A *Universal Key*:

Utopias and Universals in JM Coetzee's *The Childhood of Jesus*

Christiaan Emile Straeuli

STRCHR015

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

Master's in English in Literature and Modernity

Faculty of the Humanities

University of Cape Town

2014

COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature:_____ Date:_____

Abstract:

In this investigation, the idea of a *universal key,* as denoting the unifying forces of language, will be analysed in *The Childhood of Jesus* using a framework inspired by the theory of forms, as described by Plato in *The Republic*. In *The Republic*, Plato structures his argument so that the soul and the state are compared in a way that perceives them as parallel and reciprocal entities. In this analogy, the character of Socrates imagines the creation of a just state with the aims of illuminating the characteristics of a just individual as part of the state. In this sense, as the primary inquiry of *The Republic*, Socrates reasons that if justice can be imagined in the structure of the state, it will be mirrored in the individual. To discover the structure of the just state, the rules of this state must be laid out in a manner which would facilitate such justice. The task of designating these rules is chiefly left to the voice of Socrates, as he and his fellows discuss the creation of a state and its citizens *ex nihilo*.

In the same manner, although not as overtly stated, it will be shown that JM Coetzee in *The Childhood of Jesus* replicates to some extent the style and structure of Plato's *The Republic*. In light of these similarities, a comparison between these two works acts as the primary structural framework to this investigation. Therefore, the various aspects of Coetzee's novel will be shown to reflect, although often in a reverse manner, the ideal notions of Plato's great work. Furthermore, it is argued that the shared elements of style and structure in *The Childhood of Jesus* and *The Republic* attract intertextual comparisons to various traditional utopian works, such as Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Sir Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* and George Orwell's dystopia in *1984.* The aim of these comparisons is to show that Coetzee, although playing on the styles and structures of the utopian tradition in *The Childhood of Jesus*, does so ultimately to reject the idea of a *universal key.*

Key Words: Bacon, Bakhtin, Coetzee, Orwell, Particular, Plato, Shklovsky, Swift, Universal, Utopia

Table of Contents

Introduction:

As Coetzee's novel with the most dialogue of all his works (Farago, 2013), *The Childhood of Jesus* reads, at times, much like a Socratic dialogue. Such a coincidence, although not tenable as the primary similarity between the two texts, brings to mind the philosophical discussions in Plato's great dialogues. Due to these resemblances, and various other stylistic and structural similarities which will be discussed with respect to Plato's work, this investigation analyses the idea of a "universal key" in *The Childhood of Jesus* using a framework inspired by the theory of forms, as described in *The Republic*. The two contrasting points of extremity within this framework are denoted by the differentiation between the universal and the particular, as represented by the two realms of Plato's theory (Allen, 1970: 6). These concepts will serve as the foundation that will guide this discussion, which will in numerous phases show how Coetzee's novel and the society it depicts shares many of the same styles and structures that are indicative of the utopian societies described in earlier examples of utopian literature. For, as can be noted right at the beginning of *The Childhood of Jesus*, Coetzee makes a very subtle reference to the utopian (or mock utopian) theme which he pursues in his novel.

As new arrivals to the land of Novilla, the father-son-like pair of Simón and David are welcomed and initiated by the authorities of the *Centro de Reubicación,* a state facility involved in providing newcomers with homes, work and even a small daily allowance (1)[1]. *Reubicación,* which can be roughly translated as resettlement or relocation, is a word which the protagonist-narrator, Simón, has not yet come across. After checking in at the centre, Simón and David are led by the helpful centre worker to their state assigned room, of which the key is missing. In a mistranslation (a subtle hint by Coetzee), Simón asks, "Do you not have a – what do you call it? – a *llave* universal to open our room?" (2). Corrected by the centre worker, she assures him that there is no such thing as a *llave* universal (a "universal key"), since the correct term is *llave maesatro* (a master key) (2). In jest, she says, "If we had a *llave* universal all our troubles would be over" (2).

A subtle inclusion by Coetzee, which may easily be ignored upon first reading, yet the idea of a "universal key" is perhaps the very foundation upon which the strange society of Novilla is built. While the idea of a *llave* universal is not again mentioned in such terms, later in the novel there is reference to the idea of a "universal balm for all our ills", one which comes in the form of goodwill in the strange society of Novilla (58). As will be argued in this study, goodwill (or its close relative benevolence) is the dominant and binding virtue present in the fictional society of Novilla. Although

[1] All references to *The Childhood of Jesus* (2013) will be from the Harvill Secker publication. Thus only the page numbers will be cited within the text for this book.

this virtue is proffered as a possible *llave* universal or "universal balm" by the Novillans, it is not explicitly advocated as an all-encompassing solution by Coetzee, as it comes up against some strong resistance from within the text, especially in the form of Simón. Thus, as is hinted at by the idea of *llave* universal, this investigation will show how Coetzee's Novilla can be imagined as a kind of universal or utopian society, as one which may even be seen as the manifestation of Plato's imagined state of Kallipolis in *The Republic*.

It must then be said that, while the society depicted in *The Childhood of Jesus* is likened to the perfect Platonic form of a society, this is done to prove that in *The Childhood of Jesus*, Coetzee only entices the reader to an idea of a "universal key" ultimately to reject it. With this enticement of the reader, it will be shown that *The Childhood of Jesus* brings attention to the idea of a perfect society to show that every living formation of perfection or the perfect state has consequences of a contrary nature. And while the perfect state may exist in Plato's realm of ideas and is perhaps manifest in Novilla, the central question that Coetzee seems to ask the reader in *The Childhood of Jesus Coetzee* is not whether such a "new life" can exist, but rather "whether the price we pay for this new life, the price of forgetting, may not be too high?' (57). In answering this question, using the framework of universals and particulars, it is argued that although a homogenous universal society with perfect rationality and understanding may at first seem desirable (as depicted in Novilla), ultimately, without an element of diversification (as introduced through the character of Simón), there can exist only a totalitarian stagnation which paralyzes the evolutionary nature of that society. And finally, to prove that *The Childhood of Jesus* advocates an idea of particularity or uniqueness, as opposed to an idea of a "universal key" solution, in both a structural and stylistic sense, this study will highlight the novel's tendency to move towards notions of particularity and divergence in a way which constantly undermines the universal state of Novilla. Finally then, to address the question posed within its pages, it is argued that *The Childhood of Jesus* does, because of a preference of particularity over universality, anticipate that the price for such a "new life" is, in fact, too high.

The structure of the argument is broken into three chapters, each dealing with a specific aspect of the idea of a "universal key" and its relation to the utopia. The first chapter, entitled "A New Life", analyses the style and structure of *The Childhood of Jesus* as compared to other utopian works, specifically looking at comparisons with *The Republic*, but also relating Novilla to the rational land of the Houyhnhnms in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1999). Within the scope of this investigation, this chapter aligns Coetzee's text, in a structural sense, to those mentioned above, to show that parallel components exist in each case which deals with the idea of a "universal key". Although in no way to prove that they are exactly the same, such comparisons aim to exemplify Coetzee's tendency in *The Childhood of Jesus* to entice the reader into a conception of the utopia, as simultaneously ideal and

unattainable. This is done to finally show that, like Plato's realm of forms, a manifestation of such a place has very specific consequences with regard to the particular and universal in the utopian society, which are not necessarily desirable when fully realised.

In the second chapter, entitled "The Language of Utopia", having laid a structural foundation between the utopian texts being discussed earlier, a deeper analysis of the idea of a "universal key" is undertaken; focussing specifically on the way language plays a role in the societies depicted in each text. Divided into the "language of the heart" and the "language of logic", this chapter shows that the sentiments of Simón and the Novillans are contrasted in a manner which emphasises the difference between those characters who are part of the utopia, as universalized subjects, and those who are not, as particulars which must be excluded from such a society. This distinction, which looks closely at the language in each case, proves to show that, in the framework of the universal and the particular, the particular force of decentralization (represented by the "newcomers") acts as an important counterbalance to the domination of rationality in the utopia. In the "language of the heart", Simón's lingual expressions will be likened to those sentiments brought forward in the eighteenth century by Romanticism, as a reaction, in part, to the burgeoning domination of scientific rationalism at that time. Thus, moving from sentiments of the heart to a "language of logic", by looking at George Orwell's essay on *Gulliver's Travels*, which deals with a criticism of the dominance of the scientific method (advocated by the likes of Sir Francis Bacon), a bridge will be made from Swift to Orwell, which in the following chapter takes the shape of a comparison between *The Childhood of Jesus* and *1984.*

Lastly, in the third chapter, "Towards the Universal", the consequences of centralization and homogenization in the universal society is discussed, looking specifically at a comparison between Orwell's dystopian state in *1984* and Coetzee's Novilla. What can be seen as a precursor to what is manifest in Novilla, the dystopia of Oceania in *1984* proves a valuable comparison to show how the forces of universalization, if left unchecked, can be totalising in a manner which not only suppresses, but wholly excludes any possibility for particularity or individuality in the utopian society. And finally, coming full circle, it will be shown the totalising force of the universal, as imagined by Plato in the realm of forms, can be criticised for a totalitarian tendency, as noted by Karl Popper in *The Open Society and its Enemies* (2011). Thus, it is concluded that, while Coetzee portrays a conception of the universal utopia, he does so to warn of the potential danger such centralising forces hold. And in the context of this investigation, the recognition of that warning ultimately proves that *The Childhood of Jesus* does not actually move towards the universal, but in fact moves away from the idea of a "universal key" solution for all of mankind's ills.

Chapter One: “A New Life”

"Nowhere Place"

[W]hen the tablet has been made blank the artist will fill in the lineaments of the ideal state.

(Plato, 1892: lxxvi)

Divided into three sections, the aim of this chapter is to show how *The Childhood of Jesus* is aligned, in terms of structure and content, with texts which deal with similar ideas of a utopian and the universal. For, as used by Thomas More in the Greek translation of the word in 1516, utopia may be seen as both a "good place" and a "nowhere place", as originating from a mistranslation or confusion of the Greek prefixes *ou* and *eu*[2] (Claeys, 1994: xi). With the aforementioned definition in mind, this chapter deals with comparisons of Coetzee's novel in relation to texts which may be seen as part of a utopian tradition in literature. The purpose of such comparisons are to show that, by using similar styles and structures as such texts, Coetzee invites intertextual comparison, in a way which puts *The Childhood of Jesus* in contact with the ideas that are evoked in the works to which it is being compared.

Yet, by inviting such comparisons, it cannot be assumed that Coetzee advocates the moralistic conceptions which these texts denote. And while the texts chosen for comparison in this investigation are all in some way are connected to conceptions of what can be called a "universal key", it is not to prove that Coetzee supports such an idea. Rather the opposite may be true, as Coetzee seems to challenge the concept of a "universal balm for all our ills" in *The Childhood of Jesus* by using the styles and structures of the utopian convention (58). This is done in a manner which enriches the interpretation of his novel, as the various intersections with past literature act as portals which lead to new grounds of analysis. Therefore, the style and structure of *The Childhood of Jesus* guides the reader not to ideas of unitary understanding, as represented by a "universal key", but rather towards a conception of plurality and inexhaustible interpretation.

In order to initiate such an argument, this chapter shows that in a metaphorical ground-clearing exercise, Coetzee wipes the slate clean in order to create what may be imagined as a *tabula rasa* society, as depicted by Novilla (Claeys, 1994: xi). This is crucial, as a way in which Coetzee ensures a suitable space for his Socratic undertakings. A space that requires "the tablet [to be] been made blank", before the utopian state can be conceived (Plato, 1892: lxxvi). With this in mind, as the primary structure to this investigation, a comparison is made to *The Republic,* as Coetzee in a similar

[2] When *ou* (the Greek prefix for "not") is added to *topos* (place), the resulting compound can be translated to mean "not place", "no place" or "nowhere place" (OED, 2011). This was the original meaning of utopia, most accurately translated from its Greek origins and the intended name for More's fictional island (Marin, 1993: 405). Yet, perhaps because More's *Utopia* dealt with the creation of an ideal state, but also because the Greek suffix *eu* ("not" or "no") is well-nigh homophonic to the that of *eu* ("good"), later usage of utopia became more commonly associated with the idea of a "good place" rather than the original "no place" (OED, 2011).

way to Plato, imagines the creation of a city *ex nihilo;* conjuring up a society from nothing. As the starting point for such a comparison, this part of the discussion examines the idea of a "nowhere place" in *The Childhood of Jesus* as both a ground-clearing manoeuvre for Coetzee's forthcoming philosophical enquiry and as a recurring stylistic device in utopian literature (Claeys, 1994).

Therefore, as a vital structure for such an argument, the comparison between Plato's *The Republic* and Coetzee's *The Childhood of Jesus* acts as the backbone to this investigation, as various aspects of Coetzee's novel are shown to reflect the style and structures of Plato's great work. By comparing the setting for Coetzee's society to that of *The Republic,* and in turn comparing these texts to other works in the utopian tradition, it is argued that the style and structures of Coetzee's novel achieve the impression of universality which is represented by the "universal key". And given the aforementioned points, it may apt to revisit the implications of Plato's theory of forms, as a configuration of the universal and the particular which is of utmost importance in this paper.

"Behold!" says Socrates in *The Republic*[3], "human beings living in an underground den" (Plato, 1892: 214). This is how the allegory of the cave is introduced by Plato in Book VII of his dialogue in *The Republic*. In this allegory, the character of Socrates[4] explains to his friend Glaucon how a group of people have been chained from their childhood to face the wall of a cave (Plato, 1892: ci). Behind them is the opening to the cave, past which people carrying various objects walk on a regular basis, casting shadows onto the cave wall. As Socrates' explains, "like ourselves", these prisoners "see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave (Plato, 1892: 215). In this way, Socrates likens all humans to the prisoners of this cave, as we never see the real forms of knowledge, existing in the realm of ideas, but only the blurry shadows which replicate these real objects, existing in the earthly realm (Plato, 1892: ci). It is not until a prisoner is unshackled and forced to turn to the light, that he can ever know "what are now called realities", as the form "true knowledge" (Plato, 1892: 215). It is through this story that Socrates advocates what he believes to be the correct education, as the only path to "true knowledge", for the guardians of his ideal state, the details of which he is to extrapolate in what is to come in *The Republic*.

In this allegory, Plato addresses a topic of debate which has been contemplated over centuries of philosophical thought. This subject is the idea of universals, as a philosophical question which countless have attempted to answer, but very few have come close to explaining. In Plato's

[3] All references to *The Republic* are taken from the third edition of Benjamin Jowett's translation of *The Dialogues of Plato,* which in the third volume translates and analyses *The Republic* divided into the ten books, followed by the *Timaes* and *Critias*.

[4] In context of this work, the mention of Socrates will always be in relation to Plato's character in *The Republic*.

conception, in what has become known as a Platonic idealism, the allegory of the cave equates the shadowy images on the cave wall to the sensual perception of human beings (Plato, 1982: cii). As imperfect copies of their true form, these shadowy images are representative of the material realm, while their perfect forms exist in a non-material domain. In this way, Plato divides what he calls the "visible" world and the "intellectual" world (Plato, 1892: cii), where the former is part of the material realm of earthly things and the latter exists in a non-material realm of ideas. This distinction, between the perfect, unchanging, non-material form and the imperfect, ever-changing, material form is denoted in this investigation as the divide between the universal and the particular.

This divide, between the non-material realm of ideas and the material realm of physical matter, is Plato's answer to what he sees as the problem of universals. In *The Republic*, the problem of universals, which even Plato recognises as an "old story", is one which Socrates and Glaucon formulate in the following manner:

> The old story, that there is a many beautiful and a many good, and so of other things which we describe and define; to all of them the term 'many' is applied.
>
> True, [Glaucon] said.
>
> And there is an absolute beauty and an absolute good, and of other things to which the term 'many' is applied there is an absolute; for they may be brought under a single idea, which is called the essence of each.
>
> Very true.
>
> The many, as we say, are seen but not known, and the ideas are known but not seen.
>
> (Plato, 1892: 173)

In this way, Plato separates the "many" particulars from their absolute or universal form. And like the shadowy representations on the cave wall, the many material objects experienced in the sensual world may take on various shapes from time to time, but their essence is preserved in a perfect, unchanging universal form. Thus, the absolute form can be seen as a unified conception of the "many" manifestations that objects take in the earthly realm. This occurs in such a way that the perfect form not only takes on a universal nature, but also a unitary, or unified character, as the single, unchanging symbol of the 'many' particulars it represents. Using this distinction between the unchanging, unitary universal form and the ever-changing plurality of the particular, in the context of this investigation, Novilla can be seen as the embodiment of the Platonic conception of the universal form, as place that represents the ideal conception of the "many", but also as an unchanging and unitary place.

Such a comparison, between *The Republic* and *The Childhood of Jesus,* functions at various levels. Firstly the content and shape of Novilla mirrors the ideal society which Socrates imagines in *The Republic*. Secondly, the style and structure of the two texts are aligned in a manner which ultimately

support each author's conceptions and consequences of a universal society in terms the idea of a "universal key". When applying the comparative style to this investigation, it needs to be noted that various critics have mentioned that, at times, *The Childhood of Jesus* reads very much like a philosophical debate (Crace, 2013 & Farago, 2013). This claim is supported, in part, by the recognition that this is the novel in which Coetzee has included the most dialogue, compared to any of his other fictional works to date (Farago, 2013). This has prompted some critics to call *The Childhood of Jesus* a "novel of ideas" (Crace, 2013), as a work which replicates to some extent the style of Socratic dialogue; the style most well-known today for its use by Plato in works such as *The Republic*. Thus, as a story "almost entirely driven by dialogue" (Farago, 2013), *The Childhood of Jesus* develops in a philosophically interesting way, as opposed to being driven by the plot. To accommodate his philosophical discussion, Coetzee's ground-clearing exercise ensures that "the tablet has been made blank", before "the artist will fill in the lineaments of the ideal state" (Plato, 1892: lxxvi).

Therefore, by examining the depiction of the fictional landscape as a stylistic device, it is shown how Coetzee empties out the surroundings of Novilla to keep the central focus on the philosophical themes of discussion. Simultaneously, as the landscape of *The Childhood of Jesus* is being examined, it is constantly set in comparison with other texts, such as *The Republic*, to better understand how such a ground clearing project plays an important role, not only in Coetzee's novel, but also in a broader context of utopian literature (Claeys, 1994). And as related to the structural framework of the universal and the particular, it is argued that the landscape of Novilla emphasises the universal and unitary nature of the society. The barren and isolated nature creates a sense of insubstantiality, which can be likened to similar depictions of the utopia in other utopian texts and importantly the Platonic conception of the realm of ideas, as existing in a non-material domain (Allen, 1970).

This desolate environment may be one of the first observations the reader may make in *The Childhood of Jesus,* due to the author's lack of scenic account. Like an empty stage, it is clear that Coetzee's aim is not to impress on the reader exceedingly descriptive depictions of the landscape, but rather to retain the interaction of the characters at the centre of proceedings. Such a barrenness of surroundings is even noted by the characters, as at one point the protagonist remarks that the "emptiness strikes him as desolate rather than peaceful", a description which highlights the isolation of the place (Coetzee. 2013: 67). Like its surrounding landscape, Novilla seems to be only explained in enough detail by Coetzee to serve as a functional backdrop for the interactions between characters.

There are barely any shops, the buildings are low, square and functional, and there seems to be a distinctive lack of colour and creativity present in the atmosphere of the city. Added to this distinct lack of substance, throughout the novel, the reader's attention is brought to the blissful ignorance of the people of Novilla to what may be going on in the rest of the world. There is no talk of activity in the surrounding towns or cities, as if nothing existed beyond the borders of Novilla. This focus on Novilla creates a sense of isolation in *The Childhood of Jesus* which is hard to ignore, as even when Simón and his *ad hoc* family try to make their escape, it is as if they are running to nowhere. In this way, Coetzee establishes Novilla as a black hole of sorts, as the centrifugal forces of the place draw all bodies to its centre. This is a characteristic comparable to Plato's idea of the perfect form, which draws in and unifies all possible manifestations of the object into the oneness of its universal form.

Most strikingly, the idea of seclusion and oneness is brought to the fore when Simón asks one of his new stevedore friends, Alvaro, if there is any news on the radio. ""News of what?" Alvaro inquires. "News of what is going on in the world", Simón replies. "Oh," says Alvaro, "is something going on?"" (64). With no desire to reach beyond their borders, the blend of isolation, ignorance and lack of curiosity creates a society at peace with itself; a society with a strangely powerful cohesiveness and mutual understanding between its citizens. As a kind of philosophical experiment, the world of Novilla acts as a blank canvas upon which the author may play out his ethical inquiries. Much like literary mode used by the Plato, the ideas Coetzee wishes to illuminate in *The Childhood of Jesus* are voiced and debated by the characters in the novel. Thus, while the plot seems to remain secondary, the philosophical themes of human nature rise to the surface. And despite the soberness of the surroundings, the insubstantial depiction of Novilla is nevertheless an element of the novel which sets it in conversation with various other utopian ideas.

For this reason, the barrenness and isolation cannot be ignored, but rather recognised as a point of intersection with other utopian texts, depicting their own kind of "new life". Then like in the case of Plato's *The Republic,* after the metaphorical ground clearing is complete to make space for the philosophical investigation which is to come, Coetzee is free to imagine in his book the creation of a city *ex nihilo.* Therefore, in terms of a "nowhere place", it does not exist in a position of interdependence with societies which exist in the physical world, but rather in a condition of isolated abstraction which emphasises its universal character. The setting of Novilla can be seen to support the comparison of *The Childhood of Jesus* to Plato's *The Republic*, as a comparison which, in turn, serves to show how these texts participate in the utopian tradition at large (Marin, 1993).

In this "nowhere place", the characters in *The Childhood of Jesus* can act out a philosophical play, set up by the author to draw out various themes of discussion. In the case of *The Republic,* the

character of Socrates debates with his friends the subject of justice. What follows, however, is a complex description of how a state comes into being, in hope that it will be made clear how justice manifests in the daily lives of the people of the imagined state. Socrates validates his idea to imagine a state (what is to be called Kallipolis) in the following way:

> 'I will tell you, [Socrates] replied; justice, which is the subject of our enquiry, is, as you know, sometimes spoken of as the virtue of an individual, and sometimes as the virtue of a State.'
>
> 'True, he replied.'
>
> 'And is not a State larger than an individual?'
>
> 'It is.'
>
> 'Then in the larger the quantity of justice is likely to be larger and more easily discernible. I propose therefore that we enquire into the nature of justice and injustice, first as they appear in the State, and secondly in the individual, proceeding from the greater to the lesser and comparing them.'
>
> 'That, he said, is an excellent proposal.'
>
> 'And if we imagine the State in process of creation, we shall see the justice and injustice of the State in process of creation also.'
>
> 'I dare say.'
>
> 'When the State is completed there may be a hope that the object of our search will be more easily discovered.'
>
> 'Yes, far more easily.'
>
> 'But ought we to attempt to construct one? I said; for to do so, as I am inclined to think, will be a very serious task. Reflect therefore.'
>
> 'I have reflected, said Adeimantus, and am anxious that you should proceed.'
>
> (Plato, 1892: 48)

To justify a structure that proceeds "from the greater to the lesser", Plato relies on an analogy between the city and the person, in a way which sees the character of a society comparable to the character of an individual. Thus, in the context of universals and particulars, to mimic Plato's justification for the creation of an imaginary state, "preceding from the greater to the lesser", this investigation moves from an analysis of the greater Novilla to the lesser individuals which partake in that state, in hope of illuminating how the idea of a *llave universal* appears in *The Childhood of Jesus*.

In the first book of *The Republic*, one can see many similarities between Socrates' initial attempt at the imagining of a state and Coetzee's depiction of Novilla. In what Socrates calls the "healthy constitution of the State", he imagines a simple city, satisfied with the basic necessitates, where "they will take care that their families do not exceed their means; having an eye to poverty or war" (Plato, 1892: 53). Like the peaceful citizens Novilla, Plato's healthy state is happy with a simple diet of "bread[..] peas, and beans" and "drinking in moderation", while for their labour they are satisfied with honest labour "commonly, stripped and barefoot" as their work will be out in the sun (Plato, 1892: 53). Such a simple lifestyle, carefully moderated to avoid any excess, is what Socrates' advocates for happiness and longevity for his imagined citizens, as "with such a diet they may be

expected to live in peace and health to a good old age, and bequeath a similar life to their children after them" (Plato, 1892: 53). In comparison, the people of Novilla that live an "even-tempered" and "placid" life (59), believe in a near identical notion of asceticism, as if Coetzee has brought into being Socrates' conception of the healthy state in *The Childhood of Jesus*.

With such a comparison being drawn it must be noted that, as Socrates' earliest version of the ideal society, the "healthy state" is quickly reworked, as Glaucon points out that it is an unrealistic and thereby, unusable example. For as Glaucon argues, such a life and diet may be suitable for a "city of pigs", but cannot satisfy "the ordinary conveniences of life" (Plato, 1892: 54). The consequence of this rejection is significant in terms of the comparison between Novilla and the "healthy state", as imagined by Socrates. If Socrates takes into consideration Glaucon's reservations and revises the constitution of the ideal state, surely Novilla in all its asceticism, cannot satisfy "the ordinary conveniences of life" (Plato, 1892: 54). And as Glaucon then demands of Socrates, he must provide for the people of the healthy state a "relish to their meal", as "many will not be satisfied with the simpler way of life" (Plato, 1892: 54). And like Glaucon's demand for a "relish to their meal", through the introduction of the disruptive forces of Simón and David, so too does Coetzee destabilize the healthy and satisfied state of Novilla in *The Childhood of Jesus*.

It would then seem necessary that, if Plato's conception of the "healthy state" is deemed untenable, then so too the idea of Novilla must be judged as equally unrealistic. And although in no way exactly the same, both the works of Plato and Coetzee seem to be entertaining ideas of an unattainable nature, in a manner which may be likened to Plato's conception of universals. Thus, like the objects in the realm of perfect forms, the societies in both texts are abstractions of the kind which seem impossible and unrealistic to those minds which dwell on the imperfect character of the concrete world. Yet, for Plato and those who had aquired the proper education, such a society is more real than the particular societies of the physical world (Allen, 1970). When thought of in this way, both *The Republic* and *The Childhood of Jesus* could be seen as utopian texts, if judged on the duplicity of interpretation which presents itself in the very etymology of the word "utopia".

For like More's translation, utopia carries a characteristic which is inherent in its very nature, as an idea of both a "good place" and "nowhere place" (2010: xi). And like Plato's realm of forms, this characteristic makes it simultaneously ideal and unattainable (Allen, 1970). Thus, as could be said of *The Childhood of Jesus*, although not explicitly structured as traditional utopian literature, the formations of Novilla, which simultaneously feel like a "good place" and a "nowhere place", can be seen as a manifestation of utopian essence. Thereby, in the next phase of discussion, the idea of the "healthy state" and its subsequent evolution into Kallipolis is more closely examined. This discussion

will focus especially on the distinct lack of “relish” in Novilla and how such asceticism works to preserve the seemingly unrealistic homogeneity of that society. And using the framework of the universal and the particular, it is observed how the simplicity of the Novillans’ lifestyle functions in an uninterrupted manner as a centralising force in *The Childhood of Jesus*, that is, until the introduction of the “new arrivals” as the disruptors of the unitary place (10).

"New Rules"

> When a man suffers justly, if he be of a generous nature he is not indignant at the hardships which he undergoes: but when he suffers unjustly, his indignation is his great support; hunger and thirst cannot tame him; the spirit within him must do or die, until the voice of the shepherd, that is, of reason, bidding his dog bark no more, is heard within.
>
> (Plato, 1892: lxvii)

As an integral part of the ideal society in *The Republic*, Socrates describes the education and training needed to raise a "guardian class" that would rule Kallipolis in a just manner, a description which leads to the prominent idea of the "philosopher king" (Plato, 1892: lxxvi). As related to Plato's theory of the tripartite soul, the primary concern for this training is to suppress the parts of the soul, which left unchecked create disorder within the individual's constitution (Plato, 1892: lxxvi). In relation to justice, such a disorder of the soul would cause the individual to have a temperament of injustice, which in turn would be reflected in the justness of the state (Plato, 1892: lxxvi). To keep in check the forces of passion and desire, which can cause disorder in the soul, reason must be cultivated as the strongest of these forces in the individual, if he is to be considered just (Plato, 1892: lxxvii). And to cultivate reason, Socrates argues that the people of his ideal state should practise, in every way they can, the suppression of desire, as the most disruptive force in the soul and therefore, also the state (Plato, 1892: lxxviii). Therefore, the strict training in temperance, which the people of Socrates' state must endure, is necessary for the refinement of reason in that society, as this virtue is honoured above all for the achievement of a perfectly just state.

Before Glaucon's demand to provide for the people of his "healthy state" a "relish for their meal", it may be imagined that the citizens of this ideal place would "live in peace and health to a good old age", as a state of harmony that Socrates finally imagines also of Kallipolis (Plato, 1892: 53). In a similar state of fulfilment, one encounters in *The Childhood of Jesus* a society satisfied with a simple life, the reward for which is health and peace for its people. This is the case until the introduction of the "new arrivals", Simón and David, who are clearly unacquainted with the ascetic expectations of this new society. Unfamiliar with the "new rules" of the place, the "new arrivals" struggle to fit in with the people of Novilla. In this part of the argument, the "new rules" of Novilla are discussed to demonstrate how the codes of conduct act as a powerful centralising force in the utopian society of *The Childhood of Jesus*. Furthermore, it is discovered that the "new rules", to which the "new arrivals" must adapt, create friction between them and the citizens. The consequence of this friction is a destabilising force, which antagonises the unified, utopian society.

As a society, which before the introduction of the "new arrivals", was harmonised by the universal nature of its citizen's cognitive perceptions, David and Simón, being outside of this cognitive unity, find it extremely difficult to comprehend the rationale of the "new rules" advocated by the strange inhabitants of their new home (24). Meeting by chance on the ship which brought them to Novilla, Simón takes it upon himself to care for the lost David, whose parents have mysteriously disappeared. As if finding themselves in Socrates' Kallipolis, Coetzee's protagonists find themselves in an extraordinarily rational society comprised of a stoic citizenry. Like ideal citizens of Kallipolis, the inhabitants of Novilla have perfected the virtue of temperance, leading lives led by pure reason and goodwill unto others, suppressing in every way the forces of desire.

Yet, due to their ascetic nature, the people of Novilla struggle to understand the passion and hunger which the newcomers have brought with them; a hunger for what Glaucon in *The Republic* calls "the ordinary conveniences of life" (Plato, 1892: 54). Thus, Simón, who discovers that it is challenging to leave behind the remnants of his old life, is constantly at odds with his new acquaintances, as he finds their superior rationality infuriating. Despite his passionate arguments with these acquaintances, Simón never really seems to be able to sway them from their convictions, as the community seems to be strengthened by their uniformity, as a result of their universalized mentality; a characteristic which is proven to repel any disruptors of such unity.

As the highest virtue in their land, the Novillans motivate their cold rationality in terms of "goodwill", as a "universal balm for all [human] ills". Thus, every action of the Novillans is ultimately justified by their conception of "goodwill", as their "universal key" to any decision; the single solution to every problem. In a remarkably similar way, in Jonathans Swift's Houyhnhnm Land, rationality is the supreme value which unites the horse society in *Gulliver's Travels*. So omnipotent is this force of belief, that the Houyhnhnms have "no conceptions or ideas of what is evil in a rational creature" since "their grand maxim is, to cultivate reason, and to be wholly governed by it" (Swift, 1999: 593). In addition to this supremely rational state of mind, "friendship and benevolence" are the two virtues which the Houyhnhnms cherish above all, which they extend equally to a stranger from another land, e.g. Gulliver, as they do to a member of their own family (Swift, 1999: 594). In a very similar way, the people of Novilla value goodwill and benevolence as the highest virtues in their land, with goodwill acting as a guiding force for all of their decisions. The value of this virtue in Novilla is continually brought up in the novel, as goodwill and benevolence seems to replace passion and sexual desires, which are part of the "old way" of life and serve no purpose in their new society (54).

Justified by the virtue of goodwill as the ultimate conception of a rational society, the "new rules" of Novilla can be seen as an attempt, like in *The Republic,* to supress the unpredictable force of desire in the individual, as a danger to the harmony of the unified state. Here, the idea of goodwill is first discussed in *The Childhood of Jesus* in relation to sex, as in Coetzee's fictional world of Novilla, excluding the introduction of Simón, the reader encounters a society which has no sexual appetite of any kind. This is clearly introduced to the reader from the very outset, as Simón's sexual advance on Ana (the first person he meets in Novilla) is cripplingly rejected. Frustrated by the lack of intimate human contact, Simón again attempts to form a physical connection with his new friend Elena by reaching out to hold her hand. As her hand "dies in his grasp like a fish out of water", Simón and the reader realise that she is in no way interested in pursuing a sexual relationship with him. Consequently, as a result of the unified rationality in Novilla, the people of the ideal society forcefully and effectively suppressed their desires (sexual and otherwise), in order for the harmony of the utopia to be preserved.

In a desperate and confused state, Simón asks Elena, "Are you beyond feeling anything for a man?" (55). In response, Elena argues "I don't feel nothing […] On the contrary, I feel goodwill, much goodwill. Towards both you and your son. Warmth and goodwill" (55). Like Swift's Houyhnhnms, the people of Novilla value goodwill and benevolence[5] in a way which relegate feelings of a sexual nature to the realm of irrationality. For these societies, in accordance with Plato's tripartite soul, desire is contradictory to reason, to such an extent that their daily lives have become barren of any lust or craving, as a conception which is aligned with the idea of goodwill as a "universal balm" for our ills. Consequently, the idea of a "universal key", here in the form of rationality, determines the codes of conduct in the utopian society and the "new rules", to which the "new arrivals" must adhere, can be seen as manifestations of the devotion to a "universal key", as an ultimate lodestar for every mental formulation and action of the Novillans.

As one such manifestation, the diet of the Novillans can be seen as a "new rule", provisioned in support of their devotion to goodwill. Like Gulliver in Houyhnhnm Land, after a few days in Novilla, Simón is equally surprised by the degree of asceticism practiced by the people he encounters with regards to food, as to sexual contact. This is most noticeable by the constant states of hunger experienced by the "new arrivals", who never seem to be fulfilled by the portions they are ascribed. Both in *Gulliver's Travels* and *The Childhood of Jesus*[6], there seems to be an unusually high amount

[5] The conceptions of goodwill and benevolence are bound up together by Coetzee in what is explained in a discussion between Simon and Elena: 'By goodwill do you mean you wish us well? I am struggling to grasp the concept. You feel benevolent towards us?' 'Yes, exactly', replies Elena (52).

[6] As is the case with Socrates' conception of the ideal state in *The Republic.*

of references to the diet of the protagonists, as an indication that this subject is of importance to the overall conception of the environment in which they find themselves. In the case of the Houyhnhnms, Gulliver is forced to partake in their daily diet, consisting primarily of oats and water, with which he manages "to make of them a kind of bread" (Swift, 1999: 493). Here, complaining of "a very insipid diet", the protagonist is initially at odds with such a simple form of nourishment (Swift, 1999: 493). So disagreeable is this fare to the protagonist, and so desperately does he crave meat, that he is eventually prepared to make an attempt to catch a small bird for sustenance (Swift, 1999: 494). Yet, as he stays with the wise horses for a longer period, he slowly becomes accustomed to their diet and even admits that, while in Houyhnhnm Land, he "never had one hours sickness" (Swift, 1999: 493). This is a state of wellbeing comparable to both the people of Socrates' healthy state and the people of Novilla who never seem to be ill.

To investigate such a correlation further, like Gulliver, Simón begins to crave meat from the first few days of his arrival in his new environment. Wholly unsatisfied with what amounts to "a very insipid diet", primarily consisting of bread and water, Simón eventually asks a fellow stevedore where he could possible buy some meat in Novilla. This action is motivated by Simón's concern for David, whom he believes is not receiving a balanced diet, something Simón considers to be of utmost importance for a young person's wellbeing. Simón protests that "a growing child needs more variety, more nourishment. One cannot live on bread alone. It is not a universal food[7]" (36). In response to Simón's request for meat, a fellow stevedore, Alvaro responds to by suggesting that he eats rats. Being caught off guard to this response (perhaps as surprised as the reader), Simón replies to Alvaro's suggestion:

> 'Rats?'
>
> 'Yes. Haven't you seen them? Wherever there are ships there are rats.'
>
> 'But who eats rats? Do you eat rats?'
>
> 'No, I wouldn't dream of it. But you asked where you could get meat, and that is all I can suggest.'
>
> He stares long into Álvaro's eyes. He can see no sign that he is joking. Or if it is a joke, it is a very deep joke[8].

[7] With regard to bread as a "universal food", Alvaro makes an interesting utterance to Simon, "Remember what the poet said: bread is the way that the sun enters our bodies" (96). A line which seems to be twisting biblical references regarding Jesus as the "truth and the light" and "the bread of life" from the Gospel of Matthew and perhaps more directly relating to the obscure scripture of *The Essence Gospel of Peace,* as translated by Edmund Bordeaux Szekely.

[8] In an early review of *The Childhood of Jesus* for *New Statesman,* Jim Crace picks up on the notion of a "deep joke", as mentioned by Simon in response to Alvaro's suggestion of eating rats (2013). One may assume this to involve a joke which is not at once recognizable as such, or perhaps one which takes time to be fully understood, as if the recipient of the joke does not immediately comprehend the intended humour of the joke. Yet, in this case however, it does not seem if Alvaro is in any way joking, even in the sense of a deep joke.

A queer suggestion, which clearly indicates that the Novillans do not partake in eating flesh, at least not in the way the reader may expect. This preference, although a strange example when seen in isolation, is shown to be a common trait amongst other similar utopian societies, as a characteristic which links their asceticism to their overall moralistic inclinations. The asceticism of the "new life" does not, however, end at the point of homogenous vegetarianism. For in the same way that Socrates believes that "the pleasure of eating is necessary in two ways; it does us good and it is essential to the continuance of life […] but the condiments are only necessary in as far as they are good for health" (Plato, 1892: 266), one can see that the Novillans also relinquish flavour, as it is not essential for health or the continuation of life. Accordingly, the people of Novilla seem to take no enjoyment from lavish or heavy meals, even in the form of a hearty dish sans meat.

Another example of how the desires must be suppressed in order to cultivate rationality, as is exemplified in a picnic with Ana (the same scene of Simón's first sexual rejection), to which the young administration worker brings "no more than a packet of crackers, a pot of saltless bean paste, and a bottle of water" (26). Along with her coldly rational tone and the bland food, Simón is totally confused by this woman and his new surroundings at large. Yet, for this investigation, the diet described seems to make sense in terms of Socrates' training of the perfect citizen. For as can be seen in Novilla, like their diet is "bloodless", so is their way of life. In a reiteration of this idea, resembling the people in Socrates' "healthy state", the Houyhnhnms and Novillans seem to refrain from eating meat. And while this vegetarianism is perhaps more easily explained in the case of a horse society than a human one, the similarity serves to enforce the idea of bloodlessness which presents itself in each case. Thus, it could be said that because these societies do not eat meat, their nature is becomes "bloodless", without war, without desire, but also without passion.

To investigate further the ideas of the universal and the particular, the next section discusses how Simón becomes a counterbalancing force to the universal nature of the supremely rational Novillans. Like Glaucon, who in *The Republic* challenges Socrates' conception of the "healthy state", Simón disrupts the flow of the previously uninterrupted universal voice presented by in *The Childhood of Jesus.* By the use of Simón as disruptor of the universal idea, Coetzee emulates to some extent the styles and structures of utopian literature which have similarly used the protagonist as a counterbalance to the standardized nature of the utopian society.

These similarities relate to the idea of the universal and the particular in a way which shows that the aim of these styles and structures is always to challenge ideas of a "universal key", which ultimately serves to exclude, limit or prevent a plurality of perceptions and interpretations in the

utopian society. As the bringer of “new ideas” to the unity of the utopia, Simón acts to upset the unanimous accord in Novilla through the unique imperfect particularity which he embodies. Such a threat effectively undermines the “new rules” that unite the citizens in their pursuit of reason and, because of this, Simón, along with David and Ines, are eventually shunned from Novilla to preserve the perfect uniformity of the utopia.

"New Ideas"

> And then, again, after the old desires have been driven out, fresh ones spring up, which are akin to them, and because the their father does not know how to educate them, wax fierce and numerous […] They draw him to his old associates, and holding secret intercourse with them, breed and multiply in him […] At length they seize upon the citadel of the young man's soul, which they perceive to be void of all accomplishments and fair pursuits and true words.
>
> (Plato, 1892:268)

As was shown to be very similar to Socrates' conception of the perfect state, the "new rules" of Novilla seem to suppress the desires of the citizens, in a way which magnifies their capacity for reasonable thought. In the case of Simón, however, the reader comes across a character who simply will not bow to the reign of rationality. Throughout *The Childhood of Jesus*, Simón, armed with what he believes to be the force of the "law of nature" behind his beliefs, passionately holds his ground among the tirade of criticism which he receives from those he meets in Novilla (148). In the face of constant criticism, Simón as the bringer of "new ideas" stubbornly retains his more animalistic convictions, never coming to respect the "new rules" which are part of the rational life of the Novillans. On one hand, the introduction of Simón, like Glaucon's demand for a "relish" in *The Republic*, could be seen as a disturbance of the simple, ascetic lifestyle which unifies the utopian society in *The Childhood of Jesus*. On the other hand, as related to Plato's conception of tripartite soul, Simón can be seen to represent the unchecked forces, such as desire and passion, as an individual which in Socrates' ideal state would require a re-education in the direction of rationality.

Because Simón's particular nature is unaligned with that of Novilla, through the employment of Simón as the reader's eyes in the world of Novilla. Here, Coetzee draws attention to the radical conformity needed in the realization of a utopian society such as Novilla or any other, which would include the examples in *The Republic* and *Gulliver's Travels*. The particular use of the protagonist in utopian fiction disrupts not only the universal uniformity of the utopian society, but also the possibility of universal uniformity in the reader's interpretation of the text. In *The Childhood of Jesus*, Coetzee seems to implement the character of Simón in a similar way to utopian texts such as *Gulliver's Travels*, yet with far more devastating consequences, as Coetzee's protagonist ultimately is excluded from the utopia in a manner which does not allow for a conclusive interpretation on the desirability of such a society. Thus, in a what is discussed in relation to Shklovsky's conception of the "automatization" of perception in "Art as Device" (2009: 6), in *The Childhood of Jesus*, Coetzee unsettles both the comfortable homogeneousness of the Novillans and the reader's interpretation of the text as a whole, primarily through the use of Simón as a bringer of "new ideas".

Firstly, with regard to the reader's interpretation, it is in "Art as Device" that Shklovsky claims, "If we examine the general laws of perception, we see that as it becomes habitual, it also becomes automatic" (1917: 5). Shklovsky argues that on a daily basis, humans become so accustomed to the experience of many of our perceptions, that eventually we begin to take certain experiences for granted. So, as Shklovsky exemplifies from the diary of Leo Tolstoy, "the complex life of many people takes place entirely on the level of the unconscious", to the extent that "it's as if this life had never happened" (1917: 5). This may seem to be an extreme example of habitual perception, one which essentially compares automatized experience to death (or at least lifelessness), in the context of this investigation, it is argued that Coetzee's instances of automatized perception *in The Childhood of Jesus* are as fatally inclined. In this vein, various critics of *The Childhood of Jesus* have hinted at the setting of the novel to take place in an afterlife of some kind, sometimes thought of as heaven or perhaps a state of limbo (Crace, 2013 & Farago, 2013). Despite these various interpretations, most readings of the novel seem to agree that the characters are not representative of human beings, as a conception of humanity with which the reader may not habitually be familiar (Duffy, 2013, Crace, 2013 & Farago, 2013). It could then be seen that such a distinction, between life and lifelessness (contrasted by the dullness of the Novillans and the passionate nature of Simón), draws attention to the reader's own "unconscious" experience of perception and awakens them from their metaphorical slumber. For, as Shklovsky argues in "Art as Device", this is the most important objective of art, to reawaken the reader/ observer, "in order to return sensation to our limbs, to make a stone feel stony" (1917: 6).

Therfore, like the "stony stone", in *The Childhood of Jesus,* Coetzee employs carefully crafted narrative techniques to create such a realization of "unconsciousness" in order to "return sensation the [reader's] limbs". Such a task, of investigating the narrative techniques in *The Childhood of Jesus*, is undertaken in a manner which looks closely at various utopian works, such as Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. It aims to show that Coetzee's novel not only invites such comparison, but in doing so consciously opens the text up to a near overwhelming flood of intertextually inspired interpretation. Ultimately then, because of such a conscious opening up to intertextual interpretation, Coetzee in *The Childhood of Jesus* seems to advocate a notion of plurality of interpretation, which in the configuration of this investigation, indicates not a suppression of the passions and desires by rationality, but rather a celebration of these powers, at least in equal measure to their rational counterpart.

To show that Coetzee's novel celebrates plurality and contrariness as a necessary and positive element of "human nature", it is set in comparison to Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, as a novel which, like *The Childhood of Jesus*, seems to make the reader experience the nature of man, as if observing it

for the very first time. In pursuit of such an aim, the reader encounters not only one utopian or dystopian society, in *Gulliver's Travels*, but rather a multitude of lands and people, each with their own social structures and life philosophies. Thus, the very structure of *Gulliver's Travels* is in opposition to an idea of homogeneity in the form of a perfect universal idea, by virtue of the text's inherent inconsistencies and the paradoxical claims to what qualities comprise the best way of life. This structure supports a balance between ideas of utopia-dystopian and effectively counteracts interpretations which seek to identify an all-encompassing moral bearing of the text.

The importance of contradiction and inconsistency in *Gulliver's Travel's* has been examined by George Orwell in his essay "Politics and Literature – An Examination of *Gulliver's Travels*" (1948)[9]. In Orwell's essay, he writes that "humanity is attacked, or criticized from at least three different angles, and the implied character of Gulliver himself necessarily changes somewhat in the process" (1948: 1). The same may be said of *The Childhood of Jesus,* as it could be argued that, because of the contrary nature of his constitution, as likened to Plato's conception of the tumultuous soul, Simón's convictions fluctuate as drastically as those of Swift's protagonist. This then becomes a three sided comparison, as the contradictions evident in the protagonists of *Gulliver's Travels* and *The Childhood of Jesus,* which are also present in *The Republic,* play an essential role in the effective social critique deployed by each novel. Furthermore, as the eyes of the reader, such contrary characters act as an artistic device which, as described by Shklovsky, enacts a process of "defamiliarization" in each novel, in a way which challenges the universal utopian society as the representative of the idea of a "universal key".

As an example of the inconsistent nature of the protagonist, the "necessary change" which Gulliver undergoes is witnessed by the reader in a gradual manner, as a transformation which spans the entire novel. In the beginning, when Gulliver encounters the various strange societies along his travels, he does so in manner of comparison to his native environment; an environment which fills him with a blinding pride. As he steps into each new society, Gulliver begins to recount the various daily rituals; sights and sounds; mannerisms and beliefs; of those societies, only to ultimately belittle them in comparison to, what he believes, are the superior virtues of his own kingdom. By the last part of the novel, however, one notices that Captain Gulliver's pride for queen and country begins to wane. So great is the extent of change which the protagonist experiences with regard to his previous loyalties, that by the end of the novel, Gulliver wishes only to return to the land of the wise horses, being repulsed by the very touch and smell of his own kind, including his wife and children (Swift,

[9] This essay is particularly pertinent to this investigation, as Orwell's dystopian society depicted in *1984,* is ultimately compared to the devastating result of the centralising forces of the *universal* in the utopian society.

1999: 643, 652). Such a dramatic change of heart seems to show that in *Gulliver's Travels* and *The Childhood of Jesus*, it is the contrary nature of the characters that allow for a possibility of flux and fluidity in the narration, in a way that facilitates the deeply effective style of social critique which these authors employ in their novels.

It is then through an effective use of paradox that these inconsistencies break the universality of voice (represented by the unitary utopian society) and allow a plurality of interpretation to seep into the reading experience. It is Orwell who makes an important point in noting that "these inconsistencies are forced upon Swift by the fact that Gulliver is there chiefly to provide a contrast", and as a tool for social critique, the use of contrast is fundamental to the author's style and structure in *Gulliver's Travels* (1948: 1). For the aforementioned reason, with specific focus on its structure, *Gulliver's Travels* provides opportunity for contrast in many ways. And as has been noted, the protagonist visits many societies, each with their own unique societal structure. Thus, the internal structure allows for comparison between the various depicted states in an intra-fictional sense. In such comparisons, Gulliver acts as an important tool of measurement, both in physical and moral terms. As example of this, in the case of the Lilliputians, Gulliver is used as a yardstick against which the people of Lilliput seem miniscule, given the fact that they are only six inches tall. Thus, in comparison to his own size, the actions of these people look completely insignificant and ridiculous to Gulliver (Swift, 1999: 96). Such physical comparisons are extremely important in *Gulliver's Travels* and are heavily reliant on the protagonist to give scale to these contrasts. In this way, Swift uses Gulliver to draw the reader into comparisons with other human-like characters, ultimately in hope that such judgements may be reflected back onto themselves. In a similar manner, as the most human-like character in his desires and appetites, it can be seen how Simón is used by Coetzee to provide a metaphorical yardstick, by which the reader may judge the society of Novilla.

The process of the reader's self-recognition works at multiple levels in *Gulliver's Travels* and in this multi-layered approach lays the key to the penetrating aspect of the social criticism and variety of perspective present in the novel. While the physical comparisons between Gulliver and the other characters play an important role in the reader's relation to the protagonist, the more powerful critique lies in the reader's self-recognition in the non-human and/ or human-like characters. For throughout Swift's novel there is a patient "defamiliarization" process at work, eventually climaxing with the introduction of the Houyhnhnms. As described by Shklovsky in *The Theory of Prose*, the process of "defamiliarization" or "estrangement" is a powerful tool which brings the reader's attention towards conceptions of the human condition (2009: 6); a conception which the reader may have taken for granted until that point in time or even considered universally consistent. With regards to *The Childhood of Jesus*, as may be said for *Gulliver's Travels*, Coetzee implements a

number of artistic devices in the text, one being the use of a conflicted protagonist, in hope to enact such a process of "defamiliarization" upon the reader. The desired effect of this process is to force what Shklovsky calls a "laborious" act of perception, by "estranging objects" and "complicating form", thereby resisting a universality of interpretation (2009: 6). In this way, the process of "defamiliarization" in *The Childhood of Jesus,* is an artistic device which attempts to enact a diversification of the readers' perception. This is in line with the overall aim of this study, which claims that Coetzee advocates a conception of plurality (represented by Simón's particular nature), as a counterbalance to the centralising forces of a homogenizing universality, represented by the idea of a "universal key".

Therefore, to further explore the consequences of "defamiliarization" in the framework of the universal and the particular, the last part of Gulliver's Travels will be put alongside Coetzee's work. While the first three parts of *Gulliver's Travels* depict the protagonist meeting characters in the human form (albeit stretched or shrunk), it is in the last part of the book that Swift finally takes the leap to depicting a society in non-human form. With the introduction of the Houyhnhnms and their vile counterparts, the Yahoos, Swift stretches the limits of comparison. In this way, the slow and ongoing process of "defamiliarization" throughout the novel ultimately prepares the reader for the final test of self-recognition. This final stage of reader self-recognition is not only in relation to the virtuous race of horses, but of course, also to the savage Yahoos. As described by Swift, Gulliver is fortuitously marooned on an unknown island, upon which he first comes across a strangely human-like creature, although they are portrayed in a grotesque manner.

As the protagonist explains, never in all his travels has he ever encountered so "disagreeable an animal, or one against which [he] naturally conceived so strong an antipathy" (Swift, 1999: 477). This creature is of course the infamous Yahoo, which inhabits the Houyhnhnm Land alongside their exponentially more agreeable horse-like counterparts. It is then through the grotesque differentiation of the Yahoos that the reader is drawn to a comparison with these creatures, which seem to symbolise the animalistic underbelly of "human nature". In this manner of slow "defamiliarization", Swift places a metaphorical mirror in front of the reader, to recognise themselves in various features and characteristics of the human-like and/ or non-human form. And, in the case of *The Childhood of Jesus*, it is argued that Coetzee sets up a similar comparison, involving a contrast of Simón and the Novillans, to enact his own type of "defamiliarization" process.

This process of comparison, as used by Coetzee in *The Childhood of Jesus*, involves a portrayal of human-like subjects, which are differentiated from the general conception of humans in a variety important ways. This distancing between the human and human-like subject is brought about by an

alteration of certain commonly held human attributes, which are often deemed as universal characteristics in human nature. As has been said, in *Gulliver's Travels*, the protagonist finds himself in contact with numerous strange societies, each of which is distinctly different to the human society to which he is accustomed. And therefore, each of these human-like subjects serves to draw attention to various absurd aspects of "human nature", as conceptions of humanity that may not be expected of the typical interpretations of such an overworked term. It is then in a stylistic foregrounding that "human nature", as term repeated several times in Coetzee's novel, becomes defamiliarized in the process of repetition, as its continual reference evokes a response from the reader (Miall and Kuiken, 1994: 389)

In a similar manner to the repetition and distortion in *Gulliver's Travels*, Coetzee portrays a human-like society in *The Childhood of Jesus* to draw attention to certain absurd aspects or conceptions of "human nature"; conceptions which may have achieved the status of normativity through their habitual use, to the extent that their "recognition" becomes, what can be considered in context of this investigation's framework, universal ideas. As Shklovsky describes, in a manner which becomes unconscious to the subject of perception, any "object" of perception can become "recognised" in a generalized manner (2009: 6), instead of being perceived as a unique object through our sensory perceptions. So what can be seen as opposite to Plato's conception of "true knowledge" (Allen, 1970: 43) in an attempt to resist habitual familiarization, Coetzee draws attention to the "unconscious recognition" of the generalized recognition of "human nature" in *The Childhood of Jesus.* In an attempt to awaken the reader from this unconscious "recognition", Coetzee employs, like Swift, a slow "defamiliarization" process, which utilizes Simón, as an important instrument through which to affect such comparisons. For, as is discussed in the next chapter, Simón has a fascination with "human nature", as a conception which tends to always favour the animalistic passions and desires, as opposed to a primarily rational state of being (47).

As can be observed throughout the novel, Simón makes constant reference to what he believes to be the "law of nature" (47) and/ or "human nature" (81), as if these concepts are universal truths which should be known and respected by everyone. Yet, in the context of *The Childhood of Jesus*, Simón's idea of "human nature" seems completely unfamiliar to the people of Novilla. For Simón, the animalistic convictions of mankind are an integral part of life, while the frugality that the Novillans cherish leaves him wholly unsatisfied. As an attitude which is replicated in Simón's sexual appetite, he sees his desires leading him to excessive pleasures such as "beefsteak[…] dripping with meat juices", while the bland tastes of Novilla, such as "crackers and bean paste", do not fulfil his self-proclaimed "healthy appetite" (29). Therefore, while Gulliver is repulsed by the animalistic traits of the Yahoos and in awe of the rational Houyhnhnms, it would seem that Simón has rather the

opposite preference. This conviction, as the desire driven conception of "human nature" that Simón introduces to Novilla, seems to act as a force of destabilization in *The Childhood of Jesus.* And as a conviction which seems to guide his actions throughout the novel in a similar, yet contrary, manner to how the idea of goodwill guides the Novillans.

In this regard, one can see Simón being utilised by Coetzee as an introducer of "new ideas" to Novilla, in a way which puts at risk the delicate uniformity of the utopian society. As the case with the Yahoos, Simón represents everything that the rational utopian world attempts to suppress. Therefore, with regard to the unescapable contrariness of "human nature", in a similar way to Plato's conception of the soul, one can notice a dichotomy being presented by Coetzee, as the opposing forces of reason and desire jostle for dominance in the protagonist's constitution. While one force acts as a centralising force, unifying the utopian society in its universality, the other opposite animalistic side threatens to tear apart such unity through its powerful destabilising nature.

In the next part of the discussion, with special focus on how language plays an important role in this conception, an extension of the idea of "human nature" is analysed using a differentiation between the "language of logic" and the "language of the heart". Using this differentiation, it is argued that in *The Childhood of Jesus*, Coetzee seems to draw attention to the inherent contrariness within "human nature", as a characteristic which effectively resists the centralising forces of rationality; a force that aims to bundle the particular*ity* of "human nature" into the unity of a universal idea.

Chapter Two: "The Language of Utopia"

"Language of the Heart"

> And he who, having a sense of beautiful things has no sense of absolute beauty, or who, if another lead him to a knowledge of that beauty is unable to follow—of such an one I ask, Is he awake or in a dream only? Reflect: is not the dreamer, sleeping or waking, one who likens dissimilar things, who puts the copy in the place of the real object?
>
> (Plato, 1892: 174)

In this chapter a contrast is set up between the "new arrivals" and the citizens of Novilla[10] (9). With a close focus on the character of Simón, it is revealed that he struggles to adapt to the new place and new rules of Novilla, as he continuously feels the need to defend his convictions against the extremely rational thinking Novillans. As remnants of the "old life", the people of Novilla urge Simón to let go of his more animalistic persuasions, as they serve no purpose in the "new life" (24). As in this contrast between Simón and the Novillans, a differentiation can also be observed between what is called the "Language of the Heart" and the "Language of Logic". Here, one represents the romantic thinking of Simón and the "old life", while the other represents the strictly unemotional language of reason, as is required for the perpetuation of the harmonious and homogeneous nature of the Novillan society.

In the description of the "language of the heart", Simón's defence of his animalistic convictions is compared to those Romantics, such as William Blake, who advocate a similar celebration of sensory delight in their poetry. Although many of the Romantics may come to mind as celebrators of the sensory world, Blake is chosen specifically in this context because of his strong-willed defence of the animalistic urges of man in his body of work, as a retaliation against the Swedenborgian principles which threatened to demonise such sentiments (Nichols, 2005). So, in describing the "language of the heart" using the sentiments of the Romantics (especially the words of Blake), it is argued that Coetzee proves to challenge conceptions of a "universal key" in *The Childhood of Jesus*, as the juxtaposition of rationality and desire in the novel seems to warn against an idea of a "universal balm", as the consequences of such a design may be less desirable than imagined.

As was discussed in the previous chapter, when Socrates sets out the rules for the ideal state in *The Republic*, he does so in a manner which best cultivates the rationality of the individuals of that society. And with a cultivation of reason in mind, Socrates does his best to root out any elements that would potentially propagate desire, appetite or lust in that society, as forces which would

[10] In this investigation, for reasons of practicality, what will be called the "citizens" of Novilla, simply refers to those people who have resided there for a significant period of time, as opposed to Simon and David who have only recently arrived and have not as yet been wholly assimilated in the society.

destabilize the rational balance of the soul and state (Plato, 1982: lxvii). It is then for this goal, to suppress in every way the forces of passion and desire, that Socrates decides to ban the poets from his ideal state, a decision which he does not make lightly, but none the less, finds necessary for the ideal state to prosper in the ways of rationality and justice. To justify such a decision, Socrates sees the poets as imitators, whose "imitations" are "thrice removed from the truth" (Plato, 1892: cxlvii). For example, if the poet writes an ode to the lark, his poem is an imitation "thrice removed from the truth", since the sensory image of the lark, which he depicts in his poem, is already a shadowy image of the true form of the lark. The danger of such "imitations", according to Socrates, is that they are concerned only with the sensory image and not the true form of that image (Plato, 1892: cxlvii), resulting in the writer and reader of such poetry being led away from true knowledge and towards the inferior copies of those forms.

So "having a sense of beautiful things" but "no sense of absolute beauty" (Plato, 1892: cxliv), the poets are banned from Kallipolis, as a threat to the delicate balance of the soul, which relies on the dominance of rationality for that society to achieve its just state of being. In *The Childhood of Jesus*, Simón can be seen to represent the poets of *The Republic*, not only because he embodies the unstable elements of the soul, such as desire, appetite and passion, but also because he is, like Homer and the other poets in *The Republic*, eventually chased out of the ideal state. Therefore, in context of this investigation's argument, it is demonstrated that Simón's convictions, as remnant of the "old life", come to represent the idea of a "language of the heart", as a counter balance to what is described in the next chapter as the "language of logic". And although he is ultimately banished from Novilla, it can be said that Coetzee's introduction of Simón in *The Childhood of Jesus* proves to support the idea that the novel leans towards a conception of plurality or particularity, as opposed to a conception of rational dominance in the constitution of "human nature", as denoted in this investigation as the idea of a "universal key".

For, like the poets, Simón threatens to upset the delicate balance of uniformity presented in Novilla. Simón's confrontational nature is illustrated in the novel when he explains to Ana, "Everyone I meet is so decent, so kindly, so well-intentioned. No one swears or gets angry. No one gets drunk. No one even raises their voice. You live on a diet of bread and water and bean paste and you claim to be filled. How can that be, humanly speaking? Are you lying, even to yourselves?" (30). Lacking the less desirable traits of humans, which Simón in his "old life" would deem normal, the people of Novilla seem, to him, somehow inauthentic. By living without vices, a state the reader may recognise as inherently impossible in the human condition, the lifestyle of the Novillans seems too good to be true; a fantasy in which even the citizens must lie to themselves to mask the reality of what Simón

sees as “human nature”. If this idea is pushed to the extreme, as discussed in the previous chapter, one may even doubt whether Coetzee meant these Novillans to be representative of humans.

As representative of the “language of the heart”, Simón is the character with which the reader can most easily associate, as a character whose understanding of the human condition is perhaps similar to their own conception thereof. Such a link is made by Coetzee to contrast the reader’s point of view with that of the Novillans, as Simón, in defence of his passionate nature, constantly romanticises the more animalistic urges of “human nature”. In conflict with Simón’s view, Ana, as if speaking on behalf of other Novillans, argues for a restraint of the base natures of mankind. In such an argument, Ana explains that sex, as an idea which Simón ardently claims as a natural part of “human nature”, is in reality nothing like the romantic conception which he puts forward. Ana explains her view on the matter in what could be understood as the cold rational character of the “language of logic”, that:

> As a tribute to me – an offering, not an insult - you want to grip me tight and push part of your body into me. As a tribute, you claim. I am baffled. To me the whole business seems absurd – absurd for you to want to perform, and absurd for me to permit.
>
> (32)

Simón is stunned by this rendering, yet refuses to concede, arguing that “it cannot be absurd, since it is a *natural* desire of the natural body. It is *nature* speaking in us. It is the way things are. The way things are cannot be absurd” (emphasis added, 32). This tactic, an appeal to the “law of nature”, is often the way in which Simón defends the urges of his past life in situations of confrontation. In another example, Simón is once again guided by his natural instincts in the strange scenario where he attempts to convince Ines that she should become/ take on the role of David’s mother, despite her not giving birth to him or ever having spent any time with the boy (80).

In this odd proposal, Simón explains that he has an unexplainable idea, an intuition of some sort, that Ines is David’s “natural mother”, to which he adds an unconvincing reasoning: “I cannot explain how that happens, but it is so, it is as simple as that” (80). Despite his passionate pitch, Simón is met with strong reservations against such an outlandish proposal by Diego, Ines’ protective brother. Unexpectedly, however, Simón manages to turn the tables by using Diego’s own pride of benevolence against him. As Coetzee phrases it in the voice of the narrator, Simón “plays his last card” (81), by which it could be taken to mean that, without any logical moves left in his artillery of debate, Simón must resort to a plea of the heart. Simón begs: “Come on Diego”, he says, “look into your heart! If there is any goodwill left in your heart, surely you will not keep a child from his mother!” (81). It is thus, by resorting to a plea for goodwill and compassion, using what could be

called the "language of the heart", Simón effectively bypasses the ordinary structure of logical debate and manages to convince his counterparts of his convictions using an emotive rationale. In this way, Coetzee's introduction of Simón, as the bringer of "new ideas" and the user of the "language of the heart", seems to play out Socrates' warning against the poets, as the Novillans' perfect rationality begins to be corrupted by the unstable forces of emotion.

As the reader experiences through the eyes of Simón, a stark difference is set up in the beliefs of the protagonist (as a human-like character) and the Novillans, who lack emotional drive to such an extent that they seem almost robotic. Because of this difference in ethical composition, when the various Novillan characters attempt to render his convictions absurd, Simón has no choice but to defend his natural urges in a similar way to which the Romantics came to defend their own beliefs regarding the desire driven nature of man. In a historical context, what has come to be seen, in part, as a reactionary response to the bourgeoning development of the scientific rationalization in the eighteenth century, which has been called the Age of Rationality (Nichols, 2005: 305), Romanticism stood to defend the side of man which the Enlightenment way of thinking was threatening to render obsolete (Nichols, 2005: 305). The powerful mix of religious zeal and the growing dominance of scientific method effectively combined to deprecate the animalistic urges of man in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. As a well-known Romantic poet, one who strongly defended the natural passions of man, William Blake explains in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793), how such animalistic energies became demonised with regard to associations with good and evil.

In his account of "human nature", Blake explains that "without contraries [there] is no progression" and that "attraction and repulsion, reason and energy, love and hate, are necessary to human existence" (Thames & Hudson, 2001: 109)[11]. These words from his illuminated book convey Blake's argument that in the human subject reside two forces which have come to be known as good and evil. Blake explains these terms – good and evil – as polarised forces of "attraction and repulsion, reason and energy, love and hate", which are ultimately drawn into the larger categories of good and evil in the religious context of the nineteenth century (Thames & Hudson, 2001: 109). Such conceptions of attraction and repulsion, much like the ideas of universality and particularity being discussed in this investigation, are crucial elements with regard to what has been termed the "language of the heart". And as the advocate of Blakean elements of animalistic energy, acting against the centralising forces of a universal form, Simon and his use of the "language of the heart"

[11] The words quoted from Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* are found in *William Blake: The Complete Illuminated Books* (2001), published by Thames & Hudson in association with The William Blake Trust and Tate Gallery. The introduction and further explanation of the illustrations in the book are supplied by David Bindman. The one which they reproduce "dates from about 1794 […] an early example of Blake's technique of colour printing […] at one time owned by Thomas Butts, for many years Blake's principal patron" (Bindman, 2001, 106).

can be seen as a manifestation of a decentralising force in *The Childhood of Jesus*, as one which Socrates attempted to suppress with the banishment of the poets.

In context of *The Childhood of Jesus*, as has been noted, Simón's character seems to contain a certain aspect of contrariness, as he struggles to adhere to the reforms of the Novillans. This contrary nature is as a result of his unwillingness to put aside his desires and appetites. And with regard to an unwillingness to forfeit desire, as something with which the Blake strongly agreed, as portrayed in "The Proverbs of Hell", he says that man should "sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desire"; a conviction with which Simón may well sympathise (Thames & Hudson, 2001: 116). Blake's ironically titled work, is largely a satire on Emanuel Swedenborg's work *Heaven and Hell,* written thirty three years before Blake's own publication. In the orthodox Swedenborgian configuration, untamed desire would be associated with an unreasonable and a weak-willed surrender to animalistic urges (Bindman, 2001: 106), in a similar way to which Socrates explained the soul of the poets.

As Blake explains, in the orthodox configuration (as stated in "all bibles and sacred codes"), "good is the passive that obeys reason" and "evil is the active springing from energy" (Thames & Hudson, 2001: 109). Therefore, it is only by the reasonable suppression of base desires that man may enter the gates of heaven (Thames & Hudson, 2001: 110). For Blake, however, this "energy", stemming from the body, is the driving force of life and it is in the engagement with this energy that Blake believes "eternal delight" can be achieved (Thames & Hudson, 2001: 110). Thus, if hell is to be found at the end of the road which is paved by fulfilled desire, then that is a fate Blake may well accept. It is in "A Memorable Fancy" that Blake says:

> As I was walking among the fires of hell, delighted with the enjoyments of Genius; which to Angels look like torment and insanity, I collected some of their Proverbs; thinking that as the sayings used in a nation, mark its character, so the Proverbs of Hell, shew the nature in Infernal wisdom better than any description of buildings or garments.
>
> (Thames & Hudson, 2001: 112)

While Simón's passions and desires look to those of Novilla like "torment and insanity", he refuses to be led purely by reason. Partly in response to Swedenborg's doctrines, "The Proverbs of Hell", which resemble syntactically those of the biblical kind, are examples of the "contraries" which Blake proposes for an alternative perspective. Guided by the "energy of life", the proverbs advocate bravery over reason, imagination over dogma, action over stability, movement over stagnation, and excess over containment (Thames & Hudson, 2001: 111). In this regard, Blake writes, "those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained" (Thames & Hudson, 2001:

111). It could be argued then, that Simón's desire is too great to be restrained and, for Blake, this is not a sign of weakness, but rather a sign of courage. Like "the tygers of wrath" in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, who are "wiser than the horses of destruction", Simón's passionate stubbornness would be celebrated in the Blakean realm, yet seem to cause more frustration than happiness in the dynamics of Novilla (Thames & Hudson, 2001: 112).

As Simón becomes slowly familiar with the ascetic way of life, he wonders if his stubborn convictions are working in his favour, in terms of starting a "new life" in Novilla. When he sees the happy friendship between David and Fidel, he realises that from "goodwill come friendship and happiness […] companionable picnics in the parklands or companionable afternoons strolling in the forest" (57). On the contrary, as learnt from his experience in Novilla, "from love, or at least from longing in its more urgent manifestations, come frustration and doubt and heartsore" (57). Therefore, with regard to his new acquaintances, Simón contemplates whether his persistent convictions cause nothing more than unpleasant friction. Yet, he cannot help his hunger and ultimately he cannot fathom that it is a shortcoming in his character, as is indicated to him by the frugal citizens of Novilla. For Simón wants to hang on to what is left of his own appetites, as he still hungers for sex and a "relish for [his] meals", as Glaucon insists. To Ana, who argues that the general good is more important than the individual good, Simón replies: "You tell us to subdue our hunger, to starve the dog inside us. Why? What is wrong with hunger? What are our appetites for if not to tell us what we need? If we had no appetites, no desires, how do we live?" (31). Here again, Simón argues that appetite is a natural process, as one which inherently guides the actions of mankind.

In opposition to this statement, as if defending the traditional Swedenborgian position, Ana argues that hunger can and should be controlled, as with all other animalistic desires, which can be restrained by a rational mind (31). When seen in this way, the rationality of the Novillans is very similar to those principles of the Swedenborgian orthodoxy, as a doctrine which, like Socrates' banishment of the poets, aims to suppress the animalistic forces of appetite and desire in the individual. This can be seen as an incarnation of Plato's words, Simón and the Novillans play out the "old quarrel between philosophy and poetry" (Plato, 1892: clxiii), as a "quarrel" which divides the "language of the heart" and the "language of logic" makes their coexistence unamicable. The aim of such categorization is ultimately to show that Coetzee proves to challenge conceptions of a "universal key" in *The Childhood of Jesus* by inciting in the reader an idea of life without passion, desire and appetite. As a world which may very well suit Socrates' vision of utopia, but perhaps if Glaucon were given the chance to speak freely in *The Republic*, he would object to such a "bloodless" life.

"Language of Logic"

> But take the case of the other, who recognises the existence of absolute beauty and is able to distinguish the idea from the objects which participate in the idea, neither putting the objects in the place of the idea nor the idea in the place of the objects—is he a dreamer, or is he awake?
>
> (Plato, 1892: 174)

As was discussed in the previous section, Blake, as the poet who advocates the supremacy of desire, comes to represent much of what the Swedenborgian tradition condemns. And in a similar manner, Simón is condemned by the Novillans for advocating the supremacy of appetites and desires. As argued, these convictions could be seen manifest in the "language of the heart", as the language which corresponds to the defence of these desires. In the opposite manner, the Novillans use what is termed the "language of logic", as the lingual expression of their perfectly rational society. In terms of the structural framework of the universal and the particular, it is argued that Coetzee's juxtaposition of the newcomers and the citizens of Novillan acts as a comparison and collision of thought. Here, the nature of Simón's contrary convictions represent a force of diversification, while the universal character of the Novillan society acts to unify the language and thought of the citizens. In this way, as a manifestation of the idea of the "universal key" in *The Childhood of Jesus*, the "language of logic" represents the unifying forces of the universal, as a force of centralization and homogenization, which ultimately is shown to be contrary to the nature of language which Coetzee advocates in the novel.

As a key element of the "language of logic", as Simón notes, the Novillans do "not see any doubleness in the world, any difference between the way things seem and the way things are" (60). While Simón romanticises his animalistic desires using the "language of the heart", the people of Novilla have no need for such emotive language. Therefore, the Novillans "language of logic" can be seen as a language of universally perfect interpretation, with no "doubleness" of ambiguity. In this configuration, the idea of "doubleness" of interpretation can be linked to the ambiguity of the "language of the heart" (exemplified by the plurality of interpretation associated with poetry). However, in the "language of logic", there is no need, and indeed no place, for such "doubleness" or plurality of meaning. As an essential part of the "new life" in *The Childhood of Jesus*, it is contended that all "doubleness" must be purged from the newcomers, to achieve the level of homogeneity of interpretation needed to maintain their universally uniform society. Using this juxtaposition, it is argued that Coetzee contrasts the convictions of the "new arrivals" to the Novillans, in a manner which exemplifies the opposing forces of unification and diversification in language.

To begin such a comparison, it is noted that in Novilla there is a distinctive process of homogenization at play, the workings of which are masked by the guise of starting a "new life" in Novilla. And while the way of life in Novilla is not completely alien to the reader, it is the unquestioning manner in which the society as a whole adheres to the laws of rationality which is most unnerving about the utopia. Spare Simón and the enigmatic senór Daga, the lone villainous figure in *The Childhood of Jesus*, the rest of the characters either readily adhere to the rational lifestyle which the society demands or they are easily bent into shape by the shady authorities of Novilla. One aspect of the "new life", which may explain the higher reasoning of the people of Novilla, is the popularity of the night classes which many of the characters attend. This institution, aptly named the "Institute of Higher Learning", is where adult Novillans can take a variety of lessons which include "course after course on Spanish" (106). As the hub of the reasonable community of Novilla, the "institute" in *The Childhood of Jesus*, acts as a version of Sir Francis Bacon's "Salomon's House", the fictional learning institution in his utopian work, *New Atlantis* (1900).

In *New Atlantis*, Bacon, who is dubbed the father of the scientific method, describes a utopian society not unlike that of Novilla. At the centre of this new world is a perfectly conceived college of learning, described as the "institution of an Order or Society, which we call Salomon's House; the noblest foundation (as we think) that ever was upon the earth; and the lanthorn of this kingdom" (Bacon, 1900: 5). As "the eye of this kingdom", encapsulating the illuminating essence of Enlightenment thought, Salomon's House serves as the unifying educational institution for the utopian society which exists in *New Atlantis* (Bacon, 1900: 4). As promoted by the institution of learning described above, the rule of logic and rationality would combat the "doubleness" which Simón holds onto from his "old life" (64). Thus, as a facility which assists in the successful integration (or conversion) of Novillans to the "new life", the "institute" plays an important role not only in *The Childhood of Jesus*, but throughout utopian literature.

In addition to "course after course on Spanish", there are a number of philosophy classes available at the "institute", none of which interest Simón in the life changing way he hopes. These classes involve problems of universality, as an inquiry which prompts one to ponder "what unity lies behind all the diversity, what it is that makes all tables tables, all chairs chairs", an area of thinking which ancient Greek philosophers such as Plato brought to the fore (106). These classes are eagerly attended by Simón's fellow stevedores, especially Eugenio, who can be seen as the lead spokesman for the "language of logic". As Simón's closest male friend in the novel, he and Eugenio often play out long philosophical debates in *The Childhood of Jesus*, in which Simón divulges his frustrations of the nature of the "new life".

These philosophical discussions are recurrent throughout the novel, as the author seems to articulate various ethical standpoints to the effect of a battle between "language of logic" and the "language of the heart"; between rationality and passion; and between the universal and the particular. At a pivotal moment in the battle between the "language of logic" and the "language of the heart", when Simón finally visits the "institute", the reader experiences the most critical encounter between the "language of the heart" and the "language of logic". Although initially sceptical of the "institute", Simón is in the end overcome by his curiosity and sits in on a class in which his fellow stevedores are enrolled. In what transpires to be a philosophy class concerning ideas of universality, Simón quickly bores of the talk of "chairness" and leaves the lecture early. After the class, when his friends join him for a free meal supplied by the "institute", Simón attempts to joke about what he had heard in his brief appearance in the classroom:

> 'How was your class?' [Simón] asks them. 'Did you work out what a chair is?'
>
> It is meant as a joke, but the young men stare at him blankly.
>
> 'Don't you know what a chair is?' says one of them finally. 'Look down. You are sitting on one.' He glances around at his companions. They all burst out laughing.
>
> He tries to join in, to show he is a good sport. 'I meant,' he says, 'did you find out what constitutes . . . I don't know how to say it . . .'
>
> '*Sillicidad*,' offers Eugenio. 'Your chair' – he gestures towards the chair – 'embodies *sillicidad*, or partakes of it, or realizes it, as our teacher likes to say. That is how you know it is a chair and not a table.'
>
> 'Or a stool,' adds his companion.
>
> 'Has your teacher ever told you,' says he, Simón, 'about the man who, when asked how he knew a chair was a chair, gave the chair in question a kick and said, *That, sir, is how I know*?'
>
> 'No,' says Eugenio. 'But that isn't how you learn a chair is a chair. That is how you learn it is an object. The object of a kick.'
>
> He is silent. The truth is, he is out of place in this Institute. Philosophizing just makes him impatient. He does not care about chairs and their chairness.
>
> (108)

In this exchange, one feels the tension between the "language of logic" and the "language of the heart", as a point of conflict between the position of the Novillans', who take their philosophy classes very seriously, and the hapless Simón, who struggles to converse with these men in the same way as he may have become accustomed to in his "old life". As Simón's attempt at humour is again completely lost on the Novillans, resulting in one of many uncomfortable moments where his jokes

seem to humiliate him rather than prove his wit, one must ask why these men do not respond in the way Simón expects.

When considered in relation to *The Republic*, this example can be seen as the most explicit intertextual link to the philosophy of Plato. And in such an example, it can be seen that Simón, like the poets in *The Republic*, is looked down upon for not recognising the distinction between the universal and the particular. For as Plato says, "one who likens dissimilar things, who puts the copy in the place of the real object", will never come to know "true knowledge" (Plato, 1892: 172). Accordingly, for the Novillans', the idea of "chairness" is important in their perfect world of rationality, as the universal is more important than the particular, as for those in Socrates' perfect state. And as a result, there is no "doubleness" of meaning in the world for the people of Novilla, because with perfect rationality comes perfect interpretation.

In terms of the structure of the "language of logic", one notes that at every turn, Simón seeks for irony in the language of his acquaintances, but fails to find any hint of evasive meaning in their talk. This can again be explained by the lack of "doubleness" in Novillans' language, which results from the unitary interpretation which such a language yields. In the case of Eugenio, a regular attendee of the free philosophy classes, even a discussion of "physical urges" produces no indication of innuendo. Thus, Simón's attempt to talk "man to man" with his fellow stevedore leads him only to a polished psychoanalytical response, which strangely resembles the difference between Plato's division between the idea and its inferior copies:

> Physical urges? Urges of the body? We were discussing those in class […] the physical urges in question have no specific object. That is to say, it is not some particular woman towards whom they impel us but towards women in the abstract, the womanly ideal […] union with an inferior copy can only leave the searcher disappointed and saddened.
>
> (141)

In a similar psychoanalytical response, as Simón's best guide between the old and the new life Elena helps him consolidate his lingering past with the "new life" in Novilla. When Simón threatens their relationship by asking permission to sleep with another woman, Elena cuts to the core of his character by giving her "full answer", which explains Simón's desire for a more passionate relationship in overtly psychoanalytical terms:

> To my ear that is an old way of thinking. In the old way of thinking, no matter how much you have, there is always something missing. The name you choose to give this *something-more* that is missing is passion. Yet, I am willing to bet that if tomorrow you offered all the passion you wanted - passion by the bucketful – you would promptly find something new to miss, to lack. This endless dissatisfaction, this yearning for the something-more

> that is missing, is a way of thinking we are well rid of, in my opinion. *Nothing is missing.* The nothing that you think is missing is an illusion. You are living by an illusion.
>
> (63)

By weaving in psychoanalytic terms such as “lack” and “desire”, Coetzee conjures theories associated with thinkers such as Lacan and Freud. This specific piece of text brings to mind Lacan’s conception of the “symbolic order” of desire, in a way which could be seen to resemble in many ways Plato’s realm of forms (Badiou, 2012: 142).

In his conceptual economy of lack and desire, Lacan describes the idea of desire as something altogether separate from actual bodily needs (Badiou, 2012: 142). For in this economy, Lacan identifies that there exists an idealised image of what is being desired which is not physically accessible, something very similar to the conception of the Platonic universal*,* since this ideal image exists only in the “symbolic order” of our consciousness (2006: 142). As explained by Lacan, the object of desire in a fantasy is the *objet petit a* (literally translated as ‘the small object *a*) (2006: 15). This object of desire is by its very nature unattainable, as its purpose is in directing the subject’s desire, yet is never meant to be reached (Lacan, 2006: 142). The essence of desirability in the *objet petit a* is, therefore, its unattainability, as an element which in *The Childhood of Jesus* links to the idea of a “universal key”, which is similarly absorbing yet ultimately unattainable. Therefore, if the object was ever to be reached, it immediately becomes undesirable. In the case of *The Childhood of Jesus*, if one is to see Elena’s speech as a Lacanian outburst, she describes how Simón’s craving of another woman constitutes an unattainable cycle of desire, not specifically someone else. In this configuration then, Simón only craves the passion of another woman by virtue of it being “the end-term of the fantasy” (Lacan, 2006: 15). The fantasy which is being played out by Simón is that of passion, as it would seem that even if he did attain this new passion, he would quickly “find something new to miss, to lack” (63). Thus, it would seem that Elena, to some extent, understands the cycle of lack and desire as something ultimately unattainable, something which can be termed as universal*,* and yet, Simón perceives desire as something particular, in a way which creates for him “endless dissatisfaction” (63).

And as Žižek proposes, in a reconfiguration of Lacan’s theory, “through fantasy, we learn how to desire” (1991: 6). It is thus Simón’s fantastical memory of his old life that is the source of his desires for passion and hunger. In the case of the other people in Novilla, however, their memories have been “washed clean”, as it seems to be a necessity for a “new life” to leave behind both old memories and past understanding (65). As Elena notes, "Forgetting takes time […] Once you have properly forgotten, your sense of insecurity will recede and everything will become much easier",

but Simón refuses to let go of his memories and to be “washed clean” (64). As Elena describes it, Simón still “suffers from [his] memories”, as if the memories (and the desire they cause) are a painful symptom of an illness. Thus, once he is “washed clean” of his memories, he will be much happier, less frustrated and importantly, will finally fit in with the citizens of Novilla. But until then he will always be the “misfit” (61); the one who thinks with his heart and not his head, putting inferior copies in place of the ideal.

In the next chapter, “Towards the Universal”, the “misfit” nature of Simón is discussed further. As a characteristic which is imperative in the battle of the universal and the particular, the “misfit” nature is shown to be a counterbalancing force to the gradual and totalising nature of universalization. In relation to his standing as an individual in the utopian state, as has been argued in this chapter, Simón represents the particularity of “human nature”; an expression of which was shown to be represented by the “language of the heart”. In what is to be a critical comparison, hinted at earlier by the discussion of his essay on Swift, the full force of the centralising universal will be shown in *The Childhood of Jesus* through a comparison with George Orwell’s’ *1984*. In this dystopian novel, the political consequence of unchecked unification and universalization, as a consequence of a “universal key” solution, is drawn out in an extreme depiction of the utopian society. Furthermore, it is revealed how such extreme universalization results in a kind of stasis (what will be called a universal stagnation), which is comparable to Plato’s realm of forms, as a conception of an eternal, unchanged and unchallenged state.

Chapter Three: "Towards the Universal"

"A Universal Language"

> Then those who see the many beautiful, and who yet neither see absolute beauty, nor can follow any guide who points the way thither; who see the many just, and not absolute justice, and the like,—such persons may be said to have opinion but not knowledge? […] But those who see the absolute and eternal and immutable may be said to know, and not to have opinion.
>
> (Plato, 1892: 175)

In this final chapter, it is argued that the centralising forces of the universal act not only to coolapse the plurality of particulars into a unified state in *The Childhood of Jesus*, but also that such centralising and homogenising forces result in the stagnation of the universalized utopian society. As discussed in the previous chapter, in Novilla there is no occasion for the irrational physical urges of the body, since, like in Plato's conception of the just man, sensory perception becomes secondary to universal knowledge. And a devaluation of the physical senses, as related to the idea of the material particular, ultimately results in what can be called universal stagnation, as an extreme form of totalitarian control. In this condition of stagnation, the utopia which emphasises the superiority of rationality falls into a state of universal unconsciousness, much like the society depicted in George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984,* where "history has stopped [and] nothing exists except an endless present in which the party is always right) and language is the critical tool of control for this endless totalitarianism (2009: 178). Using this comparison, it is argued that *The Childhood of Jesus* depicts, especially with regard to Simón, a mental battle against the forces of unification present in the Novillan society. A process of unification which involves the dominance of centralising forces over decentralising forces in language, as is described in Mikhail Bakhtin's conception of language in his essay "Discourses in the Novel" in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981), as a theory which describes the centripetal and centrifugal forces active in and around the "utterance" (271).

In his essay "Discourse in the Novel", Bakhtin celebrates the role of diversification in language, as this paper argues for *The Childhood of Jesus*. Yet, before he begins such a celebration, he first notes another force inherent in the language. As Bakhtin explains, there exists within and around language both forces of unification or diversification (1981: 270). And it is because of what he terms the "centripetal forces of language", forces that "serve to unify and centralize the verbal-ideological world" (Bakhtin, 1981: 270), that it has been the task of numerous great thinkers to define what he calls a "unitary language" (1981: 271). Due to such forces of centralization, Bakhtin believes that many philosophical schools at different times, all "serve one and the same project of centralising and unifying the European language", as theoretical configurations influences by the "centripetal forces of language" (Bakhtin, 1981: 271). In relation to the aims of this investigation, such a force of

unification in language is very useful in explaining the conception and consequences of a "universal key" in *The Childhood of Jesus*. And accordingly, for the use in context of the utopian texts which have been examined, what Bakhtin calls a "unitary language", we may call a "universal language*",* as a language which plays an important role in the homogenization and stagnation of the utopian society.

Bakhtin's attitude to such a centralization of language is ultimately in line with this project, as he sees every attempt to create a "unitary language" resulting in a similar fate. That is, the subsequent "supplanting of language", where the "unitary language" dominates all other dialects, in what is essentially "their enslavement" (1981: 271). This "enslavement" of all other languages and/ or dialects is the consequence of a unitary or universal language, as the manifestation of the theories of "unification and centralization" (Bakhtin, 1981: 271). A manifestation which, in context of this investigation, may be classified as a sub-division of the idea of a "universal key". Therefore, to begin the discussion of a universal language in *The Childhood of Jesus*, it is worthwhile to note the first instance of what can be called language domination in the novel, where one language becomes supressed by another. In this instance, as has been discussed, it is a requirement for Simón and David (as any other newcomers) to learn and speak Spanish, as this seems to be the compulsory language of communication in Novilla. Even before their arrival, the newcomers must participate in some form of mandatory intensive language training, a kind of language boot camp which prepares them for their arrival in Novilla. This scenario is played out right in the beginning of the novel, thus an emphasis on language control is at the centre of the story from the very outset.

This focus on language is exemplified on the first page of the novel, as Simón introduces himself to the authorities of Novilla, expressing his greetings in "the Spanish he has worked hard to master" (1). Thus, as a newcomer to the land, Simón is put on the back foot with this uncertain start to language and communication. He must now try to fit into a new environment, with strange customs and beliefs, using a language which he has only recently acquired; a language with which he cannot express the feelings "from [the] heart" (60). His uncertainty of the language is immediately emphasised by Coetzee, as Simón thinks to himself after reading a sign, "*Reubicación*: what does that mean? Not a word he has learnt", as one instance of many which clearly draws attention to the fact that he is not yet confident in this new tongue (1). One can perhaps even imagine that Simón's character does not yet *think* using the language of the land, as is clear in the above example.

With regard to language and its manipulation in *The Childhood of Jesus*, it is important to note that in the process of being "washed clean", it is required of all newcomers to Novilla to undergo a compulsory training in Spanish and to leave behind any other language, which they may have spoken

before their arrival (25). The idea of learning a new language as part of being born into a "new life" can be seen as an important function of being "washed clean", to erase whatever remnants of the "old life" the newcomers bring with them. This ploy plays an integral part in the process of creating a universal society because, to achieve its universal status, Novilla must purge its society of all forces of diversification, a consequence of which is its eventual stagnation as a result of its extreme homogenization.

Although one begins to question the compulsory use of Spanish in *The Childhood of Jesus* right from the start of the novel, it is not until Simón contemplates his own use of the language that the full force of the matter begins to dawn on the reader. It is once again in one of Simón's rants to Elena about the placid nature of Novilla that he notes the lack of substance in the society, particularly in the way that the language they speak "lacks weight", since "these Spanish words […] do not come from [the] heart" (60). In line with Plato's immaterial universal*,* like everything else in Novilla, including the food and love-making, Simón feels as if the language has very little substance. This lack of gravity antagonises Simón and is the reason for his aura of continual dissatisfaction in the novel. Listening to the radio one day, as Simón becomes ever more unfulfilled by the "new life" in Novilla, he notes that "life is […] like the music on the radio. *Anodina*: is that a Spanish word?" (59). Translated as anodyne, *anodina* immediately relates to the idea of Novilla as a society which is "unlikely to cause offence", but in another sense, "having the power of assuaging pain", in terms of numbing the senses (Stevenson, 2011). This latter interpretation can be seen as a symptom of the universal stagnation in Novilla, a symptom which is comparable to the numbness of the society in Orwell's *1984,* as a utopian, or more accurately, a dystopian text which depicts the consequences of an extreme lack of peculiarity in the utopian society.

In many ways, in *1984*, the character of Winston reminds one of Simón in *The Childhood of Jesus*. Both characters feel uncomfortable in their environments for various reasons and continually question the system to which they must adhere in their respective worlds. This continual questioning is eventually turned back on to themselves, as the majority of their fellow citizens do not welcome the friction which these characters create by resisting the common beliefs of the society. The uncomfortable feeling of presumed isolation is essential in each novel, as this leads the two characters towards their existential questioning. In *1984,* Winston feels as if he is "a minority of one", the "last of his kind" and that "he was alone" (Orwell, 2009: 31, 309). In *The Childhood of Jesus,* Simón, who constantly questions the *status quo* of the Novillan society, begins to think that there is something wrong with him and eventually comes to the understanding that he is in fact "the misfit" (64).

The feeling of being "a minority of one" is largely as a result of the way language shapes these fictional landscapes and which cause Winston and Simón to question their identity and even their sanity. As has been discussed, the reader is given little reason why there would be such consensus to language in Novilla, other than the reason which Simón has offered to David. In answering the inevitable question posed by his young companion, "Why do we have to speak Spanish all the time?" (186), Simón answers, "We have to speak some language, my boy, unless we want to bark and howl like animals. And if we are going to speak some language, it is best we speak the same language. Isn't that reasonable?" (186). Indeed, this does seem reasonable, yet something seems to be lost when you are forced to discard the language with which you are most comfortable and made to communicate in a foreign language. This "something" that is lost or "something" that is missing can be described as the lack of diversification in Novilla, a universal stagnation which is closely linked to the loss of the "language of the heart", as comparable to the loss of the particular in *1984.*

In *1984,* the fictional world of Oceania is on the whole quite different to Novilla, yet similar in some key respects. While the citizens of Oceania are stringently oppressed by the totalitarian state which controls all things to the most miniscule level, the authorities of Novilla are far less pervasive as far as surveillance and control measures are concerned. In the totalitarian state of Oceania, "Big Brother" is always watching you, even penetrating the minds of the citizens in attempts to prevent "thoughtcrime", which may undermine the power of the state apparatus (Orwell, 2009). In comparison to Oceania, the citizens of Novilla are seemingly free to a large extent, with regards to their actions and thoughts, yet the majority of the inhabitants believe and live by the idea that a frugal and conservative life is rational and would best serve those living alongside them. Thus, the most important distinction between the people of Novilla and the people of Oceania is that the latter is forcefully and precisely controlled through fear, intimidation and manipulation by a totalitarian state, while the other seems to be self-governed by the citizens who have a consensus amongst themselves to what would best serve the whole. This said, one can imagine as a thought experiment, the society of Novilla as a finished product of the project of the Party in *1984*; the superlative (or universal) form into which the Party wants to mould Oceania.

For, in *1984,* it is the Party's aim to eliminate all opposition to its rule, the key to which is the creation of a perfect orthodoxy amongst its citizens, beginning with the control, suppression and eventual elimination of all thought in conflict with its principles. Further, in *1984*, any opinion or thought which is not in line with the Party's principles is neatly collectivised into the single concept known as "thoughtcrime", an offense punishable by death. There are many ways "thoughtcrime" is controlled in Oceania, including a special state unit called the "thought police", but the ultimate weapon which the Party is developing to eliminate "thoughtcrime" is the language of "Newspeak"

(Orwell, 2009: 12). So important is the concept of a newly structured language in Orwell's fictional world, that *1984* contains an appendix of over ten pages devoted entirely to "The Principles of Newspeak" (Orwell, 2009: 343-355).

As a weapon for the Party, by which to control the thoughts of its citizens, "Newspeak" is designed to "make speech, and especially speech on any subject not ideologically neutral, as near as possible independent of consciousness" (Orwell, 2009: 351). This can be achieved, as is explained in "The Principles of Newspeak", by a continual cutting down of the words in the language (the actual vocabulary of "Newspeak") and by strictly narrowing the meaning of words to one clearly defined concept, with "all ambiguities and shades of meaning purged out of them" (Orwell, 2009: 345), as relative to the idea of purging "doubleness" in the language and thought of Novillan. In this way, it is hoped by the creators of this language that "the smaller the area of choice, the smaller the temptation to take thought", thus reducing the likelihood of questioning authority. By the end of *1984,* the Party has arrived at the 9th edition of the "Newspeak" dictionary, each edition more successfully cutting language to the bone and more completely controlling the thoughts of the citizens of Oceania.

While the detailed and elaborate imaginings of "Newspeak" in *1984* are not present to the same extent in *The Childhood of Jesus,* there does seem to exist a similar idea of language control. If one again entertains the idea that Novilla is the superlative form of the Party's aim for society (perhaps interpretable as the Platonic ideal), then it could be said that the inhabitants of Novilla speak the perfect form of "Newspeak", as far as it is a language where there is no ambiguity. This comparison is important because in *The Childhood of Jesus,* Coetzee makes it clear to the reader that those who have been in Novilla for a significant period of time lack the ability to "see any doubleness in the world". If for example, "Newspeak" was executed to the nth edition, where each concept had a clearly defined boundary; there would be no room for irony, since meaning would not stray from its designated intention. In *The Childhood of Jesus,* as would be the case in the ideal (universal) form of "Newspeak", there seems to be no "doubleness" in the world of Novilla and accordingly, the inhabitants do not see any "difference between how things seem and how things are" (64). This state of universal meaning, where one word corresponds perfectly to one concept, is exactly what the Party in *1984* is attempting to accomplish with the development of "Newspeak", as what is in this investigation called a universal language.

This idea, which links thought to language in such a critical manner, is a well-documented concept in the realms of the philosophy of language. The early work of Wittgenstein for example (in the ambitious *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus),* he aims to prove that all philosophical problems are

essentially problems of language, asserting in the preface "that the reason why these problems are posed is that the logic of our language is misunderstood" (2001: 3). If these "problems" of language are eradicated, there exists, according to Wittgenstein, no problems of philosophy. If this were so to be believed, one may see Novilla as a land where philosophical questioning has been eradicated, as a result of perfect universal interpretation. And consequently, because ambiguity has been eradicated in their language, many of the most difficult philosophical questions of life in Novilla have been deemed illogical. And in this sense, as Simón describes in the later parts of *The Childhood of Jesus*, there is no philosophy in Novilla which interests him; the kind of philosophy which "shakes one […] that changes one's life" (202).

In terms of universal stagnation, it can be seen in *The Childhood of Jesus* that the Novillans, like the citizens of Oceania, have been purged of "doubleness" and "thoughtcrime", as alternative ways of thinking about their world. Due to the pervasiveness of the anodyne nature of the "universal language", these people become numb to their sensory environment, the particular world and, as a result, stop questioning "whether the price [they] pay for this new life, the price of forgetting, may not be too high?" (57). Accordingly, in the case of *1984,* while Orwell clearly advocates the idea that language dictates thought in a controlling manner, the same may be said of *The Childhood of Jesus*. Therefore, as expressed in "The Principles of Newspeak", the party's aim is not "to extend but to *diminish* the range of thought, and this was indirectly assisted by cutting the choice of words down to a minimum" (Orwell, 2009: 344). Similarly, in choosing to require the newcomers learn Spanish, one can imagine Coetzee too is portraying a situation where the citizens of Novilla, like the citizens of Oceania, become steadily indoctrinated to the orthodoxy which that language entails. In this way, through what has been termed a universal stagnation, the universal language of utopia acts to numb the citizens of their particular nature through its anodyne quality. For as is argued, although many of the philosophical schools which propose theories of a "unitary language" do so in hopes of expediting interpretation in a positive manner, an extreme form of this could ultimately be at the loss of the particular, as a counterbalance to the forces of centralization present in language. Thus, with this loss of particularity, the diversification aspect of language is eliminated, leaving only a state of totalitarian stagnation, as described in the example of *1984*.

By examining the various outcomes which an imposed language creates in *The Childhood of Jesus,* one begins to notice that the reach of such a subtle element in the novel, in fact, extends far beyond a simple means of communication. It could then be said that, through the introduction of the idea of an imposed language, Coetzee, like other utopian novelists before him, depict in the creation of Novilla, the negative outcomes to the possibility of such an idea of a universal language. Thus, as a subject of the broader theme of a "universal key", the anodyne nature of the universal language can

be seen to cause the stagnation of the utopian mind, as the perfect form in which totalitarian control can be exercised. When considering that it was written over sixty years later, Coetzee's *The Childhood of Jesus* echoes in an uncanny manner the words of O'Brien in *1984*, who says to Winston he will be "washed clean" of his old way of thinking (Orwell, 2009: 292), as each text seems to warn against the forces which lead to a totalitarian unification and stagnation, in terms of a universal language and a universal mind.

Therefore, it is by playing on the themes of traditional utopian literature that *The Childhood of Jesus* exposes the pitfalls of such a "universal balm", which proves to extinguish any sense of individuality and passion related to the irrationality and particularity of human nature. In addition, central to the questioning of universal cures is the role which language plays in the utopia, especially with regard to the suppression of individuality and emotional drive. As is shown, the language depicted in the various utopian societies serves as the key device in achieving the universal adherence of the population to that society's chosen maxims. Thus, although subtly portrayed by Coetzee, the language usage implemented in Novilla is, in fact, the feature which underpins the effective homogeneity of life philosophy in this particular utopia, as the "language of utopia" is the primary means by which the depicted society is controlled. Unchecked by the counterbalancing forces of particular*ity,* this process involves a conception language that can be thought of as the extreme case of Bakhtin's forces of centralization. This is a process which attempts to manipulate language in a manner which would allow for only one possible interpretation and thereby, a universal recognition of meaning amongst its users. A language, which if successfully implemented, could then truly be called a universal language.

"Against the Universal"

> If the poets speak truly, why then we had better be unjust, and offer of the fruits of injustice; for if we are just, although we may escape the vengeance of heaven, we shall lose the gains of injustice; but, if we are unjust, we shall keep the gains.
>
> (Plato, 1892: 43)

In opposition to the forces which compel theories of a unitary or universal language discussed in the previous section, Bakhtin sees another force surrounding language, one which resists such theories of unification. This is a force of diversification or "stratification", linked with what he calls the "dialogic nature of language" (Bakhtin, 1981: 270). And in *The Childhood of Jesus*, it is argued that Coetzee celebrates this force, like Bakhtin, as an inherent characteristic of language, which alongside the forces of centralization and unification, acts as a force of "decentralization and disunification" (Bakhtin, 1981: 272). To support such an idea of celebration, by illuminating the characteristics of Coetzee's novel which can be thought of as stratifying as opposed to unifying interpretations thereof, it is argued that the inclusion of numerous intertextual references in *The Childhood of Jesus* is essentially in opposition to the idea of a "universal key" solution. Therefore, as an intertextually "open" text, *The Childhood of Jesus* can be seen to support notions of "dialogism", as described by Bakhtin (Holquist, 2002: 21). However, in a broader observation is also argued that it is as a result of this "openness", Coetzee's novel can be seen to warn against the dangers of a "universal key" solution, as a theory of language and thought which is not without potential for exploitation.

To illustrate such a celebration of the particular in *The Childhood of Jesus*, as the representative of "decentralization and disunification", it is worthwhile to note Bakhtin's conception of the "utterance" (1981: 279). For, in the argument of Bakhtin, the word or "any utterance" cannot fail to be orientated towards "the already uttered," the "already known," the "common opinion" and so forth, as it is "the natural orientation of any living discourse" to interact with the previously uttered expression (1981: 279). Thus, beside "the mythical Adam", nobody, no text, no utterance, no word can escape the "dialogic nature" of language, as every expression of language is in a "tension-filled interaction" with the "already known" (Bakhtin, 1981: 279). Thus, because of the inescapable socio-historical force which surrounds language, Bakhtin argues that:

> at any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between different epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so

> forth, all given a bodily form. The "languages" of heteroglossia intersect each other in a variety of ways, forming new socially typifying "languages".
>
> (1981: 279)

It is then because of the "heteroglot" nature of language that it can, at least outside of the utopia, resist the forces of the universal, which aims to draw together all particulars towards itself as a perfect, yet insubstantial form. In the context of *The Childhood of Jesus*, one can notice such characteristics of "heteroglossia" as Coetzee constantly and consciously puts the novel in conversation with various other texts. The result of this "dialogism" is an interpretation of the narrative which will "widen and deepen as long as language is alive and developing" (Bakhtin, 1981: 272). Therefore, by maintaining a high level of intertextual openness and comparability, the very structure of *The Childhood of Jesus* seems to support notions of the particular over the universal, as the self-conscious interconnectedness seems to acknowledge its coexistence with the past and present in literature, language and various schools of philosophical thought.

For, in this investigation alone, there has been mention of numerous utopian texts and authors, along with a number of theories of universality, including Plato, Bacon, Swift and Orwell, all of which make for a plethora of interpretation in *The Childhood of Jesus*. And up until now, this discussion has not yet mentioned the most explicitly referenced literary text in Coetzee's novel. This text is Cervantes' famous *Don Quixote*, as an intertextual mention in *The Childhood of Jesus* which seems to puts Cervantes, Plato and Jesus in conversation with one another, all in the same novel. Although an unlikely progression of discussion, it is even more surprising when these associations are made in an essay entitled "*Don Quixote* and the Invention of the Novel", published more than ten years prior to the release of Coetzee's *The Childhood of Jesus* (2013). In this essay, published as part of *The Cambridge Companion to Cervantes* (2002), Cascardi justifies the link between Cervantes, Plato and Jesus through the idea of "imitation" (63). In summation of such a justification, Cascardi reasons that in writing *Don Quixote*, "Cervantes engages the genres that precede him through different kinds of "imitation" and, furthermore, as a self-proclaimed imitator, Cervantes was well aware of Plato's critique of "imitation" (2002: 66). Thus, as was discussed in relation to banning of the poets, in the eyes of Socrates', the poets work is a mere copy of a copy, with each "imitation" moving farther away from "true knowledge" (2002: 66). Yet, in the course of the Renaissance, "imitation came to also mean the emulation of models" and Jesus, perhaps being the most fervently emulated model during the Renaissance, is used as an apt example for the idea of "imitation" by Cascardi (2002: 66). It is then remarkable that, in the case of Coetzee's novel and Cascardi's essay about *Don Quixote*, there are such unique associations between Cervantes, Plato and Jesus present in each text, yet

underlying such a coincidence is the idea of "imitation", as a form of "dialogic" intertextual recognition.

As the title suggests, Cascardi's essay argues that Cervantes, by the "imitation" of various "pre-novelistic genres", created what was to become known as the first novel in history and unknowingly "initiated the most important literary genre of the modern age" (2002: 58). A statement with which Coetzee may well agree, as he said of Cervantes in his Jerusalem Prize Acceptance Speech (1987), it is on his "giant shoulders we pigmy writers of a later age stand" (1992: 98). And coming back to Cascarid's argument, the "invention" of the novel can be seen as a process of imitation and combination of those "pre-novelistic genres" preceding *Don Quixote,* as what can be seen as a kind of textual collage; a structure comparable in many ways to *The Childhood of Jesus*. For, as an inclusion which exemplifies the collage-like structure of Coetzee's novel, it is of course as a result of the insertion of *Don Quixote* in *The Childhood of Jesus* that the reader may in the first place be drawn to a discussion regarding Cervantes and imitation.

This insertion takes the form of a tattered book, a romantic artefact in a world without romantic imagination. Scratching around a tiny library (the only library in the land of Novilla), Simón and his friend David discover, among the pile of practical books of instruction, "flat on its face under other books" with "its spine torn off", an illustrated children's version of *Don Quixote* (132). A text which twinkles of romanticism, comedy and fiction, this artefact from the "old life" seems to have no place in a land of humourless stoicism, as exists in Novilla. Thus, like the threat of the poets' work in *The Republic*, the insertion of *Don Quixote* in *The Childhood of Jesus* seems to threaten the delicate balance of the homogenous and unified society of Novilla. Ultimately then, in accordance with the limited aim of this study, such an example shows that Coetzee, through the collage-like nature of his novel, celebrates a plurality of meaning, similar to that symbolised by the particular "doubleness" of meaning represented by the great knight of La Mancha himself.

As trigger for a revolution of the mind in Novilla, especially in the case of Simón, the insertion of *Don Quixote* in Coetzee's novel can be seen as a device which leads the protagonist (and ultimately the reader) away from conceptions of the universal and towards every conception of the particular. With its diversifying presence, the text within the text causes, at least in part, Simón's final rejection of the ideas of homogeneous interpretation proffered in the utopia, as he himself begins to be effected, like David, by the "doubleness" of *Don Quixote,* as a kind of defamiliarization device, which causes the re-thinking of the *status quo*. Structurally then, the text within the text, as an example of *The Childhood of Jesus'* collage-like composition, enacts a process of defamiliarization which ultimately resists the idea of a "universal key". And ultimately, because of its intertextual openness,

in *The Childhood of Jesus* there seems to be a celebration of the "dialogic nature of language" described by Bakhtin, as a conception which sees language (and its facilitation in the novel) in constant conversation with itself and its environment, in a way which creates a stratification and plurality of meaning, much like the layers of interpretation Cervantes creates in *Don Quixote.*

Through the mention of texts such as *Don Quixote* in *The Childhood of Jesus*, one can see that Coetzee not only acknowledges, but also celebrates the stratifying nature of language as an essential part of meaning creation in the novel. By the coming together of old and new, past and present, known and unknown, language diversifies and evolves. For as Bakhtin explains, although there are simultaneously centralising and decentralising forces present in language, it is always the nature of language to be in conversation with itself, in a process of "dialogism" (1981: 270). In a similar relationship, the novel, as an expression of language, is always in dialogue with those texts which have come before it, whether the author is conscious of the fact, or not. Perhaps then, it could be said that Coetzee, in *The Childhood of Jesus,* acknowledges this conversation with past literature, in a way which creates layers of interpretation within the text. Simultaneously, such a layering actively resists a unitary form of language and interpretation, represented in this investigation by the larger idea the universal. Thus, while the title of this work is dedicated to the idea of a "universal key", the investigation attempted to show that *The Childhood of Jesus* illuminates the intersection points of various schools of thought, contrasted in terms of the particular and the universal, in a way which consistently sees an idea of a "universal key" at odds with conceptions of plurality*,* especially with regard to language and the interpretation thereof.

Finally, to conclude our argument, it is necessary to return to the initial frame of comparison for this investigation. To move then to the very start, it is in the introduction to Plato's *The Republic* by the translator Benjamin Jowett, that the reader is urged to believe that "to Plato himself, the inquiry 'what was the intention of the writer?', or 'what was the principal argument of the Republic?'", would have been hardly intelligible, and therefore had better be at once dismissed (1892). This is because, in Jowett's opinion, there is no grand design in *The Republic,* in the sense that, no one idea may serve to explain each argument and every line within the text in a manner which unifies the work by ironing out the contrary nature of the debate (1892). If this were so, it would be possible to align in a neat manner the often rambling and always wandering opinions explored by the likes of Socrates, Glaucon, and Adeimantus. However, Jowett sees a more organic development of the arguments in *The Republic*, as opposed to a scenario where the arguments are designed to build towards a grand climax. In support of such an organic progression, Jowett believes that as "the plan grows under the author's hand; new thoughts occur to him in the act of writing" (1892: vii). This idea would seem to be more aligned with the way in which the characters of *The Republic* seem to

contradict themselves at every turn, as they arbitrarily spout new ideas, often wholly unrelated to the subject at hand.

Likewise, the structure *The Childhood of Jesus* may be viewed in a similar manner, as the inconsistencies and contradictions of Coetzee's collage-like narrative can be seen as a mode that effectively resists the force of unification, in the form of an all-encompassing interpretation. Jowett argues regarding *The Republic* (in a note that can also be applied to Coetzee's novel) that, "It is not prose but poetry, at least a great part of it, and ought not to be judged by the rules of logic or the probabilities of history" (viii). This allows for a writing style which is not limited to facts of reality or laws of logic, thus permits without bounds the argumentative wanderings of *The Republic*, for as the work grows, so the ideas seem to change and evolve. In *The Childhood of Jesus*, Coetzee seems to allow a similar level of freedom, to the extent that one critic has called it his "most freewheeling book so far" (Robson, 2013). And although the reader may often be tempted to seek a grand design in *The Childhood of Jesus* (as Jowett warns against for *The Republic*), this is surely an undertaking of a misguided nature. Attempting to find a unifying intention in these works would necessarily result in only "the vaguest and most general" idea being seized upon (Plato, 1892: viii). Thus, as is argued, *The Childhood of Jesus*, although in the guise of allegory, is not intended to provide a "universal key" in a didactic sense of instruction. And while it incorporates various elements of utopian tradition (Marin, 1993), Coetzee's novel does not attempt to send into the world a message of redemption, as the biblical title may suggest. Rather, in contrast to such a grand design, it is perhaps more accurate that *The Childhood of Jesus* offers not just one truth, but as Jowett says of *The Republic*, it is "the vehicle of three or four great truths" (1892, viii).

For when read in a single, all-encompassing manner, the interpretation of Coetzee's work becomes what Derek Attridge calls a "relatively straightforward process of allegorization, whereby characters and events that befall them are taken to represent either wider (in some cases . . . universal) or more specific meanings" (39). Thus, in a similar manner warned against by Jowett for *The Republic*, Attridge opposes reductionist readings of Coetzee which attempt to unify, in the way of reading an allegory, the whole work in a universal, moralistic interpretation. In opposition to this way of reading, moving away from the totalising forces of a universal allegorical meaning, *The Childhood of Jesus* presses the reader to reconsider their familiar ideas of "human nature" and more broadly, any conceptions which at times become too unified by the centralising forces of language. In this balance, one can see Coetzee presenting a warning which is in direct opposition to that of Socrates. While Socrates warns of the danger of the poets and imposed a ban upon their kind, one can imagine Coetzee advocating the contrary. Thus, although eventually banished once more, *The Childhood of Jesus* sees the return of the poet figure to the utopia, in the form of Simón. And, when

compared in this manner, as is the concluding argument for this investigation, Coetzee shows the consequences of banning the poets through the depiction of the “bloodless” utopia in Novilla.

By illuminating the less desirable aspects of the utopia, Coetzee’s vision of the universal society can be compared Karl Popper’s warning against Plato’s conception of the extremely rational utopian state in *The Republic*. It is in his work entitled *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1954) that Popper writes: "It seems to be a consistent and hardly refutable interpretation of the material to present Plato as a totalitarian party politician, unsuccessful in his immediate and practical undertakings, but in the long run only too successful in his propaganda for the arrest and overthrow of a civilization which he hates" (149)**.** Such a reading of Plato stems from what has been discussed in this essay as the move towards the universal*,* as a movement or sliding towards a stable, unchanging, eternal form causes by the centralising forces which are related with such an idea. It is for this reason that Popper describes Plato the “chief totalitarian theorist of the ancient world” (Grant, 1954). This is due to the fact that, if his theory of forms is translated into a socio-political context, it could be read as an attempt to halter the dynamism of a society, in a manner akin to an extreme form of conservatism and eventually totalitarianism. Thus, in terms of *The Childhood of Jesus*, although not to the extent to which Popper blames Plato for such zealous ideology, this paper argues that Coetzee depicts a similar movement towards the universal as a centralising force. A force which has been shown to lead to a kind of universal stagnation in the utopian society, as was likened to the unconscious nature of the extreme orthodoxy in the totalitarian society of *1984.*

Furthermore, with such a move towards the universal, as was seen in the example of *1984,* this requires a loss of everything, including your own language, memory and eventually even consciousness. And to be reborn into a “new life”, a new way of thinking is required, or more precisely, “there will be no thought”, since the universal utopia requires complete orthodoxy (Orwell, 2009: 61). For, as is explained in *1984,* “orthodoxy means not thinking […] orthodoxy is unconsciousness” (Orwell, 2009: 61) and consequently, with this degeneration into unconsciousness, there seems to be an undesirable scenario at either extreme of the utopia. On the one hand, as warned against by Socrates, there is “a state at fever-heat” which results from the unreined forces of desire and passion in the individual (Plato, 1892: 43). It is a society which is the opposite of its “healthy state”, in which the “language of the heart” reigns and the poets are kings. And on the other hand, there is the “healthy state” where rationality rules and the poet, like Simón, is banished in order to preserve the strict devaluation of the senses. Here, the poet has no place in the order of the universal*,* since they, like Simón, uphold the value of the particular and the sensory perception of man as an integral part to the human condition. But as hinted at by Coetzee, such an extreme orthodoxy has its downfalls, falling eventually into the realm of universal stagnation.

Finally then, it can be said that Coetzee, playing on the themes of the utopian tradition, illustrates both sides of Socrates' vision in the depiction of Novilla. And as has been shown, Novilla and its citizens represent the unchecked forces of the universal, ultimately resulting in a "bloodless" and heartless place of cold rationality. On the other hand, the newcomers, namely Simón and David, represent Socrates' poets, the bringers of "new ideas" and the embodiment of the particular. It can finally be said that, in the configuration of the universal and the particular, Coetzee acknowledges and celebrates the force of the particular, as a necessary measure of diversification and dynamism needed to keep in check the totalising forces of the universal.

Conclusion:

As one of the first literary investigations of *The Childhood of Jesus* and perhaps the very first discussing in detail the themes of utopia and universality, it is hoped that this paper will serve as a pilot light for further inquiries into the novel. For as has been shown in the framework of the "universal key", there are many avenues of philosophy towards which *The Childhood of Jesus* gravitates, as is expected of a novel with such a collage-like structure and intertextual openness. And, while every attempt has been made in this investigation to discuss as thoroughly as possible the ideas of utopias and their link to universality, there is still much more work to be done to further illuminate the inexhaustible number of interpretations and theoretical connections which Coetzee draws upon in the book. This said, within the limited scope of this study, the intention is to orientate the text between the universal and the particular, as a task which would ultimately show that, within such a framework, Coetzee could be said to not only acknowledge, but also celebrate the decentralising forces that enact on language in *The Childhood of Jesus.*

Such an argument was undertaken in a multi-phased manner, which firstly examined the structure and style of *The Childhood of Jesus*. In this analysis, it was shown that Coetzee's novel is aligned with the likes of *The Republic* and *Gulliver's Travels*, as each seems to hold common elements in their structure which are related to the utopian tradition at large. Through such comparisons, it was argued that Coetzee consciously opens up his novel to intertextual links, as was discussed in more depth in the following chapters. It was in the second chapter that these intertextual links were further drawn out, specifically looking at "The Language of Utopia", as a major element in the universal status of each examined utopia and an element which all of those societies seem to share. Yet, later in the same chapter, through the distinction between the "language of the heart" and language of logic", it was argued that through the introduction of the "newcomers" (an especially Simon), Coetzee enacts a type of "defamiliarization" process, which like Shklovsky describes, attempts to awaken the reader from their perceptive unconsciousness, as a slumber which is comparable to those citizens of the universal utopia.

And in the final chapter, by pushing the universal to the extreme, as in comparison with *1984,* it was shown how the centralising forces at work in the utopia eventually case a stagnation, as depicted in Plato's realm of ideas where nothing changes, as a preservation the perfectly rational state. This depiction of stasis, exemplified in *1984,* is argued to be a result of the unchecked forces of centralization. Finally, in "Against the Universal", it is shown how *The Childhood of Jesus*, because of its stratifying nature with regard to interpretation, can be more closely aligned with the decentralising forces of the particular, than its oppositional force of the universal. In the aim to

justify such an argument, it was shown throughout this investigation how Coetzee's text in many ways resembles the styles and structures of the utopian tradition, as evidence of its intertextually open character. As the main reference for such a comparison, *The Childhood of Jesus* was examined alongside *The Republic* to show that these texts were structurally quite similar, yet in a way which showed that while Plato's work seemed to advocate the idea of a "universal key", Coetzee's novel actually may be seen to warn against such a conception.

Ultimately then, in answering the question posed within the novel of whether the price to pay for a "new life" is too high, it must be concluded that, in terms of the creeping forces of centralization which end in a state of universal stagnation, such a price may well be too high. For as Coetzee notes, "there exists a banal kind of evil which has no conscience, no imagination, and probably no dreams, which eats well and sleeps well and is at peace with itself" (Coetzee, 1992: 96). Such a "banal kind of evil" is perhaps the type existing in the coldly rational world of Novilla, a place where there is large amounts of goodwill, yet no tolerance for those who seek to question the sacrifices needed for such an existence to come about. And finally, it can be seen that Coetzee urges the poet to return to Socrates' utopia, and although such a return will not be welcomed by the citizens of that place, without the balancing force of the particular, such a world may not be worth living in at all.

List of Sources:

Allen, R. *Plato's 'Euthyphro' and the earlier theory of forms*, New York: Humanities Press, 1970.

Attridge, D. *J.M. Coetzee and the Ethics of Reading: Literature in the Event*.

Bacon, F. *The New Atlantis,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900.

Badiou, A. with Truong, N. *In Praise of Love*. Trans. P. Bush, London and New York: Serpent's Tail Press, 2012.

Bakhtin, M.M. "Discourses in the Novel" in *The Dialogic Imagination,* ed. M. Holquist, trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

Bindman, D. *William Blake: The Complete Illuminated Books.* London: Thames & Hudson, 2001.

Cascardi, A.J. "*Don Quixote* and the invention of the novel" in *The Cambridge Companion ton Cervantes,* ed. A.J. Cascardi, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Claeys, G. "Introduction" in *Utopias of the British Enlightenment,* ed. G. Claeys, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Coetzee, J.M. Jerusalem Prize Acceptance Speech (1987) in *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews,* ed. D. Attwell, London: Harvard University Press, 1992.

—— *The Childhood of Jesus,* London: Harvill Secker, 2013.

Crace, J. 2013. *Review: "The Childhood of Jesus* by JM Coetzee – digested read", *The Guardian,* Available: http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/mar/10/childhood-of-jesus-digested [2014, August, 14].

Duffy, M. 2013. "Review: Childlike Simplicity", *The Millions,* Available: http://www.themillions.com/2013/09/childlike-simplicity-on-j-m-coetzees-the-childhood-of-jesus.html [2014, August, 22].

Farago, J. “J.M. Coetzee’s stunning new novel shows what happens when a Nobel winner gets really weird”, *New Republic*, Available: http://www.newrepublic.com/article/114658/jm-coetzees-childhood-jesus-reviewed-jason-farago [2014, September 2].

Grant, “Plato and Popper”, *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science / Revue canadienned'Economique et de Science politique*, 20(2), 1954: 185-194.

Lacan, J. *Écrits, the first complete edition in English,* trans B. Fink, H. Fink and R. Gigg, New York: Norton, 2006.

Marin, L. “Frontiers of Utopia: Past and Present”, *Critical Inquiry,* 19(3), 1993: 397-420.

Miall, S. and Kuiken, D. “Foregrounding, Defamiliarization, and Affect: response to literary stories”, *Poetics,* 1994, 22(5): 389-407.

Nichols, A. "Roaring Alligators and Burning Tygers: Poetry and Science from William Bartram to Charles Darwin", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society,* 2005, 149(3): 304–315.

Orwell, G. *1984,* London: Penguin, 2009.

— “Politics and Literature – An Examination of *Gulliver’s Travels*” (1948) in *All Art is Propaganda*: *critical essays*, ed. G. Packer, Orlando: Harcourt, 2008.

Plato. *The Republic,* translation, introduction and analysis by B. Jowett, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1892.

Popper, K. *The Open Society and its Enemies,* London: Routledge, 2011.

Robson, L. 2013. “Reviewed: *The Childhood of Jesus* by JM Coetzee and *Harvest* by Jim Crace”, *New Statesman Online*, Available: http://www.newstatesman.com/culture/2013/03/reviewed-childhood-jesus-j-m-coetzee-and-harvest-jim-crace [2014, June 23].

Shklovsky, V. “Art as Device” in *Theory of Prose,* trans. B. Sher, Champaign and London: Dalkey Archive Press, 2009.

Stevenson, A. *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. A. Stevenson, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Swift, J. *Gulliver's Travels: into several remote regions of the world,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Wittgenstein, L. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness with an introduction by B. Russell, London: Routledge, 2001.

Žižek, S. *How to Read Lacan.* London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006.