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Papers

Name: Verena Adamik, University of Potsdam, Germany

Paper Title: Another Place: African American Utopianism at the Turn of the 20th Century

Abstract: To this day, European/European descendant-authors dominate utopian literature in the Anglophone world. To put it bluntly, the utopian genre is White; a bias not surprising considering that the literary tradition is closely tied to European imperialism (cf. Balasopoulos; Knapp).

Following scholars that have sought to define and find postcolonial utopias (cf. Ahmad; Pordzik), this paper focuses on the linkage of utopia, racism, and nationalism in works by African-American authors at the turn of the twentieth century. Still often overlooked, the authors Sutton E. Griggs, Pauline Hopkins, and W.E.B. Du Bois produced fiction that engages strongly with the utopian genre, seeking visions of a place in which African-American futures can be imagined. In this quest, they often challenge and disrupt generic conventions, and the political and cultural system and convictions of the USA; the nation is left behind, torn apart, or completely reworked, in order to come up with another place outside of their dystopian (cf. Claeys) environment—the memories of slavery and the horrors of life under Jim Crow. Yet, as this paper will argue, they are critical of their own quests, and self-consciously comment on the limits that are imposed on their writing by the historical realities as well as the ideological heritage of the genre that they call upon, a tradition that will be shown to continue in African American literature in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s.

Panel: 6.1: African and African American Utopianism

Name: Jonathan Alexander, University of California, Irvine

Paper Title: Desiring America: David Wajnarowic and Utopian Practice

Abstract: David Wajnarowicz's dystopic visions of America, born largely out of his encounters in the 1980s with hostility and inaction in the face of the AIDS crisis, are well-documented in his writings and art. Wajnarowicz's work might offer an example of someone who generated a great deal of activist art out of his dystopian view of a culture and political moment that actively denied the claims of humanity of queer subjects. But Wajnarowicz's collage aesthetic also suggests a practice of assemblage that revisions monocultural America to make room for plurality and dissent as utopian horizon. His use of the poet Arthur Rimbaud's head on the bodies of street people and hustlers offered an active way to imagine the poetic and transformative possibilities lurking within the margins. In this presentation, I use Ernst Bloch's notion of "cultural surplus," the value of excess content that cannot be contained in the service of bourgeois ideology, to explore Wajnarowicz's collages as utopian practice. I also consider the contemporary resurgence of interest in Wajnarowicz's work, including three major retrospective exhibitions in New York this summer (2018). Part of that interest lies in a broader curiosity about late 20th-century queer activism and AIDS nostalgia. But I also will consider interviews with curators to understand the

kairotic investment in recovering this writer and artist for contemporary audiences—both as a figure for a collective queer historical imaginary as well as a possible model for working within revived structures of nationalism and conservative culture building.

Panel: 7.3: Utopia as Practice

Name: Musab Bajaber, King Saud University

Paper Title: Should I NOT call it “Arabian Utopian Science Fiction?” Or Should I, and Let the Genie Take Me to Waq Waq Planet ?

Abstract: This paper brings about my initial conclusions of defining and identifying Arabic utopian science fiction, its characteristics, and influence on the Arabic intellectual and literary scene. Through my survey of more than two hundred science fiction works, this paper argues that science fiction in Arabic has mainly gone through stages and challenges similar to what its counterpart in English has gone through. It differs, however, in that it has been mostly dependent on scientific ideas perpetuated and entertained in the West (e.g. space exploration) rather than the Arab World. This dependency has developed ambivalence—within both the writers and readers—towards the genre and steered Arabic utopian science fiction more into vividly serving anti-colonial, postcolonial, and nationalist themes.

Unlike many of its postcolonial counterparts, Utopian Arabic Science Fiction has been mostly under the radar of both utopian and science fiction critics. This paper will hopefully bring it into focus and open up discussions about its development and prospects.

Panel: 5.3: Colonial and Postcolonial Utopianism

Name: Antonis Balasopoulos, University of Cyprus

Paper Title: Between Utopia and History: The Meta-Utopia of Joseph Conrad’s *Nostromo*

Abstract: Gary Saul Morson’s *The Boundaries of Genre* has offered us a generic category that complicates the binary or, in other versions, tripartite schema of utopia, anti-utopia and dystopia: the category of “meta-utopia”, which Morson defines in terms of the setting up of an inconclusive dialogue between “utopian faith and anti-utopian skepticism” (36). Morson’s study focuses on Dostoevsky’s *Diary of a Writer*, while also engaging with H.G Wells’s *A Modern Utopia* as instances of meta-utopian features. In this paper, I will consider the masterpiece of Wells’s contemporary and interlocutor, Joseph Conrad, *Nostromo* (1904), as a vital meta-utopian text.

Divided into three sections, *Nostromo* constitutes a kaleidoscopic compendium of a series of utopian visions sedimented from different moments of the nineteenth century and coming into contact in the imaginary country of Costaguana: Giorgio Viola’s democratic-populist Garibaldinism, with its nostalgia for heroic nation-building, fraternity and volunteerism; Charles Gould’s pragmatic meliorism, his “idealistic view of success” (*Nostromo*, 68) and in “material interests” as means of effecting progressive social change; the idealistic investment of a cultured local aristocracy (especially Don José Avellanos) in the ideas of an enlightened and stable social order that could replace a history of turmoil and chaos in the Republic. The plot of *Nostromo*, echoing Marx and Nietzsche at once, subjects them all to the corrosion of historical actuality, dramatizing the frustration of any and all investments in the reducibility of history to conscious aspiration and intentional action. At the same time, however, and most characteristically in its highly utopian portrayal (in the novel’s third section) of a future and apparently prosperous and stable Sulaco that has been largely engendered by the interplay between individually defeated visions, *Nostromo* turns the tables on its own skepticism, producing a richly ambiguous and inconclusive portrayal of the dialectic between utopia and history, subjective desire and the complex mechanisms of actual social change.

Panel: 6.4: Utopias in Marx, Marxism, and Marxians

Name: Sarah Panlibuton Barnes, The University of Alabama

Paper Title: "The I('s)land Is Everywhere: Destabilizing the First-Person Singular Pronoun as an Anti-colonial Mode of Self-Making"

Abstract: The body of the colonized Subject occupies a space that is both here and not. The body appears as it is useful or troubling to the colonizer and disappears as it is shrouded in culture, language, and ritual that is unintelligible to the colonizer. After 400 years of colonization by three different powers, the Philippines is a site of fluency in this mode of fluid subjecthood. In order to develop a poetics reflective of the of the island where I trace my lineage, I examine the orally transmitted epic saga of the Panay Bukidnon tribe on the island of Panay in the Western Visayan region of the Philippines. Then, I turn to the pre- and post-colonial Filipino psycho-social system Kapwa, or “the shared self,” as the foundation for the construction of a poetics that seeks to destabilize and resist the formation of the Subject as a singular “I”. This consideration of nested subjectivities within a body is necessary in a postcolonial poetics on the island of Panay, where the imposition of singularity was traditionally an act of alienation in the Marxist sense. I seek archival models of a less lonely, less violent way of being a Subject in history. One such example is *The Sugidanon*, a ten-volume oral poetic epic that the Panay Bukidnon chant in sessions lasting hours at a time. In this tradition, the chanter is in dialogue with all those who have also chanted the words of *The Sugidanon*, living or dead, and all of those other speakers are speaking with and through the chanter. I consider the implications of this dialogue that happens atemporally, intersubjectively, for the site of the chanter’s body—is this not a form of possession, inhabitation, or even co-habitation of the site of the body, the place where subjecthood must be contained? When the chanter utters the first-person singular pronoun, who does it name? My work turns to Kapwa and one of its pivotal interpersonal values, Pakiramdam, to engage these question. Pakiramdam connotes an experience that expands beyond and beneath empathy, a kind of radical intimacy, an osmotic border between people who are considered Hindi Ibang Tao, or “one of us.” My work seeks to expand the Foucaultian formulation of the heterotopia to include this realm of atemporal ritual practices in congress with the interpellation of the body via non-Western psycho-social and linguistic modes.

Panel: 12.3: Ecopoetics as Archive: Heterotopias in the Global South

Name: Cordelia Barrera, Texas Tech University

Paper Title: Disruption on the Borderlands as Apocalyptic: Gloria Anzaldúa’s Utopianism

Abstract: In this presentation, I discuss apocalyptic imagery in Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands* as utopic. A highly innovative cultural and feminist theorist, Anzaldúa’s work is firmly rooted within Latinx scholarship. And although scholars have begun to unpack Anzaldúa’s science fictional and speculative leanings, few—if any—have developed insight into aspects of social dreaming within her work that can be theorized as utopic. Additionally, although there is considerable scholarship on her groundbreaking *Borderlands* chapter, “Towards a New Consciousness,” such writing fails to consider the philosophical idealism of accessing of utopia via a process of altered states of consciousness, a technology found in feminist euspychias, or utopias constructed by the mind.

Anzaldúa’s utopianism in “Towards a New Consciousness” emerges as a process of interiority, an altered mode of perception marked by a negation of historical processes that fail to consider consciousness as a system that values counter knowledge. I argue that Gloria Anzaldúa’s mestiza consciousness signifies an apocalyptic disruption of historical practices that have effectively split

the Self from the external world. Anzaldúa's assessment is feminist and gendered and focuses the locus of utopian change within the Self, specifically one's psyche. In this regard, Anzaldúa is aligned with critical, process-oriented, feminist utopianism of the late twentieth century. Following Ernst Bloch's conception of the "Not-Yet," which imparts visionary desires onto the external world, alongside Jameson's ideas regarding the utopian "impulse" allows us to unravel Anzaldúa's utopic inclinations in terms of an ecofeminist discourse that foregrounds a methodology of hope.

Panel: 2.1: Immigration and Borderlands

Name: Lee Bebout, Arizona State University

Paper Title: Temporal Utopias of Inequality: The Logic of Time in White Supremacist and Men's Rights Antifeminist Thought

Abstract: Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign continually gestured to a temporal utopia with the slogan "Make America Great Again." This phrase deployed a nostalgia for an imagined, now-gone time of American excellence, enthymetically claiming that in the present era, the US had fallen and was mired in problems. For those in the alt-right "Make America Great Again" articulated their frustration with the dystopic present of multiculturalism and feminism and called for the American future to be found in its nostalgic, utopian past. As this paper will demonstrate, the constituent elements of the alt-right—white supremacists and men's rights antifeminists—have used this temporal rhetoric for years prior to the creation of the alt-right and well before the Trump campaign. Both movements have coalesced recently because of specific historical circumstances and because they share common rhetorical strategies. This paper looks at one of those strategies, what I call "temporal utopias of inequality."

This paper will offer a comparative analysis of white supremacist texts like Pierce's *The Turner Diaries* (1978), Buchanan's *Death of the West* (2002), and Brimelow's *Alien Nation* (2013) and men's rights antifeminist texts like Doyle's *The Rape of the Male* (1976), Farrell's *The Myth of Male Power* (1993), and Khan's "The Misandry Bubble" (2010). This analysis brings together disparate texts and cultural workers to show how they share a common rhetorical logic and makes legible how imagining temporal utopias can function as calls for social intransigency and inequality.

Panel: 4.1: Whiteness and the Utopian Imagination

Name: Jacob Birken, Kassel University

Paper Title: From Disaster to Dystopia. Jack London and (Californian) Catastrophe

Abstract: While Jack London's legacy is mostly defined through his writing on outdoor adventure, there are two substantial other parts to his work: Speculative fiction, and socialist activism. In my paper, I want to discuss London's dystopian and post-apocalyptic work both against the backdrop of specifically 'Californian' issues and the tropes of political speculative fiction. London had visited San Francisco the day the 1906 Earthquake struck; his "Story of an Eyewitness" for Collier's feeds into the popular narrative of altruism and social cohesiveness in times of disaster. This, and the corresponding narrative of an exploitative, repressive Hobbesian elite, inform London's later dystopian *The Iron Heel*, which can easily be read as an investigation into different forms of subliminal & overt, latent & forced crisis in modern society. London's novel reproduces specific anxieties and arguments from turn-of-the-century socialism, yet many of its ideas can be

discussed in contemporary contexts: Is it necessary to view (post-)industrial capitalism as a state of emergency itself, despite its claims to normalcy? What, then, is the didactic aim of the dystopian novel that, like *The Iron Heel*, ironically frames narratives of the heroic individual as all but irrelevant compared to the (ultimately benign) forces of historical progress – and disaster as an unfortunate, but essential moment within progress itself? Finally, how does this compare to anti-heroic utopian narratives of the early 20th century, as Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *Herland*—and the different views on ‘heroic’ or collective responsibility in today’s representations of—and antidotes to—global crisis?

Panel: 9.3: Capitalism and Utopia

Name: Adrienne Rose Bitar, Cornell University

Paper Title: Detox Diets and the Environmental Utopia, 1980-2015

Abstract: Detoxification diets offer complete plans to purify the body, soul, and society. Starting in the 1980s, hundreds of popular detoxes have maintained that environmental toxins provoked the obesity epidemic and, more broadly, the ills of modernity. Detox plans impose strict order on a chaotic, seemingly disorderly modern world by prescribing set foods on a set timetable – usually low-calorie juice fasts followed for 5-10 days. As narratives, detox diets memorialize a pre-industrial environment and advocate for dieters’ return to a lost utopia before industrialization and pollution sickened both human health and the health of the planet.

Specifically, this paper advances two detailed arguments. First, detox diets offer fresh insight into the porous relationship between human and environmental health, showing how Americans have conceptualized the biological dangers of modernity. Unlike other diets, detoxes maintain that everyone – even unborn babies – are inextricably linked and injured by the toxic environment. By enlarging our image of the selfless environmentalist, detoxers demonstrate how selfishness can be a springboard for real environmental change. Second, detox diets combined environmentalism with the drug and alcohol addiction framework to develop the concept of the “toxic food environment,” an idea that mediates between liberal and conservative explanations for the obesity epidemic by situating personal responsibility in an obesogenic modern environment.

Most broadly, this paper reads detox diets as myths, manuals, and manifestos: myths of a lost pre-industrial utopia, practical manuals to recapture health, and political manifestos to heal a toxic environment.

Panel: 12.2: Constructing a Utopian Environment

Name: Casey Boyle, University of Texas at Austin

Paper Title: Dystopic Speculations

Abstract: As computational and algorithmic processes become interlaced with the operations of “smart cities,” we are hearing stories about how those processes are replacing human judgment (Bratton, 2015). In some avenues, even our governance is becoming out of mind through a collective “technological unconscious” (Thrift 2011; Boyle 2016). The most extreme of these cases may be a report offered by the State Council of China called “Planning Outline for the Construction of a Social Credit System,” a plan that would combine social, financial, judicial, commercial data to generate ratings for citizens whereby those rankings would modulate those citizens’ access to

services, spaces, events, or people. To be sure, these reports are the stuff of fantasy and fear, speculating doom and dread through a filter of science fiction fabulation. It is important, however, to engage in this practice of speculation not as a joyful embrace of possibility as articulated by many current orientations to speculative methods (Grusin, 2010; Dunne and Raby 2013; *An Uncertain Commons* 2013) but as a practice for practicing disaster. Poring over stories of unthinkable tomorrows is to reenact stoic technique of “*praemeditatio malorum*” (meditation of bad things) a practice wherein one would speculate through the unthinkable—contracting a disease, the death of a loved one, a betrayal—as a way to prepare oneself for awful futures. This presentation will introduce and outline the practice of unthinkable tomorrows by surveying how we are unthinking spaces of tomorrow’s smart cities.

Panel: 7.3: Utopia as Practice

Name: Brittany Page Brake, Western Michigan University

Paper Title: Utopianism at the Turn of the American Revolution: How the Founding Fathers Perceived Utopian Thought

Abstract: Most scholarship that focuses on colonial utopian thought is geared towards an understanding of those utopian communities which developed during the 18th c. in newly formed America and those who designed them. While this research continues to be vital in our comprehension of how and why utopian communities were designed and spread throughout a crucial time period in American history, America, itself, has been categorized as somewhat of a utopian-creation. Despite this accusation, there continues to be a complete lack of scholarship committed to considering what the groundbreaking Founding Fathers, who were responsible for the creation of America, thought of utopianism.

In this paper, I explore multiple questions: How did the Founding Fathers perceive utopianism? During the drafting of the Constitution did they believe they were creating a new utopian country? Were they convinced they were utopian thinkers themselves? Correspondence to and from founders like John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison exemplify how some American thinkers hoped for a utopian-like country, but also how other prominent thinkers of the Revolution were not persuaded by, and completely rejected, utopian ideas. To determine how each thinker varied in their opinions on utopianism, I have tracked down letters, journal entries, and convention notes from 1787, through the Library of Congress. After creating a key to distinguish the separate ways the different Founders defined and used the term “utopia”, I determine how each thinker varied in their usage of the term and if, in fact, America was intended to be a utopian paradise.

Panel: 5.3: Colonial and Postcolonial Utopianism

Name: Albert Brenchat, University College London

Paper Title: Seeking the Traverse in the Garden of the Anterior of Bernard Lassus

Abstract: In 2003, *History of the Human Sciences* published an issue called ‘Glimpses of Utopia,’ edited by the utopian studies academic Ruth Levitas, which included Art Historian Stephen Bann’s article ‘Arcadia as Utopia in Contemporary Landscape Design: The Work of Bernard Lassus.’ In this article, Bann claimed – following the theories of semiotician and utopian thinker Louis Marin – that the work of the landscape architect Bernard Lassus elaborated an alternative or ‘traverse’

method which contested “the theories and practices of contemporary urbanism” (Bann, 2003: 111 quoting Marin).

This paper studies relations between nature and culture in Lassus’s landscape practice and theory—specifically through his project Garden of the Anterior—in order to contest Bann’s argument. First, it contextualises the project Garden of the Anterior. Second, it unfolds Marin’s theory of the traverse and Bann’s interpretation of it. Finally it develops a set of antitheses through the theories of Marin and Fredric Jameson, to conclude that Lassus’ practices are utopian and not ‘traverse’, that they do not contest the strategies of the French Garden, and that they do not contest progress, as Bann contends, if understood as a genealogy of alleged improvement in line with a capitalist linear conception of time.

Panel: 12.2: Constructing a Utopian Environment

Name: Baptiste Brossard, The Australian National University

Paper Title: Theorizing Utopia Production: Outline of a Research Program

Abstract: This paper presents a research program currently developed at the Australian National University around the following question: Why, in a given society, at a given point of its history, do some individuals design idealized forms of social organization? This production is conceptualized as the “intersection” between the social trajectory of a utopia producer and the social context in which this production takes place, inspired by Elias’ and Bourdieu’s works on cultural production. The research consists of comparing several in-depth case studies of classical and contemporary utopian texts, which allowed, so far, to formulate five areas of investigation: (1) the political trajectory of the utopia producer, (2) the cultural and social capitals of the producer, (3) “class distance” expressed through the utopian content, (4) the operations through which the utopian content is generated and (5) the concepts of “utopian niches” and “utopian chains”. The presentation will conclude by highlighting the two main objectives of the research: providing a sociological model to understand utopia production and the rise of dystopia production over the course of the twentieth century.

Panel: 6.2: Class and Utopia

Name: Susan Love Brown, Florida Atlantic University

Paper Title: Communal Utopias and American Capitalism

Abstract: The United States has a history of intentional communities that chose to organize themselves in a communal fashion. That is, they owned the land on which their communities were located in common, they made provisions for the distribution of food, shelter, and clothing communally, and they shared common ideologies that created the moral framework for their everyday communalism. While many of these communities failed, a remarkable number of them experienced incredible longevity within the individualistic American environment. What’s more, these successes were often marked by positive successes in the market; in other words, successful economic interfaces with the larger society. In this paper, using the Shakers as an example, I argue that their engagement in the market was one key to their success, and that many of their values were transmitted to the larger society through the market, establishing not only a reciprocity of goods and services but of moral values as well.

Panel: 9.3: Capitalism and Utopia

Name: Susan Bruce, Keele University

Paper Title: Leaving home: Europe and Utopia

Abstract: In the lead-up to the Brexit referendum the concept of utopia was repeatedly invoked to disparage positions diametrically opposed. On the one hand, it was deployed to describe appeals to the possibility of a rediscovered national self-determination and ‘control’. On the other, it was utilized to undermine appeals to the conception of a European federation that might subsume the autonomy of separate nation states. I argue here that the deployment of the adjective on both sides of the debate is not a mere accident of language. Rather, it betrays a deeper correspondence between the idea of Europe and the conception of utopia – not just any utopia, but, specifically, that of Thomas More. From England, through Castile, Flanders, Bruges, Cassel, Brussels and Antwerp: the space of Utopia’s first two paragraphs is punctuated by a list of locations that suggest that the route to Utopia is charted not through a westward direction, but via a passage across a smaller sea, eastwards into Europe. In More’s text we can read a prolepsis of the profound tensions that underlie the U.K.’s relation to Europe today: it anticipates on the one hand a retreat into an illusory, isolationist integrity; on the other, the dream of a Europe not (yet) achieved, whose most ambitious and thus far unrealised objectives – peace, collaboration, respect for human rights and succour for the dispossessed – flicker into being, perhaps for the first time, in the utopian imaginary of a text written over half a millennia before our own fragile historical moment.

Panel: 3.4: Isolation and Secession

Name: Lauren Callihan, Kansas State

Paper Title: The Tough Guide to Dystopia

Abstract: *The Tough Guide to Dystopia* is a satirical mock-travel guide to many of the common tropes of Dystopian fiction. Published by the fabricated group “Dictators and Natural Disasters”, this 30+ page guide walks the reader through common people, places, and things they are likely to see on their “vacation” in either State controlled or Chaos controlled sectors of Dystopia Parkland, from cannibalism to flashbacks and various flora. Humorous, witty, and biting, this guide draws on works by Margaret Atwood, Cherie Dimarline, Lois Lowry, Yevgeny Zamyatin, Alex London, and many others to both highlight the most common features of dystopian fiction and to ironize it’s frequent shortcomings in areas pertaining to racism, gender, and sexuality in a way that is thoroughly enjoyable as well as educational.

Panel: 7.2: Creative Approaches to Utopia

Name: Beatriz Cantinho, Choreographer. Researcher at CIAC - Algarve University, Portugal

Paper Title: La dérive: Choreographic strategies of political dissent

Abstract: This paper addresses the ways in which La dérive Situationist can inform the discussion on how choreography can critically address the aesthetic and political transformative power of movement, whether this movement takes place inside or outside the boundaries of art.

The predefined movement used by La dérive, resonates with choreography’s ‘modus operandi’. The Situationist’s playful strategies of movement and its representation through visual creative mapping have changed our perception of the city, its visible and invisible spaces, durations, velocities and relations of power. La dérive’s psychogeography, comes as a critic to the movement

of the Flâneur, the stroller, that relied solely in chance and intuition, and for that reason Debort consider it to be conservative as it lacked the power to disrupt habit and change our perception of space and time (Debord, 1958).

The Situationist's cartographies and its visual proximity to contemporary visual dance scores, trigger the familiarity of their processes of thought and representation. The mapping of the moving bodies in action, define the ontological and aesthetic dimension of action itself. In this perspective, 'mobility' is not to be understood only as a displacement of bodies in space. Mobility is that which will allow us to grasp the aesthetic and political implications of both thought and action in motion. The different formats of political intervention, activist or artistic, indicate different strategies of movement, and it is crucial to observe and analyse their operative modes and their effectiveness and symbolic power, on the public sphere (Cantinho and Dima, 2018).

Panel: 10.4: Utopian Aesthetics

Name: Greg Castillo, UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design

Paper Title: Utopian Discourse in the Counterpublic Sphere: Bay Area Counterculture in Print

Abstract: Critiques dismissive of Bay Area counterculture and its back-to-the-land movement typically elide the shift from regional experimentation to commercial commodification. Manhattan leviathans like Random House successfully monetized Bay Area hippie publications like Stewart Brand's *Whole Earth Catalog*, launching teleological narratives that portray counterculture utopianism as a facile, consumerist lifestyle pursuit. This paper traces the trajectory of another hippie bestseller, Alicia Bay Laurel's *Living on the Earth*, from its genesis as a handcrafted how-to guide for first-time Aquarian pastoralists at Wheeler's Ranch, an early Bay Area 'open land' commune; through its publication in a run of 10,000 by Bookworks, the independent Berkeley publisher also responsible for printing the *Whole Earth Catalog*; to the purchase of rights by Random House, which sold out a first nationally-distributed run of 350,000 copies. Manhattan's California gold rush in alternative press offerings forged bestsellers from books originally created to debate the prospects and practices of an Aquarian transformation of society: contributions to the counterculture version of what Jürgen Habermas called "the public sphere"—or, more accurately, its "countersphere," as Nancy Frasier calls discursive arenas forged by "counterpublics" as "spaces of withdrawal and regroupment" and, simultaneously, "bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics." If, as Frasier asserts, "it is precisely in the dialectic between these two functions that their emancipatory potential resides," the incursion of a regional countersphere into national discourse should be seen as a triumph of Bay Area hippie culture rather than its fall from grace.

Panel: 2.3: Settlement Trips: Aquarian Utopias

Name: Rabia Çiğdem Çavdar, Çankaya University, Ankara, Turkey

Paper Title: Constructing "Cyborgnetic Environment": Dystopia of *Blade Runner 2049*

Abstract: In Latourian sense, the environment of 21st century will be consisting of "human" and "non-human things". This new "social assemblage" of human and non-human things could be named as "Cyborgnetic environment". "Cyborgnetic environment" is constituted via "incommensurable dialectic" of the subject and the object. The dialectical tension between the subject and the object becomes narrow, after the cyber organisms took place in social strata. The

“cybersphere”- “third nature” will occupy the immediate future of the current order. Via the re-interpretation of the Leibnizian term “monad”, it is possible to conceive new social assemblage that is formed after the digital turn; “monad” is an atomic entity that is on the irreducible level, which has potential to self-replicate itself. The self-replication of the “things” in cyborgnetic environment makes the “man-made things” free from the “man”, this feature dissolves the otherness of the non-human things. The film, *Blade Runner 2049*, scrutinizes how the feature of self-replication (self-reproduction) of the non-human things will create a social order in the immediate future of the world. When *Blade Runner 2049* (2017) compared to the former film, *Blade Runner* (1982), it is obvious that the cyber-immigrants become a part of social order; the utopia of the former realized. The question is that the film *Blade Runner 2049* is a dystopia or a heterotopias caused from the displacement of cyber-immigrants. The architectural space of *Blade Runner 2049* constructed as the space of Deleuzian “difference”.

Panel: 12.2: Constructing a Utopian Environment

Name: Julia Chan, Yale

Paper Title: War and Utopia in Shangri-La

Abstract: What is the relationship between utopia and war? On the one hand, systematic killing and destruction seems radically incompatible with the idea of a good place; on the other hand, the collective focus of war, as Jameson and others have argued, promises to obliterate racial and class differences and, as such, actualizes utopia. My paper approaches this problem from a “lost horizon”: China as a site of utopian intimations for Western writers in the 1930s. In particular, it compares James Hilton’s invention of Shangri-La in the novel *Lost Horizon* (1933) with William Empson’s poem “Autumn in Nan-Yueh” (1938) during the Sino-Japanese War. In tracing the representations of China—from initially a refuge from global conflicts to a geopolitical hot zone itself—I propose that these texts form a unique utopian aesthetics by displacing traditional pastoral literature onto an Orientalist fantasy. Highlighting alterity rather than collectivity, this “Orientalist pastoral” offers a new model for locating utopias in wars.

Panel: 10.4: Utopian Aesthetics

Name: Gregory Claeys, Royal Holloway, University of London

Paper Title: The Countercultural Utopias of 1968: A New Theory of Sociability?

Abstract: 1968 represented the remarkable coincidence of many movements and events. Most observers now reckon these exhibited two main countervailing but overlapping trends, the countercultural and the political. It has become fashionable to contrast the two faces of 1968, by way of lamenting the failures of both. Yet humanity never moves forward without setbacks, and it is worth considering today what was gained in this moment, particularly in light of the present and the needs of an even more precarious century. In this talk I want to ask three questions, focusing on the creation and aims of the counterculture: what exactly happened in 1968?; how should we understand it today?; and what relevance does it have to our future?

Panel: 4.2: The Counterculture and Its Legacies

Name: Aaron Coleman, University of Arizona

Paper Title: Out of the Sky, Into the Dirt

Abstract: My research responds to the perpetuation of systemic, cultural imperialism, chauvinism, colonialism, institutionalized violence and the radicalization of spirituality. Police brutality, racial discrimination, religious extremism, persecution of the LGBTQIA communities, economic unrest, global warming, species extinction, habitat loss, holy wars, power trips and ego mania are the extremes my work addresses. My work takes on the characteristics of this global chaos. Each piece is an explosive combination of comic book pages and religious iconography, which illustrates a world in ruin and the heroes and villains who occupy it. I appropriate imagery from many different eras in history to present an idea of where we've come from and where we might be headed. Utilizing appropriation, I am able to produce imagery not unique to my own imagination, but rather, universal across cultural histories. Typically layering several printmaking techniques in each of my prints, I visually recall the chaos found within the concepts I explore. Social media, news, advances in technology, television, music and movies constantly bombard us. These are the distractions that keep the masses pacified. I utilize color, pattern, texture and appropriated imagery to re-contextualize these distractions begging the viewer to consider the larger role we play as humans. We consume resources and pollute our planet all in an effort to make things bigger and better while ignoring, or even destroying, our relationships with each other and our environment.

Panel: 9.4: Making Our Place: Disruptive Narratives in Contemporary Printmaking

Name: Sean Connolly, Bluefield State College

Paper Title: Seasteading and Neoliberal Utopia

Abstract: This presentation will compare the utopian goals of the Seasteading Institute to Robert Nozick's famous theory of liberal utopia in his famous 1974 book *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. This text offers perhaps the most well known and thoroughly developed framework for a (neo)liberal utopian politics. He acknowledges that a comprehensive monopolitical vision of utopia will breed conflict and oppression among individuals, who each have different values and abilities and thus a different utopian politics. To avoid this conflict, utopia must be tailored, individualized, and multiplied into a polypolitical or polytopian state of states. "There will not be one kind of community existing, and one kind of life led in utopia," he explains; "utopia will consist of utopias, of many different and divergent communities in which people lead different kinds of lives under different institutions." It will provide "a diverse range of communities, which people can enter if they are admitted, leave if they wish to, shape according to their wishes; a society in which utopian experimentation can be tried, different styles of life can be lived, and alternative visions of the good can be individually and jointly pursued." Strongly echoing Nozick, the Seasteading Institute seeks to bring a "market of competitive governance" with "a competitive dynamic that works well in technology industries." Seasteaders would be "empowered since they can 'vote with their feet' and move between cities much more easily and safely than they can cross into another nation. Competition between these zones creates tight feedback for governments to know if their reform is working." Special emphasis will be given to the paradoxical "state of statelessness" and "community of individuals" sought in these analogous neoliberal utopias.

Panel: 10.1: Neoliberal Utopia and the Start-Up Society

Name: Cheryl Coulthard, Texas A&M University

Paper Title: Reimagining Personal Relationships: Polyfidelity at Kerista Commune

Abstract: Many utopian communal groups attempted to create a new model for what they viewed as problematic sexual and family structures in mainstream society. Oneida is one of the most researched societies famous or perhaps infamous for its complex marriage. In late twentieth century San Francisco the Kerista Commune created an enduring system of polyfidelity that parallels that of Oneida. Kerista disrupted mainstream assumptions about forging lasting relationships and challenged criticism of free love. This presentation will critically examine the Kerista model and compare it to its predecessor at Oneida.

Panel: 11.3: Sexuality and Utopia

Name: Jennifer Cowe, University of British Columbia

Paper Title: The Coming Storm: Middle-Class Violence and the prediction of Theresa May's 'Jams' in J.G. Ballard's *Millennium People*

Abstract: The premise of Ballard's novel of bourgeois violence and dislocation seemed far-fetched when it was published in 2003. The idea that the British middle-class, such a stalwart of the class system, would be leaders in the breakdown of the social contract seemed to mark it out as a work of fiction rather than social commentary however, the aim of this paper is to examine the elements of middle-class stability that Ballard showed as being under pressure. Ballard brilliantly exploits the trappings of contemporary middle-class life (private education, foreign travel, expensive child care, home ownership) to show that when these are no longer readily available, the prevailing social contract is nullified. As an example of this I will compare the bourgeois revolutionaries of Ballard's novel to the emerging 'class' of what Theresa May labelled the 'Jams' (Just About Managing). As austerity economic policy has gradually eroded the previously secure financial and societal privileges of the British middle-class over the last decade, I will show the destabilising effect this has had upon the Thatcherite/New Labour myth of meritocracy and aspiration within modern Britain.

Panel: 6.2: Class and Utopia

Name: Susanna Crum, Indiana University Southeast

Paper Title: Alternative Maps, Aspirational Pasts

Abstract: For centuries, prints have been a means to illustrate, define, and share scientific findings, political ideologies, and social actions. Maps and printed ephemera like newspapers, banknotes, and advertisements provide material evidence of the ways social frameworks and cultural norms are promoted and maintained. As visual theorist Johanna Drucker describes, "Maps, like other graphic conventions, construct normative notions about time, space, and experience that become so familiar we take them for accurate representations rather than constructions." I use printmaking processes like lithography, woodcut, and cyanotype to interpret and examine the ways that such social artifacts continue to structure knowledge and experience in an increasingly screen-based world. My creative practice merges digital and analog techniques with community-based and archival research, often resulting in works on paper, video, and sculpture that explore print media's roles in promoting (and erasing) identity and social history. By creating work that utilizes the visual language and social authority of globes, viewing devices, maps, and schematic drawings, I work to facilitate conversations about the ways yesterday's

printed languages influence today's relationships to place, and propose psychogeographical interpretations in which past, present, and future are concurrent and vital. My multilayered images map the social lives of specific locations, with data most recently mined from banknote designs and national anthems, to illuminate unexpected intersections and aspirations within projections of culture and identity that we often see as separate from one another in both space and time.

Panel: 9.4: Making Our Place: Disruptive Narratives in Contemporary Printmaking

Name: Claire Curtis, College of Charleston

Paper Title: Utopian Studies and Interdisciplinary Inquiry: Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*

Abstract: Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* is a dystopian classic that can be read and analyzed from a variety of perspectives. As a political scientist, I read and teach *Oryx and Crake* looking at the world Atwood has created from a variety of political perspectives. For example, Jimmy's world, with its corporate-led gated communities, is virtually silent on political life at the national or local level. It is not only that Washington, Congress, and the Supreme Court all seem to have faded away, but also that Jimmy's parents and other adults of that world that we encounter in later books of the trilogy do not engage with one another through typical, local political means (where is the school board, city council, the ballot measure?).

Neither the genetic manipulations performed either by Jimmy's father nor those performed by Crake himself seem to face any legal challenges, and it is not simply the absence of these challenges, but the absence of any means (other than sabotage) through which these challenges could be made, that is chilling. Atwood creates a world where most people seem indifferent to the ethical consequences of these genetic manipulations, but more than that, readers have no sense of how the absence of legal and political channels in the world she has created came about. Utopian studies emphasizes the value of interdisciplinary approaches. These questions are different from a purely literary analysis, and yet putting these analyses together illustrates the value of studying utopia. Understanding the dystopia that Atwood has created demands that kind of interdisciplinarity.

Panel: 8.3: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Utopian Studies

Name: Claire Curtis, College of Charleston

Paper Title: "And I intend to last:" Survival as rebellion in *The Handmaid's Tale*

Abstract: How are we as readers of the novel and viewers of the Hulu adaptation of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* to understand June/Offred as resisting the Gilead regime? On the one hand, both the novel and the television series present the act of survival as itself resistance. On the other hand, June/Offred's survival seems to depend on certain forms of privilege, and to come at the detriment of others. This raises questions about the limits of the claim that survival is resistance. These limits are most clearly seen in the second season of the television series, which expands beyond the novel and even seems to make June responsible for the deaths of others. This paper explores the limits of the claim that survival is itself resistance, by asking what political arguments are implicit in that claim.

Panel: 12.1: Literary Feminism

Name: Micah Donohue, Eastern New Mexico University

Paper Title: Critical Dystopias in Contemporary US-Mexican Borderlands Literature and

Philosophy: Alicia Gaspar de Alba's *Desert Blood* and Sayak Valencia's *Capitalismo gore*

Abstract: "The perfect dystopia" (Carlos Monsiváis). A "nightmare" (Alicia Gaspar de Alba). A "contemporary dystopia" and "zone of terror" (Miguel López-Lozano). "Crossroads of chaos" (Carlos Carrera and Sabina Berman). "Inferno" and "gore dystopia" (Sayak Valencia). "The gateway to a Mexican hell" (Sergio González Rodríguez). These are some of ways in which authors, academics, and filmmakers have described the contemporary US-Mexican borderlands as terrifying dystopias. Taking Erika Gottlieb's assertion in *Dystopian Fiction East and West* that "historical phenomena [...] create societies that should be described as dystopic" as my departure point, I argue that these descriptions, far from being dismissible rhetorical flourishes, should be taken and studied seriously. Drug violence, soaring murder rates, the unsolved femicides, economic exploitation through the post-NAFTA maquiladoras, and the USA's racist and inhumane "policing" of its southern border converge to create dystopias that rival anything being produced in speculative fiction today.

And yet these borderlands dystopias are "critical dystopias" as Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan interpret the phrase to mean dystopian environments punctured by spaces of utopian hope for the possibility of social transformation. Focusing on Alicia Gaspar de Alba's noir-detective thriller *Desert Blood: The Juárez Murders* (2005) and Sayak Valencia's work of borderlands philosophy *Capitalismo gore* (2010), I show how both works, in a manner emblematic of the larger archive of borderlands literature and philosophy, portray the US-Mexican borderlands as genuine dystopias and preserve possibilities for resistance and change within those dystopias. They explode utopian countercharges within the dystopian structures that dominate the twenty-first century borderlands.

Panel: 2.1: Immigration and Borderlands

Name: Mehmet Dosemeci, Bucknell University

Paper Title: 1968: The Politics of Anti-imperial Disruption

Abstract: The non-violent disruptions of 1968 came under intense criticism over the past half-century. Newer narratives positioning 1968 as a generational revolt or cultural revolution recuperated by capital have joined old leftist critiques that 1968 was nothing but the "failed, symbolic, and masturbatory" reenactment of what workers had attempted before. Both sets of criticisms ignore the collective politics of 1968, an anti-imperial politics of disruption, which this talk seeks to recover.

Drawing inspiration from the decolonization struggles of Cuba, Algeria, and Vietnam, the New Left believed that the existing organization of human beings, how they related to one another, the ways they spoke, what they saw and desired, was an imperial mechanism of social control. For New Left activists, these subtler mechanisms worked alongside explicit state and economic repression to colonize the lives and minds of human beings. This talk examines the Atlantic uprisings of 1968 as a collective stand against imperial encroachment into the national, institutional, communal, and individual domains of human existence. Anti-imperialism, I contend, informed the politics of efforts to disrupt the global war machine, arrest police intrusion into black neighborhoods, decolonize the university, and redefine the social roles and language of everyday life. From university and factory occupations to psychedelic drugs, Black Panther patrols to Situationist

détournement, New Left tactics across the Atlantic attempted to disrupt the existing order as well as the psycho-social mechanisms of submission policing it. The talk concludes by asking what can and should be rescued of 1968 for the politics of liberation today.

Panel: 4.2: The Counterculture and Its Legacies

Name: Emma Downey, Bucknell University

Paper Title: Genocide and Virginité, Dystopia and Utopia: A Reconciliation through Film

Abstract: If one wishes to learn about a society's values all one must do is watch its films. In film we see the fantasies, desires, ideals and heroes of a given society. We mythologize the stars, linking them with the roles they play and seek to emulate them in our own lives. In this way, films and acting are ways through which we can see our ideas manifested and actualized. We no longer have to imagine a utopian society, we are shown it. We no longer need to envision how politicians behave in a dystopia, we know how. This paper looks at three films of the Third Reich: *Hitlerjunge Quex* (1933), *Jud Süß* (1940), and *Die Große Liebe* (1942). It analyzes the content, and actors, in an effort to understand how the ideals and goals of National Socialism were understood by individuals and how the films acted as a mechanism of controlled education. I use specific examples from the films to discuss how the films reconciled the paradoxes in Nazi platitudes and practice, rhetoric and reality, life and liminality to argue the films taught Germans how they ought to behave and limited how citizens could imagine acts of resistance to the regime. Finally, I compare films of the Third Reich to modern dystopian films, like *Hunger Games*, *Black Panther*, and *Avatar*, which provide images of reality and ideas of resistance but have little translation into actual resistance. What role does film really play in teaching us about our realities? Our possibilities?

Panel: 8.2: Utopian Critique in Film

Name: Ruth Dusseault, Agnes Scott College

Paper Title: *Ecotopia*: Liberal To Libertarian Makers In The Woods

Abstract: *Ecotopia* is a work of slow-form journalism that explores the contemporary back-to-the-land movement through the lens of digital utopianism. It is informed by a wave of scholarship about the history of the networked society and its ideological roots in the post-war countercultural movement, including the work of media theorist Fred Turner (2006), political journalist and filmmaker Adam Curtis (2011) and architectural historian Felicity Scott (2017).

By circling back around to the same geographic and social territory as their 1960s countercultural predecessors, we find a similar demographic with similar anti-institutional leanings. My young subjects were also among the first generation to graduate into the abyss of the economic recession. Their disillusion stems from witnessing the "free market" privatize the gains and socialize the losses.

With the internet replacing the *Whole Earth Catalog* as a how-do manual, today's communes are sites for peer-to-peer studio-based learning. They use the global network to develop educational business models and attract students for workshops and residencies. Using small-scale technology, they build remote maker spaces and establish living laboratories for life after the fall.

In the film, neo-hippies, preppers, urban activists and libertarians all speak about the internet in utopian terms. They are inspired by the dream of a truly distributed system that they believe will lead society to a new, more egalitarian, social order. Uniting them is a belief in global equity through self-sustaining small scale villages. Add to this scenario the damaging effects to global distribution systems by the natural disasters caused by climate change, and there is an implicit case for the resilience of self-sufficient small communities.

Central in the film is a chapter about a group Open Source Ecology, which epitomizes neoliberalism and pioneer capitalism. Their founder is libertarian, he purports the use of open source networks to design and prototype “50 machines necessary to start a small civilization.”

Panel: 10.1: Neoliberal Utopia and the Start-Up Society

Name: Ruth Dusseault, Agnes Scott College

Paper Title: *Ecotopia* (2018)

Abstract: The first generation to come of age after the great recession head back-to-the-land with their laptops and build new models for stepping down into a smaller life.

This 55-minute film is one output from a long term project that began in 2012, just as the tectonic shifts of the great recession were beginning to feel permanent. The first film, *The Active Observer* (30 min, 2017) followed open source designs from an Earthship community in the American SW to rural Prince Edward Island.

Ecotopia is organized in four chapters, each dedicated to a different location, framed by a prologue and epilogue.

Locations (chapters) include:

- a peer-to-peer primitive skill-share in Appalachia
- an open source machine fabrication lab and maker space near Kansas
- an urban farm in an economically marginalized community in Atlanta
- and a self-sustaining eco-village in northeast Missouri founded in 1992 by Stanford computing majors (one lives in the Bay Area and has been invited as a respondent)

Ecotopia is a work of slow-form journalism that explores the contemporary back-to-the-land movement through the lens of digital utopianism. It is informed by a wave of scholarship about the history of the networked society and its ideological roots in the post-war countercultural movement. Neo-hippies, preppers, urban activists and libertarians all speak about the internet in utopian terms. They are inspired by the dream of a truly distributed system that they believe will lead society towards a new, more egalitarian, social order.

You can preview a rough cut on Vimeo (pass: rabbit): <https://vimeo.com/271994089>

Panel: 8.1: Ecotopia – Film Viewing and Discussion

Name: Emsal Sema Ege, Biruni University, Istanbul, Turkey. Full Professor, English Department

Paper Title: The Feeble Protests/Disruptions of the Disrupted, of the "You do not accept us"es; Conrad's "Amy Foster", Bradbury's Eating People is Wrong, Butlin's "The German Boy" '

Abstract: Eborebelosa, the African student in Bradbury's Eating People is Wrong cries "You see, sir, [...] You do not accept us." The Red Brick University, the new development in the aftermath of the Second World War, provides the setting for bringing together people not only from different classes but also nationalities and cultures. Yet the university, a microcosm of society/the world offers no melting-pot.

Just as does the "classroom" in Ron Butlin's "The German Boy" where the German Boy, eventually repeatedly crying "Zwei Minuten" with 'Tears' 'running down his cheeks' "his voice" "choking" "was taken to the sick-room." "Finally."

The island too could be the microcosm of the universe as in Conrad's "Amy Foster" where the shipwrecked Central European Yanko Goorall whose wife "had left him -sick- helpless- thirsty" is like "a bird caught in a snare". "The spear of the hunter had entered his very soul. Why he cried in the penetrating and indignant voice of a man calling to a responsible Maker."

The answer—Conrad's would be similar—lies in Bradbury's Professor Treece's explanation to Eborebelosa: "we have the same difficulties in understanding you." Ironically Treece too felt himself a "passé, whose 'predominant emotion was a puzzled frustration"; "all the passions he had held then" did 'not quite fitted the situation of the present time".

Analyzing Conrad's, Bradbury's, and Butlin's works comparatively, the paper argues that the crucial issue of displacement, disruption will continue to be insurmountable as long as the individual/cultural/gender etc. differences remain to be in the fabric of life.

Analyzing Conrad's, Bradbury's, and Butlin's works comparatively, the paper argues that the crucial issue of displacement, disruption will continue to be insurmountable as long as the individual/cultural/gender etc. differences remain to be in the fabric of life.

Panel: 9.1: Disruptive Ability and Otherness

Name: Jan English-Lueck, San Jose State Univ, Department of Anthropology

Paper Title: Silicon Dreaming: Reengineering Nature

Abstract: Silicon Valley's connections to the counterculture of the larger Bay Area are well documented. The Bay Area itself has a long history of intentional communities, from Kaweah to Ladera. Stewart Brand's influence on the notions of augmentation and appropriate technology continue to resonate with way information technologies are framed. However, the Internet of Things, with its focus on clean tech, food production and consumption and wellbeing bring these nature-facing values into sharp focus. Events such as Burning Man and Maker Faire underscore attributes such as individualism, mutual responsibility, an affective connection to nature, and a playful connection to the artificial. More diffuse than the conventional intentional community, nonetheless, the yearning for a particular kind of future dominates the region.

Panel: 1.1: Reinventing Intentional Communities

Name: Teppo Eskelinen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Paper Title: The privatisation of utopias - and how to recollectivise them

Abstract: The paper has a dual purpose of analysing the current stage of utopian thinking, and discussing the ways how social scientists could engage in creating shared narratives to revitalise utopias.

First, we will review how and why the universal human desire for a better way of being increasingly often takes the form of private dreams and hopes. According to our analysis, this state is fostered by a given "utopia fatigue", the neoliberal policy lock-in, and a given nostalgic turn in the prevailing cultural mode. We will further discuss, how these private utopian desires and goals – despite their alternative potential – link to the governmentality of current neoliberal systems.

Second, we will sketch starting points for social scientists to help overcome this privatisation of utopias. We will analyse, how could academics work to uncover shared elements in privatised utopias, and to build stepping stones for forming collective expressions of hope. While preliminary, the analysis is a collective effort to show how engaging and transformative social science could and should build utopias as "counter-images" of the current society, from the basis of actual desires.

The presentation is a joint effort by Teppo Eskelinen, Keijo Lakkala and Miikka Pyykkönen, all Finnish scholar-activists working together on the project "utopias as method of criticism".

Panel: 10.1: Neoliberal Utopia and the Start-Up Society

Name: Seonaid Espiner, Lincoln University, New Zealand

Paper Title: Precarious terrain: earthquakes, plants and utopian alterity in the shaky isles

Abstract: In this presentation I consider how three instances of New Zealand utopianism, through their depictions of earthquakes, plants and human action, figure nature's disruptive utopianism. Rachel McAlpine's two utopian novels *The Limits of Green* (1985) and *Running Away From Home* (1987) appeared in the aftermath of neoliberal reforms in New Zealand and at a time of rising environmental consciousness. Taking place in future or uchronic societies, these novels explore possibilities of plant agency, supernatural human-plant interconnectedness, and plant-human-earthquake assemblages as disruptive to state and corporate power. I read these alongside the articles and blogs of the art-gardening group, "Plant Gang" of Christchurch, New Zealand, whose work was catalysed by the 2010-2011 Canterbury Earthquake Sequence. Plant Gang's mission is to bring about everyday awareness and appreciation of wild plant life, protecting and encouraging wild growth in ways which do not always easily align with government and corporate-lead developments. In this sense, Plant Gang attempts to bring into being a new kind of ecologically oriented city, conveying a utopian impulse which I suggest finds affinity with McAlpine's novels. While nonhuman nature is portrayed as unpredictable and disruptive, unlike many speculative and apocalyptic depictions of nonhuman threats to civilisation, these (con)texts refuse a tired narrative of collapse and might be better read for the hopeful and alternative worlds and ways of being suggested amongst environmental turmoil.

Panel: 3.3: Environmental Utopias and Dystopias

Name: Laura Fasick, Minnesota State University Moorhead

Paper Title: Inner Utopia, Outer Inferno: When the Personal Eclipses the Political

Abstract: It is axiomatic among literature teachers that reading literature will lead to a better society. Isn't it clear that reading literature makes us more empathetic? Doesn't empathy with others include concern for their well-being and therefore an interest in the social structures that promote or impede that well-being? Almost all my students enter university unaware of such real-life dystopian societies as apartheid South Africa or the China of the Cultural Revolution. In an effort to alert them to the relationship between the political and the personal, I consistently teach novels that show the effects of large-scale structures and movements on individual lives. By reading powerfully written novels, I reason, students not only learn about instances of social/political oppression, they also grow to care about the people affected by them. Unfortunately, there is an unexpected and, to me, dismaying aspect to this caring that complicates my sense of what literature can achieve. Students are moved by the narratives. However, their interest in the narrative arc involving the fictional protagonists quickly eclipses their interest in the social context. They dismiss politics as "superficial" compared to "what really matters," that is, romantic and family life. It is not the relationship between the political and the personal that gains their attention, but the personal relationships among main characters. Above all, they consistently argue that as long as a novel's protagonist achieves the utopia of inner peace, then the outer inferno a novel shows is of little consequence.

Panel: 11.2: The Future of Politics and Utopia

Name: Katherine Field-Rothschild, St. Mary's College

Paper Title: Feminist World-Making: Fighting Daily Sexism Through Subversive Tweets

Abstract: Although social media has created a platform for many feminist thinkers and theorists to share their work, it has also created trolls who perpetuate gender discrimination and gender-biased language. Because of this pushback against those who speak out in support of calling out and other feminist issues, many users have created pseudonyms or closed their accounts (Morello, 2015). The user @manwhohasitall, who Tweets from a fictional world where gender norms are reversed, is able to address sexist language by using a myth-dispelling imagined voice in what some might consider a utopian world. This performative move gives the user a safe harbor and allows "the man who has it all" to voice the feminist concerns that media language is highly gendered and allows for critique of systemic discrimination—without immediately being ignored (Becker & Swim, 2011) or dismissed (Exline & Tenge 2014).

The fictionalized world-building allows the user to bypass the immediate societal pushback of directly addressing sexism (Giuliano & Boutell, 2001) in a similar way to that of fictional characters. The individual user @manwhohasitall can be seen as constructing a model, or re-imagination, of Derrida's theory of phallogocentric language. @manwhohasitall uses an oppositional language—perhaps yonigocentric—to reveal the truths behind the media's everyday sexism by inverting linguistic expectations. This presentation offers an understanding of that subversive behavior, and invites participants to do the same.

Panel: 1.2: Feminist Utopias and Dystopias

Name: Damon Franke, USM Gulf Coast

Paper Title: Utopia and World-Making in Howards End

Abstract: In my paper “Utopia and World-Making in Howards End,” I examine how E.M. Forster's novel constructs a utopian vision of a future England in which a dynamic, organic unity thrives through the dialectic of its constituent antitheses. Howards End is constructed as a pilgrimage spot that offers the best of both country and city, the weak and the strong, the spiritual and the material. The estate functions as a transitional example in Raymond Williams' schema of the degeneration of country house literature from those works that see the estate as land to those that hold it as a capital investment. The novel fashions Howards End into an ideal locale that unites land, capital, and labor—the Schlegels, the Wilcoxes, and the working class. The novel exemplifies Lawrence Buell's cue to practice environmental criticism through the conceptual lens of “world-making,” which is exemplified by the “invention of the entire world” in “utopian narrative.” Though not strictly a work of utopian fiction, Howards End constructs the country house as Forster's ideal form of community through the relentless play and suggested reconciliation of structural antitheses. The intricate techniques by which the novel weaves the land with linguistic elements accentuate the utopian or “world-making” construction of the novel as Margaret and the reader pass from “words to things.” Capital is reinvested in the land, and the denouement of the novel ideally collapses much class distinction while Margaret hopes that “civilization” will “rest on the earth” in the mode of the exemplary country house.

Panel: 3.3: Environmental Utopias and Dystopias

Name: Sonja Fritzsche, Michigan State University

Paper Title: The Fascists Are Here!: Revisiting *Iron Sky's* Nazis in 2018

Abstract: What is so “appealing” about Nazis in film? In part, they are easily translated as the “bad guys” to audiences around the world. While the Wehrmacht soldier might play the fool (Werner Klemperer's Colonel Klink in *Hogan's Heroes*), the true Nazi (often SS or Gestapo [e.g. Maj. Wolfgang Hochstetter]) in many instances is infused with amorality, opportunism, sadism, sometimes pedophilia, and the ultimate evildoer. As the true Nazi war criminals fade into the past, the fictional Nazi has become a caricature populating a diverse array of films from the parody, to the musical, to the Nazi exploitation film, to the science fiction horror adventure. In science fiction, the genre becomes the alternate future in which the Nazis threaten yet again.

With the recent rise of right-wing extremism both in Europe and the US, this paper revisits my previous analysis of the sf parody *Iron Sky* (2012) by Finnish filmmaker Timo Vuorensola. In the film, it has been discovered that the Nazis have been hiding out on the dark side of the Moon all along, waiting to invade the Earth. They do so after a Sarah Palin-type character has become President. Taking into account Umberto Eco's 1995 essay “Ur-Fascism” and the need for continual vigilance for fascists who won't always look like Nazis, the paper problematizes the comical figure of the Nazi in the light of the move to the center of real-life neo-Nazis and others on the right. Vuorensola's crowd-funded sequel *Iron Sky: The Coming Race* is set to be released in January 2019.

Panel: 8.2: Utopian Critique in Film

Name: Lu Gan, University of Bayreuth, Germany

Paper Title: Race and Risk in Narrating the Anthropocene

Abstract: Utopia remains the most resonant and multivalent political, philosophical, and literary concept of our time. *Topos*, the Greek word for place, initially confines utopia to the depiction of a spatial entity. However, with the completion of geological discovery, utopia tends to have a temporal dimension as well. Our imagination of this elsewhere can be a mixture of memory, nostalgia, and an ardent social dreaming of the yet to come. In contemporary speculative narrative, dystopia takes a more prominent position to present visions of catastrophe, deterioration as well as the collapse of natural environment and social systems alike. In contrast, utopian future becomes a less likely possibility novelists outline for humanity. The project “Speculative Asia” surveys the representation of Asia in contemporary American science fiction. Drawing from utopian studies and risk studies, I examine how discourses of race and colonialism intersect with discourses of the environment in narrating the Anthropocene. The primary texts discussed are Paolo Bacigalupi’s *The Windup Girl* (2009) and Kim Stanley Robinson’s *2312* (2012). Operated on spatial scales ranging from the local to the global, and from the global to the interplanetary, the two novels explore far-reaching anthropogenic ecological changes and their lasting impact. While Bacigalupi resorts to apocalyptic anticipation and dystopian portrait of the alternatives to energy crisis, food shortage, biodiversity loss, to name a few, Robinson enacts utopian possibilities of terraforming following ecological degradation on Earth. In the presentation, I will map out the conditions and tendencies of these imaginations and their narrative strategies.

Panel: 12.4: The Utopianism of Kim Stanley Robinson

Name: Matt Garite, Wake Forest University

Paper Title: The Eupsychian Network: Aldous Huxley, Abraham Maslow, and the Origins of Psychedelic Utopianism

Abstract: In the mid-twentieth century, two groups with competing agendas introduced psychedelics into American society: the CIA with its MK-Ultra program on the one hand, and countercultural intellectuals like Aldous Huxley, Gerald Heard, Timothy Leary, Ken Kesey, and Allen Ginsberg on the other. By now, histories have been written about the efforts of both of these groups; but in accounts of the latter group in particular, what sometimes goes unmentioned or unrecognized was its explicitly utopian intent. After their first encounters with substances like mescaline and LSD, early users of these drugs felt compelled not just to pen literary utopias like Huxley’s final novel *Island*; most of them also rushed to form communes and related kinds of alternative, experimental foundations, schools, organizations, and institutions—among which we can include Esalen Institute, the White Hand Society, the Zihuatanejo Project, Millbrook, the Merry Pranksters, the League for Spiritual Discovery, and others. Unlike certain of their utopian precursors, most of these organizations and communities prioritized psychosexual deprogramming and the “raising of consciousness” through mass ingestion of psychoactive substances as techniques essential to their goal of changing society for the good. In light of the recent revival of interest in psychedelics, this talk will work to reconstruct the brand of psychedelic utopianism that informed the ideas and actions of the 1960s and 1970s counterculture, focusing on the works of Huxley and humanistic psychologist Abraham Maslow in particular. Through examination of exchanges between these figures, I’ll show that their efforts to formulate a theory of “eupsychia” led to one of the signal achievements of the counterculture:

namely, its positioning of the therapeutic as a necessary component of a viable Cold War form of utopianism.

Panel: 5.2: Intoxicating Utopia: Drugs and Drug Policy

Name: Henrike Gätjens , University of Zurich, Switzerland

Paper Title: Utopian Wonder: An interdisciplinary approach to the function of an aesthetic emotion in utopias of (not only) the early modern period

Abstract: How do utopian or dystopian texts convince, inspire, irritate or frighten us? How do they proceed in making truth claims about the well-ordered society, in defending or establishing certain values and in legitimizing the possibility of another—marvelous or horrifying—reality? These questions can be addressed with methods and within frameworks of several disciplines, including literary studies, the history of mentalities, and philosophy. In my presentation, I would like to exemplify what an interdisciplinary approach to the structures and receptions of different utopias and dystopias could look like. To this end, I want to investigate the role of wonder and its modifications (amazement, surprise, astonishment) in utopian texts as the aesthetic emotions which are able to both call reality into question and constitute it anew. I primarily focus on texts of the 17th century (Campanella's *Civitas Solis*, Andreae's *Christianopolis*, Winstanley's *The Law of Freedom*), but also passages from Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* will be discussed. The role of wonder is of particular interest not only concerning the acquisition of knowledge, being depicted as a means of generating curiosity and an urge for insight, but also in regard to the materialization of wonder in the structuring of space envisioned in utopian/dystopian texts. Against this background, my presentation will try to open up perspectives for a trans- or multidisciplinary approach in Utopian Studies that takes its point of departure in an analysis of how wonder epistemologically and spatially shapes practices of representation and (de)legitimization of utopian/dystopian knowledge and power.

Panel: 8.3: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Utopian Studies

Name: Anne Gessler, University of Houston-Clear Lake

Paper Title: Ambivalent Producers: Female Broadcasters and the Inverse Utopianism of 1950s and 1960s College Radio

Abstract: During the 1950s and 1960s, male educators imbued noncommercial college radio with a utopian mission: as citizen-producers, student broadcasters would protect a democratic and market-oriented society by disseminating uplifting cultural programming to civically engaged audiences. A slate of classical music and news programming would inoculate credulous female listeners against the dual threats of totalitarianism and feminizing mass culture. Employing Heather Fryer's theory of the "inverse utopia," I argue that female broadcasting students quickly discovered the limits of college radio's egalitarian rhetoric. To climb a precarious institutional hierarchy, women were forced to uphold a restrictive, male-oriented vision of the public sphere that actively displaced them from the audio landscape. Male educational and commercial station managers alike sequestered them within women's programming and secretarial staff positions. Student resistance to restrictive in loco parentis station policies was also gendered: secure in their commercial radio future, rebellious male disc jockeys protested what they viewed as effeminate, moralistic programming by playing raucous, disruptive rock 'n' roll and celebrating iconoclastic

free speech. In contrast, female broadcasters promoting radio as a promulgator of civic discourse exposed the gap between male educators' intent and reality. Using the College of William and Mary's WCWM and The University of Texas at Austin's KUT radio stations as case studies, my paper broadens our understanding of the porousness of Cold War-era containment culture by analyzing the terms by which women successfully negotiated their expanded role in the radio field.

Panel: 1.2: Feminist Utopias and Dystopias

Name: Ted Goertzel, Rutgers University at Camden

Paper Title: Utopian Socialist Thought from H.G. Wells to Bernie Sanders

Abstract: Socialism as a utopian vision has become more important in both the United Kingdom and the United States in recent years. Perhaps the most important utopian socialist theorist was H.G. Wells whose thinking provides a sharp and constructive contrast to that of Karl Marx. In England, Clement Attlee put much of this theory into practice after World War II by nationalizing the commanding heights of the economy and establishing the national health service. Prominent exponents in the United States include Upton Sinclair and Eugene Debs. Leading current exponents are Jeremy Corbyn and Bernie Sanders. This paper will contrast the British and American experiences and discuss the relevance of utopian socialist thought for the current conjuncture.

Panel: 11.2: The Future of Politics and Utopia

Name: Ed Graham, Simon Fraser University

Paper Title: Representing Intoxication: Ben Lerner's *10.04* and utopian responses to addiction

Abstract: A utopian response to North America's current opioid crisis, and historic problems of drug addiction more broadly, demands narratives about addiction beyond piecemeal reform and stigmatization. This paper outlines two such frameworks. On the one hand, responding to the infiltration of addiction into communities requires what Fredric Jameson termed cognitive mapping: understanding that addiction, rather than being a stand-alone choice, is dialectically related to the uneven distribution of and cuts to social services, crises in social reproduction and, regarding prescription opioids especially, politicians beholden to drug companies. Under the utopian imperative to retain the social totality, transforming the struggle of addiction becomes inseparable from transforming society. On the other hand, we can look at how drug users and activists in places like Vancouver have fought for harm-reduction strategies and community-run safe-injection sites. Rather than a totalizing vision, such instances mark forms of utopian problem-solving; addressing specific social dilemmas and proposing and testing solutions, often outside state regulations.

Through an allegorical reading of Ben Lerner's *10:04* (2014), I argue that these twin-utopian demands of "seeing it whole" and "fighting for space" be kept in productive tension. Lerner's narrator has several epiphanic moments that attempt to link his heightened, intoxicated state to the social whole. However, in a moment towards the novel's end, the narrator's epiphanies are replicated in the disturbing, conspiratorial remarks of his unstable, drug-induced student, Calvin, and the passage emphasizes the body, responsibility and protolanguage. In the encounter with Calvin, the tension between trans-individual grasps on the totality and an embodied perspective

that is sensitive to individual needs, persists, rather than being overcome. The figurative role of intoxication in *10:04* therefore prompts discussion around tensions within utopian responses to drug addiction, as well as an exploration of the relationship between narrative and the politics of drug-use.

Panel: 5.2: Intoxicating Utopia: Drugs and Drug Policy

Name: Gabriela Grecca, São Paulo State University

Paper Title: A Dystopian Time for Culture: Art, Censorship and Ideology in Brazil's political and social discourses

Abstract: The main purpose of this paper is to present a panorama of three recent social, national-scale events in Brazil that happened in such manner as to resemble descriptions found in Dystopian narratives about the institutional interferences in censoring, demonizing and standardizing artistic manifestations. The first event, dating from 2016, was the shutdown of the Ministry of Culture (MinC), an achievement in Brazilian's cultural and educational scenarios. As a reflect from the underlying ideology made concrete with this event - the depreciation of art and culture in favor of focusing on economy and progress - two consequent social movements took place in 2017. First, the forced shutdown of an exposition called Queermuseum, under the words of protest "Ban Modern Art"; and, almost simultaneously, a rally against a performance of a nude man that happened at the Museum of Modern Art (MaM) in São Paulo, accused of eroticism and pedophilia. This is symptomatic of the disassociation of Brazilian's dominant ideology with its commitment with art and culture, that, more than reinforcing its historical deficiencies in many aspects that comprise the country's cultural life, are also succeeding in making the whole society conniving with the image that art can perform morally pernicious acts. To debate such processes, dystopias can constitute an important resource, as several writers of the genre have assimilated similar fears when it comes authoritarianism and the arts.

Panel: 5.1: Brazilian Perspectives on Utopia

Name: Brian Greenspan, Carleton University

Paper Title: Flatfoot Utopia: Mobile Media and Global Conspiracy

Abstract: This talk introduces our adaptation of *Set in Darkness* (2001), the 11th installment in Ian Rankin's popular Inspector Rebus detective series, for "locative" mobile media. Rankin's novel uses Edinburgh's architectural landmarks as background to a story about gentrification, gender politics, and Scottish nationalism. The discovery of a body in the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood initiates Rebus's investigation. In solving the murder, however, Rebus uncovers a national conspiracy that he is powerless to dispel, a deferral of closure in which Eleanor Bell locates Rankin's ethical project. Philip Wegner, by contrast, argues that the deferral of closure that structures contemporary detective series in general leaves audiences suspended "between two deaths," deferring any commitment to radical politics and a utopian transformation of the world.

The Tailing Rebus app remediates this narrative dynamic of deferral, allowing users to follow Inspector Rebus's unfolding story and discover a series of clues as they move through the streets of Edinburgh, smartphone in hand. Our users re-enact the flatfoot's quest at every turn, exploring the relationship between story and place, and re-spatializing the detective story's deferred temporality of apocalyptic knowledge in a "dialectical utopianism" (Harvey) that mediates the city past and present through spaces both fictional and actual. By superimposing global information

networks onto local sites of national relevance, our app foregrounds Rankin’s “analysis of the unsettling forces at the heart of post-devolution Scotland” as it moves “into twenty-first century global uncertainty and . . . a more postnational vision of the nation” (Bell).

Panel: 7.1: Utopia 2.0? – Technology and the Future of Utopia

Name: Ron Haas, The Honors College at Texas State University

Paper Title: Sexual Liberalism and Sexual Utopianism: The Revolt of the Incels in Michel Houellebecq’s Early Novels

Abstract: The term “involuntary celibate” or “incel,” used to describe someone who struggles to find willing sexual partners to the point of despair, first appeared in an online community in the late 1990s. In the last few years, however, this term has become associated more narrowly with a subculture of frustrated young men who nurture revenge fantasies against the beautiful women who spurn them and the privileged men who have access to them. The rise of the incel movement in North America has spurred renewed interest in the early works of Michel Houellebecq, France’s most controversial novelist better known today for his role in debates over anti-Islamic racism. In light of a van attack that killed 10 people in Toronto in April of this year—the most recent act of “gender terrorism” as some commentators have labelled this phenomenon—Houellebecq’s debut novel *Whatever* from 1994 reads like a character study of an incel *avant-la-lettre*, exposing the psychological processes and social dynamics that can lead from sexual misery to murder.

Whatever (*Extension du domaine de la lutte* in French) furthermore outlines the main tenets of contemporary incel thought. Central to this ideology, I argue, is a critique of sexual liberalism and the sexual revolutions of the 1960s more broadly that cuts across political, ethnic, and socio-economic lines. According to this critique, by introducing the capitalist logic of liberal society into the sexual sphere—thereby extending “the domain of the struggle” alluded to in the novel’s French title—the revolutionaries of the 60s inadvertently created an elite class of sexual privilege (the carefree world of the “Chad’s” and “Stacey’s” in the incel imagination) and a mass of sexual proletarians (“uglycels,” “shortcels,” “fatcels,” “oldcels,” etc. in the expanding vocabulary of the “manosphere”). By overextending a flawed economic metaphor, this critique first of all presents us with a false choice between sexual “liberalism” and some form of sexual “regulation,” whether of a traditional, patriarchal sort or of a “socialistic” variety—institutionalized prostitution, futuristic sex robots, and an actual “redistribution” of sexual services are just some of the proposals debated on incel forums. Moreover, I maintain, this critique misrepresents the sexual revolutions of the 60s and fails to appreciate the key insights of its utopian thinkers who challenged ahistorical and essentialist conceptions of sexuality and envisioned societies transformed by a revolution of desire. Drawing from the work of Guy Hocquenghem and other sexual revolutionaries, I argue that sexual utopianism, by focusing attention on the gap between our expectations for sexual fulfillment and our means for procuring it, makes it possible to acknowledge the reality of sexual suffering—a suffering that Houellebecq plumbs with unique talent in his early novels—while combating the spread of incel ideology at the same time.

Panel: 10.2: Utopian Aspirations and Dystopian Fears in Contemporary Literature

Name: Carter Hanson, Valparaiso University

Paper Title: The Undetermined Future: Temporality and Collective Memory in Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*

Abstract: Contra the utopian genre's tendency to flatten temporality and negate historical causality, Marge Piercy's "critical utopia" *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976) represents the present, the future, and Utopia as open-ended and precarious. Thus, Piercy grapples with how a utopian society needs to deal with its past in order to bring about desired utopian change and prevent social stagnation and the drift towards centralized power. My paper argues that Piercy locates the source of an ongoing utopian impulse in performative, ritual acts of collective memory that finesse the difference between remembering the past and revering the past as a fixed entity. In its conviction that the future is undetermined, Piercy's novel functions as an important precursor and response to Fredric Jameson's formulation that global late-capitalism has reduced the future to ahistorical repetition.

Panel: 6.3: Direction and Temporality in Utopia

Name: Kirsten Harris, Senior Teaching Fellow in Liberal Arts, University of Warwick, UK

Paper Title: Teaching Utopia: A Problem-Based Learning Model

Abstract: This paper will explore how Utopian Studies can become more genuinely interdisciplinary by discussing how utopianism can be taught in an interdisciplinary undergraduate classroom. With a background in radical English literature and nineteenth-century British socialism, I currently teach on the University of Warwick's pioneering Liberal Arts programme. Our structured programme is founded on an interdisciplinary philosophy which drives our research-informed teaching. Though my research – which combines history, politics, print culture and activism – prepared me to work in Utopian Studies to a certain extent, re-thinking my teaching practices from a truly interdisciplinary perspective has transformed how my students and I approach the 'big questions' that utopianism provokes. This is a work in progress: the first iteration of the module I designed and teach (Utopias: Texts, Theory, Practice) is currently being reworked to integrate a broader range of disciplinary perspectives more effectively within each lesson, and to empower the students to set the agenda through their own independent research. A problem-based learning approach puts the responsibility for the lesson in the hands of the students, and Utopian Studies offers a particularly rich landscape for learning. 'Problems' or 'big questions' pertaining to utopianism—relating, for example, to power, gender, technology, quality of life, or freedom of speech—may be explored using examples from a range of platforms: political philosophy, activism, architecture and town planning, community-building, festivals and celebrations, literature, film and music, to name but a few. Students appreciate being given the freedom to pursue their individual research interests before combining their knowledge and experience in a collaborative classroom. Students who have begun to develop specialisms in, for example, social research, politics, cultural/literary analysis, and history/lived experience, are encouraged to think both theoretically and pragmatically, drawing on each other's expertise in order to develop a multi-faceted response to the problem at hand. As well as outlining some of the strengths and benefits of teaching and learning in this way, this paper will address some of the challenges involved. It is my hope that this experience not only prepares students for responding to real-world problems outside the academic world, but breaks down barriers between historical and contemporary research, and between the Arts, Humanities and the Social Sciences, which will have an impact on future research as some students choose to continue onwards into academia.

Panel: 2.2: The Interdisciplinarity of Utopian Studies

Name: Amy Hart, University of California, Santa Cruz

Paper Title: The Politics of Social Reform: The Communitarian-Led Fight for Women's Rights in Wisconsin

Abstract: The Fourierist communities of the 1840s instigated social and political change beyond the boundaries of the communal setting. This paper will examine the case study of the Wisconsin Phalanx (also known as Ceresco) which offers an example of communitarians influencing wider social reform and formal politics. Within the Ceresco community, women held property ownership rights, limited voting rights, and received financial compensation for their domestic labor. Despite these improvements in women's social status, scholars who have documented the history of Ceresco have depicted the community as ultimately failing to achieve significant advances in women's rights within the communal setting.

This paper will take a longer view of Ceresco's history, highlighting the strategies that Ceresco members and their descendants used to disrupt normative social hierarchies and politics in Wisconsin, if years later than originally intended. During the community's existence, members of Ceresco participated in the formal politics of Wisconsin, including Wisconsin's transition from a U.S. territory to a state. Ceresco's co-founder, Warren Chase, served as a delegate to Wisconsin's constitutional conventions, where he advocated progressive political ideals such as married women's property rights. After the community's dissolution, some of Ceresco's female members would go on to become advocates of the women's rights movement. By highlighting individuals' experiences within the Ceresco community and afterwards, this paper posits that these communitarians offered an early ideological challenge to antebellum notions of women's role within the family and society, a challenge which would influence social reform movements, including women's rights, for years to come.

Panel: 8.4: Countercultural Communitarians: Fourierist Critiques of Nineteenth-Century American Society

Name: Carrie Hintz, Queens/CUNY and The Graduate Center/CUNY

Paper Title: "Leaping from the Pinnacle of a Tower in the Air:" The Epigraphs of Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and the Discipline of Literary History

Abstract: Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* begins with two epigraphs: one from Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and the other from Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. My paper will consider Swift and Woolf as intertexts for *Oryx and Crake*, taking the epigraphs as an opportunity to position the novel within literary history. What can we learn from bringing *Oryx and Crake* into dialogue with its literary predecessors?

Atwood's dialogue with Swift underscores the novel's debt to the literary tradition of the misanthrope, dismayed by human folly and excess. Swift's ironies are a helpful entry point into Atwood's own use of the fantastic in the dystopian mode of warning and caution. In the epigraph Atwood includes from *Gulliver's Travels*, the narrator comments that he "could have astonished you with strange improbable tales" yet, "chose to relate plain matter of fact in the simplest manner and style." "My principal design," he intones, "was to inform you, and not to amuse you." The Swiftian epigraph in *Oryx and Crake*, with its dark playfulness, underscores Atwood's seriousness and urgency in *Oryx and Crake*—but also the many layers of irony in which she cloaks that seriousness.

The epigraph from Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* is equally complex. It reads: "Was there no safety? No learning by heart of the ways of the world? No guide, no shelter, but all was miracle and leaping from the pinnacle of a tower into the air? By invoking the artist Lily Briscoe's complicated—and ambivalent—grief for Mrs. Ramsay, Atwood hints at the interpersonal tensions that will animate *Oryx and Crake*, especially the love triangle between Jimmy, *Crake and Oryx*. The epigraph also evokes the risk and exhilaration of making art—and making meaning—in times of chaos and dissolution.

In keeping with the themes of the panel, I will also discuss the limitations of a literary historical approach, in dialogue with my fellow panelists.

Panel: 8.3: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Utopian Studies

Name: Sarah Hogan, Wake Forest University

Paper Title: 'Several Worlds in Several Circles': Cartography and Cosmography in the Writings of Margaret Cavendish

Abstract: Cavendish criticism to date has admirably examined the Duchess's tenuous, ambivalent, at times even hostile relationship to the New Science of her day, finding in her writing a remarkable, satirical anti-positivism, even as she produces a vitalist materialist natural philosophy that regularly borrows and builds upon the works of thinkers like Rene Descartes, Henry More, Robert Hooke, and Thomas Hobbes. In my talk, I'll suggest that the imaginary worlds of Cavendish's prose and poetry, including those in her utopia, *The Blazing World*, similarly rely on and radically challenge the emerging cartographic frameworks of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—and that her fictive and philosophical worlds are in skeptical tension with the mapped spatial realities of early modern mathematized cartography. Which is to say, that in advocating for the right to create a world of one's own, Cavendish problematizes various early modern efforts to map and know the world—or Nature—in toto. To support these arguments, the talk will present several of the most influential, widely reproduced, but still speculative cartographic works of the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries, including renderings of the Arctic pole, while unpacking Cavendish's use of the word "world" across her various writings, exploring its innate plurality as a planetary body, metaphysical concept, ontological realm, and construction of human authorship. Even more specifically, I plan to examine her tendency to figure worlds as celestial and extraterrestrial realms but also as concentric, interior spatial multiplicities, or worlds within worlds, thus aligning with some of the more occult worldviews of the late Renaissance and maintaining some attachment to her early (but ultimately disenchanting) atomism.

Panel: 1.2: Feminist Utopias and Dystopias

Name: Isabella Ides, Author newly released utopian trilogy that takes place in Humboldt County

Paper Title: *White Monkey Chronicles*: A new utopian novel. Literary. Comic. Feminist.

Abstract: In her study, *Postmodern Utopias and Feminist Fiction*, Jennifer A. Wagner-Lawlor, unpacks the tantalizing notion of feminist hospitality as a prevalent theme informing fictional postmodern utopias. Isabella Ides, the presenter, will discuss how hospitality is at the matrix of her newly released utopian novel, *White Monkey Chronicles*. Pushing the concept further, she will illustrate how hospitality is an agent of disruption. The author will also read certain relevant selections from her novel—expect a lively presentation from this former performance artist. Everyone in attendance will be gifted with a complimentary copy of *White Monkey Chronicles: The*

Complete Trilogy. It is a fabulist tale of an undocumented deity, and the rogue Sisterhood, tucked away in Humboldt County, who are persecuted for their willingness to take in strays. It is a novel of multiple disruptions, including the trajectory of the so-called fall. The Sisterhood is characterized as a dis-order, a dis-order with a welcome mat, a place for the displaced. Hospitality itself becomes the engine of creative disruption in the fictive world of *White Monkey*.

Panel: 7.2: Creative Approaches to Utopia

Name: Brittani Ivan, Kansas State University

Paper Title: The Tough Guide to Dystopia

Abstract: This is a joint project between myself and Lauren Callihan, also of Kansas State University. *The Tough Guide to Dystopia* is a satirical mock-travel guide to many of the common tropes of Dystopian fiction. Published by the fabricated group “Dictators and Natural Disasters”, this 30+ page guide walks the reader through common people, places, and things they are likely to see on their “vacation” in either State controlled or Chaos controlled sectors of Dystopia Parkland, from cannibalism to flashbacks and various flora. Humorous, witty, and biting, this guide draws on works by Margaret Atwood, Cherie Dimarline, Lois Lowry, Yevgeny Zamyatin, Alex London, and many others to both highlight the most common features of dystopian fiction and to ironize it’s frequent shortcomings in areas pertaining to racism, gender, and sexuality in a way that is thoroughly enjoyable as well as educational.

Panel: 7.2: Creative Approaches to Utopia

Name: Naomi Jacobs, University of Maine

Paper Title: Pandora Worries About What She Is Doing: Le Guin and the Problem of Utopian Authority

Abstract: One notable feature of Ursula K. Le Guin’s magisterial utopia *Always Coming Home* is the presence of a shaping figure named Pandora, who puzzles over the challenges presented by the utopian mode—the temptation to make everything fit too precisely, creating nothing more than “doll people” in a “doll’s country.” Not wanting to replicate the arrogance of the “smartass utopians” she has always disliked, Pandora seeks a more intuitive mode of utopian thought, understood as a process of exploration rather than the production of a fixed vision. Le Guin is clearly aware of the temptations of authorial power in the utopian mode; Pandora even gets into an argument with an “archivist” from the future world who critiques the novel’s vision as “a mere dream dreamed in a bad time . . . a critique of civilization possible only to the civilized . . .” This paper will explore the anxiety of utopian authorship and of utopian imagining: the question of “who am I to write this book?” *Always Coming Home* will be taken as one instance of an anxiety that may be endemic to the genre, made visible in such classic tactics as the deflection of authority to a utopian guide. Might there be an “anxiety of utopian authorship” (pace Gilbert and Gubar) specific to women writers? how does this issue link to the charge of cultural appropriation (another dilemma of authority) regarding Le Guin’s use of Native materials?

Panel: 7.4: Revisiting the Works of Ursula K. Le Guin

Name: Mark Jendrysik, University of North Dakota

Paper Title: Does Utopia Have a Future?

Abstract: In this paper I examine the current status of utopian thought in a non-utopian era. I will consider the current state of scholarly debate about utopia. I will also consider the popular image of utopia at the current time.

In our current age, it has become fashionable to declare that progress is a lie, democracy a sham and human liberty an impossible dream. Authoritarian populism is resurgent. We see the return of magical thinking and the recreation of an enchanted world. Reason (and its child, science) has been rejected. Utopian thought, like much political and social thought, has been relegated to the ivory towers of academic debate. Can utopian thought escape from the ivory tower and become vital again? My answer is yes.

I look for evidence of utopian dreaming in our current dystopian seeming landscape. In many ways the current wave of pop culture dystopian speculation is at its heart, really utopian. Evil regimes are overthrown by heroic action. Previously passive and atomized individuals join together and work for change. It seems possible that utopian thought has once more become revolutionary. We can also note the rise in small scale experiments in communal living by religiously committed people. Perhaps the word “utopian” has come to signify a childish dream for things that cannot be. But the desire for a better world remains vital, and I search for evidence of utopian dreaming and action in our present.

Panel: 11.2: The Future of Politics and Utopia

Name: Craig Johnson, UTS: University of Technology, Sydney and Rowan Tulloch, Macquarie University

Paper Title: Popular Video Games and Utopia: Orders and Disorders of Play in Accelerated Neoliberalism

Abstract: Popular video games reinforce today’s hegemonies but they may also present ways for us to dream differently again. Even in their most bleak social and political depictions, popular video games provide a compelling, strange utopic relief from our increasingly dystopian real world, where players are offered a chance to create order within ontologies of disorder, and within lives of uncertainty, as lived within the fragments of the current cultural logic of what Nick Srnicek has called ‘platform capitalism’. What ‘ways out’ (following Kant) are suggested by the conjuncture of games and neoliberalism? The act of play can be viewed as a process of learning hidden algorithms, a level by level, room by room, etc., drive towards an optimal state of being, where players experience feelings of control and even a sense of infinity or digital sublimity. The most extreme example of this might be the ‘speed run’ where players use every technique, glitch and shortcut to complete a game in as short a time as possible. Ernst Bloch, Paul Virilio and Lev Manovich guide us into a theory of utopian performance in video games, a space where a totalising logic does apply, efficiency can be optimised and entropy and disorder can be reversed.

Panel: 7.1: Utopia 2.0? – Technology and the Future of Utopia

Name: Clint Jones, University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point

Paper Title: Starving People of World Unite!: Food Rebellions, Eco-Marxism, and the Promise of Agri-Utopianism

Abstract: In 2012, during the financial crisis in Spain, Mayor Juan Gordillo led supporters in raids of supermarkets to ensure that people in his community had enough to eat. This is reminiscent of French Syndicalist Jose Bove who led a peasant rebellion against McDonald's in southern France in 1999. In the 21st century hunger has become so prevalent, roughly 1 in 9 people worldwide are classified as starving, that some theorists are arguing that it will be the food crisis that brings us together to fight capitalism. This has a very Marxist ring to it, but Marx himself held a very negative view of rural communities. I argue that by reconceptualizing of rural areas as uniquely contextualized to foment anti-capitalist resistance, it is possible to also re-conceptualize how urban centers might harness the agricultural as well, forging a bond between the rural and urban that can disrupt capitalist enterprises that utilize the control of food to maintain social control.

Panel: 6.4: Utopias in Marx, Marxism, and Marxians

Name: Raphael Kabo, Birkbeck College, University of London

Paper Title: "Life! Life! Life!": The Precarious Utopianism of Kim Stanley Robinson's *New York 2140*

Abstract: Essayist Rebecca Solnit, recounting her experience of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake in Northern California, writes that to her surprise one of the dominant emotions in the affected areas was enjoyment, "if *enjoyment* is the right word for that sense of immersion in the moment and solidarity with others caused by the rupture in everyday life". In contrast with the dominant narrative of individualism and predation presented by neoliberal capitalist power, Solnit argues that the disaster provides "an extraordinary window into social desire and possibility"—the disaster utopia.

This paper will examine the utopianism of Kim Stanley Robinson's latest speculative fiction novel, *New York 2140*, the world of which is defined by a different disaster: rapidly rising water levels, catastrophic storms, and mass environmental destruction. Like the participants of the disaster utopias recounted by Solnit, the protagonists of *New York 2140* are motivated by care, compassion, collaboration, and utopian joy in their work to prevent the immediate effects of the disasters which threaten their precarious existences.

The speculative world of *New York 2140* allows Robinson to explore the valences of disaster utopianism beyond its contemporary, exceptional appearances, and to contemplate what communities have to look like to survive in a world where disaster and crisis, both environmental, social, and political, are constant and ongoing. This paper will situate *New York 2140* within a newly emerging corpus of cultural work which calls for a direct confrontation with the destructive powers of the present by understanding utopia as a precarious and never-finished form of resistance which is always dependent on networks of care, compassion, and joy beyond capitalism.

Panel: 12.4: The Utopianism of Kim Stanley Robinson

Name: Corina Kesler, University of Michigan

Paper Title: Enemies at the (Virtual) Gates: The Rise and Likely Pitfalls of Cybernationalism

Abstract: This project focuses on a) the rise of cybernationalism, and b) the increasingly more overt and controversial role that social media platforms and corporations such as Facebook –and the break-in abilities of their affiliates’ APIs and plug-ins– are playing in the international political arena.

More precisely, it places under scrutiny Benedict Anderson’s definition of the nation as “an imagined political community (...) imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” These national imaginings, I assert, are extensively mediated by social media platforms such as Facebook to bound and bond together the ever expanding and highly mobile members of a nation. Our particular case study, Romania, has a “bounded” population of 19 million and a Diaspora of close to 4 million citizens. Yet, in these “in house” and “long-distance” imaginings, the nation is imagined via cyber channels that are rarely politically neutral or devoid of partisan interests. As such, the resulting “cybernation” fails to belong and represent the intentions and political aspirations of only its citizens. Volens nolens, it then includes the never transparent, private interests of the international corporations providing these nation-making cyber tools.

The overall project will ultimately place under question the global and socio-political nature of present day nations or “communities imagined” via social media platforms. It will highlight how social media platforms such as Facebook could act as both a democratizing news sharing and civic activism platform and, as the Cambridge Analytica incident demonstrated, a very dangerous Pandora Box.

Panel: 3.4: Isolation and Secession

Name: Benjamin Klein, California State University East Bay

Paper Title: "High Exposure": Documenting Northern New Mexico’s ‘dropouts, renegades, and utopians’”

Abstract: Between 1967 and 1971, photographer Irwin Klein made several visits to northern New Mexico, using his camera to document what he described as “the dropouts, renegades, and utopians,” the “children of the urban middle class,” and old [B]eatniks,” “living alone, in couples, families, or small groups in the little Spanish-American towns in the back country” between Santa Fe and Taos. His black-and-white photographs of “the new settlers” provides viewers, in the words of aural historian Jack Loeffler, with “an honest portrait of counter-culturalists attempting to create their right to community in a harsh, beautiful new homeland where a higher level of human consciousness might take root and thrive.” Writer John Nichols provides a more caustic assessment of Klein’s photo essay: “Excellent images and that are enlightening and disturbing. A provocative portrait of a people hard at work in what often feels like a hippie demolition derby.” However, as the curator Daniel Kosharek reminds us, “Life in Northern New Mexico was difficult, especially for those who had fled the cities and suburbs... Klein pulls no punches in his images of northern New Mexico. As a result, his photos are a valuable resource for historians and others interested in understanding the complexities and contradictions of the countercultural scene.” Klein’s use of the term “new settlers” rather than hippies to describe his subjects, in the words of historian Michael Doyle, provides us with “a new heuristic category for understanding the counterculture in the region,” one that connects the newcomers with their predecessors.

Panel: 2.3: Settlement Trips: Aquarian Utopias

Name: Jaime Knight, California College of Art

Paper Title: Queer Illuminations: Utopias in Print and Performance

Abstract: Thinking through a history of queer spaces, communities and political movements can give us examples of not only utopic visions for the world, but concrete examples of utopias out/alongside society. From the queer space of the dance floor to the gatherings of gay men’s motorcycle clubs in the hills of the low Sierra, the sanctuaries of the radical fairies to unicorns in tech, Guy Hocquenghem’s *Screwball Asses* to marriage equality, queerness has always allowed for the experimentation, implementation and envisioning of the utopia that is Muñoz’ “warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality”. Through looking at a long history of queer subjectivity I create work in order to disrupt, deconstruct and recreate ideas of queerness and question hegemonic hetero-normativity with the goal of creating an autonomous space of dissent, one where, to quote Claire Bishop “the un-decidability of the aesthetic experience implies a questioning of how the world is organized, and therefore the possibility of changing or redistributing that same world.”

Panel: 9.4: Making Our Place: Disruptive Narratives in Contemporary Printmaking

Name: Zebadiah Kraft, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Paper Title: New Orders of Utopia and Dystopia: A Metamodern Shift in Swiss Army Man

Abstract: The people of Utopia, through a philosophical belief in the value of physical separation from their enemies, cut themselves off by digging out the peninsula attaching them to warring nations. They choose to leave the greater society behind and create their ideal home. The premise of leaving for benefit carries on thematically to this day in literature, film, and video games. My argument is that this notion of creating a better world decayed and became pessimistic in the last century, until an adoption of postmodern irony to generate a feeling of sincerity occurred within the wastelands of dystopian fictions after the turn of the millennium. ‘Social dreaming’ works until very recently neglect the eutopian and focus instead on the contrasting notion of dystopia and survival in the apocalypse merely. My presentation argues for scholars to begin to consider new films and video games as utopias—especially as a new sincere means to think about utopias coming from our own choice to move on from desolation, disruption, and disorder of neoliberal capitalism. I argue from a metamodernist perspective, building from the work of Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin Van Den Akker, that the sense of an end inherent in postmodern dystopias is going so far that a new sincerity is found within the ultra pessimistic, the truly apathetic. My primary texts is the film *Swiss Army Man*, which represents (whether purposefully or not) a sincere attempt to provoke audiences through sarcasm and cynicism, by creating surreal value within our living dystopia.

Panel: 3.4: Isolation and Secession

Name: Howard Kurtz, Southwestern Oklahoma State University

Paper Title: Medical Marijuana and Red State Politics

Abstract: The Medical Marijuana issue has drawn praise and ire across the United States . Nowhere has the debate been greater in so called Red States. Conservative values and their impact on the passage of medical marijuana and its implementation are discussed. Social policy theories are applied with an emphasis on the sociological and legal evolution of a back trending region.

Panel: 5.2: Intoxicating Utopia: Drugs and Drug Policy

Name: Keijo Lakkala, University of Jyväskylä

Paper Title: Counter-Logical Disharmony in Utopia

Abstract: Utopian thought and utopias themselves have many different meanings and many different functions. They can have the positive function of facilitating social change by creating hope and presenting a goal for transformative social action. Utopias can also have a so-called the critical function of utopia. Utopia has a critical function in the sense that when utopia is created and presented, it creates a contrast-effect which makes us question the present society and take a critical attitude towards it.

Utopia relativizes the present. This has been the case in most utopias since Thomas More's Utopia. Utopias present in literary form a society where the logic of social practice is radically different. This logic can either be presented as a peaceful alternative to the present or it as an alternative which is in antagonistic relationship with the present. The first type of logic can be called "parallel-logic" and the second type can be called "counter-logic". Either the utopia is peacefully co-existing with the present society or it challenges the present. Outside of literary utopias, these two types of logics can be seen also real-life utopian social movements and intentional communities. The community can either withdraw from the present society and start to live by different rules and with different logic of social practice or it can organize itself as counter-power which aims to overthrow the present society. Counter-logical stance aims to create disharmony within the present society as much it aims to create harmony in the new utopian community.

Panel: 3.1: Utopian Disharmony and Ambiguity

Name: David Leach, Department Chair and Director of the Digital Storytelling & Social Simulation Lab, Department of Writing, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC

Paper Title: Kibbutz: The Settlers of Palestine — Simulating Utopia in a Divided Land

Abstract: Founded in 1910, the kibbutz movement was a radical experiment in direct democracy, communal economics and utopian philosophy, as well as a microcosm of the complex and controversial history of the state of Israel. Kibbutz: The Settlers of Palestine (www.kibbutzgame.com) is an online simulation designed to complement a print-based journalistic history of utopian settlements in Israel and Palestine (*Chasing Utopia: The Future of the Kibbutz in a Divided Israel*, ECW Press 2016). This web-based "choose your own utopia" allows participants to make decisions (based on historical incidents) as the leader of a communal settlement, founded upon one of four possible political philosophies, that impact the finances, population growth, solidarity and reputation of a fictional kibbutz across a century of evolution. These choices also encourage players to reflect on the ethical, political and philosophical compromises that disrupted the utopian ideals of the kibbutz movement's founders.

This creative presentation will consist of three parts: a brief introduction to the kibbutz movement and the design of the interactive historical simulation (5-10 minutes); a critical playthrough of Kibbutz: The Settlers of Palestine by workshop attendees, either solo or in a group (15-20 minutes); and a moderated discussion of the potential benefits (and pitfalls) of using interactive simulations to understand the complex social and political ecologies of communal settlements and other utopian movements (15-20 minutes).

Panel: 9.2: Kibbutz: The Settlers of Palestine — Simulating Utopia in a Divided Land

Name: Helga Lenart-Cheng, Saint Mary's College of California

Paper Title: Archiving Immigrants' Personal Stories as Part of National History

Abstract: The presentation will focus on France's efforts to document the history of their immigration through archives of immigrants' personal stories. In the last two centuries, modern states (including the US) have often made attempts to compile and to archive the stories of their immigrants as part of the effort to write a national history. But what do individual stories about "crossing the border" tell about the old country and the new one, and the way we perceive their relation? How do these individual stories disrupt the effort to institutionalize them? I start with the assumption that each historical period's archiving practices reflect the political positioning of migration trauma in that particular epoch. How do France's contemporary oral history efforts to collect the stories of their migrants reflect the politics of migration? And how do new archiving technologies change our perception of the relation of immigrants to their new country?

Panel: 2.1: Immigration and Borderlands

Name: C. Wylie Lenz, Florida Polytechnic University

Paper Title: The Ambiguous Apocalyptic Utopianism of Jack London's *The Scarlet Plague* and George R. Stewart's *Earth Abides*

Abstract: As represented in imaginative texts, the disruption, displacement, and disorder brought about by an apocalyptic event or process can be combined to provide the perfect vehicle for a consideration of utopian potentiality. By sweeping aside the complex trappings of civilization, the producers of such texts create scenarios that place their characters in quasi-primitive conditions akin—but not identical—to the prelapsarian "state of nature" so often imagined in the thought experiments of modern philosophers and theorists. These scenarios allow for an interrogation of fundamental ontological, epistemological, and political concerns, which in turn inform visions of the ideal society. As such, these texts posit a sort of ambiguous apocalyptic utopianism. This presentation will address two novels published during the first half of the Twentieth Century, one shortly before World War I and the other shortly after World War II, that offer a remarkable opportunity for a comparative analysis of this conceit and its accompanying themes, motifs, tropes, and implications. Jack London's *The Scarlet Plague* (1912) and George R. Stewart's *Earth Abides* (1949) have virtually identical settings and plots, so much so that it becomes difficult not to read the latter as a purposeful rewriting of the former. However, they are remarkably different in style and tone, and these differences serve to heighten the ambiguity of any primitivist utopian ideations.

Panel: 3.1: Utopian Disharmony and Ambiguity

Name: Yi-Chuang Lin, National Tsing Hua, Taiwan

Paper Title: The Positive Power of Disruption and Disorder: *The Crying of Lot 49* and Entropy

Abstract: Conventional Utopia usually reckons a relatively compact, secluded and homogeneous state as one observes from Plato's *Republic* to Aldous Huxley's *Island*, while interaction with any external other usually brings about change and disruption to the original order. And it is for such reason that any contact with the other and introduction of socio-political diversity are usually placed under strict surveillance. If conventional utopia is built and ruled by a certain central authority who sets the norm and order, modern decentralized capitalist democracy seems to verify the more powerful internalized gaze of the big Other.

In *The Crying of Lot 49*, Thomas Pynchon resorts to the second law of thermodynamic to demonstrate how media assisted consumer capitalism brings about a more stable homogeneous society than any autocracy and show the ultimate irony of how the advocacy of individualism results in simulated uniformity. *Lot 49* set in the most politically active and socially disruptive 60s calls alert to “the shadow” and omnipresent “ghostly” power of business tycoons, exemplified by Pierce Inverarity. With the help of what Baudrillard has expounded in *Simulacra and Simulation* Slavoj Žižek’s Marxist psychoanalysis, this paper explores how Pynchon uses Entropy as a metaphor to demonstrate how the uncanny prevalence of American Businesses has hijacked one’s sense of self and adulterated one’s memory with persistent and unavoidable mass media, and celebrate the almost sinister disruptive power of the clandestine Tristero that conspires to invert bureaucratic accounts, social norms and state order. The increase of entropy within the self decreases the external socio-political vivacity and thereby attains a socio-political tranquility.

Panel: 9.1: Disruptive Ability and Otherness

Name: Hugo Ljungbäck, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Paper Title: The Happiest Place on Earth? Dismaland and the Simulation of Utopia

Abstract: The Walt Disney Company’s theme parks have been forever engrained in popular consciousness as the “happiest places on earth,” but in recent years, filmmakers and artists have offered images of the resorts that go against the company line, revealing instead sites of poverty, family discord, and trauma, contrary to the utopian fantasy marketed through popular discourse. Banksy’s large-scale installation Dismaland (2015), an abandoned and ghostly parody of Disneyland which appropriated the aesthetics of the fantasy resort into a dystopian “family theme park unsuitable for children,” and two films which take Walt Disney World as their subject matter, Sean Baker’s *The Florida Project* (2017) and Randy Moore’s *Escape from Tomorrow* (2013), will constitute this paper’s main objects of study.

Jean Baudrillard (1981/1994) argued that Disneyland served as the perfect manifestation of his theory of “simulacrum” as a place riddled with obvious fakery and outrageous phantasmagoric elements that exist simply to make the rest of the world appear real. Baudrillard proclaimed, by contrast to the illusionistic fantasy of the theme park, the parking lot outside (and, by extension, the rest of America) is a “veritable concentration camp.” In his reflections on “Utopics,” Louis Marin (1973/1984) suggests that Disneyland, as a “degenerating utopia,” functions as a melding of the past and the future, the close and the far away, in which “reality becomes fantasmatic and fantasy, actuality.”

This paper argues that, not only does Dismaland further illustrate Baudrillard’s theory by becoming a second-order simulation of Disneyland (a Barthian myth), but as the studied media objects show, the Disney theme parks perpetuate the same historical amnesia and rewriting of history, exoticization of different cultures, and celebration of hyper-commercialism as the rest of America. The inside is, after all, not so different from the outside.

Panel: 10.4: Utopian Aesthetics

Name: Alex MacDonald, Campion College, University of Regina

Paper Title: Teaching Utopia: A Planned "Realworlding" of a Course in Utopian Literature

Abstract: My Humanities 260 course is described in our university calendar as a study of "utopian literature, thought and experiment." Typically the emphasis in terms of class time and assignments has been on the literature and the history of the genre, with some attention to communities and city planning. I want to try "flipping" this for Winter 2019, by exploring several ways of answering the question—how can we make human society better? These several ways will likely include units on city planning, co-operative strategies, education, law, politics and technical expertise. The talk will sketch some specific examples of these approaches, including Thomas Mawson's city planning ideas, a late 19th century co-operative colony and contemporary co-housing, a 1960s statement on liberal arts in context of the 20th century "multiversity," the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child, radical politics and political gradualism—student activism of the 1960s for example, and the "Regina Manifesto" as a local expression of pro-active government/new-deal type thinking. One point I'd like to make in this talk might be expressed as a friendly amendment to Oscar Wilde's often-quoted dictum that "progress is the realization of utopias." Instead, we might say that progress is the failed or, at best, partial realization of utopias. Utopian visioning is futile, in a sense, and sometimes it is dangerous when it is too rigid, or when it attempts to be too complete or all-encompassing; but as we make our way in a transitory world of "becoming," it remains essential for survival and for improvements where they are possible.

Panel: 2.2: The Interdisciplinarity of Utopian Studies

Name: Kelly Martin, University of Florida

Paper Title: The Apocalypse Was Kind of Dull: Mapping Narratives of Punk, Post-Punk, and Postmodernism in Derek Jarman's *Jubilee* and *The Last of England*

Abstract: A seeming triumph of 21st-century neoliberalism, 2016's Brexit signaled for many progressives the return of Thatcher's insiderist legacy, a specter from the 1980s that never truly evanesced from our political horizons. Across the Atlantic, 2016 also witnessed the meteoric rise of Donald Trump to the U.S. presidency, a conservative victory, like Brexit, symptomatic of our current moment under late capitalism. To begin parsing the historical weight of these recent events, in this presentation I return to the scene of a moment that speaks to our present in telling, perhaps troubling, ways: Thatcher's England. To facilitate this narrative, I examine two films by Derek Jarman from this period noted for their "dystopic" vision of not only Thatcher's England but also the global situation of '80s postmodernism more generally: *Jubilee* (1978) and *The Last of England* (1987). Aesthetically, these films express the historical shift from the anarchistic spirit of late-70s punk to the often melancholic post-punk of the 1980s, a narrative that intersects in interesting ways with Jameson's famous characterization of postmodernism as the cultural logic of late capitalism. This presentation is not simply an application of Jameson to Jarman; on the contrary, I also read Jameson's 1991 *Postmodernism through Jarman's "dystopic utopianism,"* a dialectical process in both films where the utopian impulse persists in and through the ostensibly dystopian. My goal here is to suggest that both thinkers, whose projects respond to a historical situation similar to ours, can remind us of the radical, utopian possibilities of the present.

Panel: 8.2: Utopian Critique in Film

Name: Beth Mauldin, Georgia Gwinnett College

Paper Title: French White Utopias and the Colonial Imagination: The Black Immigrant Body in Olivier Nakache and Eric Toledano's *Les Intouchables* (2011) and Michael Haneke's *Caché* (2005)

Abstract: In *Black Skin/White Mask*, Frantz Fanon locates blackness within the power relations of history and French colonialism. His encounter with the young child on the train carries traces of the French colonial project of the mission civilisatrice and its accompanying ideal of universal citizenship. Here, culture is an invisible marker that grants Fanon's black body status as a civilized body, and by extension, ostensibly as a member of the French nation. This deviation in subject formation is a result of a blackness that is produced by and done to him by others.

In this paper, I look at two films which enact an encounter of the black body with narratives of the French nation as color-blind utopia: *Les Intouchables* (2011) by Olivier Nakache and Eric Toledano and Michael Haneke's *Caché* (2005). In both films, the black immigrant body—as a site of rupture and a site of fantasy—works to catch the nation in the process of composing a France that floats untethered from the historical traumas of the French colonial era. In *Les Intouchables*, blackness is not the invasive contagion that punctures the French national psyche, as in *Caché*; rather the black immigrant body serves to heal the wounds of the French colonial imagination. Whereas as blackness reopens the prior history of French colonialism and the fissures in the French national narrative in *Caché*, the black body in *Les Intouchables* functions as a supplement, a suturing of the narrative and its mythology of inclusivity.

Panel: 4.1: Whiteness and the Utopian Imagination

Name: Brie McLemore, University of California, Berkeley

Paper Title: The Spatialization of Blackness: Crime Mapping as a Tool for Gentrification

Abstract: In recent years, crime maps have expanded from the back corners of police precincts into the public arena. They are now published online, making them readily accessible to the general public. As a result, space is reimagined to make legible commonly held beliefs about what crime is, where it takes place, and who is responsible for it. My presentation will trace the historical trajectory of crime maps alongside the social and political construction of racialized, urban spaces, which has allowed for the categorization of Black spaces as “disorderly,” thus conflating Black bodies with crime. The emergence of publicly accessible crime maps, particularly on real estate websites, can be traced to a neoliberal logic, in which individual citizens are tasked with assessing danger in response to a crumbling state apparatus. This presentation is timely given the increased discussion concerning White residents of gentrifying areas who hastily call the police on their Black neighbors. My analysis will explore how the carceral state, aided by crime maps, plays an essential role in accelerating the gentrification process. Crime maps serve as a tool for locating and targeting Black bodies for removal in an attempt to transform perceived Black “dystopias” into White, orderly “utopias.”

Panel: 10.3: Urban Spaces and Communities

Name: Kate Meakin, University of Sussex

Paper Title: Reproduction and parenting in a dystopian future: (hi)stories evoked and omitted by *The Handmaid's Tale*

Abstract: Connections have been established between North American dystopian worlds and societal critique (Basu, Broad and Hintz, 2014), yet few studies have considered the policing of

reproduction and parenting within contemporary dystopian television. *The Handmaid's Tale*, written in 1985 by Margaret Atwood, depicts an authoritarian regime set in the future where women's bodies are controlled as the nation's "reproductive resources" (St Peter, 1989: 364). The novel has been compared to various periods from the past, such as the Salem Witch trials and the formation of Puritan communities (Dodson, 1997). The 2017- TV adaptation was lauded for its relevance to current debates on reproductive rights (Soddart, 2017). However, the show has also been criticized for its depiction of a seemingly utopian post-racial North American society, disregarding the histories of slaves forced to complete reproductive labour for white women, slave children being sold away from their families, and the children of indigenous families being stolen to be "civilized" in boarding schools (McDonald, 2017; Midge, 2018). This is particularly pertinent considering the recent implementation of policies that sanction Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) agents separating children from their parents at border checkpoints. Applying a discursive textual analysis to an episode of *The Handmaid's Tale* (2017-) entitled "Late", I will consider Elizabeth Freeman's (2010) work on queering temporality alongside Fredric Jameson's concept of historical amnesia (Freeman, 2010; Jameson, 1985). I will argue that *The Handmaid's Tale* (2017-) evokes and omits particular oppressive histories, elevating certain concerns around reproductive and parental injustice whilst ignoring others.

Panel: 12.1: Literary Feminism

Name: Rita Elena Melian Zamora, University of Michigan (research scholar)

Paper Title: Subjects, Stories and their Displacement via Textual Translation

Abstract: This presentation brings to dialogue the fields of literature, translation, and anthropology, through a connecting line between them: language. Language not in the sense of 'means of communication', but in terms of its performativity; that is, how language affects/infects us,—or even better, how "language causes us to be. And sometimes... cause us to stop being", as Mozambican poet Mia Couto beautifully reminds us. (How) are languages capable of displacing subjects and their stories? What are the political and ethical implications behind language performativity when a text is translated? Based on this interrogation, here I explore the ways and the extent to which translation becomes relevant in the reshaping of meanings and identities of people and their stories. Based on a specific work from the immense world of anthropological ethnographies, I set off in a translation experimentation that allows me to think about the multiple ways in which a story can be told in other languages and places, and also the ways in which some stories just refuse to be told, articulated in a single homogeneous, well-behaved tongue.

Panel:

Name: Kristin Miller, UC Santa Cruz

Paper Title: "The Transit Network Society: Urbanism, Mobility, and the Bay Area in the Silicon Age"

Abstract: The Bay Area is popularly imagined as a science-fictional ecotopia, home of technological wizardry that has freed information and leveled global hierarchies through networked data. Its engineers are speeding towards midcentury dreams of autonomous transport and artificial intelligence, if not the jetpacks we were promised. It is a good question, however, whether this futurist urban imaginary corresponds to the increasingly contested lived experience of the region. Extracted from my ongoing dissertation research, this paper will focus on

intertwined histories of mobility, transportation, and information technology in the Bay Area, including the midcentury BART campaign, the private tech company shuttles—the so-called “Google buses”—in the early 2000s, and the current race to develop the self-driving car. Each phase of the region’s modern transportation history responds to the growth of a science- and science fiction-influenced urban imaginary, as well as socio-political conjunctures that have contributed to increasing economic stratification, gentrification, displacement, and privatization of public space and systems. The growth of the Silicon Valley tech industry, in particular, is rooted in an ideology drawing on cybernetics and network thinking, which nominally values open data, rhizomatic design, and a globalized flow of information, people, and capital. I will explore how the “Californian Ideology,” however, devalues ideas of the public sphere or commons even as it argues for open-source information. To this end, my research interweaves critical urban and transportation studies, mobilities literature, and research on the tech-utopian ideologies that have shaped the Bay Area's form, self-concept, and public perception.

Panel: 11.4: Urban Futures

Name: Nancy Nester, Roger Williams University

Paper Title: Disquieting Readings: *Walden Two* and the Differently-Abled

Abstract: At the time B.F. Skinner was writing *Walden Two*, ordinances known as “ugly laws,” were still on the books in CA. These laws targeted beggars and indigents, as well as the physically, psychologically, and intellectually “infirm” (Schweik 28), prohibiting them from public streets. *Walden Two* describes a community in which the majority are held to norms. Scant allowances are made for variations in aptitudes or temperaments, leading readers to wonder whether the differently-abled could be integrated into this idealized society, or if they would remain relegated to the periphery. Though Skinner alludes to social issues as being the exigence for the penning of this utopia, he does not address matters of the impaired. Curious, for in his revised introduction to *Walden Two*, Skinner attributes the renewed interest in the fictional utopian community to scientific proof of the benefits of behavioral engineering as a treatment for psychological and intellectual concerns. In fact, his prominent interlocutor, Frazier, “founder” of *Walden Two*, seems dismissive of physical and neurodiversity. Frazier mouths a version of John B. Watson’s famous claim that, using the proper behavioral tools, a child can be fashioned to meet specifications. This presentation explores what Martha Nussbaum refers to as a “fiction of perfection” (HFH312), a viewpoint that obscures the needs of the differently-abled in society. Similarly, it responds to the challenge Claire Curtis articulates in “Utopian Possibilities” where she calls for critiques of “eugenic cures” as utopian solutions (20).

Panel: 9.1: Disruptive Ability and Otherness

Name: Tajaddin Noori, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Paper Title: The Quest for a Global Utopia in the New Era of Globalization

Abstract: A global utopia aims to bring utopian impulses from different nationalities and different cultures together to explore their shared intentions to build a new world characterized by prosperity, tranquility, and equality. It denounces the alienation and marginalization of human beings in any corner of this globe and proposes spaces of freedom and solidarity beyond borders. The paper will argue that a global utopia is anti-racism, anti-imperialism, and anti-late capitalism. It will explain that a global utopia critiques the status quo of the world system and looks for an

alternative world in which human beings can live without any kind of division. A global utopia tries to eliminate the mediation of dystopia, which threatens every positive change wherever it is in the era of globalization. Furthermore, the paper will reveal the distinctive and overlapped aspects of utopia and globalization. The paper will also point out that a global utopia rejects the economic and regional reductionism. In other words, the paper will assert that a global utopia exceeds the capitalistic limits of globalization and the attachment of utopia to a specific region. Finally, the paper will define a global utopia as a social project of oneness over otherness of human beings and a movement toward a global reformation.

Panel: 9.3: Capitalism and Utopia

Name: Hisashi Ozawa, Meiji University

Paper Title: Utopia after *Brave New World*: The Idea of Anthropology in Aldous Huxley's *Eyeless in Gaza*

Abstract: In *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936), his next novel after *Brave New World* (1932), Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) describes the ideological and personal development of the hero Anthony, from an irresponsible cynic to a pacifist idealist who believes in a utopian vision of "unity." This development is urged by the anthropologist Miller and his anthropology, but unlike the general definition of these words, the anthropology in the novel means a study based on love for humanity, and the anthropologist refers to a person who practises this belief, contributing to social reform and world peace. Although Huxley's ideas of anthropology and anthropologist could be associated with several possible sources, this paper argues for the potential influence of one of his acquaintances, Ada Elizabeth Chesterton (1869-1962)—a journalist and social reformer who revealed the true state of destitute women by writing *In Darkest London* (1926) and who established the Cecil Houses as shelters for homeless women.

Panel: 8.3: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Utopian Studies

Name: Graeme Pente, University of Colorado Boulder

Paper Title: From Paris to Texas: French Fourierists in Power and in Exile, 1848-1857

Abstract: The decade ending in 1857 with the collapse of the colony of La Réunion near Dallas was a dramatic one for followers of the French utopian socialist Charles Fourier (1772-1837). Catapulted into the National Assembly by the popular republican movement of 1848, Fourier's leading disciple Victor Considerant was at the height of his influence, potentially commanding a national audience and shaping national policy. These circumstances challenged Fourierist theory of small-scale communal projects implemented through incremental change. The speed of revolutionary events quickly thrust the French Fourierists from power, and they found themselves in exile planning a communal experiment for the plains of Texas more conventionally along the lines of Fourierist orthodoxy. Shortcomings of capital, soil, and leadership would lead this new project to collapse, as well. My paper traces this history of defeat and the lessons utopian socialists learned from it. I examine how these experiences reshaped Fourierist thinking about democracy as they adjusted their ideas to a national scale and the ideal encountered the real in communal practice. This paper speaks to the conference theme with practical experience disrupting theory and closely held ideals, while the people themselves were displaced from their homeland. It is part of the larger project of my dissertation, which explores nineteenth-century experiments in direct democracy and the contributions of Fourierist thinkers and practitioners to democratic theory.

Panel: 8.4: Countercultural Communitarians: Fourierist Critiques of Nineteenth-Century American Society

Name: Kara Plaxa, UC Berkeley

Paper Title: A Temporary Utopia: Leatherdyke Space

Abstract: Every year, San Francisco’s South of Market district welcomes a crowd of 400,000 people clad in leather, leashes, and lingerie. The Folsom Street Fair, a leather and fetish event, strives to “unite the adult alternative lifestyle communities with safe venues for self-expression and exciting entertainment,” according to its mission statement. Within the fair is a zone named The Playground that provides a space for leatherdykes: women, trans, and gender identities other than cis-male (those comfortable with the male gender assigned at birth).

Since 1984, the Folsom Street Fair has served as a counterpublic realm where leathermen exercise sexual and social desire as a visible community within urban public space. The leather community pushed the boundaries of permissible public behavior through a carnivalesque display of a “deviant” lifestyle in which the cis-male is the dominant group. More recently, a separate space within the fair welcomes only those individuals who identify as “female, genderqueer, gender fluid, transmasculine, transfeminine, transgender and others with identities beyond the binary sex or gender spectrum.” The Playground, known as a ‘safe place,’ serves subaltern counterpublics as a site for the performance of alternative identities through the practice of BDSM and the production and circulation of their discourses. Both The Playground and its surrounding Folsom Street Fair demonstrate the power of the carnivalesque in generating counterpublic realms with the capacity to erupt as temporary utopias – in this case, attracting close to half a million national and global visitors annually.

Panel: 11.3: Sexuality and Utopia

Name: Mark Preslar, Sewanee: University of the South

Paper Title: Knowledge is power: Technology as Catalyst in Revolution and Worldview Transformation

Abstract: If we understand worldview as the map of reality shared by a community, and revolutions of all sorts involving a dramatic shift in worldview, then technology, as a practical embodiment of knowledge, plays a fundamental role in human revolutions of all sorts, preceding the great sea-change transformations in human life.

Social revolutions take place because of preceding technological revolutions that dramatically change the socio-economic landscape and subsequently, the political landscape as well - often leaving revolutionaries and political leaders standing on the sidelines with mouths open.

History (and prehistory) are full of examples, including Harari’s (*Sapiens*): the cognitive revolution (c. 70,000 BC, when Homo Sapiens likely developed language, imagination, and complex social structures), the Agricultural revolution, (c. 12,000-6,000 BC), the scientific revolution (c. 1500 AD+), the various industrial revolutions, and the currently unfolding knowledge revolution, which includes the exponential growth of the disruptive information technologies, that are transforming many socio-economic aspects of human life, to the extent that scientists tracking this refer to this phenomenon as a singularity, meaning we cannot predict what will lie on the other side of these drastic changes.

A potential revolutionary result springing from current technological explosion: inadvertent socialism. Tech titans are already calling for Universal Basic Income as a solution to an economy becoming exponentially more productive and automated to the extent of elimination of jobs. This

revolution would, not planned by revolutionaries, but accomplishing as an unintended consequence of preceding technological change.

Panel: 7.1: Utopia 2.0? – Technology and the Future of Utopia

Name: Gib Prettyman, Penn State Fayette

Paper Title: Le Guin's utopian legacies

Abstract: Ursula K. Le Guin was born in Berkeley in 1929, and died early this year. SUS 2018 in Berkeley seems like a fitting time and place to consider her legacies in the utopian imagination and utopian studies. My paper will focus on one key legacy: her exploration of non-Western cultural frameworks. This legacy is deeply intertwined with her ecological concerns, her feminism, and her ambiguous utopianism. Le Guin's anthropological and philosophical uses of non-Western concepts precipitate sophisticated utopian insights, while also provoking critical questions about traditional political agency and capitalist appropriation.

Panel: 7.4: Revisiting the Works of Ursula K. Le Guin

Name: Idit Ran, Technion – Israel Institute of Technology: Faculty of Architecture and Town-Planning

Paper Title: Center-periphery interrelations in the Israeli kibbutz

Abstract: The Israeli kibbutz is often presented or examined as a Utopian project—an attempt to realize utopia on earth. Like other utopias, the Zionist utopia emphasized physical planning and architecture, as a way to fulfill and construct social values. The typical spatial planning of the kibbutz reflects an attempt to create an egalitarian space without hierarchies, among other things through creating a distinct dominant center, surrounded by circles of uniform and modest dwellings, reflecting values of equality and modesty, with a preference for the collective over the individual.

My research deals with the processes that took place during the 1970s in the Israeli kibbutz movement, which eventually led to the disintegration of the kibbutz, and in many ways of the utopian vision. During that period, the changes of social outlook and ideology created a situation of incompatibility between space, which was designed in advance to fit a certain social concept, and daily life. In such a situation, the awareness of the space, its components and the way it is produced becomes more acute, and space takes on a stronger presence in daily life.

In the proposed presentation, I will highlight the interrelationship between the social order and the spatial order, which sometimes contradict each other and sometimes strengthening each other, and present the process that finally led to the total abandonment of the center –both in the social and in the spatial sense.

Panel: 10.3: Urban Spaces and Communities

Name: Vanessa Rapatz, Ball State University

Paper Title: Brave New Worlds and Insubstantial Pageants: Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and HBO's *Westworld*

Abstract: HBO's *Westworld* summons up numerous literary allusion including Shakespearean plays. A line from *Romeo and Juliet*, in fact, has become the mantra of this dystopian. However, in terms of *Westworld*'s architecture and deep structures, a perhaps more salient allusion is Peter

Abernathy's recitation from *The Tempest*, "This is hell and all the devil's are here." In Shakespeare's play this line is delivered in the midst of shipwreck and disorder that violently ushers the play's characters into a strange land. Both *The Tempest* and *Westworld* present audiences with fantasy settings that at once read as potential utopian or dystopian landscapes. One man's vision of a commonwealth where free will reigns is pitted against another's hellish enslavement. In a recent article featured in *The New Republic*, Josephine Livingstone aligns *Westworld* with *The Tempest* in its rumination on freedom. In my comparison, I want to focus specifically on the gender dynamics in both works. Women in both are central to male fantasies of control and freedom, whether the object is to populate these worlds with their own progeny or indulge urges to rape and pillage. Taken together, these works help us examine how the dawning consciousness of women such as Shakespeare's Miranda and *Westworld's* automaton hosts Dolores and Maeve allow us to imagine "Brave New World[s]" that push beyond the manufactured and "insubstantial pageants" of patriarchal architects. Indeed, in both cases, this dawning consciousness can be tied back to memories of the maternal, even when these memories have been cast into the "dark backward and abysm of time," to borrow Prospero's own phrasing.

Panel: 12.1: Literary Feminism

Name: Anthony Raynsford, San Jose State University, Art and Art History

Paper Title: Designing a Liberated Berkeley: Radical Ecology and the Genesis of the 'Integral Neighborhood'

Abstract: Scholarship on the utopian communities of the Northern California counterculture has overwhelmingly tended to focus on the rural communes and the back-to-the-land movement. Less studied but no less important were the countercultural attempts to disrupt the physical and social order of existing urban space by carving out enclaves based on communitarian, ecological principles. The city of Berkeley, with its heady mixture of counterculture migrants, new left militants, and environmental designers, would become the center for this kind of experimentation, culminating in what Ecocity advocate Richard Register later dubbed the "integral neighborhood." Unlike the rural communes or mega-structural utopias, such as Paolo Soleri's Arcosanti such integral neighborhood designs consisted of incremental, local transformations of the existing urban fabric – architecturally, socially and legislatively. This paper investigates the genesis of this type "outlaw" urban enclave, from actions such as the occupation and building of People's Park to manifestos such as the Berkeley Liberation Program, which proposed local, communal control over urban space, asserting: "The civilization of concrete and plastic will be broken and natural things respected." This thinking was the logical extension of New Left concepts of "community self-determination," combined with countercultural images of (social) ecology. Proposals for such a reshaping of the city then also led to detailed plans, including architectural drawings and published proposals for urban farming and neighborhood cooperatives, effectively socializing urban land and closing off streets in favor of green space. By investigating the radical, disruptive origins of what has now become the mainstream commonplace of sustainable or 'green' urbanism, this paper argues that many of its original utopian ideals have, in fact, been papered over or forgotten.

Panel: 2.3: Settlement Trips: Aquarian Utopias

Name: Molly Reed, Cornell University

Paper Title: Regenerating Body, Land, Society: Fourierism and Non-Human Nature

Abstract: This paper considers debates within Fourierist circles in the 1840s around the connections between human bodies, non-human nature, and social reform. For these communal reformers, Sylvester Graham's prescriptions in the *Science of Human Life*, alongside Fourier's voluminous writings on the coming state of nature, helped to provide a guiding framework for ideal relationships between humans, non-human animals, and the land. Brook Farm member Marx Edgeworth Lazarus, following Graham and William Alcott, articulately argued that the exploitation of labor paralleled and was reinforced by the exploitation and consumption of non-human animals. To these reformers, dietary changes and the pursuit of bodily perfection through health reforms represented an important pathway to broader social reform and an increased sensitivity to the plight of non-human nature in the context of industrial capitalism. Communitarians also argued that physiological practices of potential community members were crucial considerations to the success and "health" of the community. This paper shows that following the "communitarian moment" of the 1840s, connections between physiological, environmental, and social reform endured, finding expression in hydrotherapy and other health reforms, as well as the movement for "hygienic" agriculture.

Panel: 8.4: Countercultural Communitarians: Fourierist Critiques of Nineteenth-Century American Society

Name: Jacqueline Rhodes, Michigan State University

Paper Title: Separatism and the Question of the Real at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival

Abstract: In 2015, after almost 40 years in operation, the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival (MWMF) ended in large part because of its (in)famous trans-exclusive "womyn-born-womyn" [sic] focus. Such exclusion marked a utopic separatism that found its form in the "womyn's land" movement of the 1970s and 1980s. In this paper, I argue that the utopian work of "womyn's land" in general (and MWMF more specifically) failed because of the thin conception of "real womanhood" and the inability to conceive of trans possibility. Drawing from the work of Jose Esteban Muñoz and Karen Barad, I offer a view of utopia as method through the work of speculation + action. For Muñoz, queer utopia is relational and collaborative as we blend the "what is" with the "what could be"—in this way, queer utopia is a potentiality rather than a mere possibility. How do we know for/by whom such a potentiality functions? For Barad, "knowing is a direct material engagement, a cutting together-apart, where cuts do violence but also open up and rework the agential conditions of possibility. ... Instead of there being a separation of subject and object, there is an entanglement of subject and object." The "cutting together-apart" of the womyn's land movement and MWMF entangled woman-as-subject and woman-as-object, but rather than acting generatively at that point, cultural feminists still attached to the unitary humanist subject doubled down. How might we use utopia as method to disrupt the politics of exclusion and essentialism?

Panel: 7.3: Utopia as Practice

Name: Ellen Rigsby, Saint Mary's College of California

Paper Title: Temporal, but not Temporary Displacement in Gibson's *The Peripheral*

Abstract: In Gibson's *The Peripheral* the generic terms of alternate history, dystopia, utopia and heterotopia are at play, and have some implications for US-American Politics. Gibson's novels have been read as both as predictive of the future and as criticisms of the present, both distancing and presenting. But *The Peripheral* offers a scenario in which we do not know which paradigm and genre we are actually in. Displacement, rather than a particular designation of place, is the mechanism by which Gibson's *The Peripheral* offers an opportunity to think through the generic elements of science fiction and utopian novels.

In this paper I will explore the generic elements of science fiction and utopian novels as they relate to time via displacement in *The Peripheral*. Utopian novels may displace the reader via time (as in Bellamy's *Looking Backward*) or place (as in Gilman's *Herland*) or both (as in Charnes' *Woman on the Edge of Time*), while science fiction usually displaces the reader through a reference to the future. All of Gibson's work pushes the comfort zone of science fiction a bit because its narratives are set in the near future. But *The Peripheral* engages a dystopian potential future with an only slightly less dystopian present to try to prevent the worst aspects of that future from becoming the future of the present of the novel, and perhaps in the present of the readers.

Panel: 6.3: Direction and Temporality in Utopia

Name: Kerry Rohrmeier, San Jose State Univ, Dept. of Geography

Paper Title: Building Black Rock City: Principles, Perspiration and Participation

Abstract: An overview of a decade of research on the world's largest ephemeral intentional community, Burning Man. Specifically, Here we will examine the annual built world referred to as Black Rock City as a place defined by the harsh high desert landscape. Touted as a countercultural destination, the event and site attempt to merge modern utopian design visions with unregulated governance. Rather paradoxically the outcome is a city struggling from the pressures of social stratification and suburbanization stemming from rapid growth.

Panel:

Name: Sabrina Rosa and André Nogueira, IFRS – UFPEL - CAPES - UC Berkeley

Paper Title: Race and Gender Issues in the Contemporary School: Brazilian High School Students' (Trans)Formation, from Social Interaction to Effective Learning

Abstract: In school, social relationships happen with a great intensity and it is in this educational environment where binarism is present, as they separate boys from girls, black from white and good students from weak ones, regulating and disciplining them as Foucault's ideological apparatus points out. However, school should promote engagement among all students demystifying matters of race, gender, and beliefs. The objective of this presentation is to reflect upon the ways Brazilian schools approach gender and race, especially about non-standardized sexualities, since there are LGBTTQ students who attend to classes, but the heteronormative culture keeps trying to exclude them. There are also the black quota students who suffer for carrying the mark of the Quotas Law on their skin, double charging them with prejudice: for being black and for being quota students. Bauman (2005) and Hall (2004) suggest the moving identity in this globalized world and we can notice that the loss of sensibility in the fluid modernity treated by Baumann and Donskis (2014) exist, but there is hope to bring this sensibility back inside

school. This hope offers a possibility to think about a pedagogical terrain where teachers and students commit themselves to critics, dialogues, and a fight for social justice (Giroux, 2013). Race and gender debate should occupy the school agenda in a critical thinking way to guarantee the students their right to exist, belong, and have voice in educational settings. This is our invitation for reflection, so there will be a possibility for effective learning in Brazilian High Schools.

Panel: 5.1: Brazilian Perspectives on Utopia

Name: Susan Rosenstreich, Dowling College (emeritus)

Paper Title: The Utopia from Hell: A 17th Century Blueprint for a French Mission in the New World

Abstract: In 1664, the Abbe Paulmier of Lisieux, France, published the *Memoire pour l'establissement d'une mission en terre australis*, a petition to Louis XIV and Pope Alexander VII for the privilege of establishing a French mission in a fertile and accessible part of the New World neither Paulmier nor his contemporaries had ever seen, but which Paulmier believed to have been discovered by a French expedition a century and a half earlier. Unlike Spanish colonies that enslaved local populations, or Islam that punished populations refusing conversion, Paulmier's mission would constitute a French ecclesiastical enclave, a self-sufficient community where indigenous peoples would, of their own free will, gladly labor for French interests. The utopian aspirations of this enterprise depend upon a labor pool of indigenous peoples converted peaceably to Christianity. Two mistaken ideas predetermine the failure of a utopia based on a labor pool of this sort in the early modern period. One of these is the colonialist disregard for the persistence of memory. A more serious error is Paulmier's dependence on a conversion that involves the dehumanizing experience of burning from the indigenous memory a past that is incompatible with the mission's moral purpose, which is to impose the moral superiority of Church doctrine on people expected to make choices based on universal free will. If the utopia of Paulmier's *Memoires* is a utopia at all, it is a utopia from hell.

Panel: 5.3: Colonial and Postcolonial Utopianism

Name: Donald Rung, Sewanee: University of the South

Paper Title: Starships as Dandelion Seeds: Anti-Utopianism in Kim Stanley Robinson's *Aurora*

Abstract: In Kim Stanley Robinson's 2015 novel *Aurora*, a generation starship travels from our solar system on a 160-year trip to colonize an earth-like moon. Full of distinct biomes, each containing a community of inhabitants whose way of life varies accordingly, the ship in *Aurora* enacts the utopian ideals of diversity and pluralism that characterized Martian life in Robinson's earlier *Mars* trilogy. *Aurora*, however, imagines a utopian project where even a postmodern focus on method rather than goal might prove insufficient. The ship's inhabitants have been set adrift in a biosphere that, because of its small scale, proves impossible to sustain, however intelligent and well-provisioned the scientists on it might be. Faced with such intractable obstacles, the ship splits into two factions, one of which continues on a likely fruitless quest to find a habitable planet that can save them, while the other returns to earth without having achieved its objective of colonizing another world. Those who return are castigated by many of Earth's inhabitants as cowards, and we might see the failure to colonize *Aurora* as a repudiation of the utopian vision that the generation starship represented. I argue that, rather than simply a form of anti-utopian expression, the disruption of the project by a return to the beginning, involving a confrontation

with the architects, recalling Batty's visit with Tyrell in *Blade Runner* for example, is a figurative demand by Robinson to consider more thoroughly limitations posed by the complexities of biology and ecology to any utopian project.

Panel: 12.4: The Utopianism of Kim Stanley Robinson

Name: Lj Russum, Polk State College

Paper Title: "Amazing Grace How Sweet the Sound:" Making the argument for The Grateful Dead being the greatest intergenerational utopian band in American History.

Abstract: There seems to be a human rhythm to hope, a dance toward a distant call, the rhythm that Fredric Jameson terms the "utopian impulse." More than a dream, it is an authentic drive to create a good place. This impulse is an internal instigation to push against the limitations of the mediocrity of our neoliberal existence. It is the desire to dance the dance of being different in a world that requires normativity. To be utopian is to know the sweet sound of amazing grace, not the grace of a stoical American puritanism. Instead, a utopian state of grace, a moment of bliss, the grace found in the music of the Grateful Dead. The Dead used the inspirational nature of music to reach across those socially constructed barriers between generations to create a sound that inspires every human to dance the dance of grace as embodied in the myth of the Greeks. The Graces were the goddesses of the letting go to discover the creativity of leisure. In a 21st century of turmoil perhaps it is time to turn from the living chaos to the quiet tranquility of The Dead. To dance that dance the notion of grace as utopian must transition from a grace dependent on the unmerited favor of a distant paternal god who we hope will find our unlovability worthy of his mercy to an inspirational force that resides in all humanity to "Keep On Trucking Up To Buffalo" until we reach Elysium as the Gratefully Dead.

Panel: 4.2: The Counterculture and Its Legacies

Name: Peter Sands, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Paper Title: Didactic Preaching and Contending Views of America in Three Utopian Sermons: Bellamy, Donnelly, Lewis

Abstract: In three of the most important U.S. utopias of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a central role is given to a sermon. In *Looking Backward*, Mr. Barton preaches over the telephone to a national audience, making comparisons between Julian West's time and the Boston of the year 2000, ultimately arguing that the future world has evolved to a state of grace and pure expression of natural law. In *Caesar's Column*, Rev. Odyard channels the voice of Henry Ward Becher, among others, to preach a gospel of selfishness, physical love, and dissipation, against which Gabriel Weltstein presents a gospel of selfless love for fellow human beings in service of alleviating suffering. In *It Can't Happen Here*, the Rev. Paul Peter Prang is a stand-in for Father Coughlin, preaching a gospel that ultimately leads to fascism and which is completely undercut by Buzz Windrip's secular, entertainment-style version.

The three sermons are as different as the three novels, reflecting their core values. In Bellamy's millennialist utopia, the sermon lays out the theological underpinnings of his system, but also presents a theory of human psychology that posits satisfaction lies in helping others. In Donnelly's dystopian response to Bellamy, the sermon presents the morally bankrupt position of organized religion, against which is contrasted Gabriel's simple profession of personal faith and acceptance of other (Christian) creeds, arguing that the Church is little more than another corrupt

and violated institution complicit in the oppression of human spirit as much as is the corporate Oligarchy ruling the world. In Lewis's warning of fascism, organized religion is a sop for the masses but even its appeal dims beside that of the true demagogue who can appeal to the, mostly financial and racist, selfishness of the average, disappointing American.

Panel: 3.1: Utopian Disharmony and Ambiguity

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

Paper Title: Carl Lee Shears/*Saggittarus*: An Unknown African-American Author from the 1970s

Abstract: Carl Lee Shears (1937-79) self-published nine books between 1969 and 1975, most under the pseudonym *Saggittarus*, five of which were utopias and a sixth of which contained a utopia, but he appears to be completely unknown, not just to utopian scholars but to students of African-American literature. Only three libraries appear to hold all his works, the Schomberg, the Library of Congress and, now, Penn State.

I discovered him in the catalog of a used book dealer. Discovering that it was held by only two libraries, the Schomberg, and the Bibliothèque nationale de France, I bought it and donated it to Penn State. When doing research at the Library of Congress, I mentioned Shears to Dr. Sybil E. Moses, a member of the staff who specializes in African-American history who I had gotten to know. At that point, all I knew was that he was a physicist. Within a few days, Dr. Moses had discovered that he had taught at Howard and talked to people there who had known him, found an obituary, and everything else I know about him other than what he wrote.

In this paper, I use what I know about him, plus some guesses based on his published works, to introduce a man who I believe belongs among the important African-American authors of the period and without question among the African-American authors of utopias.

Panel: 6.1: African and African American Utopianism

Name: Robert Seguin, Hartwick College

Paper Title: Solidarity and the Non-Human: Eco-Communism from Timothy Morton to Mike Davis

Abstract: Timothy Morton's latest book *Humankind* argues the need for a new solidarity between humans and non-humans, in the context of a rethinking of some basic Marxist categories. One feature of the latter is his surprising rehabilitation of Marx's notion of "species being," one of those anthropocentric universals that Morton's ecological post-humanism seemingly would rule out of court. For Morton, species being is "what you can't help doing," which for humans is the full sensuous engagement with the world, or what Marx calls production. Another other key element in his presentation is a meditation on "communist affects," which Morton wants to situate at a much lower, more everyday level than is often imagined: such affects are not the achievement of a long process of struggle so much as the very baseline of what he calls the "symbiotic real." In this paper I wish to consider the intersection of Morton's thoughts with Utopian-inflected theorizing more generally by bringing them into dialogue with other recent texts that venture onto related terrain: David Graeber's speculations on communism as a basic mode of human interaction in *Debt*, Richard Powers' novel *The Overstory*, where a disparate group of people suddenly find themselves drawn, often unaccountably, into intense relationships with old-growth trees, and especially Mike Davis' *Old Gods, New Enigmas*, a paean to the revolutionary potential of the

traditional industrial working class that yet attempts to open a space for ecological modes of thinking within its retrieval of political agency.

Panel: 6.4: Utopias in Marx, Marxism, and Marxians

Name: Francis Shor, Professor Emeritus, Wayne State University

Paper Title: Trumpism and the Dystopian Social Matrix

Abstract: Following the insights of Russell Jacoby and Tom Moylan that construe contemporary dystopias as the realization of oppressive developments in society, this paper will explore how Trumpism reflects what Naomi Klein calls the “logical end point” of such developments. In order to identify the specific contours of these dystopian tendencies, I will highlight three overlapping domains—the socio-economic, the socio-cultural, and the socio-psychological—and the social theories that inform each of those domains. For the socio-economic the paper will utilize the perspectives of David Harvey on “vulture capitalism” and Paul Kennedy on “vampire capitalism.” Bleeding into the socio-cultural domain the oppressive conditions of neoliberalism will be underscored through the work of Zygmunt Bauman (“liquid modernity”), Guy Debord (“the society of the spectacle”) and Henry Giroux. Finally, the socio-psychological domain, dominated by fear and resentment, especially racial in its composition, will be investigated. The overlap of the three domains creates a dystopian social matrix that grounds Trumpism as a political project even while it gives rise to a resistance that portends its own utopian political horizons.

Panel: 3.2: Utopia and Dystopia in the Age of Trump

Name: Patrick Smyth, CUNY Graduate Center

Paper Title: Oh, the Places We’ll Build: Infrastructure in Utopia

Abstract:

"As a system grows, it acquires momentum."

— Thomas Hughes, *Networks of Power*

"In man-machine symbiosis, it is man who must adjust:

The machines can't."

— Alan J. Perlis

Patrick Svenson has noted a kind of infrastructural agnosia that has existed in the humanities—that, historically, "when it comes to thinking about the humanities in terms of infrastructure, there seems to be a lack of both everyday systemic awareness and extensive critical work." In certain interdisciplinary fields within the humanities, this is beginning to change. In new media studies, platform studies, critical code studies, and, most recently, critical infrastructure studies, scholars have begun to interrogate infrastructure, applying critical and hermeneutic methods once reserved for the analysis of literature, art, and culture and, in doing so, uncovering insights about our relationship with our lived environment.

While utopian studies has not explicitly been involved in this "infrastructural turn," the field already speaks to an understanding of the relationships among people, society, and the lived environment. From engagement with the concept of bodies as infrastructure (Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy, Jeff VanderMeer's *Borne*) to an obsession with infrastructure in the ur-text of

the field (More on enclosure, Bacon on the university) to what Damien Broderick has called, with reference to science fiction, an "attention to the object in preference to the subject," utopianism and utopian studies consistently explores built environments and the permeable boundaries between the living and the nonliving. This paper will argue that utopian studies as a field has much to contribute to, and a great deal to gain, from a more explicit engagement with the interdisciplinary field of infrastructure studies, including an engagement with society through the places, artifacts, and beings created and shaped in its image.

Panel: 2.2: The Interdisciplinarity of Utopian Studies

Name: Ana Elisa Sobral Caetano da Silva Ferreira, Universidade Federal de São Carlos

Paper Title: A Modern Oracle: A Discursive Analysis on Google

Abstract: Since its first appearance in Gibson's novel, *Neuromancer*, the Cyberspace has been an indulging theme for many fiction writers. Others have described innumerable alternative realities; however, the word cyberspace has officially migrated from Sci-Fi narratives to become part of our lives.

Researchers, such as Lévy (1999) and Lanier (2006), have warned us about the positive and negative impacts Digital Technologies could have in our lives and how they would shape the way we understand reality. The internet became a synonym of this space. Debray (1997) defined it as "a headless network, a decentralized, horizontal and unlimited rhizome." (Debray, 1997, p.30) and reminded us how, like any other free land, this space would rapidly obey a hierarchy that organizes and excludes at the same time.

This hierarchy came with search engines that organized information online. In the early nineties, there were a few websites that helped users finding data in this "headless network", but none of them made such an impact as Google.

Google itself became the internet. It found its way to the dictionary and it was converted into a verb. This process was done without much questioning and this can be understood, in French Discourse Analysis, as a naturalization process due to a metaphorical approach. (Pêcheux, 1998). This paper will discuss how it's possible to identify Discursive Sequences that, not only allow Google to be a Modern Oracle, but also validates it by naturalizing it as source of knowledge in a similar process to what Orwell describes in *1984*.

Panel: 5.1: Brazilian Perspectives on Utopia

Name: Caterina Sposato, Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria, Italy

Paper Title: Utopia and Technology in the Contemporary Process: Technology for the morphogenesis of the future.

Abstract: In thinking of utopia, we generally refer to an image depicting a "place", more specifically a "non-place", that is to say, a place of the mind and fantasy that resembles in the eventuality to new and tangible spaces of an alternative reality.

Many times then, the utopian image served to suggest perfect worlds, other times to presume disastrous and apocalyptic situations. However, if to the utopia, the faith and the incessant hopes - of the attainment of a perfect spatial, political and social organization - are set aside, it is then that its function in architecture takes on a new role.

The hypothesis enunciated in this research is:

Behind the progress of technology and science, utopia becomes a method of renewal of formal strategies, in terms of specific architectural objectives as a solution to the problems concerning the future of humanity.

A demonstration of this methodological peculiarity of the utopia is conducted through a dual qualitative analysis.

The first, of an explanatory nature of the characteristics concerning the shape and the performance of the architectural image. The second consistent in the study of the historically new forms of space, architecture and urbanity, experimented under the guidance and suggestion of scientific and technological innovation.

Panel: 11.4: Urban Futures

Name: Lisa Sumner, Carleton University and Marianopolis College

Paper Title: The tiny homes of Les Hameaux de la Source: Social enterprise and utopian possibility

Abstract: This poster communicates early research examining a burgeoning tiny home community located in the Laurentian region outside Montreal. The Laurentians are a popular site for vacationers and more recently have become the site of an unusual new settlement—Les Hameaux de la Source (Hamlets of the Source), initiated by the social enterprise, Habitat Multi Générations. The community grew out of a successful campaign to change zoning laws in the municipality of Lantier, Quebec in order to permit eco-friendly, affordable properties of modest square footage—a remarkable achievement in a holiday region dotted with luxury chalets. Habitat Multi Générations (HMG) envisions a low-income housing community of 100 mini and tiny homes complete with communal gardens, sporting facilities, and a daycare facility.

The hamlets are growing slowly—there are only four occupied homes and a total of seven units currently constructed. This research investigates not only the motivations of residents and prospective residents to re-locate there but also the screening of applicants and the challenges to realizing the project's goals with minimal promotion and a lack of public transportation in the area. Is the disconnect between HMG's ambitions and its more modest gains simply typically of the obstacles (problems encountered since Fourier's Harmony) to the building of alternative communities? A key question I ask is how a utopian project that requires investment and new members to prosper can stay faithful to its utopian vision yet persuasively market itself to realize its aims.

Panel: 11.4: Urban Futures

Name: Francis Tarpey, La Trobe University, Melbourne

Paper Title: Cracking the Present : Utopian Desire and Ghosts of Resistance

Abstract: Even if the aesthetics of the present portray a time of deep division, disharmony and uncertainty, a certain structuring harmony, at least in the etymological sense of the word as 'joining' or 'settled order', is apparent. The political, social and economic possibilities for imagining change generally remain joined to a consensus that more or less takes the limits imposed by a certain understanding of possibility and temporality for granted.; a 'neoliberal reality principal' that governs 'our time'. Utopian desire, however, refuses the containment of

conventional ‘reality’ and temporality, and disrupts the consistency of the present in the name of a more just—but im/possible—world. Against the grain of the limits of any present rub events and desires that exceed what is presently presumed possible. People not only demand the im/possible, they live it. In this paper, I will explore utopian desire as manifested in two cases of resistance that I argue ‘crack’ the consistency of the present insofar as they continue to haunt us and remind us that our time, in fact, is ‘out of joint’. Both the Gezi Park protests of 2013 and the movement for Aboriginal Sovereignty—whilst they may seem worlds apart by conventional chronology and cartography—compel us to engage with an inheritance of utopian desire that not only offers concrete strategies and critical forms of hope but demonstrate disruptions that open other ways of being in time, place and possibility.

Panel: 10.2: Utopian Aspirations and Dystopian Fears in Contemporary Literature

Name: Corinne Teed, University of Minnesota

Paper Title: Speculative Futures and Queer Ecologies

Abstract: Potential alliances between queer humans and non-human animals populate contemporary queer scholarship, while historically dominant culture has relegated both groups to similar sites of abjection. My work presents utopic visions crafted from these shared sites of marginalization and asks how they can enable new biopolitical communities. Using printmaking, installation, time-based media and participatory projects, I interweave queer, animal and ecological dialogues to re-examine social and environmental histories. Through portraiture, appropriation and collaboration I stage inter-species exchanges to interrupt, disassemble and then build anew ideas of humanness, queerness and animality. The resulting otherworldly spaces I create immerse audiences in narratives and landscapes that reveal utopic, cross-species alliances amidst the dystopic realities of America as a settler colonial landscape.

In her essay “Melancholy Natures, Queer Ecology” Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands writes “Recent queer scholarship on melancholia... is focused exactly on the condition of grieving the ungrivable: how does one mourn in the midst of a culture that finds it almost impossible to recognize the value of what has been lost?” Mortimer-Sandilands presents the embrace of melancholy as a political stance - preserving the beloved object that society does not value. Relating the devastation of HIV/AIDS with that of climate change and extractive industries, she offers a framework for queer ecology. From this affective stance of melancholy, I will present work that documents voices and portraits of those on the margins, collaboratively defining our existent, ecocidal dystopia while also articulating possibilities of speculative futures.

Panel: 9.4: Making Our Place: Disruptive Narratives in Contemporary Printmaking

Name: Michelle Tiedje, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Paper Title: Bush Socialism and White Solidarity in William Lane’s New Australia

Abstract: William Lane created the New Australia Movement first and foremost as a racial utopia for whites, an economic haven from an industrial world he viewed as increasingly threatened and corrupted by the influx of cheap, non-white labor. Although his particular brand of utopian socialism—bush socialism—was rooted in an idealized view of the male Australian bush worker, “Lane’s ideal Australian was an Englishman; the pure embodiment of the Anglo-Saxon ‘race’.” As a consequence, Lane’s racial policies for admission to New Australia ensured the community was

composed almost exclusively of white citizens of the British Empire. In 1893 the New Australia Colony was established near Asunción, Paraguay—among a local Paraguayan and Guaraní population that was neither British nor white. Lane’s ideology of white supremacy, and the cultural and racial isolation he demanded of his followers, contributed to the eventual failure of first the New Australia Colony, then its splinter colony, Cosme. By early 1897 New Australia dissolved into private ownership and individual farming, by 1899 Lane gave up on Cosme and left the colony, and by 1909 Cosme dissolved as well. This paper will examine what Lane’s particular brand of bush-socialist white supremacy reveals about the underlying sources and scope of white supremacy in industrializing Australia as well as how Lane’s vision for a white separatist utopia fared in the jungles of late-nineteenth century Paraguay.

Panel: 4.1: Whiteness and the Utopian Imagination

Name: Csaba Toth, Carlow University

Paper Title: Utopian Horizons of Solidarity and Collective Action in William E Trautmann’s novel *Riot* (1922)

Abstract: William E. Trautmann’s novel *Riot* is based on the Pressed Steel Car Company strike of 1909 in McKees Rocks, which lasted for three months from July 13 through September 8. It is a quasi-factual account of the events overlaid with utopian projections.

The strike, which eventually ended with a victory for the strikers, opened some hopeful new avenues. Immigrant workers, theretofore considered unorganizable, formed the backbone of the strike. Their strike committee kept discipline even in light of provocations was able to raise funds, and marshal national sympathy. Also, significantly, the Company’s American workmen—though not all—supported the immigrants. This is not to say that the strike was a “smooth” operation. A particularly bloody confrontation between strikers, private security, and the Pennsylvania State Police took place on August 22 (“bloody Sunday”), which captured national attention in favor of the workmen.

The Pressed Steel Car strike was seen as a major event for syndicalists aggregated in the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) union. Trautmann, one of the IWW founders, joined and rallied the strikers until his arrest for strike organizing activities.

It was Trautmann who later published the novel *Riot* (1922) memorializing the strike in McKees Rocks, which also served as a prelude and model for several victorious strikes soon to come (in Bethlehem, etc.).

Trautmann was one of the more formidable theorists of American syndicalism—or “industrial socialism” as syndicalism was often called. Originally from New Zealand, he immigrated to America, settled in Ohio and became a member of the Brewery Workers Union, edited their paper the *Brauer Zeitung*, and eventually transitioned to the I.W.W. He was considered a significant interpreter of direct action and sabotage for the American labor movement as several of his booklets demonstrated it. In the Pressed Steel Car strike Trautmann and his comrades saw the spontaneous installment of the principal strategies of “industrial socialism”.

Trautmann as theoretician placed direct and indirect action within the context of employer—employee collision. According to him, the worker’s best chance to curtail capitalist power was at the point of production: withdrawal from the job, suspension of operation, and withdrawal of efficiency (sabotage). The monopoly of jobs held by the capitalist class must be broken. And if the economic power of the employers was reduced, so would the power of the political institutions controlled by them.

My presentation will look at how Trautmann identified his utopian hopes of a workers' controlled society in the actions of the striking community; utopian hopes that came to life for a long moment at McKees Rocks.

Panel: 6.2: Class and Utopia

Name: Patricia Ventura, Spelman College

Paper Title: White Consciousness, Racist Trolling, and Dystopian/Utopian Temporalities

Abstract: This paper is part of a larger attempt to work through two questions: what is the new, new racism (the racism for today's "hipper," younger white supremacist)? And how does utopia provide a framework for combating racism? In order to begin answering these questions, I argue that, while an individual may feel hatred toward the Other for a variety of personal, psychological reasons, racism is a social hatred that today is inescapably tied to the online world and social media. In order to explore this social hatred, I study the rise and fall of Milo Yiannopoulos. "Milo" has marketed a toxic and queer white masculinity into a personal global celebrity. He shows that the promise of the Internet becoming the great emancipator of information has brought with it a cyber-dystopia of bullies, stalkers, doxers, incels, and other trolls who have made the Internet, especially social media, into a place where the promise of unlimited information is matched, and at times overmatched, by cruelty, fake news, and threats of violence. Few groups have become as emboldened in this environment as today's white supremacists. Milo and his ilk are actually products of a type of posthumanism—an imbrication of human and nonhuman. Milo's rise and fall was meteoric because the temporalities of social media move at breakneck speeds and have created a world deeply vulnerable to racist authoritarian rule. But just as racism is a social hatred, utopia as a social dreaming gives us the framework for creating and promoting liberatory temporalities.

Panel: 4.1: Whiteness and the Utopian Imagination

Name: Jennifer Wagner-Lawlor, Penn State University

Paper Title: Being Peripheral: Posthuman Tropes of Possibility

Abstract: In this talk I will explore William Gibson's troubling of local and global in his newest novel, *The Peripheral* (2014). The very title proposes a concept of relationality that structures spatial and temporal dimensions of history and community in the novel—not to mention the temporality of the novel itself. Neither we as readers nor the characters themselves (with a few exceptions) are precisely certain "where" "we" are, or, for that matter, what we are doing, as this depends on whether we are at the center of things, or on the periphery. We are alternatively in the present and in the future; we are "here" in "real" world, and in a virtual (?) game-world. The political intrigue and broad historical movement we perceive "there" is contingent on what appears to be an historic(al) collapse of a coherent national politics and identity here. It becomes unclear, therefore, which world is peripheral. There also exist "peripherals," external bodies to which a human individual can be connected and thus, in a sense, two places at once: here and there, then and now. Being peripheral, in fact, is a cyborg-status only available to a select group. Like computer peripherals, peripheral bodies come to life only through technological connectivity to meat-world brains; what is less clear, again, is, politically speaking, who is peripheral to whom.

Panel: 6.3: Direction and Temporality in Utopia

Name: Karma Waltonen, UC Davis

Paper Title: The Simpsons' Utopia: Embracing Community

Abstract: It may be difficult to see the Utopian aspect of *The Simpsons*, as it seems hidden under layers of satire of American people and their communities. But it's right there—in the idea of communities. *The Simpsons* shows us a world with vibrant communities. Just as it exaggerates our foibles, it exaggerates our engagement with the world to better satirize that world. In what other town is almost every parent at every PTA meeting, every citizen at every town hall meeting, church sermon, public celebration, and the bi-mon-sci-fi con? Here, the citizens know their local politicians and newspeople personally. They vote, complain, and cajole in the smallest of local races, as seen when the position of sanitation commissioner comes open. This community is imperfect, as the voters are too easily manipulated, but there is a sense of duty to one's community usually only seen in the too-perfect sitcoms of the 1950s. The show explicitly explores how the community can only prosper when individuals put others before themselves. *The Simpsons Movie*, for example, has Homer reach an epiphany about caring about others more than himself, as he returns to try to save his city. "Bart's Inner Child" illustrates the danger of individuals "doing what [they] feel like" instead of upholding their part in the social contract.

Panel: 10.3: Urban Spaces and Communities

Name: Jennifer Wells, California Institute of Integral Studies

Paper Title: Imagination in the Anthropocene: Utopia as (Transdisciplinary) Worldview

Abstract: The supreme human faculty, arguably, is imagination. Utopia Studies is perhaps the most serious response to the Anthropocene as Crisis. The Anthropocene questions human history itself, which by definition has led us to the brink. A utopian vision of a better world must renew our indigenous sensibility, of both the multi-dimensionality of reality, and multi-disciplinarity of knowing. I argue, following thinkers like Eileen Crist, Claire Colebrook, and Bruno Latour, that the challenges of the 21st Century call not for the old hammer-seeks-nails approach of modern science, homo economicus, or rational thought alone—e.g. geoengineering the climate. Rather, the 21st Century calls more than ever for a much richer worldview, drawing on renewals and advances in: indigenous and wisdom traditions; new sciences such as quantum physics; new humanities and arts such as environmental humanities; and syntheses of the above to be found in many hybrid inter- and multi-disciplines, and even more fully, in the field of 'complex thought.' The most successful variants of utopian thought will embrace paradox, e.g. that the Anthropocene is an awakening both extremely variegated and also sweepingly singular – explicitly calling for a 'undisciplinarity' that is, in Immanuel Wallerstein's sense, richly multi- and trans-disciplinary. Only such a rich utopian thought as worldview, supports social imaginaries for our times.

Panel: 2.2: The Interdisciplinarity of Utopian Studies

Name: Toby Widdicombe, University of Alaska Anchorage

Paper Title: Slouching towards Dystopia: Fighting the Long Defeat for This Country's Soul

Abstract: I would like to present a paper on contemporary political dystopia. I would begin with a nod to the defeat of Roy Moore by Doug Jones in the Alabama senatorial election in 2017. I would then move back to the Declaration of Independence in 1776 before moving forward to the Gettysburg Address in 1864 and tracing the long defeat of democracy in this country in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. I would then offer solutions to the current crisis

before admitting that this country may suffer from intractable ills (which I would briefly enumerate). I would follow this with a brief excursus on Great Britain (I was born there and remain a British citizen). Then in my conclusion I will cite John Breitlinger's *The Best of What We Are* and the anonymous Anglo-Saxon poem *The Battle of Maldon* in an effort to suggest a way forward. My paper would be part history, part literature, part politics, and part polemic. It is inspired by Preston Browning's essay collection *Struggling for the Soul of Our Country* (2016).
Panel: 3.2: Utopia and Dystopia in the Age of Trump

Name: L. Lamar Wilson, The University of Alabama

Paper Title: "The Erotic Freedom of 'Black Girl Magic': From Fungible Trope to 'Pynk' Power"

Abstract: In the wake of a small majority of white women voters helping elect the 45th U.S. president despite his on-camera bragging about sexually assaulting women, hip-hop soul artist Janelle Monáe subverted his "pussy grabbing" and fashioned a sex-positive rebuke from the #MeToo Movement, particularly from women of color, whose activism coined the hashtag, who decidedly opposed to his bid at the ballot box, and who continue to battle the emotional scars of slavery's sexual abuses and the ensuing vestiges of what scholar Moya Bailey calls misogynoir. Monáe's "Django Jane" and "Pynk"—and other songs on her 2018 EP and "emotion picture" *Dirty Computer*—blend blistering critique of men's sexual profligacy with unapologetic odes to a pansexual love she has been embracing throughout her decade-long ascent to mainstream acclaim under various noms de plume and characters. In the near futures she imagines, Monáe—a St. Louis native who has come of age in Atlanta, the epicenter of the global South's counterculture and bass-driven "Dirty South" sound—creates what Foucault and his acolytes call heterotopias for those who revel in "black girl magic" and "the square," E. Patrick Johnson's allomorph for the catch-all term for non-heteronormative intimacies that describes ontologies that are decidedly Southern, rural, and rooted in the African-American blues tradition. This paper's close reading of Monáe historicizes *Dirty Computer* in that century-long tradition, one that has empowered black women musicians to transform the caricature of the "magical Negro" into liminal performances that are armors against anti-blackness.

Panel: 12.3: Ecopoetics as Archive: Heterotopias in the Global South

Name: Aaron Windel, Simon Fraser University, History Department

Paper Title: Decolonizing the Cooperative Movement

Abstract: The cooperative movement has always been a space for utopian dreaming. In the mid-twentieth century, however, the social dreams that the movement inspired were often deeply entangled with colonial ideology. Colonial governments in Africa 'discovered' cooperatives in the 1920s as mechanisms of technocratic rural planning that, in theory and paradoxically, would work from the bottom up. By 1945, as development ascended as the new rationale for continued European colonial rule, a carefully-guided and controlled cooperative movement had become the centerpiece of the spectacle of British grassroots colonial modernization. As a technopolitics cooperatives were designed to work across scales, not just by bringing the locality to the world and increasing agricultural production but also shoring up the empire by 'reconstructing' rural society. They were also about "anti-politics," intended to align rural-associational activity with the colonial state while keeping adverse politics at bay. However, far from being associations that dissolved politics into the anodyne activities of thrift and credit, cooperatives could be turned into

disruptive spaces where anti-colonial politics intensified, facilitating interactions between local groups and movements of a much larger scale. To highlight these dimensions of ideological struggle this paper focuses the important case of postwar Uganda. There a Ganda farmers' organization claiming to represent the "true co-operators" mobilized tens of thousands of cotton and coffee farmers behind a radically different vision of the future than that presented by British community developers and a radically different conception of what African cooperatives could be as spaces of politics.

Panel: 6.1: African and African American Utopianism

Name: Martin Woessner, The City College of New York Center for Worker Education

Paper Title: From Burning Books to Dancing Shoes: J. M. Coetzee and Literary Utopianism

Abstract: The Nobel Prize-winning novelist J. M. Coetzee is not typically associated with speculative fiction. The works for which he remains most well known—from *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980) to *Disgrace* (1999) and *Elizabeth Costello* (2003)—have more in common with the genres of the historical novel and literary realism than anything else. But a closer look at Coetzee's career as both a writer and a critic reveals an ongoing fascination with speculative themes, including even an abandoned manuscript set in a none-too-distant dystopian world. That unfinished work, "The Burning of the Books," is now housed in the Coetzee archive at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin. When read alongside Coetzee's most recent works—in particular, *The Childhood of Jesus* (2013) and *The Schooldays of Jesus* (2016)—a startling insight emerges: despite his career-long interest in questions of literary realism, Coetzee has always been interested in depicting both dystopian fears and what we might call utopian aspirations.

Building on work I have previously published on Coetzee's ethical thought, I will argue that the *Jesus* novels, in their persistent questioning of utopian and dystopian tropes stretching from Plato's *Republic* and Voltaire's *Candide* to the current global refugee crisis, should be read as expressions of Coetzee's hopes and fears for the future fate of not just literature, but also of all life on this planet. Constituting a distinct late style, these works, set in places such as "Novilla" and "Estrella"—or "No Town" and "Star," respectively—get to the heart of Coetzee's career as a writer, critic, and moral thinker. They might also be read, I will argue, as bookends to a remarkable career: whereas Coetzee's early works—from "The Burning of the Books" and *Waiting for the Barbarians* up to and including *The Life & Times of Michael K* (1983)—explored distinctly dystopian themes, his late works seem intent on sketching utopias towards which writers and readers alike can work. They suggest that utopian thinking is, first and foremost, a literary endeavor. It is not the domain of rational calculation or technological manipulation. Utopian thinking, literary thinking, is closer to poetry, music, or dance—practices that move the body and the spirit as well as the mind. Coetzee reminds us that, like novels, utopias are made through the limitless powers of the creative and sympathetic imagination. The more we can imagine, in other words, the better off we—and the world—might be.

Panel: 10.2: Utopian Aspirations and Dystopian Fears in Contemporary Literature

Name: Alexis Wolfe, Simon Fraser University

Paper Title: Erotic Reterritorialization or Entropic Accelerationism?

Abstract: The dialectical tension between eros and thanatos animates virtual worlds, with excesses in erotic and aggressive energies flowing into sensual reality and affecting lived political and social reality. This paper will develop a psychoanalytic interpretation of the relationship unfolding between the reactionary discourse of entropic, dystopian "dark enlightenment" or "right accelerationist" online communities and the revolutionary affirmative, spontaneous, generative, anarchist and ecosocialist utopian projects that challenge these and continue to grow by virtue of their online presence. Engaging with Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari, Jameson, Fromm, Rilke and Lacan, this paper will argue that the limits of the apollonian symbolic order (heightened levels of alienation and ontological insecurity, for example) that characterize our mechanical late-capitalist lifeworld eventually resuscitates a dionysian politik--a series of sensual reterritorializations that affirm human subjectivity in its multiplicity. The erotic utopian project is being articulated online, in virtual communities in the radical terms of post-scarcity, automation, open borders, psychedelic psychotherapy and free association. For the disenfranchised, deterritorialized socius, right accelerationist death drive politics are no match for the life-affirming imaginative utopian project of the emerging, meta-modernist left. Through the work of critical and psychoanalytic theory, this paper will elucidate why.

Panel: 11.3: Sexuality and Utopia

Name: Robert Wood, Irvine Valley College

Paper Title: A Utopian Trace in *Hard Times*

Abstract: Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* is not associated with utopia. The scholarship tends to focus on the generic conventions of realism and representations of the working class. The only reference to utopia in the scholarship comes from Leona Toker, who reads the novel as a critique of utopia, placing utilitarianism into the camp of utopia. I want to pose a counter-reading that places its focus on a series of liminal moments in the text. The novel continually gestures towards the fantastic, whether in the form of imagery on carpeting or the pulp literature consumed by the working classes. These traces of the fantastic are a threat by the advocates of utilitarianism, who attempt to suppress them from the school room and daily life. These attempts are shown in a comic light, revealing a narrow-minded literalism on the part of school teachers, but these liminal forms of art and literature also gesture towards the possibility of a world that operates on a different logic than the 'hard facts' of the factory town. I read these moments in the text as a utopian trace in the text, gesturing towards the forms of cooperation between working people that life in the industrial town depends on even as the dominant structures of the town attempt to suppress it. The traces of the fantastic take the form of a series of novum in the Blochian sense disrupting the daily life of the instrumental life of the factory town with a range of fantastic alternatives.

Panel: 6.2: Class and Utopia

Name: Sarah Yoon, Yonsei University, South Korea

Paper Title: Ethics of care in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's feminist utopia *Herland*

Abstract: This article explores how Charlotte Perkins Gilman's feminist utopia *Herland*, written in 1915 but published in book form in 1979, can provide an illuminating perspective on an idealized

society that is governed by relations of care. In this literal society of mothers and sisters, Gilman presents a utopian society that is more amenable to readings of an ethics of care, in contrast to values that have dominated a male orientation toward social organization. In contrast to values like competition and rivalry, Gilman's novel presents a society where collective values and intellectual pursuits take centerstage. In the "deification of motherhood" in this society, Gilman presents a radical counterargument against a male-dominated society, one that recognizes individual competition and self-reliance, with a social model that nurtures and fosters relations of care. Reading Gilman's novel in the contemporary age from the perspective of an ethics of care engages in relevant discussions pertaining to neoliberal individualism and the expansion of capitalism, at the expense of relations that require care and mutual understanding.

Panel: 12.1: Literary Feminism

Roundtables

Title: Ready Player One: Roundtable (Film / Novel Discussion)

Chair: Carrie Hintz, Queens College/CUNY

Presenters: Ellen Rigsby, St. Mary's College of California; Brian Greenspan, Carleton University, Ottawa; Patrick Smyth, CUNY

Description: "Everything you can imagine is real" (Pablo Picasso).

This open and informal roundtable discussion will explore and invite conversation on the utopian/dystopian, thematic, digital/VR/cyberpunk narrative, and gaming aspects of both the novel "Ready Player One" by Ernest Cline (2011) & the 2018 film adaptation of "Ready Player One" directed by Steven Spielberg (screenplay by Zak Penn & Ernest Cline).

Panel: 11.1: Ready Player One: Roundtable - Visions of Gamertopia, Dystopia & Virtual Reality in Steven Spielberg & Ernest Cline's *Ready Player One* (Film / Novel Discussion)

Title: *The Dystopian Imagination in Contemporary Spanish Literature and Film*

Chair: Diana Palardy, Youngstown State University

Presenters: Antonis Balasopoulos, University of Cyprus; Sonja Fritzsche, Michigan State University; Clint Jones, UW-Stevens Point; Lyman Tower Sargent, University of Missouri-St. Louis

Description: Diana Palardy's recently published book *The Dystopian Imagination in Contemporary Spanish Literature and Film* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) explores fictional representations of Spain's 2008 economic crisis. This roundtable discussion will draw on some of the salient themes in the book that are relevant to other Europeans who have lived through similar experiences and will look at the repercussions of movements that have formed in the wake of the crisis. Among the themes that may be discussed are globalization, consumerism, immigration, financial speculation, precarity and political resistance. Palardy will provide a brief summary of her work, after which the panelists, Sonja Fritzsche, Antonis Balasopoulos, and Clint Jones, will offer their insights from distinct perspectives, looking at the issues from literary, political and sociocultural perspectives. They may also look at how these issues have been addressed in other European nations, either in literature or in actual political or social contexts.

Panel: 4.3: Roundtable discussion on *The Dystopian Imagination in Contemporary Spanish Literature and Film*

Title: Women of color in contemporary and future imaginings of dys(u)topia

Chair: Raina León, Saint Mary's College of California

Presenters: Audrey Williams, AfroSurreal Writers; Rochelle Spencer, AfroSurreal Writers; MK Chavez, Casita Palabras

Description: We live in the contemporary moment when the voices of women of color are often pacified, dulled, and marginalized. In this panel, we defy the contemporary through our imaginings of a transformative and liberating reality in which women of color and their envisioning work offers the opportunity for embodied societal evolution and change. This multimedia presentation explores intersections of recent theories set forth by scholars of Afrofuturism/AfroSurrealism, Chicanafuturism, and ecofeminism. The scholarship of Alondra Nelson, Ytasha Womack, Nettrice Gaskins, Catherine S. Ramírez, and others provides context for women of color imagining dystopian landscapes and the ways creative work (poetry, fiction, film, music, architecture) allows for new interpretations of "the human." In this panel, we will also call in the influences of pop culture, arts, and literary icons like Janelle Monae, Octavia Butler, Nnedi Okarafor, and the artists of the 3.9 Collective and The Black Woman is God exhibition as we shared our own creative and scholarly works on the themes of dystopia and utopia as women of color reaching into an Other world through transformative, liberating, and visionary imagining and enacting. We explore "the human" and "the world" as spiritual, corporeal, political, relational, time-bound and time-boundless, racialized, place-center and transnational/borderless, and bound and unbound by language.

Panel: 2.4: Roundtable: Women of color in contemporary and future imaginings of dys(u)topia

Keynote

Speaker: Fred Turner (Stanford University)

Title: The Factory as Utopia: Art Inside Facebook and the Legacies of 1968

Abstract: For almost a decade, Facebook has maintained two internal organizations to commission and create artworks for Facebook offices around the globe. This talk maps those enterprises, their organizational practices, and the aesthetics they promote. It then builds on recent work in the critical sociology of capitalism to make two cases: one, that the ways Facebook works with the arts marks a radical departure from traditional, industrial-era corporate collecting practices; and two, that Facebook's arts initiatives mirror and help legitimate profit-seeking techniques particular to social media. Together, it concludes, these features give us a glimpse of the ways that utopian visions of the 1960s are shaping art inside Facebook and through it, Facebook's understanding of the public it serves.

Panel: Friday Keynote