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# Utopian Literature And Imperialism

Musab Adnan Bajaber

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# UTOPIAN LITERATURE AND IMPERIALISM

by

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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

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for the degree of

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This dissertation, submitted by Mosab Bajaber in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

  
Rebecca Weaver-Hightower, Chairperson

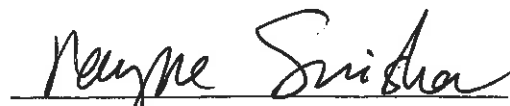
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To my mom Wafa and my dad Adnan. May Allah grant you Jannah for all the wonderful things you did for me!

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that the utopian literary genre is an imperial construct that is contingent upon its imperial discourse. I argue that imperialism and utopian literature are intertwined with each other not only because of the different themes related to imperialism present in utopian literature, but also because utopian literature can only speak through imperial tropes and language. This dissertation traces the relationship between utopian literature and imperialism through the 16<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The texts it discusses are More's *Utopia*, Bacon's *New Atlantis*, Harrington's *Commonwealth of Oceana*, Bulwer-Lytton's *The Coming Race*, Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, Morris' *News From Nowhere*, Rodenberry's *Star Trek* and Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Introduction

The idea of this dissertation was initiated when I took a class on utopianism during my Master's program at the University of Regina. Back then, my understanding of utopia was that of what many people think: a term that connotes impossible idealism and satire. As the class progressed, I got to see the different complex levels of the term and its connection with hope, progression, and social development. I eventually joined the Society for Utopian Studies and have, ever since, devoted the bulk of my research to the field.

Prior to my interest in utopianism, I was interested in postcolonial theory, so it makes sense that elements of imperialism were the first that caught my attention when I read Thomas More's prototype, *Utopia* (1516), where he created a fictional society with slaves, war, expansion, totalitarianism, subjugation, and exploitation of colonies. These elements made *Utopia* seem as if it were some sort of imperial fantasy rather than an ideal society: a fantasy of an ideal metropolis that is well governed, that holds itself accountable for high standards of living and ethics, that protects its center, and that expands into colonies either for demographical or economic reasons.

As I progressed into my research, I came to notice that Early Modern utopias are embroiled with and in constant negotiation with imperial tropes to varying degrees. For example, in Thomas More's *Utopia*, the solution to overpopulation and shortages is to invade other countries; in Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), utopians excavate and ransack knowledge

across the globe; James Harrington's *The Commonwealth of Oceana* (1656) lays out the bureaucracies of ideal empires; and Henry Neville's *The Isle of Pines* (1668) questions the possibility of constructing utopian space in colonies. Furthermore, the element of Othering is a cornerstone in any utopia as it is in the imperial discourse. Utopias are always about the superiority of utopians vs. the inferiority of the Other: be it the traveler who visits utopia (e.g. Bulwer-Lytton's *The Coming Race*), the outside world the traveler comes from (e.g. future utopias that look at past with contempt such as Bellamy's *Looking Backward*), or the outcast in the utopia itself (e.g. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*). In addition, tropes of travel, of conquest, of surveillance, of isolated or *terra nullius* islands and lands, and of constructing ideal societies dot the Early Modern utopian scene. As a matter of fact, many of these utopian texts were written as manuals or samples of ideal governance; they were addressed to monarchs and emperors at the time, and the writers of these texts were mainly men in monarchs' courts (e.g. More in the court of King Henry VIII and Bacon in the court of Elizabeth I).

The initial observation of the connections between Early Modern utopias and imperialism led me to question the relationship between utopian texts and imperial fantasies: are there differences between the two? Can utopian texts escape their early imperial context and develop into other forms that do not aspire or respond to imperialism? As I looked into the topic, I found little literary criticism that addresses this important concern. It sounded peculiar to me that the connection between these two had not yet been made; to overlook the connections (whether concurring, oppositional, or ambivalent) is to overlook a historical connection that has defined the essence of both utopia and empire. This dissertation – as I will later explain– draws the connection between the two and argue that dismissing it has presented problematic interpretations of both imperial fantasies and utopias. While some critics do draw direct, but

hesitant and basic connections between More's *Utopia* and imperialism, as we shall see momentarily, little has been written about the relationship between the utopian literary genre as a whole and imperialism.<sup>1</sup> To many utopian writers, the idea of utopianism, of which utopian literature is part of, means longing for a better world which, arguably, is free of the injustice, subjugation and totalitarianism that usually define imperialism. Hence, the connection between the two seems remote, if not infeasible all together. This dissertation seeks to answer my questions, arguing, in essence, that the notion of constructing utopia is inherently imperial. Utopia is born out of an imperial discourse dominated by colonization and subjugation; it developed alongside the development of imperial fantasies throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>th</sup> centuries, and its connection to imperialism is still solid. As a matter of fact, utopia and empire are and always have been brought into existence through each other. While imperialism provided utopian literature with tropes and themes to dwell on, utopian literature of prosperous civilizations fed imperial fantasies throughout history to the point where I argue that utopia and imperial fantasies are contingent upon one another.

In the following section of this introduction, I will first discuss the definition of both terms - utopianism and imperialism- to establish how I see the two as connected with each other. After this, I will go through the literary review. Then, I will discuss my critical approach to the subject matter followed by the addition this dissertation brings to both utopian and postcolonial studies. Finally, in this introduction, I will discuss the scope of this dissertation and a brief chapter overview.

## Definitions

It is important at this point to discuss the issue of definition before proceeding, since both terms have diverse connotations and - as with any genre - the definition of utopia is complex and contested. This dissertation argues that the meanings of both terms have shifted and altered throughout time and place to the point where our current understanding of each term differs from its predecessor. In general, however, this dissertation will start off by positioning itself within established definitions of both terms and will tease out the continued complexities and areas of dissent throughout the coming chapters. Let us start with utopia.

### *Utopia:*

When I discuss utopia, I particularly mean literary utopia which is different from the general concept of utopianism. While it is true that the term utopianism originated from the word utopia, it has now become - as Ernst Bloch affirms in *The Principle of Hope* – a manifestation of hope. This manifestation comes in different forms which Lyman Sargent divides into three categories in “The Three Faces of Utopianism:” utopian literature, intentional communities, or theory (political, social and otherwise). However, even when specifically discussing utopian literature, critics have various opinions about the meaning of the term that can go to extremes. Some notable critics, for example, associate utopia with myth (e.g. Northrop Frye), with the Christian millennia (e.g. Krishan Kumar), or argue that it is a sub-genre of science fiction (e.g. Darko Suvin). In this dissertation, I stick to the general understanding of literary utopia as expressed by Lyman Sargent and J.C. Davis' articulations of the term. Sargent presents a holistic definition of utopia and Davis teases out the details that set utopian literature apart from other idealistic literary manifestations. In “Utopia and the Problem of Definition,” Sargent explains that utopia can mean one of three things: Eutopia (a happy place), dystopia (the opposite of

happy place) or satirical utopia. However, nowadays, utopia generally refers to eutopia. Sargent also explains that, contrary to the common perception, perfection is not a characteristic of utopia and that – as a matter of fact – it is doubtful that it ever was. Sargent defines utopias as:

Works which describe an imaginary society in some detail. Obviously the completeness will vary. Some centuries stressed certain aspects of society and neglected others, and some authors are concerned with certain parts of society more than others. But it must be a society -- a condition in which there is human (or some equivalent) interaction in different forms and in which human beings (or their equivalent) express themselves in a variety of ways. (142)

Sargent's definition points out two distinctive features of any utopian work: first, any utopian work offers a considerable description of the utopian society and, second, it is intended to present a view of a better alternative to the intended reader's society.

Sargent's definition of utopia eliminates works that do have utopian elements but are not utopian in their totality such as satire, fantasy, etc. However, Davis presents a more detailed and generally agreed upon definition of literary utopia that this dissertation will rely on. In his book, *Utopia and the Ideal Society: A Study of English Utopian Writing 1516-1700*, Davis makes clear distinctions between a literary utopia and other forms of utopianism. A literary utopia, Davis explains, is different from the other four forms of utopianism commonly mistaken to be utopian literary works. First, a literary utopia is different from the Land of Cockaigne fantasies (such as the Land of Cockaigne, Shangri La, El Dorado, etc.) that focus on abundance, fulfillment of desire, and ideal nature. Second, a literary utopia is also different from Arcadian literature (named after Sydney's *Arcadia* and found in noble savage literature) that reflects on a generous and abundant nature and romanticizes the relationship between nature and human needs. Third, a



literary utopia is different from moral commonwealth literature that expects the moral perfection of every individual as grounds for the perfection of a society (e.g. Christian social reform pamphlets and treaties). Finally, a literary utopia is different from millennium literature that expects some sort of transcendental assistance to perfect society (such as Eden, Heaven, Nirvana and other transcendental perfect worlds). A literary utopia Davis argues is “realistic.” It accepts the basic problem of “limited satisfactions exposed to unlimited wants” (37). “In utopia” Davis explains, “it is neither man nor nature that is idealized but *organization*. The utopian seeks to solve the collective problem *collectively*, that is by reorganization of society and its institutions, by education, by laws and by sanctions. His prime aim is not happiness, that private mystery, but *order*, that social necessity” (38) [my emphasis].

My understanding of utopia is developed from Sargent and Davis’ definitions of the term. Of course – as Sargent and others point out –, the idea of happy and miserable is a matter of perspective. A happy place or system for one group of people, might not be so for others. In fact, any eutopia for one group of people can be a dystopia for another group. For example, More’s *Utopia*, with its totalitarian system in today’s standard, is dystopic by all means to us and to non-utopian nations at the time. In a way, eutopia and dystopia can be two sides of the same coin. However, here I refer to utopia as a happy place (eutopia). To me, the author of the work is the one who defines happiness and how it plays out in his or her utopia.

In addition to happiness, I want to focus on four keywords from Davis’ definition that assist me in articulating the thesis of this dissertation:

The first keyword is literature. As mentioned, my focus in this dissertation is utopian literature. By utopian literature I mean utopias that have some sort of a narrative format with a plot and a protagonist (whether the narrator or other). Of course, this does not mean that utopian

literature does not contain substantial political or social commentary. However, this commentary has to be weaved – whether thinly or thickly – into some sort of a narrative.

The second keyword is organization, not idealism. Whenever utopia is brought up, people commonly and wrongly associate it with idealism. Utopia is not necessarily about idealism. Utopia is about a harmonious and well organized society that is free of problems which the author sees as damaging to contemporary societies. Utopia has both happy and not so happy individuals.<sup>2</sup> Rather than focusing on the happiness of each individual, utopian literature is more concerned with presenting detailed, holistic and well thought out schemes of order that bring happiness to the collective. Through these schemes, the author of the utopia proposes methods of eliminating certain contemporary problems and explains how this elimination produces a considerably noteworthy positive outcome.

The third keyword is human effort. Utopia is a human construct. It requires careful planning followed up by human effort. Utopia is about the human accomplishment of a successful society, not a transcendental place in which humans have no say in its design.

The final keyword is hope. Any utopian work carries a message of encouragement and a vision of hope. This message reflects the authors' ideological and social leanings and it also addresses the social and political context of the utopian work. It also reaffirms the author's optimism that conditions will improve in the future.

Having defined utopian literature, I move to imperialism.

### *Imperialism*

Like utopia, empire is a big word not because it connotes massive territory or grandeur, but because it has produced massive theories and debates. Like utopia, empire means different things for different people in different times and places. Imperialism is a flexible term that

evolved through time and it invokes different connotations depending on its context. It currently invokes narrow connotations that do not reflect the nature of the term in its totality. While utopia almost always incorrectly connotes idealism, so too empire almost always incorrectly connotes colonization. Unlike utopia, however, empire is a much older, and hence a more complicated term which was coined fifteen centuries prior to utopia. For the Romans and prior to 10<sup>th</sup> century Europe, imperialism, as I discuss in chapter one, connoted control, power and sovereignty. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, empire connoted annexation, colonization and expansion. Contemporary imperialism connotes cultural and economic hegemony. In addition, imperialism has also been perceived in negative and positive ways throughout time. For the Romans, for example, it was a mere technical term that meant control. For 19<sup>th</sup> century British imperialists, it represented civilization. Nowadays, imperialism is mostly viewed in negative terms that present aggressive and undesired political encroachment.

I argue, then, that it is important to understand the shifting definitions of imperialism because it allows us to better understand its connection to utopian literature. Utopian literature in a specific era is connected to the concept of imperialism in that specific era rather than our contemporary understanding of the term. In order to illustrate my point, I will use three definitions of imperialism in three moments of history that reflect three stages of the development of this term. The first definition is classical imperialism (i.e. *imperium*) articulated by John Richardson and David Armitage. The second definition is that of 19<sup>th</sup> century imperialism (i.e. high imperialism) articulated by Michael Doyle and Edward Said. The third is the 21<sup>st</sup> century definition of imperialism (i.e. neo-imperialism) articulated by Kwame Nkrumah. Richardson explains that *imperium*, was a Roman hierarchal title that meant “command” and “order” and that “*imperare*” meant “to command.” It was provided to generals to either rule

occupied territory or to rule Rome in times of danger. The *imperium* was originally granted by religious authorities and the senate, thus providing it full legitimacy from both the religious and the secular bodies of Rome. Later on, the religious aspect of the *imperium* faded and the idea of granting command extended to mean commanding all the state rather than a specific territory. Richardson also argues that, to Romans and for medieval Europeans, *imperium* connoted three definitive aspects: sovereignty, military power and citizenship.

In his book *Empires*, Michael Doyle defines imperialism as: “the relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be achieved by force, by political collaboration, by economic, social, or cultural dependence” (45). Doyle’s definition has been widely accepted by literary critics and historians as the most feasible definition of the term. This evolution of the term, however, stands in contrast to the term the Romans and Early Modern period intellectuals had in mind.

The third definition of imperialism that is common in the 21<sup>st</sup> century relates to Nkrumah’s concept of *neocolonialism*. In his book, *Neocolonialism: the Last Stage of Imperialism*, Nkrumah describes neocolonialism – or neo imperialism as it later called - as a phenomena in which empires attempt to extort cultural, economic and religious influence on former colonies without formally colonizing them or seeming to be militarily aggressive.<sup>3</sup> The aim of neocolonialism is to maintain hegemony over the colonized, and to use the colonized for strategic, political and economic benefits of the colonizer. The hegemony of the United States over the world is frequently referenced as an example of this form of imperialism.

Looking at these definitions, we notice that they are different but related to each other. While they all eventually mean control and dominance, the connotations of each definition is distinct but builds upon - both etymologically and conceptually – its predecessor. *Imperium*

originally reflected sovereignty, control and citizenship of a certain nation without connoting expansion. Dolye's definition of imperialism adds expansion and colonization to the bag of connotations of the term. This development, from mere control over a nation into an aggressive control, is relatively new. Nkrumah's definition focuses on cultural and economic hegemony more than direct colonization. The relationship between these three definitions indicates that the connotations of imperialism alter depending on circumstances; some connotations disappear and later resurface, while others disappear for good as new connotations emerge.

To define imperialism inclusively is crucial because it allows us to see the connection between each literary utopia and its contemporary imperial context.

## **Literary Review**

Numerous critics have noticed and pointed out the connections between utopia and colonialism and a handful of dissertations have touched upon the issue. Lyman Sargent and Bill Ashcroft are the two big names, in both fields (postcolonialism and utopianism), that discuss the prospect of a relationship between utopia and imperialism, though neither directly articulated this connection. Sargent connected intentional communities to colonization and settlers' colonies in seven publications. He also connected utopian literature to the New World (i.e. Canada, New Zealand, America, and Australia) in more than a dozen of publications.<sup>4</sup> Sargent has also published numerous essays discussing postcolonial utopias that are influenced by imperialism and he and Ashcroft are co-editing a book on the topic to be published in 2016. In general, Sargent's observations can be summed up in three points:

First, Sargent points out that utopianism is present in the propagation and motivation of settler colonies: Colonization, according to imperialists, solves the dystopian problem of overpopulation since More's *Utopia*. In More's work, colonization is utopian because it

maintains the quality of utopian lifestyle as its population grows. More's solution to overpopulation, Sargent argues, is in line with the general drive towards colonialism not only during the Early Modern period, but also throughout the imperial history of England. William Booth's work "In the Darkest England and the Way Out" (published in 1890) is an example of this.

Second, Sargent also points out that settler colonizers perceived their new homes as settings for utopias different from the dystopian conditions of their homeland. This perception is apparent not only in new laws and utopian projects that were popular in the New World, but also in utopian literary works that project successful societies beyond the imperial metropolis. Among the examples Sargent brings up from America are John Winthrop's puritan work *A City Upon the Hill* and William Smith's *A General Idea of the College of Mirania*. Sargent also argues that the tradition of imagining successful settler colonies continues to prosper in science fiction, with utopian colonies in space such as Ursula Le Guin's *The Word for World is Forest* and Kim Robinson's *Mars Trilogy* to name a few.

Finally, Sargent observes that colonization has impacted the utopian perceptions of the colonized. Sargent argues that utopias of the colonized either portray pre-colonial societies (e.g. *Two Thousands Seasons*) or they portray a utopian drive for independence and nationhood. In "Colonial and Postcolonial Utopias," Sargent writes:

The European utopian ideas of freedom and equality, taught to the colonized, demonstrated the disjunction between belief and practice, and provided independence movements with the intellectual tools needed to confront their masters. Ideas that had once been explicitly utopian in Europe and put into practice to at least some extent became again utopian for those seeking independence. (212)

The second critic who traces the relationship between utopia and empire is Bill Ashcroft. Ashcroft has more than seventeen publications about utopian literature. His interest in utopia is geared towards postcolonial utopias such as African and Caribbean utopias. Ashcroft also sees contemporary utopias (critical utopias) as postcolonial, because they write back to empire just like any other postcolonial literature. In defining and characterizing postcolonial utopias, Ashcroft brings up four points.<sup>5</sup>

First, both imperialism and postcolonialism are authentic forms of utopianism. Utopianism is fundamental to the imperial discourse of self-justification and the idea of a civilizing mission. Postcolonialism is utopian in its sense of an “irresistible hope” for a future free of imperial dominance.

Second, Ashcroft argues that the relationship between utopia and postcolonial literature in particular is complex. The utopian literary tradition lacks moral anti-colonization ground because colonization has been part of the utopian literary discourse since More’s *Utopia* and, additionally, it has been part of what Ashcroft describes as “imperial utopias” (i.e. utopias that rotate around colonization such as *Robinson Crusoe* and *the Tempest*).<sup>6</sup> However, postcolonial writers have appropriated the utopian literary genre the same way they appropriated other genres from empires.

Third, Ashcroft divides utopian literature into two kinds: imperial and postcolonial/critical. He argues that imperial utopias attempt to resolve imperial tensions through blue print or organic utopias that represent ideal colonial situations. Organic and blue print utopias eventually failed. Critical utopias, which are postcolonial utopias, resisted resolving these tensions and concluded with open endings. This approach – which Ashcroft believes is postcolonial - saved the utopian genre from the fate of imperial utopias.

In a way, Sargent and Ashcroft's works complete each other and tightly connect utopia to colonization. While Sargent connects utopia to settler colonies and intentional communities (which are mostly set in the New World), Ashcroft connects utopia to the colonized and postcolonial theory that studies the effects of imperialism on colonized nations.

My addition to the work put forth by both of these scholars is twofold:

First, I connect utopia to imperialism as a whole and not only to one of its outcomes. Colonization is one outcome, of the many, of imperialism and— as we have seen in the definition of empire — it is a relatively new addition/definition to the more than two thousand year old term. To connect utopia to colonization only helps in understanding how imperial policies shaped utopian literature during the age of exploration. Hence, if we follow Sargent and Ashcroft's articulations, we might conclude that any utopia that does not articulate colonization and expansion is not imperial. As a matter of fact, this is the conclusion Ashcroft reached when he defined critical utopia as a postcolonial utopia that outgrew imperialism and previous "imperial utopias". However, my argument in this dissertation is that utopia did not outgrow imperialism. Utopian literature, even in its current forms, is contingent upon imperialism and cannot be articulated without it. I argue that utopia is dependent on imperialism in two ways: themes (e.g. colonization, control, authority, social discontent, etc.) and tropes (surveillance, Othering, binarism, etc.) which I will discuss later in this dissertation.

In addition to Ashcroft and Sargent, other writers have drawn indirect connections between utopia and imperialism by pointing out that the two share common political leanings and origins (such as Phillip Wegner who illustrates that nation building carries imperial tropes) or can be found in the same literary genre (such as science fiction). Furthermore, some authors have pointed out imperial aspects in some utopias ranging from Early Modern utopias all the



way to contemporary utopias (namely *Imperialism and the Sublime in the Science Fictional Works of Jules Verne, H. G. Wells, and Karel Capek* by Bed Paudyal and Jeffery Knapp's *An Empire Nowhere: England and America, from 'Utopia' to 'The Tempest'*). A third group have brought up the imperial leanings of some writers of utopian literature such as Bacon and others.

In addition to these groups, numerous dissertations also touch upon the issue (e.g. *Utopia and Colonisation* by Robyn Walton, and *Unpacking utopia: uncustomary inspections of the ideological baggage of exploration, empire, and otherness in selected English and American utopian fictions* by Jennifer Schwenk Nelson). All these articulations are noteworthy. However, my argument here is not geared towards pointing out mere direct or indirect connections between utopia and imperialism. My argument, rather, is that utopia is contingent upon imperialism. No utopia can work without its imperial discourse.

### **Research Questions**

This dissertation attempts to answer four questions which, as I will momentarily explain, enrich both postcolonial and utopian studies:

1. How are Early Modern utopias both a product and a prerequisite of the revival of early imperialism (i.e. the *imperium*) in the Early Modern period?
2. How did utopias and imperialism develop in relation to each other through the age of exploration?
3. How did utopias and imperialism interact with each other during the height of imperialism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century?
4. How are contemporary utopianism and contemporary imperialism (i.e. neo-imperialism), mainly in the United States, still connected to each other?

Each of these questions contribute to the central argument of this dissertation, which is that utopia and imperial fantasy are contingent upon each other.

The answer to these questions is not definitive because, as mentioned, empire and utopia are complex. However, generally speaking, this dissertation answers the first question by arguing that classical and Early Modern utopias are connected to imperialism because they mostly reflect an idealized longing for the unachievable perfect *imperium*. In these utopias, empire is a sovereign entity that thrives on justice (however justice is perceived), that is powerful, that is well governed, and that is well controlled and protected. Early utopias are usually a response to political upheavals that jeopardized the sovereignty of the author's empire. In them, the author attempts to discuss the issues at hand and propose ways in which the empire can overcome its problems. For example, Plato's *Republic* discusses the aftermath of Athens' defeat by Sparta and proposes ways in which it could overcome defeat by imagining a utopia ruled by philosopher kings. More's *Utopia* navigates the British sovereignty from European political entities and the enigma of Ireland by proposing a British-like island, cut off from the mainland that colonizes neighboring nations for demographical and economic reasons. Harrington's *Oceana* discusses an ideal British post-restoration constitution, and so on.

This dissertation answers the second question by arguing that utopias in the age of exploration, in addition to discussing issues of sovereignty, also engage with issues of expansion (e.g. *Utopia*, *Oceana*), better policies for governing colonies (e.g. *Robinson Crusoe*, *Description of Spensonia*, *Isle of Pines*, and better policies of governing the metropolis (e.g. satire as in *Gulliver Travels*, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*). These utopias are mainly located in the periphery (mostly on islands) of the empire and reflect an imperial drive for seeking wealth, knowledge, exotic environments and artifacts through discovery and adventure. Utopias and empires in the

age of exploration had a mutual relationship. Utopias lent a hand for imperial policies of discovery and expansion propaganda, while new discoveries and encounters lent a hand for utopian settings.

In response to the third question, this dissertation argues that during the apex of imperial expansion, utopias addressed problems within the imperial metropolis that rose mainly as a result of focusing on expansion and economic gains while neglecting the social and economic conditions of the imperial center. These utopias are mainly concerned with the social and moral well-being of the heart of the empire, because the well-being of the center of empire ultimately reflects on the health of empire as whole. Among the main topics discussed in these utopias are issues of "lacking" in the imperial metropolis, such as social equality (e.g. Bellamy's *Looking Backward*) and labor rights (e.g. Morris' *News From Nowhere*), effects of the industrial and technological revolution on society (e.g. *Erewhon*, *Ionia*), evolution and scientific advancements (e.g. *The Coming Race*), moral decadence, women rights (*Empire of Nairs*, *Herland*) and other *fin de siècle* issues. Utopias of this type are indirectly related to the imperial policies of expansion and discovery. Hence, they do not seem related to imperialism.

Finally, in answering the fourth question, this dissertation argues that contemporary utopias and neo-imperialism have an ambivalent relationship that reflects skepticism of imperialism yet attachment to it. Utopias of the 21<sup>st</sup> century discuss both the positive and negative aspects of imperialism but concede that, in the end, imperialism presents the only feasible direction for human improvement. Hence, the general narrative frame of these utopias begins by pointing out the downside of imperialism but then admits its unavoidability. These utopias, then, ultimately tap into the bigger question of how to improve empire and minimize its negative effects rather than eliminate it as a whole. Utopias such as *The Dispossessed*, *Star Trek*,

*and Trouble in Triton* are good examples of this form of utopia which navigates, but does not escape, the imperial enigma.

### **Critical Approach**

My critical approach in this dissertation is postcolonial. It is positioned within Edward Said's approach to literature. In his work, Said constantly discusses the importance of understanding the worldliness of the text. By this, Said means that a literary text is interconnected with its political, social and cultural discourse; we cannot appreciate any literary work without positioning it within its discourse. In order to recognize the worldliness of a text, Said introduces what he calls the "contrapuntal reading" method of reading. By this, he means that readers of a literary work must pay special attention to the power dynamics within the text. Such as dynamics that involve the hierarchal structure of the characters in the work (i.e. the location and role of the oppressor/ colonizer/ superior characters versus the oppressed/colonized/inferior characters in the text) and the role they play and how they influence each other. Contrapuntal reading also requires our understanding of the historical and imperial background of the text and that we consider how it plays out in the setting and the plot. Hence, to understand a specific incident in the novel, one has to understand the history behind its setting and the significance of small details that, seemingly, do not hold a central position in the plot. Said brings the example of Antigua in *Mansfield Park*. While it is true that the British colony is barely mentioned in Austen's work, failing to understand its significance undercuts our understanding of Sir Bertram's authoritarian behavior and its implications in the novel.

Thus, for my dissertation the questions that arise with Said's contrapuntal reading are: what is the imperial discourse of each utopian work? How is this discourse affecting small details in the novel and the plot? What is the relationship between the protagonists of the novels

and their imperial background and how do the utopias I read answer some of the main problems in both the imperial metropolis and periphery? It is clear, as my work illustrates, that only through a contrapuntal reading of utopian texts that we can fully see how utopia is clearly contingent upon imperialism and how empire is ingrained in the foundation of any utopian work. While it is true that imperialism in utopian literature can be seen on the superfluous level of having colonies and implanting utopias in colonies (as Sargent and Ashcroft pointed out), the depth of imperialism in utopias (such as socialist utopias like *Looking Backward* and *News from Nowhere*) cannot be seen if we simply search for clear colonial incidents in the work. It is only through contrapuntal reading that we can see how *Looking Backward* or *News from Nowhere*, for example, though superfluously anti-imperial, contain, negotiate with, resist and incorporate imperial aspects all at the same time, which add layers of complexity to these works and increases our comprehension and appreciation of them and their significance in both their time and in our time. Hence, instead of only looking for incidents of colonization in every utopia that I discuss, I will dig deeper and look into the multiple layers of imperialism and imperial tropes found in every utopia I examine in this dissertation.

Furthermore, I also build off Said's articulations of Orientalism in *Orientalism*, and imperial culture in *Culture and Imperialism*. In *Orientalism*, Said explains how Europe managed to control and colonize the Orient (i.e. its Other). His arguments can be summarized in five main points:

First, the Orient is an imaginary construct built upon imperialists perceptions of the Other.

Second, knowledge and power are connected and contingent upon each other. European colonizers were only able to successfully colonize the Orient (and other populations) through

knowing them better. The better the Europeans knew their colonies and their people, the more effective they colonized them.

Third, Orientalism (i.e. the knowledge of the Other) is not only important so that Europeans can control the Orient/Other. Orientalism is also important because it defines Europe/the Occident - and empires in general – through defining its Other as inferior and opposite of what the Occident is.

Fourth, Orientalism is an amorphous discourse that is interconnected with other imperial aspects. It is hard to point out Orientalism as a separate discourse or academic field within European culture. Furthermore, while Orientalism promoted and helped in colonizing the Orient, it also sustained itself as a result of the colonization process that it promoted in the first place. Hence, we see an interconnected relationship between imperialism and Orientalism that cannot be pointed out in clear cut cause and effect relationship.

Fifth, Said also explains that the Orient is silent in European discourse until the Orientalist brings it to life through published studies, works of art and literature. In other words, the Orient cannot speak without the Orientalists' permission. Furthermore, whatever the Orient says is censored to meet the Orientalists' narrative that is - with no doubt - imperialistic and condescending.

In this dissertation, I argue that the idea of utopia (a well-constructed imaginary location) is similar to the Orient/Other, in that it shapes and defines empires and imperialist cultures in similar ways. However, while the Orient defines an empire by being its inferior (i.e. what the empire is not and what it does not want to be), utopia defines the empire by being its superior (i.e. what an empire aspires to be). To illustrate this, let us look at one of the main themes in both utopian literature and Orientalism: rationality and organization. In *Orientalism*, Said illustrates

how Orientalists define the Orient by its lack of rationality and organization. The Orient is chaotic, irrational, superstitious, and in constant state of misery and disconnection with its roots, unlike the Occident/empire that is well structured, rational, organized and progressive. If we look at utopian literature, we almost always see that utopian writers project their utopias as better organized, structured and rational entities than the empires from which they come from. More's *Utopia* for example is about a well-structured society that England aspires to become. Similarly, Bacon's *New Atlantis* is a rational scientific society in contrast with the British Empire. In other words, if we pick any utopia, we will find that it defines the colonizer/imperialist through its aspirations in the same way that the Orient/colonized other defines the colonizer/imperialist through its aversions. My addition to Said's work, then, is that while it is true that the Occident/imperialist does define himself through what is inferior to him, the Occident/imperialist also defines himself through what is superior to him. In other words, both utopia and the Orient/colonized are two aspects that define imperialism and constitute what it means to belong to an empire. On one hand, the colonized/orient for the imperialist is the Other that it does not want to be. On the other hand, utopia is the Other an imperialist yearns to be.

Second, the utopian literary discourse is similar to Orientalism in that both are amorphous, meaning that their connection to imperialism and empire building is multi-layered and complex. Both deal with the same tropes (e.g. the gaze, organization and structure, knowledge and power, surveillance, control, Othering, binaries, civilization, colonization, exoticism, travel and adventure, etc.) and both have directly and indirectly influenced the policies of empires. However, there is not always a clear-cut relationship between utopia and imperialism. Some connections are clear; others are not. In other words, it is not always possible to pin down an imperial incident or a specific imperial policy that resulted in a specific utopian

work, nor can we pin down a specific utopian work that has directly contributed to a specific imperial policy. As a matter of fact, as I mentioned previously, one cannot pin down a static confined definition of imperialism itself, in the first place. Instead, the relationship is more one of context rather than direct causality. What this dissertation attempts to articulate is that utopias and empires share a similar discourse – a nebula one might say - in ways that collectively influence each other, give birth to similar tropes, and formulate clusters that rotate around each other. In addition, to talk about a discourse is to talk about an overlap between different utopian themes and imperial themes throughout the development of the imperial discourse. Hence, some utopias do continue to negotiate with imperial policies even though those policies are no longer in practice (such as colonization in current science fiction such as *Star Trek* and *Mars Trilogy*). Similarly, we also see recent neo-imperial policies inspired by socialist utopias (such as labor rights) even though those utopias lost glamour after the World Wars (e.g. *Looking Backward* and *News from Nowhere*). The bottom line here, then, is that when we talk about a relationship, we talk about a complex and interrelated relationship that cannot be sorted out as an individual utopia or imperial experience relating to its specific counterpart.

And finally, utopia is similar to the Orient in that though we frequently hear the host of a utopia speaking about his or her society, it is usually the narrator/visitor/imperialist that speaks about utopia, guides us through it, analyzes it and evaluates it for us. However, unlike the Orientalist who guides us through the Orient to extrapolate the merits and superiority of the Occident and how far it has improved, the utopian narrator/visitor guides us through the superior system of utopia that contemporary empires ought to imitate.

These aspects of utopian literature have endured throughout time and, as we shall see in this dissertation, they continue to resist any attempt to break them away from imperial discourse.



Having explained the connection between utopia and Orientalism, I will now discuss the connection between utopia and imperial culture. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said brings up seven points:

First, as William Blake states: the foundation of empires is art and science. These two elements also constitute the culture of any empire and allow it to exercise control over others. In other words, imperial culture is the most powerful agent of imperial hegemony. To Said, this concept of culture and its connection to imperialism, allowed European empires to endure, unlike previous empires that were built upon looting and destruction. Second, Said defines culture a similar to Mathew Arnold: “Culture is the best that has been thought and said.” Third, imperialism is unchallenged by reformist movements. Reformist movements are all imperialist by and large (67). Fourth, without empire, there is no European novel as we know it. Fifth, novels do not call for colonization, but they do not stand in the way of it. Sixth, culture participated in colonization, yet somehow it is excused from its role.

Said’s ideas of culture and its role in empires has roots in the formulation of utopian literature. It is not hard to see the interconnection between imperial culture and utopian literature. First, arts and science are the main themes of many utopian works. Utopian works also advocate these elements as a source of power and hegemony (e.g. *New Atlantis*, *Star Trek*, etc.). Furthermore, utopian works usually aim to improve the culture of a society, which is defined by Arnold in utopian terms (i.e. the best that is thought of and said). In addition, for imperialists (e.g. Victorians), seeking perfection fuels the idea of a model nation which is fit to rule and to civilize the world by example and not military force. Therefore, to yearn for a utopia in an imperial context aligns with a yearning for imperial expansion and colonization.

Hence, unlike the presence of imperialism in the novel in general, I argue that empire holds a foundational position in any utopia. Any utopia, then, speaks to empire and aspires to imperial ideals, discusses imperial themes and uses imperial tropes all at the same time. Yet, surprisingly, as the case with the novel, though utopia actively participates in imperialism, it is, somehow, excused from it and – ironically – perceived as countering it (128).

### **Importance and Addition to the Field**

This dissertation adds to both utopian and postcolonial studies. It adds to utopian studies because it positions itself within the debate of whether utopia is a Western or a universal phenomenon. For some critics, like Kumar, utopia is a Western phenomenon that is not present in non-Western literature prior to contact with the West. For many other utopian critics, such as the utopian bibliographers Sargent and Gregory Claeys, utopianism is a universal phenomenon because it reflects hope (not just space) which is part of human nature. My work contributes to this debate in two ways:

First, it alters Kumar's argument by arguing that utopia is not necessarily Western; it is rather imperial. Not all the West is imperial. Utopia is found wherever imperial thought is found, whether in the West or elsewhere. I agree, that the utopian genre gained noticeable momentum and took its current shape in the West because imperialism advanced in Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries more so than in other locations around the globe. Imperialism in Europe advanced mainly because of the unearthing of the classics, the discovery of the New World and the eruption of the exploring, colonizing and civilizing missions in the Early Modern period, the age of exploration and 19<sup>th</sup> century colonization.

Second, this dissertation counters the perception of the universality of utopia by establishing the difference between utopianism and utopia as a *form* of utopianism. It argues that

while utopianism and hope in general are universal, utopian literature is not. Utopian literature is hope associated with imperialism. For imperialists, it is hope for a better, stable, prosperous and developing empire; for colonized subjects, it is hope of a nation free of imperial dominance. Furthermore, utopia is hope that heavily invests in imperial tropes and cannot be expressed otherwise. Among the most noticeable tropes are Othering, adventure, first encounter, surveillance, civilization and exotic settings.

This dissertation also contributes to postcolonial studies in three ways:

First, it argues that any utopia should be read as a text responding positively, ambivalently or negatively to imperialism. On the one hand, utopias should be looked upon as either a positive or ambivalent response to empire because they contribute to the development of empire in one of three ways: first, some utopias seek to perfect an empire through projecting a prosperous effectively governed empire for comparison (e.g. *Utopia*, *Oceana* and other Early Modern utopias); second, other utopias question imperial practices deemed destructive to empire and propose better practices of governance (e.g. *Looking Backward* and other socialist utopias); three, and third other utopias express ambiguity towards empire by acknowledging the downside of imperial practices, and negotiating its complexity, but they eventually admit the inescapability of the relationship between the two (e.g. critical utopias such as *The Dispossessed*, and postcolonial utopias such as *Calcutta Chromosome* and the *Rape of Shavi*).

Second, this dissertation adds to postcolonial studies by adding to Bill Ashcroft's observations on the relationship between utopia and postcolonialism. It affirms two prominent themes in Ashcroft's observations and extends on two others. First, it affirms that postcolonialism is a form of utopian thinking because it is "irrepressible hope" of a better outcome from the mostly negative imperial experience; second, it also affirms that critical

utopias are a postcolonial response to the enigma of imperialism.<sup>7</sup> However, this dissertation also argues—contrary to Ashcroft’s assertions – that utopia’s response and negotiation with imperialism is not recent. The utopian literary genre was, is, and will always be part of and contingent upon the imperial discourse. What distinguishes postcolonial and critical utopias from earlier utopias is that the former has become more complex and dynamic only as a result of the imperial discourse itself becoming more complex and dynamic.

Finally, this dissertation also contributes, indirectly, to the drive for re-engaging postcolonial literary criticism with literature originating from the imperial metropolis. This engagement has waned ever since the publication of *The Empire Writes Back* and other postcolonial key texts that solely focus on literature written at the periphery of the empire rather than that written from within the metropolis.<sup>8</sup> The separation between the literature of the metropolis and that of the periphery when discussing the effects of both imperialism and colonialism is not only limiting a vast field of study, but also crippling in the quest to better understand postcolonial effects on human culture as a whole.

## **Scope**

In regard to the scope of my dissertation, four notes need to be brought up here. First, my dissertation is of an introductory nature. Hence, a big portion of it is theoretical and aims at engaging with theory before moving on to discussing utopian texts at hand and analyzing the connections between them and imperialism, and extracting conclusions about the direction this connection might take. Each chapter of this dissertation first begins by establishing context and theory before moving on to discussing texts.

Second, the time period this dissertation attempts to cover is wide, starting from Early Modern period up to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. To cover all utopias in such a time frame and to locate their

connection with imperialism is impossible. Therefore, here I pick three influential utopias from three time periods (i.e. the Early Modern period, the 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries and the 21<sup>st</sup> century), analyze them, show their connection to imperialism, and use them as samples to reflect the larger picture of the time period from which they are taken. Hence, the overall number of utopias I will be covering in this dissertation is eight predominant utopias from the 15<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century. I selected predominant utopias because they illustrate my argument more cogently than discussing unfamiliar works in the field.

The third note regarding scope is geographical. This dissertation focuses on Anglophone literature (i.e. British and American), though the relationship between utopianism and imperialism, of course, does extend beyond Anglophone discourse. My interest in the Anglophone here is only meant to narrow my focus and provide a more manageable study frame for the dissertation. Furthermore, since I intend my dissertation to be foundational, for future work to build on, examining British imperialism is necessary since most of the works examined in Postcolonial theory focus on British imperialism.

## **Chapter Overview**

This dissertation is divided into three chapters in addition to an introduction and a conclusion. These three chapters are lined up chronologically: the first covers Early Modern and 17<sup>th</sup> century utopias, the second 19<sup>th</sup> utopias and the third contemporary utopias. Each chapter addresses the relationship between utopia and, respectively, one of the three forms of imperialism mentioned above (the *imperium*, imperialism, and neo-imperialism).

In the first chapter, “Early Modern Utopias in Emerging British Imperialism” I analyze three early utopias: More's *Utopia* (1516), Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), and Harrington's *the Commonwealth of Oceana* (1656). I look into their connection to their Early Modern period

discourse and I argue that the discourse of the New World, and the emerging interest in the classics, gave birth to the utopian literary genre. I also argue that imperial tropes played a crucial role in establishing the utopian genre of the Early Modern period and that utopias in that era are imperial fantasies.

In the second chapter, “Utopia, Imperialism and Victorian England” I explore three utopias of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and argue that their writers sought to improve the imperial metropolis that suffered from imperial policies of expansion and capitalism.<sup>9</sup> The texts I look at are Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888), William Morris *News from Nowhere* (1890), and Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *The Coming Race* (1871). The first two works propose socialism as solutions to the problems of imperialism and the third work attempts to illustrate the enigma of imperialism which favors the few at the expense of the rest. I argue that issues about social justice within the metropolis - such as fair distribution of wealth between citizens of the empire and equality and happiness - dominated the utopian scene. In other words, utopias shifted from reflecting imperial fantasies to reflecting what Claeys calls “imperial skepticism.”

In the third chapter, “Utopia, Empire and Science Fiction,” I argue that as we progress into the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, new forms of utopia emerge as a result of the development of imperialism. No longer is imperialism mainly associated with colonization and military expansion or sovereignty. Neo-imperialism, based on exploitation and cultural hegemony, overtook the scene. As a result, while many utopias continue to follow the previous two forms of utopias (i.e. imperial fantasy and perfecting imperial metropolis), new forms of utopia shifted toward a more complicated relationship with empire. The development of dynamic utopias and critical utopias best illustrate this section. This dissertation argues that a dynamic utopia, exemplified by *Star Trek* TV show, is a utopia that acknowledges the never-ending shortcomings

of imperialism utopias and empires and addresses them through continuous improvement of empire rather than projecting a static and perfect empire. A dynamic utopia is a utopia that acknowledges the shortcoming of imperialism; yet, it does see imperialism as desirable and as the ultimate end to human prosperity.

The conclusion of this dissertation will put a cap on my research by offering a summary and by proposing new frontiers within the field and boldly go where no dissertation has gone before.

### **Relevance**

As mentioned above, this dissertation is beneficial for both utopian and postcolonial studies. For utopian critics in the Society for Utopian Studies, who gather annually to discuss and analyze utopian visions about human development and progression, understanding the connections between imperial fantasy and utopian fantasy provides a better outlook on how to address the concept of hope and progression in utopianism. After all, many of the problems that plague humanity (war, conflict, social injustice, inequality) and a lot of despair and nightmares are initiated by imperial policies, yet imperialism is rarely examined by utopians as a perpetuator of utopian literature.

For postcolonial critics – who in general, as Ashcroft pointed out, have utopian leniency towards understanding the aftermath of colonialism to provide better outlook for the future, where subjugation and injustice are eliminated - understanding the connection between imperial fantasy and utopia opens up a whole new dimension of study of an important unexplored sector of the imperial discourse. This new dimension can be explored in whichever possible way and end critics wish to take. And I do hope that my dissertation brings up interest in this recently explored territory.

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY MODERN UTOPIAS IN EMERGING BRITISH IMPERIALISM

#### Introduction

In his letter to Luis de Sant Angel announcing his discovery of the New World, Christopher Columbus describes his discovery as if it were Eden. In the letter, Columbus writes that the mountains are:

Most beautiful, of a thousand varied forms, accessible, and full of trees of endless varieties, so high that they seem to touch the sky, and I have been told that they never lose their foliage. I saw them as green and lovely as trees are in Spain in the month of May. Some of them were covered with blossoms, some with fruit, and some in other conditions, according to their kind. The nightingale and other small birds of a thousand kinds were singing in the month of November when I was there. There were palm trees of six or eight varieties, the graceful peculiarities of each one of them being worthy of admiration as are the other trees, fruits and grasses. There are wonderful pine woods, and very extensive ranges of meadow land. There is honey, and there are many kinds of birds, and a great variety of fruits. Inland there are numerous mines of metals and innumerable people. Hispaniola is a marvel. Its hills and mountains, fine plains and open country, are rich and fertile for planting and for pasturage, and for building towns and villages. The seaports there are incredibly fine, as also the magnificent rivers, most of which bear gold.



The trees, fruits and grasses differ widely from those in Juana. There are many spices and vast mines of gold and other metals in this island. (qtd. in *Ideas and Movement* 234)

As his description goes on, Columbus explains how he and his men encountered the inhabitants of the land and how this Eden, which Columbus decided to name Hispaniola (thus establishing domination over it by ignoring its original name and existence), had potential for exploitation. Columbus' discovery and his descriptions of the New World sent ripples across Europe and promoted a scramble for colonization and imperial expeditions in unheard of magnitude. They were unique because they presented a distinct shift in travel agendas in the Early Modern period - from aiming to establish trade with other nations (which was Columbus' original plan in opening trade routes with India) to aiming at colonization. In other words, with Columbus' discovery, European expeditions began to explore lands – particularly in the New World and later on throughout the world - not to determine trade with their inhabitants but to determine these lands' potential for colonization; the determining factors for colonization as we see in Columbus' letter included climate, flora, fauna and presence of wealth and Edenic abundance. The more similar the land was to Eden, the more “colonizable” it was. Indeed, years after his discovery, Spain, Portugal, England, France, and the Netherlands had laid their eyes on the new found paradise and were quarreling among themselves, each wanting a piece of the pie. The Treaty of Tordesillas divided the New World between Spain and Portugal in 1494, and Henry VIII sent John Cabot to explore the new land in 1497. Shortly after this, Francis I sent Giovanni da Verrazzano in 1524. In a matter of a hundred years, Europeans had extended their control across the Caribbean, Central America and South America, eradicating indigenous nations in their totality while enslaving others, plundering the newly found resources, and destroying three empires along the way.<sup>10</sup>

In line with the discovery of the New World, a second discovery took place in Italy: the discovery of manuscripts by Greeks and Romans. Though interest in classical works had been developing since the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans resulted in Byzantine scholars traveling to Italy, bringing manuscripts with them along the way. This discovery prompted a movement of scavenging and reacquiring classical manuscripts elsewhere and, eventually, reconnected Europe with its pre-Christian Roman and Greek past; the discovery of the classical heritage helped develop what Thomas Dandeleit, in his *The Renaissance Empire in Early Modern Europe*, describes as “a sense of imperial ambition” that not only manifested itself in territorial expansion, but also in social, cultural, architectural, and artistic fronts, long lost since the fall of Rome (3).<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, during this discovery, humanists closely studied Rome and Greek’s history and made it a reference point – along with, and sometimes without, the Church – of European heritage.

I argue that the utopian literary genre – like the literature, architecture and arts of the Early Modern period - is a product of the discourse of these two discoveries: the discovery of the New World and the discovery of the classics. It is a literary genre born from within the Renaissance imperial discourse, dating from when Europe began to aspire to the glories and civilization of the rediscovered Roman Empire and from when Europe began to explore, practice, and imitate this form of imperialism (i.e. the *imperium*) on its own territory and in the New World.<sup>12</sup> Utopia is a literary genre of ambition and optimism. It was born within a historical context which carried the optimistic spirit of the Renaissance that restored faith in humanity and reason along with – and sometimes instead of – the Church’s call for a transcendent kingdom of Heaven. It is also a product of a time that captured the optimistic imperial outlook towards the New World and the new possibilities that saw Eden not as an idyllic untouched and innocent

place in Heaven, or an inaccessible pasture untampered with, but as a place possibly present in the New World that requires human effort to establish.<sup>13</sup> Utopia is a literary genre that fantasizes about utilizing the wealth and abundance of Eden, colonizing it, and building on it an imperial civilization after the image of classical empires.<sup>14</sup>

This chapter attempts to decipher the birth of the utopian literary genre by locating it within its Early Modern period context. I argue that the utopian literary genre began as a form of imperial fantasy – and sometimes propaganda - literature, reflecting Early Modern imperial ambitions of establishing an ideal humanist empire fit to rule Early Modern Europe and its New World colonies. By a “humanist empire,” I mean an empire that is not solely concerned with annexing and exploiting territories of enemies- as the case with Medieval kingdoms – or pushing a religious agenda - as the case with the Christian traditions that call for an afterlife kingdom of Heaven - but as an empire that thrives on the idea of civilization, that is inclusive of its subjects, that has a superb governing system, and that is – hence – ideal and that all humanity aspires to be – and should be - under its fold.<sup>15</sup> My argument about the birth of the utopian literary genre from Early Modern imperial fantasies is substantial to this dissertation and to the utopian studies field in general. As I mentioned in the introduction, scholars of utopian studies trace the origins of utopia in multiple directions -from yearnings for perfection and hope (e.g. Sargent, and Bloch), to classical philosophy (e.g. Vieira), Christian millennia (e.g. Kumar), etc. Here, I argue that imperial fantasies are the origins of the utopian literary genre. All other elements of utopianism that existed prior to More’s work did carry elements of hope and idealism. However, the crystallization of the genre itself and its development into a narrative format did not originate from the mere concepts of hope and ideal. The birth of utopia is indebted to the imperial

discourse of the Early Modern period and to the early ambitions of constructing empires shaped after their classical counterparts.

A quick examination of Early Modern utopias reveals that they all had two characteristics. All Early Modern utopias were imperial projects that responded to the *imperium* in various degrees depending on the writer's perception of the *imperium*. This projection, as we will see, evolved from attempts to replicate, alter or borrow elements from the *imperium* in an Early Modern context (as we see in *Utopia*, *New Atlantis* and *Oceana* respectively). The attempt to reconstruct the *imperium* in Early Modern Europe responds to Europe's drive to reconnect with its perceived loss of a glorious past since the fall of Rome. To Early Modern humanists and politicians, the reconstruction of Europe's glory seemed achievable through bringing back successful Roman policies. Whatever policies brought glory and success to Rome would surely become salvageable policies to bring Early Modern empires glory and success too.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, a quick look at Early Modern utopias also reveals that the fantasies of ideal humanist empires are a result of the discovery of the New World. Every Early Modern utopia is associated with the New World in one way or another. All utopias occur on islands and in newly discovered lands; they are found by brave, imperialist and adventurous "sea surfers" equipped with galleons and navigational instruments, who are - as usual - rewarded with gold, experience and knowledge. The presence of these tropes affirms that had it not been for imperial ambitions and discoveries, early utopias would not have been conceived or developed to what they have become today, which in turn shows the interconnected relationship between imperialism and utopia in general.

In extension to the argument that Early Modern utopias are imperial fantasies, this chapter also argues that, while it is true that utopia is a literary genre, Early Modern utopias –

like literary forms of the time - were not pieces of literature solely meant to demonstrate artistic talents and imagery. Early modern utopias offer political, social and economic commentary and advice to European rulers of their times. They present solutions to problems that these rulers faced in governing their states/empires.<sup>17</sup> As a matter of fact, as mentioned earlier, many Early Modern utopian writers were advisors in Monarchs' courts (e.g. More, Bacon), members of the political elite (e.g. Gott, Eliot) colonialists (Bacon) or political activists (e.g. Harrington, Plattes) who were either praised for the utopias they presented to their rulers or who were punished for disagreeing with their ruler's ambitions.

Indeed, looking into the utopian literary works that came after More's coinage of the term affirms my point. For example, in his bibliography, *British and American Literature 1516-1975*, Sargent, presents 43 utopias or works with utopian elements prior to the 18th century. These utopias were not only set in an imperial context, whether on colonized islands in the New World or empires in distant space or time, but they also propagated some sort of imperialism be it classical imperialism (e.g. More's Utopia), ideal Monarchy (e.g. *Macaria*) Christian imperialism (e.g. *Novae Solymae*), republican (e.g. *Oceana*) or epistemological imperialism (e.g. *New Atlantis*). All these utopias are fictional constructions of a visionary society that is either a colony, an empire, or an empire in the make.

By arguing that Early Modern utopias are a result of the discovery of the *imperium*, the efforts to colonize the New world, and establish successful empires, this chapter illustrates that the utopian literary genre and imperialism have been interconnected and inseparable from each other right from the beginning of the genre. As we shall see in the coming chapters, this relationship continues to develop and takes on different shapes throughout the development of imperialism.

In order to prove my argument that Early Modern utopias are imperial fantasies of ideal humanist empires, this chapter will discuss three Early Modern British utopian literary texts that exemplify the larger trend of utopias in the Early Modern period: More's *Utopia* (1516) – the kick start of the utopian literary genre –envisions a humanist empire crudely shaped after the image of classical imperialism (called *imperium* henceforth). Bacon in *New Atlantis* (1624) envisions a humanist empire as an Edenic and epistemological empire that thrives on knowledge and mastery over nature. Harrington in the *Commonwealth of Oceana* (1665) envisions a humanist empire as a republic of well-established law and constitution that heavily borrows from the Roman Republic's system.

These three utopias share common aspects that establish the connection between imperialism and the utopian literary genre. They are also unique prototypes of utopias of the Early Modern period and utopias to come. All these utopias reflect imperial fantasies that respond to the political turmoil in the development of the British Empire. More's version of the *imperium* presents possible solutions to the problems England faced during Henry VIII's attempt to establish a British Empire (that includes Ireland) in isolation from Europe. Bacon's version of a humanist Edenic and epistemological empire responds to the enigma of imperial greed and exploitation of Early Modern empires in the New World; it attempts to establish a sense of noble purpose to British Empire that is supposedly nobler than the gold-digging of the Spanish empire. Harrington's version of an ideal republic responds to the emergence of the short lived British Commonwealth.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, each one of these works discusses an important aspect of imperialism unique to their period and each one, then, sets the tone for future utopias. More's *Utopia* is the prototype of egalitarian utopias that seek to consolidate imperial sovereignty and control over

subjects. *New Atlantis* is the prototype of the utopia of ethics, religion and science. *Oceana* is the prototype utopia of constitution and law. Through establishing the connection between these utopias and imperialism and proving that these connections are strong, I hope to prove that imperialism is interconnected not only with Early Modern utopias, but with any other utopia that is similar to these three prototypes. These connections, of course, change and evolve; however they remain the basis of any utopia to come.

### ***Utopia and the Reconstruction of the Imperium***

Whenever More's *Utopia* is brought up in a postcolonial context, Utopian critics such as Sargent, Vieira, Davis, and others almost always point out its imperial aspects.<sup>19</sup> *Utopia* is a story of a successful empire fashioned in an image in-between Athens and Sparta. It started with a successful conqueror annexing a peninsula, establishing a strong military, running a successful government, colonizing nearby territories, developing hegemony over nearby nations that are not colonized, and - of course – becoming wealthy and prosperous as a result of these policies. Utopian critics deny or, at the very least, sugarcoat the presence of imperialism in *Utopia*. However, they contextualize it within the satirical nature of *the work and its context*. This light-handed approach towards the issue does not necessarily damage our perception of *Utopia*, but it overlooks a better and holistic debate about the work. In this section, I further pursue the enigma of imperialism in *Utopia* by arguing that the presence of imperialism in the work is not satire, because More is not known to be a satirist. *Utopia*, the kick-start of the utopian genre, is in fact an imperial fantasy. It is an attempt by More to construct a humanist empire after the image of classical imperialism (i.e. *imperium*) and show it at work within an Early Modern British context. This reading of *Utopia* is important because it establishes the connection between the utopian literary genre and imperialism from the beginning of the genre. To More, implementing

the *imperium* was the main factor of success for the Roman Empire. It balanced the two competing rivals that sought hegemony over Europe and the New World at the time (the Church and European Monarchs). The *imperium* also represented an ideal human empire that thrived on civilization and laws that had been long lost in the Dark and Middle Ages. It also reflected the Renaissance spirit of Henry VIII's policies at the time.

In order to demonstrate how Early Modern utopias are reconstructions of the *imperium*, it is important to understand the connotations and characteristics of the term during the Early Modern period and the classical age. Without understanding these connotations, we might not see the connections between utopia and empire at the time, because the word empire in contemporary usage mostly connotes high imperialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century meaning a direct or indirect rule of a metropolis over a periphery. John Richardson, David Armitage and Brett Bowden's explanation of the term is helpful here.

As mentioned in the introduction, in his definition of classical imperialism (i.e. the *imperium*) in *Imperium Romanum: Empire and the Language of Power*, Richardson discusses the difference between classical imperialism (the *imperium*) and high imperialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. To the Romans, *imperium* meant "command" and "order;" "*imperare*" was "to command." It was ascribed to either generals to rule occupied territory or to rule Rome in the time of crisis. The *imperium* was originally granted by the religious authority and the senate, thus providing it full legitimacy from both bodies that influenced Rome: the religious and the secular. Richardson explains that, later on, the religious blessings of the *imperium* were ignored and the idea of granting the decree to command then extended to mean commanding *all* the state rather than a specific territory. Richardson also explains that the *imperium* connoted three definitive characteristics: sovereignty (i.e. independence, authority and control), military power, and



citizenship. Expansion, annexation of territory and hegemony were not seen, as they are in more recent times, as defining negative aspects of imperialism in the Early Modern period nor during the Roman Empire. Expansion was seen as a positive consequence of victory. The three aspects of the *imperium* do sound like aspects crucial to any state rather than an empire. However, what needs to be considered here is that our perceptions of terms such as state, empire, commonwealth and nation were only shaped later in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. The idea of statehood, now as in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, heavily relied on the construction and understanding of the *imperium* itself, which illustrates that any construction of a utopian society in a literary utopia is, by definition, a reconstruction of an *imperium*. Regardless, what I will demonstrate later in this discussion is that the elements of the success of *imperium* are the exact same elements of the success of *Utopia*.

Following up on Richardson, Armitage in *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* explains that “the distinction between states and empires has rarely been a clear one, least of all in the early-modern period (15). To Early Modern humanists, the word “empire” was synonymous with “state.” A successful state meant a successful empire and, as with the Romans, expansion into enemy’s lands was seen as a natural consequence of victory. It is only during the 18th century that the idea of territorial expansion on the basis of superior civilization became a central theme to imperialism. Prior to that, “Empires gave birth to states and states stood at the heart of empires” (15).

Bowden in his book, *The Empire of Civilization: The Evolution of an Imperial Idea* adds the final piece of information regarding imperialism that I need here. He argues that late in the Early Modern period, and as a result of humanists salvaging the classics, civilization became a central aspect of imperialism. For an Early Modern Humanist, a humanist empire – that European states should aspire to become - is protected and sovereign basin of civilization. These

basins of civilization are obliged to protect their assets and unite with each other and/or spread civilization to other nearby "barbaric" nations.

As I mentioned, understanding the meaning and connotations of the *imperium* in the classical age and the Early Modern period is key to understanding how More's *Utopia* is a humanist imperial fantasy. While *Utopia* is imperial in the way imperialism is understood nowadays (i.e. Utopia has colonies and maintains a hegemony) - the connection between *Utopia* and imperialism, however, runs deeper than this. Every element that defines the success of *Utopia* as an ideal state concurs with an element that defines a successful *imperium*. Furthermore, like the *imperium*, expansion in Utopia is the natural outcome for a classical empire and not an end in-and-of itself (see Richardson and Armitage's definition of the *imperium* above). In the following, I will demonstrate how *Utopia* and a successful *imperium* are two sides of the same coin by examining the three elements that define the success of *Utopia* and by illustrating how they are the same elements of a successful *imperium*. The three elements reflect imperial fantasy in *Utopia*. They are: sovereignty and control over subjects, military might, and defined sense of citizenship.

#### *First: Control and Sovereignty*

Utopia, is a strictly governed and controlled sovereign island. As a matter of fact, its success is a result of its sovereignty and control over subjects. The sovereignty of Utopia was sealed ever since Utopus conquered Abraxia. Back then, Utopus named the conquered land after himself and isolated the peninsula from the continent by digging a canal (31). He then secured the water sources by walling the source of the river and joining it with the "town proper so, that if they should be attacked, the enemy would not be able to cut off the stream or divert or poison it" (34). After that, he surrounded the town "by a thick, high wall, with many towers and

bastions. On three sides [he] also surrounded [it] by dry ditch, broad and deep and filled with thorn hedges, on its four side the river itself serves as a moat.” (34). Furthermore, the natural and dangerous topography of the island and its bay reinforce the sovereignty of Utopia. The bay of Utopia is not navigable without the guidance of Utopians themselves. Hence, invading ships are wrecked before they reach Utopian shore. Renaming Utopia, isolating it and fortifying it ensures its sovereignty endurance. Utopian fortifications are also substantial elements for a successful *imperium*, the way perceived during the Early Modern Period.

Authority and control over Utopians can be seen in the rigid organization and structuring of space as well as in the rigid egalitarian system enforced upon Utopians. Each Utopian city is described as some sort of a barrack. The number of residents is controlled, the people living in each household are controlled, the times and places for eating are set, clothes are one uniform, houses are identical and are designed to maximize surveillance over subjects, and finally each city is identical to other cities in Utopia. This sense of a detailed organization not only reflects the obsession of Early Modern humanists with perfection, but also reflects the imperial relationship with the domination of space and colonization space. To colonize space means better surveillance, early recognition of dissent, and better governance. Hence, it is no wonder that the utopian host boasts that Utopia controls, down to the last detail, “the amount of grain the city produces and consumes” and claims it as a desirable aspect (33).

What is more noteworthy in this regard is the way utopians maintained their system for millennia. Utopians maintained the order of their system by taking measures to prevent any dissent that resulted from financial and social inequality (40). Hence, Utopians ridiculed money – the source of greed and trouble - and rendered it useless. Money does not maintain a living. It does not secure food, shelter, or clothing. Money is only used to hire assassins, to convince

friends of utopia into serving utopians, to chain and brand slaves and prisoners of war, and to pacify children. Ambassadors who lavished in gold and silver were commented on by Utopian residents: “look at that big lummoX, mother, who’s still wearing pearls and jewels as if here a little kid !” hush, my boy, I think he is one of the ambassador’s fools” (47).

To maintain their opinions of gold, silver and jewels and stop them from being influenced by non-utopians, the Utopians

[t]hought of a plan: to make the material too available to be valuable. ... As a result, when Utopians have to part with these metals, which other nations give up with as much agony as if they were being disemboweled [and even go to war for it] the Utopians feel it no more than the loss of a penny (47).

To engrain the belief that gold and silver are not valuable, as noted here, is said to eliminate one of the main causes of instability. It also means preventing residents and subjects from competing with each other which could generate conflict. In Utopia, there is no competition; and hence no hostility, which in turn means peaceful residents that consent to the rule of the state. In other words, what More attempts to prove is that less competition leads to less conflict and better control over subjects. This, I argue, is imperial, in that it seeks to prevent conflict which could destabilize the empire.

Controlling subjects is also apparent through egalitarianism. Since its founding, Utopus designed Utopia to maintain an egalitarian nature. As mentioned previously, utopians live in similar houses, wear similar clothes and have a similar lifestyle (35). Each house contains no more than 40 men and women and two slaves (32). Furthermore, residents of Utopia were required to convene and socialize in communal areas, thus communal areas eliminate chances of side discussions and affairs that might originate dissent (42). One family has 16 adults maximum

and any extra were relocated to other households (41). This is followed by raising children in state nurseries that indoctrinate them to become utopian citizens and learn the ways of utopia. This ensures that all citizens get similar upbringing.

Egalitarianism is also maintained through regulating work and leisure hours and through eliminating the sense of ownership. Every person has equal hours of work (6 hours), rests for three hours and learns in the morning (36). In addition, everyone rotates in living between the country and the city and in different residents in utopia (34).

Though egalitarianism can indicate equality and justice, one should not mistake the Utopian egalitarian system to be in line with socialist egalitarian utopian later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The main purpose of egalitarianism in Utopia is to control subjects, hence enhancing imperialism, while egalitarianism in socialist utopias are less inclined to control over their subjects. I will discuss this in the second chapter. Furthermore, the difference between the two forms of egalitarianism can be seen in the utopian hierarchical structure and through a harsh punishment system. It is also a hierarchal system that – unlike other egalitarian socialist 19<sup>th</sup> century utopias – thrives on classification of societies abuse of others and coercion. Egalitarianism in Utopia is significant because it produces a stable society and allows for better control and government and less dissent. In other words, a better form of *imperium*. Furthermore, egalitarianism in Utopia, as we shall see, also defines a sense of citizenship, which, because equality enhances loyalty, eliminates dissent. I will talk about this later in the third element of *imperium*.

In *Utopia*, More presents an ideal *imperium* as a way to suggest policy changes in England. An egalitarian society that is isolated, well governed, well surveyed and controlled is a

fantasy of Early Modern European empires that were vulnerable to other encroaching empires - especially England and its conflict with France and other empires in Europe.

*Second: Military Might*

Military might is the second element that defines *imperium* in *Utopia*. Throughout *Utopia*, More extensively describes the belligerent nature of utopia. Utopia is a nation of war, even though Utopians disdain it and think it is fit only for beasts (67). The belligerent nature of Utopia can be seen in four aspects of the construction of the state: 1) its heavy fortifications, 2) its barrack-like layout, 3) its cover of a just war, and 4) the military of its subjects training.

First is the heavy fortification. The founding of Utopia goes something like this: Utopus - the conqueror who renamed Abraxia after himself - altered the geography of the peninsula into an ideal fort: as mentioned earlier, he first dug a canal to cut it off from the continent (31). He then, secured the water sources by walling the source of the river and joining it with the “town proper so that if they should be attacked, the enemy would not be able to cut off the stream or divert or poison it” (34). After that, he surrounded the town “by a thick, high wall, with many towers and bastions. On three sides [he] also surrounded [it] by dry ditch, broad and deep and filled with thorn hedges, on its four side the river itself serves as a moat” (34). Fortification not only demonstrates protection but also sovereignty, readiness for war, and aggression.

The barrack-like arrangement of cities in Utopia is the second element that illustrates its belligerent and imperial nature. Utopians, as mentioned above, have a strict number of residents for each city: “six thousand household with each family containing between ten and sixteen adults” (42). This limit is maintained by the relocation of overflow from one house or city to another:

If a city has too many people, the extra persons serve to make up a shortage of population in other cities. And if the population throughout the entire island exceeds the quota, then they enroll citizens out of every city and plant a colony under their own laws on the main land near them. Where ever the natives have plenty of unoccupied and uncultivated land (42).

The cities of Utopia are designed for efficiency rather than luxury. Every member in the city is assigned a duty. No one is idle. All members wear similar uniforms, and every city has leaders: a head of a family, a tranibor for 30 families and syphogrant for a city. Furthermore, citizens are required to eat and socialize in its communal areas, “thirty families are assigned to each hall, to take their meals in common – fifteen on one side and fifteen on the other.” In addition, no one is allowed to enter or leave any city without the permission of the tranibor and syphogrant (44).

“Anyone who takes upon himself to leave his district without permission is treated with contempt brought back as a runaway, and severely punished. If he is bold enough to try it a second time, he is made a slave” (45). Absolute discipline and intolerance for dissent is not only an indication of authority and control, but of a belligerent nation on war alert. The strict social structure in Utopia reminds us of other strict social structure of classical war nations such as Sparta. As a matter of fact, this social structure gave an edge to Sparta over Athens and it consequently prompted Plato to write *The Republic*.

The third characteristic that demonstrates the belligerent nature of Utopia is its idea of just war. Utopians have a list of reasons for war. Among these are: The first reason is to expand into *terra nullius* lands (41). The second reason is to remove tyrants and liberate people, because non-Utopians “who have learned to admire Utopian virtue have [naturally] made a practice of asking for Utopians to rule over them” (64). The third reason is to “protect their own land,

protect that of their friends in addition to avenge their friend's previous injuries "humanly sympathy" (67). The fourth reason is revenge (67). The fifth is, to alter unfair laws against their trade (66). The final reason is, pre-emptive strikes (67). "These" and only these justifications – whether satirical or not - "are their chief concerns, which they go after energetically, yet in such a way as to avoid danger , rather than to win fame and glory" (67). The utopian justifications of war in *Utopia* are the justifications of any empire that engage in war and colonization. These justifications rely on perceptions of high moral ground. They are successful in maintaining the imperial citizens' zeal to engage in battle.

The fourth characteristic that demonstrates the belligerent nature of Utopia is military training. Utopians are bred to battle:

From childhood they have been trained by example and instruction in the principles of patriotism, and that adds to their courage. A man who refuses to go to war in Utopia is considered weak and is looked upon with contempt. Even utopian women are placed in the line of battle with their husbands (68).

Furthermore, in battle, utopians

get more determined, putting up a steady, stubborn resistance. Their spirit is so strong that they will die rather than yield ground. They have no anxieties about making a living at home, nor any worry about the future of their families ... so their spirit is exalted and unconquerable. Knowing the job of warfare and knowing it well gives them extra confidence (68).

Utopians also excel at dirty war and strategy. They are assassins by profession. In war, they assassinate leaders of their enemies either by trained assassins or by putting bounty for whoever kills them (70). Preparing Utopians for war in order to defend Utopia and its sovereignty recalls



Plato's *Republic*, which is written in the aftermath of Athens' defeat by Spartans. *Utopia* and *The Republic* illustrate the inseparable connection between an ideal state and strong military. This inseparability also demonstrates the strong connection between utopia and classical imperialism that frequently – as Richardson has indicated – overlaps with the idea of a successful statehood.

Thus far, I have discussed how Utopian policies define states as nations of war. These policies, as Richardson indicates above, are crucial components of the *imperium*. Military might and aggression crucially define the *imperium* and the success of Utopia.

### *Third: A Defined Sense of Citizenship*

Citizenship is the third element of the *imperium* present in Utopia. An *imperium* is different from other political entities, according to Richardson and Armitage, because it connotes citizenship. By citizenship, I mean belonging and being proud of belonging to a political entity. By citizenship I also mean a bond between a political entity and those who belong to it. The political entity defends its citizens and these citizens, in turn, are loyal to that entity.<sup>20</sup>

Citizenship is acquired through consenting to ethical conduct that citizens of a nation agree upon, strive to fulfill and distinguish themselves through. Early modern humanists believed that these characteristics set apart the Roman Empire from "barbaric" nations and other political entities that were defined by tribal, local, or religious affiliations. To become a citizen of the Roman Empire was not to be originally from Rome, belong to its tribe or believe in the same Gods. Instead, to be a citizen of Rome was to act like Romans, abide by their moral conduct and remain loyal to the Roman Empire. Hence, the Roman Empire – and other empires – had citizens of different backgrounds and cultures including peoples from the places that they conquered. These citizens of different backgrounds even became leaders, generals and active members of the Roman Senate.

More's Utopia demonstrates aspects of citizenship that were still formulating in Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The idea of citizenship in Utopia can be seen in two elements: inclusion and exclusion. In *Utopia*, there are those who belong to Utopia and there are the Others who are subject to utopian contempt and – sometimes - aggression. To be a utopian citizen is to be part of its moral system, which is, arguably, the best system one can find. This system is based on a Judeo-Christian tradition, even though it is not strictly Christian in nature. Utopians are easygoing, cheerful, generous, patient, value heavy labor, and are curious. They are humble and respectful. They, “do not gamble,” do not eat much,” and they “have a well-established moral system of education that is unique of them only and of no one else,” etc. To be a utopian or not is a matter of choosing between following this moral system of Utopia and being happy or following other inferior systems and becoming miserable.

What is important to notice here is that it is not the mere attitude or upbringing of people that defines the happiness and good life of utopians; it is rather believing in and abiding by the utopian covenant founded by Utopus that constitutes the happiness of this island and by following the covenant in Utopia encouraged directly (e.g. fighting greed by banning trade with gold) or indirectly (e.g. promoting laws that improve character). As the narrator tells Hythloday, “these and the like attitudes the utopians have picked up partly from their upbringing, since the institutions of their society are completely opposed to such folly, and partly from instruction and their reading of good books” (49). Furthermore, unlike other concepts of law that are designed to prevent crime, utopian laws are designed to build character among its citizens:

So you see, there is no chance to loaf or kill time, no pretext for evading work; no taverns, or alehouses, or brothels; no chances for corruption ; no hiding places, no spots for secret meetings. Because they live in the full view of all, they are bound to be either

working at their usual trades, or enjoying their leisure in a respectable way. Such a life style must necessarily result in plenty of life's good things (45).

This concept of civility is an example of the presence of the third element of the *imperium* because of inclusion. As we have discussed above, inclusion is based upon the idea of following an agreed upon code that unites all citizens. Whoever follows it is utopian; whoever doesn't is not.

To have a system that is based on the idea of inclusion on the merit of agreeing to a specific moral code (which is a characteristic of Roman *imperium*) is to open up the doors for others to be members of the Utopian empire and benefit from it. Indeed, as Hythloday affirms, many nations accept the rule of Utopians and they are always welcome to become utopian citizens (41).

The second element that defines citizenship in Utopia and the *imperium* and demonstrates how they are two sides of the same coin is exclusion. Utopians had a clear categorization of the Other. The Other is one of three: an enemy, an inferior ally, or a second class citizen. These three categories of the Other reoccur in nearly all Early Modern utopias, as we shall see in *New Atlantis* and in the *Commonwealth of Oceana*. Not much is said about the enemy, simply because Utopia is, supposedly, a friendly nation. However, when mentioned, the enemy of utopia is clearly evil: it is one who does not stand to reason and one who is unjust to Utopians, their allies, or people at random. Utopians cannot come to terms with the enemy, despite utopian's sincerity and excellent diplomatic skills, The enemy of Utopia, , is fought without mercy and its leader terminated by any means necessary. This is all discussed in the description of the war machine of Utopia.

Allies of Utopia are natives who prefer to be ruled by utopians rather than local tyrants. These allies are not capable of ruling themselves because their morals and character are inferior to Utopians. Utopians are fair, just, detached from greed and, hence, good rulers, whereas these allies are presumably incapable of improving themselves. Friends of Utopia are used for utopian interests. The Zapoletes, for example, live five hundred miles to the East and are described both as “rude, rough and fierce” and as “growing up in the mountains and becoming a hard race, capable of standing heat, cold, drudger, unacquainted with any luxuries, careless of what houses they live in or what they wear ... and survive by hunting and stealing. ... and the only art they know for earning a living is the art of taking life” (69). These friends are used for various tasks, mainly to serve utopians by fighting battles that utopians do not want to engage in.

Finally, second-class citizens of Utopia are those who do not fully conform to utopian ideals. More presents these second-class citizens as slaves. In Utopia, there are two kinds of slaves: slaves who come from other nations and slaves who were originally utopian citizens. Slaves of other nations are part of the spoils of war or they are fugitives of other nations who prefer slavery in Utopia over death in their homeland. Slaves who were originally Utopian citizens are those who broke the law (e.g. travelling without permission from authority or committing adultery) and are punished by enslavement. Each of these slaves has their own set of rules. While slaves who were previously utopians can become free in the long run if they fully repent their crime, non-utopians cannot. Only their offspring can become full citizens of Utopia. Slaves in Utopia do what slaves do everywhere: menial jobs. They are kept busy cleaning, cooking and serving and assisting their masters in various tasks.

What is interesting about this slave system is the aspect of utopians becoming slaves themselves. According to Hythloday, slaves, who were originally utopians, are harshly dealt

with, more so than other slaves, because they should've known better (59). The whole idea of enslaving utopians is a reinforcement of the defined identity of citizenship utopians had developed about themselves. It emphasizes that adherence to the shared moral code of conduct guarantees citizenship, not tribal ethnic or religious bounds. If one does not follow these codes, he is automatically stripped from his utopian citizenship and enslaved.

Thus far, I have explained how *Utopia* encapsulates the three elements of the *imperium* and attempts to present them as the foundations of a successful state/empire. These elements, as More stresses throughout the story, are the foundational elements of the success of utopia. Utopia would not have existed without these elements. Yet, these elements are the exact same elements that defined Roman *imperium* as perceived – but not always as practiced – during the Roman Republic and Empire. More's *Utopia*, the founding book of the utopian literary genre, firmly sets the interconnected relationship between utopia and imperialism and presents Early Modern humanist imperial fantasy and utopia as two sides of the same coin. All utopian works that came afterward continued to navigate this relationship in various subtle ways. Ever since More's *Utopia*, no utopia ever escaped imperialism. The next two sections in this chapter will discuss two other Early Modern utopian works that further demonstrate how Early Modern utopias are imperial fantasies, even though not as apparent as that of More's *Utopia*.

*New Atlantis: Utopia and the Edenic and Epistemological Empire*



(Figure 1)

In 1620, Francis Bacon published his magnum opus *Novum Organum Scientiarum* (New Instruments of Science) proposing a new method towards knowledge that, “though hard to practice, is easy to explain” (Introduction). This method later came to be known as empirical reasoning and Bacon’s “hard-to-practice” method is now the practical cornerstone of all sciences. On the cover of Bacon’s book (figure 1) is an interesting illustration: a galleon passing

through the two Pillars of Hercules following another that is venturing deep into the Atlantic.

The basic symbolism of this picture, as Bacon would have perhaps meant, is that the new method proposed in the book is revolutionary. It is a break away from old methods of Aristotelian logic and classical beliefs, and it is a venture into a promising new era that will bring new discoveries to science similar to the way that Columbus' discovery of America brought discoveries to cartography.

What is more interesting in this illustration, however, is that it reflects the interconnection between imperialism and utopianism in Bacon's work in a subtle but solid manner. On the one hand, we see three elements associated with empire: The Pillars of Hercules and the horizon, the ocean, and the galleon. The Pillars of Hercules - which in Greek mythology stand at the end of the World - and the Horizon reflect the imperial spirit of adventure and conquer into the unknown beyond the limits of the Old World. The ocean represents the level of risk associated with adventure as well as the vastness of the potential imperial domain. The Galleon is the most instrumental sea vehicle that gave edge to the 16-19<sup>th</sup> centuries' empires of Europe to conquer the New World and - as a result - to prosper. Hence, what we see here is a mighty imperial galleon passing through the Pillars of Hercules following another galleon and venturing into the vast dangerous ocean towards a promising horizon (i.e. the New World).

On the other hand, throughout the book, Bacon infuses his method of empiricism with utopian ideals describing it as revolutionary, illuminating, serving the advancement of humanity, etc. No indications of imperial ambitions or glory are present throughout the book until its conclusion. In it, Bacon takes his praise a step further arguing that his new scientific method will uplift mankind from its fall from Eden and concurrent loss of innocence and lack of *domination* over God's creation on Earth: "For man by the Fall fell at the same time from his state of

innocence and from his dominion over creation. Both of these losses, however, can even in this life be in some part repaired; the former by religion and faith, the latter by arts and sciences” (221). In this conclusive statement is an interesting connection between achieving a utopian, Edenic, innocent condition based on scientific methods and an imperial domination over God’s creation as a whole. Whatever Bacon meant, innocence (an element of utopianism), and science leading to domination (elements of imperialism) might not click together in modern utopian thought. However, they seem to perfectly do so in Bacon’s work; and *New Atlantis* – a utopia beyond the New World –illustrates this. Empiricism, to Bacon, opens up new understandings towards the world and allows for a more well-constructed and controlled society around the globe. This new utopian method, however, is not without its imperial connection which is present in the above illustration and in Bacon’s writings in general.

The front cover of Bacon’s book offers a good introduction to *New Atlantis* and to Bacon’s ideas about empire and its relationship to utopia. *New Atlantis* is an imperial fantasy of an empire of knowledge and science which is capable of ruling not only limited swaths of territory but all of God’s dominion. Bacon's work is a short story about stranded travelers who lose their way in the Pacific Ocean and accidentally find the utopian island of New Atlantis. This utopia, as the travelers learn, is a continuation of ancient European civilizations. It broke away from the old world due to the geographical and demographical barrier of America. As the travelers stay, they learn that New Atlantis is a devout Christian nation that admires science and knowledge alongside religion. The success of *New Atlantis* rests on two policies, scavenging knowledge from other nations and establishing a scientific think tank (in the house of Solomon that rules the island).



At first glance, Bacon's *New Atlantis* might not seem as imperialistic as More's *Utopia*. It is not aggressive or materialistic. Indeed, *New Atlantis* does not have an army, or colonies or colonized subjects. As a matter of fact, New Atlantans seem to be content as introverts, only interested in science and nothing else. As a result, a few critics such as Walter Cohen, William Burns - and others which I mention later- have explored aspects of imperialism in *New Atlantis*. However, the bulk of criticism on *New Atlantis* is focused on exploring his revolutionary propagation of science, empiricism and religion in the work. The lack of substantial work on *New Atlantis*' imperialism, as opposed to the rich literature on Bacon's imperialism in general, is disappointing and it needs to be addressed. Here, I illustrate the connection between Bacon's propaganda of his scientific methods and his imperial leanings. It is true that Bacon's fantasized island does not advocate *imperium* like More - due to the different imperial context that developed over the century and due to Bacon's interest in science as opposed to More's clerical background. Nevertheless, *New Atlantis* still retained elements of the *imperium* - as we shall see further down - and more importantly, it developed its own vision of imperialism that influenced the British Empire's drive for knowledge.

Many biographers of Bacon (e.g. Bryan Bevan and John Russell) have pointed out Bacon's imperial projects and ideals throughout his writing and political career. Bacon, these critics argue, was an imperialist in the truest sense of the word. In *Essays*, for example, he propagates the idea of a civilized empire that reflects the ideals of an imperialist in search of glory, nobility, self-righteousness, and a mission to enlighten the world and spread civilization to heathens, savages and fellows humans who fell from grace. As a matter of fact, Bacon even tried to implement some of his ideas in the New World. He was an advocate of the first successful British colony in the New World, the Virginia colony, and a stock holder in the trade with the

New World. Some scholars, like Harvey Wheeler, go to the extent of arguing that Bacon's ideas contributed to American constitutionalism.<sup>21</sup> However, scholarship has not yet fully related Bacon's imperial and colonial projects and his empirical method to *New Atlantis*, as if *New Atlantis* were a fictional work. As I mentioned previously, the absence of discussion undercuts the depth of our understanding of Bacon's work. To Bacon, as we see at the end of his *magnum opus*, there is no distinction between imperial fantasy and scientific utopian fantasy. The ultimate goal of his new utopian scientific method is not to merely broaden the mind; the ultimate goal of the new utopian scientific method is to "conquer nature" rather than fear its wrath and mystery. To Bacon, the main obstacle that prevented humanity from achieving utopia is its submission to nature rather than its utilization of it. Hence, to propose a new scientific method is to propose a break away from this fear and to recommend a method of consolidating imperial ideals of discovery, and assert that to conquer and civilize is desirable and utopian in every sense. In other words, an empire of knowledge and science is a fearless, victorious, optimistic and powerful empire that is also a desired utopia. This, once again, demonstrates how literary utopias are connected to imperialism and how Early Modern utopias are imperial fantasies.

We should read *New Atlantis* from Bacon's perspective of an ideal humanist empire that thrives upon science and knowledge. *New Atlantis* is an example of how Bacon sees utopia and an epistemic empire of science and knowledge as two sides of the same coin. To acquire better knowledge and science to Bacon, as I have said, is to acquire better control not only over territories stretched around the globe, but over the globe as a whole. Hence, *New Atlantis*, through its search for knowledge and science is bent not on controlling parts of the globe, but the globe – i.e. God's creation – as a whole. Though this form of control is not political, hegemonic or militaristic in a strict sense, it is nevertheless imperial in the sense that it enables *New Atlantis*

to exploit Earth as whole as if it were a colony of non-resistant inhabitants whose knowledge and intellectuality does not match that of New Atlantans. In the following, I will to extrapolate on this premise by, first, introducing the context of imperialism in Bacon's time and illustrating its effect on Bacon's perception of an ideal epistemological empire; second, by illustrating this perception at play in *New Atlantis* and; third, by illustrating that, as a result of this epistemological drive, elements of the *imperium* are in fact still present in *New Atlantis* even though we may not initially see them.

*First: The Context of Imperialism in Bacon's Time*

It is important to understand the context of imperialism in Bacon's time in order to understand his advocacy of an epistemological and non-traditional empire. In *An Empire Nowhere: England, America, and Literature from Utopia to the Tempest*, Jeffrey Knapp offers a picture of the British political scene during Bacon's time. During the reign of Elizabeth, England was not doing well, both on the domestic and international level. On the domestic level, religious tensions between Catholics and Protestants was still rife and the Queen's priority was to resolve domestic conflicts. On the international level, England was falling behind other empires such as the Spanish, the Dutch, and the Ottoman empires as they acquired territory. All attempts to establish colonies in the New World failed; the British navy was still developing, and diplomacy was poor. To compete with its rivals, England depended on profiteers and pirates in looting the Spanish fleets loaded with gold and goods from the New World. This policy contributed to the Armada that awakened a sense of British national pride in defeating the biggest navy at the time.

However, the tide of retreat reversed— during the Stuart Period. The British began to establish colonies in the New World (e.g. Virginia), form colonial enterprise companies (the East Indian Company), and develop a navy that eventually became the strongest in Europe. Knapp

asserts that these successful steps in foreign policies, however, were not matched domestically. England was still stuck in religious conflict and enduring a messy transition from civil war and continuous political strife. These factors affected the British perception of their empire and its heading.

*New Atlantis* and Bacon's thoughts and proposals, in general, can be looked upon from within the context of the British initial failures at colonization compared to Spain. Bacon's thoughts developed within the complex British context of imperialism with the late arrival of the Renaissance to England. Like More, Bacon was heavily involved and affected by the politics of his time. He eventually became King James' chancellor reinventing the image of the British Empire based upon humanist principles rather than religious or medieval ones. To a large extent, Bacon's writings provided political advice on the best ways of governance. Some of his advice was taken (e.g. colonization of Ireland); other bits of his advice was either later considered (e.g. the Royal Society as proposed by the idea of *New Atlantis*) or never considered at all.

#### *Second: Epistemological Imperialism in New Atlantis*

*New Atlantis* falls within the plethora of books and letters Bacon produced to define British imperialism and set it apart from other European imperialism. While More's solution to British problems was to introduce the idea of *imperium* to England, Bacon's answer was to introduce science and knowledge to British imperial rhetoric. In *New Atlantis*, Bacon projects Britain not as an empire with colonies in the New World, but rather as an empire of the whole globe. To Bacon, achieving a global empire is not done through wealth or military. It is achieved through science and knowledge. In *Natural Science and the Origins of the British Empire*, Sarah Irving points out that the heavy involvement of early British scientists' in imperial and colonial projects in the New World reflects not pure love of science but a fantasy of reclaiming a lost

epistemological “Adamic empire” over –what Robert Boyle describes as Earth’s “inferior creatures.”<sup>22</sup> This Adamic Empire, as John Locke further emphasizes, in his second treatises of civil government, is a right of man that is granted by God ever since the Fall (Locke). To Bacon, in particular, the first step of this reclamation process is to establish what Irving calls an “epistemic empire:” that is, an empire that is not built on colonizing nations and expanding territory, but rather on reclaiming all knowledge lost and, hence, acquiring dominance over God’s creatures - including humans. This idea is illustrated in *New Atlantis*.

*New Atlantis* is an epistemological empire and utopia that demonstrates the interconnection between utopian thought and imperialism in all its forms and leanings. In the story, every five years, the New Atlantans scavenge the world in search of knowledge that they either steal from unworthy holders or acquire through negotiation and trade. In their scavenging and in their experimentation with science, New Atlantans built a massive archive of information that allowed them to control people by knowing their psyches, cultures and attitudes, and which assisted them in efficiently navigating and ruling the seas, and that brought them wealth and happiness beyond any empire at the time. Indeed, through its search for knowledge, New Atlantis achieved an Edenic empire status that had been lost - according to Bacon– “since the Fall.” As we read through the novel, we see that the residents of Bensalem are happy, wealthy and content with their well-structured society that was developed by both the “Merchants of Light” who brought all knowledge of their time to their utopia and by the wise scientists of the house of Solomon who studied, experimented and made use of this knowledge to formulate laws and governing ideologies. This advancement of knowledge made *New Atlantis*, in the words of Joiban its Jewish resident, “the most chaste nation under heaven,” “free from all pollution and

foulness,” “the Virgin of the World,” “the likeness of a fair beautiful Cherubim that is most admired by mortal men” (27).

Bacon’s presentation of this new form of imperialism, to problematic British foreign and domestic policies, is utopian in the sense that it is far-reaching and ideal. It also sets new benchmarks for both utopia based on scientific advancement - which we will further explore in science fiction in the third chapter – and for empire based on maintaining archives. In *Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire*, Thomas Richards argues that the British Empire of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was shaped not so much by the acquisition of territory, but rather by the perception of control over territory. In order to assert this perception, the British embarked on tireless efforts to survey and understand their colonies and frontiers. These efforts were crystallized in their surveillance methods, in “the bottomless” collections of the British Museum, and in their fantasies of an over-reaching and well-educated metropolis. Richards also states that even though the British eventually realized the impossibility of their task, they nevertheless continued to fantasize about utopian empire of ultimate knowledge.

Richards further asserts that the idea of an empire built upon knowledge is a product of Victorian Britain. However, this fantasy of an empire based on knowledge is as early as *New Atlantis*. The utopian metropolis in *New Atlantis* is a metropolis of an epistemological empire (i.e. empire of knowledge). The frontier and colonies of this empire/utopia is the whole globe: a vast space defined by potential discovery, excavation and subjugation of knowledge. *New Atlantis*’ ability to extract, exploit and use this knowledge to its benefit without difficulty is the ultimate success of an epistemological empire that consolidated its control over its rich of knowledge periphery and colonies. This understanding of *New Atlantis* allows us to fully see

how Bacon's utopian ideas project an inseparable connection between the utopian literary genre and imperialism.

*Third: The Imperium in New Atlantis*

Having established the connection between *Utopia* and the fantasy of an epistemic empire in *New Atlantis*, I argue that the *imperium* is present in the work, even though not as clearly as in *Utopia*. In order to make this argument, I point out that the *imperium* here and differentiating it from that of *Utopia* illustrates two elements: first, it reflects the development of imperialism from its classical sense (i.e. *imperium*) to a newer form (i.e. new imperialism) that we will further discuss in the second chapter. Second, it also reflects the utopian adjustment to the new form of imperialism. *New Atlantis* was published a century after *Utopia*. During that period, and as a result of further exploration of the New World and the political scene in Europe, ideas of imperialism developed from pure imitation of classical empires into new forms. These forms, although new, still retained elements of classical imperialism and imperialism in the late Early Modern period began to entertain ideas of civilization and *New Atlantis* reflects this in addition to the other three elements of the *imperium*. As I have mentioned previously, *imperium* relies on three elements: sovereignty, military might, and citizenship. To show the presence and development of these elements in *New Atlantis* ultimately shows the connection between empire and utopia.

### **Sovereignty and Control**

*New Atlantis* is similar to *Utopia* in that it is an isolated and tightly controlled island. No one allowed to enter can reach New Atlantis except its residents. The narrator and his crew accidentally find the island and are allowed entry only on humanitarian basis and are asked to leave as soon as they can. Furthermore, the island is well-structured and controlled by scientists.

So, as in *Utopia*, we see *New Atlantis* as an exemplification of a united and organized society. Furthermore, similar to *Utopia*, to maintain solid control and efficient organization is to have a better *imperium*.

### **Civilization and Citizenship**

The sense of citizenship in New Atlantis is similar to Utopia in that New Atlantans are united under a similar moral code. Furthermore, in *New Atlantis*, civilization, which is a component of the *imperium*, is defined by acquiring and protecting knowledge. *New Atlantis* best illustrates how utopian and imperial rhetoric redefines the imperial metropolis as a bastion of civilization and knowledge. In *Utopia*, published roughly a century before *New Atlantis*, little is mentioned about *Utopia* projecting civilization. Utopians were curious about other cultures and people; however, they were focused on following a strict social structure that was rallied through military might. In *New Atlantis*, however, New Atlantans are defined by their love of knowledge and by their incorporation of whatever new useful knowledge they scavenged into their system. In other words, they are not only curious. Instead, they are both curious and accepting of whatever other cultures might bring to them. This incorporation led them to accept Christianity, and it also led them to develop the House of Solomon that was solely dedicated to managing the incorporation of knowledge. Hence, as time passed, New Atlantis became a bastion of civilization that New Atlantans cherished and related to. The representation of Bensalem by the Jew provides a good example of the sense of superior civilization through which the New Atlantans see themselves. As mentioned, New Atlantans also see themselves as being chosen by God to be superior. As their foundational myth goes, when the cylinder of light appeared in the sea, no other nation was able to approach it and gain the books of wisdom from the boat under it except the New Atlantan envoy. He was chosen from all other nations to carry the light. Hence,



to accept the mission and to hold the torch was an honor New Atlantans defined their civilization through.

This sense of superiority is followed with the belief in a civilizing mission. As the head of the House of Solomon explains, this mission is to “enlarge the bounds of human empire, to the effecting of all things possible,” “to wisely use the knowledge contained within the books,” to “humbly beseech to prosper this great sign,” and “to interpret it and use it in mercy” and to secretly guard it from others who might misuse it (31). New Atlantans, then, see themselves as entrusted with a civilizing mission that is carried out by the Merchants of Light and the wise men of the House of Solomon. As the ruler of the house of Solomon explains, the merchants set sail around the world with the mission to “to give [the wise men of Solomon] knowledge of the affairs and state of those countries to which they were designed, and especially of the sciences, arts, manufactures, and inventions of all the world” (38); These Merchants also bring “books, instruments, and patterns in every kind” (38). In order to achieve their mission, the merchants are “fraught” “with store of victuals, and good quantity of treasure to remain ... for the buying of such things and rewarding of such persons as [the merchants] think fit.” (39). When the merchants bring knowledge back home, the wise men of Solomon decipher it, experiment with it, develop it, archive it, and use it to better the utopian society and set it as the “chaste” model for humanity. In other words, what we see here is an ideal empire of knowledge that raids peripheries for its own interest.

Along with the sense of citizenship and a civilizing mission comes the sense of the Other that is a staple of imperial psyche. Like *Utopia*, the Other in *New Atlantis* is either an enemy, an ally or a second class citizen. The enemies of *New Atlantis* are enemies of knowledge. They are the savage descendants of the great civilizations of Atlantis and America who decided to take

“great pride in feathers” instead of knowledge. New Atlantans sealed off their territory from these enemies and they sent their merchants of light to steal any useful knowledge from them. The allies of New Atlantis are races that trade their knowledge with New Atlantans. Second class citizens of *New Atlantis*, like *Utopia*, are members who do not fully conform to the moral codes of their utopia. Hence, while they are accepted as residents of the utopia, they do not enjoy the full rights citizenship. In the case of *New Atlantis*, Jews fit this category. The narrator explains the position of Joabin the Jew. This Jew is not like other “cunning” and “fouly” Jews found elsewhere:

For whereas they hate the name of Christ, and have a secret inbred rancor against the people among whom they live; these, contrariwise, give unto our Savior many high attributes ... Surely this man ... would never acknowledge that Christ was born of a Virgin; and that he was more than a man; and he would tell how God made him ruler of the seraphim, which guard his throne; and they call him also the Milken Way, and the Eliah of the Messiah, and many other high names, which though they be inferior to his divine majesty, yet they are far from the language of other Jews” (26).

In other words, this Jew did hold his personal beliefs; “But yet setting aside these Jewish dreams, the man was a wise man and learned, and of great policy, and excellently seen in the laws and customs of that nation” (26). Furthermore, despite his “extreme love” of New Atlantis, this Jew is fully trusted with strangers and has limited access to other New Atlantis facilities (27). Hence, what we see here is an ambivalent relationship with a non-Christian Other who professes patriotism which reflects, as we shall see, a constant thread in utopian works and their imperial perceptions of the Other. Like any empire that has, what Joseph Conrad calls in *Heart of Darkness*, the improved specimen, Early Modern utopias – and many other utopias as a matter of

fact – always have this improved specimen who is not fully integrated in utopia, yet not considered an outsider. And like Empires, Utopias need these others on every scale to formulate and articulate its identity. Here in *New Atlantis*, we see multilayers of othering as defining the civilization of New Atlantis. New Atlantans are not savages with “feathers and beads.” They are not pagans like other nations and New Atlantans are not “fouly” Jews. This example illustrates the interconnection between imperialism and the utopian literary genre. It also reflects how Early Modern utopias are imperial fantasies.

### **Military Might**

As mentioned above, military might, which is a staple of the *imperium*, is not present in *New Atlantis*. This absence is problematic given Bacon’s advocacy of militarism. In his *Essays* for example, Bacon stresses on the importance of military power and writes that the “study” of army and “occupation,” is the “principle of honor.” Anything beside that is “but habilitations towards arms. ... and what is habilitation without intention and act?” (97). According to Bacon, military and training empowered the Spanish and the Ottomans to become what they were and subsequently they would sustain empires, and “do wonders.”

Furthermore, Bacon also believes that honor in empires is related to military service and the occupied land a person provides for the empire. In his essay “Honor,” Bacon writes that “the most honorable people are the founders of empire such as Romulus, Cyrus, Caesar, Ottoman, Ismael, etc. Next are the second founders – the legislators and the lawgivers – “because they govern by their ordinances after they are gone” (164). Then comes the liberators, or salvatores, “such as compound the long miseries of civil wars, or deliver their countries from servitude of strangers or tyrants.” Then, in the fourth place are propagators of the empire; “such as in honorable wars enlarge their territories, or make noble defense against invaders.” Finally, there

are the kings and rulers who “reign justly, and make the times good wherein they live. Both which last kinds need no examples, they are in such number” (165).

Hence, the absence of the military in *New Atlantis* can be attributed to the unfinished nature of the work.<sup>23</sup> However, one could also argue that the absence of this aspect reflects the idea of the Global epistemological empire discussed above. While it is true that New Atlantis doesn't have an army, it is still powerful. It has the ability to persuade and coerce nations to sell or let go of their knowledge. Furthermore, New Atlantans are wealthy and successful traders with fleets that navigate the whole globe. New Atlantis is rich. Not only does it have treasures used in trade for knowledge, but it also has loads of treasure and “unsought after” gold that is used in erecting statues of wise men - from the House of Solomon and elsewhere - who contributed to the greatness of the empire across Bensalem. As explained, “For upon every invention of value, we erect a statue to the inventor, and give him a liberal and honorable reward. These statues are some of brass; some of marble and touch-stone; some of cedar and other special woods gilt and adorned; some of iron; some of silver; some of gold” (40).

Furthermore, in his *Essays*, Bacon proposes a method to start and maintain an empire. This method relates to his conceptions of an Edenic empire. In “Empire,” Bacon compares a successful empire with the Kingdom of Heaven that is not like a

Great Kernel or Nut, but rather “a grain of mustard-seed: which is one of the least grains, but hath in it a property and spirit hastily to get up and spread. So are there states, great in territory, and yet not apt to enlarge or command; and some that have but a small dimension of stem, and yet apt to be the foundations of great monarchies (92).

In this comparison, Bacon responds to calls for hasty aggressive expansions. To him, what matters is a sustained and successful empire that takes its time to bloom; when it blooms it

becomes a “kingdom of Heaven” engulfing all humankind. *New Atlantis* is the amplification of this concept. It is an empire in the making. It is a strong metropolis with a strong epistemological foundation that will eventually become a great Adamic Empire that engulfs *all* humanity.

Thus far, I have argued that *New Atlantis* is an imperial fantasy of constructing an Edenic epistemological empire across the globe and that it reflects British imperial ambitions. This epistemological empire prides itself on science and knowledge and sees them as means of controlling not only other nations across the globe, but rather the entire world. Mastering science and knowledge assists in fulfilling God’s given mission on Earth. I have also demonstrated that elements of the *imperium* are not strongly present in *New Atlantis* like *Utopia*, they are nevertheless present and their presence illustrates the development of the *imperium* reflected in utopian literature of the time. To illustrate how *New Atlantis*, a canonical utopian work, is an imperial fantasy of an epistemological empire and how the elements of the *imperium* developed in the work is another example of the interrelationship between the utopian literary genre and empire. It is also an example of how the development of perceptions of imperialism mirror the development of the utopian literary genre. In the final section of this chapter, I will discuss the *Commonwealth of Oceana* and show how it too reflects a third form of imperial fantasy that is shaped by the political conditions of the British Empire.

### ***The Commonwealth of Oceana: Utopia, Constitution, and Covenant***

In the previous two sections, I have presented two examples of how Early Modern utopias are forms of imperial fantasies of an ideal humanist empire. *Utopia* presented the *imperium* as an ideal form of a humanist empire; *New Atlantis* presented an epistemological empire as an ideal form of a humanist empire. The *Commonwealth of Oceana* (called *Oceana* henceforth) is the third example of a humanist empire achieved through a well written

constitution. *Oceana* is closer to *Utopia* than *New Atlantis* in its attempt to reconstruct the *imperium* in an Early Modern context. It also directly responds to political turmoil in Britain the same way earlier utopias do. However, what I am interested in, in *Oceana*, is that it runs on an early form of democratic constitution. This introduction is important to my argument for several reasons: first, it defines utopia not on the spirit of the good will of its residents voluntarily embracing their utopian life style; it rather defines utopia on the basis of its residents' political interaction and on the basis of encouraging their financial ambitions while keeping them in check and tunneling them towards improving society.

*Oceana* is also an important utopian work because it thinly veils its interaction with the political situation of the emerging British Empire. Unlike *Utopia*, *New Atlantis* and other utopian works at the time, the political inclinations in *Oceana* are not veiled through satire, pursuit of knowledge, or romance. *Oceana* heavily borrows from both the Roman and the classical imperial rhetoric. It openly calls for applying the Ancient Prudence in an Early Modern context and it uses the Puritan idea of Godliness that was running the British Republic at the time to extrapolate its merits. To achieve a stable utopia, according to Harrington, is to establish a republican system similar to its Roman counterpart. In addition, to present the constitution as a covenant that unites utopia and ensures its prosperity and means, again, an empire that has good control and authority over its citizens.

*Oceana* is also an important utopian work because, through its election system, it constantly develops which sets it apart from previous static utopias we have seen. While it is true that *Oceana* is not the first utopia that calls for elections (e.g. Gott's *Novae Solymae* - published six years earlier - has an election system), it differs from earlier utopias in that its election laws are the foundation of its utopia. Unlike *Utopia* or *New Atlantis* that is run by

oligarchy maintaining a rigid system set by the founders of these utopias, *Oceana* is run by a constitution that explicitly requests its citizens to engage in its political process and decision making. This engagement ensures the continuous improvement of utopia based on the opinions of the electorates and elected leaders. This dynamic nature of utopia, however, is not without its quirks as I will discuss further down.

In the following, I do not extensively illustrate how *Oceana* and imperialism are interconnected with each other, since this connection has been openly asserted by Harrington himself. In the following, instead, I will illustrate how the *Oceana* reflects a change in the perception of imperialism, which again reinforces my argument that the utopian literary genre and imperialism are interconnected with each other. I will begin my discussion by, first, showing that *Oceana* is a reincarnation of the *imperium* and show its similarity to *Utopia*. I will not go into detail in analyzing these elements since they are similar to *Utopia*. After this, I will demonstrate how Harrington used the British imperial and puritan rhetoric of Godliness to advance his idea of a humanist utopia and how the idea of a Republic is still imperial at its core. While many critics and scholars, such as Glen Bowman and Ronald Beiner, have illustrated how Harrington's developed ideas of justice differ from Puritanism, no one to - my knowledge - has pointed out how his utopia, even though it portrays anxiety towards religious coercion and tyranny, is still a treaty on an ideal and sustainable imperialism.

### *Oceana and the Imperium*

*Oceana* was published during a turbulent time in the British history that saw the execution of King Charles I and the establishment of the short lived Cromwellian British Commonwealth. As with any new political beginnings, anticipation, anxiety and hope were rampant in the new republic. Both these principles shaped the imperial psyche of England. They

were also reflected on the utopian scene, in general, and more specifically in *Oceana*. *Oceana* is addressed to Lord Cromwell – the ambitious imperial new leader of the English Commonwealth - suggests ways for the new republic to develop from an empire of Man [i.e. monarchy] to an empire of law [i.e. a republic] (20). In a somewhat narrative format, Harrington thinly veils his ideas by presenting a utopian empire/ commonwealth following a proposed and detailed constitution. *Oceana* is a projected ideal of England as conquering Ireland (Panopea) and Scotland (Marpesia) and ruled by Lord Cromwell (Archon) after going through a similar turmoil of overthrowing the monarchy. It is a successful, happy, and Godly place that the British Republic aspires to become. It succeeded in developing a constitution based upon equal division of land and on aligning the self-interest of the governing class with that of the public. To achieve his end, Harrington presents *Oceana* as an agrarian and egalitarian society that is run by a detailed secret ballot election system that has checks and balances and bureaucracy. Harrington's ideas of the election system based on land ownership, state departments and aligning governing interest with that of the public reflect Cromwell's opinions that were in contrast with Levelers at the time. However, his ideas also reflect utopian ideals of equality and happiness for everyone. Many of Harrington's ideas eventually became the founding principles of modern democracy. As a matter of fact, Harrington's ideas inspired the Puritans in American colonies and contributed directly to the United States' constitution a century later.<sup>24</sup>

*Imperium* in *Oceana* is present the same way it is present in *Utopia*. It is present through a mighty army, through the well laid out system of governance, and through a defined sense of citizenship. Furthermore, more so than More and Bacon, Harrington explicitly invokes the Roman model of imperialism in his work (i.e. what he calls the ancient prudence) and calls for



its re-establishment for the benefit of the British Republic instead of the monarchy. The following sections will briefly examine these three elements of the *imperium*.

### **Military Might**

The discussion of the departments related to war and army is the first characteristic of the *imperium*, (i.e. military might). Like Utopia, Oceana is a nation of war. It has departments that only deal with war, aggression, and colonization. The army of Oceana is described in detail from the numbers of its different sections to the specific salaries of generals and soldiers (216). As Davis explains in *Utopia and Ideal Society*, *Oceana* is in fact, a nation that has a massive military for security and for expansion (217). Furthermore, Oceana has colonies governed from Emporium, the capital of Oceana. The first colony, Marpesia, in the Northern part, supplies Oceana with men toughened by the climate of their land (5). According to the narrator, Oceana liberated Marpesia from its oppressors, and, in return, the Marpesians allied themselves with their liberators, enlisted in their army and took over labor duties. The second of Oceana's colonies, Panopea, supports the nation with farm land and food. The original inhabitants of this colony are “slothful and pusillanimous people,” who make no good use of their soil and natural commodities. Hence, Oceana replaces them with energetic undesirable citizens, such as the Jews who are disrupting the empire’s economy. To expel these unwanted citizens to a colony serves the empire because it resolves a metropolis problem and prospers a colony. Unlike Marpesia, Panopea’s citizens are not fit for arms or manpower because its climate impacted the character of its residents. Harrington also discusses the reasons for the success of the Roman army and explains how to implement them in current settings. What we see in these details is that Oceana’s military structure demonstrates Oceana’s *imperium* the same way it does for utopia.

### **Control and Sovereignty**

Obsession with control and authority in *Oceana* are present in the painstaking details of bureaucracy which Harrington sets forth throughout the book. Harrington covers, in detail, the smallest aspects of daily life. For example, in his description of the ballot system, Harrington is specific in setting the hierarchy of people in charge and the exact process of election. Harrington also meticulously details the process of holding a council meeting (123), categorizing and defining nobilities, (74) salaries and budgets (297), even the wardrobe of council members (124), etc. To him, order is crucial to the perfection of the commonwealth just as it was for the Roman Empire (43). As a matter of fact, one can divide *Oceana* into three parts. The first part of *Oceana* mainly discusses the greatness of empires, analysis successful and unsuccessful empires, and political theories at the time (mainly that of Machiavelli and Hobbes). The second part lays out Harrington's ideas of a perfect commonwealth; the final part illustrates how Harrington's ideas work in the fictional nation of Oceana. These three sections and fine details indicate Harrington's obsession with a strong political and bureaucratic system that has efficiently implement law and order. Without law and order, Oceana cannot function or even exist. Hence, we see, again, that *Oceana* and the utopian literary genre in the Early Modern utopias in general are interconnected with the *imperium* and cannot be separated.

### **Civilization and Citizenship**

Citizenship in Oceana is similar to that in Utopia and New Atlantis in that the residents define themselves abiding by the same moral code and through their perception of the Other. Civilization and citizenship are evident through Oceana's perception of Godliness and through the election system, which I will discuss further down.

Thus far, I have briefly illustrated the presence of *imperium* in *Oceana*, which is yet another piece of evidence of the inseparability of utopia and empire - even though *Oceana* is written almost 150 years after *Utopia*. Furthermore, it also shows that even though the imperial leanings of Britain at the time shifted from interest in establishing an ideal monarchy to interest in establishing a British Christian Republic, *imperium* – the prototype of other imperial forms to come – persisted. Of course, it should not come as a surprise that *Oceana*, written in a distinct imperial context, presents imperial leanings and traces elections back to the classics. However, what is intriguing is that Harrington, as we shall see, used puritan rhetoric to promote classical republicanism in a nation driven by puritan zeal. Before getting to this point, however, I want to stress that the connection between utopia and imperialism in *Oceana* presents the British Empire itself as a successful utopia in the future. As we have seen, *Oceana* is a nation that went through the exact conditions and events England went through and managed to prosper because it established a constitution after the formation of its republic. In a sense, it picks up from the historical point the British Empire reached during the writer's time. This futuristic outlook of the British Empire sets *Oceana* as an imperial fantasy set in the future unlike other utopias. Having said this, I will move on to discuss the unique utopian and imperial elements in *Oceana* that distinguish it from the other two utopias I have previously discussed.

#### *Oceana and Godliness, and Constitution*

Having briefly discussed the connection between *Oceana* and the *imperium*, I will discuss in detail the presence of constitution in *Oceana* and extrapolate its imperial elements to further demonstrate the connection between utopia and imperialism.

Cromwell's Western Design, perhaps, best represents the puritan idea of Godliness running a successful empire. In 1655, Cromwell declared war on Spain after a year of the

ongoing conflict over the Caribbean colonies. In his declaration of war letter, which was drafted by John Milton, Cromwell presented a compelling case against Spain. Spain, he argued, was an enemy of justice, was hostile to the Godly British commonwealth and “as oft as they have opportunity, without any just cause or provocation at all, cease not to kill and slaughter, nay sometimes in cold blood, to murder the people of this Nation, spoiling their Goods and estates, destroying their Colonies and Plantations” (qtd. Greenspan 87). As Nicole Greenspan explains in her analysis of Cromwell’s declaration of war in *Selling Cromwell's Wars: Media, Empire and Godly Warfare, 1650–1658*, Cromwell’s arguments basically rotated around the perception that Spain vowed nothing less than the utter destruction of Protestantism, a plot to which the repeated attacks against England and other Protestant nations attest. War thus was necessary for the preservation of Protestantism domestically and internationally. Equally important was to deprive Spain of the land and wealth which provided ample resources for the spread of popery and solidified Spain’s position as the main buttress of the papacy. (87)

To historians specializing in the era, the justifications of war against the Spanish Empire are all too familiar as they reflect the Puritan imperial drive at the time. The idea of a war against the enemies of God (i.e. Catholics here) to defend faith, to establish justice, and to benefit the emerging Godly nation so that it continues fighting for the Protestants’ cause was reasserted not only against the Spanish, but also against the Irish, and other Catholic nations. As a matter of fact, it even worked against the Scots and the Dutch (even though they were Protestant nations), and additionally against the English Royalists and the voices of dissent in England (even though they were British subjects). In every declaration of war, Cromwell was able to raise the nation to

arms and emerge as victorious, which strengthened his rhetoric of a nation chosen by God to establish a Godly kingdom on Earth.

Though the objectives of Cromwell's war against Spain were specific and explained as purely defensive and religious, historians mostly agree that Cromwell's Western Design had nothing to do with Spain's aggression on England or on its colonies or even on its religion. Religion and Godliness were only cover ups for the imperial ambitions of the newly established republic and its attempt to catch up with other empires at the time. What Cromwell's adventures and rhetoric represented, then, is a puritan firebrand of religious imperialism that rode on the premise of upholding God's covenant for success. In other words, to achieve a successful empire, an imperialist has to keep up with God's covenant. Throughout his adventures, Cromwell constantly reminded the British that the success of the new republic was a result of abiding by God's laws and his efforts to establish these laws across the republic and elsewhere. Consequently, any setbacks and failures were a result of abandoning God's covenant. This frame of mind not only drove the domestic policies of the emerging republic but it provided a sense of imperial zeal.

Keeping up with the covenant for worldly and imperial gains is what I call a form of "Godliness" that defined the emerging British Cromwellian Commonwealth. It is different from other religious imperial ambitions because it establishes a unique empire that is neither run by religious oligarchy or religious hegemony. Yet, it uses religion to establish secular principles (e.g. imperial republicanism in which people choose their leaders who are not necessarily religious figures) and imperial perceptions of universal rights (i.e. justice and freedom that are not associated with Christianity but to whatever serves imperialism).

The idea of Godliness that drove Cromwell's imperial war machine and domestic politics are seen in a plethora of utopian works at the time that either sought to challenge it (e.g. *A Healing Question* by Henry Vare's and *The Excellences of a Free State* by Marchmont Nedham), propagate it (Baxter's *A Holy Commonwealth*, John Eliot's *The Christian Commonwealth* both published in 1595), or use and adjust it to present a humanist empire, as we see in Harrington's *Oceana*. In *Oceana*, Harrington replaces the idea of a covenant with God to a covenant with a constitution. In *Oceana*, instead of the covenant with God bringing success and victory, it is keeping up with the constitution that brings success, victory and a sense of an imperial civilizing mission. Harrington's supplanting of the constitution as a covenant that *Oceana* abides by is remarkable not only because it establishes a humanist empire run by human law - as opposed to the Puritan empire Cromwell propagated that ran on religious dogma - but also because Harrington successfully uses Cromwellian Puritan rhetoric to advance his utopia. This utilization secured *Oceana*'s escape through Puritan and Cromwellian censorship. In his work, Harrington emphasizes that Godliness and success are achieved through the constitution. The more *Oceana* abides by the imperial constitution and government regulations, the "Godlier" and the more successful it is. The best example for this is the detailed praise of *Oceana* in biblical terms:

Oceana is as the rose of Sharon ... the lily among thorns, such is my love among the daughters. .... Her neck is as the tower of David, builded for an armory, whereon there hang 1,000 bucklers and shields of mighty men. ... Arise, queen of the earth, arise, holy spouse of Jesus; for lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; ... Arise, I say, come forth, and do not tarry: ah! Wherefore should my eyes behold thee by the rivers of Babylon, hanging thy harps upon the willows, thou fairest among women? (233)

This invocation of the “Rose of Sharon,” the promised land where the “tower of David” is and the selfless “spouse of Jesus” are used to praise a nation that is not built on religious ambitions or on establishing a Kingdom of Heaven, rather they reflect a nation that is built on secular principles, that emboldens agrarianism and that accepts greed and ambition as reasons for prosperity - if properly implemented - but keeps it in check and tunnels it to improve the nation. Furthermore, upholding the constitution is rewarding in the same way upholding the covenant is rewarding. In the *Bible*, we see that upholding the covenant leads to Eden and peace. In *Oceana* upholding the constitution brings Eden to Oceana, even though this constitution is secular. In their description of Oceana, parliament members begin their sessions with a distinctive praise:

O the most blessed and fortunate of all countries Oceana! How deservedly hath nature with the bounties of heaven and earth endowed thee, the ever fruitful womb not closed with ice, nor dissolved by the raging star; where Ceres and Bacchus are perpetual twins. Thy woods are not the harbor of devouring beasts, nor they continual verdure the ambush of serpents, the food of innumerable herds and flocks, presenting thee their shepherdess wit distended dugs or golden fleeces. The wings of thy night involve thee not in the horror of darkness, but have still some white feather, and thy day is that for which we esteem life, the longest (3).

What we see here is an Eden-like description that serves an imperial ambition in a way similar to how religion was used to serve Cromwellian imperial ambitions. The use of religion to serve utopia distinguishes *Oceana* because it shows how imperial rhetoric in any era (puritan imperialism here) ultimately influences utopian rhetoric to the finest details, even though the principles on which utopia is written differs from that of its imperial context.

Looking into the description of Oceana mentioned above and the biblical language that describes its idealism resonates with the puritan imperial mood of the time and speaks to it. The biblical description not only evokes the moral superiority of Oceana, but also the sense of mission that it has to enlighten the world through example, missionary and conquest. Of course, this idea - in Cromwellian terms - means to overthrow corrupt Monarchy, to expand the frontiers of the Godly Empire, to fight other evil empires – like the Spanish – and defend virtue and justice. Hence, what we see here is contingency: Oceana is Godly and utopian, hence it is an example for the world and has a godly mission to fulfill (i.e. imperialistic). Failure to fulfill this mission, or falling short of its prescribed role as a model for the world underscores its perfection. Indeed, unlike *Utopia* or *New Atlantis*, *Oceana* is called an “empire of law.” It has colonies established through unapologetic imperial policies, In addition, Oceana’s hegemony, as mentioned above, reflects Cromwell’s imperialism at the time.

Godliness, abundance and law are interconnected with each other in the utopian setting of Oceana. They also reflect Oceana’s imperialism. Good laws and morals lead to Godliness, Godliness leads to a blessed state, and a blessed state uses its blessings to serve God’s cause (i.e. fulfilling its role as a model and spreading its light upon others – a religious imperialism that was prominent in warring Europe of the time). To take out one of these interconnected elements would undermine both Oceana as a utopia or an empire at the same time. In other words, utopia and empire in Oceana are contingent upon each other. They cannot be separated especially because the book is written within a puritan, political, post-civil war context and is addressed to Cromwell as he leads an emerging Commonwealth.

What needs to be stressed here, however, is that even though the elements of imperialism and utopianism in *Oceana* seem to be interrelated with Puritan ideals of a Godly empire,



Harrington is not advocating for a puritan empire or utopia per se. Unlike other Christian utopias, *Oceana* is a humanist empire that promotes humanist ideals. As a matter of fact, as Davis in his analysis of *Oceana* notes, in *Utopia and the Ideal Society*, Harrington's political propositions are built on secular values and a classical republicanism that ran in contrast to his time (210). In the work, Harrington advocates religious tolerance (relatively speaking that is – since Jews and Catholics are abandoned from *Oceana*) and suggests separation between politics and religion. Hence, Harrington's implementation of the puritan concept of Godliness contributed to the popularity of his utopia during the interregnum. However, his use of Godliness demonstrates the connection between the utopian literary genre and imperialism. It would be hard to analyze Harrington's engagement with Cromwellian rhetoric and the policies of the Roman Republic without projecting an imperial fantasy.

#### *Engaging the Public in Running Utopia*

Thus far, I illustrated how *Oceana* ties Godliness to constitution in utopia. I also illustrated that *Oceana* mimics of the imperial rhetoric of Cromwell. In the remaining part of this chapter, I will discuss democracy in *Oceana* and illustrate that it too is a utopian and imperial aspect. The idea of democracy, especially in contemporary context, sounds both utopian and anti-imperial. Hence, it might seem that Harrington's introduction of elections and his detailed description of the checks and balances system is anti-imperial and stands at odds with the imperial narratives of other utopias. However, I argue that looking into *Oceana* from within its context demonstrates that our perception that democracy is anti-imperial is not accurate. Rome was, initially, a republic with elections and an empire at the same time. The presence of democracies in empires is common. Despite this, the democratic system in Harrington's work is, nevertheless, unique. Even though elections and a voting system on laws and leaders was popular

during the early Roman *imperium*, no utopian work prior or current to *Oceana* attempts to particulate voting for it. The laws of Utopia, for example, were instituted by Utopus, the founding king of Utopia, and they continued to run Utopia for thirteen centuries. Similarly, New Atlantis is governed by an authoritarian oligarchy of scientists. *Oceana*, however, proposes that its citizens vote – through secret ballots - on both its laws and governors. It also proposes that its governors hold office for a short period of time and that there should be rotation in office. Harrington’s proposals are not only aligned with the general spirit of the emerging British Commonwealth that overthrew the monarchy at the time. But they are also utopian for all time for many reasons. First, they insure an everlasting utopia, they give voice to people, and they set the standards for many utopias to come. Davis explains the reasons the election system of *Oceana* is utopian for all times as well. *Oceana*, Davis argues, is utopian because it seeks to achieve both “constitutional and political perfection” (213). This perfection is not built upon a charismatic persona as Hobbes argues in the *Leviathan*, but rather on institutions and laws that govern the society. Furthermore, Davis explains that Harrington’s utopianism is different from previous utopias for one main reason: it holds a unique position between classical republicanism and More’s utopianism:

In the classical republic, virtue and stability depended on: first, the correct exercise of free will by all citizens. Two, the existence and observation of laws regulating the relationship between citizens, and, three, the freedom from external contingencies. The utopian assumes that the last of these can be resolved by isolation or by military strength, is prepared to sacrifice the participatory basis of the first, and, attaching primacy to the second, sets above morality in the civic sense order and the external observation of a pre-ordained moral code (207).

*Oceana* is in an in-between position because the freedom of all citizens is guaranteed – through the election system, which always serves the public’s interest, without sacrificing freedom or individuality like *Utopia*. A military is present and organized without isolationist policies and the laws produce the same satisfactory results of any utopia even though they rely on preventing ill human nature rather than promoting good character, like utopia.

In addition to striking a balance between classical republicanism and early utopianism, Davis also points out that *Oceana* sought to strike balance between rulers and the public through the ballot system (212), through limited the years in office, the bicameral system and the separation of functions. The conflict between these segments of society (whether aristocrats against public or aristocrats among themselves) was usually the main cause of revolutions and instability. Hence, to achieve a balance between them ultimately lead to peace and prosperity.

All the reasons Davis brings up about *Oceana*’s utopian election system also constructs *Oceana* as imperial. In other words, like other utopian works, *Ocean*’s utopian elements are the same elements that define its imperialism. After all, as Harrington explains, *Oceana*’s election system is designed after the “ancient prudence” that was successfully applied in the Roman Republic and Empire. This prudence is imperial. For example, *Oceana* is an agrarian society. To own a piece of land is to voice in the government. Slaves, women, and young men who do not own land do not have a say in the election system.

Furthermore, *Oceana* is successful through the checks and balances system that thrives on conflicting interests in society. This conflict of interest that manifests itself in elections feeds the imperial drive of *Oceana* for two reasons: first, it encourages citizens to own lands to gain access to elections which, in turn, expands *Oceana*’s domains since all lands within the empire are already owned; second, it encourages what Doyle describes as systematic drive of

imperialism. In *Empires*, Doyle explains that as a system of balance develops between empires, competition and rivalry spells out into expansion beyond imperial domains. This expansion creates more imbalances which results in more imperial ambitions until balance is re-established between the competing empires (26). I argue that the systematic drive of imperialism is present in the Roman Empire and *Oceana* and the outcome of the election system as well. The agrarian and checks and balance system in *Oceana* creates a balance of power between Oceana's rival factors. This balance, however, only pushes competition to acquire land and hence more influence beyond the imperial metropolis. As a result, competition beyond the imperial metropolis will spin into imperial expansion. Indeed, one can see this competition for periphery expansion at play during the Roman Republic and Empire and in *Oceana*. Through the development of the Roman Empire, generals gained footholds in the Senate and the politics of the empire because of their victories and expansion beyond imperial domains. In *Oceana*, we see this alongside concepts of Godliness and rights to spread an empire of law across the globe as Marsupia is colonized. In other words, what we see here is that the utopian dynamic and revolutionary aspects of elections, agrarianism, and checks and balance are the same elements that defined and developed Roman imperialism. As a matter of fact, and as mentioned above, Harrington asserts that the success of *Oceana* is a result of its implementation of the Ancient Prudence that defined the Roman and other classical empires.

Thus far, I have explained that *Oceana* is a third example of Early Modern utopias that are fantasies of an ideal humanist empire. I have illustrated this by pointing out how *Oceana*, like *Utopia*, invokes the *imperium*. I have also pointed this out by arguing that the two unique elements of *Oceana* further illustrate the connection between the utopian literary genre and imperialism. Godliness in *Oceana* reflects Cromwell's puritan imperialism; furthermore, the idea

of a utopia run through elections recalls the Roman Republic's imperialism that used conflicts among imperialists to expand beyond Rome.

In conclusion, *Oceana* is a work that suggests ways to perfect the emerging British Empire/Commonwealth. This can be seen in the Harrington's motifs and through the presence of the three elements of imperialism I discussed above. In the introduction of his book, Harrington establishes that the motive of his work is to establish an emerging British Empire that is better than previous – mainly Roman - and current empires - such as that of France, Spain, the Dutch and the Turks. To Harrington, the success of the new empire is not to repeat the mistakes of other empires: namely that of monarchy (i.e. empire of men) or unequal league between nations (i.e. injustice). A successful empire is one that can salvage the old prudence and develop it to fit the emerging British Republic.

## **Conclusion**

This dissertation's overall argument is that utopia and imperialism are interconnected with each other, have developed alongside each other, and cannot be perceived without each other. This chapter illustrated the connection between imperialism and utopia by arguing that the discovery of the New World and the classics have directly contributed to the birth of the utopian genre and its development in the Early Modern period. The discovery of the New World contributed to the development of imperialism through setting new frontiers in which an empire can expand and a utopia can be located. The discovery of the classics re-ignited the utopian idea of an *imperium* that is fit for Early Modern empires. The *imperium* is not only concerned with territorial expansion and exploitation, but also in containing civilization and spreading it. Early modern utopian works have facilitated and recontextualized the *imperium* to fit the political context of the Early Modern period. *Utopia*, *New Atlantis*, and *The Commonwealth of Oceana* are good examples that illustrate how the *imperium* can be beneficial to Early Modern

imperialism. In *Utopia*, we have seen how the elements of the *imperium* are the integral elements that define the founding text of utopias. In *New Atlantis*, we see that the elements of the *imperium* have slightly shifted to portray a humanist interest for knowledge and civilization that portray the British political mood at the time. *Oceana* demonstrates that the *imperium* can be achieved through implementing a constitution to the emerging imperial republic. As we shall see, these early utopias have set the tone and relationship with imperialism for all utopias to come. Utopian works change as the imperial drive, interest and fantasy changes. What this chapter did not cover yet is the second part of my argument in this dissertation: how do utopias influence imperialism. In the next chapter, we will see that England by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century has achieved most of the fantasies Early Modern utopias promoted. Similar to *Utopia*, the British Empire became a well-governed *imperium* isolated from Europe. The British Empire, like New Atlantis, also perceived itself as a bastion of knowledge and civilization, and finally similar to *Oceana*, The British Empire implemented an election system that had direct influence on imperialism. In the second chapter, I will explain how these influences on utopian literature dialectically developed the utopian imperial fantasy into a complicated imperial anxiety that did not abandon imperial dreams, but yet began to eye these dreams with suspicion and respond to it accordingly.

## CHAPTER III

### UTOPIA, IMPERIALISM AND VICTORIAN ENGLAND

#### **Introduction**

In the previous chapter, we saw how Early Modern utopian literary works (i.e. *Utopia*, *New Atlantis* and *Oceana*) were fantasies of successful humanist empires that invoked and adjusted the *imperium* – in various degrees – to an Early Modern context. In this chapter, we will see how the relationship between the utopian literary genre and imperialism progressed in a dialectical manner. On the one hand, the rhetoric of Early Modern utopias provided a wealth of material for 19<sup>th</sup> century imperial propaganda. On the other hand, the mostly negative consequences of 19<sup>th</sup> century imperialism provided new topics for the utopian genre that allowed it to re-emerge, tackling unresolved imperial problems and projecting humanist imperialism in new ways. This feeding off each other between imperialism and utopian literature illustrates how the utopian literary genre and imperialism are inherently contingent upon each other. Had Early Modern utopias not provided imperial narrative with material, and had the consequences of imperialism in *Pax Britannica* – in return – not provided the utopian literary genre with issues to discuss, none of them would have existed the way we have seen them so far.

To illustrate how utopian fantasies fueled the imperial rhetoric throughout the centuries and *vice versa*, I will first discuss the influence of Early Modern utopias (exemplified by the ones I discussed ) in consolidating 19<sup>th</sup> century imperial propaganda; then, I will discuss the effects of 19<sup>th</sup> century imperialism on 19<sup>th</sup> century utopian literary works, specifically Bulwer-

Lytton's *The Coming Race* (1872), Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1887) and Morris' *News From Nowhere* (1890). These three texts are prototypes of dystopias, socialist utopias, and environmental utopias respectively. The purpose of this discussion is to demonstrate the inextricable interrelationship between empire and the utopian literary genre in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### *Early Modern Utopias and 19<sup>th</sup> Century Imperial Propaganda*

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated how utopian literature fantasized about a humanist empire governing nearby colonies (More's *Utopia*), cradling human civilization and science (Bacon's *New Atlantis*), and carefully drafting a constitution that ensures the rights of its citizens through law and justice (Harrington's *Commonwealth of Oceana*). In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, British imperialists promoted these Early Modern utopian fantasies as realities the British Empire had actually achieved. Moreover, Victorian imperialists and enthusiasts used these earlier ideals to further propagate imperial projects which, as John Mackenzie describes in *Propaganda and Empire*, are well-articulated in political speeches, exhibitions, cinema, theater, textbooks, and juvenile literature. Early Modern utopian rhetoric assisted two imperial propaganda trends in the 19<sup>th</sup> century: one saw the British Isles *alone* as an achieved utopia controlling expansive colonies and advocating civilization; the other saw the entire British Empire *with* its colonies as achieved, civilized and developed humanist utopia/empire that was well developed as a whole. These two trends overlap with each other but are, nevertheless, distinguishable.

The first method in which Victorian imperialists promoted their empire was based upon projecting the British Isles as an achieved ideal civilization (i.e. utopia) focused on spreading its ideals across the globe. Looking into the languages of famous imperial orators at the time (e.g.



Joseph Chamberlain, John Seeley, Benjamin Disraeli, Rudyard Kipling, etc.), one can see that British imperialists saw their empire as the jewel of the world whose destiny was to spread civilization throughout the entire globe. In this method, imperialists presented the British Isles as an ideal utopia with all elements Early Modern utopias fantasized about, like isolated locality, ideal citizens, ideal system of governance, and ideal use of resources, science and military. At the time, many imperialists genuinely believed that Britain was two islands cut off from the continent and that it had an exceptional and ideal civilization ruling one-fifth of the world. Great Britain invested heavily in royal societies and academic institutions that scavenged knowledge and promoted scientific and archeological missions;<sup>25</sup> military force, as was argued by early 20<sup>th</sup> century imperial historians and writers like Margret Synge (which we will read momentarily), was only used to serve “noble” purposes and to protect peace and trade routes around the globe. Indeed, history textbooks during the apex of the British Empire seemed as if they were extracts from Early Modern utopian fantasies rather than actual history.

Many contemporary critics – especially postcolonial critics like Edward Said, Elleke Boehmer, and Anne McClintock – have discussed the imperial rhetoric of idealizing the civilizing mission and the importance of this rhetoric to the imperial psyche. What I would add to these critics’ points is that this idealization, though not explicitly presented in utopian terms, does, nevertheless, correlate with earlier utopian fantasies about the British Isles in the Early Modern period. While it is true that the sense of uniqueness is present in every imperial experience, the British imperial rhetoric of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, is unique in that it did not see glory in war, religious dogma, or wealth as previous empires did, but rather in civilization and a sense of a humanist mission to uplift the world lagging behind.

Perhaps the best examples that illustrate how Early Modern utopian rhetoric is present in British imperial propaganda are books intended for juvenile readers during the decline of the British Empire after the World War I. At the time, the British Empire was suppressing colonized people who were demanding independence across the empire. Despite the brutalities the British committed to quell these insurgencies at the time (e.g. the Amritsar massacre of 1919), the imperial rhetoric heavily relied on ideas of a civilized nation surviving in utopian settings and turned a blind eye to the reality of imperialism that contained resistance to its economic hardship, social discontent, etc. In his *History of the British Empire* (1920), for example, Basil Williams describes the children of the British Empire as follows: “They were the children of a unique culture, that of the English public schools, with its celibate discipline, its classical loyalties, its emphasis on self-reliance, team spirit, delegated responsibly, Christian duty and stoic control” (220). Basil continues his description of this British empire/utopia asserting that as a result of education and careful planning, the British built an empire,

That survived by the separateness of its rulers, their conviction that what they did was right, and that all else was second best. .... ‘No country has ever possessed a more admirable body of public servants than the Civil Services of India,’ wrote Sir John Strachey, ... how is it that these pale-cheeked exiles give security to a race of another hue, other tongues, other religions which rulers of their own people have ever failed to give? (221)

In this contemplation – and others written during the time that conflict with the reality of imperial policies – we see similarities with More’s *Utopia*; the British have defined a unique culture and system that is the best across the world from their school systems and public service, all the way to governance that brought peace to nations that cannot achieve peace by themselves.

The uniqueness of the British Isles, its ideal conditions, progress and law, according to British imperialists, is utopian and leads to success. In her book, *The Reign of Queen Victoria* (1919), a history text targeting juvenile audiences, Margaret Synge describes the British Isles at the time as a successful utopia because of its conditions, ingenuity and progress. She writes:

As new lands came under the Queen's sway, the people in these new lands naturally looked to Britain to supply their needs. They needed materials for development and protection, they needed the luxuries of modern civilized life. Britain then circulated throughout the Empire arms and ammunition for their defense, machinery and tools for their manufactures, railway, telegraph, and electrical appliances for their closer communication, steel-work for their bridges, water and gas pipes, ready-made clothing of cotton and wool, soap, candles, books, pictures, glass, china, drugs, pianos, and all the thousand necessaries which they could obtain from her.

In return, as the new countries grew and developed, they were able to produce more food-stuffs than their own small populations could consume. They therefore sent their supplies home to the Mother Country, which no longer could supply herself with food. There was a further reason—the Mother Country exacted no duties on goods brought into the country; she indulged in a system of Free Trade, while most other countries demanded that duties should be paid.

Thus—roughly—Great Britain sent one-third of her exports to the colonies, receiving one-quarter of her total imports from them; and as the British Isles were now for the most part manufacturing, and the colonies were mainly agricultural and pastoral, the exchange was highly beneficial to both (209).

In Synge's description, we see an interesting cause and effect relationship between empire and utopia. The choice of words and the logic that Synge presents as driving the British psyche has nothing to do with greed, ambition, or aggressiveness. On the contrary, this logic has everything to do with the utopian setting, the ingenuity, the system and people of the British Isles. It is "natural" to look up towards the British Empire; the British Empire provides "protection," and "defense." The language used in this example reveals an oblivious imperialist psyche Said pointed out in *Culture and Imperialism*. According to Synge, Britain did not encroach upon other nations; it is the other nations that "came" under the queen's sway and looked up to its ideal civilization. These other nations, not only "needed" the protection of the strong British army and sought to forge alliance with it, but these other nations also "needed" utopian merchandise and technology. As Synge states, they needed "soap, candles, books, pictures, glass, china" and even "pianos, and all the *thousand* necessities" [my emphasis] which they could not possibly produce, like utopias did.

What we see here is an invocation of a utopian island such as we saw in Early Modern utopias. People came to Utopia or New Atlantis – bastions of civilization and science – for help, not the other way around. As a result and in return, the British Isles had an obligation – a *utopian* civil obligation one might stress – to help those who sought its help. And, as Synge argues, as a result of this help and mother-daughter sacrifice analogy, the "mother figure" was "no longer" able to feed itself. So the daughter colonies stepped in and helped her. This projection of a familial relationship is imperial in every single aspect, as any postcolonial critic would notice. More importantly, though, it is an ideal utopian fantasy of cooperation, of returning favors and of harmonious international relationships between strong and caring nations and appreciative weaker ones.

But perhaps what is more interesting about the way British imperialists propagated their empire by invoking earlier utopian ideals is not in the obvious idea of British exceptionalism that brought other nations begging for friendship and trade, but in their propaganda of an ideal humanist empire that is not built upon the uniqueness of the British Isles alone, but rather on the uniqueness of the British Empire as a whole, including its colonies. In his controversial book *Imperial Ornamentation*, David Cannadine argues that the British imperialists saw their empire as a carefully crafted ornament – a holistic piece of a larger construction in which “Britain was very much a part of the empire, just as the rest of the empire was very much part of Britain” (xvii). This structure, Cannadine argues, has no racial or ethnic favorites among British subjects. Victorian imperialism, Cannadine argues, was obsessed with class, organization, and holistic imperial construction that did not rely on the opposition of a colonizer vs. colonized and racial and ethnic backgrounds, but rather on the premise of hierarchical structure across the globe that gave importance to education and nobility and that produced an ideal commonwealth fit not only for the British but for the world as a whole. All those subjects were treated in a hierarchal structure based upon their class and wealth regardless of their color or ethnicity. This setting invokes a perfect government structure similar to the utopias we read about in the previous chapter. As a matter of fact, Cannadine’s argument recalls Harrington’s idea of an ideal commonwealth based on prosperity and nobility.

Although Cannadine’s idea of the British Empire is far-fetched and contradicts what postcolonialists and historians have established about the racist policies of the British Empire at the time, it nevertheless demonstrates how British imperial fantasies are still present nowadays; it also demonstrates nostalgia for a supposedly lost utopian setting in the past. To British imperialists – as we have seen in Synge’s example – the British Empire was all about advancing

civilization, fair trade, equality, justice and protection of ethics in every part of the grand humanist empire at the time, whether in England or elsewhere. The Earl of Carnarvon – the secretary of Benjamin Disraeli – described the British Empire in a way that perhaps best represents the imperial impulse that saw the entire British Empire as a well-constructed utopian entity. He states that the British Empire was:

A great English-speaking community, united together in a peaceful confederation, too powerful to be molested by any nation and too powerful and too generous, I hope, to molest any weaker State and, on the other hand, in restoring law, order and liberty to backward and warring societies, thus creating a system where the light of morality and religion can penetrate into the darkest dwelling places” (qtd. in *Imperialism* by Koebner 154).

In Carnarvon’s description, what we see at play is an Early Modern utopian fantasy of a humanist British Empire. Empire, to the Earl of Carnarvon, is not about conquest, subjugation, and exploitation. As a matter of fact, the British Empire – though mighty – is not a nation of war at all. Victorians don’t like war; they are too powerful for it. The British Empire, according to the Earl, is not set on a colonizer vs. colonized paradigm. It is only a “community,” a “confederation of people,” who *happen* to speak English, who needed to empower themselves, to protect their civilization from backward nations, and who share an ideal moral code. This code is not forced upon other nations. However, due to its uniqueness, it has the potential to penetrate into the “darkest dwelling places.” This description recounts More’s *Utopia* on all three levels of the *imperium* I discussed earlier. Utopia is a mighty nation that only protects itself and its allies. It is a well-controlled sovereign state; it has an ideal moral code that unites all of its citizens in a harmonious confederation.

In other words, what I am trying to argue here is that 19<sup>th</sup> century British imperialism justified its empire and propagated it through earlier utopian ideals prominent in More's *Utopia*, *New Atlantis*, *Oceana* and other Early Modern utopias. In the introduction of her book, *Empire Islands: Castaways, Cannibals, and Fantasies of Conquest*, Rebecca Weaver-Hightower argues that the castaway literary genre was a tool that allowed imperialists to justify imperial aggression, which, in effect, "enabled the expansion and maintenance of European Empires" (ix). What I have argued here is that the utopian literary genre, also, played a similar role by lending Imperial propaganda a hand to mask its failures from the public and to propagate further imperialism that is increasingly viewed with skepticism, as we shall see further down. Unlike other empires in different times and locations, the British imperialists propagated their empire as an ideal humanist empire: an empire, as I have previously described, that is not solely concerned with annexing and exploiting territories of enemies (e.g. Medieval kingdoms), pushing a religious agenda (e.g. the Medieval Roman Catholic Empire), or expanding its riches (e.g. the Spanish Empire), but as an empire that is inclusive of its subjects, that is a bastion of civilization, that practices good government, and – hence – that is ideal and that all humanity aspires to be. I argue that the British propaganda – even though it avoided the use of the term "utopia" – successfully used earlier utopian fantasies in selling agendas both to its troubled metropolis – that generally did see both the downside and positive side of empire – and in colonies – that saw the horrors of colonization, exploitation and subjugation. What this observation basically illustrates is that utopia and imperialism are interconnected with each other and that utopian literature lends a hand to imperialism the same way imperialism lends a hand to utopianism.

### *Imperial Consequences and their Influence on Utopian Literature*

Having explained how British imperial propaganda resembled utopian rhetoric taken directly from utopian fiction, let us look into how the consequences of Victorian imperialism influenced utopian literature at the time. My argument in this section is that the utopian literary works of the 19<sup>th</sup> century sought to answer the question of what awaits imperial prosperity: that is, what does the future hold for the British Empire? Looking into imperial conditions during Queen Victoria's reign – i.e. what historians see as the peak of British Empire – reveals that the high wave of optimism did not reflect the actual conditions of the empire, both in the metropolis and the periphery. Despite all the propaganda of success and achievements, the conditions within the empire were far more complex than what any utopian fantasy projected. While the British as a whole – as John Mackenzie points out in *Imperialism and Popular Culture* – “basked in their imperial glory and developed a powerful notion of their own superiority,” (270) the conditions in the metropolis were far from the coherent, egalitarian and harmonious simple society many utopias projected 200 years earlier. As Andrew Thompson explains in *The Empire Strikes Back*, what the imperial projections and fantasies amounted to was a society split by class, wealth, ethnicity and religion that was far more diverse and complex than what the British thought their empire would ever become. The complexity and ambiguous heading produced the atmosphere of the *fin de siècle* in which – as Ross Forman describes – the idea of empire was oscillating between “a double helix”: “On the one hand, the promise of continued expansion, new ‘spheres of influence,’ and the success of the ‘civilizing mission’ and, on the other, the fear of collapse, degeneration and reverse colonization” (93).<sup>26</sup> While imperial propaganda overlooked the negative consequences of imperialism and focused on the optimistic side of things, many British social radicals and reformers (e.g. John Hobson, Richard Cobden, John Bright, Jeremy Bentham)



and political movements (e.g. antislavery societies, socialists) within the empire did not allow the imperial grand and optimistic narrative to slip by without challenging it.<sup>27</sup> These intellectuals questioned this narrative, its legitimacy, sustainability, and its overall benefit to Britain. In other words, the expansive imperial atmosphere produced what Claeys calls “imperial sceptics” who saw the “quasi-religion of Empire,” when “juxtaposed to facts and honest doubt,” was a “self-destructive delusion and perhaps ultimately threatened the existence of the nation itself” (4).<sup>28</sup>

The utopian literary genre flourished and continued to develop from within skepticism and anxiety over empire during the *Pax Britannica*. It shifted from promoting idealistic imperial humanist fantasies of expansive empires into addressing the urgent question of how the empire could overcome its problems and/or what would happen if it fails to do so. Indeed, nearly every utopian work produced during the era, that Sargent and others have mentioned in their bibliographies, addresses the question of imperial perplexity in one of three ways: some utopian works address imperial problems only by raising red flags about its headed (e.g. *The Coming Race*, by Bulwer-Lytton in 1870 and *After London* by Richard Jefferies in 1885), some works address imperial perplexity by calling for reform that will sustain an empire (e.g. Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* in 1887 and *Freeland* by Theodor Hertzka in 1890), and some works address imperial perplexity by projecting an end to the British Empire and its succession by post-imperial societies (Anarchic and Socialist utopias like *The Island of Anarchy* by Elizabeth Waterhouse 1887, Robert Blatchford’s *The Sorcery Shop* in 1885, and Morris’ *News from Nowhere* in 1890).

In addition to imperial skepticism, the shifting conditions and political scene of the British Empire also influenced the utopian literature at the time. This can be seen in the setting and language of many utopias in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These utopias shifted – along with imperial exploration – from locating utopia in the frontiers of uncharted islands (e.g. *Utopia*, *New*

*Atlantis, Oceana, Isle of Pines*, etc.) to the frontiers of uncharted continents and undiscovered inland territory (*Erewhon, The Coming Race*, and semi-utopian works of lost races like *King Solomon's Mines* and others). Furthermore, no longer is the visitor to utopia a naïve or undecided traveler awed by the development of an island utopia. Rather, as Davis notices, utopian travelers in Victorian utopian works put more “emphasis on observation, the collection of data, the mapping and classification of the world and its context (both material and living). This was travelling in the enlightened spirit of Von Humboldt, Cook, and Charles Darwin all underwritten by the epistemology of Francis Bacon and John Locke” (2).<sup>29</sup> In other words, Victorian visitors to utopia were full-fledged imperial nationalists whose narratives – as we shall see – were marked by sharp surveillance and analytical skills, by their refined sense of Britishness, by keenness in scientific and archeological findings, and by interest in a salvable social order that can benefit their homeland.

To illustrate how utopian literature prospered within imperial skepticism and shifting imperial scenes, I will examine three utopian responses to imperial policies in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Through examining these responses, I reiterate the main idea of this dissertation, which is that utopia is contingent upon empire and a main contributor to imperial discourse.<sup>30</sup> The examples I will discuss here reflect the three utopian responses to imperial perplexity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>31</sup> Bulwer-Lytton's *The Coming Race* (1871) which exemplifies the first utopian response to imperialism raises red flags about imperial rhetoric – seen here in the rhetoric of Social Darwinism – and its consequences without necessarily calling for a specific plan of action to counter it. This representation of imperial complexities without proposing solutions not only reflects a shift in utopia that is skeptical of imperial practices at the time, but it also reflects the sense of imminent doom and fear of the unknown that was floating in the imperial atmosphere

during the *fin de siècle*. This portrayal of doom makes *The Coming Race* an early prototype of the dystopian genre that flourished decades later.<sup>32</sup>

The second example I will discuss is Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1887). This work, though American, cannot be ignored because it had a huge influence on both sides of the Atlantic and is considered by some critics to be the actual beginning of utopian literature. I argue that Bellamy's work is the ultimate example of the utopian response that calls for imperial reform rather than objecting to imperialism altogether. Through working from within the imperial discourse, *Looking Backward* stirred passionate positive and negative responses from socialists demonstrating the interconnection between utopian literature and imperialism.

The final example I will discuss is the most well-known response to Bellamy's work: *News from Nowhere*. Morris' work exemplifies a utopian trend that projects the decay of the British Empire and the prosperity of post-imperial England that is a hybrid of imperial urbanism and pre-imperial pastoral life. *News from Nowhere* has a delicate connection to imperialism even though it seems to be overtly anti-imperialistic; it retains an imperial origin and – as we shall see – cannot escape it.

What I will illustrate throughout this chapter is the ultimate connection between the utopian literary genre and empire.<sup>33</sup> After all, the utopias I am discussing here are famous and have been exhaustively read and analyzed in hundreds of books and essays. However, as with many earlier utopias, all these prior readings did not adequately address the direct and indirect influence of imperialism on them.

### **Vril and the Utopia of the Conquering Race**

In his conclusion to the *Descent of Man* (1871), Charles Darwin writes that:

The main conclusion arrived at in this work, namely, that man is descended from some lowly organised form, will, I regret to think, be highly distasteful to many. But there can hardly be a doubt that we are descended from barbarians. The astonishment which I felt on first seeing a party of Fuegians on a wild and broken shore will never be forgotten by me, for the reflection at once rushed into my mind such were our ancestors. These men were absolutely naked and bedaubed with paint, their long hair was tangled, their mouths frothed with excitement, and their expression was wild, startled, and distrustful. They possessed hardly any arts, and like wild animals lived on what they could catch; they had no government, and were merciless to everyone not of their own small tribe. He who has seen a savage in his native land will not feel much shame, if forced to acknowledge that the blood of some more humble creature flows in his veins. . . . Man may be excused for feeling some pride at having risen, though not through his own exertions, to the very summit of the organic scale; and the fact of his having thus risen, instead of having been aboriginally placed there, may give him hope for a still higher destiny in the distant future. But we are not here concerned with hopes or fears, only with the truth as far as our reason permits us to discover it; and I have given the evidence to the best of my ability (629).

In this provocative statement, Darwin presents a unique optimistic, yet troublesome, vision of the future backed by scientific facts rather than shallow hopes and fears. To Darwin, human beings and their civilization, that achieved its highest form in Europe, will continue evolving. However, contrary to common perceptions of the time, this development is not a result of religion, human exertion, ethics, or European heritage. It is rather a result of pure biological and geographical conditions that made Europeans more advanced than other races. Darwin's conclusions had

massive effects on both the imperial and utopian rhetoric in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Even though Darwin did not support imperial practices of his time and stressed perceiving his theory within its scientific context, his ideas nevertheless became a feature of imperial jingoism.<sup>34</sup> The idea of survival of the fittest – coined by Darwin’s student Herbert Spencer – and the implementation of it into the social and political discourse (i.e. Social Darwinism) fueled the justifications of brutal imperial policies, added a utopian twist to them by “scientifically” projecting an evolved and improved future, and became a driving force for imperialism both in England and elsewhere.<sup>35</sup>

Bulwer-Lytton’s *The Coming Race* (1871) questions the imperial rhetoric manifested in Social Darwinism and raises red flags about its influence on imperial society and culture.<sup>36</sup> In the novel, Bulwer-Lytton tells a story about an encounter between an American elite and a superior subterranean race. This race achieved physical, mental, intellectual and social perfection (i.e. utopia) through evolution. According to the story, the Flood forced the subterranean race to go underground thousands of years ago. The harsh subterranean conditions perfected this race through natural selection. Social evolution developed, too. As their population grew, this race expanded and created their own world of cities and colonies, competed for natural resources, and went into wars and imperial development until a group of them discovered the Vril – a natural and powerful energy force – and evolved into two races: those who managed to use the Vril and those who didn’t. The masters of the Vril (the Vril-ya) accelerated their evolution and achieved utopia, while the other races succumbed into barbarism and either died away or are dying away. Lytton’s story ends with the narrator returning to Earth’s surface predicting that once the Vril-ya run out of subterranean space, they will come out and conquer the upper world. In the process of conquering Earth, the Vril-ya will wipe out humanity and their improved species will repopulate Earth.

Critics have approached *The Coming Race* from different angles that range from analyzing it as Menippean satire (e.g. Jennifer Judge), alternative history and Science Fiction (e.g. Suvin), a utopia of reason (e.g. Sargent), and a piece of misanthropy (e.g. Joseph Fradin). However, like other utopian works I discuss, even though imperial tropes are rampant throughout the work, no critic – to my knowledge – has pointed out the connection between utopia and imperialism. Imperialism in *The Coming Race* is present through its tropes. These tropes like those in other utopian works are both imperial and utopian and they illustrate how utopian literature is contingent upon imperialism. For the limitations of this dissertation, I will discuss three here: binarism, colonization, and surveillance and illustrate how they reflect the dynamics of the imperial scene at the time and skepticism towards it.<sup>37</sup>

### *Binarism*

Binarism occupies a foundational position in utopian rhetoric, and it is the constant creation of oppositions in imperial rhetoric. As Lynette Russell explains in the introduction to *Boundary Writing: An Exploration of Race, Culture, And Gender Binaries in Contemporary Australia*, binarism locates the imperial metropolis, civilization and colonizer on the superior side of a constructed opposition, and the periphery (savages and the colonized) on the opposite inferior side of the opposition. The implication of binarism is crucial to imperialism because it justifies the latter's policies and regulates the direction of influence between the empire and its colonies. As Russell explains, this flow ensures that the colonizer maintains a superior position over the colonized and it positions the colony only as a source for raw material and a locality for overpopulation.

Binarism also occupies a foundational position in utopian literature. It is only through the dichotomy of utopia being superior to other inferior nations that we can see the merits of utopia. No utopian work – up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century – had pointed out utopian imperfections nor had any utopian work portrayed utopian society less perfect or comparable to contemporary society. As mentioned in my introduction, imperial tropes of binarism are found in almost all utopias. This trope has prevailed throughout utopian literature without challenge until *The Coming Race* where Bulwer-Lytton raises red flags about its presumptions and possible problematic outcome.

Binarism in *The Coming Race* is seen in the binary set of colonizer vs. colonized. On the one hand, there is the utopia that is the metropolis of the Vril-ya and there is the periphery that is the frontier. Along with the metropolis comes civilization, justice and righteousness. Along with frontier comes barbarism, brutality and darkness. Binarism, in the novel, establishes the connection between utopia and empire because both belong to the same side of the opposition. In the novel, the Vril-ya only recognize two categories of race in their subterranean world: themselves as opposed to everyone else who is presumably a savage. When Alph-Lin, the host's son, meets the narrator, he is confused because the narrator does not belong to either side:

But what part of the world do you come from," asked my host, "that we should appear so strange to you, and you to us? I have seen individual specimens of nearly all the races differing from our own, except the primeval savages who dwell in the most desolate and remote recesses of uncultivated nature, unacquainted with other light than that they obtain from volcanic fires, and contented to grope their way in the dark, as do many creeping, crawling, and even flying things. But certainly you cannot be a member of those barbarous tribes, nor, on the other hand, do you seem to belong to any civilized people (51).

What this questioning illustrates is that the Vril-ya, conceive of the world in two categories: them who are the superior and the others who are inferior. This categorization of either being inside the circle of civilization or outside it reflects the imperial and utopian mentality at the same.

Though binarism serves our apprehension of utopia, its horrific implications surface when we read the Vril-ya's portrayal of the other the policies they implement towards the inferior race. In *The Coming Race*, everything good is associated with the Vril-ya; everything bad is associated with the Other: The barbarians are in a constant fight with each other "tending to their own dissolution" (108). Not only is their wretchedness "perpetual," but their physical appearance is also damned (108), their social system is vulgar and capitalistic where "many hate the few, but without the few they could not live" (108). In short, "they are savages groping their way in the dark towards some gleam of light, and would demand [the Vril-ya's] commiseration for their infirmities, if, like all savages, they did not provoke their own destruction by their arrogance and cruelty" (109). Furthermore, these savages cannot be trusted and Vril-ya should always maintain their distance. Furthermore, this description of the savages is clearly imperialistic and haughty. However, it amplifies the connection between imperial tropes and utopia because it allows utopia to be further defined by its negative: setting stark contrast between what utopia is and what it is not. Through the utilization of this binary opposition, the host is able to enhance the beauty of the utopia of the Vril-ya in ways that would not have been as clear had *The Coming Race* lacked inferior and subjugated races.

Furthermore, demonizing the savages is used to justify discriminatory utopian practices just as demonizing the colonized is used to justify imperial practices in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Like any imperialists, the Vril-ya see themselves as kind, rational people with good intentions. It is the uncontrollable savages who are to be blamed. This haughty narrative, of course, is satirical as



many critics have pointed out (e.g. Judge) because it inverts the superiority of the Europeans and puts them at the inferior end of the binary opposition, compared to the Vril-ya, here. But it also illustrates the connection between imperialism and utopia and shows how utopian narrative can only flourish through imperial tropes. Utopia is enhanced through the imperial trope of binarism. Without this trope, I argue, this utopia would not have been as vivid as Bulwer-Lytton would have liked.

### *Colonization*

Edward Said defines colonization as “the implantation of imperial settlements in distant territories” (9). Said explains that colonization is an outcome of imperialism. To imperialists, colonization is crucial because, first, it provides natural resources for the empire to prosper and, second, because it resolves overpopulation in the imperial metropolis.

In *The Coming Race*, colonization fulfills the same functions that it does for empires in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Vril-ya establish colonies to gain access to natural resources and to overcome overpopulation.<sup>38</sup> The justifications for these colonies is exactly the same one brought up by imperialists: to civilize others and to populate land that is *terra nullius*. The host’s child describes the process:

“Of course, we cannot settle in lands already occupied by the Vril-ya; and if we take the cultivated lands of the other races of Ana, we must utterly destroy the previous inhabitants. Sometimes, as it is, we take waste spots, and find that a troublesome, quarrelsome race of Ana, especially if under the administration of Koom-Posh or Glek-Nas, resents our vicinity, and picks a quarrel with us; then, of course, as menacing our welfare, we destroy it: there is no coming to terms of peace with a race so idiotic that it is

always changing the form of government which represents it. Koom-Posh," said the child, emphatically, "is bad enough, still it has brains, though at the back of its head, and is not without a heart; but in Glek-Nas the brain and heart of the creatures disappear, and they become all jaws, claws, and belly" (113).

What we see here is lack of empathy masked with a supposedly extraordinary show of kindness and restraint. The Vril-ya only colonize places out of necessity, and they strive to prevent unnecessary aggressiveness. This show of kindness is typical of any imperial prelude to genocide throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, like that of the Boers or the indigenous Australians.<sup>39</sup> However, what we also see here is that justifying imperial expansionist policies through superior civilization is crucial not only to imperialism, but also to utopia. In *The Coming Race*, there are no other means to maintain utopia without expansion, colonization, and elimination of other races. If the Vril-ya do not expand, their cities will be overcrowded, less developed and, hence, no longer utopian. The idea of expansion into other lands is natural and essential to the utopia of *The Coming Race*, and it is also essential to imperialism. As a matter of fact, colonization has been articulated as a solution to problems in the imperial metropolis by both advocates' and opponents of imperialism (e.g. Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* and John Hobson in *Imperialism: a Study*, respectively).

#### *Surveillance:*

The last evidence of the contingency of utopian literature upon empire in *The Coming Race* is seen in the narrator's surveillance of the discovered utopia. In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Mary Louis Pratt points out the crucial role surveillance plays in colonization. When imperialists survey new found land, their surveillance is a practice of "monarch of all I survey" (201). Hence, through surveillance, the imperialist is no longer merely

curious about science and geography. He is, rather, interested in understanding the locality he is about to colonize and exploit. Through surveillance, the imperialist closely examines and categorizes all aspects of the new imperial possession beginning from its topology, archeology, and anthropology all the way to the language and religion of its inhabitants.<sup>40</sup>

Surveillance is also crucial to utopia because it allows the narrator to fully visualize and, in a way, own the utopia he encounters. In *The Coming Race*, the narrator's description of the subterranean environment as a whole resembles imperial surveillance in a travel narrative. It is organized, observant, detailed, and reflects the ego of an imperialist standing on high ground observing terrain yet to be colonized. When the narrator enters the new subterranean environment, he first starts describing the geography, fauna and flora of the area. Then he moves on to describing the city he encounters and its inhabitants:

There were lakes and rivulets which seemed to have been curved into artificial banks, ... at my right hand, ravines and defiles opened amidst the rocks, bordered by trees resembling ... gigantic ferns, with exquisite varieties of feathery foliage, and stems like those of the palm tree. Others were more like the can-plant ... others, again, had the form of enormous fungi, with short and thick stems supporting a wide dome-like roof ... the world without the sun was bright and warm as an Italian landscape at noon, but the air less oppressive (37).

This description of the fauna and flora of the area is typical of any imperial travelogue since Christopher Columbus set foot in the New World. However, unlike Columbus' and early imperialists' descriptions that survey land and bluntly assist their colonializing potential, 19<sup>th</sup> century imperialists masked their colonizing interests with a language of curiosity and science

which, in effect, influenced the surveilling techniques in utopian literature. Here, we see the narrator's survey of the subterranean world reflecting 19<sup>th</sup> century surveillance methods and language. There were lakes and rivulets, which "seemed" to be curved. There were gigantic ferns, exquisite varieties of feathery foliage and "stems like those of the palm tree," etc. All these detailed descriptions resemble imperial scientific missions that preceded colonization in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century travel literature that focused on the natural resources of the colonized, or yet to be colonized, space.

As the traveler moves on and encounters the utopian settlement, he describes its architecture:

I came in full sight of the buildings. Yes, it had been made by hands, and hollowed partly out of a great rock. I should have supposed it at the first glance to have been of the earliest form of Egyptian architecture. It was fronted by huge columns, tapering upward from massive plinths.... I perceived it to be more ornamental and more fantastically graceful than Egyptian architecture allows. As the Corinthian capital mimics the leaf of the acanthus, so the capitals of these columns imitated the foliage of the vegetation neighboring them, some aloe-like, some fern-like (37).

Here we see an imperialist presenting an archeological finding as if he were describing an abandoned site of an ancient race. The narrator compares the site to other sites of ancient civilizations. What we see here is not mere description of a new locality like *Utopia*, *City of the Sun*, *New Atlantis* and others. What we see here – and in the passages that I will discuss further down— is an the imperial language of surveillance that – in addition to describing what is at hand – analyzes, compares, and extracts conclusions. It is a language of "supposing,"

“perceiving” and “assessing” what is at hand. This language of an imperialist traveler becomes vivid as the traveler encounters and describes the first person he meets from the new race (the Vril-ya):

It was tall, not gigantic, but tall as the tallest man below the height of giants. Its chief covering seemed to me to be composed of large wings folded over its breast and reaching to its knees; the rest of its attire was composed of an under tunic and leggings of some thin fibrous material. ... But the face! It was that which inspired my awe and my terror. It was the face of man, but yet of a type of man distinct from our known extant races. The nearest approach to it in outline and expression is the face of the sculptured sphinx – so regular in its calm, intellectual mysterious beauty. Its color was peculiar, more like that of the red man than any other variety of our species, and yet different from it – a richer and a softer hue, with large black eyes, deep and brilliant, and brows arched as a semicircle, the Face was beardless; but a nameless something in the aspect, tranquil though the expression, and beautiful though the features (39).

In this description, we again see an excerpt of an imperialist’s travelogue carefully describing the features of an exotic race.<sup>41</sup> However, what is significant here is that the traveler’s gaze shifts from looking downward at the object of observation into looking upward in awe. This shift is a turning point of the narrative. No longer is the traveler in a superior position. His gaze is not directed downward towards the colonized but rather upward towards him, which indicates anticipation, fear and anxiety that is characteristic of Victorian utopianism as we will see when I discuss Morris’ work. Nevertheless, the narrator here continues his observations describing the biological features of the Vril-ya including their skull, skin texture and color that is “surprisingly

not uniformed” (47), their religion (7), their language (71) , etc. which all resonate with imperial surveillance techniques at the time.

Two aspects are significant in the description of utopia that I argue here: first, like previous utopias, surveillance, which is an imperial trope, allows the reader to comprehend the utopia at hand. Without the narrator’s surveillance, this utopia would not have been as vivid to a Victorian audience – saturated with travel narrative that describes the exotic, far domains of their empire – as Bulwer-Lytton would have wished. The second noticeable aspect in the work is that the narrator here is focused on scientific and anthropological observations, which reflect Victorian imperial interests at the time. This focus is different from the early utopias that were attentive to military might, authority, wealth, and the spatial organization of encountered utopias that we saw in the previous chapter. This transition is analogous with the shift in interest and techniques of imperialism as I have discussed earlier in the chapter.

Hence, from discussing these three imperial tropes, we can see that utopian literature is contingent – in various ways – to imperial tropes. Imperial tropes allowed Bulwer-Lytton to construct and narrate his utopia. Without these tropes, this utopia would have been hard to visualize.

### *Imperial Anxiety*

Having discussed the contingency of utopia upon imperial tropes, I now move on to anxiety towards imperialism in *The Coming Race*. As I mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, *The Coming Race* exemplifies a plethora of works that raise red flags regarding imperial utopian rhetoric without countering it with solutions. Because of its lack of counter argument, several critics (such as Wegner) have aligned Bulwer-Lytton’s work with satire rather than

utopia. These critics argue that Bulwer-Lytton allows readers to see the vanity of the imperial rationale and that he uses science by upsetting the binary opposition and placing the imperialists on the inferior side of it. However, as I explained earlier, what is different here is that Bulwer-Lytton's satire does not simply and comically mock social or political conditions. *The Coming Race* also expresses the sense of doom that was dominant at the apex of the British Empire. As Forman states, empire during the *fin de siècle* was seen as a double helix. It presented, "on the one hand, the promise of continued expansion, new 'spheres of influence,' and the success of the 'civilizing mission' and, on the other, the fear of collapse, degeneration and reverse colonization" (93). In her analysis of *The Coming Race*, Lillian Nayder associates this double helix with ambivalence towards the Other in the novel: "The Other" she writes, "typify many self-contradicting possibilities: an odd composite of the very old and the very new, the imperial and the aboriginal, ... they also constitute a threat to both Americans and Britons who are otherwise seen in counter opposition" (13).<sup>42</sup> What Nayder rightly asserts is that in *The Coming Race*, the Other is far more complex than the Other perceived in imperial discourse. In the novel, the Vrilya are the Other. They are admired and praised as an achieved utopian society; yet, they are feared because they are a threat to humanity. Their environment is tranquil, peaceful and desired; yet, it is somber and static. These conflicting attitudes towards the utopian race reflect not only the narrator's ambivalence towards utopia, but also ambivalence towards any imperial project as a whole that sees itself as successful, unique, and bound to dominate the world as opposed to other inferior races.

I add to Nayder that Bulwer-Lytton's ambivalence towards the other reflects anxiety and skepticism towards imperialism during the *fin de siècle* as a whole. I will explain this in two examples. The first example is in the narrator's realization of the catastrophic outcome of

imperial rhetoric. When asked about his origin at the beginning of his encounter with the subterranean race, the narrator boasts about his ideal American background that thrives on the principles of freedom, pursuit of happiness, democracy, and justice. The narrator then moves on to predict that the American ideals will eventually “float around the continent” with the assistance of the revolver and the doctrine of Monroe (166). This optimistic outlook turns into horror as the narrator realizes that the Vril-ya are more developed and that they share the same imperial ambitions and use the same imperial rhetoric to accomplish it. After the host, Aph-lin, describes the lesser subterranean races and the Vril-ya’s destiny to overrun them, the narrator confesses that “at these words [he] felt a thrill of horror, recognizing much more affinity with ‘the savages,’ than I did with the Vril-ya, and remembering all I had said in praise of the glorious American institutions, which Aph-lin stigmatized as Koom-Posh” (109).

However, as I argued above, the aggressive nature of the Vril-ya adds another dimension to this satire because it reflects fear of global imperial conflict in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. What complicates things further is that the narrator also realizes that even the savages in the novel are imperialistic, according to the Aph-lin, too. Every nation in the novel sees itself as superior: the American, the Vril-ya, and the savages. However, no one can verify their superiority without fighting and wiping out its competitor. The American claims his nation is superior, and the proof lies in their domination of the world through the revolver and the Doctrine of Monroe. The Vril-ya believe they are superior and the proof is their ability to wipe out the savages. The savages also claim to be superior, and their proof is through victory over other savages. This method of verifying the superiority of a certain civilization or race reflects the 19<sup>th</sup> century competitive and aggressive political scene that could ignite open conflict between European empires and it also reflects Bulwer-Lytton’s anxiety towards a possible global imperial conflict in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Bulwer-Lytton presents a utopia in the Early Modern sense of an imperial fantasy. However, unlike Early Modern utopian writers, he is skeptical of its ends. Utopia, to Bulwer-Lytton, is not totally desired. Its ends are potentially dangerous. When the narrator returns home, he confesses his fear of the fantasies of the utopian race:

I believe that if the Vrilya first appeared in free America--as, being the choicest portion of the habitable earth, they would doubtless be induced to do--and said, "This quarter of the globe we take; Citizens of a Koom-Posh, make way for the development of species in the Vrilya," my brave compatriots would show fight, and not a soul of them would be left in this life, to rally round the Stars and Stripes, at the end of a week (162).

Here, the narrator – and Bulwer-Lytton – acknowledge the problem of the rhetoric of utopian evolution and destiny. The success of utopia for one race is a dystopia to other races and an imperial fantasy to one race is a nightmare to other races. Just as Europeans and Americans can apply the rhetoric of Social Darwinism to their favor, so could potentially superior races apply it against them, which makes utopia not an inclusive and happy place for all, but rather an exclusive community that only sustains itself through aggressive imperial policies.

The second example that illustrates anxiety and skepticism towards imperialism in *The Coming Race* is seen in the mutual-destruction structure that sustains the utopia of the Vrilya tribes. According to the host, the Vrilya achieved utopia only after they discovered how to master the Vrilya and through understanding that further warring between them would result in mutual destruction. In many ways, the discovery of the Vrilya was a utopian blessing to the Vrilya because it transformed their society. At the same time, the Vrilya was also a curse because tension between the Vrilya tribes could lead to their destruction if not kept in check. If the Vrilya tribes

war with each other, not only will their utopia vanish, but also all other subterranean races. The discourse of the Vril-ya and its blessings and curses resembles the discourse of colonization of the New World. Colonization was a blessing to the empires of Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century because it brought wealth and prosperity. However, colonization also brought tension between European empires that could eventually lead to war and destruction if Europeans cannot agree on regulating access and exploitation of resources.<sup>43</sup>

Thus far, I have shown how *The Coming Race* is a utopia contingent upon imperial tropes. I have also shown that it is the first utopian work that acknowledges the problem within utopian rhetoric that builds off imperialism and reflects Bulwer-Lytton's anxiety towards it. It is true that utopia/empire might be a perfect end that projects order, luxury and happiness for the privileged. However, due to its moral ambiguity, its end might not be as desired as one might think.

### ***Looking Backward: Dreams of Utopian Metropolis***

In the previous section, we saw how a utopian satire raised concerns about 19<sup>th</sup> century imperial rhetoric (exemplified by Darwinism). We also saw that this utopian satire, like any satire, only pointed out the issue at hand but did not take a definitive approach towards it. In the following, I will discuss two socialist utopias (*Looking Backward* and *News from Nowhere*) that raised concerns about imperialism *and* proposed solutions to them. I use socialist utopias here because they were the most prominent utopias of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>44</sup> Socialism might initially seem to be the opposite of imperialism because it calls for equality, fair distribution of wealth and justice. However, as we shall see, the relationship between the two is far more complex. One can argue that the eruption and popularity of socialist ideas is a reaction towards the negative

consequences of imperialism in Europe. However, despite the conflict between imperial ideals and socialism, socialists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had different reactions towards imperialism that varied from outright anti-imperial sentiments (e.g. Marxist) to ambiguous stances that called for working from within the imperial structure. In this chapter, I will illustrate that however socialists reacted towards imperialism, their utopias were crucially affected by imperialism. Imperialism served socialism in three ways: first, through colonization; it allowed socialists to construct their ideal socialists' communities in different colonies. These communities were also imperial in the sense that they built colonies on lands of native inhabitants. First, especially earlier in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, colonialism – a direct consequence of imperialism – lent a hand to socialists who established settler egalitarian utopias – and ravished the societies of indigenous people at the same time. The founders and theorists of socialist utopias (e.g. Robert Owen who established New Harmony in 1824 and Charles Fourier whose ideas helped in designing La Réunion in 1855) not only saw the New World as a location of potential utopia away from corrupt metropolises of Europe, they also set their utopias as examples of successful societies in the hope that others would replicate elsewhere, which in turn would spread socialist utopia across the globe. Hence, what we see in this train of socialist utopian reasoning is an interconnected relationship between socialist utopias being exemplary and isolated, yet, carrying overreaching and expansionist (i.e. imperialist ) ambitions.

The second way in which imperialism crucially affected socialism and socialist utopias – particularly towards the late 19<sup>th</sup> century – was through the industrial revolution. In his article “Themes in Utopian Fiction before Wells,” Sargent identifies four common questions that utopias of the 19<sup>th</sup> century sought to answer, in addition to themes inherited from earlier utopias: the question of equitable economic systems, the question of communitarianism, the question of

women's roles in society and the question of taxes. These themes do not only respond to imperialism in general; they also particularly respond to one of the most prominent agents of imperialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century: the industrial revolution that created massive economic upheaval in the British Empire.<sup>45</sup> Socialists, in general, saw the effects of the industrial revolution in negative terms and sought to either improve its outcome to improve the British Empire or to scratch the idea of empire and industrialization altogether (through revolution) and start all over again.

The third way in which imperialism influenced socialism was that imperialism, ironically, also provided a podium for certain forms of socialism to formulate ideas of socialist global outreach that is, as Claeys argues, broadly conceived in terms of a cooperative commonwealth. Socialists of all walks perceived empire as a vehicle to spread imperial ideals across the world. Hence, it is no wonder that this outreach can be seen in socialist movements in many postcolonial nations.

To talk about the connection between socialism and imperialism is not the project of this dissertation. Hence, I will not further elaborate on it. I also will not discuss the first way in which imperialism affected the development of settler utopias (i.e. via colonialism) because it is beyond the scope of the literary utopias this dissertation is focused on. I want to discuss the second and third ways imperialism affected socialist literary utopias here. Despite the fact that socialists believed that the social conditions caused by imperial practices – particularly seen in the industrial revolution – were repulsive, they, nevertheless, had mixed feelings towards imperialism. As Claeys explains in *Imperial Sceptics: British Critics of Empire, 1850–1920*, socialists' antagonism towards imperial expansion was “increasingly balanced by a desire to improve rather than dispense with Britain's possessions” (125). Claeys rightly argues that due to

the growing popularity of imperialism in the British Isles, socialists sought to either “shoulder the imperial burden,” or to “positively promote a socialist brand of imperialism, broadly conceived in terms of a cooperative commonwealth” (125). Throughout his discussion, Claeys illustrates that contrary to the common belief that socialism is inherently anti-imperialistic, socialism is in fact a product of imperial discourse and, hence, reflects many approaches towards imperialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

I take Claeys’ argument about socialism and its relationship to empire further by arguing that every socialist utopia is also a product of its imperial discourse. Socialist utopias thrive through their response to imperialism and its effects on the social conditions of the imperial metropolis. These utopias either shoulder the imperial burden by promoting change from within the imperial system – that is, promoting a civilizing mission that sees European civilization as the optimal human development – or through rejecting current forms of imperialism altogether and substituting other imperial cooperative utopian commonwealths.

Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* and Morris’ response *News from Nowhere* are excellent examples that broadly represent the two main trends of utopias in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that not only point out imperial problems but propose solutions to them. *Looking Backward* is a utopia that addresses negative imperial effects by projecting smooth imperial progression towards a socialist utopia (even though Bellamy doesn’t call it so). *News from Nowhere* projects the opposite: a revolutionary and bloody progression towards utopia. Both works respond to imperialism by addressing its influence on the metropolis and by addressing the effect of the industrial revolution that resulted from and maintained imperialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. *Looking Backward* has a correlational relationship with the industrial revolution and empire. It is a work that uses the industrial revolution to create a utopia for all citizens of the empire. *News from*

*Nowhere* is a work that has an oppositional relationship with the industrial revolution and empire. It seeks to improve the quality of life by putting a hold on the industrial revolution and capitalism. In analyzing these two works, I will illustrate how the utopian literary genre is contingent upon its imperial discourse even in socialist utopias that are presumed to be anti-imperial because both utopias not only negotiated with imperial agents, but also used imperial tropes to promote alternative societies, as we shall see.

While it is true that *Looking Backward* is an American utopia that is not related to the British Empire, one cannot overlook its tremendous success in Britain and worldwide. As Martin Gardner argues, *Looking Backward* is the most important utopia of all time, more important even than More's *Utopia* (19). It brought phenomenal attention to the utopian genre through dozens of translations, 35 or more passionate positive and negative utopian responses, thousands of critical responses and even societies named after Bellamy. *Looking Backward* is important to our discussion here not only because of its influence on the utopian literary genre in general but also because it was written from within an imperial discourse similar to that of England at the time and because it tremendously affected British imperial utopianism.

In *Looking Backward*, Julian West – the protagonist – goes into an induced hypnosis and wakes up in the year 2000 where Boston is transformed from a troubled capitalist society plagued by strikes and social discontent into a thriving utopia drastically different from that of Boston in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In future Boston, advanced technology serves a happy egalitarian society that overcomes poverty and social discontent. Throughout the novel, Bellamy promotes a socialist society that is able to use the industrial revolution to serve all citizens within the metropolis and to create an all-inclusive middle class that lives in harmony and peace.

Despite the international appeal of Bellamy's work and its influence on social and political movements both in the United States and worldwide, few critics have discussed its relationship to imperialism in general and to American imperialism specifically. I argue that *Looking Backward* was popular at the time precisely because it had a positive and optimistic approach towards imperialism.<sup>46</sup> Like other Fabians at the time, Bellamy did not outrightly reject the advances, policies and consequences of imperialism. He rather pointed out earlier imperial problems and proposed reforms for the imperial system to achieve utopia. These reforms called for expanding the lifestyle of luxury to all citizens of the empire rather than to an elite. Furthermore, *Looking Backward* envisioned this socialist form of imperialism that would eventually spread around the world through imperial means. In the following, I will first point out how imperial tropes are crucial to the visualization of Bellamy's utopia. After that, I will illustrate how Bellamy's work presents a positive response to imperialism even though it seems anti-imperial. The trope I will bring forth is the binary opposition between the metropolis and periphery.

Imperialism in *Looking Backward* is present in three elements: the description of the metropolis of Boston, the presence of a periphery, and the utilization of the industrial revolution. Let us look at these three elements.

### *The Metropolis of Boston*

In *Looking Backward*, Boston is a thriving Metropolis. When West wakes up in 2000 and climbs the roof, he describes what he sees as follows:

At my feet lay a great city. Miles of broad streets, shaded by trees and lined with fine buildings, for the most part not in continuous blocks but set in larger or smaller enclosures, stretched in every direction. Every quarter contained large open squares filled

with trees, among which statues glistened and fountains flashed in the late afternoon sun. Public buildings of a colossal size and an architectural grandeur unparalleled in my day raised their stately piles on every side. Surely I had never seen this city nor one comparable to it before. Raising my eyes at last towards the horizon, I looked westward. That blue ribbon winding away to the sunset, was it not the sinuous Charles? I looked east; Boston harbor stretched before me within its headlands, not one of its green islets missing (43).

This grand description of Boston with colossal buildings and unparalleled architectural grandeur, with a mighty river and big harbor, brings to mind descriptions of ancient metropolises like Rome or Athens. Furthermore, the residents of this metropolis bring to mind the residents of any imperial metropolis at the time. They live a luxurious and worry-free life. Reading about Miss Leete's life and her money-free shopping trips, for example, recalls the daily life of a Victorian aristocrat. Edith Leete – the doctor's daughter and eventually Julian West's fiancée – visits a colossal beautiful market, shops for "pretty clothes" and has the shipment sent to her house as she continues to joyfully stroll around and converse with her guest. In the *Spectre of Utopia*, Matthew Beaumont points out that this style of consumerism reflects the capitalist notions of spending and division of labor, which conflicts with socialist ideals of cooperation and equality. As a matter of fact, Beaumont further argues that *Looking Backward* is a capitalist dream of an ever expanding middle class that thrives in unsustainable economic policies.



## *Periphery in Looking Backward*

The periphery in *Looking Backward* can be seen when West asks his host about America's relationship with other nations and whether socialism prevailed or not. The host responds that:

The great nations of Europe as well as Australia, Mexico, and parts of South America, are now organized industrially like the United States, which was the pioneer of the evolution. The peaceful relations of these nations are assured by a loose form of federal union of world-wide extent. An international council regulates the mutual intercourse and commerce of the members of the union and their joint policy toward the more backward races, which are gradually being educated up to civilized institutions (68).

What we see in this brief explanation is an imperial trope (i.e. binarism) that sets the world in two categories: races that are advanced for embracing a specific social and economic system and races that are not and are still developing. In addition, developed nations live in harmony and luxury. Backward races (whether in 2000 or in past history) live lives of hardship.

It is important to mention at this point that although Bellamy's utopia is a socialist utopia, Bellamy himself did not call it so but rather described it as a nationalist utopia. This categorization is noteworthy because it, first, illustrates Bellamy's uneasiness with the notion that his utopia is anti-imperialist like other famous socialist utopias. Second, Bellamy's promotion of his utopia as a national utopia illustrates the imperial leanings of the work as nationalism which in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was strongly associated with imperialism and imperial power and hegemony. As a matter of fact, in *Looking Backward*, Bellamy does not object to expansion and cultural and economic encroachment upon other nations. Actually, these policies are justified because they present a civilizing mission the advanced world is obliged to fulfill

towards backward races. These policies are also positively acknowledged because they are done on a national level rather than on individual or corporate levels. Interestingly, Bellamy's approach here is aligned with imperial policies that nationalized its colonial assets in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>47</sup> As a matter of fact, Bellamy's ideas of having a strong nation whose economic, social and cultural model projects itself on other nations and compels them to imitate it and eventually enroll into its league concur with colonial practices by the British Empire and other empires at the time.

Furthermore, sustained limitless money resources, peacefulness in the spacious residents in Boston and the aura of ease and luxury turn a blind eye to the actual resources of this wealth. While it is true that Bellamy provides a method on how this wealth came about (i.e. the nation providing for all its citizens), little is discussed, however, on how the nation sustains its flow of money – or the resources that fuel it – beyond the presence of the army of workers at its disposal. It is as if these resources are unquestionably available out there which brings to mind Said's argument that imperial prosperity is only possible because someone else behind the scenes produces it. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said argues that imperialism is at the backdrop of any imperial novel.<sup>48</sup>

#### Industrialization and *Looking Backward*

But perhaps what illustrates Bellamy's novel's contingency upon imperialism is not only its reliance on imperial tropes. It is, also, the novel's promotion of imperialism and its optimistic take on it: that imperialism will eventually and naturally evolve and perfect itself without the need for strikes and objections. When West asks Dr. Leete how the change came about in Boston 2000, Dr. Leete responds that it was simple: "The solution came as the result of a process of

industrial evolution which could not have terminated otherwise. All that society had to do was to recognize and cooperate with that evolution, when its tendency had become unmistakable” (49). Leete explains that the industrial revolution promoted utopia in two ways: first, it gradually eroded small business and replaced it with corporations. These corporations competed with each other and eventually merged into monopolies. These monopolies were then handed to the government who became the employer of its citizens. Throughout the development, Dr. Leete explains to his guest that all that happened was natural and that the agonies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century regarding the progression of industrialization were unnecessary.

It is not hard to notice – from Dr. Leete’s description of how change came about – that the change concurs with imperial propaganda to emphasize that empire is good, that everything is fine and the change will lead to the prosperity of all of its citizens. Dr. Leete in the novel approves of the American imperial *laissez-faire* policies that are a trademark of adventure, freedom, hard work, and ingenuity that define the American dream and believes that these ideals will evolve and improve America in the future. To Bellamy, imperialism is not the problem. Imperialism is a stage of ambition that will lead to socialism. Hence, it should not be tampered with. The problem, according to Bellamy, like other socialists, is the discrepancy between the different social classes within the imperial metropolis in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and Bellamy sees that these discrepancies will disappear in the future.

Furthermore, Dr. Leete’s description of how the change came about also reflects the spirit of the gilded age when America became more industrialized, and was expanding westward and competing with European empires in South America.<sup>49</sup> This age also saw waves of migrants – both from rural America and from abroad – looking for better living condition, hence producing social and economic concerns similar to those in Europe at the time.<sup>50</sup> Bellamy, however, as a

Fabian, sought to resolve imperial issues by swimming with the imperial flow rather than against it. He saw the solution to imperial problems through further advancing capitalism and worldwide markets and felt that the industrial revolution would bring luxury. In other words, Bellamy's answer to imperial problems, ironically, leads to the kind of socialism envisioned by Marx. Interestingly, many of Bellamy's projections did materialize in imperial America through different Bellamy societies and policies adopted by successive American governments.<sup>51</sup>

Indeed, Bellamy's utopia does recall Marx's theory of the dialectical development of history. Furthermore, Bellamy's utopia also calls for nationalization of labor employment (e.g. money, housing, industry) which eventually treats its employees equally and meets all other needs.

Hence, what we see in *Looking Backward* is that utopia and imperialism are not as oppositional or unrelated as one might initially think. As a matter of fact, utopia is contingent upon imperialism. Bellamy used binarism to visualize utopia and he also promoted imperialism as a way to achieve a socialist utopia. These two aspects contributed to the post-civil war imperial context of America and the complex imperial situation in Europe, without which one can assume that *Looking Backward* would fall into oblivion.

In the last section of this chapter, we will see how *Looking Backward* has generated fierce responses among Marxists (exemplified by *News from Nowhere*) that saw the work veering off towards accepting the *status quo* of dire social conditions rather than confronting it. However, we will also see that these responses, though anti-imperial, are nevertheless contingent upon their imperial context.

## ***News from Nowhere and Morris' Anti-Imperial Sentiment***

### *Introduction*

#### ***Jerusalem***

*And did those feet in ancient time  
Walk upon England's mountains green?  
And was the holy Lamb of God  
On England's pleasant pastures seen?*

*And did the Countenance Divine  
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?  
And was Jerusalem builded here  
Among these dark Satanic Mills?*

*Bring me my bow of burning gold!  
Bring me my arrows of desire!  
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!  
Bring me my chariot of fire!*

*I will not cease from mental fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England's green and pleasant land.*

William Blake

William's Blake prelude to *Milton* published in 1805 is a great testimony of the inevitable and tense connection between utopia, the British Empire and the industrial revolution at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this poem, Blake negates an imperial utopian project based upon the industrial revolution and proposes a different imperial utopian project based on romantic imperialism.<sup>52</sup> At the beginning of the poem, Blake questions the imperial promises of the industrial revolution. Since the beginning of the industrial revolution, "no feet of ancient time" walked on England and bestowed glory. No "Jerusalem" was built, no "countenance divine" shined upon England; nothing is seen but ugly "Satanic Mills" of misery. In response to the industrial revolution, Blake calls for a counter-revolution that would truly "build Jerusalem" in

England's "green and pleasant land," make it the real utopia of its time and the center and example (i.e. metropolis of an empire) of civilization. What is interesting about Blake's poem is that its imperial undertones were picked up on by Herbert Parry, who made it into a national anthem for Britain in 1916. This anthem came to represent the idea of fixing whatever went wrong in the empire during World War I and moving on to create a better utopian empire after the War.<sup>53</sup>

Blake's disappointment – in this and other poems (e.g. *The Songs of Innocence* and *The Songs of Experience*) – in the promises of the industrial revolution and his call for another form of a utopian empire has been the strong trend of utopias throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly among socialists who shared concerns with the Romantics about the social instability and poor health and economic conditions the Industrial Revolution brought to the heart of the British Empire.

Hence, it is not surprising that Bellamy's notion of promoting the industrial revolution and allowing it to evolve and smoothly fix the problems of society prompted passionate negative responses from many socialists – particularly non-Fabians – at the time. Morris' *News from Nowhere* is a prime example of socialists who objected to Bellamy's approach. As Alexander Macdonald points out in "Bellamy, Morris and the Great Debate," Morris did not notice *Looking Backward* prior its phenomenal success. In his famous review of Bellamy's book, Morris criticized the nationalistic method of national monopoly and ridiculed the notion of utopia based upon non-luxurious working hours. He described *Looking Backward's* utopian vision as a "dangerous," "semi-fatal," "deadening and discouraging" view that is "unrealistic" and "unachievable" (Morris).<sup>54</sup> In response, Morris wrote *News from Nowhere* (1890) and proposed a future utopia that is emphatically anti-imperial and less industrial. In this utopia, Morris predicts

that the industrial revolution will cause further social unrest and revolutions before England achieves a garden-like utopia driven by the love of work and art rather than comfort and luxury. According to Morris, this love of work, lack of national monopoly, and disappearance of factories is what makes utopia sustainable, desirable and realistic.

*News from Nowhere* is a story about a British socialist (referred to as the Guest) who wakes up in post-revolutionary England. In the future, England has become a socialist utopia whose members work for pure enjoyment rather than paid wages. As the Guest observes the happiness and peacefulness present in the society, he constantly compares it with the pre-revolution British society that is plagued by capitalism, corruption, and pollution.

Morris' pastoral and anti-industrial approach to utopia reflects his adamant and frequently voiced objection not only to the industrial revolution, but to imperialism in general. Many critics have directly and indirectly pointed this out. Critics like Graham Hough in *the Last Romantics*, E.P. Thomson in *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* and others have pointed out the artistic elements of this utopia that contrast with the bleak atmosphere of the industrial revolution. Others have pointed out its pastoral Golden age aspirations (e.g. Lewis Roger), its focus on greenery and ecology (e.g. Florence Boos) and its strong socialist leanings (e.g. Christopher Shaw).<sup>55</sup>

I do not disagree that Morris is a loud Victorian anti-imperialist of his time; his objections towards imperialism are clear and unambiguous. What I intend to point out here, however, is that despite Morris' objection to imperialism, a thorough analysis of his utopia reveals that its relationship with imperialism is much more complex and ambivalent than what Morris and his enthusiasts like to think. First of all, it is the discourse of Victorian imperialism that allowed Morris' socialist ideas in general and his utopias specifically to flourish. Had it not

been the imperial discourse of Victorian England that resulted in social inequality and economic disparities, and had it not been for Morris' and socialists' negotiations with the aftermath of imperialism, *News from Nowhere* and many of Morris's other writings – and socialist writings in general – would not have been popular. In fact, it would not be extreme to say that Morris would not have even written the work had it not been for the imperial context of the British Empire in the first place. As Faulkner attests, *News from Nowhere*'s anti-imperial stance brought Morris fame and controversy because it is “one of the most convincing pieces of Victorian anti-imperialism, and all the more striking and courageous as being written at the beginning of the decade of the Diamond Jubilee, the high point of the British Empire” (25). In other words, Morris' confrontation of his imperial norm is what made him and his work stand out.

Furthermore, the crucial relationship between *News from Nowhere* and imperialism is not only apparent in the oppositional relationship between Morris' views and common imperial views, but also through the former's constant borrowing and negotiation of the latter's tropes. I argue that in *News from Nowhere*, Morris' approach to imperialism is complex to say the least. First, he establishes oppositions prominent in the imperial discourse and, then, he formulates his utopia as a hybrid space between these oppositions. In other words, the utopia in *News from Nowhere* is neither imperial nor anti-imperial. It is a combination of the two. It hosts elements of both imperialism and its opposite. In order to explain my premise here, I will bring up three binaries prominent in the imperial discourse that Morris uses to build his utopia: the metropolis vs. the periphery, civilization vs. savagery, and industrial evolution vs. social evolution. Through finding middle ground between these oppositions, Morris illustrates that it is impossible to project any literary utopia without an imperial backdrop and/or a response to it, which is – in essence – what I am arguing in this dissertation.



### *Metropolis vs. periphery*

As mentioned previously, Morris' novel has been frequently described as a pastoral utopia. According to these critics, not only does Morris call for a pastoral utopia because he perceives that pastoral settings are pragmatic and socially stable, but also because he sees pastoral utopia as aesthetically pleasing and artistic. I argue that despite Morris' vocal antagonism towards Victorian urbanism it is, nevertheless, balanced by constant borrowing of urban tropes – namely urban planning and gardening that construct his utopia. As a matter of fact, as we shall see, the final product Morris presents in *News from Nowhere* is not a pastoral or Golden age locality, but rather a well-planned garden utopia that is a hybrid of imperial urban settings and the rural settings of Victorian England.

The opposition of the metropolis and the periphery in *News from Nowhere* can be seen in Morris' description of how the metropolis of England faded in his new utopia and how nature and fauna took over England. For instance, Morris writes that:

The soap-works with their smoke-vomiting chimneys were gone; the engineer's works gone; the lead-works gone; and no sound of riveting and hammering came down the west wind from Thorneycroft's. ... The stone was a little weathered, but showed no marks of the grimy sootiness which I was used to on every London building more than a year old (14).

What we see in this description is a utopia that is not defined by its features, but rather by the disappearance of imperial features. The smoke, chimneys and factories that were a feature of the British imperial metropolis are gone. Further down, as Morris walks towards the center of utopia he describes a rural road:

The road plunged at once into a beautiful wood spreading out on either side, but obviously much further on the north side, where even the oaks and sweet chestnuts were of a good growth; while the quicker-growing trees (amongst which I thought the planes and sycamores too numerous) were very big and fine-grown.

It was exceedingly pleasant in the dappled shadow, for the day was growing as hot as need be, and the coolness and shade soothed my excited mind into a condition of dreamy pleasure, so that I felt as if I should like to go on forever through that balmy freshness (36).

These two passages set up an opposition. On the one hand, there is England of the past: polluted, overcrowded, displeasing, bare, and dark. On the other hand, there is England of the novel's present: clean, merry and pleasant. The setting of this opposition allows Morris to situate his utopia between them. This can be seen when Morris encounters the center of utopia, which used to be the old center of London:

On the north side of the road was a range of buildings and courts, low, but very handsomely built and ornamented, and in that way forming a great contrast to the unpretentiousness of the houses round about; while above this lower building rose the steep lead-covered roof and the buttresses and higher part of the wall of a great hall, of a splendid and exuberant style of architecture, of which one can say little more than that it seemed to me to embrace the best qualities of the Gothic of northern Europe with those of the Saracenic and Byzantine, though there was no copying of any one of these styles. On the other, the south side, of the road was an octagonal building with a high roof, not unlike the Baptistry at Florence in outline, except that it was surrounded by a lean-to that clearly made an arcade or cloisters to it: it also was most delicately ornamented.

This whole mass of architecture which we had come upon so suddenly from amidst the pleasant fields was not only exquisitely beautiful in itself, but it bore upon it the expression of such generosity and abundance of life that I was exhilarated to a pitch that I had never yet reached. I fairly chuckled for pleasure (25).

What we see in this passage – and many others – is not a chaotic arcadia that is opposite of imperial urbanism. What we see here is a hybrid space between imperial urbanism of the past (the first side of the opposition) and the current (in the novel) natural arcadia (i.e. woods and greenery). In other words, we see urban planning and space domination of a unique nature. At the center of this utopia are glorious buildings that “embrace” the best qualities from the previous empires of “Gothic Northern Europe,” to “Saracenic and Byzantine” and “Florentine” architecture. Alongside these buildings and further down, we see arranged houses that blend with the garden England has become.

This careful description of details demonstrates that Morris’ pastoral utopia is anarchic and drastically anti-imperial as it may initially seem. As a matter of fact, this organization and architecture is meant to “bear” the expression of generosity and abundance of life to a “pitch that the gust has never yet reached.” Furthermore, this landscaping also reflects awareness of conquering space and design that pleases the eye of the colonizer of that space. In other words, the utopians have colonized England and designed its urban space to reflect their philosophy and attitude towards life in similar manners as colonizers have done in fictional and non-fictional colonies (e.g. Robinsonades and urban designs in other settlement colonies). England has not fully reverted to its past pastoral arcadia. It, rather, further incorporated elements of arcadia that would fit the vision of its utopians/colonizer or inhabitants. Anything indigenous (particularly related to the fauna) that does not please the eye is carefully removed and replaced or

camouflaged, as we shall see further down with something more appealing. While urban designing certainly does not deem the utopia the Guest sees as imperial, one can, nevertheless, see that Morris' utopia still recalls an imperial background that is certainly not as exclusively anti-imperial as it may seem.

The language that Morris uses to describe the construction of the landscape of this utopia further supports my premise here. When Morris describes how the change came he writes:

The town *invaded* the country; but the *invaders*, like the warlike invaders of early days, yielded to the influence of their surroundings, and became country people; and in their turn, as they became more numerous than the townsmen, influenced them also; so that the difference between town and country grew less and less; and it was indeed this world of the country vivified by the thought and briskness of town-bred folk which has produced that happy and leisurely but eager life of which you have had a first taste (my emphasis) (79).

What we see in this description is some sort of dynamic power struggle, control and resistance. The country "invaded" the city but was merciful and understanding. It created a hybrid between urban planning and pastoral life. When the host discusses the dystopias of past imperial cities, he describes them as lacking aesthetics. However, the host also acknowledges that the design of these past cities had its justifications: people needed money, and the factories that littered previous empires provided jobs. Once jobs were no longer linked to factories, urban planning shifted towards a hybrid design that did not totally remove remnants of the past, but reconstructed these factories to meet the new needs of people. In other words, what we see here is good form of colonization that aims to improve a setting and reconstruct it to serve the

conquering culture of the country rather than demolish it and fully allow nature to take over as we see in anarchist utopias.

Furthermore, despite the revolutions and turbulent changes, the host also stresses that the urban settings and architecture were not completely removed for both practical and archeological purposes. Among the practical purposes of maintaining past imperial structures, for example, is housing residents from slums until they relocate in newly developed areas:

Our forefathers, in the first clearing of the slums, were not in a hurry to pull down the houses in what was called at the end of the nineteenth century the business quarter of the town, and what later got to be known as the Swindling Kens. You see, these houses, though they stood hideously thick on the ground, were roomy and fairly solid in building, and clean, because they were not used for living in, but as mere gambling booths; so the poor people from the cleared slums took them for lodgings and dwelt there, till the folk of those days had time to think of something better for them; so the buildings were pulled down so gradually that people got used to living thicker on the ground there than in most places; therefore it remains the most populous part of London, or perhaps of all these islands. But it is very pleasant there, partly because of the splendor of the architecture, which goes further than what you will see elsewhere (91).

The maintenance of old architecture here indeed fulfills the practical reasons the host presents. However, it also shows awareness about the importance of archiving, maintaining the past, and illustrating the evolution of society. All these gritty details are imperial in nature since they rely on egocentrism and on glorifying progression. These elements of reconstructing the metropolis illustrate that even though Morris' objection to imperialism in his utopia is voiced out loud, Morris, nevertheless, could not escape some imperial tropes he objects to. As a matter of fact, he

eventually ends up utilizing these tropes to enhance his utopia. In other words, what I am saying here is that empire and utopia in this example remain inextricably bound – in various degrees – even when the author is explicitly trying to be critical of imperialism.

### *Civilization vs. Savagery*

Many postcolonial critics like Said, McClintock and others have pointed out that among the main characteristics associated with imperialists are superiority, sophistication, knowledge, high ethical standards, civility and command over colonized subjects. Sophistication, authority and imperial psyche are aspects Victorians cherished most about their empire. Cecil Rhodes' famous statement about the superiority of the British race exemplifies this:

I contend that we are the finest race in the world and that the more of the world we inhabit, the better it is for the human race. Just fancy those parts that are at present inhabited by the most despicable specimens of human beings what an alteration there would be if they were brought under Anglo-Saxon influence, look again at the extra employment a new country added to our dominions gives (qtd in Flint 248).<sup>56</sup>

To Victorians, the British considered their society – with its sophisticated relationships, cultural and moral conduct – the highest form of civilization, even though this society still struggled with some of its persistent problems. Along with the sense of self-glorification comes the desire to elevate conquered races (i.e. the civilizing mission) and fear of degradation (i.e. going native and losing connection with the superior imperial culture). Hence, in imperial travel literature (from that of Mary Kingsley, to Joseph Conrad, Rudyard Kipling, etc.), the imperial traveler always does three things: one, he holds a sense of high moral ground when describing the natives he encounters; two, he presents his efforts to civilize the natives he encounters as noble; three, he

protects himself from degeneration and going native by constantly setting barriers between his imperial rational and complicated high culture vs. that of the natives.

As discussed regarding previous utopias, the sense of superiority and nobility is a staple of utopian literature. Every utopia thrives on the prospect of superiority over non-utopians. In the Early Modern age, as we have seen in *Utopia* and *New Atlantis*, the hierarchal structure when a utopian encounter occurs is almost always clear: utopians are superior, non-utopian travelers are inferior. This structure is initially altered, however, throughout utopias in the Victorian era where the Victorian traveler is initially presented as superior to non-utopians but then, utopians eventually gain the upper hand. For example, as we have seen in *The Coming Race*, the narrator initially has a sense of command over the environment through surveillance and careful observation. This command and superiority, however, is immediately disseminated when the narrator meets the Vrilya, the superior subterranean utopians.

In *News from Nowhere*, the hierarchical relationship between the Victorian traveler and the utopians follows other Victorian utopias' dynamics that reflect imperial psyche. At first, like other Victorian utopias, the narrator is presented as superior through his observation skills and sense of command. This can be seen in the first encounter between the Guest and the utopians. At the beginning, Morris portrays the Guest as a typical Victorian, with an aura of superiority, encountering a supposedly naïve waterman. The traveler describes the waterman, his attire and attitude the way an ethnographer would describe a native inhabitant:<sup>57</sup>

He was a handsome young fellow, with a peculiarly pleasant and friendly look about his eyes,—an expression which was quite new to me then, though I soon became familiar with it. For the rest, he was dark-haired and berry-brown of skin, well-knit and strong, and obviously used to exercising his muscles, but with nothing rough or coarse about

him, and clean as might be. His dress was not like any modern work-a-day clothes I had seen, but would have served very well as a costume for a picture of fourteenth century life: it was of dark blue cloth, simple enough, but of fine web, and without a stain on it. He had a brown leather belt round his waist, and I noticed that its clasp was of damascened steel beautifully wrought. In short, he seemed to be like some specially manly and refined young gentleman, playing waterman for a spree, and I concluded that this was the case (12).

As in other Victorian travel narratives, what we see here are the surveillance skills of a superior colonizer studying a native inhabitant. In this observation, we sense pseudo-objectivity and clear aura of imperial superiority. The native is handsome and friendly, he is brown-skinned, is “used to exercising his muscle” (12) and is “a refined young gentleman” (12). Following up on the conclusions, the Victorian traveler commands the waterman and the waterman obeys as a servant would obey his master: “so I jumped in without any words, and he paddled away quietly as I peeled for my swim.... and I had my clothes off, I jumped in without more ado. ... Please take me ashore now: I want to get my breakfast” (13). When the traveler/Guest offers to pay the waterman, the waterman is puzzled the way a native would be puzzled by the European system of reward and gratitude:

He looked puzzled, and said, "How much? I don't quite understand what you are asking about. Do you mean the tide? If so, it is close on the turn now."

I blushed, and said, stammering, "Please don't take it amiss if I ask you; I mean no offence: but what ought I to pay you? You see I am a stranger, and don't know your customs—or your coins."



And therewith I took a handful of money out of my pocket, as one does in a foreign country. And by the way, I saw that the silver had oxydised, and was like a blackleaded stove in colour.

He still seemed puzzled, but not at all offended; and he looked at the coins with some curiosity. I thought, well after all, he is a waterman, and is considering what he may venture to take. He seems such a nice fellow that I'm sure I don't grudge him a little over-payment. I wonder, by the way, whether I couldn't hire him as a guide for a day or two, since he is so intelligent (14).

Again, what we see here is a typical encounter between an imperialist and a simplistic native whose social and economic system does not incorporate a monetary system, yet, which resonates with similar encounters from earlier imperial texts that are based on misunderstanding (e.g. *The Voyages of Christopher Columbus* when natives traded with goods rather than money). But then, as the narrative moves on, we see a reversal of the hierarchy. The native eventually explains to the traveler that the reward system in the past is not applicable to the future utopian society. He further reveals that he is aware of the coins and their value to the traveler:

“As to your coins, they are curious, but not very old; they seem to be all of the reign of Victoria; you might give them to some scantily-furnished museum. Ours has enough of such coins, besides a fair number of earlier ones, many of which are beautiful, whereas these nineteenth century ones are so beastly ugly, ain't they? We have a piece of Edward III., with the king in a ship, and little leopards and fleurs-de-lys all along the gunwale, so delicately worked. You see," he said, with something of a smirk, "I am fond of working in gold and fine metals; this buckle here is an early piece of mine” (14).

What we see here then is a reversal of hierarchy: an inversion that has been constantly applied in satire and utopian literature (e.g. *Gulliver's Travels*, *The Coming Race*) to examine cultural constructs (represented here by the idea of trading service with money). As it turns out, the Victorian traveler is not superior. The utopian, while simple and supposedly naïve, is in command. This scenario of the traveler initially holding the upper hand and later losing it to the native utopian, is repeated when the traveler meets all different types of utopians. The narrative shows a subtle, yet curious, questioning of the idea of a civilized capitalist culture more desirable than a simple cooperative pastoral one. This questioning also upsets the idea of the civilizing mission Victorians felt about natives. It also questions the fear of going native – a common fear of degenerating to simpler lifestyles that Victorians saw themselves as having already passed. What we see here, then, is that the simple lifestyle the natives of this British utopia live in is happy, comfortable, healthier and more likable compared to that of the Victorians. Hence, a civilizing mission is not needed. As a matter of fact, as we later see, this simple life is a developed stage of humanity that has already passed through the complexity of Victorian high culture and eventually abandoned it for better life conditions.

To related this observation back to my argument in which I argue that *News from Nowhere* occupies a hybrid space between imperial binary oppositions, what we see in this initial encounter are utopians inhabiting a hybrid space between a colonizer (i.e. imperial and superior) and a colonized (native and inferior). Utopians are not like Golden Age innocent natives. They are aware of their discourse. They cherish it, impose it and instruct the Guest about it. However, their attitude is not totally that of an imperial instructing an invaded civilization. It is rather mild and genuinely welcoming. In other words, the utopians are neither imperialists overrunning a colony, nor are they noble savages unaware of the innocent and beautiful discourse they live in

that is about to be colonized. Utopians in *News from Nowhere* are a hybrid between the two: the colonizer and the colonized.

As a matter of fact, civilizing the natives is questioned in one of the Guest's old host's (i.e. the Old Hammond) rage against empire:

When the civilized World-Market coveted a country not yet in its clutches, some transparent pretext was found—the suppression of a slavery different from and not so cruel as that of commerce; the pushing of a religion no longer believed in by its promoters; the 'rescue' of some desperado or homicidal madman whose misdeeds had got him into trouble amongst the natives of the 'barbarous' country—any stick, in short, which would beat the dog at all. Then some bold, unprincipled, ignorant adventurer was found (no difficult task in the days of competition), and he was bribed to 'create a market' by breaking up whatever traditional society there might be in the doomed country, and by destroying whatever leisure or pleasure he found there. He forced wares on the natives which they did not want, and took their natural products in 'exchange,' as this form of robbery was called, and thereby he 'created new wants,' to supply which (that is, to be allowed to live by their new masters) the hapless, helpless people had to sell themselves into the slavery of hopeless toil so that they might have something wherewith to purchase the nullities of 'civilization.' Ah," said the old man, pointing the dealings of the Museum, "I have read books and papers in there, telling strange stories indeed of civilization (or organized misery) with 'non-civilization'; from the time when the British Government deliberately sent blankets infected with small-pox as choice gifts to inconvenient tribes of Red-skins, to the time when Africa was infested by a man named Stanley" (117).

Hence, what we see here is questioning of Victorian ideals and narratives of imperial adventure and conquest and an assertion that the only progression of humanity is not through the perfection of these ideals and their enforcement upon natives. Nor is it the other way round (i.e. totally disregarding them). *News from Nowhere* suggests that while it is desirable to lose connection with imperialism and high culture embroiled with artificial courtesy, a utopian society would still retain the oppositional structure of civility vs. vulgarity. This basic restructuring of the opposition not only reveals Morris' Little England attitude that developed as a result of interacting with aspects commonly found within the imperial discourse, but also a hybrid approach towards the civilizing mission as a whole. In other words, what this dialogue shows is that without imperial binarism, Morris couldn't have articulated his hybrid utopia.

#### *Natural Progress vs. Industrial Evolution in Utopia*

Perhaps the most prominent aspect of Morris' work, as I mentioned previously, is its rejection of Bellamy's idea of an expanded middle class and his tolerance of the industrial revolution. Morris' vision of utopia is a hybrid between the periphery and the metropolis. From the metropolis, his utopia borrows urban planning and gardening; from the periphery, his utopia borrows the simple setting and life utopians need to manage their everyday life. Morris elaborately describes the achievement of such a goal. To him, the path of progress is complex. In the long chapter "How the Change Came About," the old host describes how utopia is achieved through a long struggle between capitalism/empire and the people aspiring for a better life. In this description, we see revolution, civil war, protests and a long journey of self-awareness that created an advanced and hybrid utopia of simple life.

In this long process, we see two opposing courses of development that merge into a hybrid conclusion. On the one hand, we see intellectual development among utopians that fought

to achieve their utopia. On the other hand, this development did not produce a more sophisticated society, as one would imagine. It rather produced a simple society that is intellectually vicious but nevertheless simplistic. One can argue that this hybrid space thrives on two central ideas that negate established imperial oppositions: the abandonment of the dichotomy of a center vs. periphery and the abandonment of the idea of progress based on the accumulation of capital and territory and the development of machinery. In this utopia, the Guest describes London as a modern “deserted Babylon of civilization” (83). Remnants of the imperial center are gone.

According to the host:

When you get down to the Thames side you come on the Docks, which are works of the nineteenth century, and are still in use, although not so thronged as they once were, since we discourage centralisation all we can, and we have long ago dropped the pretension to be the market of the world (83).

To the host here, though London is still the center of this utopia, it is no longer its metropolis. No longer is London the main loading dock and distribution center of the empire nor is it the catalyst of intellectual and political activity. The abandonment of the idea of center vs. periphery also dissolved the difference between the different classes of people within the empire. When asked about the difference between urban and rural people, the host was confused:

“I don't understand,” said he, “what kind of people you would expect to see; nor quite what you mean by 'country' people. These are the neighbors, and that they like run in the Thames valley. There are parts of these islands which are rougher and rainier than we are here, and there people are rougher in their dress; and they themselves are tougher and more hard-bitten than we are to look at. But some people like their looks better than ours;

they say they have more character in them—that's the word. Well, it's a matter of taste.

Anyhow, the cross between us and them generally turns out well (34).

What we see here is that not only has the decentralization of the metropolis led to the disappearance of classes in the empire itself, but it has also led to human brotherhood longed for after people were “freed from folly,” were “serviceable to each other,” and rarely got into conflicts, which even if they happen, would be easily appeased. Furthermore, the opposite sides of the elites and working class merged into a hybrid class that – as we have seen – are not overtly superior and haughty nor inferior and submissive. All citizens of utopia are at equal footing. It is true that some residents in some parts receive “heavier rain” and wear “rougher dress” while others don't. However, all these issues do not make one group superior to the other; they are merely variety within utopia.

The idea of abandoning a center in *News from Nowhere* is in line with abandoning the industrial revolution which in turn resolved social problems. According to the host:

No sacrifice would have seemed too great a price to pay for getting rid of the 'manufacturing districts,' as they used to be called. For the rest, whatever coal or mineral we need is brought to grass and sent whither it is needed with as little as possible of dirt, confusion, and the distressing of quiet people's lives (87).

To the host, miserable conditions were a result of imperial development that only benefited the rich at the expense of the rest of the population. Getting rid of factories solved the problem.

Other countries – like America – that didn't follow the lead – according to the Host – suffered.

Hence, what I have argued so far is that while many critics argue that *News from Nowhere* is a continuation of pastoral utopianism, one notices that certain elements illustrate that Morris' utopia is different from previous pastoral utopias because it projects the pastoral not as a

stage of innocence but as a developed stage of humanity. As the Guest continues to venture into this utopia, he sees the hybrid of the imperial metropolis in a pastoral land as positive development. In other words, in *News from Nowhere*, Morris seems to say that the reversal of progress, turning native and embracing a simple life, is not an undesired conclusion that reflects decay and anarchy, nor does it mean total dispensation of positive imperial aspects such as civility and noble character. As a matter of fact, it is an evolutionary process towards utopia that Victorians and residents within the empire should embrace and cherish.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I argued that imperial fantasies of Early Modern utopias provided leverage to 19<sup>th</sup> century imperial propaganda. I have also argued that utopian literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century evolved from reflecting imperial fantasies to reflecting imperial skepticism. This skepticism is manifested through raising red flags about where imperial rhetoric is headed, presenting imperial reform from within the imperial frame of thought, or projecting an end to high imperialism and its substitution with post-imperial forms of imperialism. *The Coming Race*, *Looking Backward* and *News from Nowhere* are examples of these three representations of skepticism, respectively. What this cross influence between utopia and imperialism reflects is the interconnection between the two. In a way, utopia dialectically evolves through its imperial discourse. Many of the imperial practices and achievements of England were a result of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> utopian dreams. However, as utopia continues to influence imperial fantasies, it learns from its mistakes and reemerges with new bench marks for the Empire. As a result of this dialectic development both utopian and imperial ideas prosper. In the following chapter, I will discuss the connection between 21<sup>st</sup> century imperialism and utopianism. We will see that, again, as perception of

imperialism developed, so did the utopias of the 21<sup>st</sup> century shift to accommodate these developments and set new imperial bench marks for future empires and utopias.



## CHAPTER IV

### UTOPIA, EMPIRE AND SCIENCE FICTION

#### **Introduction**

In the previous chapter, I argued that Victorian utopianism reflected imperial skepticism. I also argued that utopian skepticism resulted in three categories of utopian literature: some utopias (e.g. *The Coming Race*) use satire to point out problems with imperial rhetoric. Other utopias raise concerns about imperial practices and propose improvements either through working from within the 19<sup>th</sup> century imperial frame (e.g. *Looking Backward*) or by rejecting it and introducing different forms ( i.e. *News from Nowhere*).

In this chapter, I argue that as imperialism developed, so did utopias. In the later 21<sup>st</sup> century, utopian works got more complicated – as imperialism became more complicated – and demonstrated more ambivalence towards the relationship between utopia and imperialism. However, despite their awareness of imperial pitfalls, utopian literature continues to develop from imperial tropes and to engage in imperial themes. In other words, it is still contingent upon imperialism.

A survey of post 1960 utopias shows that many of them continued to negotiate with the same imperial tropes that earlier utopias did. Utopias post 1960's still used the tropes of othering, surveillance, glory, colonization, and frontiers. Furthermore, these late 20<sup>th</sup> century utopias continued to address the same negative effects of imperialism as in earlier utopias such as lack of

social justice and the concentration of wealth among elites. However, these tropes are contextualized within a 20<sup>th</sup> century discourse that is dominated by the culture of the Cold War, the space race, technological and scientific competition, and civil rights movements. Utopias in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, for example, contextualized socialism within the imperial race of the Cold War (e.g. Le Guin's *Dispossessed*, [1974]), within feminist movements (e.g. Marge Percy's *Women at the Edge of Time*, [1976]), within environmental movements (e.g. Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia*, [1975]) and within the space race (e.g. *Star Trek*).

Well known critics like Fredric Jameson, Darko Suvin, Raymond Williams, and Tom Moylan, for example, have discussed the strong relationship between utopian literature and science fiction and John Rieder, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Patricia Kerslake have established the connection between science fiction and imperialism.<sup>58</sup> Howard Segal has discussed the relationship between American technological advancements and utopian literature.<sup>59</sup> Sargent and Bill Ashcroft – as mentioned in the introduction – have brought up the relationship between utopian literature and postcolonialism.<sup>60</sup> Other less noticeable critics have also touched upon the relationship between specific imperial and scientific issues and utopian literature like the space race (e.g. Kligmore) and environmentalism (e.g. Marius de Geus).<sup>61</sup> However, what I will add to this noteworthy body of criticism is the discussion of the direct connection between imperialism and utopian literature.<sup>62</sup> My argument here is that utopia is linked both *indirectly* and *directly* to imperialism: indirectly through science fiction – as these critics have illustrated – and directly through constantly borrowing from utopianism and the negotiation of imperial tropes within the 21<sup>st</sup> century context.

In the following, I will discuss two well-known 20<sup>th</sup> century utopias that demonstrate how contemporary utopian literature is interconnected with imperialism – even though the

writers of these utopias are aware of the ambiguities of this relationship and attempt to escape it. The first example is the *Star Trek* television and film franchise of the 1960's - 1990's; the second is Le Guin's novel, *The Dispossessed* (1974). *Star Trek* is an example of what I call a "dynamic utopia," and *The Dispossessed* is an example of a "critical utopia." By "dynamic utopia" I mean a utopia that is not static, rigid or defined by its perfect social and economic conditions (as is *News from Nowhere*, for example, where it is presumed that everything is ideal and problems are non-present). A dynamic utopia is rather a utopia that is defined by its ideal system of resolving problems in society. In a dynamic utopia, we – readers – are frequently exposed to problems within a specific utopia. However, we are always assured and shown that the system of this utopia is capable of resolving whatever problems and challenges it faces. In other words, dynamic utopias are utopias highlighted by their ability to resolve problems rather than by the ideal conditions they have achieved. Dynamic utopias resist failure and withstand challenges because their unique system is flexible and adaptable to whatever situation it faces, unlike static utopias that run on a well-defined blueprint that cannot be adjusted or altered.

*Star Trek* – the famous TV show – is the best example of a dynamic utopia. In *Star Trek* we see that the United Federation of Planets in the 25<sup>th</sup> century has achieved utopia. However, in this utopia, the Federation constantly faces challenges but manages to overcome them through its unique system of resolving problems (a system based upon scientific evidence, freedom of expression, and expression of creativity). Unlike earlier utopias, *Star Trek* does not ignore problems utopias usually face. *Star Trek* does not brush off the problems its utopia faces and focus on the ideal conditions of the Federation. Instead, every episode in *Star Trek* begins with a problem of its utopia and ends with a resolution that consolidates and improves the utopian

conditions of the Federation and proves to the viewers that the Federation is indeed a desired utopia. We will talk more about the dynamic utopias when I discuss *Star Trek* in detail.

Conversely, critical utopias are similar to dynamic utopias in that they show the problems within utopias. However, critical utopias do not end with solutions. By “critical utopia” I mean post-civil rights movement utopias that Tom Moylan distinguishes from earlier utopias in the century. In his book, *Demand of the Impossible*, Moylan explains that critical utopias are utopias that are critical – in the literal sense of the word – of wholly utopian or dystopian (i.e. black or white) projections. Critical utopias attest that any utopia is complex and ambiguous. Instead of presenting ideal utopian conditions, critical utopias generally present utopian settings that are flawed; they also present utopian citizens coming to terms with these flaws. Like dynamic utopias, critical utopias focus on the problems present in every utopia. Unlike dynamic utopias, however, critical utopias do not end with solutions. Critical utopias leave readers or viewers with unanswered questions and reflections. Le Guin’s *The Dispossessed* is a prime example of a critical utopia. It is a novel about a scientist coming to terms with his flawed anarchist utopia and accepting it the way it is. I will talk about critical utopias in detail further down.

Dynamic and critical utopias are unique to our discussion here for many reasons. First, unlike other contemporary utopias, they do not follow previous utopian patterns (e.g. pastoral and isolated utopias). Hence, discussing their connection to imperialism will not be a repetition of what has been already said in the previous two chapters. Second, dynamic and critical utopias are unique in the sense that they do not portray a rosy society. They are, rather, aware of the problems within utopian settings and they do not ignore them. As a matter of fact, these two types of utopias’ plots rotate around projecting these problems. Finally, I argue that both utopias are also aware of the contingency of utopia upon imperialism and they attempt to separate utopia

and imperialism to illustrate their complexities. However, they fail to do so, which consolidates my argument that utopia is contingent upon imperialism regardless of whether utopian writers like it or not and regardless of whether utopian writers attempt to break it or not.

### ***Star Trek: A Dynamic Utopia/Empire***

*Star Trek* is one of the most successful American TV shows about future adventures of humans in space. The show follows the stories of starships, their crews and the problems they encounter in space. *Star Trek* has been a cultural phenomenon with generations of excited fans, popular conventions that continue to flourish long after the end of the television franchise, and wide academic attention from critics in humanities fields ranging from history, to cultural studies, to literature, etc.<sup>63</sup> Whenever *Star Trek* is brought up, two opinions emerge. One – mainly held by fans and producers – is that it offers a utopian vision of the future; the other – held by many critics – is that it shows an imperial fantasy spilling out into space.<sup>64</sup> Mike Hertenstein summarizes the main element that defines the show’s utopian vision in *The Double Vision of Star Trek: Half Humans, Evil Twins, and Science Fiction*. According to him, *Star Trek*

Presents an optimistic take on the world of tomorrow. It begins with a happy ending, so to speak. Gene Roddenberry’s original vision of the future is set in the context of a human society which has eliminated poverty, disease, social conflict and war, and possesses (without being possessed by) a technology that extends human powers almost indefinitely (17).<sup>65</sup>

Conversely, Jay Goulding, in *Empire, Aliens and Conquest: A Critique of American Ideology in Star Trek and Other Science Fiction Adventures*, summarizes the critical approach and argues that the show is an “intergalactic” reenactment of imperial ambitions that the American media is seeking to propagate to cover up for the government’s imperial adventures during the Cold War

(13). What is problematic about these two contrasting attitudes – and their like – is that they are entrenched in only two contrasting grounds in order to analyze the show. These two opinions ignore elements that contradict their leanings which results in frequent analysis of *Star Trek* that is shallow and easily contested.

In contrast, I argue in this chapter that *Star Trek* is a projection of both an empire and a utopia. *Star Trek* is a dynamic utopia that is defined by imperialism but – at the same time – is aware of its problems in the metropolis and the periphery. *Star Trek* is a grand TV show of an established imperial utopia that is proud of its accomplishments but also improves itself through facing and resolving the problems, through countering other empires and utopias, through learning from its experience, and by having faith in American ideals of freedom, individuality and science.

Throughout the 40-year span of *Star Trek's* development from *The Original Series* (1966-1969), *The Next Generation* (1987-1994), *Deep Space Nine* (1993-1999), *Voyager* (1995-2001), *Enterprise* (2001-2005), and twelve movies, one can see a grand story of an empire that is all too familiar. The Federation of Planets, the main political entity in *Star Trek*, is an empire that started when humans discovered warp drive (as dramatized in the film *Star Trek: the First Contact* [2005]) and transformed from warring nations into one united human nation exploring space and reaching out for other civilizations (best illustrated in *Enterprise* and *The Original Series* that are set in the early days of the Federation).<sup>66</sup> Through time, this nation grew into a well-established and far-reaching empire with a fearsome fleet of spacecraft, armory, and technology (illustrated by *The Next Generation*, *Deep Space Nine* and *Voyager* which portray a far flung empire in space). This empire is also in constant competition with other empires in the galaxy (Romulans, Borg, the Dominion, etc.) in a similar way to how in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the

British Empire competed with other Empires at the time. In addition, the Federation expanded its original mission to explore space into other activities empires usually engage in like diplomatic missions, wars, espionage, and colonization.

Furthermore, the two spinoffs of *The Next Generation*, *Deep Space Nine* and *Voyager*, also consolidate the imperial attitude of the Federation in the show. *Deep Space Nine* is about the life of an outpost that deals with problems within a 21<sup>st</sup> century imperial frontier. *Voyager* is a reincarnation of the odyssey-like imperialist's journey back home, where a Federation captain and her crew are lost after an encounter with a Federation enemy.

*Star Trek* is embroiled with imperial rhetoric that unambiguously glorifies the superiority of the Federation. The show is also heavily reliant on imperial tropes like surveillance, othering, colonization, civilizing mission, and frontiers. As a matter of fact, the connection between *Star Trek* and imperialism is evident right from the famous opening of every episode in the show's first series: "Space: the final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise. Its five-year mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before." The connotation of this famous opening is that of confidence and glory present in any empire. Space is a frontier to the empire; the world in space is exotic and "strange," and space travel requires the audacity of a fearless and righteous imperialist and his crew.<sup>67</sup> This opening also disguises the practices of imperialism the same way previous imperial rhetoric did with previous empires. The concealed mission of the Enterprise – the main ship in the show – is to "explore space" and "to seek out new life and new civilizations" which are both – as we know – preludes to imperial cartography that almost always ends up in colonization and hegemony despite the imperialists' insistence otherwise.<sup>68</sup>

Indeed, *Star Trek* is about constant engagement with the pros and cons of empire and the best way to overcome imperial problems. However, it is also a utopian show because it has an optimistic outlook towards imperial practices and the future of imperialism. In the series, the Federation's metropolis is an achieved utopia that has eliminated poverty, sexism, racism and all other social discontent. The show is also utopian because it runs on the premise that every problem has a solution. As mentioned earlier, every episode in *Star Trek* begins with a problem and ends with a solution. These solutions boost the justifications of imperialism and present imperial projects as utopian and aspiring. To demonstrate how the show is both imperial and utopian at the same time, let us examine one of the earliest episodes in the first season that sets the tone for later episodes: the "Devil in the Dark" which aired on March 9, 1967.<sup>69</sup>

#### *The Devil in the Dark*

"The Devil in the Dark" is an early episode of *Star Trek* and is the favorite among *Star Trek* writers, actors and fans.<sup>70</sup> This episode is a good example of how empire and utopia are interconnected with each other and how solutions in the show justify imperial practices.<sup>71</sup> In "the Devil in the Dark," the starship Enterprise crew is asked to assist the Federation's miners of preguim (a fictionalized precious mineral) in the remote planet of Junas VI to defeat a monster in the mines that is killing the miners. After investigating the incidents, encountering and attempting to kill the monster, Spock mind-melds with it and realizes that the monster is a mother protecting the eggs of the next generation of the original inhabitants of the planet. These inhabitants die off every 50,000 years, leaving one of them to protect their eggs. In the process of mining, the miners have been accidentally destroying these eggs, and the monster retaliated by attacking and killing the miners. Upon learning this, Kirk, the captain of the starship, strikes a "*modus operandi*" (i.e. an ideal compromise) with the monster (the Horta): That she and her



offspring mine her planet and hand the minerals to the Federation and, in exchange, the Federation will not kill them. The Horta agrees to the proposition because – according to Spock – it is “logical” and the Horta is “an intelligent and sensible being.” The episode ends with a happy note of harmony and coexistence between colonizer and the indigenous race.

The “Devil in the Dark” is a classic allegory of an ideal imperial approach to colonization: the original inhabitants should allow – or rather assist – the colonizer in colonizing their planet if they are to be allowed to survive. Furthermore, it is common knowledge that the original inhabitants have no right to use their natural resources simply because they do not need them or care about them and because their life is simple and unsophisticated. In the episode, we see the clear binary opposition of the colonizer vs. the colonized. The colonizer (i.e. the Federation) is civilized, upright, logical, righteous, kind, and interested in a supposedly *terra nullius* site, since the Horta is nowhere to be seen and not a hominid in the first place; the colonized (i.e. the Horta: a non-hominoid carbon-based inhabitant) is a heinous, simplistic and demonized gooey blob that resides in the darkest parts of the planet not wanting to be seen. The colonizer arrives and ravishes the planet, but the Horta simply forgives them – and even assists them – because the colonizers are earnest and sincere and they should not be held accountable for their massacre. The damage caused was only accidental.

Despite the fact that “The Devil in the Dark” is a classic example of imperial logic, the episode, nevertheless, does call this logic into question and presents the encounter with the Horta as a problem within the dynamic utopia of *Star Trek*. On the one hand, the planet amply supplies the Federation (the utopia) with its needs for preguim and other minerals, more so than “a thousand planets” supply, which makes it crucial for the Federation to colonize it. On the other hand, mining the planet is clearly a threat to the existence of its original inhabitants. In classical

imperial scenarios and utopias, the solution to a problem as such is, usually, to forcefully push aside or destroy the original inhabitants who are crippling imperial prosperity (as we saw in *Utopia* and *The Coming Race* for example). In the “Devil in the Dark,” however, we see that the complexities of colonization are acknowledged, and the solution is not to destroy the original inhabitant as the miners suggested initially. The ideal solution the Federation proposes acknowledges the rights of the colonized to exist. As a matter of fact, the “devil” is eventually liked. According to Kirk – and later the miners – she is “kind,” “harmless,” “most sensible” and can be of great assistance to the Federation’s utopia. The deal that the Federation strikes with her not only brings peace to both of them, but also cooperation in favor of the Federation.

The *modus operandi* in the “Devil in the Dark” supposedly provides the viewers a glimpse of the way the show’s producers saw the future human utopia conducting its business. However, it also presents an ideal fantasy of informal imperialism nowadays. Many modern informal empires do not want to engage in previous horrible imperial practices of colonization. Yet, these empires are still dependent on exploiting natural resources from colonies and other “less civilized” nations. In *Star Trek*, this is evident in the mining colonies in different planets across the galaxy (e.g. Ardana, Rigel XII, and Capella VI). After all, even the replicators – the technology that produces everything in *Star Trek* – still needs raw material to produce goods. What “the Devil in the Dark” illustrates is that even though utopian rhetoric in *Star Trek* is imperial, it is full of elegies of peace and non-interference with others. What we see here is that a utopian solution to colonization is, in fact, an imperial solution. The utopia of the Federation thrives only because it has massive mining and natural resources across the galaxy, and only because it was able to pacify and convince the original inhabitants of these planets to work for the Federation.

But then, the question that follows and that *Star Trek* usually attempts to resolve is: is there any possibility of maintaining a utopia without imperial practices? The answer that *Star Trek* producers constantly end up with is: *no*. No matter how much they try, utopias perish unless they develop imperial practices. Let us look at two unimperial utopias in *Star Trek* as examples that demonstrate my point that *Star Trek's* utopias cannot survive without imperialism: “the Apple” and “The Masterpiece Society.”

*“The Apple” and “The Masterpiece Society”*

“The Apple” (1967) from *The Original Series* and “The Masterpiece Society” (1992) from *The Next Generation* are two *Star Trek* episodes that demonstrate how utopias cannot survive without reverting to imperial policies. In “The Apple,” the Enterprise crew beams down into an Eden-like utopia on the Gamma Trianuli VI. In this utopia, the noble savage-like inhabitants sustained a thousand years deal with a God-Machine (Vaal). They provide the machine with food and the Machine in return provides them with social stability, abundance, and happiness. Despite the stability and happiness present in this utopia, many members of the *Star Trek* team thought that these conditions were inhumane. In the words of McCoy (the doctor of the spaceship), this utopia is one of “stagnation” that left its population undeveloped for thousands of years. The inhabitants of this utopia needed life and evolution to achieve the utopian vision of the *Star Trek* team. Kirk (the captain of the spaceship) agrees and eventually destroys the God Machine, which leaves the inhabitants in disarray. As the starship team prepares to leave the planet, Kirk assures the inhabitants that all will be well and that with the *help* of the Federation, they will become free, they will evolve, and they will be happy in a “real” utopia under the Federation’s hegemony and not a delusional one under Vaal.

In “The Masterpiece Society,” a similar situation occurs. The Enterprise attempts to save a human colony from a stray stellar core fragment from a dead star. When the away team beams into the colony, they see a genetically engineered utopia where every person is assigned to a duty and is genetically engineered to accomplish it. This utopia (Moab) has maintained a strict isolationist policy and has been successful for 200 years. Despite its success, however, and upon seeing the Enterprise, many of the utopian residents request to leave their utopia and join the Federation because they see its ideals as better than theirs. This sudden desertion wrecks Moab and the story ends with a final note on the dangers and fallibility of isolationism and genetics and on the merits of the Federation’s American ideals.

“The Apple” and “The Masterpiece Society” are two episodes that demonstrate the contingency of utopia upon imperialism. In these two episodes, we first see opposite utopias: one static and isolated and one dynamic and expansive. In “The Apple,” for example, the static utopia is the Edenic utopia that did not progress for thousands of years. Like More’s *Utopia*, it is isolated and well protected; it has a dangerous landscape with planted mines and poisonous roses to fend off intruders, and, like *Utopia*, only the inhabitants of this planet know how to navigate through it. The dynamic utopia in “The Apple,” on the other hand, is that of the Federation, which strives to develop across the galaxy through discovery, freedom, colonization, and aspiration to perfection. The ideology of these utopias are opposite of each other. The static utopia’s utopian principle is countenance and submission and thus living in peace and harmony; the dynamic utopian principles are intuition and progress. What eventually happens when these utopias collide is that the dynamic one overcomes the static one simply because the dynamic utopia is ambitious and resides on imperial policies of civilizing missions while the other is not. Spock and McCoy’s discussion when they see the people feed Vaal illustrates this opposition:

Spock: Doctor, you insist on applying human standards to non-human cultures. I remind you that humans are only a tiny minority in this galaxy.

McCoy: There are certain absolutes, Mister Spock, and one of them is the right of humanoids to a free and unchained environment, the right to have conditions which permit growth.

Spock: Another is their right to choose a system which seems to work for them.

McCoy: Jim, you're not just going to stand by and be blinded to what's going on here.

These are humanoids, intelligent. They need to advance and grow. Don't you understand what my readings indicate? There's been no progress here in at least ten thousand years. This isn't life. It's stagnation.

Spock: Doctor, these people are healthy and they are happy. Whatever you choose to call it, this system works, despite your emotional reaction to it.

McCoy: It might work for you, Mister Spock, but it doesn't work for me. Humanoids living so they can service a hunk of tin. ("The Apple")

What we see in this Socratic debate is that as Spock continues to point out the utopian aspects of the planet and the right of its citizens to live according to their beliefs, McCoy acknowledges the presence of this utopia but it simply does not "work" for him. This conversation reflects imperial enigmas towards the noble savage ideals. Some imperialists – represented here by Spock – do not want to disrupt this static utopia. Other imperialists – represented by McCoy – want to civilize these savages and improve their culture.

In the end, Kirk sides with McCoy. When he bids farewell to the inhabitants who are left in chaos, he assures them that they have achieved the "right" utopia, which is the one that he and McCoy see fit for them:

You'll learn to care for yourselves, with our help. And there's no trick to putting fruit on trees. You might enjoy it. You'll learn to build for yourselves, think for yourselves, work for yourselves, and what you create is yours. That's what we call freedom. You'll like it, a lot. And you'll learn something about men and women, the way they're supposed to be. Caring for each other, being happy with each other, being good to each other. That's what we call love. You'll like that, too, a lot. You and your children. (“The Apple”)

Here we see the civilizing mission at work. The inhabitants of utopia are savages, and it is the duty of the imperialists (the Federation) to civilize them. The inhabitants of the utopia will “learn” how to care for themselves, with the “help” of the Federation. They will learn to “build,” “think,” and they will earn their “freedom” and live “the way they’re supposed to be” (i.e. the ways of the Federation). Any other lifestyle that contradicts the Federation’s ideals is wrong and must be changed. It is with the “help” of the Federation that the people of Vaal will continue to develop and achieve the Federation’s standards of utopia, and “what is more” – to use Kipling’s phrase – “they *will* like it” (my emphasis).<sup>72</sup> In other words, what we see here is that eventually the static, isolated and passive utopia loses to the aggressive, dynamic and expanding utopia. What we get from this episode is that static and isolated utopias cannot exist in isolation. Utopias can only survive through imperial means: through aggression, through pushing boundaries, through imposing standards on others and through evolving to become stronger and more efficient by the day.

“The Masterpiece Society,” like “The Apple,” reiterates the importance of utopias being aggressive in a similar manner. In the episode, we see a static utopia that brought itself to perfection in isolation from other inhabitants in the galaxy. As a result of its isolation, the ideals of this utopia collapsed in front of the Federation’s ideals even though Moab’s inhabitants and

environment are perfect and better structured than that of the Federation. The inhabitants of Moab, for example, have no physical imperfections, since the founding fathers – in Hannah’s (the chief engineer of Moab) words – didn’t want the members of their utopia to suffer. The society of Moab also doesn’t host criminals and every person has a designed duty he or she is trained and genetically engineered to fulfill. What we see here again is that the endurance and success of the Federation’s utopia is a result of its aggressive policies that allowed it to progress and constantly upgrade itself; unlike Moab, the static utopia, which lost edge because of its isolation.

Despite the obvious connection between utopian success and imperialism, it is important to mention that the producers of *Star Trek* were aware of the problematic contingency of utopian rhetoric and practices of imperialism. However, their response to this enigma is that this connection is disliked but it is unavoidable. At the end of both episodes, the audience is left in a dilemma about whether the Federation’s policies are right or wrong. In the episode “The Apple,” Kirk and Spock discuss this dilemma:

Spock: Captain, you are aware of the biblical story of Genesis.

Kirk: Yes, of course I'm aware of it. Adam and Eve tasted the apple and as a result were driven out of paradise.

Spock: Precisely, Captain, and in a manner of speaking, we have given the people of Vaal the apple, the knowledge of good and evil if you will, as a result of which they too have been driven out of paradise.

Kirk: Doctor, do I understand him correctly? Are you casting me in the role of Satan?

Spock: Not at all, Captain.

Kirk: Is there anyone on this ship who even remotely looks like Satan?

Spock: I am not aware of anyone who fits that description, Captain.

Kirk: No, Mister Spock. I didn't think you would be. (“The Apple”)

In this short, light-humored discussion, Spock – the Vulcan with devil-like pointed ears – is concerned that the Enterprise has destroyed a utopia. Kirk brushes Spock’s concern aside and questions Spock’s appearance indicating that the Federation is not evil and that it does not drift people away from paradise.

In “The Masterpiece Society,” a similar reflection occurs. Captain Picard was not happy about the collapse of Moab:

Picard: If we ever needed reminding of the importance of the Prime Directive, it is now.

Riker: The Prime Directive doesn't apply. They're human.

Picard: Doesn't it? Our very presence may have damaged, even destroyed, their way of life. Whether or not we agree with that way of life or whether they're human or not is irrelevant, Number One. We are responsible.

Riker: We had to respond to the threat from the core fragment didn't we?

Picard: Of course we did. But in the end we may have proved just as dangerous to that colony as any core fragment could ever have been. (“The Masterpiece Society”)

Here, the only difference between this ending and the previous ending is an unimportant reversal of roles. In the previous episode it is the captain’s second in command (Spock) who raises the concern while the captain (Kirk) brushes it off. In “The Masterpiece Society,” it is the captain (Picard) who raises the concern while his first officer (Riker) downplays it. Other than that, the ending leaves the audience with a sense that what happened was unavoidable.

Looking into both episodes and the logic of those who objected to the interference, one can see that the question the producers push for is not whether the Enterprise’s interferences



were right or wrong. The question the audience is left with in these episodes is whether there were *any other* solutions or not. According to the plot, and after second thoughts at the end of both episodes, the answer is that there were *no* other solutions but to push one utopia over the other. While it is true that the inhabitants of both planets had good lives, the colonization and destruction of their paradises was inevitable in “The Apple.” Even though Kirk could have just starved Vaal enough to weaken his strength and break the Enterprise loose from Vaal’s grip, he yet chose to weaken it and then destroy it. According to him, there was no other option but to do so. In a similar manner in “The Masterpiece Society,” Picard could have allowed the leader of Moab to keep his citizens for six months to build up their utopia before letting them go. However, Picard decided against it. In both cases, it is the imperial ideology of the Federation that motivated both Kirk and Picard to allow the destruction of weaker utopias. This ideology resides on superiority, the civilizing mission, and teaching others that freedom, individuality and progress (i.e. utopian ideals of empires) are the ultimate non-negotiable ideals any utopia must achieve.

Thus far, I have demonstrated that isolated utopias cannot exist in the world of *Star Trek* because they will be overrun by other utopias. Even though the two shows are almost 20 years apart, they still convey the same message. Isolated and peaceful utopias fail because they are not imperialistic, they do not have the means to fend for themselves and they assume that they would be left alone as far as they leave others alone. In the following, I will demonstrate how *Deep Space Nine* further consolidates this imperial and utopian vision of *Star Trek*. I argue that it is this series in its totality – and not isolated episodes – that asserts the notion that in order for utopia to survive and sustain itself, it has to be aggressive and imperial.

## *Deep Space Nine*

*Deep Space Nine* is a spinoff of *Star Trek's Next Generation* that ran from 1993-1999. Unlike other *Star Trek* series in which the main events take place in a ship, *Deep Space Nine* takes place in an outpost space station in the Federation's frontier. This outpost is strategically located near a wormhole that regulates the travel between the alpha and gamma quadrants of the galaxy.<sup>73</sup> Like any outpost in the real world, *Deep Space Nine* is controlled and regulated by the Federation's policies and, like any outpost in a frontier, it faces the same challenges any imperial outpost regularly faces in a frontier, such as ethnic conflicts and cultural misunderstandings (e.g. "The Ascent" in which Odo and Quark, who don't get along, must work together to escape a planet), threats of invasion (e.g. "The Circle," in which a xenophobic Bajoran group attempts to overtake the station), and conflicts with nearby enemies, the Dominion and the Cardassians (throughout the last four seasons in the series). Through the endeavor and cooperation of the team in charge of this outpost and their ability to overcome conflicts and difficulties, *Deep Space Nine* survives the harsh conditions and becomes a utopia exemplary of prosperity and harmony.

Additionally, *Deep Space Nine* is an arc story of two empires/utopias clashing with each other: the Federation – a collection of races led by humans from the Alpha Quadrant – and the Dominion – a collection of races led by the Founders or Changelings – from the Gamma Quadrant. The Changelings are a peaceful introverted species that wants to be left alone in their idyllic interlinked society (i.e. the Great Link) after being oppressed for thousands of years by non-liquid life forms (i.e. the solids). In order to achieve peace, the Changelings believe that they have to take control of other aggressive races and, to do so, they genetically engineered two races (i.e. the Jim Hadar and the Vortas) to carry on the job while they live in exclusion. The arc

story of *Deep Space Nine* ends when the species residing in the wormhole decides to put an end to the war between the Federation and the Dominion and block each from aggressing the boundaries of the other.

*Deep Space Nine* has been frequently described as hosting the dark themes of the *Star Trek* world.<sup>74</sup> In the following, I argue the contrary: that *Deep Space Nine* is, in fact, the embodiment of the utopian ideal of Gene Rodenberry and that the series further – and adamantly one might add – expresses that utopia is strongly contingent upon imperialism. I will demonstrate my point through analyzing multiculturalism and the War with the Dominion. Multiculturalism in this series is a utopian aspect maintained by hegemony. The Dominion War illustrates that utopian ideals cannot be maintained through non-imperial means.

### **First: Deep Space Nine and Multiculturalism**

*Deep Space Nine* is part of the grand utopia of *Star Trek*. It is part of the optimistic future the creators of the show and its fans saw, particularly in its portrayal of diversity at work in the universe.<sup>75</sup> In *Deep Space Nine*, the station is full of species of different kinds and backgrounds who often get along but who brawl with each other occasionally. The station is also a safe haven for castaways, deserters, lonely species, exiles and deviants who make the station their new home. Kathy Ferguson beautifully describes this diversity:<sup>76</sup>

Garrack, the exiled Cardassian ex-spy who became the station's tailor; Gul Dukat's half Cardassian, half Bajoran daughter, a mixed-species child whose only possible home is the liminal space of the station; Quark, the Ferengi bartender who both upholds and subverts his species' 'fanatical pursuit of prophet'; Sisko, an officer in the secular Federation who has been picked by the Prophets to be their sacred Emissary; Odo, the orphaned

changeling who combines a longing to rejoin his murderous species with an unflagging loyalty to “solids” (species which cannot change shape); Worf, the Klingon raised by humans; Dax, the symbiotic being called a Trill who has lived nine lifetimes. (182)

Furthermore, *Deep Space Nine* is also utopian because, like other shows in the series, it advocates the American dream of equality, justice, and freedom through constantly contrasting these ideals with that of other utopias in the frontier (particularly with the Dominion as we shall see). In *Deep Space Nine*, everyone is accepted the way they are within the boundaries of the law. Odo, even though a Changeling, is tolerated; Quark, even though greedy and shady, is accepted; and Worf, the Klingon, even though aggressive, is welcome.

While it is true that *Deep Space Nine* presents a close to ideal situation on multiculturalism in that it encourages different species to live together and to practice – to a certain extent – their cultural and social customs, one cannot overlook the fact that this metaphor in utopia still treats these species as humans who belong to different, but similar, Western cultures. For example, aliens socialize in the promenade (the Bar of the Station), they get drunk, they gamble, flirt and they are interested in Dabo girls (escorts in the station). Furthermore, they eat the same food, breath the same air, have four limbs and express the same emotions and communicate like humans. All these similarities, in effect, underscore the idea of diversity between drastically different races. Furthermore, this multicultural space is also maintained by keeping the hegemony of the Federation over other races. In the station, it is only the Federation’s laws and codes that are accepted, even though the station belongs to Bajorans and is in Bajoran space.

Throughout the series, we are constantly reminded that anything that contradicts the Federation's interests or principles is not tolerated. This can be seen in the discussion between Worf, Dax, and Sisko (the chief of security, chief science officer, and captain of the station, respectively) after Worf violates the law by exercising a Klingon ritual of settling a family dispute between him and his brother in "Sons of Mogh":

Worf: Captain, I do not have an answer. Sir, I realise my actions were in violation of Starfleet regulations, but ...

Sisko: Regulations? We're not talking about some obscure technicality, Mister Worf. You tried to commit premeditated murder.

Dax: Benjamin, it wasn't murder. Worf and Kurn were performing a Mauk-to'Vor ritual. It's part of Klingon belief that when ...

Sisko: At the moment, I don't give a damn about Klingon beliefs, rituals or custom. Now I have given you both a lot of leeway when it comes to following Klingon traditions, but in case you haven't noticed, this is not a Klingon station, and those are not Klingon uniforms you're wearing. There is a limit to how far I'll go to accommodate cultural diversity among my officers and you've just reached it. When your brother is released from the infirmary, you better find another way to settle your family problems. Is that clear?

Worf: Captain, it may not be possible to ....

Dax: It's clear. There are definitely other possibilities for Kurn. This will never happen again.

Sisko: You're damn right it won't. Now both of you, get out! ("Sons of Mogh")

In other words, what this encounter demonstrates is a fake claim of inclusion and acceptance of other cultures and rituals. The fact of the matter is that other cultures in the Federation are only tolerated as long as they do not contradict the Federation's law, which is, in essence, American ethics. Here, Worf was shamed because he broke the Federation's law, even though he was following the established tradition of his culture and even though his brother Kurn agreed to it. Furthermore, what we see is also a silencing of any chance of explanation or accommodation of different points of view. When Worf tries to explain his stance to Sisko, Sisko doesn't even allow him to finish. Even Dax, who is supposedly defending Worf, interrupts the discussion and hushes Worf into silence, which, in essence, demonstrates that the Federation's regulations are superior and unquestionable.

The hegemony of the Federation over other cultures can also be seen in the schooling system at the station. In "In the Hands of the Prophet," Keiko – the principle of the school – instructs children, who are mostly Bajorans, in the Federation's "science" that contradicts Bajoran faith. Conflict between the Bajorans' faith and the Federation's science arises when the issue of the wormhole comes up. To the Federation, the wormhole is a natural phenomenon, *discovered* by the Federation's Captain Sisko, and the residents of the hole are a space species. To the Bajorans, these residents are prophets and the wormhole, which they already know about, is their residence. When the Bajorans object to Keiko describing their Gods as mere species to Bajoran children, Keiko rebuffs the objection and refuses to use the term "prophets" even though her action complicates the tense relationship between the Federation and the Bajorans, who see the Federation as yet another invader attempting to establish an imperial presence in their territory. When Keiko and Sisko discuss the problem in front of Kira – the Bajoran Militia officer assigned in at the station – Kira supports her people. Keiko interrupts:

Keiko: You can't possibly believe teaching the facts about the wormhole amounts to blasphemy?

Kira: I think some revisions in the school curriculum might be appropriate. You teach a lot of Bajoran children.

Keiko: I'm not going to let a Bajoran spiritual leader dictate what can or can't be taught in my classroom.

Kira: Then maybe we need two schools on the station. One for the Bajoran children, another for the Federation.

Sisko: If we start separating Bajoran and Federation interests...

Kira: A lot of Bajoran and Federation interests are separate, Commander. I've been telling you that all along.

Sisko: Nobody's saying that there can't be spiritual teaching on this station, Major, but can't it be in addition to what's taught in Mrs. O'Brien's classroom?

Kira: But if she's teaching a fundamentally different philosophy...

Keiko: I'm not teaching any philosophy. What I'm trying to teach is pure science.

Kira: Some might say pure science, taught without a spiritual context, is a philosophy, Mrs. O'Brien.

Sisko: My philosophy is that there is room for all philosophies on this station. Now, how do you suggest we deal with this?

Kira: I'm not sure you can. ("In the Hands of the Prophets")

In essence, what we see here are issues all too common within imperial metropolises and frontiers. We see the Federation's ideals pitched against that of the Bajorans and science (a characteristic of rational imperialism) pitched against superstition (a characteristic of the

indigenous inhabitants). In an inclusive and fair environment, the beliefs and wishes of the majority (i.e. the Bajorans) would have been respected. However, here, it is the Federation's beliefs that triumph, even though Sisko admits later to his son Jake that the Bajorans' faith was their means of survival throughout their hardship and that whether the species were prophets or mere aliens is a matter of interpretation:

My point is, it's a matter of interpretation. It may not be what you believe, but that doesn't make it wrong. If you start to think that way, you'll be acting just like Vedek Winn, only from the other side. We can't afford to think that way, Jake. We'd lose everything we've worked for here. ("In the Hands of Prophets")

Sisko's reflection here shows that he understands the situation. However, he is not concerned whether to yield to the preference of the majority or not. He is only concerned that the situation might jeopardize his mission to incorporate Bajor into the Federation (i.e. imperial expansion). As the show continued, the discontented Bajorans blew up the school and were charged with terrorism. This ending is common for many enforced imperial policies that discriminate against the natives in the real world.<sup>77</sup> Yet, the writers of the show insist that *Deep Space Nine* is about diversity; it is *only* the imposition of faith upon others that is not tolerated here. As Robert Wolfe, the writer of the episode, affirms:

I have no argument with someone having a fundamentalist belief in Christianity or Islam or Judaism or Buddhism or anything else, but I do have a serious objection to people trying to impose their values on other people. And that's what this episode is about. No one has the right to force anyone to believe the things that they believe. That's one of the beautiful things about Gene Roddenberry's vision of IDIC (Infinite Diversity in Infinite



Combinations), and that was one of the things that we really wanted to hammer home here. Sisko does everything he can, not to impose his values on the Bajorans, but Vedek Winn is determined to impose her values on everyone (68).<sup>78</sup>

Wolfe's assertion here is lovely. However, it does not reflect the events in the episode; the Bajorans were not imposing their faith upon others. They were only asking the Federation's school to teach Bajoran kids according to Bajoran tradition. As a matter of fact, it is the Federation that is imposing its science on Bajoran children. This proves that while it is true that *Deep Space Nine* does host utopian infinite diversity, it still remains an imperial outpost that parallels outposts in real life such as the British outposts in the Falklands or Hong Kong where local cultures are tolerated to a certain degree and where the culture of the colonizer is enforced upon others through missionary schools and other government sponsored educational institutions.<sup>79</sup>

### **War with the Dominion**

Thus far, I have demonstrated that utopia in *Deep Space Nine* is maintained through the Federation's hegemony. I now demonstrate how utopias in *Deep Space Nine* are also maintained through aggression. In *Deep Space Nine*, there are two utopias: that of the Federation and that of the Changelings/Founders. When Odo discovers the Great Link (i.e. the utopic and harmonious society of the Changelings) ("The Search II"), the female Changeling describes it as the ultimate ideal society where everything is shared including thoughts and feelings. In the Great Link, the Changelings find peace, happiness, relaxation and harmony without materialistic needs. No Changeling hurts or kills any other Changeling, and, when one does, he/she is expelled from this utopia (like Odo in "Broken Link"). The utopia in the Great Link also resembles many utopias in the past like *New Atlantis* that sends seekers of knowledge across the world (with 100

Changelings sent to explore the world and return to enrich the Great Link as we see in the “Chimera” episode) and *News from Nowhere* where people live in harmony and happiness with no sense of privacy and selfhood.

However, what is also stressed about the Changelings is that along with their isolation, they are an aggressive empire. Their policy is to rule the quadrant and bring peace to the “chaotic universe.” For the Changelings, establishing peace around the galaxy correlates with peace in the Great Link. When Odo realizes that the Changelings were in fact the Founders (i.e. the leaders of the Dominion and the enemies of the Federation), for example, he gasps as the female Changeling explains their motivation for dominance:

Odo: You're the Founders.

Female Changeling: Ironic, isn't it? The hunted now control the destinies of hundreds of other races.

Odo: Why control anyone?

Female Changeling: Because what you can control can't hurt you. Many years ago we set ourselves the task of imposing order on a chaotic universe.

Odo: Is that what you call it? Imposing order? I call it murder.

Female Changeling: What you call it is no concern of ours.

Odo: How do you justify the deaths of so many people?

Female Changeling: The solids have always been a threat. That's all the justification we need.

Odo: These solids have never harmed you. They travel the galaxy to expand their knowledge. Just as you once did.

Female Changeling: The solids are nothing like us.

ODO: No, I suppose they're not. And neither am I. I've devoted my life to the pursuit of justice, but justice means nothing to you, does it?

Female Changeling: It's not justice you desire, Odo, but order. The same as we do. We can help you satisfy that desire in ways the solids never could. You will understand once you've taken your place in the Great Link. .... I hope that one day you'll return to us, Odo, and take your rightful place within the Dominion. ("The Search II")

What we see here, then, is that the motivation of the Changelings to dominate the Gamma Quadrant and eliminate dissent (i.e. murdering people in Odo's terms) is not usual. It is to seek stability in which their utopia can thrive. Without stability, there is no utopia.

When Odo bids farewell to the Changelings, the Female Changeling promises to visit Odo in the future because the Alpha Quadrant "seems wreck with chaos" and "could use some order," meaning that it has become a threat to the Great Link and thus needs to be dominated. The Female Changeling's justification is logical and reasonable even though it is made to sound horrific. As we have seen in the previous section, utopia cannot prevail in isolation unless it exerts its influence over others and enforces order around it; otherwise, it will always be threatened by other entities. As a matter of fact, looking into events throughout *Deep Space Nine*, one can see that the Gamma Quadrant is in fact peaceful and organized because the Changelings stomped out all other empires in it and enacted peace, while the Alpha Quadrant is still fully of warring empires in competition and conflict and is in constant turmoil.

Hence, *Deep Space Nine* is a clash of two utopias and empires at the same time: the Dominion and the Federation. The aggressiveness of the Dominion is well articulated. However, little is said about that of the Federation that, in fact, thrives through expansion and colonization more so than the Dominion but covers up its policies with an optimistic rhetoric that is similar to

the imperial rhetoric of any empire in the past. Furthermore, the rhetoric and the reality of running the Federation's imperial rhetoric resembles that of empires in real life. The Federation argues that it is present in the station to "assist" the Bajorans – who have no expertise in running advanced stations – and for "protecting" them from strong and greedy empires nearby (i.e. Cardassians). This rhetoric, of course, conceals the priority of the Federation in controlling the wormhole rather than protecting Bajor. As a matter of fact, Bajor is frequently put at risk because the Federation is more interested in the wormhole than Bajor, as we see throughout the War with the Dominion. This imperial interest in strategic locations resembles imperial practices of guarding important canals and strategic locations in reality, such as the British with the Suez Canal in the past, and the Americans with the Panama Canal nowadays.

In many ways then, imperialism in *Deep Space Nine* is seen in the presence of Said's three characteristics of imperialism which he defines as "the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory" (9).<sup>80</sup> Regarding practice, although the Federation is invited to assist the Bajorans, it doesn't take more than two episodes for Sisko to end up in command and Major Kira, the Bajoran who was initially in charge, becoming his assistant. The justification for this is that Sisko is not only a better administrator and commander, but also, according to the Bajorans, an emissary of prophets. The law adhered to in the station is also that of the Federation, even though – as mentioned earlier – the station belongs to Bajorans and is located within Bajoran space territory.

Thus, I have demonstrated how utopias have to be aggressive to survive in *Star Trek*. A utopia is an imperial construct that cannot exist without imperialism or imperial policies. This point is asserted in the midst of the war with the Dominion. In "In the Pale Moonlight" – an episode in the middle of the four seasons that cover the war with the Dominion – Sisko plots the

assassination of a Romulan diplomat and frames the Dominion for it, so that that the Romulans side with the Federation. After the Romulans declare war on the Dominion, Sisko reflects on the incident:

So... I lied. I cheated. I bribed men to cover the crimes of other men. I am an accessory to murder. But the most damning thing of all [pauses] I think I can live with it. And if I had to do it all over again, I would. Garak was right about one thing: a guilty conscience is a small price to pay for the safety of the entire Alpha Quadrant, so I will learn to live with it. Because I can live with it. ("In the Pale Moonlight")

Sisko's justification of his action resembles that of his enemies, the Founders, in which ends justify means. It also encapsulates the contingency of utopia upon imperialism in any utopia, whether in *Star Trek* or other works, utopian ends justify imperial means. Imperial practices are the means for utopian sustainability and success. Here, we see murder; in other utopias we see other imperial practices like tyranny and oppression. *Star Trek* excelled in presenting this enigma and in illustrating that despite our awareness of the problem, utopia cannot escape its imperial discourse. In the following last section about *Star Trek*, I will illustrate how *Star Trek* also heavily borrows from imperial tropes and that without these tropes utopia cannot be articulated.

### *Star Trek's Archive*

*Star Trek* is a massive collection of captains' logs (an imperial trope) and the Federation's archives (imperial trope) accumulated throughout the Federation's history. This collection (of logs in all series) is presented to viewers presumably in a distant utopian future so that these viewers can contemplate the past and human progress. This massive collection can be interpreted as an ideal simple utopian archive that is one of many other good things about *Star*

*Trek*, or it can be interpreted as an archive of yet another imperial power that functions the exact way empires functioned before. In this section, I argue that the archive in *Star Trek* is both a utopian and an imperial trope, and that it further demonstrates the contingency of utopia on imperialism.

The archive in *Star Trek* is a utopian fantasy. It is invaluable information collected into a single, coherent, well-organized and easy to use computer system (LCARS: Library Computer Access/Retrieval System) accessible from any location around the galaxy, even from the Delta Quadrant which is the furthest frontier explored in the *Voyager* series.<sup>81</sup> This collection assists the Federation in unlimited ways. It allows captains of starships to avert war and navigate through enemy territory without notice (e.g. as we see in “Scorpion” in *Voyager* when Janeway navigates the ship through Borg territory without their notice), saves the Federation from invasions (e.g. as we see in “Conspiracy” in *The Next Generation* when the Federation is infiltrated by parasites and the Enterprise relies on the archive to unravel their plan), allows new members to assimilate in the Federation (e.g. as we see when Seven of Nine adapts to her new home in “Drone” in *Voyager*), averts dangerous space phenomena (e.g. as we see in “Where no Man Has Gone Before” in *The Original Series* when the Enterprise consults the archive to learn about the fate of the ships that encountered this phenomenon), and ends hostilities between warring nations (e.g. as we see in “the Vengeance Factor” in *The Next Generation* where the Enterprise relies on archived data to consolidate peace).

However, despite these obvious utopian features of the ideal archive, it is, nevertheless, an imperial fantasy as well. Many critics have discussed the connection between archiving and empire building. In *Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire*, Thomas Richards argues that archiving has been an obsession of the British Empire since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. To 19<sup>th</sup>

century imperialists, particularly the British, archiving and collecting data about colonies and colonized races meant power. No longer was military force the sole indicator of power and hegemony. It was, rather, knowledge over people, places, and technologies that made an empire strong. As a result of this shift in perception of power, the British – and other imperialists – were obsessed with collecting and archiving data because the acquired knowledge supposedly empowered them to better use the natural and human resources of distant colonies. To Richards, what distinguished the British Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century from empires of the past was that the British capitalized on diplomacy and knowledge-based governance rather than invasion and coercion. A successful imperialist for the British was not one that defeats savages, but one who employs these savages, through knowledge, to meet the empire’s goals. Thus, one of the first tasks of an imperialist is to collect data about colonies that allows for better control. Hence, Richards argues: “The British may not have created the longest lived empire, but it was certainly one of the most data intensive” (4).

Carrying on with this premise, Richards also argues that the concept of archive for the British was not physical. It was rather a concept of “collectively imagined junction of all that was known or knowable, a fantastic representation of an epistemological master pattern, a virtual focal point for the heterogeneous local knowledge of metropolis and empire” (11). The archive is a massive, coherent, complete, unified, and well-articulated, well organized, well protected and accessible information tool that “succeeds in superintending all knowledge, particularly the great realms of knowledge coming from all parts of the Empire” (8). In many ways, as Richards states, “the idea of imperial archive [is] an early version of today’s fantasies of a world unified by information” (73).

Richards also argues that empires perceive the archive as a national asset to be closely protected by the state. “Knowledge,” Richards argues, is “inconvenient without the state. The question of the state is a question of knowledge, especially scientific knowledge; the classing of knowledge must be underwritten and directed by the state in its various capacities” (74). It is from this prospect that military deployment into colonies became an imperial necessity along with the imperial administrative machine that runs this archive. Among the many functions of the military is to protect the imperial archive and expand it.

The archive in *Star Trek* is an excellent example of contemporary fantasies of archive-based empires. As mentioned earlier, the archive in the show is the amalgamation of the official captains’ logs and all collected scientific, anthropological, historical, psychological, biological, astronomical, galactic and planetary pieces of data the Federation has laid hands on throughout its exploration of space. Two series of the show – *The Original Series* and *The Next Generation* – are arc stories of two starships’ mission to further enrich the archive, explore space and document new scientific, cultural and social encounters. The other series in the franchise contributed to the archive indirectly by the narrating of events that took place in a space station (*Deep Space Nine*) and a trip back home (*Voyager*). Every episode in *The Original Series* and *The Next Generation* contributes to the archive by directly filling up information about alien races, natural phenomena, historical mishaps, and stories of success that can be later used by other star fleet members and future adventures. The use of this archive – as mentioned earlier – has been instrumental in *Voyager*. *Voyager* is a starship that is lost in the Delta Quadrant of the galaxy, and it uses the archive to navigate through space and reach Earth.

Looking at *Star Trek* from Richards’ perspective, I argue that the show’s archive is the embodiment of the British fantasy of an ideal imperial archive, not only because it fulfils every



single aspect of the ideal archive – which I will talk about in a moment – but also because of the consequences that result from this fantasy.

Furthermore, in *Star Trek*, what unifies the Federation is the archive, not the headquarters on Earth that is infested with political corruption and violence (e.g. *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*). It is, rather, the archive. In addition, the concept of metropolis vs. colonies in *Star Trek* blurs as access to the archive surpasses territorial, racial, ethical, and religious boundaries in space. In previous empires, the center has been the source of strength and point of reference. In *Star Trek*, the point of reference is the archive that is accessible from anywhere in space.

The concepts of warp drive (i.e. a technology that allows for faster than light travel) and the Prime Directive (i.e. a Federation policy that forbids interaction with races that did not achieve warp drive technology) also reinforce the idea of unity based upon shared archive and knowledge. Members of the Federation achieved warp drive after advancing in knowledge and technology. Furthermore, the shared archive has also set boundaries between those who own it and those who don't. The Prime Directive prohibits interference with less advanced life forms so that their "natural development" is not interrupted. Though the rationale behind this reasoning sounds anti-imperial, one shouldn't overlook the connotations of an elite club deciding on whom to accept and whom not to accept based upon acquiring certain technology such as the nuclear elites nowadays.<sup>82</sup>

Richards has also argued that empires treat archives as commodity. Three aspects in *Star Trek* illustrate this. First, any penetration or scanning of a Starfleet spaceship's computer system (i.e. archive) without the spaceship's consent is considered an act of aggression. Each spaceship

is equipped with shields that protect its computer systems from undesired infiltration and the failure of these shields is considered an existential threat to the spaceship.

Second, access to the archives between warring species is the first step to victory. Any empire that succeeds in accessing its enemy's archive wins the war. This can be seen when the Borg encounter the enterprise in "Q, who?" in *The Next Generation*. Instead of destroying the ship, the Borg penetrate the ship's archive to get information about the Federation and to understand its weak points in order to eventually invade it. As a matter of fact, in "The Best of Both Worlds" in *The Next Generation*, the Federation was only able to defeat the Borg by penetrating its computer system and influencing its collective, which again shows us the importance of the archive for any imperial project.

Third, adding to the archive in the show is one of the main factors of competition and conflict between the Federation and other empires in space. The Federation, the Cardassians, Romulans, Farengi and the Klingons are all in pursuit of bits and pieces – from each other and from other sources – to build up their archive. This great hunting game constitutes the plot of many episodes in the show, such as "The Chase" in *The Next Generation* where species race to obtain crucial information about their origin and "A Simple Investigation" in *Deep Space Nine* where Starfleet lays its hands on a data crystal about the Founders that would help in defeating them.

Building the archive in *Star Trek* is similar to building up any imperial archive in the sense that the categorization of races, places and information is based on the usefulness of these pieces of information to the Federation. In the Federation's archive, species are organized into a hierarchy: Hominoids who have mastered warp drive (e.g. Vulcans, Farengi, and Romulans) are at the highest position in the hierarchy. Hominoids who have passed the industrial revolution

(e.g. the Veridians) come next, and after them are species that rely on agriculture (e.g. the Brunali). In addition, in *The Meaning of Star Trek*, Thomas Richards explains that races in space are in three categories: First, primitive, thus not threatening to the Federation and are, hence, treated as lower life forms that the Federation observes and uses their natural resources without altering their life forms. The second category are developed races that compete with the Federation for natural resources and domination and are thus treated as rivals. The third category are races more advanced than the Federation and thus perceived as a threat that must be dismantled and destroyed. Furthermore, planets and colonies in the show are classified into categories based upon their inhabitability (i.e. colonization) or their natural resources and prominent materials (class Y is considered “a demon” class because it is toxic and uninhabitable, Class K is adaptable with pressure domes, and M habitable). Thus, archives become means for constructing colonies and searching for natural resources across the galaxy.

Thus far, we have two readings of *Star Trek*'s archive: a manifestation of utopia and a manifestation of imperial fantasy. If we look at the elements that amplify utopian or imperial aspects in the archive, we find them to be the same; coherence, accessibility, unity and organization, are utopian and imperial elements of the ideal archive. Furthermore, ideas of knowledge as sources of empowerment, quests for collecting data for broadening observations and careful analysis are both utopian and imperial fantasies of constructing an archive in the show.

In the *Star Trek* episode “Time’s Arrow” in *The Next Generation*, Mark Twain reflects on the utopian settings he suddenly encounters: “I’m not impressed with this future,” he says. “Huge starships, weapons that can no doubt destroy entire cities, military conquest as a way of life ... Oh, I know what you say ... this is a vessel of exploration ... your mission is to, discover

new worlds ... that's what the Spanish said .. And the Dutch, and the Portuguese. It's what all conquerors say..." In response, Troi explains that things did change. Indeed, they seek to explore new worlds and that they have encountered "thousands of species." However, everyone in the Federation lives in peace. People "serve the Federation by choice ... poverty was eliminated a long time ago. And a lot of things disappeared with it: hopelessness, despair... cruelty ... war ..."

Troi's refutation of Twain's accusation is yet another testimony of the inseparability between utopia and empire. Both, Twain and Troi are correct in their observation of how things have changed. The Federation is an empire that has sought to expand its boundaries and control over species and space. It has used similar rhetoric to further its dominance over planets and colonies and to extract resources from them. Yet, it has done this in a utopian method of winning the loyalties of subjects who have supposedly willfully submitted their service to the Federation. These subjects did achieve a utopian standard of living. But yet, this standard is only confined to them and to no one beyond the Federation.

### ***The Dispossessed: Critical Utopia and Empire***

In the previous section, we have seen how dynamic utopias are contingent upon imperialism even though these writers are aware of the problems of such connection. In this section, I will demonstrate how critical utopias are also interconnected with imperialism even though writers of these utopias are aware of the implications of this connection but fail to escape it, too. Critical utopias are the last piece of evidence that I will bring up to back up my argument because this form of utopia has been described by prominent critics like Tom Moylan as the most evolved form of utopian literature: the form that reinvented the utopian genre and brought it back to life in the 1960's. This form of literary utopia has also been described as the form that is aware

of the problematic nature of utopian constructs and that addresses them through unique narratives and plots. To illustrate that even this sub-genre of utopian literature cannot escape its imperial context proves my point that the utopian literary genre as a whole is contingent upon imperialism.

Le Guin's novel *The Dispossessed* is the best example of a critical utopia.<sup>83</sup> It is a story of a physicist (Shevek) looking for ways to develop a scientific theory (General Temporal Theory) and to promote an invention (an ansible: a device used to communicate across space) based on it. When his home planet (the Annares) – an anarchist utopia with limited resources – discourages him from furthering his research, Shevek accepts a teaching position at the Annares' twin planet (the Urras) which hosts capitalist and communist societies in a cold war conflict. As time passes by, Shevek understands the reason the anarchists deserted Urras. The two nations of the Urras (the A-Io and Thu) are interested in his theories for their own imperial ends rather than for the benefit of the hominids in the whole planetary system. After joining a revolutionary group in Urras and attempting to further their cause, Shevek becomes a fugitive and is later rescued and returned home by Terrans (a member of the Space League of the Ekumen).

*The Dispossessed* has received tremendous critical acclaim from different critical viewpoints that range from Marxism (like Jameson in "World Reduction in Le Guin: the Emergence of Utopian Narrative"), environmentalism (like Werner Mathisen's "The Underestimation of Politics in Green Utopias: The Description of Politics in Huxley's *Island*, Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, and Callenbach's *Ecotopia*"), and anarchism (like Brennan in "Anarchism and Utopian Tradition in *The Dispossessed*").<sup>84</sup> However, it is Tom Moylan's description of it as a critical utopia that is relevant here.

In his book *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination*, Moylan presents an interesting history of utopian literature. He locates the birth of literary utopias in the 17<sup>th</sup> century early exploration era. Back then and up to the 1960's, literary utopias served one of two purposes: capitalist dreams of wealth or oppositional ideologies that "pushed beyond the limits of this dream". As capitalism progressed, Moylan argues that subversive utopias emerged to challenge it from "farmers, industrial workers, women, racial and ethnic minorities, intellectuals, feminists, socialists, communists, anarchists syndicalist, populists, free love and temperance advocates, [and] spiritualists" (7). Unfortunately these subversive voices were "coopted" by capitalism and eventually "foreclosed alternative possibilities which served human autonomy and authentic needs based on principles of social justice and freedom" (7). By cooptation, Moylan means that in capitalist cultures, utopia served as an apparatus to subdue oppositional forces, encapsulate them in alternate spaces, whether physical or temporal, and deem the oppositional forces' aspirations too ideal to implant. As a matter of fact, in recent history, the forceful attempts to implement visions of utopia in reality backfired (e.g. communism aspiring from socialist utopianism) in utopian literature and led to the destruction of its positive connotations. Moylan asserts that "the general impression, especially in postwar industrial societies, [became] that utopia is now unnecessary either because it has already arrived in daily life or because it represents a dream incapable of attainment... Utopia became a residual literary form" (9).

In the late 60's however, Moylan argues that utopias were revived through a new form he names "critical utopia." Moylan defines critical in the enlightenment sense of critique "that is expressions of oppositional thought, unveiling, debunking, of both the genre itself and the historical situation" and in the nuclear sense of the "critical mass required to create a nuclear

explosion” (11). Critical utopia is a utopia that does not portray a perfect society or a blue print for a desired society. It rather tackles questions about utopian settings and ideals, deconstructs these ideals, and negotiates their meaning through projection of non-ideal utopias and exploring their complexities. As Moylan explains:

A central concern in the critical utopia is the awareness of the limitations of the utopian tradition, so that these texts reject utopia as blue print while preserving it as dream. Furthermore, the novels dwell on the conflict between the ordinary world and the utopian society opposed to it so that the process of social change is more directly articulated. Finally, the novels focus on continuing presence of difference and imperfections within utopian society itself and thus render more recognizable and dynamic alternatives (11).

To Moylan, critical utopia emancipated utopia from traditional utopian blueprints that connect utopianism to idealism. Unlike traditional utopias, critical utopias are utopias that admit to the fact that utopian projects are fraught, ambiguous and in continuous development. Rather than projecting utopia as an end to development, critical utopias project utopian thought itself as a process of development. Unlike dynamic utopias which I discussed earlier, critical utopias do not recognize an achieved ideal that is constantly developing to become better. Critical utopias maintain that the utopian ideal remains a dream yet to be achieved and that utopian thought does not have the answers nor does its system lead to answers or ideal situations.

In other words, critical utopias do not describe an ideal situation. Rather, they explore the phases of utopian progress towards the ideal. Moylan believes that the dynamics and characteristics of critical utopia have allowed it to resist cooptation, which was the fate of previous utopias. By this, Moylan means that the nature of critical utopia has made it hard for

capitalism to focus on a specific blueprint to coopt because critical utopias – by definition – are critical of blueprints in the first place. Moylan summarizes the function of critical utopias as keeping “the utopian impulse alive by challenging it and deconstructing it within its very pages” (46). In the following, I argue that while it is true that critical utopias might resist capitalist or communist cooptation, it is nevertheless intertwined with imperialism and cannot escape its discourse. I will demonstrate my argument by discussing *The Dispossessed*.

If we are to take the Marxist stance of aligning capitalism with imperialism, as Lenin famously did in his book *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, then we can concur that critical utopia – the way Moylan describes it – also resists imperial and neo-imperial cooptation. Traditional utopias like the ones we have discussed in the first and second chapters have either inspired imperial fantasies (e.g. More’s *Utopia* and Bacon’s *New Atlantis*), or have served as dreams of escaping imperial contexts but eventually unraveled in other forms still connected to imperialism (e.g. *Looking Backward* and *News from Nowhere*). Hence, according to Moylan’s argument, critical utopias are forms of utopia that resist imperial cooptation. As a matter of fact, Bill Ashcroft in his essay “Critical Utopias,” seems to have reached this conclusion where he describes postcolonial utopias as critical utopias that resist imperialism in similar ways to how postcolonial literature as a whole resists imperialism.

Although Moylan and Ashcroft’s arguments are noteworthy and do portray the ways in which critical utopias are different from traditional utopias, my argument here is that despite these differences, critical utopias remain contingent upon imperialism. Not only because critical utopias thrive upon opposition and resistance to capitalism – supposedly an imperialistic trait – as socialist utopias do, but also because the development these utopias portray is a process of imperial development. To illustrate my point, let us examine Moylan’s prime example of critical



utopias – *The Dispossessed* – and see that even though it resists capitalism and other forms of imperialism, it eventually lapses back into envisioning the development of a grander imperial project.

In his book, *Demand of the Impossible*, Moylan explains that Le Guin’s utopian society “symbolically describes her version of the oppositional theory and practice of the late 1960s and early 1970s as well as her response to the contradictions of both capitalist and state socialist societies” (94). To Moylan, *The Dispossessed* is an anarchist utopia: “a non-sexist, ecologically sound, libertarian-communist alternative to the nations of Urras that mirror Le Guin’s own historical situation [i.e. the competition between capitalist, socialist and third world societies]” (100). However, what makes this utopia unique is that Le Guin does not present it as a blueprint for a perfect society; she rather presents it as a development process that navigates utopian ecological problems (scarcity rather than abundance), conflicts (competition and self-interest), contradictions, and shortcomings (the problems of the system of revolution) that Shevek attempts to solve. Moylan argues that although the novel does not end with a resolution that eventually puts utopia back into its ideal tracks, it nevertheless demonstrates an

Expression of détente, of the cooperation of injustice and jointly work toward a better world for all. This is not a vision which presumes simple solutions and lack of conflict; indeed, Le Guin’s sense of détente is that of a goal which requires resistance and rebellion, political force and personal risk to achieve it (93).

To Le Guin, then, it is not isolation of utopia that brings in solutions; it is rather the “unity and harmony of all humanity” (93) exemplified by the Hainish, the leaders of the Counsel of the world, that presents an optimistic future.

Moylan's analysis of *The Dispossessed* – and critical utopia in general – does not touch upon imperialism directly. However, looking at Le Guin's novel, one can see that it is interconnected with imperialism in three main ways.

First, the background of the novel is the imperial context of the 60's during the height of decolonization (when nations are resisting imperial hegemony and setting their own national narrative) and cold war. As critics have mentioned, the two competing powers in Urras (the A-Io and Thu) mirror the two super powers of the time, the USA and the USSR.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, the fictional anarchist utopia of Anarras reflects different anarchist ideals that resist the hegemony of these two opposing powers. In a way, then, the Annares' utopia is a utopia that resists and speaks back to the two imperial models of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, Annares is a utopia that resists imperialism through resisting notions and tropes that potentially lead to imperialism – like progress, organization of space, development of bureaucracy and abundance of natural resources. As a matter of fact, it would seem at a certain point that the utopia of Annares only exists for deconstructing whatever systems the empires of Urras thrive upon. For example, in the debate between Bedap and the PDC meeting over the syndicate they created, Bedap and Shevek try to advocate opening up the borders to the Anarchist Urrasti who express desire to relocate in Annares. The counsel strongly objects to the proposal and alludes to the Terms of Settlement. Rulag, the opponent of Bedap, explains the terms of this settlement:

Our hope lies, it has lain for a hundred and seventy years, in the Terms of the Settlement: No Urrasti off the ships, except the Settlers, then or ever. No mixing. No contact. To abandon that principle now is to say to the tyrants whom we defeated once, the experiment has failed, come re-enslave us! (365).

What we see in these terms is that the Anarchist society adamantly forbids any contact or exchange between the two planets and sees this blockade as the main principle for protecting the planet, even though the anarchists share similar ideas. When an old man from the assembly, stands up to defend Bedap and Shevek, he reminds the crowd that the founding principles of the Anarchist society allows for freedom of choice. Nevertheless, he attributes the success of the Anarchist society to negating the system of Urras:

What we are after is to remind ourselves that we didn't come to Anarres for safety, but for freedom. If we must all agree, all work together, we're no better than a machine. If an individual can't work in solidarity with his fellows, it's his duty to work alone. His duty and his right. We have been denying people that right. We've been saying, more and more often, you must work with others. You must accept the rule of the majority. But any rule is tyranny. The duty of the individual is to accept *no* rule, to be the initiator of his own acts, to be responsible. Only if he does so will the society live, and change, and adapt, and survive. We are not subjects of a State founded upon law, but members of a society founded upon revolution. Revolution is our obligation: our hope of evolution. "The Revolution is in the individual spirit, or it is nowhere. It is for all, or it is nothing. If it is seen as having any end, it will never truly begin." We can't stop here. We must go on. We must take the risks" (359).

The case the middle-aged man puts to Shevek here is strong in that it allows the anarchists to come. However, it reinforces the idea of revolution against the A-Io as the foundation of the success of the Anarres society. The Anarchists do not seek a state, do not seek law, and do not yield to rule. Their main purpose is to object to whatever is done in A-Io. This ideology of deconstructing any patterns of hierarchal development, which the anarchists here see leading to

imperial tyranny, frustrates Shevek. Neither he nor any scientist could build off their theories to substantial use in Annaras because there is no innovation and the political system – though nomadic – is too anti-bureaucratic. In other words, what we see from this is that the utopia of the Anarchists is built upon an oppositional relationship with imperialism, which in turn reflects the importance of imperialism in shaping any utopian project that either correlates and builds upon it or opposes it and builds against it.

The second connection between *The Dispossessed* and imperialism can be seen in the establishment of the Annaras utopia. In the novel, Annaras is, in effect, a penal colony. It is a colony established for the same reasons penal colonies are established: to eliminate dissent in the imperial metropolis.<sup>87</sup> In the novel and in the prequel short story, “The Day before the Revolution,” we learn that the settlers of Annaras are the followers of Odo, an anarchist revolutionary female leader who fought against the capitalist principles of the A-Io in Urras. After social upheaval created by her followers, the A-Io government agrees to resettle the anarchists in the new planet as a way to – in Moylan’s words – coopt the revolution and protect the integrity of the A-Io capitalist system.

Furthermore, despite the social and cultural independence of Annaras, the anarchist colony still remains a colony of the A-Io in the sense that it is a source of natural resources for the A-Io. The Annaras still have to trade with the A-Io by sending them minerals and raw material and by receiving essential needs not produced by the Annaras in exchange. In addition, the A-Io ship the anarchists to Annaras and allow them to manage their daily lives provided they mine the mineral-rich planet and supply Urras with their need of raw material. In a way, what we see in this scenario is a win-win situation for the A-Io that is similar to the win-win situation we saw in *Star Trek’s* “The Devil in the Dark.” When discussing “The Devil in the Dark,” I

illustrated that the solutions imperialists seek and project as utopian ultimately serve imperial ambitions and assume that the colonizers (the Anarchists here) are disinterested in the wealth of their planet. Here, we see a similar scenario. The A-Io sought to diffuse the threat of the revolutionary ideals by allowing the Anarchists to live with their own ideals on a mineral rich planet. But the Anarchists are required to mine and trade with the A-Io. If this mutual agreement is disrupted, one can only predict that the A-Io and Thu would invade Annares and reestablish order. This threat was always present in the mind of the Annares – as we saw – and it is what kept the Annares adamant about their disconnection with the A-Io.

What is interesting in the relationship between the A-Io and the anarchists is that it reflects 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century imperial practices on many levels. For example, the idea of shipping political prisoners to colonies was a common practice of the British Empire.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, the concept of Commonwealth where the British Empire ensures that its former colonies remain dependent on it is similar to the relationship between the A-Io and Annares. Nowadays, one can only recall the neo-imperial relationship between the United States and the oil rich countries (e.g. Saudi Arabia that has a drastically different social and political system than the United States) as examples of what is happening between the A-Io on their colony. Oil rich countries are left to manage their own social and cultural affairs according to their own ideology –even though these ideologies are unique – as long as they supply the demand of oil to the world market. If a country breaks away from this agreement (e.g. Iraq), invasion and restructuring of the country is imminent.

The third connection between imperialism and *The Dispossessed* can be seen in the viable solution Le Guin presents at the end of the novel. As we know, Shevek eventually seeks asylum in the Terran embassy that is a member of the Ekumen alliance. Shevek also entrusts the

Terrans and their counsel with his theory, which – as we later know – becomes of great benefit to them and promotes the upgrade of this alliance. In a way, this league is similar to the Federation of Planets in *Star Trek* that I discussed earlier in this chapter. As a matter of fact, if we are to position the events that take place in *The Dispossessed* into a *Star Trek* setting, we can picture Urras and Annares as two planets the Enterprise visits in its outreach mission to “discover new lands and new people.” The Federation of Planets, or the Counsel of the World in the case of *The Dispossessed*, provides asylum to Shevek, rescues him and learns about his discovery. Shevek – like any outcast in *Star Trek* – appreciates the qualities of his rescuers and helps them further their adventure and expand their hegemony that is more civilized and developed than the societies of his world both in Annares and Urras.

Furthermore, the grand story of the Hainish cycle – of which *The Dispossessed* is part – resembles the backstory of *Star Trek*.<sup>89</sup> In “The Chase” from *Star Trek: Next Generation*, the different races in the galaxy trace their origin to an ancient hominoid race from which they originated. This race existed thousands of years ago and planted seeds of their hominid DNA into different planets so that these seeds evolve into similar but different races. The main goal for this ancient race is that

You [hominoids] would have to come together in fellowship and companionship to hear this message. And if you can see and hear me, our hope has been fulfilled. You are a monument, not to our greatness, but to our existence. That was our wish, that you too would know life, and would keep alive our memory. There is something of us in each of you, and so, something of you in each other. Remember us. (“The Chase”)

This origin of the *Star Trek* world is similar to that of the Hainish cycle in which the Hain – the ancient race – colonized the universe and planted Terrans that evolved into different forms that

would come together in the future.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, the mission of the Hainish is the same as that of *Star Trek* that seeks to re-establish hegemony in the inhabited world. This hegemony reflects a utopian nostalgia of unity, of a center, and of an advanced civilization that is progressive successful and peaceful – all of which are imperial fantasies.

Hence, what we see in this ending is not an open ending of utopia or a utopia of possibilities and continued progress – as Moylan and proponents of critical utopias suggest. What we actually see, again, is a happy ending of an imperial fantasy. Through their advanced civilization, the Hainish eventually succeed in creating an interspace empire that extends beyond the original homeland of the Hainish race (i.e. the Hain); *The Dispossessed* is one story of many on how this empire evolved and developed through its embrace of diversity and through its advanced ideals that are superior to the races they encounter, like the ones in Urras and Annares.

Having described the ways in which *The Dispossessed* is intertwined with imperialism, then, begs the question of whether it is possible to picture a utopia or critical utopia without an imperial discourse. My argument, as I have demonstrated, is definitely negative. Utopia is contingent upon imperialism, even though some utopian sub-genres (including critical utopias) attempt to break this connection. *The Dispossessed* is a prime example of a critical utopia that was not able to escape imperialism. It targets problems within contemporary imperial projects. It is aware of the problems of traditional utopias that seek to project blueprints of ideal societies. However, its ending lapses back into a grand imperial fantasy that is not necessarily militaristic and formal, but nevertheless hegemonic and promotional of specific ideals that seek to dominate all space.

## CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have illustrated how the utopian literary genre is part of the imperial discourse and I have argued that it is inconceivable without it. In the first chapter, I argued that early utopias are reflections of imperial fantasies of humanists during the Early Modern period. I stated that utopias were born from within the discovery of the New World and the renewed interest in the classics. These two factors allowed Early Modern humanists (who are also engaged in the politics of their times) to form fantasies of ideal empires that are powerful, sustainable and accommodating to humanist ideals. I illustrated my point by discussing three utopias: More's *Utopia*, Bacon's *New Atlantis* and Harrington's *Commonwealth of Oceana*. More's *Utopia* is a reflection of a humanist impression of the *imperium*. Bacon's *New Atlantis* is a reflection of an epistemological empire that sustains itself through knowledge and Harrington's *Oceana* is a reflection of an empire of law and well written constitution. These three utopias not only reflect humanist aspirations of ideal political and social systems but they also reflect humanists' ambitions of extending their ideologies through imperial means. Furthermore, I also demonstrated that these utopias are articulated through imperial tropes such as Othering, colonization, exoticism, and exploration that were a staple of imperialism in the Early Modern period.

In the second chapter, I argued that the utopian literary genre shifted from reflecting imperial fantasies into reflecting imperial skepticism. In the age of high imperialism and as the positive and negative effects of imperialism are felt across the empire, utopian writers questioned



the ends of imperialism by presenting utopias that either raise concerns about the consequences of imperialism ends without proposing solutions to overcome them or that raise concerns and propose solutions at the same time. These solutions either work from within the frame of high imperialism or object it and project better forms. Bulwer-Lytton's *The Coming Race*, Bellamy's *Looking Backward* and Morris' *News from Nowhere* reflect these trends respectively. I also argued that 19<sup>th</sup> century utopian writers, like their earlier counterparts, continued to use imperial tropes to articulate their utopias and that it is not feasible to write any utopia without these tropes.

In the third chapter, I argued that contemporary utopian literature, inhibited mostly in science fiction, continues to develop from contemporary imperial discourse in the same manner in which earlier utopias did. Contemporary utopias either project contemporary imperial fantasies (Fantasies of a far flung empire that is diverse, global, technological, and multicultural) or they project skepticism of contemporary imperial ideals. I also argued that what distinguishes contemporary utopias from earlier ones, however, is that the writers of contemporary utopias are more aware of the ambivalent relationship between imperial practices and utopia and, hence, contemporary utopias are more complex in articulating this relationship than earlier ones. However, despite this awareness and complexity, utopian literature continues to feed off its imperial discourse and it is unable to break loose. I presented *Star Trek* (a dynamic utopia) and *the Dispossessed* (a critical utopia) as evidence for my premise. I argued that these utopias not only reflect imperial fantasies and imperial skepticism respectively, but they also reflect the ambivalent relationship between empire and utopian literature. While these utopias do object to different imperial practices of the past, their propositions of overcoming these problems are nevertheless imperial in their own way.

So what is next? How do these findings reflect on other utopian literary works and utopian sub-genres? And how do these findings enhance our understanding of utopian literature in general?

It is important to note three points that position my dissertation within the bulk of research about utopian literature here: First, this research, that discusses eight utopias, only scratches the surface of a rich topic that definitely needs further study. Not only have I skipped discussing other prominent utopias in the time frames I chose, but I have also skipped discussing utopias in other periods such as 18<sup>th</sup> century utopias which are – as Sargent attests are not plenty but nevertheless present - and early 20<sup>th</sup> century utopias such as H.G. Wells ground breaking works in the genre (e.g. *When the Sleeper Wakes* published in 1899, *a Modern Utopia* published in 1900, and in the *Days of the Comet* published in 1906). Furthermore, I did not discuss prominent utopian sub-genres namely dystopias and postcolonial utopias. I have also overlooked prominent utopian themes such as feminist utopias (Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* published in 1915, Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* published in 1976), environmental utopias (Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia* published in 1975) and other utopian themes. My response to overlooking these utopias is that I can only hope that other critics would pick up what I have missed and further examine their relationship with imperialism. Furthermore, I also argue that because utopia is connected to imperialism, then by extension, its sub-genres and different themes are, by default, connected to imperialism. All utopias, whether feminist, environmental, dystopian or any other can only be articulated through imperial tropes of Othering, elitism, binarism, frontiers, boundaries, authority, colonization, civilization, etc. One cannot find any utopia that does not develop off imperial tropes and no matter how anti-imperial these literary utopias might initially seem.

Second, while it is true that I have not come across any critic that directly links utopia to imperialism, I have to stress again that this research only crystallizes what has been floating in the air but not uttered yet. As mentioned throughout the research, many critics did directly or indirectly draw connections between imperialism and some utopian literary works. For example, science fiction - that dominated utopian literature - was frequently presented as an imperial genre and travel literature also functioned as beacon for both utopia and imperialism. However, the affirmative statement that utopian literature is contingent upon its imperial discourse has not been pointed out, yet. Hence, my research, in essence, is only pointing out an elephant in the room.

Finally, this research, reiterates what many new historians (namely Michael Foucault) and postcolonial critics (namely Edward Said) have already broadly established about the relationship between literature and its discourse. As mentioned in my introduction, Said has already established that any cultural manifestation (including utopian literature that represents the aspirations of that culture) is a product of its discourse. Hence, if this discourse is imperial, then one can only expect that its literature would reflect imperialism; Said has also established that the novel is an imperial construct. Hence, utopian literature (a sub-genre of the novel) is, by default, an imperial construct. However, what I am adding here is that utopia is not only a product of its imperial discourse; it is also contingent upon imperialism. As mentioned earlier, utopia cannot function without borrowing imperial tropes and the ends of any utopia is to care for its metropolis and to expand and incorporate humanity under its ideal system. This expansion is done voluntarily through presenting an irresistible ideal system to be replicated worldwide, or involuntarily through invasion and coercion.

My emphasis on the connection between utopian literature and imperialism adds to the bulk of research done on contemporary utopian studies because it affirms the new historical approach towards literature that attaches it to its social and political discourse. Furthermore, my emphasis also challenges the perception that utopia is synonymous with the “unattainable ideal” held by advocates of new criticism (that don’t see the wider implications of the genre beyond satire, irony and paradox), archetypal criticism (that associates utopia with myth) and structuralism (that positions utopia in opposition to imperialism and contemporary politics). What I illustrate in this research is that utopia is far more complex than what initially meets the eye and that utopian literature is not synonymous with positive connotations.

It has to be clear though that by connecting utopian literature to imperialism I do not discourage utopian aspirations nor do I advocate the futility of utopian desire. As mentioned in my introduction, the utopian literary genre is different from utopianism. While utopianism is an articulation of hope, as the consensus among utopian critics nowadays goes, utopian literature is imperial in the sense that it constructs a humanist empire fantasy and uses imperial tropes to achieve this end. The aim of the argument in this dissertation is that better understanding of a literary genre produces better articulation and awareness of the complexity of human thought in general and that literary text in specific. This better understanding of the complexity of an issue leads to better approaches to it and it contributes to the dialectical evolution of the genre itself. As I have demonstrated in this dissertation, the utopian literary genre has gone a long way from projecting imperial fantasies to raising imperial skepticism to attempting to project utopias critical of imperial policies. While it is true that the connection between utopian works and imperialism did not break, one can see that the awareness of such a connection has produced refined utopian works that at least attempt to produce “empireless” utopias. Furthermore, these

refined literary utopias also contribute to a refined utopian impulse that avoids utopian pitfalls of the past. One can only hope that it is through the dialectical development of the utopian impulse - in which utopian literature is part of - that human conditions would improve through time.

I end my dissertation with Oscar Wilde's famous quote about utopia in *The Soul of Man under Socialism*:

A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing. And when humanity lands there, it looks out, and, seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realization of Utopias.

Wilde's quote sums up my dissertation: It presents utopia as a place in the map in which people will try to find and dominate (i.e. invoking the idea of colonization). However, once this place is occupied, humanity will seek another place to dominate and so on. And in travelling from one place to another, and dominating one place after another (i.e. imperialism), "progress" occur. In other words, it is interesting and paradoxical— like the word utopia itself — that it is only through domination of utopian space and through interest in expanding this domination (i.e. through imperialism) that humanity can see the fruits of utopia and utopian thought and feel it through time.

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## Notes

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1 See Bill Ashcroft in references

2 Northrop Frye, in “Varieties of Literary Utopias” for example relates utopia to myth and idealism.

3 See Ashcroft’s, et al. *Postcolonialism: Key Words* for discussion of the shift of the term.

4 See references for the list of articles and books published

5 See references for list of essays

6 Among other works Ashcroft brings are James Burgh’s *Cessares* (1764), Thomas Spence’s *Crusonia* (1782), Carl Wadstrom’s *Sierra Leone* (1787), Wolfe Tone’s *Hawaii* (1790), Thomas Northmore’s *Makar* (1795), and Robert Southey’s *Caermadoc* (1799)

7 See references.

8 Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (credited to be the originator of Postcolonial theory) is written about imperial culture and discuss “colonial discourse theory.” However, this theory eventually developed into postcolonial theory that mostly discuss literature of the colonized. Literature within the imperial metropolis is referred to as “Contemporary British” that is beyond the scope of postcolonial interest.

9 Historians argue that the Conference of Berlin and the scramble for Africa marked the emergence of competitive European empires and it has also marked the end of British Imperial dominance of seas.

10 For more on Columbus and other Europeans’ atrocities in the New World, see *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World* by David Stannard, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean* by Peter Hulme in references.

11 Dandalet writes:

The revival of imperial ambition, this dream of a Renaissance of empire as an intellectual, cultural, and political project, was nothing less than the dominant master narrative that drove European political life for the entire Early Modern period – that is at least for centuries. Empires that matched or surpassed ancient Rome in territorial domination, military strength, large revenues extracted from their subject peoples, and the power to impose new laws, cultural aesthetics, and religious beliefs were the driving ambitions of rulers of the great age of Early Modern empire – Charles I of Spain (1500 -`557), Philip II of Spain (1527), and Louis XIV of France (1638 -1715) to name the most formidable among them. Global empires were the ultimate prize of Early Modern political context. (3)

Dandalet further argues that the interest in Roman imperialism has two sides to it, the cultural, literature and architectural (i.e. civil) part and the political territorial part. These two sides (imperial humanism and renaissance imperialism) further drove the shaping of the idea of empire itself during the Early Modern period.

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12 See source above

13 “Brave New World” is a phrase from *the Tempest*, Act 5 Scene 1, line 189. Critics, such as Douglas Peterson, discussed the connection between the *Tempest* and Utopia in *Utopias in the Tempest*, John Evan’s *Utopias on Prospero’s Island*, Jeffery Knapp’s *an Empire Nowhere: England, America, and Literature from Utopia to the Tempest* to name a few (See bibliography at end). References of utopianism in the work plenty but controversial. However, perhaps what is distinguishable in *the Tempest* here is Gonzalo’s speech on the possibility of constructing a commonwealth in the Island:

*'th' commonwealth I would by contraries  
Execute all things, for no kind of traffic  
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;  
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,  
And use of service, none; contract, succession,  
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;  
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;  
No occupation; all men idle, all,  
And women too, but innocent and pure;  
No sovereignty—  
[...]  
All things in common nature should produce  
Without sweat or endeavor: treason, felony,  
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine,  
Would I not have; but nature should bring forth  
Of its own kind, all foison, all abundance,  
To feed my innocent people. (2.1.162-171; 175-180).*

Here, we see a distinctive feature of utopia: Gonzalo does speak of the Eden like situation in the Island. However, he calls for using abundance in this Eden to construct an egalitarian commonwealth. In other words, unlike Golden Age fantasies that portray innocent savages enjoying Eden, egalitarianism in *the Tempest* is a conscious decision and enforced habit by the constructor of utopia. It is constructed and developed over as a result of colonization. This feature, as we shall see, is a trend in the utopian literary genre that distinguishes it from Golden Age and pastoral fantasies.

14 In the early modern period, especially the late 15th and early 17th century, we see Christian utopias that apply Christian principles on a worldly society. These utopias are not strictly Christian *per se* since do not call for a Kingdom of Heaven. These utopias rather combine secular ideals of improving society with

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Christian ones. Examples of these are Thomas Lupton's *Siuqila* (1580), Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1626), and John Eliot's *Christian Commonwealth* (1659). See Sargent bibliography for more examples.

15 When we talk about utopia we also discuss the satire of utopia (Satirical utopias) that are by extension satire of imperialism in general. See for example *Isle of Pines* by Henry Neville (1668), *The Western Wonder* by Richard Head (1674), *New Utopia* by Edward Howard (1671), etc.

For more on Human imperialism see *Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity* by Makdisi and *Literature and Utopian Politics in Seventeenth-Century England*

16 See *The Renaissance of Empire*

17 Examples include Erasmus, *Institutio principis Christiani* 'Education of a Christian Prince' (1516), written to King Charles of Spain (the later Charles V), John Skelton, *Speculum principis*, written for the then future Henry VIII. Johann Damgaard, *Alithia* (1597), written for the young Danish monarch King Christian IV. George Buchanan, *De iure regni apud Scotos* (1579) written in the form of a Socratic dialogue on ideal kingship dedicated to the young James VI of Scotland.

18 The three works here have been frequently combined in almost any anthology of Early Modern Utopias. The Most known one is Morley's 1888 version *Ideal Commonwealths* that also included Campella's *City of the Sun*. *Utopia*, *Oceana*, *New Atlantis* have also been frequently discussed all together or two at a time to show different traits of early modern utopias. No discussion – as far as my knowledge goes – has combined these three in relationship with imperialism, as I am doing here.

19 See introduction for previous works.

20 For more on the relationship between imperialism and citizenship see *Imperial citizenship: empire and the question of belonging* by Daniel Gorman.

21 For more information see David Sylvester, Lisa Jardine, Alan Stewart and other biographers of Bacon in references.

22 Qtd in Irving's reference.

23 On the unfinished nature of the work see biographers of Bacon mentioned above. More specific

24 For more on the influence of Harrington's *Oceana* on American constitution, see *Harrington and his Oceana; a story of a 17th century Utopia and its influence in America* by Russell-Smith.

25 For more on the relationship between the British Empire and scientific research, see *Science and Empire: knowledge and networks of science across the British Empire, 1800-1970* by Brett Bennett and Joseph Hodge.

26 *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle*

27 See Bernard Porter *Critics of Empire : British Radical Attitudes to Colonialism in Africa 1895-1914*

28 *Imperial Sceptics: British Critics of Empire 1850-1920*

29 See "Going Nowhere: Travelling to, through, and from Utopia" *Utopian Studies*



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January 1, 2008

30 In the 19th century many utopias continued to project imperial fantasies similar to earlier utopias. However, these utopias were insignificant due to the development of imperialism from mercantile mode of imperialism into New Imperialism. They can also be found in adventure literature like that we see written by Rider Haggard in *King Solomon Mines*, and Allan Allan *Quatermain* and others where wealth defines the discovered utopias.

31 The discussion of utopias of enlightenment is a good case here. As Claeys states in *Utopias of the British Enlightenment*, the general misconception is that utopias declined throughout the 18th century even though plenty were written during the age.

32 Dystopian streaks in utopian literature can be traced as far back as the 18th century (see Claeys “Origins of Dystopia” in *Cambridge Companion to Victorian Literature and Late Victorian Utopias* 2008). However, it is the wake of the World Wars - that were direct results of imperial competition – that positioned dystopias into what Claeys argues the “predominant expression of the utopian ideal” (108). Unlike *The Coming Race*, however, these dystopias (e.g. *1984*, *Brave New World*, etc.) did not question the imperial rhetoric and its possible dire consequences, but rather projected these consequences in the future.

33 *The Coming Race* for example reflects ideas of subterranean utopias like *Philoland*, technological utopias like *Six Thousand years Hence* and others. *Looking Backward* represents anti-capitalist utopias and more than 35 Utopias written in response. *News from Nowhere* also illustrates the connection between socialism and environmental utopias that continue to surface even in contemporary utopias like *Ecotopia* and *Walden Two*.

34 Many critics question whether Darwin and other evolution theory advocates entertained social Darwinism and the hierarchal structure of human races. As a matter of fact, historians debated some of Darwin and other scientists staunch objections to imperial policies and whether Darwin is in fact an advocate of the aftermath of his theory. Nevertheless, the consensus is that his theory was instrumental for imperial practices, even though social Darwinism ideas were common – but not well articulated – ideas in the 19th century. For more discussion on the issue, see Gregory Claeys article “‘Survival of the Fittest’ and the Origins of Social Darwinism” and books related to the issue like *Social Darwinism and English Thought: The Interaction Between Biological and Social Theory* by Greta Jones and *Social Darwinism: Linking Evolutionary Thought to Social Theory* by Peter Dickens.

35 As mentioned above, there are debates about the origin of the term. Gregory Claeys and others contest that social Darwinism is an aftermath of Darwin’s theory, even though Darwin did contribute to it in more than one way. The term itself has only been widely circulated in the 20th century. For more on the origin

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of the term see “Social Darwinism in Anglophone Academic Journals: A Contribution to the History of the Term” by Geoffrey Hodgson.

36 More so than any other place, social Darwinism was popular in America. Ever since Herbert Spencer’s visit and lecture about Darwinism in the United States, American intellectuals and scientists (e.g. Edward L. Youmans, John Fiske, John W. Burgess) utilized his theories to justify the practices of their empire and its endeavor to establish itself as carrying the torch of civilization across the Atlantic. To these intellectuals, the United States is the new utopia of their time and its imperial policies against the Native Americans and the Spanish in South America should be taken not in negative terms of aggression, but rather in positive utopian terms that call for the evolution of human kind through natural means. For more on the topic see books written on Social Darwinism in America like *Social Darwinism in American Thought* by Richard Hofstadter. Furthermore, Anne McClintock in her book *Imperial Leather* also argues that Social Darwinism is also part of the imperial rhetoric.

37 For more on imperial tropes see *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* by David Spurr

38 In the *Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith for example advocates colonialism by arguing that “If one-tenth of the laboring people of England were transferred to the colonies, and along with them one-tenth of the circulating capital of the country, either wages, or profits, or both, would be greatly benefited by the diminished pressure of capital and population upon the fertility of the land, in England itself” (8). It is also interesting that not only capitalists saw colonization as the solution to imperial problems. Even John Hobson, the major Victorian critic, in *Imperialism: a Study* justified colonialism if it contributed to solving over population.

39 Many books have discussed the rhetoric that justified genocide. Tom Lawson book, *The Last Man: A British Genocide in Tasmania*, for example, provides a good analysis of the rhetoric of genocide the British Empire utilized to justify its atrocities.

40 See Spurr and Pratt.

41 Said has briefly touched upon the idea of exotic Egypt in the imperial discourse. Stephanie Moser’s book *Wondrous Curiosities: Ancient Egypt at the British Museum*, however, details the British archeologists’ fascination and awe with Ancient Egypt.

42 Christensen’s *the Subverting Vision of Bulwer Lytton: Bicentenary Reflections*

43 The Berlin Conference is perhaps the best example of how balancing the tensions between empires that brought Europe a period of relative peace as they scrambled for Africa and were busy exploiting its resources.

44 Like Christian utopias (e.g. *the Godhood of Man* by Michaels, Nicholas 1899, *Altruria* by Titus Smith 1895) Feminists (*Mercia* by Amelia Mears 1895), Eugenics (e.g. *Forty Years with the Damn* by Charles

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Aikin 1995, a *Visit to Topos and how the Science of Hereditary is Practiced There* by William Little (1897), etc. all in Sargent's Bibliography.

45 The question of whether colonialism, the abundance of raw material and new trade routes stimulated the industrial revolution or vice versa is a chicken and egg question. In *Industry and Empire: The Birth of the Industrial Revolution* Eric Hobsbawm and Chris Wriggle explain the interrelationship between the two: how the industrial revolution led to colonialism, settlement and expansion of empire and how raw materials from colonies led to industry.

46 Bellamy's association with the Fabian society is discussed in "The American Fabian Movement" by Thomas Jenkin. For more on the relationship between Fabianism in general and Imperialism see *Fabian Socialism and English Politics, 1884-1918* by A. M. McBriar and *Skeptics of Empire* by Gregory Claeys.

47 The British Empire for example nationalized the East Indian Company and formed the Raj in 1858.

48 Said discusses the presence of empire in Jane Austen's work as an example of imperial discourse. Most of Austen's works discuss social problems of aristocrats in England rarely touching upon empire. However, the backdrop of most of these social problems are a result of imperial influence. The Aristocrats were able to maintain their living standards through Empire. See *Culture and Imperialism*.

49 For more on American imperialism post the civil war see *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion 1860-1898* by Walter LaFeber

50 For more on US colonization policies in the 18th century, see *The United States and Imperialism* by Frank Ninkovich.

51 See bibliography on American policies influenced by Bellamy's work.

52 For more on romantic imperialism, see Saree Makdisi *Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity*.

53 For more on this see the BBC documentary "Jerusalem: An Anthem for England (TV 2005)". Retrieved 1st of August 2015.

54 Commonweal, 21st June 1889

55 "News from Nowhere: Arcadia or Elysium?" "'News From Nowhere and 'Garden Cities,'" "William Morris and the Division of Labour: The Idea of Work in *News from Nowhere*," respectively. To many of these critics, Morris' pastoral utopia, in addition to many of his letters and statements, demonstrate his anti-imperial stance that is shaped by anti-capitalist leanings. Some critics and biographers of Morris also demonstrate Morris' anti-imperial stances and dedicated books (e.g. Thomson) and articles that describe Morris as courageous and revolutionary in his propagation of socialist and anti-imperial ideals. Other contemporary critics like Philip Wegner and Gregory Claeys associate Morris with the "Little Englander" movement that held negative views of imperial policies and saw it damaging to England. The

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Little Englander is a political movement that wanted to end the Imperial British policies overseas and see British politicians only concerned with England's internal affairs. It particularly gained reputation after the Second Boar War (1899-1902) and it is usually aligned with William Gladstone's political leanings. For more on Fabian Imperialists vs. Little Englanders see *Sceptics of the Empire* by Gregory Claeys.

56 Flint, John. *Cecil Rhodes*. Boston: Little Brown, 1974

57 For more on the relationship between anthropology and imperialism see: *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* edited by Talal Asad.

58 See for example Fredric Jameson's *Archaeologies of the Future*, Darko Suvin *Metamorphosis of Science Fiction*, Raymond Williams "Utopia and Science Fiction," and Tom Moylan *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination* also see *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* and "Science Fiction and Empire" respectively.

59 See *Technological Utopianism in American Culture*

60 See for example Ashcroft's "Critical Utopia" and *Postcolonial Utopias* by Ashcroft and Sargent to be published in 2016

61 See *Astrofuturism: Science, Race, and Visions of Utopia in Space* and *Ecological Utopias: Envisioning the Sustainable Society* respectively.

62 For Example, John Rieder discuss utopian works like *Crystal Age*, where he argues that the work should be interpreted more as "drama of mutual miscommunication and misrecognition between a stranger in a strange land and its inhabitants (81). *Science Fiction and Empire* by Patricia Kerslake discusses *the Dispossessed* but not as a utopia representing empire, but rather as an example of science fiction colonizing space.

63 For the popularity of *Star Trek* see *The Influence of Star Trek on Television, Film and Culture* by Lincoln Geraghty

64 Critics like Byers in "Commodity Futures: Corporate State and Personal Style in Three Recent Science Fiction Movies," Fulton "An Other Frontier: Voyaging West with Mark Twain and *Star Trek*'s Imperial Subject," Geraghty "Neutralizing the Indian: Native American Stereotypes in *Star Trek: Voyager*" and many others I mention further down. Check Geraghty's bibliography for an expanded list.

65 For more on the utopian ideals of *Star Trek*, see Geraghty's section about Fan's obsession with *Star Trek* "A Reason to Live" in *Living with Star Trek*.

66 In *Star Trek*, Warp Drive is a hypothetical faster-than-light propulsion system it is discovered by Zefram Cochrane in April 4, 2063

67 For more on the connection between empire and exploration see *Scientist of Empire: Sir Roderick Murchison, Scientific Exploration and Victorian Imperialism* by Robert A. Stafford. *The Age of Reconnaissance: Discovery, Exploration, and Settlement, 1450-1650* by J. H. Parry, *Exploration and*

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*Empire: The Explorer and the Scientist in the Winning of the American West* by William Goetzmann. In these three books, all authors agree that planned exploration was the first step towards colonization.

68 According to the official *Star Trek* Website, the Federation of Planets has 700 colonies. Furthermore, many of the episodes and major events rotate around events in colonies or conflicts around colonies similar to real conflicts here. The Maquis in *Deep Space Nine* is a good example of conflicts about colonies. It is about a relocation of colonists from one location to the other that sparked defections and terrorism activities throughout the episodes. Although many fans of *Star Trek* claim that the show is about knowing people, even the commencement of Zefram is about putting planets in our fingertips.

69 S. 1, E. 26

70 William Shatner for example in his *Star Trek Memories* thinks that it was "exciting, thought-provoking and intelligent, it contained all of the ingredients that made up our very best *Star Treks*." (200)

71 "The Devil in the Dark" is written by Gene L. Coon: a TV script writer who is known throughout his writings for questioning imperial practices and taken-for-granted facts. Among his famous contributions are *Train Wagon*, *Bonanza* and others.

72 Kipling "If"

73 In the world of *Star Trek*, the galaxy is divided into four quadrants. The Alpha is where most events take place and where the Federation is located. The Beta is dominated by the Borg, the Gamma is dominated by the Dominion and the Delta is where the events of *Voyager* series take place.

74 See "Inheriting the Final Frontier: *Star Trek Deep Space Nine*"

75 In their production, Roddenberry asserts that "If man is to survive, he will have learned to take a delight in the essential differences between men and cultures. He will learn that differences in ideas and attitudes are a delight, part of life's existing variety, not something to fear."

76 "This Species Which Is Not One: Identity Practices in *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*"

77 Look at Israel, and other places

78 *Star Trek Deep Space Nine Companion*.

79 For more on imperial outposts see *Outposts: Journeys to the Surviving Relics of the British Empire* by Simon Winchester and *Imperial Outposts, from a Strategical and Commercial Aspect: With Special Reference to the Japanese* by Murray

80 *Culture and Imperialism*

81 For more information see *Star Trek: The Next Generation Technical Manual*

82 The idea of a universal library has been present in many other science fiction world like that of *the Uplift World* by David Brin. In Brin's world, the more advanced the species the better access they have to the library.

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83 It won the Nebula Award for Best Novel in 1974, the Hugo and Locus Awards in 1975, and received a nomination for the John W. Campbell Memorial Award in 1975.

84 For more on critical reception of Le Guin's work see *The High Points So Far: An Annotated Bibliography of Ursula K. Le Guin's The Left Hand of Darkness and The Dispossessed* by James Collins (2001).

85 See *The New Utopian Politics of Ursula K. Le Guin's The Dispossessed* edited by Laurence Davis and Peter G. Stillman and Moylan's *Demand of the Impossible*.

86 For more on anarchism and its resistance of imperialism see *Anarchism FAQ II* by Iain McKay

87 New South Wales and Tasmania were original panel colonies before they joined other colonies in forming Australia.

88 See for example the First Scottish Martyrs in 1794, Irish rebels in 1798, 1803, 1848 and 1868; Scots Rebels (1820); Yorkshire Rebels (1820 and 1822); leaders of the Merthyr Tydfil rising of 1831; The Tolpuddle Martyrs (1834); Swing Rioters and Luddites (1828–1833); Upper Canada rebellion/Lower Canada Rebellion (1839) and Chartists (1842).

89 Le Guin frequently resisted the notion that the Hainish cycle series are connected with each other. However, in her website's FAQ she eventually provide a suggested reading order of the Hainish cycle.

90 The notion of a common origin of hominids (i.e. panspermia) is popular in science fiction and space travel opera. Other fictional works that portray this, in addition to *Star Trek* and the Hainish Cycle, are *Battlestar Galactica*, *Ringworld*, *Babylon 5*, etc.