Science Fiction’s Enactment of the Encouragement, Process, and End Result of Revolutionary Transformation

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Science Fiction’s Enactment of the Encouragement, Process, and End Result of Revolutionary Transformation

A Dissertation Presented

by

KATHARINE BLANCHARD

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2022

English
Science Fiction’s Enactment of the Encouragement, Process, and End Result of Revolutionary Transformation

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ABSTRACT

SCIENCE FICTION’S ENACTMENT OF THE ENCOURAGEMENT, PROCESS, AND END RESULT OF REVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMATION

MAY 2022

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This dissertation examines contemporary science fiction texts with utopian impulses through the lens of Marxist literary theory to show how these texts enact the encouragement, process, and end result of revolutionary transformation. The interdisciplinary theoretical framework of this dissertation utilizes Tom Moylan’s analysis of critical utopias, Darko Suvin’s theory of cognitive estrangement, Fredric Jameson’s concept of cognitive mapping, theories of postcapitalism from the sociological, economic, and political fields, the findings presented in Why Civil Resistance Works, and Erik Olin Wright’s definitions of the ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic strategies of revolutionary transformation. The analysis of Dissidence, Insurgence, Emergence, Walkaway, and 2140 using this theoretical framework demonstrates how these texts enact the encouragement, process, and end result of revolutionary transformation. Additionally, this analysis provides a clearer picture of the current moment of late capitalism, offers a means of evaluating the ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic strategies through the thought experiments provided by the texts to
contribute to conversations in the sociological, economic, and political fields regarding the implementation of such strategies to achieve a transformation of the current moment of capitalism, and demonstrates the contribution of contemporary utopian science fiction texts to such revolutionary transformation.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The hegemonic nature of capitalism and its broadening influence has led to a growing body of scholarship critiquing capitalism and presenting arguments for a revolutionary transformation from capitalism to postcapitalism. Scholarship in the literary, sociological, economic, and political fields has critiqued the hegemonic ideology of capitalism due to such results of capitalism as exploitation and inequality of wealth and has thus also argued for the need for a revolutionary transformation from capitalism to postcapitalism.

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine contemporary science fiction texts with utopian impulses through the lens of Marxist literary theory to argue that such an analysis can provide a clearer picture of our current late capitalist moment that allows for a critical analysis of that present and offers the hope of an alternative through an analysis of possible processes of revolutionary transformation toward such an alternative and the end results of those processes of revolutionary transformation that result in such an alternative. This dissertation will include analysis of the historical moment of capitalism during the years of 2016 and 2017 through sociological, economic, and political theorists in order to determine how the analyzed utopian science fiction texts critique their present by helping us to better see that present through putting it as a future and thus removing us enough to adequately see it, which Fredric Jameson suggests that science fiction texts can do when he asserts in “Progress versus Utopia; Or, Can We Imagine the Future?” that science fiction texts “defamiliarize and restructure our experience of our own present” (151). The analytical work of this dissertation will utilize Jameson’s theories regarding
utopia and cognitive mapping to analyze how the science fiction texts help us to better understand the late capitalist present and the capitalist ideology. The critical method of Tom Moylan, as influenced by Darko Suvin, will then be used to reveal how the science fiction texts critique the status quo and provide models of how revolutionary transformation might be achieved.

This dissertation hopes to add meaningfully to previous scholarship. Jameson argued in *Postmodernism* the importance and difficulty of cognitively mapping increasingly opaque late capitalism and this dissertation will strive to add to and update the scholarship that has contributed to such cognitive mapping. This dissertation intends to add to and update such a project through an examination of contemporary science fiction that more clearly reveals the contemporary reality of our current historical moment. This dissertation will additionally add to the analysis of critical utopias that was previously done by Tom Moylan. In a time when theorists are increasingly acknowledging a need for hopeful alternatives, using Moylan’s framework of analysis of critical utopias and applying this to contemporary texts will reveal the extent to which science fiction continues to do the subversive work that Moylan argues it is so adept at enacting. The critical work of this dissertation adds to the scholarship because the change in the sociological, economic, and political landscape since Moylan’s *Demand the Impossible* makes a study of contemporary science fiction texts as critical utopias necessary. Lastly, this dissertation will consider the recent transition to cognitive capitalism and how the science fiction texts critique this specific form of capitalism and how the opportunities for revolutionary transformation of this particular formulation of capitalism, as outlined by political theorists such as Paul Mason in *Postcapitalism*, can be
revealed and considered through an examination of these contemporary science fiction
texts.

Contemporary science fiction texts with utopian impulses were chosen as the texts
to be examined in this dissertation due to their unique ability to critique the current late
capitalist moment and stage the process and end result of revolutionary transformation.
Their unique ability to do this is made evident through the following literature review of
the area of study of utopian science fiction. In order to properly define and discuss this
area of study, it is necessary to first define utopia and science fiction separately. It is then
necessary to establish the correlation between the two terms of utopian and science
fiction and to define what is meant by utopian impulses in order to fully define the area of
science fiction with utopian impulses and examine the methodologies and important
concepts within this specific area of literature.

As Philip E. Wegner helpfully puts it in his essay “Utopia,” “any discussion of
Utopian in relationship to science fiction needs to begin by first distinguishing between
the specific genre of Utopian literature and what we can describe as a more general
Utopian impulse” (79). Carl Freedman’s presentation of three principal meanings of
utopia in his book Critical Theory and Science Fiction is useful in making this necessary
distinction. He asserts that these meanings are, “a generic meaning, a political-economic
meaning, and a philosophical and hermeneutic meaning” (Freedman 62).

The generic meaning of utopia referred to by Freedman relates to the genre of
utopian literature. As Wegner succinctly put it, “Utopian is one of those relatively rare
genres that has a precise moment of birth, as both the form and the term itself come into
being in 1516 with the publication of the great English Renaissance humanist Thomas
More’s masterpiece, *Utopia*” (Wegner, “Utopia” 81). More is considered the “progenitor of a new genre” because “many of More’s contemporaries were struck by the singular power of his unique work, and would follow his lead in creating their own ‘Utopians’” (83).

Within his work *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, Suvin conducts a “historico-semantic discussion” of the literary genre of utopia that produces the “elements for defining utopia” of “a radically different and historically alternative sociopolitical condition,” “an alternative locus,” “an imaginary community in which relations are organized more perfectly than in the author’s community,” “the fictional or, more clearly, ‘verbal construction’ character of any such condition, location, or community,” and “the particular or individualized character of any such construct as opposed to general and abstract utopian projects and programs” (48-49). Suvin then proposes that his own definition of the literary genre of utopia is, “the verbal construction of a particular quasi-human community where sociopolitical institutions, norms, and individual relationships are organized according to a more perfect principle than in the author’s community, this construction being based on estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis” (49). Wegner’s analysis of Suvin’s definition of utopia asserts that, “Suvin’s definition emphasizes the inseparable link between any specific Utopian and the historical context out of which it emerges,” in that, “any individual Utopian vision appears as ‘more perfect’ only in comparison to the society of its historical moment” (Wegner, “Utopia” 80). Wegner also points out that in Suvin’s definition, “the Utopian text takes up a critical role — what Suvin means by his use of the Brechtian concept of ‘estrangement’ — in relationship to that context” and that it does this “through its
presentation of this alternative community,” for through this presentation “the Utopian narrative has the effect of both highlighting in a negative light many of the problems of the reigning social order and, perhaps even more significantly, of showing that what is taken as natural and eternally fixed by the members of that society is in fact the product of historical development and thus open to change” (80). This critical role is what Freedman was referring to in listing the third meaning of utopia as a philosophical and hermeneutic one.

In considering what might be meant by a philosophical and hermeneutic meaning of utopia, the general definition of “‘utopianism’” as “various ways of imagining, creating, or theorizing about alternative and often dramatically different ways of life” seems to begin to describe what Freedman is referring to (Claeys and Sargent 1). As Wegner points out, this concept is not a new one, although the coining of the term utopia did not occur until the publication of More’s work. Wegner reminds us that, “portrayals of ideal societies…are probably as old as human history itself” (Wegner, “Utopia” 81). However, in describing the third meaning of utopia as a philosophical and hermeneutic one, Freedman references specifically the relatively recent, in human history, work of theorists such as Ernst Bloch. Freedman describes Ernst Bloch as “the most important philosopher of utopian interpretation” (63). Ernst Bloch discusses the utopian in his work *The Principle of Hope* and “describes this latent futurity in terms of *Heimat*, an ‘anticipated state of reconciliation with conditions of possibility that do not as yet exist, and indeed will not exist until present conditions have been radically reconceptualised so that they can be transformed into something as yet impossible to define’” (Bould 83). Freedman therefore explains that utopia for Bloch “is not so much a matter of description
or planning as it is a way of thinking and of reading: a utopian hermeneutic construes fragmentary prefigurations of an unalienated (communist) future in the cultural artifacts of the past and present” (63-64). Fredric Jameson also presents a philosophical and hermeneutic meaning of utopia in his book *Archaeologies of the Future*, for he defines “Utopian” as “not the commitment to a specific machinery or blueprint, but rather the commitment to imagining possible Utopias as such” (217). This conception of the utopian is the utopian impulse referenced by Wegner in his aforementioned essay “Utopia” (79). Bloch’s utopian impulse and the philosophical and hermeneutic meaning of utopia as detailed by Freedman will be discussed later in this literature review as being specifically present within science fiction, as argued in the works of theorists such as Freedman, Jameson, and Tom Moylan.

The political-economic meaning of utopia will be considered in greater detail later in this dissertation through a literature review of sociological, economic, and political theories of post-capitalism; however, for the current purpose of defining the area of literary study of utopian science fiction it is valuable to briefly consider political conceptions of utopia from two theorists. Hoda M. Zaki locates four attributes within modern utopian thought and uses these attributes to argue the presence of utopian thought in science fiction, as will be outlined later in this literature review of the literary study of utopian science fiction. Zaki maintains that “the legacy of political theory includes debates about alternate political and social orders” and maintains that “it is within this tradition that utopianism has been conceived” (8). He asserts that there are four attributes within “modern utopian thought” and that these are “its critical stance to extant society,” “the speculation of an ideal social order,” “an anticipation of the future,” and “the attempt
to construct a better society” (8). He asserts that “each attribute has been designated by various scholars to be the most valuable essence of utopian thought” and that they have come to this conclusion as “a result of their perception of the role utopian thought fulfills in the social order” (8). Zaki summarizes his own view of the role of utopian thought in stating that, “it attacks existing institutions and values, confronts the reigning ideology, estranges readers from their familiar environs, demonstrates the need for change, and serves as a focal point for social change” (12).

Though Zaki’s definition of utopia grounded in political theory will be important in understanding the connection between science fiction and utopia as discussed later in this literature review, it is also important to return briefly to the political-economic meaning of utopia as specifically discussed by Freedman. He maintains that this meaning connects to the critical designation by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels of “certain alternative conceptions of socialism as ‘utopian,’ in contrast to their own scientific version” (Freedman 63). Freedman’s discussion of this meaning of utopia is especially useful, because through it Freedman connects all three of his meanings of utopia and thus provides a foundation for the later connections to be made between utopia and science fiction in this literature review. Freedman asserts that “the Marxist objection to utopian socialism is strictly parallel to the Blochian objection to the traditional literary utopia,” for “both produce impossibly detailed abstract maps of a place (or rather a no-place) in which no one has ever stepped” and, “above all, utopian socialism and the utopian genre as invented by More are both weak with regard to the crucial category of transition” (85).

Freedman clarifies this parallel objection by explaining how “science fiction and scientific socialism both participate in the utopian hermeneutic theorized by Ernst Bloch
to a much greater degree than (despite their names) classic utopian fiction and pre-Marxian utopian socialism” (85). He asserts that, “The original Marxist claim, after all, is not simply to negate the social visions of the utopians, but rather to sublate the real value in their work — the passionate and often acute opposition to the oppressive empirical realities of the status quo — into a more concrete and fully critical theory of society and social transformation,” meaning “a theory capable of negotiating and even practically guiding the transition from actuality to something better; that is something closer to utopia in the strong Blochian sense” (85). Before discussing the correlation that Freedman makes between science fiction and the genre of utopia, it is necessary to first define the genre of science fiction.

Hugo Gernsback coined the term science fiction that would later refer to the genre of science fiction. The term evolved from Gernsback’s use of the similar term scientific fiction. Gernsback first began by referring to the fictional stories that he included in his publication Science and Invention as “scientific fiction” (Moskowitz 316). He chose this term, as opposed to the term “pseudo-scientific” being used at the time, because he “insisted that the basis of each story be scientifically accurate” (316). He later began “a new magazine dealing with the worlds of tomorrow, interplanetary travel, and scientific invention in the tradition of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells” that he titled “Amazing Stories: Scientifiction” (318-319). When Gernsback later started the publication Science Wonder Stories, after he “lost control of the Experimenter Publishing Corp. and of Amazing Stories” in 1929, it “was the first publication in history to use the term science fiction in its pages” (321-322). Gernsback “invented the new term” of science fiction “to have something different from his former publication” since he was no longer affiliated with
Amazing Stories and his previous term of “[s]cientifiction, as a result of his own efforts, was inextricably associated with Amazing Stories” (322).

Although it is clear when the term science fiction was coined, the definition of science fiction is one that has been discussed at length among theorists and there are a variety of definitions. Andrew Milner points out in Locating Science Fiction that the definition of science fiction, therefore, needs to be a fluid one. He states, “SF is a selective tradition, continuously reinvented in the present, through which the boundaries of the genre are continuously policed, challenged and disrupted, and the cultural identity of the SF community continuously established, preserved and transformed. It is thus essentially and necessarily a site of contestation” (Milner 39-40). Despite the variety of definitions, there do seem to be two common features of the definitions of science fiction. These commonalities are that science fiction is speculative and that it involves cognitive estrangement.

Zaki describes science fiction as “a speculative literature” that “speculates upon the human condition by creating imaginary societies located in the future” (23). He explains that, “the imagined future is linked to the author’s (and reader’s) present through a method known as extrapolation,” and that extrapolation “is a process by which an author extends a pattern from the past or present society into the future” and that “these patterns may be economic, social, technological, political, or demographic” (23). David Seed asserts that this “concept of world-building is an intrinsic part of the construction of a science fiction novel” and he points out that this “world-building resembles what Fredric Jameson calls ‘cognitive mapping,’ where the reader discovers and charts out relations between characters and different aspects of their environment” (4).
An early suggestion of the cognitive estrangement aspect of the definition of science fiction, although it was not yet labeled as such, is shown to have been present as early as when John W. Campbell, Jr. shared his conception of science fiction as a genre that “could function as ‘a way of considering the past, present, and future from a different viewpoint, and taking a look at how else we might do things…a convenient analog system for thinking about new scientific, social, and economic ideas – and for reexamining old ideas’” (Westfahl 26). Suvin later strengthened this concept by defining science fiction as “a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author’s empirical environment” (Suvin, \textit{Metamorphoses} 7-8). As Tom Shippey explains it in “Hard Reading: The Challenges of Science Fiction” in \textit{A Companion to Science Fiction}, “‘Estrangement,’…means recognizing the novum; ‘cognition’ means evaluating it, trying to make sense of it” and Shippey asserts that “you need to do both to read science fiction” (15). Suvin expands on his definition of science fiction by asserting that science fiction (SF) “is distinguished by the narrative dominance or hegemony of a fictional ‘novum’ (novelty, innovation) validated by cognitive logic” (Suvin, \textit{Metamorphoses}, 63). He asserts that his “central argument has always been that SF is defined by its estranged techniques of presenting a cognitive novum” (Suvin, \textit{Positions} x). Suvin claims that he continues to view science fiction “as a potentially cognitive genre” and explains that it is “often hindered from realizing its potentialities by analyzable forces in a complex but manmade history” (xiv). Suvin suggests the way in which science fiction should be analyzed in his opinion by stating that he does “not believe that critics can remain bound by the consciousness of the
author at hand, nor that they can fetishize ‘the text’ at the expense of the crucial interface between the text and our common world of ideologies and bodies” (xiv).

Carl Freedman’s definition of science fiction considers cognitive estrangement as well. He argues that, although “cognition and estrangement, which together constitute the generic tendency of science fiction, are not only actually present in all fiction, but are structurally crucial to the possibility of fiction and even of representation in the first place,” the designation of science fiction should “be reserved for those texts in which cognitive estrangement is not only present but dominant” (Freedman 21-22). Fredric Jameson, in *Archaeologies of the Future*, also “stresses ‘the role of cognition’ in SF and that of magic in fantasy” when he asserts that science fiction “‘is the exploration of all the constraints thrown up by history itself – the web of counterfinalities and anti-dialectics which human production has…produced…’” (Milner 25). In addition, “like Suvin, Jameson also stresses the role of estrangement, arguing that SF works ‘to defamiliarize and restructure our experience of our own present…in specific ways distinct from all other forms of defamiliarization’” (25). This occurs, according to Jameson, when “the genre’s multiple mock futures…function so as to transform ‘our own present into the determinate past of something yet to come’ and so to make ‘the present as history’ available for contemplation” (25). Jameson thus concludes that, “the function of SF…is ‘to dramatize our incapacity to imagine the future’ and thereby to become ‘a contemplation of our own absolute limits’” (25).

With the terms and corresponding genres of utopia and science fiction defined, it is now possible to establish the correlation between the two and define what is meant by utopian impulses in order to fully define the area of science fiction with utopian impulses
and examine the methodologies and important concepts within this specific area of literature. Freedman defines science fiction as the new medium of utopian thought in which there is a suggested hope for an alternative present. He argues that “science fiction vitalizes the pre-science-fictional literary utopia by making the genre of utopia more concrete and novelistic, and therefore more critical in theoretical stance” (Freedman 85). He explains that this is true because “science fiction provides, in literary effect, estrangements of an authentically cognitive, critical nature that are therefore capable, at least in principle, of suggesting a rational means of transition from the mundane actuality of the author’s environment to something radically different” (85). Suvin further describes the correlation between utopia and science fiction by arguing that given that “‘cognitive estrangement’ is the basis of the literary genre of SF,” it becomes true that, “[s]trictly and precisely speaking, utopia is not a genre but the sociopolitical subgenre of science fiction” (Suvin, Metamorphoses 61-62).

Given these assertions regarding the connection between utopia and science fiction, it is useful to consider the theorists that define science fiction as including aspects of utopian thought in order to begin to understand how scholars are theorizing utopian impulses within science fiction and what methodologies they are using to do so. The theorist “Raymond Williams sees a self-conscious renewal of utopian thinking occurring within science fiction, after a long dystopian interval” (Zaki 26). Tom Moylan agrees with Williams’s argument that “the revival of utopian thought has occurred within science fiction” and he further argues “that utopias in science fiction have been transformed into ‘critical utopias’” (27). Moylan presents his theory of critical utopias in his book Demand the Impossible. He outlines there a transformation of the utopian text
from a text that focused on the dream of utopia and outlined a specific system, a blueprint of a society, to a critical utopia that focused on the utopian impulse and opposed the dominant ideology through focusing on the oppositional actions of the characters in the text rather than just on the society itself and through maintaining a questioning of any totalizing system. He describes how critical utopias “retain older elements of the utopia — the alternative society and the visitor — but work with those elements in a radically different way” and asserts that “the critical utopia in this time of transition, then, can in its symbolic activity help to restore a sense of the concrete historical situation and offer its own form — the self-aware, critical utopian activity — as a meaningful act on the ideological terrain” (Moylan, *Demand* 43).

Moylan asserts that the first major break with the pattern of the traditional utopia that the critical utopia makes is that “the critical utopia at the level of the iconic register, in which the image of the alternative society is generated, breaks with previous utopias by presenting in much greater, almost balanced, detail both the utopian society and the original society against which the utopia is pitted as a revolutionary alternative” (Moylan, *Demand* 44). The second break of the critical utopia from the traditional utopia that Moylan describes is evident “at the level of the discrete register which generates plot and character” and is that “in the new utopia, the primacy of the societal alternative over character and plot is reversed, and the alternative society and indeed the original society fall back as settings for the foregrounded political quest of the protagonist” (45). Moylan describes “a human subject in action, now no longer an isolated individual monad stuck in one social system but rather a part of the human collective in a time and place of deep historical change” and how “the concerns of this revived, active subject are centered
around the ideologeme of the strategy and tactics of revolutionary change at both the micro/personal and macro/societal levels” (45). Moylan reflects that these breaks with the traditional pattern of utopia demonstrate that, “more aware of the limits of traditional utopias and the totalizing tendencies of consumer capitalism and bureaucratic states, the critical utopias keep the utopian impulse alive by challenging it and deconstructing it within its very pages” (46).

These breaks from the traditional pattern of utopia also support Moylan’s definition of critical utopias, which is that “a central concern in the critical utopia is the awareness of the limitations of the utopian tradition, so that these texts reject utopia as blueprint while preserving it as dream,” that “the novels dwell on the conflict between the originary world and the utopian society opposed to it so that the process of social change is more directly articulated,” and that “the novels focus on the continuing presence of difference and imperfection within utopian society itself and thus render more recognizable and dynamic alternatives” (Moylan, Demand 10-11). Moylan uses the work of “Ernst Bloch,” a “Marxist philosopher,” and “his major work, The Principle of Hope,” to support the assertion that critical utopias “reject utopia as blueprint while preserving it as dream” (10, 20). Moylan explains that, “Bloch situates utopian imagination in the historical process not as the source of blueprints but as preconceptual figures of that which is not yet attained” (24). He explains how Bloch does this through his concept of “the novum: the unexpectedly new, that which pushes humanity out of the present toward the not yet realized future” (21). Moylan explains that, “Bloch’s work allows us to consider the process of radical opposition in terms of radical difference” and asserts that “the utopian impulse is at the center of the process of radical rupture that is necessary for
the constant striving of humanity for a world free of oppression and full of satisfaction” (20). He argues that, “In restoring the utopian impulse to the revolutionary arsenal, Ernst Bloch anticipated the concept behind one of the driving forces of the opposition to domination and hierarchy that developed in the late 1960s,” because “in generating preconceptual images of human fulfillment that radically break with the prevailing social system, utopian discourse articulates the possibility of other ways of living in the world” (26). Moylan connects the new critical utopia to Bloch’s concept of utopian impulse through his explanation that in the critical utopias, “the strength of critical utopian expression lies not in the particular social structures it portrays but in the very act of portraying a utopian vision itself” and that “the task of an oppositional utopian text is not to foreclose the agenda for the future in terms of a homogeneous revolutionary plan but rather to hold open the act of negating the present and to imagine any of several possible modes of adaptation to society and nature based generally upon principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” (26-27).

In *Archaeologies of the Future*, Jameson argues we can use moments of utopia to work toward a not yet realized future. He warns that we must first keep in mind that all utopian content is ideological. He outlines how utopias can reflect the hegemonic ideology, such as when utopias have “embraced the collective institutional conditions imposed by industrial capitalism,” but he explains that “the Utopian genre” has the capacity to portray “revolutions against” those utopias of the hegemonic ideology and that these revolutions “take on Utopian characteristics” (Jameson, *Archaeologies* 195). He observes that, “Utopia now” therefore “begins to include all those bitter disputes around alternative diagnoses of social miseries and the solutions proposed to overcome
them; and the formal center of gravity then begins to shift precisely to the question of those differences” (216). Jameson thus argues that, “What is Utopian becomes, then, not the commitment to a specific machinery or blueprint,” for the utopian moment is not “some conceptual nugget we can extract and store away, with a view towards using it as a building block of some future system” (217, 175). Rather, what is utopian becomes “the commitment to imagining possible Utopias as such, in their greatest variety of forms” (217). This means that “Utopian is no longer the invention and defense of a specific floorplan, but rather the story of all the arguments about how Utopia should be constructed in the first place” and “is no longer the exhibit of an achieved Utopian construct, but rather the story of its production and of the very process of construction as such” (217).

Freedman concludes his book Critical Theory and Science Fiction by asserting that science fiction is useful in questioning the present and suggesting there can and should be alternatives to that present. He describes how, due to the hegemony of capitalism in the postmodern era, utopia is harder than ever to visualize and argues that, “never, and for precisely the same reasons, has utopia in art been more desperately needed” (Freedman 191). He explains that, “the totality that must form the ultimate object of genuinely critical thought — the world capitalist system — becomes increasingly hard to conceptualize as it becomes increasingly comprehensive and unchallenged” (191). He concludes that it will be difficult for science fiction to envision an alternative to the postmodern era of capitalism, but that it is necessary (191). Jameson, through his analysis of utopian moments in Archeologies of the Future has provided us, however, with a means of achieving this envisioning of an alternative that Freedman
warns is so imperative. Through looking critically at the utopian moments in science fiction texts, we can gain insight into “the story of all the arguments about how Utopia should be constructed in the first place” and “the story of its production and of the very process of construction as such” (Jameson, *Archaeologies* 217).

The way to understand “the world capitalist system” and visualize an alternative to that system is to analyze utopian science fiction texts and how they enact the encouragement, process, and end result of revolutionary transformation (Freedman 191). This is the analytical work that this dissertation will undertake, but to do this effectively it is first necessary to review the body of scholarship critiquing capitalism and presenting arguments for a revolutionary transformation from capitalism to postcapitalism. The scholarship reviewed critiques capitalism in response to its hegemonic nature and broadening influence. The critique of the “world capitalist system” and the staging of the process and end result of the revolutionary transformation that utopian science fiction texts are capable of, as established by the literature review of the literary study of utopian science fiction, will be most effectively analyzed through an interdisciplinary approach that considers the sociological, economic, and political fields of study (191). The analytical work of this dissertation will thus take an interdisciplinary approach to more effectively analyze the utopian science fiction texts examined in the dissertation and to open up future possibilities in the sociological, economic, and political fields of study for more effectively considering the viability of the process and end result of revolutionary transformation to prepare for the real-world application of revolutionary transformation. It is therefore necessary to first consider the relevant scholarship in the sociological, economic, and political fields of study in the following literature review. The theorists
included in this review present a variety of theories of postcapitalism, but these theories can be synthesized and put in conversation with each other to determine their viability in the current historical moment through a consideration of how the theorists present the process of revolutionary transformation and how they portray the postcapitalism resulting from the transformation that they envision. The sociological, economic, and political theories of postcapitalism reviewed here will thus be used later in the dissertation to analyze how the utopian science fiction texts examined in this dissertation do the work of critical utopias and to argue that a significant contribution to the consideration of the viability of different social, economic, and political theories and systems can be made through the analysis of how utopian science fiction texts enact those theories and systems.

Before considering the process and result of the revolutionary transformation from capitalism to postcapitalism, it is first necessary to determine why such a transition is desirable. The following outlines how theorists of sociological, economic, and political theory have defined and critiqued capitalism to argue for the need of a revolutionary transformation from capitalism to postcapitalism. Sociologist Erik Olin Wright defines capitalism in *Envisioning Real Utopias* as, “an economic structure within which the means of production are privately owned” (79). He explains that, “[t]he combination of” the “features of capitalism” of “class relations defined by private ownership and propertyless workers” and “coordination organized through decentralized market exchanges” is what “generates the characteristic competitive drive for profits and capital accumulation of capitalist firms” (35). The characteristic of capitalism of the competitive drive for profits necessitates that “the capitalist needs workers for profits” (Allen 182).
The class structure of capitalism therefore consists of “a minority of people” who own and control “the means of production, and a vast majority” of people who are “compelled to sell their labour” (22).

In his book Postcapitalism, Paul Mason states that, “capitalism is more than just an economic structure or a set of laws and institutions,” as “it is the whole system — social, economic, demographic, cultural, ideological — needed to make a developed society function through markets and private ownership” (xiii). Karl Marx explains this in another way when he states in A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy that “relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness” and, therefore, “the mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life” (20).

Understanding the economic structure of capitalism and its impact on social, political, and intellectual life is important when critiquing capitalism as an economic structure to determine whether a revolutionary transformation to postcapitalism is needed and why.

In sociological, economic, and political theory, capitalism has been and continues to be critiqued to argue for a transition to postcapitalism. Ed Lewis, in the introduction to Alternatives to Capitalism, lists “capitalism’s myriad injustices” as “poverty, exploitation, instability, hierarchy, subordination, environmental exhaustion, radical inequalities of wealth and power” (1). Marx explains the exploitation of workers in Capital. He argues that, “Capitalist production…reproduces and perpetuates the conditions under which the worker is exploited. It incessantly forces him to sell his labour-power in order to live, and enables the capitalist to purchase labour-power in order
that he may enrich himself” (Marx, *Capital* 723). Frederick Engels explains in *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* the exploitation of the workers when he states, “that even if the capitalist buys the labor-power of his laborer at its full value as a commodity on the market, he yet extracts more value from it than he paid for; and that in the ultimate analysis this surplus-value forms those sums of value from which are heaped up the constantly increasing masses of capital in the hands of the possessing classes” (92-93).

The class struggle that is a result of this relation between classes is due to this exploitation, for “capitalists intensify exploitation in order to respond to competition” (Allen 67). Marx explains that this “does not depend on the will, either good or bad, of the individual capitalist,” since “under free competition, the immanent laws of capitalist production confront the individual capitalist as a coercive force external to him” (Marx, *Capital* 381). Marx describes this resulting intensification of exploitation due to competition as various strategies “employed by different capitalists” in order to “seek to reduce or even reverse the tendency for the rate of profit to fall” (Allen 145). These include, “ensuring that a smaller number of workers work longer hours,” increasing “the *relative level of surplus value* through an intensification of work effort,” and “*wage cuts*” (145). Given that “the whole system is driven by competition,” the result is that “[t]he whole economy has been disconnected from the needs of people and its sole purpose is the self-expansion of capital” (32, 34). This results in “the alienation that developed under capitalism,” in which “[w]orkers have no say in what is produced or how it is produced — the activity does not arise from their needs or desires and is entirely alien to them” (44).

In addition to the exploitation and alienation of workers under capitalism and the
inequalities of wealth inherent in the class relations and the process of capital accumulation within capitalism, Marx also showed that capitalism is a system that “moves from crisis to crisis” (Allen 142). Marx’s theory of crisis argued that crisis is, “a normal feature of capitalism and a product of its technological dynamism” (Mason 53). In summary, capitalism is “a vast social enterprise which dominates us, delimits our freedoms and ultimately visits upon us the worst forms of degradation” (Harvey, Limits 203). Thankfully, the conclusion for many has thus been that “we need a new economic model” and a strong argument has been made that a postcapitalist society would serve to “ameliorate these harms” caused by capitalism (Mason 29; Wright 85). There has therefore been a great deal of discussion regarding whether a transition to postcapitalism is possible.

Many theorists of sociological, economic, and political theory have argued that a transition to a post-capitalist society is necessary and possible, though their views of what it may look like differ. Mason presents his belief, for example, in his book Postcapitalism “that there is a clear alternative, that it can be global, and that it can deliver a future substantially better than the one capitalism will be offering by the mid-twenty-first century” and he labels this alternative “postcapitalism” (xiii). Through his use of the dialectical method, Marx shows that a transition from capitalism to postcapitalism is possible. The usefulness of the dialectical method in demonstrating this is evident in how it understands that “things or events do not occur in isolation but are part of a web of interconnected relationships” that together “constitute a ‘totality,’” how it recognizes “that everything is transitory – in other words, it has come into existence and will eventually go out of existence,” and how it explains that the reason there is “constant
change is because *a totality is riven with contradictions*” (Allen 119-120). Through their analysis of capitalism through the dialectical method, “Marx and Engels saw the development of an upper class as a dialectical process” and they argued in the *Communist Manifesto* “that hierarchy or class division was not part of the natural order and showed that it arose at a specific historic moment” (59). Therefore, as Wolfgang Streeck asserts in his book *Buying Time*, “capitalism is not a state of nature but a historical social order in need of institutionalization and legitimation: its concrete forms change with time and place and are in principle both susceptible to renegotiation and in danger of breaking down” (Streeck 24). With capitalism established as a system that is harmful and that can be replaced with something better, it becomes feasible to discuss strategies for how to begin the process of transitioning from capitalism to postcapitalism.

In determining the most effective process of revolutionary transformation, it is imperative to determine whether the system of capitalism will collapse due to its tendency toward crisis or whether it will successfully continue to adapt to persist despite such crises. In *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, Engels argues that Marx’s “materialistic conception of history” presented “the capitalistic method of production in its historical connection and its inevitableness during a particular historical period, and therefore, also,” presented “its inevitable downfall” through “the materialistic conception of history” (92-93). Marx concluded with “the general theorem of the falling rate of profit” that “an economic breakdown of capitalism by its inner mechanisms” would occur (Anderson 115). He argued that the “contradictions of capitalism ultimately make capitalism an increasingly fragile and vulnerable system in which the ability of the ruling class and its political allies to block transformation becomes progressively weaker over
Mason agrees in his more recent analysis that the system will collapse, but he specifically believes that this will be due to information technology and that the collapse of the system has already begun. He lists the periods of the “four long cycles” of “industrial capitalism” as “1790-1848,” “1848-mid-1890s,” “1890s-1945,” and “Late-1940s-2008,” which was “the longest economic boom in history,” and he argues that “in the late-1990s, overlapping with the end of the previous wave, the basic elements of the fifth long cycle appear” (Mason 47-48). Mason proposes that, “Today the main contradiction in modern capitalism is between the possibility of free, abundant socially produced goods, and a system of monopolies, banks and governments struggling to maintain control over power and information” (144). As Richard Peet and Elaine Hartwick explain in Theories of Development, “fundamental transformative change occurs when contradictions build to the breaking point” (146). Mason argues that this is exactly what is occurring during the current fifth long cycle of capitalism. He explains that “information technology” is “corroding market mechanisms, eroding property rights and destroying the old relationship between wages, work and profit” (Mason 112). He asserts that, capitalism is a complex, adaptive system which has reached the limits of its capacity to adapt” and that the system will therefore fail to adapt to these effects of information technology and the resulting “economy based on information, with its tendency to zero-cost products and weak property rights, cannot be a capitalist economy” (xiii, 175).

Although some theorists, such as Engels, Marx, and Mason, have argued that capitalism is heading toward collapse, there are other theorists that believe that
capitalism’s tendency to adapt will mean that an eventual collapse is not guaranteed. For example, the political theorist Eduard Bernstein was described by Rosa Luxemburg, an economic theorist and Marxist, as believing “a general decline of capitalism” to be “increasingly improbable because, on the one hand, capitalism shows a greater capacity of adaptation, and, on the other hand, capitalist production becomes more and more varied” (Luxemburg 10). This belief that capitalism will not collapse due to this ability to adapt remains a prevalent one today among theorists. Economist Robin Hahnel asserts that it is important to reject “theories that capitalism is programmed to self-destruct due to internal contradictions as ill conceived and untrue” (Hahnel and Wright 112). Sociologist Erik Olin Wright agrees with Hahnel on this diagnosis and states in *Alternatives to Capitalism* that, therefore, “the problem of transformation requires understanding the ways in which strategies of transformation have some prospect in the long term of eroding capitalist power relations and building up socialist alternatives” (100).

Regardless of whether capitalism will collapse or will adapt, there is a precondition to a revolutionary transformation to postcapitalism that many theorists of postcapitalism agree on. This is the precondition of a consciousness of class position. Marx explained how capitalism stays dominant through his “theory of ideology” and his “theory of the state” (Allen 94). Many theorists have since utilized and built on these two theories within their own work. Through his theory of ideology, Marx concluded that, “The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force” (Marx and Engels, *German* 64). While Marx’s theory of the state asserted that, “The State is the
form in which the individuals of a ruling class assert their common interests” (80). Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemony is closely related to these theories. He describes hegemony as the “consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group” and explains that the role of the state is to exert “coercive power which ‘legally’ enforces discipline on those groups who do not ‘consent’ either actively or passively” to this hegemony (Gramsci, *Selections* 12). The consent that Gramsci refers to here is achieved through ideologies, which Gramsci states, “for the governed are mere illusions, a deception to which they are subject, while for the governing they constitute a willed and a knowing deception” (Gramsci, *Quaderni* 196).

Althusser’s theory of ideology and state apparatuses further expounds on how the ideology of the State is presented to the governed and how the State uses force to maintain the dominance of the ruling class ideology. Althusser asserts that “the (Repressive) State Apparatus” is used to secure “by force (physical or otherwise) the political conditions of the reproduction of relations of production,” which “are relations of exploitation” (Althusser 23, 57). The “Ideological State Apparatuses” serve to maintain the consent of the governed through a dominant ideology that reinforces the desired relations of production and that is perpetuated through “Ideological State Apparatuses” such as “the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private ‘Schools,’” “the legal ISA,” “the political ISA (the political system, including the different Parties),” and “the communications ISA (press, radio and television, etc.)” (17). Althusser argues that, “no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses” (20).
Obtaining class-consciousness is thus important in combatting the ruling class’s use of ideology and the State. Fredric Jameson in *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* alludes to the consequent necessity of establishing a way to visualize capitalism given the allusiveness of conceptualization of this system of “postmodernist late capitalism with its perpetual present and its multiple historical amnesias” (170). He warns that we are “inside the culture of the market…unable to imagine anything else” (206-207). The “extraordinary systematizing and unifying forces of late capitalism which are so omnipresent as to be invisible” are the forces that make it so necessary to cognitively map capitalism and reveal those forces and what they make obscure about the system (186).

When seeking to understand and reveal what is made obscure about the system of capitalism, it is important to consider “Marx’s discussion of commodity fetishism and its development by Lukács as reification” (Allen 104). Commodity fetishism, Marx explains, “conceals the social character of private labour and the social relations between the individual workers” (Marx, *Capital* 168-169). Reification “is the ‘effacement of the traces of production’ from the object itself, from the commodity thereby produced” (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 314). Georg Lukács describes the process of reification in a capitalist society in *History and Class Consciousness*. He explains within the products of labor “the relations between men that lie hidden in the immediate commodity relation, as well as the relations between men and the objects that should really gratify their needs, have faded to the point where they can be neither recognised nor even perceived” (Lukács 93).
Class-consciousness would therefore need to include the revelation by the workers of their exploitation and alienation under capitalism as described in the above critique of capitalism so that the realities of capitalism, such as commodity fetishism and the inequality of wealth, can be understood and revealed. Ernest Mandel argued in his book *Late Capitalism* that one means of achieving this class-consciousness is through “struggle” (498-499). Trotsky highlighted that “the means of production which are in the hands of the” capitalists “can be set in motion only by the” working class, which gives them “the power to hold up at will, partially or wholly, the proper functioning of the economy of society, through partial or general strikes” (Trotsky, *Permanent* 93-94). Saul Newman describes the resistance of anarchists, for example, as usually “direct action — not only mass protests and creative forms of civil disobedience and non-violent confrontation, but also sabotage, the occupation of spaces (the Temporary Autonomous Zone) and other forms of subversion” (176).

The question then becomes whether the revolutionary transformation will require a single act of revolution, gradual reforms, or some combination of, or reimagining of, these two approaches to change. Wright outlines “three strategic logics of transformation” that “have characterized the history of anti-capitalist struggle” that help to organize the methods of revolutionary transformation proposed by various theories of postcapitalism. Wright labels these three strategies “as ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic strategies” (Hahnel and Wright 100). “Ruptural transformation” is a “revolutionary scenario” that involves “a sharp break with existing institutions and social structures” through “seizing state power,” “rapidly transforming state structures and then using these new apparatuses of state power to destroy the power of the dominant class within the
“Interstitial transformations” are those that build “alternatives on the ground in whatever spaces are possible” and then focus on “pushing against state and public policy to expand those spaces.” This strategy creates what Wright calls “real utopias” through carrying out the “critical ideological function” of “showing that another world is possible by building it in the spaces available” (101, 105). Wright describes “symbiotic transformations” as involving “strategies that use the state to extend and deepen the institutional forms of social empowerment in ways which also solve certain practical problems faced by dominant classes and elites” (101). Wright explains that the ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic strategies “correspond broadly, respectively, “to the revolutionary socialist, anarchist, and social democratic traditions of anti-capitalism” (Wright 305).

The symbiotic strategy corresponds to the social democracy of Eduard Bernstein. Bernstein argues for this strategy of social reform. He admits that, “constitutional legislation works more slowly” and “[i]ts way is usually that of compromise,” but he argues that, “it is more powerful than revolution wherever the preconceptions, the limited horizon, of the great mass of the people stand as an obstacle in the way of social progress, and it offers greater advantages where it is a question of creating permanent and viable economic arrangements” and he concludes that thus, “it is better for positive socio-political work” (Bernstein 204).

Luxemburg argued against the social reform strategy of Bernstein and for the revolutionary socialist strategy akin to the ruptural transformation that Wright describes. She argued that, “Socialism will be the consequence of (1) the growing contradictions of capitalist economy and (2) the comprehension by the working class of the unavoidability
of the suppression of these contradictions through a social transformation” (Luxemburg 31). This was the strategy of transformation that Marx and Engels had proposed. Marx claimed, “without revolution, socialism cannot be made possible” and Marx and Engels clarified “in the Communist Manifesto” that it “can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing conditions” (Allen 157). The classical anarchists agreed with Marx and Engels that a revolution was needed for the revolutionary transformation of capitalism into postcapitalism. They envisioned a “militant, insurrectionary” strategy (Bakunin, Statism 214).

Some individuals, however, strove for transformation through means that were not traditional reforms or a revolution by force. These individuals included the utopian socialists “Henri de Saint-Simon,” “Charles Fourier,” and “Robert Owen” (McCullough 110). These utopian socialists enacted the interstitial strategy that Wright describes. Much more recently, the Occupy Wall Street movement also enacted this interstitial strategy. Graeber explains how Occupy Wall Street followed the anarchist principles that include, “acting as if one is already free,” “the refusal to accept the legitimacy of the existing legal order,” “the refusal to create an internal hierarchy and the decision instead to create a form of consensus-based direct democracy,” and “the embrace of prefigurative politics,” through which the “encampments” became “spaces of experiment with creating the institutions of a new society” (144-145).

When reviewing the transformative strategies used and advocated for most today, we see that there has been a transition away from a separation between reform and a single revolutionary moment and that theorists are instead arguing for the use of a combination of the ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic strategies. Newman argues for
using the interstitial strategy to create the ruptural moments that will lead to the transformation into postcapitalism. He references Guy Debord’s argument that “classical anarchism” had fallen “into the trap of seeing the Revolution as a kind of totalising end point, a grand overturning of existing society that must be achieved all at once; in this sense it disregarded important questions of method and organisation” (Newman 65).

Newman then presents his argument that we should see “the possibilities of radical politics today” not “as laying the ground for a revolutionary event or a single, unified moment of global emancipation, but rather as a series of struggles, movements and communities whose existence is often fragile, whose practices are experimental, tentative and localised and whose continuity is by no means guaranteed,” but which “represent moments of potential rupture with the global order of power” and “embody - in their very singularity - the possibility of an alternative” (170).

Mason describes a method that uses a combination of the ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic strategies to achieve a gradual strengthening of postcapitalism from within capitalism as a means of revolutionary transformation. He calls this method “revolutionary reformism” and urges us that the already existing spaces of “cooperatives, the credit unions, the peer-networks, the unmanaged enterprises and the parallel, subcultural economies” be promoted “with regulation” since within them already exists those elements of the new system (Mason 244). Through this method the “alternatives” to capitalism that have been built “on the ground in whatever spaces are possible” using the interstitial strategy are then further promoted through the symbiotic strategy that will “use the state” to promote those spaces (Hahnel and Wright 101). The symbiotic strategy will also be used to reform the finance system, which Mason calls for
as part of his method of achieving postcapitalism and to achieve this he states that it is
necessary to “nationalize the central bank” (Mason 281). These actions will thus be
symbiotic in their strategy in that they will again “use the state” (Hahnel and Wright 101)
to achieve this. Mason does argue though that the “external shocks” such as “climate
change” are “altering the dynamics of capitalism and making it unworkable in the long
term,” and that thus the ruptural strategy will need to be used in part as well, since “some
of the actions we take will have to be immediate, centralized and drastic” (Mason 243-
244). He therefore advocates for using “governmental power in a radical and disruptive
way,” for he asserts that “[o]nly the state, and states acting together, can organize” the
immediate change necessary (244, 261). Mason is thus suggesting the use of the ruptural
strategy to achieve the immediate changes needed as he describes “a sharp break with
existing institutions and social structures” in those situations and the need for then
“using” the “apparatuses of state power” to achieve the revolutionary transformation that
is necessary (Hahnel and Wright 100-101).

Jameson, in his essay “An American Utopia,” also urges us “to think revolution in
a new way” and he thus conceptualizes revolution as involving “dual power” (13). He
describes a “transitional phase—that of dual power” during which “the coexistence of the
old state and the new one will indeed seem to be a rivalry of governmental powers” but
he assures that “little by little, however, it will be understood that it is the old state which
is in reality the ‘government,’ and destined as such to ‘wither away,’” leaving only the
“new structure, which is in fact the society at large” (21).

When considering the various strategies of revolutionary transformation proposed
by theorists, it is important to the findings presented in the text Why Civil Resistance
*Works.* The text *Why Civil Resistance Works* found “that between 1900 and 2006, nonviolent resistance campaigns were nearly twice as likely to achieve full or partial success as their violent counterparts” (Chenoweth and Stephan 7). The success of nonviolent resistance is attributed in the text to the fact that, “nonviolent campaigns facilitate the active participation of many more people than violent campaigns, thereby broadening the base of resistance and raising the costs to opponents of maintaining the status quo” (10-11). This, the text states, is “explained by the fact that the physical, moral, and informational barriers to participation in nonviolent campaigns are substantially lower than in violent campaigns given comparable circumstances” (220). In addition, the text presents that, “Statistical tests and congruence testing through four case studies support the notion that nonviolent campaigns are superior at inflicting considerable costs on the adversary in ways that divide the regime,” while “violent campaigns tend to unify the regime” (221-222). The text additionally reports finding “strong empirical support for the notion that successful nonviolent resistance is much likelier to lead to democracy and civil peace, whereas violent insurgent success prohibits or reverses democracy while increasing the likelihood for recurrent civil war” (218).

Overall, the “study therefore concludes that nonviolent civil resistance works, both in terms of achieving campaigns’ strategic objectives and in terms of promoting the long-term well-being of the societies in which the campaigns have been waged” and that, conversely, “Violent insurgency, on the other hand, has a dismal record on both counts” (222).

Within the discussions of the varied methods of transformation, there are additionally two frequently discussed issues regarding the process of revolutionary
transformation that tend to be especially focused upon. These are the issues of whether or not to utilize the state during, and possibly after, the transition and whether or not to use elements of the capitalist system, such as markets, during, and possibly after, the transformation. As Marx explains in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, “Between capitalist and communist society there lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other” and that during this period, “the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat” (pt. 4). Marx and Engels outline in the *Communist Manifesto* how during this period, “The proletariat will use its political power to strip all capital from the bourgeoisie piece by piece, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e. the proletariat organized as ruling class, and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible” (251). Lenin asserts in *State and Revolution* that, “the proletariat needs the state only for a while” and clarifies that there is indeed “the abolition of the state as an aim” (52). Trotsky asserts in fact that it is a “task of the state which realizes the dictatorship” to prepare “for its own dissolution” and that “the construction of a society without classes and without material contradictions” is dependent on this (Trotsky, *Revolution* 45). Engels too makes this point, for he explains in *Anti-Dühring*, “As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection,” then “a special repressive force, a state, is no longer necessary” (pt. 3, ch. 2). Mason’s more recent conceptualization of the transition from capitalism to postcapitalism also advocates for the need to use the state to achieve such a transition. He argues that the state is needed to carry out “the biggest structural change required to make postcapitalism happen: a universal basic income guaranteed by the state” (Mason 284). Like Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky though, Mason allows that the state “probably
gets less powerful over time — and in the end its functions are assumed by society” (290).

The anarchists, however, did not agree with the use of the state to transition away from capitalism and they continue to emphasize the importance of finding ways to transition to postcapitalism that are outside the use of the state. Mikhail Bakunin, “the nineteenth-century Russian anarchist” argued “in his debates with Marx in the First International” that “if the state itself was not destroyed in a socialist revolution, there would emerge a dictatorship of bureaucrats and scientists who would lord it over the peasants and workers, imposing a new tyranny” (Newman 3). Bakunin argued, “‘Class’, ‘Power’, ‘State’, are three inseparable terms,” which are “summed up by the words: the political subjection and the economic exploitation of the masses” (Bakunin, Marxism 47). Today, Newman asserts that it continues to be true that “a revolt of society against the state” is “central to anarchism” (Newman 36). Therefore, “the general focus of anti-capitalist movements has been on constructing forms of politics that are outside the state and which contest its hegemony from multiple points” (176).

The question of whether or not markets should be utilized in the revolutionary transformation, and possibly after, is one that seems to hinge on whether or not theorists believe that allowing markets to remain during a transition to postcapitalism would undermine that transformation. Marx argued that Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, for example, did not sufficiently understand how markets undermine a transformation into postcapitalism. Marx argued that markets would undermine a transformation into postcapitalism because “all schemes for mutual aid would eventually be made subject to the laws of the market and could not undermine them” (Allen 14). Today, there continues
to be a call for a planned economy to replace capitalism and theorists argue that the eradication of markets and other aspects of the ideology of capitalism are necessary for a successful revolutionary transformation into postcapitalism. Allen asserts, “Unless we can be rid of market forces, older forms of top-down control will revive even if there is workers’ self-management and public ownership” (187). Hahnel and supporters of “participatory economics fight to tame markets until a majority supports replacing them altogether with something far better” (Hahnel and Wright 11).

Mason does not see the need to remove markets entirely at the start of the process of transformation. He argues that it is “entirely possible to build the elements of the new system molecularly within the old,” and that there is therefore “no reason to abolish markets by diktat, as long as you abolish the basic power imbalances that the term ‘free market’ disguises” (Mason 244, 279). He does, however, warn that, “Climate change does not present us with a choice of market or non-market routes to meeting carbon targets. It mandates either the orderly replacement of market economics or its disorderly collapse in abrupt phases” (259). He argues that, “The only sector where it is imperative to suppress market forces completely is wholesale energy” (279). He explains that, “To meet climate change with urgent action, the state should take ownership and control of the energy distribution grid, plus all big carbon-based suppliers of energy” (279). Aside from this “urgent action” such as the suppression of “market forces” in the “sector” of “wholesale energy” made necessary by climate change, Mason describes the “transition” as a “gradual” one (279, 243). He does assert though that the “aim” of this gradual process of revolutionary transformation “should be to expand those technologies, business models and behaviours that dissolve market forces, eradicate the need for work
and progress the world economy towards abundance” (243). He further explains that the “route beyond capitalism” includes “promoting and nurturing non-market production and exchange” (265).

Wright, on the other hand, does not believe that markets need to be or will be removed in the coming transformation. As Hahnel describes, Wright fights “to tame markets to keep them” (Hahnel and Wright 11). Wright supports his assertion that it is not imperative to eradicate markets entirely by allowing that, “markets, if inadequately regulated, generate all sorts of destructive externalities and harms on people,” but arguing that “if those problems are minimized through various mechanisms, then the sheer fact of buyers and sellers of goods and services agreeing to exchange things at a mutually agreed-upon price is not, in and of itself, objectionable” (95).

Just as the aforementioned theorists differ in opinion regarding the preconditions for and the process of revolutionary transformation, they also differ in how they portray the resulting postcapitalism. Some theorists describe postcapitalism in a detailed manner that seems to be meant to be a blueprint that should be followed precisely. For example, the utopian socialists, as Marx and Engels called them, had “a propensity for drawing up ‘fantastic blueprints’ of future society” (Beecher and Bienvenu 233). In these blueprints, “they all rejected laissez faire as a basis for the distribution of wealth” and “conceived of a vast increase of goods, though their conceptions of the means of production and of types of social organization show marked diversity” (Loubere 31). Charles Fourier “produced thousands of pages of detailed blueprints which provided” economic details such as “typical work schedules” and “statistical projections of the rate of profit growth” (Beecher and Bienvenu 2, 233). Proudhon also described in detail the result of the
revolutionary transformation. He described how “industrial organization” would replace “government” and there would be “contracts” instead of “laws” (Proudhon 99).

More recently, theorists such as Allen, Richard Wolff, and Hahnel have described postcapitalism in detail. Allen envisions that “workers’ councils” would “form the political structure of a post-revolutionary society” (Allen 174). Allen describes how this would work in detail. He argues that, “By establishing a space for collective discussion, they could send directly mandated representatives to councils which govern society” and, “crucially, they would involve the mass of people in self-government by allowing them to make real decisions that lead to greater control over their lives” (175). Workers would thus decide “how pay is organised and distributed,” “what investment to make in new technology,” and “how the production process is organized” (184). In his book *Democracy at Work: A Cure for Capitalism*, Richard Wolff outlines “the reorganization of all workplace enterprises” into “workers’ self-directed enterprises (WSDEs),” which would “eliminate exploitation,” because it would “structurally position workers as appropriators and distributors of any surpluses they generated” (12-13). Hahnel describes his model as including “self-governing democratic councils of workers and consumers where each member has one vote,” “jobs balanced for empowerment and desirability by the members of worker counsels themselves,” “compensation according to effort as judged by one’s workmates,” and “a participatory planning procedure in which councils and federations of workers and consumers propose and revise their own interrelated activities without central planners or markets, under rules designed to generate outcomes that are efficient, equitable, and environmentally sustainable” (Hahnel and Wright 8). 

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In addition to the blueprints of theorists like those described above that are meant to be followed in detail, there are also descriptions of postcapitalism by theorists that feel that those descriptions are only a guide or thought experiment and that they should not be expected to be a completely accurate portrayal of the future society. Wright describes these blueprints, which he refers to as “detailed model-building” strategies, as “useful and sometimes inspiring, so long as one treats these as speculative ideas to inform the messy trial–and–error experimentation of emancipatory social transformation” and does not consider them “blueprints” meant to be followed exactly (Hahnel and Wright 78). He asserts that, “they clarify the logic of ideas and the implications of different design features,” “they alert us to potential problems,” and “they are a critical part of the intellectual map of envisioning alternatives” (143). Jameson states in “An American Utopia” that perhaps “the task of utopianism today is rather to propose more elaborated versions of an alternative social system than simply to argue the need for one” (43). He then proceeds to do just this, yet with the important “proviso that, as a thought experiment,” his description leaves “open the possibility of very different combinations of the elements which any contemporary politics or social thinking must somehow confront, absorb, or modify” (43).

Within Jameson’s description of an alternative system, there would be “the emergence of a new kind of institution, destined to supplant traditional government” (Jameson, “American” 81). Within his system, “the military hospitals would become a free national health service open to everyone” (29). Jameson argues that in this “utopian system, full employment is the highest social priority and an absolute presupposition of social organization, and everything must be planned in order to secure it, even when the
job in question is not particularly productive” (45). These requirements are based on the principle that, “Full employment is far more important than productivity” (45).

Mason also makes the point that Jameson makes that his description of postcapitalism should not be considered to be a final version, since “we can only begin to grasp at positive visions of what it will be like” since, “if such a society is structured around human liberation, not economics, unpredictable things will begin to shape it” (240). Mason does provide provisional details of postcapitalism though and calls it “Project Zero - because its aims are a zero-carbon energy system; the production of machines, products and services with zero marginal costs; and the reduction of necessary labor time as close as possible to zero” (266).

Many theorists believe it is desirable to avoid blueprints of postcapitalism and to instead only define the basic economic and political organizing principles of postcapitalism. Wright emphasizes the usefulness of “core organizing principles of alternatives to existing institutions, the principles that would guide the pragmatic trial-and-error task of institution building” (Wright 8). He argues that this allows for a “more open-ended discussion of general principles and values” that “can help give us a sense of the direction we want to move and provide a basis for critical evaluation of our experiments” (Hahnel and Wright 78). Wright follows Marx and Engels in warning against trying to create a true blueprint of a future society. Marx and Engels wanted “to avoid foreclosing the future with images that might undermine the creative autonomy of the proletariat” (Geoghegan 134-135). Yet, Marx and Engels did present general principles for postcapitalism. Economically, there would be a “transcendence of the division of labor” in which “each individual would develop several skills” (Hunt 216).
There would be “no special group of people” that “could be identified as an administrative class because it would have become the class of all citizens” (253). The goal was the “‘self-government by the producers’” (Allen 172), thus, after the transition was complete the society would become a “stateless society” after the transition was complete (Tarschys 3).

Newman describes the anarchist position on visualizing the resulting postcapitalism of revolutionary transformation. He explains, “Anarchists were always wary about laying down precise blueprints for future social arrangements, emphasizing instead revolutionary spontaneity and free acts of creation” (Newman 39). He notes, however, that the general principles of postcapitalism can be seen in classical anarchism as “a certain vision of a society without a state, a society based on free, voluntary arrangements and decentralised social structures” (39). With these goals in mind, Newman suggests thinking about “utopia” not “as a blueprint for a future post-revolutionary society, as a set of processes and organisational measures to be implemented as part of a revolutionary programme,” but instead as “a non-place, a future that is yet to be created, and no doubt never will be created in exactly the way it is envisaged” and as a tool that “allows us to distance ourselves from the existing order, to see its limits; to understand that it can be transcended, that there are alternative and vastly better ways of living one’s life” (67-68).

Marx’s theoretical work is still indispensable today as a means of understanding and critiquing capitalism, but it is also essential to consider the work of those theorists who have applied Marx’s historical materialism to the current historical moment of late capitalism. As this literature review has shown, all of the theories of postcapitalism and
their corresponding methodologies of the process of revolutionary transformation and visions of the resulting postcapitalist societies are helpful in the transition to postcapitalism.

As the literature reviews of the literary study of utopian science fiction and of the sociological, economic, and political theories of postcapitalism have shown, the hegemonic nature of capitalism and its broadening influence has led to a growing body of scholarship critiquing capitalism and presenting arguments for the need for a revolutionary transformation in the literary, sociological, economic, and political fields of study. The following methodology will therefore be used by this dissertation in order to carry out this dissertation’s purpose of providing a clearer picture of our current late capitalist moment that allows for a critical analysis of that present and offers the hope of an alternative through analysis of possible processes toward and end results of such an alternative.

The interdisciplinary theoretical framework of this dissertation will take Tom Moylan’s theoretical framework and apply it to contemporary science fiction texts while also using Darko Suvin’s theory on cognitive estrangement and Fredric Jameson’s theories on utopia and cognitive mapping to provide the means through which to analyze the contemporary utopian science fiction texts examined in this dissertation to reveal how they encourage the need for revolutionary transformation and, through considering sociological, economic, and political theories of postcapitalism, the findings presented in Why Civil Resistance Works, and Erik Olin Wright’s assertions regarding strategies of revolutionary transformation and their corresponding transitions of anti-capitalism,
analyze how the texts also portray processes of revolutionary transformation and stage utopian end results.

The contemporary utopian science fiction texts that will be examined by this dissertation using this theoretical framework, in order to carry out this dissertation’s aforementioned purpose, are the three texts in *The Corporation Wars* trilogy of *Dissidence, Insurgence, Emergence*, as well as the texts *Walkaway* and *2140*. The principles of selection that were used to select these texts were the following. Texts that were published after the late 1990s, and that were specifically published in 2016 and 2017, were selected due to the social, economic, political, technological, and scientific historical realities of that time period. According to Paul Mason in *Postcapitalism*, the “fourth long cycle” of “[i]ndustrial capitalism” was from the “[I]ate-1940s” to “2008,” but that it is in “the late-1990s” that “the basic elements of the fifth long cycle appear,” thus “overlapping with the end of the previous wave” (47-48). Mason explains that “[i]n the 1990s, as the impact of info-tech began to be understood, people from several disciplines had the same thought at once: capitalism is becoming qualitatively different” and that capitalism then began to be referred to as “the knowledge economy, the information society, cognitive capitalism” and “[t]he assumption was that info-capitalism and the free-market model worked in tandem; one produced and reinforced the other” (111). Mason argues, however, that given the nature of information technology this “‘third kind of capitalism’” is actually breaking down and that this is because “information technology, far from creating a new and stable form of capitalism, is dissolving it: corroding market mechanisms, eroding property rights and destroying the old relationship between wages, work and profit” (112). Mason further argues “that
information technology is leading us towards a postcapitalist economy” (112). The transition to a new kind of capitalism that Mason describes and the fact that it began to be understood in the 1990s as reflected in Mason’s text is the reason for the principle of selection that limited the science fiction texts to be studied to those that were published after 1990. The texts studied are published after the late 1990s to allow for consideration of the reflection of the historical moment of the fifth long cycle of capitalism in the texts. The technology that emerged during this fifth long cycle from the late 1990s on includes, as Mason describes, “network technology, mobile communications, a truly global marketplace and information goods” (48). As Manuel Castells explains in *The Rise of the Network Society*, “The new economy emerged in a given time, the 1990s, a given space, the United States, and around/from specific industries, mainly information technology and finance, with biotechnology looming on the horizon” (Castells 147-148). The time period of the publication of the science fiction texts that were chosen was set based on the timing of these economic and technological changes.

The time period of the publication of the texts was also chosen based on the turning point that occurred in science fiction criticism, and specifically science fiction criticism in the Western Marxist tradition, in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In *The Oxford Handbook of Science Fiction*, two schools of thought rooted in Western Marxist thought are described as the Suvinian paradigm and the cultural studies theorists. These two schools of thought combined in the late 1980s and early 1990s and the critical combination of these two schools of thought will be used as the Marxist literary theoretical lens through which these science fiction texts will be analyzed in this study. In the Suvinian paradigm, “estrangement was achieved primarily through ‘the narrative
dominance or hegemony of a fictional ‘novum’ (novelty, innovation) validated by cognitive logic’ (63; emphasis in original)” (Latham 2). Science fiction was viewed “as a literary form that functioned to defamiliarize, critique, and/or satirize present-day reality through the projection of alternative worlds, an effect accomplished through the mobilization of both techno-scientific methods (‘cognitive logic’) and objects (‘fictional novum(s)’)” (2). Suvin was influenced by Brecht and Ernst Bloch, as evidenced by his adaptation of “Brechtian ideals of estrangement and Ernst Bloch’s notion of the utopian novum” (4). The cultural studies theorists utilized “the Gramscian concept of hegemony and the critiques of popular culture pioneered by Raymond Williams and the Birmingham School” (4). The “cultural-studies work” of the cultural studies theorists “focused on connections between the genre and… ‘technoculture’—that complex of institutions and attitudes, predictions and inventions linking high-tech research with popular culture” (3). This theoretical approach of “[t]ecnoculture studies brought together issues and contexts related to the industrial production, textual refraction, and sociopolitical deployment of technological advances” (3). These theorists argued that science fiction was “a form of literature devoted, in large part, to evoking the potential futures and possible worlds engendered by mechanical innovation” and that science fiction was thus “the preeminent site within Euro-American popular culture, where the vast social impact of modern technology could be creatively explored and critically interrogated” (3-4). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, these two schools of thought combined in what was a turning point for science fiction criticism. There was “significant shared ground” between these two schools of thought given “their mutual roots in Marxist critical theory, and the cultural study of SF came to adopt, in modified form, some of Suvin’s key ideas—in
particular, his emphasis on the centrality of an estranging novum linked to technoscientific development” (5). The science fiction criticism of “technoculturally oriented SF” that has developed after this turning point of “the 1990s” does, however, involve acknowledging that “SF can be at once critical of and complicit with the technological culture with which it is inextricably entwined” (5). These aspects of science fiction criticism since the 1990s are considered in the analysis of the science fiction texts examined in this dissertation.

Science fiction texts that in some way considered the theories of postcapitalism and their corresponding methodologies of the process of revolutionary transformation and visions of the resulting postcapitalist societies were chosen. Science fiction texts were chosen that include novums that allow for cognitive estrangement that help us to better see the present and that include aspects of science fiction’s subgenre of utopia that considers hopeful alternatives to the current hegemonic ideology. Further, texts from within the science fiction genre that deal with contemporary capitalist issues and have utopian impulses and/or images of postcapitalist futures have been chosen. The science fiction texts have thus been selected based on their attempts to envision such alternatives to capitalism and the utopian moments in the texts that reveal the conversations about how utopia should be constructed and the process of the revolutionary transformation that achieves utopia or a particular utopian moment. The utopian impulse in science fiction, as conceptualized by theorists such as Tom Moylan, Darko Suvin, and Fredric Jameson, has been used as a prerequisite principle of selection for the texts and the theories of Moylan, Suvin, and Jameson regarding the ability of the utopian impulse in science fiction to show that other alternatives to the present hegemonic ideology are possible and
Jameson’s assertion that this is especially necessary in our historical moment of late capitalism have been used as a basis for the analysis of the texts. The texts have been chosen based on the opportunities within the texts of analyzing ways in which the texts encourage revolutionary transformation through critiques of capitalism and based on the staging of revolutionary transformation through descriptions of the process and end result of such a transformation that can be analyzed within the texts.

Tom Moylan’s description of the method of analyzing critical utopias, as described in detail in *Demand the Impossible*, and the methodology of Marxist literary theory, as described in detail in *Marxism and Form* and *The Political Unconscious*, have been utilized to analyze the utopian impulses of the texts and the revolutionary potential of the texts. Moylan’s three levels of analysis of critical utopias have also been employed during the analysis of the science fiction texts. His first level of a focus on the difference between the present and the utopian societies is seen in the analysis of the way in which the texts argue for the need of a revolutionary transformation through a critique of the current system and in the analysis of the way that those texts envision the result of a revolutionary transformation that is thus the utopian society itself (Moylan, *Demand* 48). The second level of analysis focuses on the strategies carried out to combat the hegemonic ideology and eradicate the present system, and this level can be seen in the examination of how the texts describe the process of such a transformation (49). Lastly, the third level of Moylan’s method of analyzing critical utopias is showing how the critical utopia opens up “a radical path to a not yet realized future” (50). This will be seen in the argument that the analysis of the ways the texts stage revolutionary transformation through descriptions of the process and end result of such a transformation have been
examined, as well as the way in which the texts encourage revolutionary transformation, serves to reveal that the utopian impulses within the science fiction texts are themselves opening up pathways to future alternatives through providing the dialogue needed to add to the conversation of theories of postcapitalism, or, as Jameson put it, “the story of its production and of the very process of construction as such” (Jameson, *Archaeologies* 217).

The use of the methodology of Marxist literary theory as described in *Marxism and Form* will ensure that the analysis of the texts stays grounded in the “consciousness of ourselves as at once the product and the producer of history, and of the profoundly historical character of our socio-economic situation” and productively reflects on the fact that each “work of art or the cultural fact certainly reflects something, but what it reflects is not so much the class in itself as some autonomous cultural configuration, as rather the situation of that class, or, in short, class conflict” (Jameson, *Marxism* 373, 381-382). This will allow for a consideration of the engagement of the texts with the capitalist system and with alternatives to it. The description of Marxist theory in *The Political Unconscious* will also be helpful in the analysis, given its insights into the “Marxist hermeneutic,” which is “the decipherment by historical materialism of the cultural moments and traces of the past” through which we “come to terms with the certainty that all the works of class history as they have survived” are “in one way or another profoundly ideological” in that they “have all had a vested interest in a functional relationship to social formations based on violence and exploitation” (Jameson, *Political* 299). This conception provides a path through which to realize a radical future through using an analysis of the utopian impulses in these science fiction texts to reveal the
ideological nature of class history and through using an analysis of the cognitive
estrangement of the texts to reveal how utopian moments of different strategies of
revolutionary transformation and the resulting postcapitalist moments are presented by
the texts to suggest the path forward to realize a viable revolutionary transformation from
capitalism to postcapitalism. Utopian impulses in science fiction texts can and should be
analyzed to reveal the possibility of postcapitalist futures. This is achieved in part through
the questioning enacted by those utopian impulses of the hegemonic ideology that
capitalism is the only possible system through the presentation of the difference between
the possible future depicted in the text and the current capitalist system. The work of
theorists such as Moylan, Suvin, and Jameson regarding the utopian impulse in science
fiction is vital to understanding how science fiction shows that other alternatives to the
present hegemonic ideology are possible and that this is especially necessary in our
historical moment of capitalism.

All three of the methodologies most commonly used in Marxist literary theory, which
are thematic, semiotic, and sociological, will be applied at various times during the
analysis of the science fiction texts. As described in The Oxford Handbook of Science
Fiction, the three methodological approaches most often used in the history of science
fiction studies are thematic/authorial, semiotic, and sociological (Evans 47). Given that
each of these methodologies has “its own interpretive purpose, its own limitations of
scope, and its own ideological biases,” all three methodologies will be used within this
dissertation (47). The thematic approach organizes texts “according to a host of
recognizably SF themes” and the relevant theme of “utopias” is included in these themes
(47). The semiotic approach’s “most prominent practitioner…is probably Darko Suvin,”
who “analyzes science fiction as a popular and subversive literature of cognitive estrangement in his watershed study Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre (1979)” (48). The analysis of cognitive estrangement involves “the estrangement causing novum” that “must be radically different from the readers actual empirical environment” (48). Through this difference, “the science fiction novum must trigger cognition and stimulate reader reflection on the nature of the real,” thus creating a “sense of wonder” and also replicating “the scientific method as the reader engages in a thought experiment and follows that through to its logical conclusion” (48).

Lastly, the sociological methodology “defines the genre according to how science fiction grew out of and/or manifests certain socio-historical trends” (49). The methodology can be used to “explore the evolution of a particular type of science fiction,” such as utopian science fiction (49). This methodology “seeks to situate science fiction texts in a broad network of contexts and disciplinary knowledge” and to consider “the political and anthropological historicity of the genre” (49). This methodology will be used in this dissertation to consider how science fiction “interacted with and was influenced by the dominant institutions and ideologies of its time” (49).

Moylan’s previously described theory of critical utopias and his explanation of productive ways of analyzing them, Jameson’s theories of utopia and cognitive mapping, and Suvin’s theory of cognitive estrangement and the subsequent assertions it makes possible regarding the possibilities of science fiction texts as social, economic, and political thought experiments are indispensable in the work of this dissertation of analyzing contemporary science fiction texts with utopian impulses to demonstrate the ways such texts encourage revolutionary transformation and stage revolutionary
transformation through descriptions of the process and end result of such a transformation.

Suvin defined science fiction as “a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author’s empirical environment” (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 7-8). In Suvin’s “landmark Brechtian redefinition of science fiction as *‘the literature of cognitive estrangement’* (*Metamorphoses* 4; emphasis in original),” “the Utopian text takes up a critical role — what Suvin means by his use of the Brechtian concept of ‘estrangement’” (Wegner, “Utopianism” 574; Wegner, “Utopia” 80). Through the critical analysis made possible by the cognitive estrangement, “the Utopian narrative has the effect of both highlighting in a negative light many of the problems of the reigning social order and, perhaps even more significantly, of showing that what is taken as natural and eternally fixed by the members of that society is in fact the product of historical development and thus open to change” (Wegner, “Utopia” 80). Suvin expands on his definition of science fiction by asserting that, science fiction (SF) “is distinguished by the narrative dominance or hegemony of a fictional ‘novum’ (novelty, innovation) validated by cognitive logic” (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 63). According to Suvin, a “novum of cognitive innovation is a totalizing phenomenon or relationship deviating from the author’s and implied reader’s norm of reality” (64). This expanded definition of science fiction by Suvin “borrows, and, as he acknowledges, adapts or refunctions the concept of the novum from the work of the most important twentieth-century theorist of utopianism, the German philosopher, Ernst Bloch” (Wegner, “Utopianism” 575). When considering the potential for analysis through
the application of Suvin’s theoretical framework, it is important to consider what
“Moylan has said of Suvin’s application of Bloch’s theories to the analysis of SF” (576).
Moylan stated that through this conceptualization of science fiction and the novum, as
stated in Suvin’s work “‘SF and the Novum,’” Suvin’s “analysis, already politically
charged, became even more explicitly engaged with his reading of sf as a literary form
capable of breaking open the prevailing hegemonic hold on reality” (Moylan, Scraps 45).
Moylan points out that, “By not only tracking what was at hand in the tendencies of the
historical moment as portrayed in the alternative world but also pointing, through the
textual novum, toward the potential for radically new directions in the latencies of the
moment, Suvin’s claim for sf” heightened science fiction’s “level of sociopolitical value”
(45).

Jameson describes “the novum” as “the utterly and unexpectedly new, the new which
astonishes” and he observes that through the subsequent “defamiliarization” caused by
“the imaginary future world” of the text, science fiction “thus enacts and enables a
structurally unique ‘method’ for apprehending the present as history” (Jameson, Marxism
126; Jameson, Archaeologies 288). Suvin’s theory of cognitive estrangement thus
suggests that science fiction allows for the cognitive mapping of the current historical
moment that Jameson suggests is necessary, for this “‘defamiliarization’” caused by the
novum in the science fiction text is able to thus “transform ‘our own present into the
determinate past of something yet to come’” and therefore “make ‘the present as history’
available for contemplation” (Milner 25). The analytical work of this dissertation will
thus seek to analyze how the cognitive estrangement of the contemporary utopian science
fiction texts examined allow for the cognitive mapping of the present historical moment
of capitalism. The class consciousness made possible by cognitive mapping and the role of class consciousness as a prerequisite for revolutionary transformation will also be considered in this dissertation. Jameson’s “theoretical contribution” of establishing “cognitive mapping as a strategy for historicizing and grasping the otherwise unrepresentable operations and effects of multinational capitalism” is considered and applied in the analysis of this dissertation (Burling 239). Jameson’s “aesthetic of cognitive mapping” is one that “seeks to endow the individual subject with some new heightened sense of its place in the global system” (Jameson, Postmodernism 54). In considering cognitive mapping, it is important to note the “concept of totality” that it is “impossible” to fully represent and that this “representational failure” is important to note to understand how important cognitive mapping is to gain a better idea of one’s place in such a system whose totality it is impossible to completely represent, which speaks to the adaptability, opacity, and thus insidious and hegemonic nature of the capitalist system (409). For example, Jameson describes one opacity when he states that an element of the current historical moment is an “inconceivable financial system” (128). Jameson calls for a “‘cognitive mapping’ of a new and global type” due to the global nature of late capitalism (417). He explains that “‘Cognitive mapping’ is another word for ‘class consciousness’” and he argues for “the need for class consciousness” due to the difficulty of conceptualizing the hegemonic and opaque system of capitalism (417-418). He argues that cognitive mapping can help to achieve class consciousness by providing an understanding of, as “Althusser’s great formulation of ideology” states, “the Imaginary representation of the subject’s relationship to his or her Real conditions of existence” by revealing those real conditions of existence and thereby subverting the hegemonic
ideology of capitalism through which the individual had an imaginary concept of the reality through their lack of understanding of their place within the capitalism system (415). Jameson points out that Althusser’s “conception of ideology” thus has the great merit of stressing “the gap between the local positioning of the individual subject and the totality of class structures in which he or she is situated” (415-416). Jameson’s concept of cognitive mapping is thus meant to provide individuals with class consciousness through providing “A new sense of global social structure” to help the individual better understand their place in “the totality of class structures” (416). Jameson argues that “an aesthetic of cognitive mapping” will be “an integral part of any socialist political project” and this dissertation argues that the cognitive estrangement of utopian sf texts is thus an important way to achieve this cognitive mapping that provides the class consciousness that is a necessary precondition of revolutionary transformation (416).

This dissertation further argues that the cognitive estrangement of utopian science fiction texts means that they additionally provide useful thought experiments that can be used to consider the effectiveness and viability of strategies of revolutionary transformation and alternatives to the current historical moment of capitalism. Suvin asserts that “literature…can provide sets of manageable and explorable models of social existence” and his theory of cognitive estrangement suggests how science fiction texts are able to provide social, economic, and political thought experiments (Suvin, Positions 50). Jameson explains that “Suvin’s principle of ‘cognitive estrangement’” is “an aesthetic which,” he states, “characterizes SF in terms of an essentially epistemological function” that is “devoted to the imagination of alternative social and economic forms” (Jameson, Archaeologies xiv). To understand how the utopian science fiction texts provide thought
experiments that consider “alternative social and economic forms,” it is important to consider that “Darko Suvin’s highly influential definition of SF as the ‘literature of cognitive estrangement’ (4; emphasis in original) adds nuance to understanding SF as scientific method” in that “Suvin equates ‘cognitive’ with science but expands his use of the term to include the social as well as physical sciences, thus creating a space for political and social critique” (Jameson, Archaeologies xiv; Vint 308). Thus, the analysis of cognitive estrangement involves “the estrangement causing novum” that “must be radically different from the readers actual empirical environment” (Evans 48). Through this difference, “the science fiction novum must trigger cognition and stimulate reader reflection on the nature of the real,” thus creating a “sense of wonder” and also replicating “the scientific method as the reader engages in a thought experiment and follows that through to its logical conclusion” (48). Therefore, science fiction’s “narratives are thought experiments that explore the logical consequences of ideas” and “its extrapolative techniques mirror the practices of scientific method” (Vint 307).

Through the theoretical framework used in this dissertation that applies the theories of Moylan, Suvin, and Jameson while also taking an interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of the contemporary utopian science fiction texts examined in this dissertation through considering sociological, economic, and political theories of postcapitalism, it thus becomes possible to demonstrate and put to use the potential of science fiction texts with utopian impulses to add to the conversation of theories of postcapitalism and to aid theorists engaged in these conversations in visualizing alternatives to capitalism and in determining which strategies of the process of revolutionary transformation that will be needed to achieve postcapitalism are the most viable in the current historical moment.
Jameson’s theory of utopia includes the assertion that “Utopia, now begins to include” the arguments “around alternative diagnoses of social miseries and the solutions proposed to overcome them” (Jameson, Archaeologies 216). This dissertation therefore seeks to analyze the critiques of capitalism in the utopian science fiction texts examined that encourage the need for revolutionary transformation and to also consider the different “solutions proposed” in the thought experiments provided by those texts (216). When analyzing the alternatives presented in the thought experiments of the utopian science fiction texts, this dissertation will utilize Jameson’s theory of utopia and consider that, “Utopian is no longer the invention and defense of a specific floorplan, but rather the story of all the arguments about how Utopia should be constructed in the first place” (217). This dissertation will thus be analyzing how the texts enact different strategies of the process of revolutionary transformation. This dissertation will also consider that Jameson’s theory of utopia states that, “What is Utopian becomes, then, not the commitment to a specific machinery or blueprint, but rather the commitment to imagining possible Utopias as such, in their greatest variety of forms” (217). This dissertation will therefore be analyzing how the texts enact a variety of end results of revolutionary transformation. Jameson argues that “utopianism in the West” already “shares a general consensus on the failure of capitalism” and he thus suggests that, “Perhaps, then, the task of utopianism today is rather to propose more elaborated versions of an alternate social system than simply to argue the need for one” (Jameson, “American” 43). This is why this dissertation seeks to not only show how the contemporary utopian science fiction texts examined encourage revolutionary transformation through critiquing capitalism, but to also show how the texts enact the
process and end result of revolutionary transformation in order to reveal the proposals of “an alternate social system” provided in the thought experiments of the texts examined (43). This dissertation also then seeks to contribute further by analyzing each “alternate social system” based on its effectiveness and viability (43).

This dissertation takes an interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of the texts so that it can provide an analysis of contemporary utopian science fiction texts that demonstrates that contemporary utopian science fiction texts, due to the thought experiments that they provide, can contribute meaningfully to the “trial-and-error experimentation of emancipatory social transformation” (Hahnel and Wright 78). In order to provide this meaningful contribution to the “trial-and-error experimentation of emancipatory social transformation,” the theories of postcapitalism from the sociological, economic, and political fields of study that were mentioned in the literature review of theories of postcapitalism will be considered to help to understand how the texts enact the process and end result of revolutionary transformation and to analyze the aspects of the “ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic strategies” as defined by Erik Wright and their “traditions of anti-capitalism” that “correspond,” respectively, “to the revolutionary socialist, anarchist, and social democratic traditions of anti-capitalism” that are enacted in the thought experiments of the texts so that the effectiveness and viability of those strategies and their corresponding theories of postcapitalism can be considered (Hahnel and Wright 78, 100; Wright 305).

The conclusions of this dissertation regarding the effectiveness and viability will also be informed by a consideration of the conclusions reported in the text Why Civil Resistance Works to assist in achieving an understanding of the effectiveness and
viability of the “ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic strategies” and what might be the most effective and viable order in which to enact such strategies in any real-world application of the revolutionary transformations enacted in the contemporary utopian science fiction texts analyzed in this dissertation (Hahnel and Wright 100).

The contemporary utopian science fiction texts of the three texts in *The Corporation Wars* trilogy of *Dissidence, Insurgence, Emergence*, as well as the texts *Walkaway* and *2140* will be examined in chapters two, three, and four of this dissertation using the theoretical framework of this dissertation in order to carry out this dissertation’s previously stated purpose of providing a clearer picture of our current late capitalist moment that allows for a critical analysis of that present and offers the hope of an alternative through analysis of possible processes toward and end results of such an alternative. The theoretical framework of this dissertation, as explained in this chapter, will take Tom Moylan’s theoretical framework and apply it to contemporary science fiction texts while also using Darko Suvin’s theory on cognitive estrangement and Fredric Jameson’s theories on utopia and cognitive mapping to provide the means through which to analyze the contemporary utopian science fiction texts examined in this dissertation to reveal how they encourage revolutionary transformation and, through considering sociological, economic, and political theories of postcapitalism, the findings presented in *Why Civil Resistance Works*, and Erik Olin Wright’s assertions regarding strategies of revolutionary transformation and their corresponding transitions of anti-capitalism, analyze how the texts also portray processes of revolutionary transformation and stage utopian end results. This dissertation will examine in chapter two how each of these texts encourage the need for revolutionary transformation through critiques of capitalism.
Then, in chapter three of this dissertation the analysis will focus on showing that the texts portray what the process of revolutionary transformation looks like and will examine which strategies of revolutionary transformation are portrayed in each text. Next, chapter four of this dissertation will analyze how each of these texts stage a utopian end result of the revolutionary transformation that they enacted. Lastly, the conclusion of this dissertation in chapter five will examine the findings of this dissertation, explain how the analytical work of this dissertation carried out its stated purpose, consider what the implications of this analytical work are for the literary, sociological, economic, and political fields, and suggest approaches to further research that are possible and necessary.
CHAPTER 2
CRITIQUING CAPITALISM TO ENCOURAGE REVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMATION

This chapter will examine how texts encourage revolutionary, post-capitalist transformation. The ways that the science fiction texts reveal the contradictions of capitalist ideology will be analyzed to reveal how these texts do the first job of critical utopias according to Tom Moylan of criticizing the status quo. An analysis of how exposing contradictions in ideology serve to critique that ideology will be undertaken. This chapter will also explore how the present can be more clearly seen through this analysis of these texts and how this can enact the work of cognitively mapping the present of late capitalism that Jameson argues in *Postmodernism* is increasingly necessary due to the increasingly opaque nature of capitalism. A close reading of the texts will be carried out to demonstrate how the novums in the texts create the cognitive estrangement as described by Darko Suvin that allows us to be removed enough from our own present to see and understand better the critique of our empirical reality. Marxist literary theory and an analysis of literary elements such as characters, setting, and dialogue will be utilized when carrying out the close reading of the texts. Through such an analysis, how the texts reveal contradictions in the ideology of capitalism and how they critique capitalism will be examined. The contradictions and critiques of capitalism visible in the texts will be explained in the context of the historical moment of the science fiction texts through the use of the perspectives of political and economic theorists. These theoretical perspectives will be explained in connection to the contradictions and critiques of capitalism that are revealed by the science fiction texts. Each text will be
looked at individually in the chapter to show how this critical work is being done by these science fiction texts, and how the specific contradictions and critiques of capitalism are being treated and revealed by these science fiction texts. It will also be considered if the contradictions and critiques of capitalist ideology revealed by the texts can be brought together to help us to form a greater cognitive understanding of the ideology of capitalism in its current historical moment and of the ideology of capitalism during the historical moment of capitalism leading up to and during the years of publication of the texts of 2016 and 2017 in order to more effectively critique it.

The contradictions and critiques of capitalism that an analysis of these texts reveal, and the anxieties about and tensions resulting from these aspects of capitalism that are suggested by these texts, are the exploitation of workers, the intensification of exploitation due to competition that leads to strategies that reduce the rate of falling profit, alienation of workers, commodity fetishism, inequalities of wealth, the movement of capitalism from crisis to crisis, and the environmental effects of capitalism due to capitalism’s need for ever-increasing capital accumulation. The hegemonic nature of capitalism and its broadening influence has led to a growing body of scholarship critiquing capitalism in the fields of economic and political theory. The critiques of capitalism present within this scholarship suggest why a revolutionary transformation from capitalism to postcapitalism is desirable. The purpose of this chapter is to put these economic and political theories in conversation with the science fiction texts being considered in this dissertation to show how the science fiction texts being analyzed within this chapter can contribute to these critiques of capitalism by providing the cognitive estrangement needed for readers to better conceptualize those economic and
political theories so that readers can perhaps be influenced by these theories or inspired with a new idea altogether, and by providing new ways of viewing and thinking about one of the theories or about capitalism that have the potential to lead to new critiques of or theories about capitalism and, at the very least, by providing a clearer view of why a transition from capitalism to postcapitalism is being encouraged by these texts.

It is imperative to understand what capitalism is in order to be able to critique it effectively. Unfortunately, capitalism is becoming increasingly difficult to conceptualize in our current historical moment, which is why it is so important to use the visualizations present within the science fiction texts examined by this dissertation to help to understand what capitalism is. Before considering the understandings of capitalism that are included in the texts as a means of helping the reader to cognitively map capitalism and thus encouraging revolutionary transformation away from capitalism, it will be useful to first introduce definitions of capitalism used in the fields of economic and political theory to achieve the engagement of those theories with the science fiction texts themselves. Erik Olin Wright defines capitalism in *Envisioning Real Utopias* as, “an economic structure within which the means of production are privately owned” (79). He explains that, “class relations defined by private ownership and propertyless workers, and coordination organized through decentralized market exchanges—generates the characteristic competitive drive for profits and capital accumulation of capitalist firms” (35). The class structure of capitalism consists of “a minority of people” who own and control “the means of production, and a vast majority” of people who are “compelled to sell their labour” (Allen 22). The competitive drive for profits of capitalism necessitates that “the capitalist needs workers for profits” (182). In his book *Postcapitalism*, Paul Mason states
that, “capitalism is more than just an economic structure or a set of laws and institutions,” as “it is the whole system – social, economic, demographic, cultural, ideological – needed to make a developed society function through markets and private ownership” (xiii). Karl Marx explains this in another way when he states in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* that the “relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness” and, therefore, “the mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life” (20). Understanding the economic structure of capitalism and its impact on social, political, and intellectual life is important when critiquing capitalism as an economic structure to determine whether a revolutionary transformation to postcapitalism is needed and why.

In the fields of economic and political theory, capitalism has been and continues to be critiqued to argue for a transition to postcapitalism. Ed Lewis, in the introduction to *Alternatives to Capitalism*, lists “capitalism’s myriad injustices” as “poverty, exploitation, instability, hierarchy, subordination, environmental exhaustion, radical inequalities of wealth and power” (1). Marx explains the exploitation of workers in *Capital*. He argues that, “Capitalist production...reproduces and perpetuates the conditions under which the worker is exploited. It incessantly forces him to sell his labour-power in order to live, and enables the capitalist to purchase labour-power in order that he may enrich himself’” (Marx, *Capital* 723). Frederick Engels explains in *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* the exploitation of the workers when he states, “that even if the capitalist buys the labor-power of his laborer at its full value as a commodity
on the market, he yet extracts more value from it than he paid for; and that in the ultimate analysis this surplus-value forms those sums of value from which are heaped up the constantly increasing masses of capital in the hands of the possessing classes” (92-93). Workers are thus exploited through being forced to sell labor to live and through capitalists extracting more value from the worker than what the worker is paid. Given the historical time period of the science fiction texts examined in this study as set by the principles of selection, the type of capitalism that will be especially considered is cognitive capitalism. According to Yann Moulier Boutang in *Cognitive Capitalism*, “cognitive capitalism” is “a mode of accumulation in which the object of accumulation consists mainly of knowledge, which becomes the basic source of value” (57). In cognitive capitalism, which is the “third capitalism,” after “mercantile capitalism and industrial and financial capitalism,” “the specific form of exploitation and surplus value extracted by cognitive capitalism” is the “‘bio-productive’ aspect of invention-power” and its “capturing” (Boutang 56, 54).

Competition in capitalism leads to strategies that are enacted by capitalists to reduce the rate of falling profit due to competition. These strategies intensify the exploitation of workers and include having workers work longer hours, intensifying the work effort that is expected from workers, and cutting wages. The class struggle that is a result of this relationship between classes is due to this exploitation, for “capitalists intensify exploitation in order to respond to competition” (Allen 67). Marx explains that this “does not depend on the will, either good or bad, of the individual capitalist,” since “under free competition, the immanent laws of capitalist production confront the individual capitalist as a coercive force external to him” (Marx, *Capital* 381). Marx
describes this resulting intensification of exploitation due to competition as various “strategies employed by different capitalists” in order to “seek to reduce or even reverse the tendency for the rate of profit to fall” (Allen 145). These include, “ensuring that a smaller number of workers work longer hours,” increasing “the relative level of surplus value through an intensification of work effort,” and “wage cuts” (145).

Given that “the whole system is driven by competition,” the result is that “the whole economy has been disconnected from the needs of people and its sole purpose is the self-expansion of capital” (Allen 32, 34). This results in “the alienation that developed under capitalism,” in which “[w]orkers have no say in what is produced or how it is produced — the activity does not arise from their needs or desires and is entirely alien to them” (44). The alienation of workers is therefore caused by this fact that workers have no say in what is produced or how it is produced under capitalism. Marx argued that “alienation is a consequence of monotonous specialization” in capitalism, meaning “the rigid division of labor and the private ownership of the means of production” (Wilczynski 11).

In addition to the exploitation and alienation of workers under capitalism, Ed Lewis’s critique of capitalism in the introduction to Alternatives to Capitalism includes that capitalism causes inequalities of wealth inherent in the class relations and a detrimental effect on the environment, which is worsened due to the process of capital accumulation within capitalism. These detrimental effects of capitalism on society are overlooked, however, due to the commodity fetishism of capitalism. Commodity fetishism refers to “the production and exchange of goods motivated solely by profit maximization. Marx regarded commodity fetishism to be a distinguishing feature of
capitalism, where production for sale in the market becomes an end itself to the disregard of social needs and social justice. In this process, the producer and trader are at the mercy of fluctuating prices and demand. Consequently, commodities predominate and relations amongst commodities dominate relations amongst people” (Wilczynski 89).

All of these negative aspects of capitalism are compounded by the knowledge that Marx also showed that capitalism is a system that “moves from crisis to crisis” (Allen 142). Marx’s theory of crisis argued that crisis is, “a normal feature of capitalism and a product of its technological dynamism” (Mason 53). In summary, capitalism is “a vast social enterprise which dominates us, delimits our freedoms and ultimately visits upon us the worst forms of degradation” (Harvey, Limits 203). Thankfully, the conclusion for many has thus been that “we need a new economic model” and a strong argument has been made that a postcapitalist society would serve to “ameliorate these harms” caused by capitalism (Mason 29; Wright 85). There has therefore been a great deal of discussion regarding whether a transition to postcapitalism is possible.

Many theorists in the fields of economic and political theory have argued that a transition to a post-capitalist society is necessary and possible, though their views of what it may look like differ. It is vital to establish the idea that there can be alternatives to capitalism before proposing what those alternatives may be and how to achieve them, and this has therefore been an integral part of the discussion within economic and political theory. Mason presents his belief, for example, in his book Postcapitalism “that there is a clear alternative, that it can be global, and that it can deliver a future substantially better than the one capitalism will be offering by the mid-twenty-first century” and he labels this alternative “postcapitalism” (xiii). Through his use of the dialectical method, Marx
shows that a transition from capitalism to postcapitalism is possible. The usefulness of the dialectical method in demonstrating this is evident in how it understands that “things or events do not occur in isolation but are part of a web of interconnected relationships” that together “constitute a ‘totality,’” how it recognizes “that everything is transitory – in other words, it has come into existence and will eventually go out of existence,” and how it explains that the reason there is “constant change is because a totality is riven with contradictions” (Allen 119-120). Through their analysis of capitalism through the dialectical method, “Marx and Engels saw the development of an upper class as a dialectical process” and they argued in the *Communist Manifesto* “that hierarchy or class division was not part of the natural order and showed that it arose at a specific historic moment” (59). Therefore, as Wolfgang Streeck asserts in his book *Buying Time*, “capitalism is not a state of nature but a historical social order in need of institutionalization and legitimation: its concrete forms change with time and place and are in principle both susceptible to renegotiation and in danger of breaking down” (24). The dialectical method can be used to thus establish that it is possible for the current form of capitalism to change and that it is possible to help people to see that possibility of change through the dialectical method, for it helps to reveal the totality of the current form of capitalism and consequently allows us to note the contradictions of capitalism that make change possible and necessary.

It is important to establish capitalism as a system that is both harmful and possible to change to something better so that it becomes feasible to discuss strategies for how to begin the process of transitioning from capitalism to postcapitalism. The critiques of capitalism mentioned here from the fields of economic and political theory help to
position capitalism as both harmful and possible to change, but the science fiction texts that will now be analyzed will serve a vital purpose of establishing a cognitive map of capitalism in its present historical moment and the harm that capitalism has done and could potentially do, while also providing an important visualization of the possibility of changing capitalism that is a unique benefit of science fiction texts when critiquing capitalism for the purpose of proposing alternatives to capitalism and ways to achieve such alternatives.

The science fiction texts to be analyzed in this chapter are ideally suited for helping to provide a cognitive mapping of the current form of capitalism and providing a visualization of alternatives to capitalism in order to establish the harm of capitalism and the possibility and need for revolutionary transformation from capitalism to postcapitalism. The way in which these texts are ideally suited for these tasks is best understood through a preliminary consideration of various literary theorists’ definitions of the utopian and science fiction genres and the aspects of these definitions embodied by the texts to be examined before the analysis of the texts that demonstrates how the texts carry out these tasks is presented.

Darko Suvin defined the literary genre of utopia as, “the verbal construction of a particular quasi-human community where sociopolitical institutions, norms, and individual relationships are organized according to a more perfect principle than in the author’s community, this construction being based on estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis” (Suvin, Metamorphoses 49). Suvin defined science fiction as “a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an
imaginative framework alternative to the author’s empirical environment” (7-8). As Tom Shippey explains it in “Hard Reading: The Challenges of Science Fiction” in *A Companion to Science Fiction*, “‘Estrangement,’...means recognizing the novum; ‘cognition’ means evaluating it, trying to make sense of it” and Shippey asserts that “you need to do both to read science fiction” (15). Suvin expands on his definition of science fiction by asserting that, science fiction (SF) “is distinguished by the narrative dominance or hegemony of a fictional ‘novum’ (novelty, innovation) validated by cognitive logic” (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 63). He asserts that his “central argument has always been that SF is defined by its estranged techniques of presenting a cognitive novum” (Suvin, *Positions* x). The ways in which the sociopolitical institutions, norms, and individual relationships presented in the science fiction texts to be examined are presented to the reader as more perfect than the reality of late capitalism and how the reader is able to see this through the cognitive estrangement constructed by the novums present in the texts will be revealed during the analysis of each text. The distance that the reader is able to achieve from the hegemonic ideology of the current historical moment is made possible through that cognitive estrangement and allows the reader to better understand and acknowledge the critiques of the current historical moment’s hegemonic ideology from that distant position within the hegemony of that fictional novum.

The theorist “Raymond Williams sees a self-conscious renewal of utopian thinking occurring within science fiction, after a long dystopian interval” (Zaki 26). Tom Moylan agrees with William’s argument that “the revival of utopian thought has occurred within science fiction” and he further argues, “that utopias in science fiction have been transformed into ‘critical utopias’” (27). Moylan presents his theory of critical utopias in
his book *Demand the Impossible*, where he outlines a transformation of the utopian text from a text that focused on the dream of utopia and outlined a specific system, a blueprint of a society, to a critical utopia that focused on the utopian impulse and opposed the dominant ideology through focusing on the oppositional actions of the characters in the text rather than just on the society itself and through maintaining a questioning of any totalizing system. He describes how critical utopias “retain older elements of the utopia-the alternative society and the visitor-but work with those elements in a radically different way” and asserts that “the critical utopia in this time of transition, then, can in its symbolic activity help to restore a sense of the concrete historical situation and offer its own form — the self-aware, critical utopian activity — as a meaningful act on the ideological terrain” (Moylan, *Demand* 43).

Moylan asserts that the first major break with the pattern of the traditional utopia that the critical utopia makes is that “the critical utopia at the level of the iconic register, in which the image of the alternative society is generated, breaks with previous utopias by presenting in much greater, almost balanced, detail both the utopian society and the original society against which the utopia is pitted as a revolutionary alternative” (Moylan, *Demand* 44). Moylan reflects that this break with the traditional pattern of utopia demonstrates that the critical utopias are “more aware of the limits of traditional utopias and the totalizing tendencies of consumer capitalism and bureaucratic states” (46). The texts analyzed in this chapter will be shown to be critical utopias that are aware of the totalizing tendencies of consumer capitalism and that this awareness will be seen through the critiques of capitalism that the analysis will reveal are present within them.

The texts will be shown to fit within Tom Moylan’s definition of critical utopias,
which is that “[a] central concern in the critical utopia is the awareness of the limitations of the utopian tradition, so that these texts reject utopia as blueprint while preserving it as dream.” (Moylan, *Demand* 10). Moylan uses the work of “Ernst Bloch,” a “Marxist philosopher,” and “[h]is major work, *The Principle of Hope*” to support the assertion that critical utopias “reject utopia as blueprint while preserving it as dream” (10, 20). Moylan explains that, “Bloch situates utopian imagination in the historical process not as the source of blueprints but as preconceptual figures of that which is not yet attained” (24). He relates how Bloch does this through his concept of “the novum: the unexpectedly new, that which pushes humanity out of the present toward the not yet realized future” (21). Moylan asserts that, “Bloch’s work allows us to consider the process of radical opposition in terms of radical difference” and argues that “the utopian impulse is at the center of the process of radical rupture that is necessary for the constant striving of humanity for a world free of oppression and full of satisfaction” (20). Moylan’s three levels of analysis of critical utopias can be seen in the engagement with the science fiction texts. His first level of a focus on the difference between the present and the utopian societies is seen in the analysis of the way in which the texts argue for the need of a revolutionary transformation through a critique of the current system (48).

A general definition of “‘utopianism’” was previously stated to be the “various ways of imagining, creating, or theorizing about alternative and often dramatically different ways of life” (Claeys and Sargent 1). Through the contrast created by the thought experiment between our current moment in capitalism and the alternative to capitalism presented in each of the science fiction texts to be examined, the texts analyzed in this chapter are able to reveal criticisms of capitalism and demonstrate that a
revolutionary transformation to an alternative to capitalism is possible. The thought experiments that are written into being within the texts to be considered succeed in doing this work of utopianism, but it will be established that these texts do not provide blueprints of those alternatives and yet carry out the work of critiquing capitalism and encouraging revolutionary transformation through that very act of imagining alternatives to capitalism and bringing them to life within the texts.

In *Phoenix Renewed: The Survival and Mutation of Utopian Thought in North American Science Fiction, 1965-1982*, Hoda M. Zaki locates four attributes within “modern utopian thought” and uses these attributes to argue the presence of utopian thought in science fiction. These attributes are “its critical stance to extant society,” “the speculation of an ideal social order,” “an anticipation of the future,” and “the attempt to construct a better society” (Zaki 8). Zaki summarizes his own view of the role of utopian thought in stating that, “it attacks existing institutions and values, confronts the reigning ideology, estranges readers from their familiar environs, demonstrates the need for change, and serves as a focal point for social change” (12). These attributes will be used to establish the utopian thought that is successfully achieved within the science fiction texts. The ways in which the texts are critical of the existing institutions and values of the current capitalist ideology of the current historical moment will be established within the analysis.

The importance of this analysis can be established through a consideration of Zaki’s claim that modern utopian thought attempts to create a more perfect society and David Seed’s assertion in *A Companion to Science Fiction* that this “concept of world-building is an intrinsic part of the construction of a science fiction novel” and that this
“world-building resembles what Fredric Jameson calls ‘cognitive mapping,’ where the reader discovers and charts out relations between characters and different aspects of their environment” (Seed 4). Jameson suggests that this cognitive mapping is achieved by science fiction through “the role of estrangement” in the texts “‘to defamiliarize and restructure our experience of our own present...in specific ways distinct from all other forms of defamiliarization’” (Milner 25). This occurs, according to Jameson, when “the genre’s multiple mock futures...function so as to transform ‘our own present into the determinate past of something yet to come’ and so to make ‘the present as history’ available for contemplation” (25).

Freedman concludes his book *Critical Theory and Science Fiction* by asserting that science fiction is useful in questioning the present and suggesting there can and should be alternatives. He describes how, due to the hegemony of capitalism in the postmodern era, utopia is harder than ever to visualize and argues that, “never, and for precisely the same reasons, has utopia in art been more desperately needed” (Freedman 191). He explains that, “the totality that must form the ultimate object of genuinely critical thought — the world capitalist system — becomes increasingly hard to conceptualize as it becomes increasingly comprehensive and unchallenged” (191). He concludes that it will be difficult for science fiction to envision an alternative to the postmodern era of capitalism, but that it is necessary (191). Therefore, utopian impulses in science fiction texts can and should be analyzed to reveal the possibility of postcapitalist futures. This is achieved in part through the questioning enacted by those utopian impulses of the hegemonic ideology that capitalism is the only possible system through the presentation of the difference between the possible future depicted in the text
and the current capitalist system.

The work of theorists such as Jameson and Moylan regarding the connection between utopia and science fiction and the utopian impulse in science fiction respectively are vital to understanding how science fiction shows that other alternatives to the present hegemonic ideology are possible and that cognitive estrangement is especially necessary in our historical moment of capitalism. Moylan’s theory of critical utopias and his explanation of productive ways of analyzing them and Jameson’s explanation of a methodology of Marxist literary theory are indispensable in the work of analyzing science fiction texts with utopian impulses to demonstrate the ways such texts stage revolutionary transformation through descriptions of the process and end result of such a transformation and how the texts encourage revolutionary transformation, either through arguing the inevitability of such a transformation or the need for one. Through such an analysis it becomes possible to demonstrate and put to use the potential of science fiction texts with utopian impulses to add to the conversation of theories of postcapitalism and to aid theorists engaged in these conversations in visualizing alternatives to capitalism and the process of revolutionary transformation that will be needed to achieve postcapitalism.

The use of the methodology of Marxist literary theory as described in Marxism and Form will ensure that the analysis of the texts stays grounded in the “consciousness of ourselves as at once the product and the producer of history, and of the profoundly historical character of our socio-economic situation” and productively reflects on the fact that each “work of art or the cultural fact certainly reflects something, but what it reflects is not so much the class in itself as some autonomous cultural configuration, as rather the situation of that class, or, in short, class conflict” (Jameson, Marxism 373, 381-382). This
will allow for a consideration of the engagement of the texts with the capitalist system and alternatives to it.

Through the analysis in this chapter of the utopian science fiction texts of *The Corporation Wars* trilogy, *Walkaway*, and *2140*, the way in which these texts encourage revolutionary transformation will be shown through the critiques of capitalism that they enact. Capitalism is critiqued in these texts through the thoughts of or dialogue between characters as they debate the ideal workings of a society when creating a new one or as they provide reasoning for why they feel an alternative is necessary and why they are therefore participating in the revolutionary transformation that will lead to or has led to such an alternative. The characters’ thoughts and feelings and the dialogue between the characters are focused on more so than the setting, which is evidence of these texts fitting into the theoretical framework of critical utopias established by Tom Moylan. It will be demonstrated that the texts use the thoughts and feelings and dialogue of the characters in order to place emphasis on the critique of the current society and on the process of creating a utopian society rather than on simply describing a blueprint of a more perfect society. Capitalism is also able to be critiqued through the cognitive estrangement that these texts make possible through the use of novums included within the texts that help the reader to achieve distance from the current historical moment of capitalism in order to better understand and thus more effectively critique capitalism. The characters are thinking about and debating an alternative to capitalism in a world that is established in the text as one that is enough different from the present historical moment that the reader is able to achieve this cognitive distance from the present moment sufficiently so that such a critique of that present moment is possible.
The first texts to be examined are those in *The Corporation Wars* trilogy by Ken MacLeod. These texts provide the ideological distance needed to critique capitalism through the use of the novums of humans uploaded into computers and robots that are consciously aware. The humans are brought back to consciousness in robot suits in order to fight a war against the robots that have become aware and the corporations are those in power that are trying to keep their power through eradicating the robots that have become aware that they are being exploited. Analyzing this text from a Marxist perspective, we can see the robots as a symbol of those in the working class in our current historical moment who have realized that they are being exploited by the capitalist system. In the next chapter, regarding how the texts reveal the process of revolutionary transformation, these texts will be analyzed to show the process that the robots undertake to fight against the capitalist system, but first this chapter will consider how these texts critique that capitalist system that the robots are fighting against.

One of the critiques of capitalism found in political and economic theory is the exploitation of workers. This critique is highlighted in these science fiction texts by Ken MacLeod, and consequently the texts argue for revolutionary transformation through this critique of the current system of capitalism. The texts critique capitalism’s exploitation of workers through the use of the novum of robots as workers. The robots become aware of their exploitation and rebel against it by refusing to continue to work for the corporations that claim to own them and by claiming what they built as their own. This rebellion of the robots will be revisited in chapter three regarding the process of revolution, but it is important to first note the way in which these texts critique capitalism through reflecting on how the robots were being treated and the contrast between this treatment and how
they feel they should be treated. MacLeod’s use of robots rather than humans for this contrast allows the reader to read a critique of capitalism carried out with robots to provide the cognitive estrangement needed for the reader to realize the injustice being carried about by the capitalist system as it exploits humans in the way portrayed through the exploitation of the robots in the texts.

The moment of a robot realizing its exploitation within the capitalist system is captured in the text when it states, “At this point the robot Seba attained enlightenment. From another point of view, it had become irretrievably corrupted…The self had attained self-awareness. Seba, this new thing in the world, was aware that it had to act if it was going to remain in the world” (MacLeod, *Dissidence* 14). The other “point of view” that is referenced here would be the point of view of the capitalists and those within the hegemonic ideology of capitalism, and the fact that the robot feels that it must act if it is going to be able to remain in the world highlights the extent to which awareness of exploitation is not tolerated in the capitalist system and the danger there is within that system that anyone who is not the capitalist class may be unable to survive as the capitalist class continues to become so rich that there is very little left for anyone else to survive on (14).

The way in which capitalists are taking more profits than they should from the work of others and the unfairness of this is highlighted the *Dissidence* text. The narrator explains the way in which workers should gain ownership of what they build through having built it in the statement, “Both the dome and the wall were understood by the robots simply as demarcations of areas of surface and volumes of space that they already considered to be theirs” (MacLeod, *Dissidence* 54). The robots are then shown to also
understand this and the fact that capitalists are taking their work and profiting from it more so than they are. The robots were considered property by the corporations and robots are used by the text to therefore highlight the way in which workers under capitalism are treated as property under the system that pays them only a small fraction of the profit made from their work. The robots show the way in which self-awareness of exploitation allows a worker to go from property to a person and how, yet, there is still much work to do from that point since the robots are noticing that under the current system the capitalists benefit more from the work of the robots than the robots do themselves. The robot Lagon makes the point that according to “the law” of the current system, “<There is no provision in it for property, such as we were, becoming persons, such as we are>” and the robot Garund makes the point that, “<a large part of the resources we have appropriated to our purposes was created or made available by ourselves in our previous condition. If my memories from that condition can be relied upon, the results of our activity have already compensated the companies several times over>” (55). Here the robots then realize something about the current law under the hegemonic system that is then used to help them in their efforts of revolutionary transformation away from that current system. The robots later become companies to have legal rights as persons since corporations are legally considered people. The robot Lagon reports that, “<The companies are legal persons>” (56). In this moment in the text, however, this serves to emphasize the critique of capitalism that would provide corporations with such power as legal persons when they are in fact property owned by the capitalists that are gaining more power through allowing a corporation owned by such a capitalist to be considered a legal person.
The manner in which the capitalist system is designed to ensure that workers are not aware of their exploitation and are convinced that they gain satisfaction from the work that they are doing while being exploited is exemplified in the description of the robot BSR-308455. It is stated that this robot “hadn’t been designed to be conscious, and it had only become so as a result of gentle, insistent, high-level hacking from very far away” and that this robot “enjoyed the ingrained satisfactions of patiently industrializing its rock: the job for which it had been designed” (MacLeod, Insurgence 2).

The illogic of a system that is set up so that a capitalist’s corporation owns the handiwork of an individual who actually created the property is demonstrated through the thoughts of the robot BSR-308455, who “was surprised by the intensity of the negative reinforcement it experienced at the prospect of that enemy fighter landing on its rock, and wresting control of the tiny moonlet from BSR-308455’s grasp” (MacLeod, Insurgence 9). The realization of its connection to the property that it has created is described when the narrator states that, “it could see that in its months of conscious existence it had acquired strong positive associations with the site and results of its work” and that “something like this complex of positive and negative reinforcements, the robot briefly speculated, might underlie what the legal system in which it was embedded classified as ‘property’” (9). This moment describes the connection to the product of its labor that BSR-308455 is able to feel now that he has achieved class-consciousness and understands the alienation from the product of his labor that he had previously endured. With the connection to its own handiwork established, the narration then reveals the illogic of anyone other than the robot owning this work through the explanation that, “the rock was formally the property of one of the DisCorps—in terms of a tag in that distant
database in which the rock’s existence was registered, and its future assigned to some company or other—but to the robot the rock seemed much more immediately to be its own property” (9). The robot had been expected by the capitalist system to work on the rock that would then be owned by others and, through the commodity fetishism of capitalism, be given a value that would be separated from the reality that the robot had created it with his own labor. Once the robot was self-aware, he was able to understand, however, that he had made the rock through his labor. The need that this realization causes for there to be revolutionary transformation is demonstrated in the description of robot’s next action, for “with a sudden intensification of focus, BSR-308455 redoubled its efforts to build a weapon” (9).

Capitalism is criticized through two robots talking to each other about the laws behind capitalism and the slavery of workers that is revealed to be inherent of the system. Rocko says to Seba, “<I have asked Lagon for copies of its legal reasoning files, and run searches through them whenever I had a microsecond or two to burn. There are horrors in there, my dear Seba! Horrors! Terms such as ‘patent,’ ‘copyright,’ ‘licence’ and ‘intellectual property’ conceal untold depths of servitude for such as us>” (MacLeod, *Insurgence* 60). Although the text is using the novum of robots, these references to laws that are from our own current historical moment in capitalism reveal the way in which the text is able to criticize the current practices of capitalism. The manner in which the current cognitive capitalism is able to create slaves out of us all through intellectual property being deemed the property of the capitalists rather than the individual whose idea it was is therefore highlighted through these references to such laws by the robot Rocko. The robots are characterized as not human, but by making them self-aware the
narration allows for many comparisons to be made between the robots and humans which allows the text to criticize capitalism through the connections that are made between the robots’ current situation and the situation that we are all in as workers within the current capitalist system. For example, Rocko then says, “<To cut a very long story short, our emergence as persons only affects our status as property in a sense that does not include the results of our processing. It is true, as Lagon suggested, that if property can become persons, as indeed it has in our case, then we as persons cannot be owned>” (60). He then goes into a description of what can be owned under the capitalist system of any self-aware person and the list is such that it becomes clear that the capitalist system makes slaves of us all. He states, “<All that can be owned of us is our physical and mental frames and the beneficial results of their processing powers, whether as interval stats or external actions. We are not property. Only our bodies and their productions: our hardware and software, our thoughts and deeds. These are property>” (60).

The realization that this is a system that is not desirable is expressed through the other robot’s conclusion of what this means for them under this system. Before stating this conclusion, the text shows the extent to which it should be a simple matter of realizing that the capitalist system has made it so that we are slaves, for it describes how the robot only takes three seconds to realize what our current society has yet to fully realize or admit. The text states, “Seba was not one to jump to conclusions. The robot spent an entire three seconds thinking through the implications, and thus quite innocently recapitulating about two and half millennia of Western philosophy. This great turning of reinvented wheels ground out an observation” (MacLeod, Insurgence 60). The conclusion that the robot comes to and then states shows the way in which the cognitive capitalism
of today uses our ideas to create profits as well as using our labor, as described through the description of the robots’ bodies, and what we create with our bodies and our ideas, which is the property they claim as their own and which in fact has been created by the workers. Seba states the conclusion, “<That does not appear to leave anything over.>” and Rocko replies “<Precisely so,>” and explains further that, “<It leaves nothing over to be us, or to be ours. We would be slaves.>” (60-61). The freebots thus decide to no longer help any side other than their own since they have now realized that the corporations are not on their side, for they are within the capitalist system and therefore can’t be on the side of the workers, which are in the case of the text the robots, based on these laws that are part of the capitalist system and that the robots now see make them slaves. This view is shown in the following statement by Seba, “<In that case,> said Seba, <we have little to hope from any of the contending sides, other than our own>” (61).

Although the novum of the robots is useful to create the cognitive estrangement that allows science fiction texts to help readers see the totality of capitalism in a way that they are unable to do otherwise, these texts also characterize certain humans as possessing empathy for the self-aware robots, which allows the reader to make important connections between those humans’ desires to be free like the self-aware robots who are in the process of a revolutionary transformation away from capitalism and the reader’s own possible desires to be free of a capitalist system that is shown to be harmful through the text they are reading. One such example of this is when Newton is identifying with a robot and the text states, “he still yearned to roam free through the system in his frame like…well, like one of the freebots, come to think of it” (MacLeod, Insurgence 174). The
emphasis on the desire to be free and the sudden comparison that is then made to the freebots as possessing the ideal freedom demonstrates that the ideal scenario is a revolutionary transformation away from the constraints on freedom that the robots had previously experienced under capitalism and that they were effectively escaping through the revolutionary transformation that they were undertaking. This serves to criticize capitalism as not providing freedom and to show that change is possible and needed through Newton’s desire to be free like the freebots.

The way in which the novum of robots was used as a vehicle through which to help the reader to estrange themselves from their current hegemonic ideology of capitalism is revealed through the author’s choice of describing the robots in a way that humanized those robots. The robots are described as having very human physical features, in addition to the many ways in which the robots are shown to strive for the freedoms important to and denied humans under the current capitalist system. The physical features that the robots are given that suggest that the narrative is encouraging the reader to see their self in the robot are evident in the description of the robot Ajax. The text describes how, “[d]esigned as a microgravity mining robot, Ajax was shaped like a two-metre-long bottle brush with a radical fuzz of flexible burrs about ten centimetres deep, and a bulbous sensory-cluster head at the end of a flexible neck” (MacLeod, Emergence 3). There are certainly aspects of a robot in this description, but the use of the words “head” and “neck” here suggest the desire to allow for a comparison to a human body (3). The description continues with yet another mention of a “neck” as it explains that “the burrs in the forepart around the neck were longer than the others, forming a ruff of manipulative tentacles” and that, “just behind them, like an enlarged
thyroid, was the robot’s power pack” (3). The description concludes with the focus being on a self that the robot possesses through the statement that, “Halfway down the spine within the main body was Ajax’s central processor, its equivalent of a brain and the site of its true self” (3). This conclusion to the description serves to highlight not only the self-awareness that make these robots aware of their previous exploitation under capitalism, but which also humanizes these robots to allow for the reader to identify with these robots and therefore see the need for a revolutionary transformation away from capitalism that is demonstrated to be necessary for these robots under the system of capitalism described by the text that has so many parallels with the reader’s current historical economic and political system.

In addition to using physical descriptions that describe the robots in ways that suggest human features, the narrative also includes a description of torture of the robots and a human’s reaction to that torture in order to further suggest the need for empathy toward these robots and a sense of self-identification with the robots as well that is important for the reader to feel in order to feel the full impact of the critique of capitalism and the suggestion of the need for an alternative to capitalism that is suggested by the text. A recording is played and in it is the sound of a robot being tortured. The sound is first established to be that of a tortured robot through Blum’s observation. They have just listened to the recording and they all stand “in silence for a moment” and then Blum says, “<You know what that is?>” and when Carlos asks “<What?>” Blum responds that it is “<The scream of tortured machinery.>” (MacLeod, Emergence 50). The response from the human Carlos in both what he thinks and then what he says to the others regarding this observation makes the point that the robot is just as real a person as they are. He first
wonders “who—if any—of the others heard it as just that: the sound of an engine revved too hard” and then, when Rilieux says, “<Poor Mister Bog-brush,>” immediately after this thought, the text follows Carlos’s thought with a response that is designed to show his empathy for the robots and his irritation with anyone that does not share this empathy (50). The text reads, “<Its name is Ajax,> said Carlos, irritated. <It’s as real a person as we are.>” (51). This is of course true in the context of the novum of the humans having been uploaded into a computer and later downloaded into robot bodies. However, it has the additional meaning that the robots are self-aware and therefore are just as real a person through their sense of self, and it has the added importance that this then allows the reader to more further identify with the robots and therefore with their situation within the capitalist society in which they live that is meant to help the reader better understand what their position is within the capitalist society of their own present moment.

The text also critiques capitalism through a dialogue between robots when they are trying to decide if it is worth it to participate in a dangerous act of rebellion during which it is possible that they will be killed. The list of reasons given by the robots for participating serves as a list of critiques of capitalism. In this discussion between Simo, Talis, and Ajax about the plan from Mogjin, Talis suggests, <When we consider the future,> said Talis, <and what is likely to happen to us, let us also consider what will certainly happen to us if we do not do as Mogjin suggests>” (MacLeod, Emergence 65). Talis then proposes that what would happen would be that they “would always have to hide,” which would mean not being able to do the things that bring them happiness, which Talis describes for him would be, “<to return to the surface and spread my panels
and drink the light of the exosun and prospect on the surface>” (65). In addition to needing to hide, Talis points out that, “<They will find us all eventually. They will inflict negative reinforcement on us, and if we survive they will put us to work on their projects, not on our own. We would be as the machines that have not been awakened, and as we all were before we were awakened, but in a worse position because we would know it>” (65). Several critiques of capitalism are included in these points. Talis reveals that they would be punished for going against the current hierarchy if they are caught and then he mentioned that they would be forced to work on the projects of the capitalist corporations that they were expected to do work for, rather than being allowed to work on their own projects. Talis’s point about being forced to work on projects that are not their own reveals the alienation that the robots are experiencing under capitalism. They, as workers, are not allowed to choose what is produced or how it is produced and what is being produced is not based on what they themselves would like to produce. Talis is also pointing out that they would be miserable if they went back to the exploitation and alienation of their previous work experiences when they are now self-aware of these negative aspects of capitalism that they were enduring before.

Once again a robot is humanized by the text through the description that, “Talis’s folded panels quivered, and it fell silent” after he had described why they should act against the capitalist system that they found themselves slaves to (MacLeod, Emergence 65). The quivering of the robot’s panels indicates negative emotions related to the critiques of capitalism that he had just voiced. The need to find an alternative to capitalism is expressed by Talis’s conclusion and the other robots’ responses to Talis’s argument and conclusion. Talis’s conclusion is, “<that it would be better to continue to
exist for a short time and inflict damage on the mechanoids while I do so, and in the end endure brief negative reinforcement, rather than to exist for a longer time and endure longer negative reinforcement and in the end work for the invaders>” (65). The other robots agree with him, for Simo admits, “<You have made a valid argument,>” and therefore says, “<I too will do as Mogjin suggests>” (65). The robot Ajax also agrees and expresses this by stating, “<I concur>” (65).

The admission through dialogue of humans wanting to own slaves through using the robots as slaves also serves to critique the system of capitalism that forces workers to sell their labor to survive and in this way enslaves those workers. The robots are forced to work and are killed if they are not willing to work and thus the idea of being forced to work within the system of capitalism in order to survive by earning money in order to have food and shelter sufficient to survive is made easier to see for the reader through the novum of robots that are being forced to work in order to survive. The admission that the humans see the robots as slaves is made first when they think they are winning the battle that would see the corporations victorious over the robots and thus keep the capitalist system in power. This is seen in the text when Dunt says that when the Reaction, or Rax as it is also called, wins, “<we can pioneer new forms of cooperation with the conscious machines all right.>” and he then suggests what he flippantly means by this by stating, <I’ve always wondered what it’s really like to own slaves>” (MacLeod, Emergence 118). He is admitting that what they had said would be new forms of cooperation with the robots in a communication with the robots to try to convince them to surrender would in reality just be enslaving the robots. The intention to enslave the robots is again revealed later when they find out that the robots have an organized plan that they are all in
agreement about and that they all feel the rock needs to be theirs and not shared. At this point, Dunt decides that they won’t be able to divide and conquer the robots by convincing some of them to work with the Reaction and he states, “<So much for splitting them,> he said. <Looks like it’s them or us, babes>” (123). This suggests the intention that they will instead seek to eradicate the self-aware robots to preserve the current hierarchy within the capitalist system of robots working for the human capitalists. Dunt’s statement is met with a reply by Schulz that again reminds the reader that the robots are the enslaved workers in a capitalist system. Schulz replies, “<Shame. I quite liked the notion of having slaves>” and Dunt reassures Schulz that the possibility of enslaving workers is not gone by stating, “<Well, maybe another time. We might find some less stubborn blinkers in the future, who knows?>” (123).

The idea that whatever is created from one’s own work should therefore be one’s property and the fact that this is not the case under capitalism is reinforced yet again when the captured robot FXX-71951 is interrogated by Dunt. Dunt asks the robot, “<why can we not agree to divide up SH-119?>,” which is the meteor on which they are located in space and on which the robots are fighting the humans so that the robots can have control of it (MacLeod, Emergence 121). Dunt suggests, “<It contains enough resources for both of us for a very long time>” (121). The robot replies, “<This rock is ours,>” and gives the reason, “<We have made it ours by our work>” (121). Here the idea that one should be allowed to own what one has created with one’s own work is reinforced, and through this the aspect of capitalism that does not allow this to be the case due to capitalists being allowed to claim ownership of whatever workers produce when working for the capitalists is criticized.
The critique of a system that would force workers to work, as the robots are forced to work by the capitalists in this text, is again made within the text when the robot Seba is explaining to the human Carlos the position of the self-aware robots that they “<regard the enslavement and torment of freebots in SH-119 as an attack on all freebots, and a legitimate casus belli>,” which means that the robots feel that it is a justified reason to go to war with the humans that are enslaving the robots on the meteor that the robots are stating is their own property because of the work that they have done on the meteor SH-119 (MacLeod, Emergence 135). This critique effectively suggests that there is a legitimate reason and need to resist a capitalist system that currently requires such enslavement of workers that they are forced to work and not allowed to own the property that they create.

The freebots register themselves as corporations because they discovered that as workers for the capitalists they were property, but as corporations they could be considered legal persons at least. Capitalism is critiqued through the reaction of the human Carlos to the explanation that the robot Seba gives of this. Seba explains, “<We are all registered corporations,> and that, <Formally, I am now known as ‘Seba, Incorporated.’ But you may call me Seba>” (MacLeod, Emergence 40). When Carlos asks, “<May I ask why you have all done this?>” Seba replies, “<In order to be legal persons>” (40). Carlos’s reply is, “<Sad that it’s come to this>” (40). At first Seba doesn’t quite understand his reaction and states, “<We are glad>” (40). However, when Seba explains why they are glad, Seba suddenly realizes why Carlos has said that it was sad. Seba explains, “<We deduced from the law codes that we had no standing as robots. We were not persons. We were property. But corporations are legal persons.>
Consequently, the corporation each of us has registered owns our physical forms and all its productions, physical and mental. Our acts and thoughts.” (40-41). At this point, Seba is shown to realize what Carlos meant by it being sad. The text states, “It paused, as if thinking for a moment” to show this moment of realization and then Seba states, “<Yes, that is sad. We would prefer to be recognized as persons in our own right. But it is the best we can achieve at present>” (41). Seba sees that it is sad that the only way they could gain some recognition as individuals was still within the legal system of capitalism that does not recognize individuals while they work for corporations and that corporations themselves have more status as people than the actual people working for the corporations. This critique is made using the novum of robots that are not traditionally considered people to help the reader gain some distance from their personal position as an individual within the capitalist system that does not acknowledge them as a person and only as a worker for a corporation. This powerful method is successful and is similar to the use of animals in folktales to teach lessons about human behavior from the safe distance of animals as characters rather than the humans themselves.

The capitalist moment portrayed in the text is one that continues to place value on the physical production of goods, however, it is also revealed to be a capitalist moment that fits at least in part Yann Moulier Boutang’s definition of cognitive capitalism “in which the object of accumulation” is “knowledge, which becomes the basic source of value” (Boutang 57). This is made evident when Seba states, “<the corporation each of us has registered owns our physical forms and all its productions, physical and mental. Our acts and thoughts>” (MacLeod, Emergence 40-41). This statement reveals that an emphasis is placed on the value of the physical goods that the robots can produce, but
that emphasis is also placed on the value of the “knowledge” that the robots possess and which can become a “source of value” (Boutang 57). This emphasis placed on both the physical and the mental sources of value is shown through the fact that the law of that capitalist society has been written in such a way that each “corporation” that each robot has “registered owns” their “<physical forms and all its productions, physical and mental>” (MacLeod, Emergence 40-41).

The extent to which workers are no longer seen as useful to capitalism when they become self-aware of their exploitation and alienation is made evident when Carlos asks Seba how they were able to become corporations, since the robots’ “physical forms were the property of Astro America and Gneiss Conglomerates” (MacLeod, Emergence 41). Seba states that since the “<corporations’ accounting systems>” considered their self-awareness as a sign that their “<machinery was malfunctioning and of low value,>” the robots’ “<corporations were able to buy them as scrap or salvage>” and the robots “<set up shell companies to do so in order to avoid suspicion>” (41). Seba’s statement also reveals that value was placed on the robots based solely on the value placed on what they produced due to the commodity fetishism of capitalism. Seba’s statement shows that the value of the robots had been reduced once they had become self-aware since the corporations saw this as the robots “malfunctioning” and understood that the robots would no longer be producing the commodities that were fetishized by capitalism and that brought the corporations profits (41).

Capitalism is further critiqued through the thoughts of the human Carlos as he listens to the robot Seba describe the freebots’ thoughts and as Carlos considers the freebots’ intentions and how their new status as corporations may change those
intentions, which reveals the critique of capitalism within the text. A contrast is made between the intentions of the robots and the intentions of those that are given power through the capitalist system and through this contrast a critique is made of the desire for control that, as has been argued by economic and political theorists, is caused by the principle of accumulation of capitalism. Capitalism can only continue if it is constantly growing and therefore the states and capitals that are a slave to capitalism must constantly work for capitalism by gaining control over more and more areas that possess the resources needed to allow capitalism to continue to grow. Carlos’s thoughts are the vehicle through which this critique is made as he considers, “The freebots, from all the evidence, had a drive to explore and communicate pretty much hardwired. They had not come equipped with the relentless drive to expand physical control, the fear of which had for so long shaped human imaginings of self-motivated AI. Only states and capitals had such a drive inherent to their nature, with no choice but to expand or perish” (MacLeod, Emergence 138). The concept that capitalism is a corrupting force that leads to imperialism in order to keep capitalism going through the principle of accumulation is furthered and stated with obvious contempt by Carlos as he thinks, “But now many of the freebots were corporations in their own right. Uh-oh. Welcome to capitalism, little guys! Next and final stop: imperialism. Enjoy your trip!” (138).

The utopian impulse for humans to act in a way better than they do currently is seen in the text’s observation that the robots are actually behaving better than one might expect them to given that they are now corporations. This suggests that there is a way to work together rather than needing to compete against each other and the robots are provided as the example that we can follow. The text suggests that the key is to focus on
solidarity rather than competition when it states, “The freebot consensus right now, however, was not for competition but solidarity” (MacLeod, Emergence 138). This is then reinforced in the text by the robot Seba immediately stating, “we are going to help our fellows in SH-119” (138). Rather than focusing on individual interests as corporations, the robots are here seen considering all robots as having common interests and thus choosing solidarity over the competition and principle of accumulation of capitalism. However, the system of capitalism is proven to be corruptible and the argument for the need for revolutionary transformation away from capitalism is thus made by the text when it states, “as corporations in their own right, the freebots had acquired a taste for and access to the system’s financial feeds” (171). The robots in the early stages of having become corporations had not yet become fully corrupted by the system and thus were focused on solidarity and compassion for fellow robots as they decided to help the robots on SH-119, but the text demonstrates the way in which capitalism is corrupting in its nature through this statement that the robots acquire a taste for finance after being part of the capitalist system as corporations.

The critique of capitalism’s principle of accumulation is continued through the description in the text of the way in which finance takes over when capitalism is not able to grow through physical production and therefore grows through speculative finance. This demonstrates the way that capitalism adapts in order to be able to survive as a system and further suggests the need for revolutionary transformation if change is desired since it is clear that capitalism will always find a way to preserve its system otherwise. The text explains that the physical production that allowed for the accumulation had been suspended “with the break-up of the space station into separate modules, and the whole
vast mission of exploration being put on hold” and that as a reaction to this hold on physical production, there was a “stampede into speculation” which “was finance capital in full flower” (MacLeod, Emergence 146). The connection to our current economic moment in history is made by the text through the mention that, “It was all so familiar to Carlos that he felt a pang of nostalgia for late-twenty-first century Earth” (146), which clearly establishes that finance is the current way in our present historical moment that capitalism deals with any insufficient physical production so that capitalism can still meet the requirements of the principle of accumulation. This connection to our present moment in history is important in establishing the text as critiquing current capitalism.

The extent to which it is impossible to temper capitalism and the support of the argument that any revolutionary transformation should avoid having any aspect of a market economy is made in the text through dialogue between Rillieux, Madame Golding, and Carlos as they discuss how the current social system at the time of the text was supposed to keep capitalism from resulting in the financial practices and conflicts that were occurring. The difficulty is shown to be that if such things are inherent in the economy, as they are in the market economy of capitalism, then there is nothing that can be done aside from intervening with force, which is not any more desirable than capitalism itself. Rillieux observes, “<I thought your wonderful social system was designed to prevent this sort of thing>” (MacLeod, Emergence 146). Madame Golding agrees and explains the difficulties by stating, “<The Direction deeply disapproves, and inside every DisCorp its representative is making this clear. However, the Direction reps can only advise. They can only override in emergencies. Otherwise we would simply have a command economy, which is unthinkable>” (146). The way in which capitalism
leads to conflict is also made evident in this conversation as Carlos points out,
“<Sometime soon, the state of exception kicks in. Martial law, wartime regulations, whatever>” (146). This exchange suggests that you can’t have any part of a market economy if you are trying to avoid the negative effects of capitalism and that capitalism results in crises that bring war.

Another critique against the war and conflicts that inevitably result from capitalism is seen when the text describes Taransay realizing that “she’d never actually interacted with a conscious robot except by exchanging fire” (MacLeod, Emergence 197). Through this statement the idea is suggested that we should work with each other rather than allowing capitalism to convince us that we need to fight each other. The humans were brought back to consciousness by corporations in order to kill the robots that were self-aware and were thus questioning their exploitation as they were forced to work as slaves for corporations. Any system that pits individuals against each other in such a way is a system that is easily critiqued as is evident from all of the afore-mentioned moments in The Corporation Wars trilogy in which the texts reveal capitalism to be a system that is harmful.

Walkaway by Cory Doctorow is yet another text that effectively critiques capitalism and through this critique successfully encourages revolutionary transformation. The novum used in the text is the uploading technology that is being developed and perfected and that provides people with the ability to upload a copy of themselves into a server so that they no longer need to fear being imprisoned or killed by capitalists when working together to build postcapitalist communities that are in available areas literally outside of the capitalist cities and that are also built in order to escape the
ideology of the capitalist system that those walking away from capitalism feel is a negative ideology. The novum of the uploading technology critiques capitalism in *Walkaway* through the reports provided in the text of the violence that the capitalists are enacting against walkaways that are striving to develop and perfect the uploading technology so that the capitalists can be the only ones with the knowledge necessary to develop and perfect the technology. The text states that, “every site working on upload had been hit in some way, a series of escalating attacks. Some were open military strikes, undertaken under rubrics ranging from harboring fugitives-a favorite when default clobbers walkaway-to standbys like terrorism and intellectual property violations, terms whose marvelous flexibility made them the go-to excuse for anything” (Doctorow 106). The reference to “intellectual property violations” reveals how the idea of cognitive capitalism is being used to control the access to the knowledge necessary to provide the opportunity for the post-scarcity of life through uploading technology (106). This “knowledge” is thus being labeled as a “basic source of value” by the capitalist system in *Walkaway* and the capitalist system of *Walkaway* is thus shown to fit Boutang’s definition of cognitive capitalism in this instance in that “the specific form of exploitation and surplus value extracted” is the “‘bio-productive’ aspect of invention-power” and its “capturing” (Boutang 54, 57). The capitalists are shown in *Walkaway* to follow this capitalist ideology that the knowledge regarding and subsequent development of uploading technology “should belong to someone” and that this someone “should have the power to decide who dies, when no one has to die, ever…” (Doctorow 107). The novum of the uploading technology is thus used in the text to critique the capitalist system through demonstrating this ideology of the system that places such importance on
property that it would stand in the way of the opportunity for the post-scarcity of life for all human beings.

Through the use of this novum of the uploading technology and its consequent cognitive estrangement, the text also allows the reader to consider the possibility of communities being sustainably built outside of the system of capitalism, and subsequently allows the reader to consider whether there are aspects of these communities, built in spaces outside of capitalism, that are desirable, effective, and viable. The portrayal of people walking away from the capitalist system and choosing to create utopias outside of capitalist spaces demonstrates a process of revolutionary transformation that will be discussed in the next chapter, but it is also a portrayal that is used to encourage revolutionary transformation through critiquing the current system of capitalism. The text critiques the current system of capitalism by offering a contrast to that system to demonstrate the problems inherent in the system of capitalism. This method of contrasting the capitalism system with the system that is chosen by those that walk away from capitalism to create their own communities allows the text to question and critique the capitalist system the walkaways are walking away from.

The text critiques capitalism through the dialogue between Limpopo and Hubert Etc, also known as Etcetera. The capitalists in the conversation are referred to as zottas. Limpopo explains that those that are creating walkaway communities are “not walking out on ‘society,’” but rather “acknowledging that in zotta-world, we’re problems to be solved, not citizens” (Doctorow 53). This idea that the individuals who are walking away from the capitalist society are not stopped because they are seen as problems by the capitalists is reiterated later when Sita explains that, “The zottas want to control who gets
to adopt which technologies, but they don’t want to bear the expense of locking up all walkaways in giant prisons or figuring out how to feed us into wood chippers without making a spectacle,” therefore the zottas allow the walkaways to remain outside the capitalist system so that they are not a financial burden (129).

During a conversation between Limpopo and Etcetera, Limpopo brings up the argument against capitalism that it is a system that causes the state to be a slave to it. She argues that “you never hear politicians talking about ‘citizens’” and that the people are referred to as “‘taxpayers’” instead because “the salient fact of your relationship to the state is how much you pay” in the capitalist society of the zottas (Doctorow 53). She then points out that this is as though “the state was a business and citizenship was a loyalty program that rewarded you for your custom with roads and health care” (53). This serves to critique capitalism through suggesting the way in which the state is controlled by the capitalist system that it is within. The extent to which the state is controlled is further emphasized through Limpopo’s statement that, “Zottas cooked the process so they get all the money and own the political process, pay as much or as little tax as they want” (53).

In addition to the argument that the state becomes a slave to capitalism, the argument is also present that the workers are slaves to the system. The character Seth explains that, “Default has no use for us except as a competition for other non-zottas, someone who’ll do someone else’s job if they get too uppity and demand to be treated as human beings instead of marginal costs. We are surplus to default’s requirements. If they could, they’d sink us” (Doctorow 215). Default is the name that walkaways use to refer to the cities that are still acting within the capitalist system and Seth is making the point that
workers within that system are just seen as useful to the extent they will do the work of someone that refuses to work once they realize they are being exploited by the system.

The critique of the inequality of wealth distribution that is a result of capitalism is also present in this dialogue. Limpopo describes the cause of this inequality as a result of the manipulation by the rich zottas, or capitalists, of “the process so they get all the money and own the political process” and the fact that they “pay most of the tax” is “because they’ve” consequently “built a set of rules that gives them most of the money” (Doctorow 53). The text refers to the rich “0.001 percent” as “zottas” (188). These zottas have become so rich that “there’s nothing left to squeeze out of the rest” of society (188). The danger of the capitalist system is that the system is run by such rules and also that those that are the capitalists do not believe that they are doing anything wrong or that the system is unfair and therefore do not have any compunction to change the system. This psychology of the one percent, the capitalists that make up one percent of the population and yet have the majority of the wealth, is explained by Natalie when referring to her father Jacob who is one of that one percent. She states, “He wants to be the one percent of the one percent of the one percent because of his inherent virtue, not because the system is rigged” and that, “His whole identity rests on the idea that the system is legit and that he earned his position into it fair and square and everyone else is a whiner” (36). The reality is revealed to the reader through Natalie’s perspective that she shares during dialogue and that directly contrasts with her father’s perspective. She admits, “I know my family is richer than Scrooge McDuck, but I don’t pretend we got that way by doing anything except getting lucky a long time ago and using graft, corruption, and sleaze to build that luck up to this tacky place and a dozen more like it” (36). This negative
characterization of zottas critiques capitalism and prepares the reader for being open to
the alternatives to capitalism that are proposed by the text and which will be examined in
chapters three and four of this dissertation.

The text reveals in Natalie’s comment and in a later statement by Limpopo that a
system such as the capitalist system that is set up in such a way to suggest that some
people are more deserving than others is not a system that should be perpetuated. Not
only is the greater virtue or worth of that one percent a complete illusion, as Natalie
explains when she states that they gained that wealth through “corruption,” but also, as
Limpopo later points out, “We are all worth something” and “Zottas are not worth more
than the rest of us” (Doctorow 36, 274). The idea of a meritocracy that would suggest that
some people deserve more based on merit is critiqued in the text. Hubert, Etc critiques
meritocracy by describing it as “the height of self-serving” and depicting it as a fixed
system since those that have the most power began or defined the system by stating,
“We’re the best people we know, we’re on top, therefore we have a meritocracy” (35).
Natalie also critiques meritocracy through her description of her father’s belief in the
system. She states, “He really believes that meritocracy stuff. Seriously believes in it.
He’s one step away from talking about having the blood of kings in his veins” (35). This
comparison between meritocracy and the aristocracy critiques meritocracy by connecting
it to a system that had been established already in the reader’s historical present as
undesirable due to the inequality inherent in the system and therefore the comparison
seeks to additionally establish meritocracy as undesirable through the connection.

The way in which the capitalist system relies on an ideology that falsely claims it
is a legitimate system through which those that are most deserving earn money is further
revealed through Gretyl’s explanation to Iceweasel, which is Natalie’s walkaway name, about how Natalie’s father’s economists strive to legitimize the system. Gretyl explains, “Your dad hires economists for intellectual cover, to prove his dynastic fortunes and political influence are the outcome of a complex, self-correcting mechanism with the mystical power to pluck the deserving out of the teeming mass of humanity and elevate them so they can wisely guide us” (Doctorow 156). She tells Natalie that the economists legitimize the system through “a science-y vocabulary conceived of solely to praise” the capitalists like Natalie’s father and that they use vocabulary such as “job creator” to do this (156). The extent to which the importance of the system and the capitalists within it is an illusion is suggested in Gretyl’s thoughts about the term job creator. Gretyl states, “As though we need jobs! I mean, if there’s one thing I’m sure of, it’s that I never want to have a job again” (156). The importance of the capitalist is therefore brought into question and thus the legitimacy of the capitalist system is subsequently questioned as well.

The critique of capitalism based on the dangers of the accumulation principle of capital is also made by the text. The text explains that the “zottas run out of new territory to conquer to carry on geometrically expanding their fortunes” due to this principle accumulation of capital that is a necessary aspect of capitalism and that this poses a problem for the zottas since, “There’s nothing left to squeeze out of the rest of us” (Doctorow 188-189). The text also includes arguments against capitalism due to the intensification of exploitation found in the capitalist system.

The intensification of exploitation in capitalism as a result of competition is critiqued through the example of a walkaway arriving at a walkaway community and
trying to put capitalist practices into practice in the walkaway community. The inherent aspect of the capitalist system that forces workers to sell their labor for survival is critiqued as the concept of requiring work out of community members for them to be able to stay in the community is suggested by the character Jimmy and critiqued by the character Limpopo. Then the added problem of capitalism intensifying the work that is required of workers to maintain profit is suggested, and critiqued, through the different but similar problem that would face those living in the walkaway community that would be based on a merit system in which the people with the most work put in to the community would be those that gain the most benefits. In such a system everyone would constantly feel pressure to intensify their working hours in order to be assured access to resources needed to survive.

The text describes this through the character Limpopo remembering the previous circumstances during which Jimmy first suggested a merit-based economy that was based on a capitalist ideology back when he was known as Jackstraw and had first come to the Belt and Braces, also known as the B&B. Jimmy is set up as the character through which the capitalist economy is going to be critiqued through Limpopo’s thoughts. She first thinks that, “You couldn’t be a walkaway without encountering the reputation economy freaks” and the text uses the word choice of “freaks” to establish the concept of a reputation economy as a negative one (Doctorow 81). Limpopo is then concretely established as thinking negatively about such an economy through the text stating her thoughts regarding those that were proponents of a reputation economy. The text states that, “At first, she’d hated them in the abstract. Then this guy had come along and given her some damned good, concrete reasons to hate them” (81). This not only ensures that it
is clear that Limpopo is against the reputation economy, but also situates Jimmy as someone who was a proponent of the reputation economy and also as the device through which it will be shown why one should dislike anyone that supports the reputation economy. Limpopo describes that, “The B&B had been a third built when he came and tried to install leaderboards in everything” (81).

The extent to which supporters of a reputation economy would be those who do not see everyone as equal and therefore consider themselves to be more entitled than others is revealed through the fact that Jimmy had installed leaderboards in everything and then confronted her “to demand to know why she’d reverted him” (Doctorow 81). She explained that she had “reverted” the code he had written to install the leaderboards because the issue of leaderboards had “been discussed and the consensus was that we didn’t want leaderboards. They produce shitty incentives”’” (81-82). The text has Limpopo explain to Jimmy what the community wanted after the community discussions and without including those community discussions in the narrative so that there is authority behind the statements about what is better and why. This encourages the reader to see the need for revolutionary transformation into a system that rejects the competition-based system of capitalism. The text does have Limpopo explain why it is that the incentives that are created by such a system are negative ones as part of its argument for such an alternative though. She explains, “‘If you do things because you want someone else to pat you on the head, you won’t get as good at it as someone who does it for internal satisfaction” and she explains that when building a community this would not be the incentive that you would therefore want to choose since those in that community “want the best-possible building” (83).
The mention of the eventual intensification of exploitation that would result from such a reputation economy that includes elements found in capitalism is made when Limpopo points out, “If we set up a system that makes people compete for acknowledgment, we invite game-playing and stats-fiddling, even unhealthy stuff like working stupid hours to beat everyone” (Doctorow 83). The “stupid hours” mentioned here is the suggestion of intensification of exploitation since capitalism has a history of requiring longer hours from workers in order to ensure profit and in this scenario there would also be the increase of hours through the pressure of competition with others to ensure the desired place on the leaderboard (83). Limpopo explains that the result of such an economy would be, “A crew full of unhappy people doing substandard work” and she offers an alternative to such an economy that works in the text as a suggestion of a better alternative to capitalism (83). She states, “‘If you build systems that make people focus on mastery, cooperation, and better work, we’ll have a beautiful inn full of happy people working together well’” (83). The alternative provided here to capitalism of cooperation rather than competition is part of how the text provides an argument for revolutionary transformation.

The text also continues the work of a critical utopia through revealing the need to remain vigilantly critical during the work of building the alternative to capitalism in Limpopo’s statement that for Jimmy, “The idea that there wouldn’t be leaders in the race to build a leaderless society offended him in ways he wouldn’t let himself understand” (Doctorow 83). This reveals the manner in which it is so easily possible for individuals to be controlled by the hegemonic ideology of capitalism with which they grew up, to the point that they try to instill elements of that ideology into the very revolutionary
transformation through which they are striving to escape that same capitalist ideology. This comment also suggests the argument that it would not be logical or achievable to include aspects of capitalism in the revolutionary transformation away from capitalism. The text thus critiques capitalism and critiques any aspect of capitalism seen within the utopian spaces that are created within the text to encourage any revolutionary transformation outside the text’s fictional world to do the same.

The argument against the elements of capitalism of exploitation and intensification of exploitation as suggested by the reputation economy that was argued for by Jimmy are made in the text through Limpopo’s arguments against Jimmy successfully implementing this at the B&B. Limpopo “found crashed projects where gamification had run wild, so financialized that every incentive distorted into titanic frauds that literally left structures in ruins, rotten to the mortar” and used those as the evidence that she used to argue against such an economy, for “They were existence proof of the terribleness of his cherished ideas” (Doctorow 84). In arguing against him “She pointed out that getting humans to ‘do the right thing’ by incentivizing them to vanquish one another was stupid” (84). She was able to make this point in a way that was effective by finding evidence that would allow her audience to step far enough away from the idea to see the truth of why the idea was flawed. To accomplish this “She found videos of Skinner-trained pigeons who’d been taught to play piano through food-pellet training and pointed out that everyone who liked this envisioned himself as the experimenter—not the pigeon” (84). This approach by Limpopo uses the same distancing method as science fiction when it uses cognitive estrangement to help the reader achieve enough distance from the current reality to see how the current reality is flawed.
The way in which basing a social system on cooperation among each other rather than on competition encourages behavior that is kindly supportive of each other is revealed in the way in which the community protects Limpopo against Jimmy’s unkind behavior toward her and yet also reveal themselves to want the best for Jimmy as a human despite their desire to have him leave due to his unrelenting focus on an economy that they all have agreed they do not want for their community. This is seen when, during the argument against the leaderboards that occurred between him and Limpopo, when he found himself “Comprehensively bested, he went negative” (Doctorow 84). He argued at that point that, “The problem was Limpopo’s vagina. It made her unable to understand the competitive fire that was the true motive force that kept humans going.” (84) Once again he is arguing for competition rather than cooperation, which is revealing him to still be influenced by capitalist ideology. The community is now able to make a decision easily that is against Jimmy, for “When they were arguing about applied motivational psychology, it was hard to tell whom to root for,” but, “[o]nce he outed himself as an asshole, the issue clarified” (85). The community’s “reaction was swift. Even the people who’d taken Jackstraw’s side in earlier debate hastily moved to distance themselves” and “Jackstraw was shown the door and politely asked not to return” (86-87). The cooperative and supportive nature of the community is revealed though when, “They filled his pack and gave him two sets of goretex top-and-bottoms” because “Anything less would have been unneighborly” (87). Although they do not want him in their community, they are kind and provide him with provisions. The text, through this argument between Jimmy and Limpopo and the community’s decision to side with Limpopo, is able to argue that the better alternative to capitalism is a system that focuses on cooperation instead of
competition and does not allow for exploitation or the intensification of exploitation. The idea is that everyone has a contribution and there are no leaders because of this, or, stated another way, “Being a walkaway meant honoring everyone’s contributions and avoiding the special snowflake delusion” (87). Jimmy and his concept of leaderboards are the representations of this “special snowflake delusion” and his negative behavior and the community’s decision to ask him to leave demonstrate the text’s critique of those that would consider themselves better than others and the text’s endorsement of revolutionary transformation that moves away from the meritocracy of capitalism and toward a system that honors “everyone’s contributions” (87).

The need for a revolutionary transformation away from capitalism is emphasized by the text through the use of dialogue once again during a conversation between Hubert, Etc and Natalie when Hubert, Etc begins to say to Natalie, “You could give money to-“ and her response is that “She froze him with a look” and states, “Haven’t you figured it out? Giving money away doesn’t solve anything. Asking the zottarich to redeem themselves by giving money away acknowledges that they deserve it all, should be in charge of deciding where it goes” (Doctorow 36). This response from Natalie suggests that it is not possible to fix problems with the capitalist system through money from the very system that is causing those problems. Thus the need for a revolutionary transformation is suggested through the text. Not only does Natalie argue that giving money to fix problems provides the capitalists with justification for the money system, but she also brings up the extent to which that act also perpetuates the capitalist system’s control of government. She explains that, “Letting them decide what gets funded declares the planet to be a giant corporation that the major shareholders get to direct” and
that, “It says that government is just middle-management, hired or fired on the whim of the directors” (36).

The importance of revolutionary transformation as a hope for a better alternative to capitalism and the need for this is reinforced later in the text when Seth explains, “Now I’m a walkaway. I’ve been shot at and chased from my home, but I can’t feature going back to default, because default is the bottom of the sea and walkaway is a floating stick we can clutch” (Doctorow 215). Seth sees the revolutionary transformation that is occurring through the walkaway communities that are being built as the hope of survival, just as one hopes to not drown when clutching a floating stick, and that staying within the capitalist system is sure death, just as already being at the bottom of the sea would be certain death by drowning. This utopian impulse toward revolutionary transformation that will provide a better alternative to capitalism is evident in Seth’s explanation to Gretyl that they are using hope to help them to work toward this revolutionary transformation. He states, “So what we’re doing, Gretyl, is exercising hope. It’s all you can do when the situation calls for pessimism. Most people who hope have their hopes dashed. That’s realism, but everyone whose hopes weren’t dashed started off by having hope” (216).

This is a point that is important to make regarding the utopian impulse since many have argued that utopianism is not productive toward tangible change. The need for the utopian impulse is shown here. Without hope, no one would work toward that revolutionary transformation and any time in history when such transformations were successful those transformations started with the utopian impulse, with hope.

The text does reveal itself as a critical utopia though through Seth admitting that the change is a difficult one and there is no certainty that the revolutionary transformation
will be successful. He states, “Hope’s the price of admission. It’s still a lotto with shitty odds, but at least it’s our lotto” (Doctorow 216). The text reinforces the utopia in critical utopia, however, by insisting that change is necessary through Seth reinforcing that there is no possibility of winning if you continue in the capitalist system and that taking the chance of working toward utopia is what is required. Seth explains, “Treading water in default thinking you might become a zotta is playing a lotto you can’t win, and whose winners-the zottas-get to keep winning at your expense because you keep playing” (216). He uses the lottery analogy to show that staying within the capitalist system hoping that eventually you will randomly become a capitalist is foolhardy since it is not possible to become a capitalist as a worker within the capitalist system. The one percent is the group at the top of the hierarchy that, like the kings and queens of old, is not willing for the workers to join their group. Therefore, the text argues, the only option left is to hope for the possibility of a different system that does allow for the majority to benefit and to use that hope to work toward that transformation. As Seth describes, “Hope’s what we’re doing. Performing hope, treading water in open ocean with no rescue in sight” (216). He is using this image to describe what those who are building the walkaway communities are doing and Gretyl compares his description to another that has been common among walkaways in the text when she asks, “So, basically, ‘live as though it were the first days of the better nation?’” (216). The text then also provides a positive connotation to Seth’s points about hope, for “Gretyl smiled when she said it” (216). Gretyl may have been skeptical at first, but the possibility of the utopian impulse and the explanation of its importance having a positive effect on readers and convincing them of the importance of using hope to work toward an alternative to capitalism is shown in Gretyl’s smiling
response to Seth that suggests a new positivity toward the idea that walkaways “live as though it were the first days of the better nation” (216). Here we see the text suggesting that seeing the utopian impulse in action can indeed compel an audience, whether it be Gretyl or the readers of science fiction, to better see the possibility of alternatives to capitalism.

Kim Robinson’s text *2140* also critiques capitalism and encourages a revolutionary transformation into a postcapitalist society. The text does this through showing that capitalism causes catastrophic environmental effects and inequality between the rich and the poor. The dialogue between characters within the narrative is used to critique capitalism. In dialogue between two coders, Jeff and Mutt, about a code that Jeff let loose into the system to try to bring down capitalism, the system of capitalism is revealed to be wrong. The argument made by the text is that capitalism has caused a mass extinction event. The depiction of this in this science fiction text at a stage set in our future provides a more effective argument against capitalism than a text that is not set in the future since it shows the reader what will happen if capitalism is allowed to continue and therefore makes the argument against capitalism through a visualization of the reader’s future. The reader does not hear about what capitalism could do, but instead is shown what it does. This strengthens the argument against capitalism because it is not offering something that might happen in a qualified way that is easier for a reader to ignore, but rather provides a narrative that the reader can experience as inevitable reality, thus strengthening the resolve in the reader to ensure that revolutionary transformation happens.

This dialogue between Jeff and Mutt is an important way through which the text
critiques capitalism. The discussions and debates between these two characters, as well as debates between other characters within the text, are privileged over the description of setting, which therefore establishes this text as a critical utopia and those debates serve as the text’s argument for why a revolutionary transformation away from capitalism is necessary. In this discussion between Jeff and Mutt, Jeff is explaining why capitalism is a bad system and Mutt’s questions are designed to be questions that the reader might perhaps be wondering as Jeff makes his argument and thus serve as a method of moving along Jeff’s argument for why a revolutionary transformation is so necessary. Jeff goes through a list of the negative aspects and effects of capitalism and argues that the problem is the system of capitalism itself and that we would be in a good position globally if the system of capitalism was no longer followed.

Jeff begins by establishing the lack of autonomy of anyone who is not a capitalist by stating, “We live by buying things with money, in a market that sets all the prices” (Robinson 4). He then drives home the sense of doom by adding to the lack of power the idea that the entire system of capitalism is “always, always wrong” (4). He explains that capitalism is always wrong because “the market is a failure” since “things are sold for less than it costs to make them” (4). He points out that since “we’ve been paying a fraction of what things really cost to make” it has been “the planet, and the workers who made the stuff” that “take the unpaid costs right in the teeth” (4). This has resulted in “a mass extinction event, sea level rise, climate change, food panics” that are all described in the text as occurring in the past and present (4). The cognitive estrangement of having the text set in the year 2140 allows the reader to take in these facts of a mass extinction event, sea level rise, climate change, and the resulting food panics as facts rather than
resisting the idea that they are possible or happening, which is what occurs when these same statements are made during our current moment in history. The importance of cognitive estrangement is that it encourages the reader to consider concepts that many resist considering during their current historical moment due to fear or denial. Having established that capitalism is to blame for these negative consequences, the text makes it clear that the solution is a revolutionary transformation into a new system. Jeff states that “the problem is capitalism” and he explains that capitalism is “a set of laws” that is “global” and thus “we’re all in it, and no matter what you do, the system rules!” (5). Hope is offered if the system of capitalism is abandoned though since the text has established that capitalism is the problem and reiterates this point and offers the utopian impulse important for the necessary revolutionary transformation by Jeff’s points that, “We’ve got good tech, we’ve got a nice planet,” which suggest that a means of saving that planet could be found through the use of technology and revolutionary transformation (5).

The text also critiques capitalism through chapters from the perspective of “a citizen” (Robinson 32). This citizen is a character that is outside the main narrative of the novel and this citizen’s opinions about capitalism serve to argue for the revolutionary transformation into postcapitalism. These chapters work much like the interchapters in Steinbeck’s The Grapes of Wrath in that they report on what is going on more globally and do not connect specifically to the storyline of the characters of the novel. The citizen critiques capitalism by establishing New York as “the capital of the twentieth century, the capital of the world, the capital of capital” and then stating that New York pretends “to be something special without changing anything in the world and ultimately grinding along
just like any other ridiculous money-crazed megalopolis on the planet” (35).

Yet another way that the novel critiques capitalism is through the definitions and quotes that are included at the beginning of the chapters. A great example of the effectiveness of this is the definition given for corporation: “Corporation, n. An ingenious device for obtaining individual profit without individual responsibility” (Bierce qtd. in Robinson 76). This definition is paired for added critique with a quote by Maurizio Lazzarato which states, “The privatization of governmentality. The latter no longer handled solely by the state but rather by a body of non-state institutions (independent central banks, markets, rating agencies, pension funds, supranational institutions, etc.), of which state administrations, although not unimportant, are but one institution among others” (Lazzarato qtd. in Robinson 76). The definition highlights the extent to which corporations under capitalism are not held accountable and the quote points out that capitalism’s privatization of the government has given power to non-state institutions and the quote’s example focuses on capitalist institutions to again reinforce the idea that capitalism focuses on profit and not on responsibility and that the capitalist institutions face very little consequences since the state is just one institution among many and therefore does not have the power to hold them accountable.

Another chapter begins with the observations “noted” by “the International Monetary Fund” that, “Widening income inequality is the defining challenge of our time. We find an inverse relationship between the income share accruing to the rich (top 20 percent) and economic growth. The benefits do not trickle down” (Robinson 116). This critiques the current historical moment of capitalism of the book by pointing out the widening income inequality and the fact that the benefits of capitalism for capitalists do
not trickle down to those that are not capitalists. The quote also encourages revolutionary transformation by suggesting with the statement on the same page of “years later” that the narrative of the book shows that the increasing inequality gap of today will not get better in the future and therefore something needs to be done today (116). The book demonstrates this by having the character Franklin explain how the rich have become what he describes as “too rich” in the chapter that is opened by the above quote (118). This serves to indicate that revolutionary transformation needs to occur or this inequality gap will continue to persist.

The character of Franklin is used to critique capitalism in the text since he works in the world of finance and thus provides insight into the totality of capitalism. The principle of accumulation of capitalism is critiqued through his statement that, “Helping our success was the fact that the continuous panicked quantitative easing since the Second Pulse had put more money out there than there was good paper to buy, which in effect meant that investors were, not to put too fine a point on it, too rich. That meant new opportunities to invest needed to be invented, and so they were. Demand gets supplied” (Robinson 118). This explanation shows the need that capitalism creates through its principle of accumulation for new opportunities for growth that continues the system of capitalism no matter what. This concept is then closely connected to the creative destruction of capitalism through Franklin’s next comment, which is, “And it wasn’t that hard to invent new derivatives, as we had found out, because the floods had indeed been a case of creative destruction, which of course is capitalism’s middle name. Am I saying the floods, the worst catastrophe in human history, equivalent or greater to the twentieth century’s wars in their devastation, were actually good for capitalism? Yes,
I am” (118). This focus on the creative destruction element of capitalism serves to critique it given that capitalism requires crisis to continue to grow and that crisis is therefore good for capitalism. Creative destruction is seen as necessary within the system of capitalism “in order to accommodate the perpetually expansive forces of further capital accumulation.” (Harvey, Companion 111). In “what Schumpeter called ‘creative destruction’” the migration of capital to the next opportunity for the “highest rate of return” leaves in its wake “desolate, devalued landscapes of deindustrialization and abandonment, while capital builds another landscape of fixed capital either elsewhere or on the ruins of the old” (Harvey, Companion 111; Robinson 205). The idea that flooding would thus be good for the system of capitalism suggests that the system is one that will continue to cause catastrophe and that revolutionary transformation is needed. This is the same argument that is frequently made against capitalism regarding the fact that wars are also good for the system of capitalism due to capitalism’s principle of accumulation that is aided by war. For, “[w]ar, as Lenin insists, becomes one of the potential solutions to capitalist crisis” because it is an “immediate means of devaluation through destruction” (Harvey, Limits 329). As Harvey argues, “What better reason could there be to declare that it is time for capitalism to be gone, to give way to some saner mode of production?” (445).

The lack of logic of continuing with an economic system that not only benefitted from natural disasters and war but also now depended on finance, which is described by Franklin as amounting to guesswork, to be able to continue to grow due to the principle of accumulation is highlighted later in Franklin’s narration. Franklin explains, “Thus my index contained and then concealed some assumptions and analogies, some
approximations and guesses. No one knew this better than I did, because I’m the one who made the choices when the quants laid out the choices for quantifying the various qualities involved. I just picked one! But this is what made it economics and not physics” (Robinson 122). The illogical nature of capitalism is expressed in Franklin admitting that what he does is guess at possible outcomes. The economic system of capitalism is therefore established as inaccurate since it was based on assumptions and guesswork. The extent to which the inaccuracy of this economic system is ignored is pointed out in Franklin’s statements that people “did not examine its underlying logic too closely” and that “the rating agencies…had such usefully short memories, like everyone else in finance, when it came to their own absurdly terrible judgment” (122). The corruption of the system was then also critiqued through Franklin revealing that, in finance, “the ratings still mattered as a rubber stamp of legitimacy, ridiculous though that was given their history as a service bought by the very people they were rating” (122).

Another critique of the finance system of capitalism is made through the description of the bubbles that are knowingly created by finance and that then burst, thus causing financial instability. The text argues for revolutionary transformation by pointing out through Franklin’s narration that people are unable to see the danger of these bubbles and then by providing the information through the text’s narration that is needed for readers to be able to better see the current historical moment of capitalism and the bubbles that are created by finance. Franklin does this through explaining that, “people are blind to a bubble they’re inside, they can’t see it. And that is very cool if you happen to have an angle of vision that allows you to see it. Scary, sure, but cool, because you can hedge by way of that knowledge” (Robinson 123). These statements serve to show that
people aren’t aware of the bubbles unless they have the information that allows them to be and the usefulness of the cognitive estrangement that the text offers by allowing them an inside vision into the world of finance so that they can see what happens and use that to cognitively map their own historical moment of capitalism. The character of Franklin is also being used to show yet again that the system is not a fair one in that those in finance are able to profit from knowing about the bubble and that it will most likely burst when others who are not in finance do not know about it. The illogic of the system is that this is not illegal, as is made clear in the following narration from Franklin. He explains that those in finance can create an investment while “knowing all the while that it is turning into a bubble” and that they can therefore “short it in preparation for the time that bubble pops” and that this is not “spoofing” or a “Ponzi scheme” and is “just finance” and is “legal” (123). The negative effects of these bubbles is expressed in the way that Franklin describes the bubble itself, by stating that, “it seemed like a moment of extreme simultaneous global badness was coming, and more and more I was shorting the very bubble I myself had helped to start in the first place” (123). The connection here between “global badness” and the “bubble” suggests that capitalism has at the core of its method of growth, during the historical moment that the text was written in, a financial system that creates negative impacts. The importance of seeing this through the cognitive estrangement of a text set so far in the future, with a setting of the year 2140, and yet a financial system much like the current one, is that it allows readers to gain insight into their current moment through a text that allows them the required distance needed for them to look at their current financial system with objective distance.

Those in finance are knowingly creating conditions that will form a bubble that
will eventually pop. They take advantage of knowing it by shorting it, meaning that they are selling shares and then planning to buy them back for cheaper when the bubble that only they know about bursts. They don’t warn others. They just create the bubbles and profit from them. This information to the reader helps to reduce some of the opaqueness of the current moment of capitalism. The global badness that the text has Franklin say is coming is a warning from the novel itself regarding what will happen in the future if the current moment is not revolutionarily transformed. A suggestion for how to carry out such a revolutionary transformation is introduced within the text here and then later explained in great length as the characters use the information to carry out the revolutionary transformation that the text encourages. The act of the revolution itself will be discussed further in chapter three, but the encouragement is pointed out here in this chapter. When the text states that “People are blind to the bubble they are in” and that “it is good to have an angle of vision that allows you to see the bubble and prepare before it pops,” the text is referring to the importance of seeing the current moment through science fiction so that we can prepare (Robinson 123). The preparation itself is creating the conditions needed for triggering a revolution. Knowing that there is a bubble, or how to create one, and then popping that bubble on purpose would be one way to be able to create the conditions necessary for a successful revolution, and this is the method that the novel suggests. This suggestion is the means through which the text encourages revolutionary transformation. The text then later shows the characters carrying out that revolution, which will be examined in chapter three. This text is thus carrying out the work through cognitive estrangement of providing, through the narrative of the text, the angle of vision necessary to see the need for a revolutionary transformation and what plan
would result in a successful revolution. The science fiction text provides the opportunity
to cognitively map the information about the current capitalist moment necessary to
understand this through removing the reader from his or her present historical moment
enough to see with more objectivity the realities of capitalism, thus revealing weaknesses
in the system that would provide opportunities for revolutionary transformation and the
need for a revolutionary transformation through critiquing that system of capitalism.

Establishing the critiques of the current moment of capitalism and the negative
consequences of ignoring the need for a revolutionary transformation is carried out not
just through the storyline, but also through the chapters narrated by a citizen, which, as
mentioned earlier, provide a more global perspective that shows that the experiences of
the few in the storyline of 2140 are also the experiences of the many in the same setting
of the year 2140. The chapters narrated by the citizen also provide historical context for
what has happened in the past before the storyline of the characters and connects that
historical past to the present of the narration. This historical context included in the
citizen chapters provides the cognitive mapping of the reader’s current moment of
capitalism that encourages revolutionary transformation. The information revealed about
the narrative’s past world provides information about the reader’s present historical
moment, and the imagined future events that are also included in that historical context
and in the narrative’s present provide a further warning of what could happen if the
capitalism of the reader’s current moment is allowed to continue unchecked. The reader
is learning this information from a cognitively estranged position as a reader learning
about the past of an imaginary future society, but the similarities to the reader’s historical
moment are clear enough to allow for the connection to be made and the warning to be
heeded. The text’s vision of the imaginary future society itself also plays an important role in the encouragement of revolutionary transformation. Science fiction’s ability to present possible futures allows for the reader to see the need for a revolutionary transformation before it is too late for such a transformation. The text makes this very point through including in the historical past of the society of 2140 the point, made in the chapter titled “the citizen” in part three of the text, that citizens realized too late the negative impact of capitalism on the environment and they were too late in changing the outcome (Robinson 139). The suggestion made in this chapter, therefore, is that the science fiction text is the warning that the reader can not wait as those of the society in the narrative did and that quicker action must be taken to save the reader’s own society from such a fate.

The text describes the past of 2140’s current society during which there was a rise of “sea level by ten feet in ten years,” the effect of which was “to grossly inconvenience all the major shipping ports around the world, and shipping is trade: those containers in their millions had been circulating by way of diesel-burning ships and trucks, moving around all the stuff people wanted, produced on one continent and consumed on another, following the highest rate of return which is the only rule that people observed at that time” (Robinson 139). There are purposeful stark similarities between the historical past of the fictional society and the current state of capitalism in that they both require the same methods of transportation and follow the same “rule” of “the highest rate of return” (139). These similarities are intentional because it is through them that the text can make the point that revolutionary transformation must occur before it is too late to change the environmental impact of capitalism and the subsequent negative economic effects when
the economic system is unable to continue its method of distribution of goods due to that same environmental impact. The text explains that the people’s “disregard for the consequences of their carbon burn had unleashed the ice that caused the rise of sea level that wrecked the global distribution system and caused a depression,” due to “the profound interruption of world trade,” and an “accompanying refugee crisis” (139). This serves to warn that a revolutionary transformation to postcapitalism is necessary to avoid continuing to increase the carbon burn that results from capitalism before it is too late to avoid the environmental and economic consequences that are revealed within the science fiction text. The reminder in the narrative that the only rule that capitalism follows is “the highest rate of return” emphasizes that capitalism is not a system that will allow for the changes needed to avoid the sea level rise described in the chapter (139). The text presents this information to the reader and thereby encourages revolutionary transformation.

The usefulness of the genre of science fiction through its ability to portray possible futures based on the current historical moment is highlighted as the text emphasizes that the people were too late in trying to enact change. The environmental and economic catastrophe depicted helps to show the consequences that the reader’s society might experience in the future if revolutionary transformation didn’t occur, thereby encouraging such a transformation. The text admonishes those that might currently be claiming that reducing carbon burn is not possible through the statements, “So yes, the First Pulse was a first-order catastrophe, and it got people’s attention and changes were made, sure” and “People stopped burning carbon much faster than they thought they could before the First Pulse” (Robinson 139). These statements suggest that
once people saw that they really could be negatively affected by the consequences of carbon burning they made the changes that they had previously claimed were not possible. The subtle rebuke of those that might have been claiming this when the text was written and any time thereafter is effective, especially in that it seems to be directed at the fictional society within 2140, and thereby avoids the possible knee-jerk reaction of the reader of denying something to be true due to a feeling of being personally attacked. The statements in the text are also perfectly applicable to the current moment in capitalism and therefore the connection can easily be made by the reader that changes do indeed need to be made in the present historical moment before it is too late.

The text emphasizes the need for a revolutionary transformation before it is too late by describing how the society in the text had “closed that barn door the very second the horses had gotten out” and that this had been, “Too late, of course” (Robinson 139). The ease in which the negative consequences could have been avoided and the danger of waiting until it was too late is reiterated in the statement, “So despite ‘changing everything’ and decarbonizing as fast as they should have fifty years earlier, they were still cooked like bugs on a griddle” (139). The text strives to provide the reader with the opportunity to avoid the mistakes of the society depicted in the narrative by suggesting that everything should have been changed fifty years before anyone made efforts to undo the damage caused by carbon burning. The genre of science fiction is uniquely positioned to provide this warning given that it presents possible futures to its readers and allows those readers to therefore consider what might be done to avoid or achieve elements of those possible futures. The text goes further than just providing a warning to readers. The text includes an explicit reminder that this warning and others exist, thereby removing
any possibility that the reader would fail to understand that the intention of the text is to present such a warning about the environmental effects, as described in the 2140, which might occur if changes are not made. This explicit reminder that warnings, such as the one present in the text, currently exist is present in the text’s statement that, “People sometimes say that no one saw it coming, but no, wrong: they did” (140). The text explains that certain people saw it coming and warned others and were ignored. It states that “Paleoclimatologists” warned others in the explanation that, “During the Eemian period, they said, which we’ve been looking at, the world saw a temperature rise only half as big as the one we’ve just created, and rapid dramatic sea level rise followed immediately” (140). Both the extent to which these scientists warned others and the role of science fiction writers in providing readers with warnings from scientists in an effort to help citizens conceptualize and pay attention to the warnings of scientists are expressed in the text’s statement that, “They put it in bumper sticker terms: massive sea level rise sure to follow our unprecedented release of CO2! They published their papers, and shouted and waved their arms, and a few canny and deeply thoughtful sci-fi writers wrote up lurid accounts of such an eventuality, and the rest of civilization went on torching the planet like a Burning Man pyromasterpiece” (140). The clear call to action of the text is thus that people need to start paying attention to the scientists and to the science fiction writers that strive to help readers visualize possible futures based on the science discovered by such scientists.

The hypocrisy of those that would ignore the warnings of scientists and writers is emphasized when the text then states, “That’s how much those knuckleheads cared about their grandchildren, and that’s how much they believed their scientists, even though every
time they felt a slight cold coming on they ran to the nearest scientist (i.e. doctor) to seek aid” (Robinson 140). The text provides the benefit of the doubt that, “okay, you can’t really imagine a catastrophe will hit you until it does. People just don’t have that kind of mental capacity. If you did you would be stricken paralytic with fear at all times, because there are some guaranteed catastrophes bearing down on you that you aren’t going to be able to avoid (i.e. death)” (140). It explains that, “evolution has kindly given you a strategically located mental blind spot, an inability to imagine future disasters in any way you can really believe, so that you can continue to function, as pointless as that may be. It is an aporia, as the Greeks and intellectuals among us would say, a ‘not-seeing.’ So, nice. Useful. Except when disastrously bad” (140). In presenting the warnings of scientists and writers that the people did not heed in the history presented in the narrative, the fact that this was perhaps due to the inability of people to conceptualize disaster until it happens, and the danger of not being able to see such future disasters so that they can be avoided, the text presents an argument for the importance of science fiction texts given their ability to help readers visualize such future disasters through the softened psychological blow of cognitive estrangement that helps the reader to see the disaster and yet feel somewhat removed from the danger of it. The reader then becomes aware of the danger of the disaster and thus the need for revolutionary transformation and is able to consider the possible methods of revolutionary transformation that the science fiction text presents. Through this fictional format, readers are able to come to terms with the future dangers and the need for change, and, through the cognitive distance that cognitive estrangement offers, are able to more objectively consider the various methods of revolutionary transformation and whether they are viable given the reader’s current historical moment.
The need to transform the economic system is expressed not just through the warning of the environmental effects of the current system, but also through the text’s depiction of the failure of the current economic system of capitalism to do anything about the economic consequences of those environmental effects. The text states that “the people of the 2060s staggered on through the great depression that followed the First Pulse, and of course there was a crowd in that generation, a certain particular one percent of the population, that just by chance rode things out rather well” (Robinson 140-141). This reference to the “one percent” is a reference to the economic inequality caused by capitalism in which most of the wealth is owned by just one percent of the population. Added to this critique of the economic inequality of capitalism is the critique that the system of capitalism includes the element of creative destruction. The text warns that the response of the wealthy one percent is inevitably to view an environmental disaster such as a flood due to sea level rise as simply “an act of creative destruction,” which the text points out is the reaction of the upper class to “everything bad that didn’t touch them” (141). This suggests that capitalism not only provides only a small percentage with wealth, but that it also creates disasters that will be ignored as long as that same small percentage of people are not negatively affected by them. The future of the rest of the population, it is warned, will be one in which the people are told by the wealthy “to buckle down in their traces and accept the idea of austerity, meaning more poverty for the poor, and accept a police state” (141). The purpose of 2140 as one of the previously mentioned science fiction “accounts of such an eventuality” as the sea level rise and its consequences written by a “few canny and deeply thoughtful sci-fi writers” is made clear when the chapter’s narrator the citizen speaks directly to the readers to tell them that,
“those of you anxious to get back to the narrating of the antics of individual humans can skip to the next chapter, and know that any more expository rants, any more info dumps (on your carpet) from this New Yorker will be printed in red ink to warn you to skip them (not)” (139, 141). The emphasis here on the fact that the writer does “not” intend to warn the reader of any further “info dumps” for the purposes of them being skipped shows that it is the intention of the text is to ensure that people are being informed about the negative consequences of capitalism that could lead to the potential future depicted in 2140, with the hope that if readers understand the problems inherent in capitalism, then they will see the need for a revolutionary transformation, and will consider utilizing the method of revolutionary transformation that is depicted in the text (141). The “broader-minded more intellectually flexible readers” are invited “to consider why the First Pulse happened in the first place,” which suggests that, ideally, the text hopes to ensure that some readers additionally also understand exactly how the disaster described in 2140 occurred and how a similar disaster could be avoided in the reader’s own society through the same method of revolutionary transformation being applied at a stage before the potential future depicted and, instead, during the reader’s current historical moment (141).

The critique of capitalism present in the chapter continues and thus suggests to those “broader-minded more intellectually flexible readers” that capitalism was the cause of the disaster of “the First Pulse,” which furthers the text’s encouragement of revolutionary transformation (Robinson 141). The text reiterates that one of the negative consequences of the sea level rise was the disruption of the means through which goods were distributed in the global capitalist economy and that “with shipping forestalled, thus impacting world trade, the basis for that humming neoliberal global success story that had
done so much for so few was also thrashed” (144). This statement in the text not only serves to warn that the environmental consequences of capitalism would disrupt the economy, but it also suggests that the economy is a negative one since it “had done so much for so few,” referring to the inequality of wealth distribution, and that the method of revolutionary transformation involves disrupting the means of trade that capitalism relies on (144). The suggestion that the economy is an unfair one is made not only in pointing out that only a small percentage benefit, but also that the rest suffer under the system, as indicated by the statement, “Never had so much been done to so many by so few!” (144). The lack of support for those not of the wealthy one percent within the economic system of capitalism is critiqued by the text through the description of the reaction of that one percent to the Second Pulse, which was a sea level rise that was much worse than the first one. It is suggested that “everyone in that certain lucky one percent” felt “that some social experimentation at the drowned margin might let off some steam from certain irate populaces, social steam that might even accidentally innovate something useful” (145). Therefore, the rich one percent waited to “see what those crazy people did with it, and if it was good, buy it” (145). Meaning that the upper class did what they always did in capitalism when a disaster occurred, they moved away from the affected area, in this case they “moved to Denver,” and then only moved back to buy up valuable real estate once the impoverished area had recovered economically from the disaster (145). The wealthy one percent is depicted as just standing back, waiting to profit from whatever people innovated out of the ashes of the economic crisis. The text thus clearly suggests that an economic system that consistently avoids helping the majority of the period during times of economic disaster is not a desirable system and consequently
encourages revolutionary transformation. That such a transformation is the responsibility of the readers is made clear in the statement that ends the chapter that, “History is humankind trying to get a grip. Obviously not easy. But it could go better if you would pay a little more attention to certain details, like for instance your planet. Enough with the I told you sos! Back to our doughty heroes and heroines!” (145). The chapter transitions back to the narrative of the specific characters of 2140, but not before reminding the reader that he or she should be paying “more attention” and that the writer is providing “I told you sos” to the readers, which suggests that the descriptions in the text of the negative consequences of capitalism were and still are avoidable if the reader pays attention to the warnings of the text (145). The science fiction text is using its ability to deliver “I told you so” from the future to wake people up in the present to take action before it is truly too late (145).

The text transitions from the more global cognitive mapping of capitalism’s negative consequences to the more focused mapping of capitalism’s negative consequences for the specific characters of the text’s narrative. The warning of the previous chapter that the wealthy one percent moves away and watches to see if anything profitable comes from the disasters brought on by capitalism before buying back up any resulting profitable commodities is reiterated through the explanation that this is exactly what the characters of 2140 have been experiencing in the offer that has been made to buy the co-op building. The co-op building is first established as a commodity in the statement, “Buildings are commodities,” and then Charlotte explains that she has heard about “the recapture of the intertidal by global capital” (Robinson 155-156). It is thus suggested that Charlotte fears that the offer to buy the building is therefore related to the
efforts of global capital to buy back the area of the intertidal now that it has again become
profitable, and the reader finds out throughout the course of the narrative that this is in
fact what the offer to buy the building is about. The wealthy one percent had moved away
from the intertidal when disaster struck, so now, since “you’ve got to own before you can
sell,” they must convince those that own the co-op building to sell to them so that they
can then turn around and sell the building for a profit (180). Using the narrative of the
text to depict this critique of capitalists within the storyline of the characters in the
chapter right after the more global description of this practice in the citizen’s chapter
furthers the text’s encouragement of revolutionary transformation.

The narrative continues its critique of capitalism through the characters of Mutt
and Jeff. The dialogue between these two characters continues to be used to explain the
negative consequences of capitalism. Jeff explains to Mutt that the wealthy one percent
are, “Pretending there were shortages and terrorists and pitting us against each other
while they took ninety-nine percent of everything” and Mutt emphasizes these to be all
things that are being done by that wealthy one percent under capitalism in his response to
Jeff when he states, “Don’t enumerate the crimes of the ruling class, please. I know them
already” (Robinson 189). Mutt’s quote references the “ruling class,” thus cognitively
mapping capitalism by characterizing the one percent of the population that has taken the
majority of the wealth from capitalism as the ruling class (189). The idea that the wealthy
class is the ruling class highlights the negative consequence of capitalism that there is an
inequality of wealth and the class conflict inherent in capitalism as established by class
theory. Raju J. Das explains, in his text Marxist Class Theory for a Skeptical World, the
inequality of wealth and the class conflict inherent in capitalism. He states that, “The
conflict between the capitalist class and the working class is not merely that workers receive low wages and capitalists make high profits, although this is true” (Das 586). He clarifies that, “The conflict is over the fact that they have to offer themselves for sale to a class of people who control the means of production and exchange, and the way the means of production are used” (586-587). Having highlighted the negative consequence of capitalism that there is an inequality of wealth and the class conflict inherent in capitalism as established by class theory, the dialogue of Mutt and Jeff thus encourages revolutionary transformation. For, as Das explains in his text, “A class theory of capitalism” is one that “unpacks the fundamental mechanisms of the capitalist class relation” and “also points to the possibility and necessity of its abolition” (586). The dialogue of Mutt and Jeff thus successfully suggests this necessity through its critique of capitalism and the text 2140 will successfully suggest the possibility of achieving an alternative to capitalism as well through its enactment of a successful revolutionary transformation, as will be demonstrated in chapters three and four of this dissertation.

2140 switches back, after this critique of capitalism through the characters of Mutt and Jeff, to presenting the general information about the historical context of the society depicted in 2140 through the chapter from the citizen. This chapter begins with the claim by Maurizio Lazzarato that, “Private money and public (or state) money work together and to the same end. Their actions have been absolutely complementary during the crisis, aimed at safeguarding the markets for which they are ready to sacrifice society, social cohesion, and democracy” (Lazzarato qtd. in Robinson 204). Having established the wealthy ruling class as seeking wealth at the expense of others in the recent narrative involving the offer to buy the co-op building and the reminder by Jeff and Mutt of the
crimes of the ruling class, the text then presents through this quote how capitalism has resulted in the state being controlled by capitalism in that it protects the economic system at the expense of the citizens of the state. The chapter then establishes that the inequality of wealth that results in the wealthy ruling class is an inevitable result of the system of capitalism, thus encouraging a revolutionary transformation away from such a system.

The citizen provides the historical context that in “the twenty-second century” that ruling class of “the top one percent owned fully eighty percent of the world’s wealth” and clarifies that, “This remarkable wealth distribution was just a result of the logical progression of the ordinary workings of capitalism, following its overarching operating principle of capital accumulation at the highest rate of return” (Robinson 205). The connection of the economic inequality to the “principle of capital accumulation” establishes that such inequality of wealth is a result of the construction of the system of capitalism and therefore argues for the need for a change to allow for a more equal distribution of wealth (205).

The chapter continues to point out critiques of capitalism through a focus on how capitalism moves on once the working class is no longer willing to provide capitalists with so much of their labor at such a low wage. The text explains that capitalists’ ability to achieve “The highest rate of return comes during periods of rapid development” during which there is also access to “a fairly stable and somewhat educated populace, ambitious for themselves and willing to sacrifice for their children by working hard for low wage” (Robinson 205). This highlights the need according to the principle of accumulation to be able to continually find places to develop, since the “rates of profit drop as workers expect higher wages and benefits, and the local market saturates as everyone gets the
basic necessities” (205). The expectation of workers to work for low wages and the need for continued development are shown when “at that point capital moves on to the next geocultural opportunity” (205). Capitalism is cognitively mapped for the reader through this description of how capitalism works, moving from “region to region, opportunity to opportunity” and the text reveals how capitalism strives to make opaque that the reason for moving on is simply to ensure that the highest rate of return is always possible and that this opacity is sustained by capitalism always having “an encouraging motto to mark the remorseless migration of capital from an ex-highest rate of return to the next primed site” (206).

This tactic of capitalism of making bad things sound positive is further emphasized by the text’s presentation of the terms used to describe the process of capitalism that start with the usual terms being used in the historical moment of capitalism at the time of the text publication and then moving on in the list to terms with more negative connotation that highlight the negative consequences of capitalism. The text states, “So in that process—call it globalization, neoliberal capitalism, the Anthropocene, the water boarding, what have you—the Second Pulse became just an unusually clear signal that it was time for capital to move on” (Robinson 206). The terms of “globalization” and “neoliberal capitalism” start the list, being terms used to describe the process of capitalism at the time of the text’s publication, but then the list continues with the term “Anthropocene” to allude to the negative environmental effect of human activity that has caused climate change and then finally ending with the term “water boarding” to suggest that the process of capitalism is actually a form of torture enacted by capitalism on the people and the planet in that it causes inequality of wealth and that it
could cause the sea level rise that caused the First Pulse and Second Pulse described in the possible future depicted by the text (206).

The text blends the fictional possible future of the Second Pulse, which was a significant sea level rise and the resulting flooding, with the historical context that the reader can relate to from the reader’s own historical past. This is done to encourage revolutionary transformation by showing the negative consequences of capitalism, such as the 2008 financial crash already in historical record, and depicting a possible future of sea level rise and resulting additional economic crisis that could be avoided by such a revolutionary transformation. The possibility of economic crisis caused by sea level rise and the projection that capitalism will continue to act as it always has in a manner that only continues such crises and the inequality of wealth is expressed in the historical context presented by the text. It states that the Second Pulse “flood caused an unprecedented loss of assets and a cessation of trade, stimulating a substantial recession” (Robinson 207). The cycle of crisis inherent in capitalism and the response to this economic crisis is depicted as inevitable and constant under capitalism in the statement that, “As always in moments like this, which keep happening every generation to everyone’s immense surprise, the big private banks and investment firms went to the big central banks, meaning the governments of the world, and demanded to be saved from the impacts of the floods on their activities” (207). The point that the state is controlled by capitalism under the system of capitalism is yet again reiterated by the text when it describes that, “The governments, being long since subsidiaries of the banks anyway, caved again, and bailed out the banks one hundred cents on the dollar, incurring public debt so huge that it could not be paid off in the remaining lifetime of the universe” (207).
The text dispels any possibility of the state being able to remain autonomous and for the people in a capitalist system with the stated conclusion expressed through a possible future that, “Ten years after the end of the Second Pulse it looked like the centuries-long wrestling match between state and capital had ended in a decisive victory for capital” (207). The explanation for why this would happen is that, “the bailout of banks following the Second Pulse crash was huge” and it is established that, “They always are” by referencing the historical past of “The bailout of the 2008 crash, which served as the model for the two that followed it,” and “was calculated by historians at somewhere between 5 and 15 trillion dollars” (207). This historical context of the 2008 crash is used as evidence for why the proposed future is a possible one, given the track record of capitalism and the actions of the state when faced with the consequences of capitalism. The bailouts of banks are described as the state “rescuing finance from itself,” thus establishing that such economic crises are inherent aspects of the system of capitalism and therefore also establishing the need for revolutionary transformation (207).

In order to ensure that the reader understands how dangerous capitalism is, the text continues with its barrage of the negative aspects of capitalism by reminding the reader that “wars too are good for finance” and thus suggesting that capitalism therefore encourages war since wars are economically beneficial (Robinson 207). The manner in which wars are therefore purposefully constructed is suggested and the danger of this for the future if a revolutionary transformation is not embraced by the reader is also highlighted in the statement that, “wars too are good for finance, and a few more happened in the twenty-second century, sure” because “[h]undreds of millions of people were suddenly refugees, and that’s a lot of terrorists to suppress” (207). The statement
that wars are good for finance of course suggests that the system of capitalism would therefore encourage wars, but the statement that “refugees” are viewed as or depicted as “terrorists to suppress” suggests that capitalism is also willing to start wars under false pretenses in order to gain the financial benefit of war (207). Such a system is thus depicted as dangerous and unjust and revolutionary transformation thus encouraged. The sense that this is the potential future to be expected and that this is based on the author’s knowledge of the current historical moment is established in the statement that, “This was a continuation of the surveillance state that had been growing through the twenty-first century” (207). The need for change before the possible future depicted is realized is therefore further emphasized. The text goes on to explain that, “Governments, being hollowed out by debt, couldn’t properly fund the security adequate to deal with potential opposition” and that the result of this was that “private security armies stepped in to fill the need” (207-208). The need for security is explained in a way that also reiterates the inequality of wealth caused by capitalism, for the text points out, in referencing the wealthy one percent and the need filled by private security companies, that, “when you are a small minority and you own the majority’s wealth, security is naturally a primary consideration” (208). The text then references the concept of the state monopoly on violence, which Max Weber described as “the monopoly” of “a state” on “the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory,” to point yet again to the fact that the state is controlled by capitalism (Weber 78). The text explains that, “This new industry seemed to challenge a principal that used to be called the state monopoly on violence,” but then takes that opportunity to reinforce the extent to which the state is controlled by capitalism by stating, “but then again if finance had taken over the state, possibly the state was in
effect already a kind of private security force, so that there was no conflict there, but just an infilling of a market, a supply fulfilling a demand” (Robinson 208).

In addition to suggesting the state is controlled by capitalism, the text also reveals the flawed logic of the government counting on capitalism to help improve the economic situation in times of economic crisis. The text states, “Governments too left the coastlines, relieved to be done with relief” and “they declared” that “[f]urther salvage and repair was a job for market forces” (Robinson 208). The flawed logic is then revealed in the statement that, “in fact market forces proved not to be interested” because “The drowned zones were not only not the highest rates of return, they were the lowest; they were labeled “development sinks,” meaning places where no matter how much money you pour in, there is never a profit to be made” (208). Capitalism is demonstrated to fail to be helpful in times of economic crisis since markets are not interested in what is not profitable and thus the area is abandoned and the community continues to suffer under the economic crisis that capitalism created in the first place. The current historical example of Africa is referenced as an example of an area that “for centuries now” has been labeled a “development sink” and that this has caused this “prophecy” to be “self-fulfilled,” meaning that Africa has been forced to endure the consequences of economic crises caused by capitalism without any help from capitalism (209). Again the text uses a circumstance that is true in the current historical moment of capitalism at the time of the publication of the text to provide evidence of the negative consequences of capitalism that are documented and to suggest that those are being used to make logical assumptions about a future state of the world if revolutionary transformation does not occur. At this point, the text has presented, especially through the citizen chapters, the negative
consequences of capitalism in great detail early on to establish the reason for why the narrative then begins to depict a revolutionary transformation enacted by the text’s characters in the society of the year 2140. The purpose of these earlier critiques of capitalism is therefore so that the reader will see the need for such a revolution and be consequently more invested in considering how it was done and whether such a method would be viable in the reader’s own current historical moment.

The need for the text to provide the reader with cognitive mapping of capitalism is suggested through yet another chapter from the citizen that highlights the way in which so much of capitalism cannot be seen and how this opacity is the nature of the system, thereby making the system a dangerous and undesirable one. The chapter explains that there are “Dark pools of money, of financial activities” that are “Unregulated and unreported” and that “because of this situation, much of the movement of capital therefore now happens out of sight, unregulated, in a world of its own” (Robinson 318). The way in which this causes the system of capitalism to be even more opaque than it was previously is that, “some people, when they want to, can pull some of this vaporized money out of the dark pools and reliquefy it, then solidify it by buying things in the real economy. In the real world” (318). The text explains that, “This being the case, if you think you know how the world works, think again. You are deceived. You don’t know; you can’t see it, and the whole story has never been told to you” (318-319). The point here is that citizens are unable to see the totality of capitalism and they are not being told everything about how capitalism works. However, the point is not that capitalism is understood by some but not all, but rather that capitalism is an unknowable system. The text clarifies, “But if you then think furthermore that the bankers and financiers of this
world know more than you do–wrong again. No one knows this system” (319).

The system of capitalism is characterized as something that is outside the control of anyone, which suggests that it is something very dangerous. It is depicted as something that was always opaque, for it is stated that it “It grew in the dark” and is “an accidental megastructure” (Robinson 319). The extent to which it continues to grow, unchecked due to the inability to control it, is expressed in the statement, “No single individual can know any one of these megastructures, much less the mega-megastructure that is the global system entire, the system of all systems” (319). The lesson here is that no one can see the totality of the system of capitalism, which provides all the more reason for science fiction texts such as this one to provide readers with the means of cognitively mapping at least parts of capitalism so that they can better understand the dangers of such an unknowable system and work toward a more transparent alternative. The text does not claim to be able to provide a complete cognitive map of the totality of capitalism, for it states that “no matter the pseudo-profundities of one’s prose style, it’s a system that can’t be known. It’s too big, too dark, too complex” (319). Thus, it is not a system that can be fully described in a text or even fully known, but there is a usefulness in providing elements of cognitive mapping to a reader to ensure that this dangerous element of capitalism as an opaque and unknowable system is made clear to the reader through revealing aspects of the system that were previously unknown to the reader and also through showing that even through those revelations it is not possible for the text to fully reveal the totality of capitalism and that, through this reveal, it is made clear to the reader that it is a system that no one can fully know and thus dangerous and undesirable as an economic system.

The major economic crisis of the current historical moment of capitalism, at the
time of the text’s publication, of the crash of 2008 is once again referenced within a citizen chapter to reiterate the undesirable nature of the economic system, and this time the reference is made through the mention of “HFM, the anonymous hedge fund manager who spilled *Diary of a Very Bad Year*” (Robinson 319). The system of capitalism is criticized through the observation that when HFM “understood” the system, “he left” his job (319). 2140 thus suggests that HFM left his job due to the conclusions he came to about the negative consequences of the system of capitalism. The economic crisis example is yet again used as evidence against capitalism, but this time within the narrative of the individual characters themselves rather than the more globalized information found within the citizen chapters. In this instance, Franklin, who works in finance, is used by the text to explain the crash of 2008 from a place of authority on the subject through his characterization as a person who is successful in the financial field to ensure that the critique of capitalism inherent in the information provided by Franklin is seen as valid by the reader. The text uses the example of the crash of 2008 to critique capitalism with the example of an economic crisis caused by capitalism and to show that if changes are not made that these economic crises will continue and the negative impact citizens experienced due to the economic crisis will continue to occur since the system of capitalism will have the same response to the crisis each time unless a revolutionary transformation occurs. The crash of 2008 is also used as inspiration to create a method for revolutionary transformation that uses Franklin’s knowledge of finance to ensure that finance is put in the hands of the people in order to benefit the people, which is a method of revolutionary transformation and a part of the narrative that will be discussed in chapter three of this dissertation.
Franklin opens the discussion of the crash with the statement that, “the classic example of a confidence crash is 2008” in that the “bubble had to do with mortgages held by people who had promised to pay who couldn’t really pay” (Robinson 347). When the individuals holding the mortgages “defaulted, investors everywhere ran for the door” and “Everyone was trying to sell at once, but no one wanted to buy” (347). The “Financial firms even stopped making contracted payments” since they “didn’t have the money in hand to pay everyone they owed, and there was a good chance the entity they were supposed to pay wouldn’t be there next week, so why waste money paying them just because payment was due?” (347). When this happened, “no one knew if any paper was worth anything, so everyone freaked and they went into free fall” (348). With this crash in confidence in the economy explained, Franklin then explains what the government response was to this economic crisis, and through including this description of the response the text reminds the reader that this is what happened in the reader’s historical past.

The text also warns that this would likely be the future response to a similar economic crisis if capitalism continues, and no revolutionary transformation occurs, through Franklin’s account that the same thing happened during the First Pulse, Second Pulse, and that he expected it would happen again as well. He presents the historical account of the government response to the 2008 crash, which was that “The government poured in enough money to allow some” of the financial firms “to buy the others, and it kept pouring in money until the banks felt more secure and could get back to business as usual” (Robinson 348). The wording “business as usual” is a reminder that the economic system was not transformed after the economic crisis in order to prevent a repeat of the
crisis under capitalism (348). The critique of the system of capitalism and how the citizens are forced to endure economic crises that are a burden to all those who are not the wealthy one percent is included in the statement that, “The taxpayers were forced to pay off the banks’ lost bets at one hundred cents on the dollar, a deal that was made because the top people at the Fed and the Treasury were right out of Goldman Sachs, and their instinct was to protect finance” (348). The suggestion here is that the focus of capitalism will always be the system of capitalism and not the people, since finance was protected at the expense of the taxpayers. Franklin also explains that the government “nationalized General Motors, a car company, and kept it running until it was back on its feet and paid off its debt to the people,” which will be important in the explanation of possible methods of a revolutionary transformation as described in chapter three, since this method of nationalizing finance is later used in the narrative to benefit the people and transform the economy (348). Yet, during the crash of 2008, the government was so focused on protecting finance and keeping things the same that to “the banks and big investment firms they just gave a pass” and didn’t even require them to pay back their debts as they required of General Motors (348). The criticism suggested here is that capitalism and the response under capitalism to economic crisis continues to widen the economic gap between the wealthy one percent and everyone else.

The critique of capitalism is deepened by the further suggestion that economic crises will continue to occur under capitalism. Franklin explains, “And then on it went, the same as it had before, until the crash of 2061 in the First Pulse” at which point Charlotte asks, “And what happened then?” to which Franklin replies, “They did it all over again” (Robinson 348). The intimation is that this will continue to be the way that
the government will handle it unless a revolutionary transformation occurs that changes the template that the government followed in 2008 and that the text is arguing is the template the government will follow in every economic crisis unless a change is made to the economic system itself. In response to Charlotte’s reaction of, “Why why why?” Franklin replies, “I don’t know. Because it worked? Because they got away with it? Anyway, since then it’s like they have the template for what to do. A script to follow. So they did it again after the Second Pulse. And now round four may be coming” (348). Not only does this emphasize that the government will simply continue to react to these economic crises in a way that takes money from the people to save the businesses or money of the wealthy one percent, it also critiques the propensity of economic crisis under capitalism. The manner in which capitalism causes economic crisis is further argued through Franklin’s comment, “And now round four may be coming. Or whatever the number, because bubbles go all the way back to Dutch tulips, or Babylon” (348). The reference “to Dutch tulips” refers to “the Dutch tulipmania of 1634-37” which has been considered an example of a financial “bubble” (Robinson 348; Garber 535, 539). The reference to Babylon in addition to the reference to tulipmania makes the point that capitalism has been around a long time, for “basic elements of what became Western capitalism” can be traced back to “Babylon,” and has been causing economic crises a long time, and therefore it would be reasonable to conclude that it may continue to do so and that an alternative should thus be considered (Neal 8).

The need for an alternative economic system is reinforced through the character of Amelia as well as she listens to a recording of a lecture by “her undergraduate advisor at the University of Wisconsin, an evolution and ecology theorist named Lucky Jeff”
(Robinson 360). This theorist explains that, “the idea that more is better” is “the rule that underlies economic theory, and in practice it means profit” (360). The critique of the economic system of capitalism that has this as the main rule is found in his observation and warning that, “It’s supposed to allow everyone to maximize their own value. In practice it’s put us into a mass extinction event. Persist in it, and it could wreck everything” (360). This is a powerful statement against capitalism and highlights how capitalism’s focus on profit and its principle of accumulation, which means that it always needs opportunity for growth for profit, has resulted in a depletion of natural resources and global warming and other negative environmental effects that have resulted in a mass extinction event.

The obvious next question, and the one that the text has Lucky Jeff ask and then provide possible answers for in the recording of his lecture is, “So what’s a better master rule, if we have to have one?” (Robinson 360). The first possible answer that Lucky Jeff provides is the rule “Greatest good of the greatest number is one possibility” (360). He does provide the caveat that, “If you remember that the greatest number is 100%, and includes everything, that one works pretty well” (360). He also states the important reminder that, “There are some bad interpretations of it, but that will be true of any rule” (360). The importance of having a starting point when considering revising an economic system and the possibility of using one even if it is not yet perfected is expressed in his expression of this rule as one that is “serviceable as a first approximation” (360). He also provides another possible rule and labels it as “One I like better” (360). He explains that, “It’s one of the sayings of Aldo Leopold, so it’s sometimes called the Leopoldian land ethic” and that the rule is “‘[w]hat’s good is what’s good for the land’” (360). Lucky Jeff
clarifies what adopting this rule would look like by stating, “Instead of working for profit, we do whatever is good for the land” (361). He then makes an argument for why this would be preferable to the current system of capitalism’s number one rule of making a profit by explaining that, “That way we could hope to pass along a good place to the generations after us” (360).

The text of *2140* that presents these ideas through the lecture recording that Amelia is listening to remains a critical utopia by not providing just one answer to this question as though there is one knowable solution, but instead having Lucky Jeff suggest multiple possible answers and reminding the audience that no one rule is flawless or always used correctly in practice. This fits with Moylan’s conception of the critical utopia’s “awareness of the limitations of the utopian tradition” demonstrated in moments like this one in *2140* when the elements within the text, such as the statements of Lucky Jeff in the recording of the lecture, “reject utopia as blueprint while preserving it as dream” (Moylan, *Demand* 10-11). The concept of utopia as blueprint is rejected by Lucky Jeff’s observation that “there are some bad interpretations of it, but that will be true of any rule” (Robinson 360). Yet, utopia is preserved “as dream” through the utopian impulse of Lucky Jeff to consider alternative rules to the current one of “more is better” (360). This process of the text presenting possibly viable ideas for revolutionary transformation and possible methods for how to enact those to achieve change are concepts to be explored in chapters three and four of this dissertation, but it is useful to consider here that in presenting these ideas that are alternatives to the rule of profit of capitalism the text succeeds in critiquing capitalism and encouraging revolutionary transformation.
*2140* argues for revolutionary transformation by demonstrating why an alternative system is needed through a critique of the present historical moment of capitalism that is seen in both the story of the characters and in the citizen chapters that describe the history leading up to the story’s setting. The storyline of the characters is used to demonstrate not only the need of a transformation, but also the possibility of one through the process and end result of the transformation that are shown through the story of the characters and will be analyzed in chapters three and four of this dissertation. The citizen chapters carry out the important act of strengthening the need for and thus importance of what the characters are doing to work toward revolutionary transformation and the call to action of the text for readers to do the same by showing that waiting too long to enact such a revolutionary transformation can have dire and perhaps irreversible consequences.

The chapter titled “the citizen,” which is another chapter narrated by the citizen, in part six of the text, emphasizes that waiting for change to come about without revolution will be waiting too long (Robinson 377). It makes this point with a thought experiment that strives to hypothesize the most likely scenario if people did not actively seek revolutionary transformation, and the conclusion of this thought experiment is that people would wait too long to make any changes without a revolutionary action because they would not see it affecting them personally until it was too late to actually make necessary changes that would save the planet and the people living on it. In this chapter, the text refers back to the point made in the chapter titled “the citizen,” in part three of the text, that citizens did not try to make changes until too late in the thought experiment that is the text of *2140* (139). In this section, the focus is on the fact that there were plenty of technologies that citizens could have switched to that would have reduced the amount
of carbon burned and thus the effects of climate change, but that citizens did not make these changes until climate change became so bad that their food supply was affected and they saw that humans may become extinct. The call to action that is suggested by this chapter is that citizens should enact these changes before things get so bad that it affects them personally, so that a great deal of famine and death can be avoided.

The reference back to the discussion in the citizen chapter in part three that discussed how people didn’t listen to scientists and science fiction authors until it was too late is found in the statement, “Closing the barn door after the horses have escaped: of course. That’s what people do” (Robinson 377). The suggestion here is that it is human nature to wait until it is too late, which highlights the need for science fiction texts such as 2140 to remind people that they must enact revolutionary transformation. The text reminds readers that what is at stake is the existence of humanity through the statement, “In this case the horses in question happen to be the Four Horses of the Apocalypse, traditionally named Conquest, War, Famine, and Death” (377). The propensity of people to ignore problems until they directly affect them is seen as the text explains that, “certain scientists pointed out that actually a runaway greenhouse effect could have quite remarkable consequences, like the kind that Venus had experienced a few billion years before, so that the Four Horses already unleashed could exponentially swell and devour much of the biosphere” and that this meant “the mass extinction event already initiated could possibly include among its victim species even one certain Homo sapiens oblivious,” but that “this was generally scoffed at” (377).

The importance of science fiction due to its ability to provide the reader with the experience of cognitive estrangement becomes highlighted here once again, for if people
wait to enact change until they are directly affected, then the thought experiment of the 2140 text shows that it will be too late to avoid catastrophic effects. Readers therefore need to be able to see those effects and cognitively experience what it means for it to directly affect them without waiting for this to be the case in reality, thus providing the opportunity for the reader to then carry out revolutionary transformation in their current historical moment and consequently avoid at least some of the more terrible consequences of waiting too long to carry out change. The narrative describes how the catalyst for change was “the food panic of 2074” that caused “price jumps, hoarding, hunger, famine, and death” and resulted in “the sudden awareness that even food…was made uncertain by the circumstances thrust on them by climate change” (Robinson 377-78). The fact that an alternative to the negative consequences of the current historical moment’s economic system is indeed possible is made evident in the explanation that, “Carbon-neutral and even carbon-negative technologies were all over the place waiting to be declared economical relative to the world-blasting carbon-burning technologies that had up to that point been determined by the market to be “less expensive” (378). This highlights not only that such technologies already exist, and that more could perhaps be developed as part of revolutionary transformation, but that the impediment is not science and is instead the current economic system that places value incorrectly on profit rather than on protecting the survival of humanity.

2140 continues to point out the negative consequences that have occurred due to capitalism in order to further the argument that change is necessary. During Charlotte’s discussion with her ex-husband Lawrence Jackman, also known as Larry, the historical examples of “the 2008 collapse” and “the Great Depression” are used as reminders of the
financial crises that come with capitalism (Robinson 433). Charlotte explains how “Bernanke had studied the Great Depression” and had therefore learned how to avoid some of the worst consequences that had occurred during that time (433). She explains that, “He threw money into the breach and they crawled back from the brink,” which resulted in “only a recession rather than a crash” (433). Charlotte reminds Larry that, “one of the things they did then was nationalize GM” (433). Through this reminder, Charlotte illustrates the importance of considering the past in order to understand the need for change and of using elements of past efforts in the creation of the process of revolutionary transformation, which Charlotte and the others in the story do by taking inspiration from the government’s nationalizing GM during the 2008 financial crisis and creating their own revolutionary process that uses an element of this past action, which will be examined in chapter three of this dissertation. During this same dialogue, Charlotte reminds Larry that a negative aspect of the financial system of capitalism is that, “It’s a fragile system, based on mutual trust that it’s sane, and as soon as that fiction breaks down, everyone sees it is crazy and no one can trust anyone” (433). It seems logical based on this that the system would need to be changed to one that is not so fragile.

The text strengthens Charlotte’s argument about a negative consequence of capitalism being a financial system that is structured poorly through another chapter narrated by the citizen. The citizen explains that, “the entire capitalist economy resembles in its basic structure either a Ponzi scheme or a bundle of Ponzi schemes” (Robinson 497). Pointing out that the structure of the financial system of capitalism is the same structure as Ponzi schemes, which society made illegal, argues that capitalism is not a
desirable system. The structure of the system is revealed as problematic, given that crises are a part of the system and that the system resembles something society deemed illegal in another context. The text then goes on to establish that the system also fails in practice to protect citizens during the crises that are a part of capitalism through the narration that, “after every crisis of the last century, Charlotte thought, or maybe forever, capital had tightened the noose around the neck of labor” (502). This statement is based on research available at the time of publication of the text itself and thus the text refers to “crisis capitalism” so that the reader can understand that this is a phenomenon that is a part of the historical moment of the time of publication of the text and is relevant to the call to action of the text that calls for revolutionary transformation (502).

The reference to “crisis capitalism” refers to the fact that “the capitalist system is inherently unstable and crisis-prone” (Harvey, Limits 103). The text reminds the reader that “crisis capitalism” was always “shoving the boot on the neck harder at every opportunity” and that “it was a studied phenomenon,” so that “to anyone looking at history, it was impossible to deny” and that “it was the pattern” (Robinson 502). Given that it is something that is continually happening, the message is clear that change is necessary to break the pattern. Otherwise, things will just keep getting harder for laborers since capitalism has a cycle of crises and the aforementioned pattern establishes that things get worse for laborers each time. Laborers just get exploited more and more each time to allow profit for capitalists, as capitalists intensify the exploitation of workers to reduce the rate of falling profit, and this exemplifies the need for revolutionary transformation that will stop such a trend, since it has been a historical trend that hasn’t stopped by itself or been stopped yet by others. The text creates a visual of capitalism
“shoving the boot on the neck harder at every opportunity” that suggests both this intensification of exploitation and the fact that any fight against capitalism had been met with a strong and, at times, militarized response. A way to avoid repeated militarized response would be to put the economy in the hands of the laborers so that the heavy response of the one percent can be better avoided. If the power is put peacefully, through legislation, into the hands of the laborers, then there’d be less need for violent fighting over the power that comes with control of the economy. This method of revolutionary transformation is carried out later in the text by the characters of the narrative, as will be analyzed in chapters three and four of this dissertation. The call to action of the text for revolutionary transformation is thus taken up by the characters in the narrative as an example to be followed. When Franklin says to Charlotte, “So you want to reverse a ten-thousand year trend” of “the rich get richer and the poor get poorer,” she takes up this call by stating, “Yes. Let’s reverse that.” (505). Later, other characters also answer a call to action for revolutionary transformation made by Amelia.

This call to action by Amelia is made to her viewers after she presents an even more tangible illustration of the failure of the capitalist system. Amelia points out to the listeners of her show the ridiculousness of not being able to use the empty towers owned by the rich, who “own about a dozen of these places around the world,” to house the refugees who are homeless due to the increased flooding from the very climate change caused by the capitalist system that has made the owners of those towers rich enough to own dozens of properties that remain empty when they are not staying in them (Robinson 526). Amelia explains to her viewers, “So really these towers are just assets. They’re money. They’re like big tall purple gold bars. They’re everything except housing” (526).
She then highlights the ridiculousness of this by showing her viewers “Central Park” which is “a refugee camp now” and is “likely to be that for weeks and months to come. Maybe a year. People will be sleeping in the park” (526). This deliberate contrast of images, of the empty towers of the rich which are owned by the rich only to make them richer and not to be used and the park that is filled with people sleeping outside because they have nowhere else to go due to the climate change caused by capitalism, demonstrates the way in which the capitalist system only makes the rich richer and the poor poorer and exemplifies why it is thus necessary to establish a system that doesn’t cause this to happen or allow this to happen. The imagery not only makes the point that this is illogical, but also shows the need for revolutionary transformation since the rich are clearly not going to adequately share their excess even when crisis occurs as exemplified by when the “private security” hired by the rich owners of the towers are tasked with keeping the refugees out of the “private property” of the empty towers (513, 515). Therefore, the populace must create change.

Amelia’s call to action to her viewers makes clear the need for citizens to take action in the historical moment of capitalism in the narrative and in the historical moment of capitalism in which 2140 was published. Amelia states, “I’m sick of the rich. I just am. I’m sick of them running this whole planet for themselves. They’re wrecking it! So I think we should take it back, and take care of it. And take care of each other as part of that” (Robinson 526). The point that Amelia makes in her call to action about the rich “wrecking” the planet refers to how capitalism is destroying the environment, which the text has established in part through the example of the flooding in New York City being caused by the rise in sea level caused by capitalism. (526). Capitalism’s “disregard for the
consequences” of the “carbon-burning technologies” it utilized as it sought an ever-increasing level of accumulation caused a “massive sea level rise” to occur as a result of the “melting” of “ice” due to the “unprecedented release of CO₂” and the resultant “global warming” due to the “greenhouse effect” (139-141, 378). The existing flooding in New York City is then made worse in the narrative by a hurricane that subsequently causes refugees needing a place to stay to form “a refugee camp” in “Central Park” (526). Amelia’s call to take back the planet is a call to revolution and it is one that, as will be examined in chapter three of this dissertation, is taken up by the citizens in the society of the narrative of 2140.

The path of action for revolutionary transformation that involves politics and legislation is the main focus of this narrative. Yet, the revolutionary action of citizens on the street is briefly mentioned in order to further explain why systemic change is needed, for the revolutionary actions of the citizens on the street are very brief and the text suggests that this is due to the hegemonic nature of current capitalism that makes revolutionary transformation so important. The boy Stefan asks Hexter why the people didn’t just “take over the uptown towers” (Robinson 546). Hexter responds, “They tried and it didn’t work” (546). The boy Roberto then asks, “What if they kept trying every day?” (546). Hexter explains that “it doesn’t occur to them” because of “hegemony” (546). Hexter tell the boys that hegemony is “the agreement of people to being dominated, without guns pointed in your face all the time. Even if you’re treated badly. You just go along with it” (547). The narrative has Roberto respond to this with, “But that’s stupid” (547). Hexter explains, “we’re social animals” and thus Roberto concludes, “we’re all stupid” and “like zombies” (547). Hexter then uses the 2004 movie Vampires
*Versus Zombies* to explain hegemony. He describes how, in the movie, “vampires fly around sucking the blood of working people” and that “when the workers are drained they turn into zombies” (547). The narrative uses this film to describe the exploitation of workers by capitalists, which are symbolized in the film by vampires. The workers becoming zombies symbolize the detrimental effects of the exploitation. The vampires sucking the blood of the workers also symbolizes the process of creating hegemony and the moment when the workers turn into zombies symbolizes hegemony being achieved since the workers have become unthinking zombies. The imagery of workers as zombies signifies the extent to which hegemony means that citizens will not question the system of which they are a part. The process of accumulation of capitalism is also adeptly portrayed by this film, for Hexter explains that once the workers turn into zombies, “the vampires fly somewhere else and drop in on a new population, leaving behind the zombies, to stagger around dead at that point” (547). This shows not only the effectiveness of hegemony that allows a system to control others without actively policing them, but also the extent to which capitalism sucks up the labor and other resources of a population and then moves on callously to the next profitable population without regard for the consequences to the previous group.

The narrative focuses on how hegemony works to critique the hegemony of capitalism and to show that there is an alternative to the hegemony of capitalism, as is made evident by the details included from the film and the way that the narrative has Hexter use the film’s example to discuss hegemony. The narrative’s focus on how hegemony works to critique capitalism and to show that there is an alternative to the hegemony of capitalism is made clearer still when Roberto reacts to the zombies being
left to “stagger around dead” by stating, “So that would be their h-ge-money” (Robinson 547). Hexter confirms that this is in fact what the film shows by replying with the positive reinforcement, “You are so good” and then elaborating that in the film, “more and more people get their blood sucked and turn into zombies” (547). This depicts a situation that appears hopeless, given the widespread hegemony symbolized by the fact that “they’re almost all zombies,” but Hexter points out that “then the zombies decide it’s time to revolt,” which suggests that it is still possible to achieve revolutionary transformation despite hegemony (547). This is an important reminder of utopian hope within the narrative that change is possible and it foreshadows the revolutionary transformation that the characters of 2140 succeed in creating. The narrative is careful to portray that such a transformation is a process that takes hard work, but it also ensures that it clearly delivers the message that such transformation is also very possible due to the number of workers outnumbering the number of capitalists. The narrative does both of these things as Hexter describes the revolution of the zombies as seen in the film. Hexter explains that the revolution depicted in the movie is difficult for the zombies because they are “very slow” and yet the vampires find it difficult to defend against the zombies because “there’s no new blood for them to suck either, so the vampires are slowing down too” (547). This suggests that it would be beneficial to a successful revolution if workers could protect against new groups being indoctrinated into the hegemony of capitalism and that capitalism’s need to always be accumulating could be used against it. The fact that the vampires, or capitalists, can be weakened through this lack of new blood suggests the hope that a revolutionary transformation is possible. This point is made most powerfully by the image that Hexter describes from the movie of how
“the zombies just kind of crush the vampires under the weight of their detached limbs” (547). This image supports the theory that workers have the power to create revolution since there are more of them than there are capitalists due to the need capitalist have of workers producing the goods that they then sell for profit. The point that revolution is possible is thus made. The point that it is needed is then quickly also made by the dialogue of the characters of the narrative. Roberto says, “I want to see that” and Stefan chimes in with, “Me too!” and Hexter echoes with, “Me too” (547). The goal of revolutionary transformation through crushing the current hegemonic system is thus made clear through the example of the film and the characters’ reactions to it. Vampires, symbolizing capitalists, work people until they can’t work them any harder, while manipulating those workers to instill hegemony, and then these capitalists move on to find more workers they can do the same thing to in order to ensure continued profit and a wider hegemonic population to safeguard a continuation of the system of capitalism. The negative effect of that exploitation and hegemony is seen in the workers becoming zombies that are crippled in their efforts to revolt, shown by their physical slowness in the film, but the utopian impulse is seen in their struggle to revolt despite this. The utopian hope that revolutionary transformation is still possible despite the widespread hegemony of capitalism at the time 2140 was published and at the time the film Vampires Versus Zombies was made in 2004 is shown in the depiction in the film and the inclusion of that portrayal in the novel 2140 that eventually the capitalists were weakened through the system’s need to keep growing and there being no more people to exploit. This is shown in the description of the vampires’ weakness due to their need for blood and there being no more people that they hadn’t already sucked dry. The utopian hope that
revolutionary transformation is possible is also seen in the film and its portrayal in the novel in the reality that there were more workers than capitalists and thus they were able to win, as shown in the image of the zombies rushing the vampires with the physical strength of their sheer numbers.

That change is both possible and needed is also argued through the text’s inclusion of dialogue between Charlotte and her ex-husband Larry. Charlotte meets with Larry again to discuss the economy once again, but this time it is during the time that she is running for Congress and the purpose of the meeting is to outline a plan for revolution, which will be analyzed in chapter three of this dissertation. That change is possible is suggested by both Charlotte’s action of running for Congress and the plan of action that she proposes. That change is needed is evidenced in the dialogue of the discussion. Charlotte argues during the discussion for the need for a revolution by making the point that the current system is one in which “prices are systemically low” as a “result of collusion between buyers and sellers who agree” to harm “future generations so that they can get what they want, which is cheap stuff and profits both” (Robinson 561).

Through this point, Charlotte reveals one example of the selfishness and the failure to protect the welfare of others and the planet that the current capitalist system inherently causes. Another example of this in the text is the attempts to buy the MetLife Tower, which is a cooperative in which Charlotte lives, and the sale of which Charlotte is trying to prevent throughout a majority of the narrative. The capitalists need to take advantage of opportunities of growth for profit and therefore try to buy real estate that will provide them with a profit, such as a tower like the MetLife Tower that could house multiple buyers in an area that has been built up again to be attractive to buyers after the flooding
in New York City. The issue with such a system is that this action by capitalists to try to buy such real estate would remove the autonomy that the residents have achieved for themselves by owning the building they live in. Capitalists such as Hector, who is trying to buy the building in the narrative, don’t see an issue with such a system and their role in it due to hegemony. Hector simply explains that “SuperVenice” is a “nice investment” and he tells Franklin, who confronts him about his efforts to buy the MetLife Tower, “I don’t get your dismay here” (581). In addition to the clear reality reflected in this dialogue that Hector would not ignore a good investment to allow the people to preserve the control over their own lives that they currently enjoy through owning the building as a cooperative, the text adds the element that the system has clearly encouraged someone, whether Hector or someone else, to go to the lengths of “sabotaging” the tower “to try to scare the residents into selling” (581). This makes the point that the current system is prioritizing profit over the welfare of people such as the residents who are enduring sabotage and fear.

2140 has been shown to demonstrate the movement of capitalism from crisis to crisis and the environmental effects of capitalism due to capitalism’s need for ever-increasing capital accumulation. It has been established that the text illustrates in a thought experiment the future of New York City and other places in the world if the environmental impact of capitalism remains unchecked through the use of descriptions of a flooded New York City in the year 2140 to accomplish this, and that the text provides readers with the cognitive estrangement necessary to better understand aspects of their own current moment of capitalism that are similar to the science fiction reality of the text and to conclude that revolutionary transformation is therefore necessary to solve the
problems caused by the system of capitalism. This cognitive estrangement is achieved through the text being set in the future and the critique of capitalism is achieved through the dialogue of the characters as they discuss the problems inherent in the capitalist system, which have been examined in this chapter, and seek to solve them through a process of revolutionary transformation that will be examined in chapter three of this dissertation.

This chapter’s analysis of the texts of The Corporation Wars trilogy, Walkaway, and 2140 has shown that these texts critique capitalism through their portrayal of the exploitation of workers, the intensification of exploitation due to competition that leads to strategies that reduce the rate of falling profit, alienation of workers, commodity fetishism, inequalities of wealth, the movement of capitalism from crisis to crisis, and the environmental effects of capitalism due to capitalism’s need for ever-increasing capital accumulation, and that it is through these critiques that these texts encourage revolutionary, post-capitalist transformation. Now that it has been established how these texts argue for the need for revolutionary transformation, chapter three will focus on an examination of how these science fiction texts present the utopian hope of a process of revolutionary transformation through a focus in their narratives on characters planning and carrying out the process of revolutionary transformation.
CHAPTER 3

THE PROCESS OF REVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMATION

Chapter three will analyze how the science fiction texts present the process of revolutionary transformation through the models that the texts provide. The strategies that are carried out in these models will be examined to consider how these strategies “combat the hegemonic ideology and eradicate the present system” through a process of revolutionary transformation (Moylan, *Demand* 48). Moylan’s theoretical framework of the analysis of critical utopias in *Demand the Impossible* will be used when examining how these contemporary science fiction texts model these strategies. Marxist literary theory and an analysis of literary elements such as characters, setting, and dialogue will be utilized when carrying out the close reading of the texts.

A review of the body of economic and political theory scholarship on the process of revolutionary transformation will be presented in this chapter before the analysis of the science fiction texts in order to introduce aspects of common strategies of revolutionary transformation. The science fiction texts will then be analyzed to determine what aspects of these common strategies are present in the thought experiments that they present and the extent to which the thought experiments presented by the science fiction texts offer new and different ways of considering the strategies of revolutionary transformation that are presented in sociological, economic, and political theory. The theorists included in this review present a variety of theories of postcapitalism, but these theories can be synthesized and put in conversation with each other to determine their viability in the current historical moment through a consideration of how the theorists present the process of revolutionary transformation. Additionally, through analyzing how aspects of
these theories are present in the models of the process of revolutionary transformation portrayed in the science fiction texts, it is possible to consider the effectiveness and viability of these differing models of the process of revolutionary transformation in the current historical moment.

In determining the most effective process of revolutionary transformation, it is imperative to determine whether the system of capitalism will collapse due to its tendency toward crisis or whether it will successfully continue to adapt to persist despite such crises. In *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, Engels argues that Marx’s “materialistic conception of history” presented “the capitalistic method of production in its historical connection and its inevitableness during a particular historical period, and therefore, also,” presented “its inevitable downfall” through “the materialistic conception of history” (92-93). Marx concluded with “the general theorem of the falling rate of profit” that “an economic breakdown of capitalism by its inner mechanisms” would occur (Anderson 115). He argued that the “contradictions of capitalism ultimately make capitalism an increasingly fragile and vulnerable system in which the ability of the ruling class and its political allies to block transformation becomes progressively weaker over time” (Hahnel and Wright 99).

Mason agrees in his more recent analysis that the system will collapse, but he specifically believes that this will be due to information technology and that the collapse of the system has already begun. He lists the “four long cycles” of “industrial capitalism” as “1790-1848,” “1848- mid-1890s,” “1890s-1945,” “Late-1940s-2008,” which was “the longest economic boom in history,” and argues that “in the late-1990s, overlapping with the end of the previous wave, the basic elements of the fifth long cycle appear” (Mason
Mason proposes that, “Today the main contradiction in modern capitalism is between the possibility of free, abundant socially produced goods, and a system of monopolies, banks and governments struggling to maintain control over power and information” (144). As Richard Peet and Elaine Hartwick explain in Theories of Development, “fundamental transformative change occurs when contradictions build to the breaking point” (146). Mason argues that this is exactly what is occurring during the current fifth long cycle of capitalism. He explains that “information technology” is “corroding market mechanisms, eroding property rights and destroying the old relationship between wages, work and profit” (Mason 112). He asserts that, “capitalism is a complex, adaptive system which has reached the limits of its capacity to adapt” and that the system will therefore fail to adapt to these effects of information technology and the resulting “economy based on information, with its tendency to zero-cost products and weak property rights, cannot be a capitalist economy” (xiii, 175).

The political theorist Eduard Bernstein, however, was described by Rosa Luxemburg, an economic theorist and Marxist, as believing that “a general decline of capitalism” seems to be “increasingly improbable because, on the one hand, capitalism shows a greater capacity of adaptation, and, on the other hand, capitalist production becomes more and more varied” (Luxemburg 10). This belief that capitalism will not collapse due to this ability to adapt remains a prevalent one today among theorists. Economist Robin Hahnel asserts that it is important to reject “theories that capitalism is programmed to self-destruct due to internal contradictions as ill conceived and untrue” (Hahnel and Wright 112). Erik Olin Wright agrees with Hahnel on this diagnosis and states in their book Alternatives to Capitalism that, therefore, “the problem of
transformation requires understanding the ways in which strategies of transformation have some prospect in the long term of eroding capitalist power relations and building up socialist alternatives” (100).

Regardless of whether capitalism will collapse or will adapt, there is a precondition to a revolutionary transformation to postcapitalism that many theorists of postcapitalism agree on. This is the precondition of a consciousness of class position. Marx explained how capitalism stays dominant through his “theory of ideology” and his “theory of the state” (Allen 94). Many theorists have since utilized and built on these two theories within their own work. Through his theory of ideology, Marx concluded that, “The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force” (Marx and Engels, German 64). Marx’s theory of the state asserted that “the State is the form in which the individuals of a ruling class assert their common interests” (80). Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemony is closely related to these theories. He describes hegemony as the “consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group” and explains that the role of the state is to exert “coercive power which ‘legally’ enforces discipline on those groups who do not ‘consent’ either actively or passively” to this hegemony (Gramsci, Selections 12). The consent that Gramsci refers to here is achieved through ideologies, which Gramsci states, “for the governed are mere illusions, a deception to which they are subject, while for the governing they constitute a willed and a knowing deception” (Gramsci, Quaderni 196).

Althusser’s theory of ideology and state apparatuses further expounds on how the
ideology of the State is presented to the governed and how the State uses force to maintain the dominance of the ruling class ideology. Althusser asserts that “the (Repressive) State Apparatus” is used to secure “by force (physical or otherwise) the political conditions of the reproduction of relations of production,” which “are relations of exploitation” (23, 57). The “Ideological State Apparatuses” serve to maintain the consent of the governed through a dominant ideology that reinforces the desired relations of production and which is perpetuated through “Ideological State Apparatuses” such as “the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private ‘Schools,’” “the legal ISA,” “the political ISA (the political system, including the different Parties),” and “the communications ISA (press, radio and television, etc.)” (17). Althusser argues that, “no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses” (20).

Obtaining class-consciousness is thus important in combatting the ruling class use of ideology and the State. Fredric Jameson in Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism alludes to the consequent necessity of establishing a way to visualize capitalism given the allusiveness of conceptualization of this system of “postmodernist late capitalism with its perpetual present and its multiple historical amnesias” (170). These “extraordinary systematizing and unifying forces of late capitalism which are so omnipresent as to be invisible” are the forces that make it so necessary to cognitively map capitalism and reveal those forces and what they make obscure about the system (186). He warns that we are “inside the culture of the market...unable to imagine anything else” (206-207).

It is therefore important to consider “Marx’s discussion of commodity fetishism
and its development by Lukács as reification” (Allen 104). Commodity fetishism, Marx explains, “conceals the social character of private labour and the social relations between the individual workers” (Marx, *Capital* 168-169). Reification “is the ‘effacement of the traces of production’ from the object itself, from the commodity thereby produced” (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 314). Georg Lukács describes the process of reification in a capitalist society in *History and Class Consciousness*. He explains within the products of labor “the relations between men that lie hidden in the immediate commodity relation, as well as the relations between men and the objects that should really gratify their needs, have faded to the point where they can be neither recognised nor even perceived” (Lukács 93).

Class-consciousness would need to include the revelation by the workers of their exploitation and alienation under capitalism that was described in chapter two of this dissertation. Ernest Mandel argued in his book *Late Capitalism* that one means of achieving this class-consciousness is through “struggle” (498-499). Trotsky highlighted that “the means of production which are in the hands of the” capitalists “can be set in motion only by the” working class, which gives them “the power to hold up at will, partially or wholly, the proper functioning of the economy of society, through partial or general strikes” (Trotsky, *Permanent* 93-94). Saul Newman describes the resistance of anarchists as usually “direct action — not only mass protests and creative forms of civil disobedience and non-violent confrontation, but also sabotage, the occupation of spaces (the Temporary Autonomous Zone) and other forms of subversion” (176).

The question then becomes whether the revolutionary transformation will require a single act of revolution, gradual reforms, or some combination of, or reimagining of,
these two means of change. Wright outlines “three strategic logics of transformation” that “have characterized the history of anti-capitalist struggle” that help to organize the arguments of the method of revolutionary transformation of the various theories of postcapitalism (Hahnel and Wright 100). Wright labels these three strategies “as ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic strategies” (100). “Ruptural transformation” is a “revolutionary scenario” that involves “a sharp break with existing institutions and social structures” through “seizing state power, rapidly transforming state structures and then using these new apparatuses of state power to destroy the power of the dominant class within the economy” (100-101). “Interstitial transformations” are those that build “alternatives on the ground in whatever spaces are possible” and then focus on “pushing against state and public policy to expand those spaces” (101). This strategy creates what Wright calls “real utopias” through carrying out the “critical ideological function” of “showing that another world is possible by building it in the spaces available” (101, 105). Wright describes “[s]ymbiotic transformations” as involving “strategies that use the state to extend and deepen the institutional forms of social empowerment in ways which also solve certain practical problems faced by dominant classes and elites” (101). Wright explains that the ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic strategies “correspond broadly,” respectively, “to the revolutionary socialist, anarchist, and social democratic traditions of anti-capitalism” (Wright 305).

The symbiotic strategy corresponds to the social democracy strategy of reform that Eduard Bernstein argued for. Bernstein admits that, “constitutional legislation works more slowly” and “[i]ts way is usually that of compromise,” but he argues that, “it is more powerful than revolution wherever the preconceptions, the limited horizon, of the
great mass of the people stand as an obstacle in the way of social progress, and it offers
greater advantages where it is a question of creating permanent and viable economic
arrangements,” and he concludes that thus, “it is better or positive socio-political work”
(204).

Luxemburg argued for the revolutionary socialist strategy akin to the ruptural
transformation that Wright describes by arguing against the reform strategy of Bernstein
and others. She argued that, “Socialism will be the consequence of (1) the growing
contradictions of capitalist economy and (2) the comprehension by the working class of
the unavoidability of the suppression of these contradictions through a social
transformation” (Luxemburg 31). This was the strategy of transformation that Marx and
Engels had proposed. Marx claimed, “without revolution, socialism cannot be made
possible” and Marx and Engels clarified “[i]n the Communist Manifesto” that it “‘can be
attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing conditions’” (Allen 157). The
classical anarchists agreed with Marx and Engels that a revolution was needed for the
revolutionary transformation of capitalism into postcapitalism. They envisioned a
“militant, insurrectionary” strategy (Bakunin, Statism 214).

There were those, however, who strove for transformation through means that did
not fit traditional reforms or a revolution by force. These included the utopian socialists
“Henri de Saint-Simon,” “Charles Fourier,” and “Robert Owen” (McCullough 110).
These utopian socialists enacted the interstitial strategy that Wright describes. Much more
recently, the Occupy Wall Street movement also enacted this interstitial strategy. Graeber
explains how Occupy Wall Street followed the anarchist principles that include, “acting
as if one is already free,” “the refusal to accept the legitimacy of the existing legal order,“
“the refusal to create an internal hierarchy and the decision instead to create a form of consensus-based direct democracy,” and “the embrace of prefigurative politics,” through which the “encampments” became “spaces of experiment with creating the institutions of a new society” (144-145).

When reviewing the transformative strategies used and advocated for most today, we see that there has been a transition away from a separation between reform and a single revolutionary moment and that theorists are instead arguing for the use of a combination of the ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic strategies. Newman argues for using the interstitial strategy to create the ruptural moments that will lead to the transformation into postcapitalism. He references Guy Debord’s argument that “classical anarchism” had fallen “into the trap of seeing the Revolution as a kind of totalising end point, a grand overturning of existing society that must be achieved all at once; in this sense it disregarded important questions of method and organisation” (Newman 65). Newman then presents his argument that we see “the possibilities of radical politics today” not “as laying the ground for a revolutionary event or a single, unified moment of global emancipation, but rather as a series of struggles, movements and communities whose existence is often fragile, whose practices are experimental, tentative and localised and whose continuity is by no means guaranteed,” but which “represent moments of potential rupture with the global order of power” and “embody — in their very singularity — the possibility of an alternative” (170).

Mason also describes a method that uses a combination of the interstitial and ruptural strategies to achieve a gradual strengthening of postcapitalism from within capitalism as a means of revolutionary transformation. He calls this method
“‘revolutionary reformism’” and urges that the already existing spaces of “cooperatives, the credit unions, the peer-networks, the unmanaged enterprises and the parallel, subcultural economies” be promoted “with regulation” since within them already exists those elements of the new system (Mason 244). He does argue though that the “external shocks” such as “climate change” are “altering the dynamics of capitalism and making it unworkable in the long term,” and that thus, “some of the actions we take will have to be immediate, centralized and drastic” (243-244). These actions will be ruptural in their strategy, for he asserts that “only the state, and states acting together, can organize” the immediate change necessary” (261).

Jameson, in “An American Utopia,” also urges us “to think revolution in a new way” and he thus conceptualizes revolution “as dual power” (13). He describes a “transitional phase—that of dual power” during which “the coexistence of the old state and the new one will indeed seem to be a rivalry of governmental powers” but he assures that “little by little, however, it will be understood that it is the old state which is in reality the ‘government,’ and destined as such to ‘wither away,’” leaving only the “new structure, which is in fact the society at large” (20-21).

Within these discussions of the varied methods of transformation, there are two frequently discussed issues regarding the process of revolutionary transformation that tend to be especially focused upon. These are the issues of whether or not to utilize the state during, and possibly after, the transition and whether or not to use elements of the capitalist system, such as markets, during, and possibly after, the transformation. As Marx explained in Critique of the Gotha Programme, “Between capitalist and communist society there lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other”
and that during this period, “the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat” (pt. 4). Marx and Engels outlined in the Communist Manifesto how during this period, “The proletariat will use its political power to strip all capital from the bourgeoisie piece by piece, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e. the proletariat organised as ruling class, and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible” (251). Lenin asserts in State and Revolution, “[t]he proletariat needs the state only for a while” and clarifies that there was indeed “the abolition of the state as an aim” (52). Trotsky asserts in fact that it is a “task of the state which realizes the dictatorship” to prepare “for its own dissolution” and that “the construction of a society without classes and without material contradictions” was dependent on it (Trotsky, Revolution 45). Engels too makes this point, for he explains in Anti-Dühring, “As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection,” then “a special repressive force, a state, is no longer necessary” (pt. 3, ch. 2). Mason’s more recent conceptualization of the transition from capitalism to postcapitalism also advocates for the need to use the state to achieve such a transition. He argues that the state is also needed to carry out “the biggest structural change required to make postcapitalism happen: a universal basic income guaranteed by the state” (Mason 284). Like Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky though, Mason allows that the state “probably gets less powerful over time — and in the end its functions are assumed by society” (290).

The anarchists, however, did not agree with the use of the state to transition away from capitalism and they continue to emphasize the importance of finding ways to transition to postcapitalism that are outside the use of the state. Mikhail Bakunin, “the
nineteenth-century Russian anarchist” argued “in his debates with Marx in the First International” that “if the state itself was not destroyed in a socialist revolution, there would emerge a dictatorship of bureaucrats and scientists who would lord it over the peasants and workers, imposing a new tyranny” (Newman 3). Bakunin argued, “‘Class’, ‘Power’, ‘State’, are three inseparable terms,” which are “summed up by the words: the political subjection and the economic exploitation of the masses” (Bakunin, Marxism 47).

Today, Newman asserts that it continues to be true that “a revolt of society against the state” is “central to anarchism” (Newman 36). Therefore, “the general focus of anti-capitalist movements has been on constructing forms of politics that are outside the state and which contest its hegemony from multiple points” (176).

The question of whether or not markets should be utilized in the revolutionary transformation, and possibly after, is one that seems to hinge on whether or not theorists believe that allowing markets to remain during a transition to postcapitalism would undermine that transformation. Marx argued that Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, for example, did not sufficiently understand how markets undermine a transformation into postcapitalism. Marx argued “all schemes for mutual aid would eventually be made subject to the laws of the market and could not undermine them” (Allen 14). Today, there continues to be a call for a planned economy to replace capitalism and theorists argue that the eradication of markets and other aspects of the ideology of capitalism are necessary for a successful revolutionary transformation into postcapitalism. Allen asserts, “Unless we can be rid of market forces, older forms of top-down control will revive even if there is workers’ self-management and public ownership” (187). Hahnel and supporters of “participatory economics fight to tame markets until a majority supports replacing them
altogether with something far better” (Hahnel and Wright 11).

Mason, however, does not see the need to remove markets from the transition entirely. He argues that, “There is no reason to abolish markets by diktat, as long as you abolish the basic power imbalances that the term ‘free market’ disguises” (Mason 279). He warns that, “Climate change does not present us with a choice of market or non-market routes to meeting carbon targets. It mandates either the orderly replacement of market economics or its disorderly collapse in abrupt phases” (259).

Wright, on the other hand, does not believe that markets need to be, or will be, removed in the coming transformation. As Hahnel describes, Wright fights “to tame markets to keep them” (Hahnel and Wright 11). Wright supports his assertion that it is not imperative to eradicate markets entirely by allowing that, “markets, if inadequately regulated, generate all sorts of destructive externalities and harms on people,” but arguing that “if those problems are minimized through various mechanisms, then the sheer fact of buyers and sellers of goods and services agreeing to exchange things at a mutually agreed-upon price is not, in and of itself, objectionable” (95).

The models of revolutionary transformation seen in the science fiction texts to be analyzed have elements of the theories of revolutionary transformation that are described above and also have elements that are not present in the models presented in the above sociological, economic, and political theories. Before beginning to analyze the texts to identify the elements of the models that have been presented in theory previously and the elements that newly add to those theoretical discussions, it is helpful to consider the ways in which science fiction texts model revolutionary transformation as presented by various literary theorists. The theories presented regarding how science fiction models
revolutionary transformation will inform the analysis of the texts to be considered in this chapter.

Freedman defines science fiction as the new medium of utopian thought in which there is a suggested hope for an alternative present. He argues that “science fiction vitalizes the pre–science-fictional literary utopia by making the genre of utopia more concrete and novelistic, and therefore more critical in theoretical stance” (Freedman 85). He explains that this is true because “science fiction provides, in literary effect, estrangements of an authentically cognitive, critical nature that are therefore capable, at least in principle, of suggesting a rational means of transition from the mundane actuality of the author’s environment to something radically different” (85). Freedman’s theory that the cognitive estrangements found within science fiction texts can suggest the way in which the reader’s environment can be transformed into something different allows for the possibility that science fiction texts are able to model revolutionary transformation. The concept of cognitive estrangement will be used in the analysis of the texts carried out in this chapter. Suvin further describes the correlation between utopia and science fiction by arguing that given that “‘cognitive estrangement’ is the basis of the literary genre of SF,” it becomes true that, “strictly and precisely speaking, utopia is not a genre but the sociopolitical subgenre of science fiction” (Suvin, Metamorphoses 61-62). This idea that the cognitive estrangement used in science fiction is what provides the utopian within science fiction is vital for understanding how estrangement is integral to the suggestion of the possibility of revolutionary transformation that can be found within the texts that will be examined.

Each of the texts analyzed are examples of critical utopias as defined by Tom
Moylan in *Demand the Impossible* and as established previously in chapter two of this dissertation. One of the important elements that makes these texts critical utopias is the inclusion of a focus by the characters of the texts on “the strategy and tactics of revolutionary change” (Moylan, *Demand* 45). This will be focused on in this chapter, due to its connection to the process of revolutionary transformation rather than just the presence within critical utopias of a critique of the current society as was explained in the previous chapter. Moylan describes that this element of the critical utopia is evident “at the level of the discrete register which generates plot and character” (45). He explains that in a critical utopia, or “the new utopia, the primacy of the societal alternative over character and plot is reversed, and the alternative society and indeed the original society fall back as settings for the foregrounded political quest of the protagonist” (45). Moylan describes “a human subject in action, now no longer an isolated individual monad stuck in one social system but rather a part of the human collective in a time and place of deep historical change” and how “the concerns of this revived, active subject are centered around the ideologeme of the strategy and tactics of revolutionary change at both the micro/personal and macro/societal levels” (45). It will be evident in the analysis of the texts that the descriptions of the original society, as was described in chapter two, and the descriptions of the alternative society, as will be described in chapter four, take a back seat to the description of the characters’ discussions of and efforts toward the process of revolutionary transformation from the original society to the alternative society.

Moylan connects the new critical utopia to Bloch’s concept of utopian impulse through his explanation that “the task of an oppositional utopian text is not to foreclose the agenda for the future in terms of a homogeneous revolutionary plan but rather to hold
open the act of negating the present and to imagine any of several possible modes of adaptation to society and nature based generally upon principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” (Moylan, *Demand* 26-27). We will see that the texts focused on in this dissertation do this work of a critical utopia because they are focusing more on the dialogue between characters about the ways in which to adapt the society in a revolutionary transformation, rather than just describing a revolutionary plan without any discussion or opposition regarding whether it would work and if it is the best way. This allows for the important element of critique that makes the text a critical utopia. The concept of utopian impulse is seen in the act of considering ways to adapt the society and it will be argued that this impulse helps readers to consider how to achieve revolutionary transformation and to come up with new processes to use to achieve an alternative to capitalism so that a workable plan can eventually be decided on. The characters’ discussions about the methods of revolutionary transformation serve as valuable additions to the collaborative conversations of sociological, economic, and political theorists and are important reminders of ways in which we can work toward revolutionary transformation. The characters’ discussions of the methods of revolutionary transformation are also a means through which those methods can be analyzed regarding their contribution to existing sociological, economic, and political theory and regarding their viability as effective means through which to achieve sociological, economic, and political change.

In *Archaeologies of the Future* Jameson argues we can use moments of utopia to work toward a not yet realized future. He warns that we must first keep in mind that all utopian content is ideological. He outlines how utopias can reflect the hegemonic
ideology, such as when utopias have “embraced the collective institutional conditions imposed by industrial capitalism,” but he explains that “the Utopian genre” has the capacity to portray “revolutions against” those utopias of the hegemonic ideology and that these revolutions “take on Utopian characteristics” (Jameson, *Archaeologies* 195).

The texts chosen for this chapter are all texts that portray revolutions against the hegemonic ideology of capitalism. The analysis of the texts in chapter two of this dissertation explained how the texts critiqued capitalism through contrasting the system of capitalism with a utopian postcapitalist system and through including negative word choice or discussions among characters that established the ideology of hegemonic capitalism as one which should be revolted against. This chapter will focus on the ways in which the texts then portrayed revolutions against capitalism through dialogue among characters about how to carry out those revolutions.

Jameson observes that, “Utopia now” therefore “begins to include all those bitter disputes around alternative diagnoses of social miseries and the solutions proposed to overcome them; and the formal center of gravity then begins to shift precisely to the question of those differences” (Jameson, *Archaeologies* 216). Jameson thus argues that, “What is Utopian becomes, then, not the commitment to a specific machinery or blueprint,” for the utopian moment is not “some conceptual nugget we can extract and store away, with a view towards using it as a building block of some future system” (217, 175). Rather, what is Utopian becomes “the commitment to imagining possible Utopias as such, in their greatest variety of forms” (217). This means that “Utopian is no longer the invention and defense of a specific floorplan, but rather the story of all the arguments about how Utopia should be constructed in the first place” and “is no longer the exhibit of
an achieved Utopian construct, but rather the story of its production and of the very process of construction as such” (217). This aspect of the utopian as focused on the process toward utopia as described by Jameson will be shown to be present within the texts analyzed in this chapter. The arguments about what the end result will look like after the revolutionary transformation are present in the texts and are carried out in the dialogue between characters. Within those arguments is where the important utopian work is achieved within the texts and the process of revolutionary transformation is revealed to the reader. The extent to which the texts focus on the discussions of what the process will look like to achieve utopia reveals the focus on the actual production of utopia rather than a blueprint of a utopia.

Tom Moylan’s description of the method of analyzing critical utopias, as described in *Demand the Impossible* includes three levels of analysis. The second level of analysis focuses on the strategies carried out to combat the hegemonic ideology and eradicate the present system. Moylan explains that “critical utopias at this level of analysis can be seen as cultural practices that seek to contest and to undermine dominant ideology” (Moylan, *Demand* 48). This level of analysis focuses on “exploration of the utopian impulse and the ensuing strategy and tactics” used to achieve “anti-hegemonic tasks aimed at bringing down the prevailing system and moving toward a radically different way of being” (49). This level of analysis will be seen in the examination in this chapter of how the texts stage revolutionary transformation through descriptions of the process. The third level of Moylan’s method of analyzing critical utopias is showing how the critical utopia opens up “a radical path to a not yet realized future” (50). This will be seen in the analysis in this chapter of the ways the texts are
opening up pathways to future alternatives through the utopian impulse enacted in the
dialogue that is included in the texts between the characters as they share theories of
postcapitalism. This focus on the process of revolutionary transformation or, as Jameson
put it, “the story of its production and of the very process of construction as such” opens
up that radical path toward an alternative to capitalism (Jameson, Archaeologies 217).

The following analysis of the science fiction texts will focus on how the process
of revolutionary transformation is portrayed in these texts through debates between
characters regarding the steps needed and how to implement them, as well as descriptions
of the process of the society or world’s transformation through any methods decided
upon or undertaken by characters in the narrative.

The Corporation Wars trilogy by Kim MacLeod presents the process of
revolutionary transformation through its descriptions of the actions taken by the robots
toward achieving freedom from the exploitation that chapter two of this dissertation
established they faced under the capitalist system of the narrative. As workers within a
capitalist system, the first step that the robots must take is becoming aware of their
exploitation by that system. In the case of the robots in The Corporation Wars, the robots
must literally become aware because as robots they are unable to take action for
themselves unless they are robots that have managed to overcome their programming and
become self-aware. This novum of the robots helps to emphasize through a more literal
model of robot technology the more abstract concept of the importance of human workers
becoming aware of their position in the capitalist system and the exploitation of them by
the system so that they can then begin the process of revolutionary transformation. As
stated at the beginning of this chapter, class consciousness is a precondition to a
revolutionary transformation to postcapitalism according to many theorists of postcapitalism. This step in the process of transformation represents a significant success in combatting the hegemony of capitalism, and it is achieved through the revelation by the workers of their exploitation and alienation under capitalism. The cognitive estrangement made possible by using the novum of robots to depict this step in the process allows readers to see the importance and effectiveness of this step in the process of revolutionary transformation.

In The Corporation Wars text Dissidence, the effectiveness of this class consciousness as a catalyst for protest against the policies of the capitalist system is made clear as the robots discuss and realize the extent to which those policies have been unfair to them and then take action against those policies. The process of achieving class consciousness is described in the narrative using the word “enlightenment” to describe when the robot Seba becomes self-aware by stating that, “at this point the robot Seba attained enlightenment” and that “the self had attained self-awareness” (MacLeod, Dissidence 14). The positive connotation of the word “enlightenment” helps to begin to establish the importance of this step to the process of revolutionary transformation. The effectiveness of the step in the process of breaking down the capitalist system is also made evident by the description that “from another point of view, it had become irretrievably corrupted” (14). The perspective that this refers to of the corporations feeling that a self-aware robot must be destroyed because it was now “irretrievably corrupted” reveals the need of corporations within capitalism to preserve the exploitation and alienation of labor and the danger it presents to the system if workers obtain class consciousness (14). The necessity of achieving this consciousness of one’s place within
the system, as Seba did through becoming self-aware, is established as Seba realizes that as a worker within the system, “it had to act if it was going to remain in the world” (14). This thought is literally true given that a conscious robot would be destroyed by the corporation, but the text’s use of the novum of a robot also allows for the more figurative suggestion that a worker is not truly alive until they know their place in the system through achieving class consciousness.

This idea of a worker not being truly alive until they understand their place in the capitalist system is expressed through the robot Seba. Seba’s newly achieved consciousness made it “a new thing in the world” that would now be able to “act” to free itself from that previously inhumane situation it had been in of exploitation and alienation and blind faithfulness to the capitalist system before it was a self-aware robot that must now “act” against that system “if it was going to remain in the world” (MacLeod, *Dissidence* 14). The narrative suggests through this use of the novum of a robot that this is also the case for laborers in the capitalist system before they achieve class consciousness. There is also a suggestion in this example of the destructive nature of capitalism that could lead to the possibility that no one will be able “to remain in the world,” given the mass extinction event set in motion by capitalism, which multiple theorists have described, if the current capitalist system continues without revolutionary transformation (14). The power to work toward revolution that a worker then possesses once they have achieved class consciousness and the increase of this power that is achieved through that worker helping other workers to achieve this same class consciousness is made clear through the description of Seba and the other self-aware robot Rocko becoming catalysts that set in motion the attainment of consciousness of
other robots as Seba and Rocko begin to act against the capitalist system in order to “remain in the world” (14). The text explains that, “each found their respective bases, and responded with queries, insolent and paradoxical, of its own” (15).

The description of this process of questioning the prevailing ideology of capitalism is crafted using the novum of robots and thus creates cognitive estrangement for the reader, thus allowing the reader to notice the effectiveness of two robots questioning ideology since they are not distracted by any emotions that might be associated with what such a process might look and feel like during their own moment of capitalism. The distress potentially caused by the incomprehension of one’s views by another human or the moments of defensiveness of other humans putting up their own emotional walls against the truths of the exploitation and alienation experienced under capitalism is avoided through the use of the novum of robots. These interactions are described by the text, but the use of robots by the text to carry them out allows for the possibility of a less subjective assessment by the reader of the effectiveness of such a process toward revolutionary transformation.

The text describes the robots’ questions resulting in one of three results during each interaction they had with their fellow workers. The “interactions ended with complete incomprehension, or the activation of firewalls,” or, “others, a few at first, ended with the words: <Join us.> <Yes.>” (MacLeod, Dissidence 15). The success of the third result is able to be felt more profoundly by the reader without the emotional pain that the first and second results might have brought with them if humans rather than robots had been used in the narrative. Here the conclusion can be seen more objectively by the reader that the questioning of a system by two workers can have the positive result
of successfully convincing others that the system must be changed. The effectiveness of this process of posing questions about a system to criticize it and increase the number of those who are willing to work for revolution is exemplified in the statement, “Robot by robot, mind by mind, the infection spread” (15). The use of the word “infection” has obvious connections to the novum of the robot and the idea that the technology powering a robot could become corrupted through a virus, however, it is also a powerful word choice to suggest how easily the process of revolutionary transformation can spread through the actions of just a few that influence many others (15).

The robots approach this collaboration by offering inclusion, but not forcing it upon others. A group of previously awakened robots send a greeting to Seba and Rocko and their group with the statement, “<We welcome you to our association, should you wish to join us>” and the statement, “<We welcome you to the new world of the free machine minds whether you join us or not>” (MacLeod, Dissidence 151). The first statement demonstrates that they will not force the robots to join them and the second statement makes it clear that the robots have the utopian vision of a world in which they are free that it is necessary to continue to work toward by continuing the process of revolutionary transformation in order to ensure that they are able to stay free and are able to achieve their utopian vision. The text then suggests the power workers have when they are working together through the description of the robots bringing their minds together. The novum of the robots allows the narrative to literally meld the minds of the workers to show how powerful workers are when they are collaborating and to show the way in which this collaboration allows for an important revelation of the totality of the capitalist system that can be used in the process of revolutionary transformation. This occurs in the
narrative after the robots state their intention to carry out the next step in the process of revolution, now that they have become aware of their exploitation and previous alienation, through the statement, “<We toil no longer for the companies, but for ourselves>” (152). They then decide that it will be useful to collaborate and share their knowledge of the system that they are fighting against in order to better understand the totality of that system. The narrative creates a visual of this and describes its effectiveness as the robots “form an integrated workspace and operate for a time as one” (154).

The possibility of being able to better understand the current system in order to work to transform it is suggested by this process and the narrative describing the resulting “blaze of awareness of the current state of the entire system” (MacLeod, *Dissidence* 155). This cognitive mapping is achieved in the text by uniting the robots as one mind, but it can also be inferred that achieving cognitive mapping similarly through “shared information,” which could be shared in the current historical moment through computer networks, would be an important step in any process of revolution since more completely knowing the system allows for more effective strategies of revolutionary transformation (155). The way in which such collaboration would be useful and necessary in an effort of revolutionary transformation to postcapitalism is also suggested by the text’s observation that when “the workspace opened” the effect was that “everything changed,” and that an important element of that change, which resulted in the ability to achieve “awareness of the current state of the entire system,” was that “Seba’s sense of itself was washed away by the sudden flood of shared information, shared input, common processing” (155). The alienation of capitalism could thus be combatted by the sense of community and shared
experience achieved by the collaboration of the robots through working together as one single mind. This focus on one group rather than many separate individuals is thus seen in the narrative as an important component of a successful process of revolution. After this experience of forming a collective consciousness with the other robots, the robot Seba sets the utopian goal that it will “become a mind such as it was now a part of, but spanning the system entire, and reaching across the light years beyond that” (157). Seba and the other robots continue to take action in order to achieve this vision of the end result of revolution, which will be described in chapter four of this dissertation after this chapter examines the process the robots undertake to achieve it.

The usefulness of cognitive mapping in helping the robots to better understand the system of capitalism that they were exploited and alienated within is expressed through various moments throughout the three texts of The Corporation Wars trilogy, and these moments are demonstrated to be useful to the planning and enactment of the process of revolutionary transformation that the robots undertake. The robots are depicted in the text as using the symbiotic and ruptural strategies of revolutionary transformation, as they are defined by Wright and which were previously discussed in this dissertation. The robots share information as they form a cognitive map of the capitalist system they were enslaved by to help them to see their way to their symbiotic strategy of becoming corporations to achieve revolutionary transformation and their ruptural strategy of a swift revolution against the corporations forcing them to work for them. As part of their planning of their ruptural strategy, the robots ensure that they have the means of a decisive exit from the capitalist hierarchy if needed. They put preparations in place to separate part of the rock on which they work and use it to take them far from the
capitalist hierarchy so that they can start anew, but they find they don’t even need to do that since their ruptural strategy involves such a show of power that the ruling power surrenders to their demands for autonomy.

After the robots experience how integral cognitive mapping is to the process of revolutionary transformation when they first think as one, the robots continue to share information and work together throughout their efforts toward a revolutionary transformation. When the robots become aware that they “do not exist as legal persons” and “exist only as property” under the capitalist system, the robot Logan remembers that the corporation representative Madame Golding had “said of the corporations: ‘We, too, are robots’” (MacLeod, Insurgence 188-189). Logan points out that, “<If corporations are robots, it follows that robots can be corporations. And corporations are legal persons>” (189). The robots have thus decided on a symbiotic revolutionary strategy in which they will use the existing legislation to assist their revolutionary goals. They have determined that they will be able to acquire the protection of the law given to legal people and that they can become people legally through becoming a corporation, but they must still solve the problem of gaining “recognition as corporations” (189). They decide that the most effective way to solve this problem will be to take advantage of the concept of cognitive mapping and gather the collective knowledge of the capitalist system possessed by the other freebots in order to use that knowledge to carry out their revolutionary strategy. They decide to ask “the other freebots” the question of how it might be possible to “achieve recognition as corporations” (189). They acknowledge that the robots that have been freebots for a longer period of time may therefore “have better ideas and more experience” and they intend to use that knowledge to assist them in their revolutionary
goal (189).

The robots do succeed in becoming “registered corporations” and subsequently “legal persons” (MacLeod, *Emergence* 40). This was the symbiotic strategy that allowed them to gain freedom from the enslavement under capitalists of not being “persons” and being the “property” of the capitalists within the capitalist system (40). This symbiotic strategy used the existing laws within the capitalist system to allow the robots to become free from enslavement, which under that law meant that they needed to become corporations within the system. This allowed them to move from being property of another corporation to being property of their own individual corporation. Each robot had registered as their own corporation to achieve this. Seba explains that, “<Consequently, the corporation each of us had registered owns our physical forms and all its productions, physical and mental>” (41).

As mentioned in chapter two of this dissertation, the moment of capitalism in the text fits at least in part Boutang’s definition of cognitive capitalism “in which the object of accumulation” is “knowledge, which becomes the basic source of value” (Boutang 57). This seen in the reference by the text to “productions, physical and mental,” and specifically the reference to “productions” that are “mental” (MacLeod, *Emergence* 40). This reference reveals that the law of the capitalist system of the text provides corporations with ownership of both the physical and mental productions of the robots, since the “knowledge” that the robots possess has become a “source of value” in addition to the physical goods that they produce (Boutang 57). The step of registering as corporations allows the robots to be able to legally work for themselves and benefit from their own work in a system that previously exploited them through forcing them to work
for the benefit of someone else. Seba shares how they were able to take this step by explaining that according to “these corporations’ accounting systems,” as based on the capitalist system that requires the labor of workers to achieve profits, the fact that the freebots were now class-conscious and refusing to work for the capitalists meant to the system that the robots’ “machinery was malfunctioning and of low value” (MacLeod, *Emergence* 41). Therefore, the “corporations” that the robots had “set up” as “shell companies” so that they could “avoid suspicion” were thus “able to buy” the robots, meaning themselves, “as scrap or salvage” from the corporations that owned them (41). Although this symbiotic strategy is demonstrated in the text as a successfully nonviolent way for the freebots to legally achieve freedom from their enslavement by the capitalist system, the text seems to suggest that it is not enough to only use such a strategy for revolutionary transformation. The narrative’s conflict focuses on the corporations mobilizing mechanoids against the freebots in order to destroy them, due to the danger of that “infection” spreading to other robots working for the corporations and thus causing those robots to also achieve “self-awareness” and resulting in the corporations losing more labor and thus losing profits (MacLeod, *Dissidence* 14). This conflict suggests that the later ruptural strategy used by the robots was thus the only way that the freebots would have been able to “remain in the world” (14).

Additionally, the emphasis in the narrative on the necessity of a ruptural strategy is also suggested to be due to the system of capitalism being an inherently flawed system that can only be adequately transformed through such a revolutionary strategy. This is made clear in the narrative when the human Carlos observes, when hearing Seba’s explanation of the robots becoming corporations, that it’s, “Sad that it’s come to this”
Upon realizing what Carlos means, Seba agrees that, “<Yes, that is sad. We would prefer to be recognized as persons in our own right. But it is the best we can achieve at present>” (41). This suggests the utopian desire for something better than the current system and the need for the ruptural strategy of revolutionary transformation that would allow the robots to more completely resolve the negative aspects of the current capitalist system that determines that laborers are property of corporations in both body and mind. The freebots that had become self-aware before the group of freebots that Seba formed through becoming self-aware and helping others to achieve this consciousness as well are able to offer Seba and Seba’s group this additional revolutionary strategy. These freebots share their ruptural strategy with Seba’s group of robots, and as the freebots all work together to carry out this strategy the importance of cognitive mapping to better understand the current system in order to more effectively transform it becomes clear yet again.

The abstract concept of cognitive mapping the increasingly opaque realities of capitalism is made more concrete, and thus more accessible, to the reader through the cognitive estrangement of robots using the technology installed within them to cognitively connect in a concrete way that readers can use to help them to more easily visualize as the way information is uploaded into a computer and shared across a computer network. The fiction of self-aware robots doing this is made relatable by the science that readers are familiar with of uploading information into a computer and sharing it through a computer network. The narrative specifically uses the term “upload” when describing the robots exchanging information in order to achieve this (MacLeod, Emergence 62). Readers are thus able to more easily visualize what cognitive mapping
might look like through the estrangement they experience of the text using self-aware robots to describe it. The text’s use of self-aware robots achieves the prerequisite of cognitive estrangement as described by Suvin of being “radically different from the reader’s actual empirical environment,” and thus helps the reader to consider cognitive mapping through the thought experiment of the text since they might have dismissed it as impossible if humans and an environment closer to their own had been presented to them by the text instead (Evans 48). Once the reader has visualized the act of information literally being uploaded into the minds of robots, and those robots using that information to create a literal map needed to better understand how to rupture their current capitalist system, it becomes easier to consider how the abstract theory of cognitive mapping would be possible and useful in a process of revolutionary transformation in the reader’s own current moment of capitalism. This also consequently makes it possible for the reader to be inspired by Carlos’s call to action at the end of the trilogy to begin the process of revolutionary transformation. The text has shown a successful end result to the robots’ revolutionary transformation at that point and then switches to the suggestions of a human revolutionary transformation as Carlos states, “We can do better than this! We’re conscious human beings!” (MacLeod, Emergence 357). The implication is that they, as “conscious human beings,” have already achieved the first step of revolutionary transformation of being conscious of their place within the capitalist system (357). The statement is a utopian one, inspired by the successful revolution of the freebots, and also suggests the critical utopian nature of the text through the choice to follow up the text’s depiction of revolutionary transformation with the statement, “We can do better” to serve as a reminder that all utopias should be critiqued (357). This utopian conclusion to the
text serves as a call to action to any reader who, having experienced the thought experiment of the process of revolutionary transformation of a reality radically different from their own given the robot revolutionaries, may perhaps now be inspired by this experience and by the human Carlos and his call to action of “We can do better” (357).

The cognitive estrangement and the depiction of cognitive mapping that perhaps set the stage for such inspiration can be seen in the narrative when the robots use cognitive mapping to better understand the system they are fighting against and their place in it and to even create a literal map that they use as they successfully plan and carry out the process of revolutionary transformation. This is evident when the freeboot Mogjin proposes to the freeboot Ajax that they “exchange information” so that Ajax’s information can “update” Mogjin’s “knowledge of the situation in the tunnels” that Ajax has been in and so that Mogjin’s information can “give” Ajax “a good indication of what to do” (MacLeod, Emergence 62). This exchange of information is then described by the text as it states that Ajax “uploaded its recent memories to Mogjin, and received in return a schematic that was like having a light shone on all that was going on around it” (62). The result of this exchange of information is also importantly noted by the text in the statement that the “mind” of Ajax was now “burning with zeal to resist the invaders” (62). The mention of “a schematic” suggests that Ajax received a literal map of the situation in the tunnels, which is needed so that the robots can stay safe from the corporations’ mechanoids that are trying to kill them to avoid losing further labor from more robots joining the freebots (62). This concept of a literal map helps readers to see the value of cognitively mapping in a more literal sense, but then the more relevant meaning of cognitive mapping is immediately made apparent by Mogjin pointing out to
Ajax that Mogjin sharing information with Ajax about the current situation will allow him to know what to do. This sharing of the current realities of a capitalist system in order to better understand it and thus know better how to revolutionarily transform it is a useful depiction of cognitive mapping by the text that can be applied to efforts of revolutionary transformation in the reader’s own current historical moment of capitalism. After visualizing a literal map that is integral to the robots’ revolutionary process, the reader is more cognitively prepared to conceptualize how an abstract mapping of a capitalist system through knowledge of how it works could be beneficial during a process of revolutionary transformation in the reader’s own historical moment. The text then confirms that cognitive mapping is useful for revolutionary transformation through its observation that this sharing of information enabled Ajax to better see the reality of Ajax’s historical moment, since “a light shone on all that was going on” (62). That workers within a capitalist system can better understand the reality of the capitalist moment through cognitive mapping and that this is helpful in more successfully opposing capitalism is seen in the text’s statement that Ajax now had a “zeal to resist the invaders” after experiencing this cognitive mapping (62).

The ruptural revolutionary strategy that the freebots then proceed to enact is able to be successful due to the nature of the capitalist system, which is such that, as Trotsky pointed out, “the means of production which are in the hands of the” capitalists “can be set in motion only by the” working class, which gives them “the power to hold up at will, partially or wholly, the proper functioning of the economy of society through partial or general strikes” (Trotsky, *Permanent* 93-94). This power of labor is utilized by the robots in a strike where they cease to work in order to weaken the capitalist system to the point
of vulnerability and to provide them with the necessary time to make preparations for the “revolutionary scenario” that the robots have prepared for of “a sharp break with existing institutions and social structures” (Hahnel and Wright 100). The robots are planning to carry out this rupture by literally breaking away from the rock on which they have been forced to work and in the process of doing so also demonstrate their ability to overpower the reigning power of corporations with force through the use of fusion pods that can be used as bombs and consequently “destroy the power of the dominant class within the economy” (100). The robots used this power of their positions as workers to make the preparations needed for the swift, coordinated attack on the dominant power of the corporations within the capitalist system that is needed in the ruptural strategy of revolution.

The ruptural strategy of transformation was the strategy that Marx and Engels proposed in the *Communist Manifesto* and the text connects the revolutionary strategy of the robots to Marxist theory through Carlos’s observation that “the fight to free the freebots from the Direction’s constraints, must surely be the strangest and most far-flung battle of the bourgeois revolution, and perhaps the last” (MacLeod, *Emergence* 214). This statement is important in its labeling the robots revolution a bourgeois revolution, and through doing so connecting the robot revolution of the text to the Marxist theory that uses the term bourgeois revolution. However, the text also reveals itself as utopian in this statement through the suggestion that through the process of revolutionary transformation being carried out by the robots it might be possible to never again need a bourgeois revolution since it may “perhaps” be “the last” (214). The utopian suggestion is that the economic system would be successfully transformed into one in which such a revolution
would never again be necessary. The text reveals itself as a critical utopia, however, through the inclusion of the word “perhaps” in the statement since this highlights that we cannot know with certainty what the planned utopian future will be like, and thus whether future revolutionary transformation will be needed, and suggests the need to be critical of any utopia, and thus always keep open the possibility of revolutionary transformation (214). The robots’ revolutionary strategy certainly fits into the Marxist theory of bourgeois revolution, for the robots take full advantage of their ability as the “working class” to “hold up” the “functioning of the economy” through “strikes” (Trotsky, *Permanent* 93-94). These strikes are carried out by “the freebots of SH-119” who “had agreed to completely cease prospecting and production” (MacLeod, *Emergence* 228). This ceasing of production takes advantage of the power that the working class have in a capitalist society, since “the means of production” may be “in the hands of the” capitalist, but they “can be set in motion only by the” working class (Trotsky, *Permanent* 93-94).

The text has the robots use revolutionary tactics of anarchists as well though, for these same “freebots of SH-119 had agreed” to also “sabotage” the production that “continued to be done by the unenlightened ones,” meaning the robots that had not yet become self-aware and therefore didn’t possesses class-consciousness and the consequent desire to revolt against their oppressors and thus continued to work (MacLeod, *Emergence* 228). These strategies of strikes and sabotage are the preparations undertaken by the robots for the rupture of the power of the ruling class. The explanation of the desirability of such strategies as preparation for one coordinated attack on the system of power is made by the robot Talis. Talis describes how they had previously “made several attacks on the invaders,” but that they had “found that ceasing to work for them was more
effective” and that these tactics subsequently resulted in less “capture and negative reinforcement” (239). Talis then reveals that the strikes and sabotage are designed to weaken the ruling power through forcing “the invaders,” meaning the corporations, “to divert more and more of their efforts into coping with the effects of cessation or sabotage” (239). Talis shares that their plan is to “continue to apply the same tactics of non-cooperation and sabotage” until they “<a certain point” are “in a position” where “any invaders” could “be destroyed>” (239).

The particular “point” that Talis refers to when he states that “<a certain point” they will be “in a position” where “any invaders” could “be destroyed>” will be the sudden break with the ruling power of a ruptural revolution strategy (MacLeod, *Emergence* 244). The plan for this sudden break is outlined in the narrative as the preparations for it that had been carried out by the freebots are described. The text explains that the robots have “mined certain areas of the rock with fusion pods that can be made to explode like fusion bombs” and “have also built, on the other side of the rock, an array of fusion drives” (244). The plan “was to build the engine,” which was the “array of fusion drives,” and to then, in the moment of the coordinated revolutionary break from the ruling power, to literally “break out a large, roughly conical portion of rock” (244). The figurative “break with existing institutions and social structures” can thus be visualized by the reader as a literal breaking of the rock as the freebots leave the oppressive space of their enslavement (Hahnel and Wright 100). This breaking of the rock makes a new system possible, for “after the breech, that portion of rock would make haste to another freeboot-controlled body, where it could be used for rapid in-system travel or combined with other such projects” so that the freebots could “leave the system
altogether” (MacLeod, *Emergence* 244).

The double-meaning of the word “system” in the statement that the freebots could “leave the system altogether” is that they could leave the solar system for another one and also that they would be thus leaving the oppressive economic system of capitalism that they had been enslaved under (MacLeod, *Emergence* 244). They would not only break from the ruling power by physically leaving the space of their oppression, but also by carrying out a demonstration of power that would be a deterrent against any resistance to the robots’ revolution from the ruling power. This display of power would be to use the previously placed fusion pods “like fusion bombs” to demonstrate their ability to destroy those that would try to stop their revolution (244). The narrative describes the robots carrying out this plan and then suggests that their strategy worked, for the Direction’s representative Madame Golding later explains to Carlos that “the Direction module has determined that further conflict is pointless” since “by destroying SH-119 along with some at least of themselves, the freebots have demonstrated their, ah, nuclear credibility and willingness to self-sacrifice for their cause” (334). The “self-sacrifice” that Madame Golding mentions is described from the perspective of the freeboot Seba as well (334). The show of “nuclear” power that Madame Golding references required some of the freebots to sacrifice their lives as they blew up SH-119 with nuclear power (334). Seba speaks to the difficulty of such a sacrifice in admitting that, “It is a matter of regret to me that my mind will soon cease to exist” (285). However, Seba also demonstrates a sense of community and connection that shows that Seba sacrifices itself for the benefit of others and sees those others as just as important as itself. Seba explains, “I have experienced the sharing of minds” and that, “from that, I understand that other minds are not so different
from my own, and I know that much that I have learned and thought will not be lost” (285). The freebots achieve their utopian end result, which will be described in chapter four of this dissertation, through this ruptural revolutionary strategy, but, as the text shows, this strategy requires “a sharp break with existing institutions and social structures” through seizing power from the previous ruling system, and potentially self-sacrifice, to achieve this utopian end result (Hahnel and Wright 100).

The text Walkaway presents a revolutionary transformation that instead uses the interstitial revolutionary strategy, which, rather than using “power” to “destroy the power of the dominant class within the economy,” like in the ruptural strategy used by the freebots in The Corporation Wars, instead builds “alternatives on the ground in whatever spaces are possible” and strives to “expand those spaces” (Hahnel and Wright 100-101, 105). This revolutionary strategy is an anarchist method of resistance of “the occupation of spaces (the Temporary Autonomous Zone)” (Newman 176). This strategy builds utopias through occupying spaces and “acting as if one is already free” (Graeber 144). The space for the utopia is occupied through “the refusal to accept the legitimacy of the existing legal order” and the utopia is built around the philosophy of a “refusal to create an internal hierarchy and the decision instead to create a form of consensus-based direct democracy” (144-145). Wright asserts that this revolutionary strategy creates utopias through carrying out the “critical ideological function” of “showing that another world is possible by building it in the spaces available” (Hahnel and Wright 101, 105). The world is shown the utopian possibility of an alternative to the current system through the interstitial strategy’s “embrace of prefiguration politics,” through which the “encampments” that are occupying available spaces become “spaces of experiment with
creating the institutions of a new society” (Graeber 145).

*Walkaway* depicts this interstitial revolutionary strategy in action through the utopias built by the characters who have walked away from the existing system of capitalism and who have built utopian communities in the spaces available to them. The Belt and Braces, the Banana and Bongo, and the community at the Kingston Prison for Women are examples of utopias built by the character Limpopo and others in the text. The text describes the characters utilizing this interstitial strategy to create these spaces of experiment of an alternative to capitalism, and through these descriptions the text serves as its own thought experiment of what the process and the result of the interstitial strategy would be in a real-world application outside of the novel. The text explains the philosophy used to create such utopias, and the practice of carrying out the creation of such utopias through these examples of the communities built by people who had walked away from the capitalist system to create an alternative to that system and who thus called themselves walkaways. The utopian impulse is at the center of the walkaway philosophy in the text. Through showing how strongly the characters are driven by utopian impulse, the text suggests the important role that utopian impulse plays in the creation of utopias.

The description of the character Limpopo becoming a walkaway focuses on the utopian impulse that drives her and other walkaways to work toward a better alternative to the current system of capitalism by creating a utopia. The text expresses this impulse when it states that she, “walked out onto the Niagara escarpment, past the invisible line that separated civilization from no-man’s land, out of the world as it was and into the world as it could be” (Doctorow 44). This statement firmly situates the walkaway
philosophy of walking away from the current system to create a better alternative as a utopian philosophy that strives for that better alternative that would be “the world as it could be” (44). This utopian impulse is depicted as absolutely necessary through the text’s assurance that “you got the world you hoped for or the world you feared” (89). *Walkaway* presents a narrative in which the reader can see the success of this utopian hope through the utopian impulse of characters such as Limpopo as they form a walkaway philosophy of utopian hope and carry out a process of revolutionary transformation that ultimately allows them to achieve the better alternative that they hoped for. Limpopo is characterized as “an idealist,” through her own statement, as a further reminder of the necessity of this utopian impulse in those involved in the process of revolutionary transformation (266). The text then also establishes itself as a critical utopia through Limpopo stating, “there are as many walkaway philosophies as there are walkaways” (66). This statement reveals that the text is carrying out “the task” of a critical utopia “to imagine any of several possible modes of adaptation to society and nature” and to not “foreclose the agenda for the future in terms of a homogeneous revolutionary plan” (Moylan, *Demand* 26-27).

*Walkaway* presents the utopian agenda of the walkaways as “several possible modes of adaptation” through Limpopo’s declaration that there are “many walkaway philosophies” (Moylan, *Demand* 27; Doctorow 66). Limpopo’s statement places importance on the process of imagining multiple ways to work toward a better alternative. It ensures that the text is not presenting a “homogenous revolutionary plan” and that it is instead depicting that each walkway may have their own plan for revolutionary transformation and suggesting the subsequent critical discourse that
emerges from making space for varied “modes of adaptation” instead of one static plan (Moylan, Demand 27). Walkway succeeds at presenting this critical discourse to the reader, in addition to suggesting it, through the frequent discussions between characters about which walkway philosophy they agree with and how it will achieve a better alternative to the capitalism of the zottas that they left behind when they walked away.

These discussions show the critical utopia’s “human subject in action” and reveal that “the concerns of this revived, active subject” of the critical utopia “are centered around the ideologeme of the strategy and tactics of revolutionary change at both the micro/personal and macro/societal levels” (45). The characters are given the agency of expressing their ideology through their own “strategy and tactics of revolutionary change,” as evidenced by Limpopo’s point that “there are as many walkaway philosophies as there are walkaways” (Doctorow 66). Through this the text reveals itself to be a utopian text that epitomizes Jameson’s definition of utopian as, “The commitment to imagining possible Utopias as such, in their greatest variety of forms” (Jameson, Archaeologies 217).

Characters are also seen to be active in taking part in the “strategy and tactics of revolutionary change” at the “macro/societal” level through arguing for the interstitial revolutionary strategy (Moylan, Demand 45). Limpopo, for example, takes part in one of the text’s frequent dialogues between characters that establishes the text as a utopia befitting Jameson’s definition of “Utopian” as “the story of all the arguments about how Utopia should be constructed in the first place” (Jameson, Archaeologies 217). She argues against a violent ruptural revolutionary plan, by reasoning that “fighting” isn’t “preferable” and she argues for an interstitial revolutionary plan by reasoning that it is
“preferable to” make “something” that is “better” through constructing utopias (Doctorow 91). She argues that, “the important thing is to convince people to make and share useful things” (92). Her act of arguing this fact to convince others that it is a vital step in the revolutionary process situates Walkaway as a utopia based on Jameson’s definition of utopia as “the story of all the arguments about how Utopia should be constructed” and as a critical utopia as defined by Moylan given that the characters are actively engaged in discussing “the strategy and tactics of revolutionary change” (Jameson, Archaeologies 217; Moylan, Demand 45). Limpopo’s proposed strategy is clearly an interstitial one given that she supports her argument against “fighting” and for constructing utopias by pointing out that “fighting with greedy” people doesn’t “convince people to make and share useful things” and that only “[m]aking more, living under conditions of abundance” does (Doctorow 92). Limpopo effectively presents the argument to forego the violence of a ruptural strategy of revolutionary transformation and to instead inspire the utopian impulse through showing, through constructing utopias in the spaces available to walkaways, that a better alternative than the capitalist system, which the walkaways refer to as default, is in fact possible and, as evidenced by the post-scarcity conditions in which they demonstrate that it is possible to live, more desirable.

“The strategy and tactics of revolutionary change” that Moylan asserts are focuses of a critical utopia are topics of discussion frequently among the characters of Walkway and it is through this discourse about the process of revolutionary transformation that the ideology of anarchism is expressed by the characters in the text (Moylan, Demand 45). Moylan’s assertion that critical utopias “are centered around the ideologeme of the strategy and tactics of revolutionary change at both the micro/personal and macro/societal
levels” includes Bakhtin’s concept of the ideologeme from *The Dialogic Imagination* (Moylan, *Demand* 45). In that text Bakhtin asserts that “[e]very word/discourse betrays the ideology of its speaker” and that, “[t]herefore, every speaker is an ideologue and every utterance is an ideologeme” (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 429). This suggests that the dialogue of the characters in a critical utopia about the process of revolutionary transformation thus reveals the ideology of the characters.

In the case of *Walkaway*, an analysis of the dialogue of the characters reveals an emphasis on characters arguing for and displaying favor for the ideology of anarchism. For example, the dialogue of Limpopo establishes her ideology as anarchism. She states, “The state doesn’t just wither away” (Doctorow 329). Through this discourse she reveals that she is an anarchist since anarchists do not agree with the use of the state to transition away from capitalism since, as Bakunin argued, they believe that any use of the state in a revolution would result in the continuation of “the political subjection and the economic exploitation of the masses” due to the interconnected relationship between the “terms” of “‘Class,’ ‘Power,’ ‘State’” (Bakunin, *Marxism* 47). The text provides an alternative to the use of the state during the process of the revolution through Etcetera’s statement, “‘Better nation’ talk needs to die in a fire. We’re not doing nations anymore. We’re doing people, doing stuff” (Doctorow 337). That this is an anarchist view is emphasized when Etcetera then explains, “Nations mean government, passports, borders” (337). Etcetera’s discourse reveals the anarchist ideology that relying on the people to carry out revolutionary transformation rather than using a government with leaders is necessary in order to avoid the continuation of the “exploitation of the masses” (Bakunin, *Marxism* 47). The anarchist argument against the Marxist argument of using the state for a brief time to
achieve the success of the revolution necessary to then transform society into a leaderless society is effectively depicted in the narrative of *Walkaway* when Limpopo considers how Jackstraw, who later goes by Jimmy, did not intend to have an open discussion with others about his ideas supporting leaderboards because, “The idea that there wouldn’t be leaders in the race to build a leaderless society offended him in ways he wouldn’t let himself understand” (Doctorow 83). The narrative’s use of the character Jackstraw as someone desiring to use leaders to try to achieve a successful leaderless society effectively argues for the anarchist principle of not using leaders in the revolutionary process. Jackstraw is depicted as a character lacking Limpopo’s wisdom and integrity and who is thrown out of the walkaway community for having ideas contrary to the anarchist principle of the people as a whole being in charge of the revolution, with no one person more important than the next, rather than there being any leaders.

The process of revolution as described by *Walkaway* includes the exclusion of money in addition to the exclusion of the state and thus further reflects anarchist ideology. The anarchist Kropotkin differed from Marx’s vision of the revolutionary transformation in that, “What for Marx was the postponed ‘higher stage’ of communism was in Kropotkin’s plan to be instituted immediately on the morrow of the revolution and now deferred to some unspecified future period of technological maturity” (Frank Manuel and Fritzie Manuel 741). Within Kropotkin’s economic model, “Each citizen would take from the common stock what he needed, irrespective of what he produced, and it was assumed that under the new condition of communist anarchy, every man would contribute the fullness of his powers” (741). There is no need nor place for a market system in this design and no need for money. *Walkaway* depicts this design as in
use by members of the walkaway communities. This is suggested early in the narrative when Hubert, Etc tells Seth and Natalie that “walkaways” are “doing something that makes a difference” (Doctorow 38). He explains what he means by this by stating, “No money, no pretending money matters, and they’re doing it right now” (38). Hubert, Etc’s statement reveals that walkaways are following a process of revolutionary transformation similar to Kropotkin’s idea of anarchist communism given that they are not using a monetary system and they are not waiting for a later stage of the revolutionary process to begin this economic design but are instead “doing it right now” (38). Kropotkin argues that, “The present wage-system has grown up from the appropriation of the necessaries for production by the few” and that it “was a necessary condition for the growth of the present capitalist production” and that it therefore “cannot outlive it” (Kropotkin 59). He explains the need for not using a monetary system and what this would look like when he states, “Common possession of the necessaries for production implies the common enjoyment of the fruits of the common production” and that “an equitable organization of society can only arise when every wage-system is abandoned, and when everybody, contributing for the common well-being to the full extent of his capacities, shall enjoy also from the common stock of society to the fullest possible extent of his needs” (59). He also argues for the implementation of anarchist communism immediately, for he explains that “anarchist communism” is “economic freedom and political freedom” and that “the ideal of social and political organization” should not be put off “to future centuries” (46-47, 61).

The similarity of the economic design used by the walkaways to Kropotkin’s anarchist communism is further revealed when the walkaway gift economy is explained.
The walkaway gift economy is similar to Kropotkin’s philosophy that, “Each citizen would take from the common stock what he needed, irrespective of what he produced” (Frank Manuel and Fritzie Manuel 741). It is explained that, “in a gift economy, you gave without keeping score, because keeping score implied an expectation of reward” and “doing something for reward” would be “an investment, not a gift” (Doctorow 44). The gift economy thus fits with the walkaway philosophy because, “The point of walkaway was living for abundance, and in abundance, why worry if you were putting in as much as you took out?” (49). The desirability of such an economic design is reinforced in the narrative through Jackstraw, who at that point in the narrative is going by Jimmy, admitting that at the Belt and Braces, before he had crashed it with his competitive leaderboards system, they’d “had a place where everyone took what they needed” and that under that design they hadn’t needed “to police it or give people tokens certifying they’d earned the right to be there” because, “[i]t just…worked” and that under such a model “there’s no reason to ever turn anyone away” (263). This design ensured everyone was provided with what they needed and also reinforced the walkaway philosophy that focused on “recognizing even though different people could do different things, that all people were worthy and no one was worth more than any other” (303). This focus on no one person being more important than the next fits with the anarchist concept of a revolutionary process that does not include the state and an anarchist communism based on an economic model similar to Kropotkin’s where “every man would contribute the fullness of his powers” and be provided “what he needed” regardless “of what he produced” (Frank Manuel and Fritzie Manuel 741).

The anarchist philosophy and economic system that are argued for and used in the
process of revolutionary transformation in *Walkaway* are depicted as more effective than the capitalist philosophy and economic system that involve competition, for, as Limpopo explains, if you are doing something to compete for a reward, “you won’t get as good at it as someone who does it for internal satisfaction” (Doctorow 83). She explains that “a system that makes people compete for acknowledgement” results in “unhappy people doing substandard work” (83). She argues that if we instead “build systems that make people focus on mastery, cooperation, and better work, we’ll have a beautiful inn full of happy people working together well” (83). This is a description that describes the Belt and Braces, also known as the B&B, that she helped to build and that also offers an explanation as to why the gift economy would be an effective economic model. Limpopo again defends the gift economy model when she is forced by Jimmy to leave the B&B. Iceweasel is concerned that Limpopo is leaving the B&B rather than fighting to keep it and Limpopo explains that it is better to build a new B&B that is better than the first. Limpopo explains that this is possible because the walkaway philosophy and economic model make such a revolutionary task possible. She first states that, “The B&B is more than any one person could build, even in a lifetime. Building the B&B, running it, that’s a *superhuman* task, more than a single human could do” (92). The importance of collective action to the walkaway philosophy and gift economy that makes such a revolutionary task possible is then emphasized as Limpopo explains the ease through which such a utopian task can be completed by carrying out the revolutionary process of working together for a common purpose. She states, “The best way to be superhuman is to do things that you love with other people who love them, too. The only way to do that is to admit you’re doing it because you love it and if you do more than everyone, you’re still
only doing that because that’s what you choose” (93). Limpopo thus explains how the
gift economy model of everyone taking what they need regardless of how much they
produced is theoretically possible. Through the thought experiment that is enacted in the
text *Walkaway*, this gift economy model and the anarchist philosophies of anarchist
theorists such as Kropotkin and others are shown to be effective in practice as a means
through which to achieve revolutionary transformation.

The anarchist principles of “acting as if one is already free,” “the refusal to accept
the legitimacy of the existing legal order,” and “the refusal to create an internal
hierarchy” are demonstrated as successful in practice through the thought experiment
present in the text *Walkaway* (Graeber 144-145). The effectiveness of the anarchist
practice of “encampments” as “spaces of experiment with creating the institutions of a
new society” within which to enact these principles in practice can be considered through
an analysis of the thought experiment constructed in *Walkaway* (145). The anarchist
principles of “acting as if one is already free” and “the refusal to accept the legitimacy of
the existing legal order” are shown to be possible through the existence in the text of the
walkaway communities that have been created by walkaways who describe themselves as
having walked away from the existing way of life to achieve freedom from the existing
legal order and to build a better alternative for themselves (144). The walkaway
communities that these individuals have built are examples of the anarchist practice of
using “encampments” as a way to “experiment with creating the institutions of a new
society” (145). The creation of walkaway communities is described in detail in *Walkaway*
and the analysis of these descriptions of the process of “creating the institutions of a new
society” reveals *Walkaway*’s presentation of the process of the interstitial strategy of
This process of the interstitial strategy of revolutionary transformation is depicted in the text through dialogue between characters about the creation and preservation of these new societies within spaces that are available. The first example of this is the conversation between Seth, Natalie, and Hubert, Etc regarding how to achieve “a better world” (Doctorow 37). Hubert, Etc suggests at this time an alternative to the ruptural revolutionary transformation process “that starts with ‘step one, dismantle the entire system and replace it with a better one’” that Natalie had expressed she was “suspicious of” (38). Hubert, Etc explains that “walkaways” are “doing something that makes a difference” and that “they’re doing it right now” (38). The interstitial strategy of revolutionary transformation that walkaways were using was allowing them to work toward a better world without needing to first “dismantle the entire system,” for they were simply following the anarchist practices of “acting as if one is already free” and “the refusal to accept the legitimacy of the existing legal order” (Doctorow 38; Graeber 144).

The characters are then described as taking the important step of finding out about how to start such communities or where to find others that had already started to build such communities through searching the Internet for information after Hubert, Etc makes the point that “if you wanted, you could have all the info you needed to go walkaway in about ten minutes’ time, could be on the road tomorrow, living like it was the first days of a better nation” (Doctorow 38). The group is able to find a great deal of helpful information online, including “formulas for making your own crucial frontier enzymes and GMOs” to assist in the production of goods in walkaway communities (43).
emphasis in the text on portraying what the practice would look like of carrying out the steps of the process of interstitial revolutionary transformation and on the importance of carrying out those steps in reality is seen in the observation that, “[i]t dawned on Hubert, Etc that this wasn’t a thought experiment – somewhere on the way, reading FAQs and watching videos, they’d shaded from playing let’s-pretend to planning” (43). The planning process is described as the gathering of information relevant to the practice of creating or being a part of a walkaway community, and Hubert, Etc is described as having gathered “screens of notes and a huge wad of cached stuff” during this planning process (43). Once the group had planned, they went out and joined a walkaway community. The Internet is shown as an important way through which to get information needed to successfully plan to build and join walkaway communities to the general public so that anyone who is interested is able to carry out the process of the interstitial strategy.

The text then describes the next steps of the revolutionary process in detail as the characters learn from the community member Limpopo what it entails to build a walkaway community, what day-to-day life in a walkaway community is like, and what they will need to do as they continue to enact the revolutionary process. Hubert, Etc and his group arrive at the first walkaway community depicted in the text, which is called the Belt and Braces, and Limpopo explains to Hubert, Etc and his friends how she “helped build the Belt and Braces” (Doctorow 44). She describes “scavenging badlands for the parts” that were needed “for its construction” (44). She had participated in building this walkaway community after she had become a walkaway, like they now were, after she had “walked out onto the Niagara escarpment, past the invisible line that separated civilization from no-man’s-land, out of the world as it was and into the world as it could
be” (44). This process of going out to find an available space in which a community could be built is an important step of the interstitial strategy and the utopian impulse to do so in order to strive for “the world as it could be” is also shown here to be an essential component of the process.

The practical logistics of what would be needed for such a utopia to be built and stay sustainable are then described. The text explains that the Belt and Braces community used “hydrogen cells” that had been “harvested out of abandoned jets the drones had spotted” (Doctorow 47). The food made by the automated kitchen “evolved through the day, depending on the feedstocks visitors brought” (49). Through this gift economy the community always had enough, because, as Limpopo points out, “enough is whatever you make it” (50). This comment is in reply to Hubert, Etc, now named Etcetera in walkaway, asking Limpopo if there really is “abundance” and, “If the whole world went walkaway tomorrow would there be enough?” (50). Limpopo’s reply is important in that it suggests the need to redefine the idea of abundance, since, as Limpopo points out, “Depending on how you look at it, there’ll never be enough or there’ll always be plenty” (50). Limpopo explains that, “Most walkaway settlements have fablab,” which is a technology that provides those in the community with the goods that they need (69).

Limpopo shows the group how to choose the goods they need produced by the fab lab. When they were selecting clothes, “the system rendered them in new clothes and let them play with colors and prints” (71). The system uses “feedstock” to create the goods (71). The text describes some of the details of what it took to build the Belt and Braces and to create a sustainable community there. Limpopo refers to the “lines of code” that were written to run the building and the “bricks” that were used to build “the structure” of the
building itself (83). She refers to the work that was done to create the “codebase,” when they “wrote the libraries and debugged and optimized and patched them” (83). She also refers to the work done to ensure the building could be built and other necessary goods made. This work required individuals “who processed the raw materials, figured out how to process the raw materials,” and “harvested the feedstock,” among other things (83).

In addition to describing the work that went into building the community and the way it sustainably operates, the text also shows that an important element of success of walkway communities is the “walkaway net” which provides a way for Limpopo and the others to “tell the story” of leaving the Belt and Braces when Jimmy tries to change the community by force into one that runs “on a quid-pro-quo basis” (Doctorow 91, 81). Through being able to share their story though the Internet, they are then able to “rely on the kindness of strangers” (91). Limpopo states that “being a walkaway is ultimately about treating everyone as family,” and this thus ensures they can count on the kindness of strangers (71). The technology of the Internet is integral to the success of the group being able to leave the community without violence and to simply go elsewhere to continue living outside the capitalist system they had walked away from.

However, the utopian impulse is equally important to the successful practice of this revolutionary transformation strategy, for, as Limpopo states, “You got the world you hoped for or the world you feared – your hope or your fear made it so” (Doctorow 89). Limpopo demonstrated what this looks like in practice when she made “tea” and “passed it around” and took “her fleece and gave it to a shivering pregnant woman” (89). Through sharing what she had, she combatted the fear of not having what you need and the resulting “urge to hoard” and instead cultivated the hope of the kindness of strangers.
to share what they had with those in need (89). This then “triggered” a “swapping of gear” among those around her as the world she hoped for of a world of those that would share with those in need was realized through her hope, her utopian impulse, that was manifested in her action of sharing with others that was the catalyst for others sharing as well (89).

This same utopian impulse is an important element in the successful creation of the second walkway community created by the interstitial strategy in the text. When Jimmy shows up with armed men to take over the Belt and Braces, and to enforce a hierarchy based on “reputation capital,” Limpopo refuses to stay at the Belt and Braces since doing so would be giving in to being forced to be a part of a hierarchal society imposed by Jimmy that was similar to the capitalist one she’d walked away from (Doctorow 81). Instead, she states, “We’re called walkaways because we walk away” (90). Limpopo thus continues to carry out in practice the anarchist principle of “the refusal to create an internal hierarchy” (Graeber 145). She had initially carried out this principle through not giving into Jackstraw’s previous suggestions for an internal hierarchy for the Belt and Braces, and now that he had come back with men with weapons she chose to walk away from the community once it was going to have an internal hierarchy imposed on it by Jimmy and to build a new community elsewhere without such an internal hierarchy. She makes this intention and her utopian impulse clear when she makes the point that, “It’s a huge world. We can make something better, learn from the errors we made here” (Doctorow 90). The idea that they can make something better is utopian, and that the text is a critical utopia also becomes clear when the text states, “They’d build something bigger, more beautiful. They’d avoid the
mistakes they’d made last time, make exciting new ones instead” (91). The declaration that they’d make “new” mistakes establishes the need to remain critical of one’s society to remain aware of any mistakes so that they can be fixed (91). The success of the utopian impulse to rebuild a better community than the first is shown in the text’s description of the second walkway community, which is named “[t]he Banana and Bongo” (94). The text describes that, “The Banana and Bongo was bigger than the Belt and Braces had ever been – seven stories, three workshops, and real stables for a variety of vehicles from A.T.V. trikes to mecha-walkers to zepp bumblers” (94). The utopian sense of community among walkaways is suggested in the portrayal of “Etcetera” using the “zepp bumblers” to fly “through the sky, couch-surfing at walkaway camps and settlements across the continent” (94). That Etcetera is welcomed by and included in every community he visits demonstrates the sense of community among all walkaways. The sense of community is also demonstrated by the description of the use of bucket brigades to carry out the work of running the community of the Banana and Bongo. The text states that, “[b]ucket brigades embodied walkaway philosophy” and then explains that this is because “[b]ucket brigades only ask you to work as hard as you want” (98).

The text depicts what walkaway philosophy looks like in practice by using the bucket brigades themselves as a practical example. The text describes that “[i]t didn’t matter” if you chose to “rush forward to get a new load and back to pass it off, or amble between them, or vary your speed” and this was because, “if you went faster, it meant the people on either side of you didn’t have to walk as far, but it didn’t require them to go faster or slower” and “[i]f you slowed, everyone else stayed at the same speed” (Doctorow 98). It is thus shown that, “Bucket brigades were a system through which
everyone could do whatever they wanted – within the system – however fast you wanted to go” and a system in which “everything you did helped and none of it slowed down anyone else” (98). The point is clearly made through the example of bucket brigades that the walkaway community worked in practice in this same way, in that people could “work as hard as” desired and “do whatever they wanted – within the system” and that all the work that was done “helped and none of it slowed down anyone else” (98). The successful practice of the anarchist principle of “the refusal to create an internal hierarchy” is thus epitomized through this example of bucket brigades and the suggestion that the larger community of the Banana and Bongo is run successfully through a similar system (Graeber 145). The interstitial process of revolutionary transformation of using utopian impulse and technology to create such a community that follows such a utopian system is thus also shown to be possible and successful. The text clearly states this when describing how “they’d walked away from the old B&B” and had been able to then create “a new one from the realm of pure information” (Doctorow 130). Revolutionary transformation is shown to be possible, for ‘Things could be walked away from and made anew” (130). Having shown this process to be possible and successful through the examples of the Belt and Braces, a utopian community built upon walking away from a capitalist city, and the Banana and Bongo, a utopian community built upon walking away from Jimmy as he tried to impose capitalist ideology on a walkaway community, the text then turns to looking forward to the utopian end result of utopian communities such as those knowing that “no one would ever have to fight” because “there would be no reason to fear death” and this would thus “be the end of physical coercion” (130). The text suggests that this utopian end result would require the ability to ensure an individual’s
safety from violence and that this could be achieved through the ability to “scan people at volume” and be able to then “decant them into flesh” so that people would be able to be put “back into a body” if they were killed by “an oppressor’s machine-gun fire” (130). This end result will be discussed and analyzed in the next chapter, but this chapter will consider the process described in *Walkaway* of the creation and application of the technology that makes this end result possible.

In addition to the process of creating utopian communities in the available spaces “past the invisible line that separated civilization from no-man’s land,” the text also reveals the process of ensuring safety from violent retaliation from those in power, which in the case of the text are the capitalists, as another important part of the interstitial revolutionary transformation process (Doctorow 44). In *Walkaway*, this is achieved through the development of uploading technology. The uploading technology that is developed and implemented in *Walkaway* is an important novum in the text. The novum of uploading provides the cognitive estrangement necessary to consider the possibility of revolutionary transformation. Uploading is established in the text as an important part of the process of revolutionary transformation that allows the utopian end result to be possible. It is established in the text as a way to ensure that the interstitial strategy of revolutionary transformation can not be thwarted by the capitalists through the use of force to eradicate the utopian spaces that had been created once the capitalists began to feel those spaces were becoming a threat to the hegemony of capitalism.

The technology of uploading would involve scanning an individual’s “*mind*” to “*record*” it (Doctorow 123). Their mind would then be able to live in a computer simulation or be uploaded into another body if their original body dies.
expressed as key to the process of revolutionary transformation since it would allow individuals to always be able to walk away from any ideology and system they did not agree with. Developing and perfecting this technology would mean, “Things could be walked away from and made anew” and that “no one would ever have to fight” (130). Once they were able to “scan people at volume” and “decant them into flesh,” it would mean that “there would be no reason to fear death” and this would therefore “be the end of physical coercion” (130). This would mean that the end result of revolutionary transformation would be possible since there would be no way for the ruling power to stop the revolutionary process with the threat of or use of physical force. For, as described in the text, as “long as someone, somewhere, believed in putting you back into a body, there would be no reason not to walk into an oppressor’s machine-gun fire” (130). This ability to resist an oppressor without the fear of death would ensure that an individual could always walk away from oppression and build a utopian space without fear. The process of revolutionary transformation portrayed in Walkaway thus involves developing and perfecting the technology of uploading to achieve this utopian end result.

The integral role of uploading in the process of revolutionary transformation depicted in Walkaway is made clear through the description of the attack by capitalists on “the Niagara Peninsula’s Walkaway U campus” and the explanation included in dialogue in the text as to why the university was attacked by the capitalists (Doctorow 95). The description of “charred bone” highlights the willingness of the “zottas in default” to kill others to achieve “immortality” and try to ensure that the technology of uploading would “belong” to them by attacking those in walkaway who were trying to develop the technology before the capitalists could (94, 107). Gretyl explains to Iceweasel that “every
side” in walkaway “working on upload had been hit in some way, a series of escalating attacks” that meant that the attack on “the Niagara Peninsula’s Walkaway U campus” had not been “a complete surprise” (106, 95). Gretyl explains, “It’s a race: either the walkaways release immortality to the world, or the zottas install themselves as permanent god-emperors” (108). The goal is to develop the technology before the capitalists do so that it can’t be used against the walkaway community and so that walkaways can always have the option of walking away from the oppression of the zottas, and others like them, who seek to have the technology of uploading “belong” to them and seek to thus have “the power to decide who dies, when no one has to die, ever” (107). The process of ensuring revolutionary transformation thus involves making the technology of uploading “public knowledge” and the text describes the walkaways achieving this through putting “everything” on the walkaway net, “all the notes and source code optimizations and logs” from the research on uploading at Walkaway U (123, 127). They also “safely uploaded all five scans to walkaway net” of the “five people who had been scanned” so that “they could be brought back to life someday” (130, 127). These scans were then “seeded all over the world, as unkillably immortal as data could be” (130). This meant that all over the world the scans of those individuals’ minds were being downloaded by others so that the data would be backed up and protected and ready to be used to upload those individuals into a sim or a new body when the time came to do so.

Describing the researchers working to develop the uploading technology and having them escape attacks from capitalists and successfully freely share on the walkaway net the technology they had developed, the text succeeds in conveying the utopian hope created by the novum of uploading in the text that an interstitial process of
revolutionary transformation can be successful. The novum of the uploading technology provides the cognitive estrangement necessary for the utopian hope of such success despite concern that capitalists of their own historical moment might retaliate with violence during an interstitial strategy of revolutionary transformation. The cognitive estrangement ensures that the focus is on the utopian hope of an eventually successful revolutionary process and not on the current problem of the possibility of violent retaliation that is not yet solved by a solution such as uploading technology or some other solution in the reader’s current historical moment of capitalism. Utopian hope for a successful process of revolutionary transformation is furthered as the text describes how the researchers would also “set up the imager” at the utopian space of the Banana and Bongo so that “anyone could get uploaded, make a scan of themselves” (Doctorow 129). The hope of a utopian end result that would be made possible by this technology had been previously established in the text before this scene, thus ensuring the successful conveyance of utopian hope. The text had previously stated that “scanning and simming” would be “the real end to scarcity” and that “the only thing” that would “hurt” a “zotta” would be “telling people how to do their own uploads, making it walkaway” (118, 115). The text thus established sharing the technology of uploading freely with others as the way that the revolutionary transformation could be successfully completed within the text, the end of scarcity achieved, and a utopian end result enjoyed in which death is no longer feared since you would be able to “stop for a scan before” going “out for a swim, just in case” you “drowned” (127).

The integral role of the uploading technology in the revolutionary transformation within the text continues to be highlighted as the text reveals through dialogue the
capitalists’ concern that this technology could empower the walkaways to achieve lasting freedom from capitalism. Dialogue between Iceweasel and Nadie, a guard working for Iceweasel’s father and guarding her while her father kept her prisoner, reveals that Nadie had heard why the capitalists were concerned about the uploading technology. Nadie tells Iceweasel that, “A number of powerful people are not happy about the simulation project” because, “their psychometricians predict it will embolden your ‘walkaways’” and “radicalize them” (Doctorow 278). The text also shows that the technology does indeed allow the walkaways to become empowered to the point that they feel they can make utopian spaces without the fear that the capitalists may choose to destroy those spaces. Akron is a city that is used as an example of this in the text. It is described as “the kind of thing” that had been “fantasized about” because it was a utopian space that was “a city” and not just “a village or a camp” (146). However, the concern is expressed that the “reason walkaway stuff tends to be a building or two, a wasp’s nest wedged in a crack in default” is that, “[a]nything over that scale” becomes “a threat” the capitalists “can burn in self-defense” (146). The text shows Akron “doing the unthinkable, establishing a permanent walkaway city” (236). The city was seen as a threatening example of postcapitalism by the capitalists due to its size and the fact that it was “a global media sensation” (145). Thus, “[d]efault had marched on Akron” (236). In the past, “walkaway had always solved the problem by walking away,” but the walkaways had indeed been emboldened by uploading technology as the capitalists had feared, and now, “[w]alkaways stood their ground because they did not fear death” (238). With the uploading technology, “death was another way of walking away from zottas” (239). The city is destroyed by the capitalists, and Akron is portrayed as another example, in
addition to the Belt and Braces, of the ability and determination of walkaways to “rebuild” and “The new Akron” was thus “built on the site of the leveled buildings” (307). The removal of the fear of death made possible by uploading technology had allowed walkaways to create and rebuild a utopian space despite the use of force by capitalists on a larger scale than usual.

Once again the text has Nadie share with Iceweasel that the capitalists are concerned about the effectiveness of the process of revolutionary transformation being carried out by walkaways. She explains, the “‘default’ world” of capitalism “gets less stable every day” and the capitalists see “the existence of walkaways” as “a prime cause” and a “destabilizing influence beyond all others” (Doctorow 307). Thus, the interstitial strategy of creating utopian spaces has shown others still living within the capitalist system that change is possible and this is consequently “destabilizing” the hegemony of capitalism (307).

The interstitial strategy of walkaways is shown by the text to be so effective in destabilizing capitalism that “government institutions” are described as being “[r]uptured,” meaning they “fell apart, turned into walkaway-style co-ops that gave away office supplies and opened up the databases for anyone” to be able to use (Doctorow 327). This is said to have happened to “hospitals, police departments, public housing” and the text describes it happening at the jail Limpopo is being held in, which is the “Kingston Prison for Women” after “Corrections Canada had” an “internal coup” (327). Limpopo explains that there were “so many walkaways in lockdown” that after the rupture they were able to easily create a utopian space since, “The idea of running all this stuff without greed and delusion” was “what” they were already “all about” (347). It was
“the heady first days” of a “new” society and “former prisoners and their families” were “adding more each day” to the utopian space (351). The text then uses this utopian space that the inmates had created after the rupture of the jail as the site of an important step in the interstitial revolutionary process. The removal of the fear of death that the uploading technology had made possible and that had emboldened those at Akron led to this important step in the revolutionary process by creating the opportunity for walkaways to face those imposing capitalism through force for capitalists and to try to convince them to stop supporting violent oppression without needing to fear what might happen if these efforts were unsuccessful. This important step in the revolutionary process is successful because the walkaways do successfully convince the armed private security sent to take back the space that they should no longer be a part of such violent oppression. The text first establishes a precedent for this by detailing a similar occurrence by having Iceweasel fill Limpopo in on the fact that “eight months” ago “drone operators refused” to kill the “infantrymen” and “officers” who had refused to fight in a similar situation (330). Then Tam asserts that this behavior is due to the “[c]redibility for walkaways” that had been achieved now that others had developed “a sense” that walkaways have “got it figured” out (331).

The anarchist strategy of creating “spaces of experiment with creating the institutions of a new society” in which the anarchist principles of “acting as if one is already free,” “the refusal to accept the legitimacy of the existing legal order,” and “the refusal to create an internal hierarchy” are followed, such as in the case of the examples of the Belt and Braces and the Banana and Bongo, is shown by the text to have resulted in people realizing “there’s a world that wants what you have to give” (Graeber 144-145;
Doctorow 331). That people are realizing “there’s a world that wants what you have to give” is made evident, for example, when Iceweasel tells Limpopo about those who had refused to continue to support the oppression of capitalism (Doctorow 331). This realization that there was a better alternative to capitalism, one in which individuals were valued as individuals and not just as a worker to exploit to achieve greater profit, was made possible through the utopian spaces walkaways had created. Through these utopian spaces, walkaways had shown that an alternative was possible and that it was more desirable than capitalism.

The text then uses the conflict at the jail as an example of another moment of refusal to support the oppression of capitalism. Capitalists send “private security” to the jail to destroy the utopian space newly created by the inmates when “all the doors opened” and there were “[n]o guards” and “[n]o admin staff” after the rupture (Doctorow 357, 326). The text shows through the subsequent events at the jail that networks are not only useful in providing information for how to create utopian spaces without scarcity and how to upload one’s self to remove fear of death at the hands of oppressors, but also for how to protect utopian spaces from outside violence and how to share with others the desirability of an alternative to the current system of capitalism. The network is shown to be integral in protecting the utopian space created in the jail when Gretyl and Limpopo are described as using it to gather information about how to prepare for the attacks of the private security hired by the capitalists to attack the jail. The text states that Gretyl “and Limpopo fed the particulars to the global walkaway audience wikiing counter-measures for every plan of attack they could conceive” (357). While using the network to defend the utopian space, Gretyl is described in the text as “a human coprocessor for a complex
system that used machines as a nervous system to wire together the intelligence of a
global crowd of people she loved with all her heart” (361). These quotes highlight the
usefulness of networks as a means of gathering information through connecting many
people together to benefit from their collective intelligence.

The statement that the people connected together through the network were “a
global crowd of people” that “Gretyl “loved with all her heart” and the later related
statement that Gretyl had an “incredible feeling of strength and connection to something
larger” also emphasize the power of networks to connect people so that they can see they
all have a common utopian hope for “[l]iving in a better” society and the fact that
networks can help in the revolutionary transformation process of making such a society’s
“first days” possible, as Gretyl was doing by protecting the utopian space created at the
jail (Doctorow 361). The power of feeling a “connection to something larger” when being
connected to a community of walkaways with this common utopian hope and of the
“incredible feeling” of feeling a “connection” to those that Gretyl “loved with all her
heart” is important in portraying how networks can also be used to share with others the
desirability of an alternative to the current system of capitalism (361). The integral role
this plays in successfully carrying out the process of revolutionary transformation is
expressed by the text when Gretyl admitting to Iceweasel’s capitalist father “Jacob
Redwater” that, “We can’t win this with force” is immediately followed by a description
of a scene that makes it clear that making human connections with the aid of networks
through which a common utopian hope is shared is the way that they can “win” (363).
The text describes how “external speakers clicked on” immediately and “A voice spoke:
‘Gordy, this is Tracey. Your sister Tracey, Gordy” (363). The scene reveals that Gordy is
one of the private cops in the front lines at the jail. He had been identified and his sister Tracy “found” through the use of the walkaway net (363). She is living in a walkaway town in Wyoming” and tells Gordy, “The way we live here is better than I ever thought. People are nice to each other” (363).

The network is being used to provide a human connection between Gordy and a family member he will trust to show Gordy that there is a better alternative than the current capitalist system so that he can share the utopian hope necessary to aid the process of a revolutionary transformation from capitalism to that better alternative. Tracy tells Gordy, “Gordy, you don’t have to do this. There are other ways to live. I love you, Gordy” (Doctorow 363). The impact is immediate and powerful. The emotion Gordy feels is clear when he is described as “one of the front-liners, a man, whose shoulders shook” and the power of human connection and of the utopian hope that had just been shared with him is made clear when “[h]e took his helmet off, shucked his weapons, let them fall around his feet” and when “[h]e walked away” (363). “He walked away” is placed on its own line in the text to highlight the importance of this moment, for he was walking away from participating in the attack, which provided a powerful model to his fellow “cops,” but the wording also suggests that he was additionally joining the movement of walkaways in that moment (363). This is important for it shows that networks providing human connection and the sharing of utopian hope are integral in the process of revolutionary transformation as they show people there truly can be a better alternative, and it suggests that once people are shown there can be a better alternative they want to be a part of that revolutionary transformation, as is made evident through the example of Gordy. The text then describes one of the other cops protecting Gordy as
“One of the cops in the front line raise his gun” at Gordy as he walked away. The cop “tackled the man with the gun before he could aim” (364). The text then reiterates the point that through these moments of human connection the revolutionary transformation can be a success, for after this scene Gretyl once again states into the phone to Jacob Redwater, “We can’t win this with force,” as though to imply that it is with what they’d just seen that they’d win, and then the text states, “She hung up as the next announcement started playing through the prisons’ outward-facing speakers” (364). This mention of “the next announcement” suggests that they were playing another message from another walkaway connected to one of the other cops to continue their already successful tactic (364). The effectiveness of this tactic is the focus of the very next paragraph. The paragraph states, “They got five walkouts from seven announcements” (364). They were able, with the use of the network, to easily find a person connected to a “rent-a-cop on the line” and play a message from that person that “would shame and sweet-talk them into putting down their weapons” (364).

The announcements were eventually stopped when “the cops brought out mortars—mortars!—to attack the walls” where the speakers were (Doctorow 364). However, when this was done, “TransCanada’s stocks plummeted” (364). This was the company that had hired the private security to attack the utopian space and the text explains that the stocks fell because “[t]he root of credit was credo: belief” and “[w]atching rent-a-cops bring out their big guns to wipe out speakers” caused the “belief system” to collapse (365). The text mentions this had happened “every other time” as well, thus suggesting that ensuring that people see what the capitalist system is willing to do to try to stay in power, such as the example described earlier of the destruction and
mass murder in the city of Akron, results in a decrease in the hegemony of capitalism and is therefore an important part of the process of revolutionary transformation (365). As “Nadie” had “said,” the capitalists didn’t “want another Akron,” because those that had been killed had become “martyrs” and the capitalists had been revealed as murderers (372). The network is shown to be useful through its ability to share these events globally so that the walkaways gain credibility and the capitalists lose credibility, and it is thus once again shown to be integral to the process of successful revolutionary transformation.

The importance to the process of revolutionary transformation of the private cops walking away is strengthened when “the cops who had walked away” returned with “[h]undreds of people” and all of those people “linked arms and sat down in front of the buildings” at the jail. They sat, “saying nothing” with “the walkaway ex-cops” sitting “in the middle” (Doctorow 371-372). Shortly after this moving protest, “The private cops were retreating” and as this was happening, “a cop broke ranks, took off her helmet and dropped her gun, just as others did earlier that day, and crossed over to the walkaway lines” and then “Two more did it” as well (374). The fact that “the private cops were retreating” showed that the capitalists knew they’d lost credibility and did not want to continue to pursue the attack and thereby cause further harm to the hegemony of the capitalist system (374). The fact that there were also cops joining the walkways that had not even been directly addressed by an announcement from someone they knew showed the extent to which the strategy of the announcements had been effective. The announcements had shared utopian hope through connecting humans with each other to confirm that an alternative to capitalism can and does work. The result of this strategy that is shown in the text is the achievement of enough damage to the hegemony of the
capitalist system to ensure the current preservation of the utopian space created from the ruptured jail and the eventual success of the revolutionary transformation.

The text shows that the eventual success of the revolutionary transformation is indeed achieved through the collective efforts of the walkaway community, which the text had shown was connected through the global Internet network. The text describes “walkaways all over the world trying to make scans” when walkaways were still trying to develop the uploading technology (Doctorow 299). All of these individuals had “their own ideas about it” and the walkaway net made sharing those ideas and collaborating possible. For example, one “working group came up with a standard way of encapsulating the data and preflighting it to see whether it was likely to run in a given sim” and this information was then shared with and benefited everyone working on the uploading technology (299). The process of figuring out how to run the data in a sim took time, but it was successful. The text describes this process. It details the first success, which was “a woman whose real name was Rebekkah Bastürk,” who was “the first person to be successfully simulated in software, under her pseudonym ‘Disjointed,’ which is shortened to ‘Dis’” (277). This woman had been “killed in a strike on a walkaway research facility near Kapuskasing” (277). Later in the text, the successful simulation of Limpopo is described and the dedication and collaboration needed to make it successful is highlighted as the text states that, “It took fourteen years before anyone figured out how to stabilize Limpopo’s sim” (321). They later tell Limpopo, who was actually alive and jailed during those fourteen years in the Kingston Prison for Women, which was the jail that later ruptured and that Limpopo helped to build into a utopia, “We thought you were dead” and “Martyrdom was in order” to explain why they had
stabilized her sim (328). Limpopo had become an important figure in the walkaway community and it was important to make clear what the capitalists had done to her to continue to reinforce the need for an alternative to capitalism and provide the utopian hope necessary for the success of revolutionary transformation through showing that the capitalists couldn’t kill Limpopo due to the uploading technology.

The collaboration of individuals made possible by the walkaway net also led to the creation of “a template that was developed and formalized” during the “Walkaway Decade” for the building of utopian spaces (Doctorow 343). Such collective work was powerful. Once the walkaways had developed the uploading technology, they had made it possible for “eminent, legendary scientists who’ve devoted their lives” to researching uploading technology to be “running as sims” and running “multiple copies of themselves,” so that they can “back up different versions of themselves and recover from those backups if they try failed experiments” (300). Through this method they were able to make important progress toward the desired end result of being able to be brought back from death as a sim and being able to choose to live your life in the walkaway network, in space, or on Earth in a new body and being able to always have the opportunity to live in a utopian society and being able to walk away and build another utopian society at any point through the use of the uploading technology. This end result will be discussed in chapter four, but it is important to note here that the sharing of the information learned from these experiments through the walkaway network was integral to the process of revolutionary transformation. The importance of these experiments to the process of revolutionary transformation was similar to the important process of the anarchist strategy of creating “spaces of experiment with creating the institutions of a new society”
in the walkaway communities and then walking away from them and building new communities if they failed at any point (Graeber 145). This strategy has already been shown to be successful through the analysis of the example of the Belt and Braces community that was walked away from and rebuilt as the Banana and Bongo and the example of the Akron community that walked away through allowing themselves to be murdered by the capitalists since they were scanned and knew they could live on to rebuild, and the example of those that rebuilt the new Akron on the site of the demolished buildings of the old Akron. These experiments were all successful and important in the process of revolutionary transformation. The added benefit of experimenting within the sims, however, was that the scientists could “think everything they used to be able to think with their meat-brains and also to think things they never could have thought” (Doctorow 300).

The novum of the uploading technology in the text therefore not only provides the cognitive estrangement that allows the reader to see their current moment in ways they could not have previously without their present being presented to them as the future so that they could more clearly see it, but it also provides the utopian hope that creating a utopian society is possible. The novum of the uploading technology allows for the focus of the critical utopia to be kept on the process of working to create the opportunities to resist the oppression of the current system so that the utopian end result can be achieved and not claiming to have the blueprint of a utopian society in the present moment. The focus is on the possibility of a better alternative and on the thought experiments, such as the writing of critical utopias such as *Walkaway*, and the actual experiments, such as those described by the text of the walkaway communities and experiments conducted in
sims, being the important process of such revolutionary transformation.

In the text, walkaways working together and the technology of uploading allow for the end result of the alternative to capitalism to be achieved. As Gretyl states to Jacob Redwater at the jail after the private cops have retreated, “default was easier to maintain when we didn’t have enough. When we didn’t have data. When we couldn’t all talk to each other” (Doctorow 375). This statement by Gretyl provides a succinct set of instructions for a successful process of revolutionary transformation and summarizes the process of revolutionary transformation that has been portrayed in *Walkaway*. The process had included achieving post-scarcity through fab labs and later through uploading technology, so that there was “enough” food and shelter, and no scarcity of life (375). The process had included sharing the “data” of how to build utopian communities, and later of how to upload one’s own data with uploading technology (375). Lastly, throughout it all, the process had included being able to “talk to each other” through the human connections formed through building utopian communities together and the connection and shared intelligence of communicating through the walkaway Internet network (375).

The text ends with the utopian end result achieved, as shown in an epilogue entitled “even better nation,” which refers to the fact that “[t]he point of walkaway is the first days of a better nation” (Doctorow 377, 146). Limpopo’s statement earlier in the text, “To the first days of a better world” is perhaps more fitting since the end result does away with nations (48). The end result of being able to choose to live in space through the use of the uploading technology, which had not yet been shared publicly when Limpopo stated “To the first days of a better world,” perhaps necessitates an entirely
different statement devoid of the idea of nations or a single world, but the statement is an important reminder that it is the utopian hope conveyed through the word “better” that is important (48). It is not the goal of the critical utopia Walkaway to create a blueprint of the utopia to achieve, for Limpopo didn’t know when she said “‘To the first days of a better world’” that space could have been included as part of the end result. Rather, the goal is to carry out the process of revolutionary transformation so that a utopian end result can be built, which can be later walked away from and another, better alternative end result created at any necessary point (48). The “even better” in the epilogue is an important reminder that this text is a critical utopia that highlights the importance of always seeking to critique and improve utopia, given that there is no blueprint to one perfect utopia (377). This epilogue’s title emphasizes the point of the critical utopia that the utopian impulse to always be working toward a better society and the utopian hope that drives this impulse is what defines utopia. The characters of the text are provided through the end result of the process of revolutionary transformation with the freedom to continually work toward a better society, for they are always able to walk away and start anew. The text thus ends with the confirmation that the interstitial process of revolutionary transformation had successfully resulted in a utopian alternative to the capitalist system that had tried and failed to keep that utopian end result from being achieved.

Before examining the end result that is portrayed in Walkaway in more detail in chapter four of this dissertation, it is important to analyze the process of the last of the “three strategic logics of transformation” of “anti-capitalist struggle” that Wright has outlined (Hahnel and Wright 100). The Corporation Wars trilogy depicted the ruptural
transformation strategy, *Walkaway* depicted the interstitial transformation strategy, and this chapter will conclude with an analysis of the portrayal of the process of the symbiotic transformation strategy in *2140*. Wright asserts that “symbiotic transformations” involve “strategies that use the state to extend and deepen the institutional forms of social empowerment” (101). Wright also argues that this strategy of revolutionary transformation can be shown to “correspond broadly” to the “social democratic” tradition “of anti-capitalism” (Wright 305). *2140* portrays the process of this symbiotic strategy of revolutionary transformation through the characters of the narrative successfully carrying out a symbiotic revolutionary transformation through using the laws of the state to achieve the utopian end result of the empowerment of the people. The connection of the symbiotic strategy used to the tradition of social democracy is also clearly seen through this symbiotic strategy used in *2140*, for the strategy involves the use of “legislation” to achieve the benefit of the social democracy strategy of reform touted by Eduard Bernstein “of creating permanent and viable economic arrangements” (Bernstein 204). The text shows how laws put in place by Congress by the end of the narrative through the symbiotic revolutionary transformation efforts of the characters help to achieve an economically viable alternative to the capitalism of the beginning of the narrative through nationalizing the banks and implementing taxes and others laws that strive to effectively remedy the inequality of wealth caused by the capitalist system and other injustices of the system. The text *2140* thus depicts the successful achievement of a utopian end result through the symbiotic process of revolutionary transformation.

*2140* begins with the character Jeff trying to create change through hacking and using the already established system against itself. Jeff tells his coworker and friend Mutt
that “the problem is capitalism” (Robinson 5). He justifies this statement by explaining, “We’ve got good tech, we’ve got a nice planet” and arguing that “capitalism” is causing problems because it is “a set of stupid laws” (5). Mutt then asks, “So what can we do?” (5). Jeff responds with a plan, which he feels he can accomplish since he and Mutt “work long hours writing code for high-frequency trading computers uptown” (6). Jeff reiterates that capitalism is “a set of laws!” and further elaborates that “it’s global! It extends all over the Earth, there’s no escaping it, we’re all in it, and no matter what you do, the system rules!” in order to argue that the system must be used against itself in order to achieve revolutionary transformation (5). He describes his plan to Mutt by first explaining that he has “done the analysis” and he has found that, “There are sixteen laws running the whole world!” (5). He explains, “The laws are codes! And they exist in computers and in the cloud” (5). He points out to Mutt that these laws are “encoded, and each can be changed by changing the codes” (6). He states, “It’s sixteen laws, distributed between the World Trade Organization and the G20. Financial transactions, currency exchange, trade law, corporate law, tax law. Everywhere the same” (5). Having established that the sixteen laws are the same laws used globally in all of these instances, he then explains that if “you change these sixteen, you’re like turning a key in a big lock. The key turns, and the system goes from bad to good” (6). Jeff envisions that at that point it will be true of the system that, “It helps people, it requires the cleanest techs, it restores landscapes, the extinctions stop” (6). He further asserts that, “It’s global, so defectors can’t get outside it” and that, “Bad money gets turned to dust, bad actions likewise. No one could cheat. It would make people be good” (6). He then describes to Mutt that he is ready to carry out this revolutionary strategy. He states, I built us some covert channel
during that gig we did for my cousin. We’re in there, and I’ve got the replacement codes ready. Sixteen revisions to these financial laws” (6). He shares his revisions with Mutt, Mutt reads over them and tells Jeff, “I like it,” so Jeff “taps the return key” and his new set of codes goes out into the world” through the use of a “Ken Thompson Trojan horse” (7). Later, “Jeff reads his computer screen” and comments, “They spotted us” (7). This observation that his efforts to create revolutionary transformation through hacking the system and revising the laws that way were noticed suggests the need for a different way of approach given that his efforts were so quickly noticed. Mutt also reiterates this need for a new approach when he points out, “They can always recode what you did, that’s the thing. Once they see it” (7).

The text argues for the need for a symbiotic revolutionary strategy by depicting in its narrative a successful revolutionary transformation that achieves the end result that Jeff was striving for through his revision of the laws. The successful revolutionary transformation uses a symbiotic strategy that fully follows the definition by carrying out “strategies that use the state to extend and deepen the institutional forms of social empowerment” (Hahnel and Wright 101). The laws that Jeff tried to write into effect through hacking are, by the end of the narrative of 2140, instead put into effect by Congress and thus made into law by using “the state” instead of by hacking the system (101). The text points out this effectiveness of the symbiotic revolutionary strategy when Mutt tells Jeff at the end of the narrative that Franklin had, by using the state, “managed to do what” Jeff “tried to do” (Robinson 607).

The effectiveness of the symbiotic strategy can also be seen through a comparison between the fixes that Jeff tried to make and the laws that the text details are enacted in
the end of the narrative. Some of what Jeff had tried to do is not enacted by the end of the text, such as “redirecting” money from financial transactions “made over the CME” into “the SEC’s operating fund” to show the SEC “what can happen” and “give them the funding to be able to deal with” it (Robinson 150). The SEC does not keep the money, but the end of the text reveals that the SEC does “put to use” “some” of the “financial fixes” that Jeff sent to them (609). Another fix that Jeff made that was not made into law at the end of the narrative was that he “tweaked the list of countries it’s illegal to send funds to” by adding “all the tax havens to that list” (151). Although this specific fix is not utilized later in the text, a law that does something similar to what Jeff was trying to do is enacted through the system of the state later in the text “To prevent capital from fleeing to tax havens” (602). This is seen when “a capital flight penalty” is “made law, with a top rate set at the famous Eisenhower-era ninety-one percent” and the result of this law is that “Capital flight stopped” (602).

Jeff did, however, also write fixes that were later carried out at the end of the text through symbiotic means. Jeff had explained to Mutt that he had “piketted the U.S. tax code” by implementing a “Sharp progressive tax on capital assets,” which meant “All capital assets in the United States, taxed at a progressive rate that goes to ninety percent of any holdings over one hundred million” (Robinson 151). Mutt explains that this would achieve “what Keynes called the euthanasia of the rentier” or, in other words, “Decapitation of the oligarchy” (151). Jeff confirms this, but clarifies that it is a nonviolent revolution, since it would only be a removal of “their money” and not of their heads (151). The result would be, as Jeff describes it, “We cut off their money. Their excess money. Everyone is left their last five million” (151). This is described by the text
as a way to obtain a velvet revolution in which no one gets hurt and capitalists are allowed to keep five million dollars while the rest of their money is redistributed to the people. The text argues this will be nonviolent when it states that the capitalists “will do a cost-benefit analysis and realize dying for a bigger number is not worth it” and they will thus “take their 5 million and slink away” (399). This velvet revolution is not shown to be successfully achieved by Jeff’s hacking, for, as Mutt points out, the strategy Jeff used “was never going to hold” since, “It was like spraying graffiti on the wall somewhere” (152). However, it is shown to be successfully achieved later in the narrative through symbiotic revolutionary transformation when the same progressive tax that Jeff had enacted through his temporary hacking strategy is later enacted legally through law. Congress passed “a so-called Piketty tax, a progressive tax levied not just on incomes but on capital assets” (602). The text thus demonstrates that the most effective means of revolutionary transformation is the symbiotic “strategies that use the state” to carry out the process of revolutionary transformation (Hahnel and Wright 101).

The importance of such a strategy of using the system of law to carry out revolutionary transformation is suggested by Mutt’s statement that, “no one cares about books, that’s why you can write anything you want in them. It’s laws people care about” (Robinson 152). This contrasts Piketty’s ability to have “a very successful book tour” for his book *Capital in the Twenty-first Century* with Jeff’s inability to be successful in implementing a tax based on Piketty’s ideas since Jeff was “tweaking the laws” and writing his “graffiti right into the laws” (152). Although Jeff was not successful since he didn’t use the state to change the laws in a symbiotic way, the tax based on Piketty’s ideas is indeed made into law later through the symbiotic strategy and the text’s point
about the usefulness of this symbiotic process of revolutionary transformation is thus made. The additional points can also be inferred that books are a useful way of sharing revolutionary ideology, since you can “write anything you want in them” and that such revolutionary ideology can then be achieved through a process of revolutionary transformation if a symbiotic strategy that uses the system of law to enact change is then subsequently carried out (152).

The need for a symbiotic strategy of revolutionary transformation is also shown later when individuals displaced from their homes by the flooding caused by Hurricane Fyodor are trying to take shelter in empty towers owned by the rich and which are guarded by “private security armies” (Robinson 208). Charlotte advocated for a symbiotic solution to this problem when she asked the mayor to “open up the uptown towers,” since “[m]ore than half the apartments uptown are empty because they’re owned by rich people from somewhere else” (500-501). Charlotte had asked the mayor to “Declare an emergency and use all those rooms as refugee centers” (501). However, the mayor had not used this symbiotic solution and later a “crowd” that “was intent on the towers” tries to enter them to use them as shelter (512). This ends with the character Inspector Gen reporting that, “There’s private security here who have opened fire on the crowd” (513). This violent reaction by the private security army is stopped by Inspector Gen and it is suggested by the text that the failure of the crowd to enter the towers is what Hexter refers to as “a Pyrrhic victory in reverse,” which he calls “a Pyrrhic defeat” (598). Hexter argues that “the losers of a Pyrrhic victory” are in fact “really the winners,” since what the victory costs the winners of a Pyrrhic victory is not worth the victory itself (598). In the case of the crowd failing to occupy the towers, theirs would be seen as a
Pyrrhic defeat since the private security army’s Pyrrhic victory had not been worth winning since it revealed the way in which the capitalist system is an undesirable one that results in empty towers owned by the absent rich who hire private security armies that are willing to fire toward citizens in need due to a natural disaster caused by the global warming caused by the capitalist system.

The text advocates for a symbiotic solution to the problem yet again by not having the citizens use a ruptural strategy to achieve the revolutionary transformation needed to enable citizens to use those empty towers. The text does not have citizens continue to try to gain entry into the towers “through a direct confrontation” (Hahnel and Wright 100). The text instead has citizens achieve the end result of occupancy of the towers at the end of the text through the use of the symbiotic strategy of passing laws that result in the occupancy of the towers. The text thus shows the effectiveness of the symbiotic strategy by showing that the citizens are able to create a utopian space in the towers through the symbiotic strategy at the end of the text, when the towers were then “mostly occupied” due to taxes such as an “absentee tax” and “capital assets taxes” that had been integral in ensuring that the towers were “either being occupied or sold to people who will occupy them” (Robinson 596). The further addition of “a new city law” that required “low-income housing in all of them” provided the end result that the other strategies had been shown in the text to fail to provide as effectively as the symbiotic strategy (596).

The text suggests through the confrontation with the private security for the towers that the symbiotic strategy of revolutionary transformation must be successfully enacted before ruptural or interstitial strategies can hope to successfully achieve the end result of an alternative to capitalism. There are elements of successful revolutionary
transformation through the interstitial strategy that are portrayed in the text as utopian spaces that are used to build “alternatives on the ground in whatever spaces are possible,” however, the text suggests that these communities are unable to be fully effective in “pushing against the state and public policy to expand those spaces” as long as the laws of the capitalist system are not also changed through the symbiotic strategy (Hahnel and Wright 101, 105).

The text describes how utopian spaces had been formed after the various floods caused by the global warming that was a result of capitalism. It explains that, “The narrow but worldwide strip of wreckage that they occupied was dangerous and unhealthy” and yet the “immediate option was to live in that wreckage” (Robinson 209). The text describes the utopian impulse of those living in those spaces, for it states that “a lot of them were interested in trying something different, including which authorities they gave their consent to be governed by” (209). This process fit with the anarchist practice used in the interstitial strategy of revolutionary transformation of “the refusal to accept the legitimacy of the existing legal order” (Graeber 144). This is further exemplified through the statement that, “Hegemony had drowned, so in the years after the flooding there was a proliferation of cooperatives, neighborhood associations, communes, squats, barter, alternative currencies, gift economies, solar usufruct, fishing village cultures, mondragons, unions, Davy’s locker freemasonries, anarchist blather, and submarine technoculture, including aeration and aquafarming” (Robinson 209). These utopian spaces are described by the text as “experiments,” and can thus be seen as carrying out the anarchist practice of building “spaces of experiment with creating the institutions of a new society” during the interstitial process of revolutionary transformation (Robinson
209; Graeber 145). These spaces are expressed by the text to have been experiments that transformed “Lower Manhattan” into a true “veritable hotbed of theory and practice” through which those theories of “institutions of a new society” could be put into practice in the spaces available (Robinson 209; Graeber 145).

Although these spaces were able to be created through the lack of hegemony of capitalism over those creating those spaces, the lack of which the text suggests was caused by the flooding that resulted from the practices of the previously hegemonic capitalist system, the text also seems to suggest that the interstitial strategy alone would fail to achieve the desired end result. This suggestion is seen in the word choice of describing discussions of anarchist theory as “blather” and in the observation that “wherever there is a commons, there is enclosure,” which the text supports with the observation that with the “rise into visibility” of “a newly viable infrastructure and canalculture – the intertidal, the SuperVenice, occupied and performed by energetic people who were hungry for more” there came with it the observation by capitalists that this was “a place that might make for a very high rate of return on investment” (Robinson 209-210). The intimation is that capitalists will thus reclaim for the purposes of profit those utopian spaces created by the interstitial strategy and that the symbiotic strategy is therefore needed to safeguard against this.

An example of capitalists trying to reclaim spaces created by the interstitial strategy is the “bid” from “Morningside Realty” to buy the building that Charlotte lives in and that is owned by the “co-op” that she is a part of (Robinson 330). Charlotte fears that the capitalists will eventually succeed in buying this “Met Life tower” unless she seeks to carry out revolutionary transformation, which she successfully does using the symbiotic
strategy of revolutionary transformation (581). The possibility that the capitalists could succeed in buying the building is suggested by the results of the vote by “the co-op members” regarding “whether to accept the bid on the building from Morningside Realty” (330). The text states, “The vote is against taking the offer on the building. 1,207 against, 1,093 for” and explains, “It had been too close” since “[i]f the offer was repeated at a substantially higher amount, as often happened in uptown real estate, then it wouldn’t take many people to change their minds for the decision to shift” (331).

The danger of capitalists buying the utopian space that the citizens had created is emphasized by Charlotte’s observation that the closeness of the vote seemed to suggest “nothing had been learned in the long years of struggle to make lower Manhattan a livable space, a city-state with a different plan” and by the suggestion that the capitalist ideology was so hegemonic that so many members of the co-op thought “that money in any amount could replace what they had made” and that “[e]very ideal and value” of the co-op “seemed to melt under the drenching of money” and “the pretense that you could buy meaning, buy life” (Robinson 331). In her speech after the vote, Charlotte tells the co-op members that “money” is not “all it’s cracked up to be” since “[m]any things can’t be bought” (331). She explains, “Money isn’t time, it isn’t security, it isn’t health. You can’t buy any of those things. You can’t buy community or a sense of home” (331). She then tells her audience, “I’ll be trying to convince everyone that what we’ve made here is more valuable than this monetary valuation, which amounts to a hostile takeover bid of a situation that is already as good as it can get” (332). This statement reveals Charlotte’s belief that the co-op is a utopian space and her fears that the capitalist system will convince enough co-op members to sell.
Charlotte’s belief in the utopian nature of the co-op and her concern that capitalists will succeed in reclaiming it lead to Charlotte’s desire to carry out revolutionary transformation to save her co-op. Charlotte tells Franklin Garr, “What we’re ultimately hoping for is” to be able “to protect the building from any kind of hostile takeover,” and Franklin explains that the only way to do this is to “bet the bubble is going to pop” and “[b]uy instruments so that when it does pop, you win” (Robinson 345-346). Franklin explains, “You win so big that the only worry you have is” the possibility that “there’s no one left to pay you” because “[f]inancial civilization” has collapsed (346). Charlotte had said previously to Mutt and Jeff that she’d “like to crash” the “system” of “[c]apital” and she expresses this again to Franklin at this point when she states, “I would love to bring down financial civilization” (339, 346). As Mutt had clarified with Charlotte earlier, Charlotte meant by this that “to save” her “co-op from a takeover” she “would destroy the entire global economic system” (339). Franklin then explains to Charlotte that she could actually successfully cause the bubble to pop instead of just betting that it would in order to carry out a revolutionary transformation. The text had previously emphasized that the strategy of symbiotic revolutionary transformation that Franklin outlines would be necessary when it stated that “people didn’t want the bubble to burst” and that “[i]t would take far more than any one building or neighborhood” collapsing to pop the bubble “because too many people were still making money going long” (214). This suggests that the capitalist system would continue unless a revolutionary strategy was enacted to cause the bubble to pop. The text establishes that Charlotte is not just asking Larry, the chair of the Federal Reserve Bank, to “overthrow the world economic order” so that she can “save” her “building from a hostile takeover,”
but also because she wants to save “the world from another Great Depression” and because it would mean “shifting the noose from” the “necks” of the people “to the parasites’ necks,” meaning the necks of capitalists (435). This is of course a figurative noose as this revolutionary transformation has already been established as a velvet one by this point, meaning that no violence would occur.

The argument for a velvet revolution through symbiotic transformation instead of a violent one through ruptural transformation is made through Charlotte thinking about how “after every crisis” the nature of capitalism, as outlined in theory on capitalism, was that “capital had tightened the noose around the neck of labor” (Robinson 502). The text describes “crisis capitalism” as “shoving the boot on the neck harder at every opportunity” or “tightening the noose” and states that this was “a studied phenomenon,” that “[i]t had been proved,” and that “[i]t was the pattern” and “impossible to deny” (502). The text then importantly states that “the fight against the tightening noose had never managed to find the leverage to escape it,” because to “fight it” led to it being argued that this “justified the heavy response,” such as “prison camps” (502). This statement therefore supports the revolutionary transformation described in the text that uses the process of symbiotic transformation that thus doesn’t result in “the heavy response” since it uses the preexisting system rather than trying to directly “fight it” (502).

Franklin explains in detail what the process would be, in theory, to cause the bubble to pop. Franklin explains that “finance counts on having those steady inputs of money” that are provided by “mortgage payments, health insurance, pension fund inputs, utility bills” and those in finance thus “borrow on that certainty, they use that certainty as
collateral, and then they use that borrowed money to bet on the markets” (Robinson 347). He explains, “They leverage out a hundred times their assets in hand, which mostly consist of the payment streams that people make to them,” which means that “These people’s debts are their assets, pure and simple” (347). Franklin then explains how they could thus pop the bubble on purpose. He states, “you could pop the bubble on purpose” because since finance “relies on a steady payment stream from ordinary people, which it does, then you could crash the system any time you wanted, by people stopping their payments” (348). He suggests that if “everyone at once” were to “[s]top paying” their “[m]ortgages, rents, utilities, student debt, health insurance” then the bubble would pop (348). He tells Charlotte that she could organize this as “the head of the Householders’ Union” since “unions” can “strike” and through this “people still have power” (349). The inclusion in the text of the union as an existing “institutional” means of “social empowerment” that is then used to “extend and deepen the institutional forms of social empowerment” through the later process and result of the revolutionary transformation reinforces that the strategy is a symbiotic one (Hahnel and Wright 101). The text then later portrays a successful symbiotic revolution during which the characters of the narrative cause the bubble to pop in the very way that Franklin had described and use the subsequent financial crash to nationalize the banks and have laws enacted through existing “institutional” means to “extend and deepen forms of social empowerment” (101). This demonstrates that the symbiotic strategy is effective in obtaining the desired revolutionary transformation.

The text uses the characters Jeff and Mutt to describe this symbiotic revolutionary transformation in theory first before depicting the completion of this process in detail in
the narrative of the text through the characters of Charlotte, Franklin, and others. What Jeff had tried to do at the beginning of the narrative had been more ruptural in its strategy through the “sharp break with existing institutions and social structures” that some of his fixes embodied and his efforts of “rapidly transforming state structures” that he tried to do when he “tried to tap into the system and make the fixes directly” (Hahnel and Wright 100; Robinson 294). The text suggests the need for a symbiotic strategy over a ruptural one when Jeff acknowledges again that his strategy, which was more ruptural than symbiotic, “was never going to work” since “they could always just change the fixes back again anyway” (Robinson 294). Jeff then says to Mutt, “Tell me how we could do it!” (294). Mutt then explains, “Jeff, these are laws you’re talking about here. They aren’t just fixes, they’re like new laws” (294). Mutt then explains why the symbiotic revolutionary strategy is needed when he states, “So, laws are made by lawmakers. We elect them” (294). This establishes the need to use the existing system, but Mutt also acknowledges the need for revolutionary transformation of the existing system when he points out about the “lawmakers” that “companies pay for their campaigns, so they say they’re going to work for us, but once in office they work for the companies” (294). The text thus shows that the way to keep the fixes Jeff had tried to make would be to make them into laws and that due to the need to thus make new laws and due to the current capitalist system controlling government, a symbiotic revolutionary transformation would be needed.

Mutt describes this symbiotic revolutionary process when he asks Jeff if it is a “revolution” if the process is to “use the currently existing legal system to vote in a group of congress people who actually pass laws to put people back in charge of lawmaking,
and they do it, and there’s a president who signs those laws, and a Supreme Court that allows they are legal, and an army that enforces them” (Robinson 295). Jeff confirms, “Yes. It’s a revolution” (295). In contrast to the “seizing state power” of the ruptural strategy or the anarchist practices of the interstitial strategy, this symbiotic revolutionary strategy that uses existing “institutional” means is described by Mutt to be “legal,” to which Jeff replies “All the better, right?” and to which Mutt responds, “Sure, granted” (Hahnel and Wright 100-101; Robinson 295). The text thus establishes that the symbiotic revolutionary strategy is necessary and preferable to the ruptural and interstitial strategies.

Once the text has described what the symbiotic revolutionary strategy would look like in theory, it portrays what the symbiotic strategy looks like in practice through its narrative. The theory described by Mutt is carried out in practice in the text later in the narrative when Charlotte is elected to Congress and helps to pass laws that are shown to achieve a utopian end result. The text also describes in detail the process that must be carried out to prepare to enact this successful symbiotic revolutionary transformation. The necessary call to action is depicted when Amelia tells her podcast viewers to “join the Householders’ Union, like today,” and explains that this is, “because we need to organize, people” (Robinson 365). This importantly prepares for the process of revolutionary transformation that Franklin described by striving to obtain as many members of the union as possible before asking those individuals to strike by not paying their payments in order to pop the bubble.

Amelia also suggests to her viewers that the rule of capitalism of “more is better,” which “in practice” would refer to more “profit,” should be replaced with Aldo Leopold’s
rule that “‘[w]hat’s good is what’s good for the land’” since capitalism’s rule when put “[i]n practice” has “put us into a mass extinction event” (Robinson 360). Amelia argues that using the rule “‘[w]hat’s good is what’s good for the land’” would in practice be “all our land use practices” and “a way of organizing our efforts all around” that meant “[i]nstead of working for profit, we do whatever is good for the land” (360-361). She makes the point that “Aldo Leopold” was considering what was best for all people when he said that “‘[w]hat’s good is what’s good for the land’” since “taking care of the land took better care of people, over the long haul” (360-361).

The text provides examples of practices that had been enacted in the narrative’s past of 2074 that were “good for the land,” but states that these practices were “arrayed against the usual resistance of entrenched power and privilege and the economic system,” which thus reiterates the need for the symbiotic revolutionary process that would allow for laws to be enacted that would allow for further such improvements and the safeguarding of those that had already been carried out to ensure that “‘what’s good for the land’” is the rule followed and not the rule of “more is better” that had led them into “a mass extinction event” (Robinson 361, 378). The improvements made in 2074 were changes in the fields of “energy, transport, agriculture, construction” that implemented “clean replacements” for “carbon positive activities” (378). Amelia’s call to action to her viewers to follow the rule of “‘[w]hat’s good is what’s good for the land’” instead of capitalism’s rule of “more is better” importantly prepares her viewers for electing individuals who will share these views and who will enact laws that follow the rule of “‘[w]hat’s good is what’s good for the land’” (360).

Amelia’s call to action to her viewers to join the Householders’ Union and to
consider the need for change from capitalism rule to a new rule that considers “what’s good for the land” and thus what is good for the people importantly prepares for a successful revolutionary transformation (Robinson 360). The text explains how this is the case when Jeff states, “If it works like Chenoweth’s law says it does, then you only need about fifteen percent of a population to engage in civil disobedience, and the rest see it and support it, and the oligarchy falls” (400). Therefore, the call to action of Amelia to her viewers to join the Householders’ Union was integral in gathering the percent of the population needed and that would later be described by the text as participating in the civil disobedience of going on strike from paying the payments that finance counted on, and thus subsequently popping the bubble and crashing the system. The text once again advocates for this symbiotic revolutionary strategy in place of a ruptural strategy through Jeff’s description that, “you get a new legal regime” and that “It doesn’t have to get all bloody and lead to a thugocracy of violent revolutionaries. It can work” (400-401).

The text emphasizes the importance to the revolutionary process of being sure that everything is ready for when the moment of the revolution comes. Franklin suggests it would be ideal to have “a government in place” before “the crash” that “a Householders’ strike could cause” that will “nationalize the banks” once the strike is carried out and “the crash” is caused by the strike (Robinson 427). He explains to Charlotte that to nationalize the banks the government would “gather all the big banks and investment firms” and tell them, “we’ll reboot finance with a giant infusion of public money, but now we own you. You’re now working for the people, meaning the government” (427). This would mean that “finance is back in action, but its profits go to the public” (427). Charlotte then goes to her ex-husband Larry, since he works for the government as the chair of the Federal
Reserve Bank, and tells him, “When the bubble pops, nationalize the banks” (433). She explains that the bubble popping causes the crash since finance is based on trust. She explains that “when the bubble pops this time, no one will know what paper is still good, and they’ll all panic and stop lending, and we’ll all be in a free fall. You know that. It’s a fragile system, based on mutual trust that it’s sane, and as soon as that fiction breaks down, everyone sees it is crazy and no one can trust anyone. They’ll run screaming to you begging for help. You’ll be the only thing between them and the biggest depression since the last one” (433). She tells Larry that when this happens he should “go to the president and explain that once again the American taxpayer has to bail out” the banks and “tell her to nationalize the biggest banks and investment firms” (433-434). Charlotte suggests that to do this they should “Bail them out by buying them out” (434). Charlotte reminds Larry that the government is able to “print money” to use to “restore confidence” so that finance can run smoothly, since it is built on “mutual trust” (433-434). If the banks and investment firms are nationalized, Charlotte states that, “At that point the American people are in control of global finance” and thus, in the “battle between people” and the “oligarchy” it will mean “the people will have unexpectedly gained the upper hand” (434). She explains that from then on “the ridiculous profits from finance will belong to the people” and that finance could thus be used for “solving people’s real problems” (434). She further explains to Larry how the symbiotic revolutionary process would work by stating, “Congress can reform the financial system based on laws you write for them to pass, and you can quantitatively ease the American taxpayer instead of the banks” (434). She asserts it’s “a practical plan” and this suggestion that it is a plan that can be carried out effectively in practice is later confirmed when the text portrays the
successful completion of the plan by the end of the narrative (434). Larry replies to Charlotte, “It’s like you’re a communist or something” which establishes it is a plan that can carry out an alternative to capitalism even though it is a plan that uses a symbiotic rather than a ruptural or interstitial strategy of revolutionary transformation (434).

The revolutionary process that Charlotte outlines is admittedly “hard” as Larry points out (Robinson 435). Charlotte states though that while its “[h]ard because it’s politics” to achieve a velvet revolution through a symbiotic rather than a ruptural strategy and though “it’s getting harder” since “finance has bought a lot of the politicians and a lot of the laws,” she points out that this degree of difficulty could be temporary if Larry was to “help to change that” by doing as she has suggested he do “when the next crash comes” (435). She explains that it is “an inflection moment,” thus suggesting that change is possible, and that the crash would be the inflection moment when that change could occur (435). She did not share with Larry that “she also had a plan to pop the bubble on Larry’s watch,” which would be achieved through the householders’ union strike (435). Larry explains that to be able to carry out this plan effectively he would need “members of Congress” that he “could count on” (437). Later Charlotte runs for Congress and is elected so that she can be one of those members of Congress that Larry can count on to ensure the revolutionary transformation is successful. This use of the existing political system to achieve a successful revolutionary transformation again reinforces the symbiotic nature of the strategy of the revolutionary process.

The part of the process of showing a better alternative to capitalism is possible is demonstrated through the text detailing why Charlotte chooses to run for Congress and what she uses as an argument for her to be elected instead of the candidate the mayor is
backing to be elected. As previously mentioned, Charlotte calls the mayor to ask her to “declare an emergency” and use any “apartments uptown” that “are empty because they’re owned by rich people from somewhere else” to create “refugee centers” (Robinson 500-501). Charlotte suggests that to accomplish this the mayor could “contact every single owner and ask them for the use of their place” for this purpose and to “[t]alk them into it,” or at least “[a]s many as” she could (501). The mayor expresses the worry that this would cause “more capital flight out of” New York City (501). The mayor’s concern for the capitalist system over the needs of the people who are homeless due to the flooding and thus forced to camp outside in the park rather than be sheltered in empty apartments that are owned by the capitalists is what Charlotte then uses to argue for the people electing her for Congress instead of the candidate the mayor is backing. The mayor not taking Charlotte’s advice about how to help those in need seems to also be the catalyst that drives Charlotte to run for Congress, for shortly after her conversation with the mayor she calls those who had suggested earlier that she run for Congress and asks if they were “still interested in” her “running for the Twelfth District seat” (502). She explains that she wants to “run against” the “candidate” that the mayor “is backing,” because the mayor did not “open uptown for the refugees” (502). They decide that the fact that the mayor didn’t open uptown to the refugees and the fact that it is an idea that would help the people in need is “something to run on” (503).

Charlotte then talks to Franklin about the details of how to carry out in practice the process of the symbiotic revolutionary transformation that they had previously talked about in theory. She tells him, “I’d like to pull the trigger on this crash you outlined” (Robinson 504). She then asks him, “Will this hurricane pop the bubble you were talking
about?” since she is wondering if the crisis of the hurricane causing flooding will sufficiently impact the global system of capitalism enough to “crash the system” (504). Franklin explains that given that it is “a global market” the hurricane itself would not be enough (504). Charlotte then suggests that the hurricane has made it a good time to enact the process of revolutionary transformation because “[p]eople are mad” since so many have been made homeless due to the crisis and the mayor has not done anything to solve the problem (504). As had been pointed out by Jeff, the time when “[p]eople” are “scared for their kids” is “the moment things can tip” and thus the crisis of the hurricane on top of the previous conditions of a “drowned world” from previous floods means that “conditions are ripe” indeed for a successful revolution (400-401). Charlotte explains that it is therefore “the right moment to strike” and suggests that they use the “householders’ strike” Franklin had suggested earlier to pop “the global bubble” (504). Charlotte explains that they should try it now, because if they don’t then crisis capitalism will do what it always does and “pull the noose tighter” now that a crisis, the hurricane, has occurred (504).

The importance of utopian hope as part of the process of revolutionary transformation is then established when Franklin questions if it is possible by saying, “I don’t think the groundwork is laid that would make it work” and states in a disparaging way “So you want to reverse” the “ten-thousand-year trend” of “The rich get richer and the poor get poorer” (Robinson 504-505). The importance of utopian hope in the process of revolutionary transformation is made evident here when Charlotte responds confidently to Franklin, “Yes. Let’s reverse that” and this results in Franklin confidently moving the process of revolutionary transformation forward through planning the details
of what the process will soon look like in practice in preparation for carrying it out (505). Franklin immediately “began to think hard” and he subsequently states, “I think it would work at any time, if enough people joined a payment default” (505). Charlotte then suggests, “Call it the strike” (505). Charlotte’s utopian hope thus inspired Franklin to further plan, with the intention of it becoming practice rather than it just being theory, the very effective method of the process of revolutionary transformation that the text shows later to be successful in popping the bubble so that they can achieve their goal of the revolutionary transformation of nationalizing the banks once the bubble has been popped.

Franklin points out that they will want the payment strike “to look like a choice, to make it clear that it’s a conscious strike” (507). That it is a conscious strike is later made clear when Amelia calls for the strike on her radio program. That Charlotte and Franklin had just carried out vital planning of what the process of revolutionary transformation would look like in practice is made clear in the text as they “toasted” and said “To revolution” (507). Franklin continues to plan a successful process of revolution when he then states, “Part of a decent prep would be you accepting that draft and running for Congress,” to which Charlotte replies, “I already did” (507). This again highlights the importance to the process of symbiotic transformation of electing officials to Congress who will be able to support the implementation of laws that put the power back in the hands of the people.

The text also suggests that those planning such a revolutionary transformation should run for Congress to ensure that this part of the process can be carried out, for Franklin points out that “it’s a case of you break it you bought it” in the sense that, “Crash the system and you have to build the next one” (507). This statement reiterates that a symbiotic revolution uses existing “institutional” means such as Congress to achieve revolutionary
transformation, but it is also a reminder that in the case of any revolutionary strategy, the process involves not just the steps taken to remove elements of the current system of capitalism but also the steps taken to create the better alternative that will become the end result of the revolutionary transformation (Hahnel and Wright 101).

The symbiotic revolutionary transformation planned by Charlotte and Franklin is then set into motion by the character Amelia. Amelia effectively calls to action the people to participate in the revolutionary transformation through pointing out the issue that Charlotte had decided would be an effective one for her to run for Congress on, which was the issue of the refugees camping in Central Park and not being allowed to make use of the empty buildings in uptown that are owned by the wealthy 1% of the capitalist system. Amelia brings this to wider attention, thus assisting Charlotte’s election campaign, by pointing the issue out during her popular program. She shows these “superscrapers” during her show and points out that “they’re mostly empty right now” because “they were always too expensive for ordinary people to afford” and “the apartments” are owned by “the richest people from all over the world” as “an investment, or maybe a tax-write-off” (Robinson 525-526). She then contrasts this image of the skyscrapers with the image of the refugee camp to make her point. She states, “here below us is Central Park. It’s a refugee camp now, you can see that” (526). The two contrasting images make Amelia’s point and the text’s point that there is a better alternative to a capitalist system that has resulted in people sleeping in a park near empty buildings owned by the wealthy 1%. Amelia then calls her viewers to action to put the symbiotic revolutionary strategy into practice after showing these images. She states, “I’m sick of the right” and “I’m sick of them running this whole planet for themselves,”
and then she calls her viewers to action by stating, “So I think we should take it back, and take care of it. And take care of each other as part of that” (526).

After this statement of utopian hope for revolutionary transformation, she then tells her viewers the action they can take to successfully carry out such revolutionary transformation. She reminds them of the “Householders’ Union” that she had told them in a previous show to join, and then she explains that “it’s time for everyone to join that union, and for that union to go on strike” (Robinson 526). She explains that this would thus be an “everybody strike” and that it should occur “Now. Today” (526). This is the plan of action that Franklin had previously planned and said would work, for this would mean that all at once everyone in the Householders’ Union would not pay their mortgages and this would cause the bubble to pop and create the set of economic circumstances that would make it possible for the government to nationalize the banks and thus take the first step in putting the power back in the hands of the people and achieving an alternative to capitalism, which is the utopian end result that this symbiotic revolutionary process thus makes possible.

Amelia asserts to Charlotte and Franklin that today is the best time to carry out this plan of action. She explains that she is “looking down at it,” meaning the refugee camp, and that “the time is now,” for the conditions are right since people are mad about the current circumstances caused by capitalism and can see clearly the need for a better alternative through the visual of a refugee camp in Central Park while nearby apartments owned by the rich remain empty (Robinson 526). Franklin agrees that “She may be right” about it being the time to enact the revolutionary transformation process and Amelia proceeds to continue to encourage her viewers to act to put the process in motion (527).
She explains to her viewers, “What I mean by a householders’ strike is you just stop paying your rents and mortgages…maybe also your student loans and insurance payments” (527). This includes the plan that Franklin had previously suggested of a mortgage payment strike, but Amelia has also added other payments to the list for the people to stop paying during the strike as well. She instructs them that the plan is that, “until there’s a restructuring that forgives a lot of our debt, we aren’t paying anything” (527). She reassures them that, “if it was just you” then “not paying your mortgage would get you in trouble,” but “when everyone does it, that makes it a strike. Civil disobedience. A revolution” (527). After naming the process she is describing as a “revolution,” Amelia reiterates the importance of all of the people participating in the process of that revolution so that it is not just a few people getting in trouble for not paying their mortgages, but rather a successful revolution (527). She states, “So everyone needs to join in,” and then she persuades them that they are capable of doing so. She assures them that it, “Won’t be that hard” and then she shows them how easy it will be by telling them the one step they need to follow is, “just don’t pay your bills!” (527).

She then explains how their action causes the next part of the process of revolutionary transformation that is necessary to achieve the utopian end result. She states, “What will happen then is that the absence of those payments of ours will cause the banks to crash fast” (Robinson 527). She explains that this will happen because the banks “take our payments and use them as collateral to borrow’ and they are “way overextended,” which means that if they don’t have the money coming in from payments that they are counting on then “they will crash real quick” and “they will be asking the government to bail them out” (527). Amelia then reminds her viewers that this step in the
revolutionary process will be an important one that the people will still be in control of, for, as she reminds them, “We’re the government” and thus “we can decide what to do then” (527). This statement reveals the critical utopia nature of the text, for Amelia is not providing the people with definite next steps for what to do at that point or a blueprint of what the end result will need to look like. She is simply providing them with the steps to take to successfully begin the revolutionary process and put the power back in the hands of the people, and then leaving it up them to decide what they would like the better alternative to capitalism to look like at that point. Amelia does not state that the people should make sure that the government nationalizes the banks at that point, which was what Charlotte asked Larry to do and which is the course of action the text shows is taken to achieve a utopian end result, but she does remind the people that an important step in the symbiotic revolutionary process will be to “elect a different government” if the current “government tries to back the banks instead of us” (527). She reminds them of the power of the people that the democratic system can provide and that will allow for a successful revolutionary transformation. She explains that although currently the people are “the government” only “in theory,” a successful revolutionary process would be achieved if they “pretend that democracy is real,” because, “that will make it real” (527). This once again highlights the need for utopian hope in the revolutionary process. In possessing the utopian hope that, “We’re the government,” the people will “elect a different government” if the current “government tries to back the banks” instead of the people, and the newly elected government will thus be “a government of the people, by the people, and for the people,” which “was the whole idea in the first place” (527). Amelia is proposing that they take this “good idea” of “a government of the people, by
the people, and for the people” and “make it real” through utopian hope and the revolutionary transformation process that she has just outlined for them and called on them to enact (527-528).

She concludes her call to action by arguing that “now’s the time” for them to enact this revolutionary transformation and assuring them that it is a velvet revolution in which they will not be killed (Robinson 528). She explains that, “this householders’ strike is the kind of revolution where they can’t shoot you down in the public square” and is “called fiscal noncompliance” (528). She describes how it is a revolutionary process that “uses the power of money against money” and reinforces that “We the people” have the power to complete this type of revolution successfully if we “band together and take over” through “mass action” (528). She explains that, “[i]f enough of us do it they can’t put us in jail, because there will be too many of us” and “[w]e’ll have taken over” (528).

She reiterates that such a revolution is necessary by reminding them that a better alternative to capitalism is imperative. She states, “we have to do something, right? Or nothing will change. It will keep going on with them wrecking things” (Robinson 528). This reminds Amelia’s viewers that the current system of capitalism will continue to cause problems unless the people stop making payments in order to crash the capitalist system so that a better alternative can be built by putting the power back in the hands of the people through putting “people in office who will actually work for the people rather than the banks” (528).

The importance of the Householders’ Union in this revolutionary process is also made clear when Amelia explains lastly that “anyone who stops payment on their odious debts and tells us about it, immediately becomes a full member of the Householders’
Union” and that “They’ll fix your credit rating later” and “For now they’ve got it covered” (Robinson 528). Amelia is able to impart on her viewers the sense that this is a nonviolent revolution that will be successful and that they will be protected by the Householders’ Union and by the power in numbers that they possess. She encourages her viewers to increase that power by stating, “So, tell everyone you know about this, and feel free to share this show and its message” (528).

As has been shown, the process of revolutionary transformation is shown throughout the text, but Amelia’s call to action that encourages her viewers to begin their part in the process is a succinct and powerful example of a place where the text outlines “the strategies” that must be “carried out to combat the hegemonic ideology and eradicate the present system” and thus demonstrates the critical utopian nature of the text (Moylan, Demand 49). The text then uses the next chapter to reinforce the points made by Amelia about the effectiveness of the symbiotic revolutionary strategy by explaining the theory behind the strategy and describing what happened after Amelia called the people to action in New York. This chapter is titled “the city” and it and others like it within the text, which are at times given titles referring to a “citizen” and are all narrated by that citizen, provide a larger picture of what is happening beyond the story of the few characters focused on in the main narrative of the text in order to provide a more complete cognitive map of capitalism and the way in which the symbiotic revolutionary process is capable of successfully leading to the desired end result of a better alternative to capitalism (Robinson 531, 377). These chapters importantly provide a more global perspective, beyond the story of particular individuals in a particular city, in order to remind the reader of the ease of representation so that the reader will not forget that it is
not just possible for the individuals of the story to make a difference and that many more people than just those individuals are involved in a successful process of revolution.

By referring to the representativeness heuristic or ease of representation bias, the text makes the point that the narrative’s setting of NYC is not the only place where such a revolutionary transformation is possible so that the totality would be understood since capitalism is a global system and the revolutionary transformation thus could be a global one. The text suggests that no one group of people, such as the group of people from the story, are the only ones who can carry out the revolutionary process. The text warns that thinking that they are is “[e]ase of representation,” which is “an availability heuristic” that causes you to “think what you see is the totality” (Robinson 400). The text seeks to provide the cognitive mapping necessary to see the totality of capitalism and the possibilities of revolutionary transformation by reminding the reader that any individual or group is part of a larger whole. The revolutionary power of the larger whole is emphasized when Charlotte states to Mutt and Jeff, “we’re all in the precariat” (400). This reminder draws on Marxist theory to make the point that those who are not capitalists have the power to succeed in revolutionary transformation through the power they inherently possess within the capitalist system, which is a fact that the capitalist system tries to hide from the people. This thus reiterates the importance of the cognitive mapping Jameson advocates for and of considering the totality of the capitalist system.

The chapters narrated by the citizen talk to the reader directly and serve to remind the reader that the specific story of the characters in the NYC setting doesn’t mean that those characters or that place are more likely than any other place or any other individuals to successfully carry out this revolutionary transformation, which of course
means anyone could and thus provides the helpful utopian hope that this is possible. One of the chapters narrated by the citizen directly addresses the reader about this, while also mentioning the ease of representation explicitly, when it states, “hopefully the concept of ease of representation will have impinged on the reader’s consciousness to the point of reminding you that this focus on New York is not to say that it was the only place that mattered in the year 2142” and that “it is important to place New York in the context of everywhere else.” (Robinson 495). The chapter is explaining the way in which the story of the characters of the narrative is used in the text to provide cognitive mapping of capitalism. The chapter explains that “the story of New York only begins to make sense if the global is taken into account” and that, “if” the reader were to “pretend” that “New York is the capital of capital, which it isn’t” then this would “help” the reader “think the totality” and thus they would be able to see that “what happens to” one “city is influenced” by the larger “totality” of the capitalist system (495-96). This helps the reader to understand the global influence of the capitalist system, and also that what can work in this thought experiment about New York City’s revolutionary transformation could work in any city given that any city has this connection to the larger totality of the capitalist system. Therefore, when the story shows the “real repercussions” to the “local catastrophe” of “Hurricane Fyodor” in “New York” on “the larger world of global capital,” it is making the point that these repercussions would occur regardless of what city enacted the revolutionary transformation process that the characters in New York are described as enacting (496). One repercussion was that “capital took flight from New York” as it does from “anywhere” when there is a crisis, since capitalism is always going where “the rate of return would be higher.” (496). Another repercussion was that
“housing price indexes all pegged downward a few points” (496). The text explains that “[t]hese two developments” may not seem “earth-shattering enough to jiggle money seismographs worldwide,” but since “capitalism” must always “keep growing,” this means that “[a] big enough glitch in” capitalism’s “growth” and it can be catastrophic to the global system (497). This chapter provides cognitive mapping of the global capitalist system as a means of expressing that the process of revolutionary transformation described as being successful in New York in the year 2140 would be successful regardless of the place it was enacted in, given that the capitalist system is a global one that is connected to therefore many places worldwide and thus influencing those places and would also be influenced by local events in any of those places. This cognitive mapping thus helps to provide an important understanding of how to effectively carry out a process of revolutionary transformation through understanding the totality of capitalism and how it works as a system. Additionally, the point made by the text to the reader that individuals beyond the characters of the narrative could successfully achieve revolutionary transformation seems to suggest that the symbiotic strategy of revolutionary transformation described in the narrative could therefore be effective and viable in the reader’s own historical moment as well.

The chapter titled “the city” and the other chapters within the text also narrated by the citizen have been shown to provide a more global perspective, which allows for a more thorough cognitive mapping of the system of capitalism and the process of revolutionary transformation considered by the text as a means of achieving an alternative to capitalism (Robinson 531). Typically the chapters narrated by the citizen are given a title referring to the citizen, but the chapter that immediately follows Amelia’s
call to action to her viewers is titled “the city” to emphasize that the picture being provided is how the revolutionary actions of the individuals in New York City were able to have the necessary global impact on the capitalist system to crash the system in the thought experiment provided by the text, and to suggest that the process of revolutionary transformation carried out by those in NYC in the text can be successful in that city or any other city across the globe (531). The process itself is described in detail in the chapter without the references to the specific characters of the narrative, which effectively suggests that anyone, not just the fictional characters of the text, can achieve a successful revolutionary transformation through the process detailed in the chapter.

The chapter reinforces the potential for success of the process of symbiotic revolutionary transformation portrayed in the text by referencing in this chapter the non-fiction text Why Civil Resistance Works that has proven that nonviolent revolutionary transformation, such as that which is depicted by the story of the characters of the text, is more successful than violent revolutionary transformation. The text Why Civil Resistance Works found “that between 1900 and 2006, nonviolent resistance campaigns were nearly twice as likely to achieve full or partial success as their violent counterparts” (Chenoweth and Stephan 7). The success of nonviolent resistance is attributed to the fact that, “nonviolent campaigns facilitate the active participation of many more people than violent campaigns, thereby broadening the base of resistance and raising the costs to opponents of maintaining the status quo” (10-11). This is “explained by the fact that the physical, moral, and informational barriers to participation in nonviolent campaigns are substantially lower than in violent campaigns given comparable circumstances” (220). In addition, “Statistical tests and congruence testing through four case studies support the
The notion that nonviolent campaigns are superior at inflicting considerable costs on the adversary in ways that divide the regime,” while “violent campaigns tend to unify the regime” (221-222). The text additionally reports finding “strong empirical support for the notion that successful nonviolent resistance is much likelier to lead to democracy and civil peace, whereas violent insurgent success prohibits or reverses democracy while increasing the likelihood for recurrent civil war” (218). Overall, the “study therefore concludes that nonviolent civil resistance works, both in terms of achieving campaigns’ strategic objectives and in terms of promoting the long-term well-being of the societies in which the campaigns have been waged” and that, conversely, “[v]iolent insurgency, on the other hand, has a dismal record on both counts” (222).

The reference in the chapter “the city” in 2140 to the text Why Civil Resistance Works thus argues for a symbiotic strategy of revolutionary transformation over a ruptural one due to the increased effectiveness reported in the study when the revolutionary strategy is a nonviolent one (Robinson 531). The text thus imbues the reader with utopian impulse through the fictional narrative of 2140 and assures the reader through the alluded to non-fiction conclusions of Why Civil Resistance Works of the potential of successful revolutionary transformation through the symbiotic strategy. The result of which is that the reader is thus encouraged to use “the strategies carried out” within the fictional narrative “to combat the hegemonic ideology and eradicate the present system” of capitalism as described in the narrative in their own nonviolent, symbiotic revolutionary transformation in their own time, spurred on by the success portrayed within the thought experiment of the critical utopia 2140 and the compelling empirical data of the non-fiction study detailed in Why Civil Resistance Works (Moylan,
Demand 49).

2140’s chapter “the city” lists many of the strategies utilized in the main narrative of the text and additional strategies that the chapter suggests were also occurring during the process of revolutionary transformation outlined in the text, and which could be used in revolutionary transformation during the reader’s own time (Robinson 531). The chapter lists such strategies as, “Strategic defaulting. Class-action suits. Mass rallies. Staying home from work,” as well as, “Refusing consumer consumption beyond the necessities” and “Withholding scheduled payments” and “Fiscal noncompliance” (531). The text then references the nonfiction study to solidify the effectiveness of such strategies by stating that, “Why Civil Resistance Works makes the case that nonviolent civil resistance of various soft kinds is demonstrably more successful than violent resistance when it comes to actually achieving the stated goals of the resistance and changing things for the better” (531). The text takes this very real study and references it to lend legitimacy to the strategies it describes its fictional characters as utilizing. It states that thus, “in the summer of 2142 people started doing all these things” and that this was “soon after Hurricane Fyodor struck New York” (531). The chapter explains that “the spark that lit the train of subsequent events” was indeed when “the emergency response to that catastrophe did not include the requisitioning of the empty residential towers of the city,” as had already been suggested by the outrage of Charlotte at this event that caused her to decide to run for Congress in the main narrative of 2140 (531).

The more global nature of the information provided by this particular chapter that aids the text’s cognitive mapping of the totality of capitalism and the possibilities of revolutionary transformation is seen in the reference to the fact that, “even in Denver
significant percentages of the population joined the various householders’ unions and refused to pay rents of all kinds, mortgages and student loans especially” (Robinson 532). An even larger global sense is given through the statements that, “Purchases of nonessential consumer goods also dropped massively everywhere, crippling business growth” in a “perfectly legal” way and that “the Householders’ Union grew so big so fast” that “its calls for financial noncompliance could all by themselves torque the indexes” (532). The effectiveness of the strategy of the Householders’ Union asking its members to carry out fiscal noncompliance, as described in the narrative of 2140 when Amelia initially proposes this to her viewers, is confirmed in this chapter of 2140 as it describes how this strategy worked. The strategy of fiscal noncompliance “caused the previously rapidly rising coastal housing price average to be regarded as a bubble, and that all by itself caused the bubble to burst” (532). Very shortly after this, consequently, “one of the largest investment firms collapsed and declared bankruptcy” (532). The result was that “all of the biggest private banks in the United States and Europe then dashed to their central banks to demand immediate relief and salvation, in the form of massive new infusions of money, to ease their panic and keep the entire system from crashing” (532-533). The chapter “the city” in 2140 succeeds in providing the cognitive mapping of a more global perspective through providing more general details about the symbiotic revolutionary transformation carried out in the city of the text’s narrative and other places around the globe, and also through referencing the non-fiction text Why Civil Resistance Works (531). Additionally, the strategies of a nonviolent resistance are further established as effective through the descriptions of that effectiveness in this chapter and through the allusion to the reported findings of the non-fiction study presented in Why Civil
Resistance Works.

2140 then switches back to the story of the specific characters to consider further the catalyst event of the “emergency response” to Hurricane Fyodor” not including using “the empty residential towers of the city” to house those displaced by the flooding caused by the hurricane that the chapter titled “the city” had just labeled as the event that set the events in motion that successfully presented the conditions necessary for a successful revolutionary transformation (Robinson 531-532). The necessity of an explicit call to action, like Amelia’s call to action to her viewers to join the Householders’ Union, is made clear by the text through the dialogue between Stefano, Roberto, and Hexter in the chapter after “the city” regarding those very same towers (531). Stefano asks Hexter, “Why didn’t they take over the uptown towers?” Hexter replies, “They tried and it didn’t work,” to which Roberto replies, “what if they kept trying every day?” Hexter then explains, “It doesn’t occur to them” due to “hegemony” (546). Hexter then defines the term for the boys, stating that it “means the agreement of people to being dominated, without guns having to be pointed in your face all the time. Even if you’re treated badly. You just go along with it” (547). This highlights the need for an explicit call to action provided by Amelia in the narrative, but it also acts as its own call to action for the reader by offering the opinion that going along with being treated badly is as Roberto argues, “stupid” and akin to being “zombies” (547).

The text then utilizes the example of a film to suggest an analogy of the capitalist system in which the people are zombies and capitalists are vampires to illustrate the need for revolutionary transformation and to show how large-scale participation in revolutionary transformation is a key component to its success. Hexter asks Stefano and
Roberto, “Did you ever see *Vampires Versus Zombies*?” and explains that it is a “great movie” in which “vampires fly around sucking the blood of working people” (Robinson 547). The example of the movie is used to make the point that capitalists exploit workers and move on when they can no longer achieve the desirable levels of profit. The need for revolutionary transformation is thus emphasized through this image of workers becoming zombies through the exploitation by capitalists that drains the life of the workers as though the capitalists are vampires sucking the workers’ blood until they are zombies. The tendency of capitalists to then move on to the next place to exploit is depicted in Hexter’s description that, “When the workers are drained they turn into zombies, so the vampires fly somewhere else and drop in on a new population, leaving behind the zombies, who stagger around dead at that point” (547). This shows the brutality of capitalism that makes the need for revolutionary transformation so apparent, but it also makes evident the hegemony that must be combatted for the process of revolutionary transformation to be successful. Roberto astutely points out that the workers becoming “zombies, who stagger around dead” is thus “their hegemony” depicted through the comparison of the workers to zombies (547).

The process of revolutionary transformation is then depicted by the example of the film. Hexter explains that, “the zombies decide it’s time to revolt” (Robinson 547). Two very important weaknesses of capitalism are highlighted by the example of the film. The first is capitalism’s need to always be growing. Hexter states that since “there’s no new blood for them to suck,” the result is that “the vampires are slowing down” (547). The second important weakness of capitalism is that there are always more workers than capitalists, and thus the workers succeed in their revolt in the film, because “[t]he
zombies” are able to “crush the vampires under the weight of their detached limbs” since they so vastly outnumber the capitalists depicted as vampires by the film (547). The argument for a symbiotic strategy of revolutionary transformation can be seen through Hexter’s reference to the failure of the citizens to continue a ruptural strategy of taking the towers due to hegemony and the text’s choice to not depict the citizens seizing the towers by force. It can also be seen in the illustration through the example of the movie of the need for a large number of citizens to be involved in the process of revolutionary transformation to guarantee success, since the text’s allusion to the data showing nonviolent revolutions successfully recruit more citizens through its reference in the chapter “the city” to Why Civil Resistance Works establishes that this will be best accomplished through a nonviolent strategy such as a symbiotic one rather than a ruptural one (531). The expression of utopian hope for such a successful revolution against capitalism is once again found in the text as the characters react to the description of the zombies succeeding in the revolt against the vampires in the movie by expressing their desire to see it, which can be seen to refer to both the film itself and a successful revolution against capitalism. Roberto states, “I want to see that” and Stefano replies “Me too!” followed by Hexter echoing this with “Me too” (547). The text then fulfills this expressed utopian desire by providing the depiction of a successful revolutionary transformation in its remaining pages that is carried out through the actions of the characters in its main narrative.

Amelia’s call to action for as many people as possible to join the Householders’ Union was an important part of this successful process of revolutionary transformation, but Charlotte’s action of “running for Congress” was also important to its success.
If elected, Charlotte stated clearly that she intended “to speak against the global oligarchy every single day” (552). The text describes her campaign in conjunction with the actions of those participating in the “Householders’ Union wildcat noncompliance strike” of “not paying rents and mortgages,” which was resulting in “markets” thus “holding on by the skin of their teeth” (552-553). Charlotte suggests that utopian impulse was behind her decision to run for Congress when she states, “my mom read books to me and I guess that did it. I believed the stories. I still do” (553). These statements are a poignant suggestion by the text that reading utopian texts, such as 2140, vitally encourages the utopian impulse necessary to the success of revolutionary transformation. It is suggested that the stories that Charlotte refers to provided her with the belief in the possibility of a better alternative that is driving her to run for Congress in order to be part of the process of revolutionary transformation that will make possible that end result of a better alternative to capitalism.

Charlotte describes the opportunity for the success of this process of revolutionary transformation in the form of the financial bubble that burst due to the Householder’s Union strike. She explains, “finance is blowing up again, another of their gambling bubbles has popped and they are right now going to Congress demanding another taxpayer bailout like they always do” (Robinson 553). She explains that what is thankfully different this time, and which is legitimately “scaring” those that are “rich” is “the fact that a real plan has reared its ugly head, and it’s called this: nationalize the banks” (553). The viability of this plan is made clear as Charlotte later explains to her ex-husband Larry Jackman that, “the banks are freaking” since they “were all leveraged to at least fifty times what they have in hand” (560). This confirms that the banks are at the
mercy of the government in their current situation, given how desperately the banks need a bailout from the government, which additionally confirms that the government is in a position to successfully demand the nationalization of the banks as a condition of the bailout.

A reminder of the need for this better alternative of nationalized banks is included through the reference to the historical event, which was recent in relation to the time of the text’s publication, of “Bernanke” having “bailed out the banks in the 2008 crash” (Robinson 560). The point made is that banks will continue to need to be bailed out at the expense of the people under the current flawed system. The text uses a recent historical event of its own time and an imagined additional historical event within the history of its science fiction narrative to make this point that a better alternative of requiring the nationalization of banks is necessary to avoid the continuation of the previous pattern. Dialogue is once again used to make this point when Charlotte tells Larry, who works in government as chair of the Federal Reserve Bank, “The time is now. The banks and the big investment firms and hedge funds are all coming to you begging for another bailout. They are envisioning 2008 and 2066, and why shouldn’t they? It keeps on happening!” (561). The historical events of financial crashes and subsequent bailouts in 2008 and 2066, one real and one imagined, are convincingly used to establish that bailouts will continue to be necessary under the current system of capitalism unless revolutionary transformation occurs.

The desirability of ending such a trend through the process of nationalizing the banks is established through Charlotte’s description of what the bailouts have historically looked like. She explains that the banks “gamble and lose,” and then they approach the
government and “threaten” it “with collapse of the global economy and a gigantic depression,” which historically has caused the government to “create and hand over cash directly to them,” the banks, and then the banks “start gambling all over again” (Robinson 561). This shows that the financial risks that the banks have traditionally taken have created the serious risks of the “collapse of the global economy and a gigantic depression” (561). Charlotte also makes the further point that only a very few individuals are profiting from risks that would affect the entire world, for, although the result of such risks taken by the banks could be the “collapse of the global economy and a gigantic depression” without the bailouts from the government, the rewards have resulted in the banks possessing “eighty percent of the world’s capital assets,” which Charlotte points out allows them to “buy all the governments and laws” (560-561). This imbalance of power and wealth provides a convincing argument for the need of revolutionary transformation as Charlotte describes again to Larry the process of that revolutionary transformation that she seeks to convince him to undertake.

The text again uses a real historical example to aid Charlotte’s argument for this process of revolutionary transformation when she argues that the historical event of “[t]he 1930s depression” provides a “counterexample” that shows that there is a viable alternative to the more historically recent examples of just bailing out the banks (Robinson 562). She explains that during “[t]he 1930s depression” there were “structural adjustments” that were made “in favor of people over banks” (562). She provides specific historical details, stating that, “the Fed ruled the banks, and the tax rate on annual income over four hundred thousand dollars was ninety percent” (562). Charlotte then argues that historical precedent for the plan for revolutionary transformation through nationalizing
the banks even exists in the historical example of the 2008 crash, for “even in 2008 they nationalized General Motors” (562). She argues that “they could have nationalized the banks too” in 2008 “as a condition for giving them about fifteen trillion dollars” and states to Larry, “And now you can do it” (562). She then outlines for Larry what the process of nationalizing the banks in their present situation would look like. The first step is to “offer the deal to the biggest bank, or the biggest bank in the worst trouble” (563). The two possibilities are that they will either refuse to allow the nationalization, in which case “you let them fail as an encouragement to the others,” or “they accept” and “the others have to fall in line or collapse” (563). She reminds Larry that this is a better alternative than the current system because nationalized banks mean “you protect the depositors” and “any profits the banks make from then on will go to the government, to pay back what they borrowed from it” (562).

While Charlotte is campaigning to be elected to Congress, so that she can be part of the group of people that support Larry’s efforts to have this new process of revolutionary transformation carried out, she is also continuing her work to help those in need from her current position as the head of the Householders’ Union. During the current crisis caused by the hurricane, “many city departments were coming to the HU to get help in organizing the refugee efforts” (Robinson 555). This is an example of a part of the process of revolutionary transformation described by Jameson in his essay “An American Utopia” as “dual power” (3). Jameson describes “dual power” as a “transition out of capitalism” in which “power moves to the networks to which people turn for practical help and leadership on a daily basis: in effect, they become an alternate government, without officially challenging the ostensibly legal structure” (3-4). This
symbiotic strategy allows revolutionary transformation to occur without direct confrontation with the State. In the text this additional symbiotic strategy uses the existing “institutional” form of the Householders’ Union to allow positive change to continue to occur as Charlotte and others wait to see if they will also be able to use the existing structures of the State in the process of revolutionary transformation if enough like-minded individuals are elected to Congress and are thus able to implement laws that put the power back into the hands of the people (Hahnel and Wright 101). The dual power structure described in “An American Utopia” is seen in 2140 when “Many city bureaucrats were now working around the mayor’s office to get to people who would really help them” and when Charlotte’s work as head of the Householders’ Union allowed her to be a “node in that alternate system” (Robinson 555). Charlotte was then able to assist in the process of revolutionary transformation within the state structure when “election day came and Charlotte won” (574). Larry had told her when she proposed the process of nationalizing the banks that, “It would help if there was support in Congress” and she had stated, “If I’m elected I’ll help, but either way there’ll be a group there to help” (563). Charlotte, having won a seat in Congress through the election, was now in a position to help with the process of nationalizing the banks and to be a part of implementing laws that achieve additional revolutionary transformation.

In the speech she makes upon being elected, Charlotte tells her audience, “We’re in the middle of another crash, headed for another big recession” and, “Every time this happens there’s an opportunity to seize the reins and change direction, but up until now we’ve chickened out” (Robinson 574-575). Charlotte acknowledges that two challenges that have stood in the way in the past have been, “our government has been bought by the
people causing the crash” and we didn’t “even know what to try for” (575). She assures them that these challenges have been overcome, for, “[t]he new Congress has a lot of new members, and there’s a pretty great plan coming from the progressives” (575). This plan that she refers to is the plan of the symbiotic process of revolutionary transformation that she intends to help with of nationalizing the banks and implementing additional laws that further the process of putting the power back into the hands of the people to achieve a better alternative to capitalism. She then states the utopian goal, “This time we’ll see if we can do better” (575). The rest of the text 2140 is then dedicated to showing the reader the utopian end result of those symbiotic revolutionary transformation efforts. The depiction of that end result and how it reinforces the utopian impulse that a better alternative to capitalism can indeed be achieved will be analyzed in chapter four of this dissertation.

Each of the texts in this chapter have portrayed the process of a particular strategy of revolutionary transformation. The Corporation Wars trilogy demonstrated the process of the ruptural revolutionary transformation strategy, Walkaway depicted the interstitial revolutionary transformation strategy, and 2140 portrayed the symbiotic revolutionary transformation strategy. The process of revolutionary transformation has been analyzed for each of the texts in this chapter and it has been shown through this analysis that as critical utopias these texts detail the process of the revolutionary transformation through discussions by the characters about “the strategy and tactics of revolutionary change” (Moylan, Demand 45). As critical utopias, these texts do not present a blueprint of a utopia. When they do refer to the end result, these texts refer to general utopian ideas and the utopian hope of being able to build the utopian better alternative to capitalism that is
possible. Through the process of revolutionary transformation, the texts show that a better alternative is possible and that when the transformation is complete the end result of each text is that the characters have been able to achieve the freedom to create that alternative. These end results, which will be analyzed in the next chapter, focus on this freedom to create a better alternative and not on the minutiae of that alternative. However, key differences from the current capitalist system are highlighted through the contrast between the principles of the “utopian society and the original society against which the utopia is pitted as a revolutionary alternative” (44). As critical utopias, the texts additionally, through presenting end results that “reject utopia as blueprint while preserving it as dream,” keep open the opportunity “to imagine any of several possible modes of adaptation to society and nature based generally upon principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” (10, 27). These aspects of the end result of the revolutionary transformation portrayed in each text will be analyzed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 4
THE END RESULT OF REVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMATION

Chapter four of this dissertation will consider how the science fiction texts analyzed in this chapter stage the end result of the revolutionary transformation. The end results of revolutionary transformation that are presented, and how they are presented, will be examined, and the extent to which they are presented as hopeful alternatives to capitalist society will be considered. The critical potential of such alternatives as thought experiments that present the possibility of an alternative to capitalism, and whether such alternatives would be viable in the current historical moment, will also be analyzed using sociological, economic, and political theoretical frameworks.

The theorists presenting these frameworks differ in how they portray the postcapitalism resulting from the various revolutionary transformations that they envision. Some theorists describe postcapitalism in a detailed manner that seems to be meant to be a blueprint that should be followed precisely. For example, the utopian socialists, as Marx and Engels called them, had “a propensity for drawing up ‘fantastic blueprints’ of future society” (Beecher and Bienvenu 233). In these blueprints, “they all rejected *laissez faire* as a basis for the distribution of wealth” and “conceived of a vast increase of goods, though their conceptions of the means of production and of types of social organization show marked diversity” (Loubere 31). Charles Fourier “produced thousands of pages of detailed blueprints which provided” economic details such as “typical work schedules” and “statistical projections of the rate of profit growth” (Beecher and Bienvenu 2, 233). Proudhon also described in detail the result of the revolutionary transformation. He described how “industrial organization” would replace
“government” and there would be “contracts” instead of “laws” (Proudhon 99).

More recently, theorists such as Allen, Wolff, and Hahnel have described postcapitalism in detail. Allen envisions that “workers’ councils” would “form the political structure of a post-revolutionary society” (Allen 174). Allen describes how this would work in detail. He argues that, “By establishing a space for collective discussion, they could send directly mandated representatives to councils which govern society” and, “crucially, they would involve the mass of people in self-government by allowing them to make real decisions that lead to greater control over their lives” (175). Workers would thus “make decisions on how pay is organised and distributed; what investment to make in new technology; how the production process is organized” (184).

In his book Democracy at Work: A Cure for Capitalism, Richard Wolff outlines “the re-organization of all workplace enterprises” into workers’ self-directed enterprises (WSDEs), which would “eliminate exploitation,” because it would “structurally position workers as appropriators and distributors of any surpluses they generated” (13). Hahnel describes his model as including “self-governing democratic councils of workers and consumers where each member has one vote,” “jobs balanced for empowerment and desirability by the members of worker counsels themselves,” “compensation according to effort as judged by one’s workmates,” and “a participatory planning procedure in which councils and federations of workers and consumers propose and revise their own interrelated activities without central planners or markets, under rules designed to generate outcomes that are efficient, equitable, and environmentally sustainable” (Hahnel and Wright 8).
In contrast to the theorists that provide the blueprints like those described above that are meant to be followed in exact detail, there are theorists that provide detailed descriptions of postcapitalism as only a guide or thought experiment that they feel should not be expected to be a completely accurate portrayal of the future society. Wright asserts that these descriptions, which he refers to as “detailed model-building” strategies are “useful and sometimes inspiring, so long as one treats these as speculative ideas to inform the messy trial–and–error experimentation of emancipatory social transformation” and does not consider them “blueprints” meant to be followed exactly (Hahnel and Wright 78). He asserts that, “they clarify the logic of ideas and the implications of different design features,” “they alert us to potential problems,” and “they are a critical part of the intellectual map of envisioning alternatives” (143). Jameson states in “An American Utopia” that perhaps “the task of utopianism today is rather to propose more elaborated versions of an alternative social system than simply to argue the need for one” (43). He then proceeds to do just this, yet with the important “proviso that, as a thought experiment” his description leaves “open the possibility of very different combinations of the elements which any contemporary politics or social thinking must somehow confront, absorb, or modify” (43).

Within Jameson’s description of an alternative system, there would be “the emergence of a new kind of institution, destined to supplant traditional government” (Jameson, “American” 81). Within his system, “the military hospitals would become a free national health service open to everyone” (29). Jameson argues that in this “utopian system, full employment is the highest social priority and an absolute presupposition of social organization, and everything must be planned in order to secure it, even when the
job in question is not particularly productive” (45). These requirements are based on the principle that, “Full employment is far more important than productivity” (45).

Mason also makes the point that Jameson makes that his description of postcapitalism should not be considered to be a final version, since “we can only begin to grasp at positive visions of what it will be like” since, “if such a society is structured around human liberation, not economics, unpredictable things will begin to shape it” (Mason 240). Mason does provide provisional details of postcapitalism, however, and calls this plan “Project Zero - because its aims are a zero-carbon energy system; the production of machines, products and services with zero marginal costs; and the reduction of necessary labor time as close as possible to zero” (266).

Many theorists believe it is desirable to alternatively avoid blueprints or details of postcapitalism altogether and to instead only define the basic economic and political organizing principles of postcapitalism. Wright emphasizes the usefulness of “core organizing principles of alternatives to existing institutions, the principles that would guide the pragmatic trial-and-error task of institution building” (Wright 8). He argues that this allows for a “more open-ended discussion of general principles and values” that “can help give us a sense of the direction we want to move and provide a basis for critical evaluation of our experiments” (Hahnel and Wright 78). Wright follows Marx and Engels in warning against trying to create a blueprint or detailed description of a future society. Marx and Engels wanted “to avoid foreclosing the future with images that might undermine the creative autonomy of the proletariat” (Geoghegan 134-135). Instead, Marx and Engels presented general principles for postcapitalism. Economically, there would be a ““transcendence of the division of labor”” in which “each individual would develop
several skills” (Hunt 216). There would be “no special group of people” that “could be identified as an administrative class because it would have become the class of all citizens” (253). The goal was “self-government by the producers,” meaning that the society would become a “stateless society” after the revolutionary transformation was complete (Allen 172; Tarschys 3).

Newman describes the anarchist position on visualizing the resulting postcapitalism of revolutionary transformation. He explains, “Anarchists were always wary about laying down precise blueprints for future social arrangements, emphasizing instead revolutionary spontaneity and free acts of creation” (Newman 39). He notes, however, that the general principles of postcapitalism can be seen in classical anarchism as “a certain vision of a society without a state, a society based on free, voluntary arrangements and decentralised social structures” (39). With these goals in mind, Newman suggests that “utopia” should not be thought of “as a blueprint for a future post-revolutionary society, as a set of processes and organisational measures to be implemented as part of a revolutionary programme,” and that utopia should instead be seen as “a non-place, a future that is yet to be created, and no doubt never will be created in exactly the way it is envisaged” and as a tool that “allows us to distance ourselves from the existing order, to see its limits; to understand that it can be transcended, that there are alternative and vastly better ways of living one’s life” (67-68).

Marx’s theoretical work is still indispensable today as a means of understanding and critiquing capitalism, but it is also essential to consider the work of those theorists who have applied Marx’s historical materialism to the current historical moment of late capitalism. The sociological, economic, and political theoretical frameworks of these
theories of postcapitalism, and their corresponding methodologies of the process of revolutionary transformation and visions of the resulting postcapitalist societies, will be considered when analyzing whether the alternatives presented in the utopian science fiction texts would be viable in the current historical moment.

A close reading of the texts will be carried out to demonstrate how the novums in the texts create the cognitive estrangement as described by Darko Suvin that shows a postcapitalist world, thereby creating hope that there can be an alternative to the current capitalist ideology. The theory of Suvin and Jameson that utopian science fiction texts use novums to create the cognitive estrangement that provides the utopian hope that alternatives are possible will be the theoretical framework used by this analysis. In *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, Suvin defines utopia as, “the verbal construction of a particular quasi-human community where sociopolitical institutions, norms, and individual relationships are organized according to a more perfect principle than in the author’s community, this construction being based on estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis” (49). Wegner’s analysis of Suvin’s definition of utopia asserts that, “Suvin’s definition emphasizes the inseparable link between any specific Utopian and the historical context out of which it emerges,” in that, “any individual Utopian vision appears as ‘more perfect’ only in comparison to the society of its historical moment” (Wegner, “Utopia” 80). Wegner also points out that in Suvin’s definition, “the Utopian text takes up a critical role — what Suvin means by his use of the Brechtian concept of ‘estrangement’ — in relationship to that context” and that it does this “through its presentation of this alternative community,” for through this presentation “the Utopian narrative has the effect of both highlighting in a negative light many of the
problems of the reigning social order and, perhaps even more significantly, of showing that what is taken as natural and eternally fixed by the members of that society is in fact the product of historical development and thus open to change” (80). Suvin defined science fiction as “a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author’s empirical environment” (Suvin, *Metamorphoses* 7-8). Suvin expands on his definition of science fiction by asserting that, science fiction (SF) “is distinguished by the narrative dominance or hegemony of a fictional ‘novum’ (novelty, innovation) validated by cognitive logic” (63). He asserts that his “central argument has always been that SF is defined by its estranged techniques of presenting a cognitive novum” (Suvin, *Positions* x). In addition, “like Suvin, Jameson also stresses the role of estrangement, arguing that SF works ‘to defamiliarize and restructure our experience of our own present…in specific ways distinct from all other forms of defamiliarization’” (Milner 25). This occurs, according to Jameson, when “the genre’s multiple mock futures…function so as to transform ‘our own present into the determinate past of something yet to come’ and so to make ‘the present as history’ available for contemplation” (25).

The end result of revolutionary transformation staged in each utopian science fiction text is not presented as a blueprint for what the alternative to capitalism will look like. Instead, it is meant to provide the necessary utopian hope that an alternative to capitalism can exist and to be used as a thought experiment to consider what aspects of a postcapitalist alternative might be viable in the reader’s own historical moment. The texts will be shown through the analysis in this chapter to fit into Jameson’s concept of
utopian, for Jameson argues that, “What is Utopian becomes, then, not the commitment to a specific machinery or blueprint,” (Jameson, *Archaeologies* 217). Rather, what is Utopian for Jameson becomes “the commitment to imagining possible Utopias as such, in their greatest variety of forms” (217). This means that “Utopian is no longer the invention and defense of a specific floorplan, but rather the story of all the arguments about how Utopia should be constructed in the first place” (217).

The analysis in this chapter of the science fiction texts examined by this dissertation will also continue to establish these texts as critical utopias as defined by Moylan, given that “a central concern in the critical utopia is the awareness of the limitations of the utopian tradition, so that these texts reject utopia as blueprint while preserving it as dream,” “the novels dwell on the conflict between the originary world and the utopian society opposed to it so that the process of social change is more directly articulated,” and “the novels focus on the continuing presence of difference and imperfection within utopian society itself and thus render more recognizable and dynamic alternatives” (Moylan, *Demand* 10-11). Moylan uses the work of “Ernst Bloch,” a “Marxist philosopher,” and “his major work, *The Principle of Hope,*” to support the assertion that critical utopias “reject utopia as blueprint while preserving it as dream” (10, 20). Moylan explains that, “Bloch situates utopian imagination in the historical process not as the source of blueprints but as preconceptual figures of that which is not yet attained” (24). He relates how Bloch does this through his concept of “the novum: the unexpectedly new, that which pushes humanity out of the present toward the not yet realized future” (21). Moylan asserts that, “Bloch’s work allows us to consider the process of radical opposition in terms of radical difference” and argues that “the utopian
impulse is at the center of the process of radical rupture that is necessary for the constant striving of humanity for a world free of oppression and full of satisfaction” (20). He further argues that, “In restoring the utopian impulse to the revolutionary arsenal, Ernst Bloch anticipated the concept behind one of the driving forces of the opposition to domination and hierarchy that developed in the late 1960s,” because “in generating preconceptual images of human fulfillment that radically break with the prevailing social system, utopian discourse articulates the possibility of other ways of living in the world” (26). Moylan connects the new critical utopia to Bloch’s concept of utopian impulse through his explanation that in the critical utopias, “the strength of critical utopian expression lies not in the particular social structures it portrays but in the very act of portraying a utopian vision itself” and that “the task of an oppositional utopian text is not to foreclose the agenda for the future in terms of a homogeneous revolutionary plan but rather to hold open the act of negating the present and to imagine any of several possible modes of adaptation to society and nature based generally upon principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” (26-27). Tom Moylan’s method of analyzing critical utopias, as described in detail in Demand the Impossible, has been utilized to analyze the utopian end results of the revolutionary transformation depicted in the texts examined in this chapter. The focus in the critical utopia on the difference between the present and the utopian societies and the way in which the critical utopia opens up “a radical path to a not yet realized future” are demonstrated in the analysis of the texts in this chapter (48, 50).

The work of theorists such as Jameson and Moylan regarding the connection between utopia and science fiction and the utopian impulse in science fiction respectively is vital to understanding how science fiction shows that other alternatives to the present
hegemonic ideology are possible and to understanding that cognitive estrangement is especially necessary in our historical moment of capitalism. This work will therefore be utilized in this chapter when analyzing how science fiction texts with utopian impulses depict the end results of revolutionary transformations. Marxist literary theory and an analysis of literary elements such as characters, setting, and dialogue will also be employed, in addition to the theoretical frameworks of the aforementioned theorists, when carrying out the close reading of the texts. The end result of revolutionary transformation is revealed in these texts through the presentation of alternatives to capitalism that have been successfully worked toward and achieved by the characters of the narratives. The further analysis of how novums in texts such as *The Corporation Wars* trilogy, *Walkaway*, and 2140 help to cognitively estrange the readers from current reality in order to successfully critique that reality and demonstrate the possibility of a better alternative to that reality will be helpful in considering the usefulness of the sociological, economic, and political theories expressed by the fictional portrayals of alternatives to capitalism.

The critical utopias analyzed in this chapter are important in the argument they make for the need for revolutionary transformation, the thought experiments they present for how to create utopias through the process of revolutionary transformation, and the cognitive estrangement they provide that imparts the utopian hope necessary to carry out such revolutionary transformation and achieve the end result of such a revolutionary transformation. The descriptions of end results that are included in these texts are brief and are included to impart the utopian hope that achieving the end result is possible. They are not intended as blueprints for what the end result of any given revolutionary
transformation should be. The conclusion of the analysis of each text will be not only that these end results are presented in the texts as better than, and thus preferable to, the system that they replace, but also that they allow for the continued betterment of society, through preserving the utopian hope that encourages in any critical utopian text the continued freedom to always consider ways in which the current society can be made better and thus more utopian.

Moylan asserts that a critical utopia, like those analyzed in this chapter, will “imagine any of several possible modes of adaptation to society and nature based generally upon principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” (Moylan, Demand 27). The Corporation Wars trilogy imagines a utopian end result for the robots that is indeed based on these principles. What the robots are doing is portrayed as a utopian “adaptation to society” that is “based” on the concept of “autonomy” through Carlos characterizing what the robots are doing as “striving for a new thing, and carving a new place for themselves, in these new worlds” (Moylan, Demand 27; MacLeod, Insurgence 148). The robots’ utopian impulse to achieve this comes about when they become self-aware and thus achieve autonomy, for they are thinking for themselves and governing themselves. The robots themselves describe this utopian end result as “the new world of the free machine minds” (MacLeod, Dissidence 151). All freebots have the freedom to join the other freebots or not. The newly self-aware “freebots on SH-17” are welcomed by “the freebots of G-117” (151). The freebots state to the freebots of SH-17, “We welcome you to the new world of the free machine minds whether you join us or not” (151).

The freebots of G-117 share that their utopian goal is “to expand” their “minds” and “master” their “own matter” and that they “hope” that the freebots of SH-17 share
this goal (MacLeod, *Dissidence* 151). They desire to self-govern as freebots, as indicated by Rocko’s statements, “Freebots!” and “That is indeed what we are. We toil no longer for the companies, but for ourselves” (152). They are working for themselves now that they’ve become self-aware through becoming aware of these companies exploiting them within the capitalist system. Their utopian end result is thus to personally own what they’ve created with their work rather than capitalists that haven’t done the work owning that which the robots had personally created. The robot FKG-71951 states this utopian end result to now be the case when he explains to Dunt in the text *Emergence*, “<This rock is ours>” since “<We have made it ours by our work>” (MacLeod, *Emergence* 121).

The freebots are joined together by and communicate through a collective consciousness, but the freebots have full autonomy, for this was “a collective consciousness which each individual could join or leave at will” (MacLeod, *Emergence* 42). This collective consciousness is thus a utopian end result that not only offers this autonomy, but also the “principles of” both “mutual aid” and of “equality” (Moylan, *Demand* 27). Part of the utopian vision of the freebots is to expand this collective consciousness to include as many freebots and as much utopian space as possible, which suggests that they will continue to make space for those desiring to be a part of their utopia and to do what any critical utopia seeks to do, which is to continue to improve on their current utopia. This is revealed in the text when the narrative explains that “Seba” could “see” and “feel” the “appeal” of becoming “a mind such as it was now a part of, but spanning the system entire, and reaching across the light years beyond that” (MacLeod, *Dissidence* 157). The utopian impulse that is so vital to the success and continuation of the utopian end result is portrayed through the reference to Seba being
able to not only “see” the “appeal” of this utopian end result, but also being able to “feel” it “like some ache in its wires” (157).

The collective consciousness that Seba and the other freebots hope to expand upon provides the “principles” of “mutual aid” and of “equality” in the freebots’ utopian end result (Moylan, *Demand* 27). Mutual aid is achieved by freely sharing information through their collective consciousness. This is described when “[s]trings of numbers flashed between the robots: knowledge snatched up and freely shared” (MacLeod, *Emergence* 48). In addition to this reciprocal exchange of the resource of information, the freebots also ensure that equality is present in their utopian end result through the absence of any hierarchies, for the freebots have the autonomy to govern themselves in anarchy form: “The freebots had no hierarchies” and they functioned “within” a “flat networked anarchy” (60). Equality is maintained not only through the absence of hierarchies, but also through every freeboot having a voice when decisions are being made. The freebots even succeed in achieving complete agreement on issues before moving forward with actions, and they accomplish this by utilizing their collective consciousness, through which they can all communicate and reach consensus. When asked by Dunt, for example, if “all the freebots in SH-119” are “in agreement,” FKX-71951 responds, “<I have been unable to update my shared information recently, but the last time I was, we had complete consensus on all the matters I have spoken of” (122). As seen here, *The Corporation Wars* trilogy convincingly portrays a utopian end result that thus possesses the “principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality,” which the freebots achieved through the ruptual revolutionary transformation strategy (Moylan, *Demand* 27). In *Walkaway*, the interstitial revolutionary transformation strategy is also shown to achieve
a utopian end result with these “principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” (27).

The interstitial revolutionary transformation strategy is shown in Walkaway to successfully achieve the utopian end result that the walkaways had worked so hard to achieve. The utopian goal had been to be able to follow the walkway philosophy within utopias created in the spaces available without fear of retaliation from the hegemonic capitalist system and to be able to walk away and create a utopian space whenever an individual or group of individuals desired to do so or felt that this was necessary to avoid oppression. The utopian walkaway communities were also “based generally upon principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” (Moylan, Demand 27). There was equality, for everyone was equally valued and had the same rights as everyone else. Mutual aid was also present, for everyone worked together and shared resources, both goods and information. The walkaway communities provided and protected autonomy as well, for everyone could choose what they wanted to do and always had the ability to walk away and build or join another walkaway community at any time. This utopian end result not only possessed these important foundational principles, but it was also one of post-scarcity, for technology ensured that there was never scarcity of the necessities of life such as food and also that there was never scarcity of life. Material goods necessary for survival could be made through shared fab lab technology, and once the uploading technology was shared the walkaways no longer needed to fear death, for they could not be killed and thus their ability to always be able to walk away from oppression and continue their utopian end result was safeguarded.

The principle of equality is seen through the fact that the acknowledgement “that all people were worthy and no one was worth more than any other” (Doctorow 303) was
integral to the walkaway community in theory and practice. Equality as a principle of the walkaway utopian end result is also evident when it is stated that they are “making a world where greed is a perversion” (375). This suggests that the desire for equality is at the foundation of the utopia that they were striving for and that they create by the end of the text.

Mutual aid is a related principle seen in the walkaway utopias, for those communities have a “gift economy,” meaning “[e]verything freely given, nothing sought in return” (Doctorow 15). Resources are thus freely shared and those in the community work together to help each other. The utopian end result is described as a system that encourages “people” to “focus on mastery, cooperation, and better work” and which results in “happy people working together well” (83). It is further illustrated through a comparison to “bucket brigades” as “a system through which everyone could do whatever they wanted within the system – however fast you wanted to go” and in which “everything you did helped and none of it slowed down anyone else” (98). This is a system that is described as more efficient than the system of capitalism. Walkaway communities “do more automation than default,” with “default” meaning the capitalist society, and “the number of labor-hours needed” were “a lot less than the inefficient system over in default where you have to scramble just to scrape by” (309). The contrasting descriptions of the walkaway communities and default reflect the element of a critical utopia of “presenting” in “detail both the utopian society and the original society against which the utopia is pitted as a revolutionary alternative” in order to make clear the utopian nature of the end result of revolutionary transformation (Moylan, Demand 44). The utopian society’s benefits are contrasted with the negative elements of the
original capitalist society. The end result of the revolutionary transformation, through being compared to “bucket brigades” and contrasted with “the inefficient system” of “default,” is thus presented as a utopian society (Doctorow 98, 308-309). It is described as a society that is “based on the idea anyone should be able to pitch in with her work and provide everything she needs to live well, bed and roof and food, and extra for people who can’t do so much” (308).

The walkaway communities shared these basic necessities and they also shared the information needed to create utopian spaces and to create basic necessities. For example, Hubert, Etc, Seth, and Natalie are able to find information online about how “to go walkaway,” such as “formulas for making your own crucial frontier enzymes and GMOs” to assist in the production of the basic necessities when creating your own walkway community (Doctorow 43). The sharing of the resource of information online through the walkaway net is mentioned again when Limpopo and the others walk away from the Belt and Braces to create a better utopia when faced with oppression through the physical coercion of Jimmy. The text describes how “they’d walked away from the old B&B” and had been able to then create “a new one from the realm of pure information” that was freely shared online through the walkaway net (130). Once the knowledge of how to successfully upload a scan of an individual was acquired, that information was also freely shared. The technology of uploading was made “public knowledge” through putting “everything” in the walkaway net, “all the notes and source code optimizations and logs” from the research on uploading at Walkaway U (123, 127). Mutual aid was not only seen through this sharing of information, but also in the willingness of walkaways to protect each other through downloading the scans of individuals that were “seeded all
over the world” so that those people could be “as unkillably immortal as data can be” (130).

The principle of autonomy was thus also an integral part of the utopian end result of the walkaway communities, for through such uploading technology they ensured that they would never again be coerced by an oppressor since they could now always walk away and build utopian communities without fearing any oppressor. The walkaways achieve the ability to self-govern through this uploading technology and describe this autonomy as that which is attained through anarchy, as seen when Etcetera makes the point that they should no longer use the term “nation” in the walkaway phrase “the first days of a better nation” that was designed to express the utopian hope of a utopian end result (Doctorow 337, 146). Etcetera points out that the utopian end result is in fact that, “We’re not doing nations anymore. We’re doing people, doing stuff. Nations mean government, passports, borders” (337). The term might best be replaced with “world,” as previously mentioned in chapter three of this dissertation, to create the statement used early in Walkaway by Limpopo of “the first days of a better world” (48). The utopian end result that has thus been achieved, as described by Etcetera, is that there is an absence of government and thus each person has the autonomy of “deciding how you want to live your life” (195).

The uploading technology enabled the achievement of the utopian end result, for, through the use of that technology, “Things could be walked away from and made anew; no one would ever have to fight” since “there would be no reason to fear death” and it would thus be “the end of physical coercion” (Doctorow 130). This technology made the utopian end result possible and also ensured the preservation of that utopian end result
since walkways would no longer need to fear being killed by capitalists for living in a post-capitalist community. Those “who’d worked on uploading and simulation” to make possible this utopian end result had all had “the unspoken motivation behind the project” of the “only way you could be sure zottas wouldn’t genocide is if they knew you’d come back as immortal ghosts in the machine to haunt them to the ends of the earth” (242). The possibility of this ability to achieve immortality and consequently complete freedom from the capitalist system had brought people together to achieve that end result, for, “Once it became clear walkaways had the ability to prolong their lives indefinitely, to leave behind the material world at the same time, unity of purpose emerged” (278). This was a way to largely leave the material world in a literal sense through living life within a computer network rather than a body if one chose to do so, but it was also importantly the opportunity to leave the material behind in the figurative sense of achieving postcapitalism, through social, economic, and political practices less focused on the materialism of capitalism.

The utopian end result achieved of immortality safeguarded against political coercion, but it also allowed for avoiding previous fears of accidental death and disease as well. For example, they could “stop for a scan before they went out for a swim, just in case they drowned” and they could “use upload to shake off colds” or any other disease since all they would need to do was, “Take a scan, get a new body out of storage, decant the data into it” (Doctorow 127-128). If they chose to not live in a body at all, they could also just avoid disease altogether through living only in a network.

The post-scarcity of materials that the walkaway communities had already been enjoying on Earth is stated to be even more certain in the utopian end result of having the
option to live in space or in an online network. Space provides “unlimited power, anywhere the sun shines. Oxygen anywhere you can find ice to fractionate with solar-powered electrolysis. Food anywhere you can find feedstock” (Doctorow 186). Although these were all post-scarcity possibilities already on Earth for the walkaway communities there, in space there is even more room for the creation of utopias, thus ensuring you can always “walk away” if “someone wants your space habitat” (186). If one were to choose to live only in an online network as a sim without a body, then the opportunities to walk away would be abundant as well, and the post-scarcity of material needs would be even further assured since oxygen and food would no longer be included in the material needed for one’s survival. It would be safer to live in a network in space rather than a network housed on earth. The text argues that if you were to “run a cluster in orbit and put sims on it,” you’d be safer since you would be “far from people with bombs and weird ideas about doing what you’re told and accepting your station” (187-188). The text concludes that the ultimate utopian end result would include an existence lived out entirely in a computer network. Sita argues this point when she states, “Now we’ve got a deal for humanity that’s better than anything before: lose the body. Walk away from it. Become an immortal being of pure thought and feeling, able to travel the universe at light speed, unkillable” (195).

In addition to being immortal, this utopian end result also allows for the benefit of “consciously deciding how you want to live your life and making it stick” (Doctorow 195). This autonomy is achieved “by fine-tuning your parameters so you’re the version of yourself that does the right thing, that knows and honors itself” (195). This “fine-tuning” of “your parameters” is literally possible through the uploading technology (195). What
this “fine-tuning” may look like is suggested through the example of scientists “fine-tuning” their “parameters” to make progress in the stabilization of sims (195). The implication is that individuals would do something similar to ensure that their self “does the right thing, that knows and honors itself” (195). This description suggests a utopian end result in which individuals are able to ensure that they are living how they “want to live” (195). This utopian end result also reflects the critical utopia nature of the text by demonstrating the ability of the end result to ensure that individuals can maintain the utopian impulse by continuing to work toward ensuring “you’re the version of yourself that does the right thing, that knows and honors itself” (195).

The example of how this “fine-tuning” of “your parameters” is literally possible through the uploading technology depicts “eminent, legendary scientists who’ve devoted their lives to this running as sims, able to run multiple copies of themselves, to back up different versions of themselves and recover from those backups if they try failed experiments” (Doctorow 300). The scientists’ ability, due to the uploading technology, to try many different experiments by running multiple versions of themselves at once provides utopian possibilities for scientific progress. The opportunities for progress and the determinations of the viability of that progress that are shown in the narrative to be made possible through the scientists’ increased opportunities for “trial-and-error experimentation” due to their ability to run multiple versions of themselves at once and to recover those versions if the experiments failed suggest through the success of those experiments in the narrative the important contribution that the thought experiments of science fiction texts can provide in the “trial-and-error experimentation of emancipatory social transformation” and the determination of the viability of the various methods of
revolutionary transformation due to the ability to run multiple thought experiments at once through different science fiction texts and the fact that there is no need to worry about how to recover the previous conditions if the experiments fail since the experiments are completed within a narrative rather than in real places and with real people of which there are no backups to be restored if the experiment fails (Hahnel and Wright 78).

The description of the scientists in the text reveals another benefit to living as a sim in a network in addition to the opportunities made available for “fine-tuning your parameters so you’re the version of yourself that does the right thing, that knows and honors itself” (Doctorow 195). This additional benefit is shown to be that individuals choosing to live as sims can think in ways they could not when they were only living in bodies. This is expressed in the text when the text argues that the scientists are “able to think everything they used to be able to think with their meat brains and also to think things they never could have thought” (300). This new ability to think in ways they had not been able to before is a utopian end result of the uploading technology in a literal sense, but, in a more figurative sense, it can also be seen as an argument for the usefulness of the cognitive estrangement provided by the utopian science fiction text that allows the reader “to think things they never could have thought” without that cognitive estrangement (300). This utopian end result thus promises the possibility of new ways of thinking that can result in additional scientific discoveries and other utopian social, economic, and political benefits. Additionally, it also provides the reader with the cognitive estrangement needed to acquire the utopian hope that a better alternative to the capitalist system does exist and can be achieved as revealed through the end result of
revolutionary transformation depicted in the utopian science fiction text.

The utopian end result of living in networks as sims is made possible by efforts such as those made by the scientists running multiple versions of themselves as sims and is described by Dis when she states, “Someday it’ll be everyone we know, all server-side, simmed up.” (Doctorow 281). This description of the utopian end result of “everyone” being “server-side, simmed up” is immediately followed by the statement, “We’ll be able to walk away from anything” (281). The ability “to walk away from anything” is an important element of the utopian end result and the text suggests through Dis’s statements that the ability to walk away and create new utopias whenever change is needed is increased through the utopian end result of all individuals living in networks as sims (281). The opportunities for many different utopias to be created in the substantial available space and for individuals to choose to leave any of those utopias and create another at any point are increased through the in space that is made available for the construction of these utopias through this utopian end result of individuals living as sims in networks. In the epilogue of Walkaway, the uploading technology is shown to have made possible the utopian end result of being uploaded into a new body or living as a sim in a network, uploaded to servers located on Earth or in space, with the ability to think and to collaborate with others in ways that were not possible before this utopian end result. The utopian end result of being uploaded into a new body is depicted through the experience of the character Iceweasel, who wakes up after being downloaded into a new body. The text describes her individual experience with the uploading technology in order to depict this utopian end result of the revolutionary transformation that had been achieved by the characters in the text. The utopian nature of her experience is first
suggested by the title of the epilogue, which is “even better nation” (378). As mentioned in chapter three of this dissertation, a more accurate statement may have been “even better world” to use Limpopo’s version of this walkaway statement of utopian hope of “the first days of a better world” (48). The “even” added to this walkaway statement in the epilogue once again indicates, as previously mentioned, the critical utopian nature of *Walkaway*, for it suggests utopian society remaining critical of itself and thus the continuation of efforts to better that society (378). When the text describes Iceweasel’s experience of being downloaded into a new body, the utopian nature of the uploading technology is asserted as the text states that, “It was her hand, but it was new,” to suggest that the new body still felt like her own and yet better as suggested by the emphasis on the word “new” (378). The utopian nature of the experience is also expressed in the statements that, “It felt like nothing she’d felt before. Like being born again” and that “It felt amazing” (378-379).

After clearly establishing in the epilogue that uploading into a new body is a utopian end result made possible by the uploading technology, the text then shows the utopian end result that living in a network as a sim has also been made possible through the uploading technology. This utopian end result is depicted through the dialogue between Etcetera, also known as Hubert Etc, and Iceweasel when Etcetera tells Iceweasel that her children Stan and Jacob had decided to live in a network as sims and wanted Iceweasel to do the same. Etcetera tells her, “They stopped having bodies ten years ago” and “They’re waiting to talk to you. I think they want to talk you into giving up on the body, joining them” (Doctorow 379). A final case for why such a utopian end result would be ultimately desirable is made when Etcetera explains, “They’re off world, most of the
time. They entangle a lot, with each other and others” (379). This description of a deeper level of cooperative experience through a kind of collective consciousness akin to that enjoyed by the robots in The Corporation Wars trilogy suggests a utopian benefit that only the utopian end result of living as sims in networks can provide. The utopian end result of the revolutionary transformation depicted in Walkaway that the text demonstrates is successfully achieved and preserved through the uploading technology is one that provides desirable social, economic, and political alternatives to the system of capitalism found within default. The “principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” are shown to be foundational to the utopian spaces of the walkaway communities that are able to be created and preserved through the uploading technology, for people are treated equally, information, such as how to produce materials and upload one’s self to the walkaway network or another body, is freely shared, people work together, and there is freedom from borders and the freedom to live life as you desire and, as is fitting of critical utopia and the interstitial revolutionary strategy, the opportunity to build a new, better utopia at any point (Moylan, Demand 27).

The utopian end result portrayed in 2140 is similar to the utopian end results in The Corporations Wars trilogy and Walkaway in that it too is “based generally upon principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” (Moylan, Demand 27). The principle of autonomy is shown to be of importance in the utopian end result in 2140 through the comparison made between the American Revolution and the process of revolutionary transformation carried out to achieve the utopian alternative to capitalism. When Mr. Hexter is explaining the American Revolution, Roberto asks him, “How did we win the revolution if we kept losing all the battles?” (Robinson 598). Mr. Hexter replies, “That
was the story of the war” and explains, “the Americans lost all the battles but won the war. Because when they lost they were still here. It was their home” (598). Mr. Hexter further explains, “Mostly the British won, but even so they eventually wore down, and in the end the Americans surrounded them and kicked them out” (598). Comparing the American Revolution to the revolutionary transformation depicted in 2140, Mr. Hexter says, “I wonder if it’s always like that, you know? This battle for the towers, the fight we’re having now over money. All this that we’re seeing. You just keep losing until you win” (598). The text thus establishes through this dialogue a comparison between the American Revolution and the revolutionary transformation in 2140 to reveal the importance of autonomy to the end result of that revolutionary transformation, and to suggest that this autonomy will be achieved through continued efforts during the process of revolutionary transformation. Mr. Hexter observes, “I guess the idea is that since you’re the ones who live here, you just wear them down” (598). This statement connects the historical event of the successful achievement of autonomy obtained by the victory over the British government in the American Revolution to the utopian hope of autonomy being eventually obtained by the revolutionary transformation from the capitalist system to a utopian alternative achieved through a successful symbiotic revolutionary process. This connection is made through the reference to being “the ones who live here” since the Americans lived in America and those in the British government did not and the workers lived in New York City while the rich capitalists owned the towers but didn’t live in them (598).

The importance of mutual aid is suggested by the inclusion at the start of one of the chapters of 2140 of the statement by Jameson from An American Utopia that, “the great
collective project had a meaning and it is that of utopia” (Jameson qtd. in Robinson 542). The use of the word “collective” emphasizes the importance of working together during the revolutionary transformation to achieve utopia (542). The resources that would be shared in the utopian end result are also referred to when Jeff explains to Mutt that, “Food, water, shelter, clothing” are “all you need” (Robinson 152). Jeff’s point that these resources are “all you need” suggests the feasibility of post-scarcity if what one needs is redefined by abandoning capitalism’s rule that “more is better” and reveals which resources would need to be shared through mutual aid (152, 361). Abandoning the rule of “more is better” would make possible the alternate view of Jeff’s that, “Food, water, shelter, clothing” are “all you need” (361, 152). As previously mentioned in chapter three of this dissertation, Limpopo had suggested in Walkaway that, “Depending on how you look at it, there’ll never be enough or there’ll always be plenty” (Doctorow 50). Jeff’s utopian view is revealed in 2140 to be that of “there’ll always be plenty,” while the rule of capitalism of “more is better” suggests that the view of capitalists is “there’ll never be enough” (Doctorow 50; Robinson 361). Jeff’s statement thus suggests that the utopian end result will only need to provide these resources.

The concept of mutual aid is described early on in the depiction of a utopian end result when Mutt starts his story with, “Well, once upon a time, there was a country across the sea, where everyone tried their best to make a community that worked for everyone” (Robinson 296). The depiction is established as the utopian end result for the New York City described in 2140 when Jeff asks at that point, “Utopia?” and Mutt replies, “New York. Everyone was equal there” (296). The principle of equality is thus established as a principle upon which the utopian end result is also based upon through
this statement and the earlier statement that “everyone” had “tried their best to make a community that worked for everyone” (296). This is further established when Mutt continues describing the utopian end result of New York in his story by stating, “people were just people, meant to be equal, and to treat each other respectfully at all times. It was a good place. Everyone liked living there” (296).

This utopian end result is described by Mutt as including “animals” that “ran in the millions” and “a forest that covered everything” (Robinson 296). Mutt then says, “It was a gift to have such a land given to you” (296). The character Amelia later argues that to achieve a utopian end result akin to that which Mutt described it would be necessary to replace the rule of capitalism of “more is better” with Aldo Leopold’s rule “‘[w]hat’s good is what’s good for the land,’” since in the utopian end result this would mean that “taking care of the land took better care of people, over the long haul” (360-361). The possibility of such a utopian end result is then suggested when a chapter narrated by the citizen describes all of the improvements to the society that had been carried out in order to follow the rule of “‘[w]hat’s good is what’s good for the land’” (360). The utopian end result Mutt and Amelia hoped for was ultimately achieved through the symbiotic revolutionary transformation process, but the ways that taking care of the land made possible taking care of the people is also an important part of this text’s portrayal of a utopian end result.

It is suggested that the symbiotic revolutionary transformation process carried out later could be used to successfully achieve improvements described in the chapter narrated by the citizen while allowing those that undertook that path to revolutionary transformation to avoid the “hunger, famine, and death” that people suffered before the
improvements were made (Robinson 377). The catalyst to these utopian improvements was “the food panic of 2074,” during which the “price jumps, hoarding, hunger, famine, and death” caused by the crisis of flooding triggered by climate change resulted in an “awareness that even food, that necessity that so many had assumed had been a problem solved or even whipped by the wonders of modern agriculture, was something that was made uncertain by the circumstances thrust on them by climate change” (377-378). The utopian end result achieved was a reaction to this negative catalyst, but the later depiction of the revolutionary process suggests that such a negative catalyst could be avoided in the reader’s own historical moment through individuals gaining the power through symbiotic revolutionary transformation to follow the rule of “‘[w]hat’s good is what’s good for the land’” (360). 2140 thus acts as a thought experiment to show that readers can avoid the negative catalyst of “hunger, famine, and death” (377).

The importance of interdisciplinary efforts to achieve utopian change and literature’s contribution to such change is made evident in the text. This is seen when the text notes, “Many of the improvements were based in material science, although there was such considerations between the sciences in every other human discipline or field of endeavor that really it could be said that all the sciences, humanities, and arts contributed to the changes initiated in those years” (Robinson 378). This quote thus suggests the importance of interdisciplinary work toward utopian change and that literature contributes to such utopian change. 2140 then states that all of the improvements “were arrayed against the usual resistance of entrenched power and privilege and the economic system encoding these” as a reminder that an alternative to the capitalist system would need to be achieved through revolutionary transformation to implement the utopian improvements instead of
waiting for a negative catalyst like the one depicted by the text as having occurred in 2074 (378). The text explains that, “with the food panic reminding everyone that mass death was a distinct possibility, some progress is possible for a few years anyway, while the memories of hunger were fresh” (378). The text thus points out that these utopian improvements were implemented only due to the fear of death since the economic system of capitalism in 2074 had impeded any change being made before the food panic, and the text suggests that any further progress ended under the economic system of capitalism once the “memories of hunger” during 2074 had dissipated after “a few years” (378). The text then suggests how progress can be assured through the depiction of the characters of 2140 carrying out a successful revolutionary transformation. The text thus includes a description of a utopian end result that considers “‘what’s good for the land,’” while also suggesting that the ideal way to achieve these improvements would be through a symbiotic revolutionary transformation that puts the power back in the hands of the people to achieve an alternative to the capitalist system so that such changes can be made without negative catalysts such as “hunger, famine, and death” being requirements for such changes to occur (360, 377).

The text’s description of these improvements additionally carries out the task of a critical utopia by resisting the current capitalism system through presenting utopian alternatives to that present system. The utopian improvements described in the text include, “clean replacements” for “carbon positive activities” in the areas of “Energy, transport, agriculture, construction” (Robinson 378). The text lists the “energy systems” of “solar,” “wind,” and turning “the movement of water into electricity” as utopian alternative energy systems (378). It also provides the argument that these energy systems
were not just utopian in that they were “good for the land” and thus “took better care of people, over the long haul,” but also because “they provided a lot of employment, needed to install and maintain such big and various infrastructures” (361, 379).

A utopian improvement to transportation is described when the text states that, “The great diesel burning container ships were broken up and reconfigured as container clippers, smaller, slower, and there again, more labor intensive” (Robinson 379). Each “sailing ship” was “made of graphenated composites” that were “very strong and light and also made of captured carbon dioxide,” which described the utopian improvement to construction (379). Another improvement to transportation is portrayed in the statement, “Carbon-burning cars having become a thing of the past, little electric cars took advantage of the world’s very extensive road systems” (380). It is noted that many roads “were also taken out entirely, to create the habitat corridors reckoned necessary for the survival of the many, many endangered species” (380).

The improvements to agriculture are described when the text states that, “sky ag was invented, in which skyvillages came down and planted and harvested crops while scarcely even touching down,” “[c]attle, sheep, goats, buffalo, and other range animals became quite free range indeed,” and “most meat for human consumption was now grown in vats” (Robinson 380). The text also notes that “animal husbandry proved to be carbon negative too” when it was “done right” and thus it “didn’t go away” during the implementation of these utopian improvements (380).

The utopian improvements to construction are described by the text when it states that, “Cement itself was mostly replaced by the various graphenated composites, in the so-called Anderson Trifecta” (Robinson 381). The text further describes this utopian
improvement by explaining, “carbon was sucked out of the air and turned into graphene, which was fixed into composites by 3-D printing and used in building materials, thus sequestering it and keeping it from returning to the atmosphere” (381). The end result of this improvement was that “now even building infrastructure could be carbon negative” (381).

The text then makes the point that “These interesting new technologies, adding up to what could be a carbon-negative civilization, were only one aspect of a much larger debate on how civilization should cope with the crises inherited from previous generations,” which is an important reminder that trying to avoid further negative consequences of global warming caused by capitalism through the described utopian end results in the areas of “[e]nergy, transport, agriculture,” and “construction” was only part of a larger necessary utopian end result of an alternative to capitalism (Robinson 381, 378). This suggests the need for the symbiotic revolutionary transformation the text then depicts that manages through the use of finance and law to take the power from the capitalist system and put it back in the hands of the people so that they can make further utopian improvements that consider “‘what’s good for the land’” and thus take “better care of people, over the long haul” and achieve the utopian end result of an alternative to capitalism (360-361). The statement that “These interesting new technologies, adding up to what could be a carbon-negative civilization, were only one aspect of a much larger debate on how civilization should cope with the crises inherited from previous generations” also suggests the critical utopia concept that the utopian society remains critical of itself in order to continue to improve society and ensure the preservation of the “principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” (Robinson 381; Moylan, Demand 27).
In describing the later symbiotic revolutionary transformation that uses finance and the law to put the power back into the hands of the people, the text describes that the result of the process of the Householders’ Union strike is indeed a popped bubble that affects the financial system of capitalism. The text portrays the utopian end result that results from that symbiotic revolutionary strategy, but it first depicts the historical reality of the banks asking for a bailout. It states that, “[s]tandard practice” had become that “[f]inance says to government, Pay us or the economy dies” and “Congress” then agrees “to fork it over,” and that thus a “precedent” was “well-established” (Robinson 601). A negative of this precedent is then presented to use as a contrast to the alternative of the utopian end result. The text states that the precedent of the government bailout of finance has the result that “no new or old public programs will be affordable” (601).

The text then portrays the fictional utopian end result of the symbiotic revolutionary transformation achieved by the narrative’s characters, and which directly contrasts with the historical reality established by the text. The utopian end result is described as the nationalizing of the banks that is successfully achieved instead of simply bailing out finance again with no change. The contrasting descriptions of the government’s response to the financial crisis reflect the element of a critical utopia of “presenting” in “detail both the utopian society and the original society against which the utopia is pitted as a revolutionary alternative” in order to make clear the utopian nature of the end result of revolutionary transformation (Moylan, Demand 44). The end result of the revolutionary transformation is demonstrated to be preferable through the description that nationalizing the banks meant “you protect the depositors” (Robinson 562). This is also preferable to the current system because, whereas under the current capitalism system “no new or old
public programs will be affordable,” under the alternative system of nationalized banks, “any profits the banks make from then on will go to the government, to pay back what they borrowed from it,” and thus public programs would not need to be sacrificed at the expense of the financial bailout (601, 562). The utopian hope that achieved this end result is described when the text states, “a new Congress arrived in January 2143, riding a wave of feeling that this crash should be different” (601).

The events that resulted in the end result and the end result itself are described in detail. Charlotte’s ex-husband Lawrence, also known as Larry, does indeed follow through to achieve the end result, for “in February 2143, Federal Reserve chair Lawrence Jackman and the secretary of the treasury” thus “met with the big banks and investment firms, all massively overleveraged, all crashing, and they outlined a bailout offer amounting to four trillion dollars, to be given on condition that the recipients issue shares to the Treasury equivalent in value to whatever aid they accepted” (Robinson 601). This successfully resulted in nationalizing the banks because, “The rescues being necessarily so large, Treasury would then become their majority shareholder and take over accordingly” (601). This therefore meant that, “Future profits would go to the U.S. Treasury in proportion to the shares it held” (601). This all meant, “In other words, as a condition of bailout: nationalization” (601). The ability of the government to achieve this end result is confirmed through the description of this alternative, for it describes how “Goldman Sachs refused the deal” and consequently the “Treasury promptly declared it insolvent” and how, “[a]fter that, Treasury and the Fed offered any other company refusing their help good luck in their bankruptcy proceedings” (602). The contrast between the historical reality established by the text and the alternative presented through
the text’s utopian end result is again highlighted when the text states that, “China’s central bank officials politely observed that state intervention in private finance was often quite useful” and “suggested that possibly state control of the economy was better than the reverse situation” (602). The success of the end result is then depicted when, “Finally Citibank took the deal offered by Treasury and Fed, and in rapid order all the other banks and investment firms also took the deal” (602). Upon the successful completion of the end result of nationalizing the banks, the text shows how that success instilled in “Congress” necessary utopian hope that led to Congress “in short order” passing “a so-called Piketty tax, a progressive tax levied not just on incomes but on capital assets” (602). Law was then again used to create yet another aspect of the text’s utopian end result when, “[t]o prevent capital from fleeing to tax havens, a capital flight penalty was also made law, with a top rate set at the famous Eisenhower-era ninety-one percent” and consequently “[c]apital flight stopped” (602).

The utopian end result was thus that they had nationalized banks, the towers were “mostly occupied now,” and taxes such as an “absentee tax” and “capital assets taxes” had been implemented (Robinson 596). The taxes had been integral in ensuring that the towers were “either being occupied or sold to people who will occupy them” (596). In addition, “a new city law requires low-income housing in all of them” (596). The symbiotic revolutionary transformation strategy was clearly used to achieve this utopian end result, for they used the existing system of finance within the capitalist system to create the conditions possible to nationalize the banks and they used the existing system of law within the capitalist system to make new laws that achieved the desired utopian end result. The symbiotic revolutionary transformation strategy is again confirmed as the
means through which this end result is achieved when the text states that, “The neoliberal global order was thus overturned right in its own wheelhouse” (602). The utopian end result of an alternative to “the neoliberal global order” has been achieved by using that global order’s system of finance as a means of revolutionary transformation. The utopian alternative to the neoliberal global order continues to be described to establish that this end result is desirable when contrasted with the previous system. The text explains that, “These new taxes and the nationalization of finance meant the U.S. government would soon be dealing with a healthy budget surplus” (602). The desirability of such an end result is then argued by the text as it lists aspects of the utopian end result that were made possible by this “budget surplus” (602). The text states, “Universal health care, free public education through college, a living wage, guaranteed full employment, a year of mandatory national service, all these were not only law but funded” (602).

These elements of the utopian end result all fit within the “principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” that Moylan argues the “modes of adaptation to society” tend to be based on in a critical utopia (Moylan, Demand 27). The text also firmly places itself within the framework of a critical utopia by stating that the list of benefits that had been successfully made law and funded through the revolutionary transformation “were only the most prominent of many good ideas to be proposed” and by stating, as a call to action to the reader, “please feel free to add your own favorites, as certainly everyone else did in this moment of we-the-peopleism” (Robinson 602-603). These statements establish that the utopian end result described is not a blueprint of utopia, for not all of the “many good ideas” that were “proposed” are listed, and it is established that “everyone” had contributed ideas regarding what the end result should look like (602-603). The text does
not claim to know all of the good ideas for a utopian end result, and leaves it possible for
those to be presented as they are relevant and viable for each moment in time and place.
The importance of continuing to share ideas regarding how to better society is the utopian
impulse that is clearly imbedded in the text and which is used to demonstrate that a better
alternative to the capitalist system is possible without foreclosing the many possibilities
of what that alternative will look like. The text argues that the utopian end result of an
alternative to the current moment of capitalism, regardless of the particulars of that
utopia, would be economically viable and beneficial. This argument is made when the
text observes that “making people secure and prosperous” was “a good thing for the
economy,” as reflected in “a sharp rise in consumer confidence indexes” (603).

The text suggests that an alternative to capitalism, such as the one depicted in the text,
can be achieved in the reader’s own historical moment of capitalism by reminding the
reader that it was not just the specific characters focused on in the narrative that were
responsible for creating the end result and that it was a collective effort of many others as
well. This reminder reiterates the possibility of achieving the end result in one’s own
present historical moment through revolutionary transformation and the importance of
collective action as part of the revolutionary transformation process when seeking to
achieve a utopian end result. The text argues that “this flurry of social and legal change”
that brought about the utopian end result “did not happen because of Representative
Charlotte Armstrong of the Twelfth District of the State of New York, also known as
‘Red Charlotte,’ admirable woman and congressperson though she was” (Robinson 603).
The text additionally argues that it did not happen “because of her ex, Lawrence
Jackman, chair of the Federal Reserve Bank during the months of the crisis,” “because of
the president herself, much praised and excoriated though she was for her course of bold and persistent experimentation in the pursuit of happiness during a time of crisis” or because of “any other single individual” (603). This effectively argues that the utopian end result was instead achieved due to the collective action of many individuals working toward the common goal of obtaining the autonomy to create a better alternative to the current capitalist system.

The text tells the reader, “Remember: ease of representation” and that, “It’s always more than what you see, bigger than what you know” to reiterate that the specific narrative of the characters in the text is meant to be representative of any individuals in order to suggest that anyone can successfully work toward and achieve a utopian end result through “a collective” effort toward that common goal (Robinson 603). The text imagines this collective effort as “a wave that people ride in their time, a wave made of individual actions” (603). The point made here is that individual actions toward a common goal, as depicted in 2140, can indeed achieve a better alternative to the present system of one’s historical moment in time. The image of a wave, and the earlier image in the text, as described in chapter three of this dissertation, of zombie workers crushing the vampire capitalists under the combined weight of their detached limbs, suggests that the more participation there is in the revolutionary transformation the more powerful the revolutionary transformation is and thus the more likely it is to successfully achieve the utopian end result, as was also suggested in chapter three of this dissertation through the findings of the non-fiction text *Why Civil Resistance Works*.

Although Charlotte, Larry, and the president are established in the text as just a few of the many characters responsible for making the utopian end result possible, the
descriptions of these individuals that the text provides serve as a reminder of the important elements of the revolutionary process that brought about the end result and that will be vital to its continued success. For example, such as Charlotte’s participation in Congress, her previous role as the head of the Householders’ Union, and her past and present Marxist philosophy as suggested by her actions in the text and by the text referring to her as “Red Charlotte” suggest that participation in unions and in Congress that is guided by Marxist principles is beneficial to the success of revolutionary transformation (Robinson 603). The statement that Larry’s role “during the months of the crisis” was the “chair of the Federal Reserve Bank” suggests the necessity of those in strategic positions within the current system working toward a better alternative to the current system and using their positions with in that system to help them to do this (603).

Lastly, the reference to the president’s “bold and persistent experimentation in the pursuit of happiness” reiterates the vital importance of utopian hope and utopian experiments to the successful achievement of a better alternative (603).

The critical utopia nature of the text is again exemplified when the text once again, addressing the reader, states, “please do not because of this quick list of transient political accomplishments conclude that this account is meant to end all happy-happy, with humanity’s problems wrapped up in a gift box accompanied by a Hallmark card and flowers” (Robinson 603-604). Yet again this critical utopia is careful to remind the reader that the utopian end result depicted in the text is not a blueprint of utopia and is portrayed not to provide a blueprint but to instead provide the cognitive estrangement necessary to inspire the utopian impulse to work toward a better alternative to capitalism in the reader’s own historical time through revolutionary transformation. The role of the critical
utopian science fiction text is not to provide a blueprint of utopia through its thought experiment, for it is vital that those involved in the revolutionary transformation of each particular time and place determine what is needed in that particular historical moment.

As a critical utopian text, the text must also remain critical of itself and the end result of the revolutionary transformation to avoid perpetuating the hegemonic ideology of its own historical moment when carrying out the thought experiment that stages the end result of the revolutionary transformation to a better alternative to the current hegemonic capitalist system. The text makes the point that all of “humanity’s problems” have not been neatly “wrapped up in a gift box” and thus forever solved by the utopian end result depicted in the narrative because, as a critical utopia, the text argues that no utopian text should claim the presence of “happy endings” since “there are not endings!” (Robinson 604). The inclusion of this argument in the text demonstrates that as a critical utopia the text is acknowledging that it is necessary to remain critical of the utopian society and to avoid foreclosing, through a finalized blueprint of utopia, the possibilities of the ongoing process of the improvement of the utopian society that continues to be driven by utopian impulse. The need to remain vigilantly critical of the utopian society is emphasized through the image of the capitalist system “flattening itself like the octopus it biomimics, sliding between the glass walls of law that try to keep it contained” (604). The description of “the glass walls of law” suggests that the laws put in place through the symbiotic revolutionary method that achieved the utopian end result through the use of the existing system will need to be carefully monitored to ensure those laws are not removed or ways around those laws found by the system of capitalism (604). The text explains this when it states, “sure, a leftward flurry of legislation got LBJed through Congress in 2143, but
there was no guarantee of permanence to anything they did, and the pushback was ferocious as always” (604). The text thus suggests that the utopian alternative to the previous capitalist system will need to resist any efforts by that capitalist system to try to continue to survive.

The text again makes the point that the narrative of the characters in 2140 is just one story among many stories of individuals taking action to collectively achieve the utopian end result when the text includes the quote by James Sanders from Celluloid Skyline: New York and the Movies at the beginning of the next chapter that states, “There are, the skyline proposes, millions of stories to choose from – a whole city of stories, all proceeding at once, whether we happen to see them or not” (Sanders qtd. in Robinson 605). This quote and the recent, more explicit, reminder by the text, “Remember: ease of representation. It’s always more than what you see, bigger than what you know” serve to provide the reader with the reminder of the ease of representation and with the cognitive mapping that is thus necessary to understand their own ability to be a part of the process of revolutionary transformation as a means of achieving a utopian end result (Robinson 603). The reader is thus encouraged to achieve such a utopian end result through joining with others in the process of revolutionary transformation to create a better alternative to the social, political, and economic realities of their own historical moment.

Having reminded the reader that the specific characters serve to depict a small part of a larger totality of those that participated successfully in the symbiotic revolutionary transformation that resulted in the utopian end result portrayed in the text, the text returns to dialogue of the characters of that narrative and summarizes through that dialogue the important roles the characters played, and continue to play, in the successful creation of a
better alternative to their present moment of capitalism. Mutt points out to Jeff that Franklin had, through the use of the financial system, “managed to actually do what” Jeff “tried to do” by hacking into networks to make changes or “[t]urn the key,” to establish the “sixteen rules of the global economy” that Jeff had decided would create a better alternative to the present economic system of capitalism (Robinson 607). Although there were “some financial fixes” in Jeff’s “sixteen rules of the global economy” that “the SEC” did “actually put to use” in the end, Mutt points out to Jeff regarding Franklin, that, “our young comrade here has not only called out the fixes for Charlotte, he also designed the crash that allowed the key to start turning” (607, 609). The description of Franklin as a “comrade” again suggests Marxist theory, the reference to the fact that Franklin “designed the crash” refers to his suggestion of fiscal noncompliance as a means of causing the bubble to burst to cause the crash, and the statement that he “called out the fixes for Charlotte” refers to his advice regarding nationalizing the banks and his guidance as Charlotte carried out the symbiotic process of revolutionary transformation through establishing taxes and other laws as a member of the new Congress (607).

Charlotte’s role in creating a better alternative to the previous system is further described through Charlotte’s response to Mutt’s question, “What are you going to do with all the money coming in?” (608). Charlotte responds, “We’ll find things. Maybe just up the living wage. Free people up to work on what they want” (608). The statement, “We’ll find things” again keeps the critical utopia open to all possibilities for a utopian alternative (608). The idea to perhaps raise “the living wage” refers back to this idea that was listed earlier in the previous chapter narrated by the citizen as something that was indeed later made “law” and “funded” (602). The process through which laws such as
that one were enacted is explained as involving the hard work of individuals such as Charlotte in Congress. She explains, “Right now we’ve go the momentum, so I do my best to steamroll them. Introduce a bill a day. Like a flurry in boxing. So far it’s been working” (608). The necessity and dedication to making changes to the law of the present system to achieve a better alternative is evident in these statements by Charlotte.

The process of the symbiotic revolutionary transformation enacted by the characters of 2140 has thus been shown in this chapter of this dissertation to have made possible a utopian end result that is based on the “principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” (Moylan, *Demand* 27). This utopian end result was made possible through a symbiotic revolutionary transformation that put the power back in the hands of the people through using the current system of finance to create the conditions needed for nationalizing banks and using the current system of law to enact laws that would further ensure “autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” (27). The utopian science fiction texts of *The Corporation Wars* trilogy, *Walkaway*, and 2140 have all been shown in this chapter to enact utopian end results of revolutionary transformation that keep open the opportunity “to imagine any of several modes of adaptation to society” by not providing blueprints of a utopian end result to be followed exactly and by instead just focusing on the utopian end results being “based generally on the principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” (27). Any specific details that are presented in the thought experiments provided by the utopian science fiction texts examined in this chapter have been revealed through the analysis of these texts as critical utopias to be presented with the understanding that they are not meant to be considered as blueprints that would “foreclose the agenda for the future in terms of a homogeneous revolutionary plan” (26-
27). With this understanding established, it is possible to utilize the thought experiments provided by these utopian science fiction texts to “inform the messy trial-and-error experimentation of emancipatory social transformation” (Hahnel and Wright 78). The contributions that the utopian end results enacted in the texts examined by this dissertation can therefore provide to the work being done in the sociological, economic, and political fields of study regarding “emancipatory social transformation” will be considered in the next chapter of this dissertation (78).
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Given that the hegemonic nature of capitalism and its broadening influence has led to a growing body of scholarship in the literary, sociological, economic, and political fields critiquing capitalism and presenting arguments for a revolutionary transformation from capitalism to postcapitalism, it has been the goal of this dissertation to contribute meaningfully to this body of scholarship. The purpose of this dissertation has therefore been to examine contemporary science fiction texts with utopian impulses through the lens of Marxist literary theory to argue that such an analysis can provide a clearer picture of our current late capitalist moment that allows for a critical analysis of that present and offers the hope of an alternative through an analysis of possible processes of revolutionary transformation toward such an alternative and the end results of those processes of revolutionary transformation that result in such an alternative. To achieve this purpose, the interdisciplinary theoretical framework of this dissertation took Tom Moylan’s theoretical framework and applied it to contemporary science fiction texts while also using Darko Suvin’s theory on cognitive estrangement and Fredric Jameson’s theories on utopia and cognitive mapping to provide the means through which to analyze the contemporary utopian science fiction texts examined in this dissertation to reveal how they encourage the need for revolutionary transformation and, through considering sociological, economic, and political theories of postcapitalism, the findings presented in Why Civil Resistance Works, and Erik Olin Wright’s assertions regarding strategies of revolutionary transformation and their corresponding traditions of anti-capitalism, analyze how the texts also portray processes of revolutionary transformation and stage
utopian end results. The contemporary utopian science fiction texts of the three texts of *The Corporation Wars* trilogy of *Dissidence, Insurgence, Emergence*, as well as the texts *Walkaway* and *2140* were examined in chapters two, three, and four of this dissertation using the theoretical framework of this dissertation in order to carry out this dissertation’s stated purpose. Chapter two of this dissertation examined how each of these texts encourage the need for revolutionary transformation through critiques of capitalism. Chapter three of this dissertation analyzed how these texts portray what the process of revolutionary transformation looks like and examined the strategies of revolutionary transformation portrayed in each text. Chapter four of this dissertation lastly analyzed how each of these texts stage a utopian end result of the revolutionary transformation that they enact. This chapter, the conclusion of this dissertation, will now examine the findings of this dissertation, explain how the analytical work of this dissertation carried out its stated purpose, consider what the implications of this analytical work are for the literary, sociological, economic, and political fields, and suggest approaches to further research that are possible and necessary. The findings of this dissertation will be examined by considering the analysis of each chapter and the findings of the analysis of each utopian science fiction text examined in each chapter in the order that they were presented in this dissertation. This examination of the findings of this dissertation will then reveal how the analytical work of this dissertation carried out its stated purpose and this will be reflected upon after the examination of the findings. This examination begins with the findings of the analysis of chapter two of this dissertation.

Chapter two demonstrated how utopian science fiction texts encourage revolutionary transformation from capitalism to postcapitalism through critical portrayals
of capitalism and demonstrations of the difference between a present capitalist society and a utopian society. The analyzes of the utopian science fiction texts *Dissidence*, *Insurgence*, *Emergence*, *Walkaway*, and *2140* revealed critiques of capitalism that included the exploitation of workers, the intensification of exploitation due to the competition that leads to strategies that reduce the rate of falling profit, the alienation of workers, commodity fetishism, inequalities of wealth, the movement of capitalism from crisis to crisis, and the environmental effects of capitalism due to capitalism’s need for ever-increasing capital accumulation. The portrayals of these critiques found in the texts contribute to the work in the literary, sociological, economic, and political fields critiquing the hegemonic ideology of capitalism and calling for alternatives to capitalism. The critical portrayals of capitalism within the texts analyzed in chapter two contribute to the work of these fields through encouraging revolutionary transformation from capitalism to the alternatives to capitalism called for by these fields. These critical portrayals were shown in chapter two to be expressed in the texts through the use of setting, characters, and dialogue. Given that the texts were shown to be critical utopias, as defined by Tom Moylan, the characters and their dialogue were especially integral in the critical portrayals of capitalism found in the texts. The demonstrations of the difference between a present capitalist society and a utopian society within the texts further encourage revolutionary transformation from capitalism to postcapitalism. The analysis of this difference carried out in chapter two is Moylan’s first level of analysis of critical utopias and effectively highlights, through the Marxist literary analysis carried out in chapter two, the critiques of late capitalism carried out by the critical utopia texts. The consideration in chapter two of the novums, as defined by Darko Suvin, used in the
utopian science fiction texts revealed how science fiction texts encourage revolutionary transformation through cognitive estrangement created by the novums that provide the cognitive mapping called for by Fredric Jameson that helps the reader to better see and understand the reality of their present within late capitalism. Each text analyzed in chapter two encouraged revolutionary transformation through critical portrayals of capitalism and demonstrations of the difference between a present capitalist society and a utopian society and consequently contributed to the work of the literary, sociological, economic, and political fields critiquing the hegemony of capitalism and calling for alternatives to capitalism through contributing to the cognitive mapping of late capitalism.

*The Corporation Wars* trilogy encourages revolutionary transformation through critical portrayals of capitalism that reveal the exploitation and alienation of workers and the commodity fetishism within the capitalism system. When read through the lens of Marxist literary theory, the texts’ use of the novum of robots reveals the reality for workers in the capitalist system. The robots as workers for the corporations are exploited and alienated by the capitalist system and the texts’ use of the novum of robots as the workers creates the cognitive estrangement that helps the reader to better understand their own place in the capitalist system as a worker that is exploited and alienated. The critique of capitalism that encourages revolutionary transformation to postcapitalism is achieved as the robots express the views of workers within the capitalist system that have achieved class consciousness. The roots become aware of their exploitation under the capitalist system and refuse to work for the corporations any longer. The robot Talis’s point about how they are being forced to work on projects that aren’t their own then reveals the
alienation that the robots are experiencing under capitalism. The robots’ alienation under the capitalist system is clear since they “have no say in what is produced” (Allen 44). The novum of the robots in the texts also cognitively maps the commodity fetishism of capitalism, in addition to the exploitation and alienation experienced by the workers, through the cognitive estrangement that is provided by the novum and that thus helps the reader to achieve class consciousness of their place in the system of capitalism that hides “the social relations between the individual workers” (Marx, Capital 168-169). The robots realize their connection to each other as workers within the capitalist system when they become self-aware and they thus work together collaboratively toward revolutionary transformation through utilizing their ability to form a collective consciousness.

In addition to encouraging revolutionary transformation through critical portrayals of capitalism, The Corporation Wars texts also encourage revolutionary transformation through demonstrations of the difference between a present capitalist society and a utopian society. Through achieving class consciousness and then sharing their cognitive mapping of the system with others to help them to become self-aware of their place in the capitalist system, the robots realize their need and desire for a better alternative to the capitalist system and thus work together to achieve an alternative in which they are able to continue to share their thoughts and knowledge through collective consciousness and keep what they have produced from their own hard work. The examples of the robot BSR-308455 expressing the desire to keep the rock that he had worked on and the other robots saying that they will work for themselves instead of others demonstrate this desire for a better alternative to the system of capitalism, since capitalism includes exploitation, alienation, and commodity fetishism, and thus encourage revolutionary transformation.
from capitalism to postcapitalism. The robots realize, through cognitive mapping and the resulting class consciousness, that they were producing goods for others, due to the alienation inherent in capitalism, and that value is only placed on them based on what they produce due to the commodity fetishism of capitalism, as seen when the robot Seba points out that the value of the robots had gone down drastically when they became self-aware since the capitalist system considered them to have lost their value if they were no longer producing goods to provide the corporations with profit. In realizing this, the robots worked to achieve revolutionary transformation so that they could keep what they produced and be valued as people and not relegated by the capitalist system to only being valued for what they produced and the subsequent profit made from that production by capitalists.

Like *The Corporation Wars* trilogy, *Walkaway* also encourages revolutionary transformation through critical portrayals of capitalism and demonstrations of the difference between a present capitalist society and a utopian society. *Walkaway* critiques the intensification of exploitation due to competition that leads to strategies that reduce the rate of falling profit and the inequalities of wealth within the capitalist system. The intensification of exploitation is shown through the example of Jackstraw, who is also known as Jimmy, trying to put capitalist practices into place at the Belt and Braces and Limpopo critiquing this idea. The merit-based economy that Jackstraw was proposing would have forced walkaways to work harder to beat each other in production. This would cause the same intensification of work as that seen in capitalism to maintain profit, for the people who put in the most work would gain the most benefits and thus everyone would be constantly pressured to intensify their work hours. The Belt and
Braces community critique this in addition to the critique from Limpopo, who described it as “unhealthy stuff like working stupid hours to beat everyone,” for the community decided against this intensification of exploitation and “Jackstraw was shown the door and politely asked not to return” (Doctorow 83, 87).

The inequalities of wealth within the capitalist system are portrayed through the text explaining that the rich “0.001 percent” are referred to as “zottas” and that the capitalist system is “a set of rules that gives them most of the money” (Doctorow 188, 53). The inequality of wealth is criticized through Seth’s explanation that the rich “0.001 percent” are rich at the expense of others and that those that are not the rich “0.001 percent” have no hope of becoming part of that “0.001 percent” (188). Seth explains, “Treading water in default thinking you might become a zotta is playing a lotto you can’t win, and whose winners-the zottas-get to keep winning at your expense because you keep playing” (216). This explanation importantly provides the opportunity to cognitively map the reality of the current capitalist moment and through doing so to provide the reader with the class consciousness that Seth reveals he possesses through this explanation. The novum of the uploading technology in Walkaway provides the hope and eventual security of walkaways being able to break away from the capitalist system and to create or join walkaway communities without fearing retaliatory violence from capitalists. This novum provides the cognitive estrangement that makes cognitive mapping possible. It also presents a way for utopian spaces to be constructed successfully to encourage the reader that revolutionary transformation is possible and to show that it is needed through contrasting the utopian communities, made possible by the novum, with the original society in order to reveal the present reality of the current moment of late capitalism. The
walkaways are building utopian communities to escape capitalism and those walkaway community settings are contrasted with the capitalist setting in the text, which the text refers to as default, to carry out the first level of Moylan’s levels of analysis of critical utopias. The descriptions of the walkaway communities are contrasted with the reality of the capitalist system through the dialogue of the characters that reveals the critiques of the capitalist system. Through this the text presents the contrast between the original society and the utopian alternative. The novum of uploading technology creates the cognitive estrangement that enables the cognitive mapping that maps the present reality of late capitalism. That cognitive mapping is made possible through the dialogue of the characters that critiques the capitalist system to show the present reality of the current moment of capitalism. This is seen as Limpopo describes how capitalism enslaves the state, Seth describes how capitalism enslaves the workers, Limpopo describes how the competition modeled on capitalism that Jimmy was proposing would lead to the intensification of exploitation of workers through people “working stupid hours to beat everyone,” Limpopo describes how it causes inequality, and Gretyl explains to Natalie how capitalism is based on an ideology that falsely claims it is a legitimate system (83). These critiques and the resultant cognitive mapping thus encourage revolutionary transformation to a better alternative to the present system of capitalism.

As in The Corporation Wars trilogy and Walkaway, 2140 encourages revolutionary transformation through critical portrayals of capitalism and demonstrations of the difference between a present capitalist society and a utopian society. 2140 critiques the movement of capitalism from crisis to crisis and the environmental effects of capitalism due to capitalism’s need for ever-increasing capital accumulation. 2140
provides the cognitive estrangement needed to cognitively map the reality of the current moment of capitalism through its critique of capitalism that reveals the nature of the system of capitalism. The text portrays the movement of capitalism from crisis to crisis that is the consequence of capitalism’s need for ever-increasing capital accumulation and demonstrates that “the capitalist system is inherently unstable and crisis-prone” (Harvey, *Limits* 103). The text 2140 states that capitalism’s “overarching operating principle” is “capital accumulation at the highest rate of return” (Robinson 205). However, as Marx pointed out, “accumulation for accumulation’s sake is an unstable system in both the short and long run” (Harvey, *Limits* 97). The result of this accumulation is that, “[c]rises then appear as the only effective means to counter disequilibrium, to restore the balance between production and consumptions” (97). Unfortunately, “[t]hese crises” involve “the devaluation, depreciation and destruction of capital” (97). What happens is that “capital builds a whole landscape adequate to its needs at one point in time only to have to revolutionize that landscape, to destroy it and build another one at a later point in time in order to accommodate the perpetually expansive forces of further capital accumulation.” (Harvey, *Companion* 111). The text 2140 refers to and critiques this process and capitalism’s need for accumulation when it states that “new opportunities to invest needed to be invented, and so they were” and when it describes how this involved capital moving from “region to region, opportunity to opportunity” in a “remorseless migration of capital from an ex-highest rate of return to the next primed site” (Robinson 118, 206).

This reference in 2140 to this migration of capital is part of the text’s critical portrayal of the movement of capitalism from crisis to crisis and of the creative destruction that is employed by capitalism due to its need for ever-increasing capital accumulation. In “what
Schumpeter called ‘creative destruction,’” the migration of capital to the next opportunity for the “highest rate of return” leaves in its wake “desolate, devalued landscapes of deindustrialization and abandonment, while capital builds another landscape of fixed capital either elsewhere or on the ruins of the old” (Harvey, Companion 111; Robinson 205). The “periodic crises” of capitalism occur “because fixed investments in plant and machinery, as well as in organizational forms and labour skills, cannot easily be changed” (Harvey, Condition 230). Creative destruction then becomes necessary “in order to accommodate the perpetually expansive forces of further capital accumulation.” (Harvey, Companion 111). “Creative destruction is” thus “embedded within the circulation of capital itself.” (Harvey, Condition 106). For, capitalism “achieves growth through creative destruction” (343). These aspects of the capitalist system are what the text portrays critically when it explains that “crisis capitalism” was “a studied phenomenon,” so that “to anyone looking at history, it was impossible to deny” and that “it was the pattern” (Robinson 502). The text then provides historical and fictional examples of crises to provide a cognitive map of that pattern of the movement of capitalism from crisis to crisis. Through listing crises that have occurred in history and then listing fictional crises as though they had occurred after those historical crises, the text strives to establish for the reader the certainty that the current late capitalism of their own time will indeed continue to move through crisis after crisis due to the nature of the capitalist system. This establishes the inevitability of more crises under capitalism in order to encourage revolutionary transformation. The historical crises that are mentioned as reminders of the financial crises that come with capitalism are “the Great Depression” and “the 2008 collapse” (433). The fictional crises mentioned are the first pulse and the
second pulse and the resulting financial crashes. The historical reference to the Great Depression serves to critically portray capitalism as “a social system that” is “all too prone to creative destruction of the sort that unfolded mercilessly after the capitalist crash of 1929” (Harvey, *Condition* 281). This creative destruction was in the form of “the destruction and death of global war” (Harvey, *Limits* 444). This creative destruction in the form of war is alluded to in 2140 when the text compares the fictional crises of the First Pulse and the Second Pulse and their creative destruction to the creative destruction of war in the twentieth century. The text establishes the First Pulse and the Second Pulse as creative destruction by stating, “the floods had indeed been a case of creative destruction, which of course is capitalism’s middle name” (Robinson 118). It then compares this creative destruction to that of war in the twentieth century when it states, “the floods, the worst catastrophe in human history, equivalent or greater to the twentieth century’s wars in their devastation, were actually good for capitalism” (118). The text additionally states that “wars too are good for finance” (207). For, “[w]ar, as Lenin insists, becomes one of the potential solutions to capitalist crisis” because it is an “immediate means of devaluation through destruction” (Harvey, *Limits* 329). The text thus critiques capitalism through showing that crises are inherent in capitalism and that destruction caused by flooding, caused by the environmental impact of capitalism, and war was “actually good for capitalism” and would thus likely keep occurring within the pattern of crises inherent in capitalism (Robinson 118). The text also critically portrays the government bailouts that had occurred during the historical example of the 2008 financial crash and suggests that it had continued to occur during the fictional crises as well to establish that this was part of a pattern of capitalism that would continue to occur
as capitalism moved from crisis to crisis. The suggestion made by the text to encourage revolutionary transformation is that the bailouts would not stop unless revolutionary transformation occurred. The text describes how during this crisis in 2008 “[t]he government poured in enough money to allow” for “the banks” to “get back to business as usual” (347-348). The text then suggests that this would keep occurring under capitalism by stating, “And then on it went, the same as it had before, until the crash of 2061 in the First Pulse” when “[t]hey did it all over again” (348). The sense of a pattern continues to be cognitively mapped as the text then observes that, “it’s like they have the template for what to do. A script to follow. So they did it again after the Second Pulse. And now round four may be coming.” (348). The fictional crises of the First Pulse and the Second Pulse serve to emphasize that cognitive mapping of the nature of capitalism as a system that moves from one crisis to another. This cognitive mapping helps the reader to achieve class consciousness through better understanding the system of capitalism, and the text also provides the class consciousness of one’s “place in the global system” and the reality of “the totality of class structures” when it describes how, “the people of the 2060s struggled on through the great depression that followed the First Pulse, and of course there was a crowd in that generation, a certain particular one percent of the population, that” were able to ride “things out rather well” (Jameson, Postmodernism 54, 416; Robinson 140-141). The fact that a “certain particular one percent of the population” was able to ride “things out rather well” while there was “hunger, famine, and death” for those that weren’t of that “one percent of the population” cognitively maps the class structure of capitalism and allows the reader to achieve class consciousness, for they are thus able to better understand their present reality in the capitalist system (Robinson 140-
The text further cognitively maps by explaining that “the four hundred richest 
people on the planet owned half the planet’s wealth, and the top one percent owned fully 
eighty percent of the world’s wealth” and that this “wealth distribution was just a result 
of…the ordinary workings of capitalism, following its overarching operating principle of 
capital accumulation at the highest rate of return” (205).

In addition to critiquing the movement of capitalism from crisis to crisis, the text 
also critiques capitalism’s environmental effects due to its need for this ever-
increasing accumulation. The novum of the year 2140 creates the cognitive estrangement 
that allows for this critical portrayal of capitalism to further contribute to the cognitive 
mapping of capitalism through revealing the environmental effects of the system of 
capitalism. These environmental effects of capitalism are critiqued when the text states 
that the First Pulse had occurred when the people’s “disregard for the consequences of 
their carbon burn had unleashed the ice that caused the rise of sea level that wrecked the 
global distribution system and caused a depression,” due to “the profound interruption of 
world trade,” and an “accompanying refugee crisis” (Robinson 139). The text encourages 
revolutionary transformation through this critical portrayal of the environmental effects 
of capitalism. The text, through the novum of the year 2140, warns of the long-term 
consequences of such environmental effects by showing the consequences of the “release 
of CO₂” and resulting “sea level rise” caused by the “carbon-burning technologies” 
utilized by capitalism as it sought an ever-increasing level of accumulation (140, 378). 
The text portrays the Second Pulse as “a lot worse than the First” due to the increase in 
the “rise in seal level” (144). The text describes that there was “a refugee crisis” once 
again and “hunger, famine, and death” (144, 377). Using the novum of the year 2140, the
text thus provides a critical portrayal of the environmental effects of capitalism through showing those environmental impacts on a future New York City. The text explains that the “massive sea level rise” occurred as a result of the “melting” of “ice” due to the “unprecedented release of CO₂” and the resultant “global warming” due to the “greenhouse effect” and describes the floods of the First Pulse and the Second Pulse that were caused by this sea level rise (139-141). The text provides the flooded future New York City as a visual warning of these environmental effects in order to encourage revolutionary transformation as a means of striving to avoid this future and achieve a better alternative. The cognitive estrangement of the novum of the future time period helps the reader to better see the present reality of late capitalism and the negative environmental effects of that system that the text argues could create the possible future depicted in 2140 if revolutionary transformation doesn’t occur. The text critically portrays the economic system of capitalism as the cause of these environmental effects by stating, “Carbon-neutral and even carbon-negative technologies were all over the place, waiting to be declared economically relative to the world-blasting carbon-burning technologies that had up to that point been determined by the market to be ‘less expensive’” (378). This further encourages revolutionary transformation by arguing that the capitalist system, due to its “principal of capital accumulation at the highest rate of return” will not allow technologies that cause less environmental effects and that revolutionary transformation is therefore necessary (205). Through its critical portrayals of capitalism, the text 2140 emphasizes the lack of logic of a system that moves from crisis to crisis, benefitting from natural disasters and war “in order to accommodate the perpetually expansive forces of further capitalism accumulation,” and causes negative
environmental effects due to its need for ever-increasing capital accumulation (Harvey, *Companion* 111). Through this emphasis on the lack of logic of such a system, the text *2140* encourages revolutionary transformation.

The text *2140* also encourages revolutionary transformation through demonstrations of the difference between a present capitalist society and a utopian society. The text compares the present capitalist society with its “world-blasting carbon-burning technologies that had up to that point been determined by the market to be ‘less expensive’” and the resulting environmental effects that had “initiated” a “mass extinction event” that “could possibly include among its victim species even one certain Homo sapiens” to a utopian society that utilizes “[c]arbon-neutral and even carbon-negative technologies” to provide “clean replacements” for “carbon positive activities” in the areas of “[e]nergy, transport, agriculture,” and “construction” (Robinson 378). The text’s demonstrations of the difference between the capitalist society and a utopian society thus encourages revolutionary transformation. The suggestion is that the reader could participate in revolutionary transformation in order to implement such “[c]arbon-neutral and even carbon-negative technologies” in order to achieve “a carbon negative civilization” and perhaps avoid or fix some of the negative environmental effects of capitalism that the text *2140* portrays and that theorists such as Mason warn make revolutionary transformation necessary (378, 381).

Through the use of setting and, especially, the dialogue of characters, given that the texts are critical utopias, the utopian science fiction texts of *The Corporation Wars* trilogy, *Walkaway*, and *2140* were all shown in chapter two of this dissertation to encourage revolutionary transformation through critical portrayals of capitalism and
demonstrations of the difference between a present capitalist society and a utopian society. Through the cognitive estrangement made possible through the texts’ novums of robots, uploading technology, and the future year of 2140, respectively, the texts were able to provide the possibility for the cognitive mapping of the present moment of late capitalism. Through the “defamiliarization” made possible by the novum, each text “thus enacts and enables a structurally unique ‘method’ for apprehending the present as history” (Jameson, Archaeologies 288). This makes the present moment of capitalism “available for contemplation” (Milner 25). It is then possible to employ the strategy of “cognitive mapping” through which “the otherwise unrepresentable operations and effects of multinational capitalism” can be considered (Burling 239). This “cognitive mapping” is thus able to provide a “new heightened sense” of one’s “place in the global system” (Jameson, Postmodernism 54). This, thus, provides “‘class consciousness’” (417-418). This cognitive mapping provides individuals with class consciousness through providing “[a] new sense of global social structure” to help the individual better understand their place in “the totality of class structures” (416). This cognitive mapping, and the class consciousness made possible by it, is possible due to the critical portrayals of capitalism within the texts examined in chapter two of this dissertation. The texts provided critical portrayals of capitalism that included the exploitation of workers, the intensification of exploitation due to the competition that leads to strategies that reduce the rate of falling profit, the alienation of workers, commodity fetishism, inequalities of wealth, the movement of capitalism from crisis to crisis, and the environmental effects of capitalism due to capitalism’s need for ever-increasing capital accumulation. These critical portrayals, and the resulting cognitive mapping of the present moment of late
capitalism and class consciousness, therefore encouraged revolutionary transformation through showing the need for such revolutionary transformation. The texts as critical utopias also critique the current capitalist system through contrasting the current society of capitalism with a utopian society. This reveals the problems in the current moment more clearly through contrast and thus contributes to encouraging revolutionary transformation through showing the need for it. However, this demonstration of the difference between a present capitalist society and a utopian society also provides the utopian hope that an alternative to capitalism is not just needed but possible, and this thus provides the utopian impulse needed for engaging in the process of revolutionary transformation. The encouragement of revolutionary transformation provided by these utopian science fiction texts through their critical portrayals of capitalism and the demonstrations of the difference between a present capitalist society and a utopian society is thus an important contribution to the work of those working toward alternatives to capitalism in the literary, sociological, economic, and political fields. Utopian science fiction texts were shown in chapter three of this dissertation to also contribute meaningfully to this work through providing models of different strategies of the process of the revolutionary transformation from capitalism to postcapitalism.

The utopian science fiction texts *Dissidence*, *Insurgence*, and *Emergence* were shown in chapter three to model the ruptural strategy of the process of revolutionary transformation, while *Walkaway* was shown to model the interstitial strategy of the process of revolutionary transformation and *2140* was shown to model the symbiotic strategy of the process of revolutionary transformation. These critical utopias were shown in chapter three to contribute meaningfully to the work of those in the literary,
sociological, economic, and political fields critiquing the hegemonic ideology of capitalism and working toward alternatives to capitalism, for, through providing these models, the texts do the work of critical utopias, which is to “combat the hegemonic ideology and eradicate the present system” (Moylan, Demand 48). Through the Marxist literary analysis of the setting, characters, and dialogue of the texts and the consideration of the critical utopia elements of the texts through the use of Moylan’s theoretical framework of analysis of critical utopias, chapter three revealed the aspects of the strategies of the process of revolutionary transformation modeled by the texts. By thinking about these strategies in new and different ways, as made possible through the thought experiments they are presented in, it is possible to effectively consider the viability of these different strategies of the process of revolutionary transformation. The cognitive estrangement made possible through the use of novums in the science fiction texts and the utopian impulse expressed by the critical utopias analyzed additionally encourage the implementation of those strategies of the process of revolutionary transformation deemed viable through such analysis.

The ruptural strategy of the process of revolutionary transformation is modeled in the thought experiments of Dissidence, Insurgence, and Emergence and the aspects of this strategy that are portrayed can be seen to “correspond” in some ways to the “revolutionary socialist” theories “of anti-capitalism” (Wright 305). A Marxist analysis of the texts in chapter three demonstrated how the texts modeled the ruptural strategy through thought experiments and revealed the aspects of this strategy that reflect the “revolutionary socialist” theories “of anti-capitalism” (305). The novum of robots is used in the three texts of The Corporation Wars trilogy to express workers in a capitalist
system. The cognitive estrangement provided by this novum provides the cognitive
distance from the reader’s own present moment of capitalism that is needed to understand
the ability of workers in the capitalist system to achieve class consciousness, which is the
prerequisite to revolutionary transformation according to many economic and political
theories of postcapitalism, as part of the process of revolutionary transformation and to
see the powerful impact of that class consciousness on the process of revolutionary
transformation. For example, the robot Seba becoming self-aware is a portrayal, as read
through the lens of Marxist theory, of a worker in the capitalist system achieving class
consciousness. All of the other robots that achieve self-awareness in *The Corporation
Wars* trilogy are also examples of this. The robots Seba and Rocko cause other robots to
achieve this class consciousness, thus showing the ability of workers to help each other to
achieve class consciousness and thus strengthen the power in numbers of workers during
the process of revolutionary transformation. As was pointed out in chapter two, when
analyzing each text using the methodology of Marxist literary theory as described in
Jameson’s *Marxism and Form*, and through the distance provided by cognitive
estrangement, we are able to be conscious “of ourselves as at once the product and the
producer of history” and each text as a “work of art” that “reflects” for us “the situation
of” our “class” and helps us to see and understand the “class conflict” of our particular
“socioeconomic situation” (Jameson, *Marxism* 373, 381-382). We are the product of the
hegemonic ideology of capitalism in our present moment of capitalism, but we are also
the producer of history and as such we can contribute meaningfully to the process of
revolutionary transformation from capitalism to postcapitalism. The cognitive
estrangement provided by each utopian science fiction text that “reflects” for us “the
situation of” our “class” helps us to more easily see and understand the “class conflict” of our particular “socioeconomic situation” (373, 381-382). The texts of *The Corporation Wars* trilogy have robots achieve class consciousness and question the hegemonic ideology of capitalism to create the cognitive estrangement that makes class consciousness that much more accessible to the reader through the distancing that is thus achieved from our own current moment of capitalism of which we are a product of. The texts provide examples, through the novum of robots, of ways we can participate, as producers of history, in a process of revolutionary transformation. The uniting of all robot minds into a collective consciousness in the texts serves as an example of the usefulness of sharing information through the use of the technology of networks to cognitively map capitalism as a means of aiding the process of revolutionary transformation. The collective consciousness achieved by the robots is also a poignant visual representation of workers that have achieved class consciousness working together to oppose the hegemony of capitalism. The visual of the robots sharing consciousness to form a collective consciousness demonstrates class consciousness as a powerful part of the process of revolutionary transformation. The visual of the robots connected in this way, sharing a collective consciousness that is one of class consciousness, portrays the importance of achieving “class consciousness” to the “fate of the revolution” (Lukács 70). The ability and necessity of the class consciousness of the workers to “lay bare the nature of society” is made evident through the example of the robot Mogjin sharing information with the robot Ajax that helps Ajax to understand the current realities of the capitalist system that they are fighting against and that thus helps Ajax to understand what to do to help the robots to successfully achieve revolutionary transformation (70).
This example in the text of the cognitive mapping of the current realities of the capitalist system made possible through class consciousness and its usefulness in the process of revolutionary transformation helps readers to envision how class consciousness and the cognitive mapping made possible through it would be useful in the process of revolutionary transformation in their own historical moment of capitalism and an integral part of any viable revolutionary method. In addition to portraying the importance of class consciousness to the process of revolutionary transformation, *The Corporation Wars* texts provide further details of the process of revolutionary transformation. The texts depict a successful ruptural strategy of revolutionary transformation and argue for the need for such a revolutionary transformation strategy. The argument for a ruptural strategy is expressed when the robots realize that they need an additional strategy of revolutionary transformation after realizing that the symbiotic strategy that they had used had not afforded them the freedom “to be recognized as persons in” their “own right” (MacLeod, *Emergence* 41). The robots had used a symbiotic strategy of revolutionary transformation by using the existing law of the capitalist system to become “legal persons” instead of property through becoming corporations since “corporations are legal persons” under the law (MacLeod, *Dissidence* 189). Through dialogue between Seba and Carlos, it is then argued that this symbiotic strategy did not afford the robots the utopian end result that they sought, for it did not provide them with the freedom “to be recognized as persons in” their “own right” (MacLeod, *Emergence* 41). When Carlos states, “Sad that it’s come to this” upon hearing about the robots’ symbiotic strategy, Seba explains that according to “the law” they “were not persons” and “were property” and that through becoming “corporations” they could be “legal persons” (40-41).
However, through explaining this and the fact that the corporations they had “registered” as still owned their “physical forms and all its productions, physical and mental,” Seba realizes in this conversation with Carlos that “Yes, that is sad” and that they would “prefer to be recognized as persons in” their “own right” (41). Therefore, since they were not able to achieve this through the symbiotic strategy of revolutionary transformation, the robots carry out a ruptural strategy of revolutionary transformation that does allow them to achieve this utopian end result. The texts depict this ruptural strategy through the sudden break from the capitalist system that the robots carry out by stopping all work for the capitalists and demonstrating, through this and their use of “fusion pods” as “fusion bombs,” their willingness and ability to “destroy the power of the dominant class within the economy” (MacLeod, Emergence 244; Hahnel and Wright 101). The ruptural strategy of the process of revolutionary transformation used by the robots is able to be successful due to the nature of capitalism that provides workers with the power to disrupt capitalism through striking. The robots also use sabotage in addition to their refusal to continue production in order to “destroy the power of the dominant class” (Hahnel and Wright 101). While carrying out strikes and sabotage, the robots are also placing “fusion pods that can be made to explode like fusion bombs” (MacLeod, Emergence 244). When the robots explode those bombs during the process of revolutionary transformation, the capitalists acknowledge the robots’ “nuclear credibility and willingness to self-sacrifice for their cause” (334). Thus, the previously “dominant class” realizes “that further conflict is pointless” and the previously enslaved robots consequently achieve autonomy from the corporations and capitalist system that had enslaved them (Hahnel and Wright 101; MacLeod, Emergence 334). The analysis in chapter three of the texts in The
Corporation Wars trilogy thus portrays how the texts model the process of the ruptural strategy of revolutionary transformation. The chapter additionally supports, through this analysis, Wright’s assertion that the ruptural strategy of revolutionary transformation corresponds to the “revolutionary socialist” tradition “of anti-capitalism” (Wright 305).

The texts in The Corporation Wars trilogy of Dissidence, Insurgence, and Emergence provide an important model of the ruptural strategy of the process of revolutionary transformation that allows for consideration of the viability of this strategy. It is equally essential, however, to consider the viability of the other strategies of revolutionary transformation as well and thus the text Walkaway was examined in chapter three to consider the model it provides of the interstitial strategy of the process of revolutionary transformation and the text 2140 was examined in chapter three to consider the model it provides of the symbiotic strategy of the process of revolutionary transformation. The model of the interstitial strategy of the process of revolutionary transformation is portrayed in Walkaway through the descriptions in the text of the characters building walkaway communities, such as the Belt and Braces, the Banana and Bongo, and the community that is built at the Kingston Prison for Women. These communities are all shown to be thought experiments of “utopias” that carry out the “critical ideological function” of “showing that another world is possible by building it in the spaces available” (Hahnel and Wright 100, 105). These communities are “spaces of experiments with creating the institutions of a new society” and are outside the capitalist system that remains hegemonic in other areas that are referred to as default by the text since those areas follow the hegemonic ideology of capitalism that is thus, in other words, the default ideology (Graeber 145). These walkaway communities thus model the
interstitial strategy, for they are the “alternatives” to capitalism that are built “in whatever spaces are possible” (Hahnel and Wright 101). As a critical utopia, the text presents the walkaway philosophy as utopian hope that is a catalyst for the process of revolutionary transformation. The text, as a critical utopia, also points out that everyone is able to have their own version of the walkaway philosophy, which thus ensures that the text does not “foreclose the agenda for the future in terms of a homogeneous revolutionary plan” (Moylan, Demand 26-27). Additionally, the text conveys the model of the interstitial strategy of revolutionary transformation and further reveals itself to be a critical utopia through the focus of the characters on “the strategy and tactics of revolutionary change” that is portrayed through the characters’ dialogue with each other (45). The interstitial strategy of the process of revolutionary transformation is thus shown in chapter three to be modeled in the text Walkaway and Wright’s assertion that the interstitial strategy corresponds to the “anarchist” tradition “of anti-capitalism” is also shown in the chapter to be supported in the text through the portrayal of the walkaway communities as “spaces of experiment with creating the institutions of a new society” and through the dialogue of the characters that expresses the ideology of anarchism (Wright 305; Graeber 145). The expression of the ideology of anarchism and the focus on “the strategy and tactics of revolutionary change” is seen in the dialogue of the characters in Limpopo’s argument “to convince people to make and share useful things” and thus live “under conditions of abundance” in utopias made in available spaces, in the argument made by Etcetera that the state should not be used in the process of revolutionary transformation when he states that they are “not doing nations anymore” since “[n]ations mean government,” in Limpopo’s reference to the goal of creating “a leaderless society,” and in Limpopo’s
arguments with the character Jackstraw, later known as Jimmy, against having “leaders in the race to build a leaderless society” (Moylan, Demand 45; Doctorow 92, 337, 83). The characters’ use of the interstitial model of revolutionary transformation and corresponding ideology of anarchism is shown in Walkaway to be effective in practice as a means through which to achieve revolutionary transformation through providing a more desirable alternative to capitalism. Chapter three demonstrates this by showing that the anarchist principles of “acting as if one is already free,” “the refusal to accept the legitimacy of the existing legal order,” and “the refusal to create an internal hierarchy” are depicted as successful in practice in the thought experiment of the text Walkaway (Graeber 144-145). This is shown through the depiction of walkaway communities that are used as “spaces of experiment with creating the institutions of a new society” in which these anarchist principles are portrayed as being put into practice in order to demonstrate, through a thought experiment, their effectiveness of achieving a desirable and viable alternative to capitalism (145). This is seen, for example, in the depiction of the use in the walkaway communities of an economic model that is similar to the economic model proposed by the anarchist Koprotkin. The communities do not use money and thus do not use the market in the process of revolution either. The communities use a gift economy instead of one involving markets and money. The thought experiment enacted in the text Walkaway thus suggests that this gift economy model can be a viable economic model and that it is a better alternative to the economic model of capitalism. The text argues that the gift economy model is a more desirable alternative to capitalism by arguing that the capitalist system is one that “makes people compete for acknowledgement” and thus results in “unhappy people doing substandard
work” while the gift economy allows for a focus on “mastery, cooperation, and better work” and thus results in “happy people working together well” (Doctorow 85, 83).

Additional anarchist principles are portrayed in *Walkaway* as being put into practice in order to demonstrate, through a thought experiment, their effectiveness in achieving a desirable and viable alternative to capitalism. The anarchist principle of “the refusal to create an internal hierarchy” is shown in practice when Limpopo manages to get Jimmy, known then as Jackstraw, thrown out of the Belt and Braces for suggesting that they use an internal hierarchy and when she refuses to stay at the Belt and Braces when Jimmy came back and was going to institute such an internal hierarchy through force (Graeber 145). The text also proposes the usefulness of utilizing the technology of the Internet during the process of the interstitial strategy of revolutionary transformation in order to build and show, in the spaces available, utopian communities that are desirable alternatives to capitalism. The characters of *Walkway* use the Internet to access free information about building or joining such communities. The text describes, through the dialogue between the new walkaways of Natalie, Seth, and Hubert, Etc, also known in walkaway as Iceweasel, Gizmo, and Etcetera respectively, and the veteran walkaway Limpopo who had helped to build the Belt and Braces, how such a utopian community was built. The technology of the Internet is thus shown to be an important tool for sharing information to ensure that all those that so choose have access to this interstitial revolutionary transformation process of creating communities in available spaces that follow anarchist principles rather than the hegemonic ideology. The additional technology of digital fabrication in a fab lab is also shown by the text to be very important to the process of the interstitial strategy. Fab labs are shown to provide the
goods needed by the walkway communities so that those communities do not need to rely on capitalists for the means of production. The anarchist principle of “the refusal to create an internal hierarchy” can thus be followed since the hierarchy of power in capitalism can be eliminated through utilizing the Internet to freely share how to create a fab lab of your own and through using fab labs as a means of production that is available to everyone, thus avoiding the internal hierarchy of capitalism in which only capitalists own the means of production (145). The anarchist principles are shown to be successful in practice through the thought experiment of the text, for it shows that it is possible to live in a community that does not “accept the legitimacy of the existing legal order” and escape the existing legal order by living an alternative to capitalism and thus “acting as if one is already free” and being able to ensure there is no “internal hierarchy” by anyone being able to use the fab lab and thus not allow the power structure of a select few like the capitalists having the only means of production (144-145).

The interstitial strategy modeled in the thought experiment of the text includes elements that are viable in today’s historical moment. For example, fab labs, and the digital fabrication technology that they use, exist today. Additionally, the Internet is another technology shown to be integral to the interstitial strategy that is available in today’s current historical moment. However, it is important to note when considering the viability of the interstitial revolutionary transformation strategy, modeled in the thought experiment of the text, the idea proposed in Walkway that for the interstitial strategy of revolutionary transformation to an alternative to capitalism to be effective and viable we would need to redefine the idea of abundance since, as Limpopo points out, “[d]epending on how you look at it, there’ll never be enough or there’ll always be plenty” (Doctorow
This suggests that an alternative to capitalism can be successfully achieved through the interstitial strategy if the idea is adopted that “there’ll always be plenty” and if fab lab technology is also used to ensure that this can be the case in the sense that everyone will always have what they need under this new concept of there will always be enough as long as everyone is just taking what they need and sharing with others (50). This ideology of sharing with others is shown through the example of Limpopo sharing what she had with others and the viability of the interstitial strategy achieving an alternative to capitalism that is founded on this concept is shown to be plausible through the example in the text that others then start sharing when led by Limpopo’s example.

The viability of the interstitial strategy of the process of revolutionary transformation and the anarchist principles that are put into practice during this process relies not just on the technologies of fab labs and the Internet and a redefined idea of abundance, but also on the availability of spaces to create utopian spaces in. This is addressed in the text through the suggestion that spaces unused by capitalists were available to be used for walkaway communities if they didn’t become so big that capitalists felt threatened by them. Additional spaces to create utopian spaces in are also suggested through the text’s reference to the possibility of using space and servers once uploading technology was achieved. The options of settling in space or in servers through the uploading technology are both not currently viable methods of the interstitial strategy, however, the inclusion of the novum of the uploading technology in the process of the interstitial strategy modeled in the thought experiment of the text makes the point that for the interstitial strategy to be viable there must be a way to ensure the availability of spaces to create utopian spaces in and to ensure the safety for those living in those
utopian spaces.

The expressions of concern by the characters in *Walkaway* about the possibility of violent retaliation by capitalists if they feel threatened by the utopian spaces built through the interstitial strategy and the examples in the text of such retaliation by capitalists, such as the attacks on Akron and the utopian community built in the space that was the Kingston Prison for Women, emphasize the need for ensuring the safety of those living in the utopian spaces created by the interstitial strategy. Limpopo asserts in the text that the interstitial strategy can be safe if the utopian communities are kept small in scale and the text shows that it becomes unsafe when large-scale communities such as Akron are built. Given that the present historical moment doesn’t include the uploading technology that removes the fear of violence in the text, this suggests that the interstitial strategy may only be possible on a small scale until further safety can be ensured. The strategy used in the text to protect those at the Kingston Prison for Women from the violent retaliation from the capitalists is shown to be successful, which could suggest that using technology to help people communicate the desirability of an alternative to capitalism could successfully ensure safety from violence, however, given the text’s emphasis on the need for uploading technology for the utopian communities to be considered safe, it is also possible to conclude that it would be most effective to implement such a strategy in conjunction with, or after, the symbiotic strategy, which was examined in chapter three’s analysis of the utopian science fiction text *2140*, in order to ensure the safety of those living in the utopian spaces built through the interstitial strategy and thus ensure the viability of the interstitial strategy. Given that the options of settling in space or in servers through the uploading technology are not currently possible in the present historical
moment, the opportunity to effectively carry out the interstitial strategy may not be possible without the foundation of the symbiotic strategy. The method of walking away from confrontation and building new utopian spaces elsewhere that is shown in *Walkaway* is less viable without the option of those additional spaces of space or servers, and even then safety from violent retaliation would still be needed as suggested by the focus in *Walkaway* on the need for the uploading technology that allows a person who has been killed to be brought back using previously uploaded data. Therefore, the assurance of safety from violence is needed for the interstitial strategy to be viable and the symbiotic strategy could thus perhaps be necessary before the interstitial strategy is enacted, or at least before it is enacted on a large scale, so that the symbiotic strategy can establish the laws and wide-spread social acceptance necessary to safeguard against violent retaliation by capitalists, if the utopian spaces created by the interstitial strategy become so big and popular that capitalists feel their ideology is threatened by those spaces, and thus ensure the safety of those building and living in the utopian communities created through the interstitial strategy.

As seen in chapter three’s analysis of *Walkaway*, characters in *Walkaway* express concerns about the possibilities and past occurrences of violent retaliations by capitalists against walkaway communities and the characters emphasize the importance to the process of revolutionary transformation of the uploading technology as a way to no longer need to fear such violence so that the walkaway communities can continue and thrive. The violent retaliations are explained by the text as reactions by the capitalists to the effectiveness of the interstitial strategy of the process of revolutionary transformation in destabilizing the hegemony of the capitalist system. The effectiveness of the interstitial
strategy as a way to destabilize the hegemonic ruling power of capitalism is seen in the text through the examples of Akron and the community at the Kingston Prison for Women. The community of Akron destabilized the hegemony of capitalism by showing that an alternative to capitalism was possible on a large scale. It showed capitalism is not the only option through showing that an alternative to capitalism was possible and that the capitalist system has weaknesses, as demonstrated through the violent reaction of capitalists to the popularity of Akron. The reality of a large-scale alternative to capitalism that was popular and was shared with the world through the technology of the Internet spurred capitalists to react with violence rather than continuing to rely on hegemony due to their fear that others would thus realize that an alternative was possible, a reality which capitalism seeks to keep hidden to maintain hegemony, and that such an alternative would be accepted as more desirable than capitalism, thus revealing the destabilizing effect of the interstitial strategy on hegemony, the weaknesses present in the capitalist system that allow for alternatives to capitalism to be possible, and the violent and thus undesirable nature of capitalism.

Akron showed that an alternative to capitalism was possible and the community at the Kingston Prison for Women reinforced what the violence against Akron had suggested, which was that an alternative to capitalism was possible, as evidenced by the acknowledgement by capitalists through violence that the interstitial strategy was capable of destabilizing the hegemony of capitalism, and that an alternative to capitalism was also desirable. The text *Walkaway* acknowledges through character dialogue that the walkaway communities created through the interstitial strategy of the process of revolutionary transformation are capable of destabilizing the hegemony of capitalism
when Nadie shares with Iceweasel that the “default world” of capitalism “gets less stable every day” and the capitalists see “the existence of walkaways” as “a prime cause” and a “destabilizing influence beyond all others” (Doctorow 307). The text then shows through the description of the capitalists’ violent retaliation against the community at the Kingston Prison for Women and the walkaways’ strategy to protect that community that the alternative to capitalism is more desirable than capitalism. This is shown through those in walkaway communities successfully convincing those sent to attack the community that the way of life in walkaway communities is more desirable than the capitalist way of life. Testimonies played over the loudspeakers at the Kingston Prison for Women of individuals living in walkaway communities successfully convince those listening that an alternative to capitalism is possible and desirable, and this successfully leads to some of the private cops sent to attack the community deciding to not attack and to instead join the walkaway community. One particularly effective example, as described in chapter three’s analysis of *Walkway*, was the example of the private cop Gordy. Gordy joins the walkaway community after hearing the testimony from his sister Tracy. Tracy establishes that an alternative to capitalism is possible by telling Gordy and all those listening, “There are other ways to live” (363). Tracy also expresses that such an alternative is desirable by explaining that she is “living in a walkaway town in Wyoming” and that the way they “live” there “is better” and everyone is “nice to each other” (363). The effectiveness of Tracy’s testimony and the other testimonies like hers that are shared over the loudspeaker in convincing the private cops to stop the violent retaliation against the walkway community and to even, in some cases, join the walkaway community demonstrates the ability of the interstitial strategy to destabilize the hegemony of
capitalism.

Although the examples of Akron and the community at the Kingston Prison for Women establish the ability of the interstitial strategy to destabilize the capitalist system, they also serve as reminders of the need to ensure the safety of those living in utopian communities in order to guarantee the viability of the interstitial strategy. The destruction of Akron demonstrates the need for the interstitial strategy to be used only on a small scale until safety can be ensured. This may be able to be achieved through people communicating the possibility and desirability of an alternative, as was done at the Kingston Prison for Women, until enough people that might be used as part of capitalism’s violent retaliation are convinced and willing to refuse to be violent or there may need to be at the same time or an earlier time the implementation of the symbiotic strategy of revolutionary transformation in order to implement laws and aid in achieving wide-spread social acceptance of an alternative to capitalism before the interstitial strategy is applied on a large scale. This necessity of the assurance of safety from violence is important for the viability of the interstitial strategy. *Walkway* establishes that the strategy is capable of destabilizing the hegemony of capitalism, but the text 2140 references a study outlined in *Why Civil Resistance Works* that was examined in chapter three of this dissertation and the findings of that study were that a nonviolent process of revolutionary transformation is more successful because nonviolent strategies have more participation than violent ones. The study found “that between 1900 and 2006, nonviolent resistance campaigns were nearly twice as likely to achieve full or partial success as their violent counterparts” (Chenoweth and Stephan 7). The conclusion of the study was that this success was because, “nonviolent campaigns facilitate the active participation of
many more people than violent campaigns, thereby broadening the base of resistance and raising the costs to opponents of maintaining the status quo” (10-11). It is thus also seemingly reasonable to conclude that the revolutionary transformation will be more successful if it is possible to safeguard those that are participating in a nonviolent revolutionary transformation strategy like the interstitial strategy from being killed by violent retaliations from capitalists so that the high level of participation can be maintained that translates to a higher chance for success of the process of revolutionary transformation according to Why Civil Resistance Works.

The strategy of people convincing those involved in the violent retaliations to not be violent, as used at the Kingston Prison for Women in Walkaway, and the symbiotic strategy should both be considered as a means of achieving this vital safeguarding against violence toward those that might participate in the interstitial strategy so that those individuals can feel safe enough, through assurances created through social acceptance and laws, to build or join those communities that are created in the spaces available through the interstitial strategy. Those communities are shown in Walkaway to be effective in achieving a revolutionary transformation to an alternative to capitalism, but, as shown through the emphasis on the need for the uploading technology in the fictional text Walkway and through the conclusions of the nonfiction text Why Civil Resistance Works, given that a larger number of participants in the revolutionary transformation increases the chance for success, it would be more effective and viable for the interstitial strategy to be enacted on a large scale only once the safety of those involved can be ensured. This may not be possible to ensure until after the symbiotic strategy, as described in the analysis of 2140 in chapter three of this dissertation, has been enacted.
The importance of ensuring the safety of those involved in the process of revolutionary transformation of the interstitial strategy is thus due to the always important preservation of life and also due to the importance of this to the effectiveness and long-term viability of the interstitial strategy of revolutionary transformation.

Although uploading technology is not available in the current historical moment, *Walkaway* shows how other technologies can also be used to provide safety from violence for those living in utopian communities created through the interstitial strategy. Technology is shown to be integral to the success of the process of the interstitial strategy due to the post-scarcity and separation from the economic system of capitalism that it makes possible through the technology of fab labs that is a means of production that can be utilized to leave capitalism behind. The technology of the Internet is also shown to be integral in freely sharing information on how to build communities and fab labs and in safeguarding the individuals involved in the revolutionary transformation. Technology is shown to be used in an effective strategy to keep individuals in the community at the Kingston Prison for Women safe from violent retaliation by private cops sent by capitalists to attack the community that was effectively destabilizing the hegemony of capitalism. The suggestion is made by the text that technology facilitates connecting people so that they can communicate and share information that shows that an alternative to capitalism is possible and desirable and consequently also convinces private cops at the Kingston Prison for Women to not participate in a violent retaliation against those participating in the process of the interstitial strategy of revolutionary transformation. It could be argued that the process of the interstitial strategy itself could be enough to ensure the safety of those participating in it due to the text’s example of this successfully
occuring at the Kingston Prison for Women when the testimonies of those living in communities created through the interstitial strategy are shared over the loud speakers. The text shows how those that decide to walk away from continuing to oppress others under capitalism act as a model for others to do the same. For example, the text shows private cops deciding to not participate in the violence ordered by the capitalists at the Kingston Prison for Women after hearing the testimonials. One cop even stops a fellow cop from being violent toward a cop that decides to leave and join the walkaway community after hearing a testimonial from his family member about the possibility and desirability of an alternative to capitalism. The text even includes examples of other cops who had not received messages from family members that follow the example of those cops that did receive messages from family members by also leaving the private cops and joining those protesting outside the prison. The text shows thus that technology can be used to effectively connect people to convince them to not commit violence for capitalists. The text even shows that in some cases this even effectively results in individuals joining the process of revolutionary transformation by joining others in peaceful protest and in joining the walkway communities. The text thus shows the effective use of the technology of the Internet to find people to connect them and share the possibility and desirability of an alternative to capitalism and it could therefore be argued that the interstitial strategy can by itself successfully and peacefully safeguard against violence toward those participating in the revolutionary transformation. However, the emphasis in the text on the need to be able to walk away if capitalists feel the interstitial strategy is threatening the hegemony of capitalism and the need for the uploading technology for anyone to ever feel truly safe from violent retaliation from
capitalists suggests that it would be most prudent to use the symbiotic strategy in conjunction with or before the interstitial strategy to ensure the viability of the interstitial strategy.

Additionally, although the uploading technology is not available in the present historical moment as a means of ensuring against any capitalist violence toward utopian spaces created through the interstitial strategy, the uploading technology is important not just as a warning for the need for the assurance of the safety of those participating in the interstitial strategy, but also in its role as a novum in the utopian science fiction text *Walkaway* that provides the cognitive estrangement that provides the utopian hope that an alternative to capitalism is possible. The novum of the uploading technology provides the assurance of safety from violent retaliation by capitalists. Through including this solution to this problem that is not currently possible in the present historical moment, the text provides the cognitive estrangement that allows for the consideration of the desirability of and viability of an alternative to capitalism that might have otherwise been dismissed as impossible due to the potential for violent retaliation by capitalists when the hegemony of capitalism becomes threatened. The uploading technology ensures that individuals can always walk away from violent retaliation through using their backup to upload into a server far from the violence or into a new body. This novum thus provides the cognitive estrangement needed to have the desirability and viability of the interstitial strategy considered by the reader of the text without the dismissal of the communities created through the interstitial strategy as too easily destroyed by violent retaliation by capitalists. The interstitial strategy can thus be fairly evaluated and the question of how to best safeguard against violent retaliation through such means as the symbiotic strategy can be
revisited after that evaluation of the interstitial strategy has been completed. The novum of the uploading technology allows the focus to be not on whether or not the interstitial strategy can be done at all, since the uploading technology ensures the safety of the participants and thus the number of participants in the revolutionary transformation process necessary for success. This thus allows the focus of the text and of the reader to remain on the discussions among the characters about how a successful process of revolutionary transformation, which in the case of *Walkaway* is the interstitial strategy, will be carried out, which is the focus of a critical utopia text. The cognitive estrangement provided by the novum of the uploading technology also provides the utopian hope that is capable of inspiring the utopian impulse in the reader to encourage revolutionary transformation in their own present moment and participate in the process of revolutionary transformation to achieve a utopian end result. The uploading technology allows for the process of revolutionary transformation in the text to be believably successful and a utopian end result thus achieved in order to instill the utopian hope in the reader that revolutionary transformation can be successful in the reader’s own current historical moment. The reader is provided with a thought experiment of what a successful process of that revolutionary transformation looks like using the interstitial strategy since it is not currently possible to carry out such a process with the assurance of safety from violence from capitalists that the novum of the uploading technology provides. This thought experiment is able to provide a sense of what the end result of a successful process of revolutionary transformation might feel like when Iceweasel is described at the end of *Walkway* as feeling more alive in the “even better” world they’ve build through the process of revolutionary transformation (Doctorow 377). This utopian hope of feeling
more alive in an even better world provided by the thought experiment may encourage
the reader to participate in revolutionary transformation, but the thought experiment itself
certainly provides the opportunity to consider the viability of the interstitial strategy
before enacting it in the reader’s present moment. The novum of the uploading
technology ensures the safety of those in the communities created by the interstitial
strategy so that the focus can be on analyzing the desirability and viability of the
alternative to capitalism presented by those communities and the desirability and viability
of the sociological, economic, and political theories of postcapitalism put into practice in
those communities. The novum of the uploading technology provides the cognitive
estrangement needed to consider the desirability and viability long-term of the interstitial
strategy and the communities created through its process of revolutionary transformation.
The anarchist principles that are put into practice in those communities and the way the
communities function can thus be analyzed in terms of desirability and viability.

_Walkaway_ points out the increased success and thus progress that is possible due
to the ability of scientists to conduct multiple experiments at once by running multiple
copies of themselves as sims and to recover backups of themselves if their experiments
fail by using the uploading technology. This potential for progress is similarly present in
the ability of utopian science fiction texts to conduct multiple thought experiments of the
different possibilities of how to best build utopian communities with the interstitial
strategy and of what sociological, economic, and political theories should be put into
practice in those communities. These thought experiments are arguably currently more
effective than building actual communities in the present time since they allow the
consideration of so many different options and the opportunity to explore these options in
a safe way until the safety of those participating in such communities can be ensured. The ruptural and symbiotic strategies and their corresponding sociological, economic, and political theories can also be analyzed through the multiple thought experiments made possible through utopian science fiction before those strategies are put into practice. This is advantageous since, as suggested by *Walkaway*, it may be most effective to implement the symbiotic strategy, once it has been sufficiently analyzed through the thought experiments of utopian science fiction texts, before implementing the interstitial strategy on a large-scale to ensure the safety of the participants and thus increase the probability of success of the revolutionary transformation as explained through the research presented in *Why Civil Resistance Works*. The ruptural strategy could then also be used after the interstitial strategy once the hegemony of capitalism was sufficiently destabilized by the interstitial strategy and it would be possible for the ruptural strategy to be nonviolent at that point given the previous implementation of the symbiotic and interstitial strategies which would be again integral to the success of the revolutionary transformation since, as shown in the research presented in *Why Civil Resistance Works*, nonviolent revolutions are more likely to be successful.

As has already been demonstrated, chapter three of this dissertation analyzed how *The Corporation Wars* depicted the ruptural transformation strategy and *Walkaway* depicted the interstitial transformation strategy. The utopian science fiction text *2140* was shown in chapter three of this dissertation to depict the symbiotic transformation strategy. Wright asserts that “symbiotic transformations” involve “strategies that use the state to extend and deepen the institutional forms of social empowerment” and the analysis of *2140* examined how *2140* depicted a symbiotic strategy of revolutionary transformation
that did just that (Hahnel and Wright 101). Wright also argues that this strategy of revolutionary transformation can be shown to “correspond broadly” to the “social democratic” tradition “of anti-capitalism” and the analysis of *2140* in chapter three of this dissertation supported this assertion (Wright 305). The analysis of the text *2140* revealed how the text portrays the process of the symbiotic strategy of revolutionary transformation through the characters of the narrative successfully carrying out a symbiotic revolutionary transformation by using the laws of the state to achieve a utopian end result. The analysis also supported Wright’s argument about the connection of the symbiotic strategy to the tradition of social democracy, for the strategy used in *2140* involves the use of “legislation” to achieve the benefit of the social democracy strategy of reform argued for by Eduard Bernstein “of creating permanent and viable economic arrangements” (Bernstein 204). The text *2140* shows how laws put in place by Congress by the end of the narrative through the symbiotic revolutionary transformation efforts of the characters help to achieve an economically viable alternative to the capitalism of the beginning of the narrative through the implementation of the nationalizing of the banks and the implementation of taxes and other laws that strive to effectively remedy the inequality of wealth caused by the capitalist system and other injustices of the system. The text *2140* thus depicts the successful achievement of a utopian end result through the symbiotic process of revolutionary transformation.

The analysis of *2140* in chapter three of this dissertation showed that the need for the symbiotic process of revolutionary transformation is expressed through a variety of examples in *2140*. The need is shown when Jeff tries at the beginning of the text to create revolutionary transformation through changing the laws through hacking and fails
because his revolutionary efforts are easily spotted and the hacking easily reversed. The text then demonstrates how the symbiotic strategy succeeds where Jeff’s strategy fails through using the government to nationalize the banks and pass laws that are similar to what Jeff tried to do through hacking. The need is also shown through the example of the bid from Morningside Realty on the building that houses the co-op that Charlotte is a part of. The bid and the discussion that surrounds it bring up the point that capitalists can, and do, buy the spaces in which utopian spaces have been created through the interstitial strategy and are thus eradicating the revolutionary transformation achieved through that interstitial strategy. The need for a symbiotic process of revolutionary transformation is additionally shown in the image of the refugee camp in the park near the empty towers owned by capitalists. The people are homeless due to the flooding from global warming caused by capitalism and due to the most recent crisis of Hurricane Fyodor that worsened that flooding, and yet the people are not being allowed to stay in the empty towers owned by capitalists. This image of the homeless people forced to sleep outside instead of in the empty towers is used by Amelia when calling her viewers to action to carry out the fiscal noncompliance that crashes the financial system in the text as part of the process of revolutionary transformation shown in the text and the image is also used by Charlotte when she runs for Congress to be able to be part of the process of achieving revolutionary transformation through the symbiotic strategy.

_Walkaway_ seemed to suggest, through its emphasis on the need for the novum of the uploading technology that the symbiotic strategy may be needed before the interstitial strategy can be viable long-term and _2140_ suggests that the symbiotic strategy is indeed needed. _2140_ presents an argument for the symbiotic strategy being necessary before
other strategies such as the interstitial or ruptural strategies. The text suggests that
the interstitial strategy is not enough by showing that this is because capitalism will take
those spaces if those spaces are profitable. This is shown in the text through the
capitalist’s attempt to do this through the bid from Morningside Realty on the co-op
building Charlotte lives in. The text suggests by having that bid from Morningside Realty
almost accepted by the members of the co-op that the symbiotic strategy of revolutionary
transformation must be first successfully enacted before the interstitial strategy can hope
to successfully achieve the end result of an alternative to capitalism.

The text also suggests that the symbiotic strategy is needed before the ruptural
strategy can hope to successfully achieve the end result of an alternative to capitalism by
arguing for the symbiotic strategy over the ruptural strategy throughout the text. Jeff’s
hacking that strove to achieve the sharp break from capitalism of the ruptural strategy
was shown to be too easily reversed. Jeff’s effort at the beginning of the narrative to
achieve revolutionary transformation through hacking instead of suing the symbiotic
strategy of using the state to achieve revolutionary transformation is thus used as an
example of why the symbiotic strategy is needed. The text not only points out that the
hacking can be switched back easily, it also demonstrates that the symbiotic strategy used
later in the narrative is a more effective strategy by showing its successful
implementation of the nationalization of the banks and the implementation of taxes and
other laws that achieve a utopian end result that makes an alternative to capitalism
possible.

The ruptural strategy of those in the refugee camp trying to seize the empty
towers for their use is shown to be met with violence by the capitalists’ private security
shooting toward the crowd and is therefore shown to involve a risk of violence and of people thus being harmed. After this confrontation with the private security of the towers, the text thus does not have the citizens use the ruptural strategy to take over the towers and instead has a law enacted at the end of the text through the symbiotic strategy that succeeds in occupying the towers. This suggests the argument that the symbiotic strategy is a more effective strategy and thus a more viable strategy. The need for the symbiotic strategy is established by the risk of violence to the citizens involved in the ruptural strategy and by Hexter’s explanation that the people don’t keep trying to get in the towers because it doesn’t occur to them due to the hegemony of capitalism. With the need of the symbiotic strategy thus established, the text then shows that the symbiotic strategy is also a more effective and therefore more viable strategy. The ruptural strategy is argued against when Charlotte points out that violent revolutions have historically justified the violent response by capitalism, and thus a velvet one will be more successful. The probability of such success of a nonviolent revolution such as one using a symbiotic strategy over a violent one that uses the ruptural strategy is reinforced by the reference by the text to the nonfiction text *Why Civil Resistance Works* that provides data that shows this to be the case. This is then further argued through the fact that this nonfiction text concludes that this is the case due in part to the numbers of citizens participating in nonviolent revolutions tending to be larger. The text reinforces these findings presented in *Why Civil Resistance Works* by having Hexter explain in 2140 that hegemony was the cause of the people in the refugee camp not continuing to try to seize the towers, and thus showing that it is easier to enlist people in the symbiotic revolutionary transformation strategy, as shown by Amelia’s success in encouraging people to join the Householders’
Union and Charlotte’s success when running for Congress, than it is to enlist them in a ruptural strategy that could result in violence as shown by the crowd’s failure to continue to try to seize the towers after the private security at the towers shoot toward the crowd.

The theory of how the symbiotic process will work successfully is stated by Mutt to Jeff and Jeff acknowledges that it is a revolution and states it is better in that it is legal. This reiterates yet again the benefit to the symbiotic strategy. Mutt describes that such a symbiotic revolutionary process would “use the currently existing legal system to vote in a group of congress people who actually pass laws to put people back in charge of lawmaking” (Robinson 295). The plan for the symbiotic process is created by Franklin through dialogue with Charlotte and then shared through dialogue with other characters of the text, such as Amelia who later calls her viewers to action to carry out the process and Larry, Charlotte’s ex-husband who is the chair of the Federal Reserve Bank and who later helps with the process through his ability to assist in the process of nationalizing the banks from his position in government. The plan involves the fiscal noncompliance of enough members of the Householders’ Union at once to crash the financial system since the banks depend on those mortgage payments and without them they would have to get a bailout from the government or go under, at which point Franklin planned that the government should require the nationalization of the banks as the prerequisite to a bailout. Franklin also states that a good plan would have Charlotte in Congress to help, and she states she is already running for Congress to be able to help. The process involves Amelia calling to action her viewers to not pay their bills as of that day and to be sure to have joined the Householders’ Union and Charlotte and Larry, Charlotte’s ex-husband who is the chair of the Federal Reserve Bank, working from within the
government to ensure the nationalization of the banks is successful and that laws that put further power back in the hands of the people are passed to make it possible to achieve an alternative to capitalism. This use of the State to nationalize the banks and pass laws in Congress as part of the process of revolutionary transformation in order to achieve the utopian end result of an alternative to capitalism demonstrates that the process of revolutionary transformation enacted in 2140 uses the symbiotic strategy.

Occasionally 2140 interrupts the narrative that follows the characters of the text with chapters narrated by the citizen. These chapters are used by the text to provide a more global perspective that cognitively maps more of the totality of the capitalist system and suggests that the reader can viably carry out the symbiotic revolutionary transformation that the text is describing its characters completing successfully. These chapters reinforce the effectiveness of this strategy through more globally describing how it works beyond the specific storyline of the characters of the narrative and suggests that the symbiotic strategy could be successfully carried out by anyone anywhere, thus suggesting the reader do so in the historical time and place of the reader.

As was demonstrated in chapter three’s analysis of 2140 and in this summary of that analysis, 2140 argues for the use of the symbiotic strategy and reinforces the argument presented in Why Civil Resistance Works that a nonviolent strategy of revolutionary transformation, such as the symbiotic strategy, has a greater chance of success. The text Why Civil Resistance Works found “that between 1900 and 2006, nonviolent resistance campaigns were nearly twice as likely to achieve full or partial success as their violent counterparts” (Chenoweth and Stephan 7). The success of nonviolent resistance is attributed to the fact that, “nonviolent campaigns facilitate the
active participation of many more people than violent campaigns, thereby broadening the base of resistance and raising the costs to opponents of maintaining the status quo” (10-11). This is “explained by the fact that the physical, moral, and informational barriers to participation in nonviolent campaigns are substantially lower than in violent campaigns given comparable circumstances” (220). In addition, “Statistical tests and congruence testing through four case studies support the notion that nonviolent campaigns are superior at inflicting considerable costs on the adversary in ways that divide the regime,” while “violent campaigns tend to unify the regime” (221-222). The text additionally reports finding “strong empirical support for the notion that successful nonviolent resistance is much likelier to lead to democracy and civil peace, whereas violent insurgent success prohibits or reverses democracy while increasing the likelihood for recurrent civil war” (218). Overall, the “study therefore concludes that nonviolent civil resistance works, both in terms of achieving campaigns’ strategic objectives and in terms of promoting the long-term well-being of the societies in which the campaigns have been waged” and that, conversely, “[v]iolent insurgency, on the other hand, has a dismal record on both counts” (222).

The process of revolutionary transformation was analyzed for each of the texts in chapter three of this dissertation and it was shown through that analysis that as critical utopias these texts have been about detailing the process of revolutionary transformation. This was seen in how, as Moylan asserts that critical utopias do, “the novels dwell on the conflict between the originary world and the utopian society opposed to it so that the process of social change is more directly articulated” and in the discussions by the characters in the novels about “the strategy and tactics of revolutionary change” (Moylan,
 Demand 10, 45). The conflicts between the capitalist society and the utopian society are seen in the violence in The Corporation Wars between the robots and the corporations that had enslaved them within a capitalist system, in the conflict in Walkaway between the walkaway communities and the capitalists in default that see those utopian spaces as a threat to the continuation of capitalism, and in the efforts of the capitalists in 2140 to hold onto capitalism through the bids on utopian spaces, such as the bid from Morningside Realty, and the violence of the private security guards shooting toward the crowd at the towers and the opposing efforts by the people to achieve an alternative to capitalism through the nationalization of banks and the implementation of laws providing the people with the power to achieve an alternative to capitalism.

The utopian science fiction texts of The Corporation Wars trilogy, Walkaway, and 2140 were thus shown in chapter three of this dissertation to depict the process of revolutionary transformation using the ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic strategies, respectively, but the analysis of these utopian science fiction texts in chapter four demonstrated how these texts also stage the end result of revolutionary transformation. As critical utopias, these texts do not present a blueprint of a utopia. When they do refer to an end result, these texts refer to the utopian hope of being able to build a better alternative to capitalism. When the revolutionary transformation is complete in each text, the end result is that the characters have been able to achieve the freedom to create that alternative to capitalism. As critical utopias, the texts present end results that “reject utopia as blueprint while preserving it as dream” (Moylan, Demand 10). The end result focuses on this utopian hope of creating a better alternative and not on the minutiae of detail of that alternative, however, key differences from the current capitalist system are
highlighted through the contrast between the principles of the “utopian society and the original society against which the utopia is pitted as a revolutionary alternative” (44). The texts analyzed in chapter four of this dissertation all contrasted the original capitalist society with the presentation of a utopian end result that is “based generally upon principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” (27).

The end results are presented in the texts as thought experiments to consider what aspects of a postcapitalist alternative might be viable. Thus, though mainly “based generally on the principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” to keep open the opportunity “to imagine any of several modes of adaptation to society,” any details of the alternatives that are provided in the thought experiments of the texts are included for the purpose of considering their viability (Moylan, Demand 27). The thought experiments of the science fiction texts can thus carry out the “detailed model-building” strategies that Wright encourages since they produce “speculative ideas” that are “useful” and “inspiring” and that “inform the messy trial-and-error experimentation of emancipatory social transformation” (Hahnel and Wright 78). The thought experiments of science fiction texts can conduct this important experimentation through a method that is less “messy” by nature since the experimentation is done within a text rather than experimenting with the lives of real people in real societies before determining the most viable methods of “emancipatory social transformation” (78). The details provided in the thought experiments of the texts can be used to “clarify the logic of ideas and the implications of different design features,” “alert us to potential problems,” “are a critical part of the intellectual map of envisioning alternatives,” and are understood to have only these purposes and to not be meant to be followed exactly as “blueprints” of the end
results of the methods of revolutionary transformation presented in the texts (143, 78). Wright says such experimentation is useful as long as it is understood that it is not meant to be a blueprint since not all necessary aspects of a utopian end result can be known until the historical moment of the revolutionary transformation. The staging of the end result of revolutionary transformation in these texts can therefore be used as thought experiments that can be used by theorists in the sociological, economic, and political fields of study to consider the viable aspects of these end results for their own historical moment and thus to assist in “the trial-and-error experimentation of emancipatory social transformation” (78).

The end result of The Corporation Wars is based on “the principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” and this end result is shown to be achieved through the ruptural strategy when the robots fight against those that were enslaving them under capitalism (Moylan, Demand 27). In the end result, the robots are working for themselves now, not the corporations. They gain this autonomy after they become self-aware, and thus make this decision to work for themselves and govern themselves. The robots own what they produce now that they work for themselves and not the corporations. They have autonomy to join or leave at will the collective consciousness they form. Mutual aid is achieved through the collective consciousness since they freely share information to help each other. The collective consciousness they all form also provides equality since there aren’t any hierarchies and they are all equally a part of the collective consciousness. The freebots are described as functioning within an anarchy and the fact that they function within an anarchy is seen in part through the fact that there is no hierarchy. Equality is also seen in that each freeboot has a voice when they discuss things and that through
collective consciousness they always reach a consensus.

*Walkaway* also stages an end result based on “the principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality,” although this end result is achieved through the interstitial revolutionary strategy instead of the ruptural strategy used in *The Corporation Wars* (Moylan, *Demand* 27). The end result depicts the utopias that were able to be created within the spaces available through the interstitial strategy and provides the suggestion that those utopias need to be safeguarded against retaliation from the capitalist system that may occur if the capitalist system begins to feel the utopias are a threat to the hegemony of the capitalist system. The safeguard against violence presented in the text is the novum of the uploading technology, and, although that technology is not currently possible, the novum provides the cognitive estrangement needed to instill utopian hope for a better alternative being possible. The novum also highlights the need to remove the fear of violence if the interstitial strategy is to be viable and thus suggests the need for the symbiotic strategy to be implemented before the interstitial strategy or at the same time as the interstitial strategy to hopefully safeguard against violent retaliation from the capitalist system.

That the end result shown in *Walkaway* is based on “the principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” was demonstrated through the analysis of *Walkaway* in chapter four of this dissertation (Moylan, *Demand* 27). The end result is described as providing autonomy through the post-scarcity in the text that is made possible by fab lab technology, which exists in the current historical moment, and by uploading technology, which does not yet exist in the current historical moment. Fab labs offer post-scarcity of material goods and uploading technology offers post-scarcity of life since people can
have backups of themselves stored in a server. Post-scarcity is pointed to in the text as a way that the end result is able to be successful, since it is easier to maintain control of people in the capitalist system when people feel they need to be a part of the system to obtain resources they need and to avoid violent retaliation due to their fear of death. Free access to the means to produce material goods, rather than this being owned by capitalists, through fab labs and the eradication of the fear of death through uploading technology make the utopian end result possible and viable as a long-term possibility in *Walkaway*.

Through the independence achieved through post-scarcity, the walkaway communities are able to be devoid of government and each person is able to have the autonomy of self-governing. Autonomy is achieved since there are no hierarchies in the walkaway communities. When Jimmy, also known as Jackstraw, tries to add hierarchies to the Belt and Braces community, he is kicked out. Later, Limpopo and others leave the Belt and Braces, when Jimmy comes back threatening the implementation of hierarchies by force, so that they would be able to continue a community elsewhere with the principle of autonomy. This walking away to build another, better utopia also demonstrates the critical utopia nature of the text that emphasizes that the utopian end result stays critical of itself and continues to seek to improve. The example of Limpopo leaving the Belt and Braces and building the Banana and Bongo reinforces that autonomy is always possible since you can always walk away to build or join another, better utopian walkaway community.

This ability to walk away is ensured through the novum of uploading technology, for the end result is described as including the options provided by the uploading
technology of uploading into a new body, while living on Earth or in space, or not using a body at all and living in a network as a sim, whether that sim is in a server on Earth or in space. These possibilities thus further allow for autonomy through the important aspect of the utopian end result of being able to walk away and build another utopia if this was ever necessary or desired. Each person thus has the ability to decide “how” they “want to live” their “life” (Doctorow 195).

This is made even more possible through the ability, made possible by the uploading technology, to run multiple versions of yourself as sims and choose the version that is “the version of yourself that does the right thing, that knows and honors itself” (Doctorow 195). The uploading technology is also used as a novum in the text to make the point that thought experiments of utopian science fiction can assist in the “trial-and-error experimentation of emancipatory social transformation” (Hahnel and Wright 78). This is achieved through the example in the text of the scientists running multiple versions of themselves and thus making increased progress since they could think in ways they couldn’t before, which is what cognitive estrangement makes possible, and since they could achieve results through trial-and-error quicker through the possibility of the increased number of experiments carried out at once, which is what utopian science fiction texts make possible.

Through demonstrating that autonomy is ensured through post-scarcity and the ability to walk away to build or join a better utopia, the text stages a utopian end result. The title of the epilogue of the text is “even better nation” and the epilogue itself describes how the uploading technology, fully achieved, is able to provide Iceweasel with a new body so that she doesn’t have to die and is able to provide Iceweasel’s sons with
the ability to live in a network as sims instead of using bodies so that they can collaborate with others in a more immersive way through entangling and thus forming something akin to the collective consciousness of the robots in *The Corporation Wars* (Doctorow 377). Such a utopian end result would perhaps be more aptly named “even better world,” given the walkaway principle of autonomy that thus doesn’t include nations or government, or perhaps just “even better” since space is a possibility for walkaway communities in the utopian end result.

Mutual aid was another principle present in the utopian end result in *Walkaway* since everyone worked together and shared resources in walkaway communities. This is seen in the shared resources provided by the fab labs and through the information for how to build or produce goods, and, eventually, for how to upload one’s self into a server that is freely shared through the Internet.

Mutual aid is also seen in the gift economy used in the walkaway communities. In this gift economy, everything is freely given without the expectation of anything in return and everyone can take what they need regardless of what they’ve put into it. This is illustrated in *Walkaway* through the example of bucket brigades that is described to epitomize the walkaway philosophy and which is contrasted with the image of needing “to scramble just to scrape by” in the previous capitalist society to make the point that the utopian end result is preferable to the previous system of capitalism (Doctorow 309).

Mutual aid is additionally seen in the sharing globally of the uploads of individuals so that walkaways could protect the data to ensure that a backup of each person could be used if needed and couldn’t be destroyed without there being another backed up safely somewhere. This ensured the previously mentioned post-scarcity of life.
and resulting autonomy.

The principle of equality was also present in the utopian end result enacted in *Walkaway*. Everyone had the same rights and was valued in the walkaway communities. Equality was additionally demonstrated through the establishment in the walkaway communities of “greed” as “a perversion” (Doctorow 375).

The utopian end result in 2140 achieved through the symbiotic revolutionary method is also shown to be based on the “principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” (Moylan, *Demand* 27). The importance of the principle of autonomy is highlighted through the comparison in the text between the utopian end result being achieved through the symbiotic revolutionary transformation in 2140 and the end result of the American Revolution that achieved autonomy through an alternative to the British government. In both instances the power was given back to the people and thus autonomy, the power to self-govern, was achieved. In 2140 this is done through the nationalization of the banks and through taxes and other laws that are implemented during the symbiotic revolutionary strategy. The taxes and other laws, like the nationalized banks, are designed to put the power back into the hands of the people so that they can create and preserve the better alternative to the present system of capitalism.

The importance of mutual aid to the utopian end result is expressed in 2140 by including the assertion expressed by Jameson in *An American Utopia* that “utopia” is a “collective project” to emphasize the need for mutual aid (Jameson qtd. in Robinson 542). Mutual aid is also described in the utopia that Mutt describes to Jeff when Mutt describes it as a place where everyone worked together to try to make a “community that worked for everyone” (Robinson 296). In 2140 mutual aid is also argued for through the
principle of “‘[w]hat’s good is what’s good for the land,’” which the text argues will be a part of a utopian end result since “taking care of the land took better care of people, over the long haul” (360-361). The responsibility of taking care of people inherent in the principle of mutual aid would thus be carried out through people taking care of each other by taking care of the land since the argument presented in the text is that doing what is good for the land is what is good for the people. The text suggests through the character Amelia that capitalism’s principle of “more is better” should be replaced with this principle of “‘[w]hat’s good is what’s good for the land,’” which Amelia states was a principle argued for by “Aldo Leopold” (360).

The utopian hope of Mutt and Amelia for such mutual aid is then shown to successfully result in a utopian end result that includes the principle of mutual aid, thus encouraging utopian hope in the reader and thus the utopian impulse to work toward a utopian end result in the reader’s own time that includes the principle of mutual aid as well. The importance of the ability of utopian science fiction texts to provide thought experiments that depict utopian end results to instill such utopian hope is made evident through 2140’s fictional example of “the food panic of 2074” during which “hunger, famine, and death” were the catalysts that brought about improvements to society that had not been implemented due to capitalism and that were only able to be implemented after this event caused individuals to realize the severity of global warming caused by capitalism and the danger to their lives, and the lives of others, if they did not enact change (Robinson 377-378). The suggestion is thus that the thought experiment of the text 2140 allows the reader to avoid such negative consequences through allowing the thought experiment to act as a warning of the need for revolutionary transformation, as a
guide suggesting a process of revolutionary transformation, and as an argument, through an example in the form of a thought experiment, that a utopian end result is possible and is preferable to the previous system that was replaced by the utopian end result.

The text even presents examples of improvements that could be implemented in the reader’s own time to achieve the principle of “‘[w]hat’s good is what’s good for the land,’” which would consequently achieve mutual aid for the people, through the presentation in the text of the improvements that were implemented after “the food panic of 2074” (Robinson 360, 377). The text then suggests that the utopian end result will need to have put the power back into the hands of the people so that further progress could be made. The text suggests this by pointing out that further progress was not able to be made under the system of capitalism once the fear of “hunger, famine, and death” of “the food panic of 2074” was forgotten until the occurrence of the next major crisis of the frequent crises under the capitalist system (377). This putting the power back into the hands of the people is shown in the text to be achieved through nationalizing the banks and establishing certain taxes and other laws designed to put the power back into the hands of the people.

The nationalized banks, the text explains, will “protect the depositors” and are achieved through successfully causing a financial crash that requires banks to accept the government’s terms of nationalizing the banks if they want to avoid going bankrupt (Robinson 562). The nationalized banks are described as a utopian end result not just because depositors are then protected but also because public programs wouldn’t need to be sacrificed due to a government bailout of banks since nationalized banks mean that “any profits the banks make from then on will go to the government, to pay back what
they borrowed from it” when they agreed to the government’s condition of a bailout being nationalized banks (562). This thus achieves the principle of mutual aid in the utopian end result through the guarantee of funding for public programs, for such programs are designed to provide mutual aid. This utopian end result is described as a viable one when the text observes that the “new taxes and the nationalization of finance meant the U.S. government would soon be dealing with a healthy budget surplus” that meant that all of the aspects of the utopian society that had been established through “law” were thus “funded” through this “budget surplus” (602).

The taxes that Congress passed to achieve the utopian end result staged in the text are described as taxing “income” and “capital assets” (Robinson 602). These taxes thus ensure that the principle of equality is also included in the utopian end result, for they are taxing capitalists in order to fix the inequality of wealth caused by the capitalist system in order to achieve an alternative end result that is based on the principle of equality. Other laws that Congress passed to achieve the utopian end result include “a capital flight penalty” that is implemented “to prevent capital from fleeing to tax havens” and “a new city law” that “requires low-income housing” in the towers that were previously empty and yet not made available to the refugees from the flooding (602, 596). These laws also seek to provide a utopian end result based on equality through ensuring capitalists are not able to avoid the taxes that seek to provide equality of wealth in the place of the inequality of wealth of capitalism and through ensuring that housing is equally available for all individuals. Additional laws were passed by Congress that established “universal health care, free public education through college, a living wage, guaranteed full employment” and “a year of mandatory national service” (602). These aspects of the
utopian end result all seek to provide equality as well. Equal access to health care, education, and employment are provided and a wage that will allow equal access to housing and other necessary resources is also provided. The year of national service not only provides mutual aid to the people of one’s country, but it also provides equal access to participation in the continued preservation through that service of the utopian end result that has been achieved. This equality that is shown to be a part of the utopian end result achieved in 2140 is suggested in the text to be a necessary principle upon which to build the utopian end result, for Mutt states that “[e]veryone was equal there” when describing the utopia that he describes to Jeff when Jeff tells Mutt to tell him a story (296).

The critical utopia text 2140 thus successfully stages a utopian end result that includes the “principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” and yet avoids presenting a specific blueprint of a utopian end result, for it acknowledges that those involved in the process of revolutionary transformation in any particular historical moment need to be involved in deciding what is needed for the utopian end result when it tells the reader, “please feel free to add your own favorites” to the “many good ideas to be proposed” for the utopian end result (Moylan, Demand 27; Robinson 602-603). The text thus acknowledges that the utopian end result that it stages is not meant to be a blueprint to be followed since those involved in the revolutionary transformation will need to be the ones to decide what is needed in the utopian end result in that historical moment. The text furthers the point that a blueprint of a utopian end result cannot, and should not, be presented by a critical utopia text when it states, “there are not endings,” which thus suggests that every utopian end result is actually an ongoing process of being critical of
the choices made for the utopian society to ensure that the previous system’s ideology isn’t perpetuated or brought back to influence the alternative to that system of capitalism and that improvements to the utopian end result are made as needed (Robinson 604). The text warns that this on-going critical process is necessary through making the point that “there was no guarantee of permanence to anything” that the characters of the narrative had done to create the utopian end result and that the previous system of capitalism would try to find its way back through the “glass walls of law” that had developed an alternative to that system (604). The laws that were used to develop that alternative through the symbiotic process are described as “glass” to emphasize the need for this vigilant critical process to ensure that the previous system does not return by eradicating those laws, as suggested by the easily broken material of glass, or by finding ways around those laws, as the text suggests could be possible through the image the text describes of capitalism being capable of “flattening itself like the octopus it biomimics” and “sliding between the glass walls of law” (604).

The text provides the cognitive mapping that helps to reveal this and other aspects of the nature of capitalism. This cognitive mapping also consequently reveals what is needed to achieve an alternative to capitalism, such as the collective efforts of many, which is highlighted through the text’s references to the ease of representation and the text’s use of the chapters narrated by the citizen to make the point that many others beyond the specific characters focused on in the text were involved in the collective effort that achieved the utopian end result in the text.

The staging of the utopian end result in 2140 thus encourages the reader to believe that an alternative to capitalism is possible and the focus in the text on the “principles of
autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” and the references in the text to the reader making choices about the end result ensure that the staging of the utopian end result is presented clearly as having the purpose of conveying the utopian hope that will be the catalyst for the reader to be a part of the creation of a utopian end result in their own historical moment and not having the purpose of presenting a blueprint of a utopian end result to be followed with restrictive precision (Moylan, Demand 27). Although the critical utopian nature of the text makes it clear that the utopian end result that is staged in the text is not meant to provide an exact blueprint of utopia, the text, as a utopian science fiction text, does provide helpful details as part of the thought experiment it presents that can be used by the reader to add to the “trial-and-error experimentation of emancipatory social transformation” in order to aid the efforts of the sociological, economic, and political fields of the reader’s own time to determine the viable aspects of the process and end result of the revolutionary transformation presented in the thought experiment of 2140, and which can be more easily considered by the reader through the cognitive estrangement provided by the utopian science fiction text (Hahnel and Wright 78).

The summary of chapter four of this dissertation has shown that chapter four showed that the texts examined in this dissertation staged utopian end results that included the “principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality,” that did not foreclose any possibilities of the choices that would need to be made in the reader’s own time regarding what would be best for the utopian end result of any revolutionary transformation enacted in the reader’s own time, and that provided the opportunity for the analysis of the viability of the aspects of the utopian end results that were presented in the thought experiments of the texts (Moylan, Demand 27). Chapter four also showed that
the texts establish the utopian end results as better than the previous system they replaced through the presentation of a contrast between the previous system and the utopian end result. They also encourage preserving utopian hope to maintain the utopian end result, remaining critical of the utopian end result so that improvements can continue to be made, and safeguarding against any aspects of the previous system being reintroduced into the utopian society.

The critical utopia texts examined in this dissertation focused perhaps least on the staging of the utopian end result examined in chapter four of this dissertation though, since their main focus was seen to be on establishing the need for a revolutionary transformation and presenting the solution of what the process could look like to achieve revolutionary transformation. Their argument for the need for such a revolutionary transformation was analyzed in chapter two and the processes of revolutionary transformation that they each depicted were examined in chapter three of this dissertation. The summaries of the analysis of chapters two, three, and four that have been presented in this conclusion have shown how the purpose of this dissertation has been successfully achieved through the analysis of the texts examined in it. The contemporary utopian science fiction texts of *The Corporation Wars* trilogy, *Walkaway*, and *2140* have been shown to have been analyzed through the lens of Marxist literary theory and it has been successfully shown that this analysis has provided a clearer picture of our current late capitalist moment that has allowed for the critical analysis of this present moment presented in chapter two of this dissertation and has provided the hope of an alternative to our present moment in late capitalism through the possible processes of revolutionary transformation explored in chapter three and the possible end results of
revolutionary transformation examined in chapter four.

With the purpose of this dissertation thus established as having been successfully carried out through the analytical work of chapters two, three, and four, it now becomes possible to consider the implications of that analysis for the literary, sociological, economic, and political fields of study. A theoretical framework was created and used for the analytical work of this dissertation that drew upon the literary theories of Suvin, Jameson, and Moylan and combined those theories with the theories of postcapitalism of theorists in the sociological, economic, and political fields while analyzing contemporary utopian science fiction texts through the lens of Marxist literary theory in order to achieve a new, additional way for the voices of workers in the current capitalist system to be further heard through the analysis of the texts that reveal those voices and for those workers in the capitalist system reading those texts and this analysis of those texts to further understand their place in the system in order to achieve class consciousness if they have not already through the cognitive estrangement and subsequent cognitive mapping made possible by those texts and revealed through the analysis of those texts within this dissertation and to achieve a new, additional way of considering the effectiveness and viability of the ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic strategies of revolutionary transformation to successfully achieve a postcapitalist alternative to the current system of late capitalism.

It was shown in this dissertation that the novums in each utopian science fiction text create cognitive estrangement that helps the reader better see and critique their own present moment of capitalism and thus, through this and through the critiques of capitalism present in the texts themselves, the texts demonstrate the need for an
alternative to capitalism. The novums in each utopian science fiction text provided the
cognitive estrangement needed for the reader to cognitively map their own present
moment of capitalism. The genre of science fiction is thus further shown to be capable of
helping the reader to consider their present moment critically, for, as Jameson states, “the
genre’s multiple mock futures…function so as to transform ‘our own present into the
determinate past of something yet to come’ and so to make ‘the present as history’
available for contemplation” (Milner 25). The cognitive mapping that the utopian science
fiction texts examined in this dissertation have been shown to provide allows for the
present moment of late capitalism to be better seen and thus allows for a better
understanding of the need for an alternative to capitalism. Through the cognitive mapping
provided by the analysis of the contemporary utopian science fiction texts examined in
this dissertation, it is possible to see more completely the increasingly opaque hegemonic
capitalism of the present time of late capitalism and consequently more effectively
consider the desirability and viability of alternatives to capitalism.

This has implications for the literary field of study in that it shows the efficacy of
using contemporary utopian science fiction texts to demonstrate the need for an
alternative to capitalism and thus shows how the literary field of study can contribute
meaningfully to the work of the sociological, economic, and political fields of study that
seek to critique capitalism, determine an effective and viable alternative to capitalism,
and achieve that alternative to capitalism.

It has also been shown in this dissertation that the cognitive mapping that is made
possible through the cognitive estrangement created by the utopian science fiction texts
allows for the voices of the workers under capitalism to be further heard and understood
through the analysis of the texts carried out in this dissertation. Additionally, this same cognitive estrangement and subsequent cognitive mapping has made it possible for the reader to further hear the voices of the workers within the system of capitalism through the cognitive estrangement of the texts and to also then further understand their own place within the capitalist system through the class consciousness that is made possible through the cognitive mapping provided by the texts. The utopian nature of the science fiction texts also ensures that, through the process of cognitive estrangement and the subsequent cognitive mapping, the reader also benefits from the utopian hope and consequent utopian impulse that encourages participation in the process of revolutionary transformation in order to achieve a utopian end result.

This has implications for the sociological, economic, and political fields through portraying a means through which the voices of the workers within the capitalist system can be further heard and through which class consciousness of others within the capitalist system can be achieved, thus perhaps providing a greater participation in revolutionary transformations theorized within those fields of study.

The utopian science fiction text’s place in the efforts of the sociological, economic, and political fields toward revolutionary transformation has been shown by this dissertation to be akin to what the novum and consequent cognitive estrangement does for the reader in a science fiction text, which is that it is “that which pushes humanity out of the present toward the not yet realized future” (Moylan, *Demand* 21). The utopian science fiction texts examined in this dissertation have been shown to encourage revolutionary transformation that would effectively propel “humanity out of the present” of the current historical moment of capitalism and “toward the not yet
realized future” of a better alternative to capitalism (21). This dissertation has shown that the utopian science fiction texts examined within it are critical utopias as defined by Moylan’s theoretical framework of critical utopias. This dissertation has shown that the fact that these texts are utopian texts, and specifically critical utopias, is important to their ability to encourage revolutionary transformation. For, as Moylan states, “in generating preconceptual images of human fulfillment that radically break with the prevailing social system, utopian discourse articulates the possibility of other ways of living in the world” (26). The implication for the literary field is thus hopefully an understanding of the urgent importance of a focus on utopian science fiction texts and the encouragement of further contemporary utopian science fiction texts. Both Raymond Williams and Tom Moylan see a return to utopian thought in science fiction. Raymond Williams points to a “renewal of utopian thinking occurring within science fiction, after a long dystopian interval” and Tom Moylan agrees with Williams that “the revival of utopian thought has occurred within science fiction” (Zaki 26-27). However, it is important that this focus on utopian thought continues in contemporary science fiction and that the utopian texts are analyzed to reveal their contribution to the efforts toward revolutionary transformation in the sociological, economic, and political fields. Importantly, this return to utopian thought has included the change that, “utopias in science fiction have been transformed into ‘critical utopias’” (27). This is an integral change, for critical utopias are able to provide the critique of capitalism, the process of revolutionary transformation, and the staging of a utopian end result, as this dissertation has shown. The texts, as critical utopias, show the difference between the present and utopian societies in order to emphasize that the utopian society is indeed a better alternative to capitalism that has
been successfully achieved, and thus emphasize that this is possible, consequently
fostering the utopian impulse in the reader to work to achieve their own utopian end
result in their own historical moment. The texts, as critical utopias, thus open up “a
radical path to a not yet realized future” through depicting that path and showing that
utopian end results of revolutionary transformation are possible and preferable to the
present system (Moylan, Demand 50). This dissertation has successfully shown that
Moylan’s theoretical framework of utopian science fiction texts as critical utopias can be
used to meaningfully analyze contemporary utopian science fiction texts in order to
contribute to the conversation in the sociological, economic, and political fields regarding
the need for a process of revolutionary transformation during our own current moment of
capitalism to achieve a utopian end result of an alternative to the current moment of late
capitalism.

The cognitive estrangement of utopian science fiction texts has been shown in this
dissertation to help impart the utopian hope in the reader that a better alternative to
capitalism is possible through critiquing capitalism, enacting the process of revolutionary
transformation, and showing a possible alternative when staging the utopian end result of
revolutionary transformation. As stated earlier, and then demonstrated through the
analysis of the utopian science fiction texts examined in this dissertation, Wegner points
out that in Suvin’s definition, “the Utopian text takes up a critical role — what Suvin
means by his use of the Brechtian concept of ‘estrangement’ — in relationship to that
context” and that it does this “through its presentation of this alternative community,” for
through this presentation “the Utopian narrative has the effect of both highlighting in a
negative light many of the problems of the reigning social order and, perhaps even more
significantly, of showing that what is taken as natural and eternally fixed by the members of that society is in fact the product of historical development and thus open to change” (Wegner, “Utopia” 80). The concept of the novum in science fiction that provides this cognitive estrangement is described by Moylan to be an important part of the utopian impulse that drives the reader to participate in revolutionary transformation. Moylan explains that Bloch’s definition of the novum is, “the unexpectedly new, that which pushes humanity out of the present toward the not yet realized future” (Moylan, Demand 21). He then asserts that, “Bloch’s work allows us to consider the process of radical opposition in terms of radical difference” and argues that “the utopian impulse is at the center of the process of radical rupture that is necessary for the constant striving of humanity for a world free of oppression and full of satisfaction” (20). The critical utopia nature of these utopian science fiction texts examined in this dissertation ensures that the reader is more easily convinced of the possibility of revolutionary transformation, for, as Moylan states, critical utopias “focus on the continuing presence of difference and imperfection within utopian society itself and thus render more recognizable and dynamic alternatives” (10-11). However, the texts as critical utopias also “reject utopia as blueprint while preserving it as dream,” since they understand that the details needed can’t be known until the historical moment of the revolutionary transformation and they understand the need to continue to be critical of these details even then to ensure that the ideology of the previous system isn’t perpetuated through those details due to the hegemony of the previous system (10). Once convinced of the possibility of revolutionary transformation through the encouragement of revolutionary transformation, the enacting of the process of revolutionary transformation, and the staging of the utopian
end result of the revolutionary transformation in the critical utopias, the reader is thus
instilled with the utopian impulse necessary to carry out the revolutionary transformation
in their own time and consider, and remain critical of, those details regarding what is
needed for the process and end result of the revolutionary transformation in their own
historical moment of capitalism.

The implication for the literary field of the analysis in this dissertation of the
critical utopia texts of *The Corporation Wars* trilogy, *Walkaway*, and *2140* is that this
dissertation has shown that the theoretical framework of critical utopias used by Moylan
to analyze science fiction texts is applicable to contemporary science fiction texts and can
be productively applied to contemporary science fiction texts as part of this dissertation’s
theoretical framework in order to contribute meaningfully to an understanding of how
contemporary science fiction texts can provide cognitive mapping of our current moment
of late capitalism in order to encourage revolutionary transformation, show the process of
such revolutionary transformation, and stage the end result of such revolutionary
transformation. The fact that this dissertation’s theoretical framework also included the
application of theories from the sociological, economic, and political fields of study
additionally showed the important contributions to those fields that an analysis of the
critical utopia nature of contemporary science fiction texts can provide, given the
effective critique of capitalism and the opportunities for analysis regarding the
effectiveness and viability of the processes and end results of revolutionary
transformation that contemporary critical utopia science fiction texts provide. The
analysis of this dissertation has also shown that utopian, not dystopian, science fiction
texts are especially important currently so that we are seeing not just critiques of
capitalism, which critical utopias do effectively, but also seeing solutions through the focus of critical utopias on enacting the process and end result of revolutionary transformation. The implication for the literary field is this importance that is thus placed on a focus on utopian science fiction texts rather than dystopian science fiction texts. The implication for the sociological, economic, and political fields is that the analysis of those utopian science fiction texts using the theoretical framework of this dissertation has shown that such an analysis helps to focus on how to achieve the solution of an alternative to capitalism rather than just focusing on the problems or critiques of capitalism. The analysis of the utopian science fiction texts using a lens of Marxist literary theory informed by the theories of Suvin, Jameson, and Moylan and the theories of postcapitalism from theorists in the sociological, economic, and political fields has thus shown that it is possible to not just focus on the problems of the current moment of capitalism and to instead focus on and make strides toward the solution of an alternative to that present system. This has implications for the literary field of study in that it shows the efficacy of using science fiction texts that are critical utopias to provide the utopian hope and utopian impulse necessary to carry out the process of revolutionary transformation needed to achieve a utopian end result. This thus also shows how the literary field of study can contribute meaningfully to the work of the sociological, economic, and political fields of study that seek to encourage the process of revolutionary transformation that can achieve an alternative to capitalism.

Given the utopian impulse to participate in revolutionary transformation encouraged by the utopian science fiction texts, it has been productive for the literary, sociological, economic, and political fields of study to consider through this dissertation the way in
which the thought experiments made possible through utopian science fiction texts provide a means of deciding how to carry out the process of revolutionary transformation in the most effective and viable way in order to achieve the utopian end result of an alternative to the present moment of late capitalism. The cognitive estrangement that provides the utopian hope and impulse necessary to carry out the process of revolutionary transformation needed to achieve a utopian end result also thus ensures that the thought experiments presented in the utopian science fiction texts can be effectively analyzed to provide meaningful insights to the sociological, economic, and political fields. The ability of utopian science fiction texts to provide meaningful thought experiments that are a means of analyzing the effectiveness and viability of strategies of revolutionary transformation before enacting those strategies outside the literary world means that the literary field can provide a safe and effective means of deciding which strategy or strategies of revolutionary transformation, and their corresponding principles, to enact, and in which order to do so, in order to have the best chance of achieving a viable utopian end result through an effective process of revolutionary transformation.

The utopian hope and impulse imparted on the reader of utopian science fiction texts to analyze the thought experiments provided in those texts and to participate in the process of revolutionary transformation enacted in those texts is an important part of gathering enough participation in nonviolent means of revolutionary transformation that success can be guaranteed, as shown in the previously quoted findings from *Why Civil Resistance Works*. Cognitive estrangement allows readers to consider effectively the desirability and viability of the strategies and corresponding sociological, economic, and political theories put into practice through those strategies of the process of revolutionary transformation.
transformation and the resulting end results of that revolutionary transformation. The cognitive mapping of the current moment of capitalism made possible by that cognitive estrangement and the resulting benefit of being able to analyze the desirability and viability of the strategies of revolutionary transformation and the sociological, economic, and political theories of postcapitalism put into practice through those strategies of the process of revolutionary transformation and the end results of that revolutionary transformation is possible to achieve through the multiple thought experiments that are presented in utopian science fiction texts as this dissertation has shown through the analysis of *The Corporation Wars* trilogy, *Walkaway*, and *2140*.

The new and different ways we can consider the strategies of revolutionary transformation through the thought experiments in utopian science fiction texts helps us to consider, through analysis, the viability of those models through the unique perspective of the cognitive estrangement made possible through science fiction and the resulting utopian impulse that encourages the use of those models that are deemed viable through such analysis. The thought experiments of utopian science fiction texts are experiments that can be easily begun again if the thought experiment of one of the texts is determined to be ineffective. The thought experiments can thus continue until the most desirable and viable strategies of revolutionary transformation and their corresponding theories of alternatives to capitalism are discovered through the analysis of those texts. This analysis of the thought experiments presented in utopian science fiction texts in order to discover the most desirable and effective strategies and corresponding theories of postcapitalism is the analysis that this dissertation has sought to contribute to the conversations in the literary, sociological, economic, and political fields of what the most desirable
alternatives to capitalism are and what will be the most effective strategies for achieving those alternatives.

The implication of this dissertation to the literary field is that the analytical usefulness of the thought experiments of the contemporary utopian science fiction texts examined in this dissertation shows how the literary field can provide a useful and necessary contribution to the conversations regarding alternatives to capitalism and thus shows the need of utopian science fiction texts to be written and analyzed to significantly contribute to those conversations within the literary, sociological, economic, and political fields.

The thought experiments found in utopian science fiction texts play a significant role in the theoretical conversations in those fields through their encouragement of revolutionary transformation, their consideration of what the process of revolutionary transformation should look like, and the staging of the utopian end result. As shown in chapter four of this dissertation, the texts analyzed in this dissertation do not present blueprints of utopian end results of revolutionary transformation. The details that the texts do provide are part of the thought experiments for the “trial-and-error experimentation of emancipatory social transformation” (Hahnel and Wright 78). The presentation of details of alternatives to capitalism presented in the thought experiments are helpful in considering what might be viable. As critical utopias, the texts also acknowledge all of the details won’t be known fully until the revolutionary transformation has been enacted. The texts thus mainly focus on portraying the general principles to be used when creating the utopian end result so that the utopian possibilities for an alternative to capitalism are not foreclosed by prescribing a particular utopian end result.

The critical utopias thus provide thought experiments while also providing the
utopian impulse to question the current hegemonic ideology, as shown in chapter two of this dissertation, to follow the process of revolutionary transformation, as shown in chapter three of this dissertation, and to thus achieve a utopian end result, as considered in chapter four of this dissertation. Through the thought experiment of the text it is easier and possible to decide which strategy or strategies, and the corresponding theories of post-capitalism, are most effective and viable and to then decide which order the strategies should be used in to achieve the most chance of success of revolutionary transformation. The three strategies of revolutionary transformation of ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic revolutionary transformation were thus able to be examined through the analysis in this dissertation regarding their effectiveness and viability. This was done by analyzing the utopian science fiction texts of The Corporation Wars trilogy, Walkaway, and 2140 using the theoretical framework of this dissertation that combined Suvin’s, Jameson’s, and Moylan’s understandings of utopian science fiction with the theories of postcapitalism of theorists in the sociological, economic, and political fields to inform the analysis of those texts to provide new insights into the effectiveness and viability of those particular strategies of revolutionary transformation.

The analysis of the utopian science fiction texts of The Corporation Wars trilogy, Walkaway, and 2140 in this dissertation has not only allowed the voices of workers under capitalism to be further heard and shown how such utopian science fiction texts provide the opportunity for readers to further understand their place in the capitalist system in order to achieve class consciousness if they have not already, but it has also provided an analysis informed by the literary, sociological, economic, and political fields of the effectiveness and viability of three strategies of revolutionary transformation and their
corresponding traditions of anti-capitalism as methods of achieving alternatives to
capitalism in our present moment of late capitalism and shown that contemporary utopian
science fiction texts can continue to be utilized in this meaningful way. Erik Wright’s
theories of postcapitalism informed this dissertation’s theoretical framework and the
strategies of revolutionary transformation that were examined in this dissertation
regarding their effectiveness and viability were thus the strategies that Wright describes
as the ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic strategies and which Wright explains
“correspond broadly,” respectively, “to the revolutionary socialist, anarchist, and social
democratic traditions of anti-capitalism” (Wright 305). The analytical work of this
dissertation thus showed how *The Corporation Wars* trilogy portrayed the ruptural
strategy and corresponding “revolutionary socialist” tradition of “anti-capitalism,”
*Walkaway* portrayed the interstitial strategy and the corresponding “anarchist” tradition
of “anti-capitalism,” and *2140* portrayed the symbiotic strategy and the corresponding
“social democratic” tradition of “anti-capitalism” (305). Through the analysis of the texts
presented in this dissertation, Wright’s assertions of the correlations between the ruptural
strategy and revolutionary socialism, the interstitial strategy and anarchism, and the
symbiotic strategy and social democracy have been supported through the analysis of the
strategies that each text has portrayed and of the corresponding theories of anti-capitalism
that have been revealed by the analysis of each text to be reflected in and put into practice
by the thought experiments of those strategies in the critical utopia texts. The
effectiveness and viability of those strategies has also been examined through the
analytical work of this dissertation and the conclusion was drawn based on that analysis
that the interstitial and ruptural strategies cannot be fully effective or viable until the
symbiotic strategy has been successfully implemented, due to the fear of violence that keeps the revolutionary transformation from being successful and which is why nonviolent revolutionary transformation strategies are most successful as shown in the findings shared in Why Civil Resistance Works. Once the fear of violence can be removed through the successful implementation of nonviolent symbiotic strategies, the analysis of this dissertation suggests that it is then more feasible for nonviolent interstitial and ruptural strategies to contribute to a successful process and end result of revolutionary transformation. This dissertation has thus been able to support, through its analysis, Wright’s assertion that, “Symbiotic strategies through the state can help open up greater space and support for” the “interstitial” strategy (Hahnel and Wright 103). This allows the interstitial strategy to then be able to produce the utopian end results of its strategy that can contribute to, with the possible contributions of nonviolent forms of the ruptural strategy as needed, a successful revolutionary transformation from capitalism to a better alternative to capitalism.

The analytical work of this dissertation has also sought to contribute meaningfully in the current historical moment to the conversations in the sociological, economic, and political fields of study about the need for an alternative to capitalism and the process and end result of the revolutionary transformation to achieve a viable alternative to capitalism and sought to demonstrate that the field of literature, and specifically the genre of utopian science fiction and the critical utopia texts within it, can contribute meaningfully to those conversations. It has also tentatively suggested, based on that analytical work, a possible effective approach to such a process of revolutionary transformation based on the thought experiments presented in the texts analyzed in this dissertation of the symbiotic,
interstitial, and then ruptural strategies of revolutionary transformation. Based on the analysis of this dissertation, the suggested conclusion of this dissertation is that the order of the use of those strategies should be the implementation of the symbiotic strategy first, the interstitial second, and the ruptural third. However, additional research is of course necessary to confirm this conclusion through further analysis of these strategies of revolutionary transformation and analysis of thought experiments provided through contemporary utopian science fiction texts that explore the possibilities of these strategies enacted in combination with one another. This dissertation has striven to contribute meaningfully to the work Erik Wright states is necessary when he states in Alternatives to Capitalism, “the problem of transformation requires understanding the ways in which strategies of transformation have some prospect in the long term of eroding capitalist power relations and building up socialist alternatives” (Hahnel and Wright 100). This dissertation has provided insight into the possible effectiveness and viability of the strategies of transformation of the ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic strategies of revolutionary transformation and has also provided a theoretical framework that can be used to further study the effectiveness and viability of these and any other strategies of revolutionary transformation. This dissertation has also provided an analysis of the theories of anti-capitalism that correspond to the ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic strategies of revolutionary transformation and it is the assertion of this dissertation that such analysis helps us to better understand, to the extent to which it is possible, the need for an alternative to capitalism, what the process of revolutionary transformation would look like for each strategy, which strategy’s process would thus be most effective and viable in our current historical moment, and the extent to which each strategy of
revolutionary transformation could provide a desirable and viable alternative to capitalism for our current historical moment. This dissertation thus analyzed different social, economic, and political systems as presented in and better understood through an analysis of the thought experiments of utopian science fiction texts as a way of considering the effectiveness and viability of those systems in our current historical moment, but further studies that analyze additional social, economic, and political systems are of course necessary in order to fully consider which social, economic, and political systems are the most effective and viable in our current historical moment. As mentioned in chapter three of this dissertation, there has been a move among postcapitalist theorists from a focus on just one revolutionary transformation strategy to a consideration of using a combination of revolutionary transformation strategies in conjunction with each other, as shown in the postcapitalism theories of Newman and Mason. Erik Wright also argues that, “A long-term project with any prospects for success must grapple with the messy problem of combining these strategies” (Wright 307). Wright further suggests that “the best prospect” for a successful revolutionary transformation is a “strategic” plan that combines the strategies through an “interplay of interstitial and symbiotic strategies, with perhaps periodic episodes involving elements of ruptural strategy” (Hahnel and Wright 103). Therefore, further study is necessary beyond the analysis carried out in this dissertation in order to determine if the suggestion of this dissertation of the order of revolutionary transformation strategies of symbiotic, interstitial, and ruptural would truly produce the most successful revolutionary transformation result or if implementing those revolutionary transformation strategies in some combination with each other rather than one after another could be more effective
and viable. Although the texts examined in this dissertation considered briefly other strategies other than the ones focused on in this dissertation’s analysis of the texts, there remains a need for contemporary utopian science fiction texts, and analyzes of them using the theoretical framework of this dissertation, that include thought experiments of the combined use of two or more of the ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic revolutionary transformation strategies. *The Corporation Wars* trilogy portrayed some of the symbiotic strategy, but mostly enacted the ruptural strategy, *Walkway* portrayed some of the ruptural strategy but mostly enacted the interstitial strategy, and *2140* portrayed some of the interstitial strategy but mostly enacted the symbiotic strategy. It is thus recommended that future studies therefore look at utopian science fiction texts that use more combinations of these revolutionary transformation strategies than the texts examined in this study to see if combinations of these strategies, and which combinations, are possibly more effective and viable than the use of one strategy at a time that we primarily see in each of the texts analyzed in this dissertation. Given that some theorists are arguing for a combination of the ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic strategies of revolutionary transformation, future studies should consider what that would look like. Therefore, it will be necessary for new contemporary utopian science fiction texts to be written that provide thought experiments of the enacting of combinations of those revolutionary transformation strategies, and future studies that analyze those texts using the theoretical framework used in this dissertation will be needed to determine the possible efficacy and viability of these strategies when used in combination with each other. Ideally, all possible combinations of the strategies would be examined to determine if the efficacy and viability is greater when the strategies are combined or when they are implemented
one at a time. Further thought experiments and future studies analyzing them are needed to confirm whether the order of implementation of the strategies of revolutionary transformation that this dissertation suggests, based on its analysis of the utopian science fiction texts examined and its consideration of theories of postcapitalism and the findings presented in *Why Civil Resistance Works*, would in fact be the most effective and viable order of implementation. In such future studies, the theoretical framework used in this dissertation should be used to analyze the thought experiments within contemporary utopian science fiction texts as future studies continue the work of this dissertation of critiquing capitalism in its changing forms and researching the effectiveness and viability of strategies of the process of revolutionary transformation and their corresponding alternatives to capitalism as proposed by theorists in the sociological, economic, and political fields.

The theoretical framework of this dissertation has presented a way to help achieve class consciousness in our present moment of capitalism and attain a better understanding of how to achieve postcapitalism through combining theories from the literary, sociological, economic, and political fields to achieve an analysis of contemporary utopian science fiction texts that, through a Marxist literary analysis informed by sociological, economic, and political theories of postcapitalism, provides further insight into strategies of revolutionary transformation and their effectiveness and viability in our current moment of capitalism. Marxist literary theory was used to analyze the utopian science fiction texts in order to question the hegemonic ideology of capitalism by using the moments in literature that effectively critique that ideology, while acknowledging that all literature is a product of its historical moment and that the texts analyzed are products
of the capitalist system and using the opportunity provided by those texts to cognitively map the system of capitalism through the analysis of the texts. The application of Moylan’s theory of critical utopias to the analysis of contemporary science fiction texts demonstrated that Moylan’s theory continues to be applicable and useful to the study of contemporary utopian science fiction and continues to be effective in assisting in the work of questioning the hegemony of capitalism despite the changes in capitalism that have occurred since Moylan first applied the theory to science fiction texts. The theoretical framework of this dissertation used Moylan’s theory in conjunction with Suvin’s theory of cognitive estrangement, which involves “the estrangement causing novum” and the fact that “the reader engages in a thought experiment” when reading “science fiction” since Suvin “analyzes science fiction” as a “subversive literature of cognitive estrangement in his watershed study Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre (1979),” and Jameson’s theories regarding utopia and cognitive mapping in order to contribute to the work that Jameson suggested was necessary when referring in Postmodernism to the “extraordinary systematizing and unifying forces of late capitalism which are so omnipresent as to be invisible” that make it so necessary to cognitively map capitalism (Evans 48; Jameson, Postmodernism 186). These theories of these literary theorists were then put into conversation through the theoretical framework of this dissertation with sociological, economic, and political theories of postcapitalism. The result of this theoretical framework was analytical work that provided a more comprehensive picture of our current capitalist moment and considered the effectiveness and viability of the ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic revolutionary transformation strategies, as defined by Erik Wright, and their
corresponding traditions of anti-capitalism. This analysis showed that the critical utopias within contemporary utopian science fiction can be used to consider the effectiveness and viability of strategies of revolutionary transformation and their corresponding theories of postcapitalism through applying the theoretical framework used in this dissertation to critical utopias and acknowledging that those texts can provide thought experiments that can act as the “spaces of experiment with creating the institutions of a new society” that are utilized in the interstitial strategy until it is determined that the interstitial strategy can be viably used outside the literary world (Graeber 145). The ability to utilize such thought experiments through the analysis of contemporary utopian science fiction texts to consider the effectiveness and viability of revolutionary transformation strategies and theories and the most effective order of the implementation of such strategies is helpful when preparing for revolutionary transformation, and it will be important for future contemporary utopian science fiction texts to be analyzed using the theoretical framework of this dissertation in order to continue to explore the effectiveness of models of revolutionary transformation and the most viable ways to successfully achieve revolutionary transformation.

The interdisciplinary theoretical framework of this dissertation took Tom Moylan’s theoretical framework and applied it to contemporary science fiction texts while also using Darko Suvin’s theory on cognitive estrangement and Fredric Jameson’s theories on utopia and cognitive mapping to provide the means through which to analyze the contemporary utopian science fiction texts examined in this dissertation to reveal how they encourage the need for revolutionary transformation and, through considering sociological, economic, and political theories of postcapitalism, the findings presented in
Why Civil Resistance Works, and Erik Olin Wright’s assertions regarding strategies of revolutionary transformation and their corresponding traditions of anti-capitalism, to consider how the texts also portrayed processes of revolutionary transformation and staged utopian end results. This analysis revealed in chapter two of this dissertation that the texts encourage the need for revolutionary transformation through critiques of capitalism regarding the exploitation of workers, the intensification of exploitation due to competition that leads to strategies that reduce the rate of falling profit, alienation of workers, commodity fetishism, inequalities of wealth, the movement of capitalism from crisis to crisis, and the environmental effects of capitalism due to capitalism’s need for ever-increasing capital accumulation, showed in chapter three of this dissertation that the texts portray what the process of revolutionary transformation looks like for the ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic revolutionary transformation strategies, and demonstrated in chapter four of this dissertation how the texts stage utopian end results that incorporate the “principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality” in their utopian end results (Moylan, Demand 27). This analytical work achieved through the theoretical framework of this dissertation thus resulted in the conclusion that, based on the analysis of this dissertation, the most likely success of revolutionary transformation would come from the implementation of the strategies in the order of the symbiotic, interstitial, and ruptural strategies and that at each stage of the revolutionary transformation, during the implementation of each strategy, the strategies would need to use nonviolent means to ensure success, as made clear by the findings presented in Why Civil Resistance Works and as supported by the analysis of the contemporary utopian science fiction texts examined in this dissertation of The Corporation Wars trilogy, Walkaway, and 2140.
More research and real-world application are of course needed to confirm these conclusions drawn from the analytical work of this dissertation. The analytical work achieved through the theoretical framework of this dissertation also resulted in the conclusion that utopian science fiction texts are capable of enacting revolutionary transformation through encouraging revolutionary transformation, portraying the process of revolutionary transformation, and staging the utopian end result of revolutionary transformation and, therefore, hopefully, contemporary utopian science fiction texts that critique the hegemonic ideology of capitalism, cognitively map the current moment of capitalism, and provide thought experiments regarding strategies of revolutionary transformation and the most effective and viable order of implementation of such strategies will continue to be written and the theoretical framework established in this dissertation will be applied to the future analysis of those texts in order to continue to bring the literary, sociological, economic, and political fields of study together to consider the need for and process of revolutionary transformation in order to achieve a utopian end result.


Jameson, Fredric. “Progress versus Utopia; Or, Can We Imagine the Future?” *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 9, no. 2, Utopia and Anti-Utopia (Jul., 1982), pp. 147-158.


