LITERARY UTOPIAS AS EXPLORATIONS IN HUMAN ECOLOGY:

FIVE MODERN WORKS, 1880-2005

A dissertation submitted to the Caspersen School of Graduate Studies

Drew University in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree,

Doctor of Philosophy

Sarah Elizabeth Dixon Minegar

Drew University

Madison, New Jersey

May 2014

ABSTRACT

Literary Utopias as Explorations in Human Ecology:
Five Modern Works, 1880-2005

Ph.D. Dissertation by

Sarah Elizabeth Dixon Minegar

The Caspersen School of Graduate Studies
Drew University

May 2014

The utopian genre is a perplexing one. Utopian literature is largely unappreciated outside of the field of utopian studies, yet utopian works continue to reemerge new and ever resonate. In fact, this persistent genre is quite complex, adaptable, and provocative. This study argues that literary utopias are important explorations in human ecology and exhibits this through the close examination of the disciplinary and dialectical components of which these works are comprised. This study conceptualizes utopian literature primarily by the function it performs, emphasizing what these works study and how they might be constructive modes of practicing human science. The basis of this research is the close examination of five English and American literary works, spanning from 1880-2005: Mary E. Bradley Lane's *Mizora* (1880), William Morris' *News from Nowhere* (1890), Burrhus Frederic Skinner's *Walden Two* (1948), Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia* (1975), and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005). This project gives literary utopia new scholarly attention so that researchers might understand the full capacity of its pragmatic and creative contributions to human studies.

To my husband and best friend,
Andy

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

This project is the culmination of over a decade of interest and research in literary utopia. I would first like to thank those who have helped me find my academic niche. Ms. Mary Nicolini, you led me to this passion long ago. Thank you for assigning *Brave New World* and for introducing me to a body of illuminating and captivating literature. I would also like to acknowledge the other teachers and mentors who have encouraged and inspired me along the way: Dawn Troyer, Cheryn Drake, Shannon Gray, Mike Coffee, Dr. Patricia Swails, and Dr. Darrin Sorrells.

Professor John Lenz, as my first contact at Drew, my advisor, and my dissertation chair, you saw my enthusiasm for utopia and helped me design a project that would allow me to contribute something new to the field of utopian studies. You have challenged and motivated me—for that, I am indebted. Thank you for believing in me and in my scholarly pursuits. To my second and third readers, Dr. Laura Winters and Dr. Jonathan Levin, I am grateful that you joined my committee. Professor Winters, your confidence in my writing abilities and treatment of the texts has been a huge source of inspiration. Professor Levin, thank you for staying on board long-distance and for your consistently insightful observations.

Thank you to Drew University and the Caspersen School of Graduate Studies for investing in a young teacher from Indiana. It has been a demanding and invigorating journey, and I am fortunate that the campus in the forest picked *me*. Drew has given me the opportunity to grow and excel as a scholar, and my experiences here have made me a more perceptive and conscientious historian. Dr. Jeremy Varon, Dr. Jonathan Rose, and

Dr. Wyatt Evans, thanks for championing the graduate History programs and for working to make them stronger.

A special thanks to the readers of my comprehensive exams, Dr. Sharon Sundue, Dr. Terry Todd, Dr. Rich Greenwald, Dr. Christine Kinealy, Dr. John Lenz, and Dr. Jonathan Rose. Your guidance in selecting and analyzing works provided a strong foundation for my teaching and research career. Linda Blank and Joanne Montross, you are angels for helping me get through the exhausting exam stage. And I would not have been able track down numerous volumes without the Drew library services, especially Dr. Beth Patterson, Johanna Edge, and the very patient Kathleen Juliano in interlibrary loans.

Dr. Dale Patterson, Dr. Sandra Jamieson, and Dr. Katherine Brown, thank you for helping me pursue other projects and interests while at Drew. Professor Patterson, your archival studies courses were some of the most memorable I have ever taken. Being immersed in primary historical documents at the Methodist Archives and having the privilege of your tutelage has been critical in my decision to continue museum and archival work. Professor Jamieson, it was a pleasure teaching writing courses with you over the years. I learned so much about teaching and about my own writing by following your example. Professor Brown, thank you for introducing me to the wonderful Drew international community. Teaching ESOL was such a delightful learning experience and I appreciate your confidence in me to welcome students' families into the Drew fold.

I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my friends and fellow scholars in my dissertation group. Dr. Michelle Iden, Dr. Robert Moore, and soon-to-be doctors Dennis Coyle, Elizabeth Fehsenfield, and Amy Jones, thank you for believing in me. I am so

proud of each of you for challenging yourselves and pursuing your academic dreams! You are brilliant and worthy and kind. You will achieve great things. Dr. Carol Gernat, I cannot thank you enough for your dedication to graduate students. You have built a secure and welcoming space for us to meet, relate, encourage each other, and set palpable goals. You are the heart of our group and with your guidance we have been able to celebrate and commiserate — and most importantly, graduate!

To my work colleagues, Dr. Jude Pfister and Joni Rowe, thank you for helping me build a career in public history *while* I completed my degree. You have been superb teachers and supportive friends. Never did I imagine a summer job would turn into an enduring passion, but my experiences at Morristown National Historical Park have been formative and unforgettable. You have opened my eyes to the wonders of the museum classroom and all it has to offer.

Thanks to all of my loyal and compassionate friends. Dr. Jenny Smith, Christopher Lapinski, Dr. Michelle Iden, and Dr. Christine Benner Dixon, as fellow academics, I truly appreciate your perspective, wisdom, and encouragement. You listen to my complaints, you share my worries, and you are the first to reassure me. Tara Holmes Williams, Stephanie Daugherty, and Melanie Lawley, you are my biggest cheerleaders. Your notes, texts, and care packages always reenergize my spirit. High fives and hugs!

Finally, I would like to recognize my incredible family for their loving support and confidence in me. Charles (Dad), Suzan (Mom), Joseph, and Jessica, you have believed in me all along. Mom and Dad, thank you for supporting my bookish ways and for setting an excellent example. You might have had the only four-year-old who enjoyed

sitting in on her father's graduate classes, but it paid off. Please know that no matter where this journey takes me, all roads lead to home.

To Andrew Minegar, who, just nine months after our marriage, agreed to quit his job and relocate seven hundred miles from home to help me pursue my graduate education—a million thank yous. Your patience and dedication are unmatched. Seven years later, here we are. Every step I made toward completing this project was possible because you were by my side. You are an incredible partner.

List of Figures

Figure

Chapter 1

Introduction

Although history has made us skeptical of utopian pursuits and "book power"[1] has declined dramatically as print culture decenters and new media impact communications, the tradition of literary utopia marches forward. The persistence of this tradition is indicative of the important function literary utopia plays as an imaginary reconstitution of society[2] and as a location for authors to work out challenging social problems. Literary utopias are far more than fictional tales of imagined worlds; they are valuable studies in human ecology. This dissertation project proposes that studying literary utopia within an ecological framework has potential to provide a richer understanding of the role these texts play in critiquing society.

Human Science

Studies in the human sciences attempt to expand human knowledge of natural, social, and psychological phenomena, and such a broad spectrum of inquiry requires an amalgamated approach.[3] Thus the realm of human science has been the natural intersection for "humanistic" and "scientific" study. [4] Human science methodology is

[1] The term 'book power' refers to a text's ability to inspire action or have any type of

[2] This notion is taken from Ruth Levitas' concept, the Imaginary Reconstitution of Society (IROS), and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

[3] This study defines human science broadly as the systemized study of human phenomena, experiences, and artifacts. Human science is therefore inclusive of knowledge produced in various areas of scholarship, including the natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities.

[4] Here, "scientific" refers to those disciplines traditionally understood as science—natural and social *science*. "Humanistic" refers to those disciplines traditionally devoted to understanding human thought and culture—literature, art history, and philosophy. Studies in the human sciences necessarily bring these commonly separated areas together.

largely determined by the purpose it intends to serve; desire to comprehend or understand requires a humanistic approach, while intention to describe and explain requires a scientific answer. Human science is by design interdisciplinary (see Figure 1).

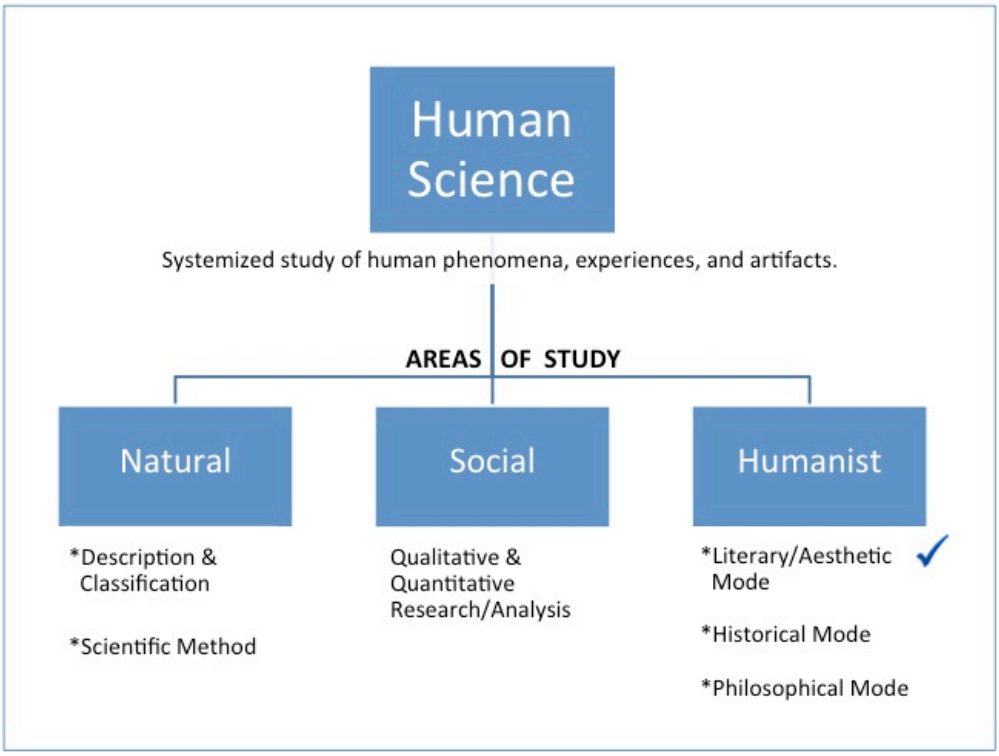

Figure 1: Areas of Human Scientific Study, Sarah Minegar

Western studies in human science tend to focus heavily on cultural factors, as the Western proclivity to invent, "advance," and succeed is rooted in traditions of progress and moral order. Our modern social imaginary, which Charles Taylor describes as the mechanism that enables society to make sense of its own social practices, is studied by human scientists who strive to understand social transformations and the obligations those transformations entail.[5] As Taylor suggests, the social imaginary serves as a guide to how society *ought* to live, operating as a reference point for organization, social

[5] Charles Taylor. "Modern Social Imaginaries." *Public Culture*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Winter 2002): 91-124.

critique, and imagination.[6] With each new and unprecedented practice or institutional form, human scientists examine new challenges and test those against the existing social imaginary.[7] Taylor traces the current iteration back to what he contends are the "social forms that characterize Western modernity": the institution of a market economy, introduction of the public sphere, and the concept of self-governance.[8] These developments assume that "human beings are rational, sociable agents who are meant to collaborate in peace to their mutual benefit."[9] Modern normative order emphasizes "mutual respect and mutual service of the individuals that make up society," thus the principal goals of organized society are *collective security* and *prosperity*.[10]

The tenets of the modern social imaginary are important to understanding how Western societies interpret "innovation" and determine what constitutes an "ideal" and "developing" people. They are also important to understanding how those notions of progress are interpreted and critiqued in human scientific studies (which includes works of art and literature). Because literary utopias contemplate human behavior and collective

---

[6] Taylor describes the social imaginary as: [T]he way ordinary people 'imagine' their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms; it is carried in images, stories, and legends…it is shared by large groups of society, if not the whole society…[it] is that common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy…[Although complex], it incorporates a sense of the normal expectation that we have for one another, the kind of common understanding which enables us to carry out collective practices that make up our social life. This incorporates some sense of how we all fit together in carrying out the common practice. This understanding is both factual and "normative"; that is, we have a sense of how things usually go, but this is interwoven with an idea of how they ought to go, of what missteps would invalidate the practice (Taylor, 106). The author notes that social theories slowly infiltrate the social imaginary, so that contentions held by an elite few are eventually imbibed (though perhaps in an evolved form) by society as a whole.

[7] This study began with "proto-human scientists" like philosophers, historians, reformers, and utopians alike and continued with academic scientists.

[8] Taylor, 92.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., 96.

practices, these works capture the ways in which *mutual respect and service* evolve to take on new shape and meaning.

As human scientists, utopians find themselves tasked with a duty to speak to the current interpretation of the social imaginary—advising *what* mutual respect and service should be or should not be. This attempt to achieve a reasoned and ethical assessment is explicated by applying the latest social research to an imagined alternative. The utopian mode remains a versatile and pragmatic method of conducting human scientific research as it satisfies both the need for historicity and the desire for a unifying narrative.

Utopian Literature as Human Ecology

This project aims to demonstrate the function and utility of one humanist mode of study: the literary utopia. To do this, this thesis conceptualizes utopian literature primarily by the function it performs, emphasizing what these works study and how they might be constructive modes of practicing human science. This study argues that literary utopias are important explorations in human ecology and exhibits this through close examination of the disciplinary and dialectical components of which these works are comprised. The utopian genre is a perplexing one. Utopian literature is largely unappreciated outside of the field of utopian studies, yet utopian works continue to reemerge new and ever resonate. In fact, this persistent genre is quite complex, adaptable, and provocative. This project gives literary utopia new scholarly attention so that researchers might understand the full capacity of its pragmatic and creative contributions to human studies.

This study is not the first to utilize an ecological framework to examine social relationships (sociologists have done this), nor is it the first to study literature's ecological relationship to culture (ecocritics have done this); the original contribution this study makes is the application of the ecological framework to works of literary utopia. This unifying framework exemplifies *how* utopia responds to the call of modernity. Studying literary utopia as works of human ecology points out critical relationships that are important to understanding the function of the utopian genre.

While the form of literary utopia is aligned with other narrative modes of human science, its function is different than that of other literature. Literary utopia is concerned with the organization and development of human social life and the rules and processes that bind or separate communities. Methodologically, utopias operate as thought experiments whereby historical problems are examined, innovations hypothesized, and speculative experiments tested. At the most essential level, literary utopia has always been the study of humans and their relationship to their natural, social, and built environments, which is unmistakably the task of human ecology (see Figure 2).

Human ecology can be understood as both an *approach* to the study of human behavior and a *cross-disciplinary field* of human systems study. Both conceptions lead human ecologists to the same guiding principles: humans should be studied as "living systems operating in complex environments," the study of human behavior requires synthetized cross-disciplinary examination, and human ecology must include the study of *biotic* as well as cultural interactions.[11] Likewise, literary utopia might be understood as an approach/method to exploring human behavior and a cross-disciplinary genre that

[11] Peter Richardson, Monique Borgerhoff Mulder, and Bryan Vila. 1996. *Principles of Human Ecology* (Revised Pearson Custom Publishing, 2001), 2.

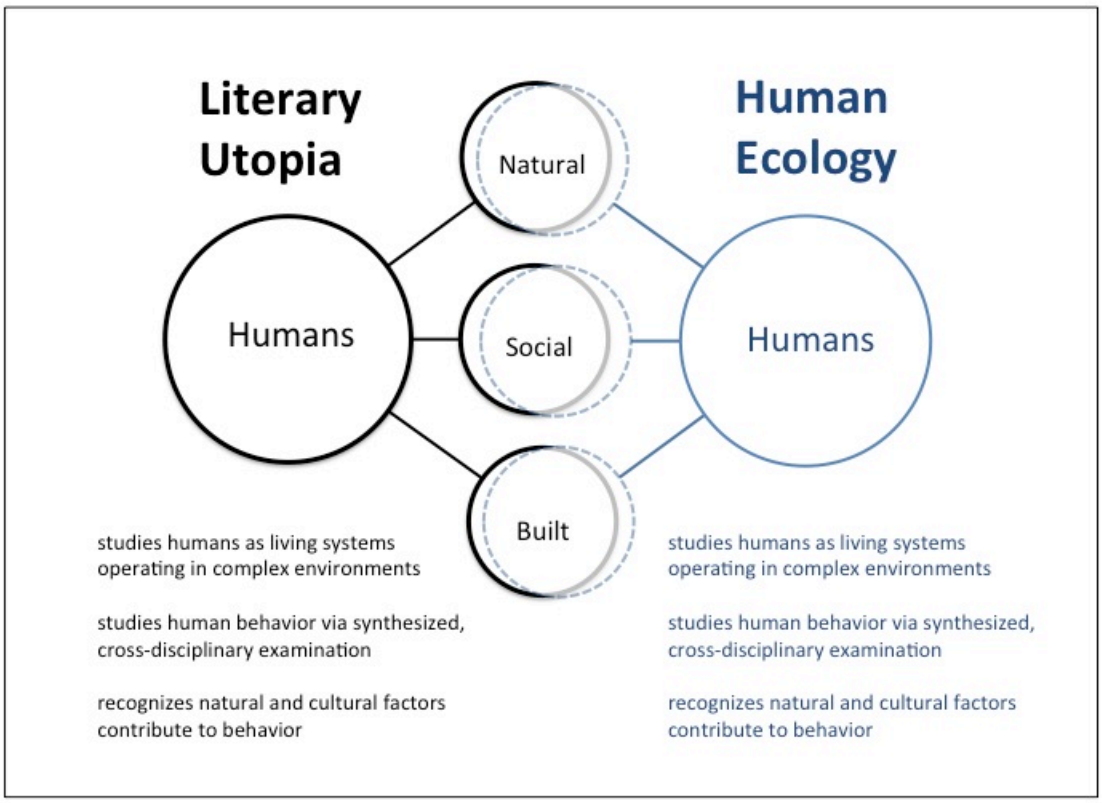

Figure 2. Relationships Studied in Both Literary Utopias & Human Ecology, Sarah Minegar

studies human systems. Though utopians conduct speculative experiments, these works attempt to understand human behavior by examining the same individual, social, and natural factors that human ecologists study. Literary utopias also behave similarly in their research approach, at once drawing from discipline-specific arguments and piecing those arguments together as a cohesive study of social and natural relationships.[12]

When literary utopia is surveyed as a study in human ecology (and therefore as a synthesized and cross-disciplinary project) and not merely an artistic expression, a more detailed picture of the utopian genre's contribution to human studies becomes apparent. The ecological perspective helps outline *what* is being communicated by utopia and helps better identify the relationships between those ideas being explored. To this point,

[12] Though the term "research" might evoke an image of laboratory or experimental studies, in the context of literary utopia, research implies an artistic *and* analytical mode of study. The goal of literature is to teach us more about the human condition and utopian works combine social commentary and imagined alternatives to reveal important truths about society at given times in history.

scholars have focused on certain analogous work being conducted in other fields, like sociology, but have not really drawn attention to the cross-disciplinary analysis present in individual literary works or what is revealed by the utopian synthesis of these disciplines. Although these works are aligned with literature more broadly in their humanistic endeavor, utopias also study human relationships, behaviors, and social activity. So while utopias contemplate existence, purpose, and the human experience, they are also a method of conducting human scientific analysis. These literary ventures provide utopians with a space to practice a truly synthesized mode of reflection—one that considers existential questions but also societal developments over time (see Figure 3, below).

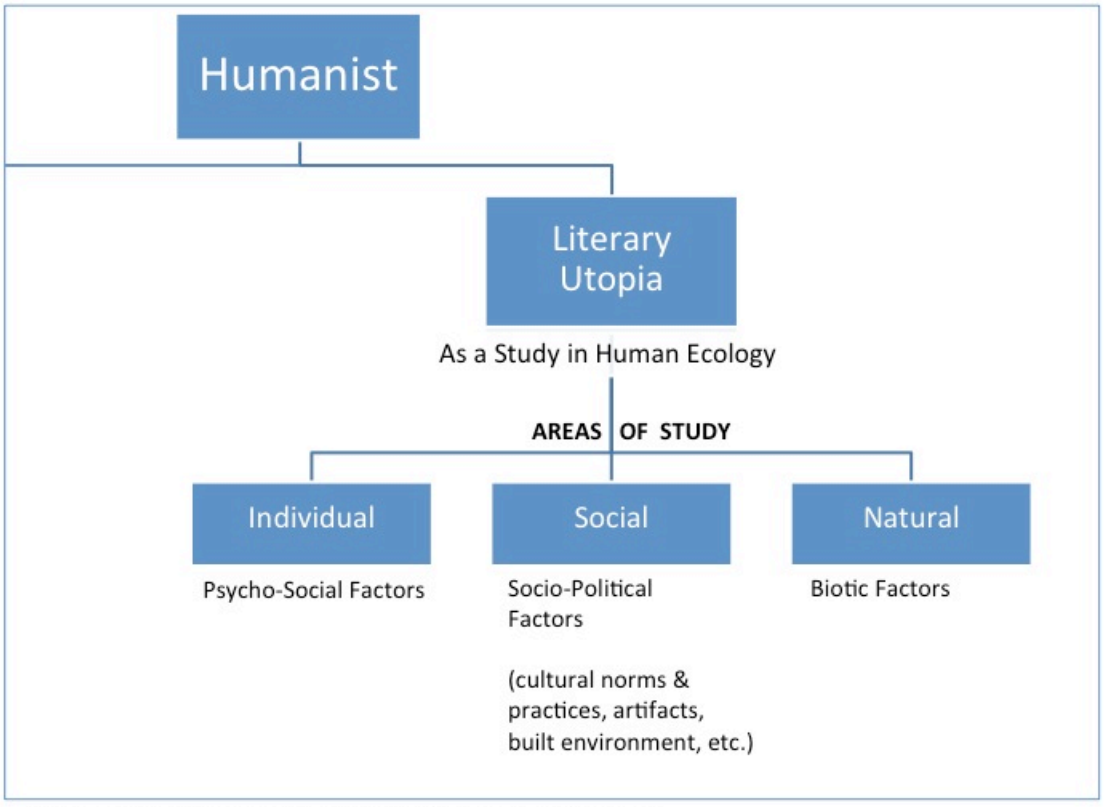

Figure 3: Literary Utopia as a Study in Human Ecology, Sarah Minegar

Utopia is concerned with *what is* but also with *what could be*, and like sociological study, it has a critical component.[13] What differentiates literary utopia from sociology is the utopian emphasis on synthetized dialog.[14] Before we continue to demonstrate the overlapping projects of utopian literature and human ecology, it is important to explore the utopian tradition more closely.

Utopian Tradition

As with other literary forms, utopian works have evolved within the context of their respective times. Over the centuries, there have been stints when utopia has interacted more with concurrent social movements, times when book power was greater (especially during the late-nineteenth century), and periods when utopian readers were skeptical, at best. Even as the genre thematically and stylistically evolves, the utopian mode has remained a constant source of inspiration and insight.

Still, utopian works have taken a lot of critical abuse. These works have been generalized and oversimplified, clouded by contention over definitions, branded as dangerous and severe, obscured due to the implausibility or purported naiveté of the intended societies described, or trivialized as insignificant daydreams. Furthermore, the genre has been cheapened by excessive attention to insignificant plot details and ethical disagreements over the character of idealized worlds. Many scholars outside of the field of utopian studies have refused to take these works seriously and thus literary utopias are

[13] Levitas, 2007.

[14] The distinction between utopia as sociology and utopia as human ecology is discussed later in this chapter.

often reduced to improbable "no places," labeled totalitarian, or simply dismissed as unsophisticated literature.

Much of the problem of reception has to do with the ways in which scholars attempt to define and evaluate the *concept* of utopia. Utopian theories have long steered the reputation of the literary genre as well as experiments in lived utopia. Perceptions are commonly guided by "historical" definitions and formative evaluations that, while perhaps outdated, have come to influence what readers expect of utopia. Scholars and lay readers alike have been locked into principle concepts of utopia: Thomas More's notion of a "good" but unattainable place, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' notion of unrealistic or misguided socialism, Karl Mannheim's notion of the transformative opposite to ideology, or Karl Popper's notion of grand totalitarian schemes.[15] When studied in isolation, these decisive conceptions of utopia sell the genre short and have thwarted scholars from taking interest in utopian analysis. Equally problematic is the universal appropriation of the notion of utopia by divergent groups with often conflicting goals. This has resulted in a superfluity of "acceptable" definitions, a complication that threatens to dilute the meaning and analytical value of the term. As Tom Moylan puts it, "utopia has been simultaneously condemned, silenced, and coopted" and its connotation has not been particularly flattering.[16]

Though there is little consensus on how to precisely define utopia, many scholars approach the task by examining the form, content, and function of literary works. Any

---

[15] Ruth Levitas' *The Concept of Utopia* (1990) does a nice job outlining the common perceptions of utopia.

[16] Tom Moylan, "To Stand With Dreamers: On the Use Value of Utopia." *Irish Review*, 34 (2006), 2. *While scholars certainly should not dismiss negative evaluations of utopia, negative opinions tend to overshadow the realization of what the utopian process can teach us.

definition of utopia (especially pertaining to specific cultural output such as literature) will likely reference elements of all three, but for the purpose of this study, *function* (arguably the least limiting referent) will be the most closely examined.

So what does literary utopia *do*?

Literary utopia serves its primary purpose as a vehicle for locating and articulating discontent. This may include identifying historical problems, exploring notions of progress, coming to terms with the fear of lost dignity when "progress" challenges one's autonomy, etc. Discontent provides impetus for social critique, fuels protest, inspires hope, provides compensation for the marginalized, and helps individuals seek alternatives, among other projects. These works explore the tension between theory and practice, as well as the "violation" of values (or strain on traditional expectations) that is inherent in changing/progressing societies. Like literature in the broader sense, utopian works are tools for cultural self-exploration, places where marginalized perspectives are voiced and grounds where plural values are tested. Literary utopia has three prominent features: the identification of a problem or injustice, a critique or comparison via the exploration of "other," and an implied or direct invitation to action.[17] This literary process has become a method for confronting crisis, as these works aid their authors (and readers) in addressing specific needs.

Utopias resonate with readers because of the unique role they perform. These works are imaginative retellings of past, present, and *future* "histories" with a distinct

[17] An invitation to act covers a wide range of "movements," from public activism to private, emotional provocation. As Charles Peirce famously articulated, thought *is* action. The social context and the issues to which a text responds influence how "action" plays out in the reader. For example, nineteenth-century socialist texts were tied to broader political movements, thus the incited action was often more outwardly measurable. Other utopias may invite inward action (such as taking a point of view on an issue) or slower social development over time (such as the gradual improvement of informed and active citizens).

focus on social education. Literary utopias possess the tropological features of autobiography, but as applied to collective life—as a speculative social history.[18] These fictional revisions of our social education let readers experience the resulting social constructions of a revised social structure (a revised social "childhood"). This experiment allows readers to imagine what is "fundamentally involved in [this] nexus of ideological forces."[19] Keith McDonald suggests, "novels which depict schooling provide a fruitful forum by which the narrator's agency in a complex power structure can be framed, questioned, and understood."[20] In the case of literary utopia, the "schooling of society" can provide a similar look into discourses of power to reveal instances of cooperation, sacrifice, and social injustice, among other things. When juxtaposed against our own contemporary social dilemmas, utopia recalls something familiar within our own social education and thus acts as a provocation.

A distinguishing characteristic of the utopian genre, and a contributing factor to the literary genre's endurance, is that it maintains cohesion in its tradition of examination, a tradition that embraces the dialectical component as the heart of the utopian mission. Thus uniting literary works by what they *do* or *provoke* and not limiting by content or

[18] Keith McDonald makes interesting arguments about the role of the autobiographical trope in literary fiction, in his article "Days of Past Futures." He says the fictional autobiography removes the need for "authenticity" and "suggest an alternative where creative shaping of experienced events provides a conduit by which a fundamental "truth" is made available" (74). These autobiographical elements he recognizes in "speculative memoir" are also apparent in literary utopia. Utopian works recount the "history" (if not in full, at least the resulting social constructs) of an alternative "social upbringing." Reference: Keith McDonald "Days of Past Futures: Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go As "Speculative Memoir." *Biography*, Vol. 30, No.1 (Winter 2007), 74-83.

[19] Ibid.,77.

[20] Ibid.

context.[21] For this reason, the genre evolves and maintains relevance even as new historical problems take center stage. Its emphasis on function is what makes literary utopia so inclusive—it remains a distinct *genre,* but to an impressive degree, a genre *without* boundaries.

Literary Utopia Contributing to Scientific Thinking

While it is not hard to recognize the valuable work being done by utopia fiction, it might be less obvious to distinguish these works as participants in a more formal human scientific project. But as sociologist and utopian scholar Ruth Levitas points out, this notion is not entirely new. Scholars like Levitas are working to validate literary utopia as a legitimate and innovative method for studying complex social structures, which has positive implications for this dissertation project. Taking cues from H.G. Wells, she demonstrates that utopia is an especially helpful tool for sociologists and recounts how Wells, most notably remembered for his science fiction writings, identified the utopian method as performing a critical evaluative function. As he stated in his article "The So-Called Science of Sociology" (1906), "the creation of utopia—and their exhaustive criticism—is the proper and distinctive method of sociology."[22] Both Wells and Levitas agree that the world would be better served if the utopian method of conducting sociology was taken more seriously and studied more closely as a device for deliberating social solutions. Levitas notes the ways in which the utopian method (which she

[21] This observation is based on what I contend is the unifying aspect of the utopian genre: its function. This feature also helps demonstrate that dystopia and anti-utopia are also facets of the utopian genre, as they are part of the same critical project.

[22] Levitas quotes Wells in her chapter on IROS in "The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society: Utopia as Method." *Method Visions: The Use Value of Utopia* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), 58.

describes as the Imaginary Reconstitution of Society or IROS)[23] and sociological study align. Literary utopia and sociology consider similar problems and, while differing greatly in technique, both utopian and sociological models share important characteristics. Both models approach subject matter holistically, considering how societies work as systems and the ways in which components are interrelated. Levitas identifies these presentations as "descriptive, explanatory, and present-oriented," and demonstrates that while each brings different elements to the foreground, both models conduct similar work. Where sociology is at fault is in its repression of the explicitly "imaginary, critical, normative, prescriptive, and future-oriented" aspects of analysis.[24] Levitas contends that as a professionalized discipline, sociology has spent a lot of energy distancing itself from utopia which has obscured just how related their pursuits actually are. She sees great potential in the use of IROS far beyond utopian studies.

Ecological Innovation

While Levitas and others view literary utopia primarily as sociological works, this study argues that these texts are representative of the human sciences in a broader sense. While literary utopia does employ the IROS to set up a comparison, it also explores social adaptation and change over time. Through fictional depictions (IROS), literary utopias anticipate the consequences of human action on our natural, social, and built environments—i.e. human adjustments to environments and the ways in which those adjustments might impact the human experience (materially, socially, and spiritually).

---

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid., 60.

And as studies of interacting organisms in their environments, *ecology* necessitates scientific integration and a varied methodological approach.

By interpreting literary utopias as works of human ecology, we can more comprehensively grasp what they aim to study, how they represent dialectical relationships, and the utility of these fictional works in real-world applications. An ecological perspective recognizes the various interacting facets of the human sciences *in motion*, inviting each discipline to contribute its specialty (anthropology its symbolic processes; history its causal explanations; natural science its laws, hypotheses, and data, etc.) while simultaneously picturing the larger web of social and behavioral determiners at play. Therein this perspective acknowledges the individuals that make up society, external and environmental factors at play, and how concurrent historical beliefs and values color the interpretation of "progress." Furthermore, it points to the "silences" (intentional and accidental) that disciplinary specific research produces, thus bringing forth new conversations that enlighten our understanding of the role of literary utopia.

Literary utopia offers researchers a unique and integrative toolkit with which to study human drive and desire. While the individual disciplines utopia highlights respond to unique aspects of an identified problem, it is the intersection of these studies that makes the ecological approach such an asset to scholars. The ecological framework emphasizes the dialectical function these texts serve and in doing so demonstrates their sophistication, pragmatism, and ability to communicate evolving ethical challenges.[25]

An ecological framework also helps focus attention on the evolving human sciences themselves, revealing various states of their institutionalization and the types of

[25] Chapters 3, 4, and 5 address these innovations directly.

questions that have been considered, while reflecting trends in scientific specialization. Because utopias reference the innovations of their time, they serve as useful records of scientific discourse and practice, as well as commentaries on the popular perception of science. Likewise, utopias represent the social scientific thought of the time, demonstrating prevailing social norms and conventions as evidenced in their treatment of technologies/innovations (social, political, medical, etc.).

Previous Scholarship

Scholars studying the intersections of literary utopia and ecology have primarily explored ecological content within utopian storylines—recurring attention is given to environmentalism, recovery narratives, return to wilderness and "nature-wisdom" stories, and nature/environment-themed apocalyptic cautionary tales.[26] Although related in some cases, these topics are more the territory of ecocritism, and represent a very different project from this one. To date, utopia as human ecology is a fairly unmapped perspective. There are, however, various useful starting points for this research, including studies in fiction, literature as cultural ecology, utopia as sociology, and reader response theory, among others.

This project builds upon scholarship in the study of utopian method and function. As the field of utopian studies is a natural juncture for cross-disciplinary pursuits, it comes as no surprise that this study borrows from scholars who maintain diverse interests in the subject of literary utopia. The analysis of utopia most closely aligned to this study

[26] Brian Stableford. "Ecology and Dystopia" in *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. George Claeys ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 259-281.

is the work of the aforementioned Ruth Levitas, who demonstrates that utopias are sociological. In her article, "Back to the Future: Wells, Sociology, Utopia and Method," she delivers a strong argument for the use of the fictive mode as a method for conducting distinctive social research, thus providing an effective example of the role of human science in utopia, and vice versa. Not only does her work force a reevaluation of literary utopia, it also demonstrates the kind of important work that only qualitative research can perform. She illustrates where speculative sociology (literary utopia by her definition) is capable of addressing the "silences" that quantitative science generates.[27] Levitas also traces the history of sociology and the ways in which the formal science has rejected the utopian approach. Her groundbreaking work in the study of utopia as method, most notably highlighted in her article "The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society: Utopia as Method" (2007) and her in recent book *Utopia as Method: The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society* (2013), provides a constructive interpretation of speculative sociology, and thus a useful analytical definition of literary utopia and an enterprising look into the function such texts serve.[28]

In a similar vein, Lyman Tower Sargent and Tom Moylan explore the "use value" of social dreaming. Both scholars study the nature of utopianism and consider the narrative practice the central characteristic of the utopian mode.[29] Sargent's "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited" (1994) offers further clarity (and definition) to the

---

[27] Levitas elaborates on what Wells describes as the "silences [that] shape utopia" and the role of literature and cultural studies to speak to these absences. Ruth Levitas. "Back to the Future: Wells, Sociology, Utopia and Method." *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 58, No.4 (2010), 542.

[28] Levitas, 2007, 2013.

[29] Moylan, 2006, 10. Moylan describes the "fictive quality" of utopian thought as one that helps utopians articulate new worlds. The narrative practice is present in all expressions of social dreaming, but is the literary tradition is its most prominent form.

concept of utopia by considering the various manifestations of utopianism: lived, literary, and social theory. He also provides very useful interpretations of two contentious points. First, he interprets the "no place" of Thomas More's eutopia/utopia pun as a mere description of fiction and not a dismissive judgment of improbability. "All fiction describes a no place; utopian fiction just generally describes good or bad no places."[30] Second, he challenges definitions of utopia that indicate *perfection* as the essential goal of utopian pursuits. By rejecting the label perfect/perfection, he notes that a good number of anti-utopian arguments lose clout. Moylan's work traces the shifting trends in literary utopia while highlighting its persistent features. He offers the term "critical utopia" to describe works that "interrogate" utopianism (like dystopian works) but maintain the hopeful goal of pulling humanity forward. In their examination of the many expressions of utopia, these scholars demonstrate the sheer breadth of utopianism and the interdisciplinary character of utopian studies. Sargent and Moylan also provide useful tools for surveying the role(s)/function(s) utopia serves. And like Levitas, they demonstrate the need for serious scholarly contemplation of utopian articulations.

Several broader studies in literary criticism are also are also relevant to this study. The work of ecocritic Hubert Zapf and science fiction scholar Darko Suvin provide insight into the social function of literature. Hubert Zapf has done quite a bit of pioneering work in the last decade to examine how literature functions in an ecological relationship with other cultural discourses. His theory of literature as cultural ecology aims to demonstrate how literature acts "like an ecological force within the larger cultural

[30] Lyman Tower Sargent. "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited" *Utopian Studies*. (1994).

system."[31] His formative works *Literatur als kulturelle Ökologie: Zur kulturellen Funktion imaginativer Texte an Beispielen des amerikanischen Romans* (*Literature as Cultural Ecology: The Cultural Function of Imaginative Texts with Examples of the American Novel,* 2002), *Kulturökologie und Literatur: Beiträge zu einem transdisziplinären Paradigma der Literaturwissenschaft* (*Cultural Ecology and Literature: Contributions on a Transdisciplinary Paradigm of Literary Studies*, 2008), and his English language articles identify what he sees as a larger cultural function of literature—to "restor[e] complexity, vitality and creativity to the discourse of its cultural world by symbolically reconnecting them with elemental forces and processes of life—in non-human nature, in the collective individual psyche, in the human body."[32] His work provides a particularly interesting tool for examining the ways in which literature empowers marginalized voices and reunites culturally separated expressions so they may participate in culture at large.

Darko Suvin's studies in science fiction and utopia, most notably in his seminal *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre* (1979) and his collection of essays *Defined by a Hollow: Essays in Utopia, Science Fiction, and Political Epistemology* (2010), offer examples of "estranged genres" (utopia among them) which present innovative worlds that compel readers to view their own worlds differently. Science fiction/utopia is presented as the appropriate medium for argument when the current debates are inadequate. Suvin's work furthermore focuses critical attention on how science fiction (and utopia, which he has determined is a sub-

[31] Hubert Zapf. "Literature as Cultural Ecology: Notes Towards a Functional Theory of Imaginative Texts, with Examples from American Literature," in *REAL: Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature* 17 (2001), 85-100.

[32] Ibid., 93.

genre of science fiction) functions.

Hayden White, Nelson Phillips, and most recently Robert Nathan each explore the broad social function of literature by honing in on the *data* that literary works offer human scientists. White's *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (1978) addresses the parallels between the literary narrative and other qualitative studies, arguing that many of the "distinctions" that art and science asserts are not entirely founded (e.g. novels and ethnographies both practice "verbal fiction"). Phillips develops this argument in his article "Telling Organizational Tales: On the Role of Narrative Fiction" (1995), by demonstrating that organizational researchers and writers of fiction share interests and research methodology. He argues that fictional modes are not that different from other (reputable) imaginative reconstructions of social science. He turns the tables on qualitative science, arguing that how scientists recover "the facts" is not an entirely objective process. "Social scientists often do what writers do: they create rather than discover, they focus on the unique and individual, and they use illusion and rhetoric in an effort to make their case."[33] Robert Nathan borrows from White and Phillips to articulate the ways in which novelists offer social insights comparable to academics in other fields of study. His article "Why It Matters: The Value of Literature as Object of Inquiry in Qualitative Research" (2013) not only validates the literary mode as a research method, it demonstrates the rich ethnographical information (he describes is as qualitative data) that literary texts provide, and points out that scientists (even "hard scientists) rely on literary devices to theorize, conceptualize, and make models. These studies help exhibit the literary mode of conducting research.

---

[33]Nelson Phillips." Telling Organizational Tales: On the Role of Narrative Fiction." *Organizational Studies*. Volume 16. (January, 1995): 626.

And finally, utopian scholar Kenneth Roemer's work on reader response theory sheds much light on what utopia *does*. Roemer's *Utopian Audiences: How Readers Locate Nowhere* (2003) elevates the role of the reader in making meaning of utopia. For this project, he uses Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* as his vehicle for exploring late-nineteenth-century readers and their responses to utopian literature. Not only does his work focus attention on how well readers understood an author's intentions (the extent to which they were "ideal" readers), it examines the ways in which value systems, concurrent historical innovations/projects, narrative conventions and rhetorical strategies, a storyline's degree of familiarity, gender roles, literacy rates, and book production and distribution (among other things) impact reading habits and reader interactions with texts. Roemer's work is an important contemplation of what literary utopia can *be* for its readers and what factors contribute to a literary work's potential during a given time.

The Plan of this Work

The basis of this research is the close examination of five literary works. These works have been selected to help draw out different aspects of the utopian dialectic—focusing on the dialectic within individual texts, between literary works and society, and as a genre. Although the ecological framework can easily be applied to early works of utopia, from the genre defining *Utopia* (Thomas More, 1516) to retrospectively identified works like Plato's *Republic*, this study focuses on a sampling of works of English and American utopia spanning from 1880-2005; Mary E. Bradley Lane's *Mizora* (1880), William Morris' *News From Nowhere* (1890), Burrhus Frederic Skinner's *Walden Two* (1948), Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia* (1975), and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*

(2005). All of these texts may be considered "modern," as each puts great emphasis on the *process* of utopian work.[34] This common feature, along with the ecological relationships these texts chronicle, is what makes this grouping particularly constructive. Two of the selected works (and the starting point of this study) date back to the late-nineteenth century, which is roughly the time when many disciplines in the human sciences were developing into professional academic fields. Utopian works that were emerging during and after this boom in scientific professionalization are unique in that they share a degree of self-awareness and have the benefit of the developing social sciences to provide them direction in studying and interpreting the human experience. While literary utopia had been doing the work of human ecology long before it came into its own distinction, modern developments in the sciences make that reality all the more apparent as they give us the tools to work backward, applying new insight to older texts. The five works selected are examples of this modern and intently perceptive utopia, beginning at a major turning point in scientific history and moving forward to the present. These works also conveniently demonstrate the development of the social sciences alongside concurrent utopian projects—demonstrating how utopian works both remark on scientific developments and are themselves defined and evaluated by the sciences they critique.

While this study will primarily examine works labeled "utopia/utopian," it will address the broader spectrum of the utopian question, thus addressing examples of refuted utopia such as dystopia, anti-utopia, and critical utopia/dystopia. Though many

[34] "Modern" here indicates a *dynamic* versus static reading of utopia. Wells discusses this development in utopian theory, at length, in *A Modern Utopia* (1908). These works stress human agency, progressive ideals, and desire to transform. Ernst Bloch echoes this notion of a journey forward in *The Principle of Hope* (published in series 1954-1959, English translation, 1986).

utopian works set out to be universally desirable, most have elements that may be interpreted as negative, degrading, or unethical. Hence one person's utopia might be another person's world gone wrong or cautionary tale. It also recognizes that an author's utopia/dystopia is not always clearly cut—either wavering in its own determinations of "good and bad" or utilizing ambiguity to incite critical opinion and reader participation. This study is mindful of interpretive issues, while placing special attention on the intentional criticism utopia's counterparts provide.[35] Finally, though this project will closely examine the function of literary texts, it will not attempt to evaluate the worlds imagined by these authors nor insert opinions on which visions are "correct."

Chapter 2: Revolutionary Framework begins by outlining developments in ecology (both as a framework and a formal science) leading up to the last decades of the nineteenth century. It first traces the uses of ecology in the natural sciences and then follows its cultural applications. This survey moves forward to a discussion of the utopian method and the scholars who are reviving the literary mode as a valid site for conducting cultural studies. Delving into Wells' assertions about the proper method of directing social criticism, this discussion considers how "virtual comparisons" (utopian scenarios) give scholars the necessary cognitive estrangement to understand how current structures operate. This argument is followed with a look at the professionalization of the human sciences and the increasingly academic and research heavy quantitative studies that evolved—developments that put science at great odds with utopia. After demonstrating the utility of the ecological framework and outlining the utopian method, this study

[35] If utopia can be understood as a desire to express what "could be," then *dystopia* is a projection of the negative outcomes of those efforts, *anti-utopia* is a rejection of the utopian impulse or a reaffirmation of current practices, and *critical utopia/dystopia* is a reflexive and skeptical examination of the utopian process.

applies the ecological framework to literary utopia. This survey concludes with an examination of the emerging notion of *modern* utopia and how this conscious shift, which stresses process and human agency, changed the trajectory of utopian thinking.

Chapter 3: Ecological Endeavors examines two late-nineteenth-century works: Mary E. Bradley Lane's feminist-techno utopia, *Mizora* and William Morris' socialist utopia, *News from Nowhere.* This chapter focuses on the ecological relationships present in literary utopia and examines the disciplines represented in the utopian context. It also demonstrates the ecological framework at play by identifying the dialectical aspects of literary utopia, via historical and social commentary, comparison and estrangement, cultural dialog, and private (or individual) epiphany. This chapter begins with an examination of the disciplinary and dialectical components present in literary utopia, and then conducts an analysis of those components at play, in two utopian works. This chapter serves as a model for studying the subsequent texts in chapters 4 and 5, providing a template to help readers identify the basic areas of study and points of dialog that utopian works cover.

Chapter 4: Human Science and the Utopian Metanarrative shifts focus to the increasingly prominent academic sciences and their influence on utopia. This chapter hones in on the social dialectic and suggests that innovations in human science not only impacted literary utopia but also helped the genre better articulate the relationships it had always attempted to understand. By paring two overtly scientific utopias, B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two* and Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia*, this chapter studies the ways in which utopia developed into a more self-aware, intentional method of experimentation. While in many ways still fulfilling a need for compensation, utopians begin to demonstrate a

penchant for examining the utopian process itself as the academic sciences mature. What is unique about this paring is that both Skinner and Callenbach are testing out scenarios of real-world scientific trends—Skinner as a behavioral psychologist and Callenbach as an environmentally conscious citizen. These authors put forth what might be considered plausible "euchronias" by "workshopping" the very tools that help us measure utopia.[36] This chapter highlights utopia's inherent pragmatism.

Chapter 5: Appraising Progress is the final textual analysis of this study. This chapter examines literary utopia's role as a barometer for progress. Perhaps one of their more ubiquitous tasks, utopian works attempt to understand and come to terms with progress by pointing out the implications of "advancement." Utopians attempt to evaluate progress by determining "suitable" environments based on whether or not innovation creates worlds that are physically, politically, psychologically, and ethically sound. This chapter studies a single dystopian work, Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. Ishiguro's contemporary work features biomedical ethics at the center of its dilemma, but the author's basic concern (how to gauge progress) resonates in each and every text examined in this study. This chapter hones in on the ethical dialectic by considering how utopian texts anticipate not only material and social adjustments, but critical emotional or "spiritual" adjustments as well.

This study contributes to scholarship in the areas of literary studies, utopian theory, and human science methodology. It aims to join those making arguments for a closer and deferential look at literary utopia by further demonstrating the value of the fictive mode as a way to set up critique, present a comparison, and conduct analysis. It also aims to demonstrate the ways in which an ecological interpretation of literary utopia

[36] Euchronia: "good place" in the future.

exhibits the totalizing capacity of utopian projects. Furthermore, this study highlights examples of the human sciences being simultaneously utilized and critiqued by scholars. And finally, it strives to eliminate artificial disciplinary boundaries and offers an integrated framework for studying the complex relationships that literary utopia tackles.

Ultimately, these works of modern utopia provide us with an interesting image of an evolving genre and demonstrate a human need for a space to conduct *synthesized* reflection on social issues. Literary utopia provides such a space to contemplate complex human systems. An ecological interpretation of this literary space furthermore illustrates the value of utopian practices.

Chapter 2

Revolutionary Framework: The Ecological Paradigm

This study proposes that literary utopia makes contributions to the field of human ecology and that an ecological framework helps demonstrate the underappreciated complexity and utility of the utopian genre. It is necessary then to begin with an examination of the analytical tool that has brought much clarity to the natural and social sciences—the ecological framework. The following exhibits this framework and introduces its application to the study of literary utopia.

According to historians of science, John Lyon and Peter Sloan, transformations in the field of natural history during the eighteenth century paved the way for a scientific program alternative to the physical sciences.[37] This new approach expanded research to include qualitative inquiry, prioritized *process* over design, and understood nature as historical and variant.[38] The "reductionist" tendencies of the experimental approach were seen as shortsighted because they did not consider contributions made within the historical sequence of occurrences (i.e. in context and in time).[39] *New* natural history had

[37] John Lyon and Philip Sloan. *From Natural History to the history of Nature: Readings of Buffon and His Critics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 2.

[38] Lyon and Sloan.

[39] Robert McIntosh. *The Background of Ecology: Concept and Theory* (New York: Cambridge University Publishing, 1986). This new natural history contributed to the expanded understanding of sequential (and temporal) interrelationships present in nature, which are the roots of an ecological perspective. It is also what makes qualitative methods of social science, like speculative sociology, possible. This is the point at which scientific study is solidified into two camps: "ergodic" scholars, who study invariant properties and make no historical considerations, and scholars who study problems utilizing historical foresight (7). This conversation is revisited later in this chapter (see: utopia as method).

"profound implications for the philosophical directions of nineteenth-century science,"[40] which was rooted in a dynamic interpretation of nature. The legacy of those developments is especially apparent in the practices of late-nineteenth-century human scientists, who made the organized study of interacting organisms commonplace. The emerging ecological paradigm set the stage for the reinterpretation of ideas across intellectual fields and enabled new areas of study to develop.

Honing in on several major nineteenth-century philosophical and social changes that resulted from an expanded view of nature, this chapter demonstrates that these critical shifts in science made the ecological perspective and a new, "modern" interpretation of utopia possible. This chapter traces how ecology comes into popular use, with plant and animal ecology, and is utilized in disciplines outside of the natural sciences. It also examines utopia's affinity with sociological practices and its utility as a method of conducting human scientific research. Finally, it illustrates how the ecological framework helps enhance the study (and meaning) of literary utopia.

In outlining various applications of the ecological framework and demonstrating the utility of literary utopia as a method for studying society, this chapter provides persuasive examples of the overlapping work being done by utopian literature and human ecology. Developments in the ecological sciences and sociology over the last century help clarify how literary utopia functions. In fact, these developments even demonstrate why literary utopia might be defined as a type of *proto-human ecology*, examining human systems long before ecology was established as a conscious or academic discipline.

The two critical developments that this chapter examines are the application of

[40] McIntosh, 3.

ecological principles to human communities (ecology-sociology link) and the interpretation of literary utopia as a method of scientific study (sociology-utopia link). The ecology-sociology link (human ecology) provides much clarity about the operation of human systems and the sociology-utopia link (IROS) legitimizes the utopian mode and its important contributions to human science. Together, studies in human ecology and the utopian method point to similarities between literary utopia and human ecology, primarily in the way of critical function and dialectical approach. The following illustrates the evolution of this innovation.

Ecological Paradigm

Origins

The contemporary field of ecology is a developed science that expands into many sub-disciplines and covers a wide variety of specialization (paleoecology, systems ecology, limnology, and ecosystems ecology to name a few). Often conflated with environmentalism, one of its many useful applications, ecology actually stems from developments in natural history. The modern and self-conscious discipline of today began not as a formal science, but as a budding framework precipitated by new a philosophy of natural history. Scientists dabbling in ecological principles focused on the relationships between various phenomena (namely interactions among organisms and their environment) and noted the intellectual overlap and potential for cross-disciplinary fertilization that an ecological perspective presented. This framework recognized

historicity ("genetics"[41]) as critical to understanding the *processes* involved in natural phenomena.[42] As this framework developed it gradually evolved into an applied science, and has since evolved in many directions.

Significant philosophical transformations leading up to the nineteenth century presented a dynamic world view that invited scientists to challenge previous epistemological assumptions and fundamental understandings of nature. Among the avant-garde were Buffon, Kant, and Hershel, who were reflecting on new concepts of historical science. Lyon and Sloan argue:

> This transformation in natural history, marking the historical root of modern evolutionary biology, biography, ecology, physical anthropology, historical geology and cosmology, is in many respects as great an intellectual event as the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century. Apart from its narrower scientific importance, the new blend of Enlightenment philosophy, empirical inquiry, philosophic naturalism and materialism, and historical thinking provided a great rational alternative to the physical sciences, with profound implications for the philosophical directions of the nineteenth century.[43]

This new qualitative and "concrete" science provided a rational alternative to the "physicist's paradigm."[44] In the nineteenth century, growing consensus regarding the notion of species extinction and the work of Charles Darwin further demonstrated the "use value" of the historical perspective. While Darwin's and others' work was

---

[41] "Genetics" was another term for phenomena understood historically. Not to be confused with the modern scientific discipline.

[42] Again, this was a move away from the "ergodic" approach, whereby scholars study invariant properties and make no historical considerations.

[43] Lyon, 3.

[44] Ibid. New science was "concrete" in the sense that is was grounded in historicism and not represented by scientific law/symbol and removed from context.

profoundly influential, these developments do not point to one clear "author" of ecology nor one specific discipline that can be identified as the parent science.

The principles of ecology came into common use in various areas of the natural sciences, during the second half of the nineteenth century. Although most notably utilized in the biological sciences, ecology's roots are far from one directional. Ecological concepts have been derived from observations in various fields and might be considered "polymorphic" in origin.[45] Historian Robert McIntosh uses the term *antecedents* to describe the concepts and practices that contributed to ecological "history" in order to demonstrate a chronology without implying a lineal or causal connection.[46] "[A] developing scientific discipline may represent a fusion of several separate trunks lacking a common initial rootstock."[47] McIntosh's metaphor echoes Thomas Kuhn's assertion that scientific theories are not merely linear accumulations of facts, but an amalgam of intellectual developments.[48]

McIntosh points out that the *sources* (and methodologies) of ecology vary depending on which field is narrating the "history," and to some extent, the career paths of individual practitioners.[49] Biologists and historians will pinpoint different critical moments in science and identify different "founders" of ecology. Although the term

---

[45] McIntosh, 17.

[46] Ibid, 7.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Tomas Kuhn. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[49] Although similar relationships were being identified in various areas of natural science, definitions of ecology have often been contingent on developments within specific fields. The science itself has been defined in many ways.

ecology was first used by zoologist Ernst Haekel in 1866, many "protoecologists"[50] have been identified: naturalist Georges-Louis Buffon (1707-1788), botanist Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), botanist Gottfried Reinhold Treviranus (1776-1837), physician Daniel Drake (1785-1852), geologist and naturalist Charles Darwin (1809-1882), transcendentalist poet Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), chemist Ellen Swallow Richards (1842-1911), and botanist Jozef Paczoski (1864-1942), to name several. While none of these scholars can be directly linked to "self-conscious" ecology, they certainly make important contributions to what Kuhn calls "normal science" and together enabled "revolutionary science" (like modern ecology) to unfold.[51]

Although the ecological framework is a legacy comprised of the collective genius protoecologists and ecologists have set forth, there are several modern ecologists that are particularly relevant to this study: Rachel Carson (1907-1964), Evelyn Hutchinson (1903-1991), Eugene Odum (1913-2002), and Charles Christopher Adams (1873-1955). These scholars not only made contributions to the development of scientific knowledge, they helped validate synthesized and history-conscious research practices that revolutionized scientific thinking.

Rachel Carson (1907-1964) brought ecology into popular recognition with her prophetic book *Silent Spring* (1962). The primary focus of her research was the widespread use of damaging synthetic pesticides (what she argues were biocides) and the

---

[50] Mcintosh, 15. The term "protoecologists" was coined by D. W. Voorhees and used in his *Concise Dictionary of American Science* (New York: Scribner's, 1983). This term emphasized scholars who made ecological contributions prior to the established science.

[51] "Normal science" and "revolutionary science" are Kuhn's terms for different stages of scientific development. The histories of scientific developments leading to up to and through the nineteenth century are much more complex than have been articulated here. This brief overview is meant to capture the most relevant details to the history of ecology as it might be applied as a critical framework.

misinformation chemical companies were sharing with the public regarding their harmful effects. Carson also held public officials accountable for not imposing stricter regulations or requiring more transparency from chemical companies. She gathered evidence of the mass wild bird extinction and traced it back to synthetic pesticides. Though her work was not the first to raise issues about pollution or the limitations of first world "progress," she was influential in initiating the modern environmental movement. As Conor Jameson remarks, "Carson blew the whistle in the USA, and the reverberations were felt globally."[52]

The legacy of Carson's activism is still felt today, but it was the ecological education she set forth that is particularly interesting to this study.[53] Carson's work helped non-scientists grasp the interconnectedness of plant, animal, and human communities. Her explanation of pesticides as biocides drove home the fact that toxic chemicals rarely "stay" put and certainly impact more than the bugs and weeds they were intended to eliminate. She helped people understand that chemicals like DDT were harmful to animals and humans, even when used "as directed." Carson introduced ecosystems science to the public and this awareness ensured that future scientists and activist would have a way to converse with the public on similar issues. *Silent Spring* popularized the ecological tool, a tool which was later applied to human communities.

Evelyn Hutchinson (1903-1991) is often referred to as the inventor or "father" of modern ecology. His specialty was limnology (freshwater ecology), but as his biographer Nancy Slack, describes, he was a scientific polymath both inside *and* outside of the

---

[52] Conor Jameson. *Silent Spring Revisited*. (London: Bloomsbury Publishing),18.

[53] In addition to the many grassroots projects her work inspired, the installation of the US Environmental Protection Agency (1970) was, in part, a response to Carson's research.

ecological sciences.[54] Hutchinson was researching and writing during an important time in the history of ecology. Between 1930-1970, what Edward Wilson calls the "golden age of ecology,"[55] ecologists like Hutchinson were at the forefront of a burgeoning field. Hutchinson's formative contribution to ecology was as founder of the discipline of limnology but ecologists in nearly every ecological sub-field have been influenced by his research. In Robert Mcintosh's *The Background of Ecology*, Hutchinson appears in numerous chapters, from population ecology to theoretical ecology. In fact, he and his students were influential in transitioning ecology from a primarily descriptive field to a theoretical and experimental one.[56] This theoretical focus tied together broader relationships and helped fields like systems ecology and behavioral ecology take off. His spin on niche theory, which dealt with ecological spaces that specific species occupy within an ecosystem, invited interest in biodiversity and complex mathematical/statistical population studies.

Hutchinson's legacy has clearly become part of the essential fiber of modern ecology, but his research approach might be even more pertinent to this study. As he wrote, it was the task of theoretical ecologists to investigate "all possible models" and the experimental ecologist was tasked with finding out which models exist in nature.[57] This synthetic approach integrates "predictive" or mathematical models with factual observation, and can be likened to the ways literary utopia borrows both from the

---

[54] Nancy G. Slack. *Evelyn Hutchinson and the Invention of Modern Ecology* (New Haven: Yale, 2011), 390.

[55] Ibid., x.

[56] Ibid., 372.

[57] Ibid., 375.

developments of its time and from theoretical or speculative modes of social planning. Although human communities are complicated by cultural components, the ecological framework as applied by naturalists has utility both as a method of specific cross-disciplinary study and as a guiding analytical trope.

Eugene Odum (1913-2002) revolutionized the field of ecology by arguing the concept of integrated ecosystems, instead of the popular compartmentalized or "disciplinary" approach to ecology. Odum worked to bring ecology into its own, as he saw it was more than a subdivision of biology.[58] Like Carson, his work influenced environmental movements, and his integrated approach to ecosystems study was utilized in "big science" (government) projects. After World War II, Odum led projects for the Atomic Energy Commission to study the impact of radioactive isotopes on plant and animal life. His textbook, *Fundamentals of Ecology* (1971), was widely used in colleges for over twenty years, so Odum's holistic view of ecosystems reached a broad audience. This holistic view of ecological study is precisely how human ecology (and literary utopia) utilizes the ecological framework. Odum intended to demonstrate how ecology integrates organisms, physical environments, *and* humans—a useful model for human ecology.

Though lesser known than the previous scholars, the work of American ecologist Charles Christopher Adams (1873-1955) exemplifies the potential of the ecological tool. His interest was in the relationships between human ecology and land use. He took a broad approach to ecology and saw many interrelationships between land use and public policy. His work demonstrates what the ecological framework achieves and how it can be

[58] Eugene Odum. "Great Ideas in Ecology for the 1990s." *BioScience,* Vol. 42 No. 7. (July-Aug, 1992)., 542-545.

applied in both content and methodology. Adams arrived at ecology through the natural history tradition and held both museum and academic positions. His research approach is, in many ways, very telling of his career trajectory. He famously employed approaches normally used in geology and anthropology, and he maintained his use of descriptive techniques even as experimental and interventionist methods came to the forefront.

Juan Ilerbaig describes Adams' work as paradoxical given the direction early twentieth-century science moved.[59] While other ecologists were adopting manipulative methods, Adams opted for more descriptive methods and took cues from geology and anthropology—both treating phenomena as *in process* and historically situated.[60] Adams' studies were thus methodically ecological—utilizing the "allied sciences" to note interdisciplinary universals and examine the historicity of evolutionary processes. His work focused on "the interrelation of physical and organic influences," i.e. processes and the context (space and time) in which they occurred.[61]

Adams believed so strongly in interdisciplinary research that he was a proponent of the "allied" or complementary sciences sharing data and working together.[62] In his work with the Association of American Geographers (AAG), he would also promote "the recognition of the necessity of dynamic and genetic methods of interpretation of the facts

---

[59] Juan Ilerbaig. "Allied Science and Fundamental Problems: C.C. Adams and the Search for Method in Early American Ecology." *Journal of the History of Biology*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Winter, 1999), 439-463.

[60] This notion of *process* will resonate in the literary utopian context, which is addressed later in this chapter. See modern utopia.

[61] Ilerbaig, 448.

[62] Ibid., 449.

of geog/[raphical] dist[ribution].”[63] And in his involvement with the Association of American Museums (AAM), he tried to generate recognition for these constructive ecological tools and reunite scientists from diverse backgrounds. Ilerbaig notes that:

> [T]hrough these activities Adams intended to organize field and museum naturalists, whose position in the biological landscape had become increasingly less prominent with the success of laboratory disciplines. Adams hoped in this way to involve these naturalists in productive exchanges with members of more active, related disciplines, in what would amount to a cognitive and institutional reformation of natural history.[64]

As Adams’ efforts exhibit, ecology helps provide a common language between disciplines so that phenomenological relationships can be explored and the sciences may remain conversant. On a more effective level, the ecological framework encourages a synthetic approach to studying the world. Ecology was, as Adams put it, “the focusing lens which converges light from all the sciences upon its own and allied economic problems.”[65] Adams understood the power of an ecological perspective and remarked on how its “synthetic tendency” and “comprehensiveness” were a real strength to the new science.[66]

An ecological framework brings attention to organization, interrelationships, and *how* processes work, and this quite usefully demonstrates the ways in which cultural outputs, like literary utopia, function. Before it is applied to literature, this chapter will explore the cultural application of the ecological framework.

---

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ilerbaig, 450. Ilerbaig referencing Adams to Frederic Lucas, May 31, 1903, Lucas to Adams, August 13, 1903, CCAP-APS Folder “American Association of Museums.” See anonymous, 1908.

[65] Ibid., 459. Ilerbaig citing C.C. Adams. “The New Natural History-Ecology.” *American Museums Journal* 17 (1917): 491-494.

[66] Ibid.

Human Ecology

Ecology revolutionized the way many scientists approached problems and how scientific questions were asked, because it provided a valuable procedure for conducting experiments. It is no wonder this perspective was useful for other disciplines and that the emerging social sciences would see utility in its cultural and social analogues. Ecology found its way into human studies as a method for exploring the relationships between humans and their natural, social, and built environments. Human ecology promised to give social scientists a way to examine specific components of the "group life of man" by providing "objective referents [on which to] anchor the generalizations concerning soci[al] phenomena." [67] Figure 4 (below) demonstrates where human ecology falls within

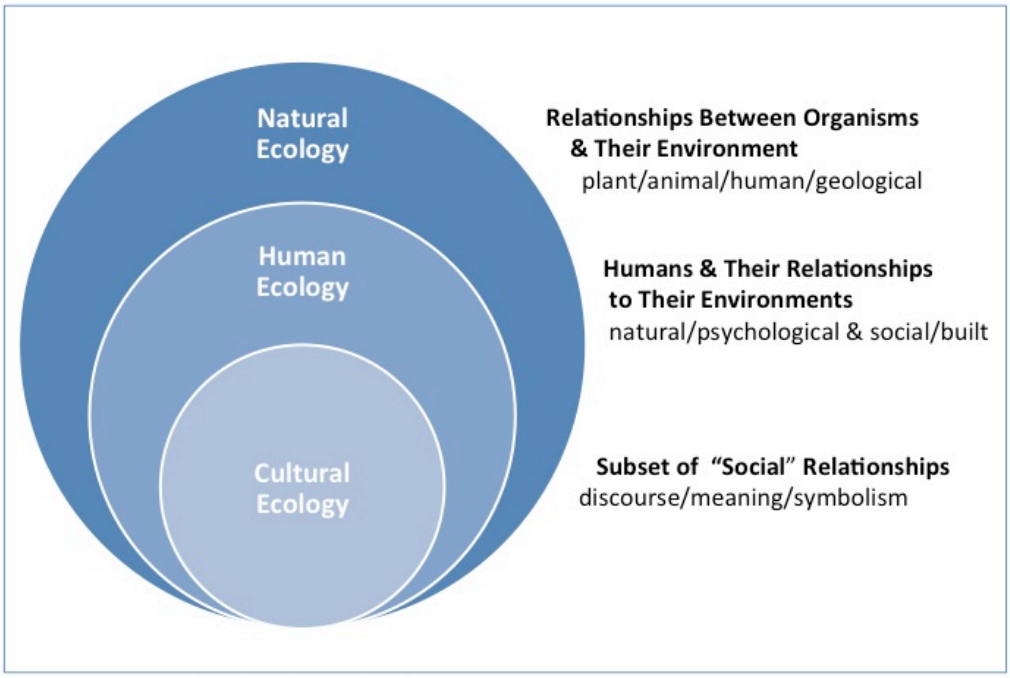

Figure 4. Hierarchy of Ecological Study, Sarah Minegar

[67] Term used by Wirth. Louis Wirth. "Human Ecology." *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 50, No. 6 (May 1945), 488.

the hierarchy of current ecological study.

Ecology proved a fruitful application in the field of sociology with the work of Robert Ezra Park (1864-1944). Park's proposal for the study of human ecology was grounded in his pragmatism and what he saw as an opportunity to apply "objective" methods to the study of social life.[68] He undertook the study of human communities and used ecology for its potential to help sociologists with new developing interests, namely in urban planning and urban ecology. His work combined what other disciplines (primarily geography, philosophy, and natural history) had been investigating into a systematic study.[69] In 1915, Park published a paper called "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the City Environment" to introduce this concept.[70] In it, he contemplated the ways in which the modern city, with its diverse and ever complex social and economic constructs, might be an interesting "laboratory or clinic in which human nature and social processes may be most conveniently and profitably studied."[71]

In his essay, "Human Ecology," Park outlines the overlapping framework that he understood as applicable to plant, animal, and human communities.[72] By superimposing

---

[68] Although this "objective" data was often quantitative survey work, Park was interested in how these findings could be applied in various allied disciples, like social phycology, anthropology, physiology, and geography. The ecological framework bridged these disciplines and punctuated the many cross-disciplinary relationships that could be studied.

[69] In this way, human ecology was very similar to natural ecology.

[70] Robert Park. "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the City Environment." *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 20, No 5 (March 1915), 577-612. Although Park introduces his notions of human ecology in this essay, he does not use the term in a formal academic publication until the *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, in 1921. Chemist and industrial reformer, Ellen Swallow Richard, is the first to use the term "human ecology" in her 1907 work, "Sanitation in Daily Life."

[71] Park, 1915, 612.

[72] Everett Cherrington Hughes et al. "Human Ecology" *Human Communities and the City and Human Ecology: The Collected Papers of Robert Ezra Park.* Vol II. Glencoe, The Free Press. 1952. Reprinted from *American Journal of Sociology*, XLII (July, 1936), 1-15.

natural ecology principles over social examples, he attempted to demonstrate where concepts like "the web of life," "the balance of nature," "competition, dominance and succession," "biological economics," and "symbiosis" might apply to society.[73] He noted that biologists (namely Darwin) had borrowed a sociological principle, "competitive co-operation," when they were formulating evolutionary theory. He echoes J. Arthur Thomson's assertion that this fact "vindicated the relevancy and utility of a sociological idea within the biological realm."[74] Park also borrowed the concept of "biological economics" from H.G. Wells, Julian Huxley, and G.P. Wells' survey, *The Science of Life,* which was concerned with the "balances and mutual pressures of species living in the same habitat."[75] He agreed with H.G. Wells' and his collaborators' notion that "ecology is an extension of economics to the whole of life."[76] With these aforementioned concepts in mind, Park divided human ecology into two elements and four factors:

> [The human community consisted of] (1) a body of customs and beliefs and (2) a corresponding body of artifacts and technological devices. [It also included factors like] (1) population, (2) artifact (technological culture), (3) custom and beliefs (no-material culture), (4) natural resources of the habitat.[77]

He went on to describe that it is within the fundamental nature of human ecology to attempt to…

> [i]nvestigate the processes by which the biotic balance and the social equilibrium (1) are maintained once they are achieved and (2) the processes by which, when

---

[73] Ibid. Park used the biotic "community" to serve as a metaphor for human society.

[74] Park, 1936, quoting J. Arthur Thomson, *Darwin and Human Life* (New York: A Melsrose, 1911), 72.

[75] Park, 1936 quoting H.G. Wells, Julian Huxley, and G.P.Wells, *The Science of Life* (New York: Garden City Publishing,1934), 977-78

[76] Ibid.

[77] Park, 1936, 158.

> the biotic balance and the social equilibrium are disturbed, the transition is made from one relatively stable order to another.[78]

Although Park demonstrates that cultural communities develop in comparable ways to biotic ones, he acknowledges that the former process is more complex. In fact, he is careful to note that terms like "economy," "web of communication," "habitat," "cooperation," "competition," do not have the same resonance in their human applications, as human communities are rooted in institution, custom, and belief. He stretches the ecological analogy pretty far, but does not imply human communities are identically parallel to those in the animal kingdom. Park stresses that the "cultural superstructure imposes itself as an instrument of direction and control upon the biotic substructure."[79] Just as naturalist Charles Adams had with natural ecology, Park understood these structures as dialectical. "Communication processes are central to ecological processes."[80]

Robert Park's pioneering work in human ecology inspired a generation of sociologists, but his contribution was not without its critics. For his part in analyzing cityscapes and generalizing urban behavior, Park was accused of moving into dangerous territory. The most scornful assertions were that he had neglected culture and promoted biological determinism. Milla Alihan, Walter Gettys, and A. B. Hollingshead were among those who interpreted Park's analogies as deficient.[81] By the late nineteen-forties

---

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Bridger et al, 530.

[81] Milla Alihan's *Social Ecology: A Critical Analysis directed at Park* (1938), Walter Gettys' "Human Ecology and Social Theories"(1940), and A.B. Hollinghead's "A Reexamination of Ecological Theory" (1947) were directed at Park and other Chicago School associates. This anti-Chicago movement focused on Park and Ernest Burgess's *Introduction to the Science of Society* (1921), Park's "The Urban

his work was already being dismissed as a "classical" and outmoded form of human ecology. Textbook explanations typically introduced Park and Burgess as formulating concepts of human ecology that were derived from plant and animal ecology and Social Darwinism. They hone in on specific examples, like the symbiosis analogy, and determine that the Chicago School focused on the non-cultural elements of social relationships, like biological drive.[82] Although Park's ecological analogy was by no means perfect, his successors seemed so eager to "break through" to new areas that they oversimplified and often misrepresent his work entirely.

As David Maines, Jeffrey Bridger and Jeffery Ulmer point out in their paper, "Mythic Facts and Park's Pragmatism: On Predecessor-Selection and Theorizing in Human Ecology," "mythic fact" making obscured the intentions of Robert Park.[83] They contend that while the ecological analogy may not seamlessly translate to cultural issues, Park's interests and motivations have been dismissed and muddied by a problem of intellectual lineage (or sociology of knowledge) within the scientific community.[84] They echo Charles Camics' argument that "scholars purposefully select predecessors whose work fits their own intellectual purposes—[this problem is defined as 'content-fit']."[85]

Community ad a Spatial Pattern and Moral Order" (1926), "Human Ecology" (1936), "Succession: An Ecological Concept" (1936), and "Symbiosis and Socialization: A Frame of Reference for the Study of Society." (1939). See Bridger, Maines, and Ulmer for detailed description.

[82] See Noel Gist and Sylvia Fava *Urban Society* (1964), Brian Berry and John Karsarda's *Contemporary Urban Ecology* (1977), James Miley's "Critical Dimensions in Human Ecology: Ideology in American Sociology" (1980), and James Spates and John Macionis' *The Sociology of Cities* (1987).

[83] David Bridger, Jeffy Maines, and Jeffry Ulmer. "Mythic Facts and Park's Pragmatism: On Predecessor-Selection and Theorizing in Human Ecology." *The Sociological Quarterly*. Vol. 37, No. 3 (1996), 521-549.

[84] Bridger et al, 521.

[85] Bridger et al, citing Charles Camic. "Reputation and Predecessor Selection: Parsons and the Institutionalists." *American Sociological Review* 57 (1992), 421-445.

They also suggest that those who have "greater intellectual capital" possess the persuasion to plant the seed of bias within in their academic circles.[86] Park's human ecology was sold short because "mythic facts" simultaneously "provide[d] ways of seeing and not seeing"[87] by reinforcing (and repeating) existing criticisms and ignoring new interpretations.[88] Consequently, by the nineteen-fifties, Park's ideas were squeezed out to make room for a "new approach." Amos Hawley led the way by changing the agenda and moving human ecology toward systems theory and measurable (quantitative) studies of community structures.[89] *In Human Ecology: A Theory of Community Structure*, Hawley effectively "rewr[o]te ecology as the study of relationships between population and space, with technology and dominance serving as intervening variables, and as a theoretical approach that maximized measurement possibilities."[90] From this point forward, the dialog with Park's work was nearly non-existent.[91]

---

[86] Bridger et al, 522.

[87] According to Bridger et al, Kenneth Burke uses the term "terministic screens" to describe a similar phenomenon.

[88] Bridger, Maines, and Ulmer make an interesting argument about "mythic facts" and predecessor-selection processes in scientific communities. Using Robert Park and human ecology as an example, they present a convincing case for the challenges to the cumulative growth model that instances of political sociology of knowledge pose. The details of this argument are beyond the scope of this project, but certainly worth exploring. These scholars provide a useful tool for historians of science to employ when examining dominant academic trends.

[89] David Smith. The New Urban Sociology Meets the Old: Rereading Some Classical Human Ecology." *Urban Affairs Review* 30 (1995), 447. Cited in Bridger et al.

[90] Bridger et al, 528.

[91] Though dialog with Park has been lost in modern sociology, scholars in other fields were interested in human-environment relationships. Another University of Chicago affiliate, George Herbert Mead, focused on interactions between individuals and their social surroundings. He worked extensively to develop the study of social philosophy (sometimes called social behaviorism) in *The Mind, Self, and Society* (1934).

Bridger, Maines, and Ulmer not only demonstrate the impact "elective affinities" had in the trajectory of ecological thinking, they also provide a strong argument for the utility of the ecological framework in its cultural application. These scholars work hard to resurrect the relevancy of Park's research and rectify gross misreadings of his work. Bridger and his colleagues emphasize that Park's philosophical leaning toward pragmatism led him to the notion that communication was the *central tenet* of social phenomena.[92] Park stresses the dialogic nature of the ecological process in an article that appeared in *The Urban Community*, in 1926:

> Society, as John Dewey has remarked, exists through communication, and communication involves a translation of energies, such as seems to take place between individual social units, for example, in suggestion or imitation, two of the terms to which sociologists have at various times sought to reduce all social phenomena; but rather communication involves a transformation in individuals who thus communicate. And this transformation goes on unceasingly with the accumulation of individual experiences in individual minds.[93]

As the author reflects, the "individual is not a constant unit of measurement," as humans are continually changing as they interact with their natural, social, and built environments.[94] An ecological framework takes into account how this constant communication shapes communities. Ecology, when applied to society, helps illuminate the interrelationships between different aspects of human communities (biotic, cultural,

---

[92] Bridger, 530. Critics ignored Park's implicit and explicit take on the role of communication in human ecology, and selectively critiqued him instead of examining his full body of work. On occasion this legacy of oversight led to scientists "discovering" concepts Park had proposed decades earlier. Though essays like "Human Ecology" were not as transparent, his "The Urban Community as a Spatial Pattern and Moral Order" (1926) and his lectures on fundamental ecological principles (1934 lecture notes), to name a couple, were rather explicit about the overlap of the biological and cultural spheres.

[93] Ibid, quoting Park, 1926, 13.

[94] Ibid., 530.

and various equilibrium-disequilibrium patterns of the two). Naturally, this type of analysis involves interdisciplinary thinking.

Robert Park's dialectical human ecology provides a functional template for analyzing society. Like natural ecology, human ecology has evolved in many directions, and while these innovations are often intriguing and productive, Park's work is still attractive because his outline of human ecology clearly demonstrates how the biotic and social are fused by varying degrees of organization, as a result of how population, political economy, technology, values, and natural resources interact.[95] Park's model of human ecology builds upon concepts in natural ecology which emphasize relationships, historical variants, and synthetic ("big picture") orientation, but it also focuses on the complexity of human communities. His contention that the symbiotic society and the cultural society are "merely different aspects of *one* society"[96] forces an important consideration on those who practice sociology to conduct experiments or make assertions that are derived from broad (and integrative) analysis.

As literary utopia is one method of conducting human scientific research, Park's application of human ecology is quite relevant to this project. To demonstrate the applicability of the ecological framework to utopian literature, this next section exhibits the ways in which literary utopia is aligned with sociological practices. Examining literary utopia at the functional level (breaking down what utopia *does* and *how* it performs), demonstrates the ecological framework at play in these works.

---

[95] Bridger et al, 533 citing Robert Park. "Succession, An Ecological Concept." *American Sociological Review*, 1(1936), 171-179.

[96] Park, 1936.

It is also useful to briefly examine the theory of cultural ecology and what the enlightened reader brings back to the cultural conversation. Literary theorist, Hubert Zapf focuses on the dialog between literary studies and cultural ecology. His work focuses on literature as cultural artifacts that interact with other cultural forms—he recognizes the *dialogical* text/culture interaction as *an ecological relationship*. Zapf's cultural ecology overlaps with what this study labels the cultural dialectic, but Zapf's cultural ecology prioritizes the author's contribution over the reader's. He considers literature a medium of cultural ecology "in the sense that it has staged and explored, in ever new scenarios, the relationships of prevailing cultural systems to the needs and manifestations of human and nonhuman 'nature.'"[97] He notes that "imaginative literature transforms conceptual, logocentric processes into energetic processes, and thus acts like an ecological force within a larger system of cultural discourse."[98]

Zapf sees the ecological practice extending to the relationships between art and culture production. He argues that literature is a form of "cultural ecology" that interacts with the larger cultural milieu. Not only might utopian literature itself be interpreted as ecological, so too might the relationship between the art form and culture. It is interesting that what Zapf identifies as literary procedures: cultural-critical discourse, imaginative counter-discourse, and reintegrative inter-discourse[99] so align with the features of utopian texts: problem identification, critique/comparison via "other," and call to action. Zapf's

[97] Zapf, 2006, 3.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Zapf, 2001, 93.

work will be addressed more in chapter three, in a discussion of cultural dialog and the larger cultural function of literature, at large.

Zapf's interpretation of cultural ecology harkens back to Robert Park's sociological application of human ecology. He concedes the same underlying assumption about the interrelatedness of culture and nature, and recognizes the ecological framework as critical to understanding the dialogical character of culture (in this case, literature). Like Park, he is careful to point out that an ecological frame of reference helps illuminate the web of biological and cultural interconnectedness, but need not assume a reductive reading of culture—i.e. examining culture/nature relationships is not an automatic indication of biological determinism.[100] Cultural ecology will be revisited in chapter three.

Utopia as Method

Utopia/Sociology Overlap

Utopians make social affairs the central concern of their literary fiction, but these authors are more than imaginative dreamers, they are human scientists. In fact, famous utopian authors Henry de Saint-Simon (1760- 1825), Charles Fourier (1772-1837), Etienne Cabet (1788-1856), and H.G Wells (1866-1946) were all, by definition, practicing sociologists.[101] Though these sociologists are perhaps quite separate from the

[100] Hubert Zapf et al. "Literature and Ecology." *Anglia: Zeitschrift fur Englische Philololgie*. Band 124 (Niemeyer: 2006) Heft 1.

[101] These figures were practicing "practical sociology," stemming from moral philosophy. They were notably also philosophers and socialists, a complementary occupation for nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century social scientists.

academic scientists of today, they were all focused on examining the origins and developments of human behavior, social structures, and social theory.[102]

How sociologists have gone about studying society has evolved with the institutionalization of the discipline. Today, social scientists attempt objectivity by creating "testable" experiments and working to accurately reflect society while "refus[ing] to endorse" any particular perspective.[103] Textbooks define sociology as a science that "aims to reveal truths about human society."[104] Most contend that sociologists must embrace a variety of research methodologies and employ a cycle of inquiry that includes *exploration*, *analysis*, and *conceptualization*, in order to achieve a better understanding of social relationships.[105] Sociologist Martin Albrow states that,

> "Sociology provides above all a cognitive frame for communicating the experiences of social relations. This arises not as a judgment from on high, nor as an arbitration of disputes, nor a wish list. It is the intellectual representation of the changing reality of those relations. In a world which is one it will seek to represent that unity. Sociological evidence now makes a central contribution to contemporary moral debate…It is the autonomous reality of society combined with the independence, moral integrity and intellectual capacities of the researchers which guarantees that such research will make a contribution to debates on values and the policies which might implement them."[106]

This goal of objectivity demands that the sociologist be aware of her own participation in the customs of her associated communities, her duty to remain sensitive to her subjects without imposing a "researcher" and "object" division, and her need to approach

---

[102] These sociologists' notion of human study registered somewhere between Auguste Comte's positivism and Marx's "science of society."

[103] Martin Albrow. "Chapter 2: The Science of Sociology." *Sociology: The Basics* (London: Routledge, 1999), 44.

[104] Albrow, 49.

[105] Ibid., 44.

[106] Ibid., 62.

problems with "interpretive" (qualitative) and "positivist" (quantitative) research.[107] Sociologists are also tasked with bringing wider assumptions about society into question.[108] "This again illustrates the thrust of sociology. Its approach is also designed to throw up uncomfortable findings, to disturb taken-for-granted assumptions and to contribute to the *continual updating* of our understanding of society."[109]

Sociologist Ruth Levitas has made great strides in demonstrating the alignment of literary utopia and sociology. In fact, as chapter one introduced, her work opens up important conversations about the role of sociology and the "proper" methods of conducting its work. In various articles and now most recently in her book *Utopia as Method* (2013), she spends time defending literary utopia and recovering it from its own "mythic facts"—understandings that have kept utopia tied to the same conceptions and never reinterpreted.

Levitas begins her argument by examining what utopia *does*. Harkening back to her earlier book, *The Concept of Utopia* (1990), she explores the form, function, and content of utopia, but hones in on the role of utopia. She invokes the work of Miguel Abensour and Ernst Bloch (1885-1977) to demonstrate the use value of utopia.[110] Levitas acknowledges the ways in which utopia evokes a powerful estrangement that is both constructive and enlightening, outlining Abensour's assertion that the utopian experiment "make[s] the familiar unfamiliar" and "disrupts the taken-for-granted nature of the

---

[107] Albrow, 33, 55, 57,60, and 63.

[108] Ibid., 55.

[109] Ibid., 55, [emphasis added].

[110] An in-depth discussion of the value of literary utopia is beyond the scope of this project, but the work of Abensour, Bloch, will be discussed indirectly in examples of *how* utopia functions and in discussions of its social role.

present."[111] The space utopia creates, says Levitas, allows a reader to "temporarily experience an alternate configuration of needs, wants and satisfactions." Or, as E.P. Thompson (1924- 1993) paraphrased Abensour,

> And in such an adventure, two things happen: our habitual values (the "commonsense" of bourgeois society) are thrown into disarray.[112] And we enter into Utopia's proper and new-found space: the education of desire. This is not the same as "a moral education" towards a given end: it is rather, to open a way to aspiration, to "teach desire to desire, to desire better, to desire more, and above all to desire a different way."[113]

As she does in *The Concept of Utopia*, Levitas revisits Bloch's three-volume *The Principle of Hope* (1954). Bloch famously posits that humans possess an underlying drive or impulse to imagine a "better" existence. This impulse underpins human progress as perpetual longing moves humanity forward toward fulfillment. Bloch's definition of utopia is quite naturally broad, and he interprets its presence as implicit in all kinds of human activities.[114] Bloch is focused on the *process* of educated hope, *docta spes*, which is compatible with the concept of modern utopia (discussed later in this chapter) and with Levitas' own method of conducting speculative sociology.

In her examination of literary utopia, Levitas demonstrates the utility of these works as an interpretive mode of sociology which confronts problems of understanding in a changing society. She began this conversation in her earlier works such as "Sociology and Utopia" (1979) and has since developed her position in various publications and lectures. Where she departs from Bloch is in her contention that the utopian method must

---

[111] Levitas, 2013, 4.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Levitas citing E.P. Thompson *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (London: Merlin Press, 1977), 790-791.

[114] Ernst Bloch. *The Principal of Hope*. Vol 1-3. 1954. Translated by Neville Plaice (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986).

be more than a hermeneutic endeavor; she asserts it must also employ constructive methods. With this, she outlines the strong parallels between sociology and utopia. Both examine "society as a whole" and ask what its "central components [are], and how they are related to one another."[115] The innovation utopia adds to the inquiry is the exploration of "how it might become and be otherwise, and how [it] *should* [be]?"[116] She articulates this function in the following statement:

> Utopia concerns what is not (yet). It is intrinsically evaluative, concerned with what ought to be and the process of conforming the world to that standard. The problematic polarity between "is" and "ought" later becomes definitive of sociology. This generates a vantage point in which sociology is the dominant narrative, explaining the various forms and expressions of utopianism in their social contexts as part of cultural anthropology or the history and sociology of culture. If utopia is the expression of what is missing, of the experience of lack in any given society or culture, then a proper understanding of any society must include the consideration of unfilled aspirations which it produces. The sociology of utopia defines the legitimate relation between the two."[117]

And this is where Levitas echoes Wells' assertion that utopia is the "proper and distinctive method of conducting sociology."

The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society

Ruth Levitas' most profound contribution to the study of utopia as method is her framework for the Imaginary Reconstitution of Society (IROS). Here she takes an innovative look at how utopia functions. As a method of conducting sociological study, she argues utopia is an imaginary reconstitution of society: "the construction or

---

[115] To borrow a description of sociology by C. Wright Mills.

[116] Levitas (2013), 66.

[117] Ibid, 67.

constitution of society as it is, as it might be, as it might not be, as it might be hoped for or feared."[118] This method (IROS) has three modes: the archaeological, ontological, and architectural.[119] These modes work to piece together the good images of society that exist within current political programs and social policies (utopia as archaeology or analysis), assign meaning to the existential quest for betterment (utopia as ontology or need fulfillment), and imagine and describe a reconstructed "other" (utopia as architecture or construction).[120] Levitas argues that utopia is more than a "thought experiment," because it "operates at the level of affect as well as intellect."[121]

Breaking utopia into its operational modes demonstrates how this genre of literature functions as a human science. Utopian authors observe and comment on current practices, imagine alternate potentialities against current realities, and invite their readers to consider other perspectives. Just as other humanistic endeavors, utopia explores tensions and hypocrisies and induces a productive anxiety that challenges readers to think— constructive literature leaves the reader unsettled and wanting. Literary utopia, as Levitas describes, is unique still. Utopia as method addresses the "transformation of needs, wants, and satisfactions entailed in both a new society and the transition to it."[122] Understanding utopia as an analytical technique allows her to demonstrate that utopia "is not and cannot be blueprint" and that "utopian envisioning is necessarily *provisional,*

---

[118] Levitas, 2007, 47.

[119] Levitas, 2005, 2007, and 2013.

[120] Ibid., 2007, 47-68; 2013, chapters 8, 9, and 10.

[121] Levitas, 2013, 218.

[122] Ibid.

reflexive, and dialogic."[123] Levitas is clear to inform that she is not inventing a methodology, but merely pointing out a mode that exists but has been underutilized and underappreciated by the scientific community.

Institutionalized Social Science: A Departure & Defense of Utopian Method

What Levitas has identified as the reason for the unfortunate neglect of the literary method is the academic rejection of certain qualitative modes of analysis. What she describes is "Two Cultures" in action.[124] Although professional sociologists insist on the proper science approaching problems with both qualitative and quantitative experiments, Levitas demonstrates that this is not always the case. In fact, she shows how many professionals shy away from humanistic modes in order to legitimize their research.

Like natural ecology, sociology was a budding academic field in the late-nineteenth century and its intellectual heritage is an amalgam of human scientific exploration. Early philosophical leanings were partially an outgrowth of reform projects (political, social and religious), Socialism, and developments in criminal justice. "Practical Sociologists" were interested in reform work and concerned with social policy. Many of sociology's "founding parents," like Jane Addams (1860-1935), W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963), Albion Small (1854-1926), Franklin Giddings (1855-1931), and Lester

---

[123] Ibid., [emphasis added].

[124] This in reference to C.P. Snow's argument that intellectual life is divided into "two cultures"—the sciences and the humanities. This assertion maintains that each of these areas of study affirms its own practices and contributions to knowledge, but the "cultures" rarely intersect. This flaw was viewed as detrimental to solving world problems. It still resonates today as scholars determine what qualifies as "scientific."

Ward (1841-1913), championed "practical" (or applied) sociology.[125] As university sociology departments became more widespread, advocates for "pure science" (or theoretical) sociology increased.

Though academic sociology is most commonly associated with the work of French scholar, Emile Durkheim (1858-1817), the United States is credited with leading the way in institutionalized social science.[126] The University of Pennsylvania offered the first university sociology course in 1869, Yale followed in 1876, and the University of Kansas established the first sociology department in 1890.[127] According to Sociologist William Norris, sociology was in the right place as higher education was transforming in the United States.[128] The 1862 Morrill Land Grant Act promoted the growth of non-sectarian state schools (like Johns Hopkins University). These new schools were pioneering "German-style" education systems and looking to branch into new areas of academic study.[129] These changes made colleges and universities more receptive to new academic disciplines, like sociology. By the 1930s the "pure science movement" gained momentum and in order to obtain academic respectability, sociologists kept sociology separate from service oriented programs like social work and criminal justice (what could

---

[125] William Norris. "A Brief History of the Emergence of Sociology as an Academic Enterprise in the United States." Lecture notes for Oakland Community College. (2005), 13.

[126] The first professional journal for sociologist was the *American Journal of Sociology* (1895), followed by *L'Année Sociologique* (1898), and *The Sociological Review* (1908).

[127] Norris, 9.

[128] Ibid., 6.

[129] Ibid., 8.

have been applied subfields).[130] Though American schools initiated the "pure science" trend, universities in Europe and Britain endorsed it as well. Sociology continually gained credibility, but increasingly did so by avoiding certain modes of study.

In her interview with sociologist Laurie Taylor, Ruth Levitas addresses the repercussions of such narrow science. After discussing H.G. Wells' view on sociology and deficiencies in modern scientific practice, Levitas comments that,

> [I]t's actually very fragmented as a discipline now, which means the kind of holistic thinking that Wells was interested in, and the early classical sociologists were interested in, doesn't happen very much, because everybody's too specialised; but also British sociology in particular has been obsessed from the outset with making itself respectable through a claim to being scientific. And what that means is that people censor themselves all the time. At any point you can't actually make the move from saying 'I have these findings about inequality or social mobility or gender discrimination' [to] saying 'for that to end society has to look like this, for that to end not only must we oppose that, but we need to think about the whole structure of society'.[131]

She repeats a contention H.G. Wells held over a century ago. Wells thought that to "dispassionately" consider sociology, "without considering what it might be," was negligent.[132] He follows his famous proclamation that utopia is the proper method of sociology by stating that "Sociologists cannot help making utopias, though they avoid the word, though they deny the idea with passion their silences shape a utopia."[133] Because sociologists are hostile toward normative practices, Wells and Levitas argue that the discipline is less useful than it might be in confronting modern problems.[134]

---

[130] Norris, 17.

[131] Laurie Taylor. Interview of Ruth Levitas. "H.G.Wells and the Mystery of the Vanishing Utopian Socialists." June 29, 2011. *Open Learn*. Open.edu.

[132] Wells, 1906, 366.

[133] Ibid., 368.

[134] Levitas, 2010, 530.

While Levitas and Wells both work to legitimize the utopian method, Wells took a more dramatic stance on sociology, insisting that the literary mode, utopia in particular, was the defining way to conduct sociology. In his lecture before the meeting of the Sociological Society, entitled "The So-Called Science of Sociology" (February 26, 1906), Wells attacks the work of Auguste Comte (1798-1859) and Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) for reducing the complexity of human study to a formulaic and "measurable" science.[135] He accuses their brand of sociology of being pretentious and incapable of objectivity, and contends that it is deceitful in its claim at "proven laws" of society.[136] He disputes that a true "science of society" can exist and insists on an honest, humanistic approach to social knowledge. He adds to this argument that, "We cannot put Humanity into a museum, or dry it for examination; our single, still living specimen is all history, all anthropology, and the fluctuating world of men. There is no satisfactory means of dividing it and nothing else in the real world with which to compare it."[137]

Instead he offers utopia as the appropriate mode for sociology and proposes several other scholars who "concede the difference between sociology and all other sciences." He states that Alfred Fouillee noticed that "certain kind of liberty belonging to society in the exercise of its higher functions…[This will not allow for] ready-made [conceptions] and the methods of the natural sciences into the science of society. For here the fact of *consciousness* entails a reaction of the whole assemblage of social phenomena upon themselves, such as the natural sciences have no example of."[138] Wells certainly

---

[135] Wells, 1906, 358-359.

[136] Ibid., 362.

[137] Ibid., 364.

[138] Wells, 1906, 365.

saw sociology serving a "higher function," accusing Comte and Spencer of being interlopers and not the "true parents" of sociology.[139] Utopia, with its description of the "Ideal Society" and its relation to existing societies, would give Durkheim the "synthetic framework" he desired. Wells expected this to be achieved by sociologists "accept[ing] Utopias as material" and as the best way to highlight common elements of human nature (universals).[140] Both he and philosopher Goldworthy Lowes Dickinson (1862-1932) agreed that scientific study was so confounded with personal perspectives that it produced inconclusive data.[141]

Wells' critics do not deny his general arguments against the scientific method and its lack of pure objectivity, but do not agree that the utopian method should be the *only* way to gain knowledge. In the discussion that followed his lecture, several members came forward and presented their rebuttals. The gist of their arguments consist of pointing out that while sociology was [then] a young science and thus finding its niche, there was utility in generalization (through the scientific method) and that utopia too benefited from this instructive process. They contend that context is always relevant to any study and that "science" is never studied as a collection of disembodied facts.[142] George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) replies as a writer of fiction and a sociologist when he

---

[139] Ibid.

[140] Ibid., 368.

[141] Ibid., Paraphrase of Dickinson, 374.

[142] Ibid., Discussion section, 370-376.

remarks that scientific "rules" and "proofs" are tools to increase understanding and cannot be discounted simply because utopia has more rhetorical appeal.[143]

Levitas' view is more moderate and demonstrative of the utopian method without wholly discounting other modes knowledge production. She contends that while interpolation is inevitable in scientific study, it is better to be explicit (as in the utopian form) than to be misleadingly "objective." She is disappointed that utopia is not more of a contender in the sociological arena. She remarks that "one of the problems with sociology is it is so often too unimaginative."[144]

The Ecological Framework and the Utopian Method

Thus far, this chapter has demonstrated the utility of the ecological framework in examining complex human systems and has established literary utopia as a humanistic mode of conducting sociology. Figure 5 (below) reiterates what each of these developments contributes to the thesis that literary utopias are studies in human ecology. Defining utopia as a mode of examining human systems is an important first step to reading utopia *scientifically* and to understanding its function and its broader contributions to human studies.

The literary mode is perhaps the oldest and most universal "science" that progressed humans have practiced. Literary *utopia* (though not always identified as such) has been practiced nearly as long. In fact, the exercise of reimagining society is connected to an even older tradition, human ecology.

---

[143] Wells (lecture discussion), Paraphrase of Shaw's remarks, 373-374.

[144] Taylor, 2011, Levitas' final statement.

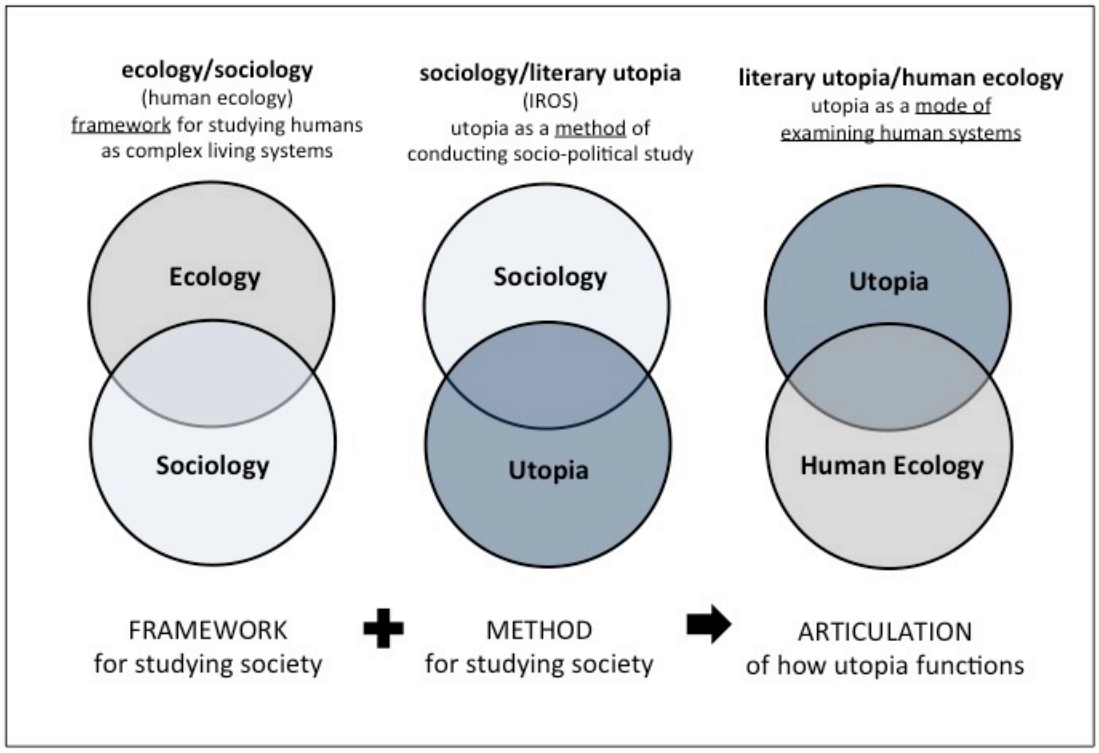

Figure 5. Articulating the Functional Role of Literary Utopia, Sarah Minegar

In their historical overview, the Society for Human Ecology points out that "[t]he subject matter of human ecology is as old as human existence. Ever since humans first conceived their surrounds, there has been some kind of human ecological perspective in the world."[145] And as humans seek to understand the world around them, it is the web of relationships between phenomena that gives them a sense of temporality, connection, and purpose. Richard Borden remarks,

> Identifying and giving words to what is, or was, or never will be again is the foundation of historical consciousness. Imagining future possibilities — what could be or should be — is the extension of human intentionality forward in time through problem solving, creative action and ethical concern. This is the essence of human ecology, and thus the study of these phenomena and relationships is

[145] Richard Borden. "A Brief History of SHE: Reflections on the Founding and First Twenty Five Years of the Society for Human Ecology." *Human Ecological Review*. Vol. 15, No. 1 (2008), 95.

vast.[146]

Utopia and human ecology are interconnected in their quest for intentionality and in their approach at grasping and understanding big picture perspectives. Just as human ecology studies humans as living systems operating within complex natural, social, and build environments, so too does literary utopia. Utopia's ecological framework also emphasizes the fluidity of the (modern) utopian *process*.

The utopian genre persists because it is a dialectical human science, and viewing these works through an ecological lens pronounces the true innovation in this literary genre. Utopian works possess a layered dialectic, consisting of internal/textual dialog, dialog with the culture of its time, and dialog across time, as a genre. As socio-political texts that aim to critique via comparison and compel readers to act, the utopian dialectic speaks to readers differently than most fiction. Utopian works re-envision complete human systems and therein study the interrelationships between individuals, nature, and society. They provide social commentary, thus critiquing human behavior and documenting the concerns of their time. And these works make strong ethical persuasions that encourage readers to "check" or take a stance on certain social issues. The utopian dialectic is quite provocative—it challenges critical readers to think and debate and leaves passive or unengaged readers infuriated by its "hubris."

While the utopian method highlights the operational modes (which Levitas defines as the archaeological, ontological, and architectural) utopia employs, an ecological framework helps organize the network of interrelationships these works explore. Utopias visualize how society *might be*, *might not be*, or how it *might be hoped*

[146] Borden, 95.

for or feared, but they also explore social adaptation and change over time. This attention to temporality and interacting systems demonstrates that utopian works are more than sociological tools; they also chronicle the intangible complexities, anxieties, and sentiment of group life. Utopian works, at once, critique and strategize (as sociologist might) *and* provoke and engage by imploring readers to invest in self-reflection and consider new perspectives. The ecological framework helps demonstrate the "use value" of utopia as a humanistic think tank *and* as a contributor to social progress over time, as utopian literature helps foster engaged and aware citizens.

As studies of interacting organisms in their environments, utopia necessitates scientific integration and a varied approach. Human ecology takes disciplinary studies in areas like sociology, psychology, geography, and biology and strives to understand how those perspectives work together. It not only synthesizes many areas of study (as is appropriate given the complexity of human studies), it focuses on the relationships between various aspects of social life. While sociology is essential to literary utopia, as utopian works study socio-political constructs, it is only part of understanding the greater structure of people, place, and power.[147] An ecological framework helps provide a picture of what literary utopia studies at the local level (individual texts) and at the broader global level (as a literary genre). Utopias might even be understood as "snapshots" of human adaptation, over time.

[147] The University of California Davis' department of Human Ecology divides its undergraduate and graduate majors into these larger critical areas. "People" includes human development and family studies, "Place" includes landscape architecture and environmental design, and "Power" includes community and regional development. Human Ecology departments at other schools like Cornell, Rutgers New Brunswick, and University of Wisconsin Madison have similar approaches to cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary study. The College of the Atlantic, in Bar Harbor Maine, is organized entirely on the philosophy of human ecology.

Utilizing Ecology: Framework and Trope

In the context of utopian literature, *ecology* can be utilized in several ways. First and foremost, it can be understood as a qualitative approach to the study of human behavior *and* a cross-disciplinary literary genre that explores human systems. It can also be applied analogously to help interpret and articulate how utopian literature responds to culture and contributes to cultural production.

This project is primarily concerned with ecology as a *framework* for conducting human scientific research and exploring how literary utopia functions. As works of human ecology, literary utopia encompasses numerous areas of disciplinary study and engages in various dialectical tasks.[148] The ecological framework provides a valuable tool with which to identify and describe the complex interrelationships utopia explores.

Though the ecological trope is examined to a lesser extent in this study, it is an illustrative device for examining the cultural aspects of the utopian dialectic. Ecological concepts provide a way to explore what utopia does for its authors personally and for those groups they represent. It also gives insight into the role utopian works play as participants in larger cultural "ecosystems" of sorts. This is the way Hubert Zapf applies ecology to literature—what he terms cultural ecology. Cultural ecology is a relevant subset of human ecology and is primarily addressed here as a way to understand reader engagement and response, in the form of cognitive or political action. The ecological trope is also reflected in discussions of genre evolution and what individual texts introduce dialogically over time.

[148] Chapter three outlines these functions in detail.

Measuring the Scientific Value of Literature
(How Literary Utopia Conducts Research)

Though in the modern context "research" is commonly associated with the "hard sciences," research/inquiry has many modes. As works of prose fiction, literary utopias make contributions to human scientific study through social analysis, but as Wells and Levitas point out, literature is not always appreciated as a proper methodology, even within the qualitative sciences (like sociology, anthropology, history, etc.). While not every utopian work may follow the recognizable "scientific method," the literary *research* approach is significant. Thus it is essential to identify how these works conduct scientific examinations. Several historians have proposed how we might understand and measure the scientific value of literature. In addition to Letivas's IROS, this study borrows from the work Hayden White, Nelson Phillips, and Robert Nathan.

Robert Nathan strives to legitimize the literary mode as both *the object of ethnographical study* and as *a method of conducting qualitative research*. Nathan is guided by his understanding of the role of language in representing "reality," and he uses this interpretation to stress that literary research carries the same weight as historical or social scientific research. He argues that all ideas are bound by the symbols of language, which make articulations of "truth" a matter of interpretation. "A general principle of language is that it does not represent the categories of reality but rather creates them—the only means by which a table can exist (as a table), for example, is through contrasting it to another language concept such as a desk. This is one reason why it is untenable to claim that true and valid quantitative research (i.e., qualitative *text*) corresponds

unproblematically to an external reality."[149] His argument that even the most "reliable" qualitative studies (i.e. those corresponding to specific external events) are subjective and selective in their account or rendering of events, works to resist the preferential treatment of one mode of study over another. It also gives him an opportunity to demonstrate the utility of literary research.

Literary fiction provides a compelling account of human experience that is not limited by form or bound by an historical sequence of events. This frees literature to represent complexities and subtleties that even traditional social science texts are unable to convey. Novelists practice science by "test[ing] ideas against evidence, generaliz[ing], pos[ing] testable questions about the social world, and try[ing] to remain faithful to details of external experience."[150] Nelson Phillips points out that like human scientists (social scientists, in particular), novelists weave together hypotheses, "statements testable against experience—about the cause and effect relationships that underlie social experience."[151] Nathan adds to this reflection that both realist literature *and* non-realist texts hypothesize and experiment in this way. He revisits Hayden White's observation that while novelists and scientists have different approaches, both aim to "provide a *verbal image* of 'reality." Though novelists utilize indirect or figurative techniques to convey *reality*, the areas of the human experience they explore are no less "real" than the selective extra-textual accounts historians study. Like other qualitative studies, literature

---

[149] Nathan, 77.

[150] Phillips, 626.

[151] Ibid., Phillips does not specifically overlap utopia with social science, but he does describe how narrative fiction (more generally) conducts research. As a form of narrative fiction, literary utopia performs in the same way.

captures nuanced perspectives of "the way things *really* were."[152]

White, Phillips, and Nathan help validate the literary practice as a method of conducing social research, but they also illustrate the type of ethnographical "data" that literary works encompass. This is particularly useful for the study of literary utopia, because utopian works are both figurative representations of humanity *and* extra-textual contemplations of human experiences (though not always addressed as *realism*). Utopians collect ethnographical data about human communities in direct *and* indirect ways. The notion that "truth" has multiple forms helps substantiate how utopia, which straddles reality and fiction (both literally and figuratively), contributes knowledge in numerous domains, at once. This perspective furthermore validates the ecological framework as the proper tool for exploring the utopian genre. Generally speaking, as works of narrative fiction, literary utopias conduct research in much the same way as other qualitative studies, but as works of human ecology, literary utopia contributes a wide variety of social data, stemming from its dialectical approach.

Modern Utopia

Why "Modern" Utopia?

The concept of "modern" utopia was inspired, in part, by the same philosophical underpinnings that encouraged nineteenth-century scientists to interpret natural history as a dynamic *process*.[153] It was also fueled by the notion that utopia must be questioned and

[152] Nathan quoting Hayden White. *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 122.

[153] This concept emerged gradually in the final decades of the nineteenth century, alongside other evolutionary/temporal definitions of progress. Though not termed as such until H.G. Wells' description

openly skeptical of its own pursuits, thus, modern utopia is cognizant of its transitional status and confident in its self-critical approach. Miguel Abensour identifies a "new utopian spirit" emerging after 1848, as a response to dialectical emancipation. He describes this new iteration of utopia as a "movement of suspicion of utopia within utopian culture, as if utopia had integrated its enemies' arguments into its approach without renouncing its primary aim or resigning itself to the end of utopia."[154] Modern utopia was prepared to dispel utopian myths, locate blind spots that had caused it to unnecessarily repeat mistakes, and invest in new forms of critical dialog.[155] The "new utopian spirit" that Abensour describes is, of course, a gradual development. It starts to noticeably make an appearance in utopian non-fiction and literary utopia following major revolutionary and Socialist advancements, in the 1840s.[156]

The modern utopian mission was thrust forward amid a flurry progress and conflict. The nineteenth century was an era of marked social improvement in the United States, Britain, and Europe. By the latter half of the century, social reform and human rights projects, Socialism, education reform, scientific and industrial innovations, and Progressive Era ambitions were testaments to human capacity, and resulted in a growing confidence in human agency. Despite this progress, it was also a period fraught with contention—gender inequality, racial tensions (in American, a failed Reconstruction effort), poor urban living conditions, ill treatment of laborers, and the widening disparity

---

around the turn-of-the-century, "modern utopia" is used to here (though as retronym) to indicate the continuity in this utopian trajectory.

[154] Abensour, "Persistent Utopia," *Constellations*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (2008), 415.

[155] Abensour, 415.

[156] Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier, and Robert Owen headed it off in the early-nineteenth century and utopians such as Joseph Dejacque and William Morris followed suit.

between the rich and poor. This combination of advancement and discord invigorated utopians to challenge the discrepancy between what *was* and what *could be*. In keeping with this energized spirit, utopians began to uphold a higher expectation of cultural discourse, like literature.

By the late-nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century, intellectuals were enamored with the concept of *dynamic* utopia. Though it can be argued that utopia has always been dynamic, based on its function as speculative sociology, it was not until this point that *modern* utopians began to imbibe this aspect of their work. Just as social issues were a fluid and developing reality, now too was the duty of utopia. A "kinetic" and "reflexive" (to borrow Wells' descriptors) utopia was transpiring around the turn of the century.[157]

H.G. Wells famously introduced the concept of "modern utopia" in his identically titled novel-commentary hybrid, *A Modern Utopia* (1908). In it, he declares that a new utopia is in order—"modern utopia must not be static, but kinetic, must shape not as a permanent state, but as a hopeful stage, leading to a long ascent of stages."[158] Levitas verifies the "kinetic" aspect of modern utopia when she remarks that "it intends change."[159]

---

[157] Utopian characters were introduced to education and empowering situations which reveal a confidence in human agency and a real shift from a "god-ordained" understanding of existence to one where humans were instruments of their own destinies. Modern utopia becomes conscious of its own process and begins to reflexively examine its own function.

[158] Herbert George Wells. *A Modern Utopia*. 1908. (Reprinted Lexington: Forgotten Books, 2008), 6.

[159] Levitas, 2013, 15.

> Just as the education of desire aims implicitly or explicitly at social transformation and the instauration of concrete utopia, [this] interrogation intends change, not least in our encounter with human others.[160]

Modern utopia is 'persistent utopia' (Miguel Abensour's term) because it is a "genuinely utopian *recurrent gesture* towards exit, toward an open not yet."[161]

Developments in the human sciences also gave intellectuals a new way to understand utopia. Academic disciplines, like ecology, helped give utopia voice and clarity, and were pertinent tools for its own self-exploration.[162] In essence, modern utopia performs a sociological study of itself. It is self-aware and interested in how the dissemination of its ideas is in conversation with modernity. Modern utopia is consciously dialectic.

The arrival of the modern utopia is a particularly constructive moment in the history of literary utopia, because as a self-aware endeavor, modern utopia is better able to describe its intentions and articulate what the utopian genre explores. As the human sciences concurrently developed, utopia was inundated with tools for examining society and its very own process. As a sociological study, it even reflects scientific progress and how society attempts to understand what this new knowledge means and how it can be used.[163] Modern utopia speaks a universal language that helps describe what is

---

[160] Levitas, 2013, 15. Levitas remarking on George Steiner's comments about art forms and transcendence.

[161] Ibid., 115, [emphasis added]. Persistent Utopia," *Constellations*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (2008), 415.

[162] The intersection of human science and utopia becomes rather prevalent at this time. As the human sciences develop, the language that emerges so accurately describes what utopia *does*. Likewise, utopia (though less respected) becomes a mirror for what is taking shape in the human sciences. Trends in academic study (behavioral psychology and environmental ecology to name two) appear in the methodology of utopian literature. This undeniable intellectual overlap is discussed in chapter four.

[163] Utopia is utilized as a way to fathom impending (unprecedented and sometimes frightening) developments in technological, industrial, and medical "progress." These developments cause people question human dignity and ethical conflict. The ecological framework utopia employs allows people to

happening across disciplines and across relationships. This "coming of age" of literary utopia is truly revealing of its ecological structure.*

Selections for this Project

The texts selected for this project demonstrate a direct engagement with the utopian *process* and with concurrent social movements. Each of these "modern" texts is self-aware and demonstrates this through various story elements and rhetorical strategies. Utilizing the ecological framework, the following chapters unpack a different aspect of the innovative utopian dialectic. In chapter three, *Mizora* and *News From Nowhere* help examine cross-disciplinary relationships and internal/textual dialog; in chapter four, *Walden Two* and *Ecotopia* focus on genre adaptation and the authors' dialog with the culture of their time; and in chapter five, *Never Let Me Go* demonstrates the necessary ethical dialog that persists within the genre, across time.

Each of these utopian authors was engaged in the *process* of reform and scientific progress, and the examples outlined here illuminate this fact. These texts are portals to

---

visualize "concrete" realities and the full spectrum of the interconnected web of human structures, and explore outcomes and impact of complete systems. This existential tool is discussed in chapter five.

* A separate but related note: Recent work in the field of science fiction criticism has renewed interest the affinities between utopia and science fiction. Science fiction scholars credit Wells with merging the two genres and, interestingly enough, pinpoint a similar moment in history as the dawn of "modern utopia" (though SF scholars term it science-fictional utopia). In his essay, "Science Fiction and Utopia: A Historico-Philosophical Overview," part of the *Learning From Other Worlds* (2000) anthology, Carl Freedman argues that Wells rebranded utopia and introduced a critical component. He contends that while earlier works of utopia produced estrangement, they did not produce the necessary cognitive (or critical) effect to be considered scientific. He attributes this limitation to the generic conventions utopia often adheres to—conventions he's see as poetic (and thus monolithic in the Bakhtinian sense) and not dialogical. He thus includes William Morris' *News From Nowhere* among the "pre-critical" texts. What makes Freedman's work particularly interesting is that he offers yet another guise to the *new and vibrant* form of utopia emerging just before the turn of the twentieth century. Wells saw "modern utopia" as the proper form of sociology, Moylan describes "critical utopia" as self-reflexive, and Freedman identified "science-fictional utopia" as the turning point for the genre. All of these scholars are describing the same event, but from different perspectives.

identifying and analyzing the anxieties, values, and aspirations of utopian authors and the groups of people they represent.

Utopia Onward

Utopia has endured a long-standing negative reputation and the following chapters aim to rectify this by demonstrating how the ecological framework provides an enlightened perspective of how utopia functions. Utopia has been dismissed as frivolous content and not seen, outside the Utopian Studies community, for its critical component or its invitation to dialog, problems solving, and others ways of being. It has been rejected as a form of model building because it has been interpreted as an "end goal," specific and inflexible, and not appreciated for the more complex thought experiment it truly is. Nor is it valued for its ability to provide articulation for issues too nuanced to study quantitatively. Scholars get hung up on the "plans" utopians propose without engaging in the function utopia performs. They are so distracted by *how* an author "deals" with the crisis of the moment that they dismiss *what* the genre offers—this is shortsighted. It is time to reinterpret the utopian enterprise.

Chapter 3

Ecological Endeavors: Disciplines and Dialectic in Mary E. Bradley Lane's *Mizora* and William Morris' *News from Nowhere*

> [W]e are not students of some subject matter but students of problems. And problems may cut right across the borders of any subject matter or discipline.
>
> -Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*

Thus far, this study has illustrated the genealogy of the uses of ecology, tracing its application in both the natural and social sciences. This study has also demonstrated how the ecological framework may be used to study the *function* of utopian literature. This chapter separates literary utopia into its disciplinary and dialectical components in order to more closely explore the relationships an ecological perspective reveals.

It is no coincidence that modern utopia corresponded with major developments in the human sciences. As academic scientists were finding ways to communicate discoveries about the human condition, humanists were translating those developments into a "literature of ideas."[164] Because utopia reflects the context of its time, progress in these fields afforded utopians a self-awareness that served as a powerful tool for articulation and for analyzing the utopian mission. The common ethos that began to emerge among intellectuals in the late-nineteenth century marks a lucid historical

[164] Edward James uses this term in "Before the Novum," in *Learning From Other Worlds*, 25. This term is used to describe estranged genres, such as science fiction and utopia. More on this overlap later in this chapter.

moment for the study of literary human ecology.[165] The utopian thought-experiment was (as it had always been) a natural intersection for scholarship to collide. The ecological framework highlights many of these cross-disciplinary conversations taking place in utopia.

This chapter focuses on the ecological relationships present in literary utopia and precisely which disciplines and proto-disciplines debut in the utopian context. Using Mary Bradley Lane's *Mizora* (1880) and William Morris' *News from Nowhere* (1890) as the basis of this survey, this chapter examines the areas of study utopias communicate and the issues explored in these speculative scenarios. It also demonstrates the ecological framework at play by identifying the dialectical aspects of literary utopia, via historical and social commentary, comparison and estrangement, cultural dialog, and private (or individual) epiphany. This chapter is divided into three main sections: an examination of the disciplinary and dialectical components present in literary utopia, a review of the status of literary utopia during the late-nineteenth century, and finally an analysis of the disciplinary and dialectical components at play in two utopian works.

Employing the ecological framework provides an opportunity to work backward; utilizing what is currently being studied in the human sciences to help identify instances of proto-disciplinary study in works of literary utopia.[166] In doing so, this study intends to demonstrate that these utopian antecedents are early contributors to human science.

---

[165] Scientists, philosophers, historians, activists, and writers (especially authors of *modern* utopian works) alike were emphasizing dynamic processes and cohesive and self-aware, humanistic study. Though he rejected the *label* himself, the Pragmatist tradition, most famously espoused by Charles S. Peirce, was also gaining ground by the 1870s.

[166] While many of the natural sciences, mathematics, and medicine had already established themselves as academic disciplines before the nineteenth century, the social sciences were making their way into the university in the late-nineteenth century.

While this practice could be mistaken for a retrospective labeling of sorts, the intention here is not to merely ascribe attributes to unconscious "proto-science." Instead, attention is drawn to the ways in which the many disciplines inherent in literary utopia reflect and address the same issues the formal sciences do. Furthermore, this chapter is not an attempt to reprise, in great detail, specific disciplinary analysis of the selected utopian texts, but to demonstrate how the ecological framework works as a uniting principle.[167]

It is important to reiterate that this study does not intend to evaluate or impose judgment on the worlds presented in the selected utopian works. The aim here is to exhibit the ways in which the ecological framework provides a deeper understanding of the function of utopia. Thus, relevant historical context, social commentary and rhetorical strategy, reader response, and scholarly viewpoints will be addressed as a way to examine this framework in action, not an attempt to discount or praise any of the specific depictions of the imagined "other." This study does not attempt to qualify a "proper" utopian design.

Human Sciences Explored in Literary Utopia

An ecological analysis of utopia begins with the identification of the major areas or categories of study explored by this genre. From there, it is possible to address the specific issues a text examines and determine which disciplines work to understand

[167] Various scholars have conducted disciplinary analysis for both *Mizora* and *News from Nowhere*. For example, many of these texts' themes pertaining to individual, social, and natural relationships (like gender, education, technology, labor, land use, and capitalism) have been examined via critical studies. While this chapter will reference those studies to make points about the disciplines and relationships present in utopian works, the role of this chapter is more to demonstrate how the ecological framework ties together many existing research projects to reveal a richer understanding of the function of literary utopia.

particular problems/questions invoked by utopia.[168] As studies in human ecology, utopian works can be divided into four main categories of operation: those representing the individual, society, nature, and the utopian other. Each of these categories addresses specific historical problems and employs different modes of analysis (what eventually developed into the combined human sciences—behavioral, social, natural, and humanistic disciplines). Figure 6 (below) outlines both the disciplinary *intersections* and *departures* apparent within the typical utopian work.[169]

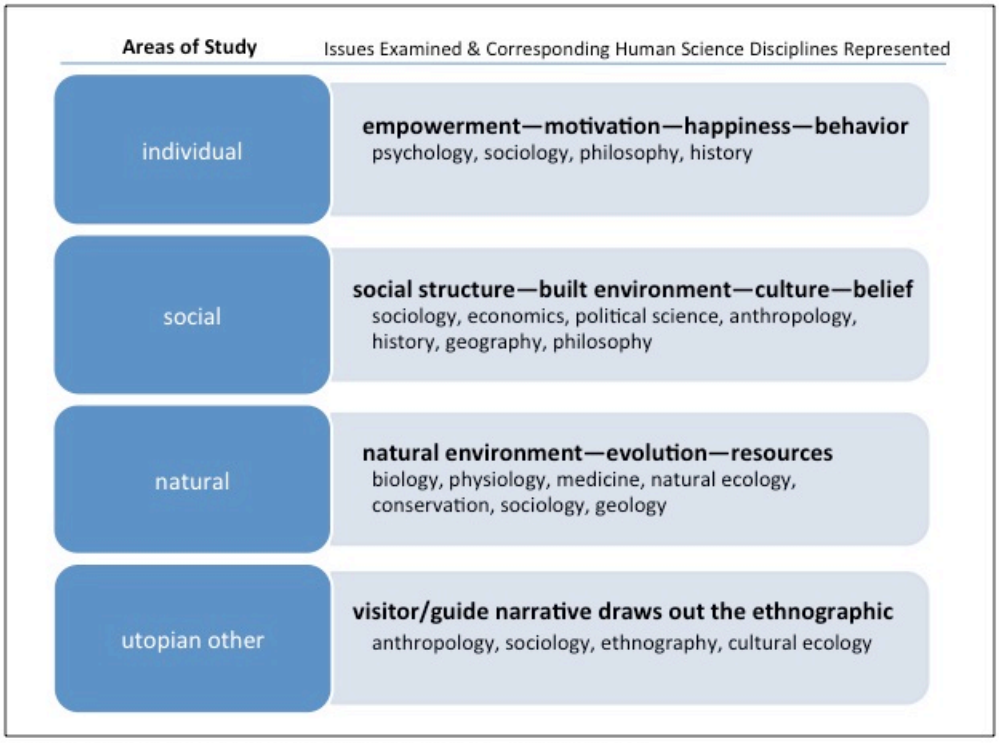

Figure 6. Human Sciences Explored in Literary Utopia, Sarah Minegar

Ruth Levitas' imaginary reconstitution of society (IROS) is a useful premise to begin examining the disciplines at work in utopia. As an IROS, utopia is broken down

[168] Though some of these literary works predate formal academic study in certain areas, they were doing the work of human ecology long before it joined the academy.

[169] Figure 6 also demonstrates that certain areas of study are "covered"/explored by numerous disciplines, while other areas of study are exclusively the domain of specific disciplines.

into its functional components, a tool for: analyzing (archeology), evaluating/interpreting (ontology), and constructing images of society (architecture). These functional components have a role in identifying a problem (challenge to current beliefs/practices), performing a critique via the comparison of "other" (inducement to cognitive estrangement), and in inviting readers to act (encouraging dialog and problem solving). Utopians questions how the current way of doing things might "become and be otherwise, and how [it] *should* be," focusing on the transition between 'is' and 'ought,' the hallmark of sociological study. [170] The subject of utopia is "big picture" society and as Levtias remarks, "is always essentially an attempt to establish the *institutional* basis of the good life, of happiness, and the *social conditions* of grace."[171] This is certainly true, but utopia digs deeper. Utopia is also about human adaptation to change and thus the evolving conditions that precipitate social behavior and the relationships between individuals, groups, and nature are also contributors to the "big picture." Sociologists are quite aware of these intersecting factors and as an academic field sociology is rather interdisciplinary on its own. While sociology is undoubtedly the common thread in utopia (utopias are socio-political studies), an ecological perspective challenges scholars to examine other disciplines (sociology, psychology, geography, and biology, etc.), and their various intersections, more minutely.

Scholars tend to examine literary utopia with specific issues in mind—thus, scholars will select story elements aligned with their disciplinary lens. After all, "[o]ne of the reasons why people work with different definitions of utopia is because they are

---

[170] Levitas, 2013, 66.

[171] Levitas, 2013, 65, [emphasis added].

asking different questions."[172] This, of course, is why scholarly interpretations are so specialized.[173] Psychologists will hone in on motivation and empowerment; sociologists and historians will examine historical context, culture, and economics; biologists will look into resource use and evolution; and humanists will focus on the existential and ethnographic components.[174] The ecological framework attempts to study these disciplines independently and in congress. It is utopia's literary mode that makes this task possible. Utopia is the site where the "Two Cultures" *do* converge and produce a fruitful examination of society and the underlying relationships that fuel it.[175]

Dialectical Aspects[176]

In order to establish a structure on which the ecological framework might perform, the previous section introduced the disciplinary areas apparent within literary utopia. This section addresses the ecological framework at play within these texts by demonstrating the interrelationships between disciplines (and the issues they contemplate) and other dialectical components of the utopian structure. The term dialectical is used here to describe dialog in general and dialogic used to convey a continual conversation with other works and historical quandaries of other times. As an

[172] Levitas, 1990, 179.

[173] They are asking different questions and thus examining different clues.

[174] Specific examples of this disciplinary allegiance is demonstrated later in this chapter.

[175] Literary utopia necessarily joins the sciences and the humanities.

[176] Dialectical is used here in the Socratic tradition, not in the Hegelian sense of resolution of contradiction via the contemplation of opposites. Hegel's dialectic is, however, useful to the utopia project. Ernst Bloch uses the dialectic to describe the journey from discontent to utopian hope. Miguel Abensour uses it to examine the destructive reversal of emancipation and the utopian duty to create "lines of flight" which repair this reversal.

example of human ecology, utopia exhibits both dialectical and dialogical aspects, as part of the *present* commentary and contemplation of "other" (dialectic) and in a forever changing relationship with *past* and *future* cultural interpretations, in a dynamic feedback loop (dialogic).[177]

Three features of literary utopia have been identified throughout this study: an identification of a problem, critique via the comparison of "other," and an invitation to act. These conceptual groupings are very handy when examining the dialog occurring in literary utopia. The following discussion focuses on the ways in which utopian works analyze the present (and the "cycles of influence" that are the foundations of the present historical context), the comparison and commentary they put forth, and the resulting productive estrangement and personal investment they inspire in their readers. The dialectical components are likewise divided into three segments for consideration: Cycle of Influence, Commentary/Comparison, and Estrangement/Dialog. It is, however, important to note that these dialectical components are fluid and thus intersect variably. The following discussion (and figure 7, below) segments these components in order to demonstrate them in action.

[177] The concept of dialogism was introduced by Russian philosopher, Mikhail Bakhtin, in his influential book, *The Dialogic Imagination* (1918). This concept contends that there are social relations inherent in speech and language and that dialogic speech involves a multiplicity of voices. Bakhtin viewed literary forms such as poetry, as monolithic, and forms like prose fiction as dialogic because it is connected to historical realities and has etymological and social meanings. Dialogical works are perpetually debating and not merely affirming a single view. General definition from Dialogic. (2012). In *Key Terms in Literary Theory.* Retrieved from http://www.credoreference.com.ezproxy.drew.edu/entry/contlt/dialogic. *Modern utopia is consciously dialogical, insisting it never conforms to a final "truth," but perpetually challenges and revises itself.

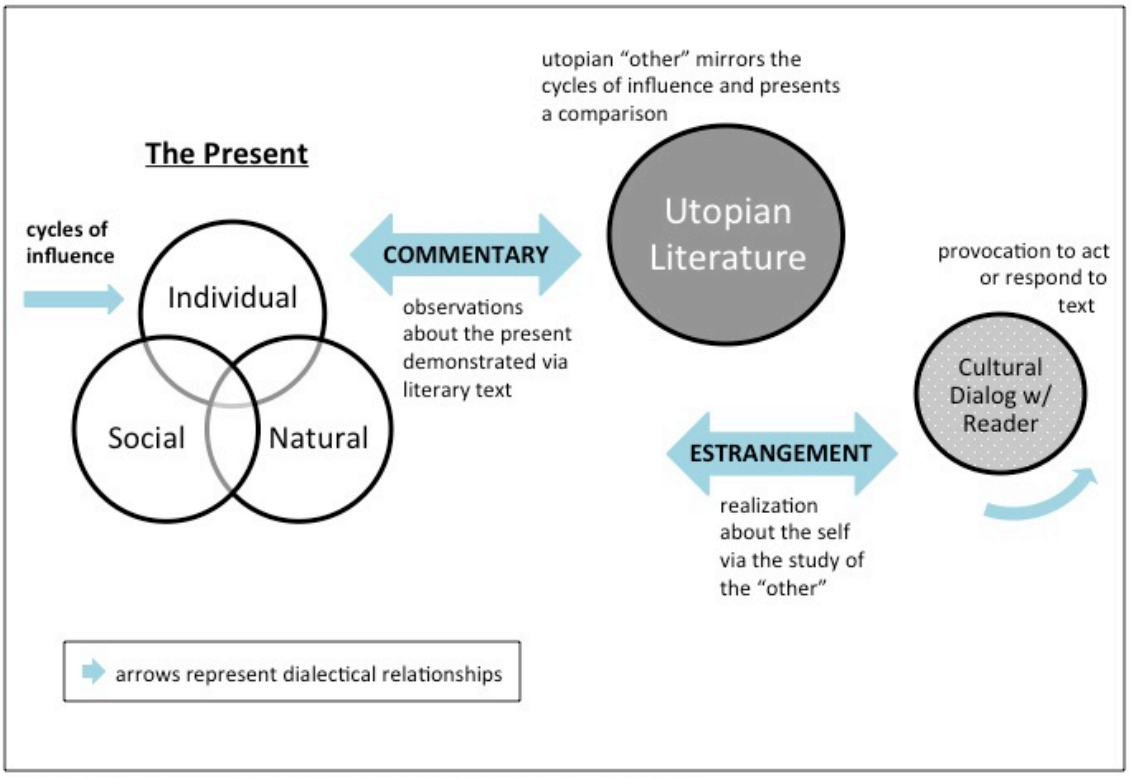

Figure 7. Ecological Framework at Play in Literary Utopia, Sarah Minegar

Cycles of Influence

The human community, at its most basic level, is a composition of individuals, social groupings, and the surrounding natural and built environments. The ways in which individuals interact with and relate to their natural, social, and built environments is the basis of human ecology. The first priority of utopia is to analyze these relationships as they occur in real life, identify problems, and pondering how they might be arranged differently.

Utopians examine the cycles of influence at play within three main areas of study—the individual, social, and natural. For example, one could examine how physiological conditions might impact the individual, which in turn influences behavior

and ability to interact socially. Or how social conventions and political arrangements impact emotional response and influence psychological wellbeing and individual happiness. Or how natural resources contribute to health, which in turn informs community choices that personally impact individuals. The cycles of influence are numerous and represent an incalculable number of interrelationships. Literary utopia mirrors these cycles of influence by adding a fourth area of study, the utopian other. The utopian other presents an alternate depiction of society, and thus an alternate example of the cycles of influence at work.

In their attempt at presenting a synthesized and holistic "big picture" society, literary utopia contemplates how changes in one or more areas might impact other areas. Thus, utopians explore the consequences of adjustments in circumstance on the big picture. For example, in *Mizora*, Lane considers the repercussions of universal education in various aspects of life. The interplay between various individual, social, and natural pressures is considered. Similarly, *News from Nowhere* proposes that a bioregional restructuring of communities will produce healthier and happier individuals.[178]

It is interesting then to see how these cycles of influence play out in different scenarios. This mode of qualitative study highlights probable networks of consequence and provides a template for in-depth analysis. When scholars are able to incorporate historical analysis and quantitative research into their utopian visions, the literary landscape becomes a territory ripe with insight.

[178] Specific examples from both of these texts are examined, in detail, in the final section of this chapter.

Commentary/Comparison

Literary utopia's second dialectical "phase" is its presentation of social commentary via comparison. This facet of the utopian project gives an author the opportunity to react to events, ideas, laws, ideologies, injustice, or circumstances of life that need questioning or improvement. The commentary aspect of utopia might be its most ubiquitously recognized function. What many critics of utopia do not fully appreciate is what commentary of this variety initiates—estrangement, emotional provocation, and dialog. Instead, scholars tend to focus on evaluating the imagined worlds and searching for flaws in their design. While many are careful to acknowledge that utopian authors are steeped in the context of their intellectual interpretations of "progress" and those philosophies that were acceptable and fathomable at the time, critics do not always move past a text's face value. The satirical elements of these texts are often misread, downplayed, or dismissed. Likewise, the notion that controversial ideas might be brought up merely in an attempt to provoke readers, and not to represent an author's values, is even less often addressed.

Modern utopia is intentionally critical of the utopian process and may call to light rather challenging problems. Authors often invite discussion without ever intending to provide an answer (i.e. they pose a challenge), thus demonstrating the complexity of the contentious issues that these texts address. In fact, modern works are sometimes difficult to pinpoint as fully utopian or dystopian. A great many works are slanted in one direction or the other, while remaining skeptical and unwilling to wholeheartedly endorse a way of being. Others may be decided on certain points, but cautious in their representation of select topics. It is also common for utopians to include story elements that present one

perspective but imply change and revaluation. Ruth Levitas's emphasis on the architectural function of utopia highlights the important role of *comparison* via the *construction* of another way of being. Utopian comparisons are full-bodied, anticipate cycles of influence, and like the real worlds they mimic, are complex and impossible to typify.

Estrangement/Cultural Dialog

The opportunity to learn from other worlds is perhaps the most illuminating aspect of literature. Literary fiction takes the journey one step further by offering worlds that do not exist in any place or time. Utopia offers a voyage to a place that is strange and foreign, but where you might recognize yourself in the other. Utopia (modern utopia, in particular) is expert in the technique of "cognitive estrangement."[179]

In 1979, literary scholar, Darko Suvin, offered an innovative interpretation of science fiction, in his celebrated *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*. This text enlivened the field of science fiction criticism and helped distinguish science fiction from fantasy. It also contributed the theory of cognitive estrangement, which asserts that "by imagining strange worlds we come to see our own conditions of life in a new and potentially revolutionary perspective."[180] Why his work has bearing on literary utopia is the link between these two modes of speculative fiction. These two genres are married in their

[179] Cognitive estrangement is a critical theory coined by Darko Suvin and used within the Science Fiction and Utopian communities to explore various potentialities imbibed in speculative fiction, namely the experience of learning about oneself through another. It will be discussed henceforth in some detail.

[180] Patrick Parrinder summarizing cognitive estrangement. "Introduction: Learning From Other Worlds." *Learning From Other Worlds: Estrangement, Cognition and the Politics of Science Fiction and Utopia.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 1-16.

functional sense (they perform cultural critique, compare, estrange, and invite participation) and aside from having "distinctive values, interests, and priorities," they operate much the same.[181] Though scholars debate which genre is a subcategory of the other and which texts are appropriately labeled "science-fiction," "utopia," "science-fictional utopia," "utopian with science fiction themes," etc., these two distinct genres intersect on many levels.[182] The two genres share antecedent texts that go back to Thomas More (probably further), they "bring together description and prescription," and as critical and interpretive disciplines, they are constantly reshaped by the *new* works that enter their canon.[183] Another significant overlap is the "commitment to visions of human transformation" that both utopia and science fiction imply.[184] Just as Ernst Bloch understood utopias to be instinctively hopeful, even in their negative articulations (as in dystopias), science fiction too has a hopeful tone—a futurity, commitment to moving forward, and desire for dialog. And not surprisingly, the two are united by the science that frames them—they both practice human ecology.

The "literature of estrangement" is also interconnected because the narrative practice is central to its approach. Although as concepts, scientific invention and utopia might exist in various modes (as philosophy or theory or lived experiment), it is the narrative practice and the fictive mode that provides the articulation necessary to open

---

[181] Science fiction scholars will generally argue that literary utopia did not reach a comparatively critical stage in its development until H.G. Wells' famed *The Time Machine* (1895). Critical utopian works after this time are considered "science-fictional utopias," SF's brand of "modern utopia."

[182] There is also debate as to when the utopian genre reached its maturity, as a critical genre, and was regarded as *part of* science fiction. Similarly, questions surround which texts and critics helped shift the "utopian" label from pejorative to complementary. Refer to Learning *From Other Worlds*, "Before the Novem" (James) and "Science Fiction and Utopia" (Freedman).

[183] Parrinder, 3.

[184] Ibid.

new worlds and new ways of thinking.[185] Not tethered down by politics or the restrictions inherent in the real world, these works of criticism are mobilized to achieve in unprecedented ways.

Novelists like Italio Calvino have praised the textual (documentary) character of works of scientific writing, such as Galileo's observations. He describes aptly this type of literary work as "a map of the world and of the knowable."[186] Patrick Parrinder points out that writing as such is a cognitive labor driven by the thirst for knowledge and the experience of being on the cusp of realization. Quoting Calvino, he describes the innovation in literature that makes the unfathomable "tangible" and enables immeasurable potentialities.

> When I read Galileo I like to seek out the passages in which he speaks of the moon. It is the first time the moon becomes a real object for mankind, and it is minutely described as a tangible thing, yet as soon as the moon appears one feels a kind of rarefaction, almost levitation, in Galileo's language. One rises with it into an enchanted state of suspension.[187]

Galileo's work contributed to an expanded notion of possibility; he reinvigorated the debate surrounding "plural worlds." Ideas like his "make" new realities—motivations, concepts, theories, discoveries, inventions, etc. Likewise, literary utopia creates new realities.

---

[185] Estrangements and ethical/emotional provocations are perhaps the most persuasive at inviting action. The primary action these devices invite are mental/thought actions and scholarly debate, but occasionally (particularly when a work is tied to a current social or political movement), these works provide impetus for protest, written response, and even life changes (as with lived communitarian experiments).

[186] Parrinder, 5, quoting Italio Calvino, "Two Interviews on Science and Literature," *The Literature Machine: Essays* (London: Vintage, 1997), 31-32.

[187] Calvino, Ibid.

Parrinder demonstrates the inimitable dialog conducted through the medium of text by alluding to the generations of intellectuals who join the literary conversation. Using the Galilio example again, he remarks that Galilo's discoveries consisted of "what he [was] able to write down, not what he literarily [saw] through the telescope, and Kepler's and Campanella's 'conversations' [were] entirely conducted through the medium of text." The further removed from Galilio's text, the more his work is "mediated and reformulated through the collective imagination."[188] Similarly, the dialogical quality of estranged genres keeps texts in conversation with each other and enables new developments and interpretations to reshape former iterations. This is precisely why modern utopia is so instructive and applicable to older texts—the insights modern utopia has afforded the utopian genre help scholars review older works with fresh perspectives. Modern utopia has clued scholars into how literary utopia functions and the ways in which it may be reflexive and dynamic. Modern utopia helps articulate its generic forerunners.

The words of the texts themselves, however, are not the only transforming quality of the *novum*. "Cognitive estrangement necessarily implies a state of partial and imperfect knowledge. It is the result of coming to understand what is just within, and was formerly beyond, our mental horizons."[189] It satisfies the human desire to know something more than is currently known and "promises communicable, rational discovery, not the fruits of religious revelation or of some private, indescribable mystical

[188] Parrinder, 6.

[189] Ibid., 7.

state. It is critical and argumentative as well as creative."[190] These estranging and enlightening moments produce epiphanies of sorts—altered awareness.

The estranging effect coupled with the temporal-critical dimension (the qualifying cognitive component) enables these texts to open eyes and minds in interesting new ways. Readers can identify themselves in the characters, but as new and transformed selves. Scholars like Carl Freedman recognize this critical dimension as apparent only in utopias written after the genre synthesized with science fiction; thus he attributes the advent of science fiction to the transformation of utopia into a "critical" (to borrow Moylan's term) or "modern" (to borrow Wells') utopia. Though I will not argue with the assertion that modern utopia achieves something different, that is why this study has targeted "modern" works after all, it also acknowledges that earlier texts make temporal-critical contributions. The very act of creating an imaginary reconstitution of society is critical and revolutionary, so it seems unfair to diminish pre-science-fictional texts as "pre-critical."

So What is the Result of Cognitive Estrangement?

While literary utopia utilizes the textual approach to convey new worlds, the estranging effect also communicates something beyond language. "In its ontological and epistemological aspects cognitive estrangement denotes a mode of thinking rather than a body of texts."[191] If texts are effective, this mode of thinking becomes an interpretive lens by which readers assess situations and their subsequent actions. These actions, whether internal or outwardly deed-oriented, are motivated in part by new channels of

[190] Parrinder, 8.

[191] Ibid., 6.

understanding. And as reader response research demonstrates, affected readers make contributions to the cycle of cultural ecology. Parrinder points out that "learning from other worlds is always a potentially political act as well as an adventure of disinterested cognition."[192]

Though a complete reader response study of *Mizora* and *News from Nowhere* is beyond the scope of this project, it is useful to briefly revisit the work of ecocritic Hubert Zapf and his theory of cultural ecology. Zapf identifies literature as a site where abstract cultural concepts are made tangible via "concrete" scenarios and thus fictional worlds contain familiar conditions but under new auspices, giving new meaning and resonance to "universal" human experiences. For example, these works express the conditions under which freedom and autonomy might persist, notions too immaterial to exist without context. Zapf identifies literature as one location where art is able to express the relationships between culture and nature and connect the local with the global. It is also a site where the textual and lived experiences converse and where authors journey to explore human values.[193] For these reasons, Zapf identifies an "ecological ethos" present in literature, and focuses on two important artistic innovations—the reintegration of marginalized voices and dynamism and plurality in literary interpretation.

> As a sensorium and imaginative sounding for hidden problems, deficits, and imbalances of larger culture, as a form of textuality which critically reflects and symbolically articulates what is marginalized, neglected, repressed or excluded by dominant civilizatory power structures, but is nevertheless of vital importance for an adequately complex account of humanity's existence within the fundamental culture-nature relationship. On the other hand, by breaking up closed world views and exclusionary truth-claims in favor of plural perspectives, multiple meanings, and dynamic interrelationships, literature becomes the site of constant, creative

[192] Ibid.

[193] Hubert Zapf. "Literary Ecology and the Ethics of Texts." *New Literary History* (2009): 847.

> renewal of language, perception, communication, and imagination. Literature thus fulfills a function which cannot be fulfilled in the same way by other forms of discourse, and which is indispensable for ensuring the richness, diversity, and continuing evolutionary potential of the culture as a whole.[194]

As Elizabeth Freund points out in her reader-response study, literature helps us articulate something otherwise inexpressible. This discourse is what makes the estranging effecting of literature so compelling. The participation of the reader adds another dialogical dimension, one that ensures that literature is never static. Zapf's explanation of literature as cultural ecology rather aptly applies to literary utopia, as his research furthermore demonstrates that utopia is not only ecological in content and function, but also in form. "Utopia is a public genre of civic and individual conversion."[195]

Status of Utopia: Late-Nineteenth Century

Fin de siècle utopias were part of a generation of works to receive high esteem and scholarly respect in their time. Authors were deeply engaged in social issues and often made contributions to these efforts, beyond their fictional articulations. Literary utopia was an influential subset of contemporary political literature as it was directly responding to social, moral, and political reform movements.[196] In fact, Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888) purportedly outsold the Bible[197] and remains one of

---

[194] Zapf, 2006, 4.

[195] Pfaelzer, 2001, xiv.

[196] Reform movements were taking place in the United States, Europe, and Britain, and events taking place at opposite ends of the world were impacting one another. For example, Roemer points out that the European legacies of the Enlightenment, scientific and evolutionary theories, socialism, and Christianity were all crucial influences in American utopianism (Roemer, 80). Literary utopia was an important forum for promoting and disseminating ideas.

the most popular and influential American utopian works.[198] Before the academic divide between the sciences and humanities solidified and prior to totalitarian projects forever tarnishing the utopian name, utopians were applauded for their innovation and foresight. Ruth Levitas notes that both "utopian and sociological sensibilities informed fictional and non-fictional texts" during this period.[199] She points out that texts like Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888) and *Equality* (1897), William Morris' *News from Nowhere* (1890) Emile Durkheim's *The Division of Labor in Society* (1893), Friedrich Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1895), Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Women and Economics* (1898), and H.G. Wells' *A Modern Utopia* (1905) share canonical status as works of sociology, utopianism, Marxism, and feminism.[200] The number of utopian works written during this time period is also outstanding. Based on surveys, like James Simmons's "Utopian Cycles"(1998) and Susan Matarese's *American Foreign Policy and the Utopian Imagination* (2001), at least two hundred utopias and anti-utopias were published in the United States between 1886 and the first decade of the twentieth century.[201] Lyman Tower Sargent's impressive *British and American Utopian Literature, 1516-1985: An Annotated, Chronological Bibliography* contains over three-thousand entries and reveals that the utopian boom was a transatlantic project as well.[202]

---

[197] Jean Pfaelzer. "Dreaming of a White Future: Mary E. Bradley Lane, Edward Bellamy, and the Origins of the Utopian Novel in the United States." *A Companion to the American Novel*. 1st ed. (Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 323.

[198] Roemer, 113.

[199] Levitas, 2013, 65.

[200] Ibid., 65-66.

[201] Roemer, 9.

[202] Lyman Tower Sargent. *British and American Utopian Literature, 1516-1985: An Annotated, Chronological Bibliography*. (London: Garland, 1989).

Mizora (1880) and *News from Nowhere* (1890) fall within the "modern" period for utopia and exhibit that self-critical "*new* utopian spirit" Miguel Abensour describes as present in literary utopia from the mid-nineteenth century onward.[203] These texts were also written during the golden era of print media,[204] amidst climbing literacy rates, after the establishment of public lending libraries in the United States and England[205], and in a time when confidence in the transformative power of knowledge (from books, in particular) was common.[206] In *Utopian Audiences: How Readers Locate Nowhere* (2003), Kenneth Roemer describes how these and other factors contributed to the reception of late-nineteenth-century literary utopia.

Using Bellamy's classic as his example, Roemer gives a glimpse into the world of Victorian readership. In attempt to avoid "reductionist" interpretations, he pieces together a picture of literacy as well as readers' cultural, historical, and ethical expectations of texts.[207] He contends that the publication of *Looking Backward* was a turning point for readers.[208] This work initiated an interest in reading and discussing utopian fiction because utopia was beginning to be identified as a meaningful way of "understanding past, present, and potential realities and as involving urgent and just appeals for action."

---

[203] Abensour, 2008, 414

[204] Roemer, 8. Technologies in printing, binding, and book distribution made access to printed materials much easier than in previous generations. More examples are found in William Charvat. *Literary Publishing in America: 1790-1850.*

[205] The Public Libraries Act went into effect in England, in 1850. In America, the School District Library Acts were in effect in many states by the 1850s.

[206] Roemer, 81. Reference to "book power."

[207] Roemer's study focuses primarily on middle class and aspiring middle class readers.

[208] Roemer, 72.

[209] As a result, Bellamy Clubs popped up all over the United States. *Looking Backward* was also making a splash across the Atlantic where Bellamy's brand of Christian democratic socialism was capturing the imaginations of Russia, Britain, Australia, Canada, Germany, Holland, Scandinavia, and France.[210] Industrialized Britain was particularly receptive. *Looking Backward* conveyed a general faith in technology, an appeal to the Victorian sensibilities of order and restraint, and exhibited confidence in human capability and self-reform.[211] As a case study, Bellamy's well-documented impact demonstrates that readers at this time were receptive to romantic idealizations of society that championed human agency. Bellamy had a part in initiating this conviction.[212]

Roemer also hones in on the concept of "book power" during the late-nineteenth century. He examines Ronald J. Zboray's and other literary theories about the development of the "transformative powers of books" originating during the first half of the nineteenth century.[213] These "powers" created "symbolic communities" who "had strong faith in the power of [fiction and non-fiction] books to shape lives." Roemer quotes Barbara Sichermaner's remark that "some critics and reviewers even 'maintained that the novel had replaced the sermon as the principle shaper of character.'"[214] He argues that the most influential "pre-texts" for nineteenth-century utopian readers were

---

[209] Roemer, 72.

[210] Sylvia Bowman et al present an accurate picture of influence abroad in *Bellamy Abroad* (1962). As does Csaba Toth's "Transatlantic Dialog."

[211] Roemer, chapter three.

[212] Tobbie Widdicombe's annotated bibliography demonstrates this. *Edward Bellamy: An Annotated Bibliography of Secondary Criticism.* (New York: Garland, 1988).

[213] Roemer, 84.

[214] Roemer, 85 citing Sicherman 143.

surprisingly not earlier utopias, but travel/adventure stories (though some travel/adventure stories were certainly utopian) and "domestic" or "sentimental" fiction.[215] These works very explicitly took readers to "other worlds" while affording them personal connections to the characters and situations presented. The domestication of the foreign other was (and still is) particularly powerful—this is the basis of the principle of cognitive estrangement. But attempting to precisely define the significant factors that would foster a community of prepared utopian readers is rather difficult, so Roemer approaches the problem by examining how travel and domestic texts more generally helped readers find meaningful personal and social guidance.[216] So, instead of attempting to pinpoint all the ways nineteenth-century readers "recognize[d], g[a]ve meaning to, and even act[ed] out utopian fiction," he demonstrates the generic conventions, textual cues, rhetorical strategies, and other perceptual signs that help readers (even modern readers) interpret and navigate utopia. *Looking Backward*, he demonstrates, was the perfect combination of idealism, estrangement, and the familiar (the domestic). Bellamy's work is a strong example of how modern utopias capitalized on domestic fiction's command to induce empathy and dialog; transforming literature into cultural forces by creating "an experience of deliberate intellectual uncertainty in the reader, urging and instructing him towards a self-denying visionary acquiescence of 'conversion' beyond language."[217] This innovation is what enables older works to

---

[215] Roemer, 82. Pre-texts are the reading materials that have been formative to a reader's knowledge and expectations of what printed works/literature should be and should do.

[216] Roemer, 87.

[217] Roemer, 97, quoting from Elizabeth Freund. *The Return of the Reader: Reader-Response Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1987), 98.

resonate with new audiences and is one of modern utopia's "timeless" generic conventions.

Disciplines and Dialectic Represented in *Mizora* & *News from Nowhere*[218]

Disciplines

The following section examines *Mizora* and *News from nowhere*, one area of study at a time—examining in order, the individual, social, natural, and the utopian other. This focuses on specific issues these texts address and the corresponding disciplines they cover. It also demonstrates how authors imagine these scenarios playing out, thus exploring the ecological relationships inherent within these texts. As this section covers two texts and four areas of study for each text, examples are fairly brief. The dialectical components are furthermore discussed in the second half of this chapter.

The premise for Mary E. Bradley Lane's *Mizora* is an all-female society whose inhabitants are guided by science, a commitment to education, and a strong conviction in social identity. Mizora exists at the center of the earth and is discovered by Vera Zarovitch, the female protagonist, when she is swept into a waterfall at sea and thrust into the strange world.[219] By the time the narrator reaches Mizora, it has been void of male inhabitants for three thousand years and the "burdens" of romance, reproduction, and

---

[218] The following examination divides literary utopia, ad interim, into its disciplinary and dialectical components, so the continuity of the storylines presented here may be slightly fragmented or anachronistic. This analytical mode should not, however, disrupt the argument.

[219] According to Joan Saberhagen, the hollow earth theory was a rather common literary device at this time. Though seemingly bizarre today, this theory was still of geological speculation in 1880. Saberhagen reminds readers that Edgar Allen Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1839), Lewis Caroll's Alice in Wonderland (1862), Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864), all have a similar device for exploration. Introduction to *Mizora* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1999).

childbirth have been removed from women's lives.[220] The primary issues Lane addresses pertain to the female plight during the Victorian era. Honing in on the opportunities women were denied and what the reversal of those circumstances might produce, Lane explores an enlightened and empowered new womanhood. With this she ponders the images and expectations of the female body, Republican Motherhood, matriarchy, bourgeois standards, women's work, and female intellect and independence among other things. Lane weaves other contentious social and political matters such as race (and eugenics), suffrage, patriarchy, masculine exploration and conquest, urban development, class division, and industrialism into her tale.[221] *Mizora* is a truly critical utopia, as Vera's character demonstrates both the benefits and ambivalent reality that such a static sweep of changes might yield. Lane's pioneering work is the second known feminist utopia written by a woman and predates Charlotte Perkins Gilman's similar tale, *Herland,* by thirty-five years. [222]

William Morris's socialist utopia, *News from Nowhere,* is a critique of nineteenth-century industrialism and capitalism. Morris's William Guest[223] falls asleep after returning home from a socialist league meeting and awakes in the future to experience a taste of life in a post-industrial, post-revolutionary society. His emphasis on a proletariat

---

[220] Mizorians have discovered the scientific "secret of life" and female offspring are born through an undisclosed form of parthenogenesis. (Lane, 103).

[221] These issues are in some regard timeless, as societies continually reinterpret and revise their views on home, work, and community. Though Lane's concerns are typical within the time period, her analysis is innovative.

[222] According to the chronology found in the reference dictionary, *The A-Z of Utopianism* (Plymouth: Scarcrow Press, 2009).

[223] William Guest is said to represent William Morris, as many of the events in the text closely resemble Morris' own experiences. "Guest" also reifies the visitor-guide narrative structure.

revolution and his views on capitalism and overproduction, imperialism, and family (marriage in particular), among other things, are especially telling of his Marxist leanings. His utopia is unique in that he tries to (at least partially) imagine the revolution that would lead to a new and perfect world—and the revolution he imagines is not peaceful. Morris' meta-history very closely parallels English society up until its revolutionary moment. The dialog between Morris's *News from Nowhere* and his non-fictional socialist writings provides an interesting opportunity for ecological analysis. The fact that *News from Nowhere* was written in response to an ongoing and heated discussion with fellow Socialist Leaguers concerning the shape of a post-revolutionary society, and partly in response to Edward Bellamy's highly influential book *Looking Backward*, demonstrates a literary cultural exchange.

Disciplines: Examining the Individual

The first audience an author writes for is herself, and thus utopian works express not only desire to solve problems and improve society; they are self-examinations. Both Lane and Morris write as representatives of a social cause and as acts of self-assertion, empowerment, and dignity. Kenneth Roemer's reader-response study reminds critics to consider not only the "ideal" reader and the "real" reader, but the "first" reader, the author. The first reader is a link to the personal drives of the storyteller, revealing beliefs, internal conflicts, and sometimes even a satirical side. It can also be revealing of the author's degree of conformity and participation in norms, her displaced world-view, and even her rhetorical strategy. The author places a bit of herself into the text so that she

may experience the implications of her imaginary reconstitution of society alongside her readers.

While very little is known about Mary Bradley Lane, it is still possible to explore her personally through her work.[224] Lane's utopia reads a bit like a fantastic "what if" diary, and the reader is able to catch a glimpse of the author in both Vera and the women Vera encounters. These women, part of two separate worlds, shed light onto how the author contemplates issues of empowerment, motivation, and happiness. The author explores the psychological and philosophical consequences that female sovereignty and absolute equality might have for women.

What stands out is Lane's critique of contemporary idealizations of progress. Identifying both the policies and practices that "hold women back" and the circumstances that "hold humanity back," she tries to sort through popular ideologies. The most dramatic are her examinations of education, motherhood, work, and race. She demonstrates how these may be locations of empowerment for individuals and how certain propositions might lead to extreme behaviors. These discussions are framed in terms of the history Mizorans share with contemporary women[225] and in the potential for growth and happiness women might encounter under alternative circumstances.

Lane's idealization for *individual* happiness is actually homogeny. Perhaps the

---

[224] What is known has been pieced together by scholars like Joan Saberhagen, Jean Pfaelzer, and Wendy Chmielewski. *Mizora* first appeared in serial form in the *Cincinnati Commercial* (1880-1881). It received great local response and editor Murat Halstead later republished the work in book form (1890). United States Census records reveal that Lane was the daughter of a rural doctor who served in the Union Army. Accord to Pfaelzer, she was raised in what is now Auglaize county, Ohio; taught public school in Mercer county; and married attorney and Civil-War veteran, Thomas A. Lane. Mary Lane wrote *Mizora* three years into her marriage. (Pfaelzer 2001, xiii).

[225] This meta-history of American women's struggle will be addressed later in this chapter, in a discussion of social commentary and comparison.

most jarring image modern readers confront with *Mizora* is Lane's portrayal of an all-female, white, blonde-headed society. Though feminist-matriarchal portrayals may not be unexpected, these overtly racist notions of human "advancement" might shock readers.[226] Readers are taken aback by lines like, "We believe that the highest excellence of moral and mental character is alone attainable by a fair race. The elements of evil belong to the dark race."[227] The dialectical portion of this chapter addresses the social commentary Lane is making with these story elements, but here we examine what the notion of "pure race" might mean for the individuals in Mizora. In her examination of individual members of Mizora, the author indirectly posits the idea of "absolute" equality. In her utopia, absolute equality is a result of the *elimination of difference* and *the intentional elevation* of all members of society to the highest standard of "perfection." For Victorian America, this is embodied in the chaste, white, Republican mother. Although Mizoran history would suggest that the need for this type of "perfection" would be invalid, Lane makes an appeal to her readers by bestowing the highest Victorian perfection on all of her citizens. In doing so she poses an important question about the definition of and potential price of "equality."

Lane's inquiry into absolute equality is addressed by the numerous questions her narrative implies. What happens when gender, race, and class boundaries are removed? What happens when *differences* are interpreted as *inequalities*? What if everyone could achieve the highest womanly standard? Is happiness contingent on equality? Do women

[226] According to Pfaelzer, "race" likely referred to the male species as well. By removing dark races, Mizorans were removing all "degraded" and "base" aspects of humankind. However, the ethnic purification is perhaps the most jarring of the two types of "race" in question.

[227] Lane, 1999, 92.

behave differently when they are liberated from social labels? Is human nature malleable? Through Vera, the reader gets to perform a psychological reading of Mizorans. Vera recognizes that all the women she encounters are compliant and outwardly and expressively content. Though *individuals* are happier in Mizora, *individuality* is not prized in the same way in Mizora as it is in Vera's homeland, and Mizorans possess a completely different world-view of social obligation. Mizorans believe the individual is better adjusted when not forced to compete and compare. While Vera is impressed by much of their world, she is also perplexed, especially by the eugenic project that has taken place, as she herself is of dark complexion. Again, this harkens back to the price of equality.

Mizoran women are able to express themselves in many ways despite their overwhelming homogeneity, and Lane helps her female readers vicariously experience alterity by walking them through the daily life of an educated, liberated, and autonomous *individual*. Lane demonstrates how a rehabilitated history might change the entire trajectory of women's experiences. Her characters' altered lives stem from a legacy of altered motivations, power arrangements, and existential beliefs. Lane embraces the notion of expansion and "progress" but imagines it on a woman's terms, not in the traditional fashion of the masculine conquest. Layered with Vera's responses, the provocative scenarios that play out give the reader the tools to read the work (and thus similar historical scenarios) as a psychologist or sociologist might. Vera's visits with the Preceptress serve as guides to readers—glimpses into the intellectual, mental, and emotional domains that women have been kept from.

Lane also focuses on female autonomy. Not only are Mizoran women entitled to the profits of their own volition, they are also in complete ownership of their bodies.[228] Lane has removed her characters from sexual contact, in marriage and from the dangers of unwanted advances, and allows science to handle the business of reproduction. As desexualized beings, Mizoran women are liberated from their obligatory sex function in society and are free from imposed bodily regulation. Women are no longer available for conquest. Pfaelzer remarks, "Parthenogenesis engenders a fundamental epistemological shift in Mizora: with their biology no longer excluding women from the activities and processes of knowing, men have lost their stance as the knowers, and hence, women have lost their stance as that which is known."[229] Mizorans are not told how to carry themselves and their notion of beauty is founded in medical science. "They considered a large waist a mark of beauty, as it gave a greater capacity for lung power; and they laid the greatest stress upon the health and size of the lungs."[230] In Mizora, women become more than keepers of the homefront and republican mothers—more than physical embodiments of the domestic life, morals, and fertility. Lane blurs the boundaries between the private and public lives of Mizorans. She elevates "homemaking" to a professional and scientific occupation. The home is no longer a site of oppression and occupations outside the home no longer excluded from women. "When the private is

[228] While Mizoran women are in control of their physical bodies because no one individual has reason to act upon another, they have, ironically, been scientifically perfected at the genetic level. Like their earthling counterparts, however, the locus of control is the same for Mizorans—neither humans nor Mizorans get a say in their *own* genetic composition.

[229] Pfaelzer, 2001, xxx.

[230] Mizora, 20.

again public, woman finds a state of her own."[231] Likewise, Lane redeems motherhood. Lane's enlightened motherhood is discussed in the following examination of the social aspects of Mizora.

Mary Lane's *Mizora* proposes a different definition of the individual; Mizoran individuals find identity as equal members of the collective society. This baseline or leveling of the playing field affords them the freedom to enrich themselves personally—being the *same* allows them to be *unique*.

English activist William Morris is most commonly known for his work as an artist, architect, manufacturer and designer, but he was also an influential writer, thinker and socialist. In 1883, Morris made the transition from Pre-Raphaelite "aesthete" to revolutionary socialist.[232] That year he joined H.M. Hyndman's Democratic Federation[233] (later the Social Democratic Federation) and began actively writing for its publication, *Justice*.[234] One year later, after the dissolution of the SDF, he helped found the Socialist League. From 1885 until 1890 he served as editor of *Commonweal*, of which he was also an active contributor, and until his death in 1896, Morris published numerous pieces on the topic of socialism.[235]

---

[231] Pfaelzer, 2001, xxv.

[232] Krishan Kumar ed. William Morris. "Introduction" *News From Nowhere*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) xii.

[233] Krishan Kumar notes that in this same year (1883) the Democratic Federation formally declared itself Marxist. Ibid.

[234] In the Cambridge University edition of *News From Nowhere*, scholar Krishan Kumar provides a helpful chronology of the life and works of William Morris. The William Morris Society website provides further information. Available at: http://www.morrissociety.org/

[235] It is in essays like "How We Live and How We Might Live" (1884) and "What Socialists Want" (1887) and poems like "The Day is Coming" (1894) and "The March of the Workers" (1894) where

Although Morris' political agenda is quite apparent in *News from Nowhere*, his utopia considers how these political changes might impact *individuals*. As Morris' William Guest explores the future, he finds to his delight that industrial capitalism and private property have been done away with, and with those changes so too the economic and family structures Guest once knew. *News from Nowhere* is a space for Morris to demonstrate what a post-revolutionary, socialist society might look like, and how individuals might evolve as a result of this progress.

One of the most interesting aspects of Morris's future society is its absence of (then) modern technology—a common feature in literary utopia. Though set in the future, Morris's utopia resembles a likeness to the fourteenth-century England. This reflects Morris's tastes in art and architecture, but also allows him to return the people (albeit an enlightened people) to a more "primitive"/ pure state—a place he saw fitting for communism to thrive. The new society has dramatically cut back on industrial production and relies considerably on the trades of craftsmen and women—true artists by Morris's estimation. Its people are enlightened, contented, and robust; poverty is a plague of the past. Urban areas are clean, sparsely populated (in comparison to the nineteenth century), and void of industrial grime (upon the invention of a new source of power—not clarified, but possibly electricity). Homes are modest in size, yet ornate in design, revealing society's devotion to craftsmanship—a testament to the marriage of art and work. Just as in Mary Lane's portrayal, the *individual* in Morris's utopia identifies with the *social* group, and as an equal, noncompetitive, and unhampered member of society, the individual is free to pursue *personal* enrichment.

Morris's passion for the socialist cause is most fervent.

One way Morris attempts to "unhamper" his new society is by removing private ownership and inheritance. In this utopia, private property has been abolished, currency is no longer valid (or even understood), and after a long and complicated revolution, England is operating successfully under communism. Perhaps the most striking different between Morris and Bellamy was Morris' rejection of mass production as the way to human salvation. Morris' bucolic and slow-paced England is nearly the opposite of Bellamy's efficient, industrialized Boston. By slowing down the pace of life and redirecting his characters' motives, Morris attempts to model alternatives for his readers.

One model Morris demonstrated was a revolutionized system of labor. This was perhaps his most significant goal for improving the lives of individuals. Morris' stance on labor was unique within socialist camps. Being that he was an artist before he was a socialist, William Morris's perspective on the role of art in society was slightly different than that of more utilitarian-minded socialists. Although he shared with other socialists the beliefs that gross overproduction of wares was wasteful and that dull and exhausting work was damaging and unproductive, he took a different stance on the value of "useful labour" and the way it should operate. Like other socialists, Morris believed that work should be equally distributed among members of society and that no person should have to work to the benefit of another.[236] But while other socialists were championing programs to shorten the working day, Morris was prescribing a new work ethic. He proposed that work be pleasurable, useful[237], and involve variety, because he believed

[236] Exceptions were to be made, of course, in certain cases. Morris. "Useful Work versus Useless Toil" (1884). In the *Manifesto of the Socialist League*, this is elaborated upon. The document reads, "[labour] may be arranged on the understanding that each person does an amount of work calculated on the average that an ordinary healthy person can turn out in a given time, the standard being the time necessary for the production of a definite quantity of bread-stuff," appendix C.

[237] By this he meant not produced for the mere sake of stockpiling surplus and creating want.

that in a future without capitalism "worthy work carries with it the hope of pleasure in rest, the hope of pleasure in our using what it makes, and the hope of pleasure in our daily creative skill."[238] He believed that *enjoying* work was the key.

> As long as the work is repulsive it will still be a burden which must be taken up daily, and even so would mar our life, even though the hours of labour were short. What we want to do is to add to our wealth without diminishing our pleasure. Nature will not be finally conquered till our work becomes a part of the pleasure of our lives.[239]

Pleasurable work, Morris attested, would become fulfilling and artistic work. People would take pride in their labor, embracing and perfecting their crafts. They would also be able to pursue more than one interest or craft. [240]

On his journey up the Thames River, William Guest visits several Banded-workshops where workers cheerfully refine their skills. These workshops are set up as Morris prescribed: pleasant and aesthetically pleasing places of fellowship and learning. The artisans at one such workshop Guest encounters are so enamored by their work that they can hardly find reason for leisure (in its more traditional sense.)[241] Their work—their art—is their leisure. Morris demonstrates how reimagining labor could lead to empowerment, motivation, and ultimately happiness. As Mary Lane did in *Mizora*, Morris shows the ways in which alternative philosophies might produce enhanced psychologies.

---

[238] Morris "Useful Work versus Useless Toil." The influence of François Marie Charles Fourier's (1772- 1837) concept of "attractive labor" is apparent in his notion of pleasurable work.

[239] Ibid.

[240] A great example of Morris's attention to variety is in Robert's (whom Guest meets at the guesthouse at the beginning of the story) occupations as a weaver and amateur mathematician.

[241] This encounter takes place in chapter 26, "The Obstinate Refusers."

Likewise, Morris explores Victorian notions of marriage and property. Though many of his portrayals of female occupations in utopia are not particularly new, his future is a much friendlier place for women. Morris shares with Marx and Engels the beliefs that private property and inheritance should be abolished, bourgeois marriage is slavery, and that utopian socialists fall short in their understanding of how human freedom is achieved. He demonstrates these opinions through Guest's encounters with the changed people of the future. When Guest discovers that Dick (his tour guide) and Clara (Dick's lover)[242] have been informally married and separated in the past, it sparks a conversation with Hammond about family relationships in their society. Hammond informs him that legal marriages and divorces do not exist, as private property is no longer a cause for marital disputes. He then addresses the "woman question" and stresses the importance of women's occupations[243] and role in society—something that drastically changed with the new notion of "marriage." Marriage is no longer a property arrangement, nor does blood relation entitle one to inheritance.[244] Hammond's words reflect what Morris drafted regarding "property–marriage," in the *Manifesto of the Socialist League*.[245] Morris'

[242] Dick (Richard Hammond, grandson of the elder Hammond) is the first person Guest meets at the river when he first awakes in the twenty-second century. Dick agrees to be Guest's guide during his travels in England. Clara is Dick's once-estranged partner.

[243] Though women are clearly liberated and considered equals, he does not suggest that women's work moves much beyond their traditional "sphere" of duty. Later, however, Guest observes several skilled craftswomen (a woman named Philippa is among them), who work at occupations that could be considered "non-traditional" by nineteenth-century standards.

[244] The *Manifesto of the Socialist League*, stresses a transition from private to common property and the elder Hammond describes a similar transition in *News From Nowhere*. It reads, "This [the current organization of society] must be altered from the foundation: the land, the capital, the machinery, factories, workshops, stores, means of transit, mines, banking, all means of production and distribution of wealth, must be declared and treated as the common property of all" (MOTSL).

[245] In this document Morris describes the League's position on marriage and property. "Under a Socialistic system contracts between individuals would be voluntary and unenforced by the community. This would apply to the marriage contract as well as others, and it would become a matter of simple inclination. Women also would share in the certainty of livelihood which would be the lot of all; and

ability to tie his non-fiction work into his novel helps readers visualize their prospects in a more "concrete" way. As his utopia is socialist, his hopes for individuals are wrapped in bigger hopes for the group.

Disciplines: Examining the Social

Just as utopia considers the issues concerning the individual, it also considers how those individuals might operate in relation to one another. In this respect, an author focuses attention on the social structures and cultural milieu that are a result of economy, policy, belief systems, and history. These sorts of ruminations require an examination not unlike the work of sociology, and depending on how precise the utopia, can involve specialized study similar to that conduced by political scientists, economists, or anthropologists. The social component is the glue that binds these imaginary reconstitutions of society together, and the element that gives us a sense of the big picture/big society in action. Because literary utopias are about imagined *societies*, they hone in on aspects of causation and impact, at various sites of influence. These hypothetical "cycles of influence" intend to mimic real-life scenarios and therefore predict, parody, or forewarn of possibilities. [246]

---

children would be treated from their birth as members of the community entitled to share in all its advantages; so that economical compulsion could be no more brought to bear on the contract than legal compulsion could be. Nor would a truly enlightened public opinion, freed from mere theological views as to chastity, insist on its permanently binding nature in the face of any discomfort or suffering that might come of it," appendix F.

[246] *Cycle of Influence* is a term I devised to help explain the ecological relationships apparent in human communities and in the depictions of those communities presented in literary utopia. This concept is described in some detail in the next section.

Mary Lane places education at the center of her utopia, and she shifts the emphasis away from education for the mere sake of fulfilling familial duties to a much broader purpose—personal and social excellence. An instructor tells Vera, " Education is the foundation of our moral elevation, our government, our happiness…The higher the culture of a people, the more secure their government and happiness."[247] Mizorans gather their moral guidance from scientific study and prize education and technology as the mode of achieving the exemplar. To make this possible, Lane imagines life without gender and class barriers. Vera recounts that,

> All institutions for instruction were public, as were, also, the books and other accessories. The state was the beneficent mother who furnished everything, and required of her children only their time and application. Each pupil was compelled to attain a certain degree of excellence that I thought unreasonably high, after which she selected the science or vocation she felt most competent to master, and to that she then devoted herself.[248]

Education is so prized, in fact, that teachers are among the most respected and well-paid citizens. "To be a teacher in Mizora was to be a person of consequence. They were its aristocracy."[249] Mizorans view education undeniably as a human rights issue and knowledge is clearly their most valuable commodity. Preceptress argues that intellectual guidance is necessary for the development of a successful social body. She urges, "Educate them. Educate them, and enlightenment will solve for them every problem in Sociology."[250]

---

[247] Lane, 24.

[248] Ibid., 23.

[249] Ibid.

[250] Ibid., 46.

Lane takes readers through the outcome of such a policy, to demonstrate the female potential. Alongside her reader, Lane works out sociological problems. Ruth Levitas's description of the architectural mode of utopia really gets at the heart of the social question, as policies that impact large groups benefit from theoretical contemplation. Levitas remarks that as a methodology,

> [utopia] allows preferred futures—including the survival of humanity on earth—their proper causal role in the emergent future, rather than leaving this to the potential catastrophe of projected trends. Most policy approaches are both piecemeal and extrapolative, and concerned with damage limitation. This naturalizes the major contours of present society, the structures of global capitalism, the dominance of paid work and the inequalities of the market. The utopian alternative is to think about where we might want to get to and what routes are open to us.[251]

Mizora certainly explores new political, social, and ideological frontiers. And consistent with the modern utopian tradition, Lane's characters are involved in continual learning pursuits. The task of knowledge is never complete. Mizorans *never* graduate from college, because they never stop nourishing their curiosities and no barriers stand in their way.[252]

While Lane does not specifically endorse any particular political arrangement, Mizora does have very socialistic and egalitarian leanings. Vera describes Mizora as a Federal Republic, in form, but notes that government is of very little importance in Mizora because its enlightened citizens are so evolved there is little need for policing. Those in political positions fulfill their social role just as any other occupation. Mizoran history does, however, reveal the politics it once practiced, so those failings are indicative of how Lane presents her alternative. In short, Mizora was once ruled by an oppressive

[251] Levitas, 2013, 218.

[252] Lane, 66.

and corrupt male-dominated social system, which was overthrown by women who banded together and at first tried to cooperate but then took drastic measures by excluding men from all affairs for one hundred years. "At the end of that time not a representative of the sex was in existence."[253] Lane's broaching of the topic of male absence highlights some of the destructive differences she identifies as being part of the male character. Although Vera, brought up in a bi-sexed world and who herself is married and has a male child, is unfamiliar with an existence without men, she is intrigued by the notion of unhampered female development. In this "retelling" of human history, the female kind presumably survived because their "race" was more perceptive to social growth and not driven by dominance, competition, and greed. Centuries of reinforcement had conditioned this in men, and centuries of oppression in women had conditioned them to work together. So in the end, the same circumstances (oppressive male dominance) that caused males to fail and die out was the basis of female flourishing. As a diligent sociologist, Lane implores her readers to weigh the consequences. While it was a dark period in their history, was it perhaps a necessary step to Mizoran revolution? Was it a clean break and fresh start? Or is diversity endemic in a "healthy" society? Vera's longing for her husband and son seem to suggest that she is somehow responding to her "nature" and that a single-sex society is "unnatural." Still, Lane lets her reader experience this ethical conflict while championing a successful all-female world.

Another important social concern Lane addresses is the care for progeny. Unlike Victorian women, whose entire identity was wrapped in their maternal role, Mizoran mothers' access to activity is redistributed. To begin, Mizoran women are not plagued

[253] Lane, 101. The storyteller does not elaborate whether or not this genocide was active or passive.

with unwanted pregnancy or burdened by the uneven duties placed upon them. Although enlightened mothers have a duty to appropriately prepare their daughters, women who are not particularly enthralled by the duties of childrearing are not stigmatized. Professionalized childcare and early childhood education free women to pursue their desired occupations while balancing their parental roles. Mizorans have removed the misery from childrearing so that motherhood has become a pleasant and esteemed social contribution. From a sociological perspective, Lane demonstrates how women might balance their public and private lives, and how that might revolutionize women's social contributions. In order make her argument rhetorically viable, Lane must conform to some Victorian social norms; her enlightened women are white, celibate, and free of lust (thus lesbian relationships are not a concern)—"pure," asexual, and "moral" by Victorian standards.

For William Morris, his political life was an inseparable part of his imaginary reconstitution of society. Socialists saw how capitalism divided society into two classes: capitalists (bourgeoisie) and workers (proletariat). He made clear his mission as a member of the Socialist League was to "seek a change in the basis of society" which would thereby end "the war of class against class" (competition) and eliminate waste (in production and distribution of wares among other things) and useless toil.[254] Morris's romantic utopia stays true to the doctrine of scientific socialism. *News from Nowhere* was

[254] This doctrine is expressed, to various degrees, in many of Morris's works—*Manifesto of the Socialist League* (1885), "How We Live and How We Might Live" (1884), "Useful Work versus Useless Toil" (1884) and *News From Nowhere* (1890) to name several.

his attempt to imagine the process of revolution and "pictur[e] the future of [a] fully developed new society"[255]

Like Lane, Morris clues his readers into the circumstances of the revolution that precipitated utopia. The event he describes is a bloody and painful two-year civil war. Against Bellamy's peaceful transition, Morris' violent prophecy would have been a hard pill to swallow. As did Marx and Engels before him, Morris found fault in the program of "utopian" socialists.[256] In *News from Nowhere*, this is apparent in the fact that Morris insists upon a revolution and not a mere reform movement. Utopian Socialists, as Marx and Engels put it, "reject all political and especially revolutionary action; they wish to attain their ends by peaceful means, and endeavor, by small experiments."[257] Morris remains confident in the proletariat to organize and revolt, and has observed the present (the nineteenth century) well enough to form an opinion regarding the capacity of socialists to incite change using universal reform.[258] In all of his political writings (post 1883), Morris focuses on class disparity—refusing to pretend things can be resolved by experiment or mere legislative action—those acts which symbolically remove class distinction through experimental or political discourse but do nothing to change reality. Morris concentrates on the role of the working class. As Krishan Kumar points out,

---

[255] Paul Meier. *William Morris: The Marxist Dreamer.* Vol 2. (Highlands: Humanities Press, 1978), 289. Meier borrows the phrase "the future of the fully developed new society" from Morris. Morris uses it in the opening chapter of *News From Nowhere*.

[256] Marx and Engels dedicate an entire chapter of Manifesto to "other" types of socialists and socialist literature. "Socialist and Communist Literature," *The Communist Manifesto*, 36-46. "Utopian" is used here in its pejorative sense. As the discussion of "concepts of utopia," in chapter one clarifies, Marx, Engels, and Morris were all proposing utopian projects.

[257] Ibid., 45.

[258] In chapter 17, "How the Change Came," Hammond describes all of the many failed attempts at State Socialism.

"Morris's political education…[from 1876-1883] led him increasingly to the view that the working class was not simply one agent but the sole agent of genuine change in society."[259] Playing the part of sociologist, Morris describes a noble social structure and empowers his readers to help bring it about.

After outlining the revolution, Hammond describes for Guest the one-hundred-fifty-year transition period that followed the uprisings and subsequent war. This transition included a "de-urbanization and dispersal" project accompanied by a village revival initiative. Life was "simplified" by the removal of the unnecessary remains of industrialization, and "Slave-wares for the poor and mere wealth-wasting wares for the rich" were no longer manufactured.[260] The art of handicraft was gradually recovered during this process of "rebirth" as well. Hammond's descriptions and Guest's observations of twenty-second century life reveal a remodeled society. Morris had plans to change the "big picture," and he desired that his readers and critics would take this vision of hope seriously.

Disciplines: Examining Nature

As works of human ecology, literary utopias examine the ways in which groups of people interact with their environments. These conversations are often part celebration and part resolve to command certain aspects of nature. The natural component of human ecology has always been a bit more elusive than the individual and social, as so much is left to the unknown. Still, humans attempt to understand their environment, utilize its

[259] Kumar ed. *News from Nowhere, xi.*

[260] Kumar ed. *News from Nowhere,* 173.

resources, and create new surroundings based on their needs. The history of human interaction with nature is an important measure for the study of human progress. Literary utopia explores how culture has accelerated the processes of evolution and adaptation.

As a technological utopia, *Mizora* is full of contemplations about scientific innovation and human wellness. Mizorans interpret scientific progress as a relationship with true nature, so they are in tune with how things work and are forever seeking ways to understand and improve upon their environment. Preceptress claims that "[they] are a people who have passed beyond the boundary of what was once called Natural Law. But, more correctly, [they] have become mistresses of Nature's peculiar processes. [They] influence or control [these processes] at will."[261] The standout innovations, among many impressive inventions, are parthenogenesis, chemical "farming," and healthcare. These "discoveries" come easy to an enlightened and unburdened people and are demonstrative of the faith Lane and Victorian society had in technology to revolutionize life. *Mirzora* begs the question, what is the role of science?

Though Lane does not give true scientific explanations for these technologies, as many of them are based on imagination or existing scientific or medical theories, her suggestion is enough to make readers wonder about how the world would function if a lot of the guesswork was removed. These innovations promise to change the shape of labor, leisure, and longevity. In turn, they promise to transform the human experience as well.

[261] Lane, 90.

Parthenogenesis has not only improved the lives of individual Mizoran women, it has improved the lives of society as a whole.[262] By changing the course of nature, Mizorans have changed the course of human history. As Pfaelzer remarks, "Freed by technology and parthenogenesis, the Mizoran women wields a political broom in the liminal space of an all female world. Political power now belongs to the educated, economically independent, single and white new woman."[263] Lane proposes that properly educated and motivated woman can accomplish unprecedented progress; women can achieve almost "goddess-like" feats.

"Understanding" nature also unlocks other secrets to health and happiness. The women in this story have removed the need for traditional agriculture and livestock by perfecting food science. Food is nutritious, flawless, and abundant, and thus food shortage and hunger are never a worry. All of the attention to diet and exercise and the intellectual strides Mizoran women have made, increase life expectancy and overall health ten times that of upper earth dwellers. Mizorans have freed individuals and society from the problems of caring for the aged, as its citizens remain youthful for centuries. Here Lane speaks directly to the predicament of disease and intergenerational healthcare, provoking readers to make comparisons.

For Mizorans, nature is the epitome of perfection and the ultimate teacher and guide. They interpret their quest for wisdom as a testament to the miraculous powers it holds. Christine Mahady points out that "In their efforts to attain the quality of "refinement" that marks the advanced civilization of Mizora, the women seek models of

---

[262] Of course, as an extinct "race," men are not included in this "improvement."

[263] Pfaelzer, 2001, xxiv.

refinement through studying and ultimately identifying themselves with nature."[264] The Mizoran approach to science, art, and relationships all emulate nature—Mizoran women are its essence. Still, Mizora resists gender dichotomies that align women with nature and men with culture. In Mizora, women are the epitome of nature *and* culture.

As Victorian scientists are beginning to "unlock" the mysteries of the world around them, Lane dabbles in a little speculative unlocking herself. She not only implies that knowledge about the natural environment, human and plant physiology, and evolution will revolutionize life, she suggests it will also advance humanity, morally and socially. *Mizora* is Lane's "seal of approval" for the pursuit of science.[265] These investments are worth the time and effort, as they will free up individuals to develop in more significant ways. Lane presents these as "a proposition for discussion and negotiation."[266]

After experiencing firsthand London's overcrowding and pollution problems, Morris has a different interpretation of progress and industrialization than many American utopists. Morris addresses the natural environment directly in his assessments of industry, urban sprawl and the resulting issues the two produced. He is so in tune with his local environmental crisis that, ecocritics read *News from Nowhere* as a "green"

---

[264] Christine Mahady. "No World of Difference: Examining the Significance of Women's Relationships to Nature in Mary Bradley Lane's Mizora." *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Winter 2004), 106.

[265] While Lane's "science" is primarily speculative and is not based in any specific experimentation, her confidence in science and technological innovation is clear.

[266] This negotiation is a device of utopia, and is described by Levitas, 219.

utopia.[267] Martin Delveaux describes *News from Nowhere* as a visionary "Back to the Land" movement, as Morris's imagined future stands in strong contrast to his contemporary London.[268] In fact, Morris's vision is "*countrified* in appearance."[269] Morris' work reacts to the mass shift of population from rural to urban areas and its resulting congestion, pollution, and sanitation problems. He also remarks on how "the spreading sore" placed huge administrative pressures on English governments who could not maintain order or keep up with poor relief.[270] As a proto-ecologist, Morris was making connections between biological realities and sociological impact. He saw the rural landscape rapidly being transformed and recognized how destructive industries were only profiting a few while creating misery for most others.

Morris' countrified utopia is not a backward and regressed society. Delveaux describes *News From Nowhere* as a prime example of the movement to create new low-population settlements in the country to replace modern cities. "Settlements were to combine the social and environmental advantages of village life with the economic advantages of urban life."[271] Morris envisioned a hybrid of the village and city. Once England had rid itself of capitalism, it was able to work on transitioning to this new design, and the secondary problems of labor and happiness worked themselves out. The citizens of *Nowhere* are in tune with nature and have envisioned a sustainable society.

---

[267] See Martin Delveaux. "O Me! O Me! How I Love the Earth: William Morris' *News From Nowhere* and the Birth of Sustainable Society." *Contemporary Justice Review.* Vol 8, No 2, (June 2005), 131-146.

[268] Ibid., 134.

[269] Morris, *NFN*, 25.

[270] Delveaux 134, citing McCarthy, 1995.

[271] Ibid, 136.

Delveaux remarks that Morris' holistic approach to nature demonstrates a social attitude about nature that mirrors an attitude about the self, and vice-versa.[272]

Disciplines: Examining the Utopian Other

Utopian works utilize the visitor-guide format as the premise for social exploration. A visitor arrives in a strange new world and is given a tour. As a skeptical visitor, she questions her guide about every aspect of the brave new world she has entered. These tales generally end one of three ways: she is converted, she rejects the new world and interprets it as a cautionary premonition (as in dystopia), or though hopeful, she remains critical of the utopian process (perhaps partially converted). While many modern works assume less overt arrangements (these tend to be more "literary" in form), they are still visitor-guide narratives as they set up a comparison between the contemporary world and the author's vision. Utopian stories, as Pfaelzer points out, "record the time/space traveler's political growth which arises from the very act of viewing and measuring a new society against their own. This popular genre also constitutes a form of ethnography."[273]

Mary Lane's protagonist, Vera, assumes the traditional visitor role. During her fifteen-year stay in Mizora, she is educated at the university and given personal tours of Mizora by esteemed members of society. Pfaelzer remarks that the first wave of

---

[272] Delveaux 137.

[273] Pfaelzer, 2012, 327.

American utopias came about at the same time as the popularization of eugenics and professionalized anthropology (in the 1880s and 1890s). This "connected disciplines that inevitably articulate a relationship of power between the observer and the observed."[274] Vera's observations demonstrate both Lane's engagement in the "irrevocable assumptions of Social Darwinism and the inexorable nature of time itself."[275] Vera re-evaluates her own political judgments and thus grows as an individual.[276] The ethnographical aspect of literary utopia is what initiates a powerful estrangement between the reader and the world she identifies with and its reflection in the utopian other presented. Thus, utopian exploration becomes the exploration of the *self* (and society) through the *other*. [277] In *Mizora*, our earthly counterpart, Vera, is our tour guide *and* anthropologist.

Morris's William Guest has a similarly traditional tour of utopia. What is unique about his tale is that he has the specific agenda of "witnessing" the potential of socialism to readers who are familiar with its practices but perhaps undecided or unconvinced of its effectiveness. Here it is important not to diminish the relevance of socialist reform movements to the nineteenth-century literary utopia. Kenneth Roemer reminds us that European socialism greatly influenced the ways in which people "imagine[d] the possibility of national systems of production and distribution that represented alternatives to capitalism. This awareness made the utopias depicted by late-nineteenth-century

[274] Pfaelzer, 2012, 327

[275] Ibid.

[276] This observation pointed out by Pfaelzer, Ibid.

[277] The theory of cognitive estrangement is discussed in the second half of this chapter.

utopists—most of which involved cooperative, planned economies—more blessedly or terrifyingly believable (depending on a reader's economic biases)."[278] In fact, although socialism carried negative connotations in America, works like *Mizora* and *Looking Backward* are quite socialistic in practice. Creating socialist or socialistic utopias was at once a demonstration of socialism's societal validity and a critique of its political approach. "Utopian fiction thus resists as it confirms the self-affirming ethnographic gaze."[279] Morris's work demonstrates that modern utopia intends to offer another way of being while simultaneously critiquing the process of "being otherwise"—it is consciously self-reflexive.

The ethnographical feature is present throughout the entirety of *Mizora* and *News from Nowhere*, as each is narrated via the visitor-guide dialog. Utopian texts that exhibit more "literary" or conventional narrative structures produce this effect via their omniscient witness, the reader (as opposed to the visitor-guide structure). By representing the culture of the utopia "other," utopists give insight into their own contemporary cultures. It is the self-reflexive nature of these texts that turns the utopian gaze inward. The observer learns about herself through that which she observes.

As the aforementioned textual examples demonstrate numerous instances of the visitor-guide relationship, it is unnecessary to elaborate this feature through further examples.

---

[278] Roemer, 80.

[279] Pfaelzer, 2012, 327.

Dialectic

As the cycles of influence were covered in the previous disciplinary discussions of these works, it is unnecessary to provide additional examples here. Likewise, a reader response study is quite beyond the scope of this project. Therefore this section hones in exclusively on the comparisons and commentaries *Mizora* and *News from Nowhere* make.

After Vera has spent time getting to know Mizoran culture, she takes time to ponder how different this new world is from her own. In her homeland, Vera notes "The philosophers in my world were but as children in progress compared with these. Still traveling in grooves that had been worn and fixed for posterity by bygone ages of ignorance and narrow-mindedness, it would require courage and resolution, and more eloquence that I possessed to persuade them out of these trodden paths."[280] The stark difference between *what is* and *what could be* motivates writers, like Lane, to take a shot at pointing out these disparities.

As the previous section discussed, Lane's *Mizora* calls many issues into question. Some of her most pointed commentary draws attention to the issues of female circumstance (working-class and middle-class female labor, female education, and female sexuality) and racial bigotry and eugenics. She also brings in some current events like revolutionary movements, her distaste for the Grant administration, and radical new

[280] Lane, 25.

labor-saving inventions.[281] Literary fiction provided Lane and other female authors a space to freely discuss issues, unguarded. Utopia became a site where marginalized voices were heard and empowered.

Lane's commentaries both on female sexuality and on race are quite intertwined, as much of the racial "question" was centered on the control of white women's bodies. Regulating female reproduction ensured racial "purity" by controlling with whom and in what circumstances women might engage in sexual activity. Mizora's state-enforced celibacy policy harkens back to the American Comstock laws (1873), which regulated sexuality by banning the shipment of contraceptives and literature about reproductive health. But Lane uses celibacy as a mode of empowerment and inclusion. She takes the Victorian idealization of purity and motherhood and spins it on its head. She removes sexuality from the picture altogether; Mizoran women can be *respectable mothers* without the policing of men, without the concern of lust, and without fear that "procreation could go racially awry."[282] Lane's celebration of celibacy might be interpreted as support for social reform through sexual repression, but it should, more importantly, be recognized for what that "repression" or withholding represents. Victorian women had always been tethered to their sexual roles—whether as married mothers, unmarried jezebels, or chaste maidens—and *selective* celibacy freed women

[281] 1) Lane's own narrator, Vera Zaraovitch, is modeled after Russian revolutionary, Vera Zasulich. According to Pfaelzer, "Upper-class women who, like Vera, were educated abroad, joined struggles for peasants' and workers' rights to land and education. Zasulich was a member of the *narodniki*, a mass movement calling for rural socialism in Russia" (2001, xiv). To bring attention to corruption, Zasulich attempted to assassinate the governor-general of St. Petersburg. She became an international hero. 2) Joan Saberhagen states that the brutal male general who is part of Mizora's ancient history was a thinly veiled attack on Ulysses S. Grant, who, like the Mizoran leader tried unsuccessfully to get re-elected for a third term. 3) Many of the mechanical household appliances in Mizora gas stoves, dishwashers, and vacuum cleaners were invented between the mid-nineteenth century and 1881 (publication year for *Mizora*). Lane conceptualizes housework and makes these inventions available to everyone.

[282] Pfaelzer, 2012, 331.

from unwittingly participating in any of those roles. "For Lane, Mizorans' rejection of sexual passion also serves as a marker of their rationality."[283] Restraint (celibacy), in essence, gave them control.

While Lane appeals to racialized notions of progress and reinforces Victorian sexual anxiety, she also questions them. For example, while Lane adopted Herbert Spencer's view that "war benefits the human species by killing off 'inferior races and inferior individuals'" (in this case "race" referring to gender), she also expresses unease about the absence of men and people of color. "Her re-inscription of heterosexuality and [Vera's] discomfort with Mizora's racial policy in fact undermine the arrogant sociopolitical certitudes of utopia."[284] Through Vera's uncertainty, Lane posits that solving these social quandaries is no simple task, and that she herself is unsure about the route to progress.

Mizora also harkens back to the racialized science practiced at the time. Theories of polygenesis and Social Darwinism and studies in phrenology and eugenics worked to create difference where there were none and thus justify discrimination and segregation. Lane's depiction of Mizorans suggests respect for science, but rejection of "science" which clearly degrades women or proposes to annihilate others. Like other utopians before her, Lane uses her story to pose "red flag" issues.

Lane's narrative also leads her to an important realization about the true intent of Darwin. Vera takes Wauna to America, only to be rejected. When she tries to return Wauna to her homeland, they are unable to locate the hidden sea and her homesick

---

[283] Pfaelzer, 2012, 326.

[284] Pfaelzer, 2012, 328.

companion dies. Vera lives out her life poor and alone in America, as she is separated from her birthplace and her husband and son have died. Pfaelzer describes these turn of events as the moment when Vera finally understands that "poverty, hatred, and hierarchy are neither natural nor inevitable…Vera has come to understand that "fitness" has nothing to do with inherent strength, intelligence, or, in particular, skin color or race, but rather, recalling the image of the thriving Eskimo people, depends on successful adaptability."[285] Adaptability might be considered the unofficial cry of modern utopia.

As was his intention for the greater body of his work, "Morris's contribution in *News from Nowhere* was toward changing the world."[286] As previously stated, the timing of its composition and publication was partly in response to an ongoing and heated discussion with fellow Socialist Leaguers concerning the shape of a post-revolutionary society[287], and partly in response to Edward Bellamy's highly influential book *Looking Backward*[288], which Morris feared might cause people to misconstrue the role of socialism.

The opening sequence parodies Morris' own experiences. His story begins with William Guest walking home from a League meeting. The group had been debating over

---

[285] Ibid., 337.

[286] Kumar ed. "Introduction," *News from Nowhere*, xxii.

[287] Meier, *Marxist Dreamer*, Vol. 2, (Highlands: Humanities Press, 1978), 288.

[288] Edward Bellamy (1850-1898) was an American socialist and author. His famous utopian novel, *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* (1888), portrays a future Boston where social equality exists and everyone's needs are met. This is maintained through work of what Bellamy calls the "industrial army." Morris was unimpressed by Bellamy's materialistic and "mechanical" brand of state socialism. He worried that Bellamy's book would forever imprint his [Bellamy's] notion of socialism into the minds of men and women. He wrote about this concern in his critique of Bellamy's work titled "Looking Backward," published in the June 22, 1889 edition of *Commonweal*.

their collective vision and Guest disagreed with the group's Anarchists. As Guest prepares for bed, still invigorated from the evening's conversation, he says to himself of the future, "If I could but see a day of it…if I could but see it!"[289] Though he goes to bed in the winter of 1890, he curiously "wakes up" in early June, sometime in the twenty-second century[290]—in-between, the peoples had had their springtime. From here, Guest experiences a taste of life in a post-industrial, post-revolutionary society. Guest gets to see what "the Morrow of Revolution" looks like, and how its people got to where they are.

Morris felt there was great need to make work more enjoyable and part of that project involved eliminating the waste that "useless toil" produced. He was adamantly opposed to work (and waste) for the sake of keeping production going.[291] This is something that Marx and Engels address in *Manifesto*. They attested that society (in the nineteenth century) was suffering from an "epidemic of overproduction."[292] In the industrial age, working men and women had become an "appendage of the machine,"[293] working more hours for less pay to feed an ever expanding market. They were producing excess in such enormous volume that those who could afford to consume goods could not

---

[289] Morris, *NFN*, 4.

[290] He awakes in a building built on the former site of his home. Inside the dining hall, a plaque reads, *"Guests and neighbours, on the site of this Guest-hall once stood the lecture-room of the Hammersmith Socialists. Drink a glass to the memory! May 1962" (NFN, 17).*

[291] In chapter 15 "On the Lack of Incentive to Labor in a Communist Society," Morris also takes time to address the common fear of work-famine. He believes that artistic work would be incentive in itself and since he proposes that all workers work to support themselves individually, there would be no widespread damage suffered from a worker refusing to work or an individual being out of work for a period of time. According to him, this problem would not arise though, since there would never be a lack of work (or drive) for passionate and skillful workers.

[292] Marx and Engel. *The Communist Manifesto*, 19.

[293] Ibid., 20.

possibly use them. When local markets were to capacity, they began to colonize and force wares on indigenous peoples while simultaneously stripping these less powerful nations of resources.[294] Morris similarly condemned the violence of the industrial machine in *News from Nowhere*. In his conversation with Hammond, Guest inquires about the process of buying and selling in a "World-Market," and Hammond informs him that that system had long been abandoned, as it was wasteful. He tells Guest that the World-Market had caused a scourge of cheap wares and that "labour-saving machines" had robbed people of their potential to be proficient at any one job.[295] Hammond remarks in jest that the nineteenth century was that "wares were to sell, not to use,"[296] and this is why capitalists had no qualms about selling goods to colonized natives so that they might become "civilized." In the post-revolutionary society, however, people no longer *want* what they don't need. Guest is surprised and reassured by this advancement.

Constructing the particulars of the revolutionary process and the designs for future work and living were important parts of Morris's creative intention for *News From Nowhere*, but he takes on the Marxist legacy in other ways as well. Morris shares with Marx and Engels the beliefs that private property and inheritance should be abolished, bourgeois marriage is slavery, and that utopian socialists fall short in their understanding of how human freedom is achieved.

---

[294] This is mentioned to some extent in *Manifesto*. Ibid, 17-18. This is also addressed in some detail in Kumar ed. *News from Nowhere,* chapter 15, "On the Lack of Incentive to Labor in a Communist Society," 96-99.

[295] Most factory work only allowed a worker to learn one *part* of one job, and taught him or her skills that were veritably unusable elsewhere. Ibid.

[296] Ibid., 99.

When William Morris set out to write *News from Nowhere*, he had hoped to provide readers with a clear picture of socialism's potential to revolutionize the world. Paul Meier describes the work as "an act of faith in the possibility of being happy."[297] Morris's aim was to afford his readers a *vision* of what might be. Meier goes on to say,

> Not only did writing need a visual backing with him, but his vision of things needed to be precise, whether it was a question of art or politics. The revolutionary position adopted by the Socialist League in 1885 only really began to satisfy him from the moment when the new order destined to replace the corrupt regime of the bourgeoisie had taken shape in the minds of the militants.[298]

The shape Morris anticipated entailed imagining a world transformed, in its every detail. Using documents like the *Manifesto* as a guide[299], Morris constructed a revolutionary history (for the future) based on actual events of the past. Like Marx and Engels, Morris was able to hypothesize the future via observation of historical patterns. In chapter seventeen, "How the Change Came," he describes two stages of revolution, socialism and communism, which result after "the great crash"[300] of 1952. Hammond, an elderly historian and expert of the nineteenth century and revolutionary years (he is also the grandfather of Guest's tour guide, Dick), describes for Guest the "terrible period of

---

[297] Paul Meier. *William Morris: The Marxist Dreamer* Vol 1. (Highlands: Humanities Press, 1978,) 260.

[298] Ibid, 264. Just hours after giving his lecture, "The Society of the Future," on November 13, 1887, Morris and fellow Socialist Leaguers witnessed the brutal police attack on political demonstrators at Trafalgar Square. As the events in *News from Nowhere* reveal, Morris is not at all censored in his commentary.

[299] Although he does not insomuch say he borrows from Marx, "the whole of Morris's work is studded with ideas borrowed from [*Manifesto*]." (Meier, Vol. 1, 213). An earlier publication, *A Summary of the Principles of Socialism* (1884), jointly published with Hyndman mentions *Manifesto* (Ibid, 212). So does the *Manifesto of the Socialist League* (1885).

[300] "The great crash" is the turning point for the working class. It takes place after workers are unable to attain freedom from their masters (the bourgeoisie). Kumar ed. *News From Nowhere,* 112.

transition from commercial slavery to freedom."[301] After many years of marginally successful reform acts and poor relief (doling, the establishment of a minimum wage, and reduced working hours among them) and fruitless working class unionizations, labor negotiations, and strikes, the working classes were at their breaking point. Their aggravations all came to head when an enormous crowd of unarmed citizens was charged and fired upon by police, in Trafalgar Square—a more murderous reprisal of the "Bloody Sunday" massacre of 1887.[302] Between one- and two-thousand people were slain, but only six soldiers fell.[303] Hammond marks this event as the beginning of a civil war which lasted for two years, though as Morris's earlier writing can bear witness, the war between classes had been taking place since the beginning of "civilized" society.

Morris clearly uses Hammond's retelling of history as an opportunity to criticize past and (then) current Parliamentary acts as well as to critique socialist and Chartist movements. What links him to Marx is his attention to the stages of the working class revolution. He stresses the necessity of *revolution* over reform, a point he adamantly underscores in an earlier essay "How We Live and How We Might Live." Morris and other scientific socialists understood revolution to mean a "change in the basis of society"[304]—one that would entail the complete uprooting and restructuring of human

---

[301] Ibid., 109.

[302] According to Kumar, Morris had witnessed the November 13th events (Kumar, 121, note 42).

[303] Kumar ed. *News from Nowhere,* 120.

[304] William Morris. "How We Live and How We Might Live." 1884. "How We Live and How We Might Live" was a lecture delivered to the Hammersmith Branch of the Socialist Democratic Federation (S.D.F.) at Kelmscott House, on November 30th, 1884. It was first printed in *Commonweal*, 1887. This text is found in electronic format at: http://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1884/hwl/index.htm

nature. In “How We Live and How We Might Live,” he clarifies this and explains how the word *revolution* strikes fear in many:

> Even when we explain that we use the word revolution in its etymological sense, and mean by it a change in the basis of society, people are scared at the idea of such a vast change, and beg that you will speak of reform and not revolution. As, however, we Socialists do not at all mean by our word revolution what these worthy people mean by their word reform, I can't help thinking that it would be a mistake to use it, whatever projects we might conceal beneath its harmless envelope. So we will stick to our word, which means a change of the basis of society; it may frighten people, but it will at least warn them that there is something to be frightened about, which will be no less dangerous for being ignored; and also it may encourage some people, and will mean to them at least not a fear, but a hope.

News from Nowhere is Morris’s way of validating revolution, and as affirmed in the *Manifesto*, the proletariat are critical to the equation.

Though *Mizora* and *News from Nowhere* were selected to demonstrate the disciplinary and dialectical aspects the ecological framework reveals, this analytical process can be applied to any literary utopia. And while the following chapters hone in on specific utopian dialectics, the outline provided in this chapter will help readers identify the basic areas of study and *intersecting* points of dialog introduced in the following works.

Chapter 4

Human Science and the Utopian Metanarrative: Influence and Articulation in Burrhus Frederic Skinner's *Walden Two* and Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia*

> [T]hought is essentially an action.
> -Charles S. Peirce, *How to Make Our Ideas Clear*

In the previous chapter, the ecological framework was utilized to illuminate the sophisticated disciplinary and dialectical components present in literary utopia. This chapter focuses on specific examples of the utopian dialectic with culture, namely with the formal, academic sciences at the time a text was written. Here the pragmatic features of the utopian genre are highlighted.

While utopians may be inspired by numerous social or political agendas, at an essential level, the *functional* utopian goal is to conceptualize the basis of collective life in an evolving world.[305] As works of human ecology they attempt to mediate the modernization process through critique and comparison and by inviting others to consider the implications of "progress." The utopian genre also possesses an inherent pragmatism, taking cues from experiential challenges and evolving methodologically as new tools become available over time. This chapter focuses on the ways in which the ecological framework demonstrates this essential nature of literary utopia. To demonstrate this point, this study hones in on applications of real world science (as opposed scientific

[305] As addressed in the chapter two, modern utopians consciously promote an evolving utopia, but even texts written with the intention of being prescriptive or fixed cannot truly achieve this in the literary context. First of all, reader engagement prevents any text from being static or definitive. But more importantly, each new utopian text responds to new issues because the real-life social structure is always in flux.

fantasy) in literary works, indicating science's capacity in explicating the utopian mission and illuminating the genre's proficiency in navigating intellectual trends.

As previous chapters discuss, modern utopia developed alongside the academic sciences, responding to similar concerns and borrowing from the sciences even as it critiqued them. This chapter explores this parallel development as a compelling example of how dialectical utopia maintains its relevance. To support a literature "in process," utopian writers did as they had always done, enlisting the social tools they had available. But the increasingly prevalent and esteemed academic sciences were particularly suited to helping the genre better articulate itself because these formal human studies were standardizing and attempting to quantify the very questions utopia had proposed all along. Despite the sciences' rejection of the humanistic mode as a source of "scientific" discovery, the human sciences actually fuse scientific and human concerns, further legitimizing its practice.

Jumping forward to the twentieth century, this study considers two works of overtly scientific utopia: B.F. Skinner's *Walden Two* (1948) and Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia* (1975). These texts were selected because they exhibit a clear example of the impact of the human sciences on the utopian genre. As explicit examples, they help illustrate these qualities in other texts with subtler scientific reflection.[306] The following takes a look at the influential science behind *Walden Two* and *Ecotopia*, and traces the ways in which utopia borrows from human science as well as the ways it appraises the scientific process. This examination demonstrates how the blend of narrative science

[306] This is in reference to those texts that engage less directly with specific developments in biological or social sciences. The authors of pre-modern works of utopia, for example, have less access to such directed and professionalized "popular" science. As a result, these works discuss challenges in their own terms.

(utopia) and experimental science (various biological and social sciences) can generate a vision of plausible utopia and euchronia. The selected works highlight the blurring and overlapping of disciplinary boundaries and focus attention on the underlying faith in science and technology characteristic of the Western social imaginary.[307]

Though various scientific disciplines are present within these texts, for the purpose of this study behavioral psychology, environmental ecology, and sociology will be examined most directly. Behavioral psychology is the focus of *Walden Two*, environmental ecology the focus of *Ecotopia*, and sociological issues are addressed in both works. Skinner's speculative behavioral study is useful because it provides a metanarrative for literary utopia broadly: a study of the relationship between human behavior and environment. Callenbach's work provides similar clarity in its fictionalized analysis of the intercourse between local acts and global consequences. His work demonstrates the ecological framework in content and via the utopian mode.

This chapter consists of two parts: an examination of the status of literary utopia during the mid-twentieth century, and a study of two scientific utopias from that period. The first intends to clarify where utopian texts are situated philosophically and place their analytical approach in contrast (or likeness) to various intellectual trends. It also explores how the modern social imaginary impacts the production of scientific knowledge, and where modern utopia fits within the context of modernity and postmodernity. This identification is useful because *how* an imaginary reconstitution of society is utilized is contingent on historical assumptions. This, in turn, impacts the ways in which human science is appropriated and the effect that literary texts have as probable solutions. The

[307] The modern social imaginary was introduced in chapter one.

second portion of this chapter proceeds to a discussion of utopian pragmatism, using the aforementioned *Walden Two* and *Ecotopia*.

Status of Utopia: Mid-Twentieth Century

Inherent Pragmatism

Although often interpreted as emphasizing "fixed" values, the dialectical nature of literary utopia precludes a truly decontextualized or positivist reading of it.[308] In fact, as discussed in the previous chapter, utopian analysis is quite contingent on historicism and the dialogical elements that keep it in conversation with new audiences and new discourse. As such, utopians deliberate in terms of probability and plausible outcomes. Utopian inquiry entails an examination of evolving natural and social environments, human adaptation to change, and the resulting consequences of adaptation. Utopians examine beliefs and the resulting habits of belief and *when* and *how* those habits cause humans to act. Utopias parody, exaggerate, or diminish outcomes in order to critique systems of belief and analyze social habits. These works also consider which conditions (natural and social) precipitate or reinforce behavior. Simply put, literary utopia hypothesizes *environment*, *behavior*, and *outcome* in variable configurations. As works of practical human science, utopias are concrete, temporal, and presumptive—thus pragmatic.[309]

---

[308] Even texts written with the intention of being prescriptive or fixed cannot truly achieve this in the literary context. This is precisely why modern utopia is not "static" nor did it "die" with postmodernism. It also makes fears about utopianism (at least in its literary form), like those of Karl Popper (*The Open Society and Its Enemies*), unfounded.

[309] Roy Moxley does a nice breakdown of the modern/postmodern philosophical milieu. His work focuses specifically on B. F. Skinner's intellectual transition and what he believes are the resulting changes to his practices/experimentation, but his discussion of postmodern pragmatism is also useful for outlining

Navigating Intellectual Trends

The twentieth century turn toward dystopia signifies for many scholars the death of utopia, but this shift in focus is just another example of the genre's pragmatism and adaptability.[310] Literary utopia was impacted by the growing distrust of the metanarrative and furthermore by the twentieth-century atrocities that justified cruelty in the name of "utopian progress." To endure, utopia had to demonstrate its pliability.

By the time Skinner and Callenbach's works entered the utopian arena, literary studies and other humanist disciplines (this included the social sciences to an extent) were in crisis. As knowledge became increasingly commodified in a technological age, some intellectuals questioned its role as a noble quest and the need for it as a tool for social benefit.[311] As interpreted by postmodern views, knowledge production was increasingly understood as a process inseparable from the "knower" and the rationale for discovery an individualistic project. This did not deter utopians.

Utopians concerned with the dialectical mission of literary utopia, which places utopian function before form, were able to adapt the imaginary reconstitution of society to meet changing intellectual demands while still participating in the tradition of the genre. After World War Two, large-scale strategies for social planning were not

---

some of the qualities that make literary utopias meaningful to human science. He echoes Pragmatist (thought he denied he was one) Charles Peirce's "How to Make our Ideas Clear" (1878), and this dissertation argues that literary utopia is inherently pragmatic. However, this study demonstrates that utopia remains pragmatic despite intellectual transitions.

[310] The increased attention to dystopian narratives during the twentieth century overshadows the numerous utopian texts written during that timeframe and mistakenly segregate dystopia (refuted utopia) from the utopian project.

[311] Jean-Francois Lyotard. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. 1979. (Reprinted Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

politically embraced in the West and all forms of utopian practice were swept into the category of fascist or totalitarian. In *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1962), Karl Popper famously espoused "piecemeal social engineering" over "utopian social engineering."[312] What he and other critics of utopia failed to realize was the dialectical function of utopian literature. Not only does the literary format preclude a static interpretation, modern works are intentionally *piecemeal*. Modern utopias not only invite conversation, they expect utopian ideals to evolve. But since "utopia" was trapped within conceptions of "totalitarianism," it needed a "work around." Utopians needed a way to provide the same critical function under a new guise—dystopia. This is not to imply that the transition to dystopia was a concerted orchestration by "utopians" et al., but whether intentional or not, these cautionary tales function identically to modern utopia. The only real difference is the different emphasis on the paths to hope. Modern utopia *is* critical utopia. Dystopia and anti-utopia do not exist without utopia, they are simply different ends of the utopian spectrum. The widespread transition to the dystopian mode did not *kill* utopia. Literary utopia persisted alongside its dystopian and anti-utopian variations.

Twentieth-century utopia met other challenges in addition to the ubiquitous utopian death knell. The modern social imaginary continued to guide the direction of social action, but as always, the overlapping intellectual movements colored the interpretation of utopia. Just as the *concepts*[313] of utopia have impacted its reputation, intellectual trends have power to advance or impede the effectiveness of human scientific insight. By mid-century the modern/postmodern transition guided the direction utopia

---

[312] Karl Popper, *Open Society and Its Enemies*, 71

[313] As discussed in chapter one, negative concepts of utopia have led scholars to dismiss the utopian genre as implausible, unattainable, totalitarian, or unsophisticated, among other things.

was ready (or required) to take.[314] Literary utopia "answered" postmodernity in two ways: it offered more examples of critical utopia (dystopia and anti-utopia)[315] and it delved into more "scientific" yet subjective realism.[316] This updated approach simultaneously questioned the metanarrative (and with it "progress" and confidence in science) and celebrated it and its universality and ability to convey otherwise inexpressible realizations. Utopia defied criticism against narrative forms and further punctuated the reader's role in interpreting cultural evidence. It also secured its function as a sociological tool.

Though functionally pragmatic, *modern* utopia is situated between high modernism and postmodernism, chronologically and philosophically, and utopia's ecological framework makes this straddling of doctrines possible. As works of human ecology, modern utopias are concerned with the totalizing account (grand narrative) as well as scientific realism (local narrative), thus uniting the metanarrative with the need for open-ended conclusions. This approach was compatible with modernism's attention to unifying heuristic knowledge *and* postmodernism's insistence on "destabilized" (or

[314] It is important to acknowledge that different subject areas produced different "modernisms"—both in chronology and in movement. The reference here is primarily to philosophical and scientific modernism, as the *function* of utopia is most closely examined. Literary and political modernism is also relevant to this discussion, but slightly more related to the narrative elements of utopia.

[315] Tom Moylan uses the term "critical utopia" to distinguish forms of utopia that provide a critical dimension combined with a political strategy (a more apparent "political maneuver"). But the main feature of a work of critical utopian is the author's awareness of the limitations of the genre. They "reject the blueprint while preserving the dream" (Moylan, *Demand the Impossible*, 10-11). Lyman Tower Sargent wonders if "critical utopia" more broadly defines all self-reflexive works on the utopian spectrum. He points out that this would make most dystopias "critical utopias." Anti-utopia is not "new" per se, as satirical works have existed for centuries. Modern anti-utopia simply has new packaging. Generally speaking, critical utopias (including dystopia and anti-utopia) are less prescriptive and require a proactive reader, thus, they are necessarily dialogical texts.

[316] Literary utopia increasingly utilized qualitative scientific evidence in its IROS, but demonstrated the complexity inherent in applying that evidence to lived experiments. Thus, while utilizing academic sciences' ubiquity and status to provide legitimate proposals, utopia openly acknowledged how idiosyncratic human experiences truly are.

situational meaning).[317] This may at first seem contradictory, but literary utopia is able to accommodate diverse intellectual constructions. As pragmatic texts, utopias' affinity with postmodernism is more obvious because both have similar views on temporality and the interpretation of "truth." Though taking a difference stance on temporality, modernist contentions are still in-line with utopian ontology.

As discussed in chapter one, literary utopia operates as a sort-of "boundary-less" genre, connecting texts by the function they perform. In this way, literature helps utopians attempt to resolve ethical and existential questions about human developments, and there is something unifying and essential in this project. Though perhaps symptomatic of human reasoning itself, the ontological question is recurrent enough to *feel* (and behave) like a timeless connection. In its own way, the persistence of utopia offers a retort to the postmodern claim that a data-driven age has stifled the cultural narrative. Modern utopia was always, as Ruth Levitas describes it, archeology, ontology, and architecture, and therefore prepared to adapt to new interpretations. Figure 8 (see next page) demonstrates how various components of literary utopia are compatible with modernist and postmodernist viewpoints.

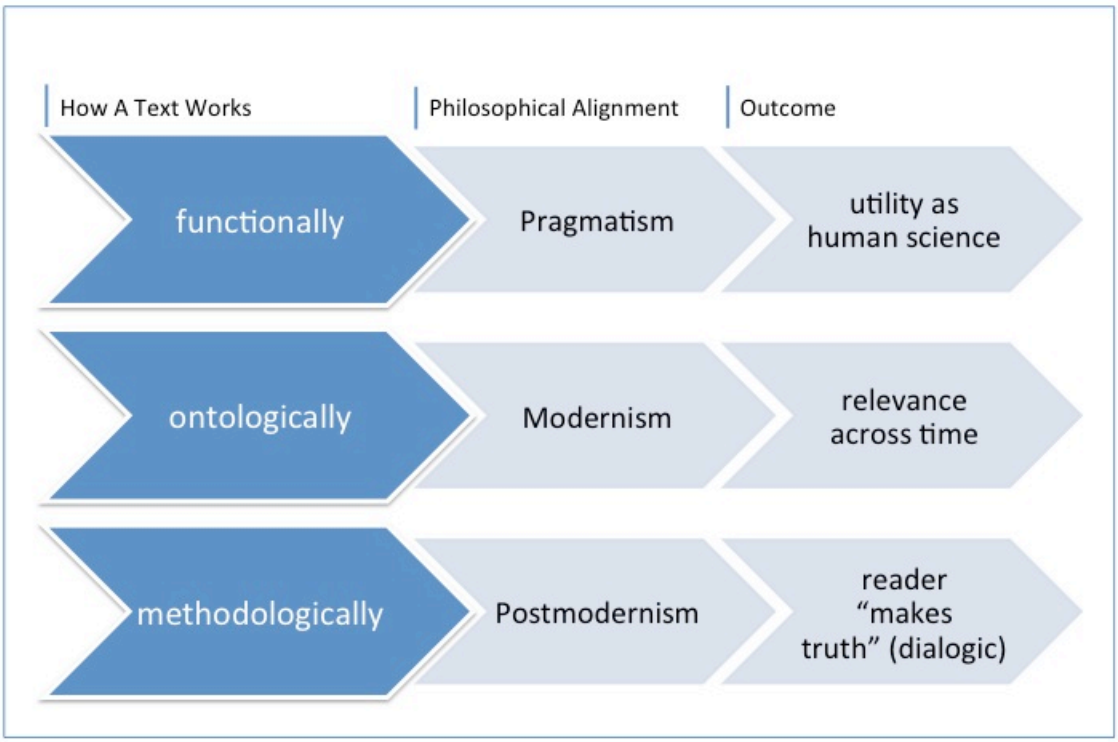

Figure 8. Navigating Intellectual Trends: Twentieth-Century Modern Utopia, Sarah Minegar

Academic Science Meets Utopia

As previously outlined science and literary utopia overlap in numerous ways. By the mid-twentieth century, utopia was deeply immersed in conversation with the academic sciences. Susan Mizruchi describes the timeframe leading up to this period as a time when culture was defined by the emerging social sciences and literary authors were learning from sociologists and from each other how to conceptualize the meaning of sociality in the modern context.[318] She posits "many writers saw themselves as deliberate

[318] Susan Mizruchi. *Science of Sacrifice: American Literature and Modern Social Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). Though this book focuses on American social scientific culture, the author demonstrates British, European, and American influence in these developments. As this dissertation studies Anglo and American utopia, her points are pertinent to cultural developments in both areas.

architects of a "science of new society."[319] This mission was especially true for modern utopians and by the mid-century an established practice. Mizruchi terms synthetic works that feature a dialog between literature and social science, "border texts."[320] Though her study does not include utopian works specifically, this term aptly applies to literary utopia produced from the late-nineteenth century up into the present. As border texts, literary utopias extend the dialog to the experimental sciences *and* other humanistic studies.

Perhaps the most significant contribution a literary work can make in its role as a border text is that of communicator to popular audiences. "Border texts are popular precisely because they expose areas of cultural controversy and grievance."[321] For this reason, Mizruchi identifies border texts from this period as precursors to cultural studies. Her definition "presupposes a society in which there is a great deal of interest in the emerging fields of social science, generated by widespread perceptions of intensive social change."[322] Mid-century utopia is testament to the role border texts play in communicating scientific research to broader audiences. In the same way the genre had been appropriated by secular and religious reformers during the nineteenth century,

---

[319] Mizruchi, 25. This in reference to literary works in her study. This observation is applicable to literary utopia.

[320] Mizruchi, 14. Mizruchi describes "border texts" as those that "at once defin[e] and bridg[e] divisions among professional disciplines…and, in turn, between these disciplines and more popular audiences. Marked by their accessible language and broad appeal, these texts cut across emerging specializations, in ways that accentuate the process of specialization itself" (Ibid). Her definition uncannily resembles this study's description of literary utopia as human ecology.

[321] Mizruchi, 15.

[322] Ibid. Mizruchi locates the border text in more modern contexts because it requires an established publishing industry, institutionalized academic culture, and an interested and informed general public. Again, her work focuses on the United States at the turn of the century, but her observations are applicable to both English and American cultural developments.

utopia was being employed by scientists and the scientific-minded to convey social theory as interpreted by various scientific communities. The resulting texts demonstrate an increasing interest in contemplating scenarios that integrate precise research developments. This made mid-century utopia more plausible, in terms of its connections to actual scientific study, and thus led to an increased interest in lived experiments based on literary works.[323]

Skinner's *Walden Two* and Callenbach's *Ecotopia* exemplify the potential of the border text to connect with all kinds of readers and to provide a common platform on which to base dialog. Though these texts paradoxically "define and defy disciplinary divisions" and "exaggerate and minimize the perceived distance between professional analysts and the larger public,"[324] these works (and others from this period) were perhaps the closest utopia had ever come to bridging the modern divide between the humanities and sciences, and the intellectual elite and the informed public. Science provided legitimacy and direction while the narrative format provided accessibility and relevance. These overtly scientific utopias candidly explore the ecological framework in operation, making direct observations of humans and their relationships to their natural, social, and built environments. This experimental approach brings controversial topics to the forefront—topics like "social engineering" (and all of its connotations), biotic and cultural interrelationships, shared obligation and kinship, and environmental justice.[325] Scientific utopia is both brazen *and* fluent in "real-life" scientific research.

---

[323] More on these project offshoots later in this chapter.

[324] Mizruchi, 16. Description of paradoxical border texts.

[325] Dystopian texts at this time were also increasingly scientific. Works like Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1924) Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), George Orwell's *Ninteen Eighty-Four* (1949), Ray

Utopians have various motives for imagining other worlds, but all are driven by pressing dissatisfactions that leads them to challenge convictions and proffer alternatives. When utopians ponder in terms of imaginary reconstitution of society, they are clearly engaging in the socio-political function of literary utopia.[326] Naturally, this entails the consideration of collective life and these arrangements are guided by notions of moral order and mutual service (i.e. the modern social imaginary).[327] Twentieth-century utopians were particularly cognizant of these guiding principles as they were taking cues from the academic sciences—sciences that were driven to understand the world *and* improve it.

Mizruchi identifies obligation and sacrificial thinking as the driving force behind social scientific ideas. Sacrificial thinking is an essential component in achieving "moral order and mutual service" as social order is achieved through an economy of exchanges. Mizruchi contends that obligation and sacrificial thinking directed late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Anglo-American attempts to "define the nature of social life."[328] At this period in history, she identifies a shared interest in sacrifice in different forms of social theory: literary, social scientific, and theological. The dynamic relationship among these systems of order led to a social scientific culture that has endured. Mizruchi's

---

Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1951), and Harry Harrison's *Make Room! Make Room!* (1966), all address concurrent scientific and technological concerns, among other themes.

[326] Although the human sciences are comprised of natural and social studies, sociology often plays the role of the synthesizing science within human studies, and as identified earlier, it is the most prominent discipline within the ecological framework. Literary utopia is thus imagined in terms of its sociological function, but as such, addresses all that society entails, holistically. This is also the basis of Ruth Levitas' argument for utopia as sociology.

[327] As chapter one discusses, the modern social imaginary is the mechanism that guides our social practices. The modern social imaginary places value on tenets that encourage sociality. Thus moral order and mutual service are prioritized.

[328] Mizruchi, 25.

interpretation of social impetus is consistent with Taylor's modern social imaginary and accounts for the attention border texts give to understanding workable social schemes. As texts that depict societies and debate its proper form, literary utopias employ a mode of sacrificial thinking, the essence of *social* thinking/planning. "Sacrifice…impels the analyst to ask 'institutional' rather than 'individual' questions."[329]

Promising Science: *Walden Two* and *Ecotopia*

The ability to navigate both scientific and humanistic problems qualifies utopias as border texts, but it also makes them useful guides to sacrificial thinking. Scientific utopias combine humanistic reflection with factual data, thus attempting to clarify how sacrificial thinking might be utilized and how it should not. As academic science gained a foothold in the popular imagination, modern utopia was able to employ scientific realism to comment on modes of sacrificial thinking. By the time *Walden Two* was written, this notion was more secularized and "realistic" utopias began popping up. In much the way a community planner or politician might strategize reform projects, utopians were utilizing academic research to reconstitute social structures. Literary utopia, in all of its pragmatism, had discerned a compatible and authoritative practice with which to associate.[330]

The literary works of B. F. Skinner and Ernest Callenbach are excellent examples of the clarity authoritative science brings to utopia. Not only does real science help legitimize and reify imagined schemes, it also illuminates modern utopia's adherence to a

[329] Mizruchi, 29.

[330] This association was not reciprocal.

piecemeal reform strategy.[331] This is demonstrated in the incremental developments these texts illustrate, the placement of utopia within the "regular" world, and the narrative focus on social learning and adaptation. These authors were able to borrow from social research in order to bring utopia into the present.

Radical Behaviorism

B. F. Skinner epitomizes the role of the "visible scientist."[332] After Sigmund Freud, he is probably the most recognized figure in the field of psychology. As a scientist, public figure, and writer, he was able to capitalize on his "border text" *Walden Two* by utilizing his own academic research. His chosen science, both professionally and for *Walden Two*, was radical behaviorism, his brand of *experimental* behavioral psychology. From his experiments in operant conditioning, to his baby tender and teaching machines, to his philosophy of human behavior expressed in *Walden Two* (1948) and *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (1970), Skinner was a provoking, inspiring, and controversial scientist. Skinner's IROS was his attempt to demonstrate how scientific social planning might revolutionize society.

Walden Two is a fine example of the ways in which the dialectical aspects of the ecological framework serve a pragmatic purpose. Skinner's work speaks to all three

[331] Testament to an evolving and dialectical *modern* utopia.

[332] Alexandra Rutherford. "Radical Behaviorism and Psychology's Public: B. F. Skinner in the Popular Press, 1934-1990" *History of Psychology,* Vol. 3, No. 4 (2000), 371. Rutherford using Rae Goodell's term.

dialectical modes[333] and aptly demonstrates the practical use of the utopian method. As commentary, an example of ecological relationships, and a platform for social debate, *Walden Two* also demonstrates the poignancy of a utopia placed in the present. This is perhaps the way H.G. Wells had intended it to be used all along.

In all of his pursuits, sacrificial thinking was a clear guide for B. F. Skinner. His viewpoints, inventions, and experiments were all derived from his ambition to understand the motivations and behaviors of social beings.[334] This passion translated to a literary work meant to clarify potential applications of radical behaviorism and demonstrate hypothetical outcomes.[335] His rhetorical strategy was literary utopia, in its most traditional form. Thus *Walden Two* is not only an example of the utopian genre finding clarity in science, but science directing persuasion through the utopian mode. Like William Morris, Skinner based his fiction on his personal work and the discussions and debates occurring in his own academic circle.[336] He was giving "applied" science a try.

Skinner's title has an intentionally familiar ring, but unlike Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* (1854), Skinner envisioned a "Walden for two"—a community experiment.[337] He asserted that "self-reliance" was a collective endeavor. Though philosophically quite different from Thoreau's reflection, Skinner imagined Walden Two

---

[333] As chapter three discusses the three dialectical modes are the cycles of influence, commentary/comparison, estrangement/cultural dialog.

[334] This assertion is based on biographies of Skinner (*B. F. Skinner: A Life*, 1993 and *B. F. Skinner: Benign Anarchist*, 1996), his essay "Walden Two Revisited" (1976, featured in the reissued *Walden Two*), and his autobiography (*The Shaping of A Behaviorist*, 1979).

[335] He also used *Walden Two* to point out existing (and normalized) forms of behavioral control.

[336] B. F. Skinner. "Walden Two Revisited." *Walden Two*. 1948. (Reprinted Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1976), vi.

[337] Skinner, *Walden Two*, 209.

as a place that exemplified similar admiration for simplified economies, reduced consumption, and productive leisure. What made Skinner's Walden radical was the radical behaviorism behind it. His "radical" interpretation was his expanded definition of behavior, which included *everything* an organism does (including what other behaviorists considered "epiphenomena" like thought, verbalization, and emotional expression). Behavior then, was a science of its own and the study of radical behaviorism applicable to complex human functions.

Walden Two features an experimental community that is giving behavioral modification, achieved through operant conditioning, a try. Skinner proposed utilizing behavioral psychology to examine the environmental causes of human behavior. When put into practice, this technology of behavior enabled him to study "behavioral processes under controlled conditions [in order to]…identify significant features of behavior and of the environment."[338] These observations, he hoped, would help scientists and world leaders solve many of the major problems involving human behavior. Though it was still a young science, Skinner had faith in the potential of radical behaviorism to vastly improve social ills. Carefully controlling the human environment could produce an enlightened, educated, and vastly improved society.

To help his case, Skinner put forth a plausible, albeit controversial, set of social modifications. His Walden Two citizens applied radical behaviorism to all aspects of social living, but the major features he focused on were education, production/consumption, labor/leisure, and kinship. These examples helped him make pertinent arguments about forms of social control, bio-cultural relationships, and the need

[338] Skinner, B. F. *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (New York: Knoff, 1971), 23.

for a dynamic science of utopia. Not only were his illustrations pragmatic, they helped clarify the utopian mission.

At the center of *Walden Two* is a small, intentional community by the same name.[339] Under the design of founder T.E. Frazier and the guidance of designated planners and managers, Walden Two's inhabitants live a life of virtual "freedom." Frazier's refined behavioral techniques have created an environment that is rewarding to all of Walden Two's members. Individuals apply to join the community at will, and if accepted must agree to the Walden Code, the community's code of conduct. Any member may leave Walden Two, at any time, for any reason. In exchange for residence, members must meet their labor credit requirements (generally four hours of labor per day) and abide by the Walden Code.[340] As part of the Walden Two way of life, the community members also give up competition, as Skinner (and thus Frazier) was fiercely against the ways of capitalism and its consumer-driven society. Skinner had also lost faith in American democracy, and this is apparent in Frazier's descriptions of the Walden Two philosophy of behavioral reinforcement. With the aid of behavioral modification, Walden Two inhabitants have evolved *beyond* the need to buy, sell, and compete and *toward* something better than the "freedom" offered by democracy.[341]

Social control via negative reinforcement was a major concern for Skinner and he hoped that the organizing principles of radical behaviorism would translate into

---

[339] Walden Two is a community of around one-thousand inhabitants.

[340] The Walden Code is covered later as an example of Skinner's intentionally piecemeal plan.

[341] These social "improvements," evidence of behavioral evolution, are what Skinner (and Frazier) hoped would free individuals from other more negative forms of control—especially those which are destructive, deplete resources or purvey injustice. Skinner saw competition as a detriment to human survival. *Walden Two*, 181. Critics of *Walden Two* accused Skinner of drafting a plan that would deny humanity its autonomy, something he scathingly addressed in his later work.

techniques for positive human conditioning.[342] He argued "[w]hat [was] needed [was] not a new political leader or a new kind of government but further knowledge about human behavior and new ways of applying that knowledge to the design of cultural practices."[343] His IROS adamantly challenged accepted social practices, many of which he interpreted as negative applications of control, and it posited a biting inquiry into acceptable and unacceptable forms of regulation. With this inquiry came a pointed discussion about society's role in selecting and submitting to forms of control and a definitional argument regarding the notion of autonomy.

Harmony in Walden Two was achieved through a system of *elective* environmental controls, which were designed to encourage desirable behavior.[344] *Walden Two* put into "practice" Skinner's contentions about the true nature of freedom. He believed that freedom came in two forms—"one as a *feeling* and one as an *illusion.*"[345] The feeling of freedom was valuable but the illusion made absolute freedom impossible. This realization guided Skinner's design for behavior. If "freedom" could never be truly achieved, then altering the conditions (cultural environments) that reinforce harmful

---

[342] Operant conditioning is a learning strategy whereby a subject's behavior is modified by its resultant consequences. Behaviorists study the likelihood a behavior will reoccur by identifying the ways in which consequences act as positive or negative reinforcers or punishers. By way of environmental manipulation, the behaviorist might attempt to reinforce or inhibit certain behaviors in a subject. B. F. Skinner used schedules of reinforcement (reinforcement based on specific rules) to study the effects of the response rate of different schedules. He hoped this data might help scientists identify patterns of behavior in correlation with various reinforcements. Behavioral techniques are commonly used to help patients change habits and may be applied as part of weight loss or addiction intervention programs. Similar techniques may be used for other training/teaching purposes. More recently, Skinner's theories of verbal behavior have been utilized in therapies for patients with autism. A. Charles Catania references these and other subsequent developments of Skinner's groundbreaking work.

[343] Skinner, *Walden Two*, xvi.

[344] The parameters of "desirable behaviors" were determined by the community and its planners.

[345] Bjork, 210. This contention was based on Skinner's observations of operants when exposed to different reinforcements. Environmental interrelationships demonstrated in *Walden Two* and reiterated in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*.

behavior could help "rewire" individuals. He framed his fictional example as analogous to the democratic practice of control, whereby citizens abide by laws (control) in exchange for freedom and protection. Just as laws are created to both regulate and protect the individual, so too would behavior modification. And as citizens of a democratic nation must be willing to give up absolute freedom and follow the norms of society (obeying laws – ranging from reasonable to extreme, honoring the rights of others, paying taxes, etc.) in exchange for independence, the Walden establishments would do the same but without the capitalist pursuit. Because Skinner viewed democratic freedom as more or less forced compliance (in his mind an aversive technique), compliance in Walden Two would be an elective and collectively embraced behavioral practice. New motivations, for Skinner of the socialistic variety, would result in a more harmonious and fulfilling existence. Radical behaviorism could create a positive and transparent (honest) form of social control without proclaiming "freedoms" that did not exist. *Walden Two* was his laboratory to postulate social outcomes.

Skinner also explored specific examples of control in terms of entitlements and inheritance, education, labor schedules and incentives, gender roles, and marriage and family practices. He desired Walden Two to be "a world without heroes"[346]—individual power was negligible and no one person was praised above another. Skinner structured it so that competition was avoidable and even unnecessary. Its inhabitants have no private investments and do not stand to achieve personal gain within the community.[347] Thus

[346] Skinner, *Walden Two*, 220.

[347] In a heated discussion between characters Frazier, Burris, and Castle regarding dangerous forms of leadership, Frazier remarks that "no one in Walden Two acts for the benefit of anyone else except as the agent of the community. Personal favoritism, like personal gratitude, has been destroyed by our cultural engineers. No one is ever in debt to any figure, or any group, short of the whole community. That's

private property, in Walden Two, is non-existent—ownership, net worth, and purchasing power are not determiners of freedom or personal value. *All* members of Walden Two are given equal access to all of the resources the community has to offer. This social arrangement, in conjunction with the labor-credit system and the abolition of private property, allows Walden Two to function as a true classless society. And though its inhabitants express individuality and independence, because social practices in Walden Two are engineered, no "natural distinctions" between individuals (i.e. those determined by wealth, status, and "freedom") occur. All of Skinner's alternative social practices survey similar exchanges of control for newfound freedom.

Skinner most certainly had a political agenda, as does any utopian, but his intentions were not as tyrannical as they were interpreted. His biographer, Bjork, remarks that Skinner was "not trying to change people, just the world in which they live."[348] But Skinner's critics interpreted changing the way people live *as* "changing people," and they felt attacked by radical behaviorism. Alexandra Rutherford points out that popular audiences took offense at Skinner's scientific approach to psychology.[349] Psychology was the domain of everyone who was cognizant of her mental faculties and "what came naturally to the public mind was mentalistic psychology…embedded in a tradition of humanistic, as opposed to scientific values."[350] Rutherford contends that the public found Skinner's dual role as a popular scientist *and* psychologist unsettling, as it required a

---

almost inevitable in a society in which economic preferment is lacking. It's impossible elsewhere" (*Walden Two*, 220).

[348] This pointed out by his biographer Bjork, 232.

[349] Rutherford, 375.

[350] Ibid.

splitting of philosophical understanding.[351] "Skinner's behaviorism did not simply propose that consciousness lay outside the realm of scientific inquiry…he outlined a radically anti-mentalistic position on the nature of consciousness; it became the self-observation of internal, physical processes." This, of course, made him a target for accusations of determinism. Furthermore, *Walden Two* was attacking the "wrong" things, as nearly every behavior Skinner interpreted as "harmful" was popularly interpreted as a mode of expressing autonomy. Not only did Skinner invalidate autonomy, he also criticized the ways in which society achieved such "freedoms."

While Skinner's primary contribution with *Walden Two* was his educated commentary on social control, his experimental data as a laboratory scientist also highlighted the bio-cultural relationships present in human communities.[352] As had happened with sociologists and other social scientists before him, Skinner's attention to bio-cultural relationships did not sit well with audiences. Just as Robert Park had faced criticism for his application of ecological principles to culture (see chapter two, human ecology), Skinner's radical behaviorism was interpreted as a slippery slope to biological determinism. And since *Walden Two* was based on hypothetical applications of radical behaviorism, many critics interpreted it as the work of an "archetype cold-blooded scientist for whom man is simply a machine that can be trained to do his—or anyone's—bidding."[353]

---

[351] Rutherford, 375.

[352] "Bio-cultural" refers to the simple interrelationship between biological factors and cultural outcomes.

[353] Rutherford, 382.

Negative reception aside, Skinner's work struck a cord that was undeniable. As Bjork describes it, he enlivened a discussion of "the American predicament."[354] As an IROS, *Walden Two* enlivened a discussion of the *human* predicament. Skinner's theoretical approach makes contributions to biological and social science, but has been primarily noted for its biological emphasis, as radical behaviorism studies behavior as a naturally "motivated" phenomenon focused on living creatures.[355] Derek Blackman argues that critics placed too much emphasis on the relations between observed behavior and biological processes when Skinner intended his study to demonstrate the "dynamics of interactions between behavior and its environmental context."[356] Skinner invoked the idea of selection by consequences "as a more precise explanatory principle…as an alternative to explanations couched in terms of purpose," but radical behaviorism is primarily a science of interaction and relationships. In this way, it is quite akin to human ecology, the study of humans and their relationships to their natural, social, and built environments. Skinner's investigation of human behavior was the perfect candidate for a literary presentation. He was studying the fundamental result of human ecology—behavior—and his *Walden Two* was the ideal setting to explore the ways in which his laboratory findings might play out in social situations.

Walden Two might be interpreted as an imaginary reconstitution of radical behaviorism—holistic and dialogic in structure. With it, Skinner is able to demonstrate the individual, natural, and social environments that precipitate and reinforce human

---

[354] Daniel Bjork. "B. F. Skinner and the American Tradition: The Scientist as a Social Inventor." *B. F. Skinner and Behaviorism in American Culture*. L.D. Smith and W.R. Woodward, eds. (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1996), 36.

[355] Derek E. Blackman. "B. F. Skinner and G.H. Mead: On Biological Science and Social Science." *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*, No. 2 (March, 1991), 252.

[356] Ibid, 253.

behavior. His use of the traditional visitor-guide narrative serves as a rhetorical cue for his readers and an invitation to tour his "virtual" laboratory. Skinner's skeptical Professors Burris and Castle may well be an incarnation of himself and other academics, but this pair is also meant to represent the reluctant reader and general public. Burris' conversion to the Walden Two way of life demonstrates how the skeptical might come to embrace radical behaviorism, if they could just see its "real-life" applications.

Another contribution of Skinner's radical behaviorism was his interpretation of meaning, which he located *within* social interactions. Symbolic environments formed by social acts such as verbal and nonverbal communication are the conditions under which learners make meaning. "Skinner's definition of verbal behavior [w]as behavior reinforced through the mediation of others rather than as language per se."[357] Blackman points out that "the social construction of consciousness…lies at the heart of many systematic approaches to psychology…and consciousness is tuned to lesser or greater extents by social interaction."[358] This notion of sociality is at the heart of a sociology of knowledge and explains the variance inherent in the experiences of individuals. As an example of human ecology in practice, *Walden Two* was Skinner's attempt to join the biological and sociological components of behavior. He did not see the two as incompatible, rather, as temporal events, behaviors were a product of biological *and* social construction.

Skinner's dialectical utopia is also very clear about its "piecemeal" project, an important tenet of modern utopian practice. His intentionally pragmatic integration of real

---

[357] Blackman, 258.

[358] Ibid., 259.

science is what made *Walden Two* more plausible than earlier "scientific" utopias. Despite the common critical interpretation of Skinner's project as a blueprint, he never intended his imaginary reconstitution of society to be static. Not only was his selection of the utopian mode an attempt to demonstrate a necessary dialog, his Walden Code expressly orders it. Frazier describes the Walden Code as " rules of conduct…which are changed from time to time as experience suggests." When any member has a disagreement, she may bring the matter up for consideration. "Anyone may examine the evidence upon which a rule was introduced into the Code. [S]he may argue against its inclusion and may present [her] own evidence."[359] Skinner meant to imply that guidelines are always changing as a matter of principle and as a result of experimentation.[360] Skinner clarifies this point further in later reflections on *Walden Two*. In the second volume of his autobiography, Skinner outlines out the distinguishing principles in *Walden Two* that overlap with Thoreau's *Walden* (One). He then offers five additional principles "underlying the construction of a good life," in order to accommodate the social aspects of Walden Two:

> (1) No way of life is inevitable. Examine your own closely. (2) If you do not like it, change it. (3) But do not try to change it through political action. Even if you succeed in gaining power, you will not be able to use it in any more wisely than your predecessors. (4) Ask only to be left alone to solve your problems in your own way. (5) Simplify your needs. Learn how to be happy with few possessions. (6) Build a way of life in which people live together without quarreling, in a social climate of trust rather than suspicion, of love rather than jealousy, of cooperation rather than competition. (7) Maintain that world with gentle but pervasive ethical sanctions rather than a police of military force. (8) Transmit the culture effectively to new members through expert child care and a powerful educational technology. (9) Reduce compulsive labor to a minimum by arranging the kinds of incentives under which people enjoy working. (10) Regard no

[359] Skinner, *Walden Two*, 151-152.

[360] As a social *experiment*, Skinner shows how the utopia method embodies the scientific method.

> practice as immutable. Change and be ready to change again. Accept no eternal verity. Experiment.[361]

Curiously enough, reviewers seem to have forgotten to insert themselves into this dialog or to acknowledge that Skinner's utopia is perpetually "in progress."

This "lack of participation" seems to be a recurrent misstep of utopian audiences. Art is supposed to provoke, inspire, and reveal truths that are otherwise situated in abstraction. Readers must assume a critical and dialogic role, but many utopian readers fall asleep on the job, reading works uncritically and unchallenged. Readers are missing the opportunity to be provoked by even the most transparently dialectical texts. Refuted utopias, such as dystopian works, are not as commonly overshadowed by narrow conceptions. Dystopia is deemed "critical" while utopia (even modern utopia) is somehow "static." As revealed by reviews of *Walden Two*, readers seem to forget that not every idea presented in a utopian text is necessarily a direct reflection of an author's intentions. Skinner's utopia was described as "curiously sterile" and critics asked of it "What will inspire us?" but Skinner left the motivation aspect up to his readers to decide.[362] His job was to give readers access to applied science, not to fill in all of the individualized details. That is not to say that utopians do not have agendas or support certain beliefs, it is just that modern utopia is structured to be a conversation or debate with its reader and not an inflexible prescription. Modern utopia works to clarify the utopian project. What might formerly have been mistaken as a tidy problem-solution literature is now actively dialogic and provisional.

---

[361] Skinner, *The Shaping of a Behaviorist*, 346. Items one through five are the principles Skinner identifies as overlapping with Thoreau's, and numbers six through ten are his original contributions.

[362] Rutherford, 383.

Walden Two, though itself sold short at the time of its first publication, is an excellent example of science bringing voice to utopia. Not only does Skinner's utopia represent parallels in the study of radical behaviorism and human ecology, its realism demonstrates palpable application. This fact is most notably demonstrated in the communitarian groups that utilized *Walden Two* as a guide for lived experiments. The Twin Oaks community, famously documented by Kat Kincade, answered Skinner's provocation.[363] Though initially inspired by Skinner's work, this community (which is still in existence) emulated the Walden Code, taking special notice of its mutability. They certainly "Regard[ed] no practice as immutable." Twin Oakers "got it."

Though *Walden Two* did not initially resonate with audiences, both Skinner and his utopia did get attention and respect, in time. His work in the laboratory and as a social philosopher was rather demonstrative of the utility of the utopian method and the creation of hypothetical worlds. Utopia provided a platform on which to strategize applications of real science—a speculative think tank of sorts. *Walden Two* opened dialog and in that served its true purpose.

Environmental Ecology

Though Ernest Callenbach was a less controversial figure than B. F. Skinner, his choice science, environmental ecology, was no less a touchy issue, as it challenged ways of living and systems of value. As a "border text," Callenbach's *Ecotopia* served as a handbook for strategizing social adaptation in light of the developing environmental crisis. This work and his later work, *Ecotopia Emerging* (a prequel to *Ecotopia*), were

[363] See Kat Kincade. *A Walden Two Experiment* (New York: Quill, 1973) and *Is It Utopia Yet?* (Louisa: Twin Oaks, 1994.)

pointed commentaries on then present-day sustainability concerns.[364] Callenbach's work remains relevant today and while provocative, aspects of his and other "green" utopians' political journeys have been used to steer real-world conversations.

Ecotopia, like *Walden Two*, highlights the utility of the ecological framework in demonstrating utopian pragmatism. Just as the aforementioned text, *Ecotopia* brings practical and timely discussions to the foreground of his imagined other. Where Skinner's study of behavior was a stand-in for human ecology, Callenbach's is an example of how human ecology fits into "big picture" ecology, emphasizing relationships and cycles of influence. His imaginary reconstitution of society is about change and human adaptation to change and the ways in which the utopian mode can aid in *monitoring* ecological developments and *modeling* possible interventions. As an "open-ended" utopia, *Ecotopia*, like *Walden Two*, supports a piecemeal and dialectical project.

Ernest Callenbach might be thought of as the citizen ecologist. Growing up in the Depression era, in rural Pennsylvania, he came to environmental activism by way of personal experience. Callenbach's first book to address sustainable living was his 1972 thrifty-living manual, *Living Poor With Style*, but he got a flavor for activist journalism earlier as founder and editor of the University of California Press' *Film Quarterly*, in 1958 (a position he held until 1991). Callenbach identified with the political culture emerging in the world of "visual literature." [365] His narrative approach with *Ecotopia* reflects his interest in activist writing, but it also accounts for his rational approach to

[364] Though society is more ecologically aware as a whole today, Callenbach's message still resonates, as many of the problems he discusses have remained or exacerbated.

[365] Martin, Ann and Rob White. "Remembering Ernest 'Chick' Callenbach" *Film Quarterly* 65.4 (Summer 2012), 4-5.

utopia. Callenbach wove together a tale of real science and utopian ambition. By the nineteen-seventies, the environmental sciences were finding indisputable evidence of pollution and irreversible ecological damage, and as Callenbach remarks, "nobody had yet thought through the implications for the way we live. The very concept of ecological sustainability, as we now understand it, was just coming into view."[366] *Ecotopia* suggests a reinterpretation of "moral order and mutual service," one that is less dependent on consumerist lifestyles and that is invested in the lives of future inhabitants.

As the title implies, *Ecotopia* is an example of literary utopia that is ecological in *content* (not just in function), and thus ecocritics and environmentalists alike have given this work attention. Conscious of a degrading natural environment, growing population, and depleting resources, Callenbach turned his focus to environmental sustainability and the intersection of nature and humanity. His narrative is told through the records of a skeptical journalist who visits the American northwest, now the seceded nation of Ecotopia, and by the end decides to make Ecotopia his home.[367] Callenbach demonstrates an attainable utopia, as many of the sustainable practices and technologies in his book have their basis in actual concurrent projects/experiments in the American west.[368] Unlike

---

[366] *Ecotopia,* Afterword, 170.

[367] Callenbach's premise is a new liberal and ecologically advanced country called Ecotopia. While the book is set in 1999, Ecotopia succeeded from the United States in the early 1980s. The Ecotopian nation is comprised of Northern California, Oregon, and Washington. William Weston, the protagonist and narrator, is the first outside journalist (an American) allowed to visit and report on Ecotopia. The story is told through Weston's diary entries and through his reports for the fictional Times-Post. During his stay, Weston finds an appreciation for small business, decentralized government, and Ecotopia's multitude of sustainable practices. He is converted and determined to be a spokesman for the Ecotopian cause.

[368] In Callenbach's reflection on his research process, he remarks that *Ecotopia* took three years to write because it was very research intensive, but that the science/technology was out there. In a 2004 interview with the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, he said, "there was an immense amount of sophisticated scientific literature on sustainable practices floating around, but no one had ever put it together and asked, "Well, how would we do things differently?" Eve Eckman. "The Lit Interview: Ernest Callenbach." *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, Available at: http://www.sfbg.com/39/26/lit_interview_callenbach.html, 2004.

many scientific utopias, his inventions are neither far-fetched nor do they present insurmountable ethical dilemmas, and many of the technologies he describes in his fictional tale are used today. The author's unique contribution to ecological study is in his demonstration of cultural adaptation. Callenbach guides his reader through the adaptation *process*. He reminds his reader that natural and cultural ecosystems collide and are interdependent. Since his plausible euchronia[369] is set only twenty-five years in the future, the author invites his reader to witness the transformation firsthand.

Ecotopia explores various green theories and technologies, but the strength in this exploration is less about highlighting "science" per se and more about stressing human potential to adapt. Callenbach was not just concerned with finding "happiness" and adjusting human motives, he was interested in human survival. His goal moves beyond the dream to ensure "a better life" and toward ensuring "the very possibility of the continuation of life itself."[370] By Murray Bookchin's estimation, Callenbach practices "*ecological sensitivity* [which] involves taking into account the consequences of human actions [and] the question 'why' something is being done as well as the inherent meaningfulness of nature."[371] *Environmentalism,* on the other hand*,* "restricts itself to the

---

[369] Euchronia: "Good place" in the future.

[370] Heinz Tschacher. "Despotic Reason in Arcadia? Ernest Callenbach's Ecological Utopias." *Science Fiction Studies*. Vol. 22, No. 3 (Nov. 1984), 308.

[371] Tschacher's note on Bookchin's distinctions, in *Ecology of Freedom*, 21, 314.

exploitation of the earth's 'resources' in less harmful ways."[372] *Ecotopia* then, is a "utopia of sufficiency" (sustainability) not a "utopia of abundance"(technology).[373]

Though Callenbach's vision includes scaling back on technological production, he is no Luddite. *Ecotopia* falls somewhere between the high-tech world of Edward Bellamy and the serene countryside of William Morris. While Bellamy and Morris could not agree on the shape of utopia, Callenbach strikes a balance between Bellamy's industrial army and Morris' pastoral simplicity. His work is about adaptation and it is neither fully technological nor rural. He is not ready to fully "regress" (reject existing innovations entirely) in the name of "progress," but is willing to adjust his expectation of *prosperity* if it means preparing for a future that can sustain itself. Like Morris, Callenbach argues that a capitalist economy is incompatible with the reality of finite resources, and that extreme forms of individualism are incompatible with sustainability. Callenbach's idealization of "scaling back" and reorganizing is demonstrated in the stable-state economy and the pre-patriarchal social structure he models. In this way, "regression" might be "assuming a progressive function."[374] Callenbach's mode of adaptation is quite pragmatic, as it does not require extensive "unlearning," but he openly demonstrates that restructuring society requires psychological, moral, and intellectual changes.[375]

---

[372] Tschacher, 314.

[373] These terms used by Marius de Geus. "Ecotopia, Sustainability, and Vision." *Organization and Environment* (June 2002), 189.

[374] This concept is famously outlined by Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* (1955) and Tschachler spends some time contemplating *Ecotopian* "regressions" in these terms. In addition to "regression" to tribalism, he identifies an ontogenetic reversion to childhood. This also invokes the popular adage, "less is more."

[375] Tschachler, 311.

Callenbach's pragmatism is also apparent in the way he addresses bio-cultural relationships. Ecological utopias are quite blatant in their demonstration of the cycles of influence, and *Ecotopia* fictionalizes plausible relationships between individuals, society, and nature. Furthermore, Callenbach utilizes real science and this blend of real science and holistic thinking creates an astounding realism—almost like a fictional focus group.[376]

Scholars, politicians, and city planners picked up on the utility of this realism and some, like Marius de Geus, are advocating the utopian method as a testing-ground for ecological scenarios. "Along with E.F. Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful*, it is cited by leading members of the German Green Party as a major source of inspiration for their real-world political efforts."[377] De Geus remarks that ecological utopias are also being taken seriously in the Netherlands. The Dutch Commission for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development (Amsterdam) includes the discussion of ecological utopias in their debates on sustainable practices. "By organizing debates and platform meetings of non-governmental organizations about future 'ecological dream societies and imaginative visions,' the Commission is capable of providing a meaningful contribution to the quest for an ecologically responsible society."[378] Examples like these might be the closest utopia has come to "non-fringe" real world applications, since utopian socialism

---

[376] Here holistic or "big picture" thinking should not be conflated with a static project. Big picture thinking is different than drastic (big picture) action. Piecemeal projects must still be planned in terms of total outcomes and interrelationship, otherwise they would have nothing to work toward and could leave out critical connections and neglect consequences.

[377] Michael Cummings. "Credibility of Transition in Callenbach's Ecotopia Emerging: Lessons for Practical Utopians." *Utopian Studies*. No. 2 (1989), 69.

[378] Marius de Geus. "Utopian Sustainability: Ecological Utopianism." Liam Leonard and John Berry, eds. *The Transition to Sustainable Living and Practice,* (Bingley: Emerald, 2009), 88.

fell out of fashion. And perhaps for the first time in recent decades, the utopian voice has been heard *uninterrupted* by misleading conceptions and unrealistic expectations.

De Geus makes an important point about those who distrust ecological utopia—simply put, they are asking utopia the wrong questions. It is a matter of choosing to enter into a dialog with the text or interpreting it as a closed system. Instead of asking "would I want to live in this utopia?" asking rather "what can I learn from this utopia?"[379] Ernest Callenbach was clearly looking to steer a conversation, but he implied it would be a group effort. As De Geus puts it, *Ecotopia* was a "compass" instead of a roadmap. And like literary utopia, environmental ecology is "big picture" thinking with an emphasis on temporality and evolution.

Even Callenbach's writing process was dialectical. Although the practice of research itself is an inherently dialogical venture, Callenbach's endeavor was to create a "virtual" gathering of scholars by synthesizing ideas that were quite innovative. He describes being the author of *Ecotopia* as being…

> like the parent of a talented child. You are not really responsible for the kid's gifts; after all, the genes involved stem from hundreds of ancestors. *Ecotopia* was stitched together like a quilt from ideas, not yet connected, that were circulating in society at the time. The pattern was evidently new and striking enough for *Ecotopia* to open readers' minds to new possibilities—ripping through the veil of the apparent inevitability of continued environmental degradation, social alienation, community decline, and personal stress.[380]

Although criticized for political shortsightedness and a narrative portrayal that at times contradicted its own mission, *Ecotopia* did what it set out to do—provoke.[381] In a 2006

---

[379] De Gues, 2002, 195.

[380] Callenbach, 171.

[381] Werner Christie Mathisen's "The Underestimation of Politics in Green Utopias: The Descriptions of politics in Huxley's Island, Le guin's The Dispossessed, and Callenbach's Ecotopia"

interview, Callenbach was asked about the relevancy of utopia in a world where the idea of utopia seems increasingly ambiguous. He answered that amidst confusion and despair, people seek out hopeful alternatives. Like a true *modern* utopian, he finds value in the journey.

> It doesn't matter whether utopias 'come true.' Neither do vast plans of any kind – globalization was supposed to produce universal prosperity, WW2 was supposed to end wars, the New Deal was supposed to end poverty in the US, etc. Utopias function to raise the question of what general direction we want to move in: the details of an utopian vision are not items on a score-card. Also it is important to remember that feeling and emotions are critical. Aside from its ecological content, *Ecotopia* moves those readers who find it 'feels like home.'[382]

Walden Two and *Ecotopia* illustrate the analytical value of the ecological framework, as it helps validate the utopian method as practical and meaningful science. These works are also examples of academic science giving literary utopia the legitimacy and expression it needed to be heard.

---

demonstrates how utopia and political theory could benefit from more interdiscourse. Naomi Jacobs' "Failures of the Imagination in Ecotopia" makes good points about Callenbach's failure to "come through" with plots and characters that truly represent his progressive vision.

[382] Rüdiger Heinze and Jochen Petzold "The Disappearance of Utopia? An Interview with Ernest Callenbach on the Role and Function of Utopian Thought in Contemporary Society." *ZAA* 55.1 (2007), 87-92.

Chapter 5

Appraising Progress: Empathy, Ethics, and Social Education in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*

> The meaning of the literary work, then, can be understood as a verb rather than a noun; not something carried away when we have finished reading it, but something that happens as we read or recall it.
>
> -Derek Attridge, *J.M. Coetzee and the Ethics of Reading*

This final textual analysis focuses on the appraisal process through which literary utopia guides readers. Utopia is not only a "think tank" for social practices but it is a space to ponder the acceptable ethical outcomes of those practices. The ecological framework is used here to help study the ethical transformations that *social adaptation* entails and that literary utopia explores.

The literary mode has long been valued for its ability to convey "truths" that are otherwise inexpressible. Literary fiction invites readers to explore abstract or intangible ideas (emotions, virtues, states of being, etc.) made "concrete" via imagined scenarios. These works also have the capacity to open readers' minds to other perspectives and other ways of being, thus reinforcing the habit of empathic reasoning (i.e. acknowledging other points of view). Some scholars even propose that by "practicing" empathy for fictional characters, readers might be inclined to behave compassionately in their real-life interactions.[383] While not everyone agrees to what extent literature impacts readers,

[383] Martha Nussbaum is among those who believe a literary education is central to a "healthy" society, because it helps cultivate skilled reasoning and foster empathic citizens. Suzanne Keen disagrees. While she does not discount that interactions with literature encourage intellectual development, she does

literature undoubtedly provides a platform for individuals to think beyond themselves; this alterity is part and parcel to ethical thinking.

Moving now to a twenty-first-century example, Kazuo Ishiguro's dystopian *Never Let Me Go*, this chapter explores perhaps the most persuasive literary dialectic—the ethical provocation. This chapter builds on the previous one by honing in on the pragmatic ethical conversations literary utopia inspires. I begin the next section with an overview of literature as a location for working out abstract concepts. From there, the focus shifts to the innovation literary utopia adds to this study and how the ecological framework forces an evaluation of the ethical *adaptations* that accompany human advancements. This chapter concludes with textual examples of the ethical dialectic from *Never Let Me Go*.

Literary utopia (and in this instance dystopia) is unique in that it examines ethical outcomes and the process of *transition* from the present ethic viewpoint to the imagined alternative. And since many utopian texts do not attempt to conceive the revolution/transition itself, it is the task of the ethical persuasion to help readers "fill in the developmental blanks," so to speak. In order to distinguish how this attention to transformation sets the utopian dialectic apart from that of other literary genres, this chapter begins with a discussion of universal literary innovations. *Never Let Me Go*, which imagines an alternative history where human cloning for the purpose of organ harvesting is common practice, was selected to act out this stage of the utopian dialectic because (human cloning) as a current and unprecedented scientific innovation its ethical

---

not see empathy for fictional characters directly translating "into 'nicer' human behavior." This debate discussed in: Anne Whitehead. "Writing with Care: Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*." *Contemporary Literature,* Vol. 52, No.1 (University of Wisconsin Press, 2011).

persuasion resonates in a way previous innovations (like industrial technology) no longer do.

This text is particularly constructive (at least in 2014) because it demonstrates the exchange utopia is intended to provoke. Ishiguro's text is invigorating *today* because it explores our current anxieties and it taps into the complicated and ubiquitous experience of social adjustment. As a contemporary text that is concerned with contemporary science, *Never Let Me Go* is engaging but its dialectic mission to estrange, inspire, and transform will make it an enduring addition to the utopian canon. Just as other utopian/dystopian texts before it, it will serve as a time capsule and an invitation to feel, think, act, and wonder. Ishiguro's work is provocative not because it makes a judgment about cloning or biomedical ethics but because it begs readers to react, investigate, or take a viewpoint. Ideally, *you*, the reader, will experience an ethical provocation and reflect on some of the issues this text presents.

Literary Mode

There is little dispute among humanists that the practice of literary fiction has social value. The debate is in the character and magnitude of this "value." Theorists Paul Ricoeur (1914-2005) and Martha Nussbaum have both emphasized the literary paradigm as the appropriate model for ethical contemplation. Hubert Zapf demonstrates a similar contention in his outline of recent ethical questions that have made their way into literary studies. He argues that because ethics are necessarily mediated through individual human perspectives, they might best be understood via literature, which can capture "complex dynamical processes" that are beyond theoretical representation. He remarks that,

"Ethical issues require the fictional mode of narrative, because the ethical is a category that resists abstract systematization and needs instead concrete exemplification of lived experience in the form of stories, which allow for the imaginative transcendence of the individual self toward other selves."[384]

These perspectives point to inherent social complexities that can only be fully understood and interpreted through "bodily" encounters. If those encounters cannot be otherwise reproduced, linguistic symbolism provides a virtual dimension in which to accomplish a similar task. As some ethical quandaries are not precipitated by concrete realities, "virtual" realities serve an important role in directing debate.[385] Utopian authors have taken stock of this literary function and use the utopian method to provide social commentary and test ethical hypotheticals.

Other scholars value literature for the emotional articulation it provides. In Patrick Colm Hogan's cross-disciplinary study of cognitive psychology and literary fiction, *What Literature Teaches Us About Emotion* (2011), he argues that literature provides important *data* that has potential to bridge various disciplinary studies in emotion and ethics. He contends that literary works are more than anecdotal accounts, in fact, literature provides data for "vast area[s] of human emotional life—real communicative products that both depict and induce emotional response, often across cultures and historical periods."[386] Hogan notes that there is much utility in the literary objectification of feelings because it helps individual translate emotional experiences into concepts wherein others can analyze

---

[384] Hubert Zapf. "Literary Ecology and Ethics of Texts." *New Literary History* (2009), 853.

[385] These virtual worlds help bring out what cannot otherwise be captured.

[386] Patrick Colm Hogan. *What Literature Teaches Us About Emotion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Kindle Edition, 2.

and identify. Literature is also a useful tool for studies of human emotion because literary representations of these emotional experiences work toward clarifying descriptions of the actual phenomenological processes. Hogan argues, "Literary narratives often provide frameworks for synthesizing the otherwise somewhat fragmented research findings on any given emotion."[387] Thus, he sees potential for literature to have real-world research applications in the field of cognitive psychology.[388]

Another reason humanists have valued literature is for its ability to situate complex concepts like freedom, progress, and dignity within palpable examples. This is particularly poignant when texts address concerns about social development or change. Literary fiction has for centuries been a location for individuals to explore agency, personhood, and aspects of their identity that may be eroded or enhanced by alternative circumstances. It is also a location for dialog concerning the character of these notions (agency, personhood, and identity), and thus a reader may be stimulated toward empathetic or even egocentric emotional reactions.[389] In this way, literature has been helpful in conveying aspects of the human experience that are difficult to demonstrate outside of material (albeit simulated) human interactions.

---

[387] Ibid., 6.

[388] Ibid., 38.

[389] Egocentric emotional responses tend to make individuals react, in real-world situations, while empathetic emotions elicit intangible actions, such as thought or identification with another's feelings. Hogan demonstrates that these emotions are often closely related, and that if a person is inclined to feel empathy toward a fictional 'other' then she would likely experience egocentric emotions if she were actually involved in that situation.

Utopian Social Education and the Ethical Dialectic

The previous examples demonstrate that literary fiction generally evokes an ethical identification for the reader. Though this inducement is not always a moral "conversion" or logical persuasion, literary alterity sets up an unavoidable comparison and thus a reader will identity this "otherness" as similar or different from her own conception. Literary utopia stipulates alterity but in the form of a *holistic social structure*. Utopian works propose an imaginary reconstitution of society precipitated by an alternative "social education," so the ethical questions it poses are in terms of a socio-political comparison. Current ethical viewpoints are measured against the viewpoints of an ethical *other*, thus nudging the reader toward resolution (See Figure 9, next page). In utopia, the ethical identification moves from a personal/private comparison to a social/public one. And literary utopias contemplate more than just "otherness"; they imagine the *social process of adaptation* (and in some cases, the transition itself) to "otherness."

As works in human ecology, part of the task of literary utopia is to monitor change (both in real life and hypothetical change) and adaptation to that change. These works explore the tension between theory and practice, and the "violation" of values (or strain on traditional expectations) that is inherent in changing/progressing societies.[390] Social adaptation requires its participants to come to terms with disruptions in the cycles of influence (i.e. how they understand the relationships between the individuals, society, and nature to operate). "Coming to terms" with these disruptions does not always involve adoption or acceptance of the *nouveau*. In fact, as many utopian works demonstrate,

[390] This specific observation was first made in chapter one.

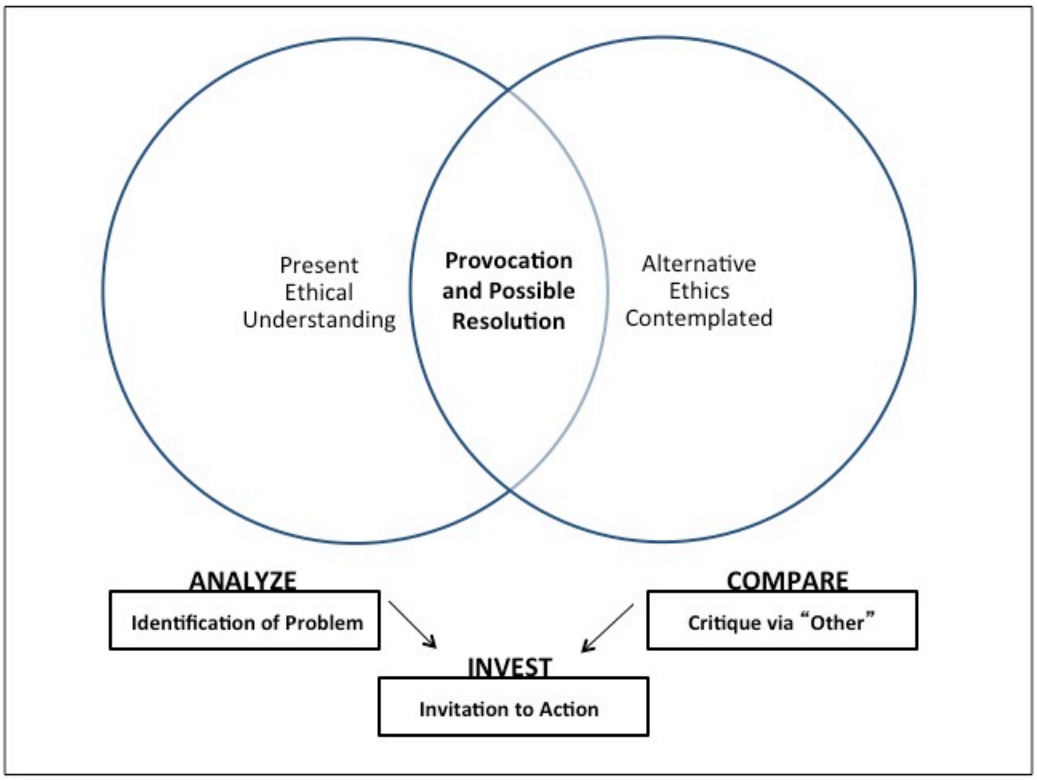

Figure 9. Ethical Dialectic in Literary Utopia, Sarah Minegar

it is common practice to protest change (or impending change) even while being forced to comply with it. Thus literary utopia is a constructive site to monitor ethical encounters as well.

Utopian works imagine an alternative social education and they survey the motivating factors therein. "Innovation" like "progress" has implications in both the positive and negative sense, and as innovation disrupts the understood cycles of influence, individuals experience empowerment, conflict, or a combination of both (ambiguity). If an innovation exceeds the threshold of "normalcy" at a given time, it can impact an individual's interpretation of selfhood and even their concept of "human nature." For example, *Never Let Me Go* contemplates the ways in which biotechnology intervenes in human lives and upsets power relationships that are part of our individual

identity. Bruce Jennings remarks that although biotechnology is designed for human benefit, it is often "an objectifying and reductionist form of power that erodes [the] self (the 'I' as a unique subject). Individuated subjects become fungible parts, edited transcripts, messages written in normal or mistaken codes (i.e., "healthy" people or people with genetic defects)."[391] As humans interact with developing technologies of various kinds, their cognitive, physical, social, and cultural environments are impacted. These constant alterations demonstrate that "human nature" is not constant; in fact, it is malleable as innovation impacts individual and social motivations.[392]

The pace and extent of "progress" are also explored in utopian texts, and therein utopia delves further into existential questions, namely regarding human purpose and the definition of prosperity. Works of literary utopia are particularly enlightening in this area because they place value on emotional and visceral reactions to change/progress. Utopian explorations of emotion differ from other literary evaluations because they implicate the reader in private *and* public realms. Readers are part of both, as they are individuals and part of society, so the alterity studied in utopia often prompts more than an empathic reaction; it enlivens *egocentric* emotions for their fictional (or future) selves. This arrangement places more at stake for a reader, who is more likely to "react" (though perhaps only in thought) to an indictment that involves their own hypothetical person. The future setting of many modern utopias helps to give readers agency in this project.

---

[391] Bruce Jennings. "Biopower and the Liberationist Romance." *Hasting Center Report* (July-August, 2010), 16.

[392] As technologies interact more and more directly with human life, they also increasingly impact social learning. So while it is tempting to define "human nature" as those "pre-cultural" qualities humans hold in common, innovations continue to intervene so persistently in individual, social, and natural environments, that "human universals" are greatly diversifying.

It is also common for modern utopian texts to maintain an intentionally ambiguous position on progress, forcing readers to wade through the complexities on their own, and increasing the likelihood of "empathic unsettlement" or "self-reflexiv[e] and performativ[e] discomfort."[393] Anne Whitehead points out that such invitations "perplex readers, in order to open up, and to hold open, central ethical questions of responsiveness, interpretation, responsibility, complicity, and care."[394] This nuanced grasp of empathy is particularly fitting for the study of trauma narratives, and is thus applicable to fictionalized trauma narratives such as dystopian works. As cautionary tales, texts like *Never Let Me Go* describe an alternate history that may well become a "future" trauma, but leave the reader responsible to mitigate her own agitation.

The ecological framework underscores the very important dialectical relationships taking place in literary utopia. An ecological perspective emphasizes interactions we might otherwise not consider, but that are crucial to a complete understanding of the genre's contribution to human science. The ecological framework helps readers register and witness their own anxieties by validating *emotion* and its contributing role to the ethical dialectic. Because (critical) utopian readers identify as part of the "fictional other," utopian literature persuades readers to let no emotion go unchallenged.[395] If a

---

[393] Whitehead, 59. Historian Dominick LaCapra's concept of "empathic unsettlement" describes an empathic identification whereby a person at once "feels for" and understands another while remaining critically aware of the distinctions between her own experience and the other. In this position, she is "witnessing" an experience, but not speaking for (or in place of) the other. *Utopian* works that produce "empathic unsettlement" are additionally complex because the reader is both separate from the other (reader role) and a *part of* the "future" other (societal participant role) the text describes.

[394] Whitehead, 59.

[395] This identification is true for all works on the utopian spectrum—thus dystopia and anti-utopia. In these works, a reader might identify with a victim, oppressor, or both. Dystopian works that intend to caution readers about social behaviors urge readers to fathom what society *might* become, and depending on the shape of the imagined social structure the reader might be unavoidably aligned with a negative incarnation.

notion of "progress" makes us *shudder*, we must explore what is behind that shudder. In analyzing what truly makes us repulsed or attracted to an idea, we can come closer to a reasoned and ethical answer. Sometimes "repugnance is the only voice left that speaks up to defend the central core of our humanity."[396]

The ethical dialectic is an important part of the human ecological equation. As works of human ecology, literary utopia necessarily examines areas where the individual, social, and natural intersect and interact. In the context of human ethics, these "big picture" contemplations also imply intersecting values and ethics. The cycles of influence that literary utopias mirror, point to conflicts and resolutions within the interrelated individual, social, and natural realms. Readers get a *more* complete picture of the trajectory of human choices when studied as a web of relationships and outcomes. Though it is impossible to calculate the extent to which readers are influenced and educated by literary works, the socio-political comparison utopian texts perform suggests that dialog is the sensible way to cultivate empathy for other perspectives.

Status of Literary Utopia: Early Twenty-First Century

Today, the genre still finds itself overshadowed by shortsighted conceptions of the meaning and purpose of utopia, but utopia nonetheless remains a persistent mode of analysis. As a genre primarily united by the *function* it performs, literary utopia is rather accommodating to new forms and new traditions of knowledge. This study has thus far

[396] Biochemist and ethicist, Leon Kass, made a case for listening to the feelings of "repugnance" that certain innovations elicit. In this case, he was speaking against human reproductive cloning. Leon Kass. "The Wisdom of Repugnance." *In a Flash of My Flesh: The Ethics of Cloning Humans*, Ed. Gregory Pence. (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 20-21. Quotation cited in John Marks. "Clone Stories: 'Shallow Are The Souls That Have Forgotten to Shudder." *Paragraph* 33.3 (2010), 339.

demonstrated how authors of utopian fictions borrow from other academic fields and the ways in which they adapt their critical approach (as with dystopia) to remain in conversation with shifting intellectual trends. The genre's current shape varies, but it seems lately to find purpose and resonance within science fiction and science-themed stories.[397] The utopian mode allows an author's imaginary reconstitution of society to take on any appearance, so long as it presents a socio-political other with which to interrogate the present via comparison. Thus it is common for modern works to play with the utopia narrative structure.

Many modern utopian texts explore the visitor-guide convention in subtle ways, achieving more realistic and "literary" narratives than earlier authors who imposed very traditional "guest" encounters. The visitor-guide convention is a generic indicator for the reader and so alternative presentations of utopia, such as dystopia or ambiguous utopia, do not always register with readers as being part of the utopian genre. Furthermore, dystopian and ambiguous texts tend to focus on more ominous or troublesome viewpoints, misleading readers to believe they are part of an entirely different critical project. Thus dystopian works, such as *Never Let Me Go,* are not always recognized as participants in the utopian dialectic. By escaping the "utopian" label, these texts generally receive fairer evaluation than overtly utopian texts, which are often dismissed without closer analysis. Ishiguro's science-fictional text was well received both popularly and critically, and demonstrates how genre adaptation has enhanced reader reception and

[397] This is likely the case because science-themed works capture the essence of a modern, technological world, and the ethical implications therein. Though commonly futuristic in setting, these works present plausible outcomes (at least relatively speaking) and thus the resulting cognitive estrangement is productive.

given literary utopia new ways to perform. Without the utopian label to hold it back, the utopian genre marches forward. And suprisingly, we also get *active* readers.

"Innovation" and Modern Ethical Quandaries: *Never Let Me Go*

Contemporary British novelist Kazuo Ishiguro is best known for his celebrated *Remains of the Day* (1989), but one of his more recent works, *Never Let Me Go* (2005), aptly demonstrates the utopian ethical dialectic. Ishiguro's characters are striking because they encounter jarring emotions that are left unresolved. In *Never Let Me Go,* this lack of resolution is particularly powerful because this work touches on a very pressing and gripping scientific development—human cloning. This novel achieves for present day audiences what the previously explored novels achieved in their respective times. The ethical persuasion is most potent at the time in which a utopian text is current. However, as utopian works contemplate ubiquitous experiences, like the social adjustments that accompany innovation, they will continue to resonate with future readers.

Ishiguro has remarked in various interviews that his haunting dystopia is foremost a story about love, friendship and mortality. His interest was in exploring what becomes important when our own mortality is unavoidably pushed to the forefront.[398] This human predicament is nothing that countless individuals have not contemplated before, but Ishiguro's spin on this timeless theme is a dark and unsettling alternative history;

---

[398] "Never Let Me Go: Exploring the Story." Fox Searchlight (2010) Accessible at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7Es5-nhZWo; Faber and Faber interview with Kazuo Ishiguro (2008) accessible at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-SmuYqKeTTs; "In Conversation" Allen Gregg interview of Kazuo Ishiguro (2005) Accessible at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=batJu1ypW-Y; BookBrowse interview with Kazuo Ishiguro (2005) Accessible at: http://www.bookbrowse.com/author_interviews/full/index.cfm/author_number/477/kazuo-ishiguro; Kazuo Ishguro. "Future Imperfect." *Guardian Book Club* online, 24 March (2006) Accessible at: http://www.theguardian.com/books/2006/mar/25/featuresreviews.guardianreview36

biomedical advancements have created a "class" of human clones who are treated as technological devices, medical instruments that "natural" humans are permitted to "consume" as needed. Ishiguro means to use this setting as a shadowy backdrop to an age-old dilemma, to give "new perspective on something we barely look at, but we know all about."[399] But what he intends to be a secondary element is also what draws the reader into an eerie comparison that is seething with ethical questions. As an imaginary reconstitution of society, *Never Let Me Go* sets up a contrast that demonstrates the very important role the "shudder" plays in helping us gauge what is "acceptable, ethically, humanly responsible behavior towards those *or that* which we deem or designate potentially non-human."[400] The "shudder" also reinforces the relationship between emotions, empathy, and ethics, and how the resulting actions of those relationships impact the cycles of influence. Emotions impact our judgment and levels of compassion, often influencing policy. Unchecked feelings of revulsion or apprehension can become problematic, as they can contribute to biased or unprincipled choices.

Never Let Me Go imagines an alternative history where human clone organ-harvesting is a modern medical marvel. Condoned the appropriate "cure" for human illness, human clones are grown and raised for the sole purpose of donating their organs to "natural" humans. Clones are disturbingly accepting of their lot and seem to take pride in their social duty.[401] The story follows the lives of three young clones through their childhood boarding school years, their time as young adults, and their agonizing lives as

---

[399] Fox Searchlight interview.

[400] Gabriele Griffin. "Science and the Cultural Imaginary: The Case of Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go." *Textual Practice,* Vol. 23, No. 4 (2009), 656.

[401] This demonstrates the power of dominant ideologies, which individuals and societies internalize, establishing control.

"carers" and donors. These friends, Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy have been brought up at an experimental school called Hailsham. We learn later that Hailsham was the result of a "human" rights effort to challenge the donation program by demonstrating the social and intellectual capacities of clones reared in cultivated environments. The guardians (Hailsham instructors) imply that government-run homes do not offer the same humane environments, as clones outside of Hailsham exist "only to supply medical science."[402] Aside from being treated as less than human, Ishiguro's clones are identical to their natural human counterparts. This simultaneous likeness *and* difference creates unease for the natural humans in this story, and produces a similarly productive unsettlement in the reader.

The unsettlements utopian works produce are perhaps the greatest rhetorical persuasion they present. These persuasions invite reader participation that is sometimes beyond consciousness. The "shudder" is often the perfect hook to initiate dialog (if only at the level of basic emotion). In this way, it is also a pragmatic mode of encouraging ethical discourse. Just as Skinner and Callenbach used their fictional settings to hypothesize pragmatic applications of science, Ishiguro creates a similar laboratory for hypothesizing ethical outcomes. One of Ishiguro's most gripping insights is imagining the crisis that occurs when science outpaces its ethical considerations. *Never Let Me Go* echoes an age-old problem of modernity—adaptation and identity. Ishiguro is not the first utopian to explore this territory; each author does it in her own way and not every innovation/change produces the same magnitude of "shudder." Samuel Butler (*Erewhon,* 1872) and William Morris (*News From Nowhere*, 1890) both addressed the ways in

[402] Kazuo Ishiguro. *Never Let Me Go* (New York: Vintage International, 2005), 261.

which industrial technology might reshape human interaction and human agency. This literary concern resurfaces with each human advancement.

In *Never Let Me Go*, the fear that technology or science might move faster than humans are prepared to process the drastic change is much more pressing than the topic of reprogenetics or even cloning itself. Ishiguro explores the rapid snowballing effect that is set in motion when "progress" goes unchecked. What happens when science "evolves" *us* before we have fully contemplated its lasting result? At what point does our current interpretation of "mutual service" permit the commoditization of health, wellness, and even life? What are the dangers of corporate medicine?

In his provocative real science/science fiction hybrid, *Remaking Eden*, molecular biologist Lee Silver explores the present scientific and political realities of reprogenetic technologies and explores the ethical dilemmas their use might raise.[403] Among these concerns are genetic divergence leading to reproductive incompatibility, species divergence, and reproductive isolation. Though Ishiguro does not explicitly explore these issues, they are part of the same ethical dilemma. Both authors imagine situations whereby science has fundamentally altered social relationships and has plagued society with irreversible "innovations." The ethical dialectic helps readers fathom what that transformation might look like and how it might drastically change humanity.

As socio-political comparisons, utopias also pick up on recurring concerns about identity. Social adaptations, particularly those precipitated by noticeable or "uprooting" innovations, bring up anxieties that are necessary to address. Identity in *Never Let Me Go* is entangled in a complex web of "biopolitics." The author introduces the bleak notion

---

[403] Lee Silver. *Remaking Eden: How Genetic Engineering and Cloning Will Transform The American Family* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007 Reissue), 294.

that the gradual "normalization" of certain biotechnologies might lead to an unfortunate altering of human character.[404] In the context of this story, it led to an interpretation of cloned individuals as mere "bodies" and tools.[405] Clones are furthermore abstracted by society through euphemistic language until they become "disincarnated and disembodied."[406] This dehumanizing process "releases" their creators from further ethical consideration. It also provides natural humans the justification they need to continue practicing "medical" cloning. For the reader, this points to ways in which technologies might "dehumanize" or to a lesser extent "change" us. Might biotechnology further segment, objectify, or label us? Might medical discourse turn us into components and ailments?[407] It is also a call to consider the lengths people might go to protect their own "rights," suggesting that incautious innovation might be a slippery slope.

In *Never Let Me Go*, Ishiguro poses numerous ethical questions that are at once specific to human reproductive cloning *and* universal to problems of adaptation. For example, when Kathy and Tommy visit their former guardians to see about getting a "deferral" (an extension of their time together before they must begin donating), they learn that their predicament is the result of rapid and unchecked breakthroughs in science. Miss Emily (a guardian) remarks,

> "Suddenly there were all these new possibilities laid before us, all these ways to cure so many previously incurable conditions. This is what the world noticed most, wanted most. And for a long time, people preferred to believe these organs appeared out of nowhere, or at most that they grew in a kind of vacuum. Yes, there were arguments…by the time they came to consider just how you were

[404] Griffen discusses the implications of this "normalization" process as well.

[405] Jennings, 18.

[406] Griffen, 651.

[407] This is a major concern of the intervening medical humanities.

> reared, whether you should have be brought into existence at all, well by then it was too late. There was no way to reverse the process. How can you ask a world that has come to regard cancer as curable, how can you ask such a world to put away that cure, to go back to the dark days?"[408]

Miss Emily describes the normalization of legalized medical slavery and homicide, and though this example is extreme, it demonstrates the ways in which casual ethical dismissals can gradually develop into tragic realities. Utopia/dystopia is a provocation to *assess* progress. In the case of questionable innovations, it is also a provocation to ask, "what were the darker days, then or now?" Dystopian works like *Never Let Me Go* tend to focus on the ominous side of technology, thus intentionally conjuring a "shudder," but works at the other end of the utopian spectrum might produce the same effect (Skinner's *Walden Two* is a perfect example). In both cases, the reader must resolve the conflict by joining the ethical dialog.

As trauma narratives, dystopian works perform as hypothetical testimonies between the character narrator (whom the reader identifies as being part of the future or alternate self/reality) and the reader. The narrator Kathy's testimony employs forensic (rhetorical based on examples of historical action), epideictic (rhetoric or blame or praise), and deliberative rhetoric (rhetoric to cause or inhibit action). Kathy's story invites the reader to review the (imagined) past, implicates the reader as a responsible citizen who must evaluate such injustice, and urges the reader to form an opinion about (or prevent) the pace and consequences of radical science. In *Can Literature Promote Justice? Trauma Narrative and Social Action in Latin American Testimonio* (2006), Kimberly Nance argues that forensic and epideictic rhetoric "offer transcendence—a

[408] *Never Let Me Go*, 262-263.

language of clarity, straightforwardness, certainty."[409] She sees the deliberative mode as being emotionally clouded, disorganized, and unreliable. In utopian/dystopian literature, the deliberative rhetoric is part of the ethical dialectic and thus the decision to take action (in thought or practice) is the responsibility of the participant-reader. The reader must also sit with the (hypothetical) consequences (i.e. social transformations) this "choice" has initiated.

Another rhetorical tool *Never Let Me Go* employs is the underlying credibility behind social transformation. Some modern works encourage dialog by postulating "real-science" and others simply suggest technological or scientific innovation. *Never Let Me Go* practices the latter. Although Ishiguro's story is in conversation with current biomedical developments, he is not concerned with reproducing plausible experiments or exact science fiction. Instead, he is concerned with deeper ethical questions. He does not rely on specificity to make his points, but rather a more generic public knowledge and expectation of science. Human cloning was on the world's mind at the turn of the twenty-first century. In 1997, the Roslin Institute announced the birth of the first cloned mammal—Dolly the sheep. Ishiguro was writing *NLMG* between 2002-2005, and thought biotechnology would make an interesting scenario with which to explore human mortality. The cloning premise does several things: it sets up an obvious "other" for the reader to explore, it imagines an alternative social education (and therein alternative ethics)[410], it challenges the notion of *unique* identity and the definition of human, and it questions the hubris (and sometimes guilt/shame) associated with progress. The cloning

---

[409] Kimberly Nance. *Can Literature Promote Justice? Trauma Narrative and Social Action in Latin American Testimonio* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2006), 45, supra 1.

[410] As social commentary, Ishiguro is likely making comments on the British health care system, in the 1990s.

premise, what was meant to be a narrative "backdrop," is what gives credibility to Ishiguro's ethical persuasion.

Ishiguro's dystopia is a reminder that there is more to human science than an understanding of natural processes and social relationships; the human experience is also a very personal and emotional one. While the literary utopia helps to reconcile what progress "means" at a given time in history, the ecological framework demonstrates the necessity of exploring the sentimental and expressive aspects of human life as part of the cycle of influence. Human ecology is a web of interacting parts and literary utopia helps us discover those relationships in context.

Conclusion

This study set out to demonstrate that literary utopias make unique contributions to the field of human ecology and that by applying an ecological framework to the examination of these texts, new insights into the *function* of the utopian genre can be explored. The primary contention is that the ecological framework, as used in various other academic fields to examine important relationships, reveals critical disciplinary and dialectical exchanges present in utopian literature. These exchanges point to the areas of study and the conversations with which utopian texts engage. When literary utopia is studied as a human science and thus framed in the context of human ecology, the totality of those interrelationships can be examined closely. In applying the ecological framework to a sampling of English and American works, spanning from late-nineteenth to the early-twenty-first century, this study reveals the inherent complexity, pragmatism, and relevance of the enduring utopian genre.

This study also sought to challenge misconceptions about literary utopia by demonstrating the sophistication with which these works answer the call of modernity. The starting point was establishing a definition of literary utopia based on the function these works perform and then confronting longstanding negative conceptions of utopia so that utopian works might be given fairer scholarly treatment. Herein this project helps liberate literary utopia from a detracting reputation in order to exhibit the very important contribution these works make to human studies.

Critical Findings

Utopian Function

Though the utopian literary genre is defined by its form, content, and function, I found that a function-centered definition was the most inclusive way to understand *how* these texts operate and *what* these works can offer in the way of social critique and practical application. When the function these works perform is prioritized, the form and content naturally follow. For example, if a utopian text is understood as a *method* for creating an alternative construction of society in order to study society as a complex system of natural and cultural interrelationships, it will utilize some iteration of the visitor-guide convention (form) and present a holistic depiction of an imagined society (content).

Using the work of Ruth Levitas, Lyman Sargent, and Tom Moylan, I was able to arrive at a constructive definition of literary utopia and found that the utopian genre was quite persistent because it was accepting of new forms and content, so long as they functioned as socio-political comparisons. First, Levitas' imaginary reconstitution of society (IROS) was an extremely valuable way to think about literary works as a method of conducting speculative social research. Her premise furthermore confirmed that *all* utopian fiction was part of the same critical project, as she outlined IROS as "the construction or constitution of society as it is, as it might be, as it might not be, as it might be hoped for or feared."[411] This model helps illuminate variation: some positive and hopeful (utopian); some negative, satirical, or fearful (dystopia); some reinforcing current states of things and rejecting change (anti-utopia); and some intentionally

[411] Levitas, 2007, 47. See introduction and chapter two for more on IROS.

dynamic and aware of the limitations of the genre (critical utopia/dystopia, modern utopia).

Lyman Sargent's pointed remarks about the intention of utopia also helped me find utility in the utopian *function*. Sargent argues that many utopian labels are uses as political weapons against the genre.[412] He argues that it is unfair to speculate an author's full motive/intention, especially when that intention is carelessly replaced with an assumption that utopian works imagine immutable "perfection." Sargent's refusal of this label removes the "given" that all literary utopias seek "perfection." He also challenges the pun eutopia/utopia (good place/no place), which has also been used as a political weapon against utopian works. His interpretation of "no place" as simply *fiction*, takes the bite out of the anti-utopian use of "no place" to mean impractical/implausible.

Tom Moylan's conception of a "critical" utopia that was aware of its own limitations and the limitations of the genre furthermore solidifies the importance of a function-centered definition of literary utopia. As utopians strive toward critical utopia, they also demonstrate their pragmatism and encourage dialog as a *necessar*y role/function of utopian criticism. Critical works are by definition dynamic and dialectical.

This focus on *function* led to an inquiry into what exactly literary utopias *do*. I began with a basic outline of the utopian literary function: literary utopias identify a problem or injustice, present a critique and comparison via the exploration of "other," and imply or directly invite action. From there, I identified the "cycles of influence" (the ways in which individuals interact with and relate to their natural, social, and built

[412] Lyman Sargent. "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited," (1994), 9. See introduction for more on Sargent's perspective.

environments) that utopian works seemed to be mirroring. These texts were exploring human communities in terms of big picture behaviors and outcomes—considering human systems in ways I had only previously observed in the "traditional" sciences. These texts were also engaging in cross-disciplinary study and were rather dialectical in their commentary with the present and in their rhetorical provocation to the reader. Literary utopias were practicing *human ecology* in narrative form.

As I developed this theory of utopian function, my attention was furthermore focused on the *role* these texts serve, and through careful analysis, I was able to demonstrate that literary utopia is quite complex (and scholarly), pragmatic, and socially relevant. The application of the ecological framework also punctuated the ways in which the ecological concept/trope is useful in conceptualizing the cultural contributions literary works make. The history of borrowed analogies (in both directions) between biology and the social sciences was quite apparent as I applied ecological concepts to culture and studied representations of non-human phenomena in terms of "social" relationships or "communities."

Inherent Pragmatism

Literary utopias have long been interpreted as "static" works, but this dissertation demonstrated the ways in which the ecological (utopian) dialectic precludes this notion. It is in utopia's inherent pragmatism that we find a truly adaptable and astute literature. Studying the evolution of the utopian genre, first through the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and then later the early-twenty-first century, led me to questions about literary exposition and the "proper" or "most effective" utopian literary "performances." In the modern context, dystopian works seemed to be the most "respected" and well-

received utopias, but prior to the twentieth century, this was not the case. It was in researching the evolving genre that I discovered that *modern* utopias have changed a lot over the past century, and thus so have reader expectations and scholarly exposition.

Looking exclusively at *function*, utopias attempt something closer to H.G. Wells' notion of speculative science—I argue speculative human ecology. Unlike literature more generally, this goal of holistic human study involves the examination of relationships, behavior, social activity, and adaptation over time. These works anticipate how those adjustments might impact the *whole group*, materially, socially, and spiritually. How utopians have contemplated human behavior, social outcomes, and collective practices depended on the tools these authors had available and the audiences for whom they were writing. Though the simple (and sometime trite) visitor-guide narrative is not especially effective for today's audiences, in the late-nineteenth century, this mode of storytelling was closely tied to activism, political movements, and non-fiction utopian writings. For nineteenth-century audiences, the "big picture" tour of a perfected society was compelling. This changed in the twentieth century.

As chapter four discussed, twentieth-century audiences were suspicious of utopian projects and thus the genre had to adapt to find new ways to evaluate human systems and explore evolving human behaviors and social practices. Utopia solved this dilemma by offering dystopian articulations of utopia and by basing utopian examples in experimental scientific realism. For many current readers, this transition to satirical and "realistic" portrayals is more gripping, and this leads today's readers to hold dystopic and realistic texts in higher regard.

Twenty-first-century texts have evolved henceforth and employ other popular

conventions, such as autobiographical elements, science-fictional story lines, and subtler visitor-guide narratives. These conventions are rather engaging for readers who may not identify, at first, the utopian message within a text. Some scholars would argue that the more "literary" works (those with engaging exposition) are more rhetorically significant, but it is important to consider how different utopias have performed for different audiences at different times.

As a pragmatic genre, literary utopia has continued to provide social commentary and has holistically addressed ever changing modern concerns by approaching the utopian enterprise in ways that are constructive at a given time—e.g. direct visitor-guide, dystopia, and science fiction. Awareness that different periods in utopian literary history are marked by distinct trends in critical approach helped me hone in on the *common function* these texts share. Though each period represents different social, intellectual, and cultural competencies, the underlying utopia mission remains unchanged.

Challenges

One of the biggest hurdles this project faced was the very limited interpretation of literary utopia and generally negative conceptions of utopia that overshadowed these works. Challenging these misconceptions was critical to my examination. I found that if critics did not respect the utopian endeavor, they would not give it the consideration needed to fully realize what it contributes.

This challenge was not a simple one because the reputation of utopia (as a concept, experiment, and body of literature) is tarnished. The most damaging accusation is certainly the "totalitarian" label that precludes many readers from ever engaging in

utopian dialog. And because some of the worlds that utopians present are quite "out there" or extreme, utopian texts were dismissed as improbable fantasies. As works of human ecology though, *how* these texts function is far more interesting than the degree of normalcy achieved by these imagined worlds.

The more I studied these works as examinations of human ecology, the more frustrated I became with utopian readers. In fact, based on my research of book reviews, modern utopian readers seemed quite lazy. The purpose of art is to inspire and provoke and the reviews of many utopian works reveal *inactive* readers. Utopian audiences seem to place value on the degree to with an imaginary reconstitution of society is to their specific liking, although it is doubtful that they demand the same from other genres of literature. "Totalitarian" and "perfection" myths seem to put blinders on readers before they allow themselves to be provoked. It is as if the "utopian" label, and all it entails, is a cue for readers to refuse to participate in dialog. But as Sargent reminds us, literature is an interactive artifact. "Once created the artifact takes on a life of its own."[413]

Although negative conceptions hurt the "utopia" label, it seems to have had less of an impact on dystopian texts. Even after the WWII, dystopian works (which are part of the same critical project) have been much better received. Dystopia's dark skepticism seems to offer a "signpost" to readers that they are participating in a critical project and that it is "permissible" to join the dialog.

Another challenge during this project was in working toward better definitions or understandings of "holistic" and "piecemeal." Critics like Karl Popper who criticize utopia for being "final" and "static" argue the necessity of "piecemeal" reform. But Popper's definition conflates the concept of "holistic" thinking with an *intention* of

[413] Sargent, 6.

inflexibility or stasis. Holistic ("big picture") thinking does not imply a *final* project. It is unfair to read finality into utopian projects. None of the modern utopian texts studied here seem to imply that the worlds they present are final or static. They all encourage evolution and dialog. And pre-modern texts are no longer static once they are read through the ecological lens.

What My Study Contributes

My goal for this project was to demonstrate the complexity, pragmatism, and relevance of the utopian genre by offering a new way of exploring utopia. This study works to unpack the utopian dialectic by identifying utopian works as studies in human ecology, and it works to reeducate utopian readers by modeling how to utilize and engage with utopian texts.

The primary implication that this theory of utopian function has for readers/scholars is that it provides a logical structure with which to analyze utopian dialog. This study established literary utopia as an example of human ecology by devising a template for measuring the scientific value of these texts. To demonstrate how utopians conduct qualitative *research*, these works were divided into their disciplinary and dialectical components. The disciplinary breakdown demonstrates what areas of study utopia covers and which specific issues or historical problems these works examine. The dialectical breakdown highlights the interrelationships between those areas of study and the ways in which individual utopian works remain in conversation with the present social predicament, readers, culture, and the utopian genre.

To further validate the literary practice as a method of conducting social research, this study aligns literature with other modes of qualitative research and argues that while literary works take an indirect and figurative approach to studying the human experience, the cognitive and emotional realities that they explore are no less important than the outwardly observable realities that history, sociology, anthropology, or cultural studies explore. This study also points out that novelists and scientists both provide "a verbal image of reality" that is constructed from subjective and selective retellings of events. This argument works to resist the preferential treatment of one mode of qualitative study over another, especially considering that utopian texts are both figurative *and* extra-textual representations of human experiences. Like human scientists, utopian novelists test hypotheses against historical experience to explore the cause and effect relationships underlying social structures. The misconception that literary *research* does not produce "reliable" data is partly the fault of scholars who lack training in reading the ethnographical evidence that literary works gather.

Each of the selected works acts out a different aspect of the utopian dialectic, revealing the utility of the ecological framework. To get a sense of how the genre has evolved over time, I selected five works that represent different periods in the development of modern utopia. These consciously critical and intentionally dynamic modern texts present clear examples of how utopian works function. These modern works are visibly engaged in examining the utopian *process* (i.e. they are self-reflexive works that are aware of the limitations of the genre even as they contribute to it) and this provides the flexibility to utilize these texts to work backward to make more universal observations about the function of the utopian genre.

The two earliest works examined, late-nineteenth-century texts, *Mizora* and *News from Nowhere,* introduce the theory of human ecology and illustrate the ways in which the ecological framework helps us study the disciplinary and dialectical aspects inherent in utopia. In order to better understand *how* utopia functions, this chapter attempts to reveal areas of study and relationships that have been previously overlooked by scholars. This chapter uncovers the true hybridity of utopian works and demonstrates how utopia performs as a humanistic science—as literary *human ecology*.

Twentieth-century texts, *Walden Two* and *Ecotopia*, demonstrate the utopian mode as a *pragmatic* and plausible "think tank." This chapter focuses on the adaptability of the utopian genre, as a body of texts united by *function*, and demonstrates that as interactive social commentaries, these works borrow from modern science even as they critique it. As works that remain in conversation with the present day society, utopias evolve alongside the communities they intend to explore and reflect. Studying these overtly scientific texts within the ecological framework emphasizes just how socially engaged the utopian genre is. These works are not like other literary forms; they are a fusion of human scientific research and humanistic reflection.

Never Let Me Go demonstrates utopia's persuasive ethical dialectic. This chapter utilizes a modern (and resonate) text to exhibit the power and necessity of this dialog with the reader. As argued before, the ecological framework demonstrates the necessity of exploring the sentimental and expressive aspects of human life as part of the cycles of influence. The ecological framework brings attention to the fundamental ethical evolution that takes place as societies "progress." Utopias place emphasis on *social* ethical transitions and how those adjustments impact human relationships and behaviors.

Utopian literature has had the unfortunate history of "not fitting in"—these texts are "literary" or "artistic" enough that they are rejected by the sciences and "real" or "scientific" enough that they are severely critiqued as dangerous policies. The ecological framework permits utopia to be a source of artistic and scientific *truths*. Through numerous textual and theoretical examples, this study helps rehabilitate literary utopia and reinstate the holistic application of human ecology that early-twentieth-century sociologists, like Robert Park, had hoped for. The process of recovering literary utopia and human ecology, and demonstrating how the two overlap, works to expand human scientific knowledge by integrating "two cultures" to reveal what the sciences and humanities can achieve in congress. This study observes that literary utopias present a more complete picture of the human experience, holistically examining cognitive and emotional realities *and* outwardly observable phenomena. Utopia attempts to explain how *adaptation* looks and feels. As an integrative toolkit, the ecological framework helps us approach the silences that discipline-specific utopian projects leave unspoken. This study also works to better demonstrate the pragmatic applications (most recently demonstrated in the work of Marius de Geus) of the utopian method of conducting social research.

Where I Will Take This Study

I would like to apply the ecological framework to pre-modern works of literary utopia, to compare self-consciously dynamic projects with works that are less intentionally so. Interestingly enough, pre-modern utopias were better received even though some of the worlds they imagine are suggestively static. As this study demonstrates, the ecological framework shows that utopian works are *functionally*

dynamic within and throughout the genre, over time. Perhaps earlier texts were better received because literature and other humanistic studies were the primary mode of conducting human science, pre-scientific revolution (experimental "hard" science). In any case, an examination of earlier works might further demonstrate literary utopia as early/pre-conscious studies in human ecology.

I also think that courses in literary utopia as human ecology might make an insightful contribution to university departments of human ecology. While current programs in human ecology incorporate literary studies into their curriculum, they have not connected literary utopia *and* human ecology, as this study has. My interpretation of literary utopia as explorations in human ecology might open new avenues of studying these complex relationships.

In focusing on the ecological function of literary utopia, I was able to see the complexity and pragmatism inherent in the genre. These texts work as "think tanks" for projects and for considering the ethical implications of those projects. This study gives new legitimacy to the literary utopian endeavor and also gives evidence as to why the genre continues to exist and to evolve.

Bibliography

Abensour, Miguel. "Persistent Utopia," *Constellations*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (2008): 406-21.

Adams, C.C. "The New Natural History-Ecology." *American Museums Journal* 17 (1917): 491-494.

Adams, C.C. to Frederic Lucas, May 31, 1903, and Lucas to Adams, August 13, 1903, CCAP-APS Folder "American Association of Museums." See anonymous, 1908.

Albrow, Martin . "Chapter 2: The Science of Sociology." *Sociology: The Basics*, 31-67, London: Routledge, 1999.

Alihan, Milla. *Social Ecology: A Critical Analysis.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1938.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination.* 1918. Reprint Austin: University of Texas Press,1981.

Balasopulos, Antonis. "Ruth Levitas, The Concept of Utopia." *European Journal of American Studies*. Reviews 2010-2. (2010): 2-5.

Bauman, Zygmund. *Socialism: The Active Utopia*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1976.

————. "Utopia with no Topos." *History of the Human Sciences*. Vol. 16, No. 1 (2003): 11-25.

Beaumont, Matthew. "*News from Nowhere* and the Here and Now: Reification and the Representation of the Present in Utopian Fiction." Victorian Studies. Autumn, (2004): 33-54.

Bellamy, Edward. *Equality*. 1897. Reprinted New York: AMS Press, 1970.

————. *Looking Backward: 2000-1887.* 1888. Reprint Boston: Bedford Books, 1995.

Berry, Brian and John Karsarda. *Contemporary Urban Ecology.* New York: Macmillan, 1977.

Bjork, Daniel. "B. F. Skinner and the American Tradition: The Scientist as a Social Inventor." *B. F. Skinner and Behaviorism in American Culture*. L.D. Smith and W.R. Woodward, eds. Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1996.

Blackman, Derek E. "B. F. Skinner and G.H. Mead: On Biological Science and Social Science." *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*. 1991. Vol. 55, No. 2 (March): 251-265.

Bloch, Ernest. *The Principle of Hope*. Vols 1-3. 1959. Translation Cambridge: MIT Press,1986.

————. *The Spirit of Utopianism*.1964. Translated Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.

Borden, Richard. "A Brief History of SHE: Reflections on the Founding and First Twenty Five Years of the Society for Human Ecology." *Human Ecological Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1(2008): 95-108.

Bowman, Sylvia Bowman et al. *Bellamy Abroad: An American Prophet's Influence*. New York: Twayne, 1962.

Bradbury, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*.1951. Reprinted Evanston: McDougal Littell, 2002.

Bridger, David and Jeffy Maines, and Jeffry Ulmer. "Mythic Facts and Park's Pragmatism: On Predecessor-Selection and Theorizing in Human Ecology." *The Sociological Quarterly*. Vol. 37, No. 3 (Summer, 1996): 521-549.

Broad, Katherine. "Race, Reproduction, and the Failures of Feminism in Mary Bradley Lane's Mizora." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*. Vol. 28, No. 2 (Fall, 2009): 247-266.

Buhle, Paul. "Green Dreams" *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* .Vol. 12, No. 3 (Sept 2001): 149-153.

Bülent, Somay and R.M.P. "Towards and Open-Ended Utopia (Vers une utopie ouverte)" *Science Fiction Studies* Vol 11, No 1 (Mar 1984): 25-38.

Burgess, Ernest and Robert Park. *Introduction to the Science of Society.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1921.

Callenbach, Ernest. *Ecotopia.* 1975. Reprinted Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2004.

Callenbach, Ernest. Interview by Eckman, Eve. "The Lit Interview: Ernest Callenbach." *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, 2004. Available at: http://www.sfbg.com/39/26/lit_interview_callenbach.html, 2004.

Calvino, Italio. "Two Interviews on Science and Literature," 28-38. *The Literature Machine: Essays.* London: Vintage, 1997.

Camic, Charles. "Reputation and Predecessor Selection: Parsons and the Institutionalists." *American Sociological Review* 57 (1992): 421-445.

Caroll, Lewis. *Alice's Advventures in Wonderland.* 1862. Reprinted New York: Bantam Classics, 1984.

Catania, A. Charles. "B. F. Skinner's *Science and Human Behavior:* Its Antecedents and its Consequences." *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior.* Vol. 80, No. 3 (2003): 313-320.

Charvat, William. *Literary Publishing in America: 1790-1850.* 1959. Reprinted Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993.

Cherrington Hughes, Everett et al. "Human Ecology" *Human Communities and the City and Human Ecology: The Collected Papers of Robert Ezra Park.* Vol. II. Glencoe: The Free Press, 1952.

Claeys, Gregory ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Coundouriotis, Eleni. Review of *Can Literature Promote Justice? Trauma Narrative and Social Action in Latin American Testimonio*. *Human Rights Quarterly* 29.2 (2007): 533-537.

Cummings, Michael. "Credibility of Transition in Callenbach's Ecotopia Emerging: Lessons for Practical Utopians." *Utopian Studies*, No. 2 (1989): 69-77.

Dala, Jyoti. "George Herbert Mead: A Social Psychologist." *Contemporary Education Dialog*. Vol. 8, No. 1 (2011): 85-103.

De Geus, Marius. "Ecotopia, Sustainability, and Vision." *Organization and Environment*, Vol. 15, No. 2. (June 2002): 187-201.

————. "Utopian Sustainability: Ecological Utopianism." Liam Leonard and John Berry, eds. *The Transition to Sustainable Living and Practice.* Bingley: Emerald, 2009.

Delveaux, Martin. "O Me! O Me! How I Love the Earth: William Morris' *News From Nowhere* and the Birth of Sustainable Society." *Contemporary Justice Review.* Vol. 8, No. 2 (June 2005): 131-146.

Durkheim, Emile. *The Division of Labor in Society.*1893. Reprinted New York: Free Press, 1997.

Ferns, Chris. *Narrating Utopia: Ideology, Gender, Form in Utopian Literature*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press. 1999.

Flannery, Maura. "Evelyn Hutchinson: A Wonderful Mind." *The American Biology Teacher*. Vol 65, No 6. (2003): 462-467.

Engels, Friedrich *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State.* 1895. Available at: http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1884/origin-family/index.htm

Freund, Elizabeth. *The Return of the Reader: Reader-Response Criticism*. London: Methuen, 1987.

Geoghegan, Vincent. "The Utopian Past: Memory and History in Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* and William Morris's *News from Nowhere*." *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2, (1992): 75-90.

Getty, Walter. "Human Ecology and Social Theories." *Social Forces* 18 (1940): 469-476.

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *The Yellow Wall-Paper, and Selected Readings.* New York: Penguin Classics, 2009.

————.*Women and Economics*.1898. Reprinted Digireads, 2012.

Gist, Noel, and Sylvia Fava. *Urban Society.* New York: Crowell, 1964.

Gras, Vernon. *Literatur als kulturelle Ökologie. Zur kulturellen Funktion imaginativer Texte an Beispielen des amerikanischen Romans. Human Ecology Review*. Vol. 13, No. 1, 2006.

Griffin, Gabriele. "Science and the Cultural Imaginary: The Case of Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go." *Textual Practice.* Vol. 23, No.4 (2009): 656-663.

Harrison, Harry. *Make Room! Make Room!* New York: Orb, 1966.

Hasley, A,H, *A History of Sociology in Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Heinze, Rüdiger and Jochen Petzold. *"*The Disappearance of Utopia? An Interview with Ernest Callenbach on the Role and Function of Utopian Thought in Contemporary Society." *ZAA* 55.1 (2007): 87-92.

Hildebrand, R. Jayne. "*News from Nowhere* and William Morris's Aesthetics of Unreflectiveness: Pleasurable Habits." *ELT.* Vol. 54, No 1 (2011): 3-27.

Hogan, Patrick. *What Literature Teaches Us About Emotion*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Kindle Edition.

Hollinghead, A.B. Hollinghead. "A Reexamination of Ecological Theory." *Sociology and Social Research* 31(1947): 194-204.

Hughes, Everett Cherrington et al. ed. *Human Communities: The City and Human Ecology, The Collected Papers of Robert Ezra Park.* Vol II. Glencoe, The Free Press, 1952.

Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World.* 1932. Reprinted New York: Perennial Classics, 1998.

Ilerbaig, Juan. "Allied Science and Fundamental Problems: C.C. Adams and the Search for Method in Early American Ecology." *Journal of the History of Biology*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Winter, 1999): 439-463.

Ishiguro, Kazuo. Interview by BookBrowse .2005. Accessible at: http://www.bookbrowse.com/author_interviews/full/index.cfm/author_number/477/kazuo-ishiguro

————. Interview by Faber and Faber. 2008. Accessible at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-SmuYqKeTTs

————. "Future Imperfect." *Guardian Book Club* online, 24 March 2006. Accessible at:http://www.theguardian.com/books/2006/mar/25/featuresreviews.guardianreview36

————. "In Conversation" Interview by Allen Gregg. 2005. Accessible at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=batJu1ypW-Y

————.*Never Let Me Go*. New York: Vintage International, 2005.

————. "Never Let Me Go: Exploring the Story." Interview by Fox Searchlight. 2010. Accessible at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7Es5-nhZWo

Jameson, Conor Mark. *Silent Spring Revisited*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing. 2012

Jacobs, Naomi. "Failures of the Imagination in Ecotopia." *Extrapolation (pre-2012)*. Vol. 38, No. 4 (Winter 1997): 318-326.

Jennings, Bruce. "Biopower and the Liberationist Romance." *Hasting Center Report.* July-August (2010): 16-20.

Jungck, John and Roger Bybee. "Rachel Carson Human Ecologist." *The American Biology Teacher*, Vol. 46, No. 6 (September 1984): 302-303.

Kass, Leon. "The Wisdom of Repugnance." *In a Flash of My Flesh: The Ethics of Cloning Humans*, Ed. Gregory Pence. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield,1998.

Kincade, Kat. *A Walden Two Experiment*. New York: Quill, 1973.

————. *Is It Utopia Yet?* Louisa: Twin Oaks, 1994.

Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Ed3. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Kumar, Krishan. *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times.* Cambridge: Basil Blackwood, 1987.

————. *Utopianism*: *Concepts in the Social Sciences.* London: Open University Press, 1991.

————. Kumar ed. William Morris. "Introduction" *News From Nowhere*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History, Writing Trauma.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2001.

Lane, Mary E. Bradley. *Mizora: A World of Women*. 1880. Reprinted Lincoln: University of Nebraska,1999.

Levitas, Ruth. "'Who Holds the Hose?' Domestic Labour in the Work of Bellamy, Gilman and Morris." *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1995): 65-84.

————. "Back to the Future: Wells, Sociology, Utopia and Method." *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4 (2010): 542.

————. *The Concept of Utopia*. London: Phillip Allen, 1990.

————. Introduction: The Elusive Idea of Utopia." *History of the Human Sciences*. Vol. 16, No. 1 (2003):1-10.

————. *Utopia as Method: The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society*. New York: Palgrave, 2013.

————. "Sociology and Utopia." *Sociology*, Vol.13, No.1 (1979): 19-33.

Lyon, John and Phillip Sloan. *From Natural History to the History of Nature: Readings of Buffon and His Critics.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981.

Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. 1979. Reprinted Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Mahady, Christine. "No World of Difference: Examining the Significance of Women's Relationships to Nature in Mary Bradley Lane's Mizora." *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Winter 2004): 93-115.

Marcuse, Herbert. *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud.* 1955. Reprinted Boston: Beacon Press, 1974.

Marks, John. "Clone Stories: 'Shallow Are The Souls That Have Forgotten to Shudder." *Paragraph* 33.3 (2010): 331-353.

Martin, Ann and Rob White. "Remembering Ernest 'Chick' Callenbach" *Film Quarterly* Vol. 65, No. 4 (Summer 2012): 4-5.

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto.* 1848. Reprinted New York: Bantam Classics, 1992.

Mathisen, Werner Christie. "The Underestimation of Politics in Green Utopias: The Descriptions of politics in Huxley's Island, Le Guin's The Dispossessed, and Callenbach's Ecotopia." *Utopian Studies.* Vol. 12, No. 1 (2001): 56-78.

Matarese, Susan. *American Foreign Policy and the Utopian Imagination.* Amherst: University of Mass Press, 2001.

McDonald, Keith. "Days of Past Futures: Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go As "Speculative Memoir." *Biography*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Winter 2007): 74-83.

McIntosh, Robert. *The Background of Ecology: Concept and Theory*. New York: Cambridge University Publishing, 1986.

Mead, George Hubert. *The Mind, Self, and Society*. 1934. Reprinted Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.

Meir, Paul. *William Morris: The Marxist Dreamer.* Vol 1. Highlands: Humanities Press, 1978.

————. *William Morris: The Marxist Dreamer.* Vol 2. Highlands: Humanities Press, 1978.

Miley, James. "Critical Dimensions in Human Ecology: Ideology in American Sociology." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. Vol. 9, No. 2 (1980):163-185.

Mizruci, Susan. *Science of Sacrifice: American Literature and Modern Social Theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Morris, William. "How We Live and How We Might Not Live,"1884, The William Morris Internet Archive: Works. Accessible at: http://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1884/hwl/hwl.htm

————. "What Socialists Want," 1887. The William Morris Internet Archive: Works. Accessible at: http://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1887/want.htm

———. "The Society of the Future," 1887. The William Morris Internet Archive: Works. Accessible at: http://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/

———. "The Day is Coming," 1894. *Chants for Socialists.* The William Morris Internet Archive: Works. Accessible at: http://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1885/chants/poems/poem1.htm

———. "The March of the Workers," 1894. *Chants for Socialists.* The William Morris Internet Archive: Works. Accessible at: http://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1885/chants/poems/poem5.htm

———. "Useful Work versus Useless Toil," 1884. The William Morris Internet Archive: Works. Accessible at: http://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1884/useful.htm

———. *Manifesto of the Socialist League,* 1885. The William Morris Internet Archive: Works. Accessible at: http://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1885/manifst1.htm

———. *News from Nowhere*. 1890. Reprinted Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

More, Thomas. *Utopia.* 1507. Reprinted Mineola: Dover, 1997.

Morris, James and Andrea Kross. *The A-Z of Utopianism* Plymouth: Scarcrow Press, 2009.

Moylan, Tom. *Demand the Impossible*: *Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination.* London: Routledge, 1987.

Moylan, Tom and Raffalla Baccolini eds. *Utopia Method Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming*. Germany: International Academic Publishers, 2007.

———. "To Stand With Dreamers: On the Use Value of Utopia." *Irish Review*, 34 (2006): 1-19.

Moxley, Roy A. "The Modern/Postmodern Context of Skinner's Selectionist Turn in 1945." *Behavior and Philosophy,* Vol. 29 (2001): 121-153.

Nance, Kimberly. *Can Literature Promote Justice? Trauma Narrative and Social Action in Latin American Testimonio* Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2006.

Nathan, Robert. "Why It Matters: The Value of Literature as Object of Inquiry in Qualitative Research." *University of Toronto Quarterly*, Vol. 82, No. 1. (Winter 2013): 72-86.

Norris, William. "A Brief History of the Emergence of Sociology as an Academic Enterprise in the United States." Lecture notes for Oakland Community College. (2005): 1-23.

O'Donohue, William and Kyle Ferguson. *B. F. Skinner: A Life*. London: Sage Publications. 1993.

Odum, Eugene P. "Great Ideas in Ecology for the 1990s." *BioScience*, Vol. 42, No.7(July-Aug 1992): 542-545.

Orwell, George. *Ninteen Eighty-Four*. 1949. Reprinted New York: A Signet Classic. 1977.

Parrinder, Patrick, ed, *Learning from Other Worlds: Estrangement, Cognition, and the Politics of Science Fiction and Utopia.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.

Park, Robert. "The Urban Community and a Spatial Pattern and Moral Order." *The Urban Community*. E. Burgess ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926.

————. "Human Ecology." *American Journal of Sociology* 42 (1936): 1-15.

————. "Succession: An Ecological Concept." *American Sociological Review* 1 (1936): 171-179.

————. "Symbiosis and Socialization: A Frame of Reference for the Study of Society." *American Journal of Sociology* 45 (1939):1-25.

————. Lecture notes for Sociology. Collective Behavior, University of Chicago, Autumn Quarter. 1934.

————. The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the City Environment" *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 20, No. 5 (March 1915): 577-612.

Peirce, Charles. "How to Make Our Ideas Clear." *Popular Science Monthly* 12. (January 1878): 286-302.

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

————. "Dreaming of a White Future: Mary E. Bradley Lane, Edward Bellamy, and the Origins of the Utopian Novel in the United States." *A Companion to the American Novel*. 1st ed. West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2012.

————. "Utopians Prefer Blondes—Mary Lane's Mizora and the Nineteeth-Century Utopian Imagination." Introduction to *Mizora: A Prophecy*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000.

Phillips, Nelson. "Telling Organizational Tales: On the Role of Narrative Fiction." Organizational Studies, Vol. 16, No. 4 (January, 1995): 625-649.

Poe, Edgar Allen. *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym.* 1839. Reprint New York: Penguin. 1999.

Pollock, Grisela. "Liquid Modernity and Cultural Analysis: An Introduction to a Transdisciplinary Encounter." *Theory, Culture & Society,* Vol. 24, No.1 (2007): 111-116.

Popper, Karl. *The Open Society and Its Enemies.* 1945. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 5th ed., 1966.

————. *Conjectures and Refutations.* 1963. Reprinted New York: Routledge, 2002.

Portlano, Marlana. "The Rhetorical Function of Utopia: An Exploration of the Concept of Utopia in Rhetorical Theory. *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (2012): 113-141.

Proctor, James D. "Guest Editor's Introduction: Imagining Ecotopia." *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture*., Vol. 5, No.2 (2011): 121-125.

Richardson, Peter. Monique Borgerhoff Mulder, and Bryan Vila. *Principles of Human Ecology*. 1996. Revised Pearson Custom Publishing, 2001.

Roemer, Kenneth. *Utopian Audiences: How Readers Locate Nowhere*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003.

Rutherford, Alexander. "Radical Behaviorism and Psychology's Public: B. F. Skinner in the Popular Press, 1934-1990" *History of Psychology,* Vol. 3, No. 4 (2000): 371-395

Sargent, Lyman Tower. "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited" *Utopian Studies*, (1994): 1-37.

————. *British and American Utopian Literature, 1516-1985: An Annotated, Chronological Bibliography.* New York: Garland Publishing, 1989.

Shils, Edward. "Robert E. Park: 1864-1944." *The American Scholar,* Vol. 60, No. 1 (2001): 120-127.

Silver, Lee. *Remaking Eden: How Genetic Engineering and Cloning Will Transform the American Family.* 1997. Reprinted New York: Harper Perennial, 2007.

Simmons, James. "Utopian Cycles: Trends in American Visions of the Alternative Society." *Extrapolations*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (1998): 199-218.

Skinner, B. F. *Walden Two.* 1948. Reprinted Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1976.

————. "Walden Two Revisited." *Walden Two.* 1948. Reprinted Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1976.

————. *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. New York: Knoff, 1971.

————. *The Shaping of a Behaviorist.* New York: Knoff, 1971.

Slack, Nancy. *G. Evelyn Hutchinson and the Invention of Modern Ecology*. New Haven: Yale University, 2011.

"Sir Author Tansley, 1871-1955." *New Phytologist*. Vol. 55, No. 2. (May, 1956): 145-146.

Smith, David. "The New Urban Sociology Meets the Old: Rereading Some Classical Human Ecology." *Urban Affairs Review* 30 (1995): 432-457.

Spates, James and John Macionis. *The Sociology of Cities* Belmont: Wadsworth Publication. 1987.

Stagoll, Brian. "Gregory Bateson at 100" *ANZJFT* Vol. 27, No. 3 (2006): 121-134.

Steinmetz, George. "The Relations Between Sociology and History in the United States; The Current State of Affairs." *Journal of Historical Sociology*. Vol. 20, Issue 1-2 (2007):1-12.

Suvin, Darko. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.

————.*Defined by a Hollow: Essays on Utopia, Science Fiction and Political Epistemology*. New York: Peter Lang, 2010.

Swallow, Ellen Richards. Sanitation in Daily Life. 1907. Ebook available at:: http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101013128846;view=1up;seq=8

Taylor, Charles. "Modern Social Imaginaries." *Public Culture*. Vol. 14, No. 1, (Winter 2002): 91-124.

Taylor, Laurie. Interview of Ruth Levitas. "H.G.Wells and the Mystery of the Vanishing Utopian Socialists." June 29, 2011. *Open Learn*. Open.edu.

Thompson, E.P. *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary.* London: Merlin Press, 1977.

Thomson, J. Arthur. *Darwin and Human Life*. New York: A Melrose,1911.

Toth, Csaba. "Transatlantic Dialog: 19th Century American Utopianism and Europe." University of Minnesota, ProQuest, UMI Dissertations Publishing, 1992. 9222483.

Tschacher, Heinz. "Despotic Reason in Arcadia? Ernest Callenbach's Ecological Utopias." *Science Fiction Studies*. Vol. 11, No. 3 (Nov 1984): 304-317.

Verne, Jules. *Journey to the Center of the Earth.* 1864. Reprinted Mineola: Dover, 2005.

Voorhees, D.W. and used in his *Concise Dictionary of American Science*. New York: Scribner's, 1983.

Wells, George Herbert. *A Modern Utopia*. 1908. Reprinted Lexington: Forgotten Books, 2008.

————. "The So-Called Science of Sociology." *Sociological Papers 1906*, London: Macmillan, 1907.

Wells, H.G., Julian Huxley, and G.P.Wells, *The Science of Life.* New York: Garden City Publishing, 1934.

————. *The Time Machine.* 1895. Reprinted New York: Signet, 2002.

White, Hayden. *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University,1978.

Whitehead, Anne. "Writing with Care: Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*." *Contemporary Literature,* Vol. 52, No.1 University of Wisconsin Press. (2011): 54-83.

Widdicombe, Tobbie. *Edward Bellamy: An Annotated Bibliography of Secondary Criticism.* New York: Garland, 1988.

Wiener, Daniel. *B. F. Skinner: Benign Anarchist*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1996

Wirth, Louis. "Human Ecology." *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 50, No. 6 (May 1945): 483-488.

Zamyatin, Yevgeny. *We.* 1924. Reprinted New York: Penguin, 1993.

Zapf, Hubert. "Literary Ecology and Ethics of Texts." *New Literary History* 39 (2009): 847-868.

———. "Literature as Cultural Ecology: Notes Towards a Functional Theory of Imaginative Texts, with Examples from American Literature," in *REAL: Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature* 17 (2001): 85-100.

———. et al. “Literature and Ecology.” *Anglia: Zeitschrift fur Englische Philololgie*. Band 124 (Niemeyer: 2006) Heft 1.

———. *Literatur als kulturelle Ökologie. Zur kulturellen Funktion imaginativer Texte an Beispielen des amerikanischen Romans*: Niemeyer: Tübingen, 2002.

———. *Kulturökologie und Literatur: Beiträge zu einem transdisziplinären Paradigma der Literaturwissenschaft* (Cultural Ecology and Literature: Contributions on a Transdisciplinary Paradigm of Literary Studies): Winter, Heidelberg, 2008.

VITA

Full name: Sarah Elizabeth Dixon Minegar

Place and date of birth: Princeton, Indiana/ December 30, 1980

Parents name: Charles and Suzan Dixon

Educational Institutions:

School	Place	Degree	Date
Secondary:			
Penn High School	Mishawaka, IN	HS Diploma	1999
Collegiate:			
Oakland City University	Oakland City, IN	BA English Education	2004
		BS Social Studies Education	2004
Graduate:			
Drew University	Madison, NJ	MPhil Modern History and Literature	2011
		PhD Modern History and Literature	2014