

ABSTRACTS: THURSDAY SESSIONS

Session I 1:45-3:15

1.A. Looking Backward at *Daedalus*, Spring 1965 (Colonial East)

This panel consists of three graduate students in the Doctor of Liberal Studies program at Georgetown University, along with their professor as the moderator. The papers will reflect on a summer class called *Utopia-Dystopia: Surveillance, Control, Tyranny, and Hope*, in which the students are reading, among other works, all of the essays in the Spring 1965 issue of *Daedalus*, titled "Utopia." The essays in *Daedalus* will serve as a springboard for both preserving and repairing/building upon what has gone before. Papers will reflect on insights from scholars like Lewis Mumford, Judith Shklar, Crane Brinton, Adam Ulam, and George Kateb (among others) and, through the lenses of recent scholarship, the U.S. political landscape, the pandemic, and current global affairs, assess the current place of utopian thought what revisions might be fitting as we look back at the scholarly visions of 1965.

Each paper will be guided by a unique disciplinary perspective so as to ensure diversity of critical angles, but they will also pursue intersections, one to the next, so as to challenge the very concept of disciplinary boundaries and to foreground the fluidity of a utopian academic landscape. Individual paper topics are expected to include values-based architecture in urban design models, the global rise in nationalist movements, and the dystopic space of social media.

Chair: Scott Krawczyk, Georgetown University

Luisa Aleman Hernandez, Georgetown University, "Learning to Live: Minor Campus Utopias in the Anthropocene"

Kate Hilts: "Unmaking the Precincts: Police Abolition from Fiction to Action"

Joey Hiles: "Making Suburbia: From Utopia to Dystopia"

1.B. Nineteenth-Century Visions and Contemporary Legacies (Colonial West)

Justin Chandler, Miami University, "Incorporated Selves: Looking Backward, Perspectival Captivity, and the Process of Utopia"

In a 2016 essay, Lyman Tower Sargent traces the development of Edward Bellamy's utopian thought from the publication of *Looking Backward* (1888) to the publication of *Equality* (1897), concluding that utopian scholarship often hinders robust readings by isolating popular

texts from relevant contexts. This paper accepts Sargent's charge and builds on his reading by highlighting unique strategies these two novels offer for unmaking and remaking the world. I explore *Looking Backward's* synthesis of self and society (as recursively interdependent and therefore contingent), its facilitation of a dialectic (whereby readers occupy a liminal space between the real world and that of the novel), and its perspectival reorientation (shifting our focus from the "real" onto the "practical effect" of Bellamy's vision). Having done so, I argue that Bellamy's novel is a work of American pragmatist philosophy, one that challenged readers to recognize the value in reseeing and remaking their world through renderings that are not true in either a rational or empirical sense but in a pragmatist sense. The development of Bellamy's vision from *Looking Backward* to *Equality* showcases a further pragmatist process, wherein a community of readers were incorporated into a shared dialogue of continuously reimagining the future. This paper thus offers space to reflect on speculative fiction as a unique tool for navigating and interrogating life and considers how readers use and continue to modulate speculative imaginings.

Jonathan Neufeld, College of Charleston, "'By Means Impossible to be Anticipated': Aesthetics and Democracy in *Benito Cereno* & *Billy Budd*"

Aesthetic and artistic expression play a central role in the plots of *Benito Cereno* and *Billy Budd*. Famously, Billy Budd has difficulty speaking because of his stutter but he sings beautifully. It is his song that binds people to him (in particular the mutinous men below decks), and in which everyone hears him to be good. His inability to speak before the law or of the law to hear his singing, however, is at the heart of his tragic downfall. It is tempting to think of Billy's song in utopian democratic terms but, I will argue, this would be a mistake—though an interesting one. Babo, the leader of the African mutineers aboard *Benito Cereno's* slave ship provide a counterweight to a utopian democratic vision of Billy's song. The African mutineers present on a stage they design especially for Amasa Delano, the supposedly benign New England Republican who offers the ship help. Delano proves to be utterly incapable of grasping the performances he sees before him. Once again aesthetic and artistic expression play a pivotal role in Melville's depiction of democracy but this time it seems that there is no question that the picture of democracy is an anti-utopian one. Or is there? In this paper I will explore the vision of aesthetic democracy Melville presents to us in these two works and what kind of hope (if any) might emerge from it.

Session II 3:30-5

2.A. Finnish Utopian Communities: Paper and Documentary Screening (Colonial East)

Paper: Teuvo Peltoniemi, Independent Scholar, "'Three Centuries, Six Continents and Four Main Ideologies': The History of the Finnish Utopian Communities"

Finnish Utopian communities are not often mentioned with More's *Utopia*, or with Fourier, Owen, Cabet or Oneida, but they have a history reaching back to the 1734 Eriksson' Sailing

Sect, antislavery “New Jerusalem” in Sierra Leone in 1792, and socialist whaling company Amurland in Pacific Russia in 1868. The main wave of Utopian emigration was already over when the Finns established more Utopian communities. Later Finnish communities were in the Americas, like Sointula in Canada, and Penedo in Brazil. Altogether 20 ventures around the world represent nationalism, socialism, cooperatives, “tropic fever” and religious ideas. The Finnish Utopian communes were considerably more numerous, and ideologically and geographically broader than those of other Scandinavian countries. There were altogether 20 ventures in Australia, USA, Canada, Soviet Russia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil and Israel. Also those are well linked to the great ideologies behind the great Utopian communities. After a short presentation of the most important Finnish Utopian communities, they are compared by their ideological background, and by the existence of Utopian features in practice. Reasons of the end of the settlements are analyzed and compared with some US traditional utopias. Finally possibilities for future Eco, Virtual and Space Utopian communities are briefly discussed.

For more information, see:

www.facebook.com/groups/finnutopias

www.teuvopeltoniemi.net

Screening: HÖÖK documentary film

Finnish-Russian documentary film "Fridolf Höök – from Ocean to Ocean" (2020, 26 min., subtitles in English)

During the worst famine years, in 1868, Finnish sea captain Fridolf Höök founded a Utopian colony of Amurland near Vladivostok the Czar Russia. Finland was then an autonomic part of Russia. The group consisted of a hundred well-to-do Swedish speaking Finns from Helsinki, and the main idea was whale hunting. At the same year, about 50 Finnish speaking peasants from Turku immigrated to the same area. Departures aroused a great media debate in Finland.

Captain Höök stayed in the Far East area after the quick end of the Utopian community, and became a local celebrity for decades. Many members of his group returned eventually to Finland. Some remained on the area, as did all the Turku peasants.

The Höök film has been produced in 2020 as a Russian-Finnish collaboration. It has been filmed in Finland and Russia. Scientific material, photos and interviews are from Helsinki, Turku, Nakhodka and Vladivostok museums and archives.

Director Mila Kudryashova (St. Petersburg)

Producer Merja Ritola (Helsinki)

Scientific adviser Teuvo Peltoniemi (Helsinki)

2.B. On Modernity, Utopianism, and the University (Colonial West)

Benjamin Schewel, Center on Modernity in Transition (COMIT), “Lewis Mumford's Path to the Axial Age”

The presentation examines the intellectual trajectories that led Lewis Mumford, the prominent 20th century urbanist and scholar of utopianism, to embrace Karl Jaspers's notion of a mid-millennial BCE "axial age" of religious metaphysical transformation. The presentation begins by examining the influence of Patrick Geddes in shaping Mumford's path toward the idea of an axial age. It then traces Mumford's intellectual biography as it leads up through the 1954 book, *The Transformations of Man*, wherein he first deploys the idea of an axial age. The presentation considers the crucial role that this book played in orienting Mumford's late works, *The City in History* and the *Myth of the Machine*. The presentation concludes by considering how the broader legacy of utopian organicism out of which Mumford's reflections on the axial age emerged enabled him to advance ideas the nature and implications of this distinctive period of parallel socio-spiritual effervescence that are still in many ways superior to those presented by the likes of Karl Jaspers, Shmuel Eisenstadt, Robert Bellah, and Charles Taylor.

Joe Kelly, College of Charleston, “Utopia and the Liberal Revolution”

In 1927, Felix Frankfurter, then a professor at Harvard Law, published a somewhat obscure article about administrative law in the *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*. That same year, John Dewey published his book, *The Public and Its Problems*. Frankfurter and Dewey were writing the blueprint for the re-orientation of American government that would come in 1933 with Roosevelt's New Deal. In its essence, this is liberalism as we understand that term in American politics today, and it was based on the radical idea that the pursuit of happiness is an unalienable right, and that it is the business of government to secure that right for all citizens. This is the milieu that would conceive the “American Dream” (a term coined by the historian, James Truslow Adams, in 1931). With a study of Frankfurter and Dewey, this paper will examine the role of utopian thought in liberalizing of the “mind of the nation” (to borrow another contemporary term from Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.). Though I describe this process as a “re-orientation,” which might imply a revolutionary shift, really it meant putting in place the kind of mechanisms necessary to the incremental change referenced in the conference's CFP.

Stacy Maddern, University of Connecticut, “Building Utopias on College Campuses”

At its core capitalist education is harsh and divisive. It distorts the practice and promise of democracy that envisions a project of human development that strives to build a better future. This conception of utopia includes educationally sensitive environments where equality creates the necessary space and time for developing real capacities. Jean-Jacques Rousseau identified the most important rule of education as “not to gain time but to lose it.” William Morris rooted education to the foundations of utopia because it encouraged democratic participation. John Dewey coined creative democracy as the “free gathering of neighbors.”

The remaking or reimagining of education as experimentation and growth is a consistent feature on college campuses around the world. It is not occurring in classrooms, nor is it a function of innovative curriculum. Professors and instructors are not leading the charge. Instead, students are turning away from the indoctrination offered by neoliberalism. New student organizations are committed to reshaping the boundaries established by capitalism's class structure and social hierarchies. Reminiscent of the counterculture of communal living during the 1960s and 1970s, the younger generations are finding their footing by building social values based on acceptance and preservation of lived experience. These students understand praxis as a formula for creating and living in horizontally organized spaces. They identify higher education, not as a benefit to them, but as an institution where the opportunity to speak truth to power is actually possible.

2.C. Slavery, Imperialism, Abolition, and Memory (Citadel North)

Barry Stiefel, College of Charleston, "Playing Whiteface: A Dystopian Comparison Study of the Indigenous Diamond Hill and Black Melrose Plantations Through Rose-Colored Utopian Glasses"

The Antebellum plantation defined the American South as the paradigm of social progress and economic success. The iconic symbol of the plantation built environment structure and system was typified by a central house with associated outbuildings for the processing of the cash-crop of that particular area, whether sugarcane, cotton, tobacco, rice, indigo, or other resource. Expanding out unto the horizon from the central house was a vast expanse of fields tended by enslaved Black and Brown bodies, often African but also indigenous. The previous indigenous inhabitants had either been displaced, killed, or enslaved to make room for the cash-crop plantation economic system. At the structural and social pinnacle of this system were the Euromerican taskmasters, enslavers, financiers, among others. However, a striking contrast at Diamond Hill plantation near what is now Chatsworth, Georgia and Melrose plantation near Natchitoches, Louisiana were that they developed, owned, and operated (respectively) by free indigenous and African individuals. Cherokee Chief James Vann was the proprietor of Diamond Hill and Louis Metoyer owner of Melrose plantation, and in many ways were playing "whiteface" as the patriarchs of each of these estates with many enslaved people forced to work for their benefit. Using these extraordinary contrary examples of indigenous and Black people owning and operating a conventional plantation, where resources were extracted and other people of color were enslaved, this paper will examine the Post-bellum reflections of race and slavery at Diamond Hill and Melrose plantations, as these places evolved from utopian romanticism to dystopian site of conscience.

Abdul Isiaq, Temple University Department of Africology, "No Africans Involved: Contextualizing the Western Imperialist Project From An Afrocentric Abolitionist Perspective"

Recent works from educator and community organizer Mariame Kaba and Afro- Caribbean professor Dr. Rinaldo Walcott both make emphatic arguments in support of the pressing need for a contemporary abolitionist theoretical and practical framework in freeing the African

diaspora from Euro-centric physical and mental subjugation. This paper seeks to build upon both discussions to maintain that an Afrocentric abolitionist perspective is one that calls for the inclusive liberation of all African persons that have been marginalized and oppressed based on their cultural location, mental or physical (dis)abilities, or their perceived locations within Euro-centrally imposed stratified social identification structures/spectra based on Western concepts of gender and sexuality. Moreover, this paper puts forth the essential consideration that such an inclusive abolitionist framework cannot be fulfilled in its entirety as long as the personal and social restructuring that it requires uphold any manifestation of the global Western imperialist project.

Session III 5:15-6:15

3. Keynote conversation (Colonial East)

Hoda Zaki, Pete Sands, Claire Curtis

As scholars of utopia our academic work is on the boundaries of some particular discipline for which utopia is potentially marginal or even a somewhat suspect concern.

As academics we all share to differing degrees the tensions around the boundaries of job status, administrative work, service commitments, pedagogical approaches.

As people in the world we negotiate the boundaries between job, community, family, politics.

We share a set of experiences with boundaries: the intellectual, disciplinary, professional, political and personal and we share the very idea that each of these realms has been bounded (or to use the lingo of the academy: siloed) in ways that often undermine each of these pursuits.

Join us for a conversation about negotiating and traversing these boundaries. Come and share your own travels and let's continue the conversation into the reception afterwards.

Abstracts: FRIDAY

Session IV 8:30-10:00

4. A. Zombies! (Colonial East)

Rosemary Millar, University of North Carolina School of the Arts, "Zomtopia: Remaking the Utopian Vision in *Aaah!! Zombies*"

Zombies threaten humanity! Frank Darabont's TV series *The Walking Dead*, Lost Zombies' graphic novel, *Dead Inside: Do Not Enter: Note from the Zombie Apocalypse* and films like George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* and even the zomcom Edgar Wright's *Shaun of the Dead* drive home that point. Zombies are harbingers to human extinction if not destroyed. With human extinction, a zombie apocalypse would in turn threaten the possibility of utopia, an ideal place to live, as envisioned by utopists such as Sir Thomas More, H.G. Wells, Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Edward Bellamy. Zombies are antithetical to visions of an ideal place; in fact, they unmake the very idea of a human society and question whether a utopia can even exist in a zombie apocalypse. Matthew Kohnen's 2007 zomcom film *Wasting Away* better known as *Aaah!! Zombies* attempts to answer that question. His story maintains a conventional human reaction to the zombies as a threat; however, the telling of that story is non-conventional. Kohnen turns the zombie story on its head to tell it from the zombies' perspective. In doing so, that perspective connects utopia to a rarely discussed, if at all, survivor motif. Indeed, it is a perspective in which the humans-turn-zombies desire a better place but more importantly a safe one so they can survive. Therefore, this paper argues that *Aaah!! Zombies* reimagines the trope of utopia as a survival mechanism in order to make a zomtopia.

Zebadiah Kraft, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, "Possibility in Destruction: Zombie Narratives of Renewal and Utopia"

The zombie is the traumatized global citizen come back to life, originally to rage against the machine and question the role of people in the world system, now to renew the planet through postapocalyptic recovery and evolution. The zombie is no longer merely shambling corpses or manic masses consuming all; it is now a figure of a new way of living and being on the planet. As such, the zombie is truly utopian in its exploration of post-death life and trauma that converges in all our lives. Trauma literature is the permeating form at present because so many of the concerns and anxieties about the future have culminated in political and cultural discourses. The literary form, as a means of expression, allows the possibility of renewal and posttraumatic fulfillment in a wide array of possible futures. My research explores how the zombie is the figure of a return to the planet and our relationships with it. Working from trauma theory and metamodernist sensibilities I will discuss how M.R. Carey's novels reach beyond the postapocalyptic imaginings of postmodern zombie narratives to address the nature of existence as already postmortem—these novels insist on traditional utopian dreaming being futile but offer a new capacity to realize a world already in its death throes, seeking what Susann Moser calls a transition to a state of mourning rather than melancholy and denial. Such mourning allows a realization of loss and a new utopian aspiration.

Clarence W. Tweedy, University of Mary Washington, "The Happy Few: The Apocalypse and Resurgence of White Patriarchal Supremacy in Rob Kirkman's *The Walking Dead*"

In current parlance, many Americans think "apocalypse" means upheaval and destruction, failing to know or understand the original meaning correlates more closely to discovery and epiphany. Even more concerning, is that almost no one will ask the question of who gets to survive in the post-apocalyptic world and why. The graphic novel genre is not only about

fantasy; rather, it is a genre that all too often offers a social commentary/ critique on problems or anxieties in our society. Critic Maria Lisboa's "Prologue" to *The End of the World* argues that we should pay close attention to who survives, and how the world changes in the aftermath of a cataclysm. She writes: "In scenarios of apocalypse, at the heart of terror there lies always the explosive combination of the possible and the unknown: the possibility of transgression and the crossing of a line from what is familiar into unimagined, unimaginable territory. [...] Furthermore, whether in the Book of Revelation or in American evangelism's millenarian visions of the Rapture, salvation following global apocalypse is usually attained only by a happy few. Within most theo-cosmogonies, therefore, planetary cataclysm only ever has a positive net value from the point of view of the small minority who are saved." Specifically, I argue that Rob Kirkman's *The Walking Dead* is only a dystopia for marginalized peoples, but a utopian possibility for white men with the reassertion of white supremacy and patriarchal power. Indeed, one can clearly see that Kirkman's graphic novel speaks directly to white men's feelings of angst, social displacement, and powerlessness in regard to a society that over the past four decades has seen massive shifts in minority rights, women's rights, gay rights—and their collective corresponding impact on present day society. Moreover, Kirkman's text rarely takes a moment to comment on the state of gender and race. In this new world those issues are left to wither and die, be avoided, or seemingly do not matter at all. But, one must remember that it only doesn't matter to the "happy few" as people of color are stereotyped or function as magical tropes, while women are regulated to being protected and only allowed power the old-fashioned way by manipulating/ using men to get what they want.

4.B. Interrogating Social Class and Labor (Colonial West)

Robert Seguin, Hartwick College, "The Symbolic Dimensions of Social Class in Mark McGurl and Ben Lerner"

This paper will examine two literary critical works, one new and one from a decade ago, that on the surface would appear to have little in common: Mark McGurl's *Everything and Less* and Ben Lerner's *The Hatred of Poetry*. McGurl focuses on the sprawling, hothouse realm of genre fiction, written mostly by fans and assorted amateurs, enabled by Amazon's self-publishing platform, while Lerner takes the very rigor and exclusivity of poetry as the starting point for his meditation on the form's fraught cultural position. Yet each author—both cultural leftists of a certain, sometimes indeterminate stripe—finds himself working around and toward a Utopian dimension of their respective subjects: McGurl finds in the sheer productiveness of this paraliterary world (thousands of titles, mostly unread) a set of figures for new human cultural and social relations, while Lerner sees in the dialectic of poem vs. Poetry the inscription of a repressed Utopian demand. I want to argue that the conceptual category that lies just beneath the surface of both works, gestured toward but never really confronted as such, is that of social class. The questions of literary production, reception, access, and purpose all entwine around those of class, in particular the difficult matter of class consciousness, especially where this last encounters the problems of aesthetic judgment and political universality. In their own way, each book affords us an opportunity to think through the increasingly symbolic dynamics of class in our own historical situation.

Mackenzie Cox, American University, “Content Creation, Capitalism, and Coogan Law: Labor in the Age of Social Media”

The rise of social media brought with it the promise of a perpetually connected, increasingly globalized utopian future. We find ourselves, instead, in a time in which adolescent social media use is found to be linked to mental health issues; and yet, a 10-year-old like Ryan Kaji can become a famous multimillionaire through his mere online presence, securing a ranking among the highest earning creators on YouTube. In such a dystopian reality, pressing questions must be asked about what it means to be an internet celebrity, and what this unique form of labor can teach us about our economic system. While social science researchers have begun to investigate the role of social media use in mass culture and individual lives, this scholarly field often overlooks the unique experiences of online content creators. Internet celebrities, many of whom become famous at young ages, experience distinctive types of work and fame, which may carry with them challenges not often faced by celebrities in traditional media. Emerging from content analysis of teenage and young adult YouTube creators' videos and podcasts, this paper seeks to deconstruct the phenomenon of internet celebrity. In more thoroughly understanding this phenomenon, it is possible to unpack related aspects of the wider dystopian arrangement, including issues concerning our economic system and labor rights for child entertainers.

Ryan Pine, Bryn Athyn College, “The Circle Was Closing, But Now It's Just Every-where: Dave Eggers's Fatalistic Ennui in *The Every*”

This paper argues a shift has occurred from Dave Eggers's 2013 novel *The Circle* and its sequel, the 2021 novel *The Every*. Eggers moves from satirical utopia in *The Circle* to critical dystopia in *The Every*. This shift will be charted through two main ways: the respective protagonists of the novels and Eggers's tone. The protagonist of *The Circle* steps on to the campus of the world's most influential technology company and exclaims, “My God. Mae thought. It's heaven” (1). Mae would begin life at The Circle with a healthy dose of skepticism towards its culture of surveillance, only to be subsumed by its totalizing ideology. Eggers, by the time we reach *The Every*, seems to have found the limits of satire and abandons it in favor of a blistering critique of a now clearly totalitarian power. Mae has assumed control of The Every, a merger between The Circle and “the jungle”—a monopoly to end all monopolies. Mae is something of a minor character in the dystopian novel's plot. Eggers instead chooses to focalize its narration through Delaney—an Every enemy hellbent on bringing down the company from the inside. If *The Circle* represents a satirical utopia—a company ridiculed for the superficial mimicry of the language of human perfection, then *The Every* functions as a critical dystopia—a nakedly authoritarian intrusion into the lives of everyone through sophisticated surveillance technology. Eggers's tone parallels this shift—from resistant to fatalistic—as if he must spell it out for us.

4.C. Young Adult Dystopias: Cultural Contexts (Citadel South)

Chair: Elaine Ostry, SUNY Plattsburgh

Carrie Hintz, Queens College/CUNY and The Graduate Center/CUNY, “The Bad Boyfriends of YA Dystopia”

Young adult dystopias tend to combine “typical” adolescent concerns—coming of age, romantic entanglements, family drama—with a broader social or political plot. But what happens when we zero in on the romantic relationships in YA dystopias? Considering the ultimate bad boyfriend from the YA dystopia *corpus*—Titus from M. T. Anderson’s *Feed* (1999)—I will consider how dystopian conditions limits our ability to be kind, loyal, empathic and genuinely loving towards one another. How does privilege limit the emotional registers available to those characters in dystopia?

Carter Hanson, Valparaiso University, “Post-Nuclear Kinship Patterns in Young Adult Climate Dystopias: Sherri L. Smith's *Orleans* and Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves*”

My paper examines the ways in which two young adult dystopias from the past decade, Sherri L. Smith's *Orleans* and Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves*, reckon with how the most prevalent mode of kinship in North America—the nuclear family—could be forced to evolve in light of climate and economic conditions. The novels contend that the nuclear family is unable to cope with the effects of the catastrophe-vortex of climate change, disease, and unchecked neoliberalism that unduly afflicts disenfranchised and indigenous minority groups. Both novels conceive of family/kinship along the lines articulated by the new kinship studies within anthropology (and sociology) that frame kinship (or relatedness) as an enacted process not tied to genealogy. Additionally, my paper explores how Smith and Dimaline triangulate kinship, memory, and what anthropologist Veena Das calls “critical events”—events that overturn local established modes of life and bring “new modes of action” into being. The novels critique how states’ neoliberal imperatives accelerate the “critical events” of climate change that destroy/displace nuclear families—acts of destruction and upheaval that then lead to new types of kinship rooted in the memory of oppression and disaster. Thus, the utopian horizon of each novel is not external to, but contained within this triangulation: the political, racial, and environmental injustices perpetrated by the state that destroy the biosphere and disintegrate the nuclear family also propel its victims to form new kinship practices that harness memory in productive, liberating ways that are themselves tied to the restoration of the biosphere.

Session V 10:15-11:45

5.A. Making/Unmaking Utopian Possibilities Across Genres (Colonial East)

Chair: Phillip Wegner, University of Florida

In this panel, we will explore a variety of genres and aesthetic modes that seek to represent forms of utopian possibility. Each panelist will investigate a cultural object(s) that in some way signifies a type of making/unmaking dialectic. Nathan Stelari will discuss the utopian/dystopian ideological formation at play within ironic and meta-ironic political internet humor and how this

informs the common sense of online political discourse. Ryan Kerr will present on Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* and how its dystopian themes (particularly in the novel's final chapter) demonstrates Mark Fisher's concept of "cancelled futures." We hope to think collectively about the relationship between politics and form, especially in a moment beguiled by the apolitical.

Participants:

Ryan Kerr, University of Florida

Nathan Stelari, University of Florida

5. B. Emily St John Mandel (Colonial West)

Katrin Isabel Schmitt, University of Konstanz, Germany, "Picking up the Pieces: Rebuilding Community in Post-Apocalyptic Literature"

Apocalyptic stories are set in shattered worlds in which most of humanity has vanished and urban spaces have been destroyed. Yet, contemporary apocalyptic literature does not mainly focus on the destructive apocalyptic moment but on what happens after this cataclysm. Berger describes such narratives as a "study of what disappears and what remains, and of how the remainder has been transformed" (7). Hence, the apocalypse is not an ultimate endpoint but a beginning after the end, which makes works of the genre inherently post-apocalyptic. In this framework, the (potential) rebuilding of post-apocalyptic communities is a key topic. Wind Meyhoff argues that post-apocalyptic narratives "most often focus on traditional family values, implying and promising a new beginning and a new life of community and solidarity" (307). However, reforming such social groups is usually more complex. Post-apocalyptic communities do not only repeat previous societal patterns but also introduce altered forms which renegotiate values and ideals such as gender roles, violence, or biocentrism. Key figures reflecting this transformation are children, both a symbol of hope and agents shaping the post-apocalyptic future. To approach these topics, I will examine three exemplary post-apocalyptic novels: Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam*, and Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven*. Based on this corpus, I will outline how communities after the end rearrange fragments to create something new while questioning if they portray a utopian impulse or the threat of returning to destructive structures and behaviors of previous times.

Ellen Rigsby, Saint Mary's College of California, "Time Travel in Emily St. John Mandel's *The Sea of Tranquility*"

This paper will argue that Emily St. John Mandel's novel, *The Sea of Tranquility*, examines our senses of belonging and disconnection through human experience of space and time, especially when her characters feel disconnected or lonely. Popular time travel narratives often let its characters see they are more connected to other times or to people in other times.

Sometimes, though, they show that time itself is a construction of our own minds. In *The Sea of Tranquility* the time travel form allows its characters, and to a greater extent its readers to see the seams our minds sew to create what we call reality. David Wittenberg's monograph on time travel argues that time travel is a narrative laboratory for storytelling. The speculative or utopian generic aspects of *The Sea of Tranquility* depict characters disconnected from their times and places to highlight the human possibilities of connection. It demonstrates that we need space and time, a relationship to the past and the future, to be human, even if we have to make them up.

Claire Curtis, College of Charleston, "Human artifice and living in a pre-made world: Emily St John Mandel's *Station Eleven*"

The postapocalyptic world of *Station Eleven*—both the comic internal to the novel and in the plot of the novel itself— involves characters living in a built environment from the past. In neither instance is the goal of those characters to re-make the world. Traditional postapocalyptic fiction emphasizes the re-building after the disaster, and that re-building is often the site of utopian imagining. But here the utopian impulse is found instead in the relations among the characters. This paper explores the role of building and making and the idea of the new in *Station Eleven* the novel itself and the graphic novel found within.

5.C. Crosscurrents of Utopian-Socialist and Marxist Thought in America's Gilded Age (Citadel North)

This panel explores the underlying current of American utopianism advocated by the late nineteenth century's radical political actors. During the unrest of the Gilded Age, a variety of socialist groups embraced utopianism as a political tool to reorganize and remake the nation into a more equitable and liberated place. Our three papers demonstrate the extensive embrace of utopianism by socialists during a period in which Marxism, a so-called scientific form of socialism, was on the rise. Graeme Pente's paper identifies the influence of utopian-socialist Charles Fourier on the work of one of the most popular American utopians: Edward Bellamy. Pente demonstrates how Bellamy adapted Fourier's vision of a harmonious future to a bureaucratic age of industrial capitalism in works such as *Looking Backward* (1888) and *Equality* (1897). Daniel Joslyn's paper examines the crosscurrents of utopian socialism and Marxist socialism in the feminist socialist circles of the late nineteenth century. Dissecting Edward Carpenter's *Love's Coming of Age* (1896), Joslyn shows the way Carpenter blended utopian free love, Fabian, and Marxist ideas and its influence among late nineteenth century feminists. Ashley Garcia's paper explores the creation of the Brotherhood of the Cooperative Commonwealth (BCC), a socialist organization that embraced intentional-community-building as a viable means of remaking America into a socialist paradise. The BCC gained support from popular socialists, such as Eugene Debs, and worked to unite the nation's socialists into a single brotherhood. Together, these papers demonstrate the persistence of utopian thought through the turn of the twentieth century and its impact on the early rise of Marxian socialism in the United States.

Ashley Garcia, University of Texas at Austin, Chair

“Association and Cooperative Colonies in the 1890s: The Utopian-Socialist Organizing of the BCC”

In the 1840s and 1960s, the United States experienced waves of communitarian activity. Hundreds of thousands of Americans turned to communal organizing as a method of reform that they believed could most effectively reshape the world. However, in between these two periods, America experienced a third communitarian wave far less studied than its counterparts. In the midst of the unrest of the Gilded Age, Americans turned to intentional community building as a viable means of socialist revolution. Utopian-socialists of the 1890s formed an organization called the BCC, or Brotherhood of the Cooperative Commonwealth. The BCC attempted to unite every socialist, including the country's Marxists, under one roof to populate the nation with socialist colonies. This paper explores the attempt of the BCC to create one unified socialist movement that would remake the world from the bottom up. Their utopian vision produced a community in Washington named “Equality” and they almost succeeded in creating a powerful socialist alliance with unionist Eugene Debs that would have catapulted their cause from a grassroots movement to a national reform campaign. This paper investigates how this communitarian-socialist-Marxist alliance almost came into being and the impact the BCC had on socialist politics at the turn of the century.

Daniel Joslyn, New York University, "When Love Came of Age: Marxism and Utopianism in Turn-of-the-Century Socialist-Feminist Thought"

First published in 1896, Edward Carpenter's *Love's Coming of Age* quickly became one of the most widely read radical works of the early twentieth century. Carpenter called on women to rise up and overthrow the “cash nexus” of marriage, alongside male workers rising up and shattering the restraints of capitalism. Combining the Marxist treatises of Friedrich Engels and August Bebel, and on the world of “utopian” socialisms from Robert Owen to John Humphrey Noyes, Carpenter wrote a revolutionary treatise cum relationship manual that would go on to sell hundreds of thousands of copies and go through almost a dozen editions. Just as Carpenter drew on an eclectic mixture of socialist thought so the work inspired radicals from Eleanor Marx (Karl's daughter) to the anarchist Emma Goldman, the socialist Upton Sinclair and became a “bible” of the New Woman movement. Looking at the circulation of this text allows us to see the intertwining in turn-of-the-century US radical thought of utopian socialist critiques of marriage and Marxist challenges to the capitalist order. At the same time, in following the adoption of Carpenter's ideas in popular society, we can see how easily calls for white people's “sexual liberation” could and can be integrated into a racial capitalist order and the concordant demands for economic justice overlooked or cast aside.

Graeme Pente, Independent Scholar, "Fourierism on a National Scale: Edward Bellamy Leads Visionary Socialism into Politics, 1878-1898"

The American followers of the utopian socialist Charles Fourier (1772-1837) long eschewed formal politics in trying to bring Fourier's vision to reality. Nonetheless, their model for a harmonious future society included democratic practices in day-to-day operations that would

give individuals more power over their lives. As Gilded Age Americans cast about for solutions to the ills of the era, the journalist and novelist Edward Bellamy (1850-1898) reached back into the American past and modernized Fourierism for a bureaucratic age of industrial capitalism. This paper examines the influence of Fourier on Bellamy's model society by reconstructing the novelist's connections to the American Fourierist Albert Brisbane (1809-1890) and highlighting the Fourierist dimensions of Bellamy's major works. Ultimately, it argues that the democratization that occurred between *Looking Backward* (1888) and *Equality* (1897) owes as much to the model's Fourierist roots as it does to Bellamy's experience with anti-monopolist politics in alliance with the People's Party. In tracing this lineage, the paper shows the persistent influence of antebellum utopian socialism on American radical politics.

Session VI 1:00-2:30

6.A. Genre and Utopia (Colonial East)

Braden Hammer, Mount Saint Mary's University, "Len Deighton and the Utopian Genre Tradition"

This presentation will argue that Len Deighton's debut series of spy novels can be included within the utopian genre tradition. Deighton's debut series, written between 1957 and 1966, represents a break from previous works in the spy genre with regard to narrative style and major themes, having grown out of a period of sociopolitical crisis and change in Britain. Previous advancements in popular literature that broke with the past similarly grew out of periods of crisis and change. Particularly relevant among these are the rise of the utopian genre in the early 16th century, notably with Thomas More's *Utopia*, and the rise of the counter-epic novel form during the late 16th and early 17th century, notably with Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. In addition to the importance of sociopolitical background, Deighton's debut series also shares several familiar features with works in the utopian genre. One shared feature is the pervasive feeling of questionable reality. This is accomplished on the level of the story, or through the author's stylistic narrative techniques that create a unique experience of the text for the reader and compel the reader to participate in meaning production. Deighton's early novels also feature such utopian genre elements as the individual's fraught relationship with the state, questions regarding the nature of identity, individuality, and liberty, the reality of the present versus that of the past, the horror of loss of liberty of thought through conditioning, and the conflict between personal perception and dogma.

Gib Prettyman, Penn State University, Fayette, "Utopian narrative labors in Robinson's *The Ministry for the Future*"

My paper explores the idea of utopian narrative labors through a close reading of Kim Stanley Robinson's novel *The Ministry for the Future* (2020). I argue that genre might more productively be conceived as something produced by specific smaller labors rather than as relatively static frameworks to which texts either conform or fail to conform. While narrative

labors can take any form, engage any facets of our world, and strive to produce any outcomes, my paper explores narrative labors that overtly strive to be utopian. In many ways, questions of narrative effects (and related imaginative powers) constitute the core of utopian studies. Scholars want to assess what is and is not utopian, how utopianism works or fails to work, how utopia is or is not conceivable, what the unintended consequences of utopian forms might be, and so on. Robinson's story explores explicitly separate attempts to tell the problems of global climate change and how humanity might (or might not) successfully engage the problems involved. As Robinson noted recently, "The real story is the one facing us in the next 30 years. It's the most interesting story, but also the stakes are highest." Global climate change, and the Anthropocene more broadly, serve to clarify Robinson's utopian narrative labors.

Csaba Toth, Carlow University, "Collective Action and Community Building in William E. Trautmann's Novel *Riot*"

William E. Trautmann's novel *Riot* (1922) is based on the Pressed Steel Car Company strike in McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania—a steel mill in the novel—which lasted for three months from July 13 through September, 1909. Trautmann was a founder (with Haywood, "Mother" Jones, etc.) and General Organizer of the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). In this latter capacity he coordinated the strike in McKees Rocks (a.k.a. Preston Valley). His role gives credibility to the novel's quasi-factual rendering of one of the most important labor actions in the pre-World War I period. I argue that Trautmann as a syndicalist has identified labor's hopes of a workers-controlled society – hopes that came to life for a long moment at Preston Valley. Leaders of the strike build their strategy on small work collectives within the factory, which are the strongest and most spontaneous source of bonding among workers. Embodied in them is the direct actionist approach of exercising continuous control in the workplace. Direct representatives of these well-organized groups call for the formation of councils that will represent labor at the point of production. Communities can organize horizontally, Trautmann understands, in contradistinction to strikers' vertical, army-like system of command and control in this particular case which recalls the industrial army visions of Fourier, Marx, Bellamy, and DeLeon. Community members hold mass rallies at a meeting place called Indian Grave (!) where speeches by Debs and other supportive visitors foment communal cohesion. In the wake of victory, as the multitude hear workers led by the community's multi-ethnic choir sing the Internationale, "jubilation" rings through the Valley and hope flies high that "prosperity and love" will come to the community.

6. B. Utopian Thought (Colonial West)

Chair: Edward K. Chan, Waseda University

Peter Stillman, Vassar College, “Uncovering Le Guin’s Utopian Alternatives: *The Left Hand of Darkness*”

This paper argues that Le Guin’s utopian alternative questions or contradicts many usual attitudes and assumptions of modern utopian thought. She herself insisted that *LHD* was not a utopia, and it certainly does not propose a blueprint or model for government. But she does put Winter or a different calendar (every year is the year one) and so a different view of time. In her criticizing of modern rationality, she emphasizes the importance of darkness as well as light. The past, in mythic form or remembrance, is present, and myths give insight and understanding to the present. Journeys are cyclical, not linear. To me, *LHD* presents the makings of a good society by exploring seemingly unconnected (and frequently seemingly un-utopian) issues, not by proposing a grand plan. I wish to use *LHD* primarily, because it is a fiction, not an essay (e. g., on Euclidean utopias), because its utopian aspects are even more ambiguous than *The Dispossessed*’s, and because it is better known than *Always Coming Home*, although I shall of course refer to those texts. (And of course I shall not ignore Gethenian sexuality and other well-studied *LHD* topics.)

Mark Allison, Ohio Wesleyan University, “*The Civil War in France*: Karl Marx’s English Utopia?”

This paper situates *The Civil War in France* (1871)—Marx’s profoundly influential defense of, and eulogy for, the Paris Commune—in a British cultural context. Taking as my points of departure Fredric Jameson’s claim that *The Civil War in France* can be classified as a utopian text and Gareth Stedman Jones’s observation that Marx’s pamphlet “was not only written in English, but for the English,” I explore a seemingly counterintuitive thesis: the *Civil War in France* may be profitably read as an English utopia. Specifically, I argue that *The Civil War in France* is carefully calibrated to appeal to the British social imaginary. In it, Marx knowingly presents an ideal-typical, imaginative reconstruction of the Commune’s structure and behavior that is intended to resonate with his British readership’s national sensibility and values. Audaciously, Marx’s pamphlet seeks to vindicate the Communards’ revolutionary experiment in self-government by depicting the Commune as an attempt to establish a utopia that accords with British ideals. Given the influence *The Civil War in France* has exercised on subsequent analyses of the Paris Commune (including analyses of the Commune as a utopia) and its centrality in interpretation of Marx’s political thought, my excavation of the British context of Marx’s pamphlet should be of interest to scholars with a wide range of interests.

6.C. The Child in Utopia (Citadel North)

We judge societies by how well children thrive in them. Children are key to utopias, showing its potential to create happy and healthy citizens. They reflect the values of a utopia and are emblems of its future. It seems that all utopias and dystopias emphasize the role of children in them as we either envy children in a utopia or fear for them in a dystopia. The three proposals on this panel all explore, in different contexts, the influence of the Romantic child in utopias and dystopias. The Romantics conceived of a child that was imaginative, innocent, carefree, playful, spontaneous, close to God and nature. Childhood was a protected space in which to engage in these qualities and foster the whole individual. Education reflects these values as the child learns from experience and mentorship rather than institutionalized indoctrination.

We explore childhood in three genres: children's literature (Ostry), Victorian literature (Andreini), and dystopian film (Weaver-Seitz). Elaine Ostry analyzes *Orphan Island* by Laurel Snyder, which is about a utopian island inhabited only by children, who view their lives with a sense of adventure and harmony in a magically benign landscape. Rachel Andreini explores the role of children in William Morris's socialist utopia, *News from Nowhere*. Both novels stress an unforced education that develops independence, cooperation, individualism, and agency. Although the children in both novels relish their carefree childhoods, they also cross into the realm of adulthood as they assume adult responsibilities, which challenges their depiction as entirely Romantic. Megan Weaver-Seitz examines the role of the child in dystopian film: they need to be protected, but they also are the key to uncovering dystopias and escaping them, even overthrowing them. As Carrie Hintz and Elaine Ostry observe, "[t]he idea of children 'saving' adults is a Romantic concept." As with the other two papers, the role between child and adult is blurred even as the Romantic child is promoted. The children in *News from Nowhere* and dystopian film represent hope for the future.

Chair: Elaine Ostry, SUNY Plattsburgh

Elaine Ostry, SUNY Plattsburgh, "'Nine on an Island, Orphans All: A Community of Children on *Orphan Island*'"

Orphan Island by Laurel Snyder is a contemporary children's book featuring a wonderful island. Only children live on the island and, in the absence of adults, they organize their lives with admirable harmony. Childhood on the island is carefree, innocent, and oriented towards nature, adventure, and laughter. In short, it is a Romantic childhood. Nature is benign, even magical: the winds allow children to leap off the cliffs with abandon, the snakes don't bite, the sky puts on an amazing show every sunrise and sunset. But the island has rules: every year the oldest child must leave, and a young child arrives in a mysterious self-guiding boat. The child who is now the oldest must take care of the new arrival. Here the eldest child assumes an adult role, whether they want to or not, in preparation for leaving. The island's pedagogical philosophy echoes Rousseau as children learn from experience and mentorship, developing autonomy outside conventional pedagogical institutions. Jinny, however, stumbles in her new quasi-adult role. She shuns growing up and even decides to stay on the island when the boat arrives again. As she swiftly and anxiously moves into puberty, the harmony and safety of the island collapse. The

supporting winds stop blowing, the snakes bite, the sky is dull. The island, then, reflects her adolescent mood and less idyllic adult future. Here, utopia is a state of mind—that of a child.

Rachel L. Andreini, University of Kansas, “Educating the Romantic Child in *News from Nowhere*: Natural Forces in Utopian Reform”

Sally Shuttleworth notes that the nineteenth century brought an increased interest in children’s inner worlds, evident in Victorian debates on forced education and its potential to hinder or accelerate child development. She connects Romanticism to the child, stating, that “authority has switched to the natural, unself-conscious child” (7). Building on Shuttleworth, I focus on how William Morris’ representation of the Romantic child and unforced education converges in his socialist utopia, *News from Nowhere* (1890).

In this paper, I discuss how the developing child becomes crucial to the existence and conceptual framing of Morris’ social utopia, *Nowhere*. To do so, I explore the qualities he ascribes to the Romantic child – earnestness, precociousness, imagination, and rebelliousness – and demonstrate how these traits enable and maintain *Nowhere*. I suggest the Romantic perspective of childhood reveals the broader political notions of Morris’ utopia; because Morris maps the utopian future of England onto the Romantic child, education becomes an engine for utopian development. The child allows Morris to critique the underlying principles of forced education, namely the values of a competitive industrial economy, which he replaces with experience-based learning within the natural world. Although I contend that Morris’ utopia is founded upon an idealized vision of the child, this paper also demonstrates how Morris blurs the line between child and adult. Thus, the Romantic child is at the heart of Morris’ utopian design, restructuring the social relations of production.

Megan Weaver-Seitz, Asbury University, “A Lens of Hope: Children in Dystopian Films”

For decades films have proven to be a self-reflexive medium, built upon conversation with and for an audience, studied within both the creation and the viewing. They unearth, reveal and grant us perspective through the lens filmmakers thrust in front of us. Within the creation of popular dystopian films, the view on children and by children is a unique representation of how we see our world, its brokenness, and our answer for the future. Films like *The Children of Men*, *Birdbox*, and *Metropolis* depict a dystopian world through the adult perspective where children are cherished, sacrificed for, and protected. Through the lens of the child, films such as *The Hunger Games*, *Divergent* and even *Zombieland*, display a view of dystopia where the children fight, overthrow and escape the broken world around them. They become their own heroes. Films like *The Giver* challenge these perspectives further by featuring children that exist within an adult-built, literal utopia who eventually reveal the real dystopia under this façade and escape to an unknown future. Though the generational lens through which these stories are told is different, they are linked in their acknowledgement that children are the ones to be protected because only they can imagine a world away from the brokenness. They are the embodiment of hope for the future, suggesting that even in dystopian film, we believe in the resilience and imagination of a generation beyond our own.

Session VII 2:45-4:15

7.A “Crafting Toward Utopia: Making and Unmaking with Zines” [Presentation and Demonstration] (Colonial East)

Brit Schulte, University of Texas, Austin

How do zines become objects that thought-smuggle, intervene, and disrupt? How can zines also create opportunities for us to play, feel, and prepare our hearts and minds? Are zine makers and distributors agents of the utopic, of radical composition? Join educator, community organizer, and zine maker Brit Schulte for a creative session, combining presentation, performative demonstration, and discussion. This will be an exercise in composition as Brit presents a constellation of zines that explore the medium's potential for experimenting in utopian thought.

Brit Schulte is an Art History PhD student at the University of Texas at Austin, a community organizer, and zinester. They study print objects, as well as sex working, queer and trans* histories. Their current organizing efforts involve criminalized survivors, prison/police abolition, and the decriminalization of sex work. Their writing may be found at *The Funambulist*, *In These Times*, *Monthly Review*, *The Appeal*, and *Truthout*.

7.B. Always Renaming Utopian Studies: the Palgrave Handbook of Utopian and Dystopian Studies (Colonial West)

In April 2022, *The Palgrave Handbook of Utopian and Dystopian Literatures*, co-edited by Peter Marks (Sydney), Jennifer Wagner-Lawlor (Penn State) and Fátima Vieira (Porto), arrived in the world. With 56 commissioned essays covering the contemporary vibrancy of utopian vision, and its resiliency as an idea, genre, and critical mode, the Handbook is a global, cross-disciplinary, and comprehensive volume. A selection of contributors will formally “launch” through a panel discussion of the editorial principles behind the organization of the volume, and the central themes guiding the range of new topics selected for inclusion. Given this year’s theme of “make, unmake, remake,” we hope that the publication of this latest volume can contribute to the conference-long discussion, as well as the interrogation of the principle of hope. We welcome a discussion with audience members on new directions.

Chair: Jennifer Wagner-Lawlor, Penn State University

Participants:

Jennifer Wagner-Lawlor, Penn State University

Peter Marks, University of Sydney

7. C. Dystopian Textualities (Citadel North)

This panel will explore texts and the discourse surrounding these texts that are being disseminated and floating around in the postmodern spaces that we all inhabit in various ways. While the internet allows for quick access to all sorts of information, it is not always a rosy scene. At present, the panel includes three presentations. Jill Craven will discuss David Byrne's *American Utopia*, and how it reads as a text, and transforms our views of the experience of going to a "Broadway show." Dominic Ording will discuss how language and texts and selves are banned in the contemporary educational system.

Dominic Ording, Millersville University of Pennsylvania, "Banned"

My paper "Banned" discusses what books are banned and why; how language used in the K-12 and college classrooms is monitored and sometimes banned; and how the Breedlove family in Toni Morrison's "The Bluest Eye" (a book often banned) are banned by society and ban themselves from existence.

Jill Craven, Millersville University, "Who's Got a Match? Burning Down the House with David Byrne"

Accepting the challenge to think differently can broaden the possibilities for our future, but we need to be open to doing the work. By structuring an inspiring narrative arc in stage patter, invoking unity in set design and choreography, challenging that unity in lyrics, and overcoming those challenges through groove and harmonies, *American Utopia* becomes a journey that invites its participants to change their minds—both literally and figuratively. David Byrne models an aspirational utopia where we understand the impact and implied hierarchies of ossified structures, where we embrace new forms and unify into a community to build something meaningful (like America), where we respect the contributions of all community members and recognize that everyone can grow, and where we embrace inclusion and develop empathy to forge meaningful human connections.

Session VIII 4:30-6:00

8.A. Speculation in Time and Space (Colonial East)

Robert Wood, University of California, Irvine, "The Mediocre Hobbyists of the Enterprise: *Star Trek*, Leisure, and Utopia"

One of the most significant shifts in *Star Trek: The Next Generation* is the introduction of elements of daily life to the show. It holds on to the episodic nature of the original series but incorporates the private lives of the crew into the show. We're given spaces of leisure in the form of ten forward and the holodeck, and we follow the crew as they play the trombone, put

on theatrical works, learn to paint, and learn forms of Klingon martial arts. These day-to-day activities create an illusion of narrative continuity. The practices create a sense of life going on off screen, of the viewer entering and exiting the ongoing daily lives of these characters. But more significantly, those elements contribute to the utopian elements of the narrative, framing the Federation as an institution that creates spaces for creativity and self-discovery. Those leisure activities take the form of creative activities that allow for the crew members to explore interests dramatically outside their jobs and activities that they are often not very good at, whether in the form of Commander Riker's missed trombone solos or Data's dreadful poetry. That emphasis on self-exploration centers the utopian project of *Star Trek* on a sort of individual discovery of the self, the development of what it means to be human. My plan is to explore this utopian element of the show and its commitment to a deeply individualized freedom that often contrasts with the collectivist elements of the show.

Jenni Halpin, Savannah State University, "'Meanwhile' as 'Otherwise': Making the Past and Future in *Copenhagen*"

An iterative imagining of what might have happened when Werner Heisenberg met with Margrethe and Niels Bohr in September 1941, Michael Frayn's *Copenhagen* sets its characters at work to make a shared past that will allow the world to linger in what Werner describes as "this most precious meanwhile" in his final speech of the play. The great threat to this in-between time is what Elaine Scarry has described as "thermonuclear monarchy"—a political and technological condition enabled by the nuclear weapons the 1941 meeting notoriously failed to prevent. As ghosts, Margrethe, Niels, and Werner find themselves imagining not only different actions and choices but different motivations for one another; they are, as Jacques Derrida would ask, taking time to listen to ghosts. This imagining—imagining otherwise as Emmanuel Levinas might have it—challenges each of their (often faulty) recollections and moreover provokes changes that make themselves become otherwise than they had been in 1941. As they reenact—and differently enact—the meeting, I argue that they are rejecting historical possibilities and realities in favor of making possible a meeting that preserves their friendship and that such preservation is a precursor to preserving the world.

Thomas Horan, The Citadel, "The Surprisingly Secular Patriarchy in Bina Shah's *Before She Sleeps*"

Recent feminist dystopian fiction tends to emphasize the sociopolitical importance of religion, either through theocratic repression and/or as an engine of resistance. Bina Shah's *Before She Sleeps* challenges this paradigm of religious significance, reducing the Abrahamic religions to one insignificant sect: "[T]he three religions that had merged into one still have their followers, but we regard them as eccentrics now that science has become our way of life.... They're too insignificant to be counted anyway" (25). Shah, like H.G. Wells, suggests that religion will atrophy swiftly, since the narrative transpires roughly fifty years from now in the ecofriendly, West Asian Green City that emerges following nuclear war. This relegation of organized religion to the periphery also recalls the secular feminist speculative fiction of the nineteen seventies. Is this collapse of monotheism in *Before She Sleeps* a mere plot point or a serious forecast? The nuclear fallout catalyzes a virulent strain of cervical cancer that decimates the female population. Does this imply that in a world where women constitute a

superminority, the sexism fueling much institutional religion—and thus belief itself—becomes unnecessary to the patriarchy? Or is the rich cultural legacy of religion a liability in a technologically advanced society that believes its survival depends on disavowing the past? My analysis will explore such aspects of Shah’s surprising portrayal of a secular near future.

8.B. Global Migrancy (Colonial West)

Chair: Tricia Reagan, Randolph-Macon College

Jacqueline Shea, Arizona State University, “Harmonious Encounters: Cross-Cultural Contact and Creation in the Borderlands”

The U.S-Mexico border region is a place where identities and nations both clash and converge. In fact, despite the extreme contention that colors the mainstream portrayal of border towns, there is another reality that remains largely unpublicized: one where people grow up toeing the line between Mexico and America, Mexican and American, and, linguistically, Spanish and English. This mixing of what many would call “essential” aspects of reality and identity challenges the claim that each and any of these—nationhood, race, and language, respectively—contain a pure “essence” that can be clearly distinguished from one another. When these so-called “essences” come into contact, they tend to create something new that blends elements from each “essence” marker, thus implying their “essences” are actually “constructions.” This presentation, therefore, seeks to explore what has been and can be created when these constructions come into contact, both personally and interpersonally, on the U.S-Mexico border, through exploring 1) the history and results of contact between each binary construction and 2) the role that music as a mode of communication can play in the facilitation and interpretation of their resulting creations. This analysis will provide the framework and context for a bilingual mashup of American and Chican@ folk music that I will share.

Tricia Reagan, Randolph-Macon College, “All that Glitters is Not Gold: The Jaula de Oro (Golden Cage) as a Dystopian Symbol in Migrant Narratives”

The description of the United States as a Golden cage is abundant in migrant narratives. Artists, composers, singers, directors, and activists alike have employed the metaphor of la jaula de oro, or the golden cage, to describe the situation of undocumented immigrants in the United States from at least the 1980s to the present day. The United States promises a utopia: riches, prosperity, and the dream of a better life to all that enter the country, but this promise, instead, becomes a trap, particularly for the undocumented immigrant who faces difficulties in every aspect of life, including fear of police detention and deportation, difficulty in obtaining work, cultural and familial disintegration, nostalgia for their country of origin, lack of health insurance, lack of access to public resources and higher education, and even driving privileges. For undocumented immigrants, the so-called “American Dream” becomes an impossible reality, a dystopia and although opportunity abounds, the immigrant is trapped by the United States. This study will provide a historical overview of the image of a golden cage as well as analyze its significance in 3 films, 4 songs and multiple pieces of artwork that use

the image to represent that all that glitters is NOT gold in particular in U.S. migrant narratives.

SATURDAY

Session IX 8:15-9:45

9. A. Utopian Themes in Michael Cummings, *Children's Voices in Politics* (Peter Lang, 2020) (Colonial East)

Robust democracy remains a utopian vision in formally democratic societies, partly because the voices of the youngest third of their people are officially excluded. As adult officials fail to address the most pressing issues of our times—including climate change, gun control, Black Lives Matter, the rights of LBGTQIA+ persons, and the defense of democracy itself—activist children, tweens, teens, and young adults are taking matters into their own hands while gaining adult allies. Adultist disenfranchisement is arbitrary, capricious, and unjust, its rationale mirroring historical reasons for preventing poor people, people of color, and women from voting: alleged political immaturity, irresponsibility, and incapacity. In the meantime, young activists have found creative ways to make their voices heard, as in the cases of Nobel nominee Craig Kielburger (Founder of *Free the Children*), Nobel winner Malala Yousafzai (on girls' rights), Nobel nominee Greta Thunberg (on climate change), and Parkland survivor Emma Gonzalez (on gun control). The 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, signed on to by all the functioning governments in the world, has spawned a generation of child and youth activism, significant policy changes, and an explosion of scholarship on children's rights, voice, engagement, and empowerment. This roundtable will address the intersectionality of marginalization by age, race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability; youth-elder mentoring and alliances; multiple paths to youth empowerment including media and the arts; and adult “apathy” as a lifelong toxic effect of the official silencing of our voices during the most formative years of our lives.

Chair: Lyman Tower Sargent, University of Missouri, St. Louis

Participants:

Michael Cummings, University of Colorado Denver

Hoda Zaki, Hood College

Philip Wegner, University of Florida

9. B. Despair, Hope, and Facing the Darkness (Colonial West)

David Schappert, King's College (PA), "East of Utopia—Philip K Dick's Utopian-Adjacent Spaces"

Although we usually think of dystopian spaces in the work of Dick (San Francisco in *Do Androids Dream* or the depopulated Africa of *Man in the High Castle*, there are clearly also utopias, although they aren't the kinds we usually think of. There aren't utopian societies, but rather empty or sparsely populated utopian spaces. The collapse of society provides for the catalyst for some of these spaces with the hope (but maybe not the desire) for true Utopias. We see a devastated Earth turned into an unspoiled garden, occupied by the privileged few (*The Penultimate Truth*) or just by Robots ["The Defenders,"], in both cases humanity relegated to toiling underground while waiting for a future when the earth would be detoxified. Much of *The Unteleported Man* is an attempt to prove that one-way transport to a new Eden is a scam. Whether or not there is a utopia on the other side of *The Crack in Space* is the mystery this novel needs to solve. See Jeffersonburg, the norm settlement in *Clans of the Alphane Moon*, with a population of one, with a hope that it will expand to 2, even while surrounded by communities of depressives, schizophrenics, paranoids, etc. This is a strange Eden but not as strange as "Strange Eden," a story from 1954 where idyll turns to horror. Finally, although the word utopia doesn't appear the Exegesis, there are references to paradise. We'll briefly consider how this "Ecospheric Park" reaffirms his imagine of a pastoral Utopia.

Tyler Eyster, Miami University, "Spectral Addicts and Storied Future: The Narratology and Ontology of Addiction in the Modern Dystopia"

Whether it be in productions like *Breaking Bad* and *Narcos*, data from world governments and NGOs on ever-growing numbers of substance abuse diagnoses, or media coverage of a national opioid crisis, the specter of addiction looms large in the American consciousness. Given this attention to addiction and the overall popularity of literary dystopias, it seems inevitable that we see scholarship paying dedicated attention to their intersection. And yet, literary analyses of addiction have largely focused on impacts in narrative structure and style, the societal stigmatization of the addict, and/or questions of agency/selfhood (Zieger 2007, Ronell 2004, Melley 2000). Similarly, treatments of addiction within the field of utopian studies overwhelmingly examine addiction in/across a body of work(s) produced by a single author (Harper 2021, Richard 2008, Burling 2005). Thus, there seems to be little to no extant criticism aimed at producing a critical lexicon of addiction within utopian/dystopian narratives. Through close readings of pivotal portraits of addiction in dystopian narratives such as Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*, and Bong Joon Ho's *Snowpiercer*, this paper/presentation will offer an overview of the narratological and ontological relevance of addiction across utopian sub-genres, highlighting the spectral and precarious dimensions of this key conceptual metaphor. In particular, placing these narratives in conversation with ontologically destabilizing frameworks—namely Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's notion of "precarity," Stacy Alaimo's "transcorporeality," and Jasbir Puar's recent redefinition of the concept of "debility"—will allow for a building towards the aforementioned lexicon.

Diana Palardy, Youngstown State University, “Isolating the Prophet: The Cassandra Curse in Spanish Environmental Apocalyptic Literature”

The figure of Cassandra, cursed by Apollo to become a prophet of doom whose accurate warnings are ignored by all, looms large in environmental discourses. The “prophet” in contemporary Spanish environmental apocalyptic literature is often marginalized in a way that is evocative of the inclination to feminize ecological discourses for the purpose of dismissing them. Regardless of the actual biological gender, the figure of the prophet is subjected to a form of gaslighting by all those who oppose their environmental movement, thus mirroring the psychological phenomenon of the Cassandra Complex. These prophets are often disparaged by their antagonists as hysterical, histrionic, hyperbolic, and, on occasion, duplicitous. Cassandra’s predictions were ignored for several reasons: her prophecies were enigmatic, they required individuals to completely change their world view, the prophet was considered an outsider, and the predictions seemed distant and far off. The purpose of this investigation is to explore the degree to which these reasons factor into the reception of the prophet’s message in Spanish environmental apocalyptic literature. Furthermore, this presentation will examine the extent to which environmental discourses have been feminized in these texts, thus leading to the marginalization and isolation of the prophet.

Session X 10:00-11:30

10. A. African American Literature and Cultural Remaking (Colonial East)

Edward K. Chan, Waseda University, and Patricia Ventura, Spelman College, “Black Lives Matter Utopian Literature”

Recent scholarship has opened up discussions of race in utopian studies, but it is perhaps in the Black Lives Matter (BLM) era that race becomes a more common focus for utopian frameworks of analysis of race-conscious literary texts and for the growth of utopian and dystopian literature to center race. In this paper, we discuss a wave of literature explicitly challenging white supremacy that blossomed in the BLM era as the movement reshaped the popular discourse around white supremacy. If BLM formed in 2013 as a hashtag and statement against American law enforcement and the judicial system that effectively endorses the killing of Black people, it quickly grew into a central organizing force and its impact has rewritten the discourse around white supremacy and culture. We use the imbrication of BLM and utopia as a framework and organizing principle to examine selections from texts such as *Octavia’s Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements* (2015), Ta-Nehisi Coates’ memoir/letter to his son *Between the World and Me* (2015), Matt Ruff’s novel *Lovecraft Country* (2016), and the post-Trump short story collections *Global Dystopias* (2017), *A People’s Future of the United States* (2019), and *The Dystopian States of America* (2020). Through this analysis we hope to take seriously the conference theme of remaking utopian studies to more consistently center issues of race in ways that will make the field speak to the profound cultural struggles of our current moment.

John Mark Robison, University of Florida, “Money, Utopia, and the Politics of Disgust in Toni Morrison's *Tar Baby*”

This paper considers the function of money in Toni Morrison's *Tar Baby* as an object of utopian desire and disgust. Throughout the novel, characters take differing positions on the role of money in black liberation. Michael Street, the young white socialist, promotes an escape from white exploitation and the money economy through a return to barter. In contrast, Son, the novel's black protagonist, romanticizes currency in his fixation on his “original dime.” He presents his all-black hometown, Eloë, as a utopian space of unalienated labor and exchange. Jadine, Son's love interest, condemns this view as naïve, as she embraces both the monetary economy and whiteness. The novel thus centers on two discourses of disgust: Son's disgust for the coprophilic impulses of capitalism and Jadine's disgust at the misogynistic traditions of Eloë. The inability to span the gap between these two forms of disgust dooms their love. While that love initially manifests a utopian impulse, this break leaves the novel without a clear image of what an alternate future might look like. I read this break not as the novel's failure but rather as Morrison's diagnosis of the political paralysis on the left which enables the emerging neoliberal order, figured in the novel's discussion of welfare.

10. B. Global Neoliberalism and the British Dystopia I (Colonial West)

Chair: Richard Bodek, College of Charleston

Richard Bodek, College of Charleston, “James Bond & the Post-War Tory Anti-Utopia”

Emerging victorious from WWII, seemingly with its great-power status intact, the United Kingdom quickly encountered a series of setbacks that radically altered its global position. Indian Independence effectively ended the empire's existence. Food rationing and relative poverty would continue until 1954. Many if not most studies of utopianism at this moment focus on the emergence of the welfare state in Great Britain, a kind of “building from the ashes” that was designed to reorient Britain for a future very different from the previous half century. Often ignored is the welfare state's contemporary counter-utopia, a counter-utopia that rejected cooperation for ruthlessness, individualism, and masculinity that could make a virtue of Britain's relative poverty, one that could look at the ashes with cool disdain. Perhaps the preeminent example of this kind of thinking is Ian Fleming's agent 007, James Bond. This paper will examine the first four Bond novels. In these works, Fleming developed a character who modeled the cynical, calculating, almost bloodless traits necessary for Britain's rebirth in a new, seemingly bipolar world. The paper's emphasis will not be on the plots but on the semi-fictional world in which they occur and the very conservative characteristics necessary for Britain to survive, if not thrive, in it.

Amanda Rose, University of Florida, “Relational Space as a Means to Collectivity: The Critical Dystopia of J.G. Ballard's *The Day of Creation*”

My paper examines the ways J.G. Ballard's *The Day of Creation* (1987) calls attention to the original spatial challenges and possibilities that arise in the 1980s. If Ballard's fictions in the 1960s and 1970s use surrealist techniques to project an inner schizophrenic psyche onto an external landscape, *The Day of Creation*, in both its form and content, turns attention to manner in which individuals shape external space and that space in turn impacts on an individual's inner reality. The novel thereby provides readers with a richer representation of the complex entanglements across time and space of humans with their environments. *The Day of Creation* is a post-disaster dystopia that explores the individual's relationships to an imminent environmental crisis. Through his narrative, Ballard unveils the complex dynamics which result in the real-world emergence of the new historical era we now call the Anthropocene. While on first glance it appears as if Ballard's earlier optimism for a world-yet-to-come has vanished, I ultimately argue that *The Day of Creation* is a form of what Tom Moylan calls a "critical dystopia," revealing utopian possibilities available to contemporary readers in their seemingly dystopian present situation.

10. C. Teaching Utopia (Citadel North)

Chair: Claire Curtis

Peter Sands, UW-Milwaukee, "Slowtopia"

Discussion of the relationships between and among the Slow Movement and utopia, particularly in the classroom.

Briana McGinnis, College of Charleston, Teaching Radical Possibility in Hopeless Times

This paper discusses the experience of teaching a course on anarchism in 2021, during a time heavily marked by anxiety and an uncertain future. It focuses particularly on the tensions between two recurring themes in student writing and discussion: hope and a skeptical fixation on infeasibility. I discuss strategies for exploring and challenging both of these themes, and the role of the instructor in facilitating intellectual risk-taking.

Session XI 1:45-3:15

11.A Queer and Intersectional Imaginings (Colonial East)

Aaron Hammes, John Jay College, "A Pyramid of Queer and Trans Counter Utopias"

It has been almost twenty years since Lee Edelman's *No Future* manifesto emerged as a shot across the bow of the cis/heteronormative future of The Child, and nearly fifteen since José Esteban Muñoz's ruminations on queer futurity in *Cruising Utopia*. More recently, Virignie Despentes writes of former paramour Paul B Preciado's desire for a "utopian gender," adding another wrinkle to the prospects for sex-gender dissidents to imagine a future in which their

lives and livelihoods escape state surveillance, phobic publics, and legal obstacles to self-determination. This presentation attempts to craft a utopian pyramid, first comparing the rhetorics of *No Future*, *Cruising Utopia*, and Preciado's *Apartment on Uranus* for some versions of still-emergent and nascent utopian knowledge projects. Then, another triangle, this one of utopian political projects: police/prison abolition, sex work decriminalization/destigmatization, and visions of queer/trans liberation. I seek to wonder with the other gathered utopians: what are the shared discursive strategies and prospects for demanding everything as curative for legislative and destigmatizing "victories" which are so quickly and easily revoked? How do struggles for queer and trans liberation and minoritarian self-determination necessarily implicate anti-carceral logics, not least around the highly sex-gendered, classed, and racialized labor of the sex trades? Finally, how do abolitionist logics of anti-reformist reform, transformative justice, and safety over security intertwine the queer and queered futures gestured toward, imagined by, and divined from Edelman, Muñoz, and Preciado?

Josephine Holland, University of Richmond, "Emerging Online Community Building, World-Making, and the Utopian Impulse in Queer Speculative Podcasts"

This paper examines the "queer processes" of producing new media speculative fiction and the online community building that surrounds the creation process. There is something creatively rich in this intersection of speculation, internet-based new media, and queer content, that sparks a utopian impulse. This utopian impulse materializes in the radically queer imagined worlds and in the simultaneous vibrant queer online community formation. Engaging in and with queer worldmaking, disidentification, and alternative futurisms turn imaginative practices into resistant ones: you cannot overturn oppressive systems if you cannot imagine a world without them. Queer speculative podcasts not only imagine queer utopian worlds but generate them in online community spaces. In examining several queer speculative podcasts using digital humanities methods and subsequent critical analysis, I will identify the actual narrative touchstones and queer collaborative creative processes that encourage a community response of queer identity formation in an emerging virtual "third space." While the particular intersection of these topics does not have a significant previous scholarship, this research is grounded in the work of José Esteban Muñoz, Alexis Lothian, and Andrew Bottomley, and will draw from the fields of queer theory, speculative studies and science fiction studies, fan studies, internet studies, and utopian studies. Overall, this work attempts to locate the space between the speculative "no place" of abstract utopias, the educated hope and "here and now" of concrete utopias, and the "then and there" queer futurity of Muñoz within the context of contemporary online culture and media.

11. B. Solarpunk Futures: A Workshop for Utopian Remembrance (Colonial West)

Solarpunk Futures: A Workshop for Utopian Remembrance utilizes the artist's table-top game, *Solarpunk Futures*, to engage attendees of the 2022 Society for Utopian Conference in a process of visionary social storytelling around the collective struggle required to win our utopia. The game employs backcasting in a "Festival of Remembrance," whereby *Assemblies for the Future*

(groups of 1-8 players) play for 45 minutes from the perspective of a future utopia in which they collectively “remember” how their *Ancestors* utilized *Tools* and *Values* to overcome a real-world *Challenge*. *Assemblies* will report back on the form of their utopian scenarios, insights gained along the way, and how their experiences might inform their present-day actions.

11.C. Utopian Effects/Dystopian Pleasures: A Roundtable Discussion (Citadel South)

This panel discussion will consider the insights and impact of Peter Fitting’s utopian scholarship, to mark last year’s publication of *Utopian Effects, Dystopian Pleasures*, vol. 21 in the Ralahine Utopian Studies Series. In this collection of essays written over a span of three decades (1979-2009), Fitting touches on an impressive range of utopian topics: from gender politics, urban planning, cinema, and technology to right-wing utopias, ideological closure, and the crucial question of how to transform utopian visions into social practice. Together, these writings provide an unprecedented glimpse into the changing currents of utopian thought and expression, as well as the formation of both Utopian and Science Fiction Studies as scholarly fields in their own right, developments in which Fitting has been instrumental.

Chair: Jennifer Wagner-Lawlor

Participants:

Peter Fitting, University of Toronto

Lyman Tower Sargent, University of Missouri-St. Louis

Jennifer Wagner-Lawlor, Penn State University

Peter Marks, University of Sydney

Session XII 3:30-4:45

12.A. Nourishing Utopia (Colonial East)

Darrell Varga, NSCAD University (Nova Scotia College of Art and Design), “Making Bread and Telling Stories: *Bread in the Bones*”

Bertolt Brecht insisted that before we can act politically, we need a full stomach since social control stems from control over the food system. Hunger breeds desperation, but a full stomach can lead just as much to apathy as to progressive action. The cliché: “an army runs on its stomach” has also been said of a motion picture crew, but bread feeds a fascist army just as well as it feeds the counter-revolutionary forces, and the same can be said for art and artists. What, then, do we do with the loaf of bread? Eat it, certainly, but can it also nurture a perspective on

life and love, on loss and struggle? Released in 2020, my feature documentary film *Bread in the Bones*, takes the simple loaf of bread as a starting point for storytelling and with the question of how bread, from The French Revolution to the Arab Spring, has been a witness, if not a catalyst, to movements for social change. This simple food, a mix of flour, water, and salt, provides nourishment for the body and also feeds our collective desire for a connection to culture and community. In the experience of these stories, we are invited to contemplate our relationship to food and to each other, and that contemplation provides the potential for action. This conference presentation examines these ideas through a discussion of the making of this film, illustrated with excerpts from the project. To see the trailer for the film: <https://vimeo.com/563748915>

Victoria Wolcott, University of Buffalo, “Abundance in a Time of Scarcity: Father Divine’s Peace Mission and Utopian Solutions to Economic Crises”

Father Divine’s Peace Mission was the most successful utopian community in twentieth-century America. During the devastating economic crisis of the Great Depression the Peace Mission offered its followers and beleaguered city dwellers free lavish banquets and low-cost goods at cooperative stores. By the late 1930s the Peace Mission had become the largest realty holder in Harlem and had extensions in twenty-six states. In its rural and coastal resorts Black and white vacationers could rest and relax in interracial settings for a minimal fee. And Divinites boasted of their good mental and physical health as they abstained from alcohol and cigarettes, had access to bountiful healthy food, and no longer feared poverty and oppression. A decade later, as the United States emerged from World War II a more prosperous and powerful nation, the Father Divine movement had considerably less appeal and began a slow decline over the course of the next few decades. In 2022 many of us are reconsidering the importance of utopian thinking and practice as we navigate multiple crises of disease, war, climate change, and racial inequality. This is an opportune moment to consider how the Great Depression offered an opening for Father Divine’s utopian experiment, as well as socialist communities such as California’s Utopian Society of America. The unmaking of the political, social, and economic world during the 1930s allowed Divinites the opportunity to remake a new world. A world of abundance in the midst of scarcity.

12.B. Utopia and Protest in Chile (Colonial West)

Daniel Sarkela, University of Florida, “La vida volverá- reconstructing Chilean Utopia”

In the wake of several months of social mobilization and protests in Chile, the Covid-19 pandemic put a halt to all demonstrations due to the public health risks and high infection rates. The protests sought to end police brutality, economic inequality, and rewrite any policies instituted by the Pinochet dictatorship 30 years earlier. These aims were an attempt to create a new and just society, free from the past’s remnants of injustice and corruption. While the physical gatherings had taken a hiatus, the fight carried on in the digital sphere as artists and musicians continued to make creative works dedicated to bettering society and working towards a brighter future. Chilean music group “Illapu” is no stranger to protest music and has been active since the Salvador Allende years before the 1973 coup. In June of 2021, the group released a single titled “La vida volverá” (Life will return) to spread their hopeful optimism in

the face of the pandemic, promising a better tomorrow. This paper will use an interdisciplinary approach using musical analysis, social movement theory and grounded utopian movement theory to analyze this song within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as the broader scope of Chile's history. The song is a manifestation of an attempted remaking of the utopia dreamed of by the Allende administration after the efforts of the Pinochet dictatorship to unmake their policies.

Eunice Rojas, Furman University, "Until Dignity Becomes Tradition: The Dawn of a New Utopia in the Songs of Chile's 2019 Social Upheaval"

On October 18, 2019, simmering student protests in Chile over a modest metro fare hike boiled over into a massive social upheaval that resulted in the destruction of public transit stations, burning street barricades, and violent confrontations between protesters and police. The protests quickly evolved into much broader critiques of social inequities attributed to the effects of the neoliberal economic system installed under the 1973-1990 Augusto Pinochet dictatorship and President Sebastián Piñera's heavy-handed management of the crisis. Thirty years earlier Pinochet's 1973 coup had ended the government of Salvador Allende, the world's first democratically-elected Marxist. Once in power, Pinochet rolled back Allende's socialist program and brought in a set of Chilean economists educated under Milton Friedman to transform the nation's economy. Often touted as the "Chilean Miracle," the nation's free market economy and its privatization of education, health care, pensions, and natural resources was identified by many in the 2019 protests as the root cause of systemic social inequalities. Within days of the start of the upheaval, social media, street art, and songs worked to spread messages that equated Piñera with Pinochet and the neoliberal system as lingering vestiges of a dictatorship that had ended nearly three decades before. In their work on religion and politics in Latin America, Horacio Cerutti and Carlos Mondragón posit the idea of utopia as a space of social resistance. Similarly, Marxist-Humanist Eugene Gogol begins his dialectical examination of the concept of utopia within Latin American social movements by drawing on Gustavo Gutiérrez's liberation theology definition of utopia "as a historically rooted denunciation of the present that compels action toward a future new society." This paper examines songs written, recorded, and released during the 2019 social upheaval that present a utopic conception of Chilean protesters denouncing the social conditions brought about by a government committed to neoliberalism. The condemnation is accompanied by the hope of ushering in a future new society based on the idea of dignity. The songs examined include "30 pesos" by Desmak, "Soy dignidad" by Trez3, "Negro matapacos" by Sr. Soya, and the 2019 version of Víctor Jara's "El derecho de vivir en paz," with lyrics rewritten for the social crisis by many of Chile's contemporary pop artists.

Session XIII 5:00-6:30

13. A. Global Neoliberalism and the British Dystopia II (Colonial East)

Eric Smith, The University of Alabama in Huntsville, "Future Perfect and the Vanishing Present: 'The Great Circularity' and Anti-Utopianism in Mukherjee's *The Lives of Others*"

In a manner the New York Times compares to Tolstoy, Neel Mukherjee's Booker Prize short-listed *The Lives of Others* (2014) executes an expansive and unsparing critical anatomy of late twentieth-century Indian social conflict anchored by the extended family saga. If Tolstoy aligns with the traditional patriarchal family, Mukherjee's commodious multi-generational tale seems, as Nivedita Majumdar observes, "invested in exposing a particularly dark underside of familial life." Majumdar adds, "Commonplace matters of illicit romance, sibling rivalry, maternal broken hearts, envious and plotting sisters-in-law, deceitful brothers, and anguished children constitute the multigenerational saga"—a litany to which I would add exploitation, rape, fraud, theft, false incrimination, vengeance murder, suicide, sadism, and coprophilia. The limitation of Mukherjee's family is therefore less to be found in any Tolstoian sentimentality than in the emphatic suggestion that a natural predisposition to corruption, frangibility, and moral degradation informs and fatally restrains any effort to transcend these innate limitations, which, like the original sins of inheritance, are revisited upon one generation after another. This voiding of the present as a space of possibility is consistently reinforced by the narrative's use of the future perfect tense and the recurrent theme of what the Naxalite revolutionary, Supratik, calls "The Great Circularity," a cosmic and moral gravitational field that arrests temporality and nullifies the labors of history. Considering these features in relation to what I identify as the novel's Orwellian hypotext, I argue that the internationally celebrated *The Lives of Others* is a novel with both naturalist and distinctly anti-utopian proclivities.

Phillip Wegner, University of Florida, "A Future Worthy of Her Spirit: Neoliberal Dystopia in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*"

In an interview following the publication of *Klara and the Sun* (2021), Nobel laureate Kazuo Ishiguro observes that "he is unusual among his literary contemporaries in having attended a state grammar school and one of the then-new campus universities." This observation comes in the midst of a discussion of "literary silos" and especially the persistent distinction between serious literary and genre fiction. Ishiguro's background gives him a sharp eye to the importance of education. Moreover, the inequities of class stratification have long been central in his work. In this paper, I explore the dystopian vision of the university in *Klara and the Sun*. All of Ishiguro's most well-known novels—*The Remains of the Day* (1988), *Never Let Me Go* (2005), and *Klara and the Sun*—can be read as dystopias, located respectively in the past, an alternate present, and the near future. All three deploy a first-person perspective to cognitively estrange the realities of our neoliberal world. Together these three novels elaborate a critical portrait of the undermining of the mechanisms of class mobility in the post-WWII welfare state and the rise of a stratified global society. In particular, Ishiguro focuses in *Klara and the Sun* on the devastating effects on families, parents, and children, as well as society as a whole, of the dismantling in our present of one of the greatest achievements of the post-war dispensation: the modern university. In the end, Ishiguro shows how this development represents a profound threat to the very future of democracy itself.

13.B. First Book Panel (Colonial West)

The First Book Celebration Roundtable brings together first-time authors of books in the field of utopian studies. It serves as a means of celebration of a milestone, as well as facilitates a conversation among roundtable members and their audience on current subjects in book-length inquiries in the field. In this, the first annual First Book Celebration Roundtable, the discipline overwhelmingly represented is literary studies. All three roundtable members are literary studies scholars who investigate the utopian (or dystopian) impulse in narrative in a variety of ways and during a variety of historical periods. For instance, Daniel Dimassa traces the influence of Dante on Germanic romantic writing, both of which – Dante and the German romantics – drew upon utopian ideals to create a mythology of German cultural identity. Similarly, Stephanie Peebles Tavera excavates how, later in the century and across the pond, the utopian impulse would also inform women writers of medical fiction in their attempt to simultaneously critique medico-legal narratives of the female body and offer an alternative history and practice of women’s reproductive health. Dimassa’s and Peebles Tavera’s findings may not be wholly surprising given the popularity of utopianism throughout the long nineteenth century. Rounding out the discussion is Anne Stewart’s study of the “angry planet” in decolonial and dystopian literature, which explores how a long-term commitment to any political imaginary, whether cultural, medical, or industrial, can be dangerous. Whether the utopian impulse propels German romanticists, nineteenth-century American writers, or contemporary authors of environmental literature, it is clear that the act of writing to create cultural change hinges upon utopianism’s penchant for hope as well as finds utopianism’s narrative structure of critique and reform as a useful tool for projects of identity formation.

Daniel Dimassa, *Dante in Deutschland: An Itinerary of Romantic Myth* (Bucknell 2022), <https://www.rutgersuniversitypress.org/bucknell/dante-in-deutschland/9781684484188/>

Stephanie Peebles Tavera, Author of *(P)rescription Narratives: Feminist Medical Fiction and the Failure of American Censorship* (Edinburgh UP, 2022), <https://edinburghuniversitypress.com/book-p-rescription-narratives.html>

Anne Stewart, *Angry Planet: Decolonial Fiction and the American Third World* (University of Minnesota Press, 2022), <https://www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/books/angry-planet>

