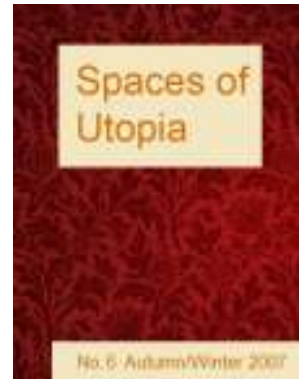


# Anarchism is Back. We May Now Re(dis)cover Utopia<sup>1</sup>

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To Ferro Piludo and Lucia Salimei who, several decades ago, raised in a very brilliant way the cosmic aspect of utopia.

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*Le sens d'une interrogation ne se démontre ni ne se réfute. Il est affaire de conviction, et c'est en tant que tel qu'il guide le travail des scientifiques et intervient dans leurs controverses. Mais cette conviction n'est pas pour autant arbitraire: elle se nourrit du passé pour définir ce que pourrait être demain une nouvelle cohérence de nos sciences. Cette cohérence ne devrait plus traduire une hiérarchie, expression d'un jugement, mais une exigence dont chaque science aurait la charge: l'exigence de rendre explicite, dans le concept singulier de son objet, et notamment dans la manière singulière dont il articule hasard et nécessité, le type de question qui en assure l'accès le plus pertinent, le type de regard et de pratique qu'il a fallu apprendre pour devenir capable d'en reconnaître la singularité.*

Ilya Prigogine & Isabelle Stengers

## **Introduction**

Utopia is generally understood as an act of the mind, a creation of individual or collective imagination. By contrast, it is in the actual world that we meet growth, violence, connections, competition, life and death. It is in the name of that reality that we are taught and governed. We need hard facts and, even if we hate reality, it's the only place where we can find a good drink, meat and potatoes.

How then could we abide in utopia, which by definition is nowhere? How can we return to the various ages of utopia, which Marx considered as superseded by science and which some philosophers equate with totalitarianism? Yet present day alternative movements proclaim that other worlds are possible and their antiauthoritarian forms of organization give rise to thousands of new dreams. Is all this world movement confined to marginality, is it literally *outlandish*, in the outskirts of nothingness?

Utopia is at the crossroads between the actual world and collective imagination. It questions nothing less than a world vision, because it is a query about reality. The first part of this paper will discuss reality as it is defined by the anti-utopians. An alternate view will be offered in the second part, which is titled "Where is nowhere?". However, utopia is much more than a creative process of building castles in the air, or a field of study in which specialists study these castles; thus, the third part will discuss the contemporary rediscovery of anarchism in alternative political and social movements as well as in art, and what this implies for a present day understanding of utopia.

Indeed, utopia is *the* challenge to reality, which will be discussed in the first part.

### **Reality and its Students**

Ron Suskind, a well-known American journalist, once received this comment from one of President George W. Bush' senior advisers:

We're an empire now, and when we act, we create reality. And while you are studying that reality – judiciously, as you will – we'll act again creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors ... and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do.<sup>2</sup>

Such a comment echoes the biblical Adam naming each creature in paradise, thus creating human reality as he is taking possession of every animal.<sup>3</sup> In the same way, leaders, delegates, presidents or heads of state paint a picture of reality and their flocks usually accept their presentation of events. Of course, many patterns are drawn by collectivities, and their prestigious guides engrave those portrayals. The media generally pick up those which are produced by the maestros and transform them into common knowledge.

Power's dirty little secret is that it may create reality just by naming it. Such was Humpty Dumpty's lesson to Alice:

'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.'  
'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.'  
'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master -- that's all.'  
(Carroll 1872: chap. VI)

The custodians of tradition declare what is *essential*. For instance, in religions such as Christianity, people did not and do not concede any substance to this life.<sup>4</sup> Everything in the environment refers to some superhuman being(s); individual and collective history is interpreted as the discourse of such entities. The faithful rely on shamans, prophets, priests and sacred writings to read the message enclosed in each event of their lives. This function was and is still also accomplished by scholars and more recently by technocrats, who are the present day successors of the clerics, while the vast majority of the population relies more and more on the narratives of the media, which are the voices of their rulers.<sup>5</sup> Legislators decide what is appropriate or unauthorized, not the individual conscience as Henry David Thoreau would have wished. High level experts in

every field stipulate what is dangerous or harmless, and they are, in some way, the administrators of collective fears.

Unsurprisingly, disbelievers, dissenters and rebels offer divergent representations of the world. Materialist thinkers, for instance, confine utopia to the ephemeral and immaterial realm of fantasy and ideals. Karl Marx's stand on utopia is well known, and it is commanded by his interpretation of "reality". The *Communist Manifesto* drew a strict line and inaugurated a new paradigm:

The significance of critical-utopian socialism and communism bears an inverse relation to historical development. In proportion as the modern class struggle develops and takes definite shape, this fantastic standing apart from the contest, these fantastic attacks on it, lose all practical value and all theoretical justifications. (Marx/Engels 1848)

History was Marx's conception of reality, not imagination. Dialectical materialism was to replace naïve visions of the world, his theory was to be substituted for utopian socialism as capitalism had removed feudalism. In the course of history, there was no return. Reality was a one way road of progress through science. "It would certainly be very pleasant if a really scientific socialist journal were to be published", wrote Marx to Engels (Marx 1968).

To ideology, Marx opposed historical development, which he interpreted as the concrete historical process of production. Ideologues as well as utopians were kept captive by their fantasies, and so were the socialists of the past who wished to abolish the causes of class struggle rather than consider those relations of production as the key to social change. Sure, utopia contained the germs of socialist critical materialism, but it was not only an uncompleted analysis because it was set up on an improper ground. It was now to be superseded by Marx's own revolutionary theory (*apud* Morton 1963: 37). The fantasies of utopia, its

doctrinaire scientism, its lack of a theory of history were to be replaced by the revolutionary science of history. Communism had to bid farewell to Fourier, Owen and the others.

While many Marxists perpetuated that stance, the tradition was far from monolithic. Within the so-called Frankfurt school, a philosopher like Adorno understood reality differently. For him, totality already exists, utopia is only the longing for the new, it can only be a fresh experience, a new combination of some of the possibilities within a spectrum, but the spectrum remains the same. People are like a child in front of a piano, searching for an unheard chord. The chord is there since all the possible combinations are limited. In effect, the quest for utopia would often cause the repetition of the same, particularly of the catastrophes of the past, as he would remind his colleague, Walter Benjamin.

It was through a revision of history that Walter Benjamin had tried to rehabilitate utopia. He saw each new stage of production as accompanied by a collective imagination which compared the future with the mythical past and strived to both suppress and sublimate the inadequacies of the social product and the failings of the social order of production (Benjamin 1989: 3). Utopias functioned in a rather ambivalent way since they would be used both as a tool for the critique of society and a means of transfiguration.

In a later work, as he took into account Adorno's remarks, Benjamin considered the mythical elements of utopia. These were the reference to the idealized past and the transfiguration of the present. What mattered was the history of the losers. Therefore the past was irretrievable when the present did not recognize itself in it. The present created a political link by recalling the past and

redeeming it. By recognizing itself in the past, both present and past were transformed, thus preventing the tradition of the oppressed and their inheritors, the present historical agent, from being co-opted by the class that dominates them (Benjamin 1977: 1247-1248). The return of the past was also the repetition of the catastrophe – the Third Reich – and the mythification of the future could also bring its return. It was therefore necessary to consider its function as an awakening of the forces of emancipation but, at the same time, to consider in a critical way the reciprocal relation of utopia and its reservoir of passions.

Benjamin still identified reality with history, particularly the catastrophe of World War I:

For never has experience been contradicted more thoroughly than strategic experience by tactical warfare, economic experience by inflation, bodily experience by mechanical warfare, moral experience by those in power. (Benjamin 1968: 83-4)

Reality could be the eternal return of catastrophe.

Such a conception was different from Marxist thought, which considered progress as inevitable. This distinct view of history related to a contrasting perception of utopia. There was a rehabilitation of human subjectivity, even though it was to be supervised by critical reason.

Not surprisingly, the neo-liberal stand, as exemplified by one of its major proponents, Frederick Hayek, of the Austrian school, is not very distant from Marx's conception of reality. Reality is identified not with history but rather with the self-regulated market, which Hayek sees as natural a process as the self-regulated population of animals in an ecological niche – an erroneous interpretation, by the way, because in an ecosystem, self-regulation cannot occur at the level of the niche, it is the system that is self-regulating.<sup>6</sup> Such an institution

reveals its superiority in creativity and progress. The utopia of central planning, on the contrary, destroys individual liberty and prevents the natural emergence, without design, of self-organizing structures. The determinism of the market replaces, in Hayek's theory, the determinism of history, which he totally rejects. In sum, human destiny depends on the free market.<sup>7</sup>

The new form of capitalist globalization has been accompanied by a choir of anti-utopian thinkers. In Germany, it was particularly declamatory; in France, the so-called "nouveaux philosophes" made the headlines of the media.<sup>8</sup> The fall of the Berlin wall offered a new occasion to identify utopia with the communist state. Thus Marxism was accused of being utopian and therefore messianic and apocalyptical. Its propagators were the false prophets who erroneously predicted the downfall of the capitalist system. Utopian thought was inherently vicious because, in fine, it was totalitarian and engendered concentration camps and the return of the catastrophes.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, while some writers made extravagant comments, endeavouring to demonstrate how utopias of happiness were indeed dystopias, their real target was the political utopia, because it endangered the *status quo* and the powers that be. As long as ideas remained in the field of literature, most often limited to a minority of literates, they were a harmless pleasure; but all the whistles would blow as soon as someone questioned the political systems.

As a substitute to the rejection of utopia, contemporary society offers a number of myths which, of course, surround the ideology of the free market like the clouds around the Biblical God.<sup>10</sup> There is a proliferation of myths of happiness

propagated by the advertising industry: well-being through consumption, success stories of the jet set, democracy through the free market and so on.

Myth is also presented as utopia, as indeed both are often mingled. It is true, their respective definitions vary considerably, and some clarification is now appropriate. I will refer to a distinction that is broadly in the line of Gustav Landauer, Karl Mannheim, Mircea Eliade, Gilbert Durand and Cornelius Castoriadis.

Myths refer essentially to the symbolic order which is seen by a society as its ultimate reference. As Gilbert Durand writes, it is the pre-semiotic language in which the body movements of rite, cult and magic act as a substitute for grammar and lexicon.<sup>11</sup> Myth accredits a reality which may be attained through ritual and is seen as essential. Myth is reality *par excellence*.

The function and importance of myths vary through time according to the various types of society. In contemporary complex cultures they are imbedded in a multiplicity of national and global as well as specific ideologies. They may explain the supposed origin of the world, as Mircea Eliade says, but also appear in the rituals of power, such as the Hippocratic Oath or the oath of office, which are meant to countenance the quest for authority and honour of some of the present hierarchies. Most of them are less universal though pretending to universality and more easily manipulated by the narrators and in nation-states it is particularly the reality of the hierarchical order. The cap and gown, the crown and the flag may no longer have the same importance as in the past, other symbols have replaced them, particularly with which group you may mix. Free market remains the gospel



that reminds you of the hard facts of life, the evidence of the market, and the nonsense of utopian political thought.<sup>12</sup>

While in the past human fate was identified with history, it is today linked to the free market or some other grand narrative enriched by myth and ritual. Indeed, utopia does not belong to such a world, it can only be nowhere.

### **Where is nowhere?**

As is well known, the word utopia was coined by Thomas More, from the Greek *ou-topos* (“no place”). In fact, the manuscript he first sent to his friend Erasmus in 1516 bore the title *Nusquama*, which in Latin means “nowhere”. It also was a pun on *eu-topos* (“the good place”). This refined Renaissance *double entendre* was forgotten by the Western tradition, and while successive philosophers referred to antecedents such as Plato’s *Republic* and, more seldomly, to the *Ta te Ching* of Lao Tzu, they tend to distort the idea of “the good place” as being “the ideal society” or, on the opposite, to identify “nowhere” with “nothingness”.

What can “nowhere” mean for us today? It cannot be *nothingness*, which is a metaphysical concept today mostly used to defend creationism: by its very definition, nothingness does not exist. Lewis Carroll’s *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* describes a chilly banquet in which the Professor says: “I hope you’ll enjoy the dinner — such as it is; and that you won’t mind the heat — such as it isn’t.” A comment follows: “The sentence sounded well, but somehow I couldn’t quite understand it ...” (Carroll 1893: chap. 22)

Nothingness does not mean *void*, either, because the idea of void refers to space. Nowhere seems to be a stupid word, an answer given to us when we look for things which we cannot find or are non-existent. But what if we ask ourselves

the question: where is the universe? Of course, we know no answer; or we may say that the question is stupid or irrelevant. However, we may not say that humanity will never discover one. And we realize that beyond the universe there can be no space, because it would also belong to the cosmos and therefore would not be beyond it. Even if we consider that the absence of space does not mean that there may not be other universes, differently structured, it is not irrelevant to say that the universe is nowhere.<sup>13</sup> Yet it exists.

If utopia is nowhere, it may be seen as a metaphor of the universe. And since utopia is contrasted with reality, one must ask if any thought about reality should not start with a discussion about cosmology rather than with an anthropocentric interpretation of history or free market. One must then notice that the Western philosophical view of the universe as reality has since its origins been elaborated in opposition to chaos. In the Mesopotamian and Egyptian myths, in the Book of Genesis, the story of creation is one of victory over chaos. In Plato's *Timaeus*, the demiurge imposes order (Plato 1957: 33, 160). Aristotle, who does not feel any necessity to refer to a cosmogonical myth, offers a philosophical ground for the understanding of a beginning:

Principles account for, and establish, the order of the world. As principles of knowledge, beginnings are the origins of thought. As principles of being, they are the sources of origination per se. Beginnings in the political or social sphere are due to *archai* or *principes* – those who command. (Hall 1982: 58)<sup>14</sup>

Chaos is unprincipled, an-archic, without *archai*. And as David Hall writes,

The dread of anarchy that is so much a part of our cultural heritage is in large measure related to the primordial fear of chaos that is its presumed attendant. The political anarchy that Carlyle found “the hatefulest of things” is but an expression of “the waste Wide Anarchy of Chaos,” which John Milton saw personified as the “Anarch old”. (*idem*, 53)

This Western approach, so different from the Taoist metaphysics, presumes an anarchic world, without *archai* or *principia*, and gets the picture of chaos with negative insinuations. Yet contemporary science does not always consider chaos as disorder but as unpredictable. Things which are chaotic may be governed by laws unknown to us. Or they may be unpredictable, as in the case of a pinball machine, because though the ball moves according to the laws of gravity, it has a very high degree of sensitivity to initial conditions.

Chaos may even be deterministic, because randomness does not exclude regularities, such as for instance the laws of great numbers or points of equilibrium. For instance, the solar system seems stable and predictable, it is not impossible that one of the planets suddenly escapes into outer space through the influence of gravitational attractions. Furthermore, if we look at evolution, we see that it contradicts Adorno's view that "everything is already there". When the earth was mostly made of carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, water vapour, and methane, to predict that life would appear could have been called utopian. And when the sea was filled with fish, to prophesy that some day animals would fly was utopian. Deterministic chaos consists not only of regularities, but also includes the conditions for the emergence of unexpected complexities which are more than the sum of their elements.

True, many utopias may just be seen as manifestoes, programs elaborated by people that Proudhon called *idéomanes* – the word will be explained later. Some of their narratives simply propose a reorganization of their contemporary environment. Nevertheless, I will swim against the current and offer instead a crazy paradigm. Instead of seeing utopia as a production of human mind, I will

consider it first and foremost as in the very essence of the cosmos. Emergence of novelty is more than a combination of the old, it introduces the unexpected event, the pristine and unfamiliar creation.

It may be worth investigating what I would call “utopian realism” as a fresh form of knowledge, probably a branch of complex system theory. The Fichtean dialectic, which apprehends “synthesis” as a result of the conflict between thesis and antithesis, does not offer a space for the unexpected Other. While chaos theory has offered us some helpful formal analogies, it is essentially grounded in mathematics and physics. The emergence of “a higher order” and the nature of open systems require an approach adapted to the complex exploration beyond the given collective imagination of a historical moment. Utopian realism spotlights the infinite creative possibilities carried by the unexpected, and applies also this method to societies. It includes an analysis of the dynamics of power, as all new events are immediately co-opted by the powers that be and their spin doctors. While such an endeavour is beyond the scope of this study, it may be useful to establish on some ground the relation of the global alternative movement with utopia.

### **The resurgence of anarchism and utopia**

#### **The anarchist revival**

A series of events such as the Chiapas insurrection of 1994 and the Seattle Black Blocks in 1999 have contributed to the emergence of a new collective agent, the world antiglobalisation movement. The Mexican Zapatista rebellion was characterized from the outset by its international dimension. On the one hand, the government dishonestly presented it as emanating from foreigners, thus qualifying

it as multinational. On the other, Rome to New York, the world offered expressions of solidarity and the Internet appeared as a new medium for the creation of multiple networks. Later on, during the anti-World Trade Organization demonstrations, the media characterized the “black block” as anarchists.<sup>15</sup> This brought the public’s attention to possible anarchistic influence and set off a number of studies on the libertarian trends within the antiglobalisation movement, thus conveying the idea of a collective actor.

True, this network is particularly anarchistic in its rejection of hierarchical structures, its preference for temporary autonomous zones, affinity groups, and fragmentary consensus. It may be referred to as “accepted anarchism”: it is a practice without any formal affiliation to some organized movement or anarchistic ideology, it is social in the same way as some people go to church for social reasons rather than religious convictions.<sup>16</sup> While church goers may value the community to which they belong more than their intimate beliefs, which perhaps they keep to themselves, the anarchist decision systems are part of militants’ group identification and its attractions.

Anarchist practice in global meetings coexists with a large variety of ideologies, most of which call for a better state rather than no state at all. The professional activists come in contact with the usual crowd of frustrated protesters expressing themselves on the basis of an ethics of indignation, groups filled with negative feelings of *ressentiment* and limiting their protest to denunciation. They also encounter identity entrepreneurs, who organize a group on the basis of some ethnic or special interest issue, and of course the swashbucklers and the managers of violence.

The most dangerous of them are, perhaps, those people whom Proudhon calls “idéomanes”, individuals imprisoned in the bubble of their ideas, including doctrinaire anarchists. They propound a platform popped out of the mind of some leader or bureaucratically elaborated in some insular institutional meeting, and they require emancipation movements to subordinate themselves to that program. These obsessive personalities try to convince the world, they offer the philosopher’s stone, they even elaborate “utopias”. They sacrifice their lives, their desires, their aspirations and their families to “the Cause”, and if they go so far as to mould themselves in those trends that seem to carry their ideas, they may even mutate into monsters. They do not help people to find their own tools for their personal and collective emancipation; instead, they ask them to submit to those ideas. The *idéomanes* are blinkered, their ideas are an obstacle to the analysis of their own subjective reality and hold them back from the theoretical exploration of the infinity of possibles.

By contrast, anarchism does not attempt to occupy some defined space, to create some specific identity around a common symbolic reference, to match the real with the ideal; it is not an ideology in competition with other ideologies; it is open to the diverse and real game of all the practices and theories which are pregnant through all the multiform shades of reality and it simply tries to allow all forces of emancipation to federate.

This is why the revival of anarchism is also the resurgence of utopia. Utopia is not some ideal society; if the cosmos is utopian, then perhaps we should not look at history like many Marxists and some anarchists, seeking for the

determinisms that may break up the capitalist system, but instead, like consistent anarchists, step into the breaches.

### **History as anarchy**

History, indeed, is full of gaps. Take institutions, for instance. They seem to be firmly grounded and strongly intermeshed. Yet the establishment, the system and the institutions are in a perpetual process of de-structuring and re-structuring. When I used to walk in New York, I was impressed by the huge skyscrapers, their superb proportions with their ample avenues. I used to wonder how such a paramount nation could ever be struck by some revolutionary event. It seemed that this could never happen... until September 11.<sup>17</sup> In the same way, everything in the planet seemed regular... till we discovered that the climate was changing.

It takes less than a week for some unknown nation to start a war against your country or vice-versa. History is full of gaps that originate a new series of events, which no one would have predicted any more than, say, the fall of the Berlin wall... History is anarchy. It is the conjunction of myriads of causes which create singular and unpredictable events which apparently come from nowhere and sometimes appear nowhere except in one's intimate experience. It is made of exceptions – there will no longer appear another Babylon. Many events remain unrecorded by historians and often forgotten by their actors. The same things happen to people, there are gaps in their lives. Does not the present instant appear as a gap between the past and the future?

And see how things do happen. You have planned to take the children to the circus and a phone call changes your life. Or you get out of a pub and find

yourself in a riot: the police take you to prison; in a glimpse, your whole view of the political system is transmogrified. Some of the most important events in our lives have occurred by chance, even if afterwards we can always reconstruct some causality.

When I went to the Soviet Union, I discovered how the people's life experience was even worse than the capitalist press reported. I wondered how those men and women could endure such an existence. And I realized that their preoccupation was elsewhere: not in the wordcraft of politics or the stagecraft of family life but in the pub, in some love affair, in the reading of a particular novel and so on. In a certain way, all that is not recorded by history, except when some grandmother says "in my time", which children correctly understand as "once upon a time", because it now appears as no more consistent than a fairy tale. The event happened nowhere except in the most intimate feelings and thoughts of an individual, feelings and thoughts which, at the same time, belong to what Gustav Landauer calls the *topos*, the symbolic reservoir of a given society, with all the subjective flux that such signs may spark off (Mannheim 1956: 126).

History is unpredictable, lives are full of breaches and millions of possible utopias lie ahead. They are not in doctrines or theories, but in the intimacy of the thoughts that cross people's minds. As Zerzan says, these thoughts reveal the abyss between signs and things, and this abyss is the door of the infinite multitude of indeterminations and possibilities.

Contemporary utopias should no longer be seen in beautiful descriptions, programs, platforms, ideas, or even symbols, but in the very movements of the social body. And here one must refer to the wonderful idea of "plateau", developed



by Bateson and also by Deleuze and Guattari (Bateson 1972; Deleuze/Guattari 1980).

Consider, for instance, the French movement against the CPE (Contrat Premier Emploi) in 2006. The new law, instead of offering the possibility of a serious integration within an occupation transformed all employees into interim workers. The protest started in the University of Rennes and for a long time remained confined to that institution. Then, suddenly, it spread all over the French universities and stabilized for a time: it was on a plateau, in a state of intense stabilization. After some time, it ascended to another plateau, when the demands were no longer confined to the abrogation of the CPE but to more and more claims expanded in many other areas. It started by asking for the withdrawal of the projected law, but then went on to demand the abrogation of the “law on the equality of chances” and other issues. In stark contrast to conventional protest movements which remain within the bounds of rituals, the successive plateaus of this social movement expressed the very moments of the emergence of new forms of consciousness. New generations discovered their collective power, the thrills of activism; new forms of comradeship appeared and the king suddenly seemed naked.

Utopia is not simply a landscape of thought, it is embedded in movements. And, of course, the question then is: how does a group or a crowd reach a succession of collective states of emancipation, how does emergence occur and why does it not continue incessantly? There are, of course, many reasons for this, but let us take the very simple example of a session of brainstorming. Such an

action is supposed to bring forth new thoughts. Why do these ideas appear? There are at least two reasons for this.

Proudhon explains that when several individuals combine their work, they produce a result that is more than the sum of each contribution. They may for instance pull down a tree, something which none of them could do alone or in a succession of the others. There is a value added to the result, and this value is due to the group, not to any particular individual. In the same way, exchanging ideas with others may result in some illuminating idea. The second reason is that the exchange that occurs within the brainstorming session must be unrestricted. There are no taboos, no value judgments, a total openness to the others' thoughts.

If we apply this to social movements of protest, we understand that the passage from one plateau to another is due to the fact that participants are not hindered by a person or an organization who decides *in their name* to negotiate with the powers that be. As long as participants remain the masters of their exchanges and actions, the movement may emerge to some other height. This is collective empowerment and emancipation.

We can now imagine a new type of activist, the utopian, who will facilitate these exchanges to produce the magic of creativity. And rather than playing the role of a leader, he will endeavour to be nowhere. Like utopia.

Utopian realism is not only a matter of knowledge but also of grassroots activism. In a world of fast and pervasive change, no one can afford to live with a petrified mind. Half a century ago, Blaise Bargaic wrote:

Only a few months are necessary for the unbelievable to be absorbed and become normal. Nuclear energy and Sputnik are digested today as electricity, the airplane and the cinema were digested.

Today, we have assimilated the Internet, mastered the laptop, incorporated the cell phone; yet while many inventions of long ago were the result of creative individuals, workers or engineers, today they are concocted in secret high tech locations under the arbitrary and quasi autonomous command of the military industrial complex. The privatization of armies, the militarization of outer space and the growing power of the merchants of death, the cloning of animals and later of human beings, the destruction of the ecosphere are in the hands of multinational corporations. They own the think tanks, the teams of forecasters and they plan our future.

Fortunately, people have access to science fiction, to virtual reality, to poetry and art. They are capable of reasoning by analogy, by intuition, of creating new mental combinations. They have the experience of randomness, accident and even serendipity. The road to utopias may become a collective journey in the unceasing succession of social movements throughout the world.

As a non-conclusion of this essay, one must add a caveat. There is always a danger that social movements and utopia can be made a new substitute for the fetishism of history or of the free market. They too may create monsters, disasters, catastrophes. Utopia is earthly. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

And we return to the core anarchist issue: who is to occupy the driver's seat?

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Daniel Colson for many of the ideas in this communication. I also wish to thank John P. Clark for his careful editing and Laurence Davis who was the *deus ex machina* for this article: had he not invited me to write a communication, this would probably never have happened. This paper was given at the 8th International Utopian Studies Society Conference, Plymouth, 12-14 July 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Conversation between Ron Suskind and an unnamed senior adviser to the president (*apud* Bargiac 1958: 1-9).

<sup>3</sup> “And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof” (Genesis 2.19-21). Naming, in the Bible, means taking possession.

<sup>4</sup> This is not the case, for instance, for religions which do not recognize any transcendent beings. Concepts like *mana* (Melanesians, Polynesians) or *orenda* (Iroquois) are powers inherent in persons or in nature. Another different approach is Buddhism, which views all existence as a succession of transitory states.

<sup>5</sup> On the role of intellectuals, see for instance Makhaïski 2001.

<sup>6</sup> I wish to thank John Clark for this remark.

<sup>7</sup> Karl Popper also rejected utopia: “If I were to give a simple formula or recipe for distinguishing between what I consider to be permissible plans of social reform and impermissible Utopian blueprints, I might say: Work for the elimination of concrete evils rather than for the realisation of abstract goods... Or, put it in more practical terms: fight for the elimination of poverty by direct means – for example by making sure that everybody has a minimum income” (Popper 1948: 114). See also Olssen 2003.

<sup>8</sup> For Germany, see Raulet 1994: 103-115.

<sup>9</sup> See, for instance, Berlin 1991.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Deuteronomy 33.26; 2 Samuel 22.12; Job 26.9.

<sup>11</sup> “Le mythe est dans ce métalangage, ce langage pré sémiotique où la gestuelle du rite, du culte, de la magie vient relayer la grammaire et le lexique” (Durand 1979: 27-28).

<sup>12</sup> An alternative view is that the decline of the myth is correlated with the rise of hierarchy. Žizek considers that to a large degree the myths are no longer necessary since ideology is embedded in everyday life and institutions. People can face the harsh reality and accept it without protest: “Je sais bien, mais quand même” “Yes, but”. The question is how one defines ideology and myth, whether ideology may include mythical elements in so far as it gives the feeling that one’s actions belong to the most essential reality and correspond to a truth that ought to be universal.

<sup>13</sup> In 1917, Einstein presented a mathematical model of the universe in which the total volume of space was finite yet had no boundary or edge.

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<sup>14</sup> See the whole chapter of this book for a development of the ideas presented in this paragraph.

<sup>15</sup> The establishment generally characterizes as “anarchists” people who have never claimed to be so while it systematically ignores the anarchist movement and its aspirations. Oddly enough, many academics are fond of describing certain works of art or music as “anarchistic” while remaining aloof of people they derogatorily (and stupidly) designate as “self-proclaimed anarchists”.

<sup>16</sup> For instance, I have met the president of a student union who used to attend the Presbyterian Church because she could meet there the upper crust of the university administrators. It is for the same reason that ministers and priests do organize all sorts of meeting places so as to maintain the links within their flock.

<sup>17</sup> September 11 was certainly a traumatic event, but it set up a new course of history. It was “revolutionary” in the sense that it initiated a social structural discontinuity in several nations as well as in several patterns of international relations.

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