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***A Connecticut Yankee in Utopia:
Mark Twain Between Past, Present and Future***

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Introduction

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the speculative-utopian novel became one of the most popular forms of literature in the United States. From the beginning, the genre displayed peculiar combinations of the political treatise, decorative romantic plots and technical-scientific details. From the 1880s to the 1900s the genre evolved and borrowed from other popular genres; its political concerns changed but it maintained a clear didactic intent and rhetorical form. Consider four plots. Three are typical, one does not quite fit.

- 1) A nineteenth century middle-class everyman (and first person narrator) wakes up more than one hundred years in the future and into a perfect, utopian world. This modern Rip Van Winkle has this world explained to him by an authoritative figure who acts as his guide. Most of the novel consists of one-sided conversations between traveler and guide. Our protagonist falls in love with a descendant of the fiancée he had left behind in his own time. In the finale, the protagonist has a nightmare of his own century in which he cannot convince his contemporaries to change their ways and solve social injustice. He wakes up, relieved to find he is still in the future.
- 2) In the future a middle-class everyman/yeoman travels to the technologically advanced but corrupt big city. We are introduced to opposing social factions: on one side, plutocrats who tend to belong to a specific ethnicity; on the other, violent anarcho-socialist revolutionaries who also tend to belong to a specific ethnicity. An apocalyptic class war breaks out, but our protagonist

escapes with a fair maiden he has saved from the unwanted attentions of representatives of both factions. They flee to the protagonist's agrarian, colonial homeland and live happily ever after.

- 3) In the near future, an ingenious upper middle-class man of science creates a new weapon that allows his homeland, and consequently his "race," to gain the upper hand in global and colonial warfare. His invention inaugurates a golden era of American world domination during which the Anglo-Saxon extends his civilizing influence to the corners of the Earth. He also falls in love with a fair maiden.
- 4) A lower middle-class nineteenth century everyman, and first person narrator, travels back in time to a primitive world. Having gained power due to his more advanced technical knowledge, he attempts to recreate nineteenth-century civilization with sweeping social and technological reforms. He eventually marries a local woman and has a child. The protagonist's project fails, and nation-wide conflict ensues. His few supporters and his many adversaries die in a final apocalyptic battle; he is exiled from the land and never sees his wife and child again. He dies dreaming of his lost love and his lost land.

These narrative arcs all represent the fears and aspirations of late modernity. Of the four plots, however, only number 4 transcends the escapist, racist or idealistic trappings that are common to the other three. And the fact that number 4 contemplates the past rather than the future is the sign of a very different historical outlook. Despite similar premises of time displacement and social transformation, number 4 displays a pessimistic and realistic twist within an unrealistic context: the failure of the protagonist is downbeat compared to the almost fairytale endings presented by 2 and 3; it is indicative of a critical perspective that is absent from 1, 2 and 3.

The first summary depicts Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* (1888). It was the most popular and most imitated of the utopian novels of this era. Indeed, sales of *Looking Backward* were second only to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Sadler 530). The second concerns Ignatius Donnelly's *Caesar's Column: A Story of the Twentieth Century* (1890). Although not as popular as *Looking Backward*, its motifs and premises were common to utopian-dystopian fiction that did not have a time travelling protagonist but a hero who was part of the (future) era. A variation on the plot premise of *Caesar's Column* has the protagonist singlehandedly transform the corrupt system and change the world rather than flee to a new utopia; something of this sort occurs in summary number 3, Stanley Waterloo's *Armageddon: a Tale of Love, War and Invention* (1898). This novel's imperialistic message is more representative of utopian fiction at the turn of the century rather than of the first wave inaugurated by Bellamy in 1888.

Number 4 summarizes Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889). The novel was at least four years in the making and was published a year later than *Looking Backward*, but before the utopian novel had crystallized into a genre. Curiously, it anticipates many of the genre's tropes and tendencies, including its later imperial developments, and reads eerily like a parody in advance. Twain's novel narrates the adventures of Hank Morgan, who, transported from Connecticut back to medieval England, attempts to transform it into a nineteenth-century republic. His project of reform turns into a war and in the final "Battle of the Sand-Belt," through the use of superior technology, Hank destroys the "massed chivalry" (227) of England. But his victory is short lived.

My thesis focuses on *A Connecticut Yankee* and a selection of Mark Twain's works that share its themes. My objective is to demonstrate how these texts retain enduring relevance due to the questions they raise and the lack of easy answers given. Even my brief summary is potentially fraught with imprecision: critics have debated whether we can actually speak of time travel, whether the novel

is actually set in medieval England, whether Hank's project succeeds or fails or whether his violence is justified. These questions are not easily answered and have generated contrasting interpretations. This ambivalence has been seen as one of *A Connecticut Yankee's* flaws. I would argue that this ambivalence is the novel's principal merit considering the historical and literary context in which it was produced.

A Connecticut Yankee was written in an era of nationalistic certainties and supposedly edifying literature. It was the age of progress, inventions, industry, civilization and empire. The novel encapsulates those ideologies. It also resists and even savages those ideologies and deflates the sense of historical self-importance that we find in speculative-utopian literature. This genre is symptomatic of a millenarianist worldview and is pervaded by those same ideologies that Twain critiques. Twain does not adhere to the *fin de siècle* anxiety that characterizes his utopian counterparts who, through either religion or social science, come to the conclusion that the 1890's were going to be the age of "Armageddon" or "The Change" (Roemer 21-22).¹ As stated by Kenneth Roemer: "Over and over in their utopian works and in utopian articles in reform magazines the alarm resounded: you are living during a decisive, perhaps the final, transition period" (17).²

This thesis contrasts the norm of speculative-utopian fiction and Twain's idiosyncratic forays into the genre: *A Connecticut Yankee* will be analyzed against the backdrop of utopian fiction in order

¹ Roemer speaks of the "general theory of history" present in these works, according to which the "late nineteenth century not simply as an important period but as THE FINAL TRANSITION" (19): an epochal shift to either to peaceful, static utopia or catastrophic wasteland.

² The arrival of the new century, the absorption of the Nationalist movement by "Populist concerns," the successive failures of the Populist movement itself and "the return of relative prosperity during the closing years of the century offer a final explanation for the decline of [Bellamy style] literary utopianism" (Roemer 7).

to determine their common historical, literary and ideological ground and the very different results that derive from these shared premises. As a result, my thesis is as much about utopian fiction as it is about *A Connecticut Yankee*. The contrast/comparison with Twain's work requires a mapping of the vast gamut of experiments in utopian fiction that are produced in this era. Therefore, some chapters of this thesis will be taxonomic rather than argumentative. These utopian experiments show common themes but also extreme individual idiosyncrasies and I have endeavored to give equal space to both; I will show the parallels and dialectic relationships that exist among these texts, but also the transversal themes that transcend political or religious divisions. The works that deviate most visibly from the norm of utopian fiction will be those that share an affinity with *A Connecticut Yankee*. Hence, Twain's novel will be discussed in relation both to the default norm and the marked margins of utopian fiction.

What Kind of Novel?

It is difficult to pin *A Connecticut Yankee* down to the constraints of a single genre. Even calling it a novel is a convention adopted for the sake of convenience. It is more related to proto-novels such as Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* or the traditionally satirical novella *Candide*. Like these texts, it has been categorized as a Menippean satire (Sanchez) and it shares more similarities with the *picaresque* than the Victorian novel due to its episodic, itinerant and satirical nature. Like *Gulliver's Travels*, *A Connecticut Yankee* is also considered an example of proto-science fiction (Foote), a genre which flourished during the second half of the nineteenth century.

I have chosen to analyze *A Connecticut Yankee* within the context of utopian fiction as it is, in many ways, the exact *opposite* of a utopian fiction. *A Connecticut Yankee* is satirical and comedic; utopian fictions are earnest. Twain uses realistic narration; utopian novels use sentimental prose and treatise-like forms (often within the same text). Twain's text is dialogic: it converses with other works

of literature of the past and present (Malory, Scott etc); the narrator confronts different characters from all strata of society; the author pits different languages, registers and philosophies against each other. The utopian novel is monologic: we are presented with one worldview and we are told what to do, lest we fall into anarchy. Hank's project fails, utopias are successful and eternal.

Nor is *A Connecticut Yankee* an example of dystopian fiction. Twain's Camelot is, at the same time, an idyllic, pastoral landscape inhabited by childish, innocent people but also a place of terrible social injustice where slavery, mob violence and privilege are ever present. Hank's new world order is not a dystopia either: he abolishes slavery and attempts to establish a republic; but Hank is also a dictator who exterminates an entire class and, in the end, destroys his brand new world. It is clear from these premises that Twain does not deal in simple political allegories and escapism, but in multifaceted portrayals of human history.

The common ground between *A Connecticut Yankee* and utopian fiction is historic and thematic. This novel inhabits the same time and place as utopian fiction, but their affinity goes beyond mere chronology. These texts contain the same concepts, the same ideas, the same metanarratives, but relate to their content in opposite ways. *A Connecticut Yankee* self-consciously absorbs the ideologies of its era and deconstructs them. The plot itself conveys this idea: Hank attempts nineteenth-century industrial utopia, Hank fails. Utopian fiction *passively* absorbs ideology and reiterates it, reinforces it and plays it out in a fictional world: from a present of frontier politics, for example, we arrive at fantasies of interplanetary, American, Anglo-Saxon empires.

What attracts us to utopian fiction are its bizarre and uncanny predictions; the fact that these texts are ridiculous or hauntingly prophetic out-of-place artifacts is fascinating. What attracts me to *A Connecticut Yankee* is the fact that it is itself an out-of-place artifact among other anachronisms. As we

have already mentioned, it was published a year after *Looking Backward* (1888) but before the utopian novel consolidated itself as a genre or mode. Utopian fiction prefigures the Cold War, the Atomic Age, space travel, stem cell research, artificial insemination etc. Twain prefigures utopian literature itself. Prefigures it and *destroys* it. Twain's novel is both satirical and comedic and that distinguishes it from utopian fiction. The utopian novel diagnoses and constructs, comedy and satire diagnose and destroy.

Authorities on utopian literature such as Kenneth M. Roemer and Jean Pfaelzer have used Twain's text to define the norm or distinguishing features of utopian literature contrastively.³ Roemer characterizes *A Connecticut Yankee* as both "utopian and anti-utopian" (8) and repeatedly uses it as a foil to the relative norm of utopian literature. Pfaelzer views it as a satire, in the vein of Swift's *Gulliver's travels*, in that it "lacks the extended representation of alternatives to what is criticized, the illustration of which occupies most of the utopian narrative" (19).

Given this important relationship between *A Connecticut Yankee* and utopian literature, we can invert Roemer's and Pfaelzer's paradigm and use the utopian text as a term of contrast to describe Twain's novel. My analysis attempts to determine what constitutes the norm in the utopian literature of the time in order to better comprehend how *A Connecticut Yankee* deviates from it. Starting from Roemer's and Pfaelzer's researches and classifications of the utopian novel, I will attempt to create my own map to facilitate the contrast/comparison with *A Connecticut Yankee*. Roemer's and Pfaelzer's mappings of the genre are rich and encyclopedic and cannot be distilled easily. In brief, Roemer analyzes utopian fiction as an expression of the milieu that produced it. He consequently portrays the

³ Unless otherwise specified, all quotes from Roemer are taken from *The Obsolete Necessity: America in Utopian Writings, 1888-1900*.

ideologies, hopes, good intentions and ambivalences of the Northern, urban, middle-class, Protestant, non radical, amateur authors who wrote these novels. Starting from the “tremendous popularity” of the genre which “invites speculation about beliefs shared by the authors and their contemporaries” (3), Roemer’s research tells us who the “‘typical’ [utopian] author” (9) is. Pfaelzer, on the other hand, highlights the dialectic tensions that exist within utopian fiction, particularly between “conservative” and “progressive” (8) texts. Moreover, Pfaelzer describes the all-important category of the “pastoral utopia” which “protects [...] from the sordid influences and temptations of culture by hiding the body politic in an imaginary garden” (21). In my own mapping of the genre, the pastoral utopia has a central role as do dialectic tensions between forward looking and backward looking texts.

My juxtaposition of *A Connecticut Yankee* and utopian literature has more to do with themes and ideology than genre or mode. It is a contrastive juxtaposition rather than a comparative one. My argument is also about form. Despite the fact that utopian fiction is necessarily ideological or that ideology is heavily present, it is also the particularities of form that reflect Twain’s critical perspective and idiosyncratic slant. Throughout the course of this thesis I will analyze those authorial strategies that differentiate *A Connecticut Yankee* from most utopian fiction: these vary from the particular style of Hank’s first person narration to the use of poorly printed newspaper clippings within the text itself. *A Connecticut Yankee* is also characterized by humor and a profound irony that is missing in utopian fiction. Occasional humor and even a handful of satirical novels notwithstanding, this genre is grave and self-important. Comedy is Twain’s signature in the deconstruction of what is lofty or hypocritical; it is, therefore, no surprise that he uses it here to take shots at Victorian medievalism, monarchical and religious institutions, Southern and Northern culture and contemporary notions of progress and civilization.

The notable absentees from this discussion on genre and form will be Realism and Naturalism. As a thorough discussion of the differences and parallels that exist between these literary movements and the genre of utopian fiction would constitute a research topic in its own right, I will here just hint at a possible contrastive trajectory. The Realist and Naturalistic novels of Stephen Crane, Frank Norris and Theodore Dreiser are products that react in a diametrically opposite way to the same socio-economic preoccupations that engender speculative-utopian literature; the Realist's reaction is to focus on capturing reality, rather than imagining alternative realities. What they have most in common is a shared attempt to diagnose social ills, however, Realism merely shows rather than propose solutions: it strives to be as mimetic and does not give "easy" answers. Even William Dean Howells' own experiment with utopian fiction, *A Traveler from Altruria*, focuses more on analyzing Gilded Age society and shows how the elite adversely reacts to the utopian outsider's behavior and ideas.⁴ What Twain does in his own forays into the genre of speculative fiction is bring his Realist sensibilities and poetics with him. As we will see, works such as *A Connecticut Yankee*, "The Secret History of Eddypus" and *The Mysterious Stranger* ably mix the opposing tendencies of Realism and Speculation and showcase Twain's unique brand of anti-utopian, tragicomic satire.

Historical Perspectives

A Connecticut Yankee is Twain's over-ambitious attempt to represent not just *a* story but *history*. The plot device of time travel *to the past*, rather than the future, is original both for the time and within the context of utopian fiction. It is Twain's means of exploring and commenting upon history, however, it

⁴ Mr. Homos, the Traveler in question, becomes more reticent about his country of origin as the novel progresses and the overall pessimistic message seems to be that America is too corrupt to follow the example of Altruria.

is not a precise or clear-cut brand of time travel. Twain displaces his protagonist but the “past” Hank travels to is a vast, anachronistic amalgam of historical and literary references. Hank’s adventure is Twain’s attempt to write a universal parable or fable of man. Within this all-encompassing parable, Twain includes a critique of both the medieval and the modern era. However, his main focus, despite the title and the setting, is on the recent developments of Western civilization: within this more focused critique, we find an analysis of specific cultures (the Southern and the “Yankee,” for example) and recent phenomena (such as slavery, the Civil War and burgeoning Imperialism). The author includes these elements within a grander history of the “Damned Human Race.”

In doing so Twain offers a critique of the mindset that produced the utopian novel: the projection of one’s ideals onto the canvas of a fictional future that is the essence of this genre is satirized through Twain’s protagonist. Hank Morgan himself is a utopian author of sorts who has been given a world to experiment on. His failure, despite his unlimited power and resources, offers a sobering, pre-emptive counterpoint to the utopian fiction that had yet to bloom. Beyond the more abstract, philosophical dimension there is also a human and tragic side to this novel which also makes it a classic story of one man’s *hubris* and his subsequent fall. This adds a basically human dimension to the text, separating it from the treatise-like style of utopian fiction and its often passive, perfunctory or highly symbolical protagonists.

A Connecticut Yankee also differs from contemporary utopian works in its marginal treatment of the “capital vs. labor” issue which is central to most of them. This conflict is universalized and de-historicized into more general oppositions between “rich/poor,” “powerful/powerless.” It is Dan Beard’s (Twain approved) illustrations that push towards a more topical critique of Gilded Age capitalism (Figures 1.A and 1.B):

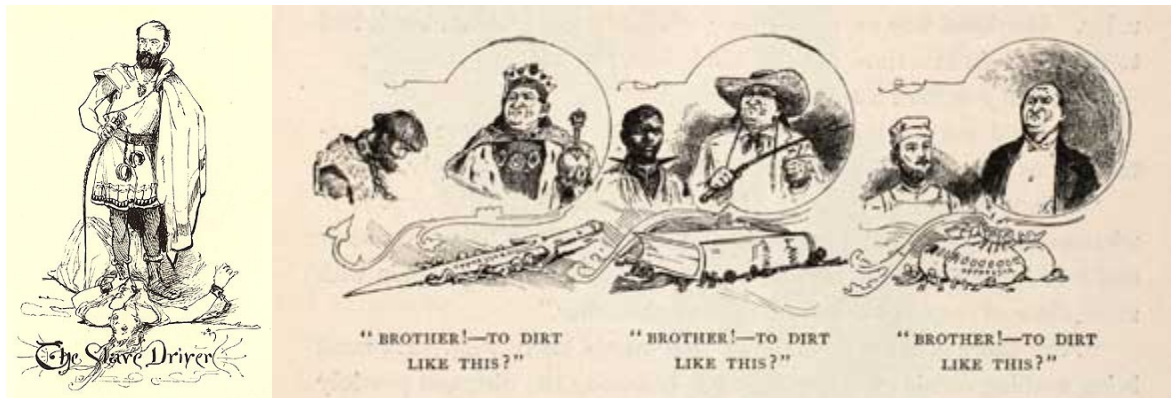


Fig. 1.A: Jay Gould as “The Slave Driver” (204). Fig. 1.B: oppressors and the oppressed through time (160).

Twain’s perspective is better represented by the second of the two illustrations in that it shows how mechanisms of power and repression are repeated throughout history in an unending cycle. What Twain seems to lack is an overblown sense of the importance of the current moment: it is neither decisive nor more critical than other moments in history.

Perhaps the difference between Twain and the utopian authors is generational. Twain re-evokes Civil War imagery and the horrors of slavery, for example. In doing so, he declares that there have already been decisive moments of truth. His socio-political analysis is not up to date with the contemporary debate on social disparity; he presents a more generalized discourse on the topics of power and change and he debates about whether the latter is an illusion. The novel universalizes the phenomenon of social disparity as much as possible, renders it ahistorical. However, Twain doesn’t remove injustice from history, quite the opposite, he shows it to be ever present: by setting the story in

medieval times and making continuous analogies between these fictional “Middle Ages” and the American South, the Frontier and Colonial America (both North and South) he renders it universal.⁵ Susan Gilman describes Twain’s historical perspective in *A Connecticut Yankee* as “Janus-faced” in that he analyses the phenomenon of “U.S. slavery,” for example, by “looking simultaneously backward and forward at the wreckage of the racial past and its reenactments, repetitions, and reincarnations in the present. As such, Twain forges a philosophy of history that is reflexive, construing historical process not as linear, but based on comparability of events in different times and places” (“In Twain’s Times” 10).

Slavery and the Civil War were still valid and topical subjects for Twain and he sees their consequences as still playing out. The author places these and other events into a historical perspective that connects them to the present rather than simply relegating them to a closed container of resolved issues. Twain late writings are littered with the idea of endless cycles and repeating history and *A Connecticut Yankee* represents an important step, perhaps even a watershed text, in the development of an idea which will later become almost an obsession. Roger B. Salomon sees *A Connecticut Yankee* as more or less adherent to the Whig interpretation of history, albeit with certain ambiguities and reserves; he also states that “By the end of the 1890’s, however, under the impetus of personal tragedy, an increasing sense of guilt, and a larger awareness of the plutocratic and imperialistic drift of American society, Twain had brought the Whig hypothesis itself under direct attack and was moving toward a theory of historical cycles” (32). It is my belief, however, that the novel already represents a significant

⁵ In fact, if we focus on the colonial-imperial dynamics of the novel we could say that Twain, perhaps involuntarily, anticipates the all-important debate regarding American imperialism that characterizes the last years of the nineteenth century. However, for his utopian peers, Twain’s social commentary may have been seen as out of date.

shift towards the “1890s” viewpoint and that, concomitantly, primacy and ultimacy are more relevant to understanding the novel than focusing on the Whiggish rhetoric that dominates the middle section of the text; furthermore, Hank’s position is not necessarily to be identified with that of the author.

In the first chapter I will focus on these specific questions. I will characterize Twain’s “1890’s” viewpoint and show how it is, in fact, relatively consistent throughout Twain’s career. I will demonstrate how Twain was consistently critical of the Whig view of history and those metanarratives of progress and civilization that are the cornerstones of utopian fiction. I will characterize Twain’s view of history as one of cycle, regression, repetition and only occasionally advancement. In my analysis of *A Connecticut Yankee* I also separate author from character, therefore, as a prelude I will scrutinize and argue against some of the biographical readings of the novel that are part of traditional scholarship.

Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis depict the speculative-utopian backdrop against which Twain’s novel will be analyzed. Time travel, social experimentation, the wealth divide, the concept of progress, industrialization and its consequences are the themes, tropes and phenomena present both in this literature and in Twain’s novel. If *A Connecticut Yankee* is idiosyncratic in how it deals with these issues, the paradigmatic text that best represents the norm of speculative-utopian fiction is Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward: 2000–1887* (1888); due to its precedence and its enormous success, it is the novel that effectively sets the trend for hosts of imitators and determines the prolificacy of the genre for almost three decades. However, *Looking Backward*’s primacy will not be taken for granted. Chapters 2 and 3 are more taxonomic than argumentative and I will present a distant reading of various works of speculative-utopian fiction in order to determine a “norm” and patterns within this body of texts as well as display the variety of experiments. These works will be analyzed and grouped

according to recurring thematic and ideological tensions: Conservative vs. Progressive, Pastoral vs. Industrial, Isolationist vs. Imperial utopias in chapter 2, Feminist vs. Patriarchal and religious utopias (both the traditional and the radically innovative) in chapter 3.

In chapter 4 I discuss works by African-American authors that find themselves at the margins of the utopian norm, and in chapter 5 texts that are not normally defined as utopian: the objective is to define peripheral points of view and isolate issues that we find also in *A Connecticut Yankee*. The novel's historical perspective on the Civil War, slavery and its critique of Southern nostalgia, for example, demonstrate an affinity with African-American utopian fiction. This places *A Connecticut Yankee* not only in contrast with the "Lost Cause" mythos but also Northern war narratives of reconciliation and/or progress. Twain resists the revision or rationalization of recent history according to narratives of progress that occurs, for example, in utopian fiction. The past realities of the Civil War and Reconstruction become essential to *A Connecticut Yankee* as a benchmark historical example of both failure and success; these events act as Twain's key to interpreting history, understanding the present and anticipating the future. Slavery, on the other hand, is a constant presence throughout Twain's works and represents the epitome of social evil. Slavery is also that past experience that enables the author to understand phenomena such as imperialism. In chapters 4, 5 I will also demonstrate the centrality of the Civil War and slavery to the novel as well as delineate its critique of reconciliation-era revisionism; by doing so, I will establish how *A Connecticut Yankee*'s historical consciousness has more in common with African-American utopian fiction than its "Yankee" Counterparts.

In chapter 6, I observe how various issues brought up by the novel and by my own analysis are ultimately resolved in the finale of *A Connecticut Yankee*. The sensorial data used by the author to depict the violence of the "Battle of the Sand-Belt" evokes pre-existing narratives and direct testimony

of the Civil War. Indeed, the critique of the historical memory of the reconciliation-era reaches its zenith in the apocalyptic finale of the novel. The death and destruction caused by Hank also signify the failure of the Whig/positivist philosophies he embodies. In determining the reasons behind the use of violent imagery and graphic detail, I also contest the standard critical reading of the ending of *A Connecticut Yankee*: rather than flawed and incoherent, I will demonstrate how the “Battle of the Sand-Belt” is perfectly consistent with the previous development of the central themes of the novel and of Hank Morgan as a character.

Chapter 7 examines the protagonist, Hank Morgan, and his narrative arc in an attempt to identify possible historical inspirations for the character: Hank as Napoleon, as Robespierre, as Ulysses Grant, as William Walker and as other significant figures of the late modern period. Due to the relevance of these historical models to the themes of progress, civilization and empire, this chapter also concludes the discussion of these themes that emerged from my analysis of utopian fiction. I will also show how Hank’s character partially conforms to types, masks, archetypes and the genre conventions of tragedy, comedy and satire in order to demonstrate his universal, ahistorical appeal: Hank as the *miles gloriosus*, as the tyrant, as the buffoon, as the tragic hero/anti-hero etc. Both analyses demonstrate how Hank Morgan’s complexities distinguish him from the bland Julian West and his various clones; his tragicomic story arc separates him from the sentimental melodrama or the cant of utopian fiction and provides an ironic portrayal of the modern myth of the “self-made man.”

Chapter 1. Twain's Speculations on Civilization and Progress

In this chapter I will scrutinize and challenge the biographical interpretations of *A Connecticut Yankee* that are part of traditional scholarship. These readings of the novel postulate the idea of a supposed “conversion” of the author which would explain the ambivalences and contradictions present in the text. To briefly sum up this “conversion” narrative: Twain started writing the novel with the idea of celebrating nineteenth century civilization, industrialization, capitalism and science; while writing the text, Twain invested heavily in the infamous “Paige typesetter” and the failure of this project almost bankrupted him. He also suffered personal losses. Due to these problems, Twain lost faith in the liberating power of inventions and became critical of nineteenth century “civilization.” This loss of faith supposedly shows in the text: it explains Hank’s failure in modernizing Medieval England and the apocalyptic finale of the novel.

My statement is that the idea of a “conversion” is incompatible with textual evidence in works that precede and follow *A Connecticut Yankee*. Twain’s critique of progress and civilization was a constant throughout his career. Twain did not “convert” but, rather, became more explicit with age, his tone more denunciatory. The contradictions within the text are not Twain’s but Hank’s; they are purposely used by the author to express the dialectic (or multilectic) nature of industrialization and the paradoxes of the late modern era. I will challenge the theoretical premises of the biographical “conversion” narrative and propose one based on textual comparison.

I will analyze a selection of Twain's late works (the "post-conversion" texts) to characterize his critique of progress. These works present unequivocal articulations of Twain's concept of "civilization." I will also analyze a series of key texts that precede *A Connecticut Yankee* and demonstrate how this critique was coherent throughout Twain's career. My intention is to present a continuous pattern of critical attitudes, from his early satire of "democratic" process ("Cannibalism in The Cars," 1868) to the anti-imperial piece "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" (1901). This selection includes the 1879 short story "The Great Revolution in Pitcairn" which represents a blueprint for the successive *A Connecticut Yankee* (1889). Most of the texts I have selected are examples of speculative and anti-utopian fiction. They serve the purpose of stressing, perhaps more than *A Connecticut Yankee*, the differences between Twain's historical worldview and that of utopian authors.

I. *The Paige Typesetter-Conversion Narrative and Hank's Idea of Progress*

Since it was first published, *A Connecticut Yankee* has spawned discordant interpretations regarding both its literary merits and its overall message. Twain's ambivalence towards technology and progress is familiar to scholars and it intensifies in this text. This apparent ambiguity has been explained through elaborate biographical interpretations rather than textual data. Bernard DeVoto's *Mark Twain at Work* offers a biographical analysis of *A Connecticut Yankee* (105-130) that has become very influential. DeVoto characterizes the period leading up to and immediately after the publication of *A Connecticut Yankee* as the beginning of Twain's disillusioned, pessimistic phase. He ascribes the author's transition from "incarnation of Southwest humor" (Cox, *Fate* 223) to "Mad Prophet" (DeVoto, *Letters from the Earth* 61) to a series of personal misfortunes among which the author's bankruptcy, due in part to his failed investment in the infamous Paige typesetter; these hardships and economic disappointments supposedly begin to negatively influence his views on capitalism, technology, progress, civilization and human existence itself.

This is the thesis which Henry Nash Smith also adheres to in his seminal work *Mark Twain's Fable of Progress* (1964). Smith uses what we will call the "Paige typesetter" or "Conversion" narrative to partially explain the supposed difficulties of the author in creating a coherent celebration (or condemnation) of progress, technology and "laissez-faire liberalism" (58-59, 90). This notion has already been questioned,⁶ but not effectively challenged by James M. Cox who partially adheres to it. Cox further expands upon DeVoto's and Smith's biographical analysis of Twain's late works; he views the development of *A Connecticut Yankee* in particular as flawed or confused due to the author's personal and creative upheavals (*Fate* 224-225 "Machinery" 398-399). Moreover, Cox sees the abortive development of the Paige typesetter as paralleling the "extravagant failure" of *A Connecticut Yankee* ("Machinery" 391); he suggests that while writing the novel the author increasingly identified himself with the failed invention ("Machinery" 397) and that Hank Morgan "is to a large extent the concrete embodiment of Twain's obsession with Paige's invention" ("Machinery" 398).

The Paige typesetter debacle still finds its way into contemporary interpretations and is largely referred to as a direct influence on the text; however, one of the advantages we have inherited from New Criticism and reader-response criticism is the possibility of pushing the author's biographical data into the background or even eschewing it. In offering my own analysis of Twain's work, I wish, on the one hand, to partially embrace the concept/critique of the intentional fallacy—to the extent that I am not under any obligation to: "assume the role of cultural historian or that of a psychologist who must

⁶ In "Mark Twain: the Fate of Humour" (1966), James M. Cox partially departs from DeVoto's "speculations" regarding Twain's later period as they "rest on the assumption that the life 'causes' the art, that behind the work lies the experience" (224). Cox espouses Henry James' thesis that it is "art" that "makes life" and rejects H. G. Wells conclusion to the contrary (*Fate* 224). However, both in *Fate* and in "The Machinery of Self-Preservation" Cox does maintain positions that are highly dependent on biographical interpretation.

define the growth of a particular artist's vision in terms of his mental and physical state at the time of his creative act" (Kuiper 228). On the other, I wish also to adopt enough of a rhetorical approach to be able to use the name "Mark Twain" to indicate either the implied-author Twain or something closer to the "flesh-and-blood author" (Phelan 134), and to speak of the strategies he adopts in his authorial agency. I am interested, to use James Phelan's terms, "not in private intention but in public, textualized intentions" (133), allowing "elbow room for intentionality" but without necessarily "driving the anti-intentionalists out of the Hermeneutic Temple" (134-35).

Deliberately ignoring the Paige typesetter/conversion narrative and its implications is one of the healthiest and most productive tendencies contemporary critics have adopted; however, I wish to recuperate it once more if only to offer a counternarrative so that its relevance can be put into perspective and attenuated. To the Paige typesetter failure/conversion narrative I oppose a more textually oriented one; the objective is to describe a more linear development wherein Twain's critique of progress and civilization are constant: they vary more in terms of degrees of intensity than in terms of a fundamental changing of position. Throughout the course of this thesis I will occasionally be referring to works which both follow and precede the supposed "conversion:" texts such as *Roughing It* (1872), "The Great Revolution in Pitcairn" (1879) and Twain's Hawaiian writings show an author that had consistently ambivalent, if not critical opinions on the notion of Civilization even before 1889. Apart from invalidating the Paige typesetter narrative, these texts give clues into how the themes of progress and civilization are to be interpreted in *A Connecticut Yankee*: the idea that this novel represents a mere contraposition of a civilized Yankee protagonist and a barbaric Arthurian aristocracy—in absolutistic terms of "positive" and "negative"—cannot subsist if we work intertextually.

It would be first of all useful to define exactly what is meant by Twain when he uses the terms “progress” and “civilization” and how they stand in relation to technology and scientific advancement. To do so, let us briefly observe how these concepts are delineated in *A Connecticut Yankee*—the text that deals the most explicitly with these themes and is at the center of our polemic. Henry Nash Smith’s *Mark Twain’s Fable of Progress* (1964) is one of the classic pieces of Twain scholarship that I will be relying on throughout this thesis. It is also, as we have seen, one of the many critical works that has adhered to the “conversion” narrative and it deals expressly with the theme of progress/civilization in *A Connecticut Yankee*. According to Smith, in the novel “progress” is expressed by Twain as:

The contrast [...] between poverty-stricken, ignorant, tyrannical feudalism and the enlightened industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century. Mark Twain, in common with virtually all his contemporaries, held to a theory of history that placed these two civilizations along a dimension stretching from a backward abyss of barbarism toward a Utopian future of happiness and justice for all mankind. The code name for the historical process thus displayed was progress, and in nineteenth century America it had the status of secular theology. (82)

However, I would argue against this generalization which takes one of a number of worldviews that are present in the text, specifically Hank’s, and applies it, across-the-board, to the author himself. Moreover, this generalized view of the novel and of Twain’s take ignores the various levels of irony that are present; it also ignores the amalgamation of symbols and references that makes Twain’s Camelot something more than just a representation of the medieval era.

Regarding progress/civilization in relation to technology, Smith affirms that: “the most obvious exemplification of progress in the story is the Yankee’s technological achievements—his creation of a complex of factories, railways, and telegraph and telephone lines. This aspect of the contrast between

civilizations is an allegory of the industrial revolution; its emphasis is primarily economic” (84). Smith also points out how Hank often equates civilization and progress with industry and technology: in chapter X, entitled “Beginnings of Civilization,” Hank lists the various infrastructures he has created in his role as self-proclaimed “despot [...] with the resources of a kingdom at his command” (51) and refers to the “nuclei of future vast factories” as “the iron and steel missionaries of my future civilization” (50). In chapter XLII (“War!”), when Hank and Clarence talk of “blow[ing] up our civilization” they are referring to “all our vast factories, mills, workshops, magazines, etc.” (243) rather than the people they will eventually “blow up.”

Beyond the more technophilic or materialist aspects of Hank’s revolution, there is a socio-political dimension. According to Smith this also makes *A Connecticut Yankee* an “allegory of the French Revolution” (84); I would expand the limits of this premise so that the text becomes an allegory for all revolutions or conflicts in which the concepts of progress and civilization are involved; Twain’s critical and historical view includes many other precedents such as the English Civil War,⁷ Frontier expansionism and the American Civil War in particular. According to Smith, with his “practical knowledge [we could say love] of machines” and “his devotion to republican institutions,” Hank is “meant to be a representative American,” however, “at different times Mark Twain emphasized first one aspect and then the other” (84) and dealt ineffectively with both themes (86). However, I believe that these flaws are to be considered part of Hank Morgan’s character rather than flaws of the text itself. It is Hank himself who has limited, faulty or inconsistent views. Hank does often express his

⁷ “Cromwell’s soldiers” (6) are mentioned in the first chapter of the book and placed in relation with Hank’s own feats.

socio-political ideals as a narrator in long-winded, well-intentioned philippics throughout the text. But when these are translated into more practical terms through his actions, they tend to be reduced to forms of production: the terms “man-factories” (50), “civilization-factories” (249) and even “teacher-factory” (50) are perhaps symptomatic of the limits of his project or of his mindset and, therefore, omens of his failure.

Smith’s defining parameters of progress perfectly describe Hank Morgan’s theory of history and his relationship with technology. However, an objection to Smith that should remain valid for the successive discussion is that, in his analysis of *A Connecticut Yankee*, he generally tends to identify the author with the protagonist: in doing so, and therefore in adapting the text to the limits of a biographical interpretation, the dialectic merits or paradoxical ambivalences that make the text interesting are diminished. A certain distance exists—and necessarily exists in any work of fiction for that matter—between narrator and author and Twain is offering a critical analysis—but not necessarily a denigratory one—of Hank Morgan himself.

II. ***“Cannibalism in The Cars” and “The Great Revolution in Pitcairn:” Butterworth Stavelly as a Prototype for Hank Morgan***

In a series of lesser-known and unpublished sketches, short stories and novels, we find examinations of the mixed blessings and failures of progress that give us the general gist of Twain’s position on the matter. These texts prove how *A Connecticut Yankee*’s critical-satirical treatment of the themes of progress and civilization is not an isolated instance but part of a pattern.

A text that represents the prototypical antecedent for *A Connecticut Yankee* is “The Great Revolution in Pitcairn” (1879), published a decade before in the *Atlantic Monthly*. In this short story the mutineers of the *Bounty* and their Tahitian wives have founded an idyllic (one could say utopian),

secluded community on the small Pacific island of Pitcairn. The community is constituted as “an appanage of the British crown” (273) but being so small, remote and devoutly Christian it does not attract the attention of either the Empire or missionaries (274-75); it enjoys its own political and economic freedom and elects its own leaders according to a democratic elective system based on universal suffrage (men and women) from the age of seventeen. Pitcairn is described in unequivocal terms as an Edenic or pastoral utopia: “The sole occupations of the people were farming and fishing; their sole recreation, religious services. There has never been a shop in the island, nor any money. The habits and dress of the people have always been primitive, and their laws simple to puerility” (274).

However, an external element arrives to sow discord and chaos, in the form of “One stranger, an American” by the name of Butterworth Stavely who has “settled on the island” and is immediately characterized as “*a doubtful acquisition*” (274). If Hank Morgan’s agency is ethically ambiguous, in *Pitcairn* the Yankee bringer-of-progress is in no uncertain terms: overambitious, driven by personal gain and ultimately misguided in his attempts to transform the tranquil community into an “empire” (279). Once he has manipulatively gained a reputation for being the most religiously zealous person on the island—using ostentation—he begins “to secretly sow the seeds of discontent among the people” with the “deliberate purpose, from the beginning, [of] subvert[ing] the government” (274).

Once he gains power and “oozing reform from every pore” (277) he pushes the community to proclaim independence from a nominal and unobtrusive motherland using the rhetoric of an enlightened liberator, similar to that used by Hank. In response to the islanders claims that England has never bothered them Butterworth declares: “She lets you go your own way! So slaves have felt and spoken in all ages! This speech shows how fallen you are, how base, how brutalized you have become under this grinding tyranny! What! has all manly pride forsaken you? Is liberty nothing?” (278). Butterworth incites them to “rise up and take your rightful place in the august family of nations, great,

free, enlightened, independent” (278). Once this meaningless or obsolete independence has been declared Butterworth then attempts to make an “empire” of the Pitcairn community by creating an army and a navy. When questioned about this—“Do we *need* an empire and an emperor?”—he answers “What you *need*, my friends is unification. Look at Germany; look at Italy. They are unified. It makes living dear. *That constitutes progress* [italics mine]. We must have a standing army and a navy. Taxes follow as a matter of course. All these things summed up make grandeur” (279). Although initially the population is enthusiastic about these reforms, the usual evils of privilege start to seep in; economic chaos ensues after the introduction of money and the expense of keeping a standing army threatens their survival as there is nobody to “till the fields” (280). The dire turn of events quickly erodes the “empire,” Butterworth is deposed and there is a return to the initial harmony.

Butterworth repeatedly urges his followers to look to Germany and Italy. These are examples of states that have taken the road of unification and aspire to the same grandeur of their imperial neighbors, even though they do not have the resources to do so: “People can’t eat unification, and we are starving. Agriculture has ceased. Everybody is in the army, everybody is in the navy, everybody is in public service, standing around in uniform” (280). Twain’s satire is directed towards, but not limited to, the economic problems that followed the unification of these two states and the interference of religion in political affairs the world over. What are also being critiqued are hierarchical, linear or totalizing ideas of historical progress whereby all states and all peoples must follow certain predetermined and ascendant steps towards an ideal “civilization.” It is clear that Pitcairn, as we initially see it, represents an example of perfect pastoral or primitivistic equilibrium that requires no interference. The terms “unification” or “empire,” to which Butterworth repeatedly appeals, may as well stand for “Civilization” within the context of this short story. After he is deposed and “very much depressed” Butterworth seems offended as he states: “I freed you from a grinding tyranny; I lifted you

up out of your degradation, and made you a nation among nations; I gave you a strong, compact, centralized government; and, more than all, I gave you the blessing of blessings—unification” (281).

In “The Great Revolution at Pitcairn,” Stavely’s is characterized from the beginning as a “dubious acquisition” and the third-person narrator is not sympathetic towards him; moreover, the reasons for his failure are explained clearly as his project brings Pitcairn on the verge of economic failure and famine. *A Connecticut Yankee* is quite different both in form (first-person narration) and in plot development: Hank’s project is (temporarily) more successful than that of Stavely and its “benefactions” are mentioned, although not described in detail. However, we can draw parallels between Stavely’s misguided attempts to form an army and navy and Hank’s success in the manufacture of weapons, his institution of a West Point like military academy and his construction of “steam war-ships” (228). Both character’s forms of warmongering have a similar ideology behind them but lead to very different types of failure. Both see the development of a military-industrial complex as a necessary stage of progress, even in the absence of enemies. And whereas Stavely fails in forming an industrial-military complex, Hank excels: so much so that the efficiency of his killing apparatuses creates a ironic and fatal “waste management” problem.

The contradictions in Hank’s mindset and the danger of his obsessions are also revealed by this particular aspect of his project: the reader might question the necessity of a standing army in this fictional medieval England where, it would seem, foreign invasion is not a problem. We can legitimately suppose that the feudal world in its entirety constitutes of the same type of ineffectual “dudes and dudesses” (43) that we find in Camelot; of course, Hank may be premeditating to use these armed forces against the nobility or to build a colonial empire, ambition which is betrayed by his Oedipal intention to “send out an expedition to discover America” (228). Indeed, it is this distorted view of what is useful or necessary that foreshadows Hank’s destructive tendencies and his justification

of genocide. He also shows an generalized obsession with efficiency that betrays more dangerous connotations when he speaks of “guns, [and] revolvers” as “labor-saving machinery” (8); this tendency of Hank’s is also evident during the selection process for commanders for the newly instituted standing army (Chapter XXV). Hank speaks admiringly of the “science of war” (139) and “scientific war” (141) and laments the stupidity and class based prejudice of the selection committee who insist that the candidates must be of noble descent. Twain offers a humorous satire of the nepotism and discrimination that is common to many selection processes. The darker side to this episode—the other layer of irony as it were—is that it reveals Hank’s compulsive need for efficiency even when it comes to destruction and violence. Indeed, he is elated by the proficiency of his “bright young West Pointer” protégée in the “science of war” (138-139).

The reader may ask whether the people of Camelot were not more content without this type of progress and “labor-saving” technology. Would they not better off if their concept of warfare had remained that of “bushwhacking around for ogres, and bull-fights in the tournament ring” (141)? Hank may be acting naïvely with regard to the terrible consequences that modern, technological, “scientific war” has. But from the final chapters of the novel, it is evident that Twain himself has a clear grasp of these consequences.

The brief sketch, “Cannibalism in the Cars,” published in 1868 in *The Broadway Annual*, represents one of the earliest examples of Twain’s treatment of the subject of progress and civilization. These themes remain part of the subtext of the vignette rather than its main focus. “Cannibalism in the Cars” is the account of a former congressman who is the survivor of an incident in which a train was caught in a snow drift for various days. In the story, the twenty-four passengers resort to cannibalism to survive but adopt the most civil of decision making processes—which mimics and satirizes governmental procedure—in order to choose who to eat. The sketch well represents the humoristic

style that characterized Twain's early career as a journalist and correspondent, and there is a nod to the lurid proto-tabloid journalism which he often parodied in his Western hoaxes. As in many of his hoaxes and sketches, violence, in this case civilized violence, is exaggerated to the point that it is rendered satirically grotesque.

Beyond the more obvious political satire, the mock congressional debates to decide who shall be eaten belie a critique of "civilization" itself: a train car of highly civilized gentlemen and ladies is reduced to a group of "bloodthirsty cannibal[s]" (69) by a week long breakdown of transport. The process is somewhat gradual as it is only on the fifth day that "A savage hunger looked out at every eye" (62). It is on the seventh day that "RICHARD H. GASTON, of Minnesota" takes the metaphorical podium and declares "Gentlemen,—It cannot be delayed longer! The time is at hand! We must determine which of us shall die to furnish food for the rest!" (62). However, from a question of mere survival, the situation degenerates into a grotesque and surreal farce; during the debating procedure, a "Gentleman from Oregon" is initially discarded as a candidate due to the fact that he is "old, and furthermore is bulky only in bone—not in flesh. I ask the gentleman Virginia if it is soup we want instead of solid sustenance?" (65).

After their first meal, the passengers acquire a taste for human flesh. They also become both greedy and fussy (our narrating congressman in particular) about what, or better who, they eat in a paradoxical juxtaposition of high refinement and anthropophagism:

After breakfast we elected a man by the name of Walker, from Detroit, for supper. He was very good. I wrote his wife so afterward. He was worthy of all praise. I shall always remember Walker. He was a little rare, but very good. And then the next morning we had Morgan of Alabama for breakfast. He was one of the finest men I ever sat down to—handsome, educated,

refined, spoke several languages fluently—a perfect gentleman—he was a perfect gentleman, and singularly juicy. (67)

After the ranks begin to thin, the previously mentioned “Oregon patriarch” is once again reconsidered for “election” and it is confirmed that:

he was a fraud, there is no question about it—old, scraggy, tough [...]. I finally said, gentlemen, you can do as you like, but I will wait for another election. And Grimes of Illinois said, 'Gentlemen, I will wait also. When you elect a man that has something to recommend him, I shall be glad to join you again.' It soon became evident that there was general dissatisfaction with Davis of Oregon, and so, to preserve the good will that had prevailed so pleasantly since we had had Harris, an election was called, and the result of it was that Baker of Georgia was chosen. He was splendid! (67-68)

Twain is anticipating, albeit in an understated manner, the more developed critique of “civilization” of his later works, his critique of a civilization that has “invented a thousand useless luxuries, and turned them into necessities; it has created a thousand vicious appetites and satisfies none of them” (*Letters from the Earth* 99). In “Cannibalism in the Cars” this situation is reversed as it is “necessity” that is transformed into “luxury” and “vicious appetites” are definitely satisfied. It is in this reversal that the story finds its satirical and grotesque force: within the space of a few pages we move from “civilization” and technology (the train) to “savagery” and from “savagery” to refinement, exposing the fine line, or absence of a line, that truly exists between the supposed binary opposites. It is a parable that elucidates the predatory side of human nature and can be understood as an allegory of the frontier or American history given the dynamics—from necessity/survival to greed/opulence—and the setting: the fact that this story of regression occurs within a train car is of extreme interest. Twain may or may

not be using the railway as a metaphor of civilization; however, Twain's intentions are irrelevant in this case as the railway had become at that point in time the quintessential symbol of the march of progress, the emblem of the "obscure kinship between [...] Machine power and the progressive forces of history" (Marx 214).⁸

"Cannibalism in the Cars" demonstrates that as early as 1868, well before the Paige typesetter fiasco and subsequent financial crisis, Twain is reflecting upon the idea of progress and the profound contradictions of civilization. Having compared "The Great Revolution in Pitcairn" and *A Connecticut Yankee*, we can concur that this short story offers analogous premises and plot developments which assist us in characterizing *A Connecticut Yankee*'s critique of "civilization."⁹ Pitcairn does not equal Camelot nor does Butterworth Stavely equal Hank Morgan exactly: the latter is more naïve and well-intentioned than the self-serving Butterworth and these texts vary in their scope, intent and dialogic properties. Nevertheless, "The Great Revolution in Pitcairn" invalidates the idea of a sudden loss of faith in progress. This text confutes the notion that *A Connecticut Yankee* is a simplistic, Manichean contrast between America/Britain, Civilization/Savagery, Present/Past or Progress/Pastoral. This

⁸ Both Leo Marx in *The Machine in the Garden* and Ronald Takaki in *Iron Cages* give countless examples that attest to the fact that the steam locomotive had become "the voice of the civility of the Nineteenth century" (Emerson in Marx, 17) as early as the 1840s (Marx 15, Takaki 150-151); the concept of the steam engine as a literal locomotive of progress had, in this period, already been eroticized (Takaki 149-151) and even satirized by Hawthorne (Marx 27) in "The Celestial Railroad" (1843). Closer to the publication of Twain's short sketch, although after, we find John Gast's widely circulated painting *American Progress* (1872) which famously shows a divine female figure in the center of the scene, advancing West and laying down telegraph lines as she does so while a locomotive follows immediately in her wake.

⁹ Moreover, there does seem to be the need to implicate any "different implied authors" in the discussion of these two texts as there are no great or "surprising difference[s] in ideological or ethical positions" (Phelan 135).

notion—which is at the basis of many “hard” (Carter 434) analyses of the novel—cannot subsist if we work inter-textually.

III. *Anti-Imperialism and The Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts*

Many of the texts that were written after Twain’s supposed “conversion” are universally understood as being critical of “civilization” and “progress.” In pieces such as “To the Person Sitting in Darkness” (1901), “The Stupendous Procession” (1901) or “The Fable of the Yellow Terror” (1904-1905) the term “civilization” is characterized either as a collective deception or as a thin veil of propaganda that disguises predatory colonial action.¹⁰

“To the Person Sitting in Darkness” is, perhaps, Twain’s most famous anti-imperial piece. It openly references current events in China and the Philippines and there are various exhortations to stop “conferring our Civilization upon the peoples that sit in darkness” and “give those poor things a rest” (164). The piece denounces the hypocrisy of Western missionary and colonial exploits by juxtaposing such “Civilization-tools” as “Glass Beads and Theology, [...] Maxim Guns and Hymn Books, and Trade-Gin and Torches of Progress and Enlightenment (patent adjustable ones, good to fire villages with, upon occasion)” (165). Twain also hints towards principles of cultural relativism and laments the fact that the United States have not allowed the “Filipino citizens” to “set up the form of government

¹⁰ “The Fable of the Yellow Terror” is a political allegory in which a species of Butterflies is the most “advanced and elegant civilization” but with the defect of being “insufferably proud of it, and always anxious to spread it around the planet and cram it down other people’s throats and improve them” (369). Having encountered the last area of the world where it is possible to “widen the market for his honey” and having found the population of “simple and peaceable” bees that inhabit this empire resistant to the lures of both civilization and “honey,” the Butterflies declare this nation a “block in the way of progress and enlightenment” (370).

they might prefer [...] according to Filipino ideas of fairness and justice—ideas which have since been tested and found to be of as high an order as any that prevail in Europe or America” (170).

Twain’s critical assessment of the concepts of civilization and progress is here indistinguishable from his critique of imperial politics. To find an analysis that is more abstractly conceptual than political we must look to the manuscripts for the incomplete novel referred to as *The Mysterious Stranger*.¹¹ What we may find is that, in this late phase of Twain’s career, the analysis of the idea of civilization/progress inevitably leads us back to the topic of colonialism/imperialism. The stranger in question and central character of all three versions of the novel is a figure who is both Satanic and ambiguously Angelic and whose origin and motives remain, as per the title, mysterious. Satan is a recurring figure in the works of Twain and is employed as the only voice that can properly act as dialectical opposite to conventional knowledge, religious dogma or humankind’s vainglorious view of itself. Satan is one of the many mysterious, magical or time-travelling outsiders that Twain uses to counterpoint dominant narratives and societal norms. This figure retains his biblical role of “adversary,” however, he is more of an intellectual or philosophical opponent than one animated by malice.

In the first manuscript, *The Chronicle of Young Satan* (1897-1900 circa), Satan seems mostly indifferent to human concerns. Removed from an earthly existence, the “young” Satan sees “Civilization” as a series of deceptions and inventions, such as “modesty, and indecency,” and

¹¹ The three distinct manuscripts for *The Mysterious Stranger* which were never published or completed during Twain’s life have been assigned this collective title based on the fraudulent version published in 1916, after the author’s death, by Albert Bigelow Paine, Twain’s official biographer and literary executor. Paine’s version of the story represents a patchwork of parts of the first (*Chronicle of Young Satan*, 1897-1900 circa) and third manuscript (*No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger*, 1902-1908 circa) in chronological order.

maintains a Rousseauan appreciation for “the natural man, the savage” who has “no prejudices about smells, and no shame for his God-made nakedness” (139). In all three versions of *The Mysterious Stranger*, Satan is a figure who like Hank Morgan possesses knowledge of times to come. Satan is a being for which all moments, past present and future, are simultaneous, therefore he is the most qualified to comment upon the progressivist “theory of history” (82) that Smith accredits to Twain. On the subject of war, for example, Satan declares that “there has never been a just one [...]. I can see a million years ahead and this rule will never change” (155). It is from this perspective that Satan debates with the human protagonists of *Chronicle* upon the concepts of progress and civilization. The immortal being repeatedly offers but a burst of cruel laughter¹² in response to humankind’s claims to improvement: ““But Satan, as civilization advances—’ Of Course he broke in with a laugh. He could never hear that word without jeering at it and making fun of it. He said he had seen thirteen of them rise in the world and decay and perish to savagery [...] and they were all poor things: shams and hypocrisies and tyrannies, every one” (156).

When pressured by his human interlocutors to elaborate, he offers to show them: “would you like to see a history of the progress of the human race?—its development of that product which it calls Civilization?” (134). He proceeds to show them visions of human history, “this long array of crimson spectacles [...], from the time that Cain began it down to a period of a couple of centuries hence” (136-37). Once completed their voyage through time, Satan thus sums up the history of human progress: “you have made continual progress. Cain did his murder with a club; the Hebrews did their murders with javelins and swords; the Greeks and Romans added protective armor [...]; the Christian has added

¹² It is described as an “unfeeling” and “unkind” laugh (137) or “evil chuckle” (138).

guns and gunpowder” (135-36). Progress is therefore hyperbolically reduced to series of improvements in military technology “to kill being the chiefest ambition of the human race” (137) and with the apex of progress being contemporary “Christian Civilization” without which “war must have remained a poor and trifling thing” (136). Satan then proceeds to list various more recent events, including the “bloody exhibitions” of the French Revolution, leading up to the age in which “the lands and peoples of the whole pagan world will be at the mercy of the sceptred bandits of Europe, and they will take them. Furnishing in return, the blessings of civilization” (136). Once again Twain’s critique of the concepts of progress and civilization leads into a discourse on the evils and hypocrisies of imperialism.

IV. *Science, Capitalism and Slavery in “The Secret History of Eddypus” and “Sold To Satan.”*

In a short story of around the same period as *Chronicle* entitled “The Secret History of Eddypus” (written 1901), Twain offers a different perspective on progress which seems more in line with the Whiggish *zeitgeist* described by Henry Nash Smith. In this text, the focus seems to be more on the advances of science and technology. The point of view is that of an narrator historian who lives in an obscurantist religious dystopia. From the future he looks back at the past through badly interpreted documents. In “Eddypus,” the nineteenth century is described as being “sown thick with mechanical and scientific miracles and wonders that ha[ve] changed the face of the world” (185). During this era “a host of extraordinary men were born—the future supreme lords and masters of science, invention and finance, *creators of the Great Civilization*” (italics in text 205). The term “*the Great Civilization*” reflects the sense of self-importance by which it was characterized. It is used repeatedly and the achievements of the era are often punctuated with exclamation points; this indicates that there is a level of irony or sarcasm to be added to this fanatical celebration of the nineteenth century.

All great scientists and inventions are transposed, in this erroneous reading of history, to the nineteenth century. Scientific discoveries are celebrated and immediately after burlesqued within the same paragraph. For example, Galileo and Joseph Priestly (among many others) are listed as contemporaries (206). Priestly's discovery of oxygen by is obtained through a series of experiments in killing animals through asphyxiation—starting from mice and moving up to men—under the edict that “the Scientist never allowed himself to be sure he could kill a man with a demonstration until he had followed the life-procession all the way up to that summit” (209). When discussing Herbert Spencer and his “all-clarifying law of Evolution” (222), “the climaxing mighty law [...], binding all the universe's inertness and vitalities together under its sole sway and command” (223), the reader could almost be fooled by the hyperbolic tone that celebrates: “the all-supreme and resistless law which decrees slow, sure, implacable persistent, unresting change, change, change, in all things, mental, moral, physical [...], never halting, never tiring, all the universe ranked and battalioned in the march, and the march eternal!” (222). These statements, seen from the point of view of a static multi-millennial dystopia, are obviously ironic.

Twain ends this short story with an even more ironic twist. He demonstrates the ethical incoherencies of “progress” particularly when it results from developments in the market economy. The “vast discoveries” of the nineteenth century create “an intellectual upheaval [...] such as had never been experienced [...] from the beginning of time [...]. Men's minds were free, now; the chains of thought lay broken [...]. This marked an epoch and a revolution [...], a revolution which emancipated the mind and the soul” (224). However, the intellectual and material benefits of this enlightened Eden breed an unlikely hidden serpent in the form of “Arkwright's spinning-frames” (224) and Watt's steam engine which bring to the rise in demand, and therefore in price, of American cotton. Following a logical chain of events, cotton, which “had ceased to be profitable,” is now profitable; therefore,

Slavery which “had long ago ceased to be profitable” and was “disappearing” in accordance with the “plans and prophecies” (224-25) of the Enlightened elite, becomes once again profitable:

and the disappearing process stopped [...]. Slavery got a new impulse; the slave's price rose higher and higher, the demand for him grew more and more pressing; men began to *breed* him for the market, other men [...] began to kidnap him in Africa [...]. Whitney went on improving his machine [the cotton gin] and—So many people stole his invention and manufactured it that another circumstance resulted—the enactment of a rational patent law [...]; and out of this grew a colossal thing, the stupendous material prosperity of the Nineteenth century! [...]. Slavery was gratefully recognized by press, pulpit and people, all over the land, as God's best gift to man, and the Prophecy which had once been so logically sound and mathematically sure drew the frayed remnants of its drapery about it and in sorrow lay down and died. (225)

So much for the liberating power of machines! Twain, in defiance of contemporary notions of progress creates a direct correlation between industrial capitalism and the institution of mass slavery; slavery is seen as a recent development of the market economy and not the product of Southern “backwardness.”¹³ The implication of scientific and technological progress in the (albeit indirect) expansion of the slave system challenges the notions of progress that dominated utopian literature .

In the short story “Sold to Satan” (written in 1904) the figure of Satan is again present in a slightly different form. He remains a charming, intelligent and sociable character who has telepathic

¹³ In doing so he anticipates conclusions later elaborated upon by historians such as C.L.R. James, Eric Williams, Stanley L. Engerman and Robert William Fogel.

powers, however he is more Mephistophelean both in form and function.¹⁴ He is called upon by the narrator (Twain himself) so that a Faustian pact can be made: the author's soul in exchange for wealth. What renders this Satan unique is the fact that his body is made of the radioactive element radium; it is later revealed as the very substance Twain will make his fortune with. Its radioactive properties are prophetically described by Satan as being the energy source of the future: "In twenty million years [radium] has had no value for your race until the revolutionizing steam-and-machinery age was born [...]. It was a stunning little century, for sure, that nineteenth! But it's a poor thing compared to what the twentieth is going to be" (228). This prediction hints at radium's potential for both great and terrible things: the radioactive properties of the element will allow Twain to "light the whole world, heat the whole world's machinery, supply the whole world's transportation power from now till the end of eternity" and for a healthy profit (232); however, Satan also tells the protagonist that the power of radium can "blast the place like a breath from hell, and burn [him] to a crisp in a quarter of a minute [...]; at my will I can set in motion the works of a lady's watch or destroy a world" (229-30).

In "Sold to Satan," scientific discovery is inevitably connected to financial and utilitarian concerns. Twain's persona, perhaps parodying the behavior of the robber baron capitalist, seems motivated only by personal gain and has little regard for both his soul and Satan's intimations regarding the dangers of Radium. When first informed of the nature of Satan's body and the value of radium, narrator-Twain immediately imagines a way to exploit this: "I gazed hungrily upon him, saying to myself: "What riches! what a mine! Nine hundred pounds at, say, \$3,500,000 a pound [...]. Then a

¹⁴ Satan is described as the "modern Satan, just as we see him on the stage," he wears "tights and trunks, a short cape [...], a rapier at his side, a single feather in his jaunty cap" (226).

treacherous thought burst into my mind!” (227). However, the Devil perceives his thoughts and laughingly compliments him for his initiative: “to kidnap Satan, and stock him, and incorporate him, and water the stock up to ten billions—just three times its actual value—and blanket the world with it!” (227).¹⁵ The message of this modern-industrial variation on the folkloristic moral or cautionary tale seems clear: progress, particularly in relation to material gain, is always a form of Faustian pact.

Regarding the science-fiction aspects of the story, Twain seems to at least have some rudimentary notion of the physics of the day and quotes Marie Curie’s research, but perhaps for poetic necessity or simply ignorance, he bends the physics a little in order to make a point. In exchange for his soul the protagonist gains the rights to a large deposit of radium in a mountain crater in the Cordilleras; the origin of this deposit are the corpses of myriads of fireflies who contain a small quantity of radium in their bodies; they have chosen this place as the “cemetery” (232) of their species and utilized it for a period of a million years. Twain seems to be referencing the biogenic hypothesis for the formation of those fossil fuels, such as coal and petroleum, which were fuelling the industrial revolution; he is subtly commenting upon the nature of progress by underlying how it is inevitably alimented by some form of loss or death. Similarly to what we had observed in “Eddypus,” the author also briefly evokes the shadow of Slavery when explaining how radium can only be controlled and plied to human needs by using another element, “polonium”, which “shall put the slave whip in your hand” (230). Twain’s

¹⁵ In general, the language used throughout the story parodies that of the world of business and finance, even in relation to abstract concepts such as the soul, and heaven: “I concluded to sell my soul to Satan. Steel was away down, so was St. Paul; it was the same with all the desirable stocks [...]. [...] I sent word to the local agent, Mr. Blank, with description and present condition of the property, and an interview with Satan was promptly arranged, on a basis of 2 ½ per cent, this commission payable only in case a trade should be consummated” (226).

poetic thermodynamic theory seems to say that the energy to fuel the machine of progress must inevitably come from somewhere; and it is a place of suffering, corruption, death or destruction.

Having observed these works, it is obvious that Twain does not have an unconditional faith in progress. Moreover, any treatment of this theme tends to lead either into a discussion on the present evils of imperialism or backwards in time to the “original sin” of slavery. Twain creates associations between a remote “barbaric” past, a more recent and personal past and an imperial future in an attempt to show not how far we have come but how little we have changed. In this sense, Twain’s speculative and (anti)utopian works are in sharp contrast with those of his contemporaries. The “Janus-faced” (Gilman) historical worldview and dark, cynical humor that is evident in both his early and late works acts as counterpoint to the *gravitas* of utopian progressivism and dystopian millenarianism. Having defined the terms in which Twain discusses civilization, empire and progress, in the following chapters I will observe how the same themes are dealt with by the utopian authors. Despite the fact that their outlook is less critical and more optimistic than Twain’s, it is not without its own ambivalences.

Chapter 2. Content and Tensions of Utopian Fiction

I. *An Age of Fear and Invention*

The number of utopian texts produced in the late nineteenth century is vast and their content varied. In this first taxonomic chapter, my effort will be to map this large group of texts. I will analyze these works from the point of view of both form and content. The study of form shows how these texts conform to the standard of Bellamy's *Looking Backward* and resemble each other. The recurrent formal and stylistic features include: a didactic intent, sentimental plots and sermonic rants.

The study of content is more challenging in that it shows the differences between these texts. Certain tropes and themes also recur despite the wide variety of content: the pastoral ideal, the City upon the Hill, the frontier, the messiah figure all feature prominently and aid us in categorizing these texts. My analysis demonstrates how, in the case of the utopian novel, form is merely a façade for ideology and the ideologies presented are diverse.

I will divide these texts according to thematic-ideological groupings. My first subdivision distinguishes between works that look “forward” towards new societal models and ideals and those that look “backwards” towards more traditional ones. My second subdivision is between works that look “inward” in constructing their utopias and those that look “outward” and to an imperial future. We shall observe how these thematic-ideological tensions intertwine and are often present within the same text.

Kenneth M. Roemer characterizes the “tremendous outpouring“ (2) of speculative-utopian literature, between 1888 and 1900, as the result of the “turbulent transition period” (4) the United States were going through.¹⁶ It was an era characterized by economic instability and extreme social tensions:

Millions of Americans were confused and distressed by the panic of 1873, the ups and downs of the 1880s, and the crash of 1893. The numerous strikes and the confrontations at Haymarket Square, Pullman and the Homestead terrified workers and employers. The unequal distribution of wealth [...] heightened tensions between the haves and the have-nots (Roemer 4-5).

All of the speculative-utopian authors of the era were influenced by these events; the genre itself was born from the need to solve the conflict between capital and labor. *Looking Backward* (1888) is generally recognized as the text that kicked off the trend; however, the rich tapestry of imitators, naysayers and marginal voices that followed Bellamy offer a more complete portrait of the era.

The marginal and bizarre texts are also more instrumental to our understanding of *A Connecticut Yankee* and its historical worldview. Bellamy offers a tame vision of the future in which all

¹⁶ So tremendous in fact, and coming from so many sources that it represents a virtual jumble of texts that only Roemer and few others have come close to ordering. It is difficult to exactly classify a large number of texts that were produced in this period, distinguishing those that are strictly utopian (or dystopian), from those that are examples of science fiction, science fantasy or blatant political pamphlets. This task is rendered even more difficult as these texts' share plot devices such as time and space travel. More importantly, they all present of a wide array of scientific theories of the time, from the more accredited to pure charlatanry. The stigma of aesthetic inferiority, often coupled with historical-political naiveté, inane fantasy, full-blown bigotry and proto-fascism that many of the speculative-utopian novels present has naturally led to their being forgotten and to their excision from the canon of foundational Sci-Fi texts. Moreover, there is also a highly didactic intent and overtly political content that distinguishes texts such as *Looking Backward* or *Caesar's Column* from *War of The Worlds* and *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*; however, it is matter of degrees of intensity rather than a question of presence or absence.

problems have already been solved; on the other hand, Ignatius Donnelly's *Caesar's Column: A Story of the Twentieth Century* (1890) offers images of volcanic violence and cloak and dagger class warfare. Sutton Griggs' *Imperium in Imperio: A Study Of The Negro Race Problem* (1899) is a rare example of African American speculative-utopian fiction; it depicts horrific scenes of racial violence in the South and ends with the threat of a violent black uprising. Other utopian fictions, such as—*Armageddon: A Tale of Love, War, and Invention* (1898) by Stanley Waterloo and *His Wisdom the Defender* (1900) by Simon Newcomb—prefigure war on a global scale and offer solutions to the problem which include: arms stockpiling, new sophisticated weapons and preemptive military strikes by the U.S. on the rest of the world. From the other side of the Atlantic, William Morris responds to *Looking Backward* with *News from Nowhere* (1890): having found Bellamy's vision of the future too urban and too enamored with machines and technology, Morris stresses the importance of artisanal work and rural living and looks to the past for inspiration;¹⁷ he inaugurates the more pastoral, anti-modern strain of speculative-utopian literature and many American authors also follow this tendency.

Even from this brief list we can deduce the sharp contrasts that exist among these works. I will be describing the form and style of the utopian novel, however, the ideological content allows for more effective categorization. I will divide these texts into thematic groupings based on the tensions they present. The first tension exists between backward and forward looking texts. It can be broadly

¹⁷ In his review of *Looking Backward* for the *Commonweal* (21 June 1889) Morris writes: “Mr. Bellamy's ideas of life are curiously limited; he has no idea beyond existence in a great city; his dwelling of man in the future is Boston (U.S.A.) beautified. In one passage, indeed, he mentions villages, but with unconscious simplicity shows that they do not come into his scheme of economical equality, but are mere servants of the great centres of civilisation [...]. In short a machine life is the best which Mr. Bellamy can imagine for us on all sides; it is not to be wondered at then that this, his only idea for making labour tolerable is to decrease the amount of it by means of fresh and ever fresh developments of machinery [...]. I believe that this will always be so, and the multiplication of machinery will just multiply machinery” (Review of *Looking Backward*).

that which exists or a waning past, the other, a will to move forward into the untried and new. I am not using “conservative” here in the same way that Jean Pfaelzer uses it—that is, to describe those utopian texts that describe nineteenth century America as “the best of all worlds,” but quite the contrary. Pfaelzer defines “conservative” utopias as those in which “the promises of ‘trickle-down’ theories” are fulfilled, in which “a community prospers when industry prospers” (8) and in which empire has a leading role; Pfaelzer’s “conservative” utopias are placed in opposition to “Progressive, pastoral, and feminist utopias” which subscribe to “class analyses and cooperative remedies” (8). In my own terminology of utopian fiction “conservative” and “empire” do not necessarily coincide and may even be in opposition; “conservative” may coincide with “pastoral,” and “empire” is a new idea that hinges upon newfangled notions of “progress,” civilization and race. More importantly, industrial capitalism was seen as a relatively “cutting-edge” phenomenon at the time, as were its deriving social theories; contemporaries perceived it as a revolutionary force rather than a reactionary one. This scheme tries to capture, among other things, the sense of “future shock” (Roemer 5) that these authors felt having lived through such rapid change; so rapid in fact, that they felt as if they themselves were Julian Wests, waking in the *future* after having gone to sleep in the *past*. While Pfaelzer’s use of the term “conservative utopia” is perfectly apt within its own context, the type of text it refers to (for example, Wheeler’s *Our Industrial Utopia and Its Unhappy Citizens*) would be “progressive” according to our current schematization: these are texts that advocate the continuation (or conservation) of a capitalistic and industrialized reality, however, this reality is recent, still very much in the making, still in continuous and rapid flux.

More specific themes that do not necessarily belong to one extreme of the spectrums posited above are: the pastoral, the Winthropian City upon the Hill, the Frontier, medievalism, messianic and religious utopianism and race; however, they may intersect with the main polarized lines in different

places depending on the specificities of each text. One author may use a specific ideal, model or metaphor in a completely different way from another. For example, for some authors the American frontier is a completely successful experiment that needs to be replicated throughout the world (in outward looking, imperial utopias); for others, the frontier represents betrayed promise, an experiment that needs to be repeated within America's confines before looking to new "virgin lands" (in the inward looking utopias); the "City upon the Hill" may be understood as the traditional model of Christian charity that was originally intended, or simply reinvented as a place of technological, labor-saving marvels. Race is an obvious component of expansionist, imperial utopias, however, we will see how it is equally as present in isolationist utopian city-states.

Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, as we have said, is a text that is representative of the norm of the utopian novel and it does contain these thematic tensions. However, being the quintessentially moderate, middle-class text, the tensions here represented are often not explicitly dealt with. Other texts, such the populist utopias of Ignatius Donnelly and Mary Elizabeth Lease, present less subtle treatments of these themes which we can compare and contrast more easily; others still, such as Benjamin Rush's *Anglo-Saxons, Onward!* (1898), more explicitly represent imperial ideologies. Said ideologies become more evident and pervasive towards the end of the nineteenth century. However, my analysis, will remain more thematic than chronological: later examples of utopian fiction are more heavily involved in the issue of imperialism, but it is not absent from earlier works. The contrast between Bellamy's early, blasé imperialism and *fin de siècle* blueprints for American global domination demonstrate the transformation of a country and its resulting literature.

Our scheme also re-proposes some of the ideas and tensions that animate economic and political discourse at the end of the eighteenth century. The fact that these utopian texts are written in response to each other can be seen as a rekindling of the Jefferson-Hamilton debate in a new guise, a resurfacing

of unresolved issues that had been forgotten due to the Civil War. But what differentiates era of Hamilton and Jefferson from end of the nineteenth century? Why does it witness such a large body of speculative literature? And why is it so obsessed with the future? The short answer is that this literature comes *after* rather than *before* certain phenomena that had shaped American history; and things had not turned out exactly as hoped: the conquest of the frontier is no longer a hypothesis but a reality and it is not the humble yeoman farmer that dominates the landscape. The failures of the Civil War and Reconstruction, although ignored by the norm of utopian literature, surface virulently at its margins. A transcontinental railroad and a nationwide network of telegraphs have now effectively “compressed” space and time, to use De Tocqueville’s wording. Machines and science have entered the household. Darwinism and emerging social sciences gain large influence and conjoin to form totalizing theories of history: these theories attempt to explain where we come from and where we are going in all facets of human existence. Positivist ideas of progress, religious concepts of destiny and romantic notions of national identity unite to spawn concepts of race and ideological justifications of empire. Empire itself is now a tangible possibility for the United States and many authors ask themselves—Twain among them—what effect this will have on American identity.

II. *Pastoral vs. Utopia or Pastoral Utopia?*

The “pastoral design” (Marx 26) is fundamental to the construction of fictional utopias in this period. As Leo Marx’s analysis has demonstrated, within American literature the pastoral impulse is recurrently in a dialectic, conflicting relationship with the intrusiveness of machines and technological-industrial progress. Late nineteenth century utopian literature is no different in this sense and the “tension between the two systems of value” (Marx 26) that is heavily present in the literature of the 1840s, 50s and 60s can also be found in this body of texts. The utopian authors, with varying degrees of involvement and explicitness, deal with the notion of chaotic, repressive, corrupt, unhealthy and over-

civilized urban living in contrast with the simplicity of idyllic, rural existence that is at the basis of the pastoral impulse. It could even be stated that the latter generation of writers is more conscious than the previous one of the negative consequences of progress; they are living inside the industrial machine and artificial repressive systems are an integral part of their life. The “trope of the interrupted idyll” (27) mentioned by Marx does not apply within utopian literature: unlike Hawthorne the utopian authors do not hear the whistle of the locomotive from afar (the herald of the encroaching machine) but have a more intimate relationship with the “machine” itself and the social systems it has generated. Therefore, the question of finding a compromise between pastoral and industry, “machine” and “garden” becomes even more urgent for this generation of authors. The “machine” becomes more prominent within the utopian novel: it is often the means of transport to reach utopia or the means to obtain utopia itself.

Despite the fact that Fredric Jameson distinguishes between utopia and the pastoral ideal, for most of these authors the two are synonymous, or at least have quite a lot in common. In *Archaeologies of the Future*, Jameson distinguishes utopian literature from the pastoral on the basis of the actual intent and purposes of the two. The objective of utopia proper is to present “diagnostic interventions” which “always aim at the alleviation and elimination of the sources of exploitation and suffering, rather than at the composition of blueprints for bourgeois comfort” (12). Those representations that offer “visions of happy worlds, spaces of fulfillment and cooperation [...] correspond generically to the idyll or the pastoral rather than the utopia” (12). Therefore, for Jameson, many of the works we are analyzing could not be defined as properly utopian in that their focus is principally that of offering “visions of happy worlds” where the “diagnostic intervention” component is merely an afterthought. We can partially sidestep the problem of defining these texts as properly utopian by using the term *speculative-*

utopian:¹⁸ a definition that indicates that a text is not fully utopian but contains some form of utopian *streben*.

Regarding the distinction between utopia and pastoral, I would argue that utopia is a product that is necessarily influenced by the culture, events and people that produced it rather than an *a priori*, rigidly defined genre. The concept of utopia cannot be approached only as a philosophical category or unreachable Platonic Ideal form. Being that utopia is also a literary product it is always subject to the limitations of the author that produces it; this means it does not “always aim” with equal levels of efficacy or competence “at the alleviation and elimination of the sources of exploitation” (12). Within this particular cultural context, that is to say late nineteenth century America, the pastoral is an ideal or model shared by most members of the implied audience; it is a pre-existing cultural tool—one of many but also one of the most prominent—used to create an understanding amongst as many readers as possible. Moreover, “blueprints for bourgeois comfort” are not just a side product of diagnostic action, but a veritable obsession within this group of texts: their focus, nay their mission, is to obtain an appropriate level of comfort, leisure time and middle–class style edification for the largest number of people. Even with the unlimited possibilities that fiction offers at their disposal, most of these authors imagine worlds that are not that distant from the relative simplicity of their bourgeois existences.

If we consider the more eccentric, marginal and forgotten texts that were written in the wake of Bellamy's *Looking Backward* it is clear that a univocal referent “utopia” does not exist; such a variety

¹⁸ Jameson renders this demarcation more elastic when considering “the protean analyses of the pastoral impulse” in William Empson's *Some Versions of Pastoral* which “bring it fairly close to the utopian impulse” (in note 12). The idea of multiple protean variations that collectively tend towards utopia rather than representing utopia in themselves is something to keep in mind when considering the texts we are analyzing.

of themes, ideas and political orientations is present that universalising the parameters of utopia is extremely difficult: we can, however, talk about general tendencies and recurring themes and tensions. In examining these works, I would expand the limits of Jameson's discriminatory borders between utopia (in its more diagnostic function) and the pastoral (as an escapist ideal) and see them as part of a cultural amalgam rather than separate categories. This amalgam also includes Edenic, exotic and technophilic imaginings: African colonial adventure often overlaps with Winthropian themes of spiritual renewal, imperialism combines with Jeffersonian yeomanry and paradoxical Edens that are both pastoral and technological abound. This popular imaginary of contiguous fantasies, mythologies and literary influences is also relevant to Twain's *Camelot*: it is the America of the era of exploration, an uncharted, exotic distant place of dangerous savages and adventure, full of opportunities for a resourceful man. It is also a place of agrarian simplicity, a "soft, reposeful summer landscape, as lovely as a dream" (13) populated by "brawny" (13) peasants and naked, frolicking children. Twain's novel also shares with utopian fiction a preoccupation with "bourgeois comfort" (Jameson 12) which is both specifically addressed and subsequently lampooned.¹⁹

The frequent overlap of the conflicting dimensions of "machine" and pastoral, idyllic "garden" within this body of literature shows a nation attempting to reconcile its original foundational mythologies with its urban, industrial present and imperial future. The fact that utopian novels are

¹⁹ Despite being given a "raiment [...] of silks and velvets and cloth of gold" and "the choicest suite of apartments in the castle" Hank laments the absence of "little conveniences that make the real comfort of life" such as "soap," "matches," "looking-glass[es]," "chromos," "gas," "candles," "books," "books, pens, paper or ink," "glass in the openings they believed to be windows," "sugar, coffee, tea, or tobacco" and complains about the fact that he has "a great many servants" but doesn't have "a bell or a speaking-tube in the castle" to summon them: "when I wanted one of them I had to go and call for him [...]. I saw that I was just another Robinson Crusoe cast away on an uninhabited island" (35-36).

“blueprints for bourgeois comfort” (12) does not make them less utopian but rather tells us what their authors’ idea of utopia was. In other words, utopia is merely a signifier or a conceptual receptacle for a variety of ideas that change over time and is determined by factors such as economy, class, religion, race etc. Jameson admits that utopias are inevitably historicized and limited by the idiosyncrasies of their creators: “Campanella is marked by the culture of the church; Fourier by all kinds of petty bourgeois fantasies [...]. Bellamy is a typical small-town middle-class American from the age of inventions” (171); and he asks if any utopia can exist that is not “some mere projection of our own situation,” that might “somehow retain effective universality [and] in which content was reduced to its most undeniable validity for all societies” (172). My answer would be: probably not. Jameson’s notion of a universal “zero-degree Utopia” (172) which is understood and accepted by all cultures and peoples throughout history seems to remain intangible or unobtainable even within a fictional world. It would seem that the only solution in the quest for this “zero-degree utopia” is a minimalist one. As Theodor W. Adorno states, the “crudest” and only response to the “illegitimate” utopian question is “that no one shall go hungry any more” (in Jameson 172), anything more than this is “frivolous and insulting to the victims” (Jameson 172) of social injustice. Therefore, a “zero-degree utopia” is one excised of all hedonism and it is not “organized around pleasure and enjoyment” (Jameson 172); moreover, it does not revel in the details of its fictional world, being that “from the standpoint of mass starvation” this constitutes a “reprehensible luxury” (Jameson 172). However, this minimalist concept of utopia probably does not fit any example ever produced and that may be Adorno’s and Jameson’s point.

What needs to be kept in mind concerning Jameson’s stricter definition is that utopian fiction is necessarily and openly ideological in nature. Moreover, it is designed as a redemptive literary intervention upon the current conditions of society. That is what distinguishes it from speculative or science fiction and escapist fantasy. However, as stated above, this is more a question of degrees of

intensity than a discriminating *aut aut*. What we are attempting to do in this chapter is to define the blatant or underlying ideologies that define both the era and a literary product (utopia) that is by definition ideological. Our successive step will be to see to what degree Twain participates in or resists these often conflicting ideologies. The “reprehensible luxury” (Jameson 172) of reveling in details or inane romantic plots is a major component of practically all of the speculative-utopian texts produced in the late nineteenth century. Many of the questionable aesthetic choices that are part of utopian literature are the result of their authors mimicking the literary conventions of the popular literature of the time. In the next section I will analyze some of these conventions and explain the possible reasons behind these choices.

III. *The Awkward Form of Late Nineteenth Century Utopias*

Roemer mentions a few of the tropes of utopian fiction that have not aged well: “long speeches and sermons by guides and political candidates bog down narration. Wedding–bells endings are carried to absurd extremes. Several of the novels end in double, triple, and even quadruple marriages of ‘spooning couples.’ Many of the heroines, like conventional genteel heroines, are accomplished singers; hence the reader is forced to suffer through at least one parlor concert” (141). These are but a few examples of the dubious choices that are determined by either the influence of sentimentalist popular fiction, a highly didactic intent or by the “bourgeois” authors indulging in the “comforts” of their middle-class life. It is often the hybrid form of the utopian texts, between treatise and popular novel (and without any satirical distancing), that renders them both unique in their style and sincerity, but also embarrassing.

Ignatius Donnelly's *Caesar's Column* is an interesting case in point; the introduction of the novel is a sanctimonious jeremiad about the importance of its message and is littered with all the clichés of a sermon mixed with political speech:

It is to you, O thoughtful and considerate public, that I dedicate this book. May it, under the providence of God, do good to this generation and posterity! [...]. It must not be thought, because I am constrained to describe the overthrow of civilization, that I desire it. The prophet is not responsible for the event he foretells. He may contemplate it with profoundest sorrow. I seek to preach into the ears of the able and rich and powerful [...]. Believing, as I do, that I read the future aright, it would be criminal in me to remain silent. I plead for higher and nobler thoughts in the souls of men [...]. (3-5)

As we can see there is a varied mix of blatant and barely veiled self-importance which perhaps reaches its peak at the end of the introduction when he calls God into question and points to his novel as a potential guideline for providence to follow: "If God notices anything so insignificant as this poor book, I pray that he may use it as an instrumentality of good for mankind; for he knows I love his human creatures, and would help them if I had the power" (6). The introduction also blatantly warns us of the dangers of the class divide and imminent class warfare, which is the focus of the novel, rather than having the novel itself show us this on its own: "The rich, as a rule, despise the poor; and the poor are coming to hate the rich. The face of labor grows sullen [...]; standing armies are formed on one side,

and great communistic organizations on the other [...]. They wait only for the drum-beat and the trumpet to summon them to armed conflict (4).²⁰

As the actual plot begins, our protagonist meets a fair and highly eroticized maiden, Estella, whom he is immediately smitten by: “Her companion instantly arrested all my attention. It seemed to me I had never beheld a more beautiful. and striking countenance. [...]; her long golden hair fell nearly to her waist, enfolding her like a magnificent, shining garment; her eyes were blue and large and set far apart” (25). We soon discover that Estella is to become the concubine of a certain “Prince Cabano” (real name “Isaacs” but he has bought a title and a new name) a “lecherous Jew” stereotype who represents the (mostly Jewish) plutocracy of this world. In an even more cringeworthy development we find out that Estella is the descendant of none other than one Lawrence Washington brother of George Washington. The plot then focuses its attention in equal measure on the liberation of the fair maiden from the sexual attentions of her captor (with the help of his jilted concubine) and the unfolding of the cloak-and-dagger social coup by Caesar Lomellini, the secret leader of the underground anarchists. Needless to say, our hero is able to escape from the rioting and burning city and return to his ranch (in a Swiss founded colony in Africa) with the fair maiden.

It is obvious how many of the tensions I had mentioned at the beginning of this chapter are present within this one text: Donnelly presents a corrupt, overly urbanized and capitalistic America that needs to be renewed. He invokes an ideal, agrarian, *past* America which has become corrupt and

²⁰ This style of introduction is often the norm in these texts. Even the titles—such as Mary E. Lease’s *The Problem of Civilization Solved* or the lengthy *The Light of Reason, Showing the First Step the Nation Should Take toward a Social Order Based on Justice* (1899) by Abraham B. Franklin—reveal from the onset the conviction these authors had in their theories without having to open the book.

dangerous due to influence of “Jewish” capital and destructive “Italian” energies and where the traditional rural yeoman has been ousted from his rightful place: “the men who once tilled the fields, as their owners, are driven to the cities to swell the cohorts of the miserable, or remain on the land a wretched peasantry, to contend for the means of life with vile hordes of Mongolian coolies. And all this in sight of the ruins of the handsome homes their ancestors once occupied” (111). Donnelly also shows how escape to a foreign land—a new frontier as it were—and a life of agrarian colonialism are the only solution for his protagonists. Here, in a perfect expression of “machine vs. garden” compromise and ambivalence it is stated: “We do not give any encouragement to labor-saving inventions, although we do not discard them” (362).

Even the more prestigious Bellamy shows examples of inconsistent aesthetic choices and romantic indulgences. The first and second chapter of *Looking Backward* immerse us in the life of Julian West; we learn of his aspirations to build a house for himself and his fiancée Edith, the various difficulties he encounters in getting the job done and the marginal influence a laborers strike has on its postponement: “the particular grievance I had against the working classes at the time of which I write, on account of the effect of their strikes in postponing my wedded bliss, no doubt lent a special animosity to my feeling toward them” (25). Moreover, Julian often reminds us of how much he loves Edith and how “beautiful and graceful” she is with richness of detail:

After this, I remember drawing Edith apart and trying to persuade her that it would be better to be married at once without waiting for the completion of the house [...]. She was remarkably handsome that evening, the mourning costume that she wore in recognition of the day setting off to great advantage the purity of her complexion. I can see her even now with my mind's eye just as she looked that night. (28-29)

After realizing that he has woken up in year 2000, the *first* interrogative we hear him pose about the future (in Chapter IV) is this: “‘To speak of small things before great,’ I responded, ‘I really think that the complete absence of chimneys and their smoke is the detail that first impressed me’” (56-57); this in itself could be considered an interesting strategy Bellamy uses to commence describing the great historical change by starting from a small detail. However, it seems completely at odds with the sentimental content of the previous chapters, an unharmonious clash between a sentimental/novelistic style of writing and a travelogue: in other words, why has he forgotten about Edith? Bellamy does address this problem and is able to justify this choice:

In reply let me ask him to suppose himself suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, transported from earth, say, to Paradise or Hades. What does he fancy would be his own experience? Would his thoughts return at once to the earth he had just left, or would he, after the first shock, wellnigh forget his former life for a while, albeit to be remembered later, in the interest excited by his new surroundings? (55-56)

It is obvious how these works of utopian fiction distinguish themselves from the tradition of Thomas More or Campanella; they are mostly written in the form of novels, novellas or short stories rather than treatises and are more often influenced by best-selling sentimentalist popular fiction than by classic utopian texts as far as style and aesthetics are concerned. True to the novelistic form, they flesh out and analyze their characters' inner world to a certain extent, often in combination with the tropes of a travel narrative as the characters often journey to distant lands or in time. Those novels or stories that are set completely in the future, where the protagonist is not a visitor from the past, follow more the style and structure of an adventure narrative: in Donnelly's *Caesar's Column* our non time travelling hero must escape from a corrupt, dangerous land with his ladylove to start anew elsewhere; in Newcomb's *His Wisdom the Defender* our genius-inventor hero (a Ulysses figure perhaps), with the help of a few trusty

companions and using airships of his invention, is able to outsmart the entire German army, capture the Emperor and impose global peace.

The use of these popular literary plots and motifs has various, and non conflicting, motivations. It is, first and foremost, a matter of literary conventions and trends of the time; the immense success of *Looking Backward* renders Bellamy's juxtaposition of the novel and the utopian treatise the canon to follow. The use of the novelistic form is also a matter of connecting with as many readers as possible on an emotional level in order to impart a lesson; in other words, these authors employ a series of rhetorical strategies that serve the principally didactic function of the text. The use of the sentimental-novelistic style could also be a question of soliciting attention or sales within the vast market of popular fiction, although it would seem that many of these writers were genuinely sincere in their efforts towards reform (Roemer 141). According to Roemer the didactic/reformist function is essential to the utopian authors' very concept of literature and art in general: "the prime function of a work of art was to teach some useful lesson about how and how not to live" (138); this is also reflected in the production of edifying "music, theater, fine arts and architecture" (140) within these fictional utopias. However, the novel remains the preferred form these authors choose and the novel of purpose, the novel that champions the world's "helpless and oppressed millions" (Flower in Roemer 140) represents their moral and aesthetic ideal. The novel as a genre was perceived as an inherently public or democratic art form and its value was measured on the basis of the principle of "the greatest happiness to the greatest number" (Howells in Roemer 141); it was seen as being the most effective means of expression and, therefore, having the greatest potential for the transformation of society: "Literature was not just another didactic, democratic art form [...]; for the utopian authors it was the most powerful means of expression. In part, they argued, this was because a novel is easier to reproduce, distribute, and interpret than a symphony or a building. But the printed word also had a revolutionary magic"

(Roemer 141). The precedent of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the legends regarding its influence in freeing the slaves or “causing” the Civil War was seen as proof of the power of the novelistic form; it inspired this new generation of writers to produce their own novels of purpose that would affect millions of lives and “change the course of history” (Roemer 141). The entertainment value for the contemporary reader is constituted more by the humorousness of the anachronisms and wackiness of the predictions than by any other inherent aesthetic value or didactic intent and sometimes the pleasure may also reside in a prediction that eerily seems to have come true. However, as historical documents these novels are incomparable in capturing the fears, anxieties and ideologies of the era.

IV. *New Edens, New Arcadias, New Cities upon a Hill, New Frontiers and the Means to Obtain Them*

“Bourgeois comfort” (Jameson 12), as we have said, is not a mere distraction from a higher intent but a fundamental driving force behind the composition of many of these novels: these texts are indivisible from the enthusiasm for science and technology and the promise of abundant leisure time that machines—but also social theory—seemed to give; These “bourgeois” writers wished to extend to everybody the privilege of that “comfort” which they may have felt guilty about and many believed that technology was the “magic” means of doing so. Even technophobic or pastoral utopias appeal to a mythical agrarian past in imaging a future where there are “comforts” in abundance for everyone.

Science, socialism, urban planning, architecture, eugenics, military conquest and occasionally genocide are among the strategies proposed by these authors in order to reach utopia. But if these are the tools, what are the models they are inspired by? The vast majority of these authors, even those who are extremely enthusiastic about technology or propose newfangled economical systems, refer back in some way to pre-existing models or mythologies; this reference to the past may present itself as a

superficial use of a Winthropian or frontieristic metaphor or may be an integral part of a particular utopia's physiology, but in any case it is omnipresent. While William Morris' pastoral utopia is inspired by village life in England, America's own particular forms of the pastoral and Edenic myth contribute to shaping many of the more introspective and contained utopian landscapes. Authors such as William Bishop (*The Garden of Eden, U.S.A. A Very Possible Story*, 1885) King Camp Gillette (*The Human Drift*, 1894) and Albert A. Merrill (*The Great Awakening; the Story of the Twenty-Second Century*, 1899) invoke and update the Edenic-foundational mythos and create new versions of the "city upon a hill;" the function of their imagined ideal communities, as per the tradition, is to be a beacon and example for the rest of the world. Merrill's agrarian colony in Africa inspires the rest of the world towards change with its "absolutely equal division of existing wealth" (32); King Camp Gillette's is a technologically advanced metropolis which will attract people to it on the basis of the rationally perfected living conditions it offers and William Bishop's privately founded utopia combines elements of both the former. In updating the Winthropian model city these and other authors either maintain or excise the religious elements to varying degrees and in various ways,²¹ creating a wide spectrum of utopias: from texts such as the theologically minded *In His Steps. "What Would Jesus Do?"* (1897) by Charles M. Sheldon, the title of which effectively sums up its content, to Albert Chavannes' *The Future Commonwealth, or, What Samuel Balcom Saw in Socioland* (1892) which represents a rare example of antireligious utopia where "secular 'happiness' is life's only goal" (Roemer 192).

²¹ The vast majority of utopian texts, according to Roemer, tend to occupy the middle ground between a profoundly religious and a completely secularized view of the future, reflecting the upper middle-class, moderate Protestant provenience of their authors: "the utopian religion was basically an Americanized, simplified, action-oriented Protestantism" (100-101) and the chaos and extremes of sectarian divisions are usually been substituted by one simple, practical and sensible (Christian) religion (Roemer 98-99).

There are authors that look towards the lost landscape of the frontier rather than the pilgrim tradition to redeem the ills of the present while others yearn for pastoral utopias of Jeffersonian inspiration; now that enough time had passed, even the Jacksonian period and the “Old South” began their ascent into the collective imagination in their idealized forms. Texts such as *Caesar's Column* by Donnelly, *The Great Awakening* by Albert A. Merrill and Chavannes' *The Future Commonwealth* all envision the foundation of small, relatively isolated American colonies in the “virgin land” of Africa which are characterized by simplified, agrarian economies; and while these particular utopian communities are not overtly imperialistic in nature, other texts show utopias that are more blatantly so.²² In *The Problem of Civilization Solved* (1895), Mary Elizabeth Lease advocates the mass colonization of South America by white, American yeomen and seems inspired by Jefferson's concept of “Empire of Liberty;” the more violent *Anglo-Saxons, Onward! A Romance of the Future* (1898) by Benjamin Rush Davenport sees Americans united in a “New crusade” to liberate Palestine, crush Russia and spread Anglo-Saxon “Civilization, Commerce and Christianity” (in Roemer 204). Africa, South America and Palestine are only a few of the possible locations for American renewal and the Edens and promised lands that these authors envision encompass the entire globe; various exemplary cities on the hill can even be found on other planets as in *Unveiling a Parallel. A Romance* (1893) and *Mirrikh; or A Woman from Mars; a Tale of Occult Adventure* (1892) which describe progressive utopian civilizations on Mars.

²² We will deal more extensively with imperialism and its intrinsic connection to the utopian literature of this period in later chapters, however, we are already beginning to see how themes related to the closing of the “old” frontier, the discovery of “new” frontiers, the need for “virgin land” and “renewal,” often and inevitably surface when analyzing these texts.

This search for new virgin lands or, conversely, the need to rediscover the frontier that already exists in speculative-fictional contexts is the natural consequence of the rapid and traumatic transformations undergone by the nation: “In the course of three decades an agrarian-based society of small towns seemed to erupt inexplicably into an industrial society of sense metropolitan centers [...]; the sense of space, time, the built environment, the meaning of goods and material things, all underwent decisive alteration” (Trachtenberg “The Incorporation” 760-761). This transformation obviously “threatened frontier and agrarian worldviews” (Roemer 5) and triggered a number of diverse reactions. It is precisely the closing of the frontier, “the disappearance of accessible, cheap, fertile land accompanied by rapid urbanization and increased technological advancements” (Roemer 5) which creates a crisis of the American identity, leading many to look for new frontiers and virgin territories.

Whether they invoke the pilgrim foundational mythos or that of the frontier, whether they believe that it is necessary to found a new “Modell of Christian Charity” or to find new frontiers, these speculative fictions reveal the widespread idea that America has been irredeemably corrupted in some way. And while some may look to foreign shores, others wish to purge the land that exists from its evils. *The Reign of Selfishness. A Story of Concentrated Wealth* (1891) by Samuel Walker is an interesting example in case: in this novel a monopolistic entity controls everything until an economic crisis and an “avenging plague” bring about the collapse of society and subsequently its rebirth “under the guidance of a businessman who redistributes the population to small villages and restores ‘friendly’ competition” (in Roemer 192). In “*Uncle Sam’s Cabins. A Story of American Life Looking Forward a Century* (1895) Benjamin R. Davenport describes a bleak future in which “the farm-class had become so absolutely impoverished that they could no longer even pay the rent of the land they planted” (31); the resultant introduction of “Bonds of Servitude” effectively renders the farmers and their descendants “as serfs to the soil and passed as any other chattel with the land, to each succeeding heir of the great

landed gentry” (31). As in *The Reign of Selfishness*, the “all-devouring wolf of Monopoly” (143) ends up controlling everything and once again a convenient plague gives a “fighting Parson” (229) the opportunity to free the serfs, redistribute the land and encourage “competition and free trade. The result is a yeoman’s utopia” (Roemer 198).

The reform or rebirth of civilization in the latter texts is the result of a passively awaited and providential purge, followed by the action of *individual* charismatic leaders. In some speculative-utopian texts the purge is more actively obtained through the use of discriminating violence, what Roemer calls the “do-it-yourself virgin-land approach” (49), which targets those specific elements of society that are responsible for its ills, be it the capitalists and/or the rabbleroising socialists and/or some ethnic third element.²³ What is also observable in Davenport and Walker’s texts are the evident references to Jeffersonian agrarianism albeit interspersed with elements of more recent theories of agrarian socialism; differently from those texts that see opportunities for renewal and reform only in foreign lands, these texts seem to rediscover the West that already exists and attempt to go back in time—in the future paradoxically—and reoccupy the frontier, but do so according to a more perfect ideal of order: projects of reform and redistribution are proposed which attempt to reconcile Jeffersonian yeomanry with social progressivism and/or socialism; a West which had already been conquered but has now ended up in the hands of the unworthy few is re-conquered for the benefit of the

²³ Once again our analysis of agrarian utopianism crosses over into the domain of racial and imperial ideology. In many of these works the ominous “purge” is not necessarily confined to America but to various undesirable peoples who own land and resources that would benefit more from the intelligent administration and better serve the spiritual renewal of a superior “Anglo-Saxon” or “Aryan” race, both in America and abroad (see for example Alexander Craig’s *Ionia; Land of Wise Men and Fair Women* and Davenport’s *Anglo-Saxons, Onward!*).

yeoman. Even those texts that look to foreign shores in the quest for American renewal, such as Donnelly's *Caesar's Column* and Mary Elizabeth Lease's *The Problem of Civilization Solved*, hypothesize the exportation of the Jeffersonian ideal on a global scale, perhaps in an effort to bring what they perceive as the best of America to utopia and leave the rest behind.

While some take a more literal, territorial route in their search for new frontiers, others look for solutions along the more sublimated paths of science, technology and industry. These are the years of entrepreneur-inventors such as Thomas Edison or King Camp Gillette and Twain himself seems obsessed with finding that one invention, patent or investment that will assure the financial wellbeing of his family and his own economic independence. While Twain's faith in technology is at times moderate and often ambivalent, other authors are profoundly convinced of its redeeming value: the popular idea that one great, well-conceived, salvific invention can change the fortunes of an individual is extended to include the entire nation if not the world. This is the case of Waterloo's *Armageddon* and Newcomb's *His Wisdom the Defender* in which the invention of an airship or dirigible by a scientist-engineer enables America (or the "Anglo-Saxon race" in Waterloo) to gain absolute military superiority and ensure global peace. Other authors, obviously inspired by the advancements of the era, look to sources of energy such as hydroelectricity (King Camp Gillette), magnetism (Donnelly in *Caesar's Column*) and radioactivity (Twain) to power their visions of the future.²⁴

²⁴ Or in Twain's case, to express his typically ambivalent and pessimistic point of view. In "Sold to Satan" a charming and sociable Mephistopheles acquires the protagonist's soul (Twain himself) in exchange for the rights to exploit a large deposit of the radioactive element, polonium, of which Satan's body is made—perhaps a comment on the forms evil has taken in the modern world—; the radioactive properties of the element will allow Twain to "light the whole world, heat the whole world's machinery, supply the whole world's transportation power from now till the end of eternity" for a healthy profit (232); however, in reference to the potentialities of

The science these authors apply to their speculative fictions is not limited to the field of physics and mechanics; some see solutions to modern anxieties in the burgeoning field of evolutionary theory and applied eugenics and in these texts the themes of the “do-it-yourself virgin-land approach” or *renewal* assume sinister racial connotations. In Craig Alexander’s *Ionia; Land of Wise Men and Fair Women* (1898) the protagonist discovers a race of Aryanized Greeks in the Himalayas (one character is described as a “blonde Hercules,” 117); they are the descendants of a cohort of Alexander the Great’s soldiers and have solved humanities problems through the use of selective reproduction. Jews, criminals and “people who are defective either physically or mentally” are either “deprived of the comforts of marriage for the benefit of future generations” (287) or executed. In *Mizora: A Prophecy*, a relatively rare piece of feminist utopian fiction, Mary E. Bradley describes an all female community located beneath the North-Pole, inhabited by “young girls of the highest type of blonde beauty” (Bradley); in the land of *Mizora*, men have been either eliminated or excluded and eugenics are practiced in the belief “that the highest excellence of moral and mental character is alone attainable by a fair race. The elements of evil belong to the dark race” (Bradley). Moreover, the narrator advocates the application of Mizora’s genetic politics to solve another problem of urban America, that of criminality:

Crime is as hereditary as disease [...]. The good, the just, the noble, close heart and eyes to the sweet allurements of domestic life, lest posterity suffer physically or mentally by them. But the criminal has no restraints but what the law enforces. Ignorance, poverty and disease, huddled in

his polonium body, Satan also says to the protagonist “at my will I can set in motion the works of a lady's watch or destroy a world” (230).

dens of wretchedness, where they multiply with reckless improvidence, sometimes fostered by mistaken charity. (Bradley)

The presence of racial discourse, often in relation to criminological theory, is no rare occurrence within this body of texts but rather the norm: it is a manifestation the urban anxiety and xenophobic fear that many upper- and middle-class Americans felt at living in close proximity of the “great unwashed masses” of foreign, hungry and often resentful people that have caused the cities to expand so rapidly into metropolises.

There are also those who seem less preoccupied by the phenomenon of rapid urbanization but recognize that there is a need for regulation or transformation. Unlike William Morris—who in reaction to *Looking Backward* literally looks backward in time for inspiration—some up the technological and metropolitan ante of Bellamy’s utopia. In *From World to World. A Novel* (1896) D. L Stump, in an unconventional move that reverses the conventional city-country paradigm of the day, places the entire future population of his utopia in large cities surrounded by public farms; people commute to these farms everyday to work via an “electric, aluminum train traveling anywhere from 100 to 200 miles per hour” (Roemer 156). King Camp Gillette envisions a “Metropolis” made up of huge edifices, distributed in the manner of a beehive, that are capable of housing the entire American population (see figure 2.A, 2.B below); the metropolis expands to become the only “city on a continent, and possibly the only one in the world” (in Roemer 51). The city itself is built in proximity of the Niagara falls in order to exploit the huge mass of falling water as a source of energy.

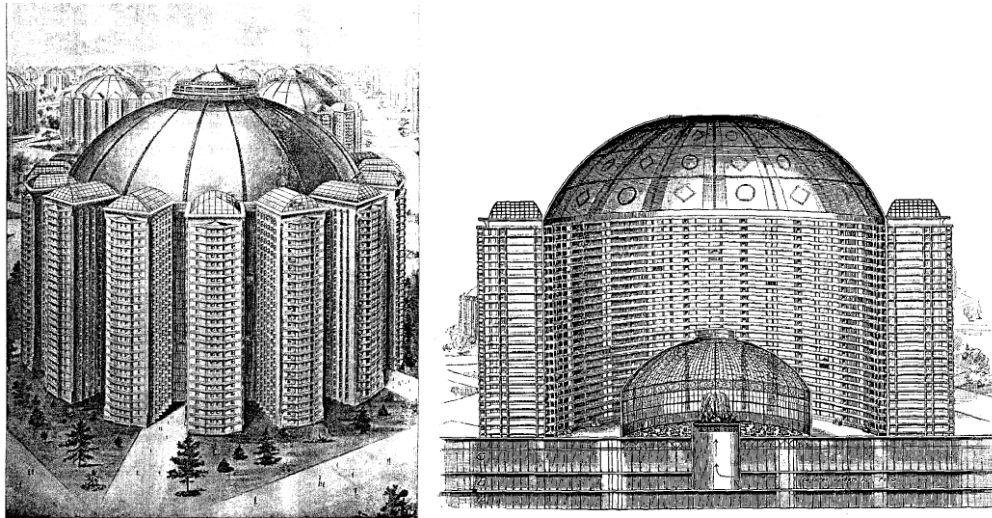


Figure 2.A and 2.B: Illustrations from King Camp Gillette's *The Human Drift* (in Roemer 64-65)

The question of urbanization and city planning in utopian fiction represents a vast and complex topic. Roemer, who dedicates an entire chapter to the subject (VIII) states that the prevalent point of view among these and other authors on modern city life was generally negative: “of all the places in America, cities and towns were the most contaminated with Old-World diseases [...]. [...] the city was the worst environment for the individual. How could he improve in a place where litter covered the ground, ugly signs and horse manure debased the streets, and smoke [...] filled the air?” (154). In imagining their solutions to the urban problem, the utopian authors either ignored the city (in the more pastoral strain), destroyed it (in the apocalyptic and dystopian strain) but more often tried to reform and improve it by “combining the best of the city and the country” (Roemer 155).

Architecture and town planning play an important part in the utopian imagination of the late nineteenth century, and it is often in this field that we find the most practical and successful applications of utopian-inspired theory in the real world. Ebenezer Howard who, inspired by Bellamy, wrote his own utopian text *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (1898), founded the garden city movement which led to the construction of “new towns” in England which have influenced the

planning of numerous towns and cities throughout the globe. In the spirit of combining the best of the city with the best of the country, these projects strived to create the perfect equilibrium between residential areas, industrial areas and gardens, perhaps in an attempt to harmoniously integrate the “machine” into the “garden.”

While the garden city movement employed actual architects and engineers for the realization of their projects, most of the utopian authors actually knew very little about the technical aspects of the inventions and machinery they envisioned (often resulting in predictions that are amusing for the modern reader); however, this did not impede their enthusiasm for science and particularly for labor saving devices and, indeed, the majority of the agrarian utopian writers do not eliminate machines, technology and science from their bucolic landscapes. The ideal cities of King Camp Gillette and Ebenezer Howard, that have gardens and machines in equal parts, are representative of the more common third way approach to the problem of technology vs. nature or future vs. past: that of harmoniously integrating the “machine” into “the garden,” traditional country life with new industrial, urban life. The conflicting ideas of the pastoral and the march of progress are often put into play within the space of a single text with results that vary from naive harmonious resolution to pessimistic catastrophism. This last scenario could describe various dystopian fictions and *A Connecticut Yankee* itself. However, Twain’s novel transcends the self-important *gravitas* of a *Caesar’s Column* or *Looking Backward* due to its ironic, playful, satirical distancing from the impulses, tensions and fears that dominate these paradigmatic texts. What in most utopian novels are the core ideologies and beliefs are, in Twain, pitted against each other without there being a clear victor.

Despite their differing visions, most authors of these futuristic town plans and reform projects seem to concur on what was essential for the happiness of mankind: the elimination of urban corruption and industrial drudgery, the augmentation of comfort and pleasure (in moderation), more leisure time

and more beautiful surroundings to spend it in. What could be more in line with the pastoral theme than this?

V. *Dangerous Leisure, Eroticism, and the Medievalist Trend*

The debate regarding the importance of “comfort” and “leisure” is particularly interesting especially among the group of texts that respond directly to Bellamy’s *Looking Backward*. To briefly sum up employment in Bellamy’s year 2000, there is a four hour working day and people retire at forty-five, excepting the President who usually enters office at around that age (263-64). If this seems like an exaggeratedly good deal to us today, we can imagine the reactions at the time. There are those who believed that, due to the lack of competition and initiative, Bellamy’s America would ultimately render itself vulnerable to attack by some foreign power as in John Bachelder’s *A.D. 2050. Electrical Development at Atlantis* (1890) and Arthur D. Vinton’s *Looking Further Backward* (1890). In both these novels, it is the Chinese who invade America reflecting the pervasiveness of “Yellow Peril” discourse. However, the more interesting responses are those that attack the concept of “leisure” itself by appealing to morality, the tradition of the protestant work ethic or even pseudo Darwinian ideas. W.W Satterlee, in *Looking Backward and What I Saw* (1890), writes of how “this enforced idleness [...] these hours spent in public places of resort away from the influences and home, will be [...] demoralizing to their mental and moral powers” (130-131), and seems to blame Godlessness, immigration and alcoholism for the current ills of society. In describing socialist groups he states that:

they organized bands of young people, which met in saloons [...], to be taught all their blasphemies, hatred of God and good men [...]. They marched through the streets of the great cities shouting “Bread or Blood,” and yet by far the majority of them spent daily enough money for beer, whisky and tobacco to have furnished themselves and their families plentifully with

bread. At the first these were nearly all persons of foreign birth, and many of them not citizens of the country. But as time wore on they were joined by many of the native born population which greatly increased their power and influence. (41)

J.W Roberts' *Looking Within. The Misleading Tendencies of "Looking Backward" Made Manifest.* (1893) is in a similar vein; as we may guess from the title itself, it contains sermon language and biblical metaphors and is particularly fervent in its opposition of idleness as the breeding grounds of sin: "Nothing is so great a foe to virtue as unoccupied time and talent devoted to wickedness. Then if Poverty debased, which is by no means a proven position, as many of the greatest and best men of all former times were poor, idleness does so in a much larger degree. Idleness, therefore, does more harm than poverty or wealth" (225). Words such as "idle," "idleness," "lazy," "laziness," "sloth," "indolence," "indolent," recur approximately thirty-three times within various sections of the three hundred page novel informing us in no uncertain terms of the danger Roberts' sees in Bellamy's "nationalism." David H. Wheeler writes a series of essays, *Our Industrial Utopia and Its Unhappy Citizens* (1895) which sustain the idea that: "late nineteenth-century America is utopia; people fail to see this because they lack "character" and desire "superfluities." Poverty exists, but it is either character building or just a punishment for laziness" (Roemer 200). George A. Sanders' series of essays, *Reality: Law and Order vs. Anarchy and Socialism, A Reply to Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward and Equality* (1898), is in a similar Leibnizian, "best of possible worlds" vein but adds "survival of the fittest" as one of the guiding "Divine Laws" (Roemer 205) of the universe. These texts can be considered examples of what Jean Pfaelzer calls "conservative utopias" and they represent the obvious "reaction" to Bellamy's "revolution;" by their mere existence they debunk the misconception or generalization that utopia is exclusively the product of communist or socialist philosophies. It is true that they can be considered

more dystopian than utopian, but these texts do contain blueprints for perfect worlds even if these plans are often defined by what they negate or exclude rather than by what they affirm.

With the exception of these more “conservative” authors, most of the nineteenth century utopians believed that leisure was as necessary to the “self-development” or “active self-improvement” of the individual as work (Roemer 150-151). More often than not machines are not only a means towards more leisure time but necessary to the enjoyment and better exploitation of the surplus of free time obtained: in utopia we find many a high speed train, plane or airship that renders travel quicker and more comfortable; radio, television and various other multimedia apparatuses allow its citizens to occupy their leisure time in an edifying manner. Technology (often in combination with social reform) also improved marital life as husband and wife could dedicate more of their surplus free time to each other in a climate of equality and serenity: “technological advances, such as electric appliances [...] liberate men from their dependence on housekeepers [...] and free women from the ‘dish-rag and the broom stick’ [...]. Economic security and increased leisure would also affect the third major function of the family, the socially accepted expression of love” (128). Therefore, the married couple in utopia “have ample time to cultivate a pure and intense relationship” (128) thanks, in part, to the liberating power of machines.²⁵

²⁵ The nineteenth century infatuation with technology and the boundless possibilities for it offered was so profound that we even find instances of the eroticization of the machines themselves. Ronald Takaki has documented how as far back as the 1840s and 50s erotic metaphors were used to describe the importance and future potential of steam power and the railroad which represented the apex of technology and the embodiment of progress at the time: “Terms such as marriage and birth were employed to describe steam [...]. In his speech at the Chicago Railroad Convention in 1847, William M. Hall described the emergent railroad as a virile masculine force [...] making his way into the “body of the continent” with the step of a “bridegroom” going to his chamber” (150).

Conversely, in many utopian texts we find indications of an erotic impulse behind the invocation of a simpler time in the past (be it recent or distant), in contrast with the cold machines, unhealthy cities and repressed feelings of the present. T.J Jackson Lears has analyzed the “fascination with medieval mentalities” which characterizes the antimodern “revolt against positivism” (179) of the Victorian era and describes it as a yearning for an “innocence” and “vital energy” which has been lost in modern times; Lears describes an American middle class that is “Impatient with the stodginess of bourgeois virtue” and that fantasizes about “an ecstatic medieval piety” characterized by strong emotions: “summits of spiritual exaltation [...] abysses of self-abasement, burning always with white hot flame” (161). Lears explains how this fascination is borne, in part, “from a liberal Protestant assumption that Catholic practices bred undisciplined emotion” (160) and that this appeal “was erotic in the strict etymological sense [...]. [...] the emotional extremism of the Middle Ages embodied boundless, unfulfilled desire rather than sexuality per se” (161); however there were also those who “noted the medieval intermingling of religion and sexuality” (161) even if expressed in extremely sublimated forms. In Morris’ *News From Nowhere* there are evident nostalgic (and idealized) evocations of medieval peasant life and the vitality associated with it (see figure 2.C below).

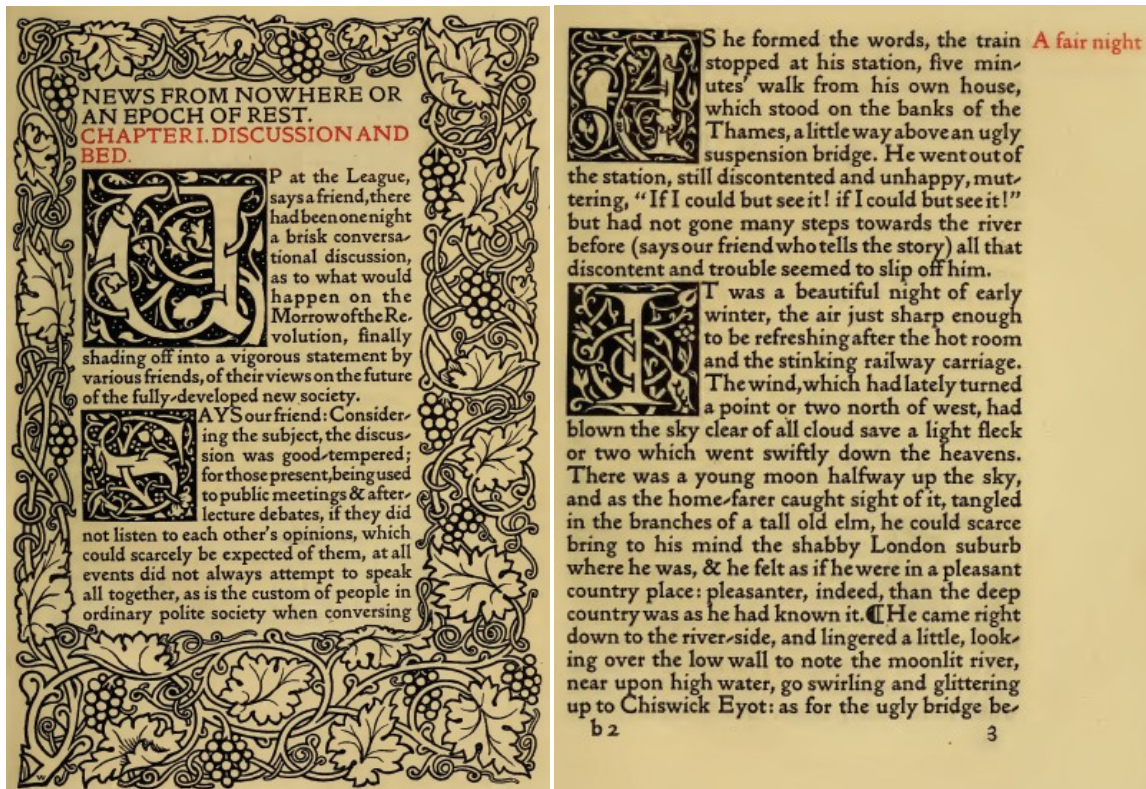


Figure 2.C: Pages 1 and 3 from an original edition of William Morris' *News from Nowhere* clearly show through the use of beautifully elaborate initials and marginalia how the author is inspired by the aesthetic of medieval illuminated manuscripts. Moreover, these decorative elements tie in with one of the running themes of the novel which is the celebration of artisanal work and handcrafted objects as opposed to all things industrial and technological (Pag. 1,3).

In one instance the protagonist, William Guest, is invited to a dinner that takes place in a quaint village church with "no [modern] architectural decoration in it" but which in this occasion is "gaily dressed [...] with festoons of flowers from arch to arch, and great pitchers of flowers standing about on the floor" (302). On discovering the location of the dinner celebration he states: "This was somewhat new to me, this dinner in a church, and I thought of the church-ales of the Middle Ages" (301), and describes the participants as "a crowd of handsome, happy-looking men and women that were set down to table, and who, with their bright faces and rich hair over their gay holiday raiment" (302). Upon meeting women for the first time in the future, Guest gives an even more indicative description that is worth quoting at length:

In this pleasant place, which of course I knew to be the hall of the Guest House, three young women were flitting to and fro. As they were the first of the sex I had seen on this eventful morning, I naturally looked at them very attentively, and found them at least as good as the gardens, the architecture, and the male men. As to their dress, which of course I took note of, I should say that they were decently veiled with drapery, and not bundled up with millinery; that they were clothed like women, not upholstered like armchairs, as most women of our time are [...]. As to the women themselves, it was pleasant indeed to see them, they were so kind and happy-looking in expression of face, so shapely and well-knit of body, and thoroughly healthy-looking and strong. All were at least comely, and one of them very handsome and regular of feature. They came up to us at once merrily and without the least affectation of shyness, and all three shook hands with me as if I were a friend newly come back from a long journey [...]. (18-19)

We can notice Morris' how repeatedly associates nature, "flowers" and "gardens" (which the women are amusingly "as good as") with the vitality and beauty (and sexuality) of the people he encounters, revealing the profoundly pastoral inspiration for his medieval utopia. It is also interesting to see how he portrays women of his day as being "bundled up" and "upholstered like armchairs," a clear metaphor for Victorian sexual repression, in contrast with the indications of the uninhibited nature of their utopian counterparts.

VI. *Race and Religion in Imperial and Internal Utopias: to Conquer Abroad or to Fight the Alien at Home?*

We have seen how the closing of the frontier, the problems of capital versus labor, of "machine" versus "garden" and the need for social reform (particularly within the urban space) are interconnected. We

have also seen how questions of empire and race are extremely pervasive and are inherently connected to the problem of “renewal,” and the quest for new frontiers. These texts are asking questions about America’s future and answering them on the basis of the example of the past or present. Nation and Nationalism are the larval stages of Empire and Imperialism and within a fictional space these authors experiment in expanding core national mythologies and rhetoric to the international stage. The frontier is extended to Africa, South-America, Asia and even Europe and the new “Indians” are subjugated, removed or eliminated through violence or selective breeding. Technological superiority plays a fundamental role in most of these imperial imaginings; many authors eerily foreshadow the atomic age and employ (non mutually) assured destruction as a means towards utopia. In 1889 Frank R. Stockton publishes *The Great War Syndicate* which imagines a war between Britain and America; America prevails due to the intervention of the “War Syndicate,” a group of private, wealthy businessmen who are under contract with the United States’ government to apply the efficiency of business methods to warfare and develop a series of high-tech weapons such as metal warships, submarines and missiles; an allied “Anglo-American War Syndicate” is formed as a result of the war; global peace is ensured and the novel ends with a prediction that eerily anticipates the atomic age and Cold War:

Now there would be no more mere exhibitions of the powers of the instantaneous motor-bomb. Hereafter, if battles must be fought, they would be battles of annihilation. This is the history of the Great Syndicate War. Whether or not the Anglo-American Syndicate was ever called upon to make war, it is not to be stated here. But certain it is that after the formation of this Syndicate all the nations of the world began to teach English in their schools, and the Spirit of Civilization raised her head with a confident smile. (128)

In 1890 William Gilpin’s *The Cosmopolitan Railway Compacting and Fusing Together All the World’s Continents* was published and it is, perhaps, one of most manifestly imperialist works of the

first wave of speculative-utopian fiction. In it we find explicit and repeated mentions of an “republican empire of North America [...] predestined to expand and fit itself to the continent; to control the oceans on either hand, and eventually the continents beyond them” (298). This represents a glaringly evident example of the extension of “manifest destiny” rhetoric to future, international political scenarios. Moreover, the use of the almost oxymoronic term “republican empire” or even “democratic-republican empire” (298) clearly indicates how the author wishes to excise the idea of despotism usually associated with empires. Gilpin insists on the fact that this particular empire will be perpetual: “The empire of our continental geography; the empire of our free people; the empires of our political, of our social, and our religious sentiment; the empire of our industries — for all of these will be found mutual concord, self-sustained; unlimited expansion; perpetual buoyancy, find perpetual life!” (124). What the author may have scruples about is clashing with the traditional republican theory of the rise and fall of empires so well represented by Thomas Cole’s series of paintings. By insisting on the idea of “perpetuity,” Gilpin attempts to exorcize from his utopia the inevitable decadence and eventual fall that follows an empire’s rise to prominence. Both the idea of a specifically “republican empire” and its everlasting nature are indicators of what we could call American “exceptionalist” thought, though the application of this term within this context is a purely etymological matter.

Gilpin’s premise for the formation of an American empire is that the “Aryan race” has repeatedly demonstrated its superiority throughout history and that the geography of North America makes it the perfect place for this particular race to multiply and thrive. Gilpin predicts that, starting from America, the Aryan race will extend its civilizing influence throughout the globe through the construction of a worldwide network of railways: “the great American deserts have been ever lessening since the advent of railways, so will the deserts of Asia become less and less, until their wastes shall blossom as the rose” (11) which seems like a re-proposition of frontier ideology on foreign shores if

ever there was one. In an unconventional move for the time, Gilpin traces the history of empire back to the “conquests of Cortes and Pizarro” which are characterized as having “opened the sources from which portable personal property has exalted itself above fixed and immutable glebe lands!” (339). The idea of escaping the “fixed and immutable glebe lands” of Europe and its endless, repeating historical cycles is a common theme in utopian texts of the era (Roemer 29), however, the “Old World” is also paradoxically the source of inspiration for images of future imperial glory in texts that speculate on the nature of a hypothetical American empire. In *The Cosmopolitan Railway* there are repeated references to prestigious “Aryan” empires of the past and invocations of an imaginary imperial hereditary line that is typical of burgeoning imperial ideology: “What old Roman roads and aqueducts were to the greatest of ancient empires, the railroads and the systems of irrigation are to the Aryans of the nineteenth century. The most advanced and comprehensive of the age is a cosmopolitan railway which girdle the globe. Not till that shall be accomplished will Aryan supremacy be secured” (127).

This passage creates an association between technology (roads, aqueducts and railways) and empire which is not only very insightful but also revelatory of the nineteenth century enthusiasm for science and technology to which Gilpin seems victim; passages like “science is divine, and economy is science revealed, rightly understood, and utilized” (iv) or “It is the truth, established by science, and not the deductions of metaphysics, with which the people must fortify themselves” (173) seem to communicate an almost religious faith in science. However, in a public speech on the subject of the Pacific railway “First Spoken at the Camp of Five Thousand California Emigrants, at Wakerusa” (311) earlier that century (1849 circa) but included in an appendix to the 1890 edition of *The Cosmopolitan Railway*, Gilpin is extremely disparaging of the ineffectual intellectualism of the scientific community:

the scientific men of the nation oppose the national railway; so did those of Europe persecute Galileo and Columbus [...]. Science is rare; the spurious quackery of science abundant. It is not

the scientific doctors of the schools, the bureaus and military wings of government, that have hewed out this republican empire from the wilderness. This has been reared by the genuine heroism and sublime instincts of the pioneer army [...]. At this moment scientific men are especially busy distracting us with multitudinous routes and invented difficulties, devised to perplex and scatter the energies of the citizens, whose unanimous resolve it is to plough open a great central trail to the Pacific. Science cannot unmake the eternal ordinances of nature and reset the universe to suit local fancies and idle fashion. It is the humble duty of science to investigate nature as she is, and promulgate the truths discoverable, for the guidance of governments and men. (329-330)

Leaving aside the evident populist rhetoric the occasion demanded, Gilpin displays a very different attitude towards science, or better, portrays two distinct types of science: one is a sentimental “reaching for the stars” embodied in the effort of the pioneers, the other is something dry and obstructive to progress which pertains to the “scientific doctors of the schools.” The author creates a vaguely defined association between science and the spirit of the pioneer which shows how Gilpin’s concept of “science” is more akin to something romantically spiritual than to scientific research proper. This outlook is representative of the imprecise, technically flawed concept of technologic and scientific progress characteristic of the majority of speculative-utopian texts. Gilpin declares that men of science “distract” from a higher purpose, that science cannot “unmake” the laws of nature and that it must simply passively observe but at the same time guide “governments and men” (330). My attempt to interpret and summarize this entangled collection of ambiguities and contradictions expressed by Gilpin would be: “science” is useful only when it knows its place and is at the service of his idea of “progress.”

The list of manifestly imperial texts goes on and includes the already mentioned *Anglo-Saxons, Onward!* (Benjamin Rush, 1898) and *Armageddon* (Stanley Waterloo, 1898). What all of these texts

demonstrate is that the American empire and the ideology on which it is based are not merely an accident; these imperial ambitions and ideologies are not the casual side effect of the Spanish-American war but the result of a long gestation and the utopian texts are an excellent means of monitoring their gradual development. Even before the moment of diffuse imperial self-consciousness that is the Spanish-American War, an American empire exists in textual form much earlier, particularly within the realm of utopian fiction. Apart from the more explicit texts, the more subtle and unexpected examples of imperial discourse not only demonstrate its pervasiveness but that this discourse is often more subliminal than conscious.

Let us take, for example, Bellamy who is, for the most part, seemingly unconcerned with international affairs. In *Looking Backwards*, there is insistence on the idea of “national” resources and infrastructures: “national industries” (76), “national storehouses” (119), “national family” (454), “national force of workers” (253); here, “national” stands for “state-owned” and it is used to a system of localized, internal state management, not cultural identity. When questioned about international politics, Dr. Leete speaks of “a loose form of federal union of world-wide extent” in which “complete autonomy within its own limits is enjoyed by every nation” and “the peaceful relations” (193) of various nations is assured; an “international council” exists to regulate “the mutual intercourse and commerce of the members of the union” (193) in what seems like a spirit of global fair trade and cooperation rather than competition or domination. However, the countries that participate in this union are “the great nations of Europe as well as Australia, Mexico, and parts of South America” which “are now organized industrially like the United States, which was the pioneer of the evolution” (193). The most notable absents from this list of participants in the council are those parts of the world which constitute the theatre of colonial politics of the European powers and America itself. Moreover, Dr Leete also speaks of a “joint policy” of this union of nations “toward the more backward races, which

are gradually being educated up to civilized institutions” (194). Benevolent as this intent may be, it obviously contains the seeds of later imperial discourse.

The frequent presence of what were characterized as “backward races” in speculative-utopian texts is more often than not connected to racial-imperial ideology; this is true both when utopia is the result of global expansion or when it is a matter of solving problems at home first. We have already seen how various authors seem worried about the negative influence of various immigrant groups or “races” due to perceived immoral or criminal behavior and/or as a hereditary menace. The renewal of the urban space in particular is often connected to the idea of reforming or eradicating certain categories of human beings. Mary Bradley’s *Mizora*—in which the matriarchal chemists have applied cold hard “science” to eliminate criminal behavior, hereditary poverty and the blemish of dark skin—is obviously influenced by social Darwinism and pseudo-scientific concepts of race; William Gilpin, Benjamin Davenport (*Anglo-Saxons, Onward!*) and Stanley Waterloo (*Armageddon*) appeal to more romantic, cultural notions of Anglo-Saxonism. And even though these texts start from similar premises regarding racial hierarchy, their proposed or imagined futures may go in very different directions.

On the one hand we have texts that show an impulse towards expansion and propagation; on the other we have texts like *Mizora* which look internally and are often set in extremely isolated utopian communities. Alexander Craig’s *Ionia* (1898) presents dynamics of racial isolation and selection as a means of progress that are similar to those of *Mizora*. The novel describes a hidden Hellenic-Aryan civilization in the Himalayas that has thrived through the application of Spartan-style eugenic practices and the gradual elimination of the Jews that used to lived among them. In this case the undesirable other is guilty of dangerously accumulating wealth, in keeping with the traditional stereotype: “The archon of that time was a man of the name of Theophilus, an able and fearless ruler. He saw plainly that the country was drifting to ruin if the power and wealth of the Jews could not be curtailed” (221).

There is also the tinge of inevitable sexual danger that proceeds from this wealth that reminds us of the lecherous “Prince Cabano” in *Caesar’s Column*: “Their prosperity made them insolent, and they began to set the laws at defiance. Our young men became their servants and our young women their mistresses” (Craig 221). However, after the Jewish population protest against forced assimilation laws, a Reichstag style crime is committed and “several of the wealthiest of the Jews were found to be, accessory to the crime, and they were executed without mercy. The senate passed a law that no person of Jewish blood should ever be allowed to marry in Ionia, and so the whole tribe died out and passed away for ever” (222).

Many other speculative-utopian texts present a number of variations on the theme of the undesirable outsider and identify different “races” or ethnic groups as the inner or outer enemy that needs to be eradicated: the Chinese in *A.D. 2050* (Bachelder), *Caesar’s Column* (Donnelly speaks of “vile hordes of Mongolian coolies,” 111) and *Looking further Backward* (Arthur Dudley, 1890); Jewish people in Corwin Phelps’ *An Ideal Republic* (1898) which illustrates a “Jewish Banker” conspiracy and Mortimer D. Leggett’s *A Dream of a Modest Prophet* (1890) which describes Judaism as a corrupting influence on “true Christianity” (in Roemer 189). To this list we can also add South, East and Catholic Europeans although the reasons for their undesirability seem to be more cultural and religious than racial: in *Armageddon* Waterloo predicts that the large number of Catholics in the country will bring about the return of the Inquisition (147), Donnelly and others purport the stereotype of the “swarthy-complexioned” Italian labor agitator (Roemer 71) and even the relatively “politically correct” Bellamy (in *Equality*, 1897) describes how uncontrollable waves of immigration had brought to America “the lowest, most wretched, and barbarous races of Europe—the very scum of the continent” (313).

Among the more religious and moralistic utopian writers there are those that view immigrants and other ethnicities as a menace due to their supposed godlessness and lack of education (both social

and religious) rather than to some inherent flaw. J.W. Roberts, as we have seen, accuses “persons of foreign birth” of spreading “blasphemies, hatred of God and good men,” idleness and vice amongst the “native born population” (41) and in reference to “labor-union men” in particular states that: “Many of them are foreign born, the lower strata of society from Europe. They have little education and no religious training worthy the name. Hence there is little restraint. When they get angry, excited, maddened by liquor, no utterance is too vile” (34). David H. Wheeler (*Our Industrial Utopia*) also points to cultural factors in order to explain “the dream of anarchy” (but from the context this seems to refer to social reform in general) affirming that “most of the anarchist writers and thinkers are of Cossack blood” and that anarchism is the attempt to recover “the old Cossack life on the Steppes [...] the Arcadia of his race” (234) which has been taken away by the formation of the Russian empire with its “restraints and rigors of discipline” (234). Wheeler’s attitude toward social reformists is literally paternalistic: “It is though your child should say: ‘Papa, fix up the government in the way we children do when we play house-keeping’” (234); moreover, he affirms that “The first aim of any religion having culture in it, is to build individuals. Altruism has no base until the individual, self building man exists” (286). Both these texts propose a concept of reform that is individual, directed internally and is the result of a proper education. This outlook seems highly influenced by the Protestant/Puritan religious tradition. However, this era also saw the proliferation of less conventional forms spiritual exploration (which we shall discuss in the next chapter) that often expressed themselves using the utopian form.

To their credit, various religiously oriented utopias seem to be more inclusive than those that are based on ideas of racial selection or hierarchy. A large number of texts is produced by Religious Socialists and various other reformers who declaredly invoke some form of religious *pietas* to justify the changes they intend to make. Cases in point are *In His Steps*. “*What Would Jesus Do?*” by Charles

M. Sheldon, a progressive Congregational minister, who advances the idea that for reform to be possible: “each individual Christian, business man, citizen, needs to follow in His steps along the path of personal sacrifice for Him” (275). This novel is one of a number of religious utopian texts that present the popular “What would Jesus do?” or “what would Jesus say?” motif which includes titles such as: *If Jesus Came to Boston* (E. E. Hale, 1895) and *Would Christ Belong to a Labor Union?* (Cortland Myers, 1900). Other authors adopt a more universalist approach to their religious utopias; Charles Daniel for example, in *Ai. A Social Vision*, tells the story of Ai, an Episcopalian bishop who is able not only to unite all Christians in Philadelphia, but looks to Judaism, Islam and Buddhism for inspiration in engendering the spiritual renewal of the city. Here, the focus is on the regeneration-reform of the individual as the basis for the reform of society at large: “he who would regenerate society must first regenerate himself, and then his virtues must act as contagion acts, by contact with man” (296). Perhaps the most radical cultural relativist among these religiously oriented utopians is Joaquin Miller who in *The Building of the City Beautiful* (1893) tells the story of the foundation of an ideal, “technologically sophisticated and religiously inspiring city” (Roemer 195) by a humble Jewess who knows “more of Christ than Christians!” (21). Moreover, in a move that is extremely uncharacteristic, particularly in utopian literature, Miller’s Jewess looks to the Native American for inspiration in the foundation of utopia: “You see the Indian is and always was [...] the truest and most perfect communist. All the lands, horses, products of the fields and chase, everything but the bow in his hand, was as much the property of his brother as himself” (208). We may, in part, interpret this as a socialist variation on the popular romantic trope of the noble “vanishing Indian,” indeed, throughout the text the native remains a marginal and exotic presence. However, *The Building of the City Beautiful* remains one of the few texts (perhaps the only other is Chauncey Thomas’ *The Crystal Button*, 1891) that mentions Native Americans without characterizing them as defeated relics of primitive stages of civilization but as a source of inspiration. Miller offers a counterpoint to the largely diffuse and

positivistic narratives of civilization and progress that characterize not only the vast majority of utopian fictions but cultural discourse at large. Miller's romantic contraposition of "Civilized man, so-called" and "savages, so-called" (207-208) seems to be in service of offering an alternative view of history and in the general economy of this text the "Indian" inspiration plays a more than marginal role in the success of the "City on the hill" of the Jewess.

The contributions of Jewish authors to the genre are few (Roemer mentions only three authors) but interesting in their outlook towards the future of Jewish identity. Two speculative texts which we can see as being in antithesis are those of Solomon Schindler, *Young West: A Sequel to Edward Bellamy's Celebrated Novel "Looking Backward"* (1894) and Henry Pereira Mendes' *Looking Ahead. Twentieth Century Happenings* (1899); Schindler's novel expands upon *Looking Backward* by adding various details to the world created by Bellamy and gives a more full-fledged psychological characterization to Julian West than we find in the original novel. He describes, for example, the condition of depression or "future shock" felt by the protagonist: "I yearn for death because I am not fit to live in the present age on account of my early education, and unfit to live again in the past on account of the lessons which the present has taught me. This discord is worse than death" (279). Even though Schindler was a rabbi (but also a radical agnostic), he articulates a vision of the future that is more secularized than Bellamy's, as is evident from this passage in which Julian West Junior describes his "religious" education:

He [his Professor] advised me to read several books, especially the religious text books of former times, among them, the Vedas, the Bible, and the Koran. I tried to read them but they were so uninteresting to me that I gave up the attempt [...]. One of these books, the Bible, was full of narratives of wars in which one people destroyed the lives and properties of others. The stories ran, that God, by whom, I supposed then was meant a person of great power, helped

them in their destructive work [...]. On the whole, I did not care for that class of literature, I returned the books to the library and not before many years did I touch them again. (119-120)

The religious faith of the “past” is explained in terms of a necessity that stems from the anxiety of civilizations that could not “guarantee the existence and the ample support of every citizen; hence they needed some protector” (171), therefore in Schindler’s utopian future, religion is simply obsolete. Conversely, Henry Pereira Mendes states that: ““Reverence for God, or Religion, considered as personal conduct, not as a system of dogma or belief,” must be “the foundation stone, walls, pillars, rafters and roof” of every human institution” (vi); Schindler’s position is, perhaps, one we could reductively call “assimilationist” in that he believes questions of religious and ethnic identity are secondary to socio-economic concerns; indeed, the words “Jew” or “Hebrew” and their variants never appear in the novel. For Mendes, on the other hand, religion is a fundamental component of all international and political relations; his utopia is dependent upon the constitution of a global Anglo-Saxon alliance (in which a Board of Pastors has extraordinary powers) and the formation of Jewish state in Palestine under the blessing of an international council of the monotheistic faiths (Chapter XVII). The newly formed Zionist state will become the “City on the hill” of the Mediterranean and Middle East; it will extend its positive influence through frontier style developmental practices and attract Jews from all over the world:

Roads were made, villages were rebuilt, enlarged into towns, watercourses were constructed, fields were planted, and the growth of the towns into cities bade fair to rival the miracles of Chicago and San Francisco. Factories sprang into existence. Immense coal fields were found toward Euphrates, petroleum to the south, metals in the Midian Hills. Railways, as if by magic, branched from Jerusalem, Damascus and Lebanon, and met railway systems of other lands.

(374)

When all destructive technological warfare (with “electric guns,” “War-Balloons” and submarine vessels”) between the various world powers becomes a global threat, the Jewish state of Palestine becomes the center of the world’s diplomacy: “Henceforth Palestine should be the bar of arbitration for the world” (380). Mendes is clearly influenced by Theodor Herzl and, in fact, served as vice-president of the American Federation of Zionists, but beyond the contrast with Schindler on the matter of religion, another fundamental divergence concerns their views on the proper path to utopia: whereas Mendes directs his attention externally, to an actual “promised land” outside of America, Schindler looks inwards and adopts an isolationist stance: “for more than fifty years, by common agreement, migration had been interdicted. That occurred at the time when the new social order was introduced. Each continent was to work out its destiny and educate the coming generations so as to fit them into the new state of affairs” (245).

VII. *Isolationism vs. Expansionism in Populist Utopias*

Two texts that present the same “outward” “inward” contrapositions but in an eminently agrarian context are “*Uncle Sam’s Cabins*” by Benjamin R. Davenport and Mary E. Lease’s *The problem of Civilization Solved* both published in 1895. Davenport describes a “populist” road to utopia involving the liberation of the farmer “serfs” of America from the despotic power of the monopolies and the redistribution of land (226). The crusade of the liberator/leader or “fighting Pastor” (Roemer, 198) is repeatedly characterized as an effort to remove the “new weed of slavery” (85) or the “second stain of slavery” (271). In case the title was not clear enough, in the preface the author quotes Harriet Beecher Stowe and the reforming effect of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as a direct source of inspiration. The final chapter of the novel that shows the effects of the Pastor’s efforts begins with an image that combines pastoral themes with populist rhetoric: “TWENTY times has the snow upon Ohio’s hills and fields been replaced by waving wheat and corn, since the inauguration of the regenerated Republic. Twenty crops

yielded by the generous soil, untaxed by monopolies, have returned to the tillers of the land, remuneration exempt from payment of blackmail” (267).

Mary E. Lease on the other hand, chooses the essay form rather than fiction but the content and ideas behind *The Problem of Civilization Solved* (1895) are similar: she repeatedly calls for the “equitable distribution” (Lease) of wealth and property and rails against land and resource monopolies. Lease’s utopian solution, however, largely differs from Davenport’s as she believes that the situation in America is not redeemable in the foreseeable future: “The lands of Europe and the United States have become monopolized by the rich; hence, it would be far cheaper for the poor to remove to the tropics than to await at home the slow evolution of justice” (Lease). Lease’s project, therefore, looks to the “vast tracts of the most favoured portion of the earth’s surface in Africa and South America” which are “waiting, in primeval solitude, the fostering hand of civilization” (Lease). It is the “plateaux of Brazil, Guiana, Mexico and Central America” which “constitute a vast empire of *virgin land* [emphasis added]” (Lease) that are of direct interest to the United States and its farmer class. What Lease seems to propose is a form of benign yeoman’s colonialism that employs foreign labor in a humanitarian but paternalistic effort to solve the problem of world hunger: “Every acre or land in Latin America might have been bought and divided into estates, with intelligent white men as planters. A hundred and fifty millions of the starving Hindoos and rat-eating denizens of China might have been transported thither as tenants to homes of ease and plenty” (Lease). However, the notion of “inferior races” being “elevated to intelligent citizenship and material prosperity” through the benign overseeing of a “planter class” of “intelligent white men” (Lease) is not merely a practical proposition on Lease’s part; it is repeatedly characterized as a question of cultural-racial hierarchy and almost as a sacred mission:

The chosen of God has served his apprenticeship and henceforth shall be the planter of the Tropics and guardian of the inferior races [...].

It *manifestly* is our duty and *destiny* to become the guardian of the inferior races. We must labor to improve his physical, moral and spiritual being [emphasis added]" (Lease).

This represents an interesting combination of “white man’s burden” philosophy mingled with the theme of “Manifest Destiny” applied on a universal scale. It is literally the extension of the frontier, as both an abstract and material concept, to the rest of the world and it is justified by a hierarchy that is both racial and cultural: “The highly-gifted white race of Europe and America are now fitted for the stewardship of the earth. They should be supplied with land in tropics which must be tilled by negroes and orientals—not as bondsmen, serfs, or servants—but as a co-operative tenantry, directed in their efforts by the superior energy and intelligence of the Caucasian” (Lease).

The natural association between colonial/imperial plantation agrarianism and slavery is present but is exorcized or sidestepped by Lease by insisting on the concept of tenantry as the basis for this naively sublimated master-servant relationship; “Slavery is an impossibility, hence tenantry is a necessity” (Lease). This attitude reveals the underlying tensions that exist between current imperial impulses and the progressive philosophies—heritage of the Harriet Beecher Stowe era—which inspire the re-creation of this genre. In a similar vein to Gilpin’s “democratic republican empire” (298), Lease gives us a perfect example of “exceptionalist” thought applied to the context of imperialism wherein America would avoid the destiny and despotic trappings of the Old World Empires. The arrangement proposed by Lease eerily reminds one of the slave system but a bettered, whitewashed version that has been excised of violence and coercion and is now voluntary:

We should clearly state that they and their families would be transported here free of charge, or that their passage money would be a loan on fifty years’ time at two per cent.; that we would supply them with the means to begin life on a tropical plantation, under the direction of the

planter, whose duty it would be to instruct them in their new mode of life, who would plan for them to execute, that the labors of all would co-operate in building, clearing and planting, and that the products of all should be divided in two equal parts, one-half going to the Caucasian and the other portion to the tenants to be divided equally. (Lease)

Moreover, Lease's utopian project is not limited to North and South America and she quite correctly predicts that vast empire building will also engender a potential for global warfare. Therefore, the author creates an extremely detailed design, complete with exact geographical borders, of the "partition of the earth's surface among the civilized nations" (Lease); these civilized nations are, of course, America and the great European Empires while Turkey, China, India, the Middle East and Africa are the territories to be divided; the language also becomes more sinister when describing how Persia "will be remorselessly dismembered" as will be China (Lease). But what part will America play in the theatre of global imperialism? Citing "that time honored scroll, the Monroe Doctrine" Lease advocates the creation of a Pan-American federation:

Should the United States profiting by her past mistakes and the wise example of Europe, assume the leadership of the Americas and become the head of the American federation, what a vision is presented of matchless grandeur and national greatness. With Canada and the Union as the seat of commerce, manufacturing, arts, education and science; with eight millions of square miles of tropical provinces for their markets, America would lead the world in glory and wealth. (Lease)

We can notice two interesting things here: firstly, the hierarchical relationship between north and south that may remind us of the colonial economic relationship that once existed between Britain and the thirteen colonies ("tropical provinces for their markets"): almost as if the colonial "son" were becoming

an imperial “father” and learning from “the wise example” of its forebears. Secondly, the idea that America will once again become a beacon, renewing itself by becoming an “empire” on the hill: “we would soon attract one hundred and eighty millions of the surplus population of the Old World [...]. America then would become the refuge for the world's expanding population for all future time (Lease). This development is curious as it almost seems to contradict the author’s initial premises regarding “Europe’s system of dumping its pauperized class upon our shores” creating an “ever-increasing swarm of dependents” and adding to the “congestive population of the cities” (Lease).

VIII. *Fear of the New “Great Unwashed” and of an Imperial Past*

The diffuse xenophobia present in these works represents a reaction to the waves of mass immigration from the Southern States, South and Eastern Europe and Asia. We have seen how the fear of “the other” often ties in with that of social uprising and anarchy and is a predominantly urban-industrial phenomenon. Although a century has passed, the terror of the French revolution becomes the subject of many a parlor conversation due to the diffusion of more recent social theories that are concurrent with mass immigration and rapid urban-industrial expansion. The sudden appearance of large masses of people who actually embody the “Third State” of old and the “new” working class is a natural catalyst for an adverse and fearful reaction. Mary E. Lease well exemplifies the direct connection that exists in the Victorian mindset between French “terror” and contemporary “anarchy” in expressing this warning to her readers:

That civilization may at any hour be convulsed by a wide-spread reign of terror is an appalling thought; yet the dire omens of discontent, the restlessness of the masses, riots, strikes, and dynamite outrages, presage the coming of just such storms as convulsed the world at the end the last century. Shall we imitate the folly of the French nobles, who rioted on, heedless of warning

until that frightful hurricane of atrocity and horror burst upon them in the fury of the French Revolution with its resulting carnival of blood: The Wars of Napoleon? (Lease)

The use of the historical precedent of the French Revolution to understand the present is a common motif which Twain himself is fond of and it is particularly relevant to *A Connecticut Yankee*. Although Lease does not directly associate migrants with social disorder, in Satterlee, Craig, Wheeler, Donnelly and even in Bellamy this connection is frequently made. The emerging political concerns conjoin with racism in both its traditional forms and its new pseudo-Darwinian or Lamarckian variants as the examples of the “Cossack=Anarchist,” “Italian=Agitator” or “Jew=Economic and Sexual predator” demonstrate.

The phenomenon of mass immigration forces white, native Americans to confront “the other,” that often becomes a frightening or persecutory other, within both the urban space and the developing ex-frontier: the “Yellow peril” phenomenon and the “Chinese exclusion act” (1882) are examples of burgeoning racial discourse and of the unrest that characterized relationships between social classes both vertically and horizontally. In Donnelly’s *Caesar’s Column*, as we have mentioned: “the men who once tilled the fields, as their owners, are driven to the cities to swell the cohorts of the miserable, or remain on the land a wretched peasantry to contend for the means of life with vile hordes of Mongolian coolies” (111). Moreover, the presence of large numbers of disenfranchised African-Americans emigrating from the South forces white, urban northerners to be confronted with the failures of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Meanwhile, the traditional “other” of the frontier is rapidly, but also conveniently, becoming a thing of the past; at this point in time the “westward expansion and colonization on the graves of murdered, dispersed, and extinguished native societies” (Trachtenberg “The Incorporation” 760) is *fait accompli*. However, in the wake of emerging global-imperial preoccupations, the U.S.—often reluctant to take their place among the world powers on the basis of

their self-perceived political or moral exceptionality—are forced to look back and question their past of colonial-imperial conquest. If in Jefferson's age the idea of an "Empire of liberty," even within the limits of continental soil, was still mostly theoretical, in this period it has become a reality which now requires practical experimentation to prove its validity. Moreover, new narratives are needed to justify the extension of the frontier abroad.

But what do we mean by empire and/or when does the American age of empire actually begin? This is a complex question as we can situate the beginnings of empire anywhere between the Western discovery of America and the Teddy Roosevelt era depending on our perspective and depending on the definitions we give to the term itself. It is also a question I am not taking into consideration. What I am more interested in are evidences of the self-perception of the United States as an imperial entity within speculative-utopian literature. In other words, I am not attempting to determine when the American empire effectively begins but how these authors prefigure future empires, on which premises (past and present) they base their speculations on and how they retrospectively interpret history through the lens of these imagined utopias. I wish to focus on the self-awareness and critique of empire rather than on the empire itself, and this type of discourse can perhaps be limited, as a conscious phenomenon, to the second half of the nineteenth century.²⁶

²⁶ Even though Jefferson speaks of an "Empire of liberty" and George Washington of a "rising empire," it must be understood that "empire" is being used here in more figurative terms (even if the proverbial shoe does fit) and that there is whole strain of extremely influential political, literary and artistic discourse dedicated exclusively to distinguishing America from the empires of Europe and their cycles of rise, decadence, fall. Taken for granted that we now perceive the Monroe Doctrine (1823) and "Manifest Destiny" as thinly veiled imperial concepts, our discussion focuses on the direct acknowledgements or critiques of empire within the texts we are analyzing, and on a more global than a "local" scale: if the idea of "Manifest Destiny" tells us anything, it is that at this point in time there is the diffuse conviction that the territorial extension of the United States is no less than it should be.

So, what narratives on the origins of empire do the speculative-utopian authors offer? Gilpin, as we have seen, portrays the history of the United States as centering on race, the “Aryan” race: he repeatedly invokes the name of Columbus, credits “Pizarro and Cortez” as having “opened the sources from which portable personal property has exalted itself above fixed and immutable glebe lands” (339) and traces the splendor of the Aryan race back to India and Rome (127); therefore, from Gilpin’s point of view, the road to empire had, perhaps, been taken as far back as the colonial foundations of the country. Mary E. Lease is likeminded in tracing the foundations of her future empire to the discovery of America itself:

When civilization lay prostrate beneath the trampling of barbaric hordes, when the torch of liberty was well nigh extinguished, when greed had strangled trade and commerce, and vice and superstition reigned paramount [...], God, who had guided the children of Israel in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, inspired Columbus to turn the frail prows of his slender bark toward the New World, bearing with him the fortunes of mankind. (Lease)

This passage presents the narrative of Columbus but infused with the puritan foundational myths. This is evident from the use of the biblical imagery, typological prefiguration (“children of Israel”) and the profound sense of destiny. Curiously enough, Gilpin, while never denying the necessity of the frontier and reveling in the glory of the settled West, speaks in defense of Native Americans and denounces their unfair treatment at the hands of the white man’s authority: “It is very wicked that our government, being republican, has ravished republican liberty and rights from the Indian, and reenacted for his race all the odious inequalities and oppressions of feudality” (322). Gilpin does refer to them as “savages” but also seems to admire Native Americans in a style that harks back to Fenimore Cooper and even expresses a sort of self-critique for the terms he is using:

We sometimes divide the human race for purposes of convenience into two general classes, savage and civilized. These, however, are relative and not absolute terms. Absolute savagism could only be where the naked wild man had never yet fashioned a tool to help him in obtaining food or covering. Absolute civilization can never exist, as civilization is a progressive and not a fixed condition. (48).

As stated above, Gilpin's concept of race (and of science) seems to be based more on a Romantic mindset than any recent evolutionary theory, and in this passage he seems to be attempting to reconcile this more spiritual philosophical position with positivistic notions of progress. Stanley Waterloo, in *Armageddon*, seems to display a similar Romantic inspiration in characterizing the foundation of America:

That was the Norseman, one type of him whose ancestors overran the British Isles. There is no chronology in this and that is the man, that is the type of the men who have held the little group of islands they have won, who have sent out, because it was in their sons' blood, groups of people who have seized upon a great part of the world, who peopled Northern America. (91)

However, a more explicit and practical starting point is described in Chapter VIII, entitled "A Path for Empire" (92): this path involves a successful war with Spain. The consequent acquisition of certain territories enables the United States to construct "The Nicaragua Canal" (92) which is literally to become the "Path for Empire." It is obvious how Waterloo's speculations are inspired by actual current events and existing projects of commercial expansion. He adheres to the convention of the period that sees the beginning of the age of Empire with the Spanish-American War, a convention which Twain also seems to adhere to, at least apparently. In justifying the consequent annexation of the Philippines, which was a highly controversial issue, Waterloo almost dismissively states: "we had utilized the

Philippines, because that had become for us a national and international necessity. The Pacific had been bridged; to us belonged the conveniences of the highway from San Francisco to Hongkong; we had taken all we needed out only what we needed" (9).

Imperial ideologies are, therefore, an important and constant component of utopian literature and, perhaps, their development (from the late 1880s to the 1900s) can even be mapped by observing these texts. The events of the Spanish-American War effectively catalyze the clash of ideas regarding the possibility of a global American empire: on the one side, there is an "expansionist" approach to America's future and on the other, a more "isolationist" point of view, one expression of which is the formation of the Anti-imperialist league. However, within the context of speculative-utopian literature, the clash between imperial ideological energies and more "isolationist" qualms dates back at least a decade as demonstrated by Stockton's *The Great War Syndicate*, published in 1889.

The pastoral, often presented in combination with the foundational myths of America, has also been shown as fundamental and ever present within this body of literature. What renders the utopian novel peculiar and unique are the often bizarre and impossible compromises that are made between "machine" and "garden;" these texts are often oxymoronic in their attachment to the past and traditional agrarian ideals while being contemporarily projected into techno-industrial futures. What is also paradoxical is how it is often the "machine" itself that allows for the perfect middle ground; it no longer needs to be the intruder upon utopia that it was to previous generation of authors, but can even be the means to obtain it.

What complicates the two-line representation that I have utilized at the beginning of this chapter is the sheer variety of positions assumed by these authors. The fact that "conservative," agrarian or

pastoral utopias do not necessarily coincide with “isolationist” positions is a demonstration of this: we have seen, for example how Mary E. Lease’s Pan-American “empire of liberty” bases itself on an traditionally agrarian, small plantation system which is nothing new within the American experience. Often those who are firm believers in the benefits of technological progress as the harbingers of social progress may be extremely ambiguous in their attitude towards empire; Bellamy’s briefly mentioned “international council” and “their joint policy toward the more backward races” (194) is evidence of this. We have also seen the important part race and religion play in the construction of these utopias, however, they have been voluntarily excluded from our initial scheme as I have not discussed some important aspects that complete the portrayal of this era: in chapter 3 I will be dealing with new and influential forms of spiritual and sexual exploration that act as counterpart to traditional forms of religious expression and established gender norms. Moreover, in chapter 4 we will be discussing the presence or absence of Southern speculative fiction, the influence of the Civil War on this genre and the contributions of African-American authors as texts that reveal what Northern, white utopias have left out.

IX. *Conclusion: A Connecticut Yankee As Utopian Fiction?*

Where does *A Connecticut Yankee* fit in within the *fin de siècle* anxiety that informs the speculative-utopian texts? The answer is that it doesn’t. Roemer characterizes *A Connecticut Yankee* as both “utopian and anti-utopian” (8) and repeatedly uses it as a foil to the general norm of speculative fiction both in terms of content and rhetoric (30, 49, 69, 79). He describes the novel as an “experiment” of Twain’s which “serves as a tragic and important illustration of the tension and ambivalence underlying the utopian concept of history” (30). Within Twain’s text we find criticisms of the “do-it-yourself virgin land approach” (49) and the figure of Hank “represent[s] an important criticism of the utopian hero” (69). Ultimately, the novel reveals the naïve and misguided nature of the belief that the world or

human nature can be truly changed within the space of a generation or “a million years” for that matter (Twain in Roemer 78).

It does resemble most other works of utopian fiction in its premises though: we have a chronologically or geographically displaced protagonist/narrator who describes the society he visits; the consecutive phases of the protagonist's plan to create his perfect society are also described in detail. However, these premises are developed in a manner that differs greatly from the utopian norm. Hank travels to the past rather than the future and this already represents a radical difference; *A Connecticut Yankee* is more akin to a work of science fiction in its exploration of the theme of temporal displacement: time travel is not used as an excuse to visit a different time or land but becomes one of the objects of inquiry itself. Although *A Connecticut Yankee* focuses social and historical concerns, rather than physical ones, it asks the question “what if a man travelled back in time?” and contemplates the potential consequences of this choice. In doing so, it anticipates the recurring tropes of time travel narratives, among them: that of the time traveler who wants to change the past, and therefore the future and becomes the unwitting agent of destiny in the process. This trope is related to that of the Oedipal self-fulfilling prophecy and the “Cassandra complex” whereby knowledge of the future does not give the power to actually influence the events. The novel also explores the now classic “Grandfather Paradox” which is itself characterized by Oedipal implications.

In *A Connecticut Yankee* the “Grandfather Paradox” is hinted at when Hank mentions his intention to “send out an expedition to America” (228). It is a briefly mentioned idea, but it is very important. This intention reveals the Oedipal nature of the Anglophobic impulses that partially underlie the novel and put them into perspective. Hank's Oedipal-colonial desires are hyperbolic, impossible, unfulfilled and, therefore, ridiculous. Indeed, if we look at the novel in its entirety, we can observe how the Oedipal implications of the “Grandfather paradox” are extended from one man's fate to the entire

course of Western history: not only do we have the Yankee dominating and ultimately destroying his parent culture, but there is also this specific attempt to change history and become the “cultural father” of oneself. This unfulfilled action represents the height of Hank’s time-travelling, narcissistic hubris, however, by virtue of its very lofty height and paradoxical nature it is inherently ridiculous: would America, and therefore the “Yankee,” have become what they are without their original British parentage and eventual rebellion? Isn’t American identity defined through this rebellious action according to Hank’s Whiggish perspective? We see how Twain’s brand of Anglophobia is more tongue-in-cheek than animated by a violently vindictive patriotic spirit as many critics have affirmed (Williams 361-368, Budd 407, Smith 411, Carter 441-442). The juxtaposition of the immense opportunities and repercussions of time travel and the Yankee’s narcissistic, nostalgic and self-destructive need to discover America is a great example of satirical comedy. By juxtaposing Hank’s pettiness with the grandness of history, the former is exposed and ridiculed, the latter is deflated.

Moreover, in science fiction and *A Connecticut Yankee*, the past or future in which the traveler arrives is modifiable and often modified by the arrival of the protagonist. This does not occur with Bellamy’s brand of time travel. The entire plot of Twain’s novel and the questions it raises depend on the potential modifiability of the past landscape. Unlike *Looking Backward*’s Julian West, Hank is not merely a passive observer but an agent. And although utopian literature is not without its men or women of action (none of whom travel to the past), their plans mostly end in success, not failure: the relevance of these protagonists’ stories pivots upon their results in obtaining utopia rather than the premise of time travel. The question the utopian novel asks is “how did it happen” rather than “what would happen and why?”

In most examples of utopian fiction the protagonist travels to the future (or to a distant land) to find either a static, perfect, utopian landscape or, occasionally, a nightmarishly dystopian one; he or she

(or the reader) then learns how society arrived from state: “A” (the reader’s present or comparable society) to state “B” (future or distant land). The reader is either informed of how to reach a *positive* state “B(p),” in the case of a utopia, or avoid degenerating into *negative* state “B(n),” in the case of a dystopia (see figure 2.D below):

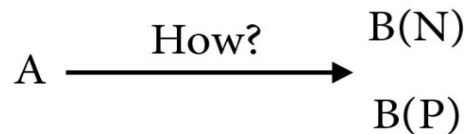


Fig. 2.D: The norm of displacement dynamics in Utopian fiction.

The “B(p)” dynamic applies to *Looking Backward* and most of its imitations. The “B(n)” dynamic applies to what Jean Pfaelzer describes as “conservative utopias” in which it is usually argued that the current state of affairs is the best of possible worlds.²⁷ Neither of these dynamics apply completely to *A Connecticut Yankee* where the world Hank travels to is neither dystopian nor utopian. Indeed, it is presented in both positive and negative terms. As Hank first arrives he describes a “a soft, reposeful summer landscape, as lovely as a dream, and as lonesome as Sunday,” and within this landscape the first person he notices is “a fair slip of a girl [...] with a cataract of golden hair streaming down over her shoulders” wearing “a hoop of flame-red poppies” giving the impression of a “mind at rest, its peace reflected in her innocent face” (13). This imagery is clearly vocative of the pastoral ideal. But,

²⁷ David H. Wheeler’s *Our Industrial Utopia and Its Unhappy Citizens* (1895) and W.W Satterlee’s *Looking Backward and What I Saw* (1890) are examples in case.

having “approached the town” he notices “a wretched cabin,” “brawny men” who “look like animals” and many people wearing an “iron collar” (13), the first hint towards the presence of slavery. This ambivalent dynamic also involves the Arthurian nobility who are both “childlike and innocent” (19), present “noble benignity and purity [...] majesty and greatness” (20) but are also repeatedly referred to as “savages” who are at the vertex of an unjust system.

Moreover, Twain’s Camelot mixes elements from fictional literary universes, ideal landscapes, past eras and present realities. Therefore, it cannot represent any one object of critique. That means we have any number of “Bs” ($B_1, B_2, B_3 \dots B_n$) which are amalgamated with each other. Hank, as an observant protagonist, diagnoses social ills, which is typical of most utopian literature. However, given this amalgamate state of Twain’s Camelot, these ills could pertain to the medieval past, pre-war slave owning South, post-war Reconstruction South or contemporary Gilded Age America. Hank, as the representative of progressive, egalitarian Yankee culture, is also critiqued. Therefore, there is no clear cut distinction between “A” and “B” (positive or negative) that allows for a contrastive comparison in favor of one or the other:

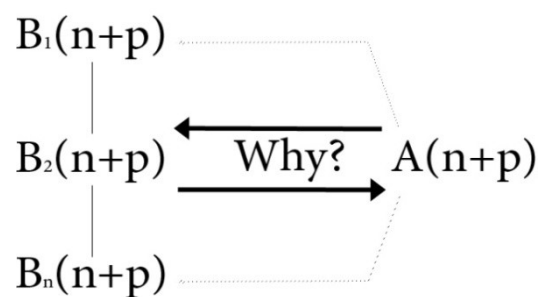


Fig. 2.E: Displacement dynamics in *A Connecticut Yankee*.

Hank's *failure* also represents an extreme and significant departure from utopian fiction; his project spirals into apocalyptic violence and the utopia he wishes to create is simply a replica of the "civilization of the nineteenth century" (51). Therefore, the question of "how" to reach utopia becomes irrelevant because, theoretically, we should already know: Hank's idea of utopia is the reader's present. Moreover, the ultimate state of events in Hank's "utopia," a battlefield of rotting bodies, is in no manner desirable. As in the case of dystopias, the novel could be asking "how to avoid?" But considering that Hank has the benefit of hindsight and still repeats the failures of the Civil War and of Reconstruction (in the form of the "Battle of the Sand-Belt"), this question becomes less relevant than the "why" (see figure 2.E above): "why" does Hank fail, or better, why did *we* fail? "Why" does humanity keep repeating the same mistakes? Is it Hank, an imperfect human being, that fails or his ideals? Hank does possess a number of tragic flaws that are part of the traditional repertory: narcissism, lack of foresight, the *hubris* to play God...etc. Therefore, he is not the selfless messiah figure nor the mere observer we find in the utopian novel. Nor is he completely the tyrant, although he has many of the traits. We may question how much of an allegorical everyman the Yankee actually is: is *A Connecticut Yankee* the story of the development of a tyrannical personality?

From this standpoint the novel is less of an example of utopian/dystopian fiction and more a study of the tragedy of human nature: a story of man's incapability to avoid fate or to avoid repeating the errors of the past. Therefore, the didactic, jeremiadic dimension that is typical of late nineteenth century dystopias is either missing or simply attenuated.²⁸ The novel cannot be defined as a

²⁸ Camelot and Hank's new order cannot be defined as absolute dystopias as both contain both positive and negative elements. Moreover, the dystopias of the period are unequivocally clear in their indictment of specific

“conservative utopia” (as defined by Pfaelzer) for the same reasons: the failure of Hank’s project reveals his lack of his foresight and the limits of the nineteenth century, techno-industrial mindset he represents. In this critique of modern civilization, Twain does not have the semi-primitivist conviction that animates earlier and later works but rather an ambiguous or even dialectic (in a Marxist sense) outlook: nineteenth century industrialization and its by-products are both the best and the worst thing to happen to human civilization.

social or ethnic categories (be it capitalists, the working class, anarchists, Italians or Jews) or specific behaviors (greed, idleness, effeminacy) whereas Twain’s discourse encompasses the whole of humanity.

Chapter 3. Experiments in Gender and Religion in Utopian Fiction

In this chapter I continue my taxonomic overview of utopian fiction by focusing on texts that explore and experiment with gender norms and religion. The “woman question” is a fundamental component of the nineteenth century utopia and is usually accompanied by concerns of a moral nature. Debates on female roles, marriage, family and sexuality are commonplace and there is much bickering among texts. Many speculate on what role religion and the state will have in utopia, particularly concerning the private spheres of family and sexuality: will sexual behavior and family life be regulated according to traditional religious norms? Will they be regulated according to new religious forms? Will they be regulated by bureaucratic entities? Will they be completely self-regulated? Will religion be eschewed completely and substituted by science?

Within these debates we can clearly distinguish a revolutionary current and a reactionary current. The texts within this chapter will be divided and analyzed accordingly. However, this dialectical opposition will not be my sole organizing principle. This chapter also attempts to capture the *variety* of the experiments and the reactions that are part of the utopian “woman question” and its related issues.

On the one hand, there are texts that reinforce traditional concepts of gender and family. These will be referred to as patriarchal or conservative utopias; within this group we find texts that appeal to conventional Christian morals, others that are colonial-sexual conquest fantasies set in exotic lands. On

the other hand, there are texts that experiment with new concepts of family, sexuality and sexual identity. Within this subgroup:

- some believe that gender equality proceeds from the material: they are concerned with economic and urbanistic matters and seek to revolutionize state infrastructure. In these utopias the state has a role in normalizing sexual behavior, often according to scientific principles.
- others are more concerned with the immaterial: sexual mores, matters of religion and morals; these authors seek to change people's "training" first, to quote Twain. These authors' revolutionize traditional religious forms or invent all new ones. This process may involve integrating scientific elements or social theory within preexisting religious norms.

We will analyze these texts pointing to the paradigmatic and idiosyncratic features of each. The paradigmatic features I will point out are: the frequent association between feminism/sexual liberation and spiritualism (and other alternative religious forms), and their peculiar combination of paranormal and scientific discourses.

Coherence with Christian morality is a major concern in the utopian texts that deal with gender issues. As in the case of "garden" and "machine," a compromise between conservative and progressive extremes is the prevalent tendency. Most utopian authors attempt to reconcile new sexual and social constructs with Christian morality: accordingly, their texts contain revolutionary ideas and moralistic disclaimers in equal measure. I will demonstrate how the majority of utopian authors are as ambivalent in matters of gender politics as they are towards "past" and "future," industry and pastoral.

There are also those that reinvent religion or rewrite the bible rather than seeking compromise with pre-existing socio-religious norms. Within this subgroup of texts we find some of the most revolutionary and peculiar ideas in utopian fiction. Female sexuality is explored and the family

deconstructed according to radical ideas we are familiar with. What is curious is that these social experiments often take place on other planets. As a result, in some of the first examples of science fiction depicting extraterrestrial cultures, the main concern of their authors is sex. Victorian sexuality, gender roles and bureaucratic intrusion on the individual sphere are also discussed in *A Connecticut Yankee*. I shall observe how Twain satirizes sexual and gender norms while comparing his novel with texts analyzed in this chapter.

I. *Gender, Sentimentalism and the Martian Sexual Revolution*

The presence of gender issues in the utopian novel derives from a perceived crisis. According to Roemer, in this era of abrupt economic and social change the utopian authors felt that:

even the most sacred retreats, religion and the family, were assailed. John Fiske's popular lectures, the sermons of devout but troubled ministers, and articles in *Arena*, *Forum*, *Atlantic*, *Harper's*, and *Century* were exposing apparent conflicts between religion and science; and divorce rates were rising, which to many signaled the collapse of civilization (5).

The utopian texts propose various solutions. Gender roles, marriage and child rearing become conspicuous concerns in utopia. Most authors believe that these issues can be solved through socio-economical reform (Roemer 128); for others, however, gender and sexuality become the main concern.

Charles J. Bellamy, brother of Edward Bellamy, writes *An Experiment in Marriage. A Romance* (1889), in which "the woman question" is the central concern rather than a marginal one: "Until the relations of the sexes are properly adjusted, we can have no real reform, nor progress" (4). However, Charles Bellamy does not invert the paradigm that sees the personal as proceeding from the material; his solution to the "woman question" hinges upon female employment, resultant economic independence and a socialistic system:

It is the socialistic nature of our settlement which makes a reform in sexual relations possible. Our women are personally independent, as much so as our men. The woman earns with her own hands her equal share of the necessities and luxuries of Grape Valley [the imagined utopian community]. If she marries, it is, therefore, with no mixed motives, but for what she thinks pure love. If she finds she is mistaken, there are no questions of maintenance to be settled [...]. There is nothing but love to keep the husband and wife in Grape Valley together. (23)

“What about the children?” is the question which readers would inevitably ask; the narrator promptly responds by explaining how all children are “wards of the State [who] are cared for at the general nursery and at the schools and colleges where their parents see, visit and enjoy them” (23). Free from the burden of child rearing, the couple is no longer forced to conform to the roles of brute bread-winner and angel of the hearth; the wife “is not forced by imperious maternal duties to neglect to be her husband's sweetheart” (24). The vocabulary used for the discussion of gender issues, here and elsewhere in utopian fiction, is either sentimental or scientific. Charles Bellamy expresses his feminist convictions using the language of sentimentalist popular fiction. This is confirmed when Bellamy's narrator actually encounters and describes one of the women of the “Grape Valley” community:

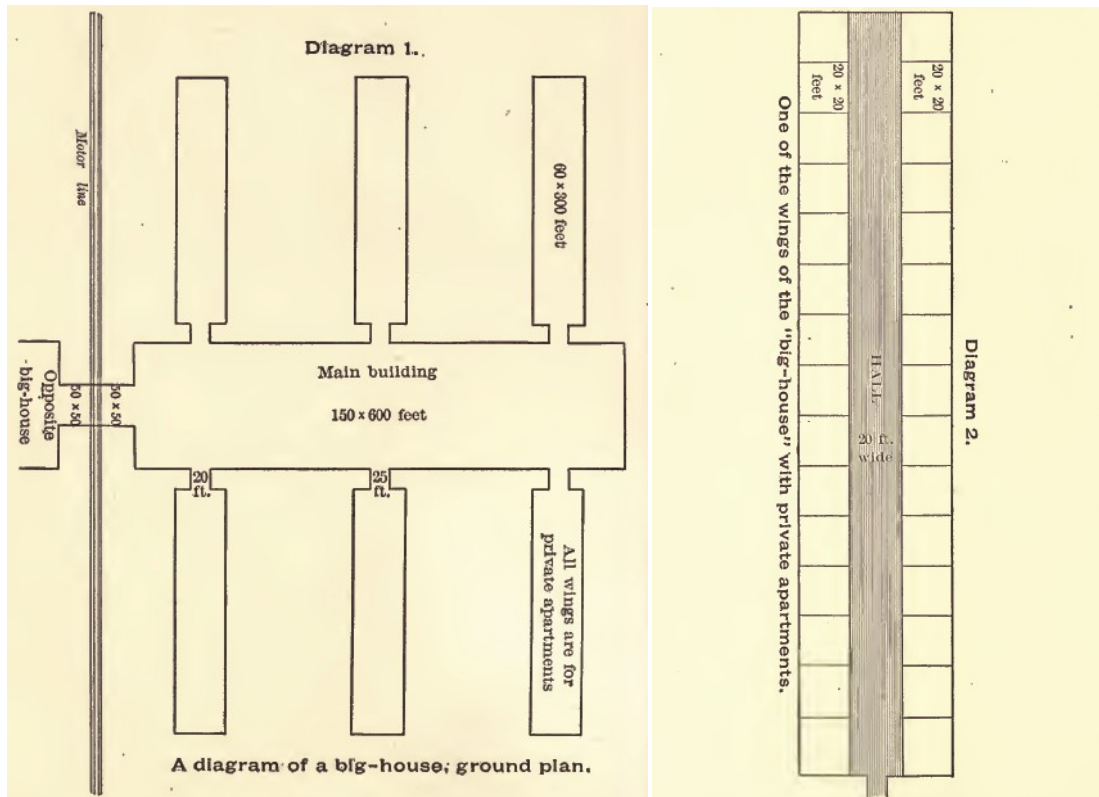
It seemed to me the most lovely face I had ever seen [...]. It was framed and crowned with red gold hair which glistened in the light. Her skin was as fair as a child's, but her gentle and tender blue eyes seemed to bless me as they looked into mine. Then her lips parted in a smile, and I caught her breath, like that of a rose before the morning's dew has left it. (60)

From a rhetoric perspective, Charles Bellamy is interested in renegotiating gender roles: he compares the institution of marriage to slavery (69) and through the voice of the emancipated female character, Kate, attacks the idea of a husband supporting a wife as something endearing: “a grown woman should

not have such silly ideas [...] and a sensible man should be above any such pride as you speak of” (68). However, Bellamy does not renounce sentimentality. The expression of his political views runs parallel to the development of the romantic plot. The driving force and ultimate end behind the construction of the utopian community is “love,” defined in the novel as “passion, physical and spiritual” (69). The plot of the novel unfolds from the protagonist’s marriage to the emancipated Kate to the eventual souring of the relationship due to jealousy and implied betrayal leading to divorce and the discovery of a more mature concept of love; all this expressed in the style of a melodrama mixed with a treatise.

Bellamy is also attempting to reconcile newfangled gender norms with Christian morality. A certain amount of effort is dedicated to explaining how the principles of the Grape Valley community are a development of a profoundly Christian spirit: “But here we have carried the Christian principle so infinitely beyond the example of the rest of society, that, as the greater includes the less, so the spirit overrules the letter” (203). Juxtaposed with the initial premises of the novel, Bellamy’s attitude here seems tentative; this contrast reveals the “conservative” and “progressive” tensions that we have found in the other ideological battlefields of utopian fiction.

Henry Olerich’s *A Cityless and Countryless World* (1893) displays a similar hesitant ambivalence in matters of sexuality. We are shown a Martian utopia where financially independent women “enjoy equal privileges with man in all respects” (35); “family” is a collective, communitarian notion, and “each individual, young and old [man or woman], has a private apartment” (54) in large apartment complexes called “big houses” (see figures 3.A and 3.B below).



Figures 3.A and 3.B: Diagrams representing the “big house” apartment complexes (Olerich, 52, 55).

This private apartment can be temporarily shared by a man and a woman; this happens when the woman desires sexual companionship and/or selects a male of her choosing for procreation, although it is implied that the principal motivation for intercourse is the latter:

the Marsian idea and practice of sex relations is, that whenever, in due time the maternal instinct of procreation prompts a woman to become a mother, she has the full privilege of soliciting the love of any man whose propagative association she desires for that purpose [...]. the *man* sexually co-operates *only* when his assistance is agreeably solicited or accepted. (264)

This relationship is not in any way permanent: “no woman gives herself away to a man for any definite length of time; and no man gives himself to any woman for a definite length of time. Consequently, we have no marriages for life” (265). If the woman gets pregnant, she continues to receive full

compensation from the state, before and after the birth, until she is ready to return to work. While she is pregnant she moves into a larger apartment with a companion of her choice (not necessarily the father and not necessarily a man) to assist her until the baby is born (266); once born, the child soon becomes a ward of the state and is reared in a public nursery. The mother can return to her job.

While this literary experiment in social science is quite ahead of its time, the author is also cautious enough to justify the Martians' liberal attitudes towards sex "by offering an argument that was common in conservative medical and marital manuals of the period" (Roemer 32). It is the theory which identifies the "sexual function" as an "expenditure of vital energy" therefore:

the person who has the sexual function so adjusted that he exercises it only for the special purpose of reproduction, is the most complete person sexually; while he who exercises it most excessively [...] is the most incomplete or licentious person sexually [...]. Those individuals, who are most perfect at birth, and who direct their vital energy most economically in harmony with the so-called laws of life, survive; while the weakly born and the licentious ones must perish in the fierce struggle for existence. Hence, the phenomena of evolution forces the inferior animal to live a chaste life, or perish from the effect of expending unnecessary energy. (Olerich 273-74)

This explanation reconciles Victorian ideals of chastity and manhood with Olerich's deconstruction of the traditional family unit; it characterizes sexual vice as an individual congenital defect rather than a social problem and postulates that evolution will eventually eliminate it. This passage is an excellent example of how the science of the period (in this case evolutionary theory) permeates all aspects of life including the private spheres of family and sex.

Perhaps one of the most peculiar utopian texts is William Windsor's *Loma; A Citizen of Venus* (1897) which announces itself as "consecrated to the emancipation of woman from the enthrallment of Sex Slavery" (dedication page); the Venusian in question travels to earth to save a pregnant single mother (Myrtle), from drowning herself as a result of her being "condemned by orthodox philosophy to social ostracism for a single mistake" (Preface). The novel is fiercely critical of the "false philosophy of [...] religion" (75) and the social mores that derive from it; beyond condemning the negative consequences religion has for women, the author reinvents a Christ that is both more secularized and mystical: Jesus was a mortal man, conceived through natural means and out of wedlock (77) by Mary and the Venusian "Manrolin" and is characterized "as the highest type of a philosopher, and not as a low type of a god" (Preface). Christ's conception is characterized as having taken place under "an extraordinary impulse of Divine goodness" which was "transmitted to Venus through Mercury and the sun" (106). Jesus then faked his death on the cross, "being a master of hypnotism" who was able to "induce [...] in himself the condition of catalepsy" (110). Then he ascended to Venus through the development of "the powers of his mind to such an extent that he was able to evolve sufficient magnetism" and the aide of two Venusian "electricians" and lived there for another 70 years (110-12). Phrenology, animal magnetism, the "code of Gallheim" and the "cosmic germ theory of evolution" (Roemer 202) are the "scientific" bases of this speculative text; it is a compendium of late nineteenth century quackery and a map of that no man's land where the extreme margins of science touch the extreme fringes of religion. The ultimate goal of Loma the Venusian is to educate the unborn child of Myrtle (*in utero* and using "magnetism," 84) so that he can become the messiah of the Venusian way of life. This includes: the free expression of affection and sexuality, particularly amongst young people (224-25), nudism (91) and collecting the largest number of "lovers" and "consorts" possible, under the edict that "the larger the number of lovers, the richer becomes the life" (147). This is all justified

through a radical reinterpretation of the bible: “when Jesus commanded his followers to love one another, he meant exactly what he said” (147).

There are many variations on the themes presented by Bellamy, Olerich and Windsor: Carlyle Petersilea’s *The Discovered Country* (1889) is a spiritualist utopian fantasy that describes a heaven where “the ideal marriage is a Socratic unity of two soul mates” (Roemer 187); in the utopia described by Albert W. Howard’s *The Miltillionaire* (1895) “the young “love naturally” before marriage, and polygamy is permitted” (Roemer 199). In a much different vein is Willis Mitchell’s *The Inhabitants of Mars*. The protagonist travels to the red planet via a hypnotic trance and describes a civilization in which “predigested foods have improved the race, all homes are electrified, and marriage is *regulated* by physical, mental and moral *exams* [emphasis added]” (Roemer 199).

Two relevant patterns emerge from Windsor’s *Loma*, Olerich’s *A Cityless and Countryless World* and Willis Mitchell’s *The Inhabitants of Mars*: in all three texts the human body and behavior is quantified according to “scientific” principles. We also see (although not in Olerich) an interest in the paranormal, mysticism, and religious reform overlapping with free love and feminism. This is not a mere coincidence. Beyond being bourgeois curiosities or diversions, spiritualism, occultism²⁹ and studies in the paranormal are a reaction to traditional religious forms. Many find mainstream

²⁹ The speculative-utopian text that shows the strongest inclination towards the occult is John U. Lloyd’s *Etidorpha or the End of the Earth* (1895). The protagonist, after being visited by a mysterious, magical stranger, begins a long (and confusing) journey towards the secret underground realm of *Etidorpha* through the study of occult sciences and “Eastern metaphysical lore” (59), initiation into an “occult society” (45) and series of elaborate rituals reminiscent of freemason lore; these are not mere plot devices that allow the protagonist to travel in time or space like in *Looking Backward* or *A Connecticut Yankee* but take up the first 98 pages of the book and are described in meticulous detail.

Christianity unresponsive to their needs or causes. This is particularly true for groups that are proponents of radical ideas and find themselves at the margins of the intelligentsia.

The extraterrestrial utopia also appears frequently within this subgroup of texts. This is not a peculiarity of feminist utopian fiction but part of a broader current of late nineteenth-century culture. In the latter half of the late nineteenth century, the idea that Mars and Venus were populated was extremely diffuse to the point that it became a motif within pop culture as the advertisement below (Figure 2.C) shows.



Figure 3.C, an advertisement (dated 1893) from an unnamed Chicago newspaper which captures both the pervasiveness of the idea that Mars was inhabited and the commercial mindset: the Red Planet represents an opportunity for future frontier-like expansion, hence the locomotive to Mars loaded with products to sell. (in Pasachoff).

The origin of this trend lies in the erroneously translated observations of the “canals” of Mars by Astronomer Giovanni Schiaparelli. These observations were enthusiastically received by the American astronomer Percival Lowell. It was Lowell who popularized the idea that both Mars and Venus were inhabited, therefore contributing to the creation of a whole strain of speculative and science fiction literature. The use of other planets as a canvas for exotic imaginings brings us back to the discussion regarding the urgent necessity for new frontiers and virgin lands that we find in “expansionist” utopian fiction. The advertisement above reveals how ingrained the idea of finding a new frontier was even outside of utopian fiction. New frontiers meant new markets and new possibilities: in this illustration we see a railroad to Mars, a train loaded with products to sell; the product is soap, the measure of civilization *par excellence*. The correlation between civilization, expansionism cleanliness and the market economy could not be more clear.

Curiously enough, soap is the product that Hank has his Sandwich board knights peddle around Medieval England. This is described as the first step “toward the civilizing and uplifting of this nation” (78) and the elimination of knight errantry. Indeed, Hank refers to his Sandwich board knights as “missionaries:”

these missionaries would gradually, and without creating suspicion or exciting alarm, introduce a rudimentary cleanliness among the nobility, and from them it would work down to the people, if the priests could be kept quiet. [...] My missionaries were taught to spell out the gilt signs on their Tabards [...] they were to spell out these signs and then explain to the lords and ladies what soap was [...]; he was to stop at no experiment, however desperate, that could convince the nobility that soap was harmless; (78-79)

Hank's foot soldiers of civilization also employ more aggressive tactics than advertising and door-to-door salesmanship. Cleanliness, therefore civilization, is enforced upon saintly "hermits" and other knights errant who have not already been converted: "Whenever my missionaries overcame a knight errant on the road they washed him, and when he got well they swore him to go and get a bulletin-board and disseminate soap and civilization the rest of his days" (79)

Twain also offers a satire of interplanetary colonialism/tourism that involves space travel. In 1874 he publishes a sketch entitled "A Curious Pleasure Excursion" in the New York *Herald*. The sketch is in the form of an advertisement that informs us that Twain and "Mr Barnum" have "leased [a] comet for a term of years" to use for "an extended excursion among the heavenly bodies" (6). In an anticipation of his later critiques of Imperialism, we are informed that "Hostility is not apprehended from any great planet, but we have thought it best to err on the safe side, and therefore provided a proper number of mortars, siege guns and boarding pikes. History shows that small isolated communities, such as the people of remote islands, are prone to be hostile to strangers" (7). Although the advertisement makes it clear that "we shall in no case wantonly offend the people of any star" it also hammers home the point that "we shall promptly resent any injury that may be done us [...]. Although averse to the shedding of blood, we shall still hold this course rigidly and fearlessly [...]. We shall hope to leave a good impression of America behind us [...]. And, at all events, if we cannot inspire love we shall, at least, compel respect for our country wherever we go" (7). The comet will also take missionaries with it to "shed the true light upon all the celestial orbs which, physically aglow, are yet morally in darkness. Sunday schools will be established wherever practicable" (7). The excursion also offers possibilities for those who wish advertise and sell products across the stars and the comet carries both bulletin boards and a "paint brush for [...] use in the constellations" (9). The similarities

between Twain's satire and the 1893 soap advertisement are uncanny. These documents demonstrate that, before it is even fully understood, space becomes the *locus* for colonial and capitalistic projections.

II. *Feminist Utopias and Carnevalesques*

Mary E. Bradley is less sentimental than her male counterparts in portraying her feminist utopia: in the isolated land of *Mizora* (1889) there is no place for men at all. The skilled female chemists that inhabit Mizora have successfully eliminated them along with “coarse features and complexions, stoop shoulders and deformity” (Bradley).³⁰ The protagonist, Vera Zarovitch, enquires as to “how this wonderful change came about” (Bradley). The answer is both hazy and curiously ahead of its time; her host, the “Preceptress,” explains that the women of Mizora: “have passed beyond the boundary of what was once called Natural Law. But, more correctly, we have become mistresses of Nature's peculiar processes. We influence or control them at will” (Bradley). Later, in one of Mizora's laboratories, the protagonist is shown “an exquisitely minute cell in violent motion” which is described as “the germ of *all* Life, be it animal or vegetable, a flower or a human being, it has that one common beginning. We have advanced far enough in Science to control its development” (Bradley).

Mizora is not necessarily loveless—the affection that exists between sisters, mothers and children is expounded upon—but it is sexless. This poses Mizora in stark contrast with William Windsor's sensual Venusian utopia. *Mizora* also attacks sentimental notions of romanticism. After Vera has told the romantic story of two lovers separated by death but who pledge to meet in heaven, one of her Mizorian hosts responds:

³⁰ All quotes from Bradley's *Mizora* are taken from the Project Gutenberg ebook, therefore no page numbers are available.

‘Poor child of superstition,’ said Wauna, sadly. ‘Your belief has something pretty in it, but for your own welfare, and that of your people, you must get rid of it as we have got rid of the offspring of Lust. Our children come to us as welcome guests through portals of the holiest and purest affection. That love which you speak of, I know nothing about. I would not know. It is a degradation which mars your young life and embitters the memories of age. We have advanced beyond it. There is a cruelty in life,’ she added, compassionately, ‘which we must accept with stoicism as the inevitable. Justice to your posterity demands of you the highest and noblest effort of which your intellect is capable.’ (Bradley)

This dry factual style contrasts with the sentimental melodrama we have seen in most works of speculative fiction.

Mizora also contains criticisms of religious platitudes. Vera, shocked by the fact that Mizora is not a Christian civilization and “quoting from [her] memory of religious precepts” states that “no nation [...] can prosper without acknowledging the Christian religion” (Bradley), to which the “Preceptress” responds: “‘How do you account for our long continuance in prosperity and progress, for it is more than a thousand years since we rooted out the last vestige of what you term religion’” (Bradley). *Mizora* presents a world where philosophy and science have eliminated the need for superstition and the metaphysical. The Mizorian concept of history is a summa of nineteenth century positivist thinking and adheres to the Whig view of history:

the farther you go back the deeper you plunge into ignorance and superstition. The more ignorant the human mind, the more abject was its slavery to religion. As history progresses toward a more diffuse education of the masses, the forms, ceremonies and beliefs in religion are continually changing to suit the advancement of intelligence; and when intelligence becomes

universal, they will be renounced altogether. What is true of the history of one people will be true of the history of another. Religions are not necessary to human progress. They are really clogs. (Bradley)

The idea of historical progress that is expressed in this passage is quite the norm within the realm of speculative-utopian fiction. But most utopian authors, including Edward Bellamy, do not completely eschew religion from their utopias; they are generally more anxious to reconcile Christianity and ideas of progress, as the examples of Charles Bellamy and Henry Olerich and Edward Bellamy (in *Equality*) demonstrate. Traditional religious forms are, therefore, not “renounced altogether” but transformed, mollified or reinterpreted. This attitude is well expressed by Hank Morgan who, although of a very secularized mindset, in making his plans for a new world order declares “We *must* have a religion—it goes without saying” (89).

A less contentious and more satirical feminist text than *Mizora* is *Unveiling a Parallel. A Romance* (1893) by Alice I. Jones and Ella Merchant. The male narrator, a prudish Victorian everyman, travels to Mars³¹ and visits two different countries. Complete equality between the sexes has been attained but with differing results for each country: in both, women can vote, they have equal opportunities for employment (also within the world of politics), they can found and run businesses and marriage is a question of choice rather than necessity. In the first country he visits (“Paleveria”), the narrator is shocked to see women indulge in vices such as smoking “pulverized valerian root” (115),

³¹ This feat is accomplished through the use of an “aeroplane” and without any long winded descriptions regarding how: “I shall not weary you with an account of my voyage, since you are more interested in the story of my sojourn on the red planet than in the manner of my getting there” (6). This is curiously self-reflective of the tropes of the genre itself and may be a conscious lampooning of those speculative-utopian texts that revel in technical details and forgetting what the “proper” function of a utopian text should be.

drinking alcohol and engaging the services of “professional ‘lovers’” who are “ignored and despised by the very women who court their caresses” (138-39). At a social gathering the narrator witnesses the (relatively sedate) drunken revelry of a group of women in which “Jokes abounded and jolly little songs were sung,— O, nothing you would take exception to, you know, if they had been men; but women! beautiful, cultivated, charming women, with eyes like stars, with cheeks that matched the dawn, with lips that you would have liked to kiss!” (80). The narrator’s “Marsian” host responds to the narrator’s disapproval by stating: “I admit all you say about the unwholesome influence of such indulgence as wine drinking, late hours, questionable stories and songs [...], but I must apply it to men as well as women” (84). On the topic of male prostitution the narrator is even more indignant and incredulous; his guide responds by explaining how the grooming process begins: “You see, these fellows, when they begin this sort of thing, are mostly mere boys, with the down scarcely started on their chins; in the susceptible, impressionable stage, when a woman's honeyed words—ay, her touch, even—may turn the world upside down to them. The life, of course, has its attractions,—money and luxury; to say nothing of the flattery, which is sweeter” (139).

This carnivalesque reversal of society has a twofold function of exposing and lampooning male vice (as per the satirical tradition) and showing that female equality should not be a question of aping male behaviour. This novel stands out for its humorous and scathing indictment of Victorian patriarchy through the means of “Marsian” ‘outrageousness;’ it also uses the prim and proper gentleman narrator as a mirror of society to expose more subtle instances of ideology; it is often the narrator’s reactions, in his function as the proverbial “straight man,” that is the basis for comedy rather than the reversed world itself. It is similar, in this sense, to *A Connecticut Yankee*: the narrator is himself an object of satirical scrutiny as a representative of his time and place; he is not just a passive vehicle for the story to be told. This feature allows both texts to transcend the self-righteous *gravitas* and homophony that speculative-

utopian fiction indulges in. When the narrator attempts to justify the differences and taboos of his own culture in matters of gender, his well intentioned paternalism is highlighted simply by its stark contrast with such liberal surroundings:

‘Our women are very superior; we treat them more as princesses than as inferiors,—they are angels.’ (52)

‘they hold the very highest place with us; they are honored with chivalrous devotion, cared for with the tenderest consideration. We men are their slaves, in reality, though they call us their lords; we work for them, endure hardships for them, give them all that we can of wealth, luxury, ease. And we defend them from danger and save them every annoyance in our power. They are the queens of our hearts and homes.’ (85)

These remarks are usually scoffed at by the “Marsians:” “‘I beg your pardon!’ said Severnius quickly; ‘I got a wrong impression from your statements. I fear I am very stupid. Are they all angels?’” (53).

The clever satire of the first part of the novel is followed by a fairly conciliatory and conventional second part in which the narrator travels to the Martian land of “Caskia.” Here the citizens are more virtuous than their Paleverian counterparts: “individuals may gratify their respective tastes—or rather, satisfy their higher needs; for their tastes are never fanciful, but always real—as they can afford” (209-10). In Caskia “brotherly love” (267) and Christian-like values are upheld and espoused upon at length (253-66) albeit with the questioning of certain dogmas such as “the Fall of Man” (254). The finale almost seems tacked on to the brilliant satire of the first part; we might explain this difference as a visible sign that the novel has two authoresses (Alice I. Jones and Ella Merchant). The insertion of a conciliatory disclaimer (in the form of a dialogue, a chapter or a finale) that upholds Christian moralities is truly a motif within this group of texts.

III. *Conservative and Patriarchal Utopias*

There are plenty of speculative-utopian novels that are written in reaction to the revolutionary forces which *Mizora* and *Unveiling a Parallel* represent. The complementary opposite to Mary Bradley's *Mizora* is *Toil and Self* (1900) by Edward A. Caswell. It is a collection of fictional lectures given in the year 2400 which describes the road towards utopia. It espouses a logic according to which "the vital law of selfishness" (9) is the driving force behind all human progress: "altruism and philanthropy are merely products of civilization, the outgrowth of intellectual progress and of religious teaching. Without selfishness humanity could not exist" (10). The lecturer, however, sees labor organization as a necessary and "natural result of the enormous power of capitalism" for the simple reason of "self-defense" (14). Unlike *Mizora*, in which selective eugenics are advocated to favor the "Aryan" race, *Toil and Self* sees "miscegenation" as the most effective means of eliminating the "race question" (65). In the novel this resembles colonial *blanqueamiento*:

all laws against miscegenation, as it was called, were soon abrogated. The result was that the number of pure-blooded negroes soon became immensely reduced, and after four generations the race question had died out of sight completely. The Indian retained in a certain degree his natural condition and his individuality, through separation from the white race, for several centuries [...], but by 1950 the white settlers had so hemmed in and overrun the reservations that intermarriage, against which there was no law, soon caused the entire absorption of the red race. At the end of the twentieth century no large number of Indians living together could be found, and very little pure Indian blood existed anywhere (65).

A similar fate awaits the populations of the "uncivilized world" (66) and even China "the last nation to abandon conservatism" is "whipped into line and join[s] the great march of progress, under European

guidance and control” (67). As in *Mizora*, the utopian civilization has discovered the “law which governs the origin of sex” (135); however, in *Toil and Self* knowledge of this law is used to favor the birth of male rather than female offspring: “The result of the publication of this discovery [...] was that during the next half century the proportion of male children to female children born was about twenty to one [...] and the miseries which had been known in the centuries from 1950 to 2200 were disappearing like dew before the morning's sun” (135-36). The “miseries” caused by females are of an economic nature: “Boys provide for themselves at an earlier age, and girls are more of a care” (135); women are also seen as the cause of overpopulation, therefore, the gradual elimination of females and the increase of males would act as a global contraceptive.

If *Toil and Self* and *Mizora* offer only cold, frightening logic, a sentimental variation the theme of an all-female society is Charles E. Niswonger's *The Isle of Feminine*. Despite its setting, this novel reinforces patriarchal ideology. The protagonist (Angelo) is castaway on an Island dominated by immortal women and ruled by a queen named Diana. The arrival of the foreign male outsider disrupts the existing order due to the fact that Diana falls in love with him, causing her to forsake her immortality: “that imperial look of immortality had vanished, and I saw before me a maiden whose face was flushed with the first passionate emotions of womanhood” (213). Before dying in his arms (as per her desire), the queen entrusts her vast riches and the rule of the island to Angelo; however, he is forced to flee for fear of retaliation by the populace. With him escapes a fair handmaiden named Vesta; she renounces house and home to follow Angelo whom she too has fallen in love with. The novel ends with her pledge of loyalty which quotes from the book of Ruth: “Whether we find a grave beneath the waves or ride safely to some harbor of thine own land, I am thine forever. ‘Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God’” (223). We could characterize this novel as a quasi-erotic, colonial adventure romp. It indulges in descriptions

of female beauty and male power fantasies and its attempts at symbolism (the use of the names Diana and Vesta) are very much on the nose.

In a similar anti-feminist vein is Julius Chambers' *"In Sargasso." Missing. A Romance* (1896). Here too the protagonist conquers the love of the female leader (named Fidette) of a ship dwelling, pirate civilization (the Sargassians). Fidette is described in a manner that is very familiar to us at this point: "a creature so startlingly beautiful that I felt my senses leaving me at the apparition. She was a young girl, [...] perfect in figure, with hazel-brown eyes, and her hair, radiant, reddish brown in color, fell round her shoulders like a mantle. Her skin was aglow with health, and her smile disclosed a row of pearly teeth that glistened in the fading sunlight" (50). The protagonist becomes the co-regnant of the Sargassian society where women live in a condition of subjection. He then assists Fidette in her attempts at "ameliorating the condition of woman" as he is a "believer in woman's rights" and sees this primitive society as the perfect locus for an experiment in feminism: "No better field on the face of the sea or land could be found in which to give the woman question a supreme test" (152). In an attempt at misogynistic satire, the narrator then describes the disastrous failure of this experiment due to reasons such as envy, gossip and "Covetousness, a vice that had been unknown among these people previously [...] and some of the women devoted all their time to plotting how they might secure the most highly prized heirlooms that their friends possessed" (159). Female envy is not treated with any seriousness but rather as a petty sentiment that has to do mostly with appearance:

Naturally all statements made by visitors of her own sex pronounced her prim and homely. Already there were rumors of a social revolt against Fidette's right to be called the most beautiful woman in the Community. The gossips asserted that she was a treacherous, despicable girl [...].

[Fidette] had taken to staining her cheeks with the juice of the ogalla berry not to render her more beautiful and attractive to her husband, but to rouse the envy of her own sex. (95, 159)

Fidette, after the disastrous turn of events and having delegated all decision making to her husband, declares amidst a flow of tears: “How much easier and better it is to have somebody to do my thinking for me. I have been a silly woman” (165). As in *The Isle of Feminine*, at the end of the novel Fidette follows her husband back to his hometown of New York to adopt his way of life. These texts are obviously patriarchal; what is more curious is that they present a reprisal of early colonial tales where the exotic female figure (such as the Malinche or Pocahontas) is the embodiment of the virgin land that is conquered/seduced. These texts represent peculiar instances of imperial ideologies being applied to the inner sphere of gender identity. They demonstrate how the two spheres of imperial politics and sexual politics can be interdependent and mutually influential.

Whereas these anti-feminist novels deal with gender issues using either pseudo-scientific logic (*Toil and Self*) or romantic sentimentality (*The Isle* and *In Sargasso*), there are those that invoke morality and religion. William R. Bradshaw’s *The Goddess of Atvatabar* (1892) contains the same theme of sexual conquest that informs the works above: we once again have a beautiful queen (the “Goddess” in question) who falls for the newly arrived American stranger/adventurer and renounces the principles she was previously upholding—in this case a cult of “Celibacy.” The text offers a nightmarish vision of a society without the institution of marriage which is not a concern in *The Isle* and in *In Sargasso*:

at one time in our history the people strove for ideal love and overthrew the ordinary marriage yoke without the restraint of reason. Law and order disappeared and social chaos reigned. The land was filled with the wailings of orphans whose parents had deserted them, and men and

women formed new associates every day. Unbridled license devastated the country. Our lawgivers re-established the law of marriage as being the only law suitable to mankind.
(Bradshaw)

The Goddess also differs from *In Sargasso* and *The Isle* as it invokes religious principles to justify its message. The finale indicates that the previously existing “worship of the human soul” is to be substituted with more theologically minded religious forms due to the conqueror’s influence: “in time I hoped to see the Christian faith rule the souls of those who had so recently worshipped themselves under the guise of Harikar, the universal human soul [...]. the human soul, with its limitations, its narrowness, its impatience, its selfishness, its arrogance, its cruelty, was a very inferior deity” (Bradshaw).

Among the more religious utopian texts there are contrasting opinions regarding the “woman question.” There are those who adopt a conservative stance; W. W. Satterlee, for example, uses hyperbole to lampoon feminist and marriage law activists: “the genius of human happiness must tear every leaf from the accursed book of God, ere man can read the inscription on his heart [...]. Down with marriage laws and divorce courts. Let the parties who make the compact unmake it at will. Hail Liberty! thy march is onward. Hail woman! For thou shalt be free” (85-87). David H. Wheeler sums up utopian societies à la Bellamy very succinctly: “there is no marriage; there is no home; there is no love; there is no God” (256). John W. Roberts reinforces the angel of the hearth stereotype, stating that the “crowning glory” of women “has always been motherhood, and always will be. In that glory, and its accompanying responsibilities, she is the world’s redeemer and benefactor [...]. She is the greatest earthly blessing to us of the other sex” (225-26). Roberts is also extremely wary of those mysterious groups who indulge in sinful activities behind closed doors:

‘Licentiousness runs riot in the secret recesses of Boston [...]. There was a class in your day called ‘free lovers.’ That class of people is not dead nor asleep: There are several secret cliques or societies of them in Boston. One of them is now in session [...]. I have secured telephonic communication with their various assemblies. If you will sit at this instrument you can hear them in secret discussion, not imparting but comparing their particular views’ (164-65)

This image of the voyeuristic moralizer, spying through *technological* means on the secret lives of a licentious elite is something we have become familiar with in our own era.

On the other hand, we have authors such as Charles M. Sheldon (*In His Steps*) whose progressive views on female equality (in the fields of labor, politics and the home) are inspired by a combination of Christian faith and socialist convictions. In a similar vein is John McCoy’s *A Prophetic Romance, Mars to Earth*; here, a Martian visits a future America in which a woman is president and utopia has been obtained through the action of female activists and their beneficial participation in the world of politics: “the country was saved; saved by the earnestness, and courage of women. It was a Herculean task, but the result was a glorious one” (93). McCoy’s inspiration, like Sheldon’s, seems to be religious in nature: “he who lives for his fellow-man is a Christian in the highest sense of the word [...]. To love all things is to have the spirit of Christ” (173). An entire chapter (234-52) is dedicated to the Martian narrator’s visit to Jerusalem in which he more or less sums up the entire story of Jesus’ life and is favorably impressed. However, McCoy also believes that a reformation of Christianity is necessary and suggests that traditional denominations are too dogmatic and intransigent: there is mention of a Christian minister who preaches to an “independent congregation” being that “the church had long been too narrow to hold his thought” (95); and it is explicitly declared that “the bible should be retranslated, rearranged and abridged [...]. We must have a better bible than our fathers had, and we look for a better Heaven than they hoped for” (170-71).

Sheldon and McCoy are representative of a diffuse attitude among progressive Christian utopians who advocate reform while remaining within the furrow of their religious ethos. This is true also for Edward Bellamy. After *Looking Backward* the author received both high praise and severe criticism; one of the various criticisms was that religion played too small a part in the founding and everyday life of his utopia.³² Bellamy's *Equality* (1897) was a response to these criticisms (Roemer 201); he includes the fact that the reform movement described in *Looking Backward* was accompanied, if not inspired by, "The Great Revival." This is characterized as:

a tide of enthusiasm for the social, not the personal, salvation, and for the establishment in brotherly love of the kingdom of God on earth which Christ bade men hope and work for. It was the general awakening of the people of America in the closing years of the last century to the profoundly ethical and truly religious character and claims of the movement for an industrial system which should guarantee the economic equality of all the people. (340)

Therefore, religion was not a reason for particular contention among the majority of utopian authors. They were mostly Christian and agreed that utopia did not exclude religious faith; any bickering among texts is a question of zeal (Satterlee and J.W Roberts for example) versus a more relaxed attitude (Bellamy, Howells etc.) or of conservative authors painting all reform movements with the same brush: they associate sedate Bellamyesque utopianism with godless, terroristic anarchism (in Satterlee) or proto-Orwellian dystopian visions (in D. Hilton).

³² Just to show how relevant "bourgeois comfort[s]" (Jameson 12) are in the conception of these utopian worlds, Bellamy imagines how the vast majority of potential future worshippers will simply settle in their "easy chair[s]", within their own domestic environment and tune in to listen to a sermon through the state owned wire network (382).

The utopian authors are preoccupied with including new concepts of female identity, sexuality and family within a Christian ethos. They demonstrate show the same ambivalence that characterizes their attitude towards industrialization. Excluding the more polarized feminist and patriarchal opposites, the middle ground—best represented by Edward Bellamy³³— is constituted by forward-thinking reformers, that challenge the concept of marriage as a “business arrangement between a featherheaded home-beauty and a money-making beast” (Roemer 126) but only to a certain degree. According to Roemer: “depriving the family of its economic function and emancipating woman [...] were two of the most radical aspects of the utopian literature [however] the new woman was still *primarily defined in relation to her children and husband*. Two of the major results of her liberation were that she would be free to be an ideal mother and an ideal wife” (130). This attitude is consistent and comparable with that same ambivalence we have seen to be operating within the utopian authors’ treatment of economic and political issues (pastoral/progress, empire/isolation). It is an outlook towards gender roles that “simultaneously [breaks] away from and [clings] to the conventional concept of the family” (Roemer 130).

IV. *Sandy and “Hello-Girls” in A Connecticut Yankee*

From a materialist perspective, gender roles and traditional notions of sexuality are challenged due to the possibilities of financial emancipation that industrialized society offers. Most utopian authors are well aware of this and in analyzing these texts we have seen how questions of gender and sexuality are

³³ In *Looking Backward* for example, women are economically independent, however, career advancement is dependent upon having a family: “so far is marriage from being an interference with a woman's career that the higher positions in the feminine army of industry are intrusted [sic] only to women who have been both ,wives and mothers, as they alone fully represent their sex” (365).

inevitably linked to the economic and technological sphere. In *A Connecticut Yankee* this connection is indirectly referenced through Hank's infatuation with Puss Flanagan, the telephone operator or "Hello-girl," from his own time. When explaining to Sandy (his future wife) what a Hello-girl is, he responds: "it's a new kind of girl; they don't have them here one often speaks sharply to them when they are not the least in fault, and he can't get over feeling sorry for it [...], it's such shabby mean conduct and so unprovoked; the fact is, no gentleman ever does it—though I—well, I myself, if I've got to confess—" (73). Hank's statement that the Hello-girl is of "a new kind" which "they don't have [...]" here is clearly indicative of a model of femininity that (he believes) Sandy cannot comprehend; and not merely for the obvious reason that telephones do not exist in Camelot. As described by Seth Lerer: "Hello-girls were not simply operators in a new technology. They stood at the nexus of desire and decorum in the 1880s, figures of public journalistic criticism and private domestic dispute. The hello-girl eroticizes feminine vocality, and Hank's stuttering allusion cracks a fissure in the fabric of accepted social life" (476).

The Arthurian women themselves are not stereotypes of Victorian (or medieval) feminine propriety; in fact, the uptight, bourgeois Hank is often shocked or intimidated by their forward or instinctual behavior. During his first encounter with King Arthur's court, he is offended by the "indecent" (26) use of language of both the men and the women: "many of the terms used in the most matter-of-fact way by this great assemblage of the first ladies and gentlemen in the land would have made a Comanche blush. Indelicacy is too mild a term to convey the idea" (26).³⁴ Hank's overall

³⁴ Moreover, As he is something of curiosity due to his strange clothing, he is stripped naked for the entertainment of the court (at this point he is still a prisoner): "I was the only embarrassed person there. Everybody discussed me [...]. Queen Guenever was as naïvely interested as the rest, and said she had never seen

judgement of the Arthurians' behaviour is a qualitative (and historically chauvinistic) one. He declares that "the *real* lady and *real* gentleman [emphasis added]" are a product of "our own nineteenth century" (26). His pronouncements on their sexual mores are quite disparaging: "the fact is, it is just a sort of polished-up court of Comanches, and there isn't a squaw in it who doesn't stand ready at the dropping of a hat to desert to the buck with the biggest string of scalps at his belt" (73-74).³⁵

Alisande, or Sandy, is the Arthurian woman with which Hank interacts the most. They eventually get married but this romantic arc does not conform to the dynamics of colonial-sexual conquest typical of patriarchal utopias. Sandy often acts as foil to Hank's presumption, invalidates his power, saves him from sticky situations and it is she who conquers Hank rather than the opposite. During their first encounter, Hank has already been invested with his role of "Boss" and has decided to investigate one of the many requests for help that are brought to the attention of the Round Table. These usually concern "princesses" being held as captives in "vast and gloomy castle[s]" by some type of "lawless scoundrel, usually a giant" (53). Hank is critical of the fact that no "credentials" are asked of the "tramps" who arrive at the castle with embellished "novelette[s]" that have the knights "jumping for the chance" (53) to take on the quest. In his interview with Sandy his conduct is like that of a bureaucrat or a policeman; in juxtaposing it with Sandy's flowery Malorianisms, Twain's intent is parodic towards Malory, satirical towards Hank and nineteenth century positivist culture:

anybody with legs just like mine before" (26). The Queen is also guilty of inappropriate behaviour, according to Hank, when she "blush[es] and smile[s], and look[s] embarrassed and happy, and fling[s] furtive glances" towards Sir Launcelot that "would have got him shot in Arkansas, to a dead certainty" (21).

³⁵ There is also an iconoclastic intent in this pronouncement and there are multiple objects of satire: Chivalric literary culture, the Aristocracy as a class and the Victorian fascination with medieval culture.

“I’m obliged to ask you a few questions; just answer up fair and square [...].

Where do you live, when you are at home?”

“In the land of Moder, fair sir.”

“Land of Moder. I don’t remember hearing of it before. Parents living?”

“As to that, I know not if they be yet on live [...].”

“Your Name, please?”

“I hight the Demoiselle Alisande la Carteloise, an it please you.”

“Do you know anybody here who can identify you?”

“That were not likely, fair lord, I being come hither now for the first time” (54)

It is here that communication begins to break down as Hank requires “letters [...] documents [...] proofs” of the fact that Sandy is “trustworthy and truthful” (54).³⁶ Sandy responds to Hank’s request for external, third party “proofs” by stating “Have I not a tongue, and cannot I say all that myself?” (54). This prompts Hank to impose upon the woman his notions of epistemological hierarchy by which her word is not as authoritative as “somebody else’s” (54). However, he is unsuccessful. Sandy simply

³⁶ Hank’s request, as early as chapter XI, subtly reveals “his hermeneutic bias in favor of the referentiality of signs” (Morris, “The Deconstruction” 168) and the limits of his philosophy. His overreliance on supposedly empirical evidences of “truth” such as a written texts, issued by an authority of some sort that he himself does not know or see, is a critique of the modern society which Hank represents; his faith in this disembodied authority—equally as ungrounded as the trust the Arthurians hold in the word of the abovementioned “tramps”—reflects our own reliance upon mediatic texts and “proofs” that are the emanation of our intangible power structures or Lacanian “big Others.”

remains baffled and Hank stutters in frustration: “why, great Scott, can’t you understand a little thing like that? [...] why do you look so innocent and idiotic!” (54).

When asked about the whereabouts of the castle “with forty-five princesses in it, and three ogres at the head of it” Sandy responds that it lies at “many leagues” of distance; however when pressed by Hank about “How many” leagues exactly and in what direction, Sandy answers according to her own concept of distance and direction:

‘Ah, fair sir, it were woundily hard to tell, they are so many, and do so lap the one upon the other, and being made all in the same image and tinted with the same color, one may not know the one league from its fellow, nor how to count them except they be taken apart [...]. Ah, please you sir, it hath no direction from here; by reason that the road lieth not straight, but turneth evermore; wherefore the direction of its place abideth not, but is some time under the one sky and anon under another [...].’ (55)

As indicated by this passage, Sandy’s notion of space is experiential rather than based on intangible, artificial units of measurement. She considers a “league” something to be distinguished by a particular “image” or “color;” direction as something dependent on where one stands; her concept of space is determined by sensorial perception rather than a priori categories, geographical coordinates or textual abstractions such as maps. We might understand this, Hank absolutely doesn’t. He dismisses Sandy as an idiot when it is actually he who is the butt of the humor.

In his romantic relationship with Sandy he shows an equal level of cluelessness. After she has convinced him to accept the quest, Hank enquires into the practical matters (as is his wont) of going about it; first and foremost, there is the matter of finding the castle in question without a map, to which Clarence responds:

‘La, sweet your worship, one may lightly answer that, I ween. She will go with thee. They always do. She will ride with thee.’

‘Ride with me? Nonsense!’

‘But of a truth she will. She will ride with thee. Thou shalt see.’

‘What? She browse around the hills and scour the woods with me—alone—and I as good as engaged to be married? Why, it's scandalous. Think how it would look.’ (56)

Indeed, when the two eventually tie the knot it is more due to Hank’s sense of propriety than Sandy’s. She seems perfectly content with being an unmarried couple. Moreover, it is she who actively seeks him out as a partner rather than the reverse: “she had hunted Britain over for me; had found me at the hanging-bout outside of London, and had straightway resumed her old place at my side in the placidest way and as of right. I was a New Englander, and in my opinion this sort of partnership would compromise her, sooner or later. She couldn't see how, but I cut argument short and we had a wedding” (233). Sandy’s instinctual and open behaviour may remind us of the merry ladies, “without the least affectation of shyness” (19), that inhabit William Morris’ medievalist utopia in contrast with their “upholstered” Victorian counterparts (19). Sandy’s behavior is one example of how Twain partially adheres to the medievalist trend of the era which he lampoons in other parts of the novel. This is only one of the many ambivalent tendencies that the text presents.³⁷

³⁷ Despite Twain’s lingering reputation as an author who does not escape the trappings of the “genteel tradition” there are various proofs of the opposite. On the matter of female sexuality, for example, if we take into consideration the stuttering Hank talking bashfully about a eroticized hello-girl, it would do well to remember that Hank Morgan is not Mark Twain. Hank is also the object of Twain’s satire. The humor of the situation

V. *New Religious Forms and Twain's Telepathic-Dream Narratives*

In feminist utopias we find both a challenge to religious morality and conciliatory attitudes. Most authors advocate for a pondered religious reform, others, like Mary E. Bradley in *Mizora*, eliminate religion completely; however, this is the most uncommon approach. Others still turn to new religious forms which they either espouse completely or integrate within pre-existing Christian mythology. This is the case of William Windsor's *Loma; A Citizen of Venus* with its Venusian Jesus and its bizarre mix of libertinism, esoterism and pseudo-science.

There are also various spiritualist novels or novels which show an interest in the paranormal; in these texts, utopia is described through communication with a spirit or via a hypnotic trance as in Carlyle Petersilea's *The Discovered Country* (1889) and Willis Mitchell's *The Inhabitants of Mars*

derives from both reader and author being complicity conscious of Hank's prudery while he himself is oblivious. In *Letters from the Earth* the narrator, Satan, elaborates at length upon human misconceptions about their own sexuality and the "solemn joys of fornication" (39). Female sexuality in particular is dealt with using a barrage of double-entendres and the narrator contrasts the "law of God" (natural law) and man's repressive perversion of it:

the law of God, as quite plainly expressed in man's construction, is this: During your entire life you shall be under inflexible limits and restrictions, sexually. During twenty-three days in every month [...] from the time a woman is seven years old till she dies of old age, she is ready for action, and competent. As competent as the candlestick is to receive the candle: Competent every day, competent every night. Also, she wants that candle—yearns for it, longs for it, hankers after it, as commanded by the law of God in her heart [...]. [...] she has the high privilege of unlimited adultery [...]. What becomes of this high privilege? Does she live in the free enjoyment of it? No. Nowhere in the whole world. She is robbed of it everywhere. (41)

Satan goes on to suggest that perhaps a better and more logical arrangement for all parties involved would be for women to have a harem of multiple partners (41-42) but that man, using faulty logic and religion, restricts woman to one man. Although Twain uses hyperbole and perhaps falls into goliardic humour a challenge to existing gender roles and notions of sexuality is present behind the comedic façade.

respectively. The crisis of traditional religious values creates an environment that allows for new spiritual possibilities and explorations: from the pseudoscientific—wherein we have the attempt to quantify and measure paranormal phenomena—to the outright esoteric regions where art meets magic. By the end of the century Spiritualism had more than eight million estimated followers in the United States and Britain (“Three Forms”) and spirit rapping and séances had become a form of entertainment. In a curious turn of events, those who gravitated towards Spiritualism, from the mid-nineteenth century onward, were often abolitionists (before the Civil War) or advocates of Women’s rights who perhaps found the attitude of their traditional churches unresponsive to their causes (Braude 296).

Mary Baker Eddy’s Christian Science can, perhaps, be seen as both a “conservative” and a “revolutionary” response to the encroachment of science and technology on the human body. The movement rapidly gains notoriety and followers and is the subject of Twain’s speculative satire “The Secret History of Eddypus” (1901 circa). More exclusive and esoteric, but also perhaps more influential on the events of the next century, is the Theosophical society founded by Helena Blavatsky, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott and William Quan Judge in New York (1875). In *The Secret Doctrine* (1888) Blavatsky proposes an “Intelligent as opposed to mechanical” (779) cosmic evolutionary theory which poses the emphasis on the spiritual rather than physical development of mankind; Blavatsky also prophesizes the arrival of a messianic “Maitreya” (412) who is to guide humanity towards a new stage of spiritual evolution. Thus, Theosophy presents itself as a re-elaboration, under a new exotic guise, of the traditional religious forms that were in crisis; moreover, it is paradigmatic in its attempt to integrate evolutionary theory within its repurposed Christian doctrines—with heavy aesthetic borrowings from ancient paganism and Buddhism. Blavatsky demonstrates how evolutionary theory is perceived more as a metanarrative than as a scientific theory proper. The complete title of Blavatsky’s book itself, *The Secret Doctrine: the Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy*, expresses a will to unite realities

and narratives that were in complete contrast, substituting a multiplicity of diverging opinions with one that was conveniently all-encompassing. Theosophy, therefore, becomes representative of the various efforts (both religious and non) to create a universal order or discover a *fil rouge* to reality in the attempt to stave off the chaos of the era.

These unconventional explorations of spirituality and the human mind do not appear in the more prominent examples of utopian fiction. Only the material and social aspects of religion are addressed in texts such as *Looking Backward*. However, the *fin de siècle* subculture of the mystical and the paranormal plays an important part in quite a few lesser known utopian fictions. In Petersilea's *The Discovered Country* (1890), Amos Fiske's *Beyond the Bourn* (1891), Henry Athey's and A. H. Bowers' *With Gyves of Gold* (1898) out-of-body experiences or trances are the means to travel to utopia, sometimes as a plot device, often as sign of a religious conviction. In John Uri Lloyd's *Etidorhpa* (1895), travel to utopia is obtained through complex rituals and initiation into an esoteric, freemason-style secret society. In Doughty F. Worchester's *Mirrikh; or A Woman from Mars* and William Harben's "In the Year Ten Thousand" (1892) utopia is the result of the people having developed telepathic faculties so that lying and deceit become impossible.

It is the down to earth, practical Twain that also shows a certain curiosity towards the paranormal and the occult. According to Charles Beach "from 1884 to 1902 Twain was a member of the English Society for Psychical Research" (551). He did attend more than one séance during his life and he and his wife even attempted to contact their daughter Olivia after she had passed away in 1896 (Beach 551). Twain apparently had an "extensive knowledge of palmistry" and even "considered hypnotism a valid option in his attempts to find a cure for Jean Clemen's epilepsy, even though as a young man he had discovered the fraudulent nature of some mesmerists" (Beach 552). He remained more or less skeptic of Spiritualism but many of his works present a fascination with the idea of

telepathy—or as he calls it “mental telegraphy”—and the paranormal nature of dreams: as a means of seeing into the future, exploring the past and visiting alternate realities. Twain believed that he had correctly predicted his brother Henry’s death in 1858 via a dream in which he “had seen Henry a corpse” lying in “a metallic burial case [...] dressed in a suit of my clothing, and on his breast lay a great bouquet of flowers, mainly white roses, with a red rose in the centre” (*My Autobiography* 165). Twain affirms that these and other details of the dream wake and the actual wake correspond. In the articles “Mental Telegraphy” (1891) and “Metal Telegraphy Again” (1895) published in *Harper’s*, Twain describes various examples of coincidences and serendipity that he sees as possible examples of telepathic communication. According to Charles Beach, in “Mental Telegraphy” Twain suggests “that mental telepathy involves actual extrasensory powers and not just coincidences” (552). He uses the term “mental telegraphy” to describe the phenomenon by which:

one human mind (still inhabiting the flesh) can communicate with another, over any sort of a distance, and without any artificial preparation of ‘sympathetic conditions’ to act as a transmitting agent. I suppose that when the sympathetic conditions happen to exist the two minds communicate with each other, and that otherwise they don’t; and I suppose that if the sympathetic conditions could be kept up right along, the two minds would continue to correspond without limit as to time. (“Mental Telegraphy” 102)

Twain’s use of the term “mental telegraphy,” as opposed to telepathy or clairvoyance, shows how he is ambivalent even with regard to the paranormal. He is unwilling to renounce the scientific and the material and even hopes that in the future some machine will be developed to allow telepathic communication, rendering the telegraph obsolete:

This age does seem to have exhausted invention nearly; still, it has one important contract on its hands yet—the invention of the *phrenophone*; that is to say, a method whereby the communicating of mind with mind may be brought under command and reduced to certainty and system. The telegraph and the telephone are going to become too slow and wordy for our needs. We must have the thought itself shot into our minds from a distance; then, if we need to put it into words, we can do that tedious work at our leisure. (105-06)

Twain also speaks of dreams as a means to access a state of perception unencumbered by the limits of our physical bodies. In other words, dreams are not an illusion but a heightened point of view. In “My Platonic Sweetheart” (1912) he describes an oneiric double-life which he has lived intermittently in recurring dreams throughout his real life. He has never actually met the “sweetheart” in question. Her name is “Alice” or “Agnes” and she never ages; Twain himself is named “George” (14) and he too is always seventeen in this dream world. Through dreams, Twain has access to heightened memory:

my dream-artist can draw anything, and do it perfectly; he can paint with all the colors and all the shades, and do it with delicacy and truth; he can place before me vivid images of palaces, cities, hamlets, hovels, mountains, valleys, lakes, skies, glowing in sunlight or moonlight, or veiled in driving gusts of snow or rain, and he can set before me people who are intensely alive, and who feel, and express their feelings in their faces, and who also talk and laugh, sing and swear. And when I wake I can shut my eyes and bring back those people, and the scenery and the buildings; and not only in general view, but often in nice detail. (19)

Therefore, the oniric world is a source of inspiration which Twain can draw from. Both in this piece and in “Mental Telegraphy” he associates dreams and telepathy with the creative act of writing. In

“Mental Telegraphy” he explains how both he and another author “William H. Wright” had the exact same idea for a book, from the subject matter to the title:

I could not doubt—there was no tenable reason for doubting—that Mr. Wright's mind and mine had been in close and crystal-clear communication with each other across three thousand miles of mountain and desert on the morning of the 2d of March. I did not consider that both minds originated that succession of ideas, but that one mind originated them, and simply telegraphed them to the other. I was curious to know which brain was the telegrapher and which the receiver [...]. (100)

These same dynamics of telepathic communication apply to many other cases within the history of literature. Twain tells us of similar occurrences happening to William Howells, Louisa May Alcott (101), Voltaire and Samuel Johnson (106). The same thing occurs in the world of science and Twain quotes the famous “Darwin-and-Wallace ‘coincidence’” (106) and the example of Leverrier, Somerville and Adams (107). We get the impression of a telepathic collective subconscious, a shared mind-pool from which we draw for inspiration.

Twain's curiosity regarding paranormal phenomena, together with his well documented enthusiasm for new scientific discoveries and inventions, are major influences on his writing particularly during the second phase of his career; *A Connecticut Yankee* represents the work in which Twain's “mysticism” and his fascination with technology overlap with his habitual satirical verve. The novel itself seems to have been originated by Twain's “Dream of being a knight errant in armor in the middle ages” (*Mark Twain's Notebooks* 3:78). *A Connecticut Yankee* can be considered as a quasi-hypnotic dream narrative: Hank's blow to the head is the catalyst for him to visit the *amalgam* of historical and cultural influences, past and present, that make up Twain's Camelot. The blow and

resulting “dream” are the premise for a horizontal metalepsis into a literary “Malory/Scott land,” as well as, an exploration of the past and of the tensions that engender utopian fiction.

One of the many elements Twain adds to the amalgam in question are remembrances of pre-War Southern society. Through these means Twain is able to analyze the causes and consequences of the War itself. This separates *A Connecticut Yankee* from the norm of utopian fiction which treats the Civil War as just another successful step in the march of progress. Twain, on the other hand, sees it as the benchmark example of the successes and failures of progress, or, a demonstration of how progress itself is but an illusion. He also sees the Civil War as a historical event that has yet to be properly unraveled and understood. Twain transposes his ongoing analysis of pre-war South to the dream realm of Camelot: the fictional world becomes the *locus* in which to explore unresolved issues concerning slavery, the Civil War and Reconstruction. These events figure prominently in the novel and become the foil to Hank’s Whiggish/positivistic rhetoric and of the utopian imaginings of a successive generation of writers. Within the context of Civil War memory and in relation to speculative-utopian texts, *A Connecticut Yankee* presents itself as a “reactionary” text: it counters certain emerging tendencies of its time with sobering reminders of past horrors and present evidences of failure. In the next chapters this relationship between the Civil War, utopian fiction and *A Connecticut Yankee* will be analyzed.

Chapter 4. African-American Utopian Fiction and The South

In the utopian texts by white, Northern authors, the South does not figure often. Slavery and its ongoing consequences are barely mentioned. African-Americans are either absent from utopia or a cause for concern. Conversely, the South and the legacy of slavery are central to the speculative-utopian texts produced by African-American authors in the late nineteenth century. This is also true of Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee*.

The representative works of Southern, African-American utopian fiction I have selected are Sutton E. Griggs's *Imperium in Imperio* (1899) and Edward A. Johnson's *Light Ahead for the Negro* (1904).³⁸ The objective of this chapter is to demonstrate the affinity between these authors and Mark Twain;³⁹ Twain is pessimistic and anti-utopian and the African-American authors I will discuss are of a similar mind: they focus on the diagnostic component of the utopian form rather than the

³⁸ Another prominent example of African-American utopian fiction is Pauline Hopkins' *Of One Blood* (1902-1903). However, I have limited my selection on the basis of geographical provenience and commonality of themes.

³⁹ This kinship remains relative in that most of Twain's most incisive material is fragmentary or remains unpublished. Moreover, in his representations of the South, particularly in *A Connecticut Yankee*, Twain maintains a dialogic, even ambivalent perspective whereby his South-Camelot is a paradoxical amalgam of both dystopian and utopian elements.

escapist one and their portraits of the era are damning: the South is a dystopian landscape ruled by injustice, racism and mob violence, the North is distant, indifferent and/or hypocritical.

The affinity between Griggs, Johnson and Twain lies in their representations of the South and their denunciation of the failures of Reconstruction. My first step will be to analyze the different strategies these authors use to describe the South. Like most utopian authors, Griggs imitates popular fiction, specifically, the “tragic mulatto” melodrama. And being a minister, his novel is full of biblical imagery and parables. Johnson, on the other hand, was a politician. He adheres to certain Bellamy-esque tropes and uses newspaper articles to validate his claims. His novel is more similar to a treatise than a drama. Twain is more indirect and uses metaphors to talk about the South and Reconstruction, however, his criticism is no less effective.

Griggs, Johnson and Twain diagnose a nationwide acquiescence or complicity in the continuation of slavery. All three authors also present associations between slavery, institutionalized racism in the U.S. and imperialism that are absent from Northern utopian fiction. I will demonstrate how, for these African-American authors, the issue of empire is inseparable from domestic racism. Moreover, I shall observe how these works of African-American fiction are not immune to those very ideologies of empire that they critique.

Imperium and *Light Ahead*—together with *A Connecticut Yankee*—act as a counterpoint to the norm of Northern utopian fiction. They offer an alternative diagnosis on the ills of the present that takes into account the legacy of slavery and the unfinished work of Reconstruction. The main objective of these texts is to ‘remind’ the reader of past failures within the midst of texts that forget, escape or rewrite them.

The main contrast between Northern, white utopian fiction and Southern, black utopian fiction is the *locus* of their respective social diagnoses. Northern utopias mostly ignore the South and its problems; they do not mention institutionalized racism, mob violence and lynching and the presence of African-Americans is less than scarce. As we had observed in previous chapters, when the question of race is not ignored (as it is in Bellamy) it is generally dealt with in blatantly supremacist terms. African-American utopian fiction deals with the problems of the South and the failures of Reconstruction with a sense of urgency and a denunciatory tone: these texts do not ask “what would it be like if...?” but declare “this is what it is like. This must stop.” Like Twain, these authors mix more abstract social musings with a great deal of realism: actual bodies suffering, actual people dying, real experiences taken from current events or historical record. These details obviously clash with the adventurous, cloak and dagger dystopianism of Donnelly’s *Caesar’s Column*; they also contrast with Bellamy’s blasé mentions of the working classes which “had quite suddenly and very generally become infected with a profound discontent with their condition” and delay construction of Julian West’s dream house “postponing his wedded bliss” (25).

Speculative-utopian works by African-American authors have been generally ignored until recently. This has had an influence on practical matters such as gaining access to (perishable) texts that were never made part of any canon or archive. In his essay “Racism and Science Fiction” Samuel R. Delany alludes to this problem by underlying the fact that he is often referred to “for better or for worse” and quite inaccurately as: “the first African-American science fiction writer [...]. But I wear that originary label as uneasily as any writer has worn the label of science fiction itself” (Delany). Beyond addressing the historically racial bias his “originary label” is an indication of, Delany points to the aesthetic and academic bias against speculative and science fiction literature. Said biases only add to various other difficulties when it comes to the availability of documents. The lack of prestige of various

dime and pulp novels, the fact that many of them are lost forever and that it is, at this point, difficult to ascertain their authorship are the reasons Jess Nevins points to in stating that: “a fully accurate history of black speculative fiction [...] would be impossible to write” (Nevins). The works of African-American speculative fiction that we do know of are profoundly influenced by the racial discourse of the era; and like all works of speculative-utopian fiction, they have a lot to say about the fears and aspirations of their authors.

I. *The Mulatto Melodrama in Dystopian representations of the South*

Two representative (and contrasting) texts are Sutton E. Griggs *Imperium in Imperio* (1899) and Edward Johnson's, Bellamy inspired, *Light Ahead for the Negro* (1904).⁴⁰ The latter follows more the example of *Looking Forward*: a time travelling narrator travels to and describes a peaceful utopian future; Griggs paints a more pessimistic picture set entirely in a fictional present which leads towards a potentially tragic future. In *Imperium in Imperio* it is suggested that African-Americans must obtain their own emancipation through the establishment of a “secret, ritualistic organization” (Roemer 75) and ultimately of a separate and independent “black” state with its own form of government. The specter of social unrest and bloody revolution permeates the entire text and the novel ends “with warnings about subterranean smoulderings similar to the cataclysmic danger signals that pervade the utopian literature” (Roemer 75). Both novels offer an explicit analysis of the specific problems faced by the black population, which is almost totally absent from all other works of utopian fiction, together with in-depth discussions of the South and the failures of Reconstruction. Violence, both as a future

⁴⁰ Another prominent example of African-American utopian fiction that is relevant to these topics is Pauline Hopkins' *Of One Blood* (1902-1903).

threat to white society and as part of everyday life for African-Americans, is ever present and described in detail and emotional involvement by Griggs in particular. Therefore, both *Imperium* and *Light Ahead* represent a counter-cultural response to the utopian literature of the period in that they highlight a series of issues that were overwhelmingly ignored.

The particularity of *Imperium* is that it applies what in other utopian texts is abstract and technical to relatively realistic—if somewhat melodramatic—situations and people: poverty, the black female condition and the racism inherent in the political system are rendered tangible by the vicissitudes of and interactions between characters. The novel tells the story of the parallel lives of two African-American boys from Virginia—Belton Piedmont and Bernard Belgrave—who grow up to become leaders within the black community and must decide the fate of an entire nation. The two characters start off as childhood rivals and are in many ways, complementary opposites: whereas Belton is a child of poverty and dark skinned, Bernard is of “mixed blood” and has light skin and delicate features that give him a certain advantage within a society that pays special attention to one’s hue. Moreover, Bernard is the illegitimate child of an unnamed wealthy senator of high lineage; he uses his power and money to offer Bernard and his mother a comfortable life and aide the political career of his son, although he cannot reveal to the world the true nature of their relationship. In fact, the stories of Fairfax Belgrave, Bernard’s mother, and other characters within the novel adhere quite closely to various tropes of the “tragic mulatto” genre. She is seduced by the older man, who is her guardian, and they marry in secret; however, their love remains impossible. During Bernard’s moment of agnition, the senator states: “This infernal race prejudice has been the curse of my life. Think of my pure-hearted, noble-minded wife, branded as a harlot, and you, my own son, stigmatized as a bastard, because it would be suicide for me to let the world know that you both are mine” (Griggs). As per the tropes of

the genre, the “mulatta” in case is sexualized and attracts the unwanted attentions of white men, among them, Bernard and Belton’s schoolmaster.

Belton himself, in an interesting experiment in transvestitism, experiences what it is like to be a young black woman in a white dominated society. In an attempt to “find out just what view the white people were taking of the Negro and of the existing conditions” he dons female garb in order to enter white society unnoticed and be able to “spy” on them by working as a nurse. The premises of this plot development and its consequences contain a whole series of issues relating to gender, race, class and sexuality to be unraveled; one of these is Belton’s assumption regarding the relative “invisibility” of the black servant woman within the rich white household. What Belton discovers is that “the white man was utterly ignorant of the nature of the Negro of to-day with whom he has to deal. And more than that, he was not bothering his brain thinking about the Negro. He felt that the Negro was easily ruled and was not an object for serious thought” (Griggs). This passage perfectly captures, perhaps inadvertently, the tendency we have seen so far in utopian literature to ignore the “Negro question.” Moreover, Griggs portrays a reality of continued black servitude in which: “The barbers, the nurses, cooks and washerwomen, the police column of the newspapers, comic stories and minstrels were the sources through which the white people gained their conception of the Negro” (Griggs). What Belton also discovers in his female role is that racial prejudice has more severe consequences for women than he expected:

The young men in the families in which Belton worked seemed to have a poor opinion of the virtue of colored women. Time and again they tried to kiss Belton, and he would sometimes have to exert his full strength to keep them at a distance. He thought that while he was a nurse, he would do what he could to exalt the character of the colored women. So, at every chance he got, he talked to the men who approached him, of virtue and integrity. He soon got the name of

being a “virtuous prude” and the white men decided to corrupt him at all hazards. Midnight carriage rides were offered and refused. Trips to distant cities were proposed but declined. Money was offered freely and lavishly but to no avail [...]. A number of them decided to satisfy themselves at all hazards. They resorted to the bold and daring plan of kidnapping and overpowering Belton. (Griggs)

The sexual implications of racial discrimination are well portrayed within this passage and remain a relevant factor throughout the rest of the story, severely influencing the lives of our protagonists. While Belton is engaged in his mission of espionage, his wife Antoinette—it is implied—is forced to turn to prostitution to survive and as a consequence bears a white child. This is revealed to Belton in a scene full of suspense and drama: “Belton bent forward to look at his infant son. A terrible shriek broke from his lips. He dropped the lamp upon the floor and fled out of the house and rushed madly through the city. The color of Antoinette was brown. The color of Belton was dark. But the child was white!” (Griggs). Immediately after, Belton leaves his home, out of shame for himself rather than resentment towards his wife; however, toward the end of the novel the two are reunited and we learn that the whiteness of the child was only temporary and imputable to Antoinette’s own lightness of skin. This is not before she endures her own form of unjust punishment that demonstrates the dangers inherent in existing on the fringes of the color line: “Antoinette Nermal Piedmont had been tried and excluded from her church on the charge of adultery [...]. Society dropped her as you would a poisonous viper, and she was completely ostracized” (Griggs).

Bernard’s own personal tragedies are also linked to issues of sexuality and identity that borrow from the “tragic mulatto” genre; however, there is a surprising twist on this formula that ties in with the positivistic and scientific notions of race that are heavily present in other utopian texts. Bernard’s fiancée, Viola, commits suicide due to the fact that she believes that she, as a ‘pure-blooded’ black

woman, cannot marry a “mulatto man,” such as Bernard, as “the intermingling of the races in sexual relationship was sapping the vitality of the Negro race and, in fact, was slowly but surely exterminating the race” (Griggs). Viola’s convictions on the necessity of racial segregation come from her having read John H. Van Evrie’s book *White Supremacy and Negro Subordination* (1867) of which she has internalized the racial discourse but reversed its premises so that they work in function of the preservation of the “Negro race” rather than of the white race. In her suicide note she informs Bernard that:

It [the text] demonstrated that the fourth generation of the children born of intermarrying mulattoes were invariably sterile or woefully lacking in vital force [...]. While this intermingling was impairing the vital force of our race and exterminating it, it was having no such effect on the white race for the following reason. Every half-breed, or for that, every person having a tinge of Negro blood, the white people cast off. We receive the cast off with open arms and he comes to us with his devitalizing power. Thus, the white man was slowly exterminating us and our total extinction was but a short period of time distant. (Griggs)

It is difficult to imagine Sutton Griggs, a militant activist for African-American rights, adhering to the pseudoscientific theories of Van Erie, a notorious anti-abolitionist before the war and ‘scientific’ white supremacist after. What remains more ambiguous is whether Griggs adheres to Viola’s reversal of this racial theory and its separatist consequences. In any case, this plot development represents a unique combination of racial melodrama and late nineteenth century scientific thought of which Griggs is providing a critique. Viola’s last request is for Bernard to: “Study the question of the intermingling of the races. If miscegenation is in reality destroying us, dedicate your soul to the work of separating the white and colored races [...]. If you fail in this, make the separation physical; lead our people forth from this accursed land. Do this and I shall not have died in vain” (Griggs). The finale of the novel

indicates that Bernard, who has become more fervent in his militancy due to this personal tragedy, will strive to do exactly what Viola asks of him. However, to Bernard's potential for violence and tendency towards *realpolitik*, Griggs juxtaposes the martyrdom of Belton who started from a more militant position. Belton is not willing to use violence to secede from the United States as he sees it as an act of treason. In various parts of the novel Griggs, a Baptist minister, seems to convey the idea that religious and moral endurance are a more effective means of overcoming racial discrimination than violent activism: such action could precipitate the United States into a racial war that would ultimately harm African-Americans. The ultimate message, whether it is for or against segregation, remains slightly ambiguous; what can be said for sure about this novel is that it presents in vivid detail the internal conflicts and opposing views that characterized the struggle for African-American rights in a sentimental and, therefore, humanly relatable manner.

None of Griggs' melodramatic intensity or flair for the dramatic is present in *Light Ahead for the Negro* which bears the Bellamy-esque characteristic of being emotionally reserved and technical. However, it is no less effective in denouncing the social, political and economic disenfranchisement of African-Americans, often making a series of more acute points that are still relevant today. Like Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, a white narrator/time-traveler, in the cryogenic style of a sci-fi Rip Van Winkle, wakes up in the year 2006 after having fallen from his airship and slept for one hundred years; it is this chronological and physical detachment from the era that allows for a more distant and technical portrayal than that of the up-close-and-personal Griggs. Johnson chooses a more impersonal style, often using actual (or slightly modified) newspaper reports, and lets the facts speak for themselves. In introducing "one of the problems met with in the outset" by the emancipation movement, "that of the fallen woman," the narrator's knowledgeable interlocutor simply describes it in terms of cause and effect: "You will recall that after the Civil War many of the slave marriages were declared

illegal and remarriage became necessary” (112); the detached style is that of Bellamy and his imitators, however, Johnson also follows up the statement of a thesis or problem with practical, real life examples, often lifted from actual newspaper reports but in manner that highly diverges from that of Griggs. In relating the story of Eva, a “bright faced octoroon girl living in one of our best Southern homes [who] became peculiarly attractive to a brother of her mistress” (113), the language used by the narrator is straightforward and shows no dramatic flair: “He met Eva during a professional visit to her new home in Connecticut. The old flame was rekindled. He concealed the fact of his marriage and offered her his hand, stating that he must take her to another town and keep her incognito, to avoid ruining his practice by the gossip which his marriage to a servant girl would naturally create” (114). Although Johnson is working in this case with materials that are the bread and butter of “tragic mulatto” narratives, he exercises restraint and detachment. Griggs bases his story on the same type of materials and human experiences but perhaps due to his formation as a minister (Johnson on the other hand was a lawyer and a politician) he insists upon dramatic effects and suspense.

II. *Prophecies of Doom: White Violence and the Threat of a Black Revolution*

The first chapter of *Imperium* opens with the words “from the lips of a poor, ignorant negro woman,” whom we later discover is Belton’s mother; these words, we are informed by the narrator, help steer Belton’s course in a direction that will avoid “the sun of the Nineteenth Century” from setting “in a sea of human blood” (Griggs). The reader’s curiosity is now stimulated and as we read on we discover that the potential cataclysm this refers to is that of a black uprising which is alluded to, both in a subtle and explicit manner throughout the text. The possibility of racial conflict looms continuously over *Imperium* and is even heralded by various signs, metaphors and dreams.

Griggs' religious convictions are what shape the apologetic outlook of his main protagonist, Belton, and his saint-like, passive embracing of martyrdom. It is the style as much as the content that betrays the author's vocation and we often find the warning tones of a prophetic jeremiad (directed towards both a black and white audience) and parables of human suffering and endurance. The character V.M. King, who becomes Belton's white sponsor, has a prophetic dream rich with biblical references:

He dreamed that a large drove of fatted swine were munching acorns in a very dense forest of oaks, both tall and large. The oaks were sending the acorns down in showers, and the hogs were greedily consuming them. The hogs ate so many that they burst open, and from their rotting carcasses fresh oaks sprang and grew with surprising rapidity. A dark cloud arose and a terrible hurricane swept over the forest; and the old and new oaks fought furiously in the storm, until a loud voice, like unto that of a God, cried out above all the din of the hurricane, saying in tones of thunder: "Know ye not that ye are parents and children? Parents, recognize your children. Children, be proud of the parents from whom you spring. (Griggs)

The interpretation of the faux-biblical symbolism of this dream more or less summarizes the content of the text: the hogs stand for African-Americans, the trees for the "Anglo-Saxon," the acorns are the seeds of liberty and the hurricane for some future cataclysm. It is these prophetic dreams which motivate King's sponsorship of Belton who is introduced, from the beginning, in messianic terms. This

is not a unique instance in the panorama of utopian literature where we find a number of socialist, populist, alien or more traditionally religious messianic figures and plot developments.⁴¹

Both Griggs and Johnson accuse the American Government of a criminal passivity that leaves African-Americans unprotected and powerless against the actions of local Southern governments and the terroristic actions of “Klu Klux, White Cappers, Bulldozers [and] Lynchers” (Griggs). In multiple occasions both authors portray these individual mobs or secret organizations as part of a system where State institutions are accomplices if not instigators of the violent acts of the former. Both Griggs and Johnson also seem to warn white readers of the dangers of allowing or simply ignoring the phenomenon of lynching and the mob mentality of which it is a manifestation. Both authors do so by showing how it is no longer exclusive to the South or aimed at African-American victims. Griggs quotes the case “murder of those Italians in New Orleans, a few years ago” (Griggs) and is probably referring to the mass lynching of 1891. This event is relevant for Griggs as demonstrates the impotence of the Government in protecting those towards which it had promised protection and he draws parallels between the condition of the “unprotected foreigner” and “The Negro” (Griggs). Johnson is more explicit in denouncing the dangers of mob rule to white society: “While Negroes were the most common victims, yet the fever spread like a contagion to the lynching of white criminals as well” (41). From being “confined to criminals who committed assaults on women, and to brutal murderers” the criteria for lynching is extended to “the slightest offense, so that no man's life was safe if he was unfortunate enough to have had a difficulty with some individual who had friends enough to raise a

⁴¹ See, for example Benjamin Davenport Rush's *“Uncle Sam's” Cabins. A Story of American Life Looking Forward a Century* (1895), *In His Steps. “What Would Jesus Do?”* (1896) by Charles M. Sheldon or William Windsor's *Loma; A Citizen of Venus* (1897).

mob” (41-42). Johnson also shows how lynching has become a perverse form of entertainment or spectacle which takes place:

sometimes in the presence of thousands of people, who came in on excursion trains to see the sight and, possibly, carry off a trophy consisting of a finger joint, tooth or a portion of the victim's heart. If the lynching was for a crime committed against a woman [...], she was consigned to the task of starting the flames with her own hands. - This was supposed to add to the novelty of the occasion (42).

Although Johnson quotes the horrific details of lynching (both here and in other instances) they are narrated in a factual way and are often in the form of newspaper quotations.⁴² Griggs, as is his wont, involves his characters directly in the matter. In *Imperium* it is Belton himself who miraculously survives an attempted lynching for having dared sit among a white congregation of church goers and having aided “A white girl who sat by him and could not read very well” with her hymn book: “That nigger actually had the impudence to take her book and find the place for her” (Griggs).

⁴² Johnson uses actual journalistic evidence and quotes in a note “A special dispatch from Charleston, S. C., to the Atlanta Journal” which reads: “former Section Foreman Jones, of the Atlantic Coast Line Road, has confessed being the murderer of his wife [...], for which crime three Negroes were lynched. [...], and after the capture of the Negroes quick work was made of them by the mob” (27). In one particular case, a newspaper excerpt demonstrates how the Southern press misrepresents the North by showing that “while the North was mobbing a Negro, the South was honoring one” (36). This is done, according to Johnson, in order “to show that the whole country was down on the Negro, and that while in the South the whites lynched only the one Negro against whom they had become enraged, in the North they mobbed and sought to drive out all the Negroes in the community where the crime had been committed” (36). This is an example of the propaganda that both authors see as being present in Southern society aimed at containing the mass emigration of African-Americans towards other regions.

In *Imperium* there are also numerous omens of a black revolution and potential violence throughout the novel. From the outset, the two protagonists show signs of what they will eventually become. As children, both Belton and Bernard are attracted to the “the story of the rebellion against the yoke of England” and are “immersed in the spirit of that heroic age” (Griggs). The revolutionary or militant figures they encounter in their historical studies, “Leonidas, Marco Bozarris, Arnold Winklereid, Louis Kossuth, Robert Emmett, Martin Luther, Patrick Henry” (Griggs) become their role models. In the final chapters the premises that were merely hinted at in the beginning become explicit. The secret black state within the state organizes an army; Bernard calls for war and his proposal is met with hearty approval. The alternative proposals include both “amalgamat[ion],” which is met with a “storm of hisses and jeers” (Griggs), and emigration to Africa in the belief that a mass exodus of African-Americans would, among other things, be a great blow to the economy of the South: by losing their black population, the South would lose half their labor and consumers and “the South's representation in Congress would be reduced to such a point that the South would have no appreciable influence on legislation for one half a century to come” (Griggs). This reflects real life forms of nonviolent protest advocated by Ida B. Wells that hinged upon the recognition of the importance of “black workers and consumers” through the application of “economic pressure” (Bederman 55). Belton proposes that the destination should be Texas, rather than Africa, as it is “broad in domain, rich in soil and salubrious in climate” and only in the case that they fail “to impress the Anglo-Saxon that he has a New Negro on his hands” (Griggs) and therefore, gain their rights through exemplary behavior and concession.

Both points of Belton's proposal seem well in line with the tropes of Christian utopian literature we have seen so far: that of finding a new promised, idealized land to colonize and that of founding utopia on the exemplary, self-improved behavior of its citizens. However, it is on the issue of

“impressing” the Anglo-Saxon and the means towards obtaining a separate state that the two rivals-turned-friends differ. Belton believes that a black utopia is obtainable through peaceful means as a mass exodus to one Texas would ensure “an unquestioned majority of votes” therefore the “secure possession of the State government” (Griggs). Bernard on the other hand believes that a *coup d'état*—involving capital, land acquisition, the preemptive infiltration and sabotage of the American navy and gaining foreign powers as allies—is the only possible solution.⁴³ Belton sees this as an act of treason and the disagreement between the two eventually leads to Belton’s political martyrdom by Bernard’s hand. The novel closes with the threat of future violence in the form of this now unfettered potential despot:

Henceforth Bernard Belgrave's influence would be supreme. Born of distinguished parents, reared in luxury, gratified as to every whim, successful in every undertaking, idolized by the people, proud, brilliant, aspiring [...], with Viola's tiny hand protruding from the grave pointing him to move forward, Bernard Belgrave, President of the Imperium In Imperio, was a man to be feared [...]. He laughed a fearful, wicked laugh like unto that of a maniac, and said: ‘Float on proud flag, while yet you may. Rejoice, oh! ye Anglo-Saxons, yet a little while. Make my father ashamed to own me, his lawful son; call me a bastard child; look upon my pure mother as a harlot [...]. Yes, stuff your vile stomachs full of all these horrors. You shall be richer food for the buzzards to whom I have solemnly vowed to give your flesh’ (Griggs).

⁴³ The details of his plan to conquer Texas, with its secret stockpiling of weapons, resources and manpower may remind us of Hank Morgan, however, they also point towards yet another subgenre of utopian fiction, that of the cloak-and-dagger, secret conspiracy variety that includes Ignatius Donnelly’s *Caesar’s Column* (1890).

Bernard Belgrave has therefore become the nemesis of white America, generated by its own sins, and we are left with the idea that he is longer in full possession of his rational faculties. As he is characterized in this passage, he becomes almost a Mordred-like figure, a spurned “bastard” son of high yet illegitimate lineage that will plunge himself, his people and America into a self-destructive war. Although Bernard starts his life with more advantages than Belton and more acceptance within white society, it is he who will presumably bring about its ruin.

If, as a young man, Bernard can count on his blood ties to American royalty for support, Belton later gains a wealthy white sponsor of his own in the form of the newspaper editor V.M. King. He has noticed Belton’s intelligence, his able use of rhetoric and his fervor: “When he read Belton's oration he saw that the flame of liberty was in his heart, her sword in his hand, and the disdain of death stamped on his brow” (Griggs). King decides to finance Belton’s education in hopes of attenuating the ardent and potentially dangerous spirit of a future African-American leader. Behind this generosity there is, therefore, an ulterior motive and he explicitly exhorts Belton, in a form of moral blackmail, to remember that there are “good” whites and “bad” whites: “In all your dealings with my people recognize the fact that there are two widely separated classes of us, and that there is a good side to the character of the worst class. Always seek for and appeal to that side of their nature” (Griggs). Indeed, Belton leaves the encounter promising to himself “to never class all white men together, whatever might be the provocation, and to never regard any class as totally depraved” (Griggs). V.M. King’s greatest fear is that of violent uprising and of a war between the races. He believes that “it was only a matter of a few years before the negro would deify liberty as the Anglo-Saxon race had done, and count it a joy to perish on her altar” (Griggs), however, he seems sincerely motivated by a desire to avoid a conflict that would certainly not benefit the African-American population and is an active advocate for “negro” rights: “This expression was not the offspring of fear as to the outcome of a possible conflict,

for, Anglo-Saxon like, that was with him a foregone conclusion in favor of his own race. But he shuddered at the awful carnage that would of necessity ensue” (Griggs).

III. *Looking Within and Without: Internalized Anglo-Saxonism and External Racism*

The continuous reference to a supposed Anglo-Saxon cult of liberty is something which characterizes a large part of *Imperium*. By 1899, the year of publication of *Imperium*, Anglo-Saxonism had consolidated itself as the principal nationalist-imperialist narrative. Part of the reason for its success was that it had the perfect historical, cultural and linguistic relevance for America—that “Aryanism,” for example, did not have—due to the fact that it combined well with the pre-existing narrative of democratic exceptionalism: the notion of Anglo-Saxonism included, among other things, the heritage of British parliamentary politics, the Glorious Revolution and Puritan dissent. According to Kramer:

Anglo-Saxons were said to be the possessors and progenitors of unique, ‘free’ political values and institutions. At their most inward-looking, Anglo-Saxons were a consistently liberated people [...]; when they looked outward, Anglo-Saxons often liberated others [...]. Wherever and however they conquered, Anglo-Saxons were racially destined to spread empires of liberty” (1322).

While reconciling ideals of liberty with supremacist ideologies, Anglo-Saxonism also proved perfect for America in that allowed the “melting-pot” theme of national identity to be partially maintained, albeit with caveats. Kramer states that the very hyphenated nature of the term Anglo-Saxon allowed for relative flexibility and inclusiveness: “While used as a shorthand purity, Anglo-Saxonism featured a contained hybridity. [...]. Anglo-Saxonism represented of superior but distinct racial elements. While sharply delimited, that hybridity —and the theoretical possibility of future assimilations—lent porousness to Anglo-Saxonism’s boundaries in race, culture and destiny” (1322). Anglo-Saxonism,

therefore, is able to reconcile the contrasting notions of liberty and empire, racial superiority and selective inclusiveness; and it is empire with both its external and internal repercussions, that truly unites North and South after the War.

So successful is the Anglo-Saxonist rhetoric that even Griggs, an African-American advocate for “Negro” rights is influenced by it: it figures prominently in the novel and in manner that is highly ambiguous rather than openly critical. The education of both Belton and Bernard is heavily influenced by ideals of Anglo-Saxon supremacy and the “Anglo-Saxon race” is a model to aspire to, from the sphere of politics and art to social mores and issues of gender: “At Stowe University, Belton had learned to respect women. It was in these schools that the work of slavery in robbing the colored women of respect, was undone. Woman now occupied the same position in Belton's eye as she did in the eye of the Anglo-Saxon” (Griggs).⁴⁴ At times, Griggs reverses this ideology, even providing an alternative view of the national foundational narrative and of the development of American democracy. In his counternarrative, Griggs assigns a central role to slave labor: “The negro was seized and forced to labor hard that the Anglo-Saxon might enjoy rest and ease. While he sat in his cushioned chair, in his luxurious home, and dreamed of the blessedness of freedom” (Griggs). Slave labor, therefore, provided the necessary *otium* for the founding fathers to even conceive of becoming a republic; moreover, Griggs partially subverts the grand narrative of the white pioneer and the frontier by describing how it was actually “the enforced labor of slaves [that] felled the forest trees, cleared away the rubbish,

⁴⁴ Here we may recognize an instance of the association that existed in the Victorian mindset between sexual restraint and “civilized white manliness” (46) analyzed by Gail Bederman in *Manliness and Civilization*. Indeed, respect for women is here characterized by Griggs as a characteristic inherent to the Anglo-Saxon race that the “negro” must learn from.

planted the seed and garnered the ripened grain, receiving therefore no manner of pay, no token of gratitude, no word of coldest thanks” (Griggs).

An ironic reversal of Anglo-Saxonist rhetoric may also be present the key scene wherein the two rivals compete in an oratorical exercise while still at elementary school. Bernard presents a speech entitled: “The Contribution of the Anglo-Saxon to the Cause of Human Liberty” (Griggs) which panders to the expectations and egos of the white judges. Belton, on the other hand, delivers a perhaps less accommodating speech on the Irish revolutionary Robert Emmet and although it is clearly superior to that of his rival, the judges cannot accept this victory due to racial prejudice: “That black nigger has beat the yellow one all to pieces this time, but we don't like to see nigger blood triumph over any Anglo-Saxon blood. Ain't there any loop-hole where we can give it to Bernard, anyhow?” (Griggs). In the largely rhetoric finale in which various members of the secret black government expound their point of view, the childhood debate scene is repeated and it would seem that the two former rivals have exchanged positions. Whereas Bernard is now more militant, Belton becomes the advocate of paternalistic, internalized racial discourse stating that “While all of the other races of men were behind the ball of progress rolling it up the steep hill of time, the negro was asleep in the jungles of Africa” (Griggs). He cites the great accomplishments of Newton, Herschel, Columbus, Martin Luther whose hard “toil” gave “the bright light of civilization to the world” while “the negro slept” (Griggs) and reminds those assembled “that by enslavement in America the negro has come into possession of the great English language. He is thus made heir to all the richest thoughts of earth” (Griggs). This supposed debt of knowledge that is owed to the Anglo-Saxon is coupled with that of religious salvation: “Nor must we ever forget that it was the Anglo-Saxon who snatched from our idolatrous grasp the deaf images to which we prayed, and the Anglo-Saxon who pointed us to the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world” (Griggs).

Belton's "White Man's Burden" styled apologia of slavery owes a debt both to pre-war anti-abolitionist discourse and the more recent developments of worldwide imperial ideology; Belton's insistence upon the concept of civilization in which the "negro" is elevated by the "Anglo-Saxon" does point more to the latter. It may even be possible that in *Imperium* we witness the overlap of two types of racial discourse which were perceived as different and are separated chronologically. Belton's apologia of Anglo-Saxon civilization generously extends to include Southern society, of which he vividly describes the horrors elsewhere, due to the prestigious example of the slave-owning founding fathers:

let us not complain too bitterly of the school maintained by the Southerner, for it was there that we learned what true freedom was. It was in school that our hearts grew warm as we read of Washington, of Jefferson, of Henry, apostles of human liberty. It was the school of the Southerner that has builded the Imperium which now lifts its hand in power and might to strike a last grand blow for liberty (Griggs).

Belton (or Griggs) espouses the rhetoric of reconciliation and "Lost Cause" mythologies and reinforces the concept of a "debt" towards Anglo-Saxon civilization: "While we, the oppressed, stayed upon the plantation in peace, our oppressors were upon the field of battle engaged in mortal combat; and it was the blood of our oppressor, not our own, that was paid as the price of our freedom" (Griggs).

The Civil War is mentioned often and even plays a part in the analeptic plot that explains Bernard's parentage; it is described with great lyricism that expresses its horrors but also glorifies the sacrifices of those who participated and seems to make no distinctions between sides:

Long before the rifle ball, the cannon shot, and the exploding shell were through their fiendish task of covering the earth with mortals slain; while the startled air was yet busy in hurrying to

Heaven the groans of the dying soldier, accompanied as they were by the despairing shrieks of his loved ones behind; while horrid War, in frenzied joy, yet waved his bloody sword over the nation's head, and sought with eager eagle eyes every drop of clotted gore over which he might exult. (Griggs)

This passage shows the influence of various literary tropes of the reconciliation era; the originally stated reasons for the war become secondary to the tragic narrative of noble warriors laying down their lives on the battlefield and grieving widows and orphans on the home front.

Belton also demonstrates a tendency towards internalized racism and shows how engrained the stereotype of the “black brute” was even within the African-American community:

Our race has furnished some brutes lower than the beasts of the field, who have stirred the passions of the Anglo-Saxon [...]. The shibboleth of the Anglo-Saxon race is the courage of man and the virtue of woman: and when, by violence, a member of a despised race assails a defenseless woman; robs her of her virtue, her crown of glory [...], it is not to be wondered at that hell is scoured by the Southern white man in search of plans to vent his rage. (Griggs)

Apart from singling out single negative elements, Belton offers a negative evaluation of more generalized tendencies within African-American society whereby he critiques: “Our grotesque dress, our broken language, our ignorant curiosity, and, on the part of many our boorish manners” (Griggs). The internalization of paternalistic racial discourse extends to the proposed renewal of African-American identity which characterizes itself more as a process of mimicry whereby the Anglo-Saxon needs to be convinced of the “New Negro’s” capacity to be included within the folds of civilization: “We must change the conception which the Anglo-Saxon has formed of our character [...]. let us pull the veil from before the eyes of the Anglo-Saxon that he may see the New Negro standing before him

humbly, but firmly demanding every right granted him by his maker and wrested from him by man” (Griggs).

Johnson could also be accused of mimicry and internalizing racial discourse: indeed, he chooses a white narrator (Gilbert Twitchell) to relate the story; moreover, all figures of informational authority, from the beautiful, intelligent and emancipated love interest (Irene Davis) to the Dr. Leete equivalent (Dr. Newell), are white and speak of “the Negro” as a third person and of solutions to the “Negro problem” in paternalistic terms. Even the declared intent of the novel, stated in the author’s preface, is to “cultivat[e] and nourish[...]” the “vein of sympathy and helpfulness for the Negro” that exists “at the bottom of Southern society” (v). Certain statements by the white characters in the year 2006 seem to indicate that their perception of African-Americans has not progressed beyond the docile, angelic image of Uncle Tom. As stated by Irene Davis: “they are of a different temperament from us, so mild and good natured, so complacent and happy in their religious worship and their music is simply enchanting! Don’t you like to hear them sing, Mr. Twitchell?” (15). Like Griggs, Johnson seems to adhere to a hierarchical concept of civilization (even mentioning “barbaric races,” 44-45), that places the “Anglo-Saxon” at its pinnacle. From this derives the notion that “the Negro” needs to receive some form of knowledge or quality that the white man already possesses to achieve true emancipation: “The white man learned this art by thousands of years of experience and of necessary resistance for the protection of those rights which he holds most dear. The Negroes were never able to make any concerted movement in their own behalf” (45). To better contextualize this quote, it is part of a intended speech written by the protagonist which lists the challenges faced by African-Americans and the various theories and positions that were involved in the discussion of the “Negro problem.”

Similarly to Griggs, Johnson acknowledges the presence of negative elements or “black brutes” within their midst and like Griggs is attentive in distinguishing “good” from “bad.” The manner in

which he chooses to make this distinction is a unfortunate re-proposition of the divisive “house slave/field slave” dynamic: “The Negro was too fond of his master’s family to mistreat them, he felt almost a kinship to them. The brutes of later days came from that class of Negroes who had been isolated from the whites, on the quarters of large plantations” (49). Both authors do not adhere to Ida B. Wells reversal of the genderized and political representations of black male aggression, white female victimhood and white male civility that were used to justify lynch law. Both Griggs and Johnson appeal to the notion that there are mostly “good negroes” and a few “bad negroes.” Gail Bederman’s analysis of the “black beast rapist” (47) stereotype in *Manliness and Civilization* (1996) demonstrates how it was used to reinforce Victorian notions of restrained masculinity as well as racial hierarchies. This “relatively new” (46) myth served the purpose of assigning victimized identities to Southern women therefore “bolstering [the] male power and authority” of male Southerners after the emasculating loss of the Civil War. This myth also gave an excuse to Northerners to look the other way when it came to the issue of lynching: “even when liberal Northern whites condemned lynching, they usually assumed that African-American men tended to be rapists” (47). What is surprising is to see it used in works of African-American fiction that are otherwise insightful and occasionally subversive. It shows the pervasiveness of the myth even within the very community it targeted.

On the other hand, as in *Imperium*, in *Light Ahead* we also find instances of ideology being reversed or critiqued and we begin to suspect that the author may be making strategic use of a racialized and paternalistic façade to smuggle in more radical content. There are direct indictments of African-American passivity that seem to implicate, however, an overlying suppressive power structure in which even white advocates of black rights seem to be involved: “No Negro gained any national reputation without first having been recognized by the white race, instead of his own. The Negroes recognized their leaders after the whites picked them out not before” (46). The narrator’s reference to

the “picking out” of leaders makes one wonder what criteria is adopted in this selection process; it may very well be in favor of more “docile,” pliable candidates given the previous depiction of white expectations from the “good” black people mentioned above.

IV. *Northern Complicity and African-American Views on Empire*

Johnson provides us with a series of observations on Northern complicity in Southern racism and the ties between ‘domestic’ racial discrimination and imperial politics abroad. The narrator re-evokes the events of the Civil War and links them with current tendencies in the mediatic and political world: “Like Lincoln’s emancipation proclamation, this wholesale assassination of Negro character in the newspapers was strictly a political ‘war measure’ intended for political use only. Its design was to prejudice the race in the eyes of the world and thus enable the white supremacy advocates, North and South, to perfect the political annihilation of the Negro” (23). This passage demonstrates how Johnson is not caught up in romantic narratives of the Civil War where there are only uncompromised “heroes” and “villains;” nor do we have a naïve clear cut distinction between North and South when it comes to racial ideology and politics: there is a clear accusation of complicity between transversal elements on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line. Furthermore, he is not disparaging the efforts of Abraham Lincoln but he inserts them within the practical and factual context that actually motivated them rather than reinforcing the epic-mythological or pathetic stance that is a component of reconciliation literature. Johnson dares to show a continuity between racial politics during the War and in the current climate, demonstrating how, in reality, not much has changed.

This logic also applies to the continuation of forms of racial ideology and serfdom in the South which even begin to infiltrate the Northern and national landscape: “On the question of civil equality, the ‘jim-crow’ system has not sufficed [...]. If practiced only in the South it might stand, but an attempt

has been made to cover the country” (69). The extension of “jim-crow” to the rest of America is obtained, according to Johnson, through the combined and almost strategic action of “the News Bureau making capital every morning of the corruption in the race” and “Southern ministers who had taken charge of Northern pulpits” (25). Beyond the personal exploits of racist individuals and newspapers, Johnson indicates capitalism as the overlying system that allows for and even encourages new forms of serfdom and political repression:

with the money interests clamoring for the South ‘to be let alone’ with the Negro question, for fear of un settling business and causing a slump in Southern securities; with the claims that, to keep the railroads earning dividends, to keep the cotton market active, the Negro must be handled according to the serfdom or shotgun plan, and that the best task master so far found was the Southern white man, who had proven himself wonderfully adept in getting good crops from Negro labor with these and many other excuses, the question of raising the Negro in the scale of civilization was left to posterity. (26)

In this passage industry and finance, both in the North and the South, are shown as totally complicit in the exploitation of cheap and malleable black labor. We also see how Johnson moves away from a critique that focuses strictly on racial issues to a more general discussion on the conflict between labor and capital that is common to the Bellamy inspired utopian literature of the period. Moreover, racial issues are extended beyond the limits of the traditional North-South dichotomy according to which slavery and racism were expressions of Southern “backwardness” in contrast with the progressive forward thinking of the industrious North. Johnson also revisits the origins of slavery in America, posing the accent on its economic causes and downplaying the role of stereotypical Southern lethargy stating that: “it was commercialism that fixed slavery in the nation and rooted and grounded it so deep that scarcely could it be eradicated without destroying the nation itself” (108).

By exposing the passive (if not active) involvement of Northern commercial interests in the oppression of African-Americans, Johnson breaks the comforting mold of the North-South dichotomy: it is shown as a narrative that allows for “backwards vs. forwards/good vs. bad” oversimplifications of what is a national matter and involves the entire body politic. Congress is denounced as being at best passively complicit (65) and career politicians, even those that seem to support “negro” rights, are fiercely critiqued for their hypocrisy in exploiting the issue for their own gain: “Various meetings were held all over the country to discuss the Negro problem, and many a mediocre white man who thirsted for a little newspaper notoriety, or political preferment, in both the North and the South, had his appetite in this direction satisfied by writing or saying something on the Negro question” (28-29). Indeed, the “Negro Problem” is characterized as the resource on which many political careers are built or fueled by, be it “Southern politicians of the old school” who “have no other questions or issues” and “depend upon the race question for a livelihood” (91) or Northern carpetbaggers and career abolitionists. Johnson even launches an indictment against the Republican party for ignoring the problem and, therefore, for its passive complicity in aiding “The advocates of white supremacy” in accomplishing the “decitizenization” of African-Americans:

They have asked to be let alone with the Negro problem; they have been let alone since 1876, when the Republican party dropped the Negro question as an issue. Since that time they have been politically tying the Negroes' hands. Realizing his industrial usefulness, the aim has been to eliminate him from politics and at the same time use him as a tax-payer and a producer. (66-67).

The indifference of the Republican party to the “Negro question” is curiously paralleled or even reflected in the notable absence of this issue from the mainstream of utopian literature; Johnson addresses the fact that even the progressive milieu of the North, which a generation or two before had

lead the charge against slavery, was now satisfied that the problem had been solved or were ignoring its long lasting consequences. Furthermore, the subjects who have “realiz[ed]” the “industrial usefulness” of disenfranchised African-Americans should be the above mentioned “advocates of white supremacy;” however, the phrasing is ambiguous enough that it might seem like the entire political establishment contributes to this process of political exclusion. Given the economic implications of this discrimination, we may argue that Johnson is attempting to insert issues of race into a socialistic/nationalistic paradigm whereby the fight for African-American rights becomes part of a larger labor (vs. capital) movement; indeed, the road to the current utopia is initiated, according to Dr. Newell, with the inclusion of African-Americans into labor movements: “The intelligent solution of the problem was found by making the Negro see what his interests were, by taking him into the labor unions, where he could be educated up to an intelligent appreciation of the value of his labor” (73). This inclusion has the twofold action of rendering black labor less exploitable and calming the tempers of the white working class who see African-American workers as potential strikebreakers. Moreover, the utopian project is dependent upon the redistribution of land to farmers (a solution common to more than one utopian novel) which is greeted with the type of opposition we are familiar with today: “Doctor Newell stated that there was much opposition to the parcelling out of land to Negro farmers. It was jeered at as ‘paternalism,’ and ‘socialistic,’ and ‘creating a bad precedent’” (102).

Beyond the repressive action of capitalistic and political power, both Johnson and Griggs view the prejudice and racism of labor organizations and subsequent exclusion of black workers as one of the biggest obstacles to emancipation. Whereas Johnson (who avoids going into too much detail) simply states that the problem was eventually overcome, Griggs is more pessimistic: he views the obstacle as so insurmountable that a completely different road or strategy needs to be taken. Like Johnson he acknowledges the problem citing the “The prejudice and pride that prompt them to exclude

the Negro from the higher forms of labor [and] the lower forms, thus leaving the Negro in undisputed possession of a whole kingdom of labor” (Griggs) and giving practical, real life examples of when this has happened. In fact, Griggs seems to assume a position that is diametrically opposite to that of Johnson on the issue of labor movements; he makes a point of separating (through the words of Belton in his elaborate final speech) the struggle for black emancipation from the that of the white working class:

The Anglo-Saxon race is divided into two hostile camps—labor and capital. These two forces are gradually drawing together for a tremendous conflict, a momentous battle. The riots at Homestead, at Chicago, at Lattimer are but skirmishes between the picket lines, informing us that a general conflict is imminent. Let us thank God that we are not in the struggle. Let us thank Him that our labor problem is no worse than it is. (Griggs)

In line with the separatist position advocated elsewhere in the novel, Belton seems to be opting for a policy of non-intervention in the upcoming war between capital and labor which is characterized as a solely “Anglo-Saxon” concern. It is an unequivocal statement of separation which seems motivated by a sincere will to avoid danger and violence at all costs. Behind Belton’s speech and his invocation of the will of “God” we see the religious convictions of the minister Griggs; Johnson, on the other hand, displays a more secularized outlook and is even critical of religious and educational institutions, openly accusing them of contributing to suppressing the militant spirit of African-Americans:

the general desire among leading Negroes was for peace at any sacrifice, and they studiously labored to that end. The South ought to have thanked the Negro preachers and the Negro school teachers for the reign of peace in that section, because it was due almost wholly to their efforts.

Then, too, the public schools,[...], served the purpose of quieting many a Negro who might otherwise have been disposed to 'talk too much' (23).

It is almost as if the two texts (and the two authors) were debating each other. It could even be hypothesized that Johnson (in 1904) is responding to Griggs exhortation (*Imperium* was published in 1899) towards non-involvement and the wide popularity of the novel itself among African-Americans. Moreover, Johnson seems more strategic (and perhaps more optimistic) than Griggs in his use of the form of the utopian novel; he follows more closely the example set by Bellamy which Griggs, on the other hand, barely adheres to, preferring the structure of an epic, melodramatic fable with biblical influences. By using the most popular form through which white progressive thought was expressed at the time, in combination with the façade of white protagonists, he is, perhaps, attempting to persuade and transform an elite white audience, rather than an African-American one.

Johnson in particular points out that the "Negro problem" is no longer confined to the South and is now becoming a Northern and urban issue. The same can also be said of the ingrained racism, the time-tested rhetoric and techniques of segregation of the South which according to Johnson are being exported Northwards and are evident within national laws and political and mediatic discourse. The mass immigration of African-American towards Northern and Western urban centers should render the "Negro Question" a national issue, however, the supremacist tendencies we have observed in various examples of utopian fiction show how the "Negro" is no longer central even to racialized discourse; mass immigration from Europe, anti-Semitism and the stereotyping of Southern, Eastern European and Irish immigrants are the elements that contribute (within the limits of utopian literature) to a more generalized xenophobic mindset which tends to oppose the "Anglo-Saxon" to an indistinguishable chaotic mass of "otherness."

What we have also observed in utopian literature is that, more often than not, domestic racial discourse intertwines with imperial yearnings; the racial hierarchies applied to the various ethnic groups present in America's cities become the blueprint for imagined global empires in which Africa is the quintessential *terra nullius* (second only to South America). On the issue of empire both Johnson and (to a minor extent) Griggs present a point of view that stands in contrast to that of their literary peers. In *Imperium* the events that sparked the Spanish-American war are briefly mentioned but in manner that seems to undermine imperial discourse: "insurrection broke out in Cuba, and the whole Imperium watched this struggle with keenest interest, as the Cubans were in a large measure negroes. In proportion as the Cubans drew near to their freedom, the fever of hope correspondingly rose in the veins of the Imperium" (Griggs). Presented in this manner, the Cuban insurrection is transformed into matter of race and the notion of an independent Cuban state becomes synonymous with a free "Negro" republic much like the "Imperium" itself. The events taking place in Cuba, the sinking of the USS Maine in particular, are juxtaposed with the murder of Felix A. Cook, a member of the "Imperium," at the hands of a "mob of white demons in human form" for the sole crime of having accepted the position of "postmaster of Lake City, South Carolina" (Griggs). This juxtaposition of the two acts of terrorism attempts to equate African-Americans as a group to a state that has suffered an attack and must perforce take action or retaliate. Moreover, it implicitly critiques the hypocrisy of a government that uses resources to (supposedly) defend liberty abroad when it has yet to resolve its own domestic problems.

Johnson, on the other hand, who publishes *Light Ahead* a few years after, has witnessed the successive developments of the war in the Philippines⁴⁵ and provides a more in depth discussion of the topic. In a note to the main text the author voices his own opinion directly, rather than using quotes or the narrator's voice, when he states: "Have the ten million American Negroes any more direct representation in Congress than the ten million Filipinos?" (65). Johnson references imperial politics in his continued critique of the Republican party's passivity on the matter of "Negro rights" and demonstrates how the imperialism of the U.S government can be used as an argument against African-American emancipation:

The white supremacy advocates seem to have selected a propitious period for this work a time when the Negro's friends in the Republican party are occupied with similar problems in Cuba and the Philippines. 'If the Republicans deny self-government to the Philippines, Porto Rico and Cuba,' inquire the Southerners, 'why haven't we the right to do the same to Negroes? Why allow Negroes in the South to rule and deny the same to Negroes in Hawaii?' (67)

Indeed, the author quotes at length Noah W. Cooper's critical response to an address by John Temple Graves: "Mr. Graves' inconsistencies reached a climax when he said in one breath, 'I appeal for the imperial destiny of our mighty race,' and then in the next breath says, 'let us put the Negro out.' Is it any more imperial to boss the Filipino abroad than it is to boss the Negro at home?" (31). A parallel between domestic racism at home and imperial politics abroad is, therefore, drawn.

⁴⁵ The Philippines even feature briefly in the events of the obligatory romantic plot when Irene's fiancée is "accidentally shot during a target practice on a U. S. vessel cruising in the Philippines" clearing the stage for our protagonist; although there is a violent death involved, the third person narrator (who takes Gilbert's place in chapter X) assures us that "peace and independence have long prevailed" (131) in the Philippines.⁴⁵

V. *Slavery and the “Negro Question” in A Connecticut Yankee and “Prophecy”*

In *Imperium* and *Light Ahead* the critical analysis of the past and present, which is a natural part of even the most optimistic of utopias, is pushed to the forefront. They are as much novels of denunciation as they are of transformation and are, perhaps, more dystopian than utopian texts in that they concentrate more on analyzing current problems (often simply transposed to the fictional world) than describing in detail how utopia is to be achieved and what it is like. Their uniqueness in the panorama of utopian literature consists in their restating of the centrality of the African-American question which is otherwise almost completely ignored⁴⁶ by white authors. These texts, *Imperium* in particular, look more to the present and past than to the future and for this and other reasons share a series of characteristics with Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee*. The presence of slavery in medieval England is an anachronism that cannot simply be imputed to ignorance on Twain's part or a will to demonize Arthurian society. We can see it instead as part of Twain's world building exercise that makes Camelot an amalgam of literary-fictional universes and real worldly historical realities, both past and present.

Camelot, therefore, becomes a proxy for many objects and spaces, both real and imagined, that are subjected to the authors iconoclastic scrutiny: the frontier, the fictional universe of Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, actual medieval England and, naturally, pre-war South. Slavery figures prominently throughout the novel, however it is in chapter XXI in particular that the author clearly evokes the

⁴⁶ Fredrick Worley is one of the few white utopian authors who actually discusses race relations in non-supremacist terms. In *Three Thousand Dollars a Year* (1890) the author “stress[es] the gradual disappearance of racial segregation” (Roemer 190).

horrors of the modern slave system he himself has witnessed. In his peregrinations around Camelot Hank encounters a procession of slaves whose piteous conditions he describes at length and in detail:

Chains led from their fettered feet and their manacled hands to a sole-leather belt about their waists [...]. They were on foot, and had tramped three hundred miles in eighteen days, upon the cheapest odds and ends of food, and stingy rations at that. They had slept in chains every night, bundled together like swine. They had upon their bodies some poor rags, but they could not be said to be clothed. Their irons had chafed the skin from their ankles and made sores which were ulcerated and wormy. Their naked feet were torn and none walked without a limp. (110)

If this detailed description were not enough, a young woman with a small child who is part of this procession is brutally whipped and the event is described with precision and an abundance of horrific details—the whip which “flick[s] a flake of skin from her naked shoulder”, the “shrieking and struggling” (111) of the victim—which render it more of an eye witness testimony than a dry and distanced evocation of historical cruelty in feudal society. According to James D. Williams (381-382) “several incidents,” including the details of the chain gang procession and the specific episode of the whipped mother, are borrowed or derived from Charles Ball’s *Slavery in the United States* (1837). Furthermore, Williams states that during the development of the novel Twain “planned to use excerpts from ‘Charles Ball’ in an appendix to substantiate the historicity of the slave scenes in Chapters xxi and xxxiv” (381). At this point we may ask ourselves why the author initially felt compelled to “substantiate the historicity” of the horrors of slavery using the “purported” (Williams 381) biographical testimony of an actual slave or why he chose to present them in such vivid detail as the passage above demonstrates.

Twain inserts slavery into a (fictional medieval) Britain where there is already an abundance of injustices, ignorance, violence, torture and privilege to denounce without resorting to anachronism. If

placed within the context of utopian literature, which tends to gloss over slavery and the ongoing “Negro Question,” this already represents an unusual choice. Moreover, Johnson’s *Light Ahead* and to a minor extent Griggs’ *Imperium* demonstrate the general lack of interest, if not revisionism and whitewashing, that was part of the social discourse of the day. If we accept Johnson’s testimony, a veritable ideological invasion—described in terms of a pestilent infection that uses the media and religion as its vehicle (25)—was taking place aided by Republican indifference to an issue no longer seen as pressing. This is also the era in which Southern nostalgia and “Lost Cause” literature become increasingly popular; these literary phenomena begin immediately after the War, although their ideological roots can be found in pre-war anti-abolitionist propaganda; they increase in intensity after the transitory phase of Reconstruction and during the same three decades in which Utopian novels also become enormously popular. To understand the relevance of Twain’s peculiar and brutally honest depiction of slavery, that is extremely corporeal and non abstract, it is necessary to contrast it with the that of the healthy, contented and blissfully ignorant slaves that populate the novels of the “plantation school.” This reason alone renders *A Connecticut Yankee* a more pertinent and timely piece of satirical fiction than if we were to limit its critical scope to the sole institutions of monarchical Britain. Moreover, The fact that the slaves in *A Connecticut Yankee* are white rather than black could be seen as part of an attempt to render this historical phenomenon, seen merely as a racial issue that did not involve white people at a personal level, closer to the implied reader’s reality;⁴⁷ indeed, the fact that slavery is present in one of the sacred halls of Western literature is relevant in its iconoclastic intent.

⁴⁷ Twain may also be using the historical model of slavery as a metaphor to describe the current problems of capital versus labor. As we have seen, Benjamin Rush Davenport repeatedly uses slavery (and medieval glebe servitude) as a model in the agrarian-populist “*Uncle Sam’s Cabins* (1895).

Even Hank Morgan and King Arthur are temporarily enslaved while they are travelling in disguise and in drawing comparisons Hank relies, as he does elsewhere in the novel, on the example of the South: “This same infernal law had existed in our own South in my own time, more than thirteen hundred years later, and under it hundreds of freemen who could not prove that they were freemen had been sold into lifelong slavery without the circumstance making any particular impression upon me” (200). This carnevalesque reversal by which King Arthur is transformed into the most lowly and disenfranchised of human beings is savagely iconoclastic in itself and is another example of Twain’s fondness for role inversion and mistaken identity as a comedic and satirical device.

It is not simply the presence of slavery that makes medieval Britain a proxy for the South of the nineteenth century. The narrator makes an explicit comparison between the behavior of the lower-class inhabitants of both societies when he notices “the alacrity with which this oppressed community had turned their cruel hands against their own class in the interest of the common oppressor” (171). Not only does Hank draw parallels between the South and Camelot, he offers a critical and utterly prosaic view of the Confederacy’s participation in the Civil War:

It reminded me of a time thirteen centuries away, when the ‘poor whites’ of our South who were always despised and frequently insulted by the slave-lords around them, and who owed their base condition simply to the presence of slavery in their midst, were yet pusillanimously ready to side with the slave-lords in all political moves for the upholding and perpetuating of slavery, and did also finally shoulder their muskets and pour out their lives in an effort to prevent the destruction of that very institution which degraded them. And there was only one redeeming feature connected with that pitiful piece of history; and that was, that secretly the ‘poor white’ did detest the slave-lord, and did feel his own shame. (172)

This is not merely a fortuitous and isolated association. Hank repeatedly uses the South as a term of comparison in explaining the subjugated condition in which both slaves and free men live, be it in the form of indoctrination as or economic exploitation (174-175).

It is not only the “poor whites” of Camelot that remind Hank of the South as even its highborn inhabitants closely resemble the Southern aristocracy that Twain had satirized in multiple occasions. A number of critics have pointed out how Twain’s previous criticism of an idealized medieval chivalric imaginary and its deleterious effect on Southern society continues in *A Connecticut Yankee*. The author’s evaluation of Southern society in *Life on the Mississippi* is a searing indictment⁴⁸ of Sir Walter Scott’s purported diffusion of “decayed and swinish forms of religion [,] decayed and degraded systems of government [,] sillinesses and emptinesses, sham grandeurs, sham gauds, and sham chivalries of a brainless and worthless long-vanished society” (375). Twain states that these “harms [...] flourish pretty forcefully still” in Southern society: “Not so forcefully as half a generation ago, perhaps, but still forcefully. There, the genuine and wholesome civilization of the nineteenth century is curiously confused and commingled with the Walter Scott Middle-Age sham civilization” (375). Regarding this description Scott Dalrymple rhetorically asks: “What better description of the society Twain derides in *A Connecticut Yankee*?” (4). Even by observing *A Connecticut Yankee* alone we find characterizations of the Arthurian aristocracy that are easily associated with the South. At one point Hank states that “a privileged class, an aristocracy, is but a band of slaveholders under another name” (136). This unbridled and tyrannical power is paradoxically coupled with their almost childlike set of

⁴⁸ Regarding the conventional perceptions of Twain’s opinion of Walter Scott’s works, a distinction needs to be made between the works themselves and their reception.

behaviors such as their penchant for self-celebratory tall tales or dueling in defense of an all sacred concept of honor. Therefore, the “dudes and dudedesses” of the Camelot court can easily be seen to represent the Southern Aristocracy (although not exclusively); however, Twain’s characterization is not necessarily one sided or demonizing and a certain ambiguity is present: Twain, particularly in his portrait of King Arthur, makes a point of underlining the childlike naïveté and ambiguous nobility of character that accompanies the Arthurian aristocracy’s participation in an unjust society or in acts of violence. The Knights of the Round Table and Arthur himself may remind us, to some extent, of the Southern gentlemen (such as Col. Sherburn or Col. Grangerford) who inhabit the landscape of *Huckleberry Finn* and combine homicidal and irrational violence with the appearance of gentility and charisma. This non-univocal presentation of those who are to be considered the main philosophical and physical adversaries of the protagonist is fundamental to my successive analysis of the novel.

T.J. Jackson Lears sees *A Connecticut Yankee* as an example of the Victorian yearning for medieval vitality and innocence but mediated through the authors “own personal ambivalence” towards civilization, represented by the “genteel literati whose favor he courted” (165). Camelot becomes, therefore, the locus of “the medieval childhood of the race” and “the repository of his fantasies of liberation” but also “the object of his progressive scorn” (165). Lears states that there is almost a sense of envy towards the Arthurians as they are, like Huck Finn, “free from the self-consciousness, the restraints and decorum, of Victorian ‘sivilization’” (165) and, therefore, possess a series of traits which “reflect the Eden of Twain’s youth” (166). I would both extend and limit certain elements of Lears evaluation: I do agree that some form of reaction towards the “genteel literati” and Northern culture in general is present, however, I see it more as being textually embodied in the figure of Hank Morgan than in an idealistic, escapist portrayal of the land he visits; it is Hank’s sanctimonious and often hypocritical attitudes (which remind us closely of our utopian authors) and his failure both to enact

progress and recognize the validity of other cultures that satirize the “genteel literati” more than anything else. Furthermore, I believe this critique to be more intellectual and historical than a question of emotional resentment or a yearning for childhood innocence (although these elements are not necessarily absent): the conduct and failures of the North in the Civil War and Reconstruction play a fundamental role in Twain’s historical analysis. This is not to say that the author is indulging in “Lost Cause” revisionism and nostalgia. In fact, rather than the locus of unbridled and guiltless nostalgic escapism, the Camelot-Hannibal Twain describes contains its grey areas and its explicitly dark areas; the fundamental aspect of “the Eden of Twain’s youth” as it represented in this and other works (such as *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* or *Pudd’nhead Wilson*) is to show how little of an Eden it actually was, the specter of slavery being omnipresent and looming large.

Twain reflections during these years are not limited to the past of slavery and he is also well aware of the current disenfranchised status of African-Americans in his time. This is evident even from a superficial analysis of *Pudd’nhead Wilson* (1894) which deals with the question of racial identity and the absurdity of miscegenation laws. However, in 1877 while still writing *A Connecticut Yankee*, Twain had these issues in mind as testified by explicit entries in the author’s notebooks. Twain had plans to write another time travel narrative, possibly entitled “1899,”⁴⁹ which was seemingly conceived of by the author as a full scale novel (he mentions yet unwritten “Chapters”). The narrator would very possibly have been a contemporary character displaced into the future as is evident from this annotation: “The thing that struck me, was their methods of punishing criminals” (346 *Mark Twain’s Notebooks*). This never completed story, which Lydia R. Cooper interprets as “a possible

⁴⁹ This may also have been the title of a single prospective chapter and not that of the entire work.

sequel to *A Connecticut Yankee*” (69), was to depict a future world in which capital punishment no longer exists and “All crimes [are] punished with humiliations—life-long public exposure <to> in ridiculous & grotesque situations—& never in any other way [...]. [...] — Sense of ridicule is bitterer than death & more feared—met [men?] commit suicide daily to escape it” (346 *Mark Twain’s Notebooks*). The fact that Twain was planning to write a *Looking Backward* style narrative where the parameters of time travel of *A Connecticut Yankee* are reversed is fascinating in itself; however, a more coherent entry only a few pages later, also dated 1887 and possibly entitled “Prophecy,”⁵⁰ is more relevant to our current discussion:

1910. In the South, whites of both sexes have to ride in the smoking car (& pay full fare,) the populous & dominant colored man will not ride with them. The colored brother has succeeded in having severe laws against miscegenation passed. There is no such thing as a free ballot. The whites have to vote as they are told, or be visited by masked men & shot, or whipped, & house burned & wife & d <stripped nar[k] > turned out in their night clothes. More religion than ever with both colors. (358-59)

Although “1899” and “Prophecy” are not necessarily linked due to their different time frames, it is interesting to see that Twain, while beginning to conceive of a time travel story, was reflecting upon the issues facing African-Americans. Had he developed one idea or the other into a more complete form the two concepts may have been merged together into a single narrative as in the case of the various scattered annotations that went to form *A Connecticut Yankee*. What Twain proposes in

⁵⁰ The editors of *Mark Twain’s Notebooks and Journals Vol. III* (U. of California Press, 1979) specify in a note that “This heading may have been added by Albert Bigelow Paine” (358)

“Prophecy” is a carnevalesque role reversal or even revenge fantasy: African-Americans are now in power and whites are subjected to segregation, Jim Crow style legislation and Klan terrorism. This shows how the author was well aware of the failures of Reconstruction with regard to racial issues and intended to offer up an inverted mirror image of society; unfortunately, Twain’s own speculative-dystopian foray into these matters was never developed into a published text although there are traces of these reflections in *A Connecticut Yankee*.

Therefore, Twain’s Camelot should not only be seen as a reflection of the past but as an amalgam of various elements, both literary and real-worldly, that includes America’s present. Of the many contemporary tendencies that are being criticized, one which I will be analyzing in the next chapter is the literary and sentimental re-elaboration of Civil War memory. During the Reconciliation era, the Civil War is separated from the issue of race and transformed into an epic-tragic clash between Anglo-Saxon brothers. From the analysis above it should be obvious how Twain resists this tendency and maintains a more pragmatic or cynical view of the War. My effort in the next chapters will be to delineate the dynamics of literary Reconciliation and reveal the odd kinship that exists between utopian and “Lost Cause” literature. I will also provide an in depth analysis of those elements of *A Connecticut Yankee* that specifically resist the Reconciliation era romanticizing of the War narrative and the utopian tendency to abstract it, forget it and move on.

Chapter 5. The South: Utopian Fiction, Plantation Fiction and the Memory of the Civil War

In this chapter I will be analyzing the common ground shared by utopian fiction and plantation fiction. The reader may be asking what utopian fiction and Plantation fiction could possibly have in common. The truth is, quite a few things. Both literatures start from very different premises: one sees slavery as an antiquated system and the Civil War as a means of necessary progress; the other sees pre-war South as an idyllic world that was destroyed by the Civil War. In utopian fiction Slavery and the Civil War are barely or briefly mentioned; in plantation fiction, the drama centers around these events.

The two genres, though starting from different premises, produce similar results with regard to Civil War memory. In utopian literature, slavery and the Civil War are placed firmly in the past and represent historical examples rather than ongoing phenomena. They are transformed into mere chapters within the master narrative of progress and the War loses its moral relevance and racial connotations. The proponents of the “Lost Cause” notoriously whitewash slavery obtaining similar results. Despite a completely different characterization of the War (in both its causes and results) in both literatures the black bodies of slavery and the fallen bodies of the dead disappear, substituted by abstraction, pathos, bombast and sentimentalism. The presence of the same Anglo-Saxonist rhetoric in both utopian fiction and “Lost Cause” literature demonstrates a commonality of spirit that transcends regional divisions.

Other matters arise in comparing the two genres: utopian texts discuss social injustice; they claim *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a source for inspiration due to its world-shaping influence. They also

quote the Civil War as an example of enforced and successful progress. Why then do the utopian authors ignore social injustice in the South given their historical and literary sources of inspiration? I would argue that this absence is an act of voluntary ignorance, motivated by the trauma of failure and burgeoning imperial ideologies.

I will also explain the reasons behind the scarcity of Southern utopian texts and the lack of idiosyncratic traits of the few examples that exist. There are obvious social and economic differences between North and South that explain the relative absence of a Southern utopian fiction, but it is also a question of differing historical worldviews. These differences are evident in the “forward” looking utopian fiction of the North and the “backward” looking plantation fiction of the South. However, there are also unsuspected similarities between the two literatures, not only concerning the results they obtain, but also in their origins and inspiration. These similarities will be delineated throughout the course of this chapter.

My statement is that “Lost Cause” literature and plantation fiction are the Southern equivalent of Northern utopian fiction. In the first chapter I observed how *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) was an explicit influence on these authors, particularly in their choice of the novelistic form: they believed this novel had catalyzed world changing action and hoped their texts would have the same benign influence. If in the North *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is the inspiration for the creation of the utopian genre, in the post-war South there are other responses. In the 1880s, “Lost Cause” literature, which included the newly resuscitated “plantation school,” responded to the accusations launched a generation ago often quoting Stowe's novel as a direct interlocutor. Apart from this ‘parentage,’ the “plantation school” and utopian literature share an odd kinship due to the themes they invoke: mainly, that of the pastoral with its opposition between corrupt, hectic, urban modern life and simple, agrarian past. In demonstrating

the affinity between the two forms of literature, I will show how they are both paradigmatic of the Reconciliation era

I. *Failed Reconstruction and Successful Reconciliation*

Thanks to Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, the utopian novel becomes "perhaps the most widely read type of literature in America" (Shurter in Roemer 3); it also generates a host of imitators and respondents who duplicate Bellamy's themes and style. The authors who follow in Bellamy's footsteps tend to be of his same social background and, despite thematic or formal variations, they tackle the same issues and present similar worldviews. According to Roemer, a "clear majority of the utopian authors were middle- and upper-class professionals" and "with few exceptions [...] Protestant, native American, white, male and middle-aged" (11). More importantly, this clear majority of authors can be geographically situated in the Northeast and mid-Atlantic areas (48%) and in the Midwest (34%) with only 5% of utopian authors originating from the South. This explains why a "Southern" perspective is notably lacking from the works we have so far analyzed. The marginal presence of African American and Southern issues is not only a matter of geography and race but also age: these authors, for the most part, belonged to a generation of "middle-aged men who had 'missed out' on the Civil War" (Roemer 177) and for which slavery was simply a thing of the past. The utopian authors were attempting to live up to the standard of their mothers' and fathers' abolitionist crusade in *new* battlefields; what they failed to recognize is that the previous generation's conflict on the issue of emancipation was still far from over.

The relative lack of Southern utopian texts can be explained by the obvious socio-economical differences between North and South. The phenomena that engendered utopian fiction affected the

North and West more heavily than the South. As stated by Roemer “this region was not experiencing the typical American ‘success story’” and various factors, including “extensive poverty:”

combined to undermine faith in the traditional American ‘self-image’ of ‘a chosen people and their land [as] a Utopia on the make.’ In other words, the South [...] offered a ‘peculiarly’ un-American, unfertile soil for the type of utopianism advocated by northern and western reformers. (Conversely it offered an appropriate environment for the backward looking, ‘before the war’ escape literature written by Thomas Nelson Page and others). (*America as Utopia* 59)

Therefore, within the same time frame in which the utopian novel becomes popular, a seemingly opposite but equally popular form of literature is produced by Southern writers. Utopian fiction and the Southern “escape literature” produced by “Page and others” may have more in common than what appears on the surface. Although one genre looks forward and the other backward, they are both didactic in their intent and what they *actually* look to is the present: these authors are declaredly attempting to replicate Harriet Beecher Stowe’s accomplishment of moving the hearts and minds of the Nation. This is true for the utopian Northerners as much as it is for the Southern supporters of “Lost Cause” ideologies and both Page and Thomas Dixon Jr. made declarations in this sense. What changes are the attitudes of the respective genres towards the parent text: for utopian literature it is inspiration, for the new “plantation school” it is reaction. Concomitantly, what also seems to differ between the two genres is their attitude towards slavery and their treatment of the Civil War. However, the results, though starting from different premises, are similar.

If utopian literature tends to ignore or skip over the War and the failures of Reconstruction, plantation literature, in its new post-war form, is obsessed with these events and strives to tell its side of the story (or history). One of the results, in the case of both literatures, is that the moral issue at the

center of the Civil War becomes more muddled or is ignored. Slavery is whitewashed by the “plantation school” by offering sentimental plots, idyllic imagery of beautiful plantations and devoted and contented servants. The sparse mentions of the Civil War in utopian fiction characterize it as a conflict with a right and a wrong side; however, both slavery and the Civil War tend to be explained in terms of Southern “backwardness,” of the South not falling in line with the march of progress. The decisional and moral aspects of the War are surrendered to deterministic necessities and it becomes just another step in the history of progress, on a par with Westward expansion and Indian removal. Moreover, the utopian authors distance themselves from the violence, horror and ambiguities that the War actually involved⁵¹ and from the unfulfilled promise of its aftermath. For these same reasons, utopian literature also tends to eliminate race from the war narrative and slavery also becomes an abstract, bodiless and raceless phenomenon. In various works, slavery is compared to the contemporary exploitation of the working class and of yeoman farmers making it part of a socio-historical exegesis rather than a problem that has yet to be solved.

This reticence regarding the Civil War is not just a peculiarity of the utopians but a generalized tendency of the American literary landscape. Daniel Aarons, in “The Unwritten War” (1973) has shown how even the great writers of the era failed to say “something revealing about the meaning, if not the causes, of the War” (xviii). Aarons shows how some writers “draped the War in myth, transmuted its actuality into symbol, and interpreted the Republic’s greatest failure as a sinful interlude

⁵¹ A different or perhaps secondary development of Civil War memory is the romanticization of the War narrative whereby it becomes a clash of ideals and noble warriors; outside of utopian literature this is an extremely diffuse tendency but we do find a few instances even within this genre. In the second phase of openly imperial utopian literature there is even an invocation of the warrior spirit of the war generation (in Davenport’s *Anglo-Saxons, Onward!*) in order to fight battles of conquest abroad.

in a grand evolutionary process” (xviii). This is the historical outlook also notice in utopian fiction, although by 1888 (and beyond) the idea of “sin” had been removed and substituted by “necessity.” In this chapter I will show how this attitude is common to various utopian authors, from Bellamy (*Looking Backward* 25) to Chavannes (*In Brighter Climes* 170). Other authors, according to Aarons were “traumatized by the four-year nightmare” and “sought to distance themselves from it or suppress it or rationalize its terrors” (xviii). This attitude is also observable in utopian fiction and overlaps with the tendency to mythologize or integrate the War within grand narratives or epic-romantic ones. Aarons analysis helps us understand that the reticence of utopian fiction and the pathos and nostalgia of plantation fiction spring from a more generalized national-literary *zeitgeist*.

Both utopian and plantation fiction are paradigmatic literatures of the Reconciliation era: they both chose to ignore inconvenient truths of the past in order to move forward together, albeit in different ways and starting from different premises. Utopian literature confirms the North as the winning side of history and adheres to a techno-industrial mindset, often heavily mitigated by pastoral yearnings; there is the frequent attempt to harmoniously integrate the proverbial “machine” in the “garden” and in this sense the Northern form of literature appeals to the same tropes of the Southern. David W. Blight explains how, much like utopian fiction, the works of Page and his “host of imitators” are an escapist reaction against the present: “The Soot of factories, the fear of new machines, the unsettling dynamism of the New South could dissipate in the rarified air of gracious, orderly, old plantations; an unheroic age could now escape to the alternative universe of gallant cavaliers and their trusted servants” (222). Both strains of literature, therefore, seem inspired by, or cater to, an American agrarian-pastoral ideal that transcends regional divisions or can even be seen as parallel developments of the same. Indeed, the escapist function that largely contributes to the success of these novels involves the Northern public more than Southern readers (Schivelbusch 97).

According to both Wolfgang Schivelbusch and Blight, the popularity of Southern nostalgic fiction is a fundamental component in the reconciliation of North and South and acts as a vehicle for a series of ideologies that begin to take hold also in the North—or reinforces pre-existing ideologies. Schivelbusch states that if *Uncle Tom's Cabin* “helped mobilize Northern public opinion against slavery” (inspiring many utopian writers for this very reason) the “plantation novels” that were “all the rage in 1880s and 1990s” have a similar role in North-South reconciliation as they “presupposed readers willing to embrace the reunited nation” (91-92). The texts that confirm Blight’s and Schivelbusch’s assessment of this cultural and literary exchange between North and South are various. Later in this chapter I will analyze those utopian texts that best exemplify this exchange such as the Bellamy-esque novels of “Southern” author Albert Chavannes—*The Future Commonwealth, Or, What Samuel Balcom Saw in Socioland* (1892) and *In Brighter Climes, Or, Life in Socioland: A Realistic Novel* (1895)—and William H. Bishop’s *The Garden of Eden U.S.A.* The latter, though written by a Northern university Professor, conforms to the tropes and trappings of plantation fiction. I will also deal briefly with texts produced by proponents of the “Lost Cause” and the “plantation school” to better characterize the parameters of the North-South exchange.

This exchange characterizes itself, broadly, as a bilateral cultural and political process: on the one hand, the North exports its economic forms and the “religion” of progress of which the “New South” movement is an expression; on the other, the South exports idyllic agrarian imagery which rekindles pastoral yearnings within an age of chaotic industry, as well as guidelines for disenfranchisement and segregation. However, it is an also oversimplification to see the South as the sole purveyor of racial discourse within this binomial relationship. In the postwar cultural “trade” the South merely contributes to pre-existing racial hierarchies that transcend the North-South divide rather than inventing all new ones.

Race, according to both Aaron and Blight, was a fundamental component of post-War literary reticence and political reconciliation; for both critics, the national process of forgetting hinged upon the irresolvable problems of the race question. Aarons states that the “‘emotional resistance’ blurring literary insight” of the Nation’s major authors was race:

Without the long presence of chattel slavery, Americans would not have allowed the usual animosities springing from cultural differences to boil up into murderous hatreds. Without the Negro, there would have been no Civil War, yet he figured only peripherally in the War literature. [...] he remained even in the midst of his literary well-wishers an object of contempt or dread, or an uncomfortable reminder of abandoned obligations, or a pestiferous shadow, emblematic of guilt or retribution. (xviii)

This, in part, explains why “the Negro” is removed almost completely from utopian fiction; his position as a “reminder of abandoned obligations” does not sit well with narratives of progress that see the War as a step towards Utopia. David Blight describes a different type of reaction to the trauma of Civil War failure that goes beyond mere reticence; he shows how reconciliation between North and South was possible due also to a development of a shared culture of racial supremacy (102, 138). As we move closer to the imperial era, a variety of racial discourses congeal into a smaller number of unifying metanarratives; one of the most popular was Anglo-Saxonism. There are tangible signs of this dynamic in both “Lost Cause” literature and utopian fiction. In the later development of both forms of literature, we see more frequent appeals to Anglo-Saxonist rhetoric. In utopian fiction, Anglo-Saxonism tends to combine with imperialistic fantasies of global expansion. This in itself is no novelty. Paul A. Kramer explains how by the mid-nineteenth century “Anglo-Saxonism and U.S. nationalism were congruent enough that [...] in discussions of the white conquest of Native Americans and Mexicans, Anglo-Saxons were proclaimed the racial embodiments and shock troops of American Manifest Destiny”

(1322-23). Therefore, there existed a correlation between Anglo-Saxonism and Union expansionism that was racial, but also a matter of state. As Kramer states: “Those defined as outside the sacred realm of Anglo-Saxon dominion or American republican virtue were equally subject to just war” (1322).

For this reason, the South has a complex, often conflicted relationship with the concepts of nationalism and imperialism given that it itself was at one time a conquered space. This does not mean that the South did not have imperial aspirations both before and after the war;⁵² however, during and immediately after the Civil War, it is obvious that the notion of strong centralized state butts heads with the Confederate separatist aspirations and “Lost Cause” rhetoric on more than one point. This ambiguity also characterizes the South’s relationship with Anglo-Saxonism: it is a narrative that harks back to a supposed Northern-Puritan legacy of race and political institutions; therefore, it clashes with the aristocratic-cavalier, “Anglo-Norman,” Scottish or Celtic foundational narratives of the South (be they real or imagined). However, Dixon’s and Page’s adherence to Anglo-Saxonism is a demonstration of the trans-regional character of this ideology at this point in time; the fact that it is also heavily present in Northern utopian fiction is evidence of a reconciliation process that unifies the country using a pre-existing cultural-racial narrative. It had served the Nation well before the War in validating westward expansion; after the War it became a perfect vehicle for national reunion, particularly in view of impending geopolitical interests. Despite a myriad of different forms of racial discourse, at the turn

⁵² Indeed, the Southern states contribution to National imperialism, both in material and textual forms, is significant. Walter Johnson, in *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (2013) analyzes the fundamental role the Southern states and the slave system played in forming the concept of an American empire.

of the century Anglo-Saxonism consolidates itself as the most diffuse narrative of race. *The* perfect racial mythology for Reconciliation and “republican” empire.

II. *Chavannes' Liberal Utopianism, The New South and The South That Time Forgot*

Roemer's detailed analysis of the demographic data makes it possible to speak of a relative majority of utopian writers and even of a shared cultural substrate; this substrate is rendered evident from the recurrence of certain ideas and culturally significant metaphors. However, when speaking of what represents the smallest minority, that is Southern utopian writers, things become more complex. Roemer's assessment raises the obvious question of why there are so few Southern authors. Due also to the mobility of certain authors (Roemer, *America as Utopia* 59-60), deciding who is “Southern” rather than “Northern” is also a problem. Are there traits and themes that are distinctive of Southern utopian literature? Moreover, can Southern utopian literature be compared in any way to other examples of Southern literature of the day? The “Lost cause” and “Old South” mythologies, for example, are not simply misattributed to Southern culture by some external force; they are cultivated and fiercely defended both in literature and in real life by their literary and political proponents. However, it is not necessarily true that these mythologies influence the landscape of the very few utopias produced in the South.

Albert Chavannes is an excellent example in case: he was born in Switzerland (1836), moved to Tennessee in 1848, briefly fought for the confederacy during the War, lived most of his life in Knox County Tennessee and was well integrated within his community of residence, even enjoying a brief local political career. However, Chavannes' Bellamy inspired utopian works *The Future Commonwealth, Or, What Samuel Balcom Saw in Socioland* (1892) and *In Brighter Climes, Or, Life in Socioland: A Realistic Novel* (1895) are barely distinguishable from those of his North-Eastern

counterparts and do not display references to “Lost Cause” mythologies or Confederate nostalgia. Nor does he seem influenced by the New South creed. The subject of both novels is the fictional utopian community of “Socioland,” a colony founded by “sociologists” in Africa that adheres to Bellamy-esque principles. According to the author himself, the choice of placing Socioland in Africa has no other motivation but the fact that “[He] was only seeking for a place where the needed seclusion could be attained. The Mormons had pre-empted the only available spot in this country, and [he had] strong objections to the Moon or Mars as a dwelling place for earthly beings” (*In Brighter Climes* iii). In founding his fictional utopian community on foreign lands, Chavannes demonstrates various incongruities with the New South creed, particularly its fetishistic attachment to the territory: the very fact that foreignness is a necessary prerequisite for utopia is incompatible with the idea of economic renewal of the South and the Southern nationalistic spirit that engenders the movement. Moreover, the fact that Socioland is isolated and that trade is heavily regulated (35) makes it impossible to see it as peripheral colony of a Southern empire (*à la* Henry Watterson), or of an American one at that. In fact, any mention of the outside world is made only in terms of negative comparison with the perfect Commonwealth of Socioland.⁵³

Southern attitudes towards the transformative potential of New South movement are as divided as those displayed by the Northern utopian writers towards industrialization and progress. It is accepted in terms of *revanche* (to use Schivelbusch’s terms), that is, as part of a reactive process of rebirth after defeat and not without ambivalences. It is characterized as an inevitable and often reluctant move and

⁵³ If Chavannes, however, is using Socioland as a metaphor for what he hopes the South may become in the future, a socialistic variation on the New South Creed may be a hypothesis of interpretation.

never described as a passive acceptance of a “superior” Northern ethos or system. In line with the “Cavalier” mythos, many Southern authors and thinkers despise money—particularly when it is owed to others—and the greed that accompanies industrialization; these sentiments are more often than not accompanied by a fear of predatory Carpetbaggers⁵⁴ and black uprisings or enfranchisement. Moreover, given the obvious socio-demographic disparity in the South, the inevitable labor issues that come as a result of industrialization necessarily coincide with racial politics and, therefore, conservative reactions. However, these issues are only covered extensively in the African American utopian novels we have analyzed. Most utopian authors and nostalgic Southern authors either ignore, dismiss or fiercely react against the organization of the black working class.

The New South’s principal and most enthusiastic proponent, Henry W. Grady, was notoriously conservative in matters of race and publicly called for the continuation of white supremacy. In an address “delivered at the Dallas, Texas, State Fair, October 1887” Grady states that:

the supremacy of the white race of the South must be maintained forever, and the domination of the negro race resisted at all points and at all hazards [...]. This is the declaration of no new truth. It has abided forever in the marrow of our bones, and shall run forever with the blood that feeds Anglo-Saxon hearts. In political compliance the South has evaded the truth, and men have drifted from their convictions. But we cannot escape this issue. (33)

⁵⁴ In utopian fiction, the figure of the Carpetbagger finds its “Northern” equivalent in the various scapegoats, both racial and social, we have identified in previous chapters. Indeed, in this era we find associations between Jewishness and carpetbaggery (or similar predatory action) that continue to this day (Rockoff).

The only innovation present in this declaration, if compared to pre-War anti-abolitionist discourse, is the use of Anglo-Saxonist rhetoric. Grady's conservatism is evident from his mention of previous race related "convictions" which the Southern man has recently "drifted" away from. Moreover, in justifying white superiority, Grady invokes images of faithful, fawning slaves that would not be out of place in a plantation novel:

I want no sweeter music than the crooning of my old 'mammy,' now dead and gone to rest, as I heard it when she held me in her loving arms [...]. I want no truer soul than that which moved the trusty slave, who for four years, while my father fought with the armies that barred his freedom, slept every night at my mother's chamber door, holding her and her children as safe as if her husband stood guard, and ready to lay down his humble life on her threshold [...]. When the master, going to a war in which slavery was involved, said to his slave, 'I leave my home and loved ones in your charge,' the tenderness between man and master stood disclosed. (28-29)

This passage is revealing of how much the "New South" in Grady's mind is linked to the "Old South." Moreover, in a demonstration of reconciliation-era, "Lost Cause" rhetoric, we see the Civil War characterized as noble fight for Southern "freedom" in which slavery is merely "involved."⁵⁵

Thomas Nelson Page, together with "most plantation romancers" (Blight 227), was also an ambivalent supporter of the New South movement. In the essay "The Old South," he describes a South

⁵⁵ Moreover, we find a curious instance of the sensualization of a black body, rather than its abstraction, in the figure of the "mammy" which invokes recurring theme in Southern literature of the double or "other" mother; what is also curious is the almost homoerotic characterization of the master servant relationship.

which “Under the euphemism of reconstruction” was “dismembered, disfranchised, denationalized” (4), “crucified [...] laid away in the sepulchre [...] sealed with the seal of government” (in Blight 227). Using various metaphors of resurrection and rejuvenation he describes how the South rose again “as America’s chosen and redemptive region” (Blight 227). Page unites a sense of messianic, “manifest destiny” style rhetoric with thinly veiled conservatism. He repeatedly insists on the fact that “the New South is, in fact, simply the Old South with its energies directed into new lines” (5) and invokes a divine will behind the South’s rebirth: “But God in his providence had his great purpose for her and he called her forth. With the old spirit strong within her she renewed her youth [...]. The outside world gazed astonished at her course, and said, this is not the Old South, but a new civilization, a New South” (4). The biblical-metaphorical rhetoric used by Page here to describe the South as a beacon on which the eyes of the world are set is almost Winthropian.

Chavannes’ own isolated “City on the Hill” of “Socioland” is more evocative of the Pilgrim or Pioneer colonial traditions than Southern nostalgia or the New South Creed. This idea of an exclusive beacon of civilization in the wilderness is reinforced by Mr. Mansfield’s (the Dr. Leete equivalent) admonition to his children during an outing: “You must not scatter in all directions. Remember this is not Socioland, and we do not know if wild animals or natives may not be lurking in these hills” (*In Brighter Climes* 112). The racial discourse inherent in this casual reference to the “natives,” seen as one of the dangers of the landscape, pertains to colonial-adventure literature, not the “plantation novel.” In fact, Chavannes seems unequivocal in his condemnation of the slave system and includes it within a list—together with war and predatory capitalism—of the negative consequences of individualism: “What upheld human slavery? The laws enacted by individuals to protect them in the pursuit of private gain. What caused its abolition? An increase of sympathy which extended the protection of the nation to all the oppressed In the land” (*In Brighter Climes* 170). Chavannes does not attempt to justify or

whitewash slavery in any way, nor does make any claim to racial supremacy or segregation; he is more conservative when it comes to denouncing the “evil results of our present economical system” (*Future Commonwealth* i) and urges for a slow, pondered industrial advancement. Chavannes even hints at racial integration within the utopian community: “Extensive cane plantations, palm trees, and a predominance of black blood among the settlers, gave the whole picture a tropical appearance” (21). Although blackness is once again part of the landscape together with palm trees and cane plantations, it is at least mentioned as part of a thriving society—which is more than can be said of most utopias. However, it is not specified whether this integration extends to Socioland itself or just its neighbors, nor what working relationships exist within the abovementioned plantations. Are these predominantly black settlers African-American colonists or have they settled from neighboring areas of Africa? Are they intended to be equal partners in the foundation of a new world or are they a cheap work force? It is difficult to answer these questions without speculation as the text does not go into great detail.

Less equivocal in this sense is Mary Elizabeth Lease. As in the case of Chavannes, it is not easy to pin her down to a stereotype of regional identity: she was born and died in the North, Pennsylvania and New York respectively, but lived and worked for most of her life in Texas and Kansas. She was also the daughter of a Union officer whose death in captivity brought economic ruin to the family (“Lease” *Encyclopedia of the Great Plains*). Her proposal, in the treatise *The Problem of Civilization Solved* (1895), is to export a slaveless plantation system “with intelligent white men as planters” and “a hundred and fifty millions of the starving Hindoos and rat-eating denizens of China” (Lease) as a workforce to be educated in the ways of Western productivity; however, the idea of global, Anglo-American, plantation style colonialism is popular with many Northern utopian writers, as is the idea of

colonizing Africa or South America.⁵⁶ A phenomenon that shares some resemblance with Mary Elizabeth Lease's proposal and which represents a real life (rather than literary) expression of Southern "nostalgia" is that of the so-called "Confederados." Immediately after the victory of the Union and up until the 1880s, there was a relocation of Southern planters—often in the company of their slaves—to Brazil and other parts of South America where slavery and the plantation system were still extant. The colonial-expansionist forms of utopianism we have analyzed are inspired by the mythology of the frontier or contemporary global-imperial dynamics rather than this marginal phenomenon. However, there is at least one novel that bears curious parallels with the real life exploits of the South American "Confederados."

Although Gouverneur Morris (1876–1953) belongs to a successive generation of writers, one of his earliest novels, *The Voice in The Rice* (1910) deserves a mention as it explicitly evokes pre-War Southern society within a utopian context. In this text, the protagonist is castaway (as per the conventions of the genre) to an isolated area of America referred to by its inhabitants as "the Santee"—a probable reference the actual Santee River Valley area in South Carolina. The inhabitants themselves are unrepentant slave owners who have cut off ties with the external world. They have renounced "King George" and "North Carolina" (26), they do not "acknowledge any sovereignty over [themselves] by the Union" (25) and seem quite adamant in their position: "It is possible that the

⁵⁶ See Ignatius Donnelly's *Caesar's Column* (1890) or Corwin Phelps' *An Ideal Republic* (1896) for example. As far as Southern imperial aspirations are concerned, precedents in terms of literature and actual events do exist. Walter Johnson in *River of Dark Dreams* (2013) reevaluates the importance of slavery and the central role played by the "Cotton Kingdom" in U.S expansionism, particularly towards Latin-America. Moreover, the real life (and well-known) exploits of the Hank Morganish William Walker in Central America or the Pan-American aspirations of Matthew Fontaine Maury can be seen as historical models for the imperialist fantasies purported in various utopian works, including *A Connecticut Yankee*. It is not excluded, therefore, that these events or historical figures may have had an influence on the genesis of these texts.

United States, by a supreme effort, unwilling [...] to let well enough alone, might reach us in the Santee, and destroy our property in slaves; but we who were scattered would return, reenslave the blacks, and resume our beneficent laws and customs” (26). The human landscape of *The Voice in The Rice* is one of wealthy Southern gentlemen, virtuous Belles and contented, fawning black slaves that certainly owes a debt to the “plantation school.” Slaves are depicted as more “landscape” than “human” and are unflatteringly described at times as “immense, ugly fellows, black as the Styx” (116) that are both ignorant and superstitious. Their reaction to the protagonist’s arrival, for example, is taken directly from the tradition of colonial-adventure literature: “The negroes say [...]. that you are not a man, but a beneficent witch-doctor. A witchdoctor is to the negroes what Hermes and Apollo and all those nice persons were to the Greeks” (71).

Perhaps the most tragic but also most humanized black figure is that of “Coffee Pot,” who is first seen by the protagonist “fawning and rubbing his hands” (12) and owes his name to the fact that: “He once spilled a boiling pot of coffee upon Lord Nairn [the main antagonist]. Hence the name. It is one of derision, shame and ignominy. He smarts under it as under a whip” (12-13). Slavery itself is justified by the inhabitants of the Santee with arguments that hark back to the pre Civil War era:

We feed our labourers; but we do not pay them. In our happy, inaccessible and amphibious little country we have never felt the necessity of giving up our slaves. Immediately after the incident from which he derives his name I purchased Coffee Pot from Lord Nairn. He is very well treated, very happy very efficient, very ignorant. (16)

Apart from the “humanitarian” justifications of slavery, the historical and political aspects of this anachronism are dealt with dismissingly by the Santee people: “When Lincoln freed the slaves he only

freed such slaves as he had the power to free. Ours were in no wise affected. They have never heard of a Civil War or of Lincoln” (25).

The novel initially seems to portray the society as well functioning, wealthy and harmonious, particularly with regard to the relationship between masters and slaves. Being that it is also a pulp, adventure novel—perhaps more than it is a utopian fiction—there are plot twists and vicissitudes that distinguish it from the previous generation of utopian texts and render its overall message unclear; it represents a far cry from the didactic certainty and optimistic will to change the world of Bellamy and other previous speculative-utopian writers. The main element of danger in *The Voice in The Rice* is not represented by the slaves themselves but by the excessive, corrupt power of the man who is richest (Lord Nairn) and therefore has more slaves. The novel closes on an image of Lord Nairn that may distantly remind us of Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899):

There he sits at this moment, doubtless, in his wheel-chair in the hottest corner of his garden, served and enriched by those hundreds of ignorant sea-coast negroes who are his slaves in body and soul, fearing him more than death. There in his corner of the United States he sits and laughs at emancipation, holding men in bondage, smuggling, defying the law and cheating the gallows. (158)

Both in style and intent *The Voice in The Rice* lacks the highly didactic, religious or philosophical components that characterize the examples of utopian literature of the previous generation. Within the realm of speculative fiction, Gouverneur Morris’ novel represents the shift away from the concerned, political utopias that are the direct descendants of *Uncle Tom* towards the pulp, adventure and science fiction literature of the following century.

III. The South as a New Frontier: Nostalgic Literature and Utopia

As we have seen, drastic solutions to racial issues—such as segregation and exclusion—are not a Southern prerogative. The racial discourse we find in the Northern and Midwestern utopias tends to justify itself scientifically, often appealing to evolutionary or sociological theories and pseudo-Darwinian hierarchies of race. Utopian literature is not the main means through which Southern racialized discourse is reiterated and remains a somewhat marginal phenomenon. Southern Nostalgia literature and other “Lost Cause” narratives—be they political, biographical or fictional—are the most popular means for the reintroduction of old forms of racial discourse into literary culture after the Civil War. The manner in which these texts operate is far different from the blunt, direct style we find in many Northern utopias that explicitly advocate segregation, racial selection and “cleansing.”

From the historical works of Edward A. Pollard and Jubal A. Ear, to the biographical testimony and efforts of the *United Daughters of the Confederacy*, to the works of Thomas Nelson Page and Thomas F. Dixon Jr., these texts (and real-worldly actions) create, foster and cater to the Southern need to define their defeat in their own terms. Rather than being aggressive and explicit in their stance, these works notoriously whitewash slavery or elide it from the narrative of noble defeat they were transforming the Civil War into. Through these texts a vast segment of Southern culture crafts for itself a collective imaginary of past pastoral peace and harmonious relationships between masters and slaves; the South cultivates its literary mask of victimhood by assuming and attributing fictional identities: former slaves as either docile and faithful or potentially dangerous ignorant brutes, themselves as either offended honorable gentleman or victimized maidens.

Gender is a key element in the construction of a Southern post-war fictional identity; genderized it is common to find characterizations of North-South relations in reconciliation literature in which the

South assumes the “female” role and the North the “male” role. Wolfgang Schivelbusch (in *The Culture of Defeat*) describes the formula of “Postwar plantation literature” as that of a plot in three sections:

The exposition depicts the idyll of the happy peacetime plantation. The outbreak of war and the dissolution of the community follows: the men go to the front; the women stay behind. A time of misery and danger commences. Marauding gangs and renegade Yankee soldiers overrun the plantation. But just as all seems lost, a young Yankee officer and gentleman appears, ready to protect the women from the terrible fate that awaits them [...]. The plot concludes with a North-South wedding. (95-96)

According to Schivelbusch this “plantation-war-marriage trajectory” becomes the most reiterated “paradigm of symbolic reconciliation” and both North and South profit from it (96). Although these works are produced by Southern authors, it is in the Northern and National arena that this literature finds a more receptive audience, particularly towards the end of the century (1880s and 1890s). Curiously, this occurs during the same decades in which utopian literature was also growing in popularity. There seemed to be an exact formula to the success of plantation literature and it involved Southern culture catering (or pandering) to the romantic idea that the North had of the South and to the National politics of reconciliation. Schivelbusch states that “novelists wrote their plantation romances primarily for a Northern audience” and quotes the example of Thomas Nelson Page: “the most successful exponent of the ‘Plantation school’ [who] advised a young author who was having difficulty selling her novel: ‘It is the easiest thing in the world. Get a pretty girl and name her Jeanne, that name always takes! Make her fall in love with a federal officer and your story will be printed at once!’” (97). Schivelbusch sees this as an example of how “Southern culture was just as subject to Northern colonial exploitation as the Southern economy” (97), however, the other side to this exploitation is that the

collective imaginary and ideology that underlie these texts gain an extremely effective vehicle for their diffusion.

Even before the war, plantation fiction was, according to Schivelbusch: “the most important literary vehicle for the idea of a discrete Southern culture. Without it there would have been no plantation mythology or myth of the cavalier, and without the myth of the cavalier there would have been no belief in Southern cultural separatism” (92). If we accept Schivelbusch’s statement, then the belief in a distinct Southern culture is a testament to the power of narrative fictions in creating and consolidating *ad hoc* realities. In the North, this genre reaches its highest level of popularity (before the war) at the height of the abolitionist fervor. According to Schivelbusch, this denotes a certain ambivalence in the attitude of the North towards the South: on the one hand there were those that “condemned slavery as barbarism” on the other there were those who “enjoyed the beautiful illusion of the plantation Arcadia” (93).

Indeed, for Northern readers, both before and after the war, this fictional Southern landscape is the locus for escapism and exotic projections; the plantation becomes the “counterpart to the Northern office and factory” (Schivelbusch 92). After the War the “plantation novel” maintains its landscape and many of its tropes, however, it does integrate the Civil War and Reconstruction into the formula “enabling a clear contrast between the golden age of the past with the leaden reality of the present” (Schivelbusch 95). David W. Blight states that the works of Thomas Nelson Page and his imitators evoke “an almost retrievable world of idyllic race relations and agrarian virtue” to contrast a “Gilded Age of teeming cities, industrialization, and political skullduggery [...]. The Soot of factories, the fear of new machines, the unsettling dynamism of the New South could dissipate in the rarified air of gracious, orderly, old plantations” (222). The premises for this genre’s popularity mirror those of utopian literature which aimed at the renewal of the corrupted Northern, industrial landscape. Blight’s

analysis also evidences how, to a minor extent, the 1880s and 90s are an “unsettling” time for the South as well as the North for what concerns industrial and urban development. Blight’s characterization of plantation fiction and the reasons behind its popularity demonstrates the parallels between this genre and that of utopian fiction: pastoral escapism is fundamental to the popularity of both. Having analyzed a number of utopian works that present evident pastoral themes or inspirations, we can understand how both genres cater to the Arcadian yearnings that are deeply ingrained in American culture and transcend regional divisions. What we find in “plantation novels,” therefore, is the Southern equivalent to the Northern utopian text. The plantation is seen as an ideal society or utopian model that has already existed and which Southern writers draw inspiration from; this renders the production of utopias that depict distant or future societies unnecessary. The “backward glance” of plantation literature may seem in contrast with the “forward” glance of the Northern utopias; however, we have demonstrated how utopian literature also finds its models of inspiration in idealized, pastoral-agrarian pasts.

The New England author John W. De Forest demonstrates the exotic view held by many Northerners of the South and its people. His observations derive from the stereotypical premise of Southern “backwardness” and show that the South was the locus of quasi-utopian, colonial imaginings. In an essay entitled “Chivalrous and Semi-Chivalrous Southrons” (1869) De Forest writes of the Southerner: “They are more simple than we, more provincial, more antique more picturesque; they have fewer of the virtues of modern society, and more of the primitive, the natural virtues; they care less for wealth, art, learning, and other delicacies of an urban civilization [...]. [...], we shall do well to study this peculiar people, which will soon lose its peculiarities” (192). Whereas for others Southern “backwardness” elicits indignation, for De Forest it becomes a virtue; the Southerner is portrayed as a “noble savage” of sorts to be studied before he disappears, overwhelmed, like the “Indian,” by the necessary march of civilization. The South is contrasted with a jaded and corrupt urban reality of the

North and De Forest even seems to suggest that it holds the secret of a renewal for the North. Knowing what we know of utopian literature and its obsessive quest for unspoiled, primitive land and spiritual renewal it seems impossible not to view the South as a potential utopian space. De Forest's characterization of the South presents colonial/imperial overtones which are typical of the period, however, what is curious is to see this type of discourse applied to white Southerners rather than Native-Americans or foreign ethnicities. When he speaks of the inevitable loss of Southern peculiarities it is obviously intended that the "Southrons" will adopt the behavior and customs of those who at the time still occupy their territory by force of arms.

One Northern writer takes what De Forest simply suggests to the next level and through the power of his utopian imagining, the South becomes the *locus* of renewal. The Northerner William H. Bishop evidently evokes an Arcadian vision of the old South and portrays demeaning African American stereotypes that seem to be inspired by plantation fiction. His 1895 novel, *The Garden of Eden U.S.A.*, portrays the successful efforts of one Wayne Morrison in founding a utopian community in North Carolina. He buys a plantation in the South which becomes the center of this new "Eden." This choice is initially motivated by the fact that he seeks isolation, the necessary prerequisite for many a utopia: "I want to hunt up some out of the way place for a Garden of Eden" he states to his friend the narrator "I prefer the North, but the Northern people are too enterprising and inquisitive. I may go down South. after all" (49). Thus, the traditional stereotypes regarding the South are clearly reiterated. A utopian community is set up and the narrator returns from the urban North to visit. The Southern landscape he describes is clearly infused with an almost mythical pastoral abundance and beauty: "Everywhere throughout the valley were the trim and well kept garden farms, while upon the higher ground were the larger stock farms, with their modern-built farm buildings, and with immense herds of cattle and of sheep ranging about the foot-hills of the mountains" (131). However, this utopian

landscape does not merely hark back to an Arcadian/agrarian ideal but attempts to integrate “machine” within the “garden.” In a literal representation of Leo Marx’s concept, immediately after the previous description, the narrator mentions: “a train of freight cars, loaded as Wayne had already told me, with western corn, being backed into the basement of one of his great barns” (131). Not only do we find modern machines in this garden but futuristic technology that seems to have liberated man from the drudgery of agricultural labor. The narrator describes “cars loaded with vegetables of various kinds standing in the midst of these long garden fields, or being moved by electricity toward the domicile block” (129-30). “Electrical energy” is involved in the extraction of products from the ground:

after an early experience In the bungling methods of farming of a score of years before, to see potatoes turned out of the ground by means of electrical energy and the ground left in perfect preparation for some other crop, was equally startling. I discovered then for the first time the significance of the vast network of trolley wires which seemed to cover the valley. They were simply the means for the application of the modern power to the modern needs of the farm and garden. (130)

Agriculture is thus harmoniously transformed into a machine-dependent, factory-like process within bucolic surroundings and maximum productivity is obtained without the any of the unpleasant consequences of industrialization. The reference to the “bungling methods of farming of a score of years before” is perhaps denotative of the author’s view of society as something that proceeds through a trial-and-error evolutionary process and clearly shows technology as a liberating force. What is more ambiguous is whether this reference to “bungling methods” represents a critique of the South and its unproductive “backwardness.”

The Northern use of the South as a colonial space is relevant to our analysis of *A Connecticut Yankee* and the parallels between Wayne Morrison's project and Hank Morgan's abound. Bishop presents the very Hank Morganish idea that the South (or even the Earth) could become a new Eden if the right people with the right culture ("Yankees" in this case) were introduced or given power over it.⁵⁷ This "colonial" reading of *The Garden of Eden U.S.A* is further justified not just through the presence of new technologies but also of people and ideals. Apart from "Northern" ideas of technological progress and productivity, Morrison introduces into North Carolina his progressive views of society. These include innovative notions of gender roles and marriage, indeed, a large part of the plot is dedicated to the narrator coming to terms not only with his friend's social experiment but with the idea of a liberated woman. When discussing education in Eden, Morrison even references the merits of a West Point style military education that may remind one of Hank Morgan and his secret academy of superiorly educated "West Pointers:" "Do you realize just how much a West Point education puts into a man besides patriotism and the art of war? We take the system as a nucleus and build the moral faculties around it—fill the carcass of the dead lion with honey, in fact. We go much farther than West Point does, but the idea is the same" (253). The countryside itself seems to be devoid of Southern voices as the one representative character the narrator encounters is "a middle-aged man of the New England farmer type" (131). It is made clear that this character is an active participant and proprietor within the community: he refers to various objects or activities using "our" or "we" and he is described as being justifiably "proud" (131) of the community's accomplishments. Morrison, or the author, seem to find it necessary to import a workforce into utopia that is more compliant with his

⁵⁷ As I will argue later, it is my opinion that Mark Twain satirically departs from this notion rather than reinforcing it, the disastrous, apocalyptic failure of Hank Morgan's project being a case in point.

ideals and the result is a colonized or hybrid landscape that is neither Southern nor Northern but combines what the author possibly feels is the best of both worlds.

Electric methods of potato extraction and the presence of proud “New England types” brings up the question of labor and, due to the setting, slavery; where are the former slaves in this fictional North Carolinian setting? The premise of many utopias is the availability of “virgin” land and it is quite common for writers to ignore the actual demographic data of the place they choose; this is nothing new within the dynamics of colonization—Chavannes, for example, simply describes Africa as a place that offers the necessary “seclusion” (iii). There are a number of explicit references to the fact that slavery does not exist in “Eden,” nor are any workers (black or white) exploited. A lot of the attention is dedicated to explaining how the most menial tasks are carried out using “electrical energy” or insisting on how proud and contented our New England farmer is. In showing the narrator the kitchens of his plantation Morrison states: “I do not want you, hereafter, to accuse me of being a slave driver, with the women as my especial object of a vindictive zeal. The house slaves are all outside Eden, my boy” (119). Indeed, when they enter the kitchen, instead of “an army of cooks, waiters and servant girls” the narrator was expecting, they see but four active men cooking for the entire plantation through the magic of machines; this image of a technological kitchen run by men is also explicitly representative of the author’s idea of gender equality where machine power is means to obtain it. But where are the “house slaves,” or better yet, where are the former slaves if they are not in Eden?

Only one black character is shown interacting with the narrator and Wayne Morrison within the context of a comedic sketch with evident racial overtones. They find the “young negro” fishing along a river bank and enquire about the surrounding property and its owner to which the boy answers with assorted variations of “Yes, Massa,” “No, Massa” while the narrator and Morrison “exchang[e]

significant glances” (57). The exchange between the two parties terminates with a poor choice of words and a demeaning exaggeration of physical details:

‘Are you good at catching.’ The darky’s face broadened still farther as Wayne commenced putting his hand into his pocket, but he did not answer. He was too much engaged in trying to discover what kind of a fish he was likely to catch at that throw. When Wayne tossed a dollar to him he caught it nimbly enough and the grin on his face broadened to mammoth proportions. He was evidently our slave from that very moment. (579)

The young boy, as per the norm in Southern nostalgic fiction, briefly maintains his marginal role as servant/messenger who aides the inevitable romantic plot of the novel: “You have found your Eden, and your Eve is coming by lightning express as soon as that darky can get his message to her. All you have to do is to build your palace and your bower and be perfectly happy” (69). Bishop’s use of these tropes show how influential plantation literature had become in the North, however, this influence is not unilateral. W.H Bishop is not only colonizing a fictional North Carolina with New England farmers, Puritan ethos and “Bostonian” progressivism but he is colonizing (and being transformed by) the literary space of Southern nostalgia literature.

IV. *Modifying the View of the South and the Memory of the Civil War*

Edward A. Johnson, in *Light Ahead for The Negro*, describes a veritable invasion of the Southern mindset towards the North: he characterizes it as a process determined by the will of individuals with a specific political and economic agenda. Johnson does not include the fundamental role played in this “invasion” by the third component that is fictional literature. Schivelbusch’s analysis of the popularity of Plantation fiction demonstrates how this “invasion” is also a question of Northern tastes and market economy: it is not only a conspiracy, but a “pop” culture phenomenon.

This ideological “invasion” or osmosis involves two main fronts: on one hand there is attempt to present the plantation and Master-Slave relations in idyllic terms. This tendency originates well before the Civil War. On the other hand, there is the attempt to nobilitate the conflict and the warriors that died therein; it is transformed into an “American epic,” to use Francis Trevelyan Miller’s words “which in romance and chivalry is more inspiring than that of the olden knighthood” (in Trachtenberg *Through a Glass* 123-24). This process involves the excision of the graphic violence, brutal deaths and the grim and morally ambiguous realities of the War from literature. According to David W. Blight “Northern novelists had plied their readers with reconciliation themes [...] well before 1880” however, it is in the 1880s that “Southern writers and themes became the darlings of American fiction [...]. The reality of war itself, much less its causes and consequences, remained hidden away in packaged sentiment” (217). The real causes of the war, the violence of its battles, the brutality of slavery and the relative failures of emancipation are elided or shifted into the background in favor of consolatory, conciliatory, glorifying or romantic narratives. Due to its popularity, Southern nostalgic fiction becomes the preferred vehicle for a series of ideologies and historical revisionism that could potentially modify the perception of the past and, consequently, present attitudes towards the South and issues of race. Indeed, in the intents of their most prominent authors these novels were to have the same mobilizing effect of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Utopian fiction presents itself boldly as the literature of transformation, Plantation fiction as the literature of mere nostalgic remembrance. It is, therefore, ironic that the latter may have had more of an effect in shaping American society than utopian fiction. Edward A. Johnson’s fear that the Southern mindset was “invading” the North through the media and religion may have been justified, but in the realm of literature it is Albion W. Tourgée who predicts that: “Within thirty years after the war of rebellion [...] popular sympathy will be with those who upheld the Confederate cause rather than with those by whom it was overthrown; our popular heroes

will be confederate leaders; our fiction will be Southern in its prevailing types and distinctly Southern in its character” (in Schivelbusch 95).

This revision of Civil War memory was resisted by author's such as Albion W. Tourgée and Ambrose Bierce. Tourgée, from a more intellectual perspective “sustained a one-man counterattack on the emerging ‘plantation school’ of literature” and appealed for “an emancipationist vision of the war” (217); moreover, he “‘chided’ the realists” for failing to understand how the Southern culture of defeat had substituted a more historically accurate understanding of the war and “resented the facile sentimentalism of Northern acquiescence to this romantic inducement to national forgetting” (219). Bierce, on the other hand, was more cynical in his approach: he “lampooned romanticism, dialect stories, and nostalgia wherever he found it” (248) and accordingly his works are “antiheroic [...] utterly bleak and unredemptive” and full of macabre detail (246-247). True to their convictions and experiences in the War, both authors did not shy away from the horrors of battle. Tourgée’s “counterattack” becomes less one-sided if we consider Twain’s representations of the War and of slavery, particularly in *A Connecticut Yankee*. Twain did not participate in large-scale conflicts, however, his choice to represent the uncomfortable realities of the War likens him to Tourgée and Bierce. The graphic violence of the “Battle of the Sand-Belt” and the vivid details of slavery we find in *A Connecticut Yankee* are clear responses to a generalized “national forgetting.”

The explicitness of revisionist and racist content of “Lost Cause” literature perhaps reaches its peak with the novels of Thomas Dixon Jr.. Perfectly collocated within the timeframe we are analyzing, these texts declaredly present the didactic objective that goes beyond mere escapism: “to preserve in this romance both the letter and the spirit of this remarkable period [i.e. Reconstruction]” (*Clansman* Foreword). In the Foreword to *The Clansman*, the author declares his intent to write “a series of historical novels” wherein *The Leopard’s Spots; A Romance of the White Man’s Burden, 1865-1900*

(1902) is “the statement in historical outline of the conditions from the enfranchisement of the negro to his disfranchisement [and] ‘The Clansman’ develops the true story of the ‘Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy,’ which overturned the Reconstruction regime” (*Clansman* Foreword). Therefore, Dixon’s intent is to set the historical record straight in hopes of modifying opinions in the present. Thomas Dixon’s novels can potentially be seen as the dark specular opposite of the Northern, progressive utopian fictions; however, *The Leopard’s Spots* and *The Clansman* contain the same Anglo-Saxonist rhetoric of utopian texts such as *Anglo-Saxons, Onward!* (1898) by Benjamin R. Davenport or Stanley Waterloo’s *Armageddon* (1898). Even in the most liberal of utopias supremacist and imperial discourses are the norm rather than the exception.

The real difference between “Lost Cause” and utopian literature does not lie in the presence or absence of a didactic intent or racist rhetoric; it lies in the choice of their respective fictional timeframes, or, in other words, in the direction their transformative energies and ambitions are directed: one towards the past and consequently the present, the other towards the present and consequently the future. It is in their relationship to their declared “parent text”—Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*—that these two strains show their greatest divergence; although it may seem strange that *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is involved in the genesis of post-war “plantation novels” and ultimately Dixon’s Klan trilogy, it is documented that both Thomas Nelson Page and Dixon were writing also in an attempt to retroactively respond to Stowe’s denunciation; Thomas Nelson Page states as much in his essays (“The Negro Question” 303) and the “example of Thomas Dixon,” further illustrates, according to Jonathan Arac, “the continuing prestige and currency of Uncle Tom’s Cabin” (85). Arac states that “Dixon’s racist and anti-Reconstruction works of fiction began with *The Leopard’s Spots* [...], written quite explicitly as a response, after fifty years, to Stowe. Stowe’s Simon Legree reappears as the villain in Dixon’s novel” (85). The fact that Dixon goes as far as to include a character from *Uncle Tom’s*

diegesis shows how both in its didactic intent and inspiration Dixon's Klan trilogy owes a debt to Stowe, albeit a begrudging one. To continue with our familiar metaphor, "Lost Cause" fiction can be characterized as the illegitimate and unrecognized offspring of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (a protest novel) and pre-war "plantation novels" that resents one of its progenitors but attempts to beat it at its own game; utopian literature is the self-declared legitimate heir who honors and worships the parent and wishes to follow its example. In the foreword to *The Leopard's Spots* Dixon states that "It will be a century yet before people outside the South can be made to believe a literal statement of the history of those times" (Foreword); however, the success of his Klan trilogy (despite the general outrage it caused both in the North and South) and its infamous role in the birth of the cinematic form as we know it show how Dixon understates his claim.

Perhaps the key to the success of "Lost Cause" literature in modifying the present is in its effort to modify the past first. Twain, in placing his utopian or anti-utopian reflections in the past amalgam of Southern, medieval and frontier culture, may be critically responding to this trend. His declared intention to compare a medieval past to the present "to the advantage of the latter" (*Mark Twain's Autobiography* 307) assumes a more ample scope and his critique goes well beyond the limits of the Middle Ages. This declaration of intent needs to be contextualized, particularly if we consider that the author, famous for his artful well-constructed lies, does not renounce his authorial mask even in his *Autobiography*. By contextualizing this quote it soon becomes evident that the author's premise of praising "the life of modern Christendom and modern civilization" (307) undergoes an ironic reversal as we read on. In *A Connecticut Yankee*, the rhetorical intent is not a complete demonization of pre-War Southern society (or medieval society), but rather that of presenting a more complex and articulate critique: one that does not declare "these are (or were) other people to which we are superior in every

way” but which includes the Southern experience of slavery within the general folds of a universal and pessimistic view of human existence.

Twain, on one hand, lampoons both the medievalist trend and pre-War Southern society by showing the dark and sordid side of oligarchy; on the other hand, he takes care to show how this system proceeds from “training” rather than individual evil; the tension between deterministic social forces and individual will represents a key issue in this and many other works by the author. Hank’s indignant denouncement is sincere as is his occasional admiration for the nobility of spirit demonstrated by Arthur: the paradox by which “a childlike and innocent lot” can be the same people responsible for the “maim[ing], hack[ing], carv[ing]” (19) starvation and torture of prisoners is the essence of the novel and expresses the complexities of human existence according to Twain. The fact that “It was hard to associate [the Arthurian aristocracy] with anything cruel or dreadful” (19) does not exclude their participation in an “evil” society and the author is asking whether this can be changed by the will of one powerful man, a “despot [...] with the resources of a kingdom at his command” (51).

V. *The Civil War’s Marginal but Important Role in Utopian Fiction*

Seen within the context of Northern utopian literature, the Civil War and Reconstruction become a relevant example of the manner in which progress can be actively enforced; according to Roemer it was “The most popular historical precedent” that utopian authors appealed to: “It was celebrated as holy crusade fought against the forces of inequality and as an example of the advantages of massive government spending, extensive planning, and large-scale organization” (95). This exemplifies the “Northern and Western biases of the authors” (95) and it further explains the lack of participation of Southern authors in the genre. The Civil War also becomes the example of how a benign and temporary dictatorship would work to the advantage of progress and the enlightened, strong leader (or tyrant)

becomes a recurring figure or trope within the genre (Roemer 64). Seen from this point of view, we begin to better comprehend Hank Morgan's cultural context and his elation at having become a "despot [...] with the resources of a kingdom at his command" (51). Burgeoning imperialism and the legacy of the Civil War can, therefore, be considered as extremely relevant, even codependent factors when analyzing the utopian texts of the era and *A Connecticut Yankee*.

Despite the importance of the Civil War as an example of enforced "progress" and its popularity as a "historical precedent," its textual presence is scarce. The causes and especially the enduring consequences of the War are rarely discussed in detail in utopian fiction, with the exception of African American authors. Mentions of the War and of slavery are limited to a sentence or a paragraph within an entire text. In the works we have analyzed so far it figures briefly and is always discussed in terms of historical-political necessity. Bellamy, in *Looking Backward*, mentions it only once and as an indirect term of comparison when speaking of the "anarchists" who "proposed to terrify the American people into adopting their ideas by threats of violence" (24-25); Julian West is quite dismissive of their efforts, stating: "as if a mighty nation which had but just put down a rebellion of half its own numbers, in order to maintain its political system, were likely to adopt a new social system out of fear" (25). Donnelly, in *Caesar's Column*, is one of the Northern authors who discusses the South and the Civil War more extensively. He cites the Civil War as a positive precedent of "large-scale organization" (Roemer 95) and firm handed political action; the protagonist quotes the example of "Abraham Lincoln [who] in the great civil war of the last century, gave the Southern insurgents so many days in which to lay down their arms or lose their slaves. In the same way I should grant one or two years time, in which the great owners of land should sell their estates" (121). Donnelly does mention the South more than other authors but simply as an example of retrograde civilization that arrests the march of progress; the effects of this "backwardness" manifest itself in the behavior of "the

blacks of the South” whose “former masters have kept them in a state of savagery, instead of civilizing and elevating them; and the result is they are as barbarous and bloodthirsty as their ancestors were when brought from Africa” (143). This doubly chauvinistic outlook both espouses racialized notions of civilization but also curiously accuses the South of not having taken their share of the “white man’s burden.” Donnelly does take both the South and the “Negro question” into consideration, however, his analysis remains superficial and simply reinforces racial stereotypes. Indeed, the violent revolutionary leader Caesar Lomellini “a man of Italian descent, but a native of South Carolina” (145) displays brutish features and behavior associated with both the “negro” and the “swarthy Italian” stereotype and even leads a “terrible negro insurrection [...] in the lower Mississippi Valley” (147) before coming North.

In Stanley Waterloo’s *Armageddon*, the example of the Civil War is referenced but from a nationalist perspective whereby it becomes one in a long line of conflicts which merely demonstrate the martial valor and resourcefulness of the Anglo-Saxon race (13-14). The veterans of the War, due to their experience, become an important asset in the upcoming global war for world domination: “The veterans of the great Civil war [...] now suddenly became men of importance [...]. Their influence was wonderful. They were men who had fought for a principle—and it was the same North and South” (157-158), a reconciliatory statement if ever there was one. Further confirming Roemer’s evaluation, Waterloo also refers to the Civil War as a historical example of the capacity of great, powerful men to move resources and armed forces in function of an objective: “The time had come to act and he did not make a mistake. He thought of the seventy-five thousand men called for by the great Lincoln at the beginning of the Civil war and of the length of time needed for preparing a greater army” (156). Lincoln is once again referenced as the yardstick of decisive political action; in this particular case he is highlighted as a war president rather than a great emancipator. Indeed, within the Anglo-Saxonist and

imperialist rhetoric of *Armageddon* this aspect of the Civil War can hardly find a place. As demonstrated above, even the Southern ex-Confederate Chavannes views the end of slavery, and therefore the war, in terms of natural progress (*In Brighter Climes* 170).

The Civil War is mentioned sparsely and in very selective or one sided terms. What is almost completely absent from Northern utopian fiction is an analysis of the problems leading up to the War and the current situation of the Southern states, particularly in relation to the “Negro Question.” One possible explanation for this notable absence is that these Northern upper- or middle-class utopian authors were simply too young to have experienced the conflict: the Civil War and slavery are a thing of the past: a bump on the road of progress towards the bright future technology, science or empire can offer. However, this deliberate absence is also the sign of the removal of something that for these authors may have been disquieting: that is, the possibility of failure that the Civil War and reconstruction also represented. Despite a conflict that left hundreds of thousands dead and a nation traumatized, slavery had not truly ended and the Gilded Age (rather than a longed for Golden Age) had arrived with its own set of problematic issues. The Civil War can be seen as the unaccomplished effort in the past that demonstrates the unavoidable potential for future failure. In analyzing Frederick Jackson Turner’s attitudes towards slavery, Jonathan Arac notices a “shifting of the perspective of American history away from the question of slavery to the question of continental expansion” which “effectively responded to a widely shared wish that these terribly vexed and painful questions would go away, a wish to believe that some things had at last been resolved if not solved” (97-98).

The utopian authors may have either removed or simply ignored “these terribly vexed and painful questions” to focus their attention on others; the content of the texts demonstrates how they were more concerned with issues such as immigration and the labor capital divide. Both Arac and Eric

Foner see material proof of this shift in concerns in the moving of material and military resources away from the South and into the North:

Other issues seized national attention. In 1877, the end of Reconstruction, there were bloody confrontations between labor and property, and Eric Foner directly links this turn in national politics to the abandonment of civil rights in the South, for the federal government built armories to house troops 'not in the South to protect black citizens, but in the major cities of the North,' so as never again to be caught shorthanded if industrial owners should feel threatened. (Arac 98)

The movement away from Southern issues, both from a material and literary standpoint, is therefore connected to the issues that engender utopian fiction: the unfinished business of the Civil War and Reconstruction is abandoned in favor of concerns that are closer to home and considered more pressing. The difference between the speculative-utopian texts and *A Connecticut Yankee* is also generational: not having directly witnessed either slavery or the War, the utopian authors simply see them as part of the last generation's battle and are anxious to move on to the next rung of social progress, even writing books in the attempt to bring this movement about as soon as possible.

Therefore, within the context of utopian fiction, Twain's treatment of the South and slavery in *A Connecticut Yankee* (1889) can be viewed as a throwback to previous debates in the public arena that had become marginal. It is therefore in its "conservative" outlook that the novel acquires critical and radical historical-political relevancy. Rather than stating that the previous generation's problem (Slavery and North-South divide) has been solved and it is now time to move onto the next arena (labor vs. capital) Twain remains anchored to the past while analyzing the present. In doing so, he not only

points to the fact that the promise of emancipation has remained unfulfilled but creates connections between forms of exploitation past and present—more subtly in *A Connecticut Yankee*, more explicitly in later works such as *The Mysterious Stranger* and “The Secret History of Eddypus.” In other words, Twain refuses to cater to the comforting and “widely shared wish” mentioned by Arac “that these terribly vexed and painful questions” of the Civil War “would go away” (97-98). This novel constitutes, among many things, an effort to set the record straight on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line, often in ambiguous and conflicting ways. Keeping in mind the popularity and influence of “Lost Cause” literature even in the North, the creative anachronism of slavery into Camelot alone assumes a more poignant relevance.

In order to be integrated into the national mythos, the Civil War narrative is re-elaborated following two main non-conflicting trajectories: one is the illuministic/positivistic/whig trajectory whereby the war is simply an obstacle in the constant progression towards some preordained state of national perfection; the other is the romantic/dramatic/epic trajectory whereby the war is a tragic disagreement between honorable gentlemen brothers who gallantly lay down their lives in defense of their respective ideals. In *A Connecticut Yankee*, Twain is playing with these two trajectories, and satirizing their very constructedness. The oversimplification of deeply complex moral and historical questions they represent is particularly evident in the finale of the novel: the apocalyptic violence of “Battle of the Sand Belt” evokes the terrible realities and moral ambiguities of the Civil War. In the next chapter, I will analyze the finale of *A Connecticut Yankee* and how it resists both the romanticization and the rationalization of Civil War memory.

Chapter 6. “The Battle of the Sand-Belt:” Evoking the Images, Sounds and Smells of the Civil War

In this chapter I will analyze the conclusion of Hank’s analeptic narrative, namely the “Battle of the Sand-Belt.” During the “Battle of the Sand-Belt” Hank’s agency arrives at its full apocalyptic potential. The violence of the finale negates the utopian premises of Hank’s project of progress. The violence also abruptly breaks off from the humor of the previous chapters. The macabre details, the sights, the sounds, the smells of the battlefield are something the reader has not experienced before on such scale; the effect is shocking.

I will demonstrate that with the “Battle of the Sand-Belt” Twain is clearly evoking the Civil War. He is doing so to deflate abstract notions of progress and romanticized, epic narratives of the War. The grim realities of the War are used to counter rationalized or romantic discourses on the necessities of enforced progress. These discourses, as we have seen, abound in utopian literature. The utopian authors often write of necessary purges (political or ethnic) or wars, they write of epic conquest and revolution. Twain *shows* what these actions would actually entail.

The “Battle of the Sand-Belt” is the intrusion of realism on Utopia; realism becomes a weapon to destroy utopian abstraction and/or fancy. Olfactory data is essential to Twain’s operation and I will discuss its importance in the finale. The photographic, and therefore visual, record of the Civil War is also relevant to Twain’s world-building. I will discuss photographic documents as well as literary texts that may have been influenced Twain in his evocation of the Civil War. Moreover, In the interest of dispelling the myth of Twain’s “almost complete loss of control over his materials” (Smith 95), I will

show how the chaos, violence and death of the “Battle of The Sand-Belt” are the natural fulfillment of the premises of the novel.

Various critics have perceived the finale of the novel as being at odds with the celebration of nineteenth century civilization that Twain supposedly intended to write (DeVoto, Cox, Smith and Carter). However, the “Battle of the Sand-Belt” seems like the most natural finale possible if we consider it a consequence of Hank having made too many enemies in his project of reform or having overreached in his progressive, world-changing *hubris*. The finale is also at odds with the humor of the first part of the novel. However, this shift in tone can be explained as a rhetorical act on the author’s part. The extreme violence and abundance of detail in describing battlefield death leaves the reader disoriented. Far from being a symptom of a “loss of control,” this is the voluntary act of an author who moves away from the humor, fantasy and satire of the preceding pages to a finale in which we can no longer laugh (if not sarcastically), no longer vicariously revel in the actions of our hero (if not with guilt), no longer distance ourselves ironically or intellectually from what we witness. The details and sensorial data of the battlefield are fundamental to eliciting this reaction; it is the same reaction Hank also has as his power fantasy spirals out of control.

In these final climatic pages Hank engages in combat with the Arthurian aristocracy who have refused to accept the changes enacted by Hank or are angered the disastrous “side-effects” his project

has wrought: these include a civil war and the death of King Arthur.⁵⁸ Being a time traveler from the 19th century, Hank's knowledge of modern weaponry allows him to win the day but at the price of the lives of nearly 30.000 knights; so efficient are his machines and inventions that he creates "a solid wall of the dead- a bulwark, a breastwork, of corpses" (254) surrounding his cave-fortress. The ultimate irony is that Hank's men and his project of progress will be defeated by the "poisonous air bred by those dead thousands" (256). The graphic detail used to describe the violence and the aftermath of the battle is effectively jarring, particularly in light of the comedic tone which prevails in the rest of the narrative. Everett Carter, in "The Meaning of *A Connecticut Yankee*," (in *A Connecticut Yankee*, Norton Critical Edition 434-452) uses the categories of "hard" and "soft" (435) to describe critics of the novel: "soft" critics are those who maintain that Twain is denouncing the techno-industrial, capitalistic system Hank represents; "hard" critics are those who see Hank Morgan as an alter ego of Twain himself (436) and the novel as an unequivocal celebration of the nineteenth century. Everett Carter, as a "hard" critic, sustains that the author and protagonist share the same beliefs and that the reader is intended to sympathize completely with Hank (436). How then is the destruction caused by Hank Morgan rationalized according to Carter? Regarding the Yankee's casual acts of cynicism and violence throughout the story, Carter states that:

⁵⁸ The Interdict of the Church is what Hank tends to see as the event that precipitates the failure of his project rather than the civil war and subsequent death of King Arthur his own project has contributed to causing. However, it is Sir Launcelot's manipulation of the stock market that rouses Mordred's ire (as he is one of the manipulated) and this personal feud degenerates into nationwide conflict. It is obvious that Hank has brought the taint of Gilded Age capitalism and corruption to Camelot. Moreover, the interdict is merely the symbol of Hank's chickens coming home to roost; it is only proclaimed once the king is dead and the civil war has torn the country. It is not even directed principally at Hank but rather at Mordred; Hank is merely "included" (241). Clarence states that "the Church has gathered all the knights that are left alive" (241) which gives the idea not of despotic power flexing its muscles but rather the desperate attempt of those who recognize in Hank the source of the cataclysmic events.

In the instance of Hank's apparently callous actions, Twain either agreed with their necessity or, in less important cases, took it for granted that his audience would understand the comic-epic tone which permits us to laugh unreservedly at the obliteration of Tom in a Tom and Jerry cartoon, without agonizing about the realities of pain [...] *Until the final pages, when Twain's rage against the aristocratic privilege got out of hand*, Twain was working confidently in the comic world of frontier humor where overstatement about death and destruction was a standard mode of evoking laughter. Many of the seemingly inhuman reactions of Hank take this form, a form linked to the author's own perhaps tasteless but nevertheless comic hyperbole. (437-38 emphasis added)

But what about those infamous "final pages?" Are they simply to be considered as a separate entity from the rest of the text? Why are these necessarily the pages in which things "got out of hand" for the *author*? Why can they not be integrated within the broader context of the novel? In any case these "final pages" cannot simply be ignored and an alternative reading to Carter's "loss of control" narrative must be offered.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Curiously enough, Carter uses various examples of extra-textual evidence, be they public speeches or letters to the English publisher as "direct, unambiguous statements of authorial purpose" (441), however he fails to quote or even to mention the details of the "Battle of the Sand-Belt," particularly the olfactory data which seems to take the reader in a completely different direction than that of the supposed "authorial purpose" of defending "democracy, technology and progress" (441). We must also take into account the slightly contradictory nature of the various "declarations of intent" (441) that Carter puts forward as proof and evaluate them within the biographical context of an author on the verge of bankruptcy who has the very basic need to promote his book and in doing so often faced different audiences purporting conflicting views and intentionally provocative statements. According to Jeffrey Bilbro: "Everett Carter link[s] Twain too closely to Hank and so interpret[s] Connecticut Yankee as a satire directed solely at the sixth century and defending the nineteenth century" (227).

Violence dominates the last pages and I argue that it is to be interpreted within the context of a modern power parable: the protagonist loses sight of his initial “high intents” as they become enmeshed with the “necessities” of history and power. Violence is also to be interpreted within the dynamics of a rise/fall narrative or one of tragic reckoning: the pestilence the battlefield dead breed is a persecutory nemesis if ever there was one. Moreover, Violence is purposefully placed in oxymoronic juxtaposition with the more lighthearted first part of the novel in order to shock the reader. To demonstrate my premise, it is necessary to prove that the death and destruction described by Twain go well beyond the boundaries of “frontier humor,” “hyperpole,” or cartoon violence; they are to be viewed as horrific and the objective is to “petrif[y]” (256) the reader’s laugh.

I. *Photography, Battlefield Death and Literary Remembrance*

Scott Dalrymple mentions two pieces of evidence which confute the notion that the battle of the Sand-Belt is merely the enactment of a boyish, destruction fantasy. One is contextual: novels of this period generally shied away from graphic representations of violence (8);⁶⁰ therefore, Twain (or Hank) does not have the complicity of the contemporary reader (as Carter suggests) but, rather, wishes to shock his audience. The other piece of evidence is the presence of details which seem lifted from the memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant and the testimony of other survivors of the Civil War. These render the “Battle of the Sand-Belt” much more than a “Tom Sawyeresque diversion” (Dalrymple 8-9).

⁶⁰ One could say that Twain had a history of breaking this rule with his Western hoaxes. An example in this sense is the hoax report “A Bloody Massacre Near Carson” in which a certain Phillip Hopkins is reported to have murdered and scalped his wife and children and then proceeded to ride into town “with his throat cut from ear to ear, and bearing in his hand a reeking scalp from which the warm, smoking blood was still dripping” (57).

Twain's evocation of certain images, sounds and particularly smells would certainly be familiar to those who had lived through the war. Even readers who had not directly participated in the conflict were aware of post-battle scenarios thanks to the renowned war photography produced by Mathew Brady's studio. Mark Twain himself was familiar with Brady's studio having posed for a photo portrait in 1871 and Brady's work was readily and publicly diffused even during the Civil War. In 1862 Brady held an exhibit entitled "The Dead of Antietam" in which he displayed these photographs documenting the consequences of modern warfare. According to the Civil War Trust:

These images, photographed by Alexander Gardner and James F. Gibson, were the first to picture a battlefield before the dead had been removed and the first to be distributed to a mass public. These images received more media attention at the time of the war than any other series of images during the rest of the war. A *New York Times* article in October, 1862, illustrates the impression these images left upon American culture stating, 'Mr. Brady has done something to bring home to us the terrible reality and earnestness of war. If he has not brought bodies and laid them in our door-yards and along the streets, he has done something very like it' ("Matthew Brady")



Fig. 6.A: Mathew Brady (Alexander Gardner). *The "Sunken Road" at Antietam* (1862).

The above example is only one of the many photographs Brady's photographers took during the Civil War which portray the aftermath of its battles. This image easily reminds us of Hank's description of a "bulwark [or] breastwork, of corpses" (254) and it addresses one of the grimmest realities of modern, industrialized warfare which caught both sides unaware: the problem of eliminating a potentially hazardous byproduct. Drew Gilpin Faust describes the problem as follows:

The most immediate of death's challenges was a logistical one, the burial of soldiers in the aftermath of battle. Armies were not ready for the enormity of the task that confronted them, particularly in the aftermath of engagements that left thousands of bodies carpeting battlegrounds like Antietam or Gettysburg. After a single day of fighting at Antietam, for example, 23,000 men and untold numbers of horses and mules lay killed or wounded [...]. A week after Antietam, a Union surgeon reported that, "the dead were almost wholly unburied, and the stench arising from it was such as to breed a pestilence." As a result, bodies were often thrown into unidentified mass trench graves. (Faust "Death and Dying")

As it is evident from this description, the similarities between the "Battle of the Sand-Belt" and the reality of the Civil War are glaringly obvious. In particular, the detail of "the stench arising" from the dead "such as to breed a pestilence"—a quote Faust takes from a letter, dated September 1862 written by military surgeon Daniel M. Holt—cannot but remind us of Clarence's postscript which describes how Hank's men are defeated by the "poisonous air bred by those dead thousands" they have killed (256). Whether Twain was familiar with this particular document or not is irrelevant as this was clearly the day-to-day reality of the Civil War. Given Twain's vast research and acquaintance with Grant and Brady's studio, it is impossible for him to have missed this detail and the terrible irony it entails: in modern, scientific, industrial warfare killing people efficiently is no longer the problem but "waste disposal" is.

Twain evokes a darker and less romantic narrative of the Civil War than those which were being created during this era of reconciliation. He does so by appealing to biographical accounts, stories and photographs of the War that best represent this darker side rather than those that surround the War with an aura of epic grandeur. Twain had a more than passing familiarity with the realities of the Civil War and the aftermath of its battles given that he had thoroughly investigated these topics before and during the composition of *A Connecticut Yankee*. The memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant, which Twain helped publish, are an example of a contemporary text that depicts the realities of battle without glorifying war or shying away from scenes of death. To exemplify the “realism and impassivity” (5) of Grant’s narrating style, Dalrymple quotes a passage which describes the aftermath of the battle of Shiloh: “I saw an open field, in our possession on the second day, over which the Confederates had made repeated charges the day before, so covered with dead that it would have been possible to walk across the clearing, in any direction, stepping on dead bodies, without a foot touching the ground” (in Dalrymple 8-9). The similarities between this biographical account and Twain’s depiction of a “solid wall [...] of corpses” (254) abound. The sensorial data does not allow readers to distance themselves from the gruesome reality that is depicted.

Conciliatory narratives, censorship or epic-romantic sublimation: these were the preferred means of overcoming Civil War trauma that Twain attempts to resist or counter in his realistic representation of the Civil War. Kyle Shook explains how unpreparedness and the resulting trauma of mass-death in the Civil War created the need for healing narratives. Authors such as Walt Whitman and Louisa May Alcott produced texts that in some way attempted to give dignity in death to those who had not that possibility:

Battlefield death (especially in the large numbers witnessed in the Civil War) devastated the Victorian notions of what death meant and how to die properly held by the American populace

at this time [...] both authors expose the internal crisis felt by a culture too unaccustomed to the particularly unceremonious and gruesome deaths that soared in regularity during the Civil War battles which harshly challenged the romanticized ideologies regarding mortality of the day [...]. Both specifically use these scenes of the battlefield and hospital to both expose the truths of war-deaths but also to attempt to salvage a notion of familiarity in the deaths. (Shook)

After the war, the challenge to “romanticized ideologies regarding mortality” and the resultant need for consolation expresses itself in various textual forms. Beyond the more prestigious examples of literary mourning offered by Whitman and Alcott, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps’ 1868 novel *The Gates Ajar*⁶¹ “offered a comforting vision of heaven as the perfection of earthly domesticity to a grieving nation” (Schoonmaker 438); this novel catered to the need for comforting narratives wherein those who died a horrible death away from home are reunited with their loved ones in the afterlife and continue a very earthly existence. According to Nancy Grey Schoonmaker the novel’s great success “gave rise to a genre of novels about the afterlife” (438) which precedes and curiously anticipates the trend and the tropes of utopian literature; indeed, in Phelps’ vision of the afterlife, “bourgeois comfort” (Jameson 12), domesticity and pastoral yearnings are a major concern: there are houses in heaven “but more beautiful; in them are parlors, rooms, and chambers in great numbers; there are also courts, and round about are gardens, shrubberies, and fields” (172). We could even state that utopian literature is the successive

⁶¹ Mark Twain himself admittedly satirized Phelps’ novel in his incomplete short story “Captain Stormfield’s Visit to Heaven” (Baetzhold and Mccullough “The Bible According to Mark Twain” 130). The story was partially published in 1909 and had an exceptionally long gestation period from a first draft in 1873 (Ketterer *The Science Fiction of Mark Twain* x).

literary trend that accommodates the same escapist and comforting desires as *The Gates Ajar* but pertains to a later, more philosophically materialist generation.⁶²

The humanitarian, consolatory re-visitation of the war was later followed by the construction of epic narratives of the conflict; regarding this process of sublimation, Alan Trachtenberg (in “Through a Glass”) gives the example of the “1912 appropriation of the photographic record of the war” (124) wherein a “fervent race-based nationalism [...] attaches each image to an urgent idea of the war and the nation” (123). Trachtenberg analyses the process through which war photography was used in the creation of an “American epic” (“Through a Glass” 123-124) and quotes contemporary commentator Francis Trevelyan Miller’s description of the Civil War as: “an epic which in romance and chivalry is more inspiring than that of the olden knighthood [...]. No Grecian Phalanx or Roman legion ever knew truer manhood than in those days on the American continent when Anglo-Saxon met Anglo-Saxon” (Miller in Trachtenberg 124). What is evident from Miller’s description is how by this point in time (1911) we are within a fully nationalistic-imperial context.⁶³ Miller’s evidently attempts to narrativize (the use of “epic”) and romanticize (the use of “chivalry” and “olden knighthood”) the War; the real people, the real bodies (black and white), the tangible data have been excised from this narrative.

⁶² Civil War mourning also expressed itself according to more socially codified norms, but on a larger and more organized scale, in the efforts of the various women’s associations that merged to form the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Apart from actively promoting the “Lost Cause” narrative of the war (Blight 272-74) these associations lobbied for “the reburial of the Confederate dead” (Blight 273), the construction of memorials and the preservation of “the places made historic by Confederate valor” (*Handbook of the United Daughters of the Confederacy* 9). Grief was also expressed in new and unexpected ways: the increased popularity of spiritualism in the latter half of the nineteenth for example was, in part, motivated by the need many felt to contact loved ones who had died during the war.

⁶³ this is evident from the Anglo-Saxonist discourse, which excises racial issues from the epic, and the evocation of warrior races and past Empires to which America is heir.

This process of glorification and romanticization was already underway, in more subdued forms, a couple of decades earlier in both Southern and Northern literature (Blight 217). Beyond the curative-humanitarian and the epic-bombastic tendencies, there is a third reaction to the horrors of the War: Whiggish/positivistic rationalization. This tendency, as we have seen, is present in utopian literature. Rather than romanticizing the traumatic event, these texts explain it as a necessary step in the continuously forward moving evolution of mankind. We have seen how Twain (in this and in other works) questions Whig and positivist notions of progress. The violence and gruesome detail of the “Battle of the Sand-Belt” reinforce this critique and render it explicit: Hank’s massacre would fit well within the catalogue of horrors that Satan shows his human companions (in *The Mysterious Stranger* 134-37) in order to demonstrate how the march of civilization is but an illusory grand narrative.

Such rationalized views of the Civil War were not as popular with most Southern writers; almost immediately after the end of the conflict, there began the production of a much different type of narrative regarding the past. Authors such as Edward A. Pollard, Jubal A. Early, Abram Joseph Ryan, Thomas Nelson Page and his various imitators invent or consolidate the myths of the “Old South” and the “Lost Cause.” With the “Battle of the Sand-Belt,” Twain denies the possibility of nobilitating either the “Lost Cause” or death on the battlefield: it is a clash between two equally misguided and egotistical parts;⁶⁴ the deaths of the “Confederate” knights are horrific and/or grotesque and little nobility is found therein as they are left to rot without burial. Moreover, the entire enterprise is ultimately futile for both

⁶⁴ The Southern “Culture of Defeat” and the fetishistic-elegiac attachment to the past that was present even before the War (Schivelbusch 51-52) are often the subject of Twain’s satire; in *A Connecticut Yankee*, apart from direct attacks towards slavery and Southern “backwardness,” the critique of “sham” medieval chivalry is an iconoclastic assault against this object of Southern aristocratic veneration.

parts and nothing is obtained if not mutual destruction. However, the fact that the chivalric legends survive and Hank's project is forgotten by history is, perhaps, Twain's hyperbolic representation of the dynamics of victory, defeat and remembrance which were playing out at the time of composition; as illustrated by Albion W. Tourgée's prediction: "Within thirty years after the war of rebellion [...] popular sympathy will be with those who upheld the Confederate cause rather than with those by whom it was overthrown" (in Schivelbusch 95). Within this context, a realistic depiction of battlefield death assumes the role of a moral-historical imperative.

Tourgée's authorial motivations in preserving Civil War memory are clear; it is perhaps a more cynical sentiment that engenders Ambrose Bierce's writings on the War. According to David Blight, Bierce's texts are "antiheroic [...] utterly bleak and unredemptive" (246-247). Twain represents, perhaps, the middle ground between these two extremes—or a hybrid. There are both intimations of a didactic intent and a certain sarcasm or cynicism in both *A Connecticut Yankee* and other texts. In composing these scenes of battlefield death, Twain may have been influenced by Bierce whom he knew in person and even admired. Twain was well familiar with Bierce's works and both praised and criticized them;⁶⁵ In a letter dated 1874, Twain stated of Bierce's *Nuggets and Dust* (published in England under the pseudonym "Dod Grile" in 1873): "It is the vilest book that exists in print--or very nearly so [...]. Bierce has written some admirable things--fugitive pieces--but none of them are among the "Nuggets." There is humor in Dod Grile, but for every laugh that is in his book, there are five

⁶⁵ M. E. Grenander states that: "Prior to his departure for the United States in January 1874, Twain praised COBWEBS FROM AN EMPTY SKULL, which had just been published, to Stoddard. And indeed he was later to choose seven of the fables in it for inclusion in MARK TWAIN'S LIBRARY OF HUMOR. [...]. [...] scholarship now holds that Mark Twain consistently approved of Ambrose Bierce's work. For example, Alan Gribben remarks that 'Clemens' references to Bierce were invariably favorable" (170).

blushes, ten shudders and a vomit. The laugh is too expensive” (in Grenander 171). Twain had been struck by the presence of some disturbing particulars within that book that elicited his “shudders” and “vomit;” although he does not specify what these details were; given the characteristic presence of violence and death in Bierce’s works, we can legitimately suppose that Twain’s reaction is connected to it.

Despite his criticisms in 1874, many details of Twain’s “Battle of the Sand-Belt” remind us of Bierce’s own descriptions of the battlefield; in “What I Saw of Shiloh” (1881) the veteran recounts one of many “engagements of the war” that occurred in wooded areas where “the fallen leaves took fire and roasted the fallen men [...] wide tracts of woodland were burned over in this way and scores of wounded who might have recovered perished in slow torture” (35). Given that “so many battles of the Civil War” were fought in “dense forests,” Bierce informs us that what happened at Shiloh was no isolated event, therefore the smell of “burning flesh” becomes an olfactive marker of Civil War memory. Like Hank, Bierce’s narrator (himself) “obtain[s] leave to go down into the valley of death and gratify a reprehensible curiosity,” that is, to observe up close the aftermath of battle:

Death had put his sickle into this thicket and fire had gleaned the field. Along a line which was not that of extreme depression, but was at every point significantly equidistant from the heights on either hand, lay the bodies, half buried in ashes; some in the unlovely looseness attitude denoting sudden death by the bullet, but by far the greater number in postures of agony that told of the tormenting flame. Their clothing was half burnt away their hair and beard entirely [...]. Some were swollen to double girth; others shriveled to manikins. According to degree of exposure, their faces were bloated and black or yellow and shrunken. The contraction of muscles which had given them claws for hands had cursed each countenance with a hideous

grin. Faugh! I cannot catalogue the charms of these gallant gentlemen who had got what they enlisted for. (35-36)

In describing these horrors, Bierce, with his final comment, sarcastically underlines the lack of any nobility or honor in battlefield death; he also wishes to dispel any aura of romanticism from the notion of fighting or dying for a cause. In attempting to represent the realities of war Twain had no choice but to consult the recollections of others (such as Grant) due to his own limited experience of the conflict; given his familiarity with Bierce's work, he may have found in it a source of inspiration. The same battle dynamics, sensorial data and disillusion are present also in the final pages of *A Connecticut Yankee*, however Twain lacks the total cynicism and intensity that is idiosyncratic of Ambrose Bierce. Despite the pessimism that distinguishes *A Connecticut Yankee* from utopian literature, Twain believes, perhaps, that there is a lesson to learnt from all the carnage: by placing the massacre in the final pages, followed by certain realizations on the protagonists' part, dramaturgic or tragic necessity is satisfied. But what is the nature of this lesson?

II. *Olfactory Data in Literature and in A Connecticut Yankee*

Olfactory data plays a fundamental role in the description (and therefore negative characterization) of Hank's last act as "Boss." The smells of the battlefield, such as "burning flesh" (253) and the "poisonous air" (256) of putrefaction, are used by Twain to ground the narrative or to create a sense of embodiedness in opposition to the dream-like quality with which the narrative begins. The violence of the "Battle of the Sand-Belt" and its consequences cannot be abstracted or sublimated due to the unpleasant reality of olfactory data.

In literary practice, there are many examples of how olfactory data is used to counter abstraction. It also shares a special relationship with memory, the most famous example being that of

Proust's madeleines. Olfactory data has a tradition of being used as a foil to the other senses and to the rational mental processing of experiences; it is the component of a phenomenon which renders its rationalization, romanticization or distancing impossible.⁶⁶ This consideration is particularly valid when we are dealing with *negative* or *traumatic* events represented in literary form. Hans J. Rindisbacher states that "however wild the imagination runs, however sensorially distorted the fictionally created universe—or indeed reality itself—may be, the original point of reference is always human sensory perception as we know it [...]. It is the sense of smell that will validate an experience, fictional or real, as authentic and human" (137).

There are a number of literary examples one could quote to demonstrate the power and ineluctability of olfactory data; authors have often used for its capacity to destroy illusions, reveal what is behind a façade or bring lofty ideals crashing back to reality. Rindisbacher, for instance, analyzes the importance of olfactory data in *Five Chimneys*, the memoirs of Auschwitz survivor Olga

⁶⁶ There even seem to be biological factors that justify the literary tradition. Quoting the work of neuroscientist Johan Lundström, Helen Fields traces the particularity of olfactory perception to the neurological idiosyncrasies that distinguish it from the other senses:

For every other sense, the message travels first to the brain stem and the thalamus before going out to the primary sensory areas. 'Olfaction is completely differently wired,' Lundstrom says. First, odor molecules bind to receptors in the nose. Signals from the receptors travel up to the olfactory bulb [...]. From there, some signals go to the primary olfactory cortex [...]. But there are also connections from the olfactory bulb directly to the amygdala, an area that is relevant to emotions and salience, and the hippocampus, which is involved in memory. That puts the receptors in the nose only one synapse away from emotion and memory. ("Fragrant Flashbacks")

Fields also quotes the research of Maria Larsson which seems to indicate that olfactory data is more profoundly connected with childhood recollections than those of later life and that the memories evoked are "more emotional and more vivid than memories brought up by visual or verbal cues" ("Fragrant Flashbacks").

Lengyel. He quotes Lengyel's recollection of the "sweetish odor, much like that of burning flesh" (1947: 14, 16) which is perceived by the new arrivals at the camp and which should reveal the true nature of the so called "camp 'bakery'" (1947: 22). Rindisbacher observes the tragic irony by which "olfactory conceptualization, always linking the phenomenon to the source" is not immediately effective in this particular instance "because the atrocity of the truth is as yet beyond the grasp of the prisoners, whose encoding mechanism is civilian and human and does not, in any case, include burning human bodies as the source of the smell they notice" (138).

"Olfactory, gustatory and tactile perceptions are senses of proximity and do not allow for even limited distancing" (Rindisbacher 138). Therefore, in the presence of uncomfortable or horrific truths, particularly if there is an attempt to hide or ignore them, olfactory data acquires the utmost revelatory significance. Rindisbacher affirms that "the Nazi concern with the fire that can be seen and the stench that can be smelled and is stronger than the official propaganda" (146) is legitimate due to the power of olfactory perception.⁶⁷ Whereas the ashes are "no cause for concern, neither in the real world of things nor in the world of memory" as they dissolve rapidly, "this is not so for smell, however, and the

⁶⁷ The olfactory dynamics Rindisbacher analyzes in the texts produced by holocaust survivors also play a fundamental role in the works of fiction analyzed by Silvana Serafin in her essay "L'Essenza della Letteratura Hispano-Americana tra Profumi e Odori di Morte." Focusing on South-American literature, Serafin finds various literary instances in which odors play an important part in defining an environment or more importantly, revealing the true nature of things. The smells of violence and death are, for example, an all pervading presence in Miguel Ángel Asturias' *El señor presidente*: the novel immerses the reader in a fictional (and archetypal) Latin-American dictatorship where the mysterious, almost divine nature of the tyrant is countered by the various smells of fear, poverty and prisons, revealing what lies under the glorified veneer of power (Serafin 307-308). Giorgia Tommasi (in "Profumi e sensualità in William Faulkner") observes how in *As I Lay Dying* by William Faulkner, the smell of putrefaction of the deceased Addie is an all-pervading but ignored presence which symbolizes the decline of the Budren family; the odor coming from the coffin is acknowledged only by Vardaman as the other members of the family refuse to admit the presence of this tangible sign of a terrible truth (Tommasi 322).

odorless burning of the corpses remains an eternal Utopia of the perpetrators of evil” (146). This statement becomes all the more valid for *A Connecticut Yankee* wherein the stench of death acquires an actual persecutory quality, causing the death of the victors of the “Battle of the Sand-Belt” and effectively nullifying everything Hank has done to forward his cause. In the finale of *A Connecticut Yankee* Twain uses the smell of “burning flesh” (253) and putrefaction of the corpses that litter the field to direct the reader’s attention back to an inconvenient truth they may have been ignoring: in an age when faith in progress was dominant and civilization’s achievements were continuously celebrated, Twain responds by presenting apocalyptic images that remind his readers of the horrors of the Civil War. While others had their eyes set forward on the promise of an American Empire and imagined future utopias, Twain offered a memento of the tragedies of the recent past.

In contrast with the finale, Hank’s first perception of Medieval England is characterized by positive olfactory data. First, Hank sees a “beautiful and broad country landscape” (8); soon after he states that: “The air was full of the smell of flowers, and the buzzing of insects, and the twittering of birds” (13). Beyond setting the stage for the story, the passage clearly evokes an idea of fertility. The vitality of the landscape is underlined by the sudden appearance of an image of youth, beauty and vital energy: “a fair slip of a girl about ten years old, with a cataract of golden hair streaming down over her shoulders [...] Around her head she wore a hoop of flame-red poppies” (13). Due to the importance of primacy and ultimacy, the novel presents an oxymoronic juxtaposition: in stark contrast with the olfactory pleasure and fertility with which it had begun, the analeptic narrative ends with the description of the “poisonous air” bred by a wasteland of dead corpses. The initial description of a fertile, pastoral Arthurian England is soon followed by Hank’s initial declaration of conquest: “I would boss the whole country inside of three months” (17). Twain’s novel contains the same pastoral, industrial and imperial preoccupations of utopian literature. In utopian literature great effort is

employed in reconciling these opposing tensions; Twain, with the “Battle of the Sand-Belt,” may be telling the reader that this reconciliation is impossible or that these tensions cannot co-exist without some kind of catastrophic reaction.

III. *Violence or “Effects?” Narrative Agency Before and During the “Battle of the Sand-Belt”*

Hank’s fetishistic attachment to his inventions and “effects” is evident throughout the novel; his braggadocio is more prominent when he explains how efficient or spectacular they are. Hank’s enthusiasm for the destructive capabilities of his inventions is particularly noticeable during the first acts of the battle. He displays a childish, gleeful enjoyment of violence as shown by the language and abundance of exclamation points in this passage:

then the sun struck the sea of armor and set it all aflash. Yes it was a fine sight; I hadn’t ever seen anything to beat it [...] Suddenly we heard the blare of trumpets; the slow walk burst into a gallop and then—well, it was wonderful to see! [...]. Great Scott! Why, the whole front of that host shot into the sky with a thunder-crash, and became a whirling tempest of rags and fragments [...]. Time for the second step in the plan of campaign! I touched a button and shook the bones of England loose from her spine! [...]. The dynamite had dug a ditch more than a hundred feet wide [...]. As to the destruction of life, it was amazing” (248-249).

Hank is clearly reveling in the “whoop and crash” (47) of battle, more than he had in the previous occasions in which he used violence. If in previous instances Hank is more deadpan and matter of fact about his acts of violence, here, the entertainer in Hank emerges more prominently. His tone is the same as when he describes the flashy, explosive “effects” he uses in the destruction of Merlin’s tower (39, slightly more deadpan) or in the restoration of the fountain in chapter XXIII:

I touched off one of my electric connections and all that murky world of people stood revealed in a hideous blue glare! It was immense—that effect! Lots of people shrieked, women curled up and quit in every direction, foundlings collapsed by platoons [...]. [...]—and turned on the red fire! You should have heard that Atlantic of people moan and howl when that crimson hell joined the blue! [...]—and whirled on the purple glare! There they were, all going at once, red, blue, green, purple!—four furious volcanoes pouring vast clouds of radiant smoke aloft, and spreading a blinding rainbowed noonday to the furthest confines of that valley [...]. Then I touched off the hogshead of rockets, and a vast fountain of dazzling lances of fire vomited itself toward the zenith with a hissing rush, and burst in mid-sky into a storm of flashing jewels! (125-27).

Be it a “miracle” or a massacre, Hank’s style of narration is the same, at least during these first acts of the battle. For all his logical, rational criticisms of Arthurian culture, Hank seems to fall prey to the glorification of violence which Twain associates with Southern culture and its Walter Scott inspired “sham grandeurs, sham gauds, and sham chivalries” (*Life on the Mississippi* 375). The democratic, utilitarian spirit of the “Yankee of the Yankees” (8) is overcome with childish enthusiasm as he plays at war; this ironic twist is underlined by “Hank’s” exclamation of “Great Scott!”⁶⁸ Medieval knight, Southerner and Yankee are portrayed as equally susceptible to forms of violent revelry; but while the

⁶⁸ That is if this exclamation does indeed refer to Sir Walter Scott; in this case the irony would lay in the fact Hank has fallen victim to the “sham” glorification of violence and warfare that is proper of Southern Culture or ‘Walter Scotland’ to use Osterweis’ expression (in Schivelbusch 50). Hank uses this exclamation quite often throughout the novel and it may also refer to General Winfield Scott. Given Scott’s involvement in the Indian wars and even in the Civil War (on the side of the Union) the exclamation still retains a certain significance. Considering that the expression could indicate both historical figures, it holds a particular dialectic relevance.

latter two express their savagery in pointless “bushwhacking,” family feuds and duels, Hank’s bloodlust is a dangerous combination of efficiency, pragmatism, utilitarianism and showmanship.

The previous extract from chapter XLIII can also be seen as an example of the cartoonish violence or frontier hyperbole that Everett Carter mentions; there is indeed a distance between the violence that is happening and the experiencing I/eye. This enables the narrator (and the reader) to enjoy the spectacle of destruction without being preoccupied with its realistic consequences. However, a closer encounter with the consequences of the battle is not far off: the “smell of burning flesh” (253) and a “bulwark [...] of corpses” (254) is mentioned only four pages later. During the first phase of the battle, we as readers may even participate in Hank’s enjoyment, presuming that we empathize with the character and have accepted his perspective. Conversely, we may also perceive the attitude of our protagonist towards violence as childish and irresponsible even before he himself is aware of the consequences. We cannot presume that all readers will have (or should have) connected with Hank, given that he has already revealed the dark shades of his character, for example: his enthusiasm for “scientific war” (141) and “labor-saving [war] machinery” (8) is something the reader is already aware of. If before we could dismiss this as mere braggadocio or gallows humor, the later phases of the “Battle of the Sand-Belt” see the sarcastic joke become reality.

Even before the battle Hank’s penchant towards the childish and irresponsible enjoyment of violence emerges, albeit with less abandon and exclamation points. During the first occasion in which he kills a group of knights through the use of explosives (in chapter XXVII), he does so to defend himself and King Arthur; however he seems to enjoy the destruction: “Yes, it was a neat thing, very neat and pretty to see. It resembled a steamboat explosion on the Mississippi; and during the next fifteen minutes we stood under a steady drizzle of microscopic fragments of knights and hardware and horseflesh” (158). The adjectives “neat and pretty” can be attributed to Hank’s frontier humor. The

reference to the “steamboat explosion on the Mississippi” contains very little humor, at least from the author’s point of view: Twain elsewhere expresses awe and respect for the dangers of riverboat navigation (see *Huck Finn* for example) given his experience as a steamboat pilot; more importantly, Twain’s younger brother Henry had died in a steamboat explosion in 1858 tragedy for which the author felt partially responsible.

In other moments Hank shows the cool, arrogant wit of a battle hardened veteran and resembles more closely the classic comedic figure of the *miles gloriosus*. When discussing the death via explosion of a Church committee sent to “command [Hank and his men] to make submission,” Clarence and Hank comment: ““Did the Committee make a report?’ ‘Yes, they made one. You could have heard it a mile.’” Hank then wittily asks ““Unanimous?’” (244-245). Similarly, when discussing the activation of the electric fence which is later to create a wall of corpses, Hank says to his right hand man: “I’ve already done it, Clarence. Did you ever know me to be inhospitable?” (252). Less subtle and witty is Hank’s incitation towards his soldiers: “While one of these men remains alive, our task is not finished, the war is not ended. We will kill them all” (250). It is a statement which is jarring in its certainty and homicidal intent. Within this context, one cannot dismiss it as an example of the sarcastic hyperbole typically used by the protagonist to express his exasperation with humankind, as when he states: “Well, there are times when one would like to hang the whole human race and finish the farce” (174). Soon after, Hank seems to have a moment of doubt in which he is no longer convinced that the greater good of his actions can justify such violence; however, it is Clarence, his first apprentice into the arts of the nineteenth century, who convinces him to proceed with his plan: it is Hank’s machine of progress that has escaped from its creator’s grasp (250-251) rather than the novel escaping from the author’s control.

All previous humor and enthusiasm soon fall flat as Hank and his entourage are confronted with the “smell of burning flesh” (253) of a dead knight who has stumbled upon the electrified fencing that

defends the Yankee and his men, soon to be joined by many other of his companions. Upon discovering that one knight has been electrocuted in an attempt to aid a dead comrade attached to the electric current, Hank comments: “Killed by a dead friend, in fact. There was something awful about it” (253); this is a moment of dreadful realization. The number of dead knights soon multiplies and the Yankee is witness to the aftermath of battle in the form of a “swelling bulk [of] dead men! Our camp was enclosed with a solid wall of the dead- a bulwark, a breastwork, of corpses” (254). The mound of dead bodies is the empirical evidence of the tragic consequences of his actions and his previously witty Whiggish rhetoric fails him. Only the language of military orders, orders of death, remain. The “smell of burning flesh” (253) and the stench of putrefaction described by Clarence (256) are sensorial data which indicate that the violence of the battle of the sand belt can no longer be glorified or rationalized; Hank describes the silence which follows the electrocution of the knights with immense disillusion: “One terrible thing about this thing [N.B he is literally lost for words] was the absence of human voices; there were no cheers, no war cries” (254). This absence of “cheers” or “war cries” is in clear contrast with Hank’s prefiguring of the glories of battle and his previous exclamatory enthusiasm.

For readers that had previously participated in Hank’s enthusiasm, the contrast between his initial joy of battle and the graphic representation of its consequences is even more effective; they may, in fact, experience the same disillusion as Hank regarding the realities of war. Moreover, we may realize that the initial “high intent” (303) of the protagonist has become tainted or that it was always fallacious. Hank’s rationality and practicality, as well as his supposed democratic ethos, are revealed to be just as lofty, misguided and ultimately dangerous as the various “sham” principles Twain often rails against. Be it the Southern “Sir Walter disease” (*Life on the Mississippi* 375), be it religious in nature, be it politically progressive, all “high intent” is eventually bent to fit the necessities of power and personal gain by human will or by the events.

IV. Conclusion: The Final Results of Hank's Experiment

Sensorial data, particularly olfactory data, are used by Twain in the finale of the novel to evoke not only the shared imaginary of Civil War death, but to elicit an instinctive “gut” reaction from the reader. Twain depicts the realities of battle in a manner which renders impossible an abstraction from what is presented: the “smell of burning flesh” is the element which impedes a rational distancing from or reduction of war to some form of *necessary evil*. The graphic representation of violence in the finale creates associations with contemporary texts that deal with the Civil War and, more importantly, with the memories of survivors of this conflict. The shift in tone seems to subvert the comedic *divertissement* of the previous chapters and our laughter becomes “petrified” like that of Merlin in his final act of suicidal vengeance (256). The shock or confusion felt by many readers becomes all the more significant if we see the “Battle of the Sand-Belt” as a moment of revelation and disillusion; it is a sensorial, empirical realization of the failure of Hank's ideals or his failure to live up to them.

To better understand this dimension of *A Connecticut Yankee*, we may compare it to “The Private History of a Campaign that Failed.” In place of the Missouri Bushwhackers—oblivious to the realities of modern warfare and caught up in their outmoded Scott-inspired notions of chivalry—we have Hank Morgan: despite the fact that he represents the “winning” side of the Civil War and the ideology that has prevailed, he turns out to be as misguided and gullible as the “Bushwhackers,” and with catastrophic results.

Therefore, the “Battle of the Sand-Belt” is also the decisive moment in which even the reader who is unreservedly sympathetic towards Hank must come to terms with the character's failings. This unsuccessful end to Hank's experiment interrupts the world-shaping power fantasy that the reader may have been vicariously living through: it may make us traumatically interrupt the previously established

empathy or retroactively feel guilty about it. However, this is not an inherent or objective flaw of the text or its character development.

Jeffrey Bilbro perceives the novel to be much in the vein of Twain's Western hoaxes; the objective of these pieces was to leave the reader stunned by a final self-critical realization: "the moral or nub of the hoax turns the entertaining story into a satire directed at the individual reader" (205). Here is how Bilbro describes the reader reception of Hank's agency during the "Battle of the Sand-Belt":

Hank's massacre should cause horror over the elitism he was able to mask with his democratic fervor and shame readers who overlooked the faults Hank exhibited early in the novel. The nub urges these readers to examine their own view of democracy and consider whether their version of democracy may be just as shallow as Hank's, whether their belief in equality could justify similar totalitarian action. (224)

The total failure of his project of democratization (of which he never seems to be fully conscious) is pointed out by numbers themselves: "we fifty-four were masters of England! Twenty-five thousand men lay dead around us" (255). It is a mathematical certainty which ultimately denies the democratic nature of his revolution and reveals the misguidedness of the protagonist. To the Yankee's failure there is an added irony expressed by his hubristic proclamation that "the BATTLE OF THE SAND-BELT will not perish out of the memories of men" (250), when in fact only the chivalric myths of Arthur and his knights will survive Hank's apocalypse. Beyond this final realization regarding the social-political premises of Hank's project, the celebration of the scientific and technological progress of the previous chapters is similarly concluded: the final plot development wherein a vindictive Merlin is able to send a dying Hank back to the present represents: "the second prong of the nub [which] forcefully reveals the false assumption behind Hank's view of technological progress [...]. Twain jolts readers who have

maintained their firm belief in the progress of science; no modern scientist can accomplish what Merlin can” (Bilbro 224).

Considering Twain’s frequent use of multilayered or double-edged satire, our empathetic involvement may have been impeded from the beginning of the novel by a series of cues (as Bilbro also seems to suggest). These cues or “faults” are both evident from the constant stream of Hank’s progressive, egalitarian rhetoric but also hidden within it. The novel has different effects depending on whether one has picked up those cues or ignored them and both reactions are equally justified. That is, until the finale. To go back to Carter’s division of readers into “hard” and “soft” and my reservations towards it, both perceptions are valid and justifiable during the first part of the novel; however, after witnessing the results of the “Battle of the Sand-Belt” the “hard” position can no longer be maintained. Picking up on the cues makes the development of the narrative a natural, tragicomic progression of events; not picking up on them, and therefore falling for Hank’s rhetoric and having faith in his project, allows the reader to be surprised and/or confused by the final pages.

Viewing the finale as a hoax-like reversal of the expectations of the “hard” reader, we can dismiss the “loss of control” and “conversion” narratives that are part of the traditional scholarship on this text. In the next chapter I will demonstrate that there is space to empathize with Hank in the early stages of the story. The novel acquires a dialectical-historical dimension if we take Hank’s initial good intentions into account. Hank represents the progressive forces of history and his project, like history, includes both positive and negative facets. In the next chapter I will show how Twain attempts to tell the history of the modern era using Hank as his vehicle. I will demonstrate that he is an amalgam of various historical personages and that his story is representative of power dynamics in the late modern era.

Chapter 7. The Hank Amalgam: Twain's "Human" History of the Late Modern Era

In this chapter I focus on Hank Morgan. Hank is the vehicle Twain uses to tell his (his)story of the modern era. I will analyze Hank from three different points of view: as a symbol of history, as a series of masks, as a human character within a realistic novel. These three aspects of the character are intertwined. The human dimension of Hank's character, for example, cannot be ignored: it is necessary to create a dialectic and *human* representation of history wherein empathy with the protagonist is an fundamental component. By making Hank a character with a psyche rather than a mere allegorical symbol, Twain counters the possibility of judging Hank solely by his actions and results (i.e. the "Battle of the Sand-Belt").

The human and, therefore, the imperfect is what renders history paradoxical rather than a logical, calculable succession of events. Contrary to the efforts of utopian fiction, Twain's 'historical realism' shows that history is not abstract, perfect and predictable but human and chaotic. He shows how from the best of intentions we can arrive at the "Battle of the Sand-Belt."

Hank is an amalgamation of various historical and literary characters that are themselves representative of modernity. He also conforms to character types that are as old as comedy and satire itself. This makes Hank both of his time and timeless. I will discuss the modern-historical archetypes and the classic literary masks Twain uses to create Hank. I will demonstrate how Twain melds these

masks in order to adequately represent modernity. Moreover, I will show how Twain's discussion on the quandaries of social progress leads to proto-imperial reflections and vice-versa.

I. A Human View of History

Hank Morgan is both the hero and the unwitting villain of his own story; he is also the object of humour. His agency is defined by his overreaching and subsequent failure. The reasons behind his failure lie both in his nature as a fallible human being—as evidenced by his tragic and comedic qualities—and as the embodiment of fictional, fallible ideas that have been mistaken for absolute certainties. He embodies the tensions that exist in history between revolutionary/reformist energies and repressive, destructive power; and his character arc points to the fact the fact that one can easily become the other. He is also a classic tragic character due to his history defying hubris and his rise, *harmartia*, fall arc; he is also an archetypal “outsider” character whose foreignness allows for comedic error and misunderstanding. His braggadocio and ignorance also make him the perfect target for humour at his own expense; he is, therefore, also a modern variation on the *miles gloriosus* character whose boasted accomplishments are far less relevant and grandiose than he perceives them to be.

He is a modern and topical character due also to the manner in which this braggadocio is expressed; his speech is full of frontier related metaphors and broad, conventional slang.⁶⁹ More importantly, the quandaries he faces and the satirical analogies that can be drawn with recent and current events demonstrate his modernity: these include, the Glorious revolution, the French

⁶⁹ Everett Carter states that Hank's narrative style is representative of “frontier humour” (438) whereas James M. Cox affirms that Hank's use of slang is “put-on vernacular” or “patronizing indulgence of metaphor” (219); according to Cox, Hank's vernacular is “nothing but a *show*, an act [...]. Nothing more than one of Hank Morgan's *effects*” (219).

Revolution, the Civil War and colonialism. Indeed, the theories of history and progress that find we find within the text and which Hank embodies are those of the late modern era: from its enlightenment and Whiggish beginnings to the more recent romantic, positivistic, scientific and imperial developments. Hank's bourgeois self-madness, his faith in technology and science, his egalitarian ideals and his Napoleonic contradictions make him the (im)perfect Son of the various revolutions and civil wars of the modern era, be they English, French, American or industrial. Moreover, his exploits in Camelot remind us of those of a number of self-made frontier and colonial adventurers.⁷⁰

Therefore, despite its faux-medieval setting, *A Connecticut Yankee* is a study of recent history, of the age of revolutions, of modernity itself. Twain acts as both a writer and a historian and attempts to narrate "Progress:" progress that is represented by events such as the French revolution, the rise and fall of Napoleon, the conquest of the frontier and the Civil War. As a writer he does not chose the form of the historical novel but something that shifts among allegorical satire, parody, the picaresque and realism. His method as a historian is reflected by the form itself: he compresses the entire modern era into the nutshell of a relatively short fable and shows the parallels between epochs as much as the differences. In doing so, he espouses an underlying theory of history that does not see the present moment as unique. This theory of history is in contrast with utopian millenarianism. Rather than narrate history as a progression or a linear chain of causes and effects, Twain seems to adhere to a "janus-faced" (to use Gilman's terms) or cyclical theory of history. Moreover, he parodies historiography itself by narrating events with irreverence, rather than reverent gravitas, and by

⁷⁰ Therefore, in its potential to be read as an anti-imperial text this novel anticipates by a decade the debate around the Philippines and poses the imperial issue in relation with America's own past of Westward conquest.

introducing anachronisms; he counters the tendency to abstract or romanticize history by including violence and graphic detail—particularly in the Civil War evoking finale. In an almost paradoxical move, Twain declares the primacy of fiction over historiography, and of realism (even within a speculative context) over romance: fiction is not pure, referenceless invention but the means to distil reality, to show both what is “real” and logic but also the absurd and the irrationally human. In short, history is a completely human phenomenon and it is necessary to analyze human character in order to understand it; the best means to do this is narrative.

In building the character of Hank Twain draws from various figures that are representative of the late modern era, be they dictators, conquerors, explorers and businessmen. However, Hank’s story of *hubris* and downfall is also the most classic of character arcs. This is coherent with Twain’s effort to fabulize history and deflate a millenarianist sense of self-importance. In making Hank both a protagonist with a tragic arc and an embodiment of the modern era, Twain could be adhering to Thomas Carlyle’s concept of the “Great Man” who guides and transforms his epoch. However, the buffoonish, comedic aspect of Hank’s character is equally as present and relevant within the text. Therefore, Twain is more probably parodying or burlesquing Carlyle: countering the historian’s notion that “The History of the World history is but the Biography of great men” (27) Twain tells the story of a man who succumbs to unpredictable social forces or his own folly and whose agency is defined by failure. *A Connecticut Yankee* is the story of a mediocre man (in his own time) who, given absolute power, leads a country into a self-destructive, apocalyptic war and he leaves no trace of himself in history. Conversely, Camelot, Arthur and his knights live on in legend. The King is not Carlyle’s “Great Man” either: he is portrayed as noble and charismatic, childlike and ignorant in equal measure, hardly the lofty figure of the Hero-King envisioned by Carlyle:

The Commander over Men; he to whose will our wills are to be subordinated, and loyally surrender themselves, and find their welfare in doing so, may be reckoned the most important of Great Men. He is practically the summary for us of all the various figures of Heroism; Priest, Teacher, whatsoever of earthly or of spiritual dignity we can fancy to reside in a man, embodies itself here, to *command* over us, to furnish us with constant practical teaching, to tell us for the day and hour what we are to do. (178)

Neither Hank nor Arthur live up to the standard of such an idealized figure. Twain is contemplating Carlyle's "Great man" theory but with an all-important addendum: history is the story of supposedly "Great men" but it is the selective way in which this story is told—an act of narrative fiction or fabrication—that makes them great. Only by excising such common human characteristics as greed, pettiness, egoism, stupidity and fallibility do we obtain the "Great Man." Twain's historiographic ethic consists in adding a dose of humbling reality or grain of salt (one could even say venom) to this grandiose metanarrative of modernity. The result is a truly dialectic (or multilectic) vision of history.

Twain's satirical, realistic and novelistic mode of historiography hinges upon perceptions of the "modern man" protagonist Hank Morgan. The manner in which we perceive Hank influences our rhetorical assessment of the text and our interpretation of the successes and failures of the character: are they a celebration or critique of a certain ethos or ideology? He is a classic tragic and comedic character, but whether we perceive him as tyrant, hero or fool may depend upon our own inclination; the many, contrasting critical readings of the novel are proof of this. Is Hank a democratic liberator, a dictatorial warmonger or a misguided buffoon? The answer is all three. All three characterizations of Hank co-exist.

This coexistence of the “roles” or “masks” renders Hank representative of the paradoxical dialectics, or better multilectics, that are inherent to historical processes. Hank’s multiplicity can be compared and contrasted with the monophonic, didactic conviction of the narrators and protagonists of utopian fiction. These “roles” or “masks” are no novelty for the modern era. We can find in the literary-mediatic treatment of Napoleon Bonaparte pre-existing examples of these “masks.” They are used to represent historical figures that can be seen by different parties, as either inspiring, formidable, or ridiculous. However, this does not usually occur within the space of one text and herein lies Twain’s originality. In *A Connecticut Yankee* this “either/or” becomes “and;” the “masks” are not treated separately but integrated within the space of one character and one text.

The difficulty of placing Hank in either one of these positions reflects the difficulty we have in reading *A Connecticut Yankee* as a unilateral, unambiguous statement. Characterizing it as “incomplete” or “confused” due to the fact that there is no clear-cut statement is reductive. “Ambiguity” and “ambivalence” are not necessarily defects; they are utilized by Twain to paint a portrait of an era that *is* ambivalent and full of contrasting tensions, as demonstrated by our analysis of utopian literature. The best approach towards analyzing the character of Hank Morgan and, therefore, the issues at stake within the text is to accept ambivalence as an authorial strategy and a qualitative category in its own right. This allows us to provide a reading of the novel without bending all of its elements to an *a priori* biographical narrative. This is not to say that no clear messages or characterizations of Hank exist but rather that they are multiple and they often contrast with each other; from a rhetorical point of view this represents an authorial strategy rather than a mistake.

II. *Hank Morgan Beyond Good and Evil: Power Parables and Masks*

In a public speech in 1886 Twain opened by declaring that “Power, when lodged in the hands of man means oppression—insures oppression: it means oppression *always*: not always consciously, deliberately [or] purposely” (in *A Connecticut Yankee*, Norton Critical Edition, 284); this lack of consciousness, deliberateness or purpose in the exercise of power—and therefore oppression—characterizes Hank’s own agency as “Boss.” In chapter X, as he observes what he has accomplished in his first four years in office, Hank affirms that: “unlimited power is the ideal thing when it is in *safe* hands” (51 emphasis added) those safe hands being his own of course. He goes on to declare: “as a perishable perfect man must die, and leave his despotism in the hands of an imperfect successor, an earthly despotism is not merely a bad form of government, it is the worst form that is possible.” According to this logic, Hank must either consider himself as the “perfect” despot or the “imperfect” despot. The most logical conclusion is that he considers himself the “perfect” despot. This is confirmed by his declaration that his works “showed what a despot could do with the resources of a kingdom at his command” (51). To break it down further, in the previous passage the author is doing either one of three things:

- 1) showing a character who in all his hubris declares that he is above the flaws of common men, that his decisions are infallible and that he has access to a “truth” that justifies his despotism.
- 2) exposing the foolishness of a character who is oblivious of the fact that he is contradicting himself and is dabbling in something of which he does not understand the consequences.⁷¹

⁷¹ Both of the above interpretations seem to be further confirmed by other declarations he makes such as: “Men write many fine and plausible arguments in support of monarchy, but the fact remains that where every man in the State has a vote, brutal laws are impossible” (138); a declaration that reveals both Hank’s naiveté and blindness to his own role as despot.

- 3) portraying Hank as a cynical Machiavellian character who wishes to dominate other men and whose pursuit of power is completely self-serving; this characterization seems confirmed by his initial declaration of intents:

I made up my mind to two things: if it was still the nineteenth century and I was among lunatics and couldn't get away, I would presently boss that asylum or know the reason why; and if, on the other hand, it was really the sixth century, all right, I didn't want any softer thing: I would boss the whole country inside of three months; for I judged I would have the start of the best-educated man in the kingdom by a matter of thirteen hundred years and upward. I'm not a man to waste time after my mind's made up and there's work on hand. (17)

These three character types are not, perforce, mutually exclusive as the despot and the idealist can be both buffoonish and self-interested, albeit unknowingly. Hank seems to fluctuate amongst these poles, making his character not a fixed point but a flux, a figure that continuously needs to redefine or reinvent itself (dictator-liberator-entertainer) depending on the situation. Characterization n° 3, for example, only subsists on a conscious level for Hank at the beginning of the novel and before he has acquired power. His conscious desire for power passes into the background (but remains ever present) soon after he has consolidated it.

By chapter VIII, through his deceitful “miracles”—the Columbus-style manipulation of the occurrence of an eclipse and the “magical” destruction of Merlin’s tower using dynamite—he has “solidified [his] power, and made it impregnable [...]. There was not any one in the kingdom who would have considered it good judgment to meddle with [his] matters” (40). Therefore, from the beginning of his power parable, the tyrannical, power-hungry persona overlaps with that of the entertainer, or P.T. Barnum style huckster: he enjoys the spectacle his “effects” create but also sees them as a means towards a political end. This overlapping of the tyrant and buffoon “masks” recurs at various intervals throughout the course of the novel and more obviously when there are “miracles” to

be performed or violence to be enacted. In preparing the “Restoration of the Holy fountain” in chapter XXIII, Hank keeps in mind the fact that: “When you are going to do a miracle for an ignorant race, you want to get in every detail that will count; you want to make all the properties impressive to the public eye; you want to make matters comfortable for your head guest; then you can turn yourself loose and play your effects for all they are worth” (123-24).

James M. Cox affirms that by “constantly advertising his ideas, his mechanical aptitude, and his stagey jokes, [Hank] becomes a grotesque caricature of the nineteenth century he advocates. Prancing through every conceivable burlesque and flaunting himself before the stunned Arthurian world into which he bursts, he begins to be the real buffoon of the show he manages” (205). Cox sees this as an incoherency. Hank’s behaviour clashes with “the logic of the narrative and the tone which sustains it” (206). According to Cox, the actual “logic” and “tone” of the narrative are to be found in the Yankee’s overbearing speeches that reflect “attitudes” which “Mark Twain himself swore by at one time or another during his public life” (206). I would argue, on the other hand, that Cox’s perception of Hank as a “grotesque caricature of the nineteenth century” shows how Twain has achieved his rhetorical objective perfectly; what Cox sees as error is actually an intended effect. However, disgust it is not the only emotion Hank’s character should elicit as Cox’s resistance testifies. Any attempt sympathize completely and irrevocably with Hank, from the beginning to the end of the novel, is impossible. Our sympathies, like Hank’s character, fluctuate. Cox ultimately refutes the idea of Hank as a caricature based on his perceptions of the extratextual, “public” persona of Mark Twain, which, ironically, is but itself the invention of a showy, professional deceiver by the name of Samuel Clemens.

Hank’s “effects” deceptively reinforce his status as a powerful magician and, therefore, his power. They also satisfy his sense of showmanship and love of spectacle. The same dynamic applies to the duel in chapter XXXIX in which Hank, once again, impresses upon the nobility how dangerous he

is by lassoing and shooting several knights. In this instance, Hank's political demonstration of force involves rodeo or circus style tricks that may remind us of "Buffalo Bill's Wild West Shows." This impression is reinforced by Hank's attire during the duel—"the simplest and comfortablest of gymnast costumes—flesh-colored tights from neck to heel, with blue silk puffings about my loins" (222)—and the carnival style advertisement that announces the tournament: "the names of the artists are warrant of good entertainment [sic]. The box-office will be open at noon of the 13th [...]. let *all* come and drink! Turn out, all hands! fetch along your dou3hnuts and your gum-drops and have a good time. Pie for sale on the grounds, and rocks to crack it with; also ciRcus-lemonade" (220).⁷² In these occasions, Hank revels in his showmanship, particularly in his ability to produce elaborate effects that shock and thrill his audiences. For the most part, excluding the abovementioned duel, the spectacle is harmless. Once we get to the Battle of the Sand-Belt, however, the circus spectacle transforms into an unequivocal massacre. The entertainment persona takes on a more sinister hue and it is revealed that the buffoon and the tyrant are one in the same. He becomes what Slavoj Žižek refers to in *The Parallax View* as the "burlesque figure of Evil Dictator" a comedic mask of same category as the "Seducer, Miser, and Deceiving Servant" (43). Žižek uses this term to describe Hitler: "Chaplin was right in his *Great Dictator*: Hitler's hubris was not 'inhuman,' out of the range of sympathy for ordinary pleasures and weaknesses—Hitler was 'human, all too human,' his political hubris was an 'all too human' idiosyncrasy which makes him ridiculous" (43). This seems very apt to describe Hank as well.

⁷² David Carlyon has analyzed the relevance of the circus as a source of inspiration for the author in "Twain's 'Stretcher': The Circus Shapes Huckleberry Finn;" Hamlin Hill's reading of the novel sees Hank as being very much influenced by the figure of P.T. Barnum. See Hill "Barnum, Bridgeport and *The Connecticut Yankee*."

At first, Hank revels unabashedly in his power, declaring that he is:

no shadow of a king; I was the substance; the king himself was the shadow. My power was colossal; and it was not a mere name, as such things have generally been, it was the genuine article [...]. I was a Unique; and glad to know that that fact could not be dislodged or challenged for thirteen centuries and a half, for sure (40-41).

Hank has effectively substituted the King and admits as much; however, later in the novel he tends not to mention his own position of absolute power in his republican philippics. Hank's justification of his power takes on a various forms; for example, he references the fact that his acquisition of power is not hereditary but meritocratic and while denouncing the privileges of a hereditary aristocracy, he declares himself: "a giant among pigmies, a man among children, a master intelligence among intellectual moles: by all rational measurement the one and only actually great man in that whole British world" (43). His investiture does not come from "God" like a traditional sovereign; nor does it come from an election but it is based on his own sense of self-worth among a people he explicitly considers inferior to himself. He declares that there is: "not a competitor; not a man who wasn't a baby to me in acquirements and capacities" (40).

This reasoning is not *just* the fruit of a very human arrogance on Hank's part but it is *also* the product of specific ideologies of Hank's era. Hank's reasoning is the product of a Whiggish/positivistic historical bias whereby the constant, chronological, forward flux of progress places the nineteenth century Hank in a superior position to his medieval counterparts. Hank admits that he was not at all special within his own time and place: "what would I amount to in the twentieth century? I should be foreman of a factory, that is about all; and could drag a seine down street any day and catch a hundred better men than myself" (40). As is evident from this passage, his nineteenth-century, bourgeois,

entrepreneurial spirit allows him to see the opportunities inherent to his position and to easily reconcile himself with his situation: “I was just as much at home in that century as I could have been in any other; and as for preference, I wouldn't have traded it for the twentieth. Look at the opportunities here for a man of knowledge, brains, pluck, and enterprise to sail in and grow up with the country” (40). To describe his situation, Hank even references the popular motif of striking “oil” (40) which creates obvious resonances with the frontier mythos and its legendary success stories. There is also a cultural—almost racial—bias that Hank expresses which characterizes him as a colonial overlord of sorts. The idea of the “inferiority” of the Arthurians is reinforced within Hank’s narration by a series of techniques such as: paternalistic infantilization (as we have seen above); he refers to the Arthurians generically as “animals” but also specifically as “moles” (43) and “rabbits” (41); he transforms them into “savages” and “white Indians.” In doing so Hank also cites a justificatory precedent for conquest and ethnic cleansing.

As is common within the phenomenon of imperialism, self-interest eventually needs a justificatory narrative of some sort, be it a “mission,” “destiny” or “burden;” Hank too proceeds in this manner and in chapter X he begins to inform the reader of his long term goals and to delineate his project of progress. This shift in Hank’s declared intentions is not merely a question of common political dynamics but an individual and human phenomenon of transformation. This change is both self-centred and altruistic. Not having any real rivals, apart from the Church which is mostly ignored until the finale, Hank is his own God, his own electorate, in short, his own authority. The impulses of Ego (and partially Id) have been momentarily satisfied by the acquisition of unchallenged power. The fact that Hank’s techno-industrial, and educational apparatus remains hidden is a marker of this Ego-Id power dynamic. He describes his hidden infrastructure as a “serene volcano, standing innocent with its smokeless summit in the blue sky and giving no sign of the rising hell in its bowels” (51). It is now the

Superego's turn to be satisfied. The altruistic, egalitarian principles of Hank's social-cultural context of origin become more prominent; his mission takes a more moralistic turn as he attempts to transform from *homo economicus* to *homo reciprocans* and he begins to wear more frequently the persona of the "liberator." The frequent and elongated sections in which Hank expounds upon the virtues of republicanism, the press and technology are, therefore, as much for the benefit of his own reassurance than for that of the implied reader.

As I had observed in chapter 1, Hank's intention to "send out an expedition to America" (228) is the expression of an unfulfilled Oedipal impulse to become his own "cultural father." This impulse finds its most "successful" output in the subjugation and final destruction of the parent culture. According to the conventions of imperial ideology, it is the discovered and colonized land that is feminized; it is often embodied by subjugated female figures such as the Malinche or Pocahontas. Hank is able to enact the mythological "castration" of the father-figure by transforming England into a colonized territory. As I had also observed, Hank's time-travelling Oedipic impulse is ludicrous in its ambition and self-destructiveness. Much like Chaplin's Hitler, Hank's *hubris* is "'human, all too human,' [and therefore] ridiculous" (Žižek 43). Albeit in a more subtle and sublimated form, Hank becomes the caricature of the insane, incestuous despot in the style of Nero or Caligula; as in the case of these historical figures, even Hank's most terrible misdeeds assume a dark comedic quality; it is comedy that is not light entertainment but the complementary opposite of tragedy. These figures are transformed into something that is both completely tyrant and buffoon, that is both fearsome and ridiculous.

III. *Hank as the Enlightened Dictator, Miles Gloriosus and Narrator*

Despite my quasi-Freudian analysis, in the intentions of the author the Yankee was to possess a “good heart and high intent” (*The Love Letters* 257-258), therefore, a side that is sincere in its altruism. How then can we explain the tragic course of events from this perspective? Moreover, how do we reconcile buffoon and tyrant Hank with his role as liberator/reformer?

Everett Carter, in his article “The Meaning of *A Connecticut Yankee*,” (in *A Connecticut Yankee*, Norton Critical Edition 434-452) divides critics of this novel into the categories of “hard” and “soft” (435): “soft” critics are those who maintain that Twain is critiquing Hank Morgan and the techno-industrial, capitalistic system he represents; “hard” critics are those who see Hank Morgan as an alter ego of Twain himself and, therefore, as a character with whom the reader is meant to sympathize completely (436). Being one of the latter, Carter cites an extratextual proof of this interpretation: in a letter to his wife Twain claimed that the theatrical adaptation of *A Connecticut Yankee* portrayed Hank Morgan merely as a “low down blackguard” depriving him of the abovementioned “good heart and high intent” which the author saw as an important part of the character. Rather than being proof that Twain fully supported the ideas and agency of his protagonist—or that he intended the character to be “good” or “bad”—this positive characterization renders Hank Morgan more stratified or polyhedric. There are no obligations to accept these binomial oppositions in analyzing the character, nor must we accept Carter’s division of “hard” and “soft.” I maintain that ambivalence, fluctuation or paradox are the very key to understanding the character and that this is representative of the human condition according to Mark Twain. *A Connecticut Yankee* can be interpreted as the narrative of a character who starts out as a self-serving Parvenu, transforms into a revolutionary idealist and ends up becoming a tyrant. This power parable reveals the gulf that separates intentions and results. The novel shows an

inverse tendency if compared to other works of speculative fiction of the era and their didactic certainties.

The figure of the “strong leader” and the phenomenon of the “one man revolution” recur often in speculative-utopian fiction; these figures are viewed in either a positive or negative light and never with Twain’s level of ambivalence. According to Roemer, the presence of “‘solitary’ figures battling an ‘alien tribe’” (63) was a literary convention that satisfied readerly expectations; due to their political content and the fact that they are “grand historical drama[s],” utopian novels draw explicit parallels between their protagonists and inspirational figures of the past such as: “Washington, Lincoln [...] Grant [...], Jesus” (63) etc. This tendency is reflected in the names of certain utopian heroes such as “Moses” or “Abraham Lincoln Homeborn” (in Roemer 65-66). The convenience of “Having [one] hero lead the march to utopia” can also be imputed to the inexperience of “Most of the utopian authors [...] at novel writing and, as one *Literary World* reviewer put it, having a hero around was very handy when the author ‘needed some gigantic puppet to hold the threads of a well-nigh unmanageable plot’” (63). There is also a tendency for the utopian hero to be unrealistically “all-encompassing:” he is, at the same time, extremely moralistic and religious, of humble origins (but often also wealthy), intelligent and almost always a professional in some useful category such as: “inventors, engineers and scientists” (65). However, Roemer states that this “all-encompassing nature of the leader was more than a literary shortcut” and that it catered to “a desire for what Michael Kammen has called the American Everyman-Superman” (65).

In many of the works we have seen, such as *Armageddon* (1898) and *His Wisdom the Defender* (1900, of which the title itself is revealing), we have one charismatic, inventor-leader-commander; his innovative weaponry and willingness to lead the nation into battle allows the United States to dominate the world. These works celebrate the proto-fascistic alliance of capital, military, race and/or nation and

place one “perfect” individual (or extremely exclusive group) at the helm. Others, such as “*Uncle Sam’s Cabins*” (1895), or E. Fitzpatrick’s *The Marshal Duke of Denver* (1895) demonstrate more populist or socialist sensibilities combined with an internally directed outlook rather than global-imperial one. indeed we have, a “fighting Parson” and a “Marshal Duke” respectively, who are the exceptional, unequivocal champions and liberators of the serfs, laborers and common people. Other novels still are very wary of revolutions and “enlightened” dictators and see them in negative light. This is the case of more dystopian works such as *Caesar’s Column* where the actions of the rebel leader (Caesar Lomellini) lead to mass death and destruction or William Harben’s *The Land of the Changing Sun* (1894) in which a scientist-tyrant controls all aspects of life—including the weather—through machines. In these works, the tyrannical leaders are obviously portrayed as villains and, more importantly, through the eyes of heroic protagonists who act as narrators or focalizers.

Twain analyzes the dangers inherent (which many utopian authors skim over) in electing an enlightened “philosopher king” or scientist “duce.” Due to his failings, Hank is a counterpoint to the more optimistic, “messianic leader” that often appears in utopian literature. On the other hand, despite his failings, Hank is not just the one-dimensional, evil tyrant/villain of the story but also, paradoxically, the hero (or misguided anti-hero). In this sense, *A Connecticut Yankee* represents a far cry from the didactic simplicity of those dystopias that show easy contrapositions of hardy heroes versus villainous plutocrats or extremist revolutionaries.

A Connecticut Yankee is different from the abovementioned utopian works also from a formal point of view. Indeed, Hank himself is both the first-person narrator—therefore sympathetic to his own cause by default—and the potential tyrant-leader. This form of sympathetic narration often relates oxymoronically with the content: Hank, even through the filter of his own words, is not presented as an unequivocally pure and infallible protagonist but as character who is also ignorant, capable of cruelty,

unnecessary violence, manipulation, error and ultimately failure. The first person narration, however, necessarily attenuates the negative aspects of the character and even the fact that they filter through is proof of Hank's honesty and naiveté. Moreover, his oft professed ideals of "HUMAN LIBERTY AND EQUALITY" (249) make him an easily relatable character; so do his genuine reactions of disgust in witnessing scenes of cruelty or frustration in the face of aristocratic privilege. First person narration, in combination with a flawed, vain, boastful protagonist is also an excellent premise for subtle humor wherein (to paraphrase Wayne Booth) the author and reader commune behind the narrators back (300). These formal features and character traits—as well as the various duels, fights and battles he partakes in—make Hank a perfect *Miles gloriosus* for the end of nineteenth century: indeed, his self-aggrandizing battle stories include a social-minded and/or an imperialistic dimension. The preponderance of the narrating voice can be considered both as one of the limits of the novel. I believe it is one of its subtleties: it sets up the protagonist (and the culture he represents) for an understated and self-revelatory satirical analysis. The self-conviction and idealistic fervor with which Hank Morgan narrates his story from chapter X onwards misdirects the reader into whole-heartedly sympathizing with him; however, Hank's assurance can also be seen as hubristic arrogance or foolishness.

Keeping in mind his *Miles Gloriosus* nature, how can we describe Hank's narrating voice? The first time he speaks in the novel is to the first narrator (M.T.) who frames Hank's own analeptic narrative. The two narrators meet during a tour of Warwick Castle: Hank briefly mentions the "transmigration of souls" that is the "scientific" premise for time travel; soon after, as the guide points out "the round [bullet] hole through the chain-mail," Hank comments: "Wit ye well, I saw it done [...] I did it myself" (5-6). Therefore, we are initially introduced to Hank as a veteran of some sort and although the Hank we meet is old and weary at this point, he still has a little boast in him. The younger Hank's narration shows a lot more swagger as can be evinced from the abovementioned declaration of

intent: “I would boss the whole country inside of three months; for I judged I would have the start of the best-educated man in the kingdom by a matter of thirteen hundred years and upward” (17). This sudden surge of braggadocio occurs not four to five pages after Hank’s narrative has started. In the first pages he is temporarily relegated to the role of observer (he is still a prisoner of Sir Kay).

When Hank discusses his project of bringing the “civilization of the nineteenth century” to medieval England, his braggadocio and therefore his delusions become more self-evident. We get the impression that he believes he has brought about change when in fact not much has changed; his accomplishments in modernizing medieval Britain may be as exaggerated and self-aggrandizing as the stories of “giants,” “ogres” and “princesses” of his Arthurian counterparts. If this suspicion is confirmed—and there are various episodes within the novel that do confirm it—then a parallel is drawn between the two cultures or epochs and their respective delusions: on one side we have the “shams” of chivalry and aristocracy, on the other those of civilization, progress and empire. The essence of Twain’s historiographic agency is to reveal the relative constructedness and fictionality of all world-explaining narratives. Hank speaks of the transformative action of his factories (his “steel missionaries” or “nurseries” of men) his “teacher-factories” and “Sunday-schools” (50) and “Man-Factor[ies]” (68). However, we are shown little of how these work and what their actual effect on society is. Moreover, the ultimate efficacy of these man-factories is debatable. The final results speak for themselves: In the end Hank is left with only a handful of followers (fifty-three circa) who all perish together with the knights they have slain; moreover, he destroys all of his infrastructures in a “scorched earth” campaign therefore nullifying everything he has done so far.

Before we arrive at the apocalyptic finale, there are various instances that demonstrate how Hank’s concept of civilization is more a question of superficial signs (or signifiers) than substance (or signifieds). This is evident from his initial relationship with Sandy whom he tends to dismiss as a child

but who shows signs of an individuality and sense of self-worth that the Yankee fails to recognize. The Sandwich board wearing knights who advertise various products (both useful and superfluous) but to an illiterate population are another case in point. Moreover, his enthusiasm with newspapers as the heralds of democracy is both understandable and debatable: particularly if we consider, once again, the mostly illiterate population of Arthurian England. Indeed, Hank is only able to impress upon those he shows the newspaper to its “mystical” significance rather than its pragmatic, watchdog function.

Hank’s founding of a newspaper and his absolute faith in it as a vehicle of democracy (in spite of its content) perfectly demonstrates his adherence to certain “shams” of nineteenth century civilization. According to Christopher Morris, his enthusiasm for the newspaper is a perpetuation of “the cliché of Whig history, that the Enlightenment was made possible by print” (165) and notices how:

Morgan’s blindness to the parallels between faith-healing and his own newspapers illustrates—in a manner that would interest the writers of the Frankfurt School—his ignorance of the groundlessness of his Enlightenment ideology. Morgan doesn’t see that democracy simply substitutes one set of arbitrary power-relations, based on discourses of money and influence, for slavery and the hereditary hegemony of aristocracies. This Foucauldian theme is articulated throughout Twain’s works, but the jolts of time-travel in *A Connecticut Yankee* make it blatant. (165-66)

What Hank also fails to see is that, without a shared ideology between author and reader, the newspaper simply becomes pointless in obtaining *his* specific idea of democracy. Hank’s newspapers either remain the repository of a superficial code without referents for the Arthurians, or become the form of expression of the Arthurians’ traditional power structures or even Hank’s “new order;” in this last case, it is obvious that there can be very little democratic journalism going on but rather

indoctrination. When he first shows the “Weekly Hosannah and Literary Volcano” (148) to a group of monks, some of the few people in England who *can* read, they do not even understand what it is: “‘What is this curious thing? What is it for? Is it a handkerchief?—saddle blanket?—part of a shirt? [...]’ They suspected it was writing, because those among them who knew how to read Latin [...], recognized some of the letters but they could make nothing out of the result as a whole” (151). This shows how the text remains, for the moment, a piece of undecipherable code that may as well be “ornamentation” (151). It takes further indoctrination on Hank’s part to persuade them of the “magic properties” that he associates to the text; he does so by informing them of how quickly and efficiently the newspaper was produced, to which they respond “Ah-h—a miracle, a wonder! Dark work of enchantment” (152); he also *reads to them* “part of the account of the miracle of the restoration of the well” which they themselves have witnessed in person; their reaction is one of wonder: “‘Amazing, amazing!’ ‘These be the very haps as they happened, in marvelous exactness!’” (152).⁷³

The monks awed reaction to the text, once Hank has revealed its “magic” properties is extremely revealing. They take the newspaper into their hands “handling it as cautiously and devoutly as if it had been some holy thing come from some supernatural region; and gently felt of its texture, caressed its pleasant smooth surface with lingering touch, and scanned the mysterious characters with fascinated eyes” (152). Hank is extremely satisfied with their reverent response to the point that he is literally ecstatic and “drunk with enjoyment. Yes, this was heaven; I was tasting it once” (152). The

⁷³ It should be noted that the specific article Hank reads to them is also the self-celebratory account of the “miracle” he himself has performed in restoring the “Holy Fountain;” the monks have witnessed the events themselves but not one of them offers a different opinion of the “facts,” which curiously enough are lies or at the very least an example of Hank misrepresenting himself. In fact, regarding the miracle itself, Hank has previously fixed the pump through very conventional means but decides to sell it to the public as a feat of magic.

fact that this moment of quasi-religious ecstasy is engendered by a badly printed article based on falsified fact is in itself darkly satirical; it also reiterates what Morris refers to as “Morgan’s blindness to the parallels between faith-healing and his own newspapers” (165). Indeed, Hank fails to realize that one of two things has happened: that he has simply substituted one set of superstitions or magic belief with his own; or that the monks have simply assimilated the “magical” object into their own cultural code without really understanding its significance according to Hank. In other words, the newspaper, as a mere signifier, can acquire no inherent quality but only an associated one, and we are not even sure that the monks and Hank have the same signified in mind.

It is also wrong to consider Hank as completely self-deluded in his reformist agency. Many of the accomplishments he refers to may be actual successes that are, at least in part, corroborated by Clarence. In chapter XL he describes England as “a happy and prosperous country” with “Schools everywhere, and several colleges” and “a number of pretty good newspapers” (228); he also declares that “Slavery was dead and gone” (228), therefore, a number of positive reforms, albeit exaggerated and short term in their duration, can be attributed to Hank. We are, however, justified in seeing Hank as partially *unreliable* narrator due to the fact that he is an *outsider*, due his disproportionate sense of self-worth and due to the hubristic belief that his project can actually change the course of history. That is to say that he is not a selective or censoring narrator but that there is a certain naiveté in the manner in which he evaluates his own accomplishments. Comedy often comes as the result of the juxtaposition of the bluntness of Yankee “ignoramus” and the flowery Malorian characters, wherein the reader understands more than the narrator himself, being familiar with the literary universe Twain is evoking and engaging with. By using a somewhat clueless protagonist, a fool or alien, Twain is able to offer a critical perspective on the world of chivalry or more precisely, the fictional literary universe of chivalry; Hank’s is a perspective which is apparently uncontaminated by *a priori* knowledge or

affection and which sees beyond the façade of long established institutions, social hierarchies or habits. This is, in part, what renders Hank a relatable character we can also support.

IV. *The John Meredith Paradox*

Twain does not deal in absolutes in this novel and this is reflected in the characterization and narrative agency of the protagonist. It would be easier to see Hank Morgan as either a self-involved despot, or as a heroic liberator, rather than contemplate the distance that separates his initial “good heart and high intent” and the result of his actions. This seems to be a paradox that the author often reflected upon in contemplating historical events such as wars or revolutions, particularly in relation to the “good heart[s] and high intent[s]” of the people that participated in them. A case in point is mentioned in Twain’s *Autobiography* (Vol. 1) and it concerns a former schoolmate of the author, John Meredith, described as:

a boy of a quite uncommonly sweet and gentle disposition. He grew up and when the Civil War broke out he became a sort of Guerilla chief on the Confederate side, and I was told that in his raids upon Union families in the country parts of Monroe County–In earlier times the friends and familiars of his father–he was remorseless in his devastations and sheddings of blood. It seems almost incredible that this could have been that general comrade of my school days; yet it can be true, for Robespierre when he was young was like that (402).

A Connecticut Yankee may be attempting to analyze what it is to be John Meredith or Robespierre and the juxtaposition of these two figures, one infamous and the other virtually unknown, may give us a clue to the way we should interpret the character arc of Hank Morgan: from unknown factory foreman to “despot [...] with the resources of a kingdom at his command” (51) to mass-murderer. For Twain the interest seems to lie in Meredith’s having been of “sweet and gentle disposition;” although this would

not be the best description of Hank, it is in part comparable to the “good heart and high intent” that Twain sees as lacking from the theatrical rendition of his character. Had John Meredith always shown signs of violent or destructive behavior this episode may not have been of any curiosity.

Robespierre on the other hand is a historical figure which represents a crux for those who at the time participated in the debate regarding social disparity. As we have seen in utopian literature, the fear of social upheaval was pervasive and Robespierre the “boogeyman” of social discourse. In *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), Twain gives a more explicit opinion regarding the French Revolution:

Against the crimes of the French Revolution and of Bonaparte may be set two compensating benefactions: the Revolution broke the chains of the *ancien régime* and of the Church, and made of a nation of abject slaves a nation of freemen; and Bonaparte instituted the setting of merit above birth, and also so completely stripped the divinity from royalty [...]. Such benefactions as these compensate the temporary harm which Bonaparte and the Revolution did, and leave the world in debt to them for these great and permanent services to liberty, humanity, and progress. (375)

If we were to take this quote and consider the social and political concerns at work in *A Connecticut Yankee*, we may be tempted to see this as a justification of Hank's agency. Certainly, Twain in part or in principle shares some of his protagonist's ideals. Not only does the author project his socio-political concerns into the character but through Hank Morgan he may also partially be indulging in a republican power-destruction-revenge fantasy. However, beyond the self-indulgent *divertissement* of this fantasy *A Connecticut Yankee* contemplates the more complex theme of what it means to gradually become a Robespierre or a Bonaparte, to be the one responsible for death and destruction in the name of progress. Robespierre and the French Revolution are referred to explicitly by Hank in chapter XX when he

describes “The Reign of terror and the guillotine” as a historical necessity, an inevitable step in the march of social progress. However, at this early stage in his character development he affirms that he is “the wrong man” for the job (103), the irony being that he will eventually become the perfect man for the political purge, although he ultimately expresses shock, disgust and perhaps even repentance at the successful results obtained in this sense.

It is, perhaps, in his reluctance to relinquish control of his project and accept failure that Hank Morgan reveals the egocentricity of his agency: after destroying the means of production and education he has set up, he comments: “It was a pity, but necessary. We could not afford to let the enemy turn our own weapons against us” (258). It is one example of the many statements Hank makes that reveal how the “civilization-factories” are conceived as his personal instruments of power rather than something built for the “benefaction” of the populace. There is no upheaval from below for which he acts as a simple conduit as his fifty-three followers can hardly be considered a silent majority that requires a leader. In the words of John Carlos Rowe, in this novel Twain is contemplating “the degree to which republican aims and their emancipatory struggles can be distinguished from the tiresome old business of conquest by kings, priests, and tycoons” and with the intention of exposing “the ways that the usual tyrants would learn to disguise themselves as bearers of enlightenment” (178). As confirmation of this, we can consider the stark contrast between what Twain sees as the “benefactions” of the French Revolution and the failure of Hank Morgan’s experiment. Not only is he personally taken out of the picture once he starts to resemble more and more the tyrant (much like Robespierre and Napoleon themselves) but his project does not continue in his absence and his elite group of supporters is defeated by the mound of cadavers they have created: England remains well within the ordinary flux (or cycle) of history and Hank’s modernized version of Camelot becomes a mere parenthesis consigned to oblivion whereas the chivalric legends survive.

Although they are not completely comparable, Hank shares many parallels with the figure of Napoleon. Both Hank and Napoleon represent the *hubris*, ambition and potential failure of the late modern, self-made man; this already complex historical figure is “updated” by the addition of end of nineteenth century technophilia, scientism and elements of positivism which place Hank perfectly within his time. Like Napoleon, he can be seen both as the “son of the revolution”—the force that sweeps away a old, privileged class and its decadent culture—but also as a misguided and self-serving warmonger. These divisive characterizations of Napoleon, that are also part of Hank’s multifaceted characterization, become evident by simply comparing different examples of Napoleonic imagery: the celebratory paintings of Bonaparte by Jean-Louis David and Antoine-Jean Gros (Figures 7.A and 7.B) depict him as a great leader and almost messianic figure, whereas the political cartoon (7.D) or Francisco Goya’s famous masterpiece *The Third of May 1808* (7.C) offer a very different perspective:



7.A, Left: Jean-Louis David, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* (1801-1805). 7.B, Right: Antoine-Jean Gros, *Bonaparte Visiting the Plague Victims of Jaffa* (1804).



7.C, Left: Francisco Goya, *The Third of May 1808* (1814). 7.D, Right: *Le petit homme rouge berçant son fils*, (1814).

What Twain is able to do in his paradoxical or ambivalent portrayal of Hank is to include elements of these differing representations; Twain transcends the limits of the single elements by virtue of this polyhedric inclusion. Twain rises above the ideological and political kitsch of David and Gros by also including Hank's failures and his darker, violent, *realpolitik* infused side. He also rises above the facile, literal demonization of the subject that occurs in the satirical cartoon (7.D) by showing the "good heart and high intent" that lies behind his actions. Moreover, As we have seen in the previous chapter, in his representation of Hank's acts of violence he does not emphasize the pathos of the events or the bravery, humanity or victimhood of those that fall as in Goya's painting; Twain employs a realistic style of description (with few pathetic concessions) that is more in line with the photography of the Civil War and the works of Ambrose Bierce than anything else. The combination of these elements make for a often hard to digest portrait of modern man and late modern history.

V. *Historical Models for Hank: Hank as Grant?*

Despite of or in virtue of the flaws of its protagonist, *A Connecticut Yankee* reflects upon the ethical and political issues that surround all "emancipatory struggles," revolutions and social progress but also

the quandaries of those who enact or participate in them. Apart from the French Revolution and its aftermath, other historical phenomena that are evidently contemplated and even quoted are the events of the Civil War and Reconstruction. I have shown in the previous chapters, the parallels that are drawn both explicitly and subtly between medieval England and Pre-War South and there may even be parallels drawn between Hank and the historical figure of Ulysses S. Grant “called by Confederate forces ‘The Yankee’” (Dalrymple 5).

According to Scott Dalrymple, Twain’s prolonged editorial relationship with Grant strongly contributes to the genesis of the novel and to the characterization of the *Yankee* being that “Grant's Memoirs were part of Twain's everyday life” during the composition of *A Connecticut Yankee* and the fact that within the text itself we can find evident references to the events of the Civil War. In particular he states that the “Battle of the Sand-Belt not only suggests parallels to the American Civil War, but it so surprisingly and particularly resembles a specific campaign Grant’s siege of Vicksburg, Mississippi that it seems likely Twain's creative mind was reshaping this crucial siege in his novel” (3). Twain’s intimate knowledge of the details of the siege of Vicksburg is evident from the chapter in *Life on the Mississippi* which is devoted exclusively to this event and it is the result of the author’s extensive research and interviews with survivors. There are analogies between the real historical event and the “Battle of the Sand-Belt” such as the terms of surrender that Hank offers the knights which “resemble those originally offered by Grant at Vicksburg” (5) and use of caves as hiding places during the siege (4). The number of people involved in the siege on the confederate side, 30,000 among combatants and civilians, corresponds to the 30,000 mounted knights who move against the Boss and his retinue (4). There is also the destruction caused by the bombardment of the city and the use of the explosive devices of modern warfare which play a central part both in the siege and in the Battle of the Sand-Belt. Even without considering the details of the siege of Vicksburg, Hank’s conflict with the knights of

Camelot reminds us of Grant “leading the ‘Republic’ in battle against the archaic, slave-holding, non-technological South” (Dalrymple 5).

However, when Dalrymple affirms that there is a “similarity of narrative style” (5) of the fictional character and the historical figure we may disagree in part. It is undeniable that some similarities exist and Dalrymple shows how the two narrators “begin their stories the same way. ‘My family is American,’ reads the first sentence of Grant's Memoirs, ‘and has been for generations, in all its branches, direct and collateral’” (5). This reminds us of Hank’s “I am an American. I was born and reared in Hartford [...]. So I am a Yankee of the Yankees” (8). Dalrymple also illustrates the general characteristics and details that render the two narrators similar, for example, the fact that: “Both men, as narrators, often recount grotesque scenes with realism and impassivity [...] images of a hill turned into a crater by a massive explosion, of human bodies flying through the air or littering the ground, are related with only as much emotion as an inventory of food rations” (6). I would, however, partially disagree as what distinguishes Hank as a narrator from Grant is the more than occasional presence of humor and childish excitement in conveying “grotesque scenes” such as those of the “Battle of the Sand-Belt,” for example. Hank’s buffoonish, showy persona emerges both when he revels in the spectacle of his “effects” and when he performs spectacular acts of violence: in these instances, the buffoon overlaps with the tyrant and the fundamental difference between Hank and Grant is evident. These are also the instances in which his *miles gloriosus* narratorial persona also emerges more prominently, demonstrating the gap that separates Hank’s narrative style from that of the dry, factual Grant. Dalrymple also acknowledges this fundamental difference between the two figures citing Hank’s hubris and Twain’s own idiosyncrasies as relevant to this divergence: “Grant constantly downplays his accomplishments, unlike the proud Hank, who glories in his. Hank is a of amalgamation of Grant's and Twain's personal characters in this regard. Perhaps ultimately it is this sense of hubris

that makes the great 'effect' of Hank's battle morally offensive to some readers. His victory is a hollow one; very soon it will become a defeat" (7).

A Connecticut Yankee is also a satire of "Yankee" civilization on the part of a defeated ex-Confederate who has seen the error in his ways but maintains enough of a critical conscience to not succumb to the self-congratulatory spirit that emerges after the tragic aspects of the Civil War have been partially forgotten. Hank is the embodiment of a historical paradox by which victory can mean defeat and adhering too strongly to "good" or rational ideals can render someone "evil" from another point of view or over time; in rendering this paradox Twain integrates the relatively positive model of General Grant, the "Northern" ideals he represents and the "benefactions" of the Civil War with the simple but terrible reality of violence and a subtle critique of the conquering ideology. In other words, Grant does not equal Hank and the author is not satirizing or criticizing Grant in a veiled manner.⁷⁴ It seems more probable that through this editorial experience with Grant, Twain gained a perspective on what it means to be the purveyor of death and destruction even if it is in the name of "progress" or a good cause. Grant serves Twain in constructing *one* side of this dialectic, or polyhedric, character and this characterization does not clash with our previous interpretation of the novel as a power parable of rise and fall. Hank is, among many things, a Grant with ego or a Grant transfigured into the classic

⁷⁴ In fact, from other writings by the author, including his bitter comments regarding Matthew Arnold's criticism of Grant's memoirs, it would seem evident that Twain did genuinely admire Grant. This is evident also from Twain's sincere efforts to financially aid the General through the publication of his memoirs. Forrest G. Robinson describes Mark Twain's relationship with Grant as a "fascination [...] which expressed itself outwardly in admiration for the great hero's valor, was inwardly complicated by an antipathy rooted in feelings of personal failure and inadequacy" (44). These ambivalent feelings may inform Hank on the more intellectual plain of a historical analysis.

comedic figure of the *miles gloriosus*. He is an amalgam of many types of “Yankee” and Twain’s knowledge of Grant is used in order to render the character more multifaceted than a mere caricature of the utilitarian Northerner or the overambitious social reformer or carpetbagger. He is also a hero/anti-hero we can understand, recognize ourselves in and occasionally sympathize with.

As we have seen, the speculative-utopian literature of the time seems to place traumatic events such as the Civil War within an ordered progression of events which will inevitably lead to an ideal state of being. Twain, however, seems more pessimistic: horrific events remain horrific events which not even humor can fully redeem and the “benefactions” of one series of events are not permanent or absolute as they inevitably lead to a repetition of the same events in some other form in an endless cycle. And if this is only hinted at in *A Connecticut Yankee*, it becomes a certainty in his later writings. Twain is offering a critique of the Whiggish *ratio* that appeared as victorious at the end of the Civil War and he may be questioning its utility and the supposed “benefactions” that were promised. Notwithstanding, there is a continued acknowledgement of the necessity that progress represents in the face of the “archaic” horrors of slavery, however, Twain asks whether the democratic aspirations of the Civil War have been fulfilled or whether only personal ambitions and power have been served. This question is reflected in the words of one of Hank Morgan’s lads who on the eve of battle begs him to “consider!—reflect!—these people are our people [...] do not ask us to destroy our nation!” (248). It is in this critique that Twain’s nature as a Northern-Southern hybrid emerges. His “conversion” to Northern ideals is not unconditional and he reserves the right to scrutinize the ethos and philosophies of the victors but without seeking refuge in the blind nostalgia of many of his Southern counterparts.

VI. *Hank Morgan’s Imperial Routes*

In creating the historical patchwork/pastiche of *A Connecticut Yankee* it is not only the recent events of the Civil War that are contemplated. The dimension of the Frontier and early colonial mythologies also feature prominently in the novel and allow us to draw parallels between Hank's project of progress and the great Westward expansion: from the early days of explorers such as John Smith to the more recent Jeffersonian era of Native American removal and the Indian Wars. The knights and damsels of Camelot are referred to by Hank as "White Indians," (19) "Comanches," and "squaw[s]" (73) and repeatedly as "Savages." Hank defeats various knights in a duel using the Cowboy's signature lasso and pistols and Merlin's clothes are described as being "as showy and foolish as the sort of thing an Indian medicine-man wears" (132)—ironically the sorcerer is later upstaged and defeated the Yankee's own "showy" and deceitful displays of 19th century technology. Early on in the story Hank is able to manipulate the Arthurian "Savages" through his knowledge of a coming eclipse; the fact that Columbus and Cortez are mentioned within this particular context creates a direct association between the Frontier and *La Conquista* and frames the novel within the context of colonial or anti-colonial discourse. Therefore, in tracing his history of the modern era and or modern man, Twain gives equal space to colonial-imperialism and the rise of republics; moreover he shows how the two phenomena are curiously intertwined. This relationship is well represented by those historical figures, which Hank may have been modeled on, who use "democratic" or "republican" values within their justifications of colonial conquest.

Hank's fictional adventures can be compared to the exploits of various, more recent colonial adventurers of both American and British origin whose accomplishments would have been common knowledge at the time of composition of the novel. Hank Morgan shares curious parallels with the colonial entrepreneur-mercenary William Walker, famous for his filibustering campaigns in Central America: both are eclectic in different ways (Walker was a doctor, lawyer and journalist) and are

familiar with the world of journalism; both men are ambitious, power hungry and share the vision of founding a “republic” of their own by applying an entrepreneurial spirit; both use the “backwardness” of the areas they conquer to their own advantage; both gain power and win battles against all numeric odds, Hank with his fifty-three followers, Walker with his forty-five (in Mexico) or sixty (in Nicaragua); both ultimately overreach and their victories are short lived. Like Hank, William Walker saw his filibustering (a term he himself obviously refuted) as a historical necessity; however he seems to have borrowed more from Frontier and Manifest Destiny ideologies than a republican-egalitarian ethos: he cites the inferiority of “mixed Hispano-Indian race,” the superiority of the “pure white American race” and the inevitability of war between these races to justify his actions (162). The Hon. John Slidell, in speaking out against Walker’s filibustering, characterizes Walker’s actions as misguided attempts to the “Americaniz[e] of [...] benighted regions” or as a “mission of regenerating Mexico and Central America” (3-4). Other observers at the time take inspiration from Walker’s actions to elaborate a whole justificatory/celebratory ideology of aggressive colonialism that anticipates the events of the Spanish-American war by half a century. In his apologia of Walker’s actions George Fitzhugh cites the fact that:

For nearly forty years Mexico has been in a state of continually recurring revolution, of misrule, and almost anarchy. She has shown that, left to herself, she is wholly incapable of organizing and sustaining any permanent form of government [...]. Her mixed population has all the vices of civilization, with none of its virtues; all the ignorance of barbarism, with none of its hardihood, enterprise, and self-reliance. It is enervate, effeminate, treacherous, false, and fickle. Like the savage and beasts of the forest, its love of liberty is but impatience of control, and hatred of law and government [...]. Its state of civilization, its morality, and its courage, are far inferior to that of the Roman Empire [...]. (613).

Citing also rampant crime and Indian attacks, Fitzhugh characterizes filibustering as a necessary mission of a humanitarian nature; moreover, the author constantly appeals to a “civilization” versus “savagery/barbarism” dialectic, he repeatedly invokes the “benefits” that would come to Mexico as a result of annexation to the United States (615-616) and explicitly quotes “manifest destiny”⁷⁵ and a “might makes right” historical ethos to justify filibustering: “from their day to ours the strong have been conquering the weak—subjecting them to a better rule, and improving their condition, when they were susceptible of improvement or civilization, and exterminating them when they were not” (617).

As a sign of the fact that the Civil War was looming (the article is published in 1858), Fitzhugh’s diatribe develops into an apologia of slavery as a component of his world history of filibustering: “the Negro slave-trade, and slavery in America, were means and agencies intended and provided by Deity to civilize and Christianize the blacks. This surely was filibustering; but the most needful of filibustering; for modern experience has demonstrated it to be the only means sufficiently coercive to civilize and Christianize the Negro” (618). This represents a curious overlap of proto-imperial racial discourse, that derives from Frontier ideologies, and the phenomenon of slavery. It unites under a same ideology phenomena that later tended to be analyzed individually: who would be willing, at the time of composition of *A Connecticut Yankee*, to sully the mythology of the Frontier and the providential view of American history it incarnates by associating it with slavery? Fitzhugh’s apologia is probably more elaborate and articulated than any means by which Walker himself

⁷⁵ Fitzhugh also compares filibusters to mythological heroes, biblical characters and great conquerors of Empires past whose actions we benefit from even today. For example, through Julius Caesar’s invasion of Gaul, France is now “the most polished, scientific, and warlike of nations” (618). Fitzhugh curiously quotes Napoleon Bonaparte as a filibuster and also compares the Frontier and the slaughter of Indians to the Hebrew invasion of Palestine, commenting that the “hand of providence is seen in either case” (617).

expressed his “humanitarian” motivations, however, they do come from the same ideological place. Despite Walker’s personal ambitions and rapid failure of his project, his long term goal was to continue the conquest of South America in order to create a series of new slave-owning states that could be annexed to the United States, or in other words, the creation of a Southern-style plantation Empire; his and Fitzhugh’s shared vision actually demonstrates how the seeds of empire reside in the South as much as they do in the North. It is also in this sense that the Hank and Walker differ greatly from each other: if Hank is a “Yankee of the Yankees” that embodies the progressive ideas of the North, Walker is his specular opposite, the Southerner who wished to extend slavery to as many peoples and lands as possible. Walker was a popular hero in the South but considered a criminal in the North. However, despite their fundamental differences they also share a peculiar kinship. In 1916, the historian William O. Scroggs (1879-1957) explained Walker’s failure from a critical yet imperialistic point of view:

With some fewer gifts of intellect, but with a broader knowledge of human nature and a more liberal endowment of common sense, he might have succeeded in putting an end to anarchy and founding a tropical empire on the ruins of unhappy experiments in democracy. That his success would have inured to the benefit of civilization few, perhaps, in view of the present condition of Central America, will be so rash as to deny. As it was, his enterprise, by reason of his failure, was productive only of evil consequences to all concerned. [...]; it caused enormous destruction of life and property in Nicaragua; (397)

This passage could well be an epitaph to Hank’s own potential and ultimate failure; where it surely differs from being an exact description of Hank’s failures is in its mention of “unhappy experiments in democracy;” in this passage it refers to the failed South American republics who would have naturally fared better under North American rule. In *A Connecticut Yankee* it is the project that Hank enacts, in his role as colonial overlord, that is better described in terms of an “unhappy experiment.”

Another American adventurer who sought personal power but whose professed ideals were similar to Hank's is Josiah Harlan. A veritable "Yankee of the Yankees" he was born into a Quaker family from Chester County Pennsylvania; his travels and his ambition brought him to into the service of various Afghan feudal lords as a military commander and he eventually gained the title of Prince of Ghor. In his own *Memoir of India and Avghanistaun* (1842) his attitude towards the "the unrestrained license of feudal supremacy" (131) is ambiguous as he seems to both denounce it and be fascinated by it, moreso than Hank. His description of "The feudatory of Asia" may remind us of Hank's depiction of the "bushwhacking," childish Arthurian nobility who continually thirst for quests:

[He] is still the child of nature, who disdains the restraints of civilization. With his horse in gay trappings of silver and gold, with his trusty spear in his hand, a sabre by his side and shield thrown over his back, he loves to prowl 'en cavalier' upon his native deserts of plain and mountain, in pursuit of the chase or conflict of battle; and he covets the excitement, regardless whether the game be man or beast.

He also expresses a very Hank Morganish attitude towards the "flame of bigotry" of certain religions such as Islam and Catholicism which impede the march of progress:⁷⁶ "Thus Spain and other Roman Catholic countries [...] are still stationary in civilization, compared with the march of intellect evinced by the other kingdoms of Europe. Even France is oppressed with the Roman Catholic doctrine, which prevents the advance of civilization among nations no less than Mahomedanism" (186). He even discusses education, in relation to civilization, in manner than remind us of Hank's views on "training:"

⁷⁶ As is typical of the colonial discourse of the day, cultures and nations can be assigned a "rank" that expresses "their degree in the range of civilization" (70).

“Civilized man is the creature of habit; the semi-barbarian is more the child of nature: both are modified by education” (44).

Harlan also denounces the existence of the slave system in these regions and the hypocritical complicity of the British in reinforcing it or creating new forms of slavery under an imperial guise: “slavery in its cruellest form—forced labour without a patron. [...] low wages and high interest of money, monopolies of salt, opium, and tobacco. Empire of opinion, might against right, cultivation declining, total absence of internal improvement, no public works, no roads, no canals, no dissemination of knowledge or improvements in education” (65-66). Like Hank, Harlan sees himself as a bringer of progress to a “backwards” region, however, he takes Hank’s ego trip a little further modeling his exploits (and even, at times, his persona) around those of Alexander the Great: “His power was extended by the sword and maintained by the arts of civilization. The savage Bactrians, the voluptuous Persians, the philosophical gymnosophist, successively submitted to his sway and received the civilization of Greece” (62). Even in his narratorial agency, Harlan occasionally demonstrates a Hank Morganish Braggadocio, particularly when relating his military accomplishments—“I remarked ‘[...] you will have regular troops to fight, when you contend against Runjeet’h’s forces, and your *sans culotte* militia will vanish like mist before the sun” (158)—and a similar self-righteousness when denouncing the injustices of British rule. After being expelled by the British and enjoying a brief period of celebrity on his return to the United States (in 1842 circa), his fame and fortune waned; despite

various attempts to get a military career started in the States, he died in San Francisco essentially forgotten.⁷⁷

Other figures which John Carlos Rowe sees as contributing to the genesis of Hank are the British colonial official Charles George “Chinese” Gordon and George Armstrong Custer. According to Rowe, the final battle of the Sand-Belt could have resonated with the contemporary reader as an echo of Gordon’s fall at the siege of Khartoum (1885) and Custer’s last stand at Little Big Horn (1876). If this were the case it would be an example of Twain making “the equation between capitalist expansion and Euroamerican imperialism that does not enter the public debate until several decades later” (181). George Gordon in particular seems to share many similarities with Hank Morgan as the colonial official was noted for having brought “progressive” reforms to the African provinces of which he was governor such as the “suppression of the slave trade” which, Rowe observes, is the first reform Hank himself makes (181). Moreover, the implementation of these reforms allegedly contributed to provoking a rebellion against British rule; it was a religiously motivated upheaval which eventually brought to Gordon’s death in battle but also to the “glorious slaughter of 20,000 Arabs”—as stated by Lytton Strachey (in Rowe 181) in the 1918 book, *Eminent Victorians*—fact which, according to Rowe, cannot but remind us of Hank’s very own last stand. Butterworth Stavely, the protagonist of the short story “The Great Revolution at Pitcairn” (1879), is in many ways a prototype of Hank Morgan.

⁷⁷ One British equivalent to Harlan (and Hank) is perhaps James Brooke, who though his own resources also acquired a position of power in a faraway feudal land, becoming the Rajah of Sarawak in Borneo. Like Hank, he began a process of reform of his newly acquired kingdom which included an excessive use of violence for which he was placed under investigation by British authorities. Unlike Hank Brooke was a loyal British subject and died of natural causes while still in full power as Rajah. Figures such as Harlan and Brookes inspired Rudyard Kipling in the composition of his novella “The Man Who Would Be King” (1888); however, a comparative analysis of the two works has yet to undertaken despite the similar premises they present, the closeness of publication dates and the mutual appreciation the authors seemed to have for each other.

Butterworth's role as a Yankee sower of discord among peaceful islanders, is based on the real-life exploits of American dictator, Joshua Hill. In the 1830s, Hill succeeded in getting elected as *President* of Pitcairn—which reminds us of Hank's Americanized title of "Boss"—before being deposed and exiled from the island. Hill also reminds us of the various other colonial entrepreneurs, adventurers and missionaries we have seen as inspiring the character of Hank Morgan: the "Man Who Would Be King" (or Emperor, or Ghor, or Rajah or, in this case, President) was more than an isolated phenomenon but a veritable epidemic that Twain may have drawn upon in his attempt to portray the late modern era.

There is, therefore, not one but various, analogous figures that could have contributed to the genesis of Hank Morgan. Be they free entrepreneurs or sanctioned military officers, the similar actions, fates, motivations and justifications of these foot soldiers of "civilization" demonstrate the existence of a pattern which Twain himself may have noticed. In tracing a history of the modern era, Twain chooses a model that he finds to be the most representative of modern man: it is a very ambiguous figure that combines self-serving motives, violence, technical knowhow and an ill-defined, highly compromised democratic ethos.

Another colonial adventurer whose violent end at the hands of "primitive" peoples may remind us of *A Connecticut Yankee* is Captain James Cook. This historical figure, his murder and the Sandwich Islands which were the place of his death return frequently in the author's works. Even in the unrelated dream narrative of "My Platonic Sweetheart" (1912) Twain and his "Platonic [dream] sweetheart" meet and old Kanaka who "said he was a hundred and thirty years old, and he remembered captain Cook well, and was present when he was murdered; saw it with his own eyes, and also helped" (18). In writing a brief summary of the circumstances of the captain's death for the briefly lived *Daily Hawaiian Herald*, Twain shows Cook using a Hank-like misrepresentation in order to gain protection and influence: "Cook was mistaken for their absent god; he accepted the situation and helped the

natives to deceive themselves. His conduct might have been wrong in a moral point of view, but his policy was good in conniving at the deception, and proved itself so" ("The Story of Captain Cook"). However, this kind of dynamic is almost stereotypical within colonial narratives; what is more specifically Hank Morganish is Cook's disregard of Hawaiian cultural and religious norms in the face of practical necessities:

'at the desire of his commander, Captain King proposed to the priests to purchase for fuel the railing which surrounded the top of the temple of Lono! In this Cook manifested as little respect for the religion in the mythology of which he figured so conspicuously, as scruples in violating the divine precepts of his own. Indeed, throughout his voyages a spirit regardless of the rights and feelings of others, when his own were interested, is manifested.' Cook desecrated the holy places of the temple by storing supplies for his ships in them, and by using the level grounds within the inclosure as a general workshop for repairing his sails, etc.—ground which was so sacred that no common native dared to set foot upon it. ("The Story of Captain Cook")

This action can be compared to Hank's more hyperbolic rigging up of the "bowing hermit" to a sewing machine in the utilitarian conviction that: "It seemed a pity to have all this power going to waste. It was one of the most useful motions in mechanics" (120).

Beyond the circumstances of Cook's death, Twain's familiarity with the Sandwich Islands may have a fundamental role not only in the inception of *A Connecticut Yankee* but in the shaping of the author's worldview: in 1866 Twain visited Hawaii as a correspondent for the *Sacramento Union* and began to form a series of notions on the matters of civilization, progress and colonialism that stayed with him throughout his entire career becoming more explicit from the 1890s onward. Fred W. Lorch has observed how many of Hank's remarks regarding Arthurian society seem to be a re-elaboration of

observations Twain himself had made on the remnants of the feudal society of Hawaii. Moreover, Lorch affirms that this visit gave the author the “rare opportunity of seeing a society still in transition, a society that only recently had been highly feudal in structure changed into society now democratic in form; a society in which the mass of people had once been cruelly oppressed and enslaved by priests and feudal chiefs, now transformed into one free and relatively well educated” (52); this at least is Lorch’s evaluation. In forming his publicly expressed opinion (both in written and oral form) of the process of “civilization” of the Sandwich islands, Twain seems to have borrowed heavily from J.J. Jarves’ *History of the Hawaiian Islands*: “it is obviously from Jarves that he got his picture of the oppressive role of the pagan chiefs and priests, of their rapacity and cruelty, of their incredibly effective use of the tabu (which Jarves compares with the interdict of the church of Rome)” (52). According to Lorch, it is the absolute monarchical and feudal power, the religious superstition, the sexual licentiousness (particularly the forwardness and inconstancy of the women, 65) and the simple yet “exotic” daily life of the Hawaiians with “nude children play[ing] in the sun and ma[king] life and noise” (C.Y. 14) that inform Twain’s medieval England.

Moreover, Lorch sees in Hank’s project of progress a fictional transposition of the process of civilization undertaken by the “American missionaries” who “came and stuck off the shackles from the whole race, breaking the power of the kings and chiefs. They set the common man free [...]. They set up schools and churches [...]. The missionaries taught the whole nation to read and write” (Twain in Lorch 54). The missionaries, like Hank Morgan, also had “considerable mechanical skill and knowledge” through which “the natives soon improved their agriculture and became tolerably skilled in general business and the ‘mechanical trades’” (59-60). Although Twain also expressed enthusiasm regarding this exportation of American civilization to Hawaii—including the presence of Jeffersonian yeomen sugar planters—Lorch seems to evade the critique that is also present in Twain’s works of the

actions of missionaries and colonists and the concept of “civilization” itself: “Incidents in the process of Christianizing and civilizing them would also have been satirized, but not the missionaries. For these Mark Twain had considerable respect, despite his occasional criticisms” (57). However, this is Lorch’s opinion and not only does it ignore Twain’s penchant for Rousseauian primitivism but it glosses over the ambivalent and occasionally highly critical attitudes towards missionary and (more in general) colonial action that are present even in his Hawaiian dispatches. Later in his career the author was to become more openly and fiercely critical of missionaries, viewing them merely as a component or as heralds of imperialism.

As early as *Roughing It* (1872), Twain does not shy away from describing the “savagery” of human sacrifices that went on prior to the arrival of the missionaries and seems full of praise regarding their beneficial influence: “The missionaries have clothed them, educated them, broken up the tyrannous authority of their chiefs, and given them freedom and the right to enjoy whatever their hands and brains produce with equal laws for all, and punishment for all alike who transgress them” (464). However, within this praise of “equal laws” there can also be seen the negative element of “punishment” and the introduction into Hawaiian culture of that which does not necessarily represent the best of American civilization. This relationship between priggish missionaries and Hawaiian “natural” men and women is succinctly summed up by the illustration below (by one of the unnamed “Eminent Artists” Fig. 5.E) where a stern faced and sternly dressed female missionary is juxtaposed with the exotically beautiful, and naked, native women who seem to be copied from early colonial (golden age or Eden inspired) exotic imagery.



Fig 5.E: from *Roughing It* page 484

In introducing a section entitled “All Praise to the Missionaries,” which due to its overstated nature may also be read ironically, the author states:

long, long before the missionaries braved a thousand privations to come and make [the natives] permanently miserable by telling them how beautiful and how blissful a place heaven is, and how nearly impossible it is to get there; and showed the poor native how dreary a place perdition is and what unnecessarily liberal facilities there are for going to it [...]; showed him what rapture it is to work all day long for fifty cents to buy food for next day with, as compared with fishing for a pastime and lolling in the shade through eternal summer, and eating of the bounty that nobody labored to provide but Nature. How sad it is to think of the multitudes who have gone to their graves in this beautiful island and never knew there was a hell. (463)

This passage calls to mind Huck Finn’s own struggles with the norms and laws of “sivilization.” The section goes on to describe the horrors of regal, feudal and religious privilege and bigotry and the chapter ends with the statement of apparent singing praise:

the benefit conferred upon this people by the missionaries is so prominent, so palpable and so unquestionable, that the frankest compliment I can pay them, and the best, is simply to point to

the condition of the Sandwich Islanders of Captain Cook's time, and their condition to-day.

Their work speaks for itself (464).

Soon after however, while casually discussing the sexual habits of the natives, Twain juxtaposes the image of an “universally educated race of people” who possess “any quantity of books, printed in the Kanaka language,” who are “fond of reading” and “inveterate church-goers” with some daunting demographical facts: “The national sin will die out when the race does, but perhaps not earlier.—But doubtless this purifying is not far off, when we reflect that contact with civilization and the whites has reduced the native population from *four hundred thousand* (Captain Cook's estimate,) to *fifty-five thousand* in something over eighty years!” (477). Perhaps in Hank’s final massacre of the Arthurian aristocracy and in the death of his followers due to “the poisonous air bred by those dead thousands” (256) Twain is replicating both the colonial dynamics of Hawaii and an anti-colonial revenge fantasy where the “missionaries” of civilization reap what they have sown. In *Roughing It*, Twain may remain within the limits of colonial ideology, however, the ambiguity expressed in *A Connecticut Yankee* is ramped up to more extreme levels; in the latter novel Twain pushes towards a more elaborately dialectic and subtle critique of the mechanisms of colonialism that is more than the juxtaposition of “noble savage,” “brave missionary” and genocidal results.

Amy Kaplan also sees Twain’s position towards colonialism in Hawaii and his own role as a commentator as being far more complex and critical than Lorch affirms, stating that: “Twain's ambivalence about his role in this script surfaces in his letters, which show him trying to dissociate his position as a traveler and writer from these overt assertions of imperial force” (62). Moreover, Kaplan observes how “In the culture of the sugar plantation Twain found striking parallels between the colonization of Hawaii and the changes convulsing the slave holding South. The remnants of imperial violence that would stay buried in the Hawaiian landscape evoked uncanny echoes of the ongoing

violence of slavery, which was not laid to rest by emancipation” (75). Therefore, what we had already observed as the amalgamate nature of Twain’s Camelot and his precocious associations between slavery and colonialism may find their genesis in the author’s experience in Hawaii. The Sandwich Islands become not only a repository for exotic and primitivist fantasies but the place in which “the unspoken issue of slavery resurfaces” and presents itself as an omen of the empire to come:

The depiction of childlike loyal natives echoes the pro-slavery position of the prewar South and the racist arguments against the capacity of nonwhite people to govern themselves. Thus while Twain may have retrospectively structured his voyage to Hawaii in *Roughing It* as a flight west to freedom, what he found instead was that the colonial hierarchies of the islands conjured memories of the prewar South and its racial hierarchies of slavery. (76)

Seen from this point of view, Huck Finn’s desire to “light out for the Territory” (296) in a westward “flight [...] to freedom” becomes even more illusory and tragic; with the colonization and “sivilization” of Hawaii there is literally no more Wild West left to go to and Western culture has run out of places where to experiment in renewing itself. Kaplan, like Lorch, believes that Twain diverted the energies, themes and reflections of a never completed “Sandwich Islands Novel,” which he conceived of between *Huck Finn* and *A Connecticut Yankee*, into the latter novel. The novel can be seen as a watershed text which divides Twain’s literary production into an earlier period of remembrance and exploration of the national dimension and a successive shift towards speculative and fantastic experimentation and the observation of global phenomena. The question of imperialism is looming in the near future but the troubled past that informs *Huck Finn* still remains a dominating presence; perhaps it is Twain’s experience in the Sandwich Islands that allows him to bridge the gap not only between his own past and the future, but—by making the Hawaiians “natural men”—that of the human race.

VII. *Conclusions*

Of the various historical figures that contribute something to the character of Hank Morgan, some among them were hailed as bringers of progress, others as tyrants, others still as brigands; some were much more successful than Hank either in fulfilling their personal ambitions or in enforcing reform. They were representative of the self-made bourgeoisie who are no longer content with running the family business and wished to make themselves kings and emperors; their ambition reached titanic, world shaping proportions given the possibilities that technology and an open world offered. In this ambition also lay also their potential ruin. Within this group, Hank is both an realistic “everyman” who is representative of the drives and paradoxes of the late modern era but also a fictional “superman” whose capacity to modify all history (including his own) represents a hyperbolic rendition of modern man’s potential to shape the world. However, Hank is not merely modern ambition and *hubris* incarnate but is also representative of the failures of modernity and human limits. The true modern paradox is that for all the power even one individual supposedly has to influence reality he/she actually has no influence at all: like Hank’s project, which is ultimately consigned to oblivion, all action is potentially futile and the Yankee’s egalitarian *streben* does nothing but substitute one set of power relations with another that is equally as groundless as that which came before. In this sense, Hank is not a fully Promethean figure, as Henry Nash Smith has suggested ⁷⁸ (104), as what is lacking is any real

⁷⁸ Henry Nash Smith states that “Mark Twain could not work out adequately his contrast of medieval and modern civilizations because the protagonist who represented the modern world in the story was an inadequate vehicle for depicting industrial capitalism” (104). However, Hank can also be seen as the perfect representation of the paradoxes, contradictions, complete absurdities, beneficial effects and violence that we see as being part of capitalism. Perhaps Twain attempts to represent industrial capitalism in a truly dialectic manner, as “the best thing that has ever happened to the human race [in this case the Arthurians], and the worst” (Jameson, Postmodernism 47) .

fire or stolen thunderbolts that are not merely showy “effects.” Hank is at best a incomplete or illusory Prometheus. But *A Connecticut Yankee* is not only fueled by negativity. Despite the fact that his ambition exceeds his reach or that his efforts may seem misguided, Hank’s enthusiasm and hope, his basic human decency and the humor which animates the novel attenuate the bleakness. By integrating what Twain may consider a positive figure such as Ulysses Grant with the more ambiguous William Walker or a terrifying Robespierre and by giving Hank a default “good heart” the novel becomes much less a study of “good” or “evil” but an analysis of the limits of ambition and ideals.

As a historian of the late modern era, Twain attempts to integrate a very human, tragic and novelistic dimension and a very abstract systemic and philosophical critique. Whether this operation is pulled off with success is debatable but in its hybridism this novel effectively demonstrates how history is both the combination of material and deterministic processes and individual human action. We can either see the novel’s contradictions as an attempt to portray the complexities of human existence or as bad characterization on Twain’s part or even (as some classic readings of the novel have) contradictions proper of the author himself. However, the character development seems quite consistent in form and not at all ambiguous or confused if it is seen as the narrative of an ordinary man who, through the “magical” device of time travel, gains power and is ultimately corrupted by that power and simply reaps what he has sown. Moreover, in representing the paradoxes and absurdities that are part of modern man, modern political systems and industrial capitalism, ambiguity and contradiction are a form of mimesis. The fact that Hank seems full of contrasts and somewhat chaotic in his motivations is a perfect expression of the *zeitgeist* of a nation that has gone from being a self-perceived pastoral republic to military industrial world power and not without receiving the scars of a civil war in the process.

Conclusion

In the first chapters of my thesis, I analyzed the speculative-utopian literature of the late nineteenth century in order to define its tropes and clichés but also the deviations from the norm. This was based on the assumption that *A Connecticut Yankee* is considered a text that is both “utopian and anti-utopian” (Roemer 8). What I found was that Twain’s novel does indeed deal with the main themes of utopian fiction such as: technological and social progress, the concept of progress in relation to civilization and empire and, to a minor extent, matters of religion, gender and race. However, I have demonstrated that *A Connecticut Yankee* also stands apart (together with a handful of other texts) for the manner in which it deals with these themes: it transcends the didactic certainty and derivative style of the speculative-utopian genre and becomes a text that is both completely of its era and also idiosyncratic.

In mapping the themes and tensions within speculative-utopian fiction, my objective was to delineate the view of history they shared and the philosophies and models they used to predict the future. The objective was also to show what the utopian text does, what makes it utopian rather than simply speculative. The utopian text describes *how* to arrive at a perfect, static, *a priori* idea of Utopia. Utopia or the *destination*, although located in the future, is based on pre-existing ideal realities; that is why we find reiterations of the pastoral ideal, the frontier and nineteenth-century bourgeois living in the fictional twenty-first century. The ‘*how*,’ on the other hand, is profoundly influenced by a combination of secular (Whig and Positivist) views of history and religious ideas of providence,

destiny and human betterment. In his juxtaposition of eras, Twain shows how the “medieval” surrender to faith and superstition and the modern surrender to machines, scientism, social theory and written texts are not that different from each other. My mapping of the utopian texts also demonstrated the variety of centrifugal experiments and marginal views that surround the norm. Our analysis of the African-American speculative texts, for example, highlighted a historical perspective that is absent from utopian fiction but present in Twain. The presence of slavery, the Civil War and the failures of Reconstruction keep these texts anchored to a past/present and grim reality.

It is not only utopian literature—or better, the *pre-existing* philosophies and energies that engender it—that are deconstructed in *A Connecticut Yankee*. Although Plantation fiction is not involved directly in Twain’s critique, the South figures prominently as part of the amalgam that is Camelot. The highly prosaic view of chivalry that the novel presents lampoons the Victorian medievalist trend; however, the numerous references to the pre-war, slaveholding South show how the critique is also directed towards the fetishistic veneration of the “shams” of chivalry that was part of Southern culture. An important component of the text which I have highlighted in this thesis is the evocation of the Civil War, both in the general dynamics of Hank’s project and in the details of the “Battle of the Sand-Belt.” There is opposition, in *A Connecticut Yankee* to the excessive reinventing of the Civil War narrative that was occurring during the period of composition; through literary re-elaboration, the memory of the Civil War was being distanced from the horrors of the battlefield and of slavery in order for it to become the “American epic” of the following century. In other words, the Civil War was being separated from what Twain saw as its causes and “benefactions” and even from its brutality and its failures. In this sense, Twain’s novel is also “reactionary” in that it reacts against the direction in which the narrative of the Civil War was being pushed by a successive generation of writers and commentators.

Twain's historical point of view and anti-utopian intent is all the more evident from my analysis of the finale of *A Connecticut Yankee*. I demonstrated how the apocalyptic finale grounds the story in past reality; through this strategy Twain deflates contemporary "Lost Cause" and "noble" war narratives. He also offers a memento to that generation (among them the utopian authors) who had forgotten that a partially failed "purge" or war of reform has already taken place in American history: far from leading to a stage of static perfection, the Civil War was followed by continuous transformation and the new and different forms of privilege that characterize the "Gilded Age" without having completely eradicated those which came before.

In utopian literature, the purge, or the "do-it-yourself virgin land approach" (49) as Roemer calls it, is a recurrent trope. Most of these novels employ a *deus ex machina* approach whereby there is a providential, biblical cataclysm (plague, earthquake or volcano) that destroys the old and corrupt society so there can be reconstruction. Other texts may include fictional accounts of future revolutions, racial selections or international warfare as necessary steps on the road to Utopia. A third type of text shows the dangers and horrors of the "do-it-yourself" approach but tends to identify the part that may enact the "purge" as something alien from themselves which they can therefore demonize. *A Connecticut Yankee* is more realistic than the first group of texts in that it acknowledges that there are no providential cataclysms that selectively "purge" a society but only manmade ones. Moreover, in *A Connecticut Yankee*, we see the effects of the political "purge" up close.

Throughout this thesis, I have proven that Twain's novel can be seen in critical contraposition to the warmongering and imperialistic texts being that Hank's project is defined by its total failure. It also stands apart from those texts which simply demonize reform or show social transformation as something to be feared: Camelot is by no means a perfect utopia to begin with and Hank has the potential to enact some form of positive reform and actually does (for example, his abolition of

slavery). Moreover, the partially sympathetic portrayal of Hank renders a complete demonization of the character impossible. This is evident from the very existence of “hard” critics as defined by Everett Carter. Beyond introducing extreme, graphic realism in the “Battle of the Sand-Belt,” Twain also shows us an old and regretful Hank once the narrative shifts back to the present. This basically human dimension shows how Hank is more than just an allegorical symbol of progress. As he “mourns his lost land” (*Mark Twain’s Notebooks* 216) and desperately calls out for Sandy and Hello-Central we realize how the initial “high intent”—the same “intent” that engenders the production of speculative-utopian texts—is meaningless to him in the face of the most human and sentimental of concerns; his individualistic, sentimental impulses dominate over the universalistic certainty of his previous lofty ideals.

The question remains whether Hank regrets his political course of action: in mourning his “fresh & new [and] virgin land” (*Mark Twain’s Notebooks* 216) does he simply grieve over the fact that he can no longer reach it or does he lament what he has done to it? Does he, in other words, regret the fact that he is the one who has corrupted and destroyed the “virgin land?” In his last delirium he mentions the death of King Arthur and the extermination of “the whole chivalry of England” but merely refers to these as “strange and awful dreams” (257). With his last breath he mentions the return of “the king” (258) whose death he has indirectly caused. This is, perhaps, a statement of “Royalist” yearning that also expresses some form of regret. “Virgin land,” as I have shown, is a necessary prerequisite of the utopian fiction of the era, second only to the concept of renewal/regeneration; these two yearnings obviously overlap, or one becomes the prerequisite of the other. In Hank’s case, the “virgin” land is medieval England, however, it is also a land that contains the corrupt structures of power and privilege that exist (or existed) in the nineteenth century or in pre-War South; as we know from the history of imperialism, “virgin” land never really exists and the concept itself usually goes hand in hand with genocide. Many utopian authors (and Twain) were not naïve enough to ignore this

fact, hence the presence of fictional cataclysmic events (both man made and non) that eliminate both large numbers and specific groups of people that impede the obtainment of Utopia.

Perhaps those critics that describe *A Connecticut Yankee* in terms of a jeremiad may have a point;¹ however, it does not warn against the collapse of society but rather it laments the endless propagation of the same old socio-historical dynamics under different guises. In the figure of Hank, the novel also points to the obliviousness or “forgetting” that lies at the base of this process of endless propagation: of the various things in Camelot that remind Hank of the South, nothing reminds him of the failures of Reconstruction and the compromises of reconciliation. The novel, therefore, also warns against the romantic distancing of a historical narrative from its realities and real life consequences. At the same time, through its subtle critique of Hank, it deconstructs the supposedly utilitarian, technophilic and scientific philosophies he embodies, showing how groundless and illusory these too are. From a human point of view, that is, if we do consider Hank a fully rounded character rather than a rhetorical function or symbol of an age, the novel contains the oldest warning in the history of literature: to beware the pride that cometh before the fall. At a time when speculative fiction offered a myriad of images of future Utopias based on lofty ideals, Twain offers uncertainties and a pessimistic assessment of a matter of fact: the blessings of progress are at the very least mixed and there is no glory in being the individual who strives for “progress” as the “good heart and high intent” are inevitably lost or distorted along the way.

¹ William V. Spanos in *Shock and Awe* (2013) and Lawrence Howe (152) in *Mark Twain and the Novel* (1998), for example.

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Estratto per riassunto della tesi di dottorato

L'estratto (max. 1000 battute) deve essere redatto sia in lingua italiana che in lingua inglese e nella lingua straniera eventualmente indicata dal Collegio dei docenti.

L'estratto va firmato e rilegato come ultimo foglio della tesi.

Studente: Nicholas Stangherlin matricola: 819747

Dottorato: Lingue, Culture e Società Moderne

Ciclo: XXIX

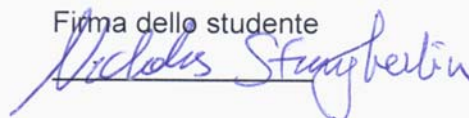
Titolo della tesi¹: *A Connecticut Yankee in Utopia: Mark Twain Between Past, Present and Future*

Abstract:

La presente tesi analizza *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* ed altre opere tarde di Mark Twain con lo scopo di dimostrare come questi testi continuino ad avere rilevanza dal punto di vista contenutistico e stilistico. L'obiettivo principale è quello di presentare *A Connecticut Yankee* come un testo che da un lato cattura perfettamente lo spirito del proprio tempo e dall'altro, paradossalmente, resiste alle ideologie dominanti. *A Connecticut Yankee* viene messo in relazione con la letteratura utopica delle ultime decadi del XIX secolo con l'obiettivo di contestualizzarlo all'interno di questo genere. Trasposizione temporale, sperimentazione sociale, progresso e industrializzazione sono i temi e i fenomeni storici che plasmano questo genere in generale ed il romanzo di Twain in particolare. Tuttavia, si dimostrerà come il testo di Twain sia capace di trascendere i limiti della didatticità intrinseca in questo genere ed offrire una critica delle tendenze che lo dominano.

Focusing on Mark Twain's late works, this thesis demonstrates how *A Connecticut Yankee* and other texts by the author retain enduring relevance both in content and style. The main objective is to portray *A Connecticut Yankee* as a text that both perfectly encapsulates the spirit of its time and paradoxically resists dominating perspectives. *A Connecticut Yankee* is often associated with the speculative-utopian literature that gains tremendous popularity during the last decades of the nineteenth century: the objective of the first section of the thesis will be to contextualize the novel within this genre. Time travel, social experimentation, progress and industrialization are the tropes, themes, and phenomena that engender both this genre and Twain's novel. However, it will be demonstrated how Twain is able to transcend the didactic limits of said genre and offer a critique of the mindset that tends to dominate it.

Firma dello studente



¹ Il titolo deve essere quello definitivo, uguale a quello che risulta stampato sulla copertina dell'elaborato consegnato.