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## **Likeness in Utopia: Situation and Metaphor from Thomas More to Edward Bellamy**

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# Likeness in Utopia: Situation and Metaphor from Thomas More to Edward Bellamy

## Abstract

As a literary genre, utopia is notably didactic. It seeks to teach desire and to educate hope. As such, utopia provides a unique site to examine the way metaphor and imagination enable one to be convinced, and the way those same elements facilitate misunderstanding. Following the theorization of Ernst Bloch, the goal of critiquing these literary utopias is not to reject hope but, rather, to educate our own daydreams, to learn and move forward. These chapters examine didacticism and the development of colonial metonymy in Thomas More's *Utopia*, the way metaphor operates through time in Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward: 2000-1887*, and utopian colonialism as a central incoherence in the utopian imaginary. Ultimately, this paper argues for a productive misreading of literary utopias, pointing to the way utopia has escaped and even refashioned its authors and the way readers' misinterpretations have opened new horizons of radical possibility.

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Likeness in Utopia:  
Situation and Metaphor from Thomas More to Edward Bellamy

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In Partial Fulfillment  
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by  
Sage Rachmiel Bard Gilbert

November 2023

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### **Abstract**

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## Introduction



Figure 1: *The Fight Between Carnival and Lent*, Peter Bruegel the Elder, 1559

There is a museum in the city of Fedora with countless utopias on display. A metal building in a gray metropolis. A city where cold necessity comes at the expense of the possible, but within this city, a monument to dreams. What separates museum from mausoleum is degrees of violence and voyeurism. Deadness is commonality in a world where possibility has failed. And yet, in this city, one of many in Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* (1972), the museum contains visible, tactile experiences of past dreams (33). Each

room of the museum is built around a singular glass globe, each globe containing a blue city, the dream of an ideal Fedora as imagined at a point in its history. An uncanny image of utopian contemplation: the city as otherwise. In a kaleidoscopic dialogue, Marco Polo describes Fedora to Kublai Kahn:

. . . in every age someone, looking at Fedora as it was imagined a way of making it the ideal city, but while he constructed his miniature model, Fedora was already no longer the same as before, and what had been until yesterday a possible future became only a toy in a glass globe. (33)

Is contemplation a kind of resurrection? What draws the people of Fedora to the museum? In Fedora, it's desire and the pleasure of estrangement, each inhabitant choosing the most pleasing city and passing a day

. . . imagining his reflection in the medusa pond that would have collected the waters of the canal (if it had not been dried up), the view from the canopied box along the avenue reserved for elephants (now banished from the city), the fun of sliding down the spiral, twisting minaret (which never found a pedestal from which to rise) (33)

For all the aesthetic pleasure, there is also something ambivalent and alienating about this idea of utopia. A city obsessed with dreams where utopia has entirely failed. The city built by an author who has watched his dreams curdle, who can only keep hope alive at a distance. Far from the revolutionary neorealism of his youth, the Calvino who wrote *Invisible Cities* had become disillusioned with political art, and his fantastic and mathematical turn was criticized as a turn away from ethical engagement with the world (Ricciardi 1063). This critique is fair. The younger Calvino—who fought against fascism in Italy as a member of the communist Youth Front—certainly would have identified in his older self a certain educated alienation and the “dying away of. . . the enthusiasm writers and the people always share in revolutionary moments. . .” but for all his failings, I find in this later work an enduring yearning for possibility and a defense of utopian



aspiration (Ricciardi 1073; Calvino *Hermit* 141). As Calvino closes the chapter, he writes that there must be room for both Fedora and its museum, as “the one contains what is accepted as necessary when it is not yet so; the others, what is imagined as possible and, a moment later, is possible no longer.” (Calvino 33).

There is instability and internal conflict visible in Calvino and his imagined city. As we will come to see in the following chapters, these are some of the crucial tensions within the utopian impulse, the tremors created in its movement through time. Contemplation of the self in new surroundings, a sense of loss engendered by something that never existed, surprising visions and sight-lines, kinesthetic joys—these are all aesthetic experiences that might bring inhabitants back to utopia. Inversely, there are the aesthetic feelings of soured wishes and disappointed dreams, the feelings of disgust, discomfort, and shame. Though Polo describes the joy of contemplation, the inhabitants of Fedora also risk encountering the exhilaration of new hope tinged with nausea or even vertigo, the curdled hopes incipient in the bauble-utopia.

### **Saturnalia and the Inferno**

In the city of Austin, on New Year’s Eve, revelers might anticipate a similar nausea, might arise in the Gregorian New Year divested of clothes and shouting, like the medieval peasant after a visit with the Abbot of Cockaigne, “*wafna, wafna! // quid fecisti, sors turpissima! // nostre vite gaudia // abstulisti omnia*” “Most wicked Luck, what have you done! All the joys of our life you have robbed!” (*The Carmina* 263). Still, the shores of the Colorado are crowded, revelers throng the sidewalks and spill into the streets, as I

sit in the backseat of a car, beside a groom who is set to be married the next day, and look out on the last gasps of 2022.

Several years before, the crowd had been made strange. The intimacy of the multitude was revealed, suddenly and dangerously, in every breath. In this before-time, trapped in my childhood home during pandemic lockdowns, I had taken a fading book down off the shelf. *In Quest of Heaven*, my great-grandfather Joseph J. Cohen's account of utopian experimentation in the depths of crisis. Cohen—an anarchist organizer and cigar-maker who had fled what is today known as Belarus in 1903—told the story of the founding of the Sunrise Cooperative, a collectivist Yiddish commune in Michigan, in 1932, in the depths of the depression. He described its success, the excitement of the radical experiment, working the land with his friends and family, and figuring out new ways of being and living together. He also discussed its failures: the debts, squabbles, and schisms that took place on a commune into which seventy families had been thrown—and the cooperative's eventual dissolution in 1940. This was a story I had heard of only vaguely, written by someone who had died forty years before I was born, but in Cohen's view of human history as a history of communitarian experimentation, in the movement towards hope in crisis, and in his grappling with the failure of his own attempt at utopia, I felt a unique sense of possibility. I was struck by his reading of Thomas More's *Utopia*, as a hero who decried greed and private property, and of *Utopia* as the first “complete vision of a collectivist society in Modern times,” and how different it was from what I found in the largely anti-communist and Catholic scholarship that dominated the conversation around More (Cohen 2). I was also surprised by his idealistic view of America as a land of experimental possibility where “the oppressed and persecuted

dreamers and prophets of all nations have found a haven for themselves and their ideas” (4). This is an understandable view for a Jew who had grown up in the Pale of Settlement, someone who described his first memories as “those which impressed upon me that I was born a Jew, a scion of a persecuted race suffering oppression, misery and injustice all through the ages” (xi). At the same time, I felt the rhetorical invocation of communalist experimentation as essentially American, while perhaps aimed at a mainstream audience distrusting of anarchists and socialists as foreign agitators, elided the violence and oppression of the American colonialist project. In a research proposal around that time, I wrote that the goal of this project was not to rescue utopia from the jaws of pundits, politicians, and philosophers, instead the goal was to find the historical, generic objects which had sunk beneath meaning, to pick them up, to turn them over, to see what came scuttling out from underneath.

This is the paper that resulted from Cohen’s story, but it isn’t exactly about Cohen. In utopia, in both its effervescing and curdling, I saw a profound expression of humanity as a creative force, of imagination and wish directed towards the very fundamental pathways of human relation and being. A reminder that our ways of being and relating were provisional: agreements that had been negotiated for a short time. Wishes—songs, stories, daydreams, manifestos, parties, promises, and vows—might escape or calcify or backfire or sublimate, but the return to hope was a feeling I wanted to bring closer.

Back in Austin, two years later, the roads are at an impasse. New Year’s is revulsion. It’s disappointment and duped dreams. New Year’s is anti-utopia, marriage too, and it’s fifteen minutes to New Year’s as our driver, a vegan best-man, pulls into the

Whataburger drive-through. The groom pressed in the middle of the back seat, his soon-to-be-husband in suspense at the hotel, awaiting their last unmarried midnight kiss. Do city planners dream of traffic? A vegan at a wedding party might spend the whole night dreaming of french fries, watching debauched aunts and drunken uncles pick at little, flesh-filled finger-sandwiches around a pool. And later, that same best-man might rashly pull into the drive-thru line. Soon the car is pressed in on all sides. In Peter Bruegel the Elder's painting *The Fight Between Carnival and Lent*, a boisterous carnival butcher rides a barrel adorned with a pork chop into battle—balancing a meat pie on his pate, his spear through a chicken, a pig's head, a guinea fowl, a sausage—opposite rides the gaunt Lady Lent wielding a paddle of fish. Dutiful children follow behind, and bees stream from Lent's beehive-capped head. The scene, filled with spinning, dancing, chanting, and screaming, is ruled by a division between pigs and fish, winter and spring, excess and restraint. Children surround a top, cheering as it spins. Men and women smash black pots in the middle ground. New Year's is apotheosis, but also a fresh start and a new hope, a wedding too. Teens film themselves dancing in the parking lot, set off fireworks by the dumpster. New Year's is saturnalia and utopia, a wedding too, and a museum might contain both, as it is itself contained by the green-gray metropolis of Austin, cut through by this other Colorado River. Bass reverberates through our seats and the car is suspended in the drive-through traffic at 11:50 p.m. The top is suspended in impossible motion forever, a black pot flies in the air, and there is a moment when the city becomes unlike itself. The rigidity of class society is upended, and daily patterns of movement and use are rewritten in carnival pageantry. This is where Bakhtin anchors his understanding of the Carnavalesque, this sensuous moment where life is “turned inside out” (125). It

also can be read as a utopian elsewhere, momentarily saturating and rewriting the routines of daily life. On the second story of a bakery, a scarecrow-like figure in a gray mask perches and surveys the collision, tree branches like horns. In the background, musicians dance around a fire, fade into the haze. It's a moment of simultaneous impasse and freedom. At midnight, the workers at the Whataburger leave their posts, step outside to see the horizon light up. The midnight kiss is postponed for a year.

### **Where is Utopia Headed?**

Is utopia over? Are we over utopia? These questions are not really about death and resurrection. Instead, we would do better to approach these as questions of position and temporality: has the horizon of utopia closed to us? Does it churn beneath us or float above? What is its trajectory? Wishes and dreams imparted much to the world we live in today and can be seen in various expressions of freedom, revolution, and joy but also in systems of oppression and violence. The stuff in museums and the things museums were built from. Parsing the daydreams of the past and examining what did and did not come to pass might allow us to move forward with clearer sight. Or it might not. When it comes to the frustrating and eccentric texts grouped under the term Utopian Literature, the overarching goal of the critique is to examine the way our own desires and hopes are constituted, to approach cultural worlds that were reflected in these texts, to pick apart their influences in our own world. Any paper risks becoming, like the city of Fedora, a cabinet of curiosities, a passing fancy, or a belittling collection. To avoid this fate, this analysis works to develop a through-line between distinct utopian worlds: the interoperation of metaphor and *topos* as key constituents of utopian writing.

As we will see in the following chapters, literary utopias provide an encounter with the historical consciousness of the possible and the world as it might have been. Following the theorization of Ernst Bloch, the goal of critiquing these literary utopias is not to reject hope, but rather to educate our own daydreams, to learn and move forward. These chapters will examine didacticism and the development of colonial metonymy in Thomas More's *Utopia*, the way metaphor operates through time in Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward: 2000-1887*, and utopian colonialism as a central incoherence in the utopian imaginary. Ultimately, this paper will argue for a productive misreading of literary utopias, pointing to the way utopia has escaped and even refashioned its authors and the way readers' misinterpretations have opened new horizons of radical possibility.

### **Wherefore not Utopie**

Discussions of utopia typically start with the etymology of the word itself. The ancient Greek word utopia first appeared in Thomas More's post-classical Latin text in 1516 CE. After making the leap into English in Ralph Robinson's 1551 translation, the word has been rearranged into an array of descriptors and theorizations—from dystopia/kakotopia (bad place) to Foucault's heterotopia (different/other place) to Tom Moylan's critical utopia. Utopia's internal contradictions start at the level of the word itself: a punning combination of the ancient Greek *οὐ* (non) + *τόπος* (*topos*/place), played against the similar *εὖ* (good) + *τόπος*, it could be the no-place or the good-place ("utopia;" Levitas 2; Khanna, "Text" 37; Sargent, "Three"). The aspiration of the non-place towards goodness is captured by Thomas More's fictive poet Anemolius's couplet: "Wherefore not Utopie, but rather rightely / My name is Eutopie: a place of felicitie"

(More 119). The ambiguity between the good place (eutopia) and its impossibility (outopia) is the energetic—sometimes tragic, sometimes laughable—tension that brings readers into utopia: that we can imagine a good place, but we cannot draw a map to reach it.

Looking for a suitable definition for this expansive concept of utopia, we could turn to a variety of authors. Strains of utopian thought have been present in the unstable collection of philosophic, literary, and religious texts grouped together as the “Western Tradition” stretching back to the Hebrew Bible’s vision of the Messianic Era and Plato’s *Republic*. Over the last 500 years, utopia has undergone intensive and often contradictory theorization. Ernst Bloch’s expansive theory of utopia, elucidated in *The Principle of Hope*, is a particularly capacious and generative approach. This utopia extends across the wide range of human experience to include all the daydreams of a better life as the key components of an anticipatory consciousness. Bloch, working both with and against Freud’s understanding of the psyche, approaches the desire for a better life as an essential part of human nature. Bloch, an idiosyncratic Marxist, is attentive to the distinction between desire that pulls towards the truly new: the concrete utopia, as opposed to the diverted, abstract utopias that fold back into the status quo. In the carefully cultivated hope that springs from the daydream, and in the act of cultivation, Bloch identifies a latent potentiality. For Bloch, the lasting relevance of utopian hope lies in the difference between the “objectively Possible”—that is, what is considered possible based on an incomplete assessment of the present—and the “Real Possible” (196). The Real Possible is what arises from an in-process and still evolving present. As Bloch puts it:

. . . as long as the reality has not become a completely determined one, as long as it possesses still unclosed possibilities, in the shape of new shoots and new spaces for development, then no absolute objection to utopian can be raised by merely factual reality. Objections to bad utopias can be raised, i.e. to abstractly extravagant, badly mediated ones, but precisely concrete utopia has in *process-reality* a corresponding element: that of the mediated Novum. Only this process-reality, and not a fact-basedness torn out of it which is reified and made absolute, can therefore pass judgement on utopian dreams or relegate them to mere illusions. (196-197)

It's *Novum*, or the truly new, towards which utopia is oriented. This is the potentiality that might break out into the world as revolution, a reaching towards real possibility and genuine emancipation. Bloch's theory is not exactly directed at literary utopias. Rather, he focuses on defending the importance of dream, hope, and possibility as revolutionary strains within Marxism. Nevertheless, he emphasizes that even at their worst, literary utopias "were always capable of saying no to the despicable, even if it was the powerful, even if it was the habitual" (*The Principle* 480). Literary utopias—as strange and idiosyncratic and even counter-revolutionary as they sometimes can be—always contain a radical possibility, a refusal to abide by routine, to acquiesce to the objectively Possible. José Esteban Muñoz identifies Bloch's theorization as a stream of "critical idealism," and this stream of critical idealism provides a fruitful standpoint from which to approach the literary utopias (2). From this vantage, literary utopias provide an encounter with the historical consciousness of the possible and the world as it might have been. The goal of critiquing these literary utopias is less to discount or destroy the possibility of change but rather to educate our own daydreams.

It's helpful to bring in a few more theorists to help flesh out this paper's critical approach to utopia. Frederic Jameson has constructed a taxonomy of utopian thought stemming from Thomas More's text; one is systemic, including both revolutionary



political practice and the literary genre, alongside communes, and the “attempts to project new spatial totalities, in the aesthetic of the city itself” (3). In another branch, Jameson places the utopian impulse, individual buildings in a city, “liberal reforms, and commercial pipe dreams,” “the deceptive pipe dreams of the here and now,” alongside Bloch’s hermeneutics of hope in body, time, and collectivity (4). Key to Jameson’s concept is the idea of enclosure, as More’s Utopia is physically isolated from the mainland, Jameson considers boundaries to be a key feature of systemic utopias: the utopian impulse can exist within a non-utopian system; a systemic utopia aims to cut itself away.

Although this paper will replicate a certain strain of canonical close reading, the eternal return to Thomas More in definitions of utopia obscures as much as it reveals. It can be argued that More only supplied a particularly apt name to a feeling that long predated him. The focus on More often serves to elevate a rationalist approach to hope at the expense of embodied experiences of wish and dream—and it’s true that even Bloch and Jameson, to some extent, overemphasize the rationalist possibility of utopia, as anticipatory consciousness, over the elements of pleasure and bodily satiety that utopia also connotes. Counter-historians of utopia, such as Karma Lochrie and S. D. Chrostowska, approach the history of utopia from alternate angles, and these authors have found the medieval vernacular stories of Cokaygne to be particularly revealing.

The mythic land of Cokaygne is preserved by a smattering of idiosyncratic texts and referents from the twelfth century through the twentieth. The *Carmina Burana* (1164 CE) includes two joking stanzas as the Abbot of Cokaygne (*Abbas Cucaniensis*) warns revelers that if they seek him in the tavern, they will leave naked and cursing (Lochrie

54). In Old French *Le 'fabliau' de Cocagne* (c. 1250) conjures a land where peasant houses are built of meat and fish, where the rivers flow with the best of both red and white wine, where sleep is the source of profit and gold is worthless, where free sexuality and gender equality are the norm—a land filled with an honorable, courteous, and colorfully-dressed citizenry who celebrate four Easters and four Christmases each year, but observe Lent only once every twenty years (Le Goff 112-116; Vaananen 20-29; Lochrie 56-65). In contrast to later expressions of the Cokaygne story—which often reaffirm patriarchal structures, adhering to male desire and fantasy in their descriptions of sexuality—the Old French *de Cocagne* describes a world where, as Lochrie observes, “women, rather than men, are featured as the primary agents of sexual desire” (Lochrie 59). The later Middle English *The Land of Cokaygne*<sup>1</sup> (c. 1330) introduces a Carnavalesque monasticism to the setting. Included as a part of the Harley manuscript—a menagerie of texts compiled between the Franciscan houses of Waterford, New Ross, and Kildare—this story features a gustatory paradise, where the abbeys are built from pies and topped with sausages, planted round with spice trees and populated by cooked geese that fly directly into the mouths of visitors, shouting ‘gees al hote, al hot’ (Lucas 299; Dunn, line 104). On this island, in the sea a bit west of Spain:

Man mai ther-of et inogh  
 Al with right and nocht with wogh.  
 Al is commune to yung and old,  
 To stoute and sterne, mek and bold. (Dunn lines 61-4)

---

<sup>1</sup> Excerpts here come from the Middle English Literature anthology edited by Charley Dunn and Edward T. Byrnes. The manuscript (Harley 913, 3r-6v) has been digitized by the British Museum and can be found on the museum’s website: [https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley\\_MS\\_913](https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_913).

The common enjoyment promised by these couplets contrasts with the poem's restricted focus: the monks and abbots of the island, whose luminous crystalline abbey is surrounded by wells of treacle and mead. This poem is often interpreted as a satiric and perhaps even colonialist poem. Where the earlier, peasant-oriented *de Cucagne* features women as the primary agents of sexual desire, this later Franciscan *Cokaygne* has a patriarchal bent, as the monks fly up in the air, lighter and swifter than hawks and only return to their work when the abbot “betith the taburs with is hond” on a nearby maiden’s buttocks. The Anglo-Norman monk who likely wrote the poem of *Cokaygne* may have intended to mock the local Irish expression of Cistercian monasticism, and the innuendos in this text seem calibrated to titillate—that is to induce a simultaneous experience of desire, excitement, and shame—in their male, ecclesiastic audience (Turville-Petre 167-169). Nevertheless, the colonialist nature of the poem is disputed, and beyond the monastic satire, what jumps out from the text is its twofold attention to embodiment. The poem revels in the satisfaction of earthly desires and, simultaneously, a mortification of the flesh. This world of pleasure and satisfaction is contiguous with our own, but to reach that land requires a fecal penitence—seven years of wading through pig shit to reach paradise.

These are just a few samples from a wide and rich history of paradisiacal folk stories, with names that include Cuckoo-Land, the Spanish *País de Cucaña* or *de Jauja*, the German *Schlaraffenland*, the dutch *Luilekkerland*—translated as “Lazy Luscious Land”— and Topsy-Turvydom (Bane). In twentieth-century culture, this strain of irreverent utopianism resurfaced in songs like the “Big Rock Candy Mountain” (Rammel 2). *Cokaygne* is an embodied paradise, a land where peasants are freed from pain, toil,

shame, and sickness, a land of sexual freedom, overflowing with milk and honey and built up with towns of sausages, sweets and salmon. While the written texts give us these illuminating glimpses of the Cokaygne story and the varied ways the fabled land was interpolated, the tradition was much richer and deeper than what arrives to us through the manuscripts. As Herman Pleij argues, Cokaygne was a living folk tradition transmitted through story-telling, song, and improvisation, and it is likely that thousands of versions existed and were widely recognized in the Middle Ages (55). Although there is a tendency in utopian criticism to discount this type of social dreaming as undeveloped or uncritical, scholars like Chrostowska identify a revolutionary attention to embodiment and the quotidian dreams of satiety in the tradition of Cokaygne (21). For Chrostowska, the Cokaygne tradition represents the somatic core of hope, a return to the body which repudiates Thomas More's rationalist utopia and its descendants (7). Rather than discounting peasant dreams of satiety as underdeveloped versions of the more intellectual utopia, this approach understands that attention to desire and embodiment are crucial aspects of utopia that cannot be ignored.

A strange parallel to the dismemberment of utopia, the severing of the rational tradition from its fleshy self, is written in the story surrounding Thomas More's own corpse. The rational utopian tradition has been venerated in the criticism, while the somatic utopia was buried or discounted. More's head was literally severed from his body. The body was buried outside the Tower of London, while his head was staked for a month on the London bridge. According to some accounts, the head was later rescued by Margaret Roper through bribery, and is today buried in the Roper Vault at the church of St. Dunstan in Canterbury. The head never found its way back to the body. And yet, that

head has its own culinary, or aesthetic, history—at turns parboiled and stuck on a pike, rescued and preserved in spices by his daughter (Bridgett 435). In this story, we can glimpse the rational cut off from the somatic, and while More's head will never find its way back to his body, our analysis can pay attention to both, suturing together some of the disparate elements through attention, and recognizing that even the rational bears the scent of an aesthetic or culinary history.

Two theorists whose definitions allow space for both embodiment and rationality include Ruth Levitas and Lyman Tower Sargent. Levitas provides a definition within a thorough examination of the scholarship on utopia. Levitas charts the differing ways theorists from Marx and Engels to William Morris to Bloch have approached—and contested—the content, form, and function of utopia. Levitas uses this survey of utopia to posit that what is essential across all the different definitions of utopia is the “desire for a better way of being and living” (7). From a different vantage, Lyman Tower Sargent approaches a general definition of utopianism from the direction of “social dreaming,” which is “the dreams and nightmares that concern the ways in which groups of people arrange their lives and which usually envision a radically different society than the one in which the dreamers live” (“The Three” 3). Sargent's taxonomy further divides utopia into three parts, literary utopias—themselves divided into “body utopias or utopias of sensual gratification and city utopias or utopias of human contrivance;” communitarianism; utopian social theory (3). Between these theoretical approaches, it becomes clear that dream, desire, and wish—directed toward something different or better—can be understood as the basic mechanisms of utopia. For the purpose of this essay, Bloch,

Levitas, and Sargent will serve as guiding theorizations of utopia as we explore just how complex desires for, and dreams about, the better life can be.

### ***Epiphora and the Naming of the Cats***

T.S. Eliot's "The Naming of the Cats," a whimsical children's poem, starts with a promise: to describe the difficult process by which a cat comes to its name. Readers of this poem—which was later adapted into the musical *Cats*, which was itself turned into a widely-panned movie—learn that every cat has three different names, a quotidian name they are called by humans, a particular and dignified name that belongs to no other cat, and above all, a mystical or essential name that lies beyond human comprehension.

Eliot's verse feels apt somehow. If you've ever watched your cat stare at a wall and felt that it must be observing some other plane of existence, Eliot says that your cat is, in fact,

. . . engaged in a rapt contemplation  
Of the thought, of the thought, of the thought of his name:  
    His ineffable effable  
    Effanineffable  
Deep and inscrutable singular name

This effanineffable name, in a silly poem, gets at something profound in speaking and being. Language, and human comprehension, are limited. We cannot know the deep identities of ourselves, much less our pets or the birds perched on the wires over the alley. There is always something missing, something unaccounted for. While Eliot might intend for us to understand this as something along the lines of a soul, I don't think we need to accept an eternal soul to grasp the ineffable effable name. In the act of looking at something, there is simultaneously the choice to look away from something else. To say anything is to leave something unsaid. Yet, for a poem titled "The Naming of the Cats,"

the actual naming is left without description, and the audience is left to wonder at this unnamable process of naming. We know that there are things—feelings, processes, cats, worlds—that lack names or whose names have eroded under the weight of use, and, as this analysis will argue, metaphor is one of the means by which we name and rename those things. Naming is a complex social, linguistic, and cognitive process, and here we will only touch on one aspect of naming, known as metaphor. And within metaphor—which has itself been subject to extensive and contradictory theorization in rhetoric, philosophy, linguistics, and cognitive psychology—we will focus on theories of metaphor that have bearing on utopian literature, and of those, just the frameworks that theorize metaphor at the level of the word or noun alongside frameworks that emphasize its operation at the level of the literary text.

The word-level theory of metaphor stems from Aristotle's theorization of language in *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*. Aristotle intersects with the current analysis in his idea that metaphor gives “names to things that have none” (Rh. 3.2.1405a12). According to Aristotle's definition, “Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy” (Poetics 1457b). Unlike later rhetoricians, Aristotle approaches metaphor as a general movement, which includes metonymy, and synecdoche. This movement is basically understood to be a more complete version of simile. Metaphor here is understood as something that happens between names or nouns—*onomatos*—and takes place via transference, giving, or carrying over—*epiphora*. Transference and borrowing introduce a second key attribute of metaphor, that it takes place between at least two words. Metaphor is not the ordinary

usage—*kurion*—rather it takes place through a sort of deviation, the application of a name which belongs to another domain, an alien name—*allogrios*. Paul Ricoeur, attuned to *kurion* as ordinary usage and the deviation—or categorical transgression—involved in transference, points to metaphor as a re-discovery of reality and deviation as the “de-constructive intermediary phase between description and re-description” (22). What connects these two disparate words is resemblance or likeness. Indeed, Aristotle asserts that on the part of a writer or speaker, the creation of metaphor involves a certain kind of talent, an “eye for resemblances,” or the ability to identify similarities between dissimilar domains (1459a5-9). For listeners and readers, there is a sort of aesthetic benefit, as metaphor enlivens oration with “perspicuity, pleasure, and an air of unfamiliarity” (3.2.1405a8). This word-level theory of metaphor, as transference and deviation, achieves meaning as two words are brought together through the apprehension of similarity and difference, and requires a sort of parallel action of apprehension between speaker/writer and listener/reader.

The operation of transference does not just function at the level of the word, or even the sentence. In this analysis, we will attempt to understand literary utopias as metaphorically structured, and to do that, we need a theory of transference that can operate at the level of the text. Paul Ricoeur’s *The Rule of Metaphor* parses and connects disparate theories of metaphor, from the word-based theory of metaphor to the sentence-based semantic understanding and finally to the theories of metaphor that operate at the level of the text, or discourse. In Aristotle’s theory, Ricoeur identifies the ontological direction of metaphor as “lively expression” or language that “expresses existence as alive,” this is language that makes contact with being (43). What I appreciate about



Ricoeur's figuration is his careful attention to the methodological nuances of the different semiotic, semantic, and discursive theories of metaphor, and the way he finds, at each of these levels, the way that metaphor operates not just as an ornament to language, but as a "power that certain fictions have to redescribe reality" (7). For Ricoeur, the key is in the ongoing presence of similarity and difference in metaphorical speech and writing, as he puts it "the metaphorical 'is' at once signifies both 'is not' and 'is like.' If this is really so, we are allowed to speak of metaphorical truth, but in an equally 'tensive' sense of the word 'truth'" (7). Building on Ricoeur's theory, Benjamin Hrushovski provides a theory of metaphor specifically articulated in relation to poetry and the analysis of complex metaphors in poetic texts. It's useful to approach metaphors, as Hrushovski writes, "not as static, discrete units, but as dynamic patterns, changing in the text continuum" (7). In addition to the word and the sentence, Hrushovski proposes a productive third unit for the analysis of metaphor at the discursive level of the text: the frame of reference. For Hrushovski, the frame of reference, "a construct based on discontinuous elements in a text, which are linked to each other by some kind of flexible but necessary 'semantic syntax,'" is the basic unit of semantic integration from which metaphor in literature is constructed (11-12). It is these frames of reference—allowing a text to toggle between limited, "formalized language" and "open, individually contextualized, thematic bodies of communication"—that enable a text to function (11). This flexible, contextual approach to metaphor allows for a more comprehensive analysis of metaphors, an analysis which includes both similarity and difference, direct comparison and more circuitous relationships, neologisms, dead-metaphors, colloquialisms, similes, even sound-meaning interactions as relevant constituents inside metaphorical frames (9). As

this paper will argue in the following chapters, metaphor is a structuring feature of utopia, what gives it its power, and influence, but also its sense of pleasure and unpredictability.

Returning to Eliot's effable ineffable name, we find that the difference between a name and a metaphor is that a metaphor might be misinterpreted. The process of recognizing similarity between dissimilar frames of reference is broadly applied across these texts, and there is something unruly in the ways transference and deviation communicate. Part of the perspicuity and pleasure of Eliot's poem is the way it gets at the limits of language and communication. Even if we stretch language in absurd ways to try to capture the dignified individuality of our pets, with names like "Munkustrap, Quaxo, or Coricopat," "Bombalurina, or else Jellylorum," at a certain point, if each cat has its own name, and no cat can share a name, this language would cease to communicate. As Derrida writes, "because of the repetition in which it is endlessly spoilt, no language can bring within its compass the structure of an anthology" (71). No language can hold an *idion onoma*, or proper name, for each individual cat, nor can it encompass the entirety of any person, concept, process, or connection. And yet, we often still try. We write poems about our cats, tell our children about their exploits, imagine their past lives, grasping after the deep and inscrutable nature of things, the effanineffable name that sits out of reach. There is always failure in this effort, but metaphor is what gives language continued life, the ability to name and rename, to stretch a limited system across the infinite material of experience and the universe. This is the same stretching—transference and deviation, similarity and difference—that enables utopia to reach from the known to the unknown. There is, in this motion, the grasping after names and Bloch's parallel

grasping after the *Novum*, the possibility of better ways of knowing and being at the edge of perception.

## Chapter 1: Situating Utopia

The second part of utopia—*topos* or “place”—is often taken for granted. The *eu* and *ou* must be anchored somewhere, and *topos* seems as good a place as any. David Bell intervenes in this discussion by noting the unbalanced approach to utopia in the general scholarship, which frequently approaches utopia as process, temporality, or heuristic while ignoring place and space. Bell also critiques the scholarship that flattens utopia into a “perfect, hierarchical place” or “an oasis cut off from historical operations of power” (134). Between these critical streams, Bell tries to get at both the mutability and the dimensionality of utopia, turning to approaches “that see space (re)produced through the changing relations of bodies and (re)producing these bodies,” following Doreen Massey’s description of places as ongoing, collections of “stories, articulations within the wider power-geometries of space” (134). Lyman Tower Sargent adds helpful refinement with his description of *topos* as “a location in time and space—to give verisimilitude” (“The Three” 5). With “to give verisimilitude,” Sargent comes up against another intricacy of *topos*, introducing the possibility of simulation and dissimulation—matrices of veracity and intent—to placemaking. This provides a different frame for the same mutability and interrelation highlighted by Bell. Between these definitions: of space as it is produced and reproduced through bodily relation and of simulation and veracity as they move outward from the text and back, we arrive at *topos* as place alloyed by temporality and relationally. Here, I propose a refinement of *topos* to get at the specific work utopian

literature does in the world, as a variation on a specifically rhetorical operation: the commonplace or the common ground, the site of the unthought, the assumed, and the quotidian. Over the course of the following chapters, *topos* will be continually called upon to help us get at the permutations of context and the commonplace, the way the commonplace is called upon in the operations of didacticism and metaphor, and the ways the commonplace can shift and collapse.

This dimension of *topos* touches on its use in classical rhetorical theory, where *topos* acquired a definition as the rhetorical commonplace, the “standard form of rhetorical argumentation” (Most). These commonplaces were compiled into catalogs of familiar paths by which rhetoricians could connect premise to conclusion (Most). Aristotle, for example, tabulates the various *topoi* in *Topics* and defines the word specifically in *Rhetoric* as the general headings under which various enthymemes—generally, deductive arguments—fall (Aristotle 2.26). The rhetorical commonplace, *τόπος* describes the repertoire ancient Greek rhetoricians returned to for the tools to convince through familiarity, and this commonplace situates Bell and Sargent’s definitions, specifying the operation of verisimilitude that Sargent points towards and the routes by which space is reproduced through communication and shared affect.

This rhetorical intervention highlights several aspects of temporality within and beyond utopian writing. This configuration of *topos* connects to, and is differentiated from, Bakhtin’s configuration of chronotope as the interdependent action of space and time bringing meaning into literature (*The Dialogic Imagination* 84). For Bakhtin, time—plot, history, action—and space—embodiment, setting, place—form into identifiable

chronotopic motifs that make up narrative; genres are constituted by the repetition of specific chronotopic configurations (Bahktin 250-251; Bemong 5-7). The interaction of time and space has a fundamental bearing on human perception and communication, and though this analysis is not aimed at identifying types of time or generic chronotopes, the broader concept points to the way that time and space are inseparable both within and beyond the literature.

Common ground is a basic component of human interaction, and there is some laboratory evidence that common ground may have played a role in the evolution of language—as humans participants in experimental games with limited forms of communication establish common expectations and then use deviation from those expectations to display communicative intent (Scott-Phillips 412). In *Using Language*, Herbert Clark frames common ground as “a form of self-awareness — self-knowledge, self-belief, self-assumption — in which there is at least one other person with the analogous self-awareness” (94). This self-awareness includes embodied context, presupposed sets of beliefs, a shared understanding of the activity at hand, and some assumed knowledge of a wider set of public events, histories, and settings. These shared assumptions make up the common ground and enable joint action. For Clark, joint action includes verbal and written communication, but also dance, music, sport, education, and politics—activities that are coordinated between two or more people. While the rhetorical angle of *topos* is illuminating, the joint action context of the literary text is significantly differentiated from the rhetorician’s oratory. Indeed, Roland Barthes goes as far as to argue that writing “is anti-communication” or intimidation “due to its appearance of

introversion and “the weight of gaze conveying an intention which is no longer linguistic,” it becomes something entirely other from speech (19-20). We won’t take this as far as Barthes, but we can at least see the way literature, which comes to be between acts of writing and rewriting, reading and rereading, is reliant on different sorts of *topos* from speech—generic and formal conventions, ideological constellations, textual form. Moreover, literature is subject to unique forms of erosion and deposition, as written texts travel farther and live longer than utterances.

In our flexible sense of utopia, *topos* gets at a more capacious form of rhetoric, which approaches the ways we are swayed in space and time, our embodied relationships to the quotidian, and the ways we communicate through structure, repetition, and the ordinary. Utopian authors turn to *topos* to communicate worlds beyond it, to inspire or to educate those they imagine to share their common ground, but their audiences often bring distinctive and unpredictable ordinaries to their readings. What is common about *topos* shifts over time and space.

### **Topos Chico**

To understand how place operates in utopia and the way it interacts with *eu* and *ou*, it’s helpful to sample it *in situ*. Here, we can return to Thomas More to examine how the text approaches the process of situation and the proper forms of rhetoric. Despite the longevity of More’s writings and ideas, the perspective of a Catholic Renaissance humanist is, in many ways, inaccessible and even distasteful to a contemporary reader. *Utopia* is a frustrating text. It’s satire, but many of the referents for mockery and

inversion that allow satire to function have, by this point, been upended, modified, or replaced. It's philosophy, but the arguments are often opaque, and the conclusions out of reach. Written for an erudite humanist cohort well versed in the complexity of Latin and Greek rhetoric—an audience that, proportionately, barely existed then and finds even more negligible purchase today—a contemporary reader might find the characters unlikeable, the social structure objectionable, not communal enough, or unrealistically communal, hierarchical, misogynistic, dull.

Where previous satirists and future utopian writers would inject their works with a sense of lightness and magic—Lucian of Samosata described salad warriors of the sun flying into battle against the moon, and nearly two thousand years later, Samuel Delany would depict the atmospheric shield of Triton faltering as an incomprehensible war between the Earth and Neptune's moon raged outside the flawed perspective of *Trouble on Triton*'s narrator—Thomas More writes there is nothing more fantastic than a well-mannered and wisely trained citizenry (12).<sup>2</sup> This tempered approach precludes some aspects of pleasure and the fantastic, but it does allow Thomas More to identify society as a substrate upon which desire and experimentation can act. What role a philosopher should play in the monarchy; what a commonwealth might consist of; what relationship religion, virtue, and rationality have to one another—these questions took center stage in the text before reprising their roles twenty years later in the events surrounding More's

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<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise noted, quotations and pagination in this section are taken from the Robert M. Adams translation of *Utopia*.



eventual beheading, but they can feel trivial in many ways five hundred years on. *Topos* changes over time; what was familiar to More's readership has shifted.

It's helpful, then, to allow Thomas More a relationship to the text as ambiguous and temporally mediated as our own. To be clear, this emphasis on ambiguity is not intended to discount what I see as the most powerful and lasting aspect of the text, Hythloday's effusive rejection of private property and the conjuring of a communalist society freed from scarcity, greed, and exploitation. Nevertheless, *Utopia* engages ambiguity on both textual and structural levels. Each edition was accompanied by different paratexts: utopian maps and poetry; various letters from Erasmus, Giles, Busleyden, and Budé, each modeling different ways of understanding the text, simultaneously fortifying and undermining its verisimilitude—engendering an instability that left it vulnerable to what the later More would understand as the menace of interpretation.

### **Foolish Conversation**

Of course, this menacing interpretability is what brings us to the text five hundred years later. It's proven fertile ground for scholarship developing theories of utopia, for heterodox communalists seeking an intellectual genealogy outside scientific socialism, for technocrats modeling idyllic cities, for anti-Marxists casting up an intellectual history that both pre-figured and pre-repudiated communism, for Catholics constructing the moral legacy of a saint (Phélippeau 575-577). Given this long history of interpretation, it's relevant to ask why Thomas More introduced so much instability to his story. This

chapter will examine the way opposition and dialogization function in the text and the way More uses these elements to construct a didactic game of morality within *Utopia*.

Although it is not exactly a novel, *Utopia*, with its complex play of satire and ambiguity, can be considered a fairly close prefiguration of the novel—part of a Cicero-inspired shift as humanist philosophy became increasingly literary and rhetoric drew increasingly on poetic language (Kinney 34). I am inclined to approach the text from the position articulated by scholars such as Elizabeth McCutcheon and Artur Blaim, who understand *Utopia* as a purposefully polyphonic and contradictory work. Blaim draws on Bakhtin to argue that *Utopia* is “dialogized system,” attuned to a certain heteroglossia, or linguistic play, as it moves between Greek and Latin and back—and between opposing perspectives (Blaim 16; Bakhtin 49). This heteroglossia is compounded by revision, as, for example, when More changed the name from the Latin “*Nusquama*” to the Greek “*Utopia*” shortly before the manuscript was published (Sylvester 273). Rather than focusing on which specific features of *Utopia* More favored, polyphony allows us to examine how ambiguity is expressed in the novel and why More would come to regret that ambiguity later.

As the story unfolds across two stylistically distinct books and various epistles convincing—in the form of rhetoric, interpretation, and the philosophy of education—takes center stage. The narration is situated in the garden of Morus’s<sup>3</sup> temporary Antwerp residence, as—in the first book—Morus, Raphael Hythloday, and Peter Giles discuss

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<sup>3</sup> Following scholarly convention, “Morus” here refers to More’s intradiegetic narrator and “More” is used to refer to the author. “Morus,” as the name appears in the original text, helps differentiate the levels of narration, and preserves the word-play of More referring to his narratorial persona as a fool, or moron (Wegemer 288; Blaim 14).

war, theft, greed, and the proper role of the philosopher in politics. In Book II, Hythloday takes the narratorial reins to depict the societal structure and history of the Utopians to those who had not approached its similitude. As Morus and Giles shift into roles as intradiegetic naratees, Hythloday describes the commonwealth of the Utopians, as an alternative to the inequality, greed, and irrationality of England

The dialogic play between Latin in Greek parallels the contrasting styles of Morus and Hythloday. While the scholarship of utopia is powered by the fission of *eu* and *ou*, the scholarship of *Utopia* interrogates the contrast between Morus and Hythloday, seeking some synthetic meaning between the characters' theses. On one side, Morus, a fool, a passive Englishman—although openminded, Peter even describes him as “greedy” to hear of “unknown peoples and unexplored lands;”—a civil servant whose rhetorical style is characteristically understated, witty, artful, and above all, civil (More 9; Wegemer 291). One possible fool, Morus, is contrasted against another in Hythloday. As Heiserman points out, Hythloday merges several generic personae: the gnostic; “the visionary who returns from a journey through strange places to report the unadorned truth about society”; the fool; the angel Raphael; at turns both Plato and Ulysses; the truth-teller; and, as the name Hythlodæus—which combines the Greek *hythlos*, nonsense, with what might be *hodaïos*, merchandise, or *daios* cunning or hostile—suggests, the merchant-of-nonsense (Heiserman 167; Wilson 33). Between these conventions arrives a babbler-Hythloday into the story: this stranger whose harsh and uncouth rhetorical style is matched only by his appearance—Morus describes him as “. . . a man of quite advanced years, with a sunburned face, a long beard, and a cloak hanging loosely from

his shoulders; from his face and dress, I took him to be a ship's captain" (More 9). Hythloday, as Wegemer notes, is long-winded, dogmatic, and prone to *ad hominem*—perhaps reflecting the passé, ineloquent style of the Medieval scholastic philosophers, often mocked by More and his fellow humanists (Wegemer 293; Davis 250). Despite this, it is possible to argue, as Sylvester does, that Hythloday has been given the best lines and most forceful arguments, and the way his speech takes up the vast majority of the text lends weight to his argument (Sylvester 281). Neither Morus nor Hythloday represents their positions consistently or logically, and this inconsistency is compounded as Hythloday's accounts of his travels are progressively introduced as irrefutable evidence in their debate.

Hythloday's prominence is emphasized by the textual history of *Utopia*, as scholarship indicates that More composed most of Book II first—mulling over the possibilities of this alternate government while on a diplomatic mission in Flanders and vacationing in Antwerp—before adding much of Book I, and much of Morus's argumentation, at a later date (Hexter 18). J.H. Hexeter identifies the moment of textual breakage in Book I, as More writes:

Now I intend to relate only what he told us about the customs and institutions of the Utopians, but first recounting the conversation that drew him into speaking of that commonwealth. Raphael had been discoursing very thoughtfully on the faulty arrangements both in that hemisphere and in this (and there are many in both places), and had also spoken of the wiser provisions among us or among them. . . . Peter was amazed. 'My dear Raphael', he said, 'I'm surprised that you don't enter some king's service; for I don't know of a single prince who wouldn't be very glad to have you.' (13)

Here, More promises a fantastic description of Utopia and then digresses in the same sentence. Peter's entreaty leads in a new direction, into discussion, and eventually

disagreement, between Morus and Hythloday, as Hythloday rejects the idea of serving a king and increasingly decries the greed and violence of European society. This debate had a salient parallel in More's own life: More wrote the first book, and its debate about entering a King's service, after returning from his diplomatic mission (Guy 163). During this time, More's internal division is apparent, first turning down an appointment to King Henry VIII's court before accepting that same appointment in March 1518. This lends credence to the idea that Hythloday and Morus's debate over the philosopher's role in public life may have reflected an ongoing, internal debate (Guy 163). The debate between Morus and Hythloday continues until the two characters come into irresolvable conflict over private property. Ultimately, for Hythloday, the only possible form of justice is the abolition of private property. Morus rejects this idea outright, and Hythloday responds,

‘I'm not surprised that you think of it this way’, he said, ‘since you have no image, or only a false one, of such a commonwealth. But you should have been with me in Utopia and seen with your own eyes their manners and customs, as I did. . . If you had seen them, you would frankly confess that you had never seen a well-governed people anywhere but there.’ (41)

Wegemer identifies this as Hythloday's flawed philosophical approach, a fundamental misunderstanding of the rules of argumentation, and evidence for Hythloday's identification with gnosticism. Rather than appealing to common ground, Hythloday calls on special knowledge of a *topos* that is not shared with Morus, a place only accessible through storytelling (Wegemer 301-302). The move to the uncommon ground is indeed a failure to call upon the proper rhetorical technique, but this leap over the impasse of proper argumentation, prioritizing image and similitude over logic, is also an essential component to the functioning of utopian writing.

There is a long history of simplistically reading the synthesis between these contrasting styles, either resulting in a defense of utopian communism or a satire of that communism. Instead, we will utilize a reading more aligned with the criticism that understands *Utopia* as a polyphonous literary work, not unserious but still imbued with an element of play. Given the power and prominence of Hythloday's arguments against private property and greed, I am more inclined to approach Morus and Hythloday as indicators of More's own divided mind and the dialogue as an exploration of questions More himself wondered about (Logan xxii). In some ways, *Utopia* can be read as the last gasp of Thomas More's humanistic play, before that playfulness was squeezed out by the twin pressures of public office and the reformation.

For a clear example of paradox and play, we can turn to Hythloday's description of the Utopians' contradictory military philosophy. In Book II, Hythloday describes the Utopians as, essentially, pacifists, despising war and only engaging in war for "good reasons" (89). These positions would have appealed to More's humanist cohort, who largely interpreted war as a "man-made evil which can be minimized. . . in a society whose organization is rational and just, and yet, as Hythloday goes on, the Utopian position is complicated (Adams 4). The conditions for just war include not just the defense of their own territory but also the defense of their partners from invasion, the "liberation of oppressed people" from tyranny, and repaying and avenging "previous injuries" to themselves and their friends (90). Although the Utopians place no import on money, they "punish wrong done to their friends, even in matters of money," and Hythloday presents an example in which the Utopians joined a war against the

Alaopolitians in defense of the traders of their allies, the Nephelogetes. After the Utopian's bloody and costly victory, they enslave the Alaopolitans and hand them over to the Nephelogetes (90). This warfare in defense of private property is strange, out of place for the communitarian Utopians, nor does it reflect Hythloday's opinion that killing someone for stealing is unjust nor his arguments against military adventurism in Book I (22, 31). The Utopians' supposed pacifism is contrasted with their practices of war—which include assassination, espionage, the employment of avaricious mercenaries, and retributive debt collection from the conquered states. Between these contrasting descriptions, More's audience is challenged to consider their own morality, using the congruence and incongruence of this alternate society to test their views. In this way, the text becomes less like a rhetorical tract and more like Platonic dialogue or, even, like a game.

### **Their Games Are Useful Too**

Between the contrasting styles of Hythloday and Morus, the flawed way each attempts to sway the other, compounded by the hypocritical worldview of the Utopians, the reader is forced to play a sort of oppositional game. This is a unique and treacherous form of didacticism. Rather than attempting to transmit an argument by appealing to common ground and logical structure or coating a moral appeal in the sugar of romance, More imagines an uncommon ground and challenges his readers to apprehend knowledge between competing frames of reference. And yet, More imagined this game being played by a certain type of reader, the Catholic Humanist, and likely did not foresee the many

players who might arrive at the game without the rulebook, bringing their own *topos* to the text. We can see the development of the didactic game in two revealing images in the text.

In Hythloday and Morus's debate about civil and scholastic philosophy, Morus challenges Hythloday to consider the audience of his argument, "What good can it do? When your listeners are already prepossessed against you and firmly convinced of opposite opinions, how can you win over their minds with such out of the way speeches? (36). This is Robert Adams's translation, and we can contrast it with Ralph Robinson's translation, which brings out a more violent and embodied sense in this question: "For howe can so straunge informations be profitable, or how can they be beaten into their headdes, whose myndes be allready prevented: with cleane contrarye persuasions?" (More, *The Utopia of Sir* 97)). The Latin uses a slightly distinct but, I think, revealing analogy: "*Quid enim proesse possit, aut quomodo in illorum pectus influere sermo tam insolens, quorum praeoccupavit animos atque insedit penitus diursa persuasio?*" (More, *The Utopia* 97). Rather than beating into heads, or winning minds, the key words here are *influere*, which hints at a sense of flowing or pouring, and *pectus* as in chests or hearts (Lewis). A more literal translation reveals a different inclination in the question: "How can you pour into their hearts the argument to which they are contrary?" This loses something of the argumentative sense and clarity of Adams's translation and lacks the visceral imagery of Robinson's, but it points to a different approach to convincing. This is a fluid, embodied approach to convincing, which involves neither warfare nor winning but argument in a fluid sense, as something to be poured from one vessel to another.



Morus answers this question with the analogy of the stage, comparing civil philosophy to a player that adapts itself to the drama at hand, as opposed to scholastic philosophy, which would pay no attention to the genre, adulterating comedy with tragedy and ruining the play (37). This attention to the “drama at hand” is an attention to the audience’s expectations and formulaic patterns that enable communication. These are the elements that allow argument to flow from one person to another.

In its lack of plot and character development, *Utopia* is not entirely like a play but it is playful. The dialogic text moves in a different direction toward convincing, invoking levels of playfulness and opposition that can only be partially resolved in the minds and conversations of readers. In this way, it bears some resemblance to a game. In games and in this other sense of playfulness, we find another response to the question of how knowledge might be poured into the chest of someone opposed to it. Here, that appears to be the didactic game. The Utopians pay special attention to the educational potential of play. As Hythloday relates, Children are taught from a young age to farm, “partly in the schools, where they learn theory, partly through field trips to nearby farms, which make something like a game of practical instruction” (51). In another instance, Hythloday describes the Utopian’s forms of leisure:

They know nothing about gambling with dice or other such foolish and ruinous games, but they do play two games not unlike chess. One is a battle of numbers, in which one number captures another. The other is a game in which the vices fight a battle against the virtues. The game is ingeniously set up to show how the vices oppose one another, yet combine against the virtues; then, what vices oppose what virtues, how they try to assault them with open force or undermine them indirectly through trickery, how the defenses of virtues can break the strength of vices or skillfully elude their plots; and finally, by what means one side or the other gains the victory. (53)

The games of the utopians—mathematical and virtuous—are dialogic and open-ended, involving numbers capturing other numbers, or virtues opposed to vices: oppositional forces coming into contact and producing meaning through interaction. This idea of educational play invokes teaching and learning as temporal—as pleasurable and open-ended practices. Likewise, utopia arises between competing frames of reference, images, moral systems, and societal structures. These frames are played against each other on the page and put into operation in readers' minds. It is left to the reader to hold both congruence and incongruence together to find some pertinence between different domains. This is the power of the utopian story, and literature at large, the way it conveys knowledge through ambiguity.

What happens in a game is unpredictable. The players might witness virtue's defeat or victory but also might arrive at a stalemate. To achieve specific, didactic ends, the game needs to be “ingeniously” designed, the rules must facilitate only certain outcomes. And there is always the possibility that players may come to the game without the proper rules, misunderstanding the expectations, or, perhaps most dangerously, an external agent might design a module, toy, or rulebook that would upend the carefully constructed dialogic encounter. This danger of this shifting *topos* is apparent to the Athenian in Plato's *Laws*, who warns that children's attraction to newness poses a danger to the permanence of laws:

. . . when these games vary and suffer innovations. . . the children are always shifting their fancy from one game to another, so that neither in respect of their own bodily gestures nor in respect of their equipment have they any fixed and acknowledged standard of propriety and impropriety; but the man they hold in special honor is he who is always innovating or introducing some novel device in the matter of form or color or something of the sort. . . a State can have no worse pest than a man of that

description, since he privily alters the characters of the young, and causes them to contemn what is old and esteem what is new. (797A-D)

The Athenian argues that regulating play is the only way the State can ensure its laws last. On the island of Utopia, it appears that this legislation has been achieved, but the written text of *Utopia*, polyphonous and artistic, communicates through dialogic play and has no such legislative power. This text would arrive in the hands of readers who did not share Thomas More's humanistic *topos* nor his understanding of the rules of irony and ambivalence. The erosion of More's *topos* was exacerbated by translation, a process in which unregulated agents changed the rulebook to the game of *Utopia*. Ralph Robinson brought his own sense of Tudor propriety to translating *Utopia*—professing his urge to serve the commonwealth in a paratext letter to Sir William Cecil—while introducing a monarchy to the text, making Utopus a “King” where More refers to him, simply, as Utopus, and turning *princeps* into “princes” rather than “first officials” or “governors” (McCutcheon 104-106; More, *The Utopia* 118, 136). The Ralph Robinson translation, an alternate ruleset, would become synonymous with *Utopia*, sometimes supplanting the Latin for the English and early American readership (Magdid 522). But Robinson was only one participant in a five-hundred-year exercise in misreading and mistranslation kicked off by *Utopia*'s publication. The first vernacular translation was a German translation published in 1524, and the first translations into Spanish, Italian, and German would leave the out first book entirely (Phélippeau 571; Sylvester 275). As the Athenian predicted, the proliferation of new rules and interpretations was dangerous, threatening More's idea of propriety and stability.

If we accept, as Edward Surtz suggests, that Thomas More, the author, wanted Christian Europeans to puzzle out the text, to adopt aspects of the text that are wisely enacted and reject those that are not, then it is perhaps most interesting how entirely this authorial intention failed (170). Across the following centuries, Puritans would point to *Utopia* as evidence for early Thomas More as a borderline Reformist thinker, Catholics would find in More's myth the outlines of martyrdom and anti-communism, while Lenin would eventually have Thomas More's name engraved on the Alexander Obelisk in Moscow, among eighteen other great communist thinkers (Phélippeau 572-575). The delicately constructed game of *Utopia* did not facilitate careful, moral education. Instead, it provoked types of reading and play far beyond what More could have imagined

Indeed within the context of his own life, More would realize this game's uncontrollable nature. By 1523, More already had less use for ambiguity—busy fighting a war of words with Martin Luther and William Tyndale and presiding over the burning of heretics—he needed sharper tools. In his pseudonymous response to one of Martin Luther's polemics, he wrote that “on behalf of his English majesty,” it would be justified “to throw back into your paternity's shitty mouth, truly the shit-pool of all shit, all the muck and shit which your damnable rottenness has vomited up, and to empty out all the sewers and privies onto your crown” (Rex 103; More, *Responsio* 311). This cesspit-minded screed is more titillating than it is representative of More's wider polemics, but it does show that More was utilizing the full array of rhetorical weapons in his struggle against Lutherism. His goal was to make his points unequivocally, and by 1532, More's understanding of the commonplace and his readership had shifted enough that the

playfulness of *Utopia* seemed newly dangerous, particularly in its presentation of a society without the Catholic Church. This late-period More feared the subversive reading of *Utopia*, writing that he would “helpe to burne them both wyth myne owne hands, rather then folke sholde (though thorow theyr own faute) take any harme of them” (Phélippeau 570).<sup>4</sup> In *Utopia*, More tapped into an uncontrollable form of rhetoric, the dialogic put into play on an uncommon ground facilitated by a certain type of metaphoric apprehension, and produced something that escaped his intentions.

### **Utopus and the *Colonia***

Though they are built into the word itself, the nonexistent *ou* and good *eu* as prefixes to the *topos* of utopia do not capture the entirety of utopianism. As we have started to see, there is a place from which the utopia is imagined and a place which is imagined to occupy. So too, there is a body that does the imagining, and bodies imagined in that place. Thomas More’s outopia was not placed nowhere, but rather, somewhere. Specifically, somewhere along the route of colonialism and the still-in-development colonial imaginary. The description of the land of Utopia arrives to Morus by way of Raphael Hythloday, a Portuguese philosopher who purports to have joined several of Amerigo Vespucci’s journeys and, after having been left in an unnamed fort, to have sailed on, south of the equator, into the realm of colonial fantasy. Though his personal brand of philosophy might be coarse and unconvincing, Hythloday, the “expositor of

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<sup>4</sup> Phélippeau citing More, Thomas. “The Confutation of Tyndale’s Answer.” In *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, edited by Thomas M. C. Lawler, Germain Marc’hadour, and Richard C. Marius, vol. 8, Yale U P, 1982, 179.

western discoveries and colonial theory,” describes a colonialism that has the power to remake the landscape, control a racialized population, and create the bedrock for an ideal but nonexistent society (Knapp 8). Hythloday describes how Utopus conquered the land previously called Abraxa, and “brought its rude, uncouth inhabitants to such a high level of culture and humanity that they now surpass almost every other people” (44). Further, Utopus remakes the geography of Abraxa, commanding fifteen miles of land to be dug up—separating the new island of Utopia from the mainland. To accomplish this isolation of Utopia, he puts “not only the natives to work at this task, but all his own soldiers too, so that the vanquished would not think the labour a disgrace” (44). Hythloday does not describe this forced labor as slavery. The reader is only given access to Utopus’s intentions. The Abraxans’ thoughts on this elided slavery sit beyond the frame of the narratorial perspective and the colonial gaze. Ultimately, *Utopia* tells a story in which colonialism has the power not just to redraw the map of the world but to re-form the land itself. The previous section approached the subtle form of didactic play that Thomas More introduced in *Utopia*, and the way his readers short-circuited his games of education. This section will engage with the colonial *topos* that *Utopia* helped develop and the way that grounding may have been one of More’s more lasting contributions to the genre. The following approach is indebted to the scholarship that has situated this colonial rhetoric’s relation to modern utopia, such as Karl Hardy’s “Unsettling Hope: Contemporary Indigenous Politics, Settler-Colonialism, and Utopianism,” Antonis Balasopoulos’s “Unworldly Worldliness: America and the Trajectories of Utopian

Expansionism,” and Djelal Kadir’s *Columbus and the Ends of the Earth: Europe’s Prophetic Rhetoric As Conquering Ideology*.

In another instance, Hythloday describes Utopia’s system of population control: whenever the population of the island passes a certain threshold, “they enroll citizens out of every city and plant a colony under their own laws on the mainland near them, wherever the natives have plenty of unoccupied and uncultivated land. Those natives who want to live with the Utopians are adopted by them” (57). In this 1551 translation into English, Ralph Robinson describes these settlements as “forreyne townes,” but in More’s Latin, the word is *colonias*—calling back to the Roman expansionist settlement practice (More, *The Utopia* 156). The novel use of *colonia* is, arguably, one of More’s most significant contributions to English society. More was possibly “the first Englishman to use the word *colonia*” in this context, and it wasn’t until the second half of the sixteenth century that the words “colony” and “colonization” would gain wider usage in English to describe—and advocate for—England’s expansion into Ireland and the Americas (Quinn 75; Knapp 21). Returning to Ralph Robinson’s translation, as this was the language early American settlers would have read, we can read how Hythloday relates the Utopian’s justifications for colonial war:

But if the inhabitauntes of that lande wyll not dwell with them, to be ordered by their lawes, then they dryve them out of those boundes, which they have limited and appointed out for themselves. And if they resiste and rebell, then they make warre agaynst them, For they counte this the moste just cause of warre, when any people holdeth a piece of ground voyde and vacaunt to no good nor profitable use. . . (*The Utopia* 155)

Here, the emphasis rests on control of land: on demarcation and enclosure, on use-value and profit. In this framework, land must be exploited to have value, and those who won’t

exploit don't just cede their claim—they cease to exist. This utopian colonialism wasn't formulated in a vacuum. Utopus's justification for conquest—the civilizing of the Abraxans—echoes and revises themes developed over the previous centuries, as rulers and writers in what would later become the nations of Spain, Portugal, France, and England attributed Whiteness and Christianity to civilization, and worked to define Europe in opposition to a “savage” Other residing outside of civilization. Though *Utopia* is pointedly ambiguous in many respects—with the layers of narration and parody mediating the reader's access to More's possible opinions—the fact that Thomas More's brother-in-law John Rastell attempted his own colonial expedition in 1516 might indicate that *Utopia* was one of the preliminary arguments for England's violent colonial expansion (Quinn 75-76). Nevertheless, John Rastell's later conversion to Protestantism might also indicate that Rastell and More's relationship was not entirely straightforward (Rex 110). In any case, More's *Utopia* can be read as a node, an intersection where various ideas collected: the early racist justifications for colonial expansion and slavery; England's understanding of its own history, legal system, and morality; the stories of Utopus's real-life analogs like Julius Caesar and William the Conqueror; alongside the early literature of exploration that More likely read, such as Vespucci's letters, and may not have read, like Henry VII's license for John Cabot's exploration. From this nodal *Utopia*, we can observe the threads of colonial exploitation, the narratives that a commonwealth could be built on stolen land—so-called *terra nullius* and the closely allied *vacuum domicilium*—unspooling through time. It's not that *Utopia*'s colonial frame is uncommon. To the contrary, what's worth noting here is that the early colonialist



imaginary is a common ground, the *topos*, upon which More builds his thought experiment.

### **Violent Definition**

The ideological configurations grounding *Utopia* become apparent when the text is placed next to the nearly concurrent generative documents of European imperialism. This imperialism was enabled by the development of a specific form of Christian theology that would later coalesce into White Supremacy.<sup>5</sup> The term “White Supremacy” is anachronistically applied to these texts, not to imply that these authors were consciously constructing this ideology, but rather to more clearly name the way this strain of thought surfaces in the twenty-first century. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, European states were undergoing a process of definition. Definition—in the sense of the ascription of meaning, but also in the sense of enclosure, termination, and boundary-making inherent to that ascription—helps us approach a range of linguistic and political shifts that accompanied the close of the medieval period on the section of the continent today designated as Europe. Often identified as the opening of the modern era, the shift towards a new imperialism in Europe was accompanied by a centuries-long linguistic shift, as Latin, the continental language of the literate and religious, was supplanted by vernacular forms of English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese (Anderson 18). These empires emerged concomitantly with early modern structures of bureaucracy and

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<sup>5</sup> This section will utilize direct quotations from prototypical colonialist texts, not to further perpetuate the violence enacted by these texts, but to move their assumptions out of the unthought.

standardization of language, as expanding territory ran up against the need for communication and control across wider geographies and more varied populations.

Benedict Anderson describes this process as one in which “sacred communities integrated by old sacred languages were gradually fragmented, pluralized, and territorialized,” and, in what would later become nations, their languages and religions and populations, were delimited (19). Thomas More would be caught up in this process as a chancellor fighting in writing and in the courts against England's turn away from Catholicism (Rex 97-105). In the opening pages of *Utopia*, Morus, an English courtier and philosopher navigating Europe’s unspooling bureaucracies, makes a diplomatic trip to Flanders to negotiate with representatives of Charles “the most serene Prince of Castile,” the grandson of Ferdinand and Isabel (9). Less than thirty years earlier, those monarchs had signed the “*Capitulaciones de Santa Fe*,” Columbus’s expedition charter. In its septuple repetition of “*descubrir y ganar*,” this charter adhered the rights of discovery to conquest in a way that has not come unglued in the more than five hundred years since (Kadir 69-70; Davenport 56, 71). The charter was signed in the military camp in which Isabel de Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon were waiting to take up residence in the newly conquered Alhambra on April 17th, 1492—only eighteen days earlier, the expulsion of the Jews had been signed by those same monarchs (Kadir 67-68). In this crucial historical moment, we can see Catholic Spain enclosing its geography—defining its own population through the destruction of the so-called heretical Jews and Muslim infidels—and setting the stage for the exploitation, defining the “discovery and conquest” that would take place beyond that enclosure. Charters like the one granted to Columbus

were similarly granted to English explorers in the sixteenth century, refining the rhetorical movements of the *Capitulaciones* into a formulaic genre (100). These generic charters functioned to define Europe and to “engender a world that they then convert into their goal and take as their object”(Kadir 92). A motion with disturbing parallels to the triangulations of utopia and its world dreaming.

### **Vacating the Land**

The binaries inscribed in charters of conquest were further entrenched by the Catholic Church, which attempted to regulate Portuguese and Spanish colonial interests: to keep the two states from further war and establish religious grounds for colonization. First, with the papal bulls of *Dum diversas* (1452) and *Romanus pontifex* (1455), Pope Nicholas V endorsed the Portuguese monarchy’s exclusive claim to occupy the entirety of West Africa (Dunbar-Ortiz 199; Davenport 12). Later, after Columbus returned from his first voyage, Pope Alexander VI issued three bulls between May 3rd and 4th of 1493, most notably *Inter caetera*, granting Spain exclusive rights to territory between Cape Verde and an arbitrary demarcation line one hundred leagues to the West (Davenport 56, 71). These bulls professed evangelization and saving souls, but they couldn’t hide an eagerness for profit:

In the islands and countries already discovered are found gold, spices, and very many other precious things of divers kinds and qualities. Wherefore, after earnest consideration of all matters, as becomes Catholic kings and princes, and especially of the rise and spread of the Catholic faith, as was the fashion of your ancestors, kings of renowned memory, you have purposed with the favor of divine clemency to bring under your sway the said countries and islands with their residents and inhabitants, and to bring them to the Catholic faith. (Davenport 62)

Crucially, the papal bulls established a definitional division between territory occupied by Christians and non-Christians. Though *Inter caetera* acknowledges that these mainlands and islands already had “many people living in peace,” it still grants the Spanish, by right of “discovery,” ownership of the land, as long as it had not been in the “actual temporal possession of any Christian owner” (62). Living was something anyone could do.

Possession and discovery were deemed uniquely Christian. Termed the “doctrine of discovery” and catalyzed by the distinction between Christian and non-Christian—between those that can possess, discover, and profit from the land and those that can only occupy, or to use More’s language, hold the land “voyde and vacaunt to no good nor profitable use”—this would become one of the key legal foundations for colonial land relations. As Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz writes,

. . . this doctrine on which all European states relied thus originated with the arbitrary and unilateral establishment of the Iberian monarchies’ exclusive rights under Christian canon law to colonize foreign peoples, and this right was seized by other European monarchical colonizing projects. . . (Dunbar-Ortiz 199)

The doctrine can be followed through to Henry VII’s 1496 license for John Cabot’s colonial expedition, which edged around the framework established by the papal bulls.

Like the *Inter caetera*, this charter granted John Cabot rights of discovery to “whatsoever islands, countries, regions or provinces of heathens and infidels. . . which before this time were unknown to all Christians” (Biggar 9). Cabot and his descendants were granted the license:

. . . to set up our aforesaid banners and ensigns in any town, city, castle, island or mainland whatsoever, newly found. . . And that the before-mentioned John. . . may conquer, occupy and possess whatsoever such towns, castles, cities and islands by them thus discovered that they may be able to conquer, occupy and possess, as our vassals and governors lieutenants and deputies therein, acquiring for us the dominion,

title and jurisdiction of the same towns, castles, cities, islands and mainlands so discovered; in such a way nevertheless that of all the fruits, profits, emoluments, commodities, gains and revenues accruing from this voyage (9)

By 1578—after England’s violent divorce from the Catholic Church and Thomas More’s resulting imprisonment and execution—the excommunicated Queen Elizabeth I would push the phrasing further, granting Sir Gilbert Humphrey rights to “discover, find, search out, and view such remote, heathen, and barbarous lands, countries, and territories, not actually possessed of any Christian prince or people” (Kadir 91). These patents take as their object a world vacated of people. They repeatedly enumerate empty “towns, castles, cities, islands and mainlands” primed for England’s profiteering. Between the 1493 *Inter caetera* and Humphrey’s patents, the grammar of attribution and possession shift: from “countries and islands with their residents and inhabitants” to the islands and provinces “of heathens and infidels” to “remote, heathen, and barbarous lands.” The rhetorical displacement from a noun to adjective indicates a century of rhetorical work to justify colonization across Europe, either as a paternalistic Christian endeavor or as a victimless economic necessity. In this framework, these lands aren’t conquered or stolen, they are simply found.

The common movement here shifts colonial violence into the unthought via the formulaic patent. This is the *topos* of early empire and the colonial episteme moving into the quotidian. Kadir illuminates the metaphoric aspects of this ideologic inscription:

The rhetorical turns this strategy takes in Anglo-America’s primal charter is commonly referred to as *denominatio*. The procedure is allied with the figure we know as *paranomasia*, or misnaming, and the trope we call *metonymy*, or naming otherwise. Rhetorical strategies are by definition expedient mechanisms for realizing ideological ends through means otherwise. And certainly Western Europe’s target in the New World is the *other* problematically, but expeditiously, maneuvered into

domestication and, when not domesticable, into annihilation. . . The humanity in this open--ended *carte blanche* is literally blanked out. (Kadir 98)

What is important here is the way Kadir articulates the “etymology’ of conquering and colonizing policies,” and the fulcrum-metonym as a mechanism for this ideological work (97). At roughly the midpoint of this early-colonial timeline, *Utopia* marks a significant point when this colonial language began diffusing into England’s intellectual and popular cultures. These metonyms became the familiar *topoi* of colonialism and White supremacy, passing from Pope Alexander VI to Elizabeth I, each time mutating and sinking further into the unthought, structuring the way Christian Europe would come to interpret itself.

This critique, moving from the *Inter caetera* to Thomas More may set up a monolithic and continuous “Western thought” and “Whiteness,” which in reality is much more tenuous and incoherent than this arboreal structure can appropriately map. This movement will become even tenuous in the next chapter, as Edward Bellamy and the Americas are looped into this legacy. I think it’s worth saying that there is much that this analysis leaves out. Looking at the history of colonial ideology by way of utopian writing is an inherently limiting approach, and those limitations should not imply an argument of direct connection and taxonomy. The division between Middle Ages and the early Modern isn’t clear-cut, and it’s important to keep in mind that even as nationalisms were defined, there were idiosyncrasies and counter-mappings. David Regnier has raised the possibility that *Utopia* was not just a response to Plato and Erasmus, but also influenced by the Andalusian philosopher Ibn Tufayl by way of Pico Della Mirandola’s translation (22). Later, as Barbara Alice Mann has suggested, seventeenth and eighteenth century

European debates around freedom, equality, and rationality may have emerged from conversations with Indigenous intellectuals, such as the Wendat philosopher-statesman Kandiaronk, and those intellectuals' critiques of the hierarchical and irrational European society (Graeber 44-58; Mann 55). Graeber and Wengrow convincingly argue that theories of social and economic development, progress, and the stages of society, as articulated by A. R. J Turgot and Adam Smith, were composed as responses to the power of that critique—placing egalitarian societies at the bottom of the developmental ladder in order to salvage a “sense of European superiority” (62). Culture and thought through history are slippery and porous. The insularity of the Western canon is a myth woven by its proponents, and it's difficult to avoid repeating this mistake in criticism.

Nevertheless, the ideology of White Supremacy and colonialism have been maintained by power and force, and continued use as justification—repeatedly re-titled into the *topos* surrounding Western Empire. The Utopians' colonial practice of invading people who “holdethe a piece of grounde voyde and vacaunt to no good nor profitable use” was written in the soil tilled by the papacy (*The Utopia* 155). As several scholars have noted, this attribution of vacancy to non-use—eliding the people on the land by way of “the law of nature”—rippled out into the propaganda and the legal codes of Renaissance England and Colonial America and Australia as *terra nullius* and *vacuum domicilium* (Hardy 125; Balasopoulos 5; Knapp 21). Vacancy, vacant lands, and *terra nullius* would be affixed in English Common Law—somewhat informally and with nominal secularity towards the end of the eighteenth century and more formally by the middle of the nineteenth—as a key precondition to occupation as a claim to sovereignty

over territory, alongside conquest and cessation (Simpson 199). From this examination of the papal bulls and the charters of discovery, the in-development tropes that Thomas More threaded through *Utopia* become legible. Moreover, this analysis argues that both of these themes surface again in later utopian texts as much as in the legal codes, cultures, and societal structures.



## Chapter 2: Edward Bellamy and the Hermeneutic Metaphor

In 1889, Nicholas P. Gilman found himself in an unusual position. A serious economist, much of Gilman's publications consisted of measured, lengthy treatises on the feasibility of profit-sharing or employer welfare systems—he recognized that the system as it existed had flaws but rejected labor unions and socialists as impediments to progress. He saw those organizations filling workers' minds with unrealistic “ideas of a universal division, or a common enjoyment of property” (*Profit* 369). Coming up against the burgeoning Nationalist movement—the not-quite-Socialist movement inspired by Edward Bellamy's 1888 utopian novel *Looking Backward: 2000-1887*—Gilman had to approach what he considered the unserious, the “naïve,” the “irrational,” the “impracticable” (71, 74, 75 “Nationalism”). In other words, the literary—the results of a “clever metaphor pushed to the extreme” and unleashed into the world (67). Through synecdoche, juxtaposition, and appeals to human nature, Gilman attempted to blunt the power of this metaphor. Gilman sought to reframe the novel, its author, and those inspired by it for the readers of his review—to create readers who could safely approach the novel without the danger of being overwhelmed or inspired themselves. As Roemer shows in *Utopian Audiences*, these were common techniques employed by Gilman's many reviewer-peers, both those with favorable and unfavorable attitudes towards *Looking Backward* (Roemer, *Utopian Audiences* 145). And there have been many reviewers. Scholarship on Bellamy and his writing abounds. Some researchers have

worked to document that scholarship: Widdicombe has collected and annotated more than a hundred reviews of Bellamy's utopian works between 1887 and 1987; Roemer has analyzed 83 reviews that appeared between 1888 and 1898 ("Edward"; *Utopian*). What these critics have confronted is a literary text that is, in many ways, unliterary, but which had complex impacts in the world, despite, or perhaps because of, this unliterariness. This chapter will consider the *topos* beneath *Looking Backward*, the way Bellamy's metaphors engage that *topos* to reach utopia, and the way metaphor, pushed to the extreme, both enables and subverts the didactic intentions of the text.

### **The Utopian Doctrine in Winthrop's Pocket**

Gillman and Bellamy were writing in a world very distinct from Thomas More's. On the continent named for Hythloday's traveling partner Amerigo Vespucci, the *topos* of colonialism and White Supremacy had undergone almost four hundred years of theorization, as Whiteness was entrenched as ideology and justification for violence. The American colony provides a paradigm of the violent, nationalist possibilities of the utopian impulse. And this American strain of future-oriented, religiously-justified utopianism can be observed from the earliest days of the colony, as illustrated by John Winthrop's oft-cited 1630 sermon urging obedience and cooperation by asserting that the New England *colonia* would be a biblical "city upon a hill" (Winthrop "A Model" 330). Indeed, Winthrop took up an idea that paralleled Thomas More's *vacuum domicilium* and expanded it:

But what warrant haue we to take the land which is and hath bine soe longe tyme possessed by other sonnes of Adam: | sol: | that which is comen to all is proper to

none these savage people ramble over much land without title or property. 2. ther is more then enough for them and vs: 3. god hath consumed these nations in a myraculouse plauge wherby a great parte of their country is left voyd without inhabitants: we shal com in with good leaue of these nations. (“General Observations” 113)

Winthrop, a Puritan, was unlikely to have been thinking of the Catholic Thomas More when he wrote this, but what’s interesting here is the way Winthrop, grasping after justification for the unjustifiable, the taking of land that “hath bine soe longe tyme possessed by other sonnes of Adam,” unearths the seeds of utopian colonialism that Thomas More had tilled into England’s ideological soil one hundred years earlier. As the colony became a nation in the 18th century, this *topos* was further entrenched and developed.

Born in the industrial town of Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts, in 1850, Edward Bellamy’s life would be shaped by this epistemic orientation towards land, possession, and profit as one of the structuring metaphors of civic and social life. At ten years old, in "A Law for the Republic of San Domingo," Bellamy wrote:

I learn from books that the inhabitants of that country are a Idle and Lazy set of people I have thought it over and thought of a remedy for it here it is: That the National Assembly or Congress should make a law compelling [sic] every person to cultivate a portion of land given them by government let government be willing to buy as much of the produce of the land as the people are willing to sell to them. Begin with a small piece of land and give the people a little more every year till they have quite a farm then cease The people Must and Cannot help in a short time being interested in it. (Schiffman 205)

Through this essay, we can glimpse his culture’s constellation of beliefs about land, value, work, and race, as interpreted by a child, and the mechanisms that transferred these beliefs: familial and religious communities, formal education, and, of course, literature. What’s evident here is a specific form of ecological consciousness present in Bellamy’s

New England Baptist culture: land is to be profited from; people who do not cultivate land are “Idle and Lazy;” and even ten-year-old colonists must consider the optimal ways to control racialized populations. At the same time, there are the inklings of what would grow into Bellamy’s later rejection of his family’s Baptism in favor of his own Religion of Solidarity. The themes of this early essay would also inform the utopia that Bellamy would create: that human behavior is environmentally determined and that government should take an active role in shaping human behavior. As Schiffman writes, where Bellamy’s contemporaries—including both religious and Social Darwinist thinkers—would posit humanity’s inherent “guilt, egoistic, materialistic, and competitive by nature, Edward Bellamy, along with a few other advanced thinkers, unearthed malleable, altruistic, non-pecuniary drives in man” (209). This is true, yet what’s clearest in this excerpt is a certain utopian calculation—shared by Thomas More, John Winthrop, and Edward Bellamy, yet apparently invisible to each of these thinkers—that a perfect world could be built on stolen land.

Although *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* was far from the first utopian novel published in America, it has come to define, specifically, the period of utopian literature from 1888 to 1900 (Roemer, *The Obsolete* 3). Of the more than 160 utopian novels published in this twelve-year span, Bellamy’s was the most popular; it had sold 60,000 copies in its first year and, as *The California Nationalist* advertised in 1890, more than 300,000 by 1890 (Roemer, *The Obsolete* 2). These figures don’t include the “foreign pirated editions” and tens of thousands of copies sold across Europe and in places ranging from Uruguay to Russia to South Africa (Toth 58; Bowman). Csaba Toth notes how by

1890, at least three different publishing houses in Germany were printing translations of the book, including the central publishing house of the Social Democratic Party (60). With chapters on Russia, Holland, and Indonesia, *Bellamy Abroad* is a widely cited anthology on Bellamy's international influence, although Lyman Tower Sargent has questioned some of the underlying evidence for the New Zealand section of Herbert Roth's chapter in the collection (Bowman; Sargent, "Edward" 175). The immediate impact of *Looking Backward* at the time was to launch the Nationalist movement, against which Nicholas Gilman polemicizes in his review. The book, and the movement, had a lasting impact on figures like Eugene Debs and was influential for the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration more than forty years after its publication (Roemer "Contexts" 209; Schiffman). Authors inspired by *Looking Backward* include Charlotte Perkins Gilman, William Morris, and William Dean Howells. In 1935, John Dewey, Charles Beard, and Edward Weeks ranked *Looking Backward* as the second most influential book published since 1885, second only to Marx's *Das Kapital*—which, though originally published in 1867, wasn't translated into English until 1887 (Roemer "Contexts" 209). Although *Looking Backward* is no longer as widely read as it once was, the novel's influence on American culture, leftist movements, and theories of governance makes it a telling artifact of the utopian process.

### **Love Stoppage**

In *Looking Backward*, the narrator-protagonist Julian West, a genteel insomniac, is induced to sleep by a hypnotist-physician in a sleeping chamber beneath the Boston of

1887—a city in which labor strikes and the “chimerical aspirations of the working class” hold up the completion of a new house, which in turn holds up Julian’s marriage to his betrothed, Edith Bartlett (8). Julian wakes in the year 2000 to discover his house has burned to the ground and a new utopian city has grown up around his tomb-like stasis chamber. He is awakened by the Leete family—comprising Dr. Leete, Mrs. Leete, and Edith Leete—whose house now stands on the land which Julian’s previously occupied. Through a series of dialogues, interspersed with dreams and excursions, Julian is educated on the novel structure of society at the end of the twentieth century; a society in which humanity’s “depraved tendencies” have “withered like a cellar fungi in the open air” and the “nobler qualities” have “for the first time in human history tempted mankind to fall in love itself” (139). In this future, “the Sphinx’s riddle of the nineteenth century,” the obstruction of the labor question—which was clogging up the operations of love and sleep and home-building in Julian’s life—has been solved by the natural evolution of society and the creation the “industrial army” (23, 30). The resolution of this crucial paradox, which had threatened to “devour society,” superficially solves many of Julian’s problems. Without the stoppage of the labor question, Julian is free to live in a beautiful future house and fall in love with Edith Leete, who, it is revealed, is the great-granddaughter of Julian’s dead fiancé, Edith Bartlett. Nevertheless, a certain incongruousness sticks to Julian in the future, particularly in his propensity towards vertigo and fainting. A paradoxical form of duplication circulates through the world around Julian—in his doubled personality as a man of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in Edith as a double mystery and later double miracle. Though it came to

define the utopian genre of the period, this is not a book in which the word “utopia” appears; instead, it is filled with the complicated, sometimes contradictory, dreams of an ideal world—printed in the language of desire, metaphor, and instruction.

The future Boston is a city incomparably larger than any Julian has seen before, the streets—broad and lined with trees—spread from squares filled with even more trees, glistening statues, and flashing fountains. The city is not arranged in blocks but, instead, “larger and smaller enclosures, which stretch in every direction” (18). Looking out from Leete’s roof, Julian is struck by “public buildings of a colossal size and architectural grandeur unparalleled in my day raised their stately piles on every side” and “the complete absence of chimneys and their smoke” (18, 20). This unrecognizable city is placed on familiar contours of ground and water, bordered by the “sinuous Charles” River and the islands in Boston harbor (19). This combination of familiar and unfamiliar triggers Julian’s revelatory acceptance of the future, paralleling Darko Suvin’s cognitive estrangement (Suvin 4-7). As Williams notes, there is something paradoxical about this moment (30). Julian describes the scene as if observed from above, with a tendency towards the absolute—in the “complete absence” of chimneys, the enclosures in “every direction,” and the view of the entire river and harbor of Boston. And yet, Julian’s position on the rooftop of the Leete’s home implies inherent obscurity, as the colossal public buildings would inevitably obscure much of this view. Williams connects this simultaneous visibility and obscurity to the contradictions between a consumer-driven and centralized economy in the novel and uses these two paradoxes to forward an understanding of utopian literature as aspiring towards “total visibility” while being

haunted by incongruity and fantasy (37). I am inclined to agree with Williams's argument here, and later sections will examine the ways visibility and obscurity interact in the processes of both metaphor and utopia, allowing both to induce revelation and, at the same time, facilitate misapprehension.

In the following chapters, Julian observes the various exteriors and interiors of the new public stores, libraries, and dining halls, and he experiences, alongside the Leete family, some of the trappings of a social life "ornate and luxurious beyond anything the world knew before" (77). Like the exteriors of the buildings, these interior spaces are mostly defined by their grandeur: wide staircases, elegant dining rooms, courtyards, and magnificent fountains (74). Alongside the private and public spaces he observes, Julian describes technologies that include "pneumatic transmitters" to ship goods from central warehouses to the large stores in each ward of the city, music performances in central music halls broadcast via telephone wires directly into the various houses Boston, and continuous waterproof awnings to replace individual umbrellas (49, 54-55, 74). Here, Bellamy innovates slightly by taking technologies or ideas familiar to his audience, refining them, and improving them through centralization. Nevertheless, though Dr. Leete describes "an era of mechanical invention, scientific discovery, art, musical and literary productiveness to which no previous age of the world offers anything comparable," very little of that reaches the reader (79). The urban design and the technological advances in Bellamy's dream world are not overwhelmingly imaginative, rather they are muted, with just enough sheen to convey a level of difference and futurity. Even Bellamy's contemporaries noted the lack of technological innovation, as Nicholas



Gilman wrote in 1889, “it is. . . noticeable how little Mr. Bellamy has troubled himself to imagine the possible inventions of the next century” (18). Instead, Bellamy’s greatest and most convincing innovations in the novel arrive by trope or turn. That is, the familiar conceptual ground of Boston made strange by new angles of vision and the new perspective enabled by the scaffolding of the future—this process might also be called metaphor. Metaphor, at its most basic level, functions by transferring meaning from one word—or phrase, or sentence, or frame of reference—to another. This transference is especially charged in utopian writing: the utopian elsewhere is created by this act of transference, and it is only interpretable through the continual apprehension of similarity and difference between fields of reference and commonplaces. What makes this powerful, and unpredictable, is the erosion of *topos*, the tendency for commonplaces to shift in relation to time and space, and the unreliable nature of vision.

### **Vertiginous Heights: Trope and Perspective**

What trope—from the Greek *τρόπος* meaning turn or, generally, manner—may contain is contested and has been as long as it has been in use (“trope, n.”). Quintilian, working in the legacy of Cicero, defined it as “the artistic alteration of a word or phrase from its proper meaning to another” and didn’t let the “interminable disputes” which surround the concept prevent him from delineating his own taxonomy (303). Trope, as turn or artistic alteration, is distinct from the colloquial use of trope as something akin to stereotype or dead metaphor—though the colloquial use does get at the way these alterations can calcify through repeated use. This is not to dismiss dead metaphors and

calcified tropes; English is structured by calcified tropes, which facilitate the way we describe everything from temporality (time as money or life as journey) to argument (argument as war). Some linguistic theorists of metaphor have at points posited that these quotidian metaphors form consistent conceptual systems in both speech and thought and that these conceptual systems map out the fundamental values of the cultures in which the metaphors operate (Lakoff 22). The cognitive approach is a contested theory of metaphor, but it does point to the proliferation of metaphors in everyday speech.

Quintilian divided the genus-trope into species of metaphor, simile, synecdoche, and metonym, among others. Here, we will ignore Quintilian's division and instead use trope, metaphor, and simile as roughly analogous, each dealing with differing degrees of the same movement. Trope may be said to operate at the level of a word or a phrase. For metaphor, we will draw on Benjamin Hrushovski's "Poetic Metaphor and Frames of Reference" to clarify the way metaphor functions as a dynamic, text-semantic pattern, which can operate at any number of levels in a text, interrelating between frames of reference (Hrushovski 7). As an example of the use of Hrushovski's concept, we can take the citywide umbrella that Julian observes in chapter fourteen, which provides a tidy example of the way literary metaphor and utopian process combine. The singular waterproof awning, protecting a "stream of ladies and gentlemen dressed for dinner," conjures one field of reference alongside this future age of cooperation as described in the novel (74). These two frames are contrasted with Dr. Leete's description of a painting of three hundred thousand umbrellas crowding the streets of Boston and the nineteenth century's "age of individualism." Rather than a simple one-to-one movement between

words or phrases, the citywide umbrella relies on four frames of reference that interrelate beyond the level of chapter and may even draw context beyond the world of the novel.

This is not to discount trope. Trope, as turn, introduces a spatial and even embodied aspect to our understanding of the transference metaphor. Trope asks us to turn over a rock, to have our understanding of the lichen on the surface mediated by the centipede living underneath—to spin and feel our equilibrium shift—to turn our heads, like Julian on the rooftop, and take in a new aspect of the horizon. The larger motion, shared by metaphor, simile, and trope, is what Anne Carson identifies as “the shift of distance from far to near” through a “violation of the code of pertinence” in the ordinary use of language (73). Anne Carson’s *Eros the Bittersweet* builds a particularly useful framework for the triangulation of metaphor and desire. Starting from Aristotle’s description of metaphors as “giving names to nameless things” via transference, Carson writes:

The violation allows a new pertinence or congruence to emerge, which is the metaphorical meaning, from the collapse of the ordinary or literal meaning. . . . There is in the mind a change or a shift of distance, which Aristotle calls an *epiphora*. . . . bringing two heterogeneous things close to reveal their kinship. . . . A virtuoso act of imagination brings the two things together, sees their incongruence, then sees also a new congruence, meanwhile continuing to recognize the previous incongruence through the new congruence. (73)

Carson’s “ordinary meaning” is fitting; apart from its relation to Aristotle’s “ordinary” nouns, it better captures the quotidian accrual of meaning in language than Quintilian’s seemingly fixed “proper meaning.” This framework has no universal, no “proper,” “ordinary meaning.” Meaning shifts depending on daily life, embodiment, and context. In Carson’s description of metaphor—as when Julian West, looking out over the horizon of

the new Boston, is struck by the reality of future-city—*epiphora*, transference, works to bring the old and new into the same image, revealing congruence and, at the same time, “tension of an acute and unresolvable kind” (Bellamy 19; Carson 73). Julian sees two incongruous Bostons float one over the other, seeing both likeness and unlikeness between the frames of reference. Of this realization, Julian says, “I did not faint, but the effort to realize my position made me very giddy, and I remember that my companion had to give me a strong arm as he conducted me from the roof to a roomy apartment” (19). Julian is forced to descend and recuperate before returning to the roof.

In Julian’s sudden vertigo, we can identify the arresting power of metaphor accompanied by a shift in perspective and the spinning of trope. It produces in Julian a lingering giddiness, a “mental intoxication,” and “glimpses, vivid as lightning flashes, of the horror of strangeness” (22, 23). Building on Paul Ricoeur’s “The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling,” Carson describes this aspect of metaphoric sense as a state of warfare, in which the mind is “caught between distance and proximity, between sameness and difference” and cannot reach peace. Crucially, as Carson continues, something paradoxical and unstable is at the center of the metaphor. As quickly as it comes together, it slides apart again. Julian goes to sleep and wakes up the next day in peace, imagining it is still 1887. When he remembers that he has been transported a century into the future, his second temporal epiphany is marked by a much greater state of anguish:

I was no more able to distinguish myself from pure being during those moments than we may suppose a soul in the rough to be before it has received the ear-marks, the individualizing touches which make it a person. There are no words for the mental tortures I endured during this helpless, eyeless groping for myself in boundless void.

No other experience of the mind gives probably anything like the sense of absolute intellectual arrest from the loss of a mental fulcrum, a starting point of thought, which comes during such a momentary obscuration of the sense of one's identity (37)

This "intolerable swimming of the brain" is a state of incongruence beyond a simple turn; the impossibility of holding these competing realities together threatens to overwhelm Julian. He imagines solace through duplication: "The idea that I was two persons, that my identity was double, began to fascinate me with its simple solution of my experience" (37-38). The incongruity, located in the eyes and in the self observing the two Bostons, is aided by a technological metaphor as Julian rushes about the streets of the new city:

. . . the mental image of the old city was so fresh and strong that it did not yield to the impression of the actual city, but contended with it, so that it was first one and then the other which seemed the more unreal. There was nothing I saw which was not blurred in this way, like the faces of a composite photograph. . . (38)

Bellamy describes this process as a composite image, the two Bostons blended together on the page. Carson, following W. B. Stanford, favors a similar—but crucially distinct—visual metaphor for metaphor: "stereoscopic vision," the triangulation that occurs when two offset images, viewed separately by each eye, create the illusion of depth (73). These distinct metaphors require more interrogation. In a composite photograph, two or more images are overlaid in a single picture; this is achieved by exposing multiple images onto one photographic plate, one after the other. In other words, it's a temporal process. Stereoscopy is a perspectival illusion; the image is ultimately located in the brain processing the two images, and if one eye closes, the illusion collapses. Metaphors must operate at both levels: they exist on the page like the composite photograph, apprehended and placed by the author or the photographer; they must also exist as conjured in the reader or viewer's mind. At each of these levels of transference, there is the possibility of

failure. For each of the images in the composite, the photographer might fail in selecting the depth of field, shutter speed, or exposure, creating regions of obscurity, and chaotic patterns of light and dark. The viewer might fail to align the stereoscope images within their ocular field, might close an eye or move their head back, disrupting the illusion. Similarly, the process of metaphor might fail at any of these levels, collapsing back into incongruence.

Carson angles her description of metaphorical sense back toward her larger goal: to describe a triangulation of desire that is as transcendent as it is unstable. Bellamy's temporal metaphor, too, moves towards desire and brings Julian back from the point of collapse through contact with Edith Leete as Julian catches her hands and clings to them "with an impulse as instinctive as that which prompts the drowning man to seize upon and cling to a rope" (39). As Lee Cullen Khanna argues, Bellamy's novel, through metaphor and perspectival shift, invites the readers of utopia to reorient themselves, to undergo a process analogous to Julian's re-seeing of nineteenth-century society, to imagine themselves as the "humane, rational" citizens of this future, and to experience the tension between their actual and ideal reader-selves ("The Reader" 77). Facilitated by desire, the process of metaphor and utopia is, in effect, the transference between frames of reference, between here and elsewhere, between familiar and unfamiliar, between embodied and imagined selves, between present and future. Nevertheless, Utopian transference is unstable. As we will explore in the following sections, the intuitive paradigms generated by metaphor and utopia can obscure as much as they reveal.

## Generic and Structuralist Topics

There are a variety of common grounds, or assumptions, that underlie Bellamy's utopia. Boston's landscape, the ground that evokes a sense of familiarity in an estranged city, allows Julian to grasp his new situation. Similarly, the *topos* beneath *Looking Backward* is the ground that allowed its readers to imagine a new society, grasp its relation to their own, and conceptualize the possibility of rewriting the world around them. The aspects of the novel's common place are extensive but not always coterminous. These aspects include: conceptions of personhood and temporality; the perspectival conventions of literature; progressive ideology as a specific constellation that combined eugenicist thought, technological possibility, and interpretations of manifest destiny, race, gender, and American national identity, alongside varying levels equality and cooperation. These are also interposed by the generic literary conventions that define the text. These common grounds rendered this future legible for Bellamy's readers.

The first lines of the novel announce both the familiar ground and the unfamiliar approach to that ground, as the narrator opens: "Living as we do in the closing year of the twentieth century, enjoying the blessings of a social order at once so simple and logical that it seems but the triumph of common sense" (1). Barbara Quissell argues that *Looking Backward* and other utopias of the period, through their "moralistic, emotionalized treatment of social issues," were more in line with the American genre of sentimental novels—both those that angled towards temperance like *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room* (1854) and abolition like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852)—than with utopian works by Thomas More and Plato (138). Indeed, this introduction follows a path established by

sentimental novels of the nineteenth century; “romances of real life” which were often prefaced by affirmations of the novels’ didactic intent, usefulness, and veracity (19, 21). The twist is the obvious lack of veracity of the preface, subtitled “Historical Section Shawmut College, Boston, December 26, 2000,” which claims to have been written by an anonymous historian of the twentieth century (Quissell 19). *Looking Backward* was introduced to a public increasingly familiar with popular novels, and already educated in the story beats of sentimental and didactic novels. Between 1830 and 1855, new technologies for printing and the production of paper significantly lowered book costs and the reading public multiplied in both America and England. Victorian elite, seeing this as an opportunity, had disseminated didactic novels as a means of spreading moral and cultural values to a large audience (Roemer, *Contexts* 211; Patten 483). While Victorian leaders hoped the public would prefer prescriptive, moral texts, readers were more drawn to the “silly, immoral trash” of popular fiction (Roemer, *Contexts* 210). Roemer argues that these cultural currents primed Victorian readers to accept *Looking Backward*, as a combination of entertainment fiction and prescriptive “future-building manual” (210).

Roland Barthes’s *Writing Degree Zero* provides some insight into the writing of the novel, the choices of style and generic affiliation. Writing about the French novels of the nineteenth century, Roland Barthes identifies a sense of pedagogical writing which loosely parallels our discussion of the sentimental novel. Although the novels under Barthes’s consideration link a pedagogical sense to tense and temporality—the preterite for which English has no exact equivalent—for Barthes, this describes the way “. . .the



triumphant bourgeoisie” of the nineteenth century attempted to instill their values in a wider audience, the preterite tense enabled this elite to “to look upon its values as universal and to carry over to sections of society which were absolutely heterogeneous to it all the Names which were parts of its ethos (33). In French society of the nineteenth century, these novels presented “a second order appeal to a corpus of dogmas, or better, to a pedagogy, since what is sought is to impart an essence in the guise of an artefact” (33-34). The American sentimental novel similarly sought to inscribe the values of the Victorian elite as universal, through a writing which professed truth and pathos. This is the generic *topos* that Bellamy writes from in *Looking Backward*, and Barthes hints at the impetus for Bellamy’s fulfillment and subversion of generic expectations, as Barthes describes it, the task of writing in the novel “is to put the mask in place and at the same time to point it out” (34). The method of placing the mask and revealing it changes over time, in Bellamy’s case, the specific way his writing both fulfills and subverts the generic expectations was through a future-oriented play on temporality and perspective.

Narrative structure is another dimension of *topos*. Narrative structure refers to the common storytelling elements that render the literary text legible and recognizable as a piece of fiction. *Looking Backward* employs common forms of narrative structure, and the way these structures appear in the text helps us understand the wider work utopian literature does in the world. Here, we can focus on the narrative structure established in the preface—the somewhat paradoxical narrating instance and the utopian narratee of the novel—and the way the extratextual agents introduced by the postscript interface with

that narrative structure. This section will argue that the simultaneous familiarity and defamiliarization of fictional narrative structures facilitate the didacticism of this utopia.

*Looking Backward* features a subsequent, or past-tense, narrating instance, and, at first glance, it appears there are two narrators. There is, to use Gérard Genette's terminology, the extradiegetic—that is, the narrating agent at the highest level of the narrative—unnamed historian who opens the preface, and the intradiegetic—that is, the narrating agent that belongs to the world of the novel—Julian West who takes on the task of narrating. The preface expresses a didactic intent, but the didacticism is not directed towards any nineteenth-century narratee, instead this is directed towards a generalized narratee of the twentieth century who is curious to learn about the nature of life in the nineteenth century. These levels of narration are laid out in the preface which introduces the purpose of the novel:

The object of this volume is to assist persons who, while desiring to gain a more definite idea of the social contrasts between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are daunted by the formal aspect of the histories which treat the subject. Warned by a teacher's experience that learning is accounted a weariness to the flesh, the author has sought to alleviate the instructive quality of the book by casting it in the form of a romantic narrative, which he would be glad to fancy not wholly devoid of interest on its own account. (1)

As the historian attests to “teacher's experience,” the preface introduces the question of involvement: is this historian relating a story they experienced directly or indirectly?

When this historian, referring to themselves in the third person, writes that “the author steps aside and leaves Mr. Julian West to speak for himself,” it seems to indicate that this extradiegetic narrator is not Julian West (2). And yet, the way the story arrives at this extradiegetic narrator is never resolved within the story. Julian West never meets a

historian to whom he hopes to tell his story. Neither does Julian describe deciding to write his story down, which might indicate that this historian serves as an editor for Julian's story. Indeed, when the historian-narrator expresses a pedagogical aim and admits to coating the story in a varnish of romance, there is an implication that Julian West's intradiegetic narration might be fabricated: a sentimental tale imagined by this extradiegetic narrator to better communicate the "social contrasts between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries" to the narratee of the twentieth century.

These relationships are complicated by the postscript of the 1889 edition, in which a new, paratextual narrator, "Edward Bellamy," introduces himself to the implied readers of the nineteenth century and responds to a review of the first edition of *Looking Backward*. That review, titled "The Millennium of Socialism," published March 30th, 1888, is generally positive, finding Bellamy's ideas agreeable and imaginative but quibbling with the rapid pace of change predicted by *Looking Backward*. The reviewer compares *Looking Backward* to the similarly future-oriented *The Diothas* and writes, "had Mr. Bellamy shown the good judgement of the author of 'The Diothas' and placed this millennial act fifty centuries ahead, his premises would have been better taken" (6). In response, Bellamy relates instances of rapid change throughout history and avows that *Looking Backward* is not just a "fanciful romance" but rather "a forecast, in accordance with the principles of evolution, of the next stage of the industrial and social development of humanity" (163). Bellamy's postscript highlights a certain extratextual valence in utopian writing, the way these novels implicate the actions and reactions of their real authors, real audiences, and real reviewers. This paratext moves Bellamy, along with

these readers and reviewers of *Looking Backward*, closer to the discursive field of the text and shifts the narration's temporality into the predictive.

The extratextual direction of utopian writing provides some clarity to the structural operation of the novel. *Looking Backward* has a clear, didactic impulse, and the narratorial paradox enhances that didacticism. The real reader of the nineteenth century encounters the extratextual agents introduced by Bellamy's postscript alongside the intradiegetic narrators and narratees of the twentieth. As we have discussed previously, the temporal play of utopian writing invites the real nineteenth-century reader to occupy the seat of the twentieth-century narratee, to imagine how that reader might experience the world and the novel. Lee Cullen Khanna suggests that through this interplay, readers' real difficulties in imagining utopia are rerouted towards problems with identity, and the direct address of the early chapters forces them "to adopt however temporarily, the view that men are good" ("The Reader," 76). The distance between the narratee and the real reader is not a distinctive feature of *Looking Backward*. Instead, it is a fairly common trait in narrative fiction that establishes the novelist's "plausible untruth," to use Barthes's term (40). Still, it is distinct from the presumed audience of utopia's compatriots: the economic analysis, the academic paper, and the political speech. Where a more straightforward tract might trigger objections and argumentation, the elements of fiction—in this case, romance, conspicuous falsehood, and the distance between narratee and reader—function to bypass some of these responses. The mystery of the author-historian's identity and the possibility of fabrication and alteration that this narrating agent brings to the story only amplifies this process.

The reader of the nineteenth century—already grappling with the morality of the twentieth-century narratee—meets overlapping narrators—blurred between the enigmatic, unnamed author-historian, who at the end of the preface “steps aside and leaves Mr. Julian West to speak for himself,” and the Julian West whose identity is fractured by the incongruity of his experience of the future (Bellamy 2). Readers might expect Julian West and the historian-narrator to come into contact, either meeting in the text or converging into one as in an autobiography. If this were the case, to use Genette’s language, “we could expect to see the narrative bring its hero to the point where the narrator awaits him, in order that these two hypostases might meet and finally merge” (226). Some scholars have interpreted a trace of this autobiographical merging when Julian West is offered a “historical lectureship” in one of future-Boston’s colleges (87). If Julian accepts this position, he becomes a historian, like the narrator of the preface. Khanna suggests that this solves the enigma of the preface by fusing Julian and the historian into one narratorial image, mirroring the themes of duality and identity revelation at other points in the novel (76). But that merging is inconclusive. Julian admits he paid little attention to “educational matters” in his former life; his “special qualification” for this lectureship is his nature as a historical artifact, unearthed by chance in the Leetes’ backyard (108, 87). By contrast, the preface’s unnamed historian invokes “a teacher’s experience” and has enough knowledge to describe the future-oriented perspective of the “writers and orators” of this time. Julian wakes on the 10th of September, 2000; the “Author’s Preface” is dated the 26th of December of that same year. It is perhaps possible for Julian to acquire “a teacher’s experience” in a little over

three months. Events beyond the narrative could also explain this. Perhaps Julian has made new friends at the university who convey this teacher's experience to him, or he could have read about it in a book.

These are great leaps of imagination to resolve such a small paradox, and still, the stylistic incongruity—between the author-historian who steps aside and the gentleman who wakes—remains. Most likely, this tension between the narrators is the remnant of Bellamy's own editing process; his first notion was “not to make [Julian West] the narrator, or to write chiefly from his point of view, but rather from that of the twentieth century,” but as Bellamy became more convinced of the possibility of this imagined future, the narrative agent shifted (*Edward Bellamy Speaks* 226). As Bellamy realized the prophetic possibility in his story, he moved the narration closer to himself and his readers, telling the story through the perspective of a nineteenth-century narratorial agent, Julian West. In this reading, the unnamed historian of the preface is an ill-fitting piece from a previous draft, a fragment surfacing in the palimpsest *Looking Backward*.

In the end, the paradox of the narrator is unresolved. The reader of the nineteenth century—prompted to imagine what it would be like to occupy the seat of the utopian reader—encounters several possible narratorial relationships. The narrator may be one agent, Julian West as the intra-homo-autodiegetic narrator of his own story, or it might be two agents, the extra-heterodiegetic historian who frames Julian West's intradiegetic tale, or it might again be one agent, as a singular extradiegetic historian fabricates the intradiegetic Julian West's fiction. Although Khanna says the reader can discover the narrator's identity, that discovery may only imply another condition of uncertainty as the

readers must puzzle out the stylistic distance between the preface and the body of the novel. The incongruous narratees, narrators, and authors wash over one another, and new configurations between the parties are glimpsed in utopia. The multiplied perspectives allow the tropes to turn and the desires to triangulate in the text, but closure is never reached. The possible narrators never fully converge. Aporia remains.

It must be acknowledged that this analysis takes some significant departures from Genette's theory. One of the primary goals of *Narrative Discourse* is to clearly differentiate the author from the narrative instance and the real reader from the narratee.

As Genette writes,

. . . critics restrict questions of narrative enunciating to questions of 'point of view'; on the other hand they identify the narrating instance with the instance of 'writing,' the narrator with the author, and the recipient of the narrative with the reader of the work (213)

It's possible that the preceding discussion re-blurs the line that Genette was trying to clarify. Nevertheless, I think the move to implicate the author and reader in the discursive field is justified in this case, as it helps us understand the specific didactic operation of utopian literature and the particular way Bellamy hoped to influence the public through his writing. In its prophetic closing sentences, Bellamy writes, "*Looking Backward* was written in the belief that the Golden Age lies before us and not behind us, and is not far away. Our children will surely see it, and we, too, who are already men and women, if we deserve it by our faith and by our works" (165). Here, the narration ceases to be entirely subsequent, and Bellamy introduces an element of the prophetic, or predictive narration, to the mechanics of the narrative. These moves, along with the narratorial paradox of the preface, further implicate the nineteenth-century readers of the novel. In this motion, I

think we can see the unique operation of utopian writing. This iteration of didactic fiction encourages readers to see their world as part of a narrative, as actively under revision, and themselves as possible narrators. This can be observed in the relative popularity of the Nationalist clubs after the publication of *Looking Backward*, as readers sought to use the prophetic vision of the novel as a catalyst to bring utopia into reality. If the world—which includes society and human relations—can be a narrative, then it can be rewritten according to the structures that govern literature, and the rapid apprehension of metaphor takes on a new importance.

### **The Telescope of Polished Utopian Consciousness**

So far we have established metaphor and *topos*—as place as well as generic, ideological, and narratorial conventions—as key didactic components of this utopia, and of the responses to it. It is worth examining how trope and *topos* combine: how transference is enabled by the rifts between the composite readers, genre conventions, and temporality. This is the notable power of the novel as opposed to the political tract, what allowed it to titillate and disgust. Within the novel, Bellamy sets up the problem of capitalism and arrives at his solution through a familiar mechanism of metaphor: the roiling stagecoach of capitalism, and the efficient industrial army of utopia. Before and after publication, Bellamy grappled with the forms of these tropes. This section will consider the tropes themselves and the way those tropes are refracted, interpreted, and misinterpreted by the readers of utopia.



That we might access any true Bellamy more than one hundred years after his death is an impossibility. Nevertheless, the self Bellamy presented to the public in his writings after *Looking Backward* is sufficient to open routes of inquiry. Particularly, we can consider two conflicting articles in which he described his compositional process. In the article “How I Came to Write Looking Backward,” published in May, 1889, as the first article in the Nationalist Club of Boston’s journal *The Nationalist*, Bellamy presents himself as someone who had neither affiliated nor sympathized with reform movements before he set about writing *Looking Backward*. According to his article, *Looking Backward* was not intended to be “a house which practical men might live in” at the start but rather “a mere literary fantasy, a fairy tale of social felicity;” he contrived to hang “in mid-air far out of reach of the sordid and material world of the present, a cloud-palace for an ideal humanity” by setting it in the year 3000 (“How I Came to Write” 1). Nevertheless, in the process of writing the book, he became so enamored with the idea of an industrial army that he changed it from a “romance of an ideal world” governed by a World Nation with a capital in Berne, Switzerland to a “romance of the ideal nation” set in the year 2000 (2). In the similarly titled “How I Wrote ‘Looking Backward,’” published five years later in 1894, Bellamy contrasts his pastoral youth in Chicopee Falls with his trip to Europe at eighteen, which opened his eyes to the “inferno of poverty beneath our civilization” (219). In this later article, he presents a self that had been groping after the solution to economic inequality for more than twenty years—a self that had to contend with the pressures to work and find a place in the world before arriving at those ethical considerations. For the 1894 Bellamy, the birth of his children is what spurred him to

interrogate “the social question” in the fall of 1886, and he set out with “the definite purpose of trying to reason out a method of economic organization by which the republic might guarantee the livelihood and material welfare of its citizens on a basis of equality” (*Edward Bellamy Speaks* 222-223). The first article describes a naive Bellamy, won over by the power of his own vision, the lightness of the castle in the sky pulled to earth by the weight of actual possibility. The second article presents a pragmatic Bellamy, continuously working towards a better world and using fiction as his field of experimentation. Between these articles, we can see a sort of revision process—of text and public self—which helps us approach metaphor’s temporal mechanisms.

Early in the novel, Bellamy compares the society of the nineteenth century to “a prodigious coach which the masses of humanity were harnessed to and dragged toilsomely along a very hilly and sandy road” (4-5). This extended trope is one among several “desperate, teetering images, replete with the sense of climbing, clamoring human beings, ever slipping downwards to be trampled on” that Khanna describes in her analysis of Bellamy’s use of metaphor (72). This metaphor is striking for both its violence and its detail, as Bellamy continues:

The driver was hunger, and permitted no lagging, though the pace was necessarily very slow. Despite the difficulty of drawing the coach at all along so hard a road, the top was covered with passengers who never got down, even at the steepest ascents. These seats on top were very breezy and comfortable. Well up out of the dust, their occupants could enjoy the scenery at their leisure, or critically discuss the merits of the straining team. Naturally such places were in great demand and the competition for them was keen, every one seeking as the first end in life to secure a seat on the coach for himself and to leave it to his child after him . . . commiseration was frequently expressed by those who rode for those who had to pull the coach, especially when the vehicle came to a bad place in the road as it was constantly doing, or to a particularly steep hill. At such times, the desperate straining of the team, their agonized leaping and plunging under the pitiless lashing of hunger, the

many who fainted at the rope and were trampled in the mire, made a very distressing spectacle which often called forth highly creditable displays of feeling on the top of the coach. At such times the passengers would call down encouragingly to the toilers of the rope, exhorting them to patience, and holding out hopes of possible compensation in another world for the hardness of their lot, while others contributed to buy salves and liniments for the crippled and injured . . . (4-5)

The image, oriented around the harsh divide between those sitting in the open air on the top and those straining in the dust below, is a relatively straightforward metaphoric analysis of class. The extended metaphor draws on frames of reference that would have been familiar to Bellamy's readership, a primary form of transportation in the horse-drawn carriage, and the recognizable structure of class society, but the metaphorical resonance produces an image that is violent and grotesque. Similar metaphorical shifts, abstract concepts interpolated and made strange by embodied imagery, can be observed in many popular twenty-first-century works. It is used violently and affectively in movies like *El hoyo*, directed by Galder Gaztelu-Urrutia, and Bong Joon-Ho's *Snowpiercer*. These metaphorical engines can be set on more circuitous routes: to explore themes of gender and environmental collapse, as in Darren Aronofsky's *Mother!*, or to pick apart the operations of oppression and complicity, as in Jordan Peele's *Us*. Writers continue to return to the extended metaphor because of its simplicity, power, and lasting popularity. Bellamy's stagecoach metaphor was no different. It affected his readers powerfully.

The metaphor is frequently mentioned in reviews and criticism and likely aided in the novel's popularity. J.J. Cohen, in his 1945 personal history of the Yiddish Anarchist movement, remembered discovering a serialized version of *Looking Backward* nearly fifty years earlier:

[in] a bound old supplement to the *Novoe vremya*. . . This had happened before *Novoe vremya* became a dogged reactionary and antisemitic newspaper. I came across the supplement in the mid-1890s; Bellamy's critique of the current order in the foreword, and his example of people harnessed into a carriage, had a violent effect on me. ("The Jewish Anarchist Movement")

Cohen describes the violence of the stagecoach metaphor as one of the three literary experiences that propelled him towards a lifelong anarchism as a cigar-maker, editor of the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme*, and founder of his own utopian educational and farming experiments. He remembers the *Novoe vremya*'s reactionary turn but seemingly forgets Bellamy's polemics against "the followers of the red flag" later in the novel (Bellamy 41, 122). Or, perhaps Cohen never read the next installment in the novel's serialization.

Apart from placement, what enables the capitalism-as-stagecoach metaphor to function is the unique orientation utopia induces in the many possible readers—what Ernst Bloch calls the telescope of "polished utopian consciousness" through which we look towards the "nearest nearness" (12). The difference between the ostensible audience, the utopian student of history or, again, Khanna's "humane and rational" ideal reader, and the actual audience of the nineteenth century is key here ("The Reader" 77). The readers' gaze ricochets from the future back to a new angle of the present. The angled perspective reveals, in this metaphor, aspects of the verticality and "total visibility" that Nicholas Williams identifies in many of Bellamy's tropes in *Looking Backward* and the utopian genre at large—moments of perfect order and commanding vision, haunted by obscurity and discontinuity (28, 34). A similar combination of estrangement, distance, and visibility appears in Bellamy's short story "The Blindman's World," in which a dream-projection of Professor S. Erastus Larrabee travels to Mars and learns that, apart from on

Earth, everyone in the Universe has knowledge of both the past and future. In this story, Earth is the sole planet whose inhabitants cannot see—or remember—the future. Humans are a “blind race” moving into the future, unable to see what awaits them. As the readers of *Looking Backward* approach a description of the future mediated by shifting levels of narration, the readers of “The Blindman’s World” find a conversation with a Martian recorded by a somnambulant Larrabee, discovered by the waking Larrabee and then rediscovered by an unnamed extradiegetic narrator digging through Professor Larrabee’s posthumous notes. These layers of narrative plunge the story into the realm of the past and the dream, moving the readers away from their loci in a past-oriented present so they can join Professor Larrabee’s dream projection as he puts an eye to a Martian telescope towards the end of the novel. From this new perspective, the readers, alongside Larrabee, observe the strangeness of Earth’s “milkmen. . . going their rounds,” and the “workmen, with their dinner-pails” hurrying to work, the janitor and the president of the college rushing to Larrabee’s own, apparently dead, body in the observatory—on a distant, melancholy world where no one can remember the future (24). Likewise, the readers of *Looking Backward*, estranged from their bodies, are invited to look through the telescopic lenses of the novel back at their own world, to recognize the similarity and dissimilarity between the frames of reference, the absurdity of the passengers offering “creditable displays of feeling” while the laborers pulling them die in the muck beneath the carriage. For some, the violent distortion of the image clearly stuck longer in their memory than the other various details of Bellamy’s theories. The anarchist Cohen praises the novel and elides, or simply doesn’t remember, Bellamy’s accusation that anarchists were funded by

the “opponents of reform” to make social change appear vulgar and terrifying (122). The metaphor takes on a certain life beyond Bellamy’s intentions.

Though the telescopic metaphor facilitates a re-seeing, it can’t do this with perfect clarity. As Williams notes, *Looking Backward’s* many moments of apparent visibility and perfect spatiality are haunted by obscurity and discontinuity (34). The bourgeois and petite-bourgeois—to which Bellamy and much of his audience, or at least those affected enough to join the Nationalist clubs, belonged—crowd the foreground at the top of the carriage; the focusing mechanism of this utopian trope blurs the working class, and the ropes that bind them, in the background. Hunger, not the ownership class, is the driver. Here, Jonathan Auerbach sees a dislocated relationship between labor and capital; hunger steers the carriage along no particular route; the “passengers and the harnessed toilers are at the mercy of mysterious forces that have nothing to do with their relation to one another” (29). So too, David Bleich notes how, in the logic of this metaphor, revolution is placed out of reach; the metaphor seems to indicate that even if the rich passengers “actually distributed their wealth equally, there would be no benefits for anyone. . . this situation would be fair, but it would not unseat the driver, who is the final source of pain and toil” (450). The placement of hunger leads both scholars to describe an immovable paradox inside the image of the perpetually moving stagecoach. Bleich concludes that this metaphor necessitates the industrial army—as a fantastical technology to dispose of labor and reach material abundance—to get out from under the paradox and reach a place where human faculties are free to play beyond alienated labor (448-449). Auerbach argues the coach metaphor, and *Looking Backward* as a whole, works to empty the nation

of people, to empty people of power, and as a result, creates a utopia beyond the reach of Bellamy and his contemporary readers (42). Bleich and Auerbach point to a paradoxical and unassailable carriage at the heart of Bellamy's metaphor. Given the power of this metaphor and the many readers who did attempt to reach this utopia, hunger's central incongruence warrants closer examination.

Kenneth Roemer's framing of Bellamy "as an important reader, and rereader, who sends and receives, reinterprets, and resends his text" is helpful here ("Getting 'Nowhere'" 138). Bellamy-as-reader layers a new transparency over the narratees and readers who encounter the novel, and this framing gets us closer to understanding the role of hunger in the metaphor and how this role changed through time. Hunger's placement in the schema of industrial capitalism was a lifelong concern for Bellamy. In his 1894 article, Bellamy describes discovering his notes for an address he gave around 1871 to the Chicopee Falls Village Lyceum (*Edward Bellamy Speaks* 218). In these earlier notes on "The Barbarism of Society," Bellamy found a description that bears a striking resemblance to the one he would include in his novel twenty years later,

. . . what is the name of an institution by which men control the labor of other men, and out of the abundance created by that labor having doled out to the laborers such a pittance as may barely support life and sustains strength for added tasks, reserve to themselves the vast surplus for the support of a life of ease and splendor? This, gentlemen, is slavery ; a slavery whose prison is the world, whose shackles and fetters are the unyielding frame of society, whose lash is hunger, whose taskmasters are these bodily necessities for whose supply the rich who hold the keys of the world's granaries must be appealed to, and the necks of the needy bowed to their yoke as the price of the boon of life. (219)

In this earlier description, the question is answered by an abstract metaphor. Capitalism is slavery; slavery is placed in an altered world-prison; the world-prison is defined in a

cascade of metaphorical agents: the lash of hunger, the fetters of society, the taskmasters of bodily necessities. A convoluted series of clauses and subclauses connect these metaphors. There is certainly the transference of metaphor here, but the frames of reference don't entirely align. Between the 1870s and the 1880s, Bellamy grasped after the words, and the metaphor-as-schema, to communicate the violence of capitalism and its relationship to bodily necessity. In the world-prison metaphor, Bellamy prioritizes a description of capitalism over the logic of the metaphor: the result is clunky—the frame of society doesn't quite line up with the shackles of the working class—but the metaphor does establish a clear and causal relationship between the ownership and laboring classes. In the later carriage metaphor, the logic of the metaphor overtakes capitalism; the stagecoach grows to a monstrous size to accommodate the whole of humanity, and several pages are given over the logic of the stagecoach and the affective experience of the passengers. In the earlier example, there is a clear connection between the lashes of hunger inflicted by taskmasters of bodily necessity who are, in turn, subordinate to the granaries controlled by the rich. The later metaphor frames hunger as the agent, as both the lasher and the lash itself, a hunger that is not subordinate to any whim except the impulse towards motion.

Connecting these attempts at apprehending capitalism is Bellamy, the author-reader, experiencing revelation through metaphor but struggling to find an image that can contain the system's complexity. Each metaphor foregrounds different similarities while obscuring or discarding others. Meanwhile, *topos* goes on shifting. Beyond the possibility that the 1894 Bellamy retrospectively edited his 1871 metaphor to better fit the new



rhetorical context engendered by the 1888 publication of *Looking Backward*, the resurfacing of this earlier metaphor illustrates how the clunky, defunct metaphor can gain new congruences and incongruences over time as ordinary meaning shifts. The mechanism of transference becomes clearer between these points in time: the writer-reader shaping the metaphor, and the metaphor shaping the reader-writer. This isn't a linear movement, and the insights of metaphor can obscure as much as they reveal. These are the pitfalls of Bellamy's chosen field of experimentation.

### **Color-Blind Utopia**

The intuitive apprehension of metaphor, and the way it relies on regions of the unthought, the taken-for-granted *topos*, can be as deceptive as it is revelatory. We've established metaphor as a crucial constituent of utopian experimentation, but what happens when the *topos* that metaphor transfers from is a culture permeated by and reliant on the rhetoric of colonialism and racism? In the 1992 essay, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, Toni Morrison explicates the way that culture of racism interfaced with American literature and the very specific way that Whiteness was constructed in relation to a nonwhite, Africanist presence in this literature. As Morrison writes:

Just as the formation of the nation necessitated coded language and purposeful restrictions to deal with the racial disingenuousness and moral frailty at its heart, so too did the literature whose founding characteristics extend into the twentieth century, reproduce the necessity for codes and restriction. Through significant and underscored omissions, startling contradictions, heavily nuanced conflicts, through the way writers people their work with signs and bodies of this presence—one can see that a real or fabricated Africanist presence was crucial to their sense of Americanness. (6)

Morrison examines this sense of Americanness through writers like Willa Cather, Edgar Allan Poe, Mark Twain, and Ernest Hemingway, and traces the way the “real or fabricated” Africanist presence in these texts elucidated dimensions of autonomy, authority, individualism, freedom—the broad thematics of American literature. In examining how a metaphoric blackness is construed in this literature, Morrison asks if it might be possible to discover how Whiteness was constructed, interrogating what this Whiteness is for, and what it does to construct the American identity (9). These are particularly relevant questions in relation to *Looking Backward* and the Nationalist movement’s attempts to formulate an American form of socialism and the way utopian literature’s history has been intertwined with the ideology of colonialism.

The introduction to this chapter used the example of Nicholas Gillman and his review of *Looking Backward*, as an anti-socialist critic who wanted to blunt the affective power of the novel. Returning to Gilman’s general disgust with *Looking Backward*, we find, at the root of his complaint, metaphor:

The author of *Looking Backward* is . . . the slave of fanciful analogies: a figure of speech carries him away a complete captive. Whether it be the one umbrella for the whole city, the industrial army, or the coach of modern society, he is not content until he has pursued his metaphor to the farthest limit of fancy. He then offers the consistency of his metaphor with itself as an equivalent to consistency with reality or probability. (Gilman 69-70)

Gillman’s complaint focuses on the wrongness of a metaphor stretched too far.

Nevertheless, in his attempt to properly frame the novel for his audience, Gilman must turn to metaphor, but, as if to demonstrate its proper use, each of his analogies only runs to the end of the clause. Just a page earlier, Gilman had described the novel as subversive to “the Anglo-Saxon race,” here, his proper metaphors evoke racialized captivity and

slavery narratives. In a few sentences, Gilman turns Bellamy from a captive carried by metaphor to a hunter pursuing metaphor through a forest of fancy. In these analogies, Gillman draws on the *topos* of colonialism and the Africanist presence to achieve his rhetorical aim. Although Gilman's analysis of metaphor is insubstantial, he inadvertently points towards a significant operation of metaphor in *Looking Backward*, the construction of Whiteness as opposed to blackness, and eugenics as a pervasive worldview among intellectuals of the time period.

Following Lakoff and Johnson's differentiation, Gilman's metaphors are certainly inconsistent but they are not incoherent. The metaphors operate as subcategories of a larger conceptual system—here, the codified language of White supremacy—without necessarily forming into one singular image (*Metaphors We Live By*, 44). Lakoff and Johnson argue that quotidian metaphors form conceptual systems in both speech and thought and that the fundamental values of a culture are often coherent with the metaphors used in that culture (22). Gilman's metaphors present a useful case study: we can observe the way racialized stories, here captivity narratives and stories of enslavement, are sublimated into metaphor. Where previously captivity narratives had collected “sensationalistic images of cultural difference” and served as “instruments of demonization to support and justify the extension of colonial hegemony,” here we see a glancing reference to those narratives facilitating literary critique (Stratton 19). The seemingly unthought racial component of the metaphors emphasizes that colonial Whiteness functioned as a conceptual system that Gilman turned to when trying to emphasize the danger of Bellamy's text. This was the same conceptual system that

structured Bellamy's writing, and it's worthwhile to examine the ways ideological opponents drew on this same *topos* to construct differing forms of White identity.

Both Bellamy and Gilman were writing in the aftermath of the Reconstruction Era, alongside the codification of racism into the US legal system and increasing racist violence around the country. By the time Edward Bellamy wrote *Looking Backwards*, the metonymy of colonialism that Thomas More had participated in developing had almost entirely sunk into the unthought, and we can see many of these metonyms resurface in Bellamy's own text, sometimes despite the authors professed beliefs. Bellamy, writing in Massachusetts in the 1880s, was by no means ignorant of racism and oppression, and in his own ways, he responded to and opposed many aspects of it. Boston was a center of abolitionist activity before the Civil War, and Bellamy was inspired by his friend Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a lifelong abolitionist, proponent of women's suffrage, and member of the Secret Six, which funded John Brown's Harper's Ferry Raid (Strauss 82). Indeed, as Rosemont argues, Bellamy and the Nationalists considered themselves "heirs to the abolitionists," and the abolition of wage slavery and exploitation to be the next step on the path towards equality (171). In the postscript to *Looking Backward*, Bellamy calls upon the example of abolitionism as one of the successful examples of rapid societal transformation, "in 1832, the original Anti-slavery Society was formed in Boston by a few so-called visionaries. Thirty eight years later, in 1870, the society disbanded, its programme fully carried out" (164). And yet, though Bellamy may have admired the abolitionists, *Looking Backward* does not mention the future of Black and Indigenous people in the United States. This analysis will argue that Bellamy's efforts to ignore race,

and his unexamined, metaphorically structured understanding of land, profit, and race, produce a fundamental incoherence in his utopia.

The absence of Black people in Bellamy's future was not ignored by readers, in fact, it appears to have been a pressing concern. In a letter to the editor of *The New Nation*, published in October of 1891, a recent reader of *Looking Backward* wrote: "I . . . read it principally to see what disposition you make of the negro. I do not believe that you mention him in any part of you book. If you will kindly write me in regard to this matter it will be appreciated" ("Nationalists" 567). Bellamy's response is avoidant and demure, writing that

Our correspondent is very possibly correct in saying that the negro is not mentioned in 'Looking Backward;' but neither, probably, is the white man. For anything to the contrary that appears in the book, the people referred to in it pages, so far as we remember, might have been black, brown or yellow as well as white. Men, women and children are all the book discusses, and as to their rights and duties the author no more thought of dividing them into classes with reference to complexion, than as to hight, width or weight. All men are brothers and owe one another duties, and have, one upon another, the claims, of brothers. As to the colors of men, the have nothing to do with the matter. The standard of duty is not a chromatic one. Nationalists are color-blind. (567)

This is a recognizable evasion, a strain of what Morrison identifies as the "liberal gesture" of ignoring race that, while its authors may consider it a generous gesture, actually functions to foreclose open debate (9-10). This foreclosure is particularly evident when we consider that *Looking Backward* is not actually color-blind. In fact, blackness, as a descriptor, is employed several times throughout the novel but only ever to describe the conditions of the nineteenth century.

In this way, blackness is encoded in the novel as a contrast to the gleaming whiteness of the twentieth-century utopia, and a specific colonialist fear is used to

construct the past. In an extended sermon in a later chapter, a preacher describes humanity before the twentieth century as a “rosebush planted in a swamp, watered with black bog-water, breathing miasmatic fogs by day, and chilled with poison dews at night” (140). In this construct, there is the recognizable metonymy we observed in the writings of More and Winthrop: cultivation as a key identifier of Christian civilization. In this same sermon, as the preacher decries the cruelty of the nineteenth century, he unearths a metaphoric frame of reference with a particular colonialist and racist history, the Black Hole of Calcutta. He describes the “peculiar horrors” of “an act of barbarity. . . committed in India,” in which:

A number of English prisoners were shut up in a room containing not enough air to supply one-tenth their number. . . as the agonies of suffocation began to take hold on them, they forgot all else, and became involved in a hideous struggle, each one for himself, and against all others, to force a way to one of the small apertures of the prison at which alone it was possible to get a breath of air. It was a struggle in which men became beasts, and the recital of its horrors by the few survivors so shocked our forefathers that for a century later we find it a stock reference in their literature as a typical illustration of the extreme possibilities of human misery, as shocking in its moral as its physical aspect. They could scarcely have anticipated that to us the Black Hole of Calcutta, with its press of maddened men tearing and trampling one another in the struggle to win a place at the breathing holes, would seem a striking type of the society of their age. (137)

The preacher refers to a 1756 incident in India, before the establishment of an official British state but when the East India Trading Company’s armies enacted brutal colonialist exploitation on behalf of the crown and controlled the prison known as the Black Hole of Calcutta at Fort William (Zoli 418). The description of the incident, in which the EITC’s soldiers were driven from Fort William by Siraj ud-Daulah’s forces, comes from the disputed account of John Holwell, and would go on to be a frequent allusion in British literature, as Corri Zoli writes, “Victorians were obsessed with this

hundred year old prison and the ‘shameful’ role reversal in power relations native insurgents” (418). Although the story was a possible exaggeration or even fabrication used to justify the EITC’s violence, its repetition in Victorian fiction demonstrates a fixation not just with the “extreme possibility of human misery” of the story but the intertwined fear and shame of colonial violence returning to the colonizer. When West is transported back to the nineteenth century in a dream, the operation of the Africanist presence in the text is laid out even more clearly. His eyes are open to the squalor and chaos of his time period—he reads of war, suffering, sickness, and poverty in the paper. Experiencing a new kind of vertigo at witnessing the streets, Bellamy describes the scene with a paragraph that lays out the way he understands Whiteness as contrasted, and constructed, by an Africanist presence:

From the black doorways and windows of the rookeries on every side came gusts of fetid air. The streets and alleys reeked with the effluvia of a slave ship's between-decks. As I passed I had glimpses within of pale babies gasping out their lives amid sultry stenches, of hopeless-faced women deformed by hardship, retaining of womanhood no trait save weakness, while from the windows leered girls with brows of brass. Like the starving bands of mongrel curs that infest the streets of Moslem towns, swarms of half-clad brutalized children filled the air with shrieks and curses as they fought and tumbled among the garbage that littered the court-yards. (157)

Again the codified language of “citizen” and “savage” surfaces here. Julian is shocked to witness “pale babies” interpolated by the violence, disease, and cacophony which is supposed to be the realm of the Other—here enslaved people and Muslims. As Justin Bibler points out, this image plays on the racist fear of “negro domination” and “amalgamation” (35). While Bellamy might preach color-blindness, the language of White supremacy and colonialism is a basic constituent of his understanding of the difference between present and future. The way Bellamy attempts to escape this racially

charged social decay and economic division—encoded blackness, “Moslem” towns, Bengali prisons, and slave ships—is to leave it in the past.

Scholars like Bibler, Rhines, and Jung have pointed out that Bellamy’s very specific construction of race is evident in the trajectory of the only nonwhite character in the novel, Sawyer. When Julian West is awakened in the twentieth century, he is perplexed because it was Sawyer, his “faithful colored” servant, who had been charged with waking West from his hypnotically induced sleep in the nineteenth century, and who “would never have betrayed” West (10, 15). The fate of Sawyer is never clearly depicted, but West eventually reaches the conclusion that “the layer of ashes found above the chamber indicated that the house had been burned down” and supposes that Sawyer must have “lost his life in the fire or by some accident connected with it” (22). Sawyer’s death is the event that catalyzes Julian’s miraculous journey into the future, and where no other character’s race is mentioned in the novel, Sawyer’s is. This serves a specific rhetorical purpose for Bellamy’s readers, as Rhines argues:

Sawyer's race is pointed out because the vaunted, stereotypical faithfulness of the house slave supports the veracity of the slave master's claims. As Sawyer is the only individual person of color mentioned in *Looking Backward*, it would be presumed by Bellamy's contemporary reader that something terrible must have happened to prevent Sawyer carrying out the charge to awaken his master/employer. (94)

Sawyer and the attribution of blackness to the nineteenth century work together to achieve a narrative end, differentiating the future from the present. This is the metaphoric language of blackness that Morrison describes as “a way of referring to and disguising forces, events, classes, and expressions of social decay and economic division far more threatening to the body politic than biological ‘race’ ever was” (63). When we consider



the very specific rhetorical work that this does, we can conclude that Bellamy directed his novel toward a White audience. It is clear that though Bellamy wrote that “All men are brothers and owe one another duties,” he drew on a commonplace that was the antithesis of that statement. As Bibler argues, while Bellamy may not have set out to create a White supremacist future, “in his zeal for Nationalism and his desire to make the utopian future as broadly appealing as possible, Bellamy plays to the lowest common denominator, the ‘most bigoted prejudices’ of his likely readership (38). Between Gillman and Bellamy, we can see the way ideological opponents drew on the metonymy of White supremacy and colonialism to achieve their rhetorical goals, to teach and to reach their White audiences.

Metaphor and utopia are powerful ways of achieving insight into the world as it is and as it might be, but they are both dependent on the commonplace of *topos*. In a nation founded on stolen land and slavery, where the ideological justification for violence is coded into quotidian metaphors and the regions of the unthought, these mechanisms are just as likely to reaffirm the status quo for writers who benefit from that commonplace.

### **Metaphor as Hermeneutic**

The temporal process of shaping and counter-shaping that we’ve seen in Bellamy’s search for a metaphor to describe capitalism can also be observed in Bellamy’s solution to the chaos of capitalism: the industrial army—and this metaphor’s afterlife in the Nationalist movement and Bellamy’s later writing. Writing in the inaugural issue of *The Nationalist* in 1889, Bellamy emphasizes the generative role of the trope in *Looking*

*Backward*. The industrial army, which had been “vaguely floating” in his mind as “merely a rhetorical analogy,” changed when he sat down to write about utopia (“How I Came to Write” 2). In the compositional process, the metaphoric “instrument” of the industrial army was placed in an “ideal cloud palace for an ideal humanity” of the 30<sup>th</sup> century (3). The contact altered both. A “complete recasting” followed, and the instrument became a “prototype” and a “corner-stone” for the new society, “furnishing at once a complete working model for its organization, an arsenal of patriotic and national motives and arguments for its animation” (3). The cloud palace returned to earth, now oriented around the industrial army as the cornerstone of a utopia set at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In this revision, Bellamy cut the “fanciful matter” from his previous draft; “the manners, customs, social and political institutions, mechanical contrivances, and so forth” were removed to avoid distracting readers from the central, organizing metaphor of the industrial army (3). The romantic plot and sentimental style were kept, “although with some impatience,” with the goal of attracting a wider audience. In this way, the romance can be understood as an integral *topos* for *Looking Backward*, the soil that stuck to the novel during its revelatory transformation, though even Bellamy acknowledges that “barely enough story was left to decently drape the skeleton of the argument” (3). This accounting of the writing process emphasizes rhetoric, style, and form as interrelated, but it goes further to capture the transformative process enabled by metaphor and re-vision. Through this accounting of his writing process, we can see Bellamy attempting to mechanize fiction, to pull whichever rhetorical and generic lever

will make his vision of the future palatable. To coat the medicine of a reorganized society in the sugar of romance. But this is an imperfect process.

In the novel, the new society, simultaneously bureaucratic and altruistic, is brought about without revolution but rather through an inexorable process of “industrial evolution” (24). In this process, all the corporations were absorbed into the nation, which, as Dr. Leete explains, “became the one capitalist in the place of all other capitalists, the sole employer, the final monopoly in which all previous and lesser monopolies were swallowed up” (27). The tendency towards oneness in place of chaos and multiplicity reaches its apotheosis in the new bureaucratic society enabled by the industrial army. In a moment of generative speech or telepathy, Julian is the first to use the simple adjective-noun combination of “industrial army” in the novel, but it soon becomes Dr. Leete’s chosen descriptor for the centralized labor organization in the new society. Military organization combines with industrial labor, enabling Julian and the composite readers to imagine how government, labor, and human motivation might be reconfigured in this epoch of “The Great Trust” (27). When Julian states that, in the popular view of his day, proper government was limited to the military and police, in the role of “keeping the peace and defending the people against the public enemy,” Dr. Leete responds:

. . . who are the public enemies? Are they France, England, Germany, or hunger, cold, and nakedness? In your day governments were accustomed, on the slightest international misunderstanding, to seize upon the bodies of citizens and deliver them over by hundreds of thousands to death and mutilation, wasting their treasures the while like water; and all this oftenest for no imaginable profit to the victims. We have no wars now, and our governments no war powers, but in order to protect every citizen against hunger, cold, and nakedness, and provide for all his physical and mental needs, the function is assumed of directing his industry for a term of years. (29)

The language of war, of peace and defense, of “public enemies,” has, for Julian, been buried under the soil of ordinary language, incorporated and decayed into the humus of the unconsidered. This productive, ordinary language is transplanted in new rhetorical ground by Dr. Leete; it challenges Julian and the readers to reconsider the necessity of war, and the ideas of safety and citizenship. While Dr. Leete’s reframing of “public enemies” is an indictment of war, the “industrial army” trope—as phrases like ‘war on drugs’ or even ‘war on poverty’ might—preserves a corrosive militarism and hierarchy in the freshly turned conceptual earth.

This is not simply a turn of phrase in this utopia. Rather, the industrial army becomes its organizational principle. In Bellamy’s dream world, the rhythms—at both an annual and generational scales—of utopian life are oriented around the military aesthetics of this future:

The fifteenth day of October of every year is what we call Muster Day, because those who have reached the age of twenty-one are then mustered into the industrial service, and at the same time those who, after twenty-four years' service, have reached the age of forty-five, are honorably mustered out. It is the great day of the year with us, whence we reckon all other events, our Olympiad, save that it is annual. (31)

In this future, all receive the same generous income, so instead of the fear of starvation driving humanity’s stagecoach, for Bellamy, “duty” is the motivation for labor, and the motivation to excel comes from the various grades, classes, badges, prizes, and honorable mentions which convey sufficient “privileges and immunities” to fulfill those desires maintained by money in previous eras: “desire of power, of social position, and reputation for ability and success” (30, 47). For most, Bellamy imagines the carrot will suffice. Nevertheless, for those “able to do duty, and persistently refusing,” solitary

confinement awaits (61). Military obedience is the *sine qua non* of this industrial army, and though Dr. Leete says that “no officer would dare display an overbearing manner” and workers can take their officers to court, laborers have no actual control over the judiciary (101). Juries and lawyers no longer exist. The president selects the judges from those reaching the end of their service to the army. Emphasis falls on strict discipline in service of efficiency: “the officer commands and the private obeys” (101).

We can compare this societal structure, growing from the skeleton of the industrial army, to the communist ideal of “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs,” which Marx says arises at the acme of communism’s development, when “all the springs of common wealth flow more abundantly” and labor has become “life’s prime want” (*Critique of the Gotha Programme* 20). In some ways, *Looking Backward’s* society fulfills this ideal, and yet, in crucial ways, Bellamy’s adherence to metaphoric structure results in a very different vision for the future. Where Marx tries to clarify the means of consumption as contingent on the conditions of production, Bellamy presents a paradise of consumption—a consumer-utopia of “total visibility” where shoppers control what is produced and how (Marx 20; Williams 32). Any commodity for which there is demand is produced, and “individual citizens,” rather than workers, control production (90). The hierarchy of the industrial army functions to drain workers of meaningful power. The workers are promoted through the hierarchies of lieutenancy and colonelcy by those above them. Suffrage is only granted to those who have already passed through the industrial army in a system that Julian calls “government by alumni” (91). So, though there are elections for the generals of each guild and for the

presidency, the workers do not vote (95). William Morris saw this as a pleasureless “machine-life,” and argued that individuals “cannot shuffle off the business of life on to the shoulders of an abstraction called the State” (*Commonweal*). Even if Bellamy, as a proponent of a certain type of socialism, might agree on some points with Marx and Morris, the conclusions reached through utopian metaphor are very different from those reached through historical materialism.

Government by alumni is neither full democracy nor temporary dictatorship of the proletariat, and where Marx aims to convert “the state from an organ superimposed upon society into one completely subordinate to it” the industrial army, a metaphor pushed to the extreme, snaps into place over Bellamy’s society (*Critique of the Gotha Programme* 32). The intuitive logic of metaphor is unleashed as State, and Bellamy imagines the system “all but runs itself” (*Looking Backward* 88). The disjunction between scientific and utopian socialism is not a new observation—this was, after all, the impetus for Engels’s *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*. It is, however, still useful here to consider the way thinkers considering roughly similar problems—that is, the means of production, the exploitation of the working class, and change in human society—reach wildly different conclusions and the way tools of analysis—here historical materialism versus metaphoric utopianism—facilitate those conclusions.

Critics have struggled to account for the industrial army metaphor: its paradoxical nature and the way it combines totalitarianism and suffrage, oneness and multiplicity, individuality and cooperation. Bellamy seems to emphasize mutuality while his system atomizes the plane of social life and labor. The paradox of the text has engendered a

similar multiplicity in the criticism. In Bellamy's scheme, Gilman saw an irrational and contradictory arrangement, "utterly subversive . . . of the political freedom dear to the Anglo-Saxon race and of the deepest-founded American institution" (68). William Morris rejected this system as pleasureless and the way it came about "peaceably and fatalistically" without revolution. Moreover, Morris attempted to prevent readers from taking the aristocratic and centralized scheme as a "Socialist bible of reconstruction" by pointing out Bellamy's "unmixed modern . . . unhistoric and unartistic" temperament (*Commonweal*). In this "antidemocratic collectivism," Arthur Lipow finds the seeds for both technocratic liberalism and Stalinism. Walter Benn Michaels describes it as a system that produces individuals through difference and distinction, rather than independence (81). Nicholas Williams argues that the industrial army better represents "a system of perfect, impersonal efficiency" more than an authoritarian command structure (31). David Bleich, intent on elevating Eros and pleasure in the novel, gets around the industrial army by placing it in the context of the history of modern technology; in this retrospective stance, it's clear that "an overwhelming portion of human toil can be done exclusively by machine" and, as a result, the industrial army becomes obsolete, it belongs "to nineteenth-century thinking" (452). In Bleich's light, the industrial army is cast into the novel's background as the fantasy that enables the free play of desire. The industrial army can be all these things, authoritarian bureaucracy, mechanized ant hill for atomized consumers, a system simultaneously eroding and defining individualism, window-dressing to humanity's free-playing desire. The power and elasticity of metaphor allow it to fill each of the measurements applied to *Looking Backward*. Metaphor allows the

various readers and critics to return to the novel for new revelations—at turns repellent and seductive.

It is notable, then, that when he returned to the novel, Bellamy himself interpreted it differently, noticeably reducing the role of the industrial army as time passed. In 1889, a year after *Looking Backward*'s publication, he opened the magazine of the Nationalist Club with a description of the industrial army as both the cornerstone and impetus for utopia, but it's clear that each year after that, the relevance of the industrial army decreased. Bellamy's 1894 program for the Nationalists instead argues for the organization of a "public business" (*Edward Bellamy Speaks* 151). Bellamy's shifting interpretation can be noted in the way the role of democracy in utopia changes, from its minimal role in *Looking Backward* to a more central role in Bellamy's later speeches and writing. On publication, *Looking Backward* did not include the word "democracy" even once. Nevertheless, the Bellamy of 1894 argues that Nationalism would apply "the democratic formula to the production and distribution of wealth" administered by "the equal voice of all for the equal benefit of all" (157). Similarly, by the time he redescribes his compositional process in 1894, the industrial army is only alluded to as one of the "analogies of military service and taxation and all other relations between the State and the citizen" necessary to describe the "democratic organization of production and distribution based on the recognition of an equal duty of service by all citizens and an equal share of all in the result" (226-227). Instead of the industrial army, most of Bellamy's 1894 article is devoted to his early horror at the conditions of society and his "rigid application of the democratic formula" to social problems and the economic



system (226-227). As he increasingly emphasizes democracy, Bellamy simultaneously de-emphasizes the industrial army. Where “industrial army” appears twenty-eight times in *Looking Backward*, it only appears three times in the 1897 sequel *Equality* (as both Roemer and Sargent have noted). As the *topos* of Bellamy’s world shifted, this formerly overwhelming metaphor lost its relevance.

Though Bellamy approached the writing process itself as a nearly scientific form of experimentation—noting that “nothing outside of the exact sciences has to be so logical as the thread of a story, if it is to be acceptable”—it’s clear that the real test is the passage of time: how the pertinence of the metaphors shift alongside the lives of the readers themselves (*Edward Bellamy Speaks* 223-224). Indeed, this approach to fiction as a way of testing hypotheses may be one of the clearest parallels between *Utopia* and *Looking Backward*. As Walter Davis argues, Thomas More’s innovation was to suggest that fiction “was *hypothesis* or exploration, an image in words of what might be true or should be true” (Davis 253). As we have seen, More would come to regret the ambiguous and experimental attitude of *Utopia*. Bellamy would similarly come to see his own work differently after observing its impact on the world. Between More and Bellamy, it’s clear that utopian experimentation, a process of exploration through fiction, doesn’t end when the fiction is written or even published. The novel becomes a longitudinal experiment. In the metaphors of the industrial army and the stagecoach, we can observe a process of iteration and experimentation: of writing and reading and re-writing, of revelation and re-vision as crucial parts of the creative process. The new congruence in each of these metaphors creates a cascade of incongruences: hunger opens a hole in the center of the

stage-coach, but the *epiphora*—the transference and the resulting insight—continues to emanate from the image. The world-prison becomes the stage-coach, and the industrial army becomes a public business. The congruence is always threatening to collapse, and the novelty of other congruences threatens to supersede it. Metaphor is powerful. It's affecting. It enables new visions and novel feelings but is ultimately an inexact science. Metaphor is, indeed, “naïve” “irrational” and “impracticable” (71, 74, 75 “Nationalism”). Thomas More would come to regret the latitude for interpretation in his fiction. Inversely, Edward Bellamy would layer a new image into the composite photograph, shifting the focus from patriotic militarism to something closer to democratic collectivism. Utopia tends to escape and refashion its authors.

### **Metaphor at a Toenail's Pace**

To close, let's call up one more metaphor, returning to the common ground of *topos*. The earth feels solid until it doesn't. Anyone shaken from a dream by a quake's shudders understands that situation has faults. The continental crust crawls along at a predictable rate, in some places as fast as a toenail grows, in some places faster (NOAA). Sometimes it grinds to a halt, only to crush forward in one motion: an earthquake. It generates and agglomerates and spews and sheds itself away, subsumes itself, and sinks away into the mantle. Human life—families, villages, towns, cities, societies—depends on this movement, on the mountain ranges that squeeze moisture from the air, on the fertile soil of volcanoes, and the sediment deposited at river deltas. And yet, this

movement threatens life, pulls down office buildings, swallows homes and yard-flamingoes in sinkholes and landslides and tsunamis.

At their best, the estrangement and transference enabled by these utopias awakened readers and writers alike to desire and dream as tools to shape the world around them. At their worst, these utopias participated in the encoding of racism and colonialism in their cultures' commonplaces. Ultimately, this paper argues for a sort of purposeful misreading of utopian literature. Despite the authors' intentions, it was often the unpredictability of *topos*, the obscurity and deviancy of metaphor, and the inherent impossibility of perfect communication that amplified the resonance of *Utopia* and *Looking Backward* for their audiences. Metaphor and utopia are powerful ways to communicate and share in desire, but they are not exact. This is how anarchists could find inspiration in *Looking Backward*; how Bellamy could return to his own text as a reader and discover democratic collectivism; the reason the translators of *Utopia* would go on to publish the second book without the ironic, humanist context of the first. To use Bloch's terms, the readers of these utopias often glimpsed a far more radical *Novum* through the polished telescope of utopian consciousness than the authors ever could themselves.

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## Chapter 1

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## Chapter 2

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