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In Search of the Utopian States of America

Intentional Communities in Novels of the Long Nineteenth Century

Verena Adamik

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Utopianism is an interdisciplinary concept which covers philosophy, sociology, literature, history of ideas, art and architecture, religion, futurology and other fields. While literary utopianism is usually dated from Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), communitarian movements and ideologies proposing utopian ends have existed in most societies through history. They imagine varied ideal beginnings of the species, like golden ages or paradises, potential futures akin to the millennium, and also ways of attaining similar states within real time. Utopianism, in the sense of striving for a much improved world, is also present in many trends in contemporary popular movements, and in phenomena as diverse as films, video games, environmental and medical projections. Increasingly utopia shares the limelight with dystopia, its negative inversion, and with projections of the degeneration of humanity and nature alike. This series will aim to publish the best new scholarship across these varied fields. It will focus on original studies of interest to a broad readership, including, but not limited to, historical and theoretical narratives as well as accounts of contemporary utopian thought, interpretation and action.

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For my parents

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Verena Adamik Dr. phil. is a research and teaching assistant at the Department of American Studies of the University of Potsdam. Her PhD thesis, on which this book is based, was supervised by Prof. Dr. Nicole Waller, University of Potsdam, and Prof. Dr. Gregory Claeys, Royal Holloway, University of London. Her work has appeared in *More After More. Essays Commemorating the Five-Hundredth Anniversary of Thomas More's Utopia* (2016) and in *COPAS—Current Objectives of Postgraduate American Studies* (2014). Forthcoming in 2020 are publications in *Utopian Studies* and in *The Encyclopedia of Contemporary American Fiction* (Wiley-Blackwell). Aside from the topics addressed in this publication, her research interests include contemporary fiction, horror, and the far-right. In 2017, she was selected for the Arthur O. Lewis Award of the Society for Utopian Studies. She is the creator and host of the academic podcast *Talking American Studies.*

CHAPTER 1

'The Optimal State of a Republic': Introduction

To begin, here is a short sojourn into the academic discourse of the United States and utopia: "The utopian ideals of certain of the original colonists and of the revolutionary generation, … assert that this New World is to be liberated from the dead hand of the past and become the scene of a new departure in human affairs" (Slotkin 1973, 3). Utopianism is a "persistent mode of self-definition in America" (Roemer 1976, xii–xiii) and, thus, "to know America, we must have knowledge of America as utopia" (Roemer 1981, 14). The United States are the "material utopia of the way of life" (Baudrillard 1989, 76). Disneyland is a "degenerated utopia" (Marin 1984, 241). "Utopian discourse has been a crucial component of American political practice" (Berlant 1991, 15). "Utopia was discovered at the same time as America" (Hatzenberger 2003, 125). "Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the notion of America as utopia has remained highly attractive for a variety of groups and newcomers" (Paul 2014, 142). A recent publication by the renowned literary and cultural critics Fredric Jameson and Slavoj Žižek is entitled *An American Utopia* (2016). It seems as though any "passing acquaintance with literary and cultural-history scholarship … is enough to suggest how central the concept of Utopia has been to American culture" (Guarneri 1994, 72). Wherever scholars investigating US history and culture look, they find something called *utopia*.

However, some of these statements do not seem to refer to the same concepts: how the Puritans or nineteenth-century pioneers connect to

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Disneyland probably eludes most of us. The problem lies with the multiple definitions that come with the term *utopia*. The term first appeared in 1516 in a book with the eye-catching title *Libellus Vere Aureus, Nec Minus Salutaris Quam Festivus, de Optimo Rei Publicae Statu deque Nova Insula Utopia*, which translates into *A Truly Golden*[1] *Small Book, No Less Useful than Enjoyable, on the Optimal State of a Republic and on the New Island Utopia*, commonly abbreviated as *Utopia*. Famously, the author, English philosopher, and statesman Thomas More (1478–1535) created the word 'utopia' using morphemes from Ancient Greek, endowing it with a double meaning: depending on how one pronounces it, it is either a combination of *εὖ* and *τόπος* (resulting in eu-topia, i.e., 'good place') or of *οὐ* and *τόπος* (uh-topia, which means 'no place'). Likely, More did this intentionally, as the book is rife with puns that those versed in Latin/Greek could pick up on: for example, the name of the main river *Anydrus* means 'no water,' the leaders are called *Ademos*, 'without people,' and the name of the Utopian traveler himself, *Hythlodaeus*, translates to 'speaker of nonsense.'

The term *utopia* can then refer to the book by More; and to the republic and the island that he describes; to a good place; and/or a non-existent place, hence the common use of the term to call something 'nice but impossible.' *Utopia* also denotes the utopian literary genre, that is, literature that describes a system which is stylized as radically different, and usually follows a certain set of narrative conventions—some kind of journey in, and often out, of the utopia, a guide of some sort, lengthy dialogues, and detailed explanations of the political, economic, and cultural institutions within the system.[2] In fact, excessive detail is a characteristic part of utopian fiction because the 'good place' has reformed most aspects of life: institutions, finances, private life, marriage, shopping, clothes, and various household items may have been reinvented and therefore necessitate description. All of these building blocks can be found within More's *Utopia*.

However, when people talk of the United States as utopian, they rarely refer to the genre, even though they might gesture to works of utopian fiction written in or about the United States as a piece of evidence that underpins their argument. Instead, their use of the word *utopia* denotes the style of thinking that More has engaged in for writing his work: *utopianism*, that is, the "social dreaming" about "the ways in which groups of people arrange their lives and which usually envision[s] a radically different society from the one in which the dreamers live" and "focuses on everyday life as well as matters concerned with economic, political, and social questions" (Sargent 2010, 4). In the examples above, the United States are utopian because they strike people either as a 'radically different society' or as a nation of 'social dreaming,' or as both.

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[1] 'Golden' in the title of Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) is probably used figuratively to mean 'valuable' or 'delightful.' It may also be one of More's jests; the utopians themselves do not value gold at all, so *Vere Aureus* may mean that the book is truly worthless, or that those who appreciate it are fools.

[2] While the origins of the dystopian genre are intimately connected to utopian literature, dystopian literature draws on a different set of literary conventions (see Baccolini and Moylan 2013).

Utopian studies commonly differentiate between three interrelated 'faces of utopianism': literary utopia (the literary genre), utopian practice, and utopian social theory (Sargent 2010, 5). Hence, *utopia* denotes (among other definitions and applications to which I will turn later) the societies described in the literary genre and the genre itself; also, the societies laid out in *utopian social theories*, which propose the details of an imaginary society, usually to resolve the central flaws the author identifies in her environment, without employing most of the narrative strategies of the literary utopia (and without its propensity for satire and uncertainty). Finally, *utopia* also refers to the sociopolitical phenomenon of *utopian practice* in the form of *utopian communities*, so it also may denote attempts at actualizing a utopian vision.

One oft-cited manifestation of utopianism in the United States is the large number of utopian communities founded on its grounds. Such "insular, self-sufficient communit[ies] of dissidents who are opposed to and alienated from the established social order, often on religious or political grounds" (Hogan 1985, 40), are said to have "have mushroomed in the fertile ground of America" (Balasopoulos 2004, 4). Even though scholars like to quibble over the terminology—*utopian communities* versus *intentional communities* versus *communes* versus *model communities*[3]—they by and large agree that such communities are comprised “of five or more adults and their children, if any, who come from more than one nuclear family and who have chosen to live together to enhance their shared values or for some other mutually agreed upon purpose” (Sargent 2010, 34).[4] Scholars denote such communal efforts to be *utopian practice*, as these communities attempt to realize their social dreams of a good place. Utopian communities existed on North American grounds even before the foundation of the United States, for example, the Labadist settlement in Maryland (ca. 1683–1720). Such communities enjoyed popularity and publicity especially in the early nineteenth century—when they were inspired by social theories and visions of, for example, Robert Owen (1771–1858), Charles Fourier (1772–1837), Étienne Cabet (1788–1856), and John Humphrey Noyes (1811–1886)—and again in the countercultural context of the 1960s. Utopianists were not idle in the meantime: in fact, scholars such as Robert S. Fogarty (1990) and Timothy Miller (1998, 1999, 2015, 2019) have collected ample data to illustrate that utopian communalism was practiced continuously throughout the history of the United States. It may seem that there is ‘something’ that inspires the foundation of utopian projects.[5] Furthermore, scholars that have studied utopian communities in the United States seem to agree that “a tradition of idealistic social reform has grown and even become embedded in the political culture of the region” (Van Bueren and Tarlow 2006, 1), that is, that

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[3] The term *utopian communities* was especially prevalent in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which is the historical time span explored in this book. The idea that these communities are somehow *utopian* marks the overlap of communal studies and utopian studies to this day (e.g., Claeys 2011, 2017; Madden and Finch 2006; Miller 1998; Sargent 2010). It goes without saying that situating the upcoming analysis within the field of utopian studies is only one of multiple approaches possible. Instead of *utopian community*, terms such as *cult*, *drop-out*, *secessionist*, *communal*, *grass-roots*, *counterculture*, *dissent*, and so on could be used to describe subsets of the communities depicted in the narratives, and each of these descriptions brings with it a different set of contexts and theories. On that note, *utopia*

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is a problematic choice, the implications of the term being distinctly Eurocentric, nationalist, and imperial. However, recent archipelagic and postcolonial enquiries into utopianism enable me to take, and further develop, a critical approach regarding the grand narratives that underlie utopianism.

[4] This is a very condensed definition which includes the main points that accomplished scholars of utopian communities have drawn up: Timothy Miller, for example, outlines his field of study by the following criteria: “A sense of common purpose and of separation from the dominant society. … Some form and level of self-denial, of voluntary suppression of individual choice for the good of the group. … Geographic proximity. … Personal interaction. … Economic sharing. … Real existence … Critical mass … Generally, it seems reasonable to think that an intentional community should include at least five individuals, some of whom must be unrelated by biology or exclusive intimate relationship” (1998, xx–xxii). Chapter 2 provides a more extensive discussion regarding the definition of the subject at hand.

[5] While working on this project, I learned of long-standing traditions of utopian practice in, for example, England, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, New Zealand, Spain, and Wales. I am sure that most nations have seen their fair share of utopian communities.

these attempts to live radically differently have left an enduring impression on the United States.

Viewing utopian communities as part of the United States is, however, somewhat paradoxical, as utopian practice is an expression of dissent. Utopian communities stand in an ambivalent relationship to the nation. Their appearance does both, "support and undermine the nation as a eutopia. On the one hand, the willingness of people to try to create a better life for themselves certainly suggests that utopian impulses are alive and well in the country. On the other hand, the very fact that people believe that they must leave mainstream society to live a good life clearly signals that there is something amiss" (Sargent 2007, 100). It is this complex interaction between dissent expressed in utopianism and the United States that I am tracing through a series of novels from the nineteenth century. The following chapters are ultimately concerned with the relationship of nation and utopia—the former an 'imagined' (Anderson 1983) and the latter an 'imaginary' community (Wegner 2002; Sargent 2007). Each of the works I have chosen has a different take on the state of 'social dreaming' in the United States, how likely they are to be turned into a radically different good place and by what means and at what costs this can be brought about.

The novels that I am reading are not *utopian fiction*. They do not give fictional accounts of entire societies that are long-established and smoothly running. Nonetheless, the narratives discussed are linked to utopianism in so far as they describe the attempt to realize a vision of a good place. They are looking at utopian practice, at the possible beginning of the road to utopia. Precisely because these communities are not fully developed utopian societies, they offer insights into the state of the utopian imagination: that is, if people thought their society could be changed drastically, and what dreams they had; which aspects of society and human nature they regarded to be immutable; which conditions already existed that would enable or hinder this change; and how swiftly this would be possible. After all, these communities try to live by a social order diverging from the implicit and explicit rules that the normative majority around them adheres to, and therefore provide an appropriate setting for discussing dissent, ideology, sovereignty, territory, agency, and so on.

For this purpose, I have selected five novels: Gilbert Imlay's *The Emigrants* (1793), Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* (1852), Marie Howland's *Papa's Own Girl* (1874), Sutton E. Griggs's *Imperium in Imperio* (1899), and W.E.B. Du Bois's *The Quest of the Silver*

Fleece (1911). The primary criterion for these texts was that they fictionalize utopian practice. However, there are of course more that were not included: for example, Rebecca Harding Davis's novel *Margret Howth: A Story of To-day* (1862); *The Undiscovered Country* (1880), and *New Leaf Mills: A Chronicle* (1913) by William Dean Howells; Louisa May Alcott's *Transcendental Wild Oats* (1873); Harold Frederic's *Gloria Mundi* (1898); and Caroline Dale Snedeker's *Seth Way* (1917).[6] Ultimately, I have chosen texts that I found to provide a productive comment on utopianism, the nation, and the relationship between the two of them. To give a multifaceted account of these issues, I deliberately selected works that offer different perspectives on US American utopianism: a novel aimed at a European readership (*The Emigrants*), a work by an author who is widely credited with having shaped the national narrative (*The Blithedale Romance*), a work by a working-class, feminist author (*Papa's Own Girl*), and two works by African American authors, one by a preacher from the South (Griggs's *Imperium in Imperio*), the other written by one of the key figures of Black[7] philosophical thought to the present day (*The Quest of the Silver Fleece*). Notably, all of these novels are not widely known; even *The Blithedale Romance* is considered one of Hawthorne's lesser works of fiction. There are of course multiple reasons as to why each of these novels enjoys relative obscurity, yet they all have in common that they provide complex answers to the question in how far the United States can become the site of a realized utopia. I will discuss them in chronological order, tracing how the connection between utopia and United States develops over the course of the long nineteenth century.[8] As the nation expanded, waged war against other nations, went to Civil War, industrialized, abolished slavery, and entered the twentieth century segregated along racial lines, the relationship between United States and utopia underwent significant changes. The narratives illustrate this in the uncertain circumstances of the utopian communities they depict. Neither quite utopian nor completely within the non-utopian present, the communities are in friction, making the limitations for arriving at the good place visible. The readings therefore contribute to what Jameson calls "a psychology of Utopian production: a study of Utopian fantasy mechanisms" (Jameson 2005, xiii), with special attention given to the relation of these utopian fantasy mechanisms and the formation and variation of the national narrative of the United States.

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[6] For those in search of more suggestions, especially of less well-known works, I recommend Lyman Tower Sargent's *Utopian Literature in English: An Annotated Bibliography from 1516 to the Present* (2016 and ongoing), as well as the lists compiled by Nan Bowman Albinski (1988), Carol Farley Kessler (1985, 1989, 1995), and Darby Lewes (1989).

[7] Throughout this book, I am capitalizing *Black, Indigenous, Native*, and the like as well as *White*, when referring to the respective ethnic/racial groups. Writing the former set with an upper case is, for one, honoring the wish of various BIPoC activists and in accordance with a set of contemporary style manuals. Capitalizing *White* has nothing to do with me honoring Whiteness but is informed by arguments from those who have critically investigated White privilege: a lower case would obscure that *Whiteness* is very much an identitary category—one that thrives on invisibility, presenting itself and its habitus as 'natural' and as the 'norm.' Kwame Anthony Appiah (2020) makes this point more eloquently than I ever could, so I would refer interested readers to his article.

[8] With the term *long nineteenth century* I am referring to the time period that starts approximately with the writing of the Constitution of the United States and ends with its entry in

This is especially interesting when we consider the power that the idea of *nation* still has. In recent political events of Europe as well as of North America, protectionism, patriotism, and nationalism, with a decidedly racist undercurrent, have proven themselves ever powerful, despite transnational networks (positive and negative), and allegedly cosmopolitan imageries. Instead of considering more nuanced and complex retellings of history and identity, people continue to adhere to "the traditional authority of … national objects of knowledge—Tradition, People, the Reason of State, High Culture, for instance—whose pedagogical value often relies on their representation as holistic concepts located within an evolutionary narrative of continuity" (Bhabha 1990, 2–3). In other words, the so-called grand narratives[9] of nations endure, inspiring notions of a monolithic,

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the First World War. Obviously, I am evoking Eric Hobsbawm's terminology for the long nineteenth century in Europe, starting with the French Revolution and ending with the outbreak of the First World War, with the modification that the foundation of the United States is the relevant date within a US American context.

[9] I am here employing Jean-Francois Lyotard's terminology. In *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979), Lyotard made the seminal argument that in postmodernity, because everything is perceived as a narrative, grand narratives have lost their power: "Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity towards metanarratives" (xxiv). However, especially postcolonial scholars, such as Edward W. Said, have pointed out that grand narratives remain potently active (1996, 18); further, even the recent evocation of a 'post-factual age' does not seem to detract from the power of grand narratives as they manifest in nationalism, racism, class, gender binary, and so on: quite to the contrary. While the analyses provided below focus on the nineteenth century, I understand the general framework to be applicable beyond the end of modernity, following Michel Foucault's suspicions that comparable orders of discourses via such narratives can be found in every society (1970,

time-honored national character that supposedly derives from a shared history and culture.

This book follows one essential aspect of the United States' 'grand narrative' in order "to encounter the nation *as it is written*" (Bhabha 1990, 2; emphasis in original) and how it came to be perceived as 'utopian.' I am therefore considering it as a part of the ongoing academic effort to unsettle and further nuance the way that people think about the idea of nation, the United States in particular, and to contemplate the relationship between utopian theory and practice. This work is also a testament to the fascination inherent in dreaming of a thoroughly restructured society, and to the temptation of setting out with likeminded people to 'just' live differently and better.

The United States are especially interesting for such an investigation because its national narrative includes 'diversity' as part of their identity (Kaplan 1999, 15),[10] and because utopian communities, being anti-systemic by their very nature, strain this idea of a diverse-yet-united community. The novels reflect on this, and on the turbulent history of the United States in the course of the long nineteenth century: the formation of the nation via the ratification of the Constitution in 1788; expansion across the North American continent, which meant genocide and displacement of entire nations and cultures in the process; seizing territory beyond these geographic borders; mass chattel slavery and its abolishment; the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the subsequent nadir of race relations (Logan 1954); religious revivals, reform movements, scientific theories, and fads. The biographies of the novels' authors differ starkly, and so their works were created under very different circumstances. All the more fascinating, therefore, are their manifest parallels.

After a brief overview of the historical relationship between North America and utopia prior to the American Revolution, the chapter on Imlay's *The Emigrants* (1793) provides a point of departure for the discussion of the utopian/national imagination. The novel showcases the European American construction of North America at the very birth of the United States as the place for putting utopia into practice and touches

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56) and that articulating anything outside of them is at best an illusion (1970, 57). Their examination is nonetheless the intellectual's duty (Said 1996).

[10] Of course, in light of various historical and contemporary examples of systemic discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality this claim of 'diversity' has been and is in dire need of reexamination.

upon a range of issues that the later novels will complicate and discuss: the idealization of the American landscape and its deterministic power over the people that occupy it; dissent with the European American society in the (still infant) United States; calls for wholesale, radical change as opposed to reform; women's rights and the role that romance plays for and within utopia; American Independence as an act of utopian secession; and, nonetheless, an antagonistic relationship between United States and utopia. Imlay seems to interpret the American Revolution as an invitation to secede from the United States. Thus, the chapter unfolds how Imlay's novel casts the American continent as the site for putting utopia into practice; inspired, but in no way limited, by the infant United States. The metafictional self-awareness already displayed in *The Emigrants* is heightened in Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* (1852), which takes up motifs of land and nation, but literally buries utopia on American grounds. Instead of envisioning a utopian future for the United States, Hawthorne delineates how different floundered utopian projects in the country's past can be wrought into a national narrative.

After Hawthorne's bleak take on utopianism, Howland's *Papa's Own Girl* (1874) provides a surprisingly optimistic outlook on the utopian future of the nation. Seemingly unfazed by the Civil War, the novel envisions a utopian community that will result in harmonious collaboration between the working class, capitalists, and even European aristocracy, as well as radically change the lot of women and the makeup of romance. In order to conceptualize such happy unions and in particular to advance the cause of White[11] women, the novel focuses on breaking open the 'domestic sphere' while still offering romantic bliss. Glossing over anti-black systemic violence, it avoids addressing the pressing question of how to unite and fully include different races in the nation; an evasive strategy that foreshadows the racial homogeneity of many utopian novels of the late nineteenth century.

Griggs's *Imperium in Imperio* (1899) engages with utopian practice to showcase the limitations that White supremacy, as expressed in Howland's work, imposes on African American utopianism. In *Imperium in Imperium*, the national narrative inhibits the utopian imagination of African American. The novel warns that African American full inclusion into the nation and full access to its utopianism cannot be put off much longer, or the United States will face a devastating war. With this, Griggs also comments on the many utopian novels that were published at the end of the century, which mostly exclude Black people from the future. Like *Imperium in Imperio*, Du Bois's *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* (1911) emphasizes the urgency for change and shows how utopianism is effectively denied to Black people at the turn of the century in the US American framework. Yet, the utopian practice that *The Quest* depicts is in the spirit of nineteenth-century utopian socialism, and opts for the abolition of the color line, and more. Reworking the connection between utopia and the United States by writing the Black community and the novel into a distinctly US American tradition, the nation becomes the place destined for and saved by African American utopianism.

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[11] For an explanation as to why I am capitalizing *White*, see footnote 7.

Just as "tightly organized intentional communities frequently exaggerate characteristic American values or carry particular concerns to their extreme logical conclusion, [and therefore] vividly highlight issues easily overlooked when studying more conventional movements" (Pitzer 1997, 6), these fictional renditions of communities provide insights because the authors imagine how utopian practice would play out. Neither simply containing dissent as a national 'reflex,' nor sketching a radically different society far removed from the non-utopian reality, the narratives draw and re-draw the map for utopia within the United States. The novels complicate the rather simplified equation of a national narrative that promotes the United States as offering so-called virgin land (as famously described by Henry Nash Smith 1950) for utopian strivings. Each text, from a different perspective, demonstrates that the ongoing construction of a discursive link between utopia and United States was not unnoticed, naturalized, or uncritically accepted and replicated throughout the nineteenth century.

As the examples provided throughout the book demonstrate, many ideas that utopians had in the nineteenth century remain alive and well today; many problems that utopian communities faced back then also challenge their successors. However, I have to disappoint anyone who reads this book in order to get an insight on how communes (mal)function. While I will signpost to various historical communities, *Utopian States of America* remains a work of literary analysis. I will not belabor the question of whether the communities described offer viable alternatives to 'mainstream' society, nor do sociological reasons for the failure of any historical community present a central concern of mine. Additionally, the utopian social theories that inspire and shape the communities, their wholesale justifications, explanations, and detailing of a new social order and its benefits, only inform my approach in so far as they provide context. Instead, I venture to unfold the national/utopian psychology[12] of these works. In other words, the following readings trace how and if the authors thought that a utopia can be imagined within the respective historical, specifically the national, framework.

Fiction is able to move more freely between utopian intention, the non-utopian reality, and the discourses that negotiate the two. After all, “a utopist, the author of a literary utopia, is free to imagine any setting that will adequately express his concepts of goodness or, in a dystopia, badness. The founders of utopian communities, on the other hand, are severely constrained by nagging realities” (Roemer 1981, 4). Novels that are set in intentional communities can then highlight what they perceive to be the ‘nagging realities’ that limit the practice, and ultimately the utopist’s supposed freedom of imagination. Approached in this way, works of fiction set in intentional communities provide insights into the conception of utopias and are all the more complexly related to utopianism because they give fictional accounts of the attempt to put an imaginary construct into reality. In effect, these narratives are composed of three levels: the utopian intention, that is, a utopian social theory that inspired the fictional community on the one hand; the non-utopian reality on the other, mimetic to a historical reality; and a third located between the preceding two, the fictional utopian community, inspired and limited by its context. Following the movement of the narratives between those levels, the upcoming chapters reveal the way in which the novels comment on, and interact with, the mechanisms of utopian production. Strikingly, all the novels propose answers to this question by commenting on writing and imagining: they employ a metafictional discourse. They all argue that the radically good place also needs a radical narrative that tells its beginnings. Consequently, all chapters expound on three interlinked issues: in how far the communities are utopian, how they relate to the United States, and what role they assign to writing and imagining within a national utopianism.

Writing about utopian practice reflects on the reciprocal relationship of environment and subject and casts a spotlight on how far the authors think that a good place can be created, and by what means. The interpretative potential of the novels lies in how they treat the friction between the non-utopian present and the imaginary good place. Instead of theorizing about agency and change from the perspective of a system that is up and running, these narratives specifically represent an uncertain moment of utopian production in which the members of the communities and their utopian visions immediately encounter their historical context. In this friction, or uncertainty, the texts relate the road to utopia on a practical level, as well as the mechanisms of the utopian imagination. Ultimately, each chapter provides another insight into the historically perceived possibilities and limitations of the utopian imagination—a historicized study of utopian psychology—and another answer to the question what role utopianism plays in the grand narrative of the United States and vice versa.

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[12] Fredric Jameson employs the term *utopian psychology* to denote the approach he takes in *Archaeologies of the Future* (2005), which underlies my approach to these novels. The next chapter provides a more detailed discussion of utopian psychology.

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