# X

## Digging the Trench: Fictional Accounts of Utopian Communities and Utopian Closure

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## Introduction

> King Utopus, […] brought the rude and wild people to that excellent perfection in all good fashions, humanity, and civil gentleness, wherein they now go beyond all the people of the world, even at his first arriving and entering upon the land, forthwith obtaining the victory, caused fifteen miles space of uplandish ground, where the sea had no passage, to be cut and digged up. And so brought the sea round about the land (More 2008: 50).

Musing about the purposes of utopian communities, Lyman Tower Sargent suggested that such projects "demonstrate that living a better life is possible in the here and now" (2010: 8). In the three novels discussed in this chapter—Gilbert Imlay's *The Emigrants* (1793), Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* (1852), and Edan Lepucki's *California* (2014)—the success of the attempt at "living a better life" depends on whether closure for the depicted communities can be established. Building on Fredric Jameson's proposition that "utopian space is an imaginary enclave within real social space" (2005: 15), this chapter concerns how the novels depict such enclaves in relation to the "real social space" in which the communities start out. In other words, I am drawing attention to how three different novels describe the spatial requirements for the establishment of a utopian society within the respective "here and now". As I will argue, a precondition for such utopian enclaves is closure—as achie-

ved in Thomas More's *Utopia* by "that great trench [...] which alone allows it to become Utopia in the first place: a radical secession" (Jameson 2005: 5)—and each of the narratives discussed below comments on whether finding or establishing such closure is possible, and if so, what the consequences would be for the attainability of utopia[1].

## Utopian Communities and Utopian Closure

The texts discussed in the following chapter are not, in a strict sense, literary utopias, as a "utopia" provides a description of a non-existent place of "radical difference, radical otherness" (Jameson 2005: xii), and its "people going about their everyday lives and [...] marriage and the family, education, meals, work, and the like, as well as the political and economic systems" (Sargent 2010: 4). Instead, the narratives that are referred to in this paper revolve around a form of utopian practice, namely utopian communities—also known as intentional communities[2], communes, or practical utopias etc. (Sargent 2010). While the accounts are fictional, i.e. the communities described are non-existent, these projects are in so far no utopias as they are still in the process of trying to establish the place of "radical otherness" and, therefore, are portrayed as connected to, interacting with, and situated close by, the social, political, and economic system from which they originated. In other words, the novels fictionalize utopian practice instead of depicting a utopia.

To provide a more concrete example: Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* (1888) describes in detail an entire society that differs in many ways from the United States of the late nineteenth century. It is separated from the society in which it was written, and from which the narrator originates, by more than a century, in which significant changes to said society occurred. Not only in its fictionality and its seeming perfection but also in its totality, the society in *Looking Backward...* is utopian, as the political and economic system as well as many aspects of the social and everyday life in the entire nation (actually, in a good part of the world) have been reworked. On the other hand, the hippie commune described in T.C. Boyle's *Drop City* (first published in 2003) is no utopia, because the novel emphasises the struggle

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[1]     Some of the considerations and conclusions provided reflect the groundwork for my project on utopian communities in US American fiction, a work still in progress.

[2]     "Utopian community" and "intentional community" will be used synonymously within this chapter.

of its members as they try to establish their ideal of a society, instead of presenting an already functioning system in detail. Because this fictional account describes the attempts at putting utopia into practice within a non-utopian reality, instead of detailing an already established society, Drop City, as described in the novel, is a utopian community, but *Drop City* is no literary utopia.

This distinction may become more obvious when considering the peculiar spatiality of utopia. Commonly, utopian places are characterized by removal, "must be located somewhere other than the author's own society" (Moylan 2014: 3). This "somewhere" may be either geographical (on an island, a previously undiscovered continent, or another planet) or temporal (most commonly in the future), or even otherwise dimensionally removed (i.e. in a parallel universe). While this removal does not constitute a utopia as such, it is a crucial criterion, as it creates the closure necessary for the society to become total, and for the extensive changes to be affected. This definition for anything "utopian" based on the spatial criterion of closure and totality builds on Jameson's analysis of utopia and science fiction, in which he connects the content of utopia*,* "a system radically different from this one" (Jameson 2005: xii), to its totality: "the properly Utopian program or realization will involve a commitment to closure (and thereby to totality)" (2005: 4). Therefore, "it is closure which enables the existence of system, which is to say, of the imagination [...] Totality is then precisely this combination of closure and system" (Jameson 2005: 4-5). The "utopian secession" (Jameson 2005: 3) creates, or moves the society into, what he refers to as a "utopian enclave" (Jameson 2005: 10). In More's *Utopia*, the namesake not only of the literary genre but of the entire concept, "the mark of this absolute totalization is the geopolitical secession of the Utopian space itself [...]: the great trench which King Utopus causes to be dug in order to »delink« from the world" (Jameson 2005: 39). Therefore, digging the trench is a necessary process for establishing a utopia, securing its autonomy from "the world", and enabling its totality.

Fictions on utopian communities, on the other hand, differ from literary utopias since they do not primarily claim to describe an alternative world, "located somewhere other than the author's own society". Yet they are linked to utopias as the communities they depict try to establish such an alternative, a connection implied by terms that were and are commonly used to refer to such communities, "a number of which relate directly to utopianism, such as utopian community, utopian experiment, practical utopia, alternative society, and experimental community" (Sargent 2010: 6-7). In their utopian striving, they often opt for closure: Timothy Miller, an

eminent authority in communal studies, defines intentional communities as "group[s] whose members deliberately separate themselves from the dominant society" (2002: 335). This separation may not be as drastic as that instigated by Utopus, yet a desire for separation and distinction, or, as Kenneth M. Roemer puts it, "purity" (1976: 52), may frequently be observed in such groups, which suggests that closure is felt to be necessary in order to allow the radical change to be affected.

Michel Foucault likewise observes a level of isolation and exclusivity to be characteristic for such quasi-utopian places. In the terminology proposed in his *Of Other Spaces* (1986), he introduces the concept of "heterotopias", a term he applies, amongst other examples, also to intentional communities. Different from utopias, "sites with no real place" (Foucault 1986: 24) heterotopias are "real places […] a kind of effectively enacted utopia" (1986: 24). In order to operate, they "presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable" (Foucault 1986: 26). In this sense, utopian communities try to attain "the transformation of the everyday" (Sargent 2010: 4), and thereby the totality that marks a utopia. However, because they are still in close proximity (temporal, geographical, and economic) with the society from which they originated, they remain in some ways "penetrable". While the prospective utopian space in the narratives discussed below is not closed yet—no one has dug the trench all the way around it, so to speak—they all feature such systems of opening and closing, and aim for eventually ensuring totality.

Thus, this chapter will explore the spatiality of utopia by looking at fictional accounts of intentional communities. The novels provide an insight into the spatial criteria that were deemed necessary for a utopian project and in this way into the attitudes towards the attainability of a radically different society at the historic moment in which they were written. Therefore, I understand the narratives discussed in this text as commenting not only on the practice of establishing and living in intentional communities—on utopian practice—but also on utopian conceptualizations as such.

## Geographically Determined Utopia in *The Emigrants*

In the first example, Gilbert Imlay's *The Emigrants,* an epistolary novel published in 1793, utopia and utopian closure are in part enabled by a form of "geographical determinism" (Smith 1971: 251), a term taken from Henry Nash Smith's immensely influential *Virgin Land* (1950). In this study, Smith investigated the development of a

powerful myth of the United States, i.e. "one of the most persistent generalizations concerning American life and character is the notion that our society has been shaped by the pull of a vacant continent drawing population westward" (1950: 4). *The Emigrants* connects this "dominant [symbol] of nineteenth-century American society" (Smith 1971: 124), that of the West as a garden, "a cluster of metaphors expressing fecundity, growth, increase, and blissful labor in the earth" (1950: 124), to utopian possibilities. However, in the novel, this space is not open to anybody, but preselects its inhabitants. As the following paragraphs argue, *The Emigrants* implies that this exclusive "vacant continent"[3] is the reason for the community's success at its utopian attempts, i.e., establishing a utopia appears to be dependent on finding Edenic territory that also provides sequestration from Western civilization.

The core of the plot of *The Emigrants* revolves around a family from England that moves across the Allegheny Mountains to Kentucky, and some of its members who join a small community of former American soldiers, forsake the eastern states of the (still infant) United States, and build up their own social and governmental structures (Piep 2004, Verhoeven 2004). The final glimpses that the novel allows suggest that the group has successfully established a small community which it deems "in epitome the model of a society" (Imlay 1793: 233), where it is impossible for those "replete with sentiment" (Imlay 1793: 248) "not to experience in this way of living, every degree of felicity" (1783: 248). The utopian community promises to be on the way to a self-contained utopia (here in the sense of eutopia).

The existence of parts of the world that were unmapped and "untouched" by Western civilization at the time allowed for this relatively simple conception of utopian enclaves, while the promotion of utopian possibilities furthered expansionism across the west of North America in search of such places, just as utopian fiction in the early modern era had informed overseas colonization, and vice versa (Knapp 1994, Hatzenberger 2003, Balasopolous 2004). Both the idealization of the land of the North American continent and the belief in the necessity to move away from the "old world" inspire the emigrants in Imlay's novel. Throughout, Kentucky is described in ways that critics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries will come to

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[3]    Unfortunately, the scope of this chapter does not permit to discuss the connection between colonialism—in particular the strategy of rendering an inhabited land "vacant", a *terra nullis* or a *vacuum domicilium*—and utopian literature as well as utopian practice. Jeffrey Knapp (1994), Antoine Hatzenberger (2003), and Antonis Balasopolous (2004) have contributed insightful studies on this in utopian studies otherwise still largely neglected issue.

think of as characteristic for American literature[4], as a plentiful, unsettled land, offering the opportunity to start over. This is a "virgin" country, "morally unsullied" (Shields 2012: 29), and it resembles a fruitful garden, suitable for the—supposedly morally beneficial—agrarian lifestyle that the settlers will practise. The heroine Caroline and her future husband encounter pristine lands: "he turns to the western territory as the site of his new society, named Bellefont, »as its infancy affords an opportunity to its citizens of establishing a system conformable to reason and humanity«" (Verhoeven 2004: 159). Not only is it "infant" as in not yet settled by Europeans but it is also so fertile that it can easily provide plenty; in addition, the depiction of the country suggests the attainability of an attractive, "simpler" life. Thus, the novel evokes a popular ideal of the eighteenth century, "the powerful romantic attraction of primitivism, dating back at least to Rousseau—the belief that the best antidote to the ills of an overly refined and civilized modern world was a return to simpler, more primitive living" (Cronon 1995: 76). The establishment of a utopia based on such romanticized ideas of "primitive" life is aided by the immensely advantageous properties of the North American countryside.

However, this garden is not open to just anyone. The Allegheny Mountains separate the still relatively unsettled Kentucky from the rest of the United States, which, so the protagonists in the novel agree, is a society as corrupt and as undesirable as Great Britain. However, rather than providing a material barrier, the Alleghenies are selectively permeable, form "not so much […] a physical but […] a moral watershed" (Verhoeven 2000: 192). While some of the characters conquer the mountains with ease "more like a picturesque tourist than a pioneer" (Verhoeven 2000: 193), and claim that "[t]he fatigue of travelling to this country is merely imaginary" (Imlay 1793: 23), others bemoan the lack of commodities along the way, and find the journey to be far from pleasant. The track is even repeatedly referred to as almost "perpendicular" (Imlay 1793: 16, 39), as "the roughest road for a carriage perhaps on the whole world" (29). These contradictory accounts of course symbolically mark those complaining as not suited for the space they are approaching, as not ready for a new start away from corrupted Anglo-American civilization, because they are fixated on presumably superfluous luxuries. The seemingly perfect space in *The Emigrants* appears

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[4]     Even though the emigrants establish their own government and forsake the society of the United States, the portrayal of the West in the novel resembles renderings of the landscape that coincided with the expansionism of Colonial America and the United States (Verhoeven 2000).

as a "wilderness", with the presumed hardship having a selecting effect, deterring those not ready to live away from Anglo-American society

Even further, the presumably ideal space not only attracts and selects a certain kind of person but it also aids the improvement of those who still need some refinement. John Seelye summarizes: "the emphasis of the novel is [...] on the influence of the western landscape on eastern mores" (Seelye 1987: 205). In this way, these inconveniences serve to keep the utopian space free from the corrupting influence of Europe and the United States, and the land selects and even creates its utopian inhabitants.

In addition, the remoteness of the settlement on the Ohio River is repeatedly stressed in various correspondences between Pittsburg and Bristol, Philadelphia, and England. Various letters mention the distance between emigrants and the United States and Europe, and some even arrive belatedly, as emigrants are separated from the rest of the world by barely surmountable obstacles such as "immense quantities of snow" (Imlay 1793: 140), so that they are effectively cut off from communication. Those instances of retardation further emphasize the "trench" as a "moral watershed" that divides Kentucky from Europe and the eastern states of the USA. Geographical distance, which had previously served as an argument for American Independence from British rule, here makes the case for the independence of the western frontier. Instead of a vision of the United States expanding continentally, the west seems naturally secluded, underlining its potential for establishing sufficient closure from the "old" world further.

In *The Emigrants*, the land in the west encourages some as a garden, promising to make "a better life" attainable, while it denies itself to others as a wilderness. The existence of the Allegheny Mountains as a border creates an enclave and allows to establish utopia, which implies a belief in "the trench" in a very literal way. The repeated emphasis on this line of separation between the old Anglo-American order and the new utopian one suggests that utopian success is in part determined geographically, namely by finding a space that is not only like a paradisiac garden but also surrounded by the right kind of trench.

## Utopia and Annihilated Space in *The Blithedale Romance*

Almost six decades later, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) is informed by the disappearance of unmapped space, and as a result by the impossibility

to find, or even to imagine, the spatial conditions for a utopian enclave. Hawthorne himself was briefly living in a utopian community, yet *The Blithedale Romance* provides no realistic account of that time. Instead, it is an extremely complex romance, challenging the community's notions of escaping "an encroaching technological and urban revolution and to preserve the agrarian ideal of an earlier America" (Levy 1968: 3) and "finding some plot of ground still in a natural state and working it into organic representations of their own ideals" (Baym 2011: 285), and the binary on which such ideas are grounded. *Blithedale*, so I argue, connects the community's struggles to their inability to find or establish closed, utopian, space.

In the beginning, the narrator, despite all odds, enthusiastically embraces the new start: "there was better air to breathe. Air, that had not been breathed, once and again! Air, that had not been spoken into words of falsehood, formality, and error" (Hawthorne 2011: 11). On arriving at Blithedale, he tries hard to establish closure, most strikingly by concocting a fever that is meant to signify his personal transformation and passage into utopia:

> My fit of illness had been an avenue between two existences; the low-arched and darksome doorway, through which I crept out of a life of old conventionalisms, on my hands and knees, as it were, and gained admittance into the freer region that lay beyond (Hawthorne 2011: 44).

This fever, which his new friends deem nowhere as serious as he does, serves as a metaphysical threshold into the utopian community and his supposedly new life. In addition to the agrarian lifestyle and this disease, his frequent romanticization of the community's members removes the project from the "mundane" world. So he endows some of the women of the commune with magical powers, the two men who threaten the existence of the community with devilish attributes, and renders the head-farmer, steaming from arduous labour, "vaporous and spectre-like" (Hawthorne 2011: 15). Yet, these mystifications never hold: only a sentence later, the farmer is described as disappointingly earthbound, smelling of dung and hard work. The narrator tries in these different ways to establish the community as utopian, yet these attempts are constantly undermined, resulting in the inconsistency of the romantic mode throughout the narrative.

With all other members of Blithedale being less optimistic (and maybe more realistic) than the narrator, he struggles to remove the community from said reality and turn/move it into a utopian enclave. Most strikingly, the word "utopia" itself is tabooed in Blithedale, and understood to be "latent satire" (Hawthorne 2011: 27-28).

The same goes for utopian musings. Dreaming up future generations "looking back-ward" on the commune as the venerable ancestors of their blissful way of life, the narrator is stunted by one of his fellow communards: "You seem to be trying how much nonsense you can pour into a breath" (Hawthorne 2011: 90). Thus mitigating the enthusiasm for intentional communities that surged in the 1840s, the novel sug-gests that even the community's members are not capable of full-heartedly believing in their success, of excluding doubts from their utopian project.

Furthermore, the utopian community described in *The Blithedale Romance* is not set in the edenic land of *The Emigrants.* On the contrary, the narrator arrives there during a snowstorm, and exclaims disappointedly, "How cold an Arcadia was this!" (2011: 28). No matter how much he wants to believe otherwise, the land is not a par-adisiac garden. In fact, the community's members have to labour so hard that the narrator fears they are losing sight of their higher intentions, and will "cease to be anything else" (Hawthorne 2011: 47) than farmers, whereas, in *The Emigrants*, farm work is a part-time job (Imlay 1793: 247). In addition, as Lauren Berlant (1989) has elaborated, Blithedale's land is far from being "virgin", but covered "fathom-deep with the dust of deluded generations" (Hawthorne 2011: 90), i.e. with reminders of other, failed, attempts at establishing utopia. In this way, the self-proclaimed ro-mance subverts any nostalgic longing for a more utopian-friendly past, and any no-tions of an enclave outside history. The claim to exceptionality that is inherent in the geographical determinism discussed above is perverted, as in this case, the land seems especially unfit for utopian endeavours.

Critics, such as Berlant (1989), Teresa A. Goddu (1997), and Nina Baym (2011), have observed that the notion of previously failed utopian projects and the growing reach of industrialization and capitalism seem to pervade every aspect of the narra-tor's world. For one, closure is disrupted by the communards themselves: "People are civilized, which means that they bring with them, because they have within them, attitudes that they thought were purely external" (Baym 2011: 285-86). Not only are the members themselves not suddenly perfect utopian subjects but also the commu-nity constantly has to face the realities of the society on the "outside", and the lack of closure that destabilizes the utopian project. To the narrator's discomfort, they have to consider how to sell the goods they produce while members frequently visit their city apartments, and outsiders stroll into the community. Finally, even the narrator returns to his old life easily: "Old habits, such as were merely external, returned upon

me with wonderful promptitude" (Hawthorne 2011: 134). Back in the city, he explicitly draws attention to a worldwide disappearance of enclaves: "As it was already the epoch of annihilated space" (2011: 134), he can travel the world, but cannot find any closed, let alone utopian, space. In the end, the pastoral idyll barely lasts for months, as worldly matters in the form of financial issues ruin the budding romantic hopes of the founder and drive her into suicide. With her, another utopian project is, quite literally, buried on these lands. Closure, so *The Blithedale Romance* suggests, is not available.

Enclaves in general have apparently disappeared, and even the spiritual world cannot claim closure. Goddu notes that the mesmerizing act, which reappears throughout the narrative, symbolizes the ubiquitous influence of "the market realm". Exploiting a young woman's psychic powers, the exhibitor of this act peddles publically what appears private and veiled (Goddu 1997). Crossing into such spaces—treading "a step or two across the boundaries of the spiritual world" (Hawthorne 2011: 6)—he purports a different kind of vision in which totality is achieved through expansion across all boundaries, a "new era that was dawning upon the world; an era that would link soul to soul, and the present life to what we call futurity, with a closeness that should finally convert both worlds into one great, mutually conscious brotherhood" (138) in his collusive mesmeric act. Thus, the market works even through spiritualism towards "annihilating space".

Concluding, *The Blithedale Romance* expresses doubts whether there is any space for utopia in a world in which closed enclaves are impossible to find. The "question of the possibility of reconstructing society on larger and more generous principles than a narrow and repressive materialism" (Baym 2011: 288) is answered in the negative. The lack of geographic closure and the history of failed utopias correspond with the disillusionment of the communalists and, finally, that of the narrator, and the overall failure to establish a utopian community. Utopian enclaves in the United States, so *The Blithedale Romance* suggests, do not exist.

## Capitalist Enclaves in *California*

The last section of this chapter will focus on a contemporary novel: *California* by Edan Lepucki (2014). The novel reflects the current *zeitgeist* regarding the state of utopia as seeming "strangely out of place in the age of globalization" (Tally 2013: vii), foreclosed by the globalized capitalist system, negating the existence of any closed

spaces and total systems but for one: globalized capitalism. While the novel describes spaces that are extremely insulated and appear to be enclaves, they maintain this system, do not subvert it.

Lepucki's novel largely takes place in a strongly fortified and strikingly nostalgic community, founded after a combination of climate change and rampant capitalism have exacerbated the situation in the United States to dystopian levels. The two protagonists flee L.A. and try to survive autonomously off the land in the woods of California, eventually encountering the agricultural commune. Its members seem to live relatively comfortably, enjoy the advantages of communal life, and, suspiciously, have access to luxury goods such as chocolate and disposable plastic razors. By and large, though, their lifestyle suggests a desire to move "backwards" in the sense of reverting back to (a nostalgic notion of) the nineteenth century. Significantly, the commune is built into the "ghost of a ghost-town" (Lepucki 2014: 130), an abandoned miner city that was turned into a historic site in the twentieth century, and then again abandoned. Their flirt with the past is also evident in the re-establishment of outdated gender roles, with the community's decision-makers all being male, and alumni of an all-male school, in which a general fondness of literature from "dead white men" (Lepucki 2014: 32) was encouraged. The community tries to recreate this school's feeling of being "lost in the past" (2014: 34)—drawing from works such as Henry David Thoreau's *Walden,* while refraining from using digital media, and separating themselves the best they can from the contemporary society. In addition to this temporal removal, they repeatedly stress that they believe in containment (this is quasi the community's motto: "We believe in containment"), and maintain secrecy at all costs. They generally do not accept outsiders, nor is there any way to apply for membership. This is also evident in the setup of the community, as they are not only withdrawn into the hinterlands of California, but have fortified their grounds with watchtowers and a maze of spikes. Only two members ever leave the community, while the rest spend their lives in this almost completely closed system.

As the main characters slowly come to realize, despite all of these measures to create closure, the utopian enclave is an illusion, created in order to provide fresh produce for the wealthy gated communities in the cities. Gated community and commune circulate luxury goods, and also parallel each other in form, as both believe in containment:

> The [gated] Community wasn't its own city, not yet, but it had exploited a loophole: it ran its own schools, funded its own police force and firefighters, and anyone hired to protect and work within its

borders either had to be related by blood to one of its residents or pass a rigorous application process. But nobody knew how to apply because the details weren't on its website (Lepucki 2014: 88).

Strikingly, the only outsiders ever allowed inside the intentional community, the two protagonist who initially tried to make it by themselves in the Californian woods, also gain entrance solely due to nepotism. Likewise similarly, gated and utopian community play with the appeal of a better, "outside" place in an otherwise dystopian world, and both are exclusive, built on the mind-set of the privileged[5].

Not only is the utopian community complicit in the system of privatization that they condemn but they are simultaneously at its mercy, depending on the benevolence of the urban communities for their protection, and tolerate severe constraints, most strikingly the prohibition on having children. Living in constant fear of marauders or outsiders who could upset this balance, the members accept these restrictions. Much like More's Utopia, this is not only a strongly fortified place to keep outsiders out, but also a strictly structured space that encloses and controls its members. Thus, the supposedly "outside" space is a work camp, controlling the labour force that produces luxury goods.

Neither the intricate system of fences and guards (a physical trench) nor the complete sequestration, nor the wilful oblivion with which the community's members treat their situation (a psychological separation from the outside world), nor the reversion to hunter-gatherer or peasant modes of production (the attempt at temporal removal), can provide the necessary closure. Significantly, the protagonists, initial dropouts from suburbia, end up being transferred into the suburban gated community described above. Despite all its fortification, the intentional community is, therefore, unable to establish an alternative: enclaves create the illusion of closure and containment that ultimately serves the global capitalistic system.

In this sense, *California* points to an understanding of utopia that is not so much dependent on geographical closure (as *The Emigrants*), nor does it suggest that enclaves have disappeared (as in *The Blithedale Romance*). Instead, the attempt at establishing a utopia fails because any enclave is always already within a larger system, in this case capitalism. *California*—and similar novels featuring intentional communities, such as Octavia E. Butler's *Parables,* or Lauren Groff's *Arcadia* (2012)—deals with utopia in crisis under globalization, which pertains, so I argue, to its spatiality. The

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[5]    For a short discussion of the spatiality of gated communities in relation to utopia, see Harvey 2000: 148-50.

novel implies that the capitalist system does not preclude separation and enclaves in an obvious way and enables the illusion of utopian spaces outside of itself: not being a singular entity[6], it permits multiple enclaves, from gated community, to agricultural commune, to hermit life in the woods. Yet, in the end, it is nevertheless total. Thus, the search for, and the move into, an enclave equates the participation in the system that was supposed to be left behind.

## Beyond the Trench

To sum up this brief overview of utopian closure in three works from three different centuries: while the utopian community in *The Emigrants* was initially enabled by geographical conditions of the "real social space", in *The Blithedale Romance* this conception is challenged due to the seeming ubiquity of western civilization and industrialization. Thus, the land which the United States has claimed is no longer the pristine garden that wards off corrupting influences, but instead has become a place in which utopian communities founder among the wrecks of their predecessors, constantly struggling to find a utopian enclave in this "epoch of annihilated space". By the end of the twentieth century, fictional accounts of utopian communities such as *California* imply, however, that finding closure may not be the issue, because such enclaves are an illusion of globalized capitalism to begin with. Instead, a critical analysis of the compliance of "utopian enclaves" in the capitalist system points to the necessity of questioning the utopianism of previous times, and of finding new ways to conceptualize utopian space, an alternative to "digging the trench".

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6    For a discussion of global markets and utopia, see Hodgson 1999, Tally 2013.

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