

Hospitality, Reciprocity, and Asymmetry

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Abstract: I maintain the flower and honeybee facultative mutualism is an unusual persistent utopia. First, it involves multiple earth species who constitute a social group. Second, it has existed for a million years. It also achieves utopian objectives of the elimination of property and sovereignty within the social group. This study shows how this is achieved, compares this utopia to others, and suggests a new way of thinking about utopias.

Key Words: Abensour; Asymmetry; Hospitality; Levinas; Mutualism; Responsibility, Utopia.

Introduction

The utopia of the flower and honeybee facultative mutualism emerges from hospitality¹. Without hospitality, the facultative mutualism could not consummate. Hospitality is unconditional and reciprocal between honeybee and flower during the event of hospitality. However, flowers compete with other flowers for sunlight, water, minerals, and space, and honeybees defend their hive against raiding bees/wasps from other hives². The flower and honeybee facultative mutualism is a social group where hospitality is freely given and has evolved over millions of years. As a facultative mutualism, both species benefit from each other for one life function: the honeybee on the flower for nourishment, and the flower on the honeybee for pollination³. The flower exploits the honeybee's flight capabilities; the honeybee exploits the flower's nectar and pollen making abilities. They do not compete for

¹ Honeybees are a discrete species with regional variants. 'Flowers' in this study refer to those flower species that attract honeybees.

² See: SCHIFFERS et al. 2011

³ See: BRONSTEIN 2015: 11.

a common resource. Therefore, they have not developed rules to avoid conflict. Their interactions are constrained; they do not intentionally harm each other⁴. Their hospitality facilitates reciprocal responsibility. This reciprocal responsibility is partially aligned with Emmanuel Levinas's responsibility to the other but is also at odds with his human asymmetrical responsibility because flowers and honeybees are reciprocally responsible to each other⁵. Levinas's asymmetrical responsibility ethic addresses humanity's competition for scarce resources; flowers and honeybees do not compete for any common resource.

I maintain that the flower and honeybee facultative mutualism is a utopia that has existed for a million years, and with their predecessors, perhaps one hundred million years, surviving the dinosaur extinction⁶. This utopia emerged from Darwinian evolution; each has co-evolved to require the services of the other⁷. Both species are different morphologically, how they obtain energy, and the flower has no nervous system⁸. Both are intentional creatures and can respond to stimuli from the environment⁹. They both exhibit Humean passion and reason through focused intentionality and optimal decision-making¹⁰.

There are four constructs this study considers: flowers and honeybees, Thomas More's Utopia, the hospitality tradition from in Judges 4 in the Bible, and Levinas's responsibility ethic. All involve some loss of individual freedom. All but flowers and honeybees involve the negotiation of common resources to mitigate conflict. The problem of scarce common resources is difficult to mitigate even for a utopia founded upon hospitality, sharing, and responsibility to the other. The flower and honeybee facultative mutualism shows that a persistent utopia does not require all activities of the participants, shared resources, a sovereign, or one species. An example of thinking utopia differently that will be explored later is the tripartite relationship between flowers, honeybees, and humans that has persisted for many thousands of years, has no common resource, multiple species, and no

⁴ See: SINGER 1981, 2011: 11.

⁵ See: LEVINAS 1969: 215.

⁶ See: LABANDEIRA et al. 1994: 122-278; See also: SOLTIS et al.: 2018.

⁷ See: KITCHER 2012: 7.

⁸ See: TREWAVAS 2014, GOULD 1990, GOULD and GOULD 1988, SEELEY 1995, MARDER 2011, 2013a.

⁹ See: MARDER 2012, 2013c, TREWAVAS 2014.

¹⁰ See: HUME 1882: 195, Volume II.

sovereign¹¹. First, the four constructs this study considers need further explanation to discover each of the challenges that each must deal with and try to overcome.

More's Utopia

In More's Utopia, residents give hospitality to other members of Utopia but the society itself is wary of outsiders. So wary of other others, its founder Utopus cut Utopia from the mainland to make it an island. Miguel Abensour says:

Is not indeed one of the definitions of persistent utopia freeing people from fear, from everything fear brings, in order to give birth to a condition in which liberation is conceived, practiced, sought, by shaking off sovereignty, dissociating itself, emancipating itself from the grip of sovereignty (ABENSOUR 2008: 419)?

In order to remain a persistent utopia, the participants of a utopia should be dissociated from the grip of sovereignty, and a most convenient way to do so is to make it invisible to other societies or, like More's island, difficult to get to¹². Fiction is replete with examples of utopias that become dystopic after being discovered and corrupted by humans or others who exist in other than utopian societies¹³.

According to Fatima Viera, Thomas More's Utopia is both a «non-place» and a «good-place» (VIEIRA 2010: 5). It is a place outside of time, but not outside of mind where it exists in the imagination as the possibility for something better, or as Ernest Bloch suggests, in the realm called «hope» (VIEIRA 2010: 6). Beginning with More, many utopic representations are apart from other societies. Separation and segregation of the utopia from other societies means that hospitality protocol does not have to consider the other, the outsider guest, in terms of the threat that the guest may pose to the host. In the real other-

¹¹ There are many flowering plant species in this relationship.

¹² E.g.: The Garden of Eden, *Brigadoon* from the eponymous musical appears one day in a hundred years; the *City of the Sun* (Tommaso Campanella), encircled by seven walls; Sir Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*, an Island; B.F. Skinner's *Walden Two* (1948) is a fictional society separated from the main even though it introduces fictional outsiders to its utopian culture.

¹³ Karel Capek's *War With the Newts* (1947) depicts the fall and rise of a sentient species of newts that will break free from and conquer repressive humans before they themselves succumb to the same deficiencies that brought humanity to the brink of extinction.

than-utopian world, the threat of the other is real. Human hospitality has long struggled to address the juxtaposition of risk of the stranger and the wealth of the host.

Judges 4: Hospitality as a Time-Limited Conditional Utopia

In biblical times, nomadic people interacted with merchants and townspeople. A protocol of hospitality was developed that required certain behaviors from both the host and guest. Victor H. Matthews outlines this protocol for hospitality from *Judges 4* of the Bible at the time Hebraic texts were written. First, there is a zone of hospitality that is different in size for the individual, home, or city (MATTHEWS 1991: 13). Second, «The stranger must be transformed from being a potential threat to becoming ally by the offer of hospitality» (MATTHEWS 1991: 14). The offer of hospitality itself serves to invite the neutralization of the threat. However, Jacques Derrida suggests that there is more to this offer of hospitality than the neutralization of the threat. He suggests that today there is a fundamental role reversal between host and guest (DERRIDA 1999: 56). The host is sovereign of the threshold but suspends that sovereignty to serve the guest and thus becomes hostage to the guest in his/her own home. While Matthews's protocol does not directly suggest this role reversal, his protocol gives the guest rights that are in line with Derrida's assertion. Matthew's next three protocols are, 3) that only a male head of the household or village may offer hospitality, 4) there is a time limit to the hospitality, and 5) this offer can be refused (MATTHEWS 1991: 14). While there is much patriarchy in the Bible, the protocol suggests that there is a designated person in society or the home who offers hospitality and negotiates the time of hospitality with the guest. Should the offer of hospitality be refused, the threat is not diffused and conflict may ensue (MATTHEWS 1991: 14). Sixth, the guest must not appear to covet the possessions of the host, but the host must offer the best of the house (MATTHEWS 1991: 15). This notion of offering the best of the house is absurdly expressed in Pierre Klossowski's satirical 1953 novel, *Roberte Ce Soir*, where the posted rules of hospitality implore guests to have their way with the spouse of the host¹⁴. Finally, Matthew's seventh protocol is, «The

¹⁴ See: KLOSSOWSKI 1953, 2002.

guest remains under the protection of the host until he/she has left the zone of obligation of the host» (MATTHEWS 1991: 15). The host is responsible for the guest even to the detriment of the host in the zone of hospitality and the temporal duration of the hospitality event.

This hospitality protocol meets Abensour's utopian requirements because: it requires no sovereign and it frees both the host and the guest from the fear of imminent conflict. However, it is temporally and situationally bound, and therefore is not persistent.

Levinas Considers the Temporal and Zonal Event of Hospitality

The seventh protocol of continuity is fundamental to twentieth century Emmanuel Levinas's ethics of responsibility. However, Levinas extends the zone of proximity vicariously to all other humans through the notion of justice¹⁵. Levinas's uses the human face of the other to initiate hospitality in a local zone of proximity. For Levinas, the other is not required to request hospitality—by sight alone I recognize that this other is an *other* from the other's human face¹⁶. From this recognition, I am to accept this other into a common zone of hospitality for whatever time is necessary to be responsible to the other. Unlike Matthews' biblical protocol, there is no host/guest negotiation of hospitality in Levinas's responsibility ethic. This is because I am always already responsible for the other in this proximal zone and everywhere else, even to the point where I am responsible for the responsibility of the other, and by extension, to all other humans¹⁷. The other is not required to reciprocate¹⁸. A refusal of hospitality by the other and even threat of violence to me by the other does not obviate my responsibility.

¹⁵ Levinas explains other others, 'the third', «One should then also recall that proximity is not from the first a judgment of a tribunal of justice, but first a responsibility for the other which turns into judgment only with the entry of the third party» (LEVINAS 1974: 190, Footnote 35).

¹⁶ Levinas saw hospitality in the recognition of the other, «To recognize the Other is therefore to come to him across the world of possessed things, but at the same time to establish, by gift, community and universality» (LEVINAS 1969: 76). The other is a gift rather than a burden.

¹⁷ Levinas says, «[I] am responsible for a total responsibility, which answers for all the others and for all in the others, even for their responsibility. The I always has one responsibility more than all the others» (LEVINAS and NEMO 1985: 98).

¹⁸ Says Levinas, «[I] am responsible for the Other without waiting for reciprocity, were I to die for it» (LEVINAS and NEMO 1985: 98).

Responsibility in Context of Scarcity

The flower and honeybee facultative mutualism exceeds Levinas's responsibility ethic, providing both reciprocal responsibility *and* reciprocal hospitality. There is a reason for this difference, and that can be explained through an analysis of scarcity. Flowers and honeybees do not compete for common resources, but humans do.

Levinas's responsibility ethic is human-centric. He does not accord this ethic to other than humans or to humans with animals¹⁹. While, as Levinas suggests, each human is infinitely different from each other, we all have fundamental common needs. Human ethics, in part, is an effort to navigate scarcity. We compete for the same resources like food and money. Both property and the sovereign are historical and expedient solutions to the dilemma of scarcity that permit segregation and ownership of resources and the adjudication of disputes through the sovereign. If scarcity of commonly required resources cannot be avoided, it is perhaps only then through hope that a persistent human utopia can be envisioned. Therefore, for there to be a persistent human utopia, the problem of conflict involving scarcity of commonly required resources must be addressed.

Levinas's Utopia of Responsibility

Levinas's ethics provides a means for human hospitality that aligns (generally) with Matthew's seventh protocol, being responsible for the guest in the zone of hospitality for the duration of the hospitality event. Levinas's ethics, however, can be construed to encompass a zone and duration of hospitality without bounds. Responsibility to the other is also unlimited. Scarcity then becomes one of available resources and not one of ownership of resources. Matthew's biblical protocol directs the host to offer the best of the house; Levinas's hospitality protocol requires the host to provide the other with what the other requires even when this may be injurious to the host. Levinas's host's ownership of property is suspended when the other requires what the host can provide²⁰. Levinas uses two key terms

¹⁹ Levinas did not know whether a snake has a 'face' (WRIGHT, HUGHES, and AINLEY 1988: 172).

²⁰ Levinas said, «Objectivity coincides with the abolition of inalienable property—which presupposes the epiphany of the other» (LEVINAS 1969: 76).

to describe this relationship. First, I the responsible person, am *passive*, meaning both receptive to the other and ready to serve the other. Second, I *substitute* myself for the other in order to be responsible for and to the other. This means that the ethics of this relationship lies within the other and it is my responsibility to fulfill the requirements of this ethics²¹. Because I cannot require reciprocity, I cannot abrogate my responsibility for any reason, including when the other tries to harm me. Levinas's solution to scarcity is to give to the other all that is available without regard to the existential needs of the giver other than the need to be responsible: a metaphysical need²². As this responsibility is without limit or temporal duration, it is conceivable to suggest that I must steal resources in order to satisfy the need of the other. However, even Levinas acknowledges the need for justice in human endeavors, and such an action would be subject to societal penalty²³.

Levinas's responsibility ethic is utopian in its nature for these reasons. Levinas's sovereign is not ontological, but transcendental, from humanity (justice) and God he sees metaphorically in the face of the other (LEVINAS 1969: 79). Asymmetrical responsibility gives all property to the other. This frees people from fear that war and conflict will result from the coveting of scarce resources.

Thomas More Brings Sharing and the Ontological Sovereign into the Utopian Conversation In More's Utopia, «No town desires to enlarge its bounds, for the people consider themselves rather as tenants than landlords» (MORE 1516: 52). People migrate from city to farmlands according to a rotation schedule and, «But though there is every year such a shifting of the husbandmen to prevent any man being forced against his will to follow that hard course of life too long» (MORE 1516: 52). Nor do they live to excess, choosing to grow just enough

²¹ Levinas explains, «Vulnerability, exposure to outrage, to wounding, passivity more passive than all patience, passivity of the accusative form, trauma of accusation suffered by a hostage to the point of persecution, implicating the identity of the hostage who substitutes himself for the others: all this is the self, a defecting or defeat of the ego's identity. And this, pushed to the limit, is sensibility, sensibility as the subjectivity of the subject. It is a substitution for another, one in the place of another, expiation» (LEVINAS 1974: 15).

²² Levinas says, «[U]topia, the not being walled in, inspiration to the end, even to expiration, is proximity of the other which is possible only as responsibility for the other, as substitution for him» (LEVINAS 1974: 182).

²³ Levinas explains the challenge of justice. First, «Only an excessive metaphysical desire, a desire for goodness — obligations, responsibilities, the call to justice—can do justice to the radical otherness of the other person» (LEVINAS 1974: xii). Therefore, stealing to provide the other may be just. However, «Justice is this very presence of the third party and this manifestation, for which every secret, every intimacy is a dissimulation. Justice is at the origin of the claims of ontology to be absolute, of the definition of man as an understanding of Being» (LEVINAS 1974: 191, Footnote 2). The third introduces complications to this theft commissioned on behalf of this other when another other appears. This produces a paradox of infinite responsibility where responsibility for one may be detrimental to another, which, in my reading, Levinas never fully resolves.

crops to consume and to share with those who live or work other than in the fields (MORE 1516: 54). Exchange is accomplished without barter or money, «When they want anything in the country which it does not produce, they fetch that from the town, without carrying anything in exchange for it» (MORE 1516: 54). The sovereign as the magistrate makes sure everyone gets what they require.

While Utopia relies upon the goodwill of the people, there is a magistrate who will intercede when disputes over shared resources arise. Scarce shared resources will likely require complex dispute mechanisms like Judges 4 hospitality, Levinas's responsibility, or a Morean Utopia where property ownership is less of an issue, but disputes remain, and a sovereign is required. Therefore, it is not likely that humans will achieve Abensour's persistent utopia until scarcity of common resources can be equitably addressed.

Scarcity Can Make a Utopia Dystopian

Christine Nadir analyzes Ursula K. LeGuin's *The Dispossessed*, where the necessity to ration commonly required resources, «[p]resents its readers with a constant negotiation between, on the one hand, freedoms of thought, expression, and desire and, on the other, the programmed sacrifices necessary for ecological survival» (NADIR 2010: 26). Scarcity not only brings about the *hope* for a better condition, but also the *desire* for a better condition which can devolve into conflict between persons who require the scarce resource. Conflict can include restrictions on freedoms that can produce unrest, anger, and violence. Nadir suggests that modern utopic thinking can be expressed through Tom Moylan's «*desire for a better life*», or Ruth Levitas's, «*desire for a better way of being*» (NADIR 2010: 24, 25, Emphasis in original). She says, «For literary utopian studies, the desire discourse reflects modern utopias' move away from totalizing blueprints and toward open-ended, self-reflexive, provisional world-making» (NADIR 2010: 25).

More created an imaginary laboratory world in which to experiment with human sensibilities. What LeGuin teaches us is that such carefully constructed societies can quickly devolve when scarcity becomes an issue, for example, from drought, excessive rain, pestilence, or environmental degradation.

One reason for the emergence of desire for something better is the scarcity of resources. Honeybees covet the scarce resources called pollen and nectar that only the flower can provide. The flower, in turn, covets the honeybee for her capability to take her pollen to a compatible flower. Scarcity of desired resources is inescapable in nature. Humans compete with humans, flowers with flowers, honeybees with honeybees, because all vie for commonly required scarce resources. Eden is a utopia outside of scarcity; *The Dispossessed* is a dystopia because of scarcity. The flower and honeybee facultative mutualism is a utopia, not because there is no scarcity in their world, but because their social group requires no common resource. Desire is directed towards the relationship where hospitality and responsibility can be consummated, rather than towards negotiating a common resource. Scarcity is not an issue for the flower and honeybee persistent utopia even though it is a critical existential issue for the lives of both out outside their social group. It is through asymmetry that we can begin to understand the nature of this persistent utopia.

Asymmetry is Essential for the Flower and Honeybee Utopia

The flower and honeybee facultative mutualism demonstrates how hospitality and responsibility can be fulfilled when there are no commonly required resources. The flower and honeybee social group, as it is constituted, requires no common resource and therefore does not build an ethics that must address scarcity. I maintain that the flower and honeybee facultative mutualism meets Abensour's requirements for persistent utopia for two reasons. First, there is no scarcity because there is no *common* property conflict associated with either party *within* the social group. Second, there is no sovereign in this social group.

How can the flower and honeybee facultative mutualism be a social group? First, each requires the other for one life function. Humans require other humans, and this is why they form social groups. Second, flowers and honeybees during some part of the year, have an intimate relationship with each other. Many human social groups are part time e.g. work, school. Third, they communicate with each other. The flower advertises her availability through color, shape, and smell to encourage the honeybee forager to fly to her. The honeybee makes a tactile announcement that she is in the flower so that the flower can loosen pollen or

produce a nectar treat²⁴. The flower ceases advertising when she is pollinated. Some flowers change color to become less attractive to pollinators, and pollinated flowers cease nectar production. The honeybee forager visits flowers that produce what the hive communicates it requires, pollen, nectar or both, but the forager will not return to a flower that no longer produces nectar or pollen. While their resource requirements are asymmetrical (food vs. pollination), hospitality is symmetrical when the other is recognized (face of the flower; tactile presence of the honeybee). Reciprocal hospitality is consummated when conditions are right for both to benefit from a relationship with each other. Their hospitality is reciprocal for another reason. Both flowers and honeybees are host *and* hostage in their relationship. They both benefit each other asymmetrically (food, sex assist); but they also exploit each other asymmetrically (flower pollen and nectar making capability vs. honeybee mobility capability).

The honeybee will forage any flower that meets her needs, and those flowers that attract honeybees attract other bee and wasp species and even other pollinating insects and hummingbirds. The honeybee receives only a minute amount of nectar from each flower she visits and therefore must visit many flowers to satisfy her hive's needs. The flower that attracts honeybees advertises to many compatible pollinators.

There is no sovereign in this social group. Both flowers and honeybees are coequal in this society, and because there is no common resource that is scarce, there is no need for anyone to direct or adjudicate the actions of either societal participant. However, flowers and honeybees are property possessive: where the flower grows; the honeybees' hive. The flower does not demand more than the honeybee can give and vice versa. When what can be exploited is exploited, the honeybee flies on to another flower; when pollinated, the flower shuts down nectar production and decays. While there is no shared resource that can become scarce, there is scarcity in the flower and honeybee world. At times there are no flowers when honeybee foragers are active, and there may be times when there are few or even no pollinators when flowers are in bloom. There may be droughts that kill plants and deplete honeybee honey stores. Their persistent utopia is subject to conditions of the world that are decidedly not utopian. What this suggests is that neither the utopia nor its persistence must

²⁴ See: BUCHMANN 1985: 517, SCHIFFERS et al. 2011; GAGLIANO 2013: 800.

be separate and segregated when the actors exist *both* in the utopia and outside of it. Nadir suggests that, «Abensour understands desire as a space of both liberatory potential and profound vulnerability» (NADIR 2010: 25). In the flower and honeybee facultative mutualism there is liberatory desire for each other through reciprocal hospitality and responsibility, but outside of that social construct, the profound vulnerability is each must acquire scarce resources in the world. It is therefore possible for existents to migrate in and out of utopian social constructs.

Nor must a persistent utopia exist *only* within a single species group. Even a group composed of species from two different branches of life can become a persistent utopia. While it is a persistent utopia that has existed for a million years, it is also a utopia that both flowers and honeybees enter and leave during their lifetimes. Segregation, separation, and exclusivity are not required for this utopia. Desire is required, but this is the Levinasian desire for the other rather than the desire for something more from the other than the other can give. A difference between the flower and honeybee facultative mutualism and other constructs this study considers is the lack of a scarce common resource.

What We Can Learn from Flowers and Honeybees

There are many mutualisms in the world; the lichen is a composite formed from an alga and a fungus; mycorrhizae fungi co-exist with plant roots; and, even our own cell (eukaryotic) mitochondria are believed to have been originally another species. These other mutualisms deserve to be studied in context of persistent or even temporal utopias. Not all mutualisms are like the flower and honeybee. The mycorrhizae help the root process soil minerals and other nutrients and they feed from the sugary sap. Thus, while they do not compete for the same resource, their mutualism effort is nutritionally based and is more-or-less permanent. I agree with Abensour that the flower and honeybee persistent utopia is both ontological and relational. This persistent utopia began through reciprocal hospitality a million years ago. Both flowers and honeybees coevolved to achieve their mutualism. The apoid wasp that was the honeybee predecessor evolved the honeybee proboscis to suck nectar, and then all the other features of extant honeybee workers including the hairs on her back legs that carry

pollen²⁵. The flower evolved to become attractive to honeybees, but more importantly began to produce sticky pollen that could be carried to other flowers.

Abensour sees the persistent utopia as emancipation, «To the contrary, the expression ‘the persistence of utopia’ designates a stubborn impulse toward freedom and justice – the end of domination, of relations of servitude, and of relations of exploitation» (ABENSOUR 2008: 407). The flower and honeybee persistent utopia evolved from two species who did *not* seek emancipation, rather they began to first like, then require what the other had to offer. Also, rather than become emancipated, they became more dependent on each other. Yet, asks Abensour, «Is the struggle for a certain conception of democracy not one of the signs of the persistence of utopia» (ABENSOUR 2008: 407)? The flower and honeybee facultative mutualism *is* towards Abensour’s second theme of a re-envisioning of democracy, a capitalistic democracy where commerce through resource exchange is fundamental to the persistence of this utopia. If flowers stopped producing nectar, likely the honeybee would eventually cease to visit flowers, and either become extinct, or evolve into something else. The society of flowers and honeybees is egalitarian and maintained through reciprocal responsibility. The hospitality events of the individual flower and honeybee are temporally short, but new flowers bloom and new workers are born and become flower foragers. However, there is one important feature of the flower and honeybee mutualism that has not been discussed: their reciprocal gaze.

The not-yet that is towards being as becoming is located in both species’ reciprocal gazes²⁶. The flower is centrifugally oriented towards the honeybee through her floral advertisement and the honeybee is centripetally focused on the flower²⁷. Flower reaches into the sky, far beyond her rooting in the ground to draw the honeybee towards her. The honeybee’s gaze is centripetal, focused down towards the center, the earth, the ground²⁸. Unlike the flower who is fixed to her plot of land, the honeybee can fly to the flower that is attached to the plant and the ground—the center of things. For both this is a restless hunger

²⁵ See: HU et al. 2008: 240.

²⁶ See: ABENSOUR 2008: 409

²⁷ Christopher Ketcham more fully develops the notions of reciprocal gaze, flowers and honeybees as a social group, the facultative mutualism, and the co-evolution of flowers and honeybees in his forthcoming (2020) book, *Flowers and Honeybees: A Study of Morality in Nature*, Brill, Leiden.

²⁸ Michael Marder suggests that the plant is all middle, so the honeybee’s centrifugal orientation to the plant is also towards the middle that is earth (MARDER 2013b: 63).

for the other: Levinas's *Il y a*, the persistent 'there is' of being in one's own being that is transcended in the encounter with the other. Abensour, quoting Levinas, notes, «as if in going toward the other man we transcended the human, toward utopia» (ABENSOUR 2008: 411). This reciprocal gaze can be deconstructed into Abensour and Nadir's desire, but in the true Levinasian sense of a metaphysical need for the other that is fundamental and necessary for the flower and honeybee facultative mutualism to thrive and continue²⁹. The clarity of opening of this persistent utopia begins, as it does through Levinas, with, «Here I am for the others» and being always already able and willing to be hospitable and responsible to the others of this social group (ABENSOUR 1998: 253). The recognition of the other is metaphorically Levinas's face—the face of the flower; the recognition of the unique tactile presence of the honeybee in the flower. However, the desire and longing for the other is for what the other can give, not what the flower or honeybee would like the other to give. Neither the flower nor the honeybee can give more than they have the capacity to give. Therefore, responsibility ends with what can be given. Neither the flower nor the honeybee requires more from the other than what is possible to give as does Levinas's responsibility to the other that is without limit. Because neither requires the same resource from the other, conflict is avoided and the other is not seen as a competitor for commonly required resources. This is why the flower and honeybee facultative mutualism today, even when resources are scarce, produces no new loss of freedom for either³⁰. They are always free to consummate the relationship and exploit the other to the extent possible. They are also free to discontinue the relationship when it suits them. As there is no common resource, there is no need to restrict freedoms when the rationing of scarce resources is necessary.

Emmanuel Levinas said, «The peace of empires issued from war rests on war» (LEVINAS 1969: 22). The flower and honeybee persistent utopia has not invented war, though assuredly 'war' exists outside of their facultative mutualism. Therefore, there is no peace that can ensue from war and what emerges is the kind of society that Levinas envisioned when causes that produce war are eliminated.

²⁹ Says Levinas, «Recollection in a home open to the Other—hospitality—is the concrete and initial fact of human recollection and separation; it coincides with the Desire for the Other absolutely transcendent...but the surplus of the relationship with the Other, metaphysic» (LEVINAS 1969: 172, emphasis in original).

³⁰ Beyond the loss of freedoms that led to the mutualism in the first place.

Towards Envisioning Other Utopias

In each of the four constructs this study has considered, ethics and economics are intertwined through the relationship of each party to the other and the nature of resources involved in the relationship. A critical ethical component for each is conflict avoidance. Second, the relationship involves commerce, whether through a shared but scarce common resource, or other than a common resource.

The flower and honeybee facultative mutualism would not exist without the natural power of evolution. However, this is only half of the equation. Flowers and honeybees had to find economic value in each other and intentionally direct behavior that engendered the evolution of their facultative mutualism. The participants in Judges 4 hospitality negotiate a relationship that engenders the event of hospitality. Therefore, both the flower and honeybee mutualism and Judges 4 hospitality are a going-towards that involves reciprocity. More's Utopia also requires this going towards and reciprocity, but a sovereign is required to adjudicate conflict. All three of these constructs require all parties to give up some freedom to initiate the process³¹.

Levinas changes the freedom dynamic. While he sees a process that is going towards, this is one way because I am infinitely responsible for the other which means a loss in freedom to be otherwise than responsible. The other is not required to reciprocate.

The economic value that the flower and honeybee utopia engenders comes from the benefit and exploitation each derives from the other outside of the need for a common resource. Neither More's Utopia, nor Judges 4 requires either party to ignore the problem of scarce shared resources. Rather, they come to compromise that produces economic benefit for all through sharing. With Levinas, my scarce resource is given over entirely to the other in the act of responsibility. Economic benefits of this relationship are skewed towards the other, but the mutual benefit of this skewing is the elimination of conflict that would be deleterious to both parties.

³¹ Again, flowers and honeybees gave up many ontological degrees of freedom to evolve to benefit from and exploit each other.

Flowers and honeybees have both ontologically and behaviorally negotiated their relationship, despite not having a shared scarce resource with which to contend. Therefore, while their utopia it is founded upon hospitality, negotiation, and constitutes an ontological reduction in freedom for both species, without shared resources, both can advance their utopia without ever having to consider conflict as an existential threat to their mutualism. The flower and honeybee utopia therefore has evolved outside of scarcity and conflict. Single species utopias are negotiations and also involve reductions in freedom, but these utopias must negotiate the sharing of scarce common resources where the threat of conflict is ever-present. Levinas saw the threat of war always in the peace of human societies that must grapple with negotiating the scarcity of common goods. His solution is to have the responsible party give over to the other all scarce resources without any negotiation other than to determine what the other requires...and without any expectation of reciprocity.

This study explored four constructs. The flower and honeybee mutualism is a going towards and an ontological and behavioral negotiation without the conflict potential of shared scarce resources. More's Utopia and Judges 4 responsibility are both a going towards that negotiates scarce resources. Levinas's utopia of responsibility is my going towards the other and my giving to the other without any expectations of reciprocity. The common thread that runs through all these utopias is degrees of freedom are lost in the process. However, despite losses of ontological degrees of freedom, the persistence of the flower and honeybee facultative mutualism is likely due to two conditions of this utopia. First, there is no sovereign, and second, there is no shared resource.

There is likely no human-only utopia that would eliminate the need to navigate shared scarce resources, even though More, Judges 4, and Levinas negotiate conditions under which conflict for the same can be minimized. While More sees the need for an ontological sovereign, Judges 4 gives that over to traditional norms of conduct. Levinas's utopia of responsibility accords the face the trace of God, and the whole of humanity (justice) as transcendental sovereigns, but his process requires no ontological sovereign³².

What the flower and honeybee mutualism teaches us is that utopias do not have to be full-time existential conditions, and they can be maintained persistently when there is neither

³² Of course, any manner of human justice today requires both laws and codes of conduct that must be adjudicated by some form of responsible party.

a scarce common resource, nor a sovereign. The single species requirement that there be shared resources likely imperils the idea that there can be a persistent utopia like flowers and honeybees. Rather, we might consider exploring other than human-only utopian-like constructs where there is not a shared scarce resource or the requirement for a sovereign.

We can look to nature for utopian-like constructs between humans and other species. For example, humans, honeybees, and flowers are a tripartite relationship where we bring honeybees to the flowers we grow so that we can all benefit and exploit each other in this relationship. We must make a portable home that suits the honeybee and our need to transport them. We must negotiate a place of existence for the flower and help her thrive so we can harvest her fruit. Both we must do in context of providing the flower and the honeybee with optimal conditions for them to consummate their mutualism. This tripartite relationship has persisted for thousands of years.

When we frame our relationship with flowers and honeybees as a utopia, this opens for critique our behavior in this relationship. For example, to what extent are we adversely affecting this relationship by the introduction of hybrid plant species that cannot reproduce? How are our use of pesticides and the introduction of honeybees as invasive species affecting the pollination capabilities of our fields and woodlands? The critique of our tripartite utopia is both ethical and economic. Recent evidence suggests that regenerative farming techniques that are closer to what nature accomplishes on her own, not only help nature maintain natural processes, but also produce higher net income for the farmer because no expensive chemicals are applied (LACANNE and LUNDGREN 2018: 1)³³. The flower and honeybee persistent utopia has survived a million years of earth cycles through heat and ice and the emergence of humanity. As this study suggests, we should consider its lesson and apply it to other possible utopias in which humans may already find themselves.

³³ Regenerative techniques include, «(1) abandoning tillage (or actively rebuilding soil communities following a tillage event), (2) eliminating spatio-temporal events of bare soil, (3) fostering plant diversity on the farm, and (4) integrating livestock and cropping operations on the land» (LACANNE and LUNDGREN 2018: 2). In their study this practice also produced many more bugs (no pesticides) and the crop yields were lower because of the lack of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizer, but farmers made higher net incomes.

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