

The Utopian in a Faithless Age

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Abstract

The Austrian philosopher, Karl Popper, a fugitive of Nazism in the 1930s, once declared that Utopianism "...with the best intentions of making heaven on earth...only succeeds in making it a hell..." (108), and certainly Utopia's history is littered with failures fuelled largely from within.

Yet the host of academic sources, as well as fictional, journalistic and popular history works on the ideal state that I have encountered in my research have been an indication to me of the perennial appeal of the subject, and the place it continues to hold in human imagination in defiance of our 'faithless age.'

I have set out to write a novel loosely based on one of New Australia's 'impractical dreamers,' Harry Taylor, attempting to set the dilemma of a liberal late-nineteenth century Socialist on his return to Australia within the context of his failed utopian dream and against the backdrop of a small Australian town fast betraying the co-operative nature which first encouraged him to settle there.

I have found in many ways my exegesis and novel to cross paths with and echo each other. The history of 'Mylong' in which my main character, Harry Gardener, is portrayed belongs in part to myself as well, and I have taken the liberty of including parts of my personal experience in the exegesis where it seemed to relate to the ethos of the town which I, in a sense, inherited.

Otherwise, while the vision of 'Landfall' may be mine, in tracing some of the story of Utopianism and linking it with white Australian history and the New Australia colony in Paraguay, I have tried to access as many late nineteenth and early twentieth century sources as possible to capture as naturally as possible the mood of a particular utopian adventure and time.

Statement of Originality

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where reference has been made in text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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