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The concept of utopia

Utopia: the word and the concept

The study of the concept of utopia can certainly not be reduced to the history of the word coined by Thomas More in 1516 to baptize the island described in his book. However, a careful consideration of the circumstances in which the word was generated can lead us to a better understanding of what More meant by the word as well as of the new meanings it has acquired since then.

It must be remembered that in 1516 the word *utopia* was a neologism. Neologisms correspond to the need to name what is new. By revealing the changes that the shared values of a given group undergo, the study of neologisms provides us not only with a dynamic portrait of a particular society over the ages but also with a representation of that society in a given period. There are basically three kinds of neologisms: they may be new words created to name new concepts or to synthesize pre-existing ones (lexical neologisms); they may be pre-existing words used in a new cultural context (semantic neologisms); or they may be variations of other words (derivation neologisms).¹

Utopia, as a neologism, is an interesting case: it began its life as a lexical neologism, but over the centuries, after the process of deneologization, its meaning changed many times, and it has been adopted by authors and researchers from different fields of study, with divergent interests and conflicting aims. Its history can be seen as a collection of moments when a clear semantic renewal of the word occurred. The word *utopia* has itself often been used as the root for the formation of new words. These include words such as *eutopia*, *dystopia*, *anti-utopia*, *alotopia*, *euchronia*, *heterotopia*, *ecotopia* and *hyperutopia*, which are, in fact, derivation neologisms. And with the creation of every new associated word the concept of *utopia* took on a more precise meaning. It is important, thus, to distinguish the original meaning attributed to the word by Thomas More from the different meanings that various epochs and currents of thought have accredited to it.

The problem is that the first meaning of utopia is by no means obvious. More used the word both to name the unknown island described by the Portuguese sailor Raphael Hythloday, and as a title for his book. This situation resulted in the emergence of two different meanings of utopia, which became clearer as the process of deneologization occurred. In fact, though the word utopia came into being to allude to imaginary paradisiacal places, it has also been used to refer to a particular kind of narrative, which became known as utopian literature. This was a new literary form, and its novelty certainly justified the need for a neologism.

It is interesting to note that before coining the word utopia, More used another one to name his imaginary island: Nusquama. Nusquam is the Latin word for ‘nowhere’, ‘in no place’, ‘on no occasion’, and so if More had published his book with that title, and if he had called his imagined island Nusquama, he would simply be denying the possibility of the existence of such a place. But More wanted to convey a new idea, a new feeling that would give voice to the new currents of thought that were then arising in Europe. More’s idea of utopia is, in fact, the product of the Renaissance, a period when the ancient world (namely Greece and Rome) was considered the peak of mankind’s intellectual achievement, and taken as a model by Europeans; but it was also the result of a humanist logic, based on the discovery that the human being did not exist simply to accept his or her fate, but to use reason in order to build the future. Out of the ruins of the medieval social order, a confidence in the human being’s capacity emerged – not yet a capacity to reach a state of human perfection (which would be impossible within a Christian worldview, as the idea of the Fall still persisted), but at least an ability to arrange society differently in order to ensure peace. This broadening of mental horizons was certainly influenced by the unprecedented expansion of geographical horizons. More wrote his *Utopia* inspired by the letters in which Amerigo Vespucci, Christopher Columbus and Angelo Poliziano described the discovery of new worlds and new peoples; geographical expansion inevitably implied the discovery of the *Other*. And More used the emerging awareness of otherness to legitimize the invention of other spaces, with other people and different forms of organization.² This, too, was new, and required a new word. In order to create his neologism, More resorted to two Greek words – *ouk* (that means not and was reduced to *u*) and *topos* (place), to which he added the suffix *ia*, indicating a place. Etymologically, utopia is thus a place which is a non-place, simultaneously constituted by a movement of affirmation and denial.

But, to complicate things further, More invented another neologism, which was published in the first edition of his seminal work. This second neologism derives from the first, in its composition, and is to be found in

the poem published at the end of *Utopia* which is presented as having been written by the poet laureate Anemolius, nephew to Hythloday on his sister's side. In the six verses that constitute the poem, the island of Utopia speaks and states its three main characteristics: (1) it is isolated, set apart from the known world; (2) it rivals Plato's city, and believes itself to be superior to it, since that which in Plato's city is only sketched, in Utopia is presented as having been achieved; (3) its inhabitants and its laws are so wonderful that it should be called *Eutopia* (the good place) instead of Utopia.

By creating two neologisms which are so close in their composition and meaning – a lexical neologism (utopia) and a derivation neologism (eutopia) – More created a tension that has persisted over time and has been the basis for the perennial duality of meaning of utopia as the place that is simultaneously a non-place (utopia) and a good place (eutopia). This tension is further stressed by the self-description provided by Utopia in the poem: Utopia, the isolated place (where no one goes because it is a non-place) is also the place where we will not find sketches but plans that have been put into practice. As Utopia and Eutopia are pronounced in precisely the same way, this tension can never be eliminated. Again, this is an aspect which is completely new, and which justifies the need for a neologism. We are, in fact, very far away from *Nusquama*.

Utopia: the concept and the word

In the above mentioned poem, the island of Utopia points out its affiliation to Plato's city; the quality of this attachment is clearly defined: both Plato and More imagined alternative ways of organizing society. What is common to both authors, then, is the fact that they resorted to fiction to discuss other options. They differed, however, in the way they presented that fiction; and it could not have been otherwise, as More created the word utopia because he needed to designate something new, which included the narrative scheme he invented. In spite of that, the word is used nowadays to refer to texts that were written before More's time, as well as to allude to a tradition of thought that is founded on the consideration, by means of fantasy, of alternative solutions to reality. This is in fact an odd situation: normally, neologisms are used to designate new phenomena. Still, utopia seems to be of an anamnestic nature (i.e., the word refers to a kind of pre-history of the concept); this situation can easily be understood, as More did not work on a *tabula rasa*, but on a tradition of thought that goes back to ancient Greece and is nourished by the myth of the Golden Age, among other mythical and religious archetypes, and traverses the Middle Ages, having been influenced by the promise of a happy afterlife, as well as by the myth of Cockayne (a

land of plenty). It is thus certain that although he invented the word utopia, More did not invent utopianism, which has at its core the desire for a better life; but he certainly changed the way this desire was to be expressed. In fact, More made a connection between the classic and the Christian traditions, and added to it a new conception of the role individuals are to play during their lifetime.

Apart from this aspiration to better life, More's concept of utopia therefore differs from all the previous crystallizations of the utopian desire; these can in fact be seen as pre-figurations of utopia, as they lack the tension between the affirmation of a possibility and the negation of its fulfilment. Although they are part of the background of the concept of utopia, Plato's *Republic*, and St Augustine's *The City of God* differ from More's *Utopia*, as Plato does not go beyond mere speculation about the best organization of a city, and St Augustine projects his ideal into the afterlife (thus creating not a utopia but an *alotopia*).

The concept of utopia is no doubt an attribute of modern thought, and one of its most visible consequences. Having at its origin a paradox that does not really require to be solved (caused by the tension described above), from the very beginning of its history it showed a facility for acquiring new meanings, for serving new interests, and for crystallizing into new formats. Because of its dispersion into several directions, it has sometimes become so close to other literary genres or currents of thought that it has risked losing its own identity. Its diffuse nature has been at the basis of debate among researchers in the field of Utopian Studies, who have found it difficult to reach a consensual definition of the concept.

Historically, the concept of utopia has been defined with regard to one of four characteristics:³ (1) the content of the imagined society (i.e., the identification of that society with the idea of 'good place', a notion that should be discarded since it is based on a subjective conception of what is or is not desirable, and envisages utopia as being essentially in opposition to the prevailing ideology); (2) the literary form into which the utopian imagination has been crystallized (which is a very limiting way of defining utopia, since it excludes a considerable number of texts that are clearly utopian in perspective but that do not rigorously comply with the narrative model established by More); (3) the function of utopia (i.e., the impact that it causes on its reader, urging him to take action (a definition that should be rejected as it takes into account political utopia only)); (4) the desire for a better life, caused by a feeling of discontentment towards the society one lives in (utopia is then seen as a matter of attitude). This latter characteristic is no doubt the most important one, as it allows for the inclusion within the framework of utopia of a wide range of texts informed by what Ernst Bloch

considered to be the principal energy of utopia: hope. Utopia is then to be seen as a matter of attitude, as a kind of reaction to an undesirable present and an aspiration to overcome all difficulties by the imagination of possible alternatives.⁴

Utopia as a literary genre

By opting for a more inclusive definition of utopia, we are not disregarding the merits and particulars of utopia as a literary genre, but recognizing the literary form as just one of the possible manifestations of utopian thought.⁵ More established the basis for the steady development of a literary tradition which flourished particularly in England, Italy, France and the United States, and which relies on a more or less rigid narrative structure: it normally pictures the journey (by sea, land or air) of a man or woman to an unknown place (an island, a country or a continent); once there, the utopian traveller is usually offered a guided tour of the society, and given an explanation of its social, political, economic and religious organization; this journey typically implies the return of the utopian traveller to his or her own country, in order to be able to take back the message that there are alternative and better ways of organizing society.⁶ Although the idea of utopia should not be confused with the idea of perfection, one of its most recognizable traits is its speculative discourse on a non-existent social organization which is better than the real society.⁷ Another characteristic is that it is human-centred, not relying on chance or on the intervention of external, divine forces in order to impose order on society. Utopian societies are built by human beings and are meant for them. And it is because utopists very often distrust individuals' capacity to live together, that we very frequently find a rigid set of laws at the heart of utopian societies – rules that force the individuals to repress their unreliable and unstable nature and put on a more convenient social cloak.

In order to create the new literary genre, More used the conventions of travel literature and adapted them to his aims. Over the centuries, utopia as a literary genre has been influenced by similar genres, such as the novel, the journal and science fiction. In fact, it became so close to the latter genre that it has been often confused with it. At the advent of science fiction, it was not difficult to distinguish it from literary utopia, as the former made a clear investment in the imagination of a fantastic world brought about by scientific and technological progress, taking us on a journey to faraway planets, while the latter stayed focused on the description of the alternative ways of organizing the imagined societies. Still, in recent decades, science fiction has been permeated by social concerns, displaying a clear commitment

to politics; this situation has given rise to endless debates on the links that bind the two literary genres: researchers in the field of Utopian Studies have claimed that science fiction is subordinate to utopia, as the latter was born first, whereas those who have devoted their study time to science fiction maintain that utopia is but a socio-political sub-genre.

One of the main features of utopia as a literary genre is its relationship with reality. Utopists depart from the observation of the society they live in, note down the aspects that need to be changed and imagine a place where those problems have been solved. Quite often, the imagined society is the opposite of the real one, a kind of inverted image of it. It should not be taken, though, as a feeble echo of the real world; utopias are by essence dynamic, and in spite of the fact that they are born out of a given set of circumstances, their scope of action is not limited to a criticism of the present; indeed, utopias put forward projective ideas that are to be adopted by future audiences, which may cause real changes.

The fact that the utopian traveller departs from a real place, visits an imagined place and goes back home, situates utopia at the boundary between reality and fiction. This fiction is in fact important, not as an end in itself, but as a privileged means to convey a potentially subversive message, but in such a way that the utopist cannot be criticized. In this sense, utopia, as a literary genre, is part of clandestine literature. Anchored in a real society, the utopist puts forward plausible alternatives, basing them on meticulous analysis and evaluation of different cultures. But although literary utopias are serious in their intent, they may well incorporate amusing and entertaining moments, provided they do not smother the didactic discourse. Utopia is, in fact, a game, and implies the celebration of a kind of pact between the utopist and the reader: the utopist addresses the reader to tell him about a society that does not exist, and the reader acts as if he believes the author, even if he is aware of the non-existence of such a society. Still, the reader's notion of reality cannot be pushed too far as otherwise he will refuse to act as if he believed the author. In fact, the fiction cannot defy logic, and the passage from the real to the fictional world has to be gradual. This passage can be softened by the introduction, into the imagined world, of objects and structures that already exist in the real world, but which now have a different or even opposite function. Out of this situation, satire is inevitably born, as conspicuous criticism of the real society's flaws is part of the nature of the genre. When satire is not confined to real society, and is aimed at the imagined society, when the satirical tone becomes dominant and supersedes pedagogy, satire ceases to be a means and becomes an end – and we are then pushed out of the realm of utopian literature.

From space to time: euchronia

By inviting us to take a journey to an imagined better place, literary utopia gives rise to a rupture with the real place. This topographical rupture engenders a break of another different kind, a fracture between the history of the real place and that of the imagined society. In fact, at the onset of literary utopianism, we can but find static, ahistorical utopias. Such utopias reject their past (faced as anti-utopian), offer a frozen image of the present, and eliminate the idea of a future from their horizon: there is no progress after the ideal society has been established. There is a reason for this situation: the imagined society is put forward as a model to be followed, and models are frozen images that don't allow for historical change after they have been instituted. The relationship between these utopias and the future is indeed problematic, since the model is offered as a term of comparison with real society, i.e., it is used by the utopist to criticize the present and not to open new paths to the future. In fact, we can say that the concept of time, as we know it, has been banished from these utopias.

In order to understand the nature of this temporal rupture, we have to distinguish the concept of time from its correlates. To St Augustine time is successive; eternity exists simultaneously, being deprived of an anteriority and a posteriority; and perpetuity has a beginning but no ending. So, it is true to say that it is perpetuity that we find in the utopias of the Renaissance, as the inhabitants of those imagined places have an existence, but do not envision their lives as a process of becoming. Those utopias must then be seen as a means for the expression of the utopist's wishes, not of his hope. Confined to remote islands or unknown places, utopian wishes fail to be materialized. Only in the last decades of the eighteenth century are utopias to be placed in the future; and only then does the utopian wish give place to hope.

The projection of the utopian wishes into the future implied a change in the very nature of utopia – and thus a derivation neologism was born. From eu/utopia, the good/non-place, we move to euchronia, the good place in the future. The birth of euchronia was due to a change of mentality, presided over by the optimistic worldview that prevailed in Europe in the Enlightenment. In the Renaissance, man discovered that there were alternative options to the society he lived in, became aware of the infinite powers of reason and understood that the construction of the future was in his hands. In the Enlightenment, man discovered that reason could enable him not only to have a happy life, but also to reach human perfection. More's *Utopia* is the result of the discovery that occurred in the Renaissance; euchronia is the product of the new logic of the Enlightenment.

These discoveries of the Enlightenment were stimulated by another revolution that took place in the field of science. In fact, it was the development of the sciences (in general, and more specifically in the fields of geology and biology) that prepared man to outline new perspectives of the world and of himself. During the Enlightenment, by transferring scientific conclusions to the purely intellectual field, man grounded his optimistic worldview on a global theory of evolution, thus reaching relevant conclusions not only regarding the splendour that would await him in the future, but also regarding the social organization and the economic order of the society he lived in.

The theories of progress that pervaded European thought in the eighteenth century were born in France, a politically unsubmissive country, which was preparing its revolution. Describing the logic of progress in his lectures at the Sorbonne in 1750, Anne-Robert Turgot associated the idea of the inevitability of progress with the idea of infinite human perfectibility. And later in the century, in 1795, in his *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*, the Marquis de Condorcet added to this belief the idea that man has an important role to play in the process. According to Condorcet, progress was already being ensured by history; still, by resorting to science, man would be able to accelerate this improvement.

Inspired by the feeling of trust that characterized the Enlightenment, in 1771 the French writer Louis-Sébastien Mercier published the first euchronia, *L'An 2440: Un rêve s'il en fut jamais* (translated into English as *Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred*).⁸ By favouring the notion of time and offering a vision of a future of happiness, euchronia acquired a historical dimension. History was now envisaged as a process of infinite improvement, and utopia, in the spirit of euchronia, was presented as a synchronic representation of one of the rings in the chain of progress. By this process, the imagined society came closer to the historical reality the utopist experienced. By projecting the ideal society in the future, the utopian discourse enunciated a logic of causalities that presupposed that certain actions (namely those of a political nature) might afford the changes that were necessary in order to make the imagined society come true. In this way, utopias became dynamic, and promoted the idea that man had a role to fulfil.

Inherent in this projection of utopia into the future, and aiding the process of convergence of the utopian discourse with the historical reality, was a change at the spatial level, at which Mercier's utopia operated: it no longer made sense, at a time when the utopist believed that his ideals could be rendered concrete with the help of time, to place the imaginary society on a remote island or in an unknown, inaccessible place. Man's trust in his intellectual capacities was thus stretched to the social possibilities of his

country, and it was there that utopia was now to be located. Furthermore, as historical progress was believed to be inevitable, it affected not only the utopist's country, but all nations. The utopian project thus took on a universal dimension.

In France, the turning of utopian discourse towards the future took place in the second half of the eighteenth century, but in England this idea of infinite progress was only to be found among the intellectual elite, with strong connections to French theorization. In fact, this philosophy only took the shape of a popular ideology in England in the nineteenth century, associated with the benefits that were reserved to the nation by the process of industrialization. The optimistic logic that at the end of the eighteenth century led French utopists to the conception of an imaginary ideal society located in the future was thus not shared by the British utopists; and here lies the explanation for the fact that, for a whole century, echronias were exclusively French.

Although intellectually linked to French optimism, the British idea of progress has a story of its own, and is deeply rooted in British intellectual thought. We can find these roots, with some variants, in the writings of men such as Shaftesbury, Locke and Hume. And it was certainly this optimism that Pope and Swift criticized at the beginning of the British eighteenth century, giving way to a whole set of satirical utopias that made the reader disregard the idea of a perfect future. Indeed, the aim of these texts was to satirize the present through the criticism of an imagined society, and the result of this situation was that the constructive, positive spirit that should preside in utopian texts was in fact lost. It is true that in the utopias of the British Enlightenment we can still find a few examples of the Renaissance aim of suggesting serious alternatives to real society.⁹ However, with very few exceptions, these utopias were still based on the idea that only law would ensure social order, thus conveying a negative vision of man; in fact, it can be said that the prevailing tone of the eighteenth-century utopia was satirical, and so more destructive than constructive.

But although British literary utopias only revealed the influence of echronic belief towards the end of the nineteenth century, this belief was incorporated into political and philosophic essays of the last decades of the eighteenth century and of the whole nineteenth century. The reception of the French and the American revolutions in England undoubtedly played a very important role in this process. The announcement, by Thomas Paine, that his generation would 'appear to the future as the Adam of a new world' (*Rights of Man*, Part II, 1792), actually corresponded to his belief in a renovation of the natural order of things and his conviction that a system combining moral with political happiness would ensure a magnificent future.¹⁰ Through the

words of William Godwin (*Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, 1793), the idea of human perfectibility was promoted in Britain, providing the basis for the confidence that if man is properly raised and educated, he will wisely be able to put moral laws (that emanate from reason) into practice, making all the repressive artificial governmental laws irrelevant.¹¹ Godwin thus replaced the idea of the need for a political revolution with the idea of the need for a revolution of opinion. Although based on different premises and aims, both Paine and Godwin announced the birth of a new man and the coming of a new era. But it is important to note that this man was not to live on a remote or unknown island, but in the real, historical world of the future. With Paine and Godwin, British utopian thought thus became truly euchronic.

The wish to build euchronia, to make it real, can also be found in the thought of the so-called ‘utopian socialists’. In fact, when Henri de Saint-Simon put forward the idea that the Golden Age was not to be found in the past but in the future, he was conveying the belief that it is up to man to conceive plans for the reconstruction of society and to put them into practice. Utopian socialism clearly cannot be seen as a homogeneous movement, not only because it was promoted by intellectuals with rather different backgrounds and dealing with divergent realities (Henri de Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier lived in a still rural France whereas Robert Owen defined his thought within the framework of industrial Britain), but also because their plans for the reconstruction of society were dissimilar. They all believed, though, that those who, like themselves, were able to conceive strategies in order to change society were morally obliged to do so. These plans were put forward by the utopian socialists based on a scientific analysis of the way society was organized. It cannot be forgotten that it was Marx and Engels who considered their plans utopian (in a negative sense), as they disregarded the forces of history and were rooted in the belief that strategies conceived by men of genius would be enough to change the world; for the modern socialists, who claimed for themselves a scientific view of history, the idea that history might obey reason did indeed seem absurd. But if possible the so-called utopian socialists would have refuted that label, as they conceived plans to be effectively put into practice. Indeed, Robert Owen, in particular, was not only a seer, but also a doer. In the community of New Lanark in Scotland, as well as in that of New Harmony in Indiana, Owen set the basis for the creation of what he called ‘a new moral world’, inhabited by those who would have adhered to a new religion, which would have given them the needed ethical support – the religion of humanity.

Owen’s utopian thought is important for an understanding of how British political thought was impregnated with a utopian perspective at a time

when Owenism and socialism were seen as synonymous and interchangeable words. And even though Marx and Engels criticized Owen and his contemporaries for having believed that a single man could change the world, they recognized that the utopian socialists were revolutionary for their time, as they put forward valid and innovative proposals and experimented with alternative communitarian ways of organizing society, paving the way for the acceptance of the idea that things might effectively be changed.

Although they claimed their theories to be scientific, the truth is that both Marx and Engels's thought was clearly utopian, in that it pointed to the future and offered promising images of freedom, stability and happiness. Based on the idea that as the capitalist modes of production caused the feudal world to disintegrate, so would industrial competition cause the destruction of the capitalist system, Marx and Engels believed that the improvement of machinery – an imperative dictated by the laws of competition – would lead to cyclical situations of a surplus of production, and eventually to the collapse of capitalist society. History itself would cause the destruction of capitalism (theory of historical materialism) but men would necessarily have to help in order to speed up this process (theory of dialectical materialism). After a period of revolution, the state would temporarily be the only owner of all the means of production (dictatorship of the proletariat). There would be no more class division, as the state itself would be revealed as dispensable. New, ethical men and women would be born and would fully assert their humanity.

If Marx and Engels's theories of historical and dialectical materialism are supposed to be scientific, the images of the future resulting from the political revolution are no doubt speculative. In fact, in *The German Ideology* (1845), the description of the psychological revolution that would inevitably follow the political one can only be described as a socialist-communist utopia: the alteration of the economic relations between individuals would lead to the birth of a new species, capable of harmoniously interacting with others; once the system of the division of labour – which forces individuals to assert themselves as a mere extension of the process of production – is extinguished, the differences between the countryside and the cities would be diluted, and people would be able to assert themselves as spontaneous, voluntary and eclectic workers; this transformation of the way man faces work would be reflected in a myriad of harmonious relationships with other men and women and with nature itself.¹²

The idea that both Marx and Engels incorporated a utopian perspective into their thought is particularly important for the understanding of the development of utopian thought and literature; indeed, the fact that Marxism (which in the second half of the nineteenth century was the

predominant form of socialism) systematically insisted on an anti-utopian discourse could lead us to the erroneous conclusion that it would cause the progressive emaciation of utopia, until its irreversible disappearance. However, Marxism not only did not provoke the death of utopian thought, but instead forced its transformation, a situation that was crucial to its success. As Karl Mannheim pointed out in *Ideology and Utopia* (1929), this transformation was denoted in the way the future came to be perceived: as the time of fulfilment of ideas that were not to be faced as mere dreams or wishes, but as something that was to be achieved.¹³ Marxism in fact merged the sentiment of determinism provided by its scientific theories with the idea of a utopia set in the future, thus redefining utopia in terms of reality: on the one hand, the idea was presented as something essentially accomplishable at the end of the historic process; on the other hand, the way this would be done had already been clearly delimited. The present should therefore be seen in terms of its fulfilment in the future.

This perception of time was the most important change that Marxist thought effected in utopian literature, as it saw the fulfilment of utopia as part of historical development. Having absorbed the way Marxism conceived the future, literary utopias of the last decades of the nineteenth century – of which William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890) is no doubt the best example¹⁴ – faced history as a process of growth of humanity, until it would reach a mature state, from which the ideal society would finally emerge. These utopias were thus truly euhchronic, as they normally described a post-historical socialist-communist society on a world-scale. In fact, for Marx, as for Engels, history would only make sense if it was universal.

The turning of British literary utopia towards the future, at the end of the nineteenth century, must be seen as the climax of a change that gradually took place at the end of the eighteenth century. In reality, many of the ideas that integrated the Marxist doctrine, and particularly those that we have described as the socialist-communist utopia (the birth of a new man, the non-essential nature of the state, the importance of work for the affirmation of man's humanity), were but reformulations of ideas that Paine, Godwin and Owen, as well as the other utopian socialists, had already put forward in a different way. All these men had, in fact, already looked at the future with a hope they all tried to justify and divulge. But only Marxist thought was able to find in the laws of historical evolution a basis for that hope, thus taking on the role of the most important promoter of the idea of the possibility of a future full of happiness. We are, no doubt, very far away from the French literary euhchronia written by Mercier. In fact, the French writer looked at the future motivated by a feeling of hope arising from the theories of infinite improvement of the Enlightenment, and which was reflected in

material (scientific) and moral progress. To Mercier, progress was in fact to be faced as an attribute of man himself, and was reflected in his ability to change social and political institutions. English literary utopias, influenced by Marxism, regarded the future as a promise of history, and were based on a logic which opposed that of Mercier: the birth of the new man would only take place after the economic situation of society had changed. It was then urgent for man to take action, and to hasten the transformation. In this sense, socialist-communist utopias were particularly revolutionary; but they were also dynamic: utopia was no longer seen as a rigid, finished model, but as a guiding principle that could even be transcended. In fact, it has often been forgotten that communism was presented by Marx as the active principle for a short-term future that could be transcended by a later evolution towards a positive humanism.

**From hope to disbelief and despair:
satirical utopia, anti-utopia and dystopia**

So far, we have merely looked at the positive side of utopia – utopia as a better place or time, a portrait of a happy society. But utopia also has a ‘dark side’, which was only overtly disclosed in the literary utopias of the nineteenth century. As we will see, the dark side is related to the turning of utopia towards the future, on the one hand, and to the idea of scientific and technological progress, on the other. The story of the darker side goes back to the eighteenth century, though, and is related to two other literary sub-genres: satirical utopia and anti-utopia.

As we have seen in the previous section, the eighteenth century was characterized by an unusual trust in man’s capacities. This confidence led man to think highly of himself and to believe that he would be able to transcend his human limitations. For many intellectuals of the eighteenth century, man was aspiring too high, which would inevitably lead to his fall. Although, as we said above, there were a few examples of serious proposals for the reordering of society, the majority of the literary utopias of that period offered a mirror where man would not be able to see his reflection but only that of a much distorted image of humanity. In those literary utopias, the journey to utopia, as well as the setting and nature of the utopian space, had no particular social relevance. While the utopias of the Renaissance had tried to confer verisimilitude on the description of the imaginary society by setting it in a distant, unknown part of the world, the satirical utopia overtly set the imaginary society in places which could neither possibly exist nor be reached, due to technological and biological impossibilities. Those places were really not important *per se*; in fact, they were only worth looking at

insofar as they existed as opposite worlds. That is why the description of the organization of the imaginary society was quite often discarded as irrelevant, the narrative being centred on the adventures of the utopian traveller. Such was the case, for example, of the protagonist of *Gulliver's Travels* (1726); in this book by Jonathan Swift, the reader's attention is in fact captivated by Gulliver's presumably brilliant – but in reality very narrow-minded – schemes to survive in the rather silly worlds he visits. The result is that, in the end, it is the real world which is valued, and thus the positive dynamic which is typical of utopia is lost.¹⁵

But the scepticism of the conservative eighteenth-century intellectuals also gave birth to anti-utopia. This literary form could never have come into existence without the literary utopia, as it shares its strategies and its narrative artifices; it points, however, in a completely opposite direction. If utopia is about hope, and satirical utopia is about distrust, anti-utopia is clearly about total disbelief. In fact, in the anti-utopias of the eighteenth century, it was the utopian spirit itself which was ridiculed; their only aim was to denounce the irrelevance and inconsistency of utopian dreaming and the ruin of society it might entail.

When the idea of euechronia came to be systematically promoted (i.e., when utopian thought turned towards the future), it was inevitably accompanied by the imagination of darker times. The idea of 'utopia gone wrong' was not naturally born then, though: from time immemorial people have thought about the possibility of the construction of a better world, but they have also been aware of the likelihood of a future which might be worse than the present. As in the case of utopia, the concept of dystopia preceded the invention of the word.

The first recorded use of dystopia (which is another derivation neologism) dates back to 1868, and is to be found in a parliamentary speech in which John Stuart Mill tried to find a name for a perspective which was opposite to that of utopia: if utopia was commonly seen as 'too good to be practicable', then dystopia was 'too bad to be practicable'.¹⁶ In that speech, Mill used the word dystopia as synonymous with cacotopia, a neologism that had been invented by Jeremy Bentham; and the two words have in fact a similar etymology and intention: *dys* comes from the Greek *dus*, and means bad, abnormal, diseased; *caco* comes from the Greek *kako*, which is used to refer to something which is unpleasant or incorrect. Since Mill's speech, many other designations have been put forward by different authors to refer to the idea of utopia gone wrong (such as negative utopia, regressive utopia, inverse utopia or nasty utopia), but Mill's neologism has prevailed.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, euechronias had gained their place both in France and in England (but also in the United States), although,

as we have seen, the idea of a better future was nourished by different perspectives and beliefs. Predictably, the contemplation of a worse future also affected utopia as a literary genre. Thus, the word dystopia came into usage not only to refer to imaginary places that were worse than real places, but also to works describing places such as these.

Literary dystopia utilizes the narrative devices of literary utopia, incorporating into its logic the principles of *euchronia* (i.e., imagining what the same place – the place where the utopist lives – will be like in another time – the future), but predicts that things will turn out badly; it is thus essentially pessimistic in its presentation of projective images.

But although the images of the future put forward in dystopias may lead the reader to despair, the main aim of this sub-genre is didactic and moralistic: images of the future are put forward as real possibilities because the utopist wants to frighten the reader and to make him realize that things may go either right or wrong, depending on the moral, social and civic responsibility of the citizens. A descendant of satirical utopia and of anti-utopia, dystopia rejects the idea that man can reach perfection. But although the writers of dystopias present very negative images of the future, they expect a very positive reaction on the part of their readers: on the one hand, the readers are led to realize that all human beings have (and will always have) flaws, and so social improvement – rather than individual improvement – is the only way to ensure social and political happiness; on the other hand, the readers are to understand that the depicted future is not a reality but only a possibility that they have to learn to avoid. If dystopias provoke despair on the part of the readers, it is because their writers want their readers to take them as a serious menace; they differ, though, in intent, from apocalyptic writings that confront man with the horror of the end of society and humanity. Dystopias that leave no room for hope do in fact fail in their mission. Their true vocation is to make man realize that, since it is impossible for him to build an ideal society, then he must be committed to the construction of a better one. The writers of dystopias that have been published in the last three decades, in particular, have tried to make it very clear to their readers that there is still a chance for humanity to escape, normally offering a glimmer of hope at the very end of the narrative; because of this, these utopias have often been called critical dystopias. They are, in fact, a variant of the same social dreaming that gives impetus to utopian literature.¹⁷

The optimistic view of the future that fed nineteenth-century *euchronias* met its end at the beginning of the twentieth century, and set the tone, with a few exceptions, for the whole century. It is true that there was a very brief moment of confidence, at the very end of the 1960s and in the 1970s, which was clearly linked to the students' movement of May 1968.

During those few years, utopia was fed by the hope of change put forward by ecologist, feminist and New Left thinkers. Still, those euchronic writings already revealed a different attitude towards utopian thinking, presenting views of a better future, but by no means a perfect future. The awareness of the existing flaws in imagined societies had a positive intent, though: they aimed at making the readers keep looking for alternatives. Because of this, they came to be called critical utopias. But apart from these years, the twentieth century was predominantly characterized by man's disappointment – and even incredulity – at the perception of his own nature, mostly when his terrifying deeds throughout the two World Wars were considered. In this context, utopian ideals seemed absurd; and the floor was inevitably left to dystopian discourse. In the second half of the twentieth century, in particular, dystopias became the predominant genre in the United States.

Two ideas, which are intimately connected, have fed dystopian discourse: on the one hand, the idea of totalitarianism; on the other hand, the idea of scientific and technological progress which, instead of impelling humanity to prosper, has sometimes been instrumental in the establishment of dictatorships. The first images of a future where the results of scientific and technological progress were misused are to be found in the canonical dystopias of the Russian writer Yevgeny Zamyatin (*We*, 1921), Aldous Huxley (*Brave New World*, 1932), and George Orwell (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 1949), and have, in fact, inspired generations of authors.¹⁸ Mainly from the 1970s until the present, dystopias, nourished by projective images of scientific and technological advancement, have in fact been frequently confused with science fiction (which, as we have seen above, has also acquired a more acute political vocation).

Heterotopia is another neologism which is frequently used regarding dystopia. This neologism is of a different kind from the ones that we mentioned above. In fact, it was created as a medical term to refer to a misplacement of organs in the human body. When the French theorist Michel Foucault used the term heterotopia out of the context of medical usage, it had already been deneologized in that field; as it was new only insofar as it was being used in a different context, the word heterotopia can be classified as a diaphasic neologism. Heterotopian spaces are spaces that present an order which is completely different – even opposite – to that of real spaces. Within the context of dystopian literature, heterotopias represent a kind of a haven for the protagonists, and are very often to be found in their memories, in their dreams, or in places which, for some reason, are out of the reach of the invigilation system which normally prevails in those societies.¹⁹

The death of utopia? Political and philosophic utopias

In recent years, several anti-utopian authors have declared that utopia is on the verge of disappearing – if it is not dead already. These authors have grounded their claims on the idea that we are now witnessing a moment of cultural retreat, as well as of a vanishing of real political convictions, and envisage the fact that contemporary writers seem to be capable of writing dystopias only as a very clear sign of man's incapacity to put forward positive images of the future. The topic of the death of utopia is by no means new, and it dominated the intellectual discussion of the 1950s and the 1960s.²⁰ The prediction of such a death has been mainly grounded on three reasons.

The first reason – which is really the most common – is related to utopia as a literary genre; this is, however, a false reason. In fact, what we have witnessed, since the creation of utopia by Thomas More in 1516, is the history of an amazing survival of the literary genre, which has indeed been capable of adapting itself to the demands of new times. Actually, to each historical moment, utopian literature put forward made-to-measure solutions; and when those solutions seemed to be no longer suited to the problems posed by new historical circumstances, the announcement of the death of utopias seemed to be inevitable. This announcement was based, though, on confusion between the form (the literary genre) and content (the message). We can no doubt accept the idea of the death of the utopias of the Renaissance, of the utopias of the Enlightenment or of socialist utopias, in the sense that the solutions that they put forward had short-term relevance and ceased to be applicable to subsequent historical moments. The idea of the death of utopia as a literary genre is absurd, though. In effect, utopia has in the last two decades proved once more to be versatile and capable of adapting itself to the demands of the new world and to the technological interests of the younger generations. By adopting the logic of the narrative construction of hyperfiction,²¹ utopia has in fact transformed itself into something that can best be described by a derivation neologism: hyperutopia. Posted on the Internet and relying on an assemblage of texts connected by Internet links, hyperutopia forces its reader to deal with the problems of multilinear reading, of the abolition of the idea of centre and margins, as well as of all forms of hierarchies. In fact, it is for the reader to decide which links are to be activated, each reading of the texts corresponding to a different interpretation. In the virtual space of the Internet, hyperutopia is the actual proof of utopia's capacity for change and will certainly ensure the survival of literary utopias – until the day the development of some new technologies leads us to more utopian (re)inventions.²²

The second reason which has led anti-utopian thinkers to proclaim the death of utopia has to do with its identification with Marxist ideology, which dominated intellectual discussion throughout the second half of the twentieth century. It was first asserted by Karl Popper, in his famous book *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1945), where in a rather abusive way the philosopher put utopian and Marxist thought at the same level, denouncing both for being fed by a wish to construct a radically new, beautiful world at the cost of the sacrifice of good things that exist in the present.²³ The same reasoning was employed by a considerable number of authors of the 1950s and the 1960s. In fact, at that time, the theme of the death of utopia was intimately related to the ideas of the end of philosophy, the end of ideology and the end of history.

The third reason for the announcement of the death of utopia is, paradoxically, connected with a very positive view of the possibilities of changing society, and was the result of the revival of utopian spirit that took place in the late 1960s and 1970s. Representing this optimistic trend, Herbert Marcuse announced, in 1967, that the end of utopia was finally possible because all the material and intellectual forces that would enable change were already within the reach of man, who would only have to find a way to overcome the difficulties posed by the productive forces.²⁴

Having looked at these reasons for the possible death of utopia, it is easy to see that this feeling has arisen due to the misconception that utopia must have a political agenda, which is to be fulfilled. This situation forces us to think about the nature of utopia: is it not possible for utopia to exist without an underlying political plan?

In order to answer this question, we first have to consider the very nature of utopia. As we have seen, utopian thought, defined as the tendency for man to think of an alternative when he lives in unfavourable circumstances, clearly preceded the invention of the word by Thomas More at the beginning of the sixteenth century. In fact, it could not have been otherwise, as utopian thought has an anthropological dimension, and must be seen as a manifestation of the wishing nature of man. This nature reveals itself in times when man is particularly discontent; in this way, the act of imagining, of creating what does not exist yet (to use Ernst Bloch's idea), is justified, on the one hand, by the very disposition of man towards utopia, and is aroused, on the other hand, by his dissatisfaction with the circumstances in which he lives.²⁵

Actually, the idea of the death of utopia derives from a very common confusion of the concepts of utopia, project and ideology: utopia is innate to man and has a perennial and immeasurable nature; by contrast, ideological projects are provisional solutions to transitory problems. Utopia may well

be nourished by a project, but its strength is not totally exhausted by it; it has an energy of its own, which outlives the blueprint. We can certainly understand this better if we bear in mind the distinction, suggested by Ernst Bloch, between ideal and idealization.²⁶ Utopia belongs to the realm of the ideal, whereas the project belongs to the realm of idealization. Political-ideological utopia derives from the coincidence of the ideal with the idealization; and if it seems to have a short lifetime, this is because the idealization cannot, by nature, overcome the frontiers of the problems it tries to solve. The utopian ideal, however, is nourished by an immeasurable and perennial desire – a surplus of desire – which not only ensures the survival of utopia, but also its dynamic nature.

The distinction between the concepts of ideal and idealization provides us with a basis for the understanding of the difference between the political utopia and the philosophical utopia, as well as with an explanation for the fact that only sometimes is utopia capable of fulfilling its catalytic function, that is, of inspiring man to take action.²⁷ The political vocation of utopia was particularly apparent in the seventeenth century in England, in the works of Winstanley and Harrington, for example, and even more systematically promoted in the nineteenth century in the works of utopists such as the British designer and writer William Morris or the American writer Edward Bellamy, where the entanglement of utopia and socialist thought was more obvious.

However, as we have seen, the twentieth century was mostly nourished by dystopian (if not completely disenchanted) images of the future. Actually, in spite of the very inspiring critical works of thinkers such as Ernst Bloch (1885–1977) and Karl Mannheim (1893–1947), the catalytic function of utopia was only revealed in the late 1960s and in the 1970s, cherished by the hope of feminist, ecological and New Left thinkers. But what has become of utopia at the dawn of the new millennium?

Utopia today

The world is experiencing a grave crisis; the nature of our predicament is economic, environmental, social and political, but it is certainly also philosophical. Throughout history, utopia has been subject to similar pressures – will it not have a role to play this time? Looking around, it seems that utopia has been replaced by images of a very unsatisfactory present, or, in the case of utopian literature, by images of a dystopian future. Has man lost his capacity to think of alternatives? Is utopia, in fact, finally on the verge of death?

Neither utopia as a concept nor as a literary genre is moribund; on the contrary, it is alive and well. We may have some difficulty in recognizing it

because, once more, it has given proof of its extraordinary capacity to survive by reinventing itself. This process of reinvention has been dictated by the common confusion we mentioned above between utopia and political blueprints. At the end of the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth century, utopia was too easily identified with socialist-communist projects, as well as with the idea of totalitarianism. The two World Wars, Hitler's utopian aspiration to 'purify the human race' and the collapse of the communist regimes all over the world led people to retreat from dreaming and forced them to adopt a very realistic perspective. Stigmatized by the ideas of impossibility and totalitarianism, utopian thought underwent an expressive change, and redefined its scope of action.

Although it did not abandon the idea of the future, utopian thought began to face it in a more short-term way. In fact, the vision of a completely different future, based on the annihilation of the present, which had been put forward by the political utopias of the nineteenth century, was replaced by a focus on a slower but effective change of the present. Utopia has then reshaped its nature and, by emphasizing its pragmatic features, it came to be associated with the idea of social betterment. Actually, the more usual formula promoted by an increasing number of authors would some decades ago have been considered a paradox – the idea of pragmatic utopianism. Abandoning the idea of blueprints and the need to define ambitious targets to be reached, utopia is now asserted as a process, and is incorporated in the daily construction of life in society.²⁸ There has no doubt been a significant shift: utopia no longer aspires to change the world at a macro-level, and is focused now on operating at a micro-level.²⁹ Inevitably, a new set of concepts has become part of utopian discourse: being envisaged mainly as a process of transformation, utopia incorporated the idea of possibilism, and the thought of a sustainable utopianism took shape.

However, the concept of a pragmatic utopia must not be seen as a betrayal of the utopian visions of old times. Utopia has certainly not lost its critical perspective of the present; instead, it has become more relevant to the transformation of society: it continues to question, and the desire to accomplish effective change is still alive. However, the idea of a blueprint has been replaced by the idea of vaguer guidelines, indicating a direction for man to follow, but never a point to be reached. Contemporary utopianism is in fact dynamic, as it is nourished by the Blochian concept of a surplus of desire.

From this perspective, we can clearly see the functions that contemporary utopian thought has to fulfil. If it is true that its compensatory function has been rendered more visible, it is also true that its critical function has been reinforced, since the present is now seen not as a reality that has to be destroyed and replaced by a totally different society, but as a time-space from

which we need to depart. By establishing horizons of expectations (with the inevitable awareness that they will never be reached), utopias guide man to the reinvention and the reconstruction of humanity, and thus lead him to his emancipation. By this process, utopia also performs an expressive catalytic function.

Utopia is thus to be seen essentially as a strategy. By imagining another reality, in a virtual present or in a hypothetical future, utopia is set as a strategy for the questioning of reality and of the present. Taking mainly the shape of a process, refusing the label of an 'impossible dream', utopia is a programme for change and for a gradual betterment of the present; in that sense, it operates at different levels, as a means towards political, economic, social, moral and pedagogical reorientation. At last, utopia has become a strategy of creativity, clearing the way for the only path that man can possibly follow: the path of creation. By incorporating into its logic the dynamic of dreams and using creativity as its very driving force, utopia reveals itself as the (only possible?) sustainable scheme for overcoming the contemporary crisis.

NOTES

- 1 There are several moments in the creation of a neologism: (1) the moment when it is created; (2) the moment when it is received and starts being used by a given group; (3) the moment when it is *deneologized*, in other words when it ceases to sound unusual and is incorporated into the lexicon of that group.
- 2 On the importance of the idea of otherness for the definition of utopia, see Louis Marin, 'Frontiers of Utopia: Past and Present', *Critical Inquiry* 19:3 (1993), 403–11, and Darko Suvin, 'Theses on Dystopia 2001', in Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini (eds.), *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 187–201.
- 3 For a thorough analysis of these characteristics see Ruth Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia* (New York: Philip Allan, 1990).
- 4 Raymond Ruyer famously described these possible alternatives as *the possible laterals* in *L'Utopie et les utopies* (Paris: P.U.F., 1950). The concept of *not-yet*, which forms the ontological structure of Ernst Bloch's thought, is very important for the understanding of utopia as the principle of hope, since it presents the universe as an open system where nothing is static and where everything is in a constant process of formation. *Not-yet* is in fact the driving force of the idea of possibility for the future.
- 5 On the need for a distinction between utopianism and utopia as a literary genre, see Raymond Trousson, *Voyages aux Pays de Nulle Part: Histoire de la Pensée Utopique* (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1979) and Vita Fortunati, 'Utopia as a Literary Genre', in Vita Fortunati and Raymond Trousson (eds.), *Dictionary of Literary Utopias* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2000), pp. 634–43. Lyman Sargent suggests utopianism has been expressed in three different forms: utopian literature, communitarianism and utopian social theory in 'The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited', *Utopian Studies* 5:1 (1994), 1–37.

- 6 For a description of the utopian motifs (tempests, shipwrecks ...) and of recurrent characters in utopian literature, see Vita Fortunati, 'Fictional Strategies and Political Messages in Utopias', in Nadia Minerva (ed.), *Per una definizione dell'utopia: Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Bagni di Lucca, 12-14 settembre 1990* (Ravenna: Longo, 1992). On the importance of the voyage in utopia, see Marin, 'Frontiers of Utopia'.
- 7 Several authors, such as Darko Suvin in *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979) and Lyman Tower Sargent, 'The Problem of the Flawed Utopia', in Moylan and Baccolini (eds.), *Dark Horizons*, pp. 225-31, have refused to integrate the idea of perfection into the notion of utopia. On the argument that the idea of flaw is closer to utopia than the idea of perfection, see Sargent, 'The Problem'.
- 8 Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *L'An 2440: Un rêve s'il en fut jamais* (translated into English as *Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred*) (1771).
- 9 The publication of *Utopias of the British Enlightenment* by Gregory Claeys (Cambridge University Press, 1994) was very important in that sense, as it shed light on utopias that had literally been forgotten and that put forward constructive views of positive societies. Such is the case of 'Ideal of a Perfect Commonwealth', by David Hume, and 'Description of "New Athens"', by Ambrose Philips, included in that volume.
- 10 Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*, Part I (J. S. Jordan: London, 1791), Part II (1792).
- 11 William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (London: G. G. J. and J. Robinson, 1793).
- 12 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (1845) (Moscow: Marx-Engels Institute, 1932).
- 13 Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (1929) (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1936).
- 14 William Morris, *News from Nowhere* (London: Kelmscott Press, 1892).
- 15 The background to satirical utopia is Greek satire. The latter is in fact a *pre-figuration* of the former, just as the myth of the Golden Age is a prefiguration of utopia itself.
- 16 John Stuart Mill, *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill: Public and Parliamentary Speeches Part I November 1850–November 1868*, ed. John M. Robson and Bruce L. Kinzer (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press and Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1988), vol. 28, ch. 88, 'The State of Ireland 12 March, 1868'.
- 17 On the idea of critical utopias and dystopias, see Tom Moylan, *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination* (New York: Methuen, 1987) and Moylan and Baccolini (eds.), *Dark Horizons*.
- 18 Yevgeny Zamyatin, *We* (1921) (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970); Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1932); George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1949).
- 19 For a thorough analysis of the ways the word heterotopia has been used, see Kevin Hetherington, *The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering* (London: Routledge, 1997).

- 20 Some good examples of this attitude can be found in Judith Shklar, *After Utopia: The Decline of Political Faith* (Princeton University Press, 1957), Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man* (London: Heinemann, 1960), Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1960) and Raymond Aron, *Eighteen Lectures on Industrial Society* (New York: Free Press, 1962).
- 21 The concept of hyperfiction results from the conjugation of two notions: hypertext and fiction. Hypertext opened up the possibility of non-sequential reading and thus a different reading on the part of the reader, according to his/her interest in the information conveyed.
- 22 Hyperutopias differ from both micronations and virtual communities in that they describe imaginary countries, reporting with careful detail the invented political, economic, social and religious systems. Relying on cyborg aesthetics, hyperutopias are 'open texts' and must be seen as pieces of literature that materialize the experiment in hypertextual literature. For a good example of a hyperutopia, see the country of Bergonia (www.bergonia.org).
- 23 Karl Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1945) rev. edn (Princeton University Press, 1950).
- 24 Herbert Marcuse, *La Fin de l'Utopie* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1967). In fact Marcuse gave voice to an optimistic view of the future which characterized the 1970s, when, as Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan have pointed out in *Dark Horizons* (2003), ecological, feminist and New Left thought gave shape to a utopian revival.
- 25 On the anthropological disposition of the human being towards utopia, see Frank and Fritzie Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1979), Vincent Geoghegan, *Utopianism and Marxism* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008) and Cosimo Quarta, 'Homo Utopicus: On the Need for Utopia', *Utopian Studies* 7:2 (1996), 153–66. For a contrary view see Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia* and Krishnan Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987).
- 26 For an elaboration on the distinction between the concepts of *ideal* and *idealization*, see Henri Maler, *Convoiter l'Impossible* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1995).
- 27 On the discussion of the need for a distinction between philosophical and political utopias, see Adalberto Dias de Carvalho, 'From Contemporary Utopias to Contemporaneity as a Utopia', in Fátima Vieira and Marinela Freitas (eds.), *Utopia Matters: Theory, Politics, Literature and the Arts* (Porto: Editora University Press, 2005), pp. 63–80.
- 28 Good examples of this shift can be found in Lucy Sargisson, *Utopian Bodies and the Politics of Transgression* (London: Routledge, 2000), Arrigo Colombo, 'The New Sense of Utopia: The Construction of a Society Based on Justice', *Utopian Studies* 11:2 (2000), 181–97, Eric McKenna, *The Task of Utopia: Politics and Culture in an Age of Apathy* (New York: Basic Books, 2001) and Michael Marien, 'Utopia Revisited: New Thinking on Social Betterment', *The Futurist* 36:2 (March/April, 2002), 37–43.
- 29 Recent literary utopias reflect this new utopian attitude. See Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (London: Verso, 2007) for a description of the way utopias have become auto-referential and meta-utopian.

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