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Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* and
the Ethics of Care

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Charlotte Perkins Gilman originally published her utopian novel *Herland* in serial form in her own small circulation magazine, *The Forerunner*, in 1915, and it was not until its publication in book form in 1979 that this story of an all-female society reached a world-wide audience. The acclaim it then received from those engaged with second-wave feminism rested on the great skill and humour employed to expose the irrationality and hypocrisy of patriarchal thinking and practice. This is done principally through the dialogues between the women of Herland and the three stereotypical male explorers who have discovered a country of three million women in the remote highlands of South America. The women of *Herland* have lived without men for 2000 years, leading a communistic existence marked by cooperation, sustainability, intelligence and innovation. The society originated from a natural calamity during a war, a huge avalanche sealing the pass that connected the country to the outside world, in the process taking the lives of all the male warriors. The problem of reproduction was resolved by the miracle of parthenogenesis; originally a woman conceived without male assistance and gave birth to a daughter, followed by other daughters. It was from this mother than the entire society developed. At first each woman produced five daughters, but when this eventually caused a problem of over-population the women learned how to control their fertility and produce only one daughter each, once they had reached the responsible age of 25. Nurturing and education are collective responsibilities, and the most able carers take the leading role (Gilman, 1999: 104, 84). A collective reverence for motherhood, viewed as the "sacrament of a lifetime" is the most

valued ethic, and is the foundation for an incredibly strong sense of solidarity (*idem*, 89; also 70, 102, 138).

The nature of this ethic is the focus of this chapter. I will argue that *Herland* anticipates the ethics of care approach that has attracted so much attention at the interface of philosophy, psychoanalysis and social and political theory since the appearance of Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* in 1982 (Gilligan, 2000). I will also argue that some of the problematic issues raised by the novel are reflected in some of the theoretical concerns that have been raised in the debates about the ethics of care. The first part of the paper will show how the basic elements of such an ethics are set down in *Herland*, and some of the problems involved. The second part will introduce modern versions of the ethics of care, and the final section will deal with the relationship between the ethics of care and *Herland*, focusing on the criticisms levelled at Gilman's book by Joan Tronto in *Moral Boundaries* (Tronto, 1994: 158-161).

The Religion of Collective Motherhood

Van, the male narrator, encapsulates the driving ethic of the Herlanders when he concludes that "mother-love with them was not a brute passion, a mere 'instinct,' a wholly personal feeling; it was – A Religion" (Gilman, 1999: 69). The book is a witty dissection of patriarchy and the stereotypical male perceptions of what constitutes the natural role of women. In using the utopian device of imagining a long-established all-female society, Gilman is able to make generalizations about the character differences between men and women. Historically, assertions of natural difference have been used by men to subjugate women, in the form of justifications for the patriarchal exclusion of women from positions of public power, politically and culturally. Because of this long history of essentialist arguments justifying male superiority, most second wave feminists, reading *Herland* for the first time in the early 1980s, would have been uncomfortable with Gilman's assertion of essential differences, especially as it is so explicitly grounded in the adulation of motherhood. "Biological" arguments had been used to confine women to domestic roles for so long that most feminists considered it necessary to either avoid or reject any biologically-grounded argument for women's emancipation. However, difference feminists pointed out that simply because previous assertions of difference had been used to justify male

superiority, this was not a good reason to rule out the possibility that character differences may well exist. Such differences could be used to expose the inadequacies of masculine assumptions and their need to be challenged by feminine character traits. Gilman's approach assumes that there are distinctively female characteristics that, if allowed to flourish, would transform the world for the better, and this approach chimes with claims made by difference feminists over the last three decades, such as Carol Gilligan (1982 and 2003) and Luce Irigaray (1993 and 2001).

We shall now turn to how Gilman develops her maternal ethics in the fictional society of *Herland*. Although the social structure is clearly collectivist, the importance of personal bonding is recognized through the "year of glory" that the mother spends with her daughter before returning to her normal work (Gilman, 1999: 104). The mother does not have exclusive responsibility for her child, but is part of the team who take care of nurturing and education, with those most skilful at the art of mothering playing the leading role. So, while each mother experiences "a certain range of personal joy" in the particular relationship with her child, this is generalised into a love for all children, so that all one million children are regarded as "our children" (*idem*, 72). Gilman suggests that the conscious sacrifice of normally limiting a mother to one child intensifies the loving ethos that suffuses the whole society. One of the older women, Somel, explains to Van that "we soon grew to see that mother-love has more than one channel of expression. I think the reason our children are so – so fully loved, by all of us, is that we never – any of us – have enough of our own" (*idem*, 71). The highest accolade that the society of *Herland* can bestow is the permission to bear more than one child, and those honoured in this way as "Over Mothers" are part of a line which comes closest to the aristocracies that exist in the outside world (*idem*, 70). Van observes that the power of mother love, the maternal instinct admired in his society, was paramount in *Herland*, and that the strength of the sister love was "hard to credit" (*idem*, 59). Such is the power of collective commitment that the children carry only one name, for a family name is irrelevant when all belong to the one family (*idem*, 76).

The religion of the Herlanders is a form of pantheism based on the centrality of the cycle of motherhood. However, Gilman's depiction of its historical development is typical of a humanistic sociology of religion that portrays an emerging self-consciousness of human

powers moving from Polytheism to Monotheism and then to Pantheism. The first mother became the God of the country and she is worshipped in the Temple of Maaia. Originally there had been a number of deities, but then they centred on the Mother Goddess and later, as they progressively realized that they were in control of their own destiny, they developed a form of Maternal Pantheism (*idem*, 61). Maternalism is therefore extended beyond the commitment to the good nurturing of children to the energizing principle underlying the entire reproduction of society. They had created a sustainable economy in which all the emphasis was placed on scientifically-managed natural growth and sustainability.

The strength of this identity with nature is neatly illustrated by Ellador, who goes on to marry Van, when she explains to him what impelled her to choose the occupation of forester (*idem*, 101-102). At the age of 11, she caught an unusual butterfly and took it to her insect teacher to identify it. The teacher told her that it was one of the few remaining female obernut moths, so called because it fed off the obernut, the country's staple food. The society had been trying to exterminate it for centuries because it was a major threat to their food supply, and Ellador's intervention meant that the eggs would not be laid and thousands of trees, bearing thousands of bushels of obernuts, would be saved. The teacher explained the natural history of the tree and the moth, and the social history of the society's struggle to overcome the problem, and Ellador, filled with pride at what she had done for all the women and girls, resolved to become a forester. Van commented that this was but one of many such instances in which the social nature of the society was affirmed. He also noted the driving force of the naturalistic ethic:

> Such high ideals as they had! Beauty, Health, Strength, Intellect, Goodness – for these they prayed and worked. They had no enemies; they themselves were all sisters and friends. The land was fair before them, and a great Future began to form in their minds. (…)
> Here was Mother Earth bearing fruit. All that they ate was fruit of motherhood, from seed or egg of their product. By motherhood they were born and by motherhood they lived – life was, to them, just the long cycle of motherhood. (*idem*, 61)

However, it was a naturalism that valued the ingenuity of the women, who used their intellect to manage natural growth, including their own improvement, achieved through their strong commitment to education (*idem*, 61, 106-108). This self-awareness involves an acknowledgment of their unnatural isolation, and, provided that it need not

threaten their basic principles, they cherish a return to dual parentage, eventually celebrating the marriage of their women with the explorers as a symbol of human solidarity (*idem*, 119).

The controversial aspects of life in *Herland* have been the source of lively debate within feminism. Like so many radical thinkers of the time, Gilman was interested in eugenics, and she tells us that the women of *Herland* "breed out (…) the lower types". Some of the "worst types" were unable to conceive, while others were persuaded to relinquish motherhood because they were not suited to it. But those women possessing a "disproportionate egoism" who gave birth, often thinking their children would be better than others, had their babies taken from them and nurtured collectively (*idem*, 83). The nature of the behaviour that provoked such punishment is not made clear, except for the example of those who exhibited sexual feelings; such feelings were regarded as atavistic and resulted in them being denied motherhood (*idem*, 92-93). How these judgements are arrived at is not made clear. At the wedding ceremony the "dignitaries" are described as the Great Over Mother of the Land and a number of High Temple Counsellors (*idem*, 119). The high level of social cohesion suggests that these counsellors may have been elected in some form of democratic process, but the Great Over Mother would have been one of the few who had been permitted to have more than one baby. We should be wary about drawing too many conclusions from this vagueness about the political processes of the society, for Gilman may not have wanted to draw attention from her two central themes, the ability of women to revolutionize social relations, and the irrationality of patriarchal relations that the explorers try to defend with increasingly embarrassing clumsiness. Interestingly, she began her public career in the Nationalist Movement of Edward Bellamy in 1890, inspired by his utopian novel, *Looking Backward*, which is also vague on the political processes of the alternative society (Scharnhorst, 2000: 65).

Care Ethics and *Herland*

Gilman's maternalism anticipates by more than half a century the interest in a distinctively feminine approach to ethics known as the "Ethics of Care", first articulated by Carol Gilligan in *In a Different Voice* (1982). Based on the findings of three psychological studies, Gilligan argues that the women involved had a different view of

moral issues than the men. The women focused on concern for others arising from a sense of close interconnectedness, whereas the men's ideas focused on abstract rules and principles applicable to all moral problems. Gilligan argued that this different voice, expressed by women, arose from the experiences of inequality and interconnection, inherent in the relation of parent and child, giving rise to the ethics of justice and care. The ideals of human relationship involved a vision that self and other will be treated as of equal worth, and that, despite differences in power, things will be fair. It was a vision that "everyone will be responded to and included, that no one will be left alone or hurt" (Gilligan, 2000: 62-63). She goes on to argue that in the different voice of women "lies the truth of an ethic of care, the tie between relationship and responsibility, and the origins of aggression in the failure of connection" (*idem*, 173).[1] To paraphrase the distinction, we have ideas of Justice, based on impartial rules arrived at through reason, and Care, based on feelings of empathy with our fellow beings, derived from emotion. However, at this stage it should be noted that while care ethics might be driven by emotion, this is not at all incompatible with its application through reason. *Herland*, for example, is portrayed as a society that displays a high level of substantive rationality and is at the same time sustained by deep emotions. As Van comments, "with these women the most salient quality in all their institutions was reasonableness" (Gilman, 1999: 77). However, I think two important questions arise from the argument for a distinctive ethics of care that have important philosophical and political implications. The first relates to where this caring faculty arises, whether from biology, pure and simple, or from processes of socialization developed throughout history. Gilman discusses this issue directly in *Herland*. The second is the scope of the ethics of care, that is to say, whether it is a sufficient principle to guide all moral judgement, or whether it requires supplementation by other forms of ethics which emphasize rules and process.

On the question of how women may have developed this moral outlook, Gilman steers us to thinking of this as the product of a long period of socialization through education. In a conversation between the elders and the three explorers, the question is posed as to why there are such physical differences among the Herlanders when cross-fertilization has not taken place. The most chauvinist of the explorers, Terry, asserts that their physical variation proves that there must be men involved. A dual answer is

provided, pointing partly to education, enhancing slight differences, presumably through expression or exercise, and partly to the "law of mutation", which they had found in their own work on plants (*idem*, 78). The women and the explorers are in agreement that greater physical variety would probably be beneficial, and that is why one of the women, Zava, says that the Herlanders greatly mourned the loss of half the population when the men disappeared. However, she suggests that this "loss" had been compensated by the conscious striving for improvement triggered by the enormous challenges they faced. Terry replies that science (he cites the evolutionary biologist August Weisman rather than Charles Darwin) has proved that "acquired traits are not transmissable", to which Zava replies then that the achievements of the Herlanders must be due either to mutation or solely to education (*idem*, 78-79). Gilman is asserting here that an all-female society is every bit as likely to have developed the science of mutation as the modern world, and the dialogue opens up major questions about how we understand human development. Gilman is making general statements about women's nature similar to modern "difference" feminists – in particular that women tend to be more pacific and to place a higher value on relationships – while allowing for a long process of self-education or socialization through which they can exercise these traits in substantively rational ways. This does not involve a rejection of Darwinism,[2] but it does allow for a form of Lamarckian development specific to human cultural relations, as has been argued by the biologist Stephen Jay Gould and the historian Eric Hobsbawm (Gould, 2001: 103-105; Hobsbawm, 2004). An important implication of this is the extent to which we can hope, as a species, to learn from our mistakes and develop a disposition to peaceful cooperation and mutual respect.

Gilligan, although developing the idea of an ethics of care from empirical analysis of the experiences of women, does not think that the "different voice" of the ethics of care *has* to be female, but can be developed by both sexes – "the different voice I describe is characterized not by gender but theme" (Gilligan, 2000: 20). A much older approach, found in a 1943 paper by Erich Fromm, emphasizes that although there are character differences between the genders, they are far less deep than the things that men and women share in terms of potential, desires and fears. The gender differences are conceived as "colorings" that do not influence the capacity to do work of any kind

(Fromm, 1997: 112-113). In general, Fromm argues that the "care" elements associated with feminism need to become preponderant over the patricentric values that became dominant, particularly in modern society (Wilde, 2004: 57-74). If this approach is adopted, it overcomes certain obvious objections, as, for example, Steve Pinker's assertion that character differences would disqualify women from becoming constitutional lawyers or Supreme Court Justices (Pinker, 2002: 342), or Kate Soper's argument that difference feminism in general, and the emphasis on the maternal function in particular, implies that some women are "cast out from femininity" because they are not mothers nor intend to become so (Soper, 1990: 233). That certain values have been transmitted through thousands of years of family structure does not entail a biological determinism that prescribes only a limited range of propensities or implies a deficiency in those who to do not experience motherhood. Indeed we have already seen a marked reevaluation of parenting that challenges traditional roles, and there have been theoretical and political initiatives to apply care and empathy into the public sphere. Both of these developments are in line with the issues raised in *Herland* almost one hundred years ago.

The basis of care ethics may be located in the historical role of motherhood, but the ethics of care is not confined to mothers or potential mothers; it is available to all humankind. Michael Slote, in his recent affirmation of an ethics of care and empathy as a full-blown ethical alternative to conventional approaches to justice, points to the moral sentimentalism of past male philosophers (e.g. Hume, Hutcheson, and Smith), and also Christian ethics, to suggest that there is nothing to prevent men from achieving this outlook. He argues that we should be encouraged to think of a fully-developed ethics of care as "nothing less than a total or systematic *human* morality, one that may be able to give us a better understanding of the whole range of moral issues that concern both men and women than anything to be found in traditional ethical theories" (Slote, 2007: 3).

This brings us to the second question as to whether or not an ethics of care contradicts or complements conventional approaches to justice. Joan Tronto supports the ethics of care approach but argues that the care versus justice dichotomy is false (Tronto, 1994: 166-167). The care approach is needed to rectify the one-sidedness of justice approaches, but a care approach can be dangerous if it does not accept that the political context in which care operates needs to be regulated by conventional justice principles.

On these grounds she is critical of the contribution of modern care theorist Nell Noddings (Noddings, 1984), and also of Gilman's *Herland* for supposing that a single principle of care can cope with all social problems.

Tronto's Criticisms

Tronto focuses on *Herland* (Tronto, 1994: 158-160) as an example of the problems inherent in a "morality first" approach whereby care is the sole moral value that informs politics. Tronto supports the promotion of an ethics of care, defining caring as "a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair 'our world' so that we can live in it as well as possible" (*idem*, 103). However, for Tronto, care alone is not a sufficiently broad idea to solve such problems as inequality and privilege, general issues about the just ordering of society. She points out that Gilligan's ethics of care is conceived almost entirely in personal relationships and therefore doesn't deal with social connections in much larger units (*idem*, 96). When it comes to the potential hazards of applying the care ethic on a societal basis, she uses Gilman's *Herland* as a vivid example of what can go wrong. Tronto argues that Herland's stability is linked with its hierarchical structure in which the leading mother figures guide the proper raising of the children. Not only do they have the power to punish women for signs of sexual interest, but they exclude some women from having children at all. Tronto suggests that only the most stable and thoughtful women are permitted to give birth, but this, I think, is a misreading of the text, since Gilman refers to the prohibition applying only to a "few worst types". More generally, Tronto argues there is no diversity of any kind in Herland, an entirely homogenous society in which the social harmony is enforced:

> Gilman must posit a degree of social harmony and an absence of conflict that almost permits no individuation among people. Gilman's account of the importation of private caring values into public life makes clear that, unless all differentiation among people is removed, it cannot work. (*idem*, 160)

Generalizing from that, Tronto argues that only a society where all differentiation among people has been removed could emanate from a principle based on personal caring values (*idem*, 160). Her major theoretical point here is that outside of any

transformed context, "Care is not a sufficiently broad moral idea to solve the problems of distance, inequality and privilege" (*idem*, 158). Tronto's argument raises crucially important points about the place of care ethics in the context of claims to moral universalism, and the example of *Herland* appears to offer a stern warning to those who, like Slote, assert that "a care-ethical approach can be used to understand all of individual and political morality" (Slote, 2007: 2). However, before dealing with this theoretical point, let us see if we can at least offer some mitigating points in defence of Gilman's intentions in the novel.

The first point that should be made is that this is a work of fiction, and the utopian genre relies on imagination – a suspension of disbelief – in order to draw attention to major failings in our present reality and provide hope for future possibilities. In this short novel Gilman presents a richly ironic and quite devastating critique of patriarchal values, and at the same time shows how an ethic of care could sustain a harmonious society. Furthermore, she wants to avoid the mistake made by her utopian predecessor, Edward Bellamy, in *Looking Backward* (Bellamy, 2009) in portraying the alternative society as perfect in every way. The "problems" in Herland relating to the recalcitrant mothers and those with sexual leanings are treated as "wrong" behaviour by "inferior" women, and are considered as a threat to protect the greater good. However, as this judgemental attitude is so obviously inconsistent with the character-types described, the reader is challenged to consider what hypothetical alternatives may make the overall social model more defensible. This aspect of the utopian genre has been present at least since More's original *Utopia*, in which a number of questionable practices are described approvingly, almost certainly deliberately formulated to provoke controversy and further discussion (More, 2002). Critics of the genre normally emphasize the dangers of perfectionism and fail to see the rich irony that is present in the best utopian works, which prompt us to see that the specificity of the vision is flawed but may be redeemed by something different. In the case of *Herland*, a radical ethics of care would reject the majority attitude towards the women who did not conform, demanding that care and empathy need also to be extended to them. This would encourage ideas about the potential for more radical participatory democratic processes, or the possibility of alternative sub-groups within the general model. In other words, the idea of an ethics based on care would have to be

expanded to include principles of how the whole range of relationships between strangers is guided, reviewed and judged.

On Tronto's specific point about the impossibility of individuation, there are at least two examples which suggest that Gilman certainly thought there could be both individual and social choice and development. On the individual level, there is the story of Ellador's discovery of her destiny as a forester, and on the social level, there is the awareness of the women that their society is not complete or perfect, and so they are inclined to reintroducing a gendered society. In other words, we might be able to conceive of individuation in Herland, and the absence of examples of individual difference may be explained by the author's desire to achieve the primary intentions outlined above in a short novel in which characterization was developed strictly to support those intentions.[3]

Having outlined these points of mitigation, however, I think that Tronto's major argument must be conceded, particularly the judgement that not only does *Herland* lack all individuation, but that a society of that sort *must* lack individuation. The governing principle of motherly love, as depicted in *Herland*, does not protect certain individuals from what appears to be quite arbitrary punishment. Those individuals are excluded from the strong solidarity of the majority, which appears to equate with Durkheim's notion of mechanical solidarity, based on strong cultural homogeneity enforced ruthlessly and emotionally by moral taboo (Durkheim, 1964: 70-110). From Gilman's depiction of Herland, it is hard to see how the high level of discursive sophistication demonstrated by the women is sustained without high levels of participation in substantive issues. Tronto is surely right that we need to have a moral framework that could promise justice through these deliberations between members of society who may not be bound by strong social bonds and traditions. Slote's *The Ethics of Care and Empathy* is an elegant attempt to argue that an ethic of care is all that we need, and that it is applicable in relations between strangers in a political situation, so that "a law is just if it reflects or expresses empathically on the part of the legislative group that is responsible for passing it" (Slote, 2007: 95). However, this formula is weak and unconvincing, and the brevity of his chapter on social justice (seven pages long) indicates the weakness – or at least the undeveloped state – of the universal care ethics position. It is encouraging, however, that

recent virtue ethics perspectives, in the form of the capabilities approaches of Amartya Sen (2009) and Martha Nussbaum (2006), bring us closer to overcoming the boundaries between the personal and the political and between care and justice which both Tronto and Slote want to move beyond (Tronto, 1994: 10, 166-167; Slote, 2007: 96). These are theoretical steps that can elevate care and empathy to a more significant place in our moral discourse, with implications for social practice. In this respect the novel and other art forms play a vital role in the dissemination of this ethical perspective, and, for all its problems, Gilman's *Herland* succeeds in appealing for the imperative of caring for all *our* children,[4] and in demanding recognition of the potential of all women.

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Notes

[1] This is remarkably similar to the distinction between matricentric and patricentric value systems made by Erich Fromm as early as 1934. The matricentric complex is characterized by a feeling of trust in the mother's unconditional love, fewer guilt feelings and a far weaker superego than in the patricentric complex, a greater capacity for pleasure and happiness, an ideal of motherly compassion, and love for the weak and others in need of help (Fromm, 1999: 19-45).

[2] Not all Darwinists would agree. Stephen Pinker describes Gilligan's ethics of care as "invidious claims without scientific support" (Pinker, 2002: 342), but he doesn't discuss the fact that Darwin himself left open the possibility that acquired traits could be inherited.

[3] The same could be said of More's *Utopia*, in which individuals are not even mentioned but in which different groups are mentioned as well as different sources of enjoyment and edification.

[4] In one of the dialogues Van is forced to concede that, in the USA of the early twentieth century, about one third of the population lived in poverty (Gilman, 1999: 63-64). This is roughly the figure for the world today.

The Way of the World "No More":
The Limits of the Female Bildungsroman in
Angela Carter's *Heroes and Villains*

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Among recent critics of the classical literary bildungsroman, there is no question that Franco Moretti has offered the most comprehensive and coherent reading of the symbolic form of the genre called the "classical bildungsroman".[1] Yet Moretti's groundbreaking 1987 study, *The Way of the World*, acknowledges that his literary-historical survey does not "account for" more recent versions of the bildungsroman: "[t]he bildungsroman", he adds, "seemed to have its own private ideology" (2000: xii). The "ideal" genre his study deals with therefore belongs to another time (mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century), another place (Europe – mainly Germany, France, then England), and "necessarily" to the male gender, though *Jane Eyre* and *Middlemarch* squeak in as legitimate examples of post-classical instances of the form. While Moretti allows for readings of post-classical bildungsroman texts up to the twentieth century as far as 1914 – that is, as far as the advent of Modernism – by his lights, this is the logical end of a "purist" history of the bildungsroman. Given his valuable statement that "formal patterns are what literature uses in order to master historical reality, and to reshape its materials in the chosen ideological key" and that "if form is disregarded, not only do we lose the complexity (and therefore the interest) of the whole process – we miss its strictly political significance too" (*idem*, xiii), he might have more usefully responded to the ongoing history of the bildungsroman than by writing off the works by "women, workers, African-Americans" (*idem*, ix-x).

Even before Moretti's "magisterial" study came out in 1987, studies of female bildungsroman narratives were beginning to appear and continue to do so.[2] Todd Kontje, no

doubt in response to Moretti and his predecessors (Jost, for instance), warns that we are as likely, if not more so, to "grow impatient" with definitions of the female bildungsroman as with "the aesthetic and ideological conservatism of earlier definitions of the male Bildungsroman. (…) In fact, searching for positive female role models in the Bildungsroman threatens to play into the hands of those who would continue to marginalize women's fiction as 'trivial' literature" (Kontje, 1993: 226). However, Susan Gubar notably remarks that women's writing generally, and women's novels of education in particular, develop a "utopian imperative" in rejecting obsolete literary forms, especially the nineteenth-century novel's commitment to linear plotting and realist mimesis, and pursuing postmodern goals of deconstruction and reconstruction with "characters' awakenings to new understandings of their functions and identity" (1998: 331) – and the form itself being challenged to adapt to those new understandings. If "plot differences among the bildungsroman novels [generate] meanings" (*ibidem*) – about history, about time, about identity – what meanings can we ascribe to recent narratives of development that clearly "affiliate with", if they do not replicate, or even parody, that original form?

The text I focus on here is not typically thought of as a "female bildungsroman" narrative, as critics focus more on its catastrophic vision of our future. But Angela Carter's *Heroes and Villains* (1993) is clearly, and self-consciously, a bildungsroman describing the formation of a woman at the edge of time. With the novel's nearly post-historical setting, the ideal and ideological teleologies of the Moretti paradigm of a classical bildungsroman text are intentionally destabilized. This will naturally have profound implications for the "symbolic form" of this text. The speculative mode of her novel, animated as well by the claims of the bildungsroman form, problematizes the bildungsroman's ideal narrative of individual improvement and social progress, with its utopian trajectory of paradise lost and regained, and its endorsement of the private. Rather, *Heroes and Villains* re-orients that teleological imperative to trace a less "predictable" vision of the "*emergence*" of individual and civilizational history (Bakhtin, 1986: 23; emphasis added) – though "into what" is the central, open question. Additionally, the interanimation of speculative and bildungsroman fiction prompts a return to the problem of education. The bildungsroman's "specific pedagogical ideal" (*ibidem*) adherent to the genre evolves, reflecting the emergence of new ways of learning about and conceiving of the individual and/in history. This too will be

reflected in an evolving form that highlights not the "comfort of civilization" under the pretense of stable ideological conditions, but the discomfort of living at a crux time. If Marianne can be said to find any "ego ideal" by the end, it is only because she recognizes that such an ideal is least of all accomplished through a narcissistic collapse of distinction between the real and imaginary spaces. That distortion Tobias Boes calls the necessary "topology" of the bildungsroman as it "becomes the mirroring surface that aids in the construction of imagined communities" (Boes, 2007: 117) would be a real failure. Instead, however, Marianne grounded her self-identity in her abandonment of the imaginary space at the border of "the realm of bare life".[3]

The conscious rehandling of the classical paradigm in *Heroes and Villains* is signaled almost immediately by the name of Carter's protagonist, Marianne, alluding directly to the female love-interest of Goethe's paradigmatic *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. It is the portrait of the young woman, however, not the young man, which is drawn. Set in a post-apocalyptic period, there is evidently no national government left, no fixed borders, a waning grip on any notion of "culture" and "humane-ness" – indeed, the "comfort of civilization" is limited to a small community in which the heroine Marianne is born – and which she rejects for the wild spaces beyond the tower and walls that mark the geography of her home. Marianne is in many ways the "typical" bildungsroman hero/ine at the novel's opening: restless, seeking "the meaning of life", "intense" (Moretti, 2000: 46). She is given the tools for understanding herself and her life from her father, a Professor of History, who imparts to her the gems of Western civilization's treasure of knowledge. Her classroom is within a "white tower" – call it the "ivory tower" – of steel and concrete, left from the nuclear war which has apparently reduced the world as we know it to a shadow of its former self. The Professors' precarious but still comfortable, insulated way of life is dedicated to maintaining a precarious hold on the rich history of humanity, the whole of knowledge, the ideals of humanism, civilization itself.

Integration into this society is clearly her father's goal for her: "He taught his daughter reading, writing, and history. She read his library of old books. (…) she looked out of the window and tried to imagine a forest of men" (Carter, 1993: 7). The professor gives her his tools to discover that "sense of belonging" (Moretti, 2000: 19) to a wider community of human beings, with the expectation that, so long as she remains safely within the walls of

the Professoriate's enclave, she will participate as a fortunately free individual in the precious continuity of humankind. As one of the Professoriate class – "the only ones left who could resurrect the gone world in a gentler shape, and try to keep the destruction out, this time" (Carter, 1993: 8) – she would enjoy the "certain privileges" of that class, such as the "deep shelters" that had allowed them to survive a nuclear holocaust. Nonetheless, her lack of "belonging" is evident in the first paragraph of the novel:

> Marianne had sharp, cold eyes and she was spiteful but her father loved her. He was a Professor of History; he owned a clock which he wound every morning and kept in the family dining-room upon a sideboard full of heirlooms of stainless steel such as dishes and cutlery. Marianne thought of the clock as her father's pet, something like her own pet rabbit, but the rabbit soon died and was handed over to the Professor of Biology to be eviscerated while the clock continued to tick inscrutably on. She therefore concluded the clock must be immortal but this did not impress her. Marianne sat at table, eating; she watched dispassionately as the hands of the clock went round but she never felt that time was passing for time was frozen around her in this secluded place where a pastoral quiet possessed everything and the busy clock carved the hours into sculptures of ice. (Carter, 1993: 1)

"Time" itself imprisons Marianne, its mechanical cyclicality mocking her gaze outward toward the unknown, those "forests of men", from atop her tower, like so many a fairy tale princess. Her father's ordered existence feels empty and cold to her, its principle of continuity coming only from the inexorable, mechanistic spring of the clock, artificial, passionless. The Professors' "Society of the Tower" in fact parallels descriptions of ideal, aristocratic societies in the earlier examples of the bildungsroman. In these aristocratic cultures, Moretti notes, there are no apparent conflicts within their walls, and the aristocracy is portrayed as "self-sufficient" – for, as Moretti puts it, "its authority merg[es] with everyday activities and relationships, exercising itself in ways that are natural and unnoticeable" (Moretti, 2000: 53). This endorsement of the aristocracy, he adds importantly, is the "hidden logic of the everyday life of the classical bildungsroman" (*idem*, 54) – and the point to which the hero must return at last.[4] So here, a community "self-supporting at the simplest level" (*idem,* 2), pastoral, but civilized, a throw-back to a sort of Platonic Republic: "primarily a community of farmers with the intellectual luxury of a few Professors who corresponded by the trading convoys with others of their kind in other places. And the Soldiers were there to protect them all" (*idem,* 8).

Marianne's rugged sense of truthfulness, however, betrays her homeland's false naturalness from the outset. The second paragraph of the novel warns how fragile a

community the Professoriate is, not least because its inhabitants close their eyes to the dangers outside: "Beyond the farmland was nothing but marshes, an indifferent acreage of tumbled stone and some distant intimations of the surrounding forest which, in certain stormy lights of late August, seemed to encroach on and menace the community though, most of the time, the villagers conspired to ignore it" (*idem,* 1). Marianne is one villager who does not. Intent even as a child in setting herself apart, she was left out of the children's games "but she did not care"; she also "marked all her possessions with her name, even her toothbrush, and never lost anything" (*idem*, 3). Through Marianne's precocious discernments, however, we begin to see that this community more closely resembles the inhabitants of Plato's cave, rather than Plato's Republic. Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Lewis Mumford, two authors featured in her father's library, contribute to his magnum opus on "the archaeology of social theory" (*idem*, 8); but beyond their theories of social contract, urban development, "technics and civilization", is the real question: "Is there still a living choice between Necropolis and Utopia?" (Mumford, 1968: 3).

Though Marianne consumes these texts as offered, they have little to say to an adolescent who lives in the present rather than the past, and who concludes that these books and dictionaries "had ceased to describe facts and now stood only for ideas or memories" (Carter, 1993: 7). Transgressing the town walls to wander the swamps and forests beyond, she learns to beware of lacerating and flesh-eating plants, hidden "bottomless vents in the ground", "obese and hugely fanged rats" who nested in the ruins of a former city. That city is reduced now to a "dangerous network of caves" that hide animal and human feces and bones as well as live specimens, which Marianne had once thought were ghosts. They are "ghosts", the narrator explains, "only in the sense that they had forfeited their social personalities" (*idem*, 8), and Marianne watches their starved figures trudge through the scape of the ruins seeking scraps of food and shelter. Looking the "picture of misery", Marianne learns that they are hardly the force of brute nature (she had thought of them as "explosions of violence produced by the earth itself" [*idem*, 14]) which she'd taken them for during their attacks on her home town.

Marianne's contentment with being set apart betokens her yearning to break old, useless affiliations: she actually hopes "at least a visit from the Barbarians would make some kind of change" (*idem*, 2) – though last time it brought the murder of her brother.

Watching dispassionately from a tower room where she'd been locked up for "curiously indulging her spitefulness in several ways" (*idem,* 3), she'd found the attack "very interesting" as the Barbarians slaughtered livestock, and her brother; and as women from her own village seemed to help the attackers in their plundering. Her willingness to objectively survey her surroundings as if she were disconnected from them – her acceptance of a speculative standpoint in other words – gives her the kind of attentiveness that allows her to effectively defamiliarize the entirely familiar, and to open her mind to critique. As insignificant as it seems, Marianne's refusal to play "Soldiers and Barbarians", the game of her childhood friends in which "'The Soldiers are heroes but the Barbarians are villains'" (*idem*, 2), is also a seed of plot prediction; she refuses as well the easy categorizations of her father and the Professoriate, whose reading of the world, she suspects, is at best irrelevant. And perhaps most importantly from the perspective of generic expectation, Marianne thoughtfully informs her father that "it was impossible for her to consider marriage with any of the young men in the community. (…) 'I don't see the point. I could maybe marry a stranger, someone from outside, but nobody here. Everybody here is so terribly boring, Father'" (*idem*, 11). With the wisdom of a maturity that can be characterized as a "*retreat from life*" (Moretti, 2000: 141), her father tells her that "chaos is the opposite pole of boredom", but, moments later, Marianne yawns at his lecturing: "She loved him but he bored her" (Carter, 1993: 11). Neither wise nor mature, she opts for history and life.

Marianne's father is not killed by a chaos-bearing Barbarian; the villain is her own old nurse who, like others in the community, had suddenly gone mad, one of those events which "[n]ow and then" broke the community "from its trance" (*idem,* 9). Remarks her uncle, "There is not enough discipline (…) That old woman was maladjusted. She should have been given treatment.' (…) 'She loved us when we were alive,' said Marianne without realizing what she was saying. Appalled, she corrects herself: 'I mean, when I was young'" (*idem,* 5). Marianne is just 16 here. After that, there is no reason for her to stay, in this posthumous existence: "there was nothing but custom to keep her in the village and nothing she wanted to take away with her; not a single one of all those things she had once possessively marked with her name now seemed to belong to her" (*idem,* 18). Among Marianne's responses: she chops her hair off, looking now "like a demented boy" (*idem,* 15); so transformed, she enjoys "with a violent pleasure" her ugliness, and decides to find

"some other violation she could perform upon herself" (*ibidem*), though she discovers that scissors and knives have been hidden. These efforts underscore her unwillingness to be absorbed into her community; not only does she turn away from the prospect of monotony (and marriage) but in the crafting of her appearance as a "*demented* boy" (emphasis added) she becomes a parody of the male initiate of the bildungsroman form.[5] She also burns her father's books, and finally "drown[s]" her father's clock: "It vanished under the yielding earth, still emitting a faint tick" (*ibidem*).[6]

The Professors and Priests may struggle to retain the woof of memory that keeps the weave of this social fabric together but that veil is rent for Marianne, who is so aware of the monotony of time. Eager to escape that monotony, the next Barbarian becomes her opportunity for freedom, as she agrees to help Jewel, a Barbarian hiding in her uncle's garage after the attack. Stealing a rare automobile, she drives out with him into what is described as a brave new world: "it seemed the real breath of a wholly new and vegetable world, a world as unknown and mysterious to Marianne as the depths of the sea; or the body of the young man who slept (…) in her lap" (*idem,* 22). Later, she notes the passing of the season, "*outside time and known space*" (*idem*, 52; emphasis added). Marianne welcomes this trial among the Barbarians as a journey of "pure potentiality" (Moretti, 2000: 44); the slate, she thinks, is clean and she walks with eyes wide open. As in the paradigmatic form, the meaning of her narrative promises to emerge with her discovery of her own meaning as the hero/ine of her quest or "ordeal".[7] Like so many such heroes, her period of trial is one of "becoming aware of such a state of affairs" (*idem*, 45); uncannily anticipating Moretti, the character Mrs. Green in *Heroes and Villains* blithely observes that "'Tomorrow you'll have to sleep with Jewel, won't you. That's the way of the world'" (*idem*, 59).

While Marianne swings from helplessness to stubborn rebellion like a ship without a ballast, alternating between abjectness and violence through much of the novel, she is courageously open to every incident, thinking, interpreting, waiting for the meaning to come to her – though she is also naively eager to judge: "you", she condescendingly informs Jewel, "are a perfect illustration of the breakdown of social interaction and the death of social systems"; then she calls him a "beautiful savage", the "noble savage in her father's researches" (*idem,* 24). She goes on to nominate him the "ragged king of nowhere" (*idem*, 53), obviously a bow to this novel's utopian forbears. This assumed "brute", however,

reveals his intelligence quickly enough, informing his family that Marianne is "the daughter of a Professor of History (…) She knows which way time runs" (*idem*, 31). Even more pointedly, when Marianne loftily informs Jewel that "[t]hinking was [my father's] function", he responds, "he had the time to think about things, did he? (…) Or was he a preserved brain at the best of times" (*idem*, 57).

Trying to orient herself in the intellectual landscape of Plato, Rousseau, and the Western culture learned from her father, Marianne discovers rather quickly what she already intuited and is therefore ready to accept: that "the way of the world" into which she was born is itself an anachronism. Her father's work on Rousseau does not prepare her for her new world, where "[s]he felt herself removed to a different planet", isolated "as though she were in quarantine" (*idem*, 41). Indeed to the Barbarians she *is* a kind of disease; she notices at the sight of her that the newly met Barbarians guard themselves by making "the sign" against the evil eye, a gesture that she recognizes, much later in the novel, as the long-forgotten sign of the cross. Given their obvious superstitions, she muses that "If time was frozen among the Professors, here she lost the very idea of time, for the Barbarians did not segment their existence" (*ibidem*). As if to drive that point home, she notices among the clothing of a little girl named Jen "a dead wrist watch on her arm, purely for decoration; it was a little corpse of time" (*idem*, 44). She muses further on this girl, who reminds her of "an Ancient Briton": "Marianne contemplated the archaic child and wondered if her clothing were proof of the speed with which the Barbarians were sinking backwards or evidence of their adaption [*sic*] to new conditions" (*idem,* 43).

Such speculations on history and culture hardly ease her "integration" into this wild society to which she was willingly, naively, even romantically, drawn. For just here, Marianne, the self-proclaimed "virgin of the swamp" (*idem*, 50), is matter-of-factly raped by Jewel upon her first and only effort to escape. It is no accident that the primary topic of their post-coital bantering is time, interpretation, and anachronism. Coldly observing her ravisher, with his amulets and tattoos, Marianne concludes, "You are a complete anachronism". Asked to define the last word, she responds, "A thing that once had a place and a function but now has neither any more" (*idem*, 56-57). That's when Jewel launches the barb concerning her father's "preserved brain". The point is clear: not only is her father an anachronism, but so is her own attachment to the past, and to her father's rational categories:

"words had ceased to describe facts and now only stood for ideas or memories" (*idem*, 7), we are told early in the novel – and the truth of this is what Marianne must be continually taught. Although she regards herself "the only rational woman left in the whole world", Jewel reminds her again and again that reason serves no useful function anymore. Thus by a logic Marianne does not understand, Jewel announces that "I've got to marry you, haven't I? That's why I've got to take you back" (*idem*, 56); they return to the tribe to prepare a wedding, ridiculously archaic as that sounds to Marianne.

In this bildungsroman, Marianne does marry – or, to put that verb in a more appropriate voice, she "is married". For her marriage is something done to her, secured through the violence of the rape, and then through the celebration of that rape in the grotesque parody of a marriage ceremony. Typically performed in a ceremony filled with symbolism that connects the individuals to society at large, marriage according to Moretti fits the lives of the two into a "symbolic construction" which "always 'connects' the 'individual moments' of a text with all the others: they are thus 'preserved' in their singularity, while simultaneously made 'meaningful' – they 'point beyond themselves'" (Moretti, 2000: 62). As the touchstone of social normality the couple is a new iteration of the ideal values of the bourgeois society whose interests the novel protected throughout the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries; the conflict between individualization and socialization dissolved in the promise of "desire", in all of its dimensions (social, economic, sexual, moral), fulfilled. In the classic bildungsroman, marriage is a metaphor for the social contract; we know by now, however, that the Barbarian society of Jewel is a grotesque version of the utopian social contract envisioned by Rousseau. And so this marriage ceremony is as well characterized by symbols emptied of their original significances and parodically redefined. One of the novel's ironical jokes is that Mrs. Green, mistress of this marriage ceremony, supplies among other things a decaying wedding dress that she removes from a wooden box. In that box are a few other possessions from the old days, "a few dresses, several aprons, her hairpins and a book which was no less precious to her because she had forgotten how to read it. This book was a copy of *Great Expectations*" (Carter, 2000: 37). It's clear by now that Marianne is no Pip; but what interests Carter anyway is not Dickens' protagonist but rather the bizarre anachronism of Miss Havesham, herself a "pun in time", to use Marianne's second, wonderful definition of that word. For it is Miss

Havesham's dress that Marianne wears – "this crumbling anachronism", Marianne calls the gown – the very tissues of it falling to pieces as it is pulled from the box.[8] The marriage in this novel does not function, generically, as a metaphor for the social contract; rather this marriage signifies the rending of that contract, symbolized by the tearing or "giving way" of Marianne's hymen, graphically described in the narrative.

Other intertextual puns adhere to this moment in the text: the elaborate tattoo depicting the Fall of Man traced permanently into Jewel's back, for instance. "'It's hideous'", says Marianne of the tattoo, "'It's unnatural'. But," the narrator tells us, "she was lying again; the tattoo seemed to her a perilous and irresistible landscape, a terra incognita on the back of the moon" (*idem*, 86). The tattoo's symbolism holds open for her, until the bitter end, the hope that she and Jewel hold in their union the potential for a future in this fallen Eden, despite the "devils" at every turn. Here's a world she can explore, perilous but irresistible. And so she does for the remainder of the novel, "[c]ourting her own extinction" (*idem*, 87) but giving life at night, as it were, to a mutation of their own, "this erotic beast" (*idem*, 88), the "dual being they made". Once again, what is emphasized is the "universe" of desire these two individuals create, that allows her to deny Jewel "an existence outside", indeed to deny the existence of anything outside: "Then their bed became a cold, black, silent world and its sole inhabitants were denied all other senses but those of touch, taste and smell" (*ibidem*).

In the afterglow of these episodes, however, separating themselves "out to themselves, again, they woke to the mutual distrust of the morning" (*idem*, 89), and the contraction of their world to only "two dimensions, flat and effectless. (…) all these activities were no more than sporadic tableaux vivants or random poses with no thread of continuity to hold them together" (*ibidem*). Marianne's world is described again and again as "this disintegrated state", and Donally reminds us, in a passage that recalls Charlie Marlow at the opening of *Heart of Darkness,* that Marianne's transcendent experience in the bedroom is countered by that contraction: "It's a small world. (…) It's as small a world as the Romans found and much smaller than Uther's, getting smaller all the time. Contracting, tightening, diminishing, shrinking" (*idem*, 95-96).

This brutal marriage does permanently change Marianne and leaves her, at least until the end, *not* "entirely without hope" (*idem*, 59). The narrative offers out something after all:

love. As they endure their wedding night, an unlikely thing happens: "the strangeness of the events of the day combined almost to subdue her"; she begins unplaiting Jewel's long hair, slowly, "an action altogether *out of time*" (*idem*, 78; emphasis added). While Jewel mocks her with her anachronistic education – "Lead me by the hand to the gates of paradise", he jibes, to which she responds, "Why are you putting me through this ordeal by imagery?" (*idem*, 81) – she accepts the ironized come-on. They "make love" for the first time, "clutch[ing] one another's hands with almost the same kind of terrified relief" (*ibidem*), and in this way, the narrative concludes, "they effected a truce" (*idem*, 82).

So that is what this marriage is: hardly a permanent contract but a temporary truce at best, as if one alternative to anti-utopian despair might be the retreat to the desires of the body, and through that desire, a renewal of society. The outcome of that I shall turn to in a moment. But here, Marianne knows even this truce is a precious thing, because, for the first time, it reveals to her something that is "real": it is her first authentic experience. Their lovemaking "bore no relation to anything she had heard, read or experienced (…) she was filled with astonishment that the room contained the world or the world had become only the room; but she put her arms around him and caressed him". The gates of paradise indeed. "And", this paragraph concludes, "if anything else but this existed, then she was sure it was not real" (*idem*, 83). Perhaps, but the poison that the Barbarian shaman Donally (himself a renegade Professor) tried to add to their morning breakfast was real enough to kill the puppy Mrs. Green tested it on.

The hope for love seems fragile at best, and a romantic one (in the negative sense) at worst. For this reason, we are suspicious when Marianne finds herself, in the days following this apparent consummation of the marriage, surprisingly and for the first time "comfortable". This feeling of comfort reminds her of her father and his ilk, "gathered together over their after-dinner, home-brewed blackberry brandy when they would discuss apocalypses, utopias and so on. Marianne suppressed a yawn but, all the same, she felt at home" (*idem*, 93). She has found "familiarity". But as her new group of companions, nomads, without a home, move out toward the sea, which she has never seen, these connections continue to confuse her: "And Marianne knew in her heart that none of this was real; that it was a kind of enchantment. She was in no-man's-land" (*idem*, 103). Furthermore,

she could find no logic to account for her presence nor for that of the people around her nor any familiar, sequential logic at all in this shifting world; for that consciousness of reason in which her own had ripened was now withering away and she might soon be prepared to accept, since it was coherent, whatever malign structure of the world (…). (*idem*, 106)

It is clear that the Moretti model for the symbolic logic of the bildungsroman, with its goals of comfort, compromise, autonomy and independence, was fully apparent to this novel's author, who, in envisioning a world in which civilization is essentially collapsed, overturns those goals time and time again. Whereas the professors "at least make the pretence of nourishing such a thing [as hope]" (*idem*, 123), Jewel, Marianne's own "unorthodox" (*ibidem*) tutor, rejects Donally's proposal of "Hope" as the dream for the future. Marianne concurs, observing that such a return to the Professors – to signal that her "researches into the *moeurs* of savage tribes [are] completed" (*idem*, 132) – is a meaningless conclusion to her education: "'The Barbarians are Yahoos but the Professors are Laputans,' she said" (*idem*, 123), both peoples, in other words, parodies of themselves and neither of them worthy of admiration. In acknowledging this, Marianne recognizes the irony of her situation and the likely uselessness of seeking existential moorings among the Barbarians, any more than from the Professors. While refusing to play Heroes and Villains, her childhood game, among the Professors, among the Barbarians the game cannot be played at all, for "I don't know which is which any more, nor who is who, and what can I trust if not appearances? Because nobody can teach me (…) because my father is dead" (*idem*, 125). The "objective foundations" (Moretti, 2000: 108) of neither society – the Barbarians' or the Professors' – can offer any positive symbolic legitimacy, and the prospect of annihilation remains the most reliable expectation.

Up to the bitter end Marianne is ambivalent, pulled between anachronistic hope and abject despair. She continues on with Jewel, at once disgusted with him and at the same time attracted: "when she perceived she and her Jewel were, in some way, related to one another she was filled with pain for her idea of her own autonomy might, in fact, be not the truth but a passionately held conviction"; she is "abashed" at her hope that simply insisting on this conviction of autonomy would make it a certainty, and ashamed at what she suspects is merely nostalgic sentimentality. Thus, as the couple reach the last real horizon, the sea, the narrator invests the final major scene with allusive ghostliness: we are brought simultaneously to the beginning of the world, with Jewel and Marianne like a first couple

standing before "all the wonders of the seashore, to which Marianne could scarcely put a single name, though everything had once been scrupulously named" (Carter, 1993: 136); and to the end of the world, on the beach, as we recall other post-apocalyptic scenarios on beaches – not only Neville Shute's but also most uncannily, H. G. Wells':

> Losing their names, these things underwent a process of uncreation and reverted to chaos, existing only to themselves in an unstructured world where they were not formally acknowledged, becoming an ever-widening margin of undifferentiated and nameless matter surrounding the outposts of man, who no longer made himself familiar with these things or rendered them authentic in his experience by the gift of naming. Jewel and Marianne walked along the beach of this wide, unfrequented bay not as if they were discovering it, or exploring it, but like visitors who have arrived too late, without an introduction, are unsure of their welcome but, nevertheless, determined to brave it out. (Carter, 1993: 136-7)

Reaching such an indifferent horizon, the traces of their footsteps "already filling with water" (*ibidem*), she still considers beginning a new world with him, even as she skeptically predicts failure:

> at best, they might begin a new subspecies of man who would live in absolute privacy in secret caves, (…) imbibing a suitable indifference to the outside with its mother's milk. This fearless and rational breed would eschew such mysteries as the one now forcing her to walk behind the figure on the shore, dark as the negative of a photograph, and preventing her from returning home alone. (*ibidem*)

Indeed a cruel reminder is offered her at just this moment: she peers ahead past the headland to see "a time-eaten city up to its ears in the sea" (*idem*, 137) and itself a kind of negative of the place from which she came with "an enormous clock whose hands stood still" (*idem*, 138) protruding from the waves, and also a "white tower", a lighthouse, "like a luminous finger pointing to heaven" except that "[i]ts light was put out": "To Marianne, it looked the twin of the white tower in which she had been born and she was very much moved for, though neither tower any longer cast a useful light, both still served to warn and inform of surrounding dangers" (*idem*, 139). In a last confusion of sentimentalism, Marianne interprets these as beneficial symbols, to restore or clarify her resolution: "abhor shipwreck (…) go in fear of unreason. Use your wits (…). She fell in love with the integrity of the lighthouse" (*ibidem*). The narrator reminds us that Jewel "might regard her as more representative of the culture of the carrier of the defunct clock" (*ibidem*); and Marianne herself, at this point, views the "rotten concrete" of the ruins as conceivably "the original

blueprint", with the existence of men and women merely a "necessary but intermediate stage of the execution of the grand design" (*idem*, 140).

The only possible ending is what Moretti calls the "implausible" kind: crisis, a divorce, death. With Marianne suspecting that the "grand design" in this world has little to do with human sociality, much less love, in their final scene together she and Jewel examine one another

> with marvelling suspicion, likely heavily disguised members of a conspiracy who have never learned the signals which would reveal themselves to one another, for to neither did it seem possible, nor even desirable, that the evidence of their senses was correct and each capable of finding in the other some clue to survival in this inimical world. (*idem*, 148)

When he leaves for good, and she can see him "no more", she suddenly feels a stranger to herself: "she was surprised to find herself dislocated from and unfamiliar with her own body" (*ibidem*). Therefore, with the death of Jewel, the narrative almost immediately shuts down. Moretti reminds us that in the classical bildungsroman "[t]he story ends as soon as an intentional design has been realized: a design which involves the protagonist and determines the overall meaning of events" (Moretti, 2000: 55). The same is true in this novel, except that the author makes it clear that the intentional design of this bildungsroman is precisely the evacuation of the utopian ideals of that classical form, a conclusion that hardly satisfies the conventional "sense of an ending". "No more" – the words used to inform Marianne of Jewel's death – is to be given, taken, exchanged,[9] or demanded.

Marianne does not collapse or even weep at the news; with an irony she understands by now, this ending was too expected. In the ultimate overturning of the bildungsroman ending, where the hero "finds" him- or herself, Marianne instead catches her reflection "in a misty, cracked mirror on the wall: there stood Marianne, *unrecognizable to herself*, leaning over the cauldron" (Carter, 1993: 149; emphasis added). Visions of her entire life history parade before her in the curling steam of the cauldron, including an image of the murderous Nurse, "her (…) forgotten face grinn[ing] triumphantly for, in some sense, her prophecy had been fulfilled" (*ibidem*); that prophecy was this: "If you're not a good little girl, the Barbarians will eat you" (*idem*, 2). But last in the stream of "visions" is her father, "who merged imperceptibly with the image of the blind lighthouse and then disappeared in the

slowly rising bubbles" (*idem*, 149), recalling the moment when the face of her father's old watch sinks into the mud. No wonder then that Marianne's story of development ends with her self-proclaimed inheritance of Jewel's authority and legitimacy: "'What, will you be Queen?' says the boy Johnny; rejecting the nomenclature of aristocracy and national history, she answers "'I'll be the tiger lady and rule them with a rod of iron'" (150). The civilized comforts of her White Tower home are devolved into the infantile terrors of the fairy-tale;[10] the most one can say of her quest for self-discovery is that she does not despair in her anti-utopian[11] suspicion that the freedom and autonomy she sought among the Barbarians exist nowhere in this "realm of bare life" (Boes, 2007: 122), utter necessity, and contingency.

The comedic drive of the bildungsroman toward "organic integration" is undone in this novel's endlessly self-consuming propositions. Whereas the classic bildungsroman endorses the "triumph of meaning over time" (Moretti, 2000: 55), this novel faces the triumph of time over meaning. Carter's rigorous and unfearful speculation on the end of, if not society, certainly of Culture and Civilization with capital C's, takes us also to the "ends" of writing: both in the sense of an "end" as a final stage of a history, and in the sense of an "end" as a purpose or goal. This speculative novel reflects most urgently on the purgatorial conditions of a life that make narrative possible. Marianne several times considered running away, even tried a few times, the narrator says, "as if somewhere there was still the idea of a home" (*idem*, 52). What Marianne knows by the final page is that there is no such thing as home, that, too, being an anachronistic notion, with no realistic function in this post-modern, post-romantic, post-historical period that Mrs. Green calls "this hell on earth", in which only the *unheimlich* persists. No further narrative possible under these conditions, other than a tallying of the days.

Carter imagines a kind of literal post-modernity, in which it is no longer possible to imagine a temporal horizon, and in which few remember the past. This society, such as it is, has nearly lost any sense of history, so "disintegrated" it is become;[12] a new dark age is clearly dawning. Carter's strategic choice of the bildungsroman exposes with the profoundest irony the falseness of Marianne's own misguided naiveté and hope long before she admits it to herself. The dismal lesson Marianne learns is that her own experiment in free will and the romance of exploration was doomed, based on anachronistic myths concerning free will, love, and that most utopian of desires, hope.

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Notes

[1] Todd Kontje describes the Bildungsroman in similar terms, as "the meta-discourse in which we witness the birth of man. (…) But evidently *not* the birth of women" (1993: 222). Writing contemporaneously with Moretti on this topic, John Smith also ties the bildungsroman to a masculinist ideology: "*Bildung*, and its narrativization in the Bildungsroman*,* is not an 'organic' but a social phenomenon that leads to the construction of male identity. (…) The strict gender codification at the basis of *Bildung* (…) makes female *Bildung* a contradiction in terms' (1987: 216 and 220).

[2] The studies began with a 1984 article in *Women's Studies* on nineteenth-century American female bildungsroman, by Beverly Voloshin, and an article two years later by Mikhael M. Bakhtin. Esther Kleinbord Labovitz's full-length study, *The Myth of the Heroine*, appeared in 1986, followed by Susan Fraiman's important monograph, *Unbecoming Women*, in 1993. Further books appeared by Feng (1997) and Lorna Ellis (1999) as well as various articles. Susan Midalia similarly characterizes the female bildungsroman as embracing a "politics of optimism" (1996: 89) based on its "emancipatory nature" (*idem,*

90), though she accurately concedes that "from a feminist perspective [it] in fact encompasses ideologically diverse, even antithetical, positions" (*idem*, 91).

[3] This phrase is Giorgio Agamben's, but its application to the theory of bildungsroman is introduced by Tobias Boes (2007), the most recent and certainly most intellectually provocative critics of the genre. See his discussion of Agamben in *Conradiana*, vol. 39, pp. 122-23.

[4] For Wilhelm, according to Moretti, "There is the warning of the Society of the Tower that accompanies him constantly – it almost torments him: 'Remember to live!' Not to live in one way or another, but simply to live. What is important is not to establish a goal and concentrate all of one's forces for the moment in which it draws close, the moment of the trial. What is important is to be able to dispose of one's energies *at every moment* and to employ them for the countless occasions or opportunities that life, little by little, takes upon itself" (45).

[5] Moretti notes that the protagonists of such narratives [the post-ideal bildungsroman] "act" in order to "be": they are "basically 'dynamic' and 'theatrical,' but that also means (…) that they incline to 'unnaturalness' and 'parody'" (2000: 106). This is relevant to Marianne's urges to escape and to masquerade as a boy.

[6] Sarah Lefanu notes this novel's "obsession with time" and the presence of clocks at its beginning and ending (for her full discussion of this novel, see Lefanu, 1989: 79-83).

[7] Here is Moretti: "in the course of the *Prüfungszeit* [the hero] is on hold, at zero degree, just as time in fact is on hold. The 'trial' of initiation consists precisely in accepting that time stop and that one's own identity vanish. It consists in being willing *to die* in order to have the possibility *to be reborn*. The only virtue put on trial is courage in the sense of 'patience', the virtue of exceptional circumstances" (2000: 45).

[8] The marriage is thus much more specifically nuanced than Sarah Lefanu suggests, in describing it as a "grotesque parody of a fairy-tale wedding" (1989: 80). In case we miss the joke the first time, the dress is burned after the wedding, though *without* its wearer inside it. Marianne demands its destruction, and Mrs. Green, who herself alternates between sentiment and callous indifference, does the honors. The myth, the fairy tale, goes up in smoke.

[9] I use this word intentionally, because it is one that Moretti associates with the symbolic logic of the bildungsroman. There it is associated with the bourgeois underpinnings of the form, and results in the "exchange" in which "comfort" is gained – and freedom is lost (see Moretti, 2000: 52-56 and 65-67).

[10] Scholars have written quite extensively of Carter's employment of fairy tale structures and tropes. But in the context of my reading, Moretti once again is relevant, as he speaks of the very short life of the "classical *Bildungsroman*" and the posthumous versions and perversions of it: "Formation as a synthesis of variety and harmony; the homogeneity of individual autonomy and socialization; the very notion of the novel as a 'symbolic' and organic form – all these beliefs are now dismissed as so many fairy-tale illusions" (2000: 75). Indeed, Carter's novel goes a long way to dismiss those "beliefs".

[11] See Levitas: "Anti-utopianism involves the active denial of the merits of imagining alternative ways of living, particularly if they constitute serious attempts to argue that the world might or should be otherwise" (1990: 30).

[12] See Lucy Sargisson on Carter (as well as on Cixous) as "profoundly disintegrationist". She is referring here to their "subversion or inversion of the fairy tale as a unifying force [that] has the effect of shattering established myths and universals" (1996: 45), thus opening the way toward alternative narratives. She emphasizes that the "functional like" between utopian literature and fairy tales is not in the "shared pursuit of universal solutions", but rather simply the "shared use of the fantastic", which means a shared employment of what she calls "tactics of separation" (*ibidem*). Elaborating on this point further in a later section on the "transgression of stereotypes and codes of social normality" Sargisson refers specifically to *Heroes and Villains* as well as to *The Passion of New Eve* (see *idem*, 202-203).

Utopia and the (con)formation of an *I* and a country

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> *"S'il est vrai que l'utopie, loin de constituer une pure spéculation abstraite, entretient au contraire des rapports étroits avec l'histoire et constitue une réaction au présent vécu par l'auteur, elle ne véhicule cependant les thèmes obsédants de l'histoire réelle que pour les corriger ou les exorciser."*
>
> *[If it's true that utopia, far from being a pure abstract speculation, has, on the contrary, close relations with history and constitutes a reaction to the present experienced by the author, this utopia only transports the haunting themes of real history in order to correct or exorcise them.]*
>
> Raymond Trousson, "L'utopie, la mémoire et l'oubli".

By basing the concept of "utopia" on Thomas More, Raymond Trousson establishes the difference between its acceptance as a literary genre and the notion of "utopism". In his perspective, "utopia" refers to the narratives that meet certain structural prerequisites, rooted in an imaginary journey that allows the "foreigner" to discover an unknown world as an ideal world; "utopism", on the other hand, identifies the set of literary or other proposals that are alternatives to the existing reality.[1]

Utopia, which in the meaning of Thomas More implies criticism of the socio-political reality of the present, over the course of the twentieth century saw this orientation reinforced, by referring to the possibility of a total or partial change of the established order in a specific collectivity, society or country, "une telle orientation en désaccord avec la réalité ne devient utopique que lorsqu'en outre elle tend à rompre les liens avec l'ordre existant" [such an orientation that disagrees with reality only becomes utopic when, besides this, it has a tendency to break the bonds with the existing order], Karl Mannheim tells us (Mannheim, 1956: 225).

Although the term "utopia" today is frequently separated from its traditional lines as a sort of "catch-all", in the words of Jean Servier (Servier, 1991: II), it is possible to find in it the "will to reconstruct", the witness of a "sociological conscience", born of a tragic sentiment of History and the desire to modify its course. Such a forward-looking vision exists in the work of the Ivorian novelist Aké Loba, in seeking "to construct" a new world beginning with the rejection of elements and dysphoric actions that, in the society of his time, he perceives as agents of social disorder, civilisational backwardness and disharmony between the I and the Other.

Taking into account the fictional path taken by Gérard Aké Loba, the reader cannot help but have problems enlisting him in the utopia camp, considering the term "utopia" in its broad meaning of critical and reformist intentions, attentive and denouncing, which appears to us to orient the fictional universe of the author, as a way of encouraging the Ivorians to redefine the social, cultural, political and ethical aspects of an axiological order that makes it possible to find a renewed identity of the country and man himself.

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Taking the first three novels of Aké Loba: *Kocoumbo, l'étudiant noir* (1960), *Les fils de Kouretcha* (1970), *Les dépossédés* (1973), as the *corpus,* we propose to reflect on a complex reality, with dynamic processes engendered by the transformations of the world in change, in the constant search for a better world.

Linked to the first generation of writers, but opting for a more reserved stance than that of his congeners Bernard Dadié or Ahmadou Kourouma, Gérard Aké Loba, in his fictional universe, seems to support a project for a modern Nation, pointing in the direction of a constructive dialogue between Europe and Africa that dynamises the well-being of the Ivorians and the prosperity of their country, so it can enter into the era of Progress and, thus, into modernity.

In the wake of Léopold Sédar Senghor, who proposed the bringing together of antagonistic cultures, Gérard Aké Loba abandons the criticism of the opposing dualities to likewise propose a future path for Africa and the African consolidated in a perpetual

dialogue between diverse, but consonant, voices, encouraging his fellow men to develop their native land.

Aké Loba seems to us to underscore the emergence of a new era, founded on the osmosis and fusion of European and African values, betting on the education of new Ivorian generations, in a new conformation of women, in a different generational relationship. Based on the principles of equality, resting on the goals of a moral and an ethic that do not repel the contribution of Reason, she would implement a reforming order that is more just and harmonious, in accordance with the very concept of Utopia.

Attentive to his time, distancing himself from universalist essentialisms, Gérard Aké Loba, without omitting a presentation of the scourges of colonialism or of any other imperialist attitude, proposes educational fiction that looks to the future, encouraging Ivorians to embrace modernisation, the sharing of values, will power and projects that benefit everyone. As Pascal Bruckner observes, "le rêve d'une société parfaite est une constante de l'histoire" (Bruckner, 2000: 280) [the dream of a perfect society is a constant throughout history].[2] It can be said that the Ivorian writer became the driving force for a new order, acting, in fact, under the impulse of the utopian vectors, centred on the critical spirit, the idealisation and adoption of new postures on life.

Aware that the society to which he belongs must undergo profound changes in order to offer a better quality of life, the author does not limit himself to the (re)presentation of a static world, instead he suggests another world, under new rules. In this sense, Gérard Aké Loba brings onto the stage the vicissitudes of the present time to propose their correction. In a way, he becomes a "maker" of a country in search of a path promised him by cultural and economic development, seeming, then, to defend the practices of economic liberalism, based on technology and foreign investment.

With this in mind, he incites his people to education, as well as to renewal and social understanding, so as to give Côte d'Ivoire a reality in which it is capable of freeing itself from the traditional agents inhibiting the sought-after modernisation: superstition, dependency on family, clan or race, obscurantism, the inability to argue and the fear of facing up to the Other. Aké Loba dedicates himself not so much to denouncing the injustices of colonialism, but rather to constructing another reality more in tune with his time.

Aware of the change in society, the author proposes a civilisational (re)conciliation, based on the sharing of knowledge and techniques, in the acceptance of difference, and the mutual help between peoples, cultures and countries. In this way, he fits into the understanding of Christian Godin, for whom "l'utopie partagée est le ressort de l'histoire" (Godin, 2000: 73) [a shared utopia is the driving force of history]. By pointing to a future state, Aké Loba reflects on a present one that ought to join in progress, science, technology and personal and civic development. Sharing the belief in a future built on new opportunities, a world in displacement, where it is mandatory to know how to join the two facets, reason and spirituality, the author proposes "l'utopie ouverte vers le future des possibles" (*idem*, 17) [a utopia open to the future of what is possible].

Aké Loba does not avoid participation in a pan-African attitude, according to the subject matter of *Negritude*: embrace the fight for freedom and reject colonialism.

However, contrarily to, for example, Aimé Césaire or Léon Gontran Damas, for whom the claim is, above all, one of identity (namely, recognition of a black identity and ancestral culture, enhancing emotion, intuition and the value of returning to one's origins), Aké Loba is closer to those who, in the fifties and sixties, more than demanding the mere valuation of the colour, demand the status of Man and Being implied in the course of history.[3] Thus, his proposal is not simply a claim on identity and culture. It is, in fact, more comprehensive, and is established on a project that also delineates a political, technical, economic and educational outlook. In his view, during a transitional phase between colonial Africa and independent Africa, this project can only be accomplished with the cooperation of Europe. Closing Africa off from the world may be harmful because it is limiting and confining.

Understandably, the fictional universe of Gérard Aké Loba is centered on the questioning of mindsets and traditions that may perpetuate delays and controversies.Thus, conscious that the African continent in general, and the Ivory Coast in particular, should follow the tracks of modern civilisation, the writer rejects the idea of a pure return to their origins.

Kocoumbo, l'étudiant noir proposes a criticism of the melancholy of "Negritude" by condemning excesses of emotivity and passivity. Throughout his first novel, the writer reveals his scepticism in regard to unbounded nostalgia, criticises the valorisation of purely

African roots and the lack of productivity of his congeners, as well as their detachment in the face of an ascension that could project Africa along the route of the developed countries.

In this first novel, Aké Loba censures the conduct of black students because they are led to abjure their commitments and abandon their studies to live in rhythm to idleness, luxury, and a sick longing for the good old days. The biting look that is directed at them when they wander through Saint-Germain-des-Prés and the cafés of the Latin Quarter is focused, mainly, at the end of the narrative. Kocoumbo, the main character, wishes for another projection, that of a dedicated worker, thus, transmitting the author's own vision.

Therefore, in *Kocoumbo, l'étudiant noir*, the novelist proposes new objectives for the characters: to leave the country, travel, get an education and return to the African continent in order to contribute to the construction of another future for the country, one different from the present. In his opinion, the African world, in general, and Côte d'Ivoire, in particular, can only attain success if they accept the requirement, the effort and a continuing application. Thus, from his first novel, the author deals with the issue of the education of the future leaders of his country. An adequate education will lead them to be aware of their obligations, so that they participate in the construction of a new society, which the author wishes to be free, prosperous and modern.

The proposal of Aké Loba (con)forms to the new social, cultural and economic paths, by following the dynamism of History referred to by Christian Godin, in his treatment of utopia: "l'histoire sera alors conçue comme un ensemble dont le mouvement général, soumis à la loi du progrès (…) est impulsé par le progrès technique" (*idem*, 54) [history will then be conceived of as a set whose general movement, subjected to the law of progress (…) is driven by technical progress]. In the view of the African writer, only the machine and knowledge can make up for the precarious situations and reduce human miseries, making it possible to conceive of the construction of a utopia in Côte d'Ivoire.

By holding that Science makes technical and human progress possible, which is at the base of the construction of new societies, Gérard Aké Loba not only declares himself to be a dreamer, but a true utopist. By questioning the present of Côte d'Ivoire, the author says that change is possible through the "volonté de construire, en face de la réalité existante, un monde autre et une autre histoire alternative" (*idem*, 22) [will to build, in the face of the existing reality, a different world and another alternative history].

Thus, in *Les fils de Kouretcha*, the character of Tougon allows us to conceive of the conformation of a country founded on an ideal of progress and economic development. In fact, between what is real in fiction and what is real in History, the text seems to defend the policy of Houphouët-Boigny, in regard to the policy of investment in infrastructures that led to the ex-colony being considered as one of the most developed countries on the African continent in the decades of the sixties and seventies of the 20th century.[4]

Through his second novel, the author advocates and even proclaims the urgent need to build the Kossou[5] dam, a mega-project that would contribute to the deforestation of the county, specifically in the region of Yamoussoukro – the home land of Houphouët-Boigny, as a matter of fact. Furthermore, he justifies the presence of the many French co-operators who remained in the country or who went there. In this sense, the writing of the author shows the confrontation between tradition and development.[6] Convinced that that infrastructure would benefit all those living along the river, Aké Loba uses the image of the moderator Tougon to underscore the advantages that the construction of the dam implies.

As an utopist, builder and reformer, through this character, the author gives a glimpse of the idea that technology, machines and industrialisation are indispensable tools for improving society.[7] As a matter of fact, we call to mind the retort by Tougon in this respect: "il faut défricher la forêt ; c'est le début de notre civilisation" (Loba, 1970: 83) [we must clear the forest; it is the start of our civilisation].

Man must carry on his battle against nature, in order to tame it: "l'homme couché, l'homme accroupi, l'homme debout, l'homme casqué" (Loba, 1970: 143) [man lying down, man squatting down, man standing, man with a helmet] can, in this way, enter into the era of modern civilisation. Even if this drastic transformation ends up creating dystopic effects, transforming the jungle into a kind of infernal forge; where the drums announce death, reason must reign. Although fear has settled in and the African village has plunged into a psychosis, leading some of the workers to interrupt their tasks, it is dynamism that must overcome inactivity.[8] The text by Aké Loba seems, in this way, to exalt the maxims established by the national motto: "union, discipline, travail" [union, discipline, work]. Therefore, resorting to the rhetoric of Tougon's arguments to convince the whole tribe to participate in the work of the riverside building yard. Some, through the force of their arms and hard work that should embarrass no one, others – even though Europeans – helping with

the scientific and technological knowledge they master. Despite the deforestation of the dense Ivorian jungle that would mark the new landscape, Tougon chooses to follow the path of modernisation to follow the precept expressed by Jean-Michel and Pierre-François Moreau: "L'utopie se veut articulation ordonnée du monde physique et du monde social, au bénéfice du second" (Moreau / Moreau, *s/d*: 8) [Utopia means the ordered articulation of the physical world and the social world, in benefit of the latter].

Seeking to follow the changes brought about by time, the novels of Aké Loba develop a broad and conscientious reflection in political, social, educational and economic terms that place the former French colony on the path of developed countries that are democratic and open to cultural plurality. For this author, African progress must articulate economic development with a heavy investment in the education of Man. Thus, he seems to say that it is necessary to forge societies in Africa that seek to instil in the African the will for his own perfecting, so as to raise up a country that is conscious of its past and believes in its future.

Thus, in *Les fils de Kouretcha*, by emphasising the posture of the African teacher Bayolaboyard, as a driver of changes, the author corroborates the importance of training and culture. Despite coming from the same tribe as Pierre Dam'no, Bayolaboyard has opposing opinions as to the learning of the students. On the one hand, Dam'no, like the colonists, maintained a backward and separatist school, destined only for the male members of the Kouretcha tribe (Loba, 1970: 11). In these terms, he cloisters his Fellow Man in the meshes of a double colonialism. On the other hand, as soon as he is entrusted with the education of the younger people, Bayolaboyard opts for an openness and an adaptation to society.

In light of what we have just said, the character of the African teacher Bayolaboyard seems to acquire a certain importance in the economy of the novel, if we take into account that the author places his wager on a modern education and in educational policies suited to contemporaneity. Bayolaboyard represents that non-conforming African moved by the dynamism of multiple initiatives, attentive to modernity and convinced that one must not only combat ignorance and educational backwardness, but also the discrepancy of that time between boys and girls in their studies.

Aware of the state of education in Africa, in general, and in Côte d'Ivoire, in particular, he denounces the differentiation in the results between the "apparent success" in school of the boys and the "inevitable failure" of the girls. In fact, this dichotomy arises in

association with two factors pointed out, not only by sociologists and historians, but also by writers who wished to sound an alert to the lack of educational and cultural measures.[9] From the beginning, one can see that Aké Loba defends the unheard-of schooling practice of dialogue, which would contribute to the training of Africans, men and women, as free citizens with equal rights and obligations. As a matter of fact, one of the facets most closely examined in this fictional universe has to do with the problem of instruction, the educational policies and the fight against illiteracy.

Aké Loba is not opposed to innovations that bring about a rupture in certain ancestral habits and customs. The author seeks to reflect on the new role of women in the reshaping of a new Africa. In a new context, the intellectual capacity of women will be valorised, contradicting the old clichés. For this reason, the author advocates education for the African woman. Only in this way will she cease to be subservient and take the reins of action, prefiguring the new role that the feminine sex ought to play in society.

As a matter of fact, in *Les fils de Kouretcha*, Aké Loba calls attention to the "feminine" fatality. Contrary to the habitual, the text underscores the fact that Marie-Claire began her studies very early, at the age of five, because Balayaboyard recognised her intelligence, dedication and love of studies. The teacher set about to mould and educate the young girl so she could achieve a life free of oppression, opened up to her through her studies. Marie-Claire, however, ends up rebelling against the projected woman Bayolaboyard had dreamed of her becoming. The young girl, who at the end of the narrative becomes pregnant by Ahyban, appears reduced once more to her condition of woman and mother.[10]

The era of independence and modernisation of the African countries looks for a change in the mindsets and civilisational paradigms that tradition has kept stable. The woman, traditionally educated under the influence of the family, her age group and the initiation ceremonies, was confined to her group. The writing of Gérard Aké Loba thus focuses on the multiple aspects of African culture that he considers antiquated and the cause of discord.

It will be understood then that from his point of view, in a modern society, polygamy and arranged marriages must be opposed, because they are imposed and forged according to a tradition that fosters discontent in the family. In *Les fils de Kouretcha*, the question of

matrimony is dealt with from two opposing examples: a marriage accepted and a marriage rejected. Pierre Dam'no, who financed Marie-Claire's primary education, considers it his right to marry her, a right, however, that is rejected by the young girl, by her parents and by the teacher Bayolaboyard. On the other hand, the marriage of Eddie and Kousso, resulting from the will of their parents, produces only unhappiness for both of them.

In *Les dépossédés*, the criticism of polygamy is openly manifested through the disputes between the three wives of Païs. Although, in the beginning harmony reigned in this plural marriage – "les deux amies, moitiés d'un seul homme, vivaient un mariage sans faille" (Loba, 1973: 166) [the two friends, halves of only one man, lived in a faultless marriage] –, later, dissatisfaction, envy and malice take the place of friendship and fraternity. As a matter of fact, this novel focuses on a tradition that cloisters the African woman, showing Akrébié, at first "assujettie à ses parents" (Loba, 1973: 23) [dominated by her parents], and afterwards, already married, following Païs "son nouveau seigneur" [her new lord] (*ibidem*). In fact, at the beginning of the narrative, we are given the image of a young girl numbed by the rigour of her daily tasks. In this way, the author underscores the need to break with an ancestral tradition that condemns a woman to servility, under her family or under her husband.

Let us note, further, that the work of Aké Loba ponders the contact between men who have been displaced, migrants, and proposes a new conformation that is up to date, modern and forward looking. One can say that his proposal embraces "des formes de vie sociale qui ne soit pas enfermée dans un cadre rigide, qui puissent être à la fois locales et planétaires" (Wieviorka, 2000: 60) [forms of social life that is not enclosed in a rigid framework, which may be at once local and planetary].

As Michel Wieviorka points out in dealing with the question of utopia, the current major problem of our societies is to know how to conciliate the universal values of reason with the collective subjectivities that abound. In the meandering of fiction, Gérard Aké Loba also proposes that the future of Côte d'Ivoire must preserve a heritage with all its components: "tous les éléments nous sont utiles" (Loba, 1970: 108) [all the elements are useful to us], said Tougon, during his speech to encourage the construction of the Kouretcha dam. Attentive to the contradiction of a country recently decolonised and that agglutinates diverse inheritances, Aké Loba cultivates a literature adapted to this reality. In fact, in *Les*

fils de Kouretcha, this new configuration is present throughout the entire novel, specifically in the colourful markets of the city to which the young couple – Païs and Akrébié – moved. It is through the curious gaze of the woman that the multicoloured experience is read. In fact, despite the altercation that Akrébié causes, the description of the two Senegalese women, or that of the two Haoussa women, paints this new reality that brings a "rainbow" of peoples, costumes and multiple languages to the city.[11]

In this sense, *Les dépossédés*, by relating the exodus from the country to the city, could well be a modern "chronicle",[12] through its record of the present, the mention of the events of everyday life and the social changes that the Ivorian landscape is undergoing. These rural migrations brought together, in the outlying neighbourhoods, elements from different tribes and clans, who must learn how to live together. From the start, Gérard Aké Loba demonstrated that he was attentive to the social and geographic changes that result in a change of mindsets.[13] Thus, Païs and Douézo are elements that explain a new social configuration. It should be noted that the initial misunderstanding between the two is not only due to tribal disputes, as is first thought to be the case, but also to the fear of the Different, viewed with mistrust and unfamiliarity, and the presence of obsolete cultural aspects that cause various "pathologies".

Let us not forget that Douézo loses her memory, at times, which results in a diminution of her rational side, an inadequacy to deal with the Other and with herself, nurturing in her an experience of pain and panic, as she would confess to Païs. She ends up by affirming that the anger directed against Païs was, more than anything else, the result of fear, of the anxiety of belonging to a world outside of any logic, bringing upon her, therefore, crises of anxiety and loss of lucidity.[14] One then can understand the friendship that arises between the rivals Païs and Douézo, who participate together in the growth of the city of Abidjan. For Aké Loba, an independent Africa must be founded on the respect for difference, human understanding and the defence of noble values, as in the song to harmony and fellowship between peoples of differing ethnic groups. In the words of its national anthem, there must be space for everyone in this "country of hospitality".[15]

This does not mean that parity is, from the outset, reached. However, Aké Loba appears as one of the pioneers on this new horizon in Côte d'Ivoire, projecting a society that aims to be free of misunderstandings that destabilise and threaten with a precarious order,

and therefore, one susceptible of promoting a different mindset, one that promotes bonds of union and imbrication between the various ethnic groups of Côte d'Ivoire. A world in which all cultures have a place, exercising at the same time an action of unity and of diversity.

Like utopia, the social project mirrored in the fictional universe of Aké Loba is impregnated with the new ideas of his time, in order to awaken the conscience of the Ivorians, as the Elder of the Kouretcha tribe appears to suggest: "nous vivons dans une époque nouvelle, étrange et étrangère à nous pour le moment" (Loba, 1970: 150) [we live in a new age, strange and unknown to us at the moment]. It is a strange period with all its implications to which they should open themselves favourably.[16] Thus, as an utopist, Gérard Aké Loba prefers to weave throughout his work multiple networks of connections and multiplicity, intertwining lines in a modifiable cartography, suited to the modern world.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

The first three novels of Aké Loba appear to correspond to different historical periods, all of them referring to the construction of an I and of a country. As a matter of fact, his fictional universe takes us back to a construction with multiple individual and collective implications, at the governmental and national levels, which allow the Africans to build a healthy and balanced republic, idealised as utopic.

By taking an interest in the ethical essence of man and the meaning of life and in the political, economic and cultural problems, Gérard Aké Loba is, then, aware that he cannot put aside the direction of this new historical route. The fictional universe of the author, especially his first three narratives (*Les dépossédés, Les fils de Kouretcha* and *Kocoumbo, l'étudiant noir*), is marked by the conviction that it is possible to transform real time, project a future, and create Ivory Coast as a free and democratic country.

His novels examine the past manoeuvres or those being performed in societies in transformation, in a salutary dialogue between peoples and races, Europe and Africa. Aké Loba inscribes his drawing of his country, more open, more developed and in dialogue in the lines of a (re)conformed cartography. To identify the problems of the past and conjugate it with the present is the essential motto for thinking the future. The Akelobian novel

proposes, then, a cartography that puts an end to the radicalisms and diverse dominances that seems to fit in with the formula of Boaventura Sousa Santos:

> *"A utopia é a exploração de novas possibilidades e vontades humanas, por via da oposição da imaginação à necessidade do que existe, só porque existe, em nome de algo radicalmente melhor que a humanidade tem de desejar e por que merece a pena lutar."*
> (Santos, 1994: 278)
>
> *[Utopia is the exploration of new possibilities and human wills, by means of the opposition of imagination to the necessity of that which exists, only because it exists, in the name of something radically better that humanity must desire and for which it is worth fighting.*

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Notes

[1] The literary *corpus* of the *Dictionary of Literature Utopias*, published in 2000 by Raymond Trousson and Vita Fortunati, is restricted to texts formally linked to utopia as a literary genre. As José Eduardo Reis

observes: "He pointed out in this work that Utopia appears whenever in the framework of a narrative (which excludes political treatises) there is a description of a community (which excludes the *robinsonnade*) organised according to certain political, economic and moral principles and correcting the complexities of social existence (which excludes the golden age and Arcadia), whether it is presented as an ideal to achieve (constructive Utopia) or as a forecast of a hell (modern anti-Utopia), or whether it is situated in real, imaginary space or in time, or whether described at the end of a probable or improbable imaginary journey" (Reis, 2002: 14).

[2] As Lyman Tower Sargent observes: "We dream. We are always imagining a better life, an improved social order, a paradise" (Sargent, 2002: 75).

[3] In the fifties and sixties, by influence of the Anglophone world, the concept of *Negritude* starts to fall in disuse. In a humoristic tone, the Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka stated that the tiger does not need to claim its "tigritude", but acts, of course, according to its condition as a tiger. In the Francophone world, Stanislas Adotevi's criticism is clear in *Négritudes et Négrologues*, when he states that the concept of *Negritude* is confusing, essentialist and reducing (Adotevi, 1999).

[4] Gérard Aké Loba looked favourably on the proposals of the RDA (Rassemblement Démocratique Africain), presided over by Félix Houphouët-Boigny. This defender of the independence of Côte d'Ivoire and, therefore, of its freedom from the European imperialist yoke, believed, however, that for reasons of efficiency and tactics, it should follow a strategy of dialogue with the former colonising power so as to promote his country as it set out on the road to real progress in the economic, social and political fields.

[5] A dam that displaced populations, but which also separated the Ivorian north (Muslim) from the south (Catholic). A situation transposed to the novel with the fictitious place name, "Kouretcha".

[6] In this sense, note the understanding of Dago Lezou: "Le thème est l'hostilité des partisans d'une Afrique traditionnelle à l'introduction de la technique moderne. Plus d'un conflit de générations, c'est le conflit de deux tensions contraires: 'tradition et modernisme'. L'auteur choisit bien sûr le progrès, dans le sens de la politique nationale, avec une intention apologétique manifeste. Son héros, le préfet Tougon, est le conciliateur averti, tolérant, partisan chevronné de la concertation (du 'dialogue', comme on dit en Côte d'Ivoire)" [The theme is the hostility of the supporters of a traditional Africa to the introduction of modern technology. More than conflict between generations, it is the conflict of two opposing tensions: 'tradition and modernism'. The author naturally chooses progress, in the sense of national policy, with an obvious apologetical motive. His hero, the prefect Tougon, is the conciliator, informed, tolerant, experienced partisan of agreements (of the 'dialogue', as they say in Côte d'Ivoire)] (Dago Lezou, 1977, 45).

[7] This message coincides with that of Etienne Cabet, in his utopia *Voyage en Icarie* (1840), in which he accentuates the link between technical progress and social progress, seeing that the industrial revolution and the progress of machinery made possible the emergence of a bourgeoisie that benefited from the advances in science and economy.

[8] In *Les fils de Kouretcha*, the defenders of modernity and technology do not only have to overcome the traditionalists that are opposed to the profaning of the river, fearing the reprisals of the sacred divinity, but they must also demonstrate scientifically that the delays in the construction of the dam are due to errors in calculations and not to the intervention of magic.

[9] See the letter from Aké Loba addressed to the President of Ivory Coast, included at the beginning of his third novel: "Bientôt le Continent Noir va prendre part de plein droit au Mouvement de l'Évolution Culturelle. (…). Ce rendez-vous de la pensée exige une longue et minutieuse préparation, car l'esprit de création et d'invention ne peut avoir racine pour s'épanouir librement et avec aisance que dans une société solidement structurée et agencée." (Loba, 1973: 5) [Soon the Black Continent will participate with full rights in the Cultural Evolution Movement. (…). This encounter of thought requires a long and careful preparation because the spirit of creation and of invention can only create roots to blossom freely and easily in a solidly structured and organised society.].

[10] Despite the changes proposed by Aké Loba, the feminine characters remain bound to these conditions. In *Les dépossédés*, Akrébié hopes for a marriage with a young man who can give her a life in the city, far from the hard work imposed on her by the village. Mofoué and "La Citadine" are concerned with increasing the descendants of Païs. In this regard, they corroborate the assertion by Robert Clignet, when he points out that the woman "est un objet de communication (…). En ce sens que le mariage n'est pas un accord entre l'homme et la femme, mais entre deux groupes sociaux (…) qui assignent à la femme la tâche essentielle de la procréation. Avoir un enfant la fait participer à la société des hommes responsables, et non seulement elle, mais aussi son époux." [is an object of communication (…). In this sense in which marriage

is not an agreement between the man and the woman, but between two social groups (…) who assign to the woman the essential task of procreation. To have a child means that she participates in the society of responsible men, and not she alone, but her husband, as well] (Clignet, 1962: 23).

[11] Note, then, the co-existence of Difference in the market at Abidjan: "Il est dix heures du matin, Akrébié se rend au marché. Elle entend comme dans un rêve la sirène de la scierie rappeler aux épouses l'heure de la cuisine. (…). Comme elle est arrivée à destination, elle se dirige sans hésiter du côté des étals des bouchers dans l'oubli le plus total de ses attitudes étudiées. Elle fend la presse des acheteuses sénégalaises dont le grand vêtement bouffant, artistement tissé et la coiffure volumineuse lui inspiraient naguère le regret de n'être pas née au Sénégal, bouscule la cape et la houlette des grands Peuls qui n'en daignent pas plus pour autant abaisser leur regard et leur majestueux turban jusqu'à elle, expédie son emplette, passe encore ici, repasse là, revient sur ses pas, tourbillonne à travers d'autres groupements de vendeurs ; on l'aperçue au loin penchée au-dessus des aubergines étalées à même le sol, on la revoit en arrière de l'échafaudage d'une porteuse de bananes, là-bas elle faufile entre deux Haoussas, aux calottes rouges. Auprès de ces gens-là, elle ne se voit même pas petite" (Loba, 1973: 55). [It's ten o'clock in the morning, Akrébié heads for the market. She hears, as in a dream, the siren of the sawmill remind the wives of the time in the kitchen. (…). As she has arrived at her destination, she heads without hesitation to the butchers' stalls completely forgetting her studied attitudes. She pushes between the Senegalese women with their large puffy clothes, artistically spun, and the voluminous coiffure that not long ago inspired in her the regret that she hadn't been born in Senegal, jostles the cape and crook of the large Peuls who do not deign any more to even so much as lower their gaze and their majestic turban to her, finishes her purchase, moves on here now, goes back there again, retraces her steps, swirling through other groups of sellers; we catch a glimpse of her at a distance over the aubergines laid out right in the sun, we see her again behind the scaffolding of a stand of bananas, there below, she snakes in and out between two Haoussas, with red skullcaps. Next to those people there, she does not see herself as small.]

[12] We see this text as a chronicle, not in the genealogical sense of the term, but in the view of a writing that carries on a dialogue with time, a *chronos*, taking us back distinctly to the decade of the forties of the 20th century

[13] In the chapter "L'afrique en voie de transformation", in *La création romanesque devant les transformations actuelles en Côte d' Ivoire*, (*op. cit.*), Gérard Dago Lezou evidences the rural model and the traditional society in the light of the different transformations that would, through a conflict of generations, bring into opposition tradition and modernism, the taste for the city and for luxury, leading to the encounter with a new configuration.

[14] The text highlights Douézo's fear in the following manner: "L'autre jour, vers sept heures du soir, je te suppliais de me dire qui j'étais, quel était mon nom, d'où je venais ; tu m'as pris pour un fou, tu disais que tu avais peur de mes yeux parce qu'ils brillaient trop… Tu sais, on est à plaindre quand on ne sait pas qui l'on est et d'où l'on vient." (Loba, 1973: 152). [the other day, around seven o'clock in the evening, I begged you to tell me who I was, what my name was, where I had come from ; you thought I was crazy, you said you were afraid of my eyes because they were too bright… You know, we need to be pitied when we don't know who we are or where we come from.]

[15] See the words to "L'Abidjanaise", the national anthem of Côte d'Ivoire: "Salut ô terre d'espérance / Pays de l'hospitalité / Tes légions remplies de vaillance ont relevé ta dignité / Tes fils chère Côte d'Ivoire / Fiers artisans de ta grandeur / Tous rassemblés et pour ta gloire / Te bâtiront dans le bonheur / Chers ivoiriens, le pays nous appelle / Si nous avons dans la paix ramené la liberté / Notre devoir sera d'être un modèle / De l'espérance promise à l'humanité / En forgeant unis dans la foi nouvelle / La patrie de la vraie fraternité." [We salute you, O land of hope / Country of hospitality / Thy gallant legions Have restored thy dignity / Beloved Ivory Coast, thy sons / Proud builders of thy greatness / All mustered together for thy glory / In joy will construct thee / Proud citizens of the Ivory Coast, the country call us / If we have brought back liberty peacefully / It will be our duty to be an example / Of the hope promised to humanity / Forging unitedly in new faith / The Fatherland of true brotherhood.]

[16] In the negative sense it may take on, that is, in an essentialist resumption of a centrist identity instead of proclaiming the multiple roots of a common basis. Let us recall that at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, a serious conflict broke out between different ethnic groups who were displaced, misunderstood and rejected. Aké Loba deals with this problem, showing himself to be against this contentious *Ivorianness*.

Feminist Cyborg Writing and the Imagining of Asia

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One of the distinctive features of contemporary science fiction is its articulation of the image of Asia. From William Gibson's Chiba City[1] in *Neuromancer* to Marge Piercy's Yakamura-Stichen Multi[2] in *He, She and It* and Maureen F. McHugh's Nanjing[3] in *China Mountain Zhang*, Asia has been persistently portrayed as an inevitable ingredient in the making of humanity's future. The issue of race, in other words, is very much rooted in the genre.[4] If it is not wrong to say that Gibson's "intricate Orientalist flourishes" (Latham, 1993: 266) nevertheless exemplifies gender/racial blindness,[5] in feminist cyborg writing, a parallel development of cyberpunk (Harper, 1995: 400) that "utilize[s] the metaphor of the cyborg rather than that of cyberspace" (Wolmark, 1994: 127), one seems to see utopian potential. This so-called feminist cyborg writing is often able to imbue problems of identity and subjectivity with gender/racial consciousness.[6] While Gibson's cyberpunk often articulates white males as its heroes and upholds the values of that specific group, feminist cyborg writing tends to construct multiple, fragmented, and partial identities, and its protagonists are diversified in terms of their gender/racial orientation. However, the gender/racial crossing as manifested in feminist cyborg writing may, in the last analysis, remain superficial. "Asia as Other" continues to be the dominant image. This paper is an attempt to see how Asia is being conceptualized in feminist cyborg writing. On the one hand, we will analyze the strategies that feminist cyborg writing adopts in shattering gender/racial bias. On the other hand, we will also pinpoint the blind spots and dilemmas that those strategies may

entail. Before that, however, some notes on the development of cyberpunk may be appropriate to facilitate further discussion.

I.

It was in the mid-1980s that cyberpunk made its debut in the science-fiction sphere. According to Scott Bukatman, cyberpunk owes much to two predecessors: so-called "hard" science fiction and New Wave (1993: 138). The term "cyberpunk" was first coined by Bruce Bethke in his short story "Cyberpunk", published in the journal *Amazing Science Fiction Stories* in November 1983. Furthermore, on 30 December 1984, Gardner Dozois had an article in the *Washington Post* which designated a group of "hot new writers" as "cyberpunks".[7] William Gibson, Bruce Sterling, Lewis Shiner, Pat Cadigan[8] and Greg Bear are the writers commonly associated with the cyberpunk movement. In fact, the term itself readily exemplifies the concern of the movement. "Cyber-" is linked to "cybernetics",[9] which points to the intimate relationship between humans and the computer in recent decades. "Punk",[10] moreover, has affinity with marginal culture or even counterculture and pinpoints a subversive or oppositional spirit. The degree to which cyberpunk was readily acclaimed by critics and general readers may be ascertained by the fact that Gibson's classic *Neuromancer* was honored with three awards – the Hugo, the Nebula, and the Philip K. Dick Awards – in 1984, the year of its publication. Cyberpunk, moreover, has "shown remarkable resilience" (*apud* Murphy / Vint, 2010: xii). Proclaimed dead by numerous critics in the last decade of the twentieth century, it has in fact undergone "sea change into a more generalized cultural formation" (*ibidem*). Terms such as "postcolonial cyberpunk", "third-wave cyberpunk" and "post-Movement cyberpunk" (*idem*, xii-xiii) testify to the genre's ongoing significance. Veronica Hollinger also points out that, if the movement of cyberpunk is over by now, its tropes and its "impact on fictional representations of the (post)human subject" remain persistent in contemporary cyberfiction (Hollinger, 2010: 191). Cyberpunk writers are mostly male and from Texas; they are the first generation of science fiction writers to really grow up in a science-fiction world (Sterling, 1991: 344). For them, satellites, computers, video games, and diverse advanced technologies are no longer things that are remote; heavy metal, punk rock, drugs – whatever there are in pop culture – are also among their most intimates experiences (McCaffery, 1991: 12). Cyberpunk is often

regarded as capturing the very spirit of postmodernity. It is in a way a response to the techno-culture of the 1980s, and a comment on the postmodern condition: the predominance of transnational corporations, the blurring of traditional boundaries, the disappearance of historicity and sense of depth. In fact, critics tend to regard cyberpunk as one important aspect of postmodernism: its oppositional stance and subversion of hierarchies – the unsettling of binary structures such as elite/popular, public/private, history/fiction, science/art – are highlighted and regarded as exemplifying postmodern queries over conventions and authorities (Sterling, 1991: 344-348; McCaffery, 1991: 12-14; Bukatman, 1993: 6). Sterling's remark on the radical redefinition of humanity brought about by cyberpunk is typical:

> Certain central themes spring up repeatedly in cyberpunk. The theme of body invasion: prosthetic limbs, implanted circuitry, cosmetic surgery, genetic alteration. The even more powerful theme of mind invasion: brain-computer interfaces, artificial intelligence, neurochemistry – techniques radically redefining the nature of humanity, the nature of self. (Sterling, 1991: 346)

This radical departure from traditional conceptions of body and mind is one prominent feature of cyberpunk,[11] and in fact one of its most fascinating aspects. Moreover, cyberpunk is adept at pinpointing latent tendencies in late capitalist societies. It often portrays a world swayed by transnational corporations and dominated by computer technologies and genetic engineering. In a world which sees the total destruction of its eco-system and the prevalence of dirt, sickness, and devastation, transnational corporations are often the one and only superpower to control the world. This tendency toward the apocalyptic is certainly dystopian, and in this light cyberpunk may be regarded as a contemporary variation of the dystopian genre. The heroes of cyberpunk, moreover, are frequently "information pirates" hired by these transnational corporations. They are the so-called "console cowboys" of the cyberspace, whose supreme objective is to retrieve valuable information and to procure profit from it. For them, money, not justice, is what matters.

Despite the positive assessment of cyberpunk mentioned above, there are nevertheless critics who tend to question the revolutionary gesture and oppositional stance of cyberpunk. Karen Cadora, for example, feels that the politics of cyberpunk is "anything but revolutionary" (1995: 357). Peter Fitting also sees cyberpunk as merely manifesting "technodazzle", and indicates that whatever rebellious stance there may be in cyberpunk has

already been "emptied of any oppositional content" (1991: 297). Similarly, Claire Sponsler is of the opinion that cyberpunk is "powerless to sustain the socio-political radicalism and representational innovation its champions claim for it" (1995: 47). Furthermore, there are critics bent on criticizing so-called "gender blindness" (Wolmark, 1997: 140) on the part of cyberpunk, pinpointing the lack of any gender awareness in its all-male world. Some critics even go on to say that cyberpunk is characterized by escapism (Wolmark, 1997: 152-153; Hollinger, 1991: 213; Sponsler, 1995: 54). James Hynes's assessment of Gibson is quite typical. For him, Gibson's keynote is "a shrug": "Dystopia is already here, say the cyberpunks, and we might as well get used to it" (*apud* Fitting, 1991: 313, note 8). Perhaps Darko Suvin can best represent the ambiguous attitude that critics adopt toward cyberpunk. Suvin regards cyberpunk as a marketable commodity, which has nothing whatsoever to do with radical political strategies. He even asks, "[I]s cyberpunk the diagnostician of or the parasite on a disease?" (1991: 364).

Feminist cyborg writing, therefore, arises as an alternative to the political nonchalance of cyberpunk. As feminist Fabulation,[12] feminist cyborg writing is a type of feminist speculative fiction[13] which "employ[s] SF's potential to 'defamiliarize' the known toward some overtly polemical ends" (Rosinsky, 1982: 105). Women writers have resorted to cyborg writing for the purpose of "explor[ing] a plethora of differing relations available to the Subject and its Other" (Harper, 1995: 407) in the high-tech world of postmodernity. What is fascinating, moreover, is the articulation of the image of Asia as a way to assert gender/racial crossing. Marge Piercy's *He, She and It* (1991) and Maureen F. McHugh's *China Mountain Zhang* (1992) are among the most noted examples. The following section is an exploration of the gender/racial breakthrough they have attempted to achieve.

II.

The gender/racial politics of feminist cyborg writing owe much to the cyborgean politics upheld by Donna Haraway. In her 1985 essay "A Manifesto for Cyborgs", Haraway advocates the advent of cyborgs as spelling the death of every kind of dualism and harbingering boundary breakdown. "[H]ailed as a benchmark in feminist thought" (Dery, 1996: 242), "A Manifesto for Cyborgs" argues for the recognition of "three crucial boundary breakdowns" (*idem*, 293) in the late twentieth century due to the development in

science and technology.[14] For Haraway, contemporary techno-culture invites rethinking along the axes of technology and the body.[15] Furthermore, the challenge that the myth of the cyborg poses to any "belief in 'essential' unity" (*idem*, 295) serves the purpose of "confront[ing] effectively the dominations of 'race,' 'gender,' 'sexuality,' and 'class'" (297). This so-called "cyborgean sensibility" (Harper, 1995: 400), demonstrating the permeability of borders and the destabilization of the human subject,[16] proves to be of lasting influence on feminist cyborg writing. One noticeable example may be Marge Piercy's *He, She and It*, which claims to have been inspired by Haraway's essay (Booker, 1994: 343). Indeed, as Cadora argues, feminist writers "have gone far in demonstrating what a cyborg, a multiply-positioned subject, might look like". Feminist cyborg writing is populated by people who "live on the margins of race" (*idem*, 370, 368). Take *He, She and It*, for example. Its woman warrior, Nili, seems to provide an ideal avenue for exploring the gender/racial encoding of the text. It is through her that the theme of "cultural blurring" becomes manifest (cf. Fitting, 1991: 313, note 9).

Nili is literally a cyborg. She is half-human, half-machine. Her entire body has been technologically enhanced to serve various ends. Moreover, she comes from Safed, Israel, that part of the world which has traditionally been an other for the western world and which has "lethal levels of radiation and plague" (1991: 198) and therefore becomes uninhabitable. Yet what is more remarkable about her is the fact that she and her race have transformed their native place into a women's utopia:

> We are a joint community of the descendants of Israel and Palestinian women who survived. We each keep our religion, observe each other's holidays and fast days. We have no men. We clone and engineer genes. After birth we undergo additional alteration. We have created ourselves to endure, to survive, to hold our land. Soon we will begin rebuilding Yerushalaim. (*ibidem*)

Contrary to the rest of the world, which is mostly devastated by every kind of disaster (with Tikva as the happy exception), Nili's community is a utopia characterized by two distinct features: it is separatist and matriarchal. Its gender discourse is even more radical when we learn that Nili is in fact the lover of Riva – the protagonist Shira's mother. In this feminist rewriting of cyberpunk, then, one seems to see utopian potential. The gender/racial breakthrough as manifested here seems to indicate that utopia does lie in this direction.

Malkah – Shira's grandmother – is another interesting case in point. Toward the end of the novel, there is the description of her traveling to Israel with Nili to undergo a rejuvenating process: "I'm an old house about to be remolded. New eyes, a new heart, that's what I need, to feed and keep up with my hungry brain" (*idem*, 417). Malkah further characterizes this trip as a spiritual quest: "traveling toward the hidden light I pray will soon be shining into me, a fountain of light into which I can plunge myself" (*idem*, 419). Malkah's travel, then, is a repudiation of the deteriorating West and an exaltation of Oriental values. Her quest for Oriental wisdom is a gesture dismantling the hegemony of the West. What is more, gender/racial issues are alike intermingled here, in that Malkah also longs to be the resident of a women's utopia: "I go to teach and to learn from women who will lift me up, wash me as if for burial and then give me renewed strength, rededicated life and the light I crave" (*idem*, 419).

If in *He, She and It* one can detect various instances of the conflation of gender and race, in another feminist cyborg writing – Maureen F. McHugh's *China Mountain Zhang* – this trend is even more conspicuous. This book, a first novel, won general acclaim. As Gerald Jonas, in his book review written for the *New York Times*, indicates, "A first novel this good gives every reader a chance to share in the pleasure of discovery; to my mind, Ms. McHugh's achievement recalls the best works of Samuel R. Delany and Kim Stanley Robinson, without being in the least derivative" (1992: 22). Another review even qualifies McHugh as "one of the decade's best science fiction writers" ("New in Paperback", 1997: par. 8). *China Mountain Zhang* depicts a future socialist world where China has become a supreme power and the United States has been relegated to a subsidiary position. The book is of special interest for its conflation of gender and race. In terms of both his gender and racial status, the protagonist Zhang[17] himself is the very epitome of boundary crossing. Zhang, an American-born Chinese of the twenty-second century, is also half Latino and gay. As pure Chinese blood enjoys privilege and heterosexuality is regarded as the norm in that future world, Zhang, conscious of his double estrangement, tries very hard to conceal his real identity.

After serving as a technician for many years in the U.S. and other regions including the Arctic Circle, Zhang eventually has an opportunity to pursue further study in China. He becomes a famous engineer specializing in so-called Daoist engineering, and his advice is

sought in every part of the human community, including settlers on Mars. Indeed, China has become a utopia and everything Chinese – be it education, philosophy, religion, technology, or even the countenance itself – is the very embodiment of perfection. Zhang's reaction when he first visits China is typical of a utopian traveler:

> The wonders multiply, maddening and exhausting. (McHugh, 1992: 214)
> I live in an apartment so beautiful I am certain I will never live in anything like it again. (*idem*, 215)

To Zhang China is the very epitome of human achievement, an embodiment of wonder he can never detect in the United States. In fact the very beginning of the book already unravels the attempt at reversal of hierarchy and the drive at boundary breakdown. The opening section of the first chapter, entitled "Zhang", introduces a melodrama in which issues of East/West and heterosexuality/homosexuality are made to converge. The story goes that Zhang's boss, Foreman Qian, a Chinese emigrant in the U.S., is so fascinated by Zhang's "pure" Chinese appearance, Chinese surname, and ability to speak Mandarin, that he would like his daughter to marry Zhang. Zhang, however, shatters whatever utopian aspiration Qian may have harbored because in fact he is gay and "a mongrel" (*idem*, 4). He looks Chinese simply because his parents have spent a lot of money to have him undergo a "genetic makeup" (*idem*, 2). Significantly, Zhang's eventual courage to assert his own sexual/racial identity – "I tell myself, it doesn't matter anyway" (*idem*, 268) – is therefore a testimony to the cyborgean sensibility prevalent in the book, since his status as a mongrel challenges the time-honored belief in gender/racial stereotypes and his genetically-altered body invites reconsideration of the posthuman condition in contemporary techno-culture.

The fascination that *China Mountain Zhang* manifests with regard to the Chinese language may also be a gesture at overthrowing the hegemony of the West. The book is characterized by the prevalence of Chinese romanization and Chinese syntax. The following examples may suffice to demonstrate this:

> "I often ask you, what you do with your life, you pretty good boy," Foreman Qian says. "We each and each respect, *dui budui*?"
> "*Dui*," I say. Right.
> "Here, you tech engineer, job so-so."
> "*Bu-cuo*," I answer, Not bad. (*idem*, 3)

My temples are shaved back and my bangs fall like a horse's forelock. Very *how can*, as they say. (*idem*, 237)

In these passages, what is manifest is the attempt at boundary crossing. The juxtaposition of English and *Pinyin* Chinese[18] and the employment of Chinese syntax[19] may both be efforts at eliminating hierarchies. And yet, from another perspective, one may wonder whether this is merely a manifestation of exoticism – an Orientalist touch that is mystifying but not at all functional in the lifting of gaps. Given the fact that throughout the book there are numerous examples of mistranslation,[20] one may rightly suspect that the boundary crossing that the book attempts to achieve may be superficial.

In fact, the cyborgean politics upheld by feminist cyborg writing is controversial in itself. The subversive potential of the cyborg has been called into question by various critics. Harper's discussion of feminist cyborgs comes out with the assertion that they "are still undeniably the dream-child of a positivist, rationalist American technology built by middle-class men of the previous two centuries" (1995: 405). Abby Wilkerson contends that Haraway's cyborg myth "evades the very issues of race and sexuality which it seems to be addressing", and that her cyborgean imagery in many cases "reinscribes the very norms she wishes to critique" (1997: 164-165). In terms of the destabilization of gender/racial norms, Balsamo is skeptical of the cyborg's potential (1996: 146-150), and Viviane Casimir regards the cyborg as a "problematic signifier" in that "it is the product of a new Cartesian metaphysics" (1997: 278). Convinced that cyborgean utopia is more apparent than real, Sharona Ben-Tov concludes that "[u]topia does not lie in that direction" (1995: 144). In the following discussion, then, we will attempt to unravel the blind spots of feminist cyborg writing in terms of its gender/racial discourse, to see how, in its conceptualization of Asia, stereotypical and dualistic thinking still looms large.

III.

In the future depicted by cyberpunk, according to Fitting, "there has been an increasing blurring of Western and Eastern cultures and commodities, with a special focus on the burgeoning high-tech economies of Japan and the Pacific Rim" (1991: 300). Wolmark also refers to the prevalence of "transnational corporate capitalism" (Wolmark,

1997: 145) in the genre. Japan in *He, She and It* and China in *China Mountain Zhang* are two prominent examples, in which, however, the illusion of boundary crossing cannot efface the deep-seated conceptualization of Asia as Other. In his *Orientalism*, Edward Said has pointed out that "[t]he Orient is (…) one of (…) Europe's (…) deepest and most recurring images of the Other" (1978: 1). The Orient is "almost a European invention", "help[ing] to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (*idem*, 1-2).[21] Exploring the imagining of Asia in feminist cyborg writing, we eventually confront two sets of conflicting images: "Asia as a threatening other" and "Asia as a feminized other". The two may be contradictory, and yet together they help pinpoint the fact that feminist cyborg writing still reinscribes gender/racial stereotypes despite its apparent effort at dismantling them.

He, She and It, to begin with, helps reiterate stereotypical and dualistic ideology by depicting the conflict between Yakamura-Stichen Multi [Y-S] and Tikva as that between the East and the West. Y-S as a transnational corporation may carry the implication of cultural blurring, and indeed the hyphenation of the Japanese "Yakamura" and the English "Stichen" seems to suggest racial crossing. However, in many ways the Multi rather signifies a threatening other that has to be suppressed. The confrontation between Y-S and Tikva, for example, is a life-and-death struggle which claims many lives and eventually shatters Yod the cyborg and his creator, Avram the scientist. The story again and again presents Y-S as a menacing other – "I want your answer by nine a.m. next Tuesday, three October. Otherwise we will launch our attack" (Piercy, 1991: 393). Y-S and Tikva are diametrically opposed to each other and there is no possibility of communication. Toward the end the decline of Y-S, moreover, signifies the vanquishing of the East and the rise of the West. It would seem that the invocation of Japan is simply impotent in upholding the spirit of cultural crossing.

The conflict between Y-S and Tikva, furthermore, is a confrontation between patriarchy and matriarchy. Y-S, with its "male dominance" (*idem*, 4), exercises "patriarchal laws" (*idem*, 10) which make Shira feel that she is "too physical here, too loud, too female, too Jewish, too dark, too exuberant, too emotional" (*idem*, 5). Tikva, by contrast, is a free town which allows for the advocacy of matriarchy. Shira's family has been a typical case:

> Her grandmother had raised her, as was the custom with women of her family. Malkah told her that when a woman had a baby, it was of her line. Men came, men went, but she should remember that her first baby belonged to her mother and to her but never to the father. (…) Of her Malkah expected much. She was the daughter of the line. (*idem*, 38)

This assertion of women's lineage immediately contrasts sharply with Y-S, which confiscates Shira's right as a mother and awards her son Ari's custody to her ex-husband. Shira eventually has to resort to violence to get her son back. There is simply no way to minimize polarity between the two parties. Dualistic ideology is what reigns.

In the case of *China Mountain Zhang*, Foreman Qian's daughter San-xiang is an interesting case for scrutinizing the imagining of Asia in the text. San-xiang can be envisioned as a cyborg in that she has undergone extensive cosmetic surgery to be transformed from an extremely ugly girl to an exceptional beauty. The sexual politics here, however, are quite suspect because the story is the epitome of gender stereotyping. San-xiang's enthusiasm over her new life ahead is a case in point:

> I don't want to be the old San-xiang any more. Poor, ugly San-xiang who had no jaw and little squinty eyes and who looked like she was congenitally stupid. This is it, my chance. I'm going to change my life. I'm going to look for a new job, have new friends, be a new person. (…)
> Practice, so when I change jobs, I'll be accustomed to my new face, and no one will ever suspect that I once looked ugly and stupid. I put on new clothes, I have a new haircut to match the shape of my new face. (…) The world is new. (McHugh, 1992: 237)

Here one may wonder whether San-xiang can really take up the subversive role that Haraway envisions for her cyborg. It seems rather that San-xiang merely embodies patriarchal designation of women and repeats the stereotypical image of women. In fact San-xiang is strikingly similar to Gildina 547-921-45-822-KBJ, a girl from a dystopian future depicted in Piercy's 1976 *Woman on the Edge of Time*, a feminist utopian novel where meditation on the relationship between technology and the female body, a recurring motif of feminist cyborg writing, can already be detected. Gildina's technologically altered body, the very embodiment of femininity, serves as the plaything of man. To survive in her intensely patriarchal / hierarchical and almost cannibalistic world, Gildina always has to resort to various kinds of plastic surgery to keep herself in perfect shape so that men would love her and give her sustenance. The following description of her "artificial" body may serve as an apt example:

> She popped off the bed and stood facing Connie, quivering with anger. They were about the same height and weight, although the woman was younger and her body seemed a cartoon of femininity, with a tiny waist, enormous sharp breasts that stuck out like the brassieres Connie herself had worn in the fifties – but the woman was not wearing a brassiere. Her stomach was flat but her hips and buttocks were oversized and audaciously curved. She looks as if she could hardly walk for the extravagance of her breasts and buttocks, her thighs that collided as she shuffled a few steps. (*idem*, 287-288)

Gildina is thus a cyborg, too. Gildina as a cyborg, however, merely perpetuates the patriarchal definition of women and does not carry any transgressive potential.

The romance of San-xiang and Bobby the "*waiguoren*" [foreigner] (*idem*, 241) is also illuminating when examined from a gender/racial perspective. Bobby is enthralled by San-xiang, the very embodiment of China, a feminized other. If Bobby represents the West, then San-xiang is the East that is ancient, mysterious, and unattainable. Their first encounter is full of Orientalist flavor and yet also unravels a tremendous gap between the two beyond any hope of bridging:

> "What's your name?"
> "Qian San-xiang," I say.
> "San-xiang," he says, "that's a pretty name. What's it mean?"
> "It means 'Three Fragrances.'"
> "My name's Bobby." He shrugs. "Unfortunately, it doesn't mean anything." (*idem*, 241)

In the subsequent story, Bobby/West's wooing of San-xiang/East turns out to be an attempt on the part of Bobby/West to impose his own values onto San-xiang/East. The effort to dominate the other culminates in a scene in Bobby's apartment where Bobby forces San-xiang and sexually abuses her. The scenario aptly highlights a world that is very much dualistic and patriarchal. In this world, the world of feminist cyborg writing, it seems indeed that gender/racial crossing remains only superficial.

This article is an attempt at scrutinizing the gender/racial discourse in feminist cyborg writing. Examining Marge Piercy's *He, She and It* and Maureen F. McHugh's *China Mountain Zhang* as target texts, we have discovered that there are blind spots in the discourse and that, despite the supposed goal of feminist cyborg writing, the imagining of Asia fails to articulate gender/racial crossing. Given their limitations, the two texts nevertheless are important signposts indicating significant concerns of contemporary feminist science fiction.

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Notes

[1] Chiba City, a Japanese city near Tokyo, is described by Gibson in *Neuromancer* as full of "cutting edge" black clinics specializing in "implants, nerve-splicing, and microbionics" (1984: 4, 6), from which the protagonist Case hopes to find remedy for the damage his nervous system has suffered.

[2] One of the 23 corporate enclaves in the post-holocaust world of Piercy's *He, She and It*. The Multi, where the protagonist Shira works, is hierarchical, patriarchal and, moreover, racially biased.

[3] A city in China where the protagonist, Zhang, of McHugh's *China Mountain Zhang* goes to study in a university.

[4] Several critical works have attempted to address the issue of race in science fiction. For example, Patricia Melzer (2006), discusses the racial politics of Octavia E. Butler, one of the few black feminist science fiction writers publishing in English; Jeffrey Allen Tucker (2004) discusses another black science fiction writer, Samuel R. Delany; a 2004 special section of *FEMSPEC*, edited by Batya Weinbaum, was dedicated

to the issue of race in Octavia E. Butler. However, these studies are mainly concerned with the representation of the black. It seems that Asia has somewhat been overlooked. It is not until very recently that the rapport between postcolonial perspectives and science fiction is more comprehensively addressed. See, for example, the "Introduction" to *Science Fiction, Imperialism and the Third World: Essays on Postcolonial Literature and Film* (Hoagland / Sarwal, 2010).

[5] For the criticism of Gibson see especially Karen Cadora (1995) and Nicola Nixon (1992). Gibson's *Neuromancer* is often regarded as the template of cyberpunk, as can be seen in the title of Rob Latham's review article "Cyberpunk=Gibson=*Neuromancer*" (1993), or Claire Sponsler's observation that "William Gibson's work (…) has been hailed (and rightly so) as putting cyberpunk on the map" (1995: 47). Both critics, however, are very critical of cyberpunk. Latham comments: "the movement, as a literary practice and a cultural ideology, gets forced into a straitjacket – a flashy one, true, patterned with intricate Orientalist flourishes, but confining nonetheless" (1993: 266). Sponsler is no less critical: "If cyberpunk has finally arrived, then it has come in crucial ways DOA – dead on arrival – powerless to sustain the socio-political radicalism and representational innovation its champions claim for it" (1995: 47).

[6] Several critics have attempted to explore the complicity between patriarchal and colonialist discourse. In a section entitled "The Relevance of Feminism to the Orientalist Debate" in *Orientalism and Religion* (1999: 112), Richard King, for example, argues that stereotypical representations of the Westerner / the Indian tend to revolve along the axis of rational males / irrational females. Silvia Nagy-Zekmi (2003) analyzes the construction of the postcolonial female subject and explores the representation of both colonial and patriarchal oppression. The relevance of Nagy-Zekmi's investigation to mine lies in her effort to "counter the images of the so-called Third World women that appear in the world media, or in Hollywood where women from India, the Arab world or Latin America are often represented with exaggerated exoticism" (2003: 171-172). My critique of McHugh's representation of the Chinese girl San-xiang in the third section of this paper also partly falls on the "exaggerated exoticism".

[7] For detail please refer to "Cyberpunk Timeline" in the online *The Cyberpunk Project*, <http://project.cyberpunk.ru/idb/timeline.html>.

[8] Cadigan is "the sole woman in the cyberpunk canon" who, however, "never fully engages with feminist concerns" (Cadora, 1995: 358).

[9] "Cybernetics" is "the theoretical study of communication and control processes in biological, mechanical, and electronic systems, especially the comparison of these processes in biological and artificial systems" ("Cybernetics", 2006). According to Dani Cavallaro in *Cyberpunk and Cyberculture*, "The roots of cyberpunk are not, of course, purely literary. The 'cyber' in cyberpunk refers to science and, in particular, to the revolutionary redefinition of the relationship between humans and machines brought about by the science of cybernetics" (2000: 12).

[10] As Andrew M. Butler explains in *Cyberpunk*, "The punk is referring to the low life, the working or lower middle-class characters, the have-nots, who populate such fiction. Rather than rocket scientists and beautiful daughters, cyberpunk features drug dealers, drug users, musicians, skateboarders as characters, as well as various hackers" (2000: 15). Cavallaro observes, "The coupling of cybernetics and punk may well seem an unholy marriage, given certain popular tendencies to associate the former with control, order and logic and the latter with anarchy, chaos and unrest. However, that pairing should not come as a total surprise, for what writers like Gibson needed – in order to represent a paradoxical culture riven by conflict and contradiction – was precisely a figure that could bring together apparently incompatible aspects of contemporary life" (2000: 19).

[11] See, for example, the following comments by Kevin McCarron: "The body, for cyberpunk writers, is an 'accident', unconnected to the pure substance of mind. They are fascinated by 'enhancement'; throughout their novels the human body becomes less organic and more artificial, increasingly machine-like" (1995: 262).

[12] As Marleen S. Barr explains in her *Feminist Fabulation: Space / Postmodern Fiction*, the term "feminist fabulation" is "an umbrella term" that includes both "feminist speculative fiction and feminist mainstream works". Barr goes on to define "feminist fabulation" as "feminist fiction that offers us a world clearly and radically discontinuous from the patriarchal one we know, yet returns to confront that known patriarchal world in some feminist cognitive way" (1992: 10).

[13] According to Marleen S. Barr in her *Alien to Femininity: Speculative Fiction and Feminist Theory*, feminist speculative fiction includes "feminist utopias, science fiction, fantasy, and sword and sorcery" (1987: xxi, note 1).

[14] They are: the boundary between human and animal; the boundary between animal-human (organism) and machine; the boundary between physical and non-physical (Haraway, 1985: 293-294).

[15] As Dery explains, "Technology calls into question time-honored ideas about the body. We live in an age of engineered monsters, when the human form seems increasingly indeterminate – reducible to replaceable parts" (1996: 231). The "traditional perceptions of the body and the self are [also] under attack by contemporary feminist theory. (…) Since the early eighties, academic inquiries into the extent to which our knowledge of the body is culturally produced, rather than naturally determined, have proliferated" (*idem*, 236-237).

[16] The human subject, instead of the traditional perception of it as an organic whole, is envisioned as "immersed in a vast and inescapably complex technological space" (Rutsky, 1999: 14).

[17] Zhang's full name is Zhang Zhong Shan. He is named after the Chinese national father Sun Yat-sen, who is also known as "Zhong Shan". This name literally means "Middle Mountain" or "China Mountain".

[18] There are several systems of Chinese romanization currently in use. The one employed here, exemplified by the italicized terms, is also called *Pinyin* Chinese, which is the system devised by the PRC. "*dui budui*?" means 'is that right?' ; "*how can*" means "good looking".

[19] Foreman Qian's remarks largely follow Chinese syntax, an instance of so-called Pidgin English. For example, "We each and each respect" is the literal translation of *Pinyin* Chinese "*women bici zunzhong*" ("We respect each other").

[20] Here are two kinds of examples:
   A. Semantic errors:
      1. "Finally she sighs. '*Bukeqi, tongzhi,*' she says. I am sorry citizen." (*idem*, 63)
         Here "*Bukeqi*" should have been "*Duibuqi*" ("I am sorry").
      2. "'*Ta ma-da*,' I say, Your mother. 'Just get dressed and come down to the coffee bar.'" (*idem*, 162).
         Here "*Ta ma-da*" is a swearword, and should not have been translated as "Your mother".
      B. Grammatical errors:
      1. "I catalogue my complaints for the nurse who frowns and tells me that I am not in the system. '*Ni gang lai-le ma*?'
          I went to a special secondary school where we spoke nothing but Mandarin, I can dream in Mandarin, so how come my fever be-fogged brain has to translate laboriously to recognize, 'You just got here?'" (*idem*, 129)
         Here "*Ni gang lai-le ma*?" is meant to be equivalent to "You just got here?" However, the use of "*le*" in "*lai-le*" is grammatically wrong and "*le*" should have been deleted. "*Ni gang lai-le ma*?" should have been "*Ni gang lai ma*?"
      2. "My fellow passengers are business travelers – men dressed as I am in black suits with red shirts, the uniform of the *bailing jieceng de*, the white-collar class" (*idem*, 210).
         Here the "*de*" in "*bailing jieceng de*" should have been deleted, as "*de*" here indicates the possessive case, and thus is grammatically incongruous.

[21] Resorting to Gramsci's idea of hegemony, Said contends that "Orientalism depends for its strategy on (…) *positional* superiority", upholding "the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures" (1978: 7). Moreover, in the postmodern world, as Said observes, "there has been a reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the Orient is viewed. (…) So far as the Orient is concerned, standardization and cultural stereotyping have intensified the hold of the nineteenth-century academic and imaginative demonology of 'the mysterious Orient'" (*idem*, 26). According to R. L. Rutsky, this designation of "non-Western" cultures may have much to do with the technological. He observes: "[C]ultures or discourse (…) that perceive the world in terms other than those of rational, scientific knowledge and technological control are necessarily characterized as antimodern, irrational, often even as 'primitive'" (1999: 3). However, as he further observes, in "representations of technological life" such as Gibson's cyberpunk, there is often the "return of the magical or the spiritual", which "involve[s] a return of those racial and gender differences repressed by the patriarchal, Eurocentric conception of the modern human subject" (*idem*, 18, 19). My stance in this section is nevertheless less

utopian. Given the effort to accentuate gender and race, stereotypical and dualistic thinking still looms large.

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn:

Looking for "America"

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Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is one of the books in late nineteenth century American Literary History that best fictionalizes a particular ambivalence in American thought and culture. On the one hand, from its beginning and throughout its history, America is linked to a particular utopian impulse and to a resulting utopianism which have informed different American cultural forms. But on the other hand, an anxiety installed by a dystopian feeling brought by the awareness of the impossibility of the existence of a good life in a better (American) society has also dominated American convictions and thought. What I want to explore here is both how this ambivalence, which is so frequent, so intense and so particular in American thought and culture, emerges in Twain's book and how curiously it simultaneously reaffirms American utopianism at the end of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

The voyage (such an identifiable American theme) down the Mississippi river has been the starting point for the majority of the canonical reflections on *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Leo Marx, for example, considered in 1953 that any position on the book will have to start by questioning the meaning of that voyage down the Mississippi river (Marx, 1953: 429). Bruce King, on the other hand, defended in 1974 that the importance of the voyage should not be taken merely in structural terms but that it should be seen as the Americanization of the traditional allegory, present in European literature, of the soul's pilgrimage around the world, oriented in a new direction (King, 1974: 110): a voyage that withdraws Huck from Miss Watson's society onto the raft, the "good place", where "a community of saints", in Trilling's words (Trilling, 1979: 104), is overshadowed by the

presence of the King and the Duke, both marked with the hypocrisy and the cruelty of the South in a new continent in search of a utopia. This is a journey that takes Huck away from what is established, what is cruel, from Miss Watson's civilization, from everything which represses him, towards the unknown, towards an uncivilized pastoral world: a running away from everything which Pap Finn represents in order to go in search of a new world of freedom. In this way, in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* the reader is left before the (re)interpretation of a well- known element – the journey – with a new meaning – looking for an idyllic place, a new Eden. But this is also a journey that does not end with the simple movement from one world to another, but rather which continues within a new statute achieved by Huck. And a very particular process of learning takes place within this continual movement guided by the river, which seems to flow for ever with the pressing need to go further, imposed by some episodes, as happens on Jackson Island, for example.

As the raft floats down the river, Huck, Twain's narrator, undergoes an experience which leads him into learning about and understanding reality, which to his eyes appears to be cruel and dystopian. All this inevitably leads Huck to turn his back on his conscience (de)formed by society in order to embrace his own natural one.

Tearing up the letter that would return Jim to Miss Watson and the decision to go to hell constitutes the climax and, at the same time, the resolution of a conflict between two moral consciences. This conflict dominates Huck from the moment (in chapter XVI) he becomes aware that he is helping a Negro to escape from slavery, which was a sin according to the moral and the religious view imposed by his education in Miss Watson's house. Until that moment of awareness, Huck had identified his escape with Jim's, and that is why he told him: "Git ups and hump yourself Jim! There ain't a minute to lose. They're after us" (Bradley, 1977: 54). In fact, as Leo Marx points out, nobody will come to the island in search of Huck, since, apart from Jim, nobody knows he is alive. Even so he uses the first person plural (Marx, 1988: 430). In effect, it is from now on that the feelings of friendship and solidarity emerge and develop in Huck's natural inner self. These feelings frequently dominate his own conscience which he begins to hear and which opposes the conscience he had acquired through his "education" in society, and which he ends up rejecting. It is this former conscience, influenced by individual values, which is so different from the one he is still attached to, that Jim troubles without knowing it:

> Pooty soon I'll be a shoutn't for joy, en Ill say, it's all on accounts o' Huck; I's a free man, en I couldn't ever been free ef it hadn't ben for Huck; Huck done it. Jim won't ever forgit you, Huck: you's de bes' fren' Jim's ever had; en you's de only fren' ole Jim's got now. (Bradley, 1977: 74)

This conflict between two consciences gets stronger when Jim points out the value of friendship. Huck has to face a moral dilemma because he feels bad when he realizes Jim considers him his only friend, since he knows that if he behaves "right", according to society's values, he cannot keep on helping the slave. And to develop this theme of deep friendship which connects people, Mark Twain makes a significant choice in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* since the story develops itself in an America which denied black people any rights or even feelings. On the other hand, Twain's choice is so much more significant that America considered it a crime to help a fleeing slave. However, in the book the raft is the place where Huck and Jim live in intimacy in an idyllic community, separated and freed from the world, living in harmony with nature. Here on the raft, racial prejudices disappear and Huck and Jim are transformed into just two human beings.

As the Mississippi flows, on the raft, Huck and Jim are no longer part of civilization or of a society which does not accept the pure feelings which unite them both. Ultimately there is no place for Miss Watson's views on slavery or for Tom's world of fantasies. The raft seems indeed to purify those who can be redeemed, and that is why the King and the Duke will never be part of that ideal community Huck and Jim belong to:

> They went off, and I got aboard the raft, feeling bad and low, because I knowed very well I had done wrong, and I see it warn't no use for me to try to learn to do right; a body that don't get started right when he's little, ain't got no show – when the pinch comes there ain't nothing to back him up and keep him to his work, and so he gets beat. Then I thought a minute, and says to myself, hold on, – s'pose you'd a done right and give Jim up; would you felt better than what you do now? No, says I, I'd fell bad – I'd feel just the same way I do now. Well, then says I, what's the use you learning to do right, when it's troublesome to do right and ain't no trouble to do wrong, and the wages is just the same? I was stuck. I couldn't answer that. So I reckoned I wouldn't bother no more about it, but after this always do whichever come handiest at the time. (Bradley, 1977: 76)

Here lies the irony of the situation. On the raft, Huck behaves "right" (according to his conscience) when he is "wrong" (according to society's values). And this will be the case until Huck's return to life on Phelps farm. There, the conflict of the two moral consciences is reignited, and Tom, the southern middle-class boy, begins to take over Huck's individual inner values again. But the purifying effects of the raft are not felt by the King and the Duke,

who were born and bred in the heart of a society dominated by violence, racial inequality, hypocrisy and lies. Ultimately, they are the society itself, and so they cannot get away from it. These two tricksters, episodes such as the fight between the Grangerfords and the Shepherdsons, the discovery of the similarity between what is taught at the Sunday school and the world of Tom's fantasies, Boggs' murder, the cruelty of the people towards the lynching, in short, life on the banks of the river, all of this is part of Huck's experience. And it is this experience that increases Huck's own knowledge of selfishness, of evil, of human cowardice in a society in which everyone has a role to play. As Richard Gray points out with regard to *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* within society "everyone behaves like an actor, who has certain lines to say, clothes to wear, things to do, rather than as an independent individual" (Gray, 2004: 254).

Huck's whole experience, which is so vital to his (re)education, is guided by a kind of God, by a force which dominates him. The river is indeed like a God which influences and purifies Huck, guiding his learning experience. As a mythological element linked to fertility, the river flows and accomplishes its mission to enrich those who entrust themselves to it and, in this way, it is on the river that Huck learns a natural justice, which would be impossible to learn within society. The Mississippi, and with it the raft, is presented as an ideal world, a utopia, which both Huck and Twain fall in love with. That is a world which cannot be thought or understood by the society and the culture young Tom comes from; it is a world that makes it possible for Huck and Jim to be nearly always naked, that is, free from the clothing society imposes. And thus they are innocent people in the Garden of Eden. The river and all that surrounds it is very often described as a magic world in opposition to the riverbanks, all of which makes Huck express how wonderful it is to live on a raft, as happens in the last words of chapter XVIII or in the beautiful description which opens chapter XIX:

> It was a monstrous big river down there – sometimes a mile and a half wide; we run nights, and laid up and hid day-times; soon as night was most gone, we stopped navigating and tied up – nearly always in the dead water under a tow-head; and then cut young cottonwoods and willows and hid the raft with them. Then we set out the lines. Next we slid into the river and had a swim, so as to freshen up and cool off; then we set down on the sandy bottom where the water was about knee deep, and watched the daylight come. Not a sound, anywheres – perfectly still – just like the whole world was asleep, only sometimes the bull-frogs a-cluttering, maybe. (Bradley, 1977: 96)

The river is, however, also dangerous and leads to the unknown, to the unexpected, to the sandbanks, to the storms, to the fogs, because the "river god" – to use Lionel Trilling's words – doesn't only have a benevolent side. Indeed, the journey guided by the river also leads to moments of pessimism and disappointment, which undoubtedly contribute to Huck's inner growth. But as the plot unfolds we are also led to question Twain's own problematization, raised by an implied voice, about Huck's innocent conclusions, up to his final decision "to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest" (*idem* 229).

It is clear that my reading of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* also underlines what for Leo Marx is unquestionable: "*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is, among other things, the fulfillment of a powerful pastoral impulse" (Marx, 1988: 20). However, I also want to make clear that if *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is a book that looks nostalgically at a lost utopian pastoral America, which is definitely lost, on the other hand it is also, as Richard Gray very well states, a book "about a moment in American history when a sense of humanity and individuality was lost, with terrible consequences for the nation" (Gray, 2004: 255). And if we look deeper into the novel, we will also understand what Randal Knoper, in 1989, stated in "'Away from Home and Amongst Strangers': Domestic Sphere, Public Arena and *Huckleberry Finn*": "Despite Mark Twain's situating the story 'four to fifty years ago' and in a rural valley, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* closely engaged daily dilemmas and concerns of a Northern, urban, middle-class audience" (Knoper, 1989: 125). In fact, Huck's final decision to go to the "Territory", and thus stay on his journey and maintain an a-social condition to look for his utopian America, isn't merely the celebration of that lost pastoral and Edenic past. I think that, as Randal Knoper states in his reading, "Mark Twain sets up his territory in this novel with topographical correspondence to the urban landscape, dividing it up in terms similar to the Northern middle class's divisions of the city into the comforts of home and the public, the female and the male, sectors of truth and of dissimulation (*idem*, 138). But what happens with *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is after all what Richard Gray tells us about many American writers:

> The nostalgic utopianism that characterizes so many American cultural forms has impelled numerous writers and artists to look back in longing, and to see some moment in the national history as the time the nation crossed the thresholds from innocence to experience. (Gray, 2004: 257)

Thus, my reading wants to underline that from this novel also emerge enthusiastic feelings on the turning point America was living in the later years of the nineteenth century, feelings which suggested hope towards the future. And that is definitely what Huck's final decision to go to the "Territory" symbolizes.

Indeed if, as the first readings of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* underline, in this novel Mark Twain undoubtedly offers the reader a nostalgic vision of an Edenic utopian America where a good pastoral life could be lived and the American Adam was a possibility; on the other hand, the writer ends the book announcing how futile that project was. However, and just because Twain's Territory sets up a topographical correspondence to the urban landscape, a spokesperson who no longer believes in an American Adam emerges at the end of the book. This spokesperson makes the reader also understand that, as Ruland and Bradbury very well state, "[Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*] is not just a story of nature but society, the society of mercantile, often urban central river where the great technological steamboats work, as do the Melvillean confidence men, the King and the Duke, exploiting innocence for gain" (Ruland / Bradbury, 1992: 199). And Huck's final decision reveals all the anxiety brought by his dystopian discoveries and consequent feelings.

However, Twain's hero does not give up his journey. On the contrary, Huck moves to the "Territory", which, when the novel was published, wasn't free land any more. With Huck's final decision, Twain also ends his novel bringing us an implied spokesperson who, being no longer an American Adam, seems, however, to announce that he will keep on anxiously looking for perfectibility. This spokesperson voices that, with Huck, he will keep on looking longingly for "America" in the future brought by the later half of the nineteenth century, when America was closer and closer to an urban and industrial society and culture.

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The Genealogy of the Utopian Millenarianism in the Oporto Philosopher Agostinho da Silva

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The Israeli philosopher Martin Buber published a politico-philosophical essay in Hebrew in 1946 that was translated into English three years later with the title *Paths in Utopia.* In this work, Buber identifies the utopian propensity with the general aspiration for the idea of justice, an idea that, according to him, is manifested in two forms – the religious, conceived as an eschatological and messianic image of a perfect time, and the philosophical, conceived as an ideal image of perfect space. The first concept involves questions of a cosmic, ontological and metaphysical nature, while the second is confined to the immanent sphere of the structural and general functioning of society as well as with man's ethical conduct. According to Buber, the eschatology or the perfect vision of time is distinguished from Utopia or the perfect vision of space by the fact that the former is based on the belief in a transcendental act deriving from a superior and divine determination, irrespective of man's will in playing an active role in the construction of a future kingdom of general well-being. With Utopia it is man's decisive, conscious will, free from any link with transcendence, that reigns supreme in the modelling of the perfect social space. Buber adds, however, that since the age of Enlightenment the eschatological vision of the setting up of a harmonious kingdom on earth through a providential act of divine intervention has lost its appeal and has given way to the modern idea of progress as formulated by the eighteenth-century free thinkers, and then systematised by their nineteenth-century followers, in accordance with five basic points: (i) the proclamation of a discernible continuity, not free from upsets, hesitation or setbacks, of the evolution of man's social and spiritual history, which, in their

sequence, reveal an immanent sign of ontological and material perfectibility; (ii) that this continuity is governed by historical laws rationally inferred through the analysis of events generated by man and not deduced by the belief in a providential scheme of divine ordination; (iii) that by means of knowing these laws the quality of the ineluctable advance of a determined period of progress to a succeeding period can be predicted; (iv) that this progress requires man's will in order to be achieved; (v) finally, that this scheme of thinking is a laicised version of an eschatological vision of history based on the idea of the millennium.

For the history of ideas, beliefs and teleological concepts, the idea of the millennium has become a dominant, guiding principle in Western Judaeo-Christian mentality; it is an expression whose content is congenial with the principle of hope that, as demonstrated by Ernst Bloch, generates the spirit of Utopia looking towards the future. In its various possibilities, this idealized future is known differently by a set of ideological and doctrinal formulations, such as the days to come, the golden age revisited, the divine entry into the Seventh Age, the Parousia promised to the believers, the earthly reign of the Messiah, a society of economic justice, the final phase of the cosmic process that will definitely erase the insufficiencies, the calamities and the mistakes accumulated by man throughout his own and necessary history. The label "millennium" is a cultural and scholarly established formula to define such general hope in a better future, deriving its lexical formation from the Latinized word "thousand" to refer to the time lapse of general Christian bliss as it is prophetically stated in St. John's Book of Revelation:

> And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus (…) they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years (…) the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and Christ and shall reign with him a thousand years. (Revelation, 20:4-6)

For Norman Cohn, author of *Pursuit of the Millennium*, the notion of human salvation aggregated to this idealized future is characterised as being of a "collective" type (as it encompasses a group of faithful people), "earthly" (due to the promise that it will be carried out in this world), "imminent" (as it should occur shortly and suddenly), "total" (regarding the degree of perfection attained), and will be executed by means of an external, supernatural intervention. But let us focus on the Western millenarianist movements. From

the adepts of the Free-Spirit in the later Middle Ages to the Jehovah's Witnesses of the early twenty-first century, and encompassing several sectarian religious movements at different times, the amazing survival of this same ideological formula of apocalyptical inspiration on the transformation of the world can be perceived as a continuous reproduction of the belief in the value of the literal truth of the eschatological prophecy announced in the last canonical book of the Bible. In their different mode of interpreting and acting according to the sacred text – whether peacefully or violently – the millenarianists, based on this interpretation, exhibit their salvationist will through two positions, i.e. either confidently waiting for the coming of the heavenly kingdom (post-millenarianism) or actively preparing for the consummation of the promised land of justice, peace and abundance (pre-millenarianism), that should precede the final phase – the end of the history of the earthly world, thus corresponding, according to St. John's vision, to the descent of the New Jerusalem from heaven (Revelation, 21).

Despite its simple etymological origins and its primitive semantic significance, the concept of the millennium is redolent with added subtleties and complexities that derive from: (i) the divergent interpretations of the prophetic-apocalyptic texts that gave rise to those two – pre- and post-millenarianist – sectarian attitudes; (ii) the theoretical contributions of those thinkers and authors who stand for the thesis of a teleological-transcendental vision of history; (iii) the interpretive proposals of scholars and exegetes of the millenarian phenomenon.

The irresistible attraction of future time is, therefore, a way of thinking and acting that, in the Western intellectual tradition, acquired a strong eschatological hue via the influence of an original belief – from among the various religious beliefs of ancient peoples –, that of the Jewish people: a belief which led this people to self-proclaiming as the human agent of the realisation of a necessarily benign and redemptive plan of the Creator of the World, regarded as the one and only God. One may even state that the providential, segmented and apocalyptic conception of history, based on the idea of a linear, progressive apotheosis of the end of time, and which enjoyed widespread acceptance in the Western world, had its original, mythical illustration in the Semite belief in the alliance, as narrated in chapter 17 of Genesis, between God and a descendent of Noah, Abram, later baptised as Abraham, the father of peoples, to whom was promised the future possession of a land of safety and

abundance. Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel were the Jewish prophets at the time of the Syrian invasion and, later, of the Exile, who emphasised and promoted the powerful myth of the coming of the Messiah-Saviour to fulfil such divine promise. Around six centuries after Isaiah, about 165 AD, another prophet, Daniel, drew up what is considered to be the oldest and most complete canonical apocalypse of the Old Testament, revealing to the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar the meaning of two dreams the latter had had which had left him intrigued. These dreams, involving four animals and a polymorphic statue respectively (chapters 2 and 7), symbolised, in the prophet's interpretation, the fall of the four great earthly empires that followed each other in the Middle East (biblical exegesis identified them as the Assyrian, the Persian, the Hellenic and the Roman empires) and which would precede the imminent foundation of the fifth, and last, empire, of divine inspiration.

As to the Christian millenarianist ideas, Norman Cohn's study, limiting its thematic scope to the millenarian movements that arose in northern Europe during the Middle Ages, is highly documented and instructed as to the revolutionary effects of the literal interpretation of the prophecy attributed to St. John. From 431 onwards, i.e. after the Council of Ephesus, the widespread belief in the millennium was duly manipulated by self-proclaimed prophets and messianic leaders who used such belief as an efficient ideological expedient to encourage heterodox religious practices – *ergo* heretical – and to promote social revolts among starving, credulous legions of poor peasants to whom were promised the kingdom of heaven by the Christ-Redeemer. It is no wonder, therefore, that medieval scholastic theology, with St Thomas Aquinas at its head, constantly condemned any attempt to explain the course of human history based on prophetic interpretations, preferring instead to encourage ideological vigilance against any insidious utopian-millenarian mental eruption.

But the spirit of Utopia cannot be fenced in and arises when and where it is least expected. At the end of the 12th century, the Cistercian monk Joachim – the abbot of the Curazzo monastery in Calabria, where he was born in 1135, and founder of a monastery and a monastic order that lasted until 1570 at Fiore – formulated, after an intense study of the scriptures and with the benefit of several spiritual visions, a salvationist, prophetic-utopian interpretation of the history of humanity. And he did it with the encouragement and approval of Pope Lucius III, within the institutional and doctrinal corpus of the *Ecclesia Romana,* of

which he was an unsuspected devotee without ever having suffered the censure or the stigma of practising heresy during his life.

In his own way, Joachim of Fiore was a philosopher of history trying to provide a logical meaning and a coherent explanation for the temporal course of the world. In order to achieve this purport, he based all his theory on an elementary principle of reason that was able to discern the meaning of the past, present and future of the worldly order of human affairs. In twelfth-century Europe, of course, this principle of reason could not be sufficient nor immanent, but necessarily transcendental, induced from Christian theology and from the narrative content of the Bible, i.e. the original code and sacred book viewed as encompassing the essential truth about the history of the world, God's purpose and His progressive revelation. For Joachim of Fiore, influenced as he was by the "idols" of his time, the canonical Bible, which had been defined by various Roman Catholic Councils, was the book in which God manifested His will and communicated His one and triadic nature as Father, Son and Holy Ghost, but also the book in which He cryptically set forth a plan for a progressive, ecumenical enlightenment that needed to be deciphered. It contained a compendium of the history of the spiritual past of mankind and, simultaneously, the key to its future history, which, when all was said and done, could only be coherently understood and interpreted in the light of that divine will and nature.

World History would thus be divided into three phases or states: that of the Father, that of the Son and that of the Holy Ghost. Each of these three states would be divided into seven periods (number seven, which had already been used by St. Augustine to establish his universal chronology, has its biblical foundation in the analogy with the seven days of the Creation), the *aetates,* each one designated by the name of a famous person of sacred history. According to Joachim, after the discordant, impure active life, therefore, would come the concordant, pure contemplative life led by the new spiritual man, a being of wisdom and peace, in tune with the strict law of God and free from the servitude of evil inclinations. Joachim's conviction regarding man's future status is peremptory when he states: "We will not be what we have been, but will begin to be other" (*apud* Manuel, 1979: 58). It was, after all, a fideistic conviction in the rhythmic, benign transformation of history, in mankind's phased ascension towards teleological good and happiness, a conviction which, not being a part of the Church's official doctrine, awakened and legitimised both the

expectations of change and the social movements of the medieval disinherited peasants. But it was also a conviction that would later become secular in theories of social emancipation and in philosophies of progress that announced an ultimate, worldly perfect time, and which, among many other formulations drawn up by eighteenth and nineteenth-century free thinkers, range from Auguste Comte's state of positivist religion and Robert Owen's fraternal community, to the communist society set out by Karl Marx or Hegel's projected Prussian state – the finished consummation of the absolute Idea.

In seventeenth-century Portugal, the prophetic-Utopian thesis of the fifth empire inspired by biblical sources had as one of its most powerful defenders the Jesuit António Vieira (1608-1697). But he wasn't the only one. The ideological, political and social situation in seventeenth-century Portugal was particularly propitious for visionary appraisals concerning the transformation of the fatherland and the whole world. The prophetic-millenarian positions of nationalist content that were disseminated and propagated in Portugal, especially between 1630 and 1670, i.e. during the period between the crescendo of the popular expectation of the restoration of political independence from Spanish rule and the phase of consolidation of national sovereignty, was characterised by the relatively generalised eruption of a euphoric, messianic- nationalist hope and by the ideological, revolutionary force that induces utopianism.

Since the millenarianism of the Portuguese Jesuit was of a hermeneutic nature, essentially derived from the interpretation of the Bible as to the advent or instauration of the thousand-year kingdom of (Portuguese) saints, he awaited a final resolution of man's history that clearly presupposed a transcendental, providential intervention – in which the Pope, the Portuguese monarch and the Portuguese people would play a decisive role in launching the blessed age of a thousand years as predicted in the Book of Revelation. As a fervent Catholic, Vieira tried to accommodate his utopian millenarianism to the dogmas of the Church, an accommodation that was difficult to be metaphysically held in a century deeply stained by intolerance among different religious creeds and by a particularly ferocious persecution of the Jews. From an eminently religious point of view, António Vieira seems, therefore, to view the fifth empire as being voluntarily recognised by the universal revelation of the supreme truth in the person of Christ although doctrinally open to the ritual diversity of the religious worship of God. From an existentialist point of view it would be a

state characterised by the pre-libation of future glories, governed by the physical laws of temporal life, a kind of earthly prelude to eternal good fortune, in which man, finally finding perpetual peace for a thousand years, would live an exceptionally long and healthy life carrying out his normal activities in a fraternal, saintly manner. In a script that Vieira left incomplete and which was published as an appendix to *Apologia das Coisas Prophetizadas* (*An Apology of Predicted Events*), the following can be read:

> The first temporal happiness of this highly fortunate kingdom will be that one without which no other can be truly called happiness, and which in itself encompasses almost everything that can be enjoyed in this life, which is peace. There will be universal peace in the whole world, both wars and weapons will cease to exist in all nations and then the prophecies that so many prophets have made and have been explained by expositors but never really understood will be fulfilled. (Vieira, 1994: 287, my translation)

This peace would lead to such a revolution in habits and be accompanied by such a change in the spirit of life that Isaiah's prophecy referring to the wolf living with the lamb would finally be fulfilled.

In the context of twentieth-century Portuguese literary culture, the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935) took up the utopian-millenarianist idea (or, in his words, the myth) of the fifth empire with conscious deliberation, renewing its content, ridding it of its more immediate biblical and theological implications and attempting to found it not as a mere formal possibility but as a real objective possibility. Like Vieira, Pessoa also recollects data in order to demonstrate its ideal potential, disapproves the course of events in order to demystify them, protests in order to exalt, exhorts in order to stimulate, predicts in order to emphasise his utopian creed. Aligning himself with António Vieira's thought – and this is the core meaning of the second part of his poetic work *Mensagem* (*Message*) – Pessoa recollects in order to set forth what one may call the knowing utopian function of the "Portuguese sea", this sea being understood not so much as an expression of national greatness, but more as a double allegory representative of (i) the real possibilities, or with pleonastic emphasis, the possible possibilities, those which lead to the effective discovery of what is new, but also (ii) the symbolic possibilities of transcending the given world, the historical world, that of the (four) known material empires. Of the five national symbols named by Pessoa that make up the Portuguese (utopian) sea-dream, the second is entitled "The Fifth Empire". Beyond trying to define or determine its possible nature, however, this

empire is presented as an indispensable form of animistic discontent, as a logical necessity or final cause of man's quest, as a reality made possible by active, anti-conformist idealisation, as the fabric of a profound desire or vision of the human soul.

In the context of the Portuguese culture of the second half of the twentieth century, it was the Oporto thinker Agostinho da Silva (1906-1994) who took over and gave a new emphasis to the legacy of the Portuguese utopian millenarian hope. He extended the view of a Vieira and a Pessoa in an indefectible future of jubilation and of the existential pacification brought to the world through the cooperation, through the example or through the "sacrifice" of the Portuguese nation or, in other words, of the ideal Portuguese nation. Of that nation which, in its real/symbolic greatness, but also in its symbolic/real faults, Agostinho recounted/mythicized in several texts, always with the purpose of presenting it as a crucial piece or cipher of the cosmic process that, necessarily or with the cooperation of human freedom, would come to a end with the hoped-for redemption of the world. In the wake of the prophetic-messianic tradition of Western culture, of Hebraic roots, the Portuguese nation, by what it has historically performed and what it has still to perform, by what it has temporally achieved and what it has still to achieve, may be viewed, according to Agostinho da Silva, as a symbol of a hope or of an intimate desire of eschatological purport. History, science, philosophy, literature, culture, all the creations of the human mind were, in Agostinho da Silva's view, skilful means, so to say, for the understanding of the consummation of this eschatological process, in which the best national idiosyncrasies or the most positive and significant events in the history of Portugal – of which sailing on endless, uncharted seas, discovering new lands, linking and re-linking separated continents, uniting people and marrying distant, unknown cultures – operate as utopian-ideal signs of the metaphysical, essential unity of Being. For Agostinho da Silva, this is the Portugal that matters: the Portugal of a messianic and millenarian vocation, the Portugal of myth and Utopia or, perhaps, to use a more daring expression, of the Utopian myth, not the Portugal of ideology and politics; the Portugal inspired by the force of mystery and by the gamble of discovery, not the restless Portugal of ambition and imperialist power; the Portugal of being and not the Portugal of having; the Portugal of hope, vision, brotherhood and voluntary, silent sacrifice, represented by paradigmatic Portuguese characters like the poet king Dinis and his wife saint queen Isabel (who, in the thirteenth century, welcomed into the kingdom

the Fraticelli, Spiritual Franciscans, disciples of Joachim of Fiore, propagators of the religious cult of the Holy Ghost) – and by the Holy Prince Ferdinand (who, with his martyrdom, expiated and redeemed the court Machiavellianism that had exchanged brotherly life for the reason of state, i.e. that had exchanged the allegiance towards the infinite freedom of the spiritual empire for the preservation of the contingent, delimiting frontiers of the material empire) – and by Luís de Camões (who wrote on the "Island of Love", making it not so much a prize of the voyage to India but more as a sample of a nostalgic-oracular condition, a paradise to be retrieved) – and by Fernão Mendes Pinto (the adventurous, legendary pilgrim of polymorphic identity who lived according to the "metaphysical of the unpredictable" in a permanent state of surprise and of overcoming adversity). This is the Portugal of Vieira and Pessoa, prophets of the Fifth Empire – transcending the "sorrowful, austere and wretched sadness", in the words of Camões, of the mediocre and repressive times in which they both lived, and pointing out instead, by various hermeneutic means, to other life possibilities. But it is also the Portugal of the democratic local rule, of people's free wasteland, of the communal feasts, of the Pentecostal festivities, of democratic, popular government, of the sharing of the public administration, the Portugal of the geographic discoveries, of the positive, adventurous and contemplative fruition of life, the ideal Portugal, spreading across different continents throughout the centuries, surviving rather as a language without frontiers than as a fatherland or fatherlands confined to the geography of their territories. It is this highly idealized view of the history of Portugal and of its national identity that embodies Agostinho da Silva's idea of the fifth monarchy. The history of Portugal, or rather, a certain history of Portugal, viewed as more mythical than real, operates as a sort of prospective draft of the Utopia of the fifth empire in Agostinho's thought. As it occurs with Pessoa, Agostinho da Silva assigns a higher heuristic value to the logic of myth, regarding it as the epitome of a permanent and wishful truth, than to the methodology of history – which he ultimately views as an intricate and subjective-like attempt to reconstitute an illusory narrative of objective past facts.

His text *Considerando o Quinto Império* (*Considering the Fifth Empire*) is a sort of guide for the followers of this project. It is written in the most spiritually engaged way, and one can read it as an echo of a monastic order, as a set of general principles both for the ruling of an intentional community and for the pursuit of man's perfectibility and

ontological transcendence. These are Agostinho da Silva's ideal prescriptions and wishful predictions:

> We will have as an ideal of government that there will be no government, just as there would be none in paradise, and we will see the whole of history as a slow but sure preparation, not through the wisdom of man but through the patience and tenacity of God, so that, passing above all the theocracies and all the aristocracies and all the democracies, we will come to the solution of the governor-governed antinomy.
>
> We will have as an ideal of economy that there will be no economy, just as there would be none in paradise, being only the duty of each one to flourish as well as he can and the right of each one to find what he needs: let us also destroy the producer-consumer, freedom-security antinomy.
>
> We will have as an ideal of people those that will have destroyed the antinomy of child and adult, of the ignorant and the wise, of man and woman; we hope that there will be no school, nor books nor marriage in the V monarchy: just as it is in heaven.
>
> And finally we will have as an ideal of thinking, from where everything comes forth, a complete fusion of subject and object, a non-thinking. To put it in relative theological terms, we wish to see from the Father and from the Son, the knot of the Spirit that unites them: in such a way that we all become absorbed in his non-thinking. Which will once more bring into focus, this time without heresy, Joachim of Fiore and his Kingdom of the Holy Ghost and its Fleur-de-Lys Kingdom. (Silva, 1989: 197-200, my translation)

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Translating Utopia in the Czech Lands

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Introduction

As elsewhere in the Western world, Czech science fiction began to expand in the prewar and interwar eras through works that featured interplanetary journeys, fantastic technological inventions and time travel. Although the genre was referred to as "utopian literature", only a small fraction was dedicated to imagining better worlds. The utopian impulse may be felt for example in the work of Svatopluk Čech, who started his writing career at the close of Alexander von Bach's absolutism and whose works, "dedicated to the future of the Czech nation and the liberation of the poorest classes" (Adamovič, 2010b: 11),[1] gained popularity with the reading public. In Čech's *Sketches from the Year 2070* (*Náčrtky z r. 2070*, 1870), the protagonist wakes up in twenty-first-century Prague to learn that winged humans graciously fly over an industrialized albeit polluted city, and that women speak Czech (not German), although they are too emancipated for his taste. While *Sketches* contains both utopian and dystopian features, Čech's later publication, *Songs of the Slave* (*Písně otroka*, 1895), includes "an idyllic vision about a land of equality, freedom and brotherhood" (Adamovič, 2010b: 11).

Only in the interwar period, however, did Czech science fiction flourish and an unprecedented number of writers turn to speculative literature. As the poet and critic A. M. Píša observed in his essay titled "The Utopian Wave" (1927), the uncertainties and tensions of the age – industrial and technological growth, the horrors of war, and rises and crises of the socialist movement – filled both drama and prose with utopian themes (Píša, 1927: 142). Píša's definition of "utopia" nevertheless continued to signify all science fiction; thus he

concluded that "the more remarkable characteristic of contemporary utopian fiction is its pessimism regarding civilization" (Píša, 1927: 146). The critic's own examples included the well-known work of Karel Čapek, which is critical of dehumanizing rationalism, materialism and the fanatical thirst for power, and the less-known work of Emil Vachek, namely *The Master of the World* (*Pán světa*, 1925), which reflects contemporary fears of dictatorship. He might also have added Jiří Haussmann's satirical story "A Trip" ("Výlet", 1921). Living in an imaginary Czechoslovak Soviet Republic, housed in the Central Building of Lyrical Poets, the protagonist – who is named "No. 28 594, series H, category IV" – is forced to write a celebratory poem about the Prime Minister. When he fails to finish on time, the last word of the poem, "oslavenec", turns into "osla" (the Czech for an "ass"), and the "honoree" is less than honored. Fortunately the poet is allowed to recite the entire poem on death row and the forced sound of his verses annihilates his opponents. Haussmann's story expresses similar anxieties as Zamyatin's *We*, which was completed around the same time but was banned in Russia (in Czech, it was published in 1927).[2]

In spite of this overwhelmingly dystopian climate, utopias (i.e. "eutopias") appeared. Jakub Machek, in his recent overview of interwar Czech utopian fiction, included as many as thirty-eight texts.[3] Some of them emerged in dialogue with their foreign counterparts. As Bohuslav Mánek pointed out, translations in general "provided information about trends in foreign literatures and also filled the gaps in the range of genres available in the Czech territories; indeed, new translations occasionally acted as inspirations for original Czech works" (Mánek, 2005: 165). Yet the old idea of translators as traitors has relevance here. In addition to inevitable untranslatabilities that arise during any translation process, Czech translations of utopias were at times intentionally unfaithful; moreover, they were usually framed by interpretative prefaces and afterwords which affected the meaning of the original. This trend, as the following pages illustrate, continued throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century.

Prewar and Interwar Years

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, a number of foreign utopias were translated into Czech. Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward 2000-1887* and *Equality*, Alexander Bogdanov's *Red Star: The First Bolshevik Utopia*, and William Morris's *News*

from Nowhere all appeared before World War I. Thomas More's *Utopia* was translated twice at the beginning of the century, and other works followed in the 1920s and 1930s. Translations of foreign utopias were often framed by blurbs that related these utopias to revolutionary events in Russia. When Morris's *News from Nowhere* was published in 1926, for example, the author of the introduction, František Sedláček, positioned Morris's utopia against capitalism and Soviet socialism. According to the Czech translator and critic, Morris believed in communism yet he "never loved extremists and revolutionaries" (Sedláček, 1926: 11) and "although he longed for a revolution that would bring justice to everybody, it was not a revolution of blood and fire" (Sedláček, 1926: 12). Thus disregarding the chapter "How the Change Came", which portrays a violent revolution necessary for the emergence of Morris's utopia, Sedláček emphasized the Englishman's disbelief in "political and economic materialism of Marxism" (Sedláček, 1926: 12). This Czech pragmatist, rationalist and pacifist view avoided violent action and emphasized Morris's value of non-alienated work; his utopia appeared to stimulate hope but not "Soviet-style" revolution.

The story of H. G. Wells in the Czech lands also began in these decades. Bohuslav Mánek's wrote that

> [i]n the first half of the twentieth century, Wells (…) was one of the most widely translated and discussed living English writers (…). Of particular interest and influence were Wells's beliefs in evolution, progress and socialism, his projects of rational social organization and, later, his worries about the future of civilization and his warnings against war and the potential abuse of science. He was also a man of public affairs and so it is no surprise that his reception was connected with the political development of the country. (Mánek, 2005: 165)

As Mánek highlighted, the Czech audience was intrigued by Wells, and not merely by the fantastic side of his science-fictional writing. In 1921, *Russia in the Shadows* was translated, and during the following year both *A Modern Utopia* and sections from *An Englishman Looks at the World* appeared. How suitable Wells's type of utopianism could be for the Czechs, however, remained a subject of dispute. Several members of the Prague Linguistic Circle – among them Vilém Mathesius, Otakar Vočadlo and Zdeněk Vančura – devoted themselves to the Englishman's work and their reactions were largely appreciative. In the introduction to *A Modern Utopia*, for example, Otakar Vočadlo (as Mánek also noted) largely praised Wells's pragmatic, thorough and efficient vision, although he also admitted that perhaps it did not please the "Slavic heart" (Vočadlo, 1922: 7). Vančura, too, approved

of Wells's collectivism, humanitarianism and social dedication while nevertheless rejecting the English writer's anthropocentrism and Darwinist evolutionarism.

The impact of translated utopias in general, and of Wells's work in particular, was strong during this period also in the field of "original" Czech fiction. Mánek has gone as far as to argue that "Wells's 'social fables' have substantially (…) underpinned" the development of Czech science fiction, which did not present merely "playful or thrilling fantasy" but rather focused on "the social consequences of scientific and technological advance, particularly on their moral and psychological aspects" (Mánek, 2005: 166). Karel Čapek's admiration of Wells, for example, has been documented. A less-known author, Ervín Neuman, wrote a novel that shares many features with Wells's work (as Machek also noted). In the first chapter of Neuman's *With a Fist of Steel* (*Ocelovou Pěstí,* 1930), for example, the protagonist highlights the dynamic and unfinished nature of his vision: "I don't believe and I don't want to believe that any future social organization could be definitive. Nothing is permanent and stable in the order of nature" (Neuman, 1930: 8-9). The protagonist visits the future utopian society of the United States of the World and laments (somewhat like Wells in *Men like Gods*) that his generation had betrayed socialist ideals as "the workers' state has not proven to realize the dreams of those who long for true justice for everybody" (Neuman, 1930: 18). However, the world fortunately changed as a result of massive decolonization struggles. Internationalist in character, Neuman's utopia depicts nations and races living in harmony, although the bias towards Western values and the white race is strong, just as in *A Modern Utopia*. Neuman's belief in a healthy and pure body even allows for the killing of unhealthy infants and expelling unsuitable adults from his ideal world of nudity and metal to the Island of the Sick – somewhat reminiscent of Wells's Island of Incurable Cheats.[4]

Postwar Ups and Downs

The year 1948 introduced significant changes in the Czech publishing industry, which was until 1989 nationalized, centrally-controlled and marked by censorship. As Pavel Janáček documented, science fiction was included among suspicious popular genres, along with adventure stories and detective fiction. Yet, just as in the Soviet Union, with the fall of Stalin and the rise of Sputnik, science fiction was published again, and in the 1960s, it

included dystopian and satirical visions, "bad things" happening to "bad Others". Thus, for example, there were fears of nuclear annihilation, but in socialist societies catastrophes did not happen and atomic energy was used responsibly to positive, exploratory ends.

Regarding translations of utopias, initially only classic works appeared for the most part. Between 1949 and 1953, the government published More's *Utopia* (1950), Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1952), Tommaso Campanella's *The City of the Sun* (1951), Etienne Cabet's *Voyage to Icarie* (1950), Bernard Bolzano's *On the Best State* (1949 and 1952), and at least four editions of *Iron Heel* (1949, 1951, 1953 twice – in Czech and in Slovak). (And that is in addition to at least three editions that came out in the early 1920s. Jack London remained a favorite of the regime: *White Fang*, for instance, was published at least 19 times between 1948 and 1989, and there were at least three further editions of *Iron Heel.*)

Selected ideals from classic utopias met with approval – but they were considered either as already having been realized by the socialist government, or nearly so. Bolzano's text, for example, included a preface by the philosopher Ludvík Svoboda, who mentioned Bolzano's criticism of private property and inequality of the sexes, the struggle with his persecutors, and even his mathematical abilities that apparently almost reached the height of the Russian genius Lobachevsky (Svoboda, 1949: 15). Svoboda however also noted that Bolzano was still unaware of the methods of historical materialism that now allow these utopias to become reality. Campanella's *The City of the Sun* was also considered an important predecessor for the contemporary socialist regime. When the text was translated in 1934, it was introduced as an interesting oddity that was over-reliant on irrationalism, superstition and an "excessive belief in a natural and unconstrained human being" (Ryšánek, 1934: 106). The 1951 Czech translation of Campanella's text, which was translated from the Russian version, was introduced by a blurb titled "Campanella's Communist Utopia". Its author, the Soviet critic V. P. Volgin, praised *The City of the Sun* for "the dissemination of communist ideas" (Volgin, 1951: 7) such as "abolishing private property, introducing the obligation to work, which is considered honorable, social organization of production and distribution, [and] productive education of the citizens" (Volgin, 1951: 8). The introduction did not mention, for example, the dubious reproductive practices of Campanella's utopians (their meticulous pairing of suitable bodies and natures; their reliance on astrology), although those parts were not left out, as they were for decades in the English translation.

Finally the vision of the "forefather of English materialism" (No author, 1953: 8), Bacon – whose emphasis on miracles and religiosity in *New Atlantis* was interpreted by his Czech critics as a tactical manoeuver – was apparently worth reading in order to confirm that scientific socialism had already dominated nature in the manner that Bacon thought desirable. These classical utopias of Campanella, Bolzano and Bacon thus lost their critical potential for the present as they merely confirmed the achievements of the dominant ideology. In other words, utopia had arrived.

Only in the more relaxed climate of the 1960s could certain dystopias be published. Fragments of contemporary Anglo-American science fiction found their way into Czech; some through children's and young adult magazines such as *ABC* and *Pionýr*, others in book form. Examples include selected texts of Frederik Pohl and Cyril M. Kornbluth, William S. Burroughs, Arthur C. Clarke, and Ray Bradbury. *Fahrenheit 451* was published as early as 1957, but it was interpreted as a critique of capitalism. Then, two years after the arrival of Soviet tanks in Czechoslovakia in 1968, Huxley's *Brave New World* appeared in translation. The introduction curiously interpreted Huxley's world as a near-utopia rather than a dystopia. Despite admitting that there were negative sides to technological progress, the author of the preface, Miroslav Holub, viewed the modern growth of civilization in overwhelmingly optimistic terms. "To a non-sentimental reader", Holub concluded,

> some principles [of *Brave New World*] do not seem condemnable. Let us admit that only Christian tradition and dogma, rather than scientific reason, object to the production of human beings in test-tubes. Let us admit that we already condition the psyche, habits and human motivation as such, although we do not yet do so as scientifically and effectively as we should. The principle is not objectionable – it is merely the aim that a particular social formation sets up for itself. (Holub, 1970: 190)

By implication, "we" have proudly made even Brave New World a reality. The attempt to reintroduce Zamyatin to the Czech public, however, was less successful. In 1969, the novel was prepared and prefaced by Miroslav Drozda, who characterized Zamyatin as skeptical and biased, but who also drew parallels with the present: "Zamyatin's attack on conformism is directed equally against today's petit-bourgeoisie from the USA as against the petit-bourgeoisie from Czechoslovakia" (Drozda, 1969: 21). *We* made it to the printing-works but the books were afterwards pulped.

Wells's fate during the first two decades of "real socialism" was equally fascinating. A few editions of the Englishman's debate with Stalin were published, and in 1960, *Russia in the Shadows* was reprinted, but accompanied by Lenin's notes and criticism. As Mánek also pointed out, Wells was praised as a critic of capitalism and condemned for his failure to recognize the power of Marxism. An effort was also made to turn Wells into a Marxist, as in the 1964 translation of *Men like Gods,* which described Wells as a poverty-stricken boy who became a Marxist at the age of fourteen. The novel, written after Wells's disillusioning visit of the Soviet Union and critical of Marxism, was interpreted as his inaccurate yet short-lived estimation of the Soviet Union's potentials. Eventually, the author of the introduction, Libuše Bubeníková, concluded, Wells changed his opinion after he visited the Soviet Union again and shortly before his death, when he landed on the correct shore and voted for the British Communist Party (Bubeníková, 1964: 257). Moreover, the translation of *Men like Gods* was produced in this spirit. Towards the end of the novel, when Mr. Barnstaple criticizes the Marxists and the Bolsheviks for having pushed Utopia further away from us rather than the opposite, the Czech translation is loose. A sentence which in the original claims that in Russia socialism was marked by "its ability to overthrow and its inability to plan or build" (Wells, 1922: 227-8) is translated into Czech as: in Russia socialism "was able to overthrow the old order, but in 1921 it still could not plan or build" (Wells, 1964: 239). Elsewhere the original has: "[t]he Marxist had wasted the forces of revolution for fifty years; he had had no vision; he had had only a condemnation for established things" (Wells, 1922: 228); and in the Czech translation: "Marxists had absorbed revolutionary forces of the past fifty years; they had no vision; in 1921, they temporarily merely condemned the established order of things" (Wells, 1964: 240). "Bolshevik failure" (Wells, 1922: 228) is translated as "Bolshevik difficulties" (Wells, 1964: 239), and "the dreary spectacle of a proletarian dictatorship" (Wells, 1922: 228) changes into "strict manifestations of the dictatorship of the proletariat" (Wells, 1964: 240).

Wells maintained an influential position in post-war Czech science fiction; Mánek noted references to his work for example in Josef Nesvadba's *The Second Island of Dr. Moreau* (*Druhý ostrov doktora Moreau*, 1964). Nevertheless, two major Czech utopias published in the 1950s, Vladimír Babula's *Signals from the Cosmos* (*Signály z vesmíru,* 1955) and František Běhounek's *Action L (Akce L,* 1956), extend predominantly the

Vernean tradition of science fiction. Both critique the present and both depict far futures in which technological and scientific miracles enable humans to live in harmony and to further explore (and colonize) their own planet as well as the cosmos. In *Action L*, humans live united as a result of technological improvements. They speak two languages (their native language and the world language liu), work for 20 hours a week (or more if they want to) and live to 150 years. In order to nourish their growing population, the inhabitants of Běhounek's future control the weather, melt the icecap, dry up the ocean, and raise dinosaurs as cattle. There are hierarchies, gender divisions, minor frictions and tragic accidents, but the society is fundamentally cooperative. Babula's *Signals from the Cosmos* likewise imagines a future utopian world which is unified, clean, fertile and dominated by inventions such as wheat with six spikes. The visitor Severson comes to this utopia from the past – yet not from the present made into the past by the future utopian vision, but rather from the 1920s. The achievements of Babula's utopian world are thus contrasted with the dystopian 1920s, ravaged by the war, disease and social injustice, and any critique or even a simple depiction of the real present is missing. Unlike Běhounek, Babula considered individuals who thirst for power, private property and racial domination, but they are defeated. Finally, while both Běhounek and Babula wrote texts comparable with Ivan Yefremov's *Andromeda* (which was translated into Czech in 1950, four years after its publication), a somewhat different work from this period is Jan Weiss's *The Land of Our Grandsons* (*Země vnuků*, 1960), which consists of several sketches that depict the transformation of an individual. The protagonist, as the author himself wrote, is "the miraculous human heart, not a miraculous machine" (Weiss, 1960: 136).

The Normalization Era

While public critique of the Czechoslovak regime was inadmissible after the Warsaw Pact invasion of 1968, neither were there joyous paeans to the brighter, better tomorrows that socialism would provide. Several critics have argued that "[a]fter 1968, only a few could have illusions about the future. (…) Despite planned economy and astronaut greetings from the cosmos, there was practically no vision of the future" (Pospiszyl, 2010: 25). Much Czech science fiction in the 1970s and 1980s adopted a dystopian outlook and featured the sterility of an automated world, conflicts with extraterrestrial civilizations, negative

consequences of scientific experiments, and even ecological disasters. The source of negativity continued to be the West (thus many works have Western settings or their protagonists have English names), so Miroslava Genčiarová, who in 1980 published the first book-length study of Czech science fiction, could characterize the genre with Stanisław Lem's words as a "fairy-tale of the atomic age". Genčiarová emphasized, for example, that encounters with the unknown, alien and foreign in socialist science fiction are portrayed in a positive light: "A meeting with the extraordinary, mysterious and enigmatic serves here one end only: to show the greatness of man in his struggle, the strength of his reason, and his victory" (Genčiarová, 1980: 97). At the same time, irony and allegory became so characteristic of science fiction that especially at present, some critics emphasize that "what made our science fiction so popular was its stance skillfully hidden in the fictitious reality" (Langer, 2006: 25, 38). In other words, critique of the West was apparently intended and interpreted by readers as a critique of socialist reality. Nevertheless, it continued being possible to read science fiction from this period also "officially", i.e. as a critique of the West. Consequently, although at present the tendency is to emphasize the hidden critical stance of Czech normalization science fiction, the truth is that it hardly features any "heroic warriors with bolshevism", as Ondřej Neff pointed out (Neff, 1995: 9). Instead, we find works that can be read as either critique or conformity, depending on what way you turn them in the light.

A good illustration of this ambivalence is Karel Honzík's *Mr. Stopa in the Cosmos* (*Stopa ve vesmíru,* 1970), which could be paired with post-sixties critical utopias from the West. Honzík's novel features technologically advanced, communist societies of squirrel-like creatures who live on the distant planet Gh6n. Although the text is partly an adventure story, it includes detailed description of various classless, decentralized, weapons-free and vegetarian societies of Gh6n. Yet the protagonist Stopa distances himself from the "static" utopias of More, Campanella, Plato, Cabet, Fourier and Paul Adam: "In all these blueprints of ideal societies, there is something… something rigid. They are so finished and so perfect that they smell of museum plaster. These people are somehow dead. Compared to them, the inhabitants of Gh6n are full of life. All the time, it's yes and no! Yes and no!" (Honzík, 1970: 116). On the whole, the planet Gh6n appears as a good alternative to the originary world of the protagonist. Notwithstanding, the squirrel-like creatures cannot help appearing

grotesque; Stopa does not find fulfillment in the utopian world (somewhat like Bron in Samuel Delany's *Triton*) and he returns to Earth; moreover, the utopian world remains as evanescent as that of Connie in Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*, because Stopa's vision is ultimately subject to investigation by both astronomers and psychiatrists. Honzík's utopia never narrows to a sharp dystopian edge, but neither does it represent a consistently desirable and possible alternative for the planet of hehes (as the inhabitants of Gh6n call the Earthlings). It is therefore a good example of the ambivalence of Czech normalization science fiction.

In terms of translations, besides further works from the socialist bloc (Aleksey Tolstoy, Anatoly Kim, Vladimir Odoevsky, Osip Senkovsky, the Strugatsky brothers, Lem), and besides more *Iron Heel,* the era of normalization allowed for the emergence of another round of the classics: Campanella, More, Bacon and Bolzano. There was an attempt to incorporate them into the Czech fabric in a similar manner as before: as precursors of socialism whose material conditions still had not allowed for their visions to become reality. In accordance with the era's growing appreciation of affluence and "socialist consumerism", there was nevertheless less emphasis on the abolition of private property and on the redemptive powers of labor. The classics could be even criticized for their modesty. Rudolf Kučera, who introduced *The City of the Sun*, for example, went as far as to argue that Campanella's utopia was backward-looking in its dogmatic emphasis on equality, state-control and poverty. Among other things, the critic complained that in the City of the Sun women were punished for wearing high-heels. "Equality in this utopia is not the equality of property-holders, which is the case of utopian socialism and communism, but it is the absolute equality of all members of the community whose needs remain equally undeveloped. The ideal is the minimum – poverty" (Kučera, 1979: 90). More was criticized along similar lines. Although Petr Křivský in the afterword to the 1978 translation of *Utopia* emphasized that More belongs to the "ideological predecessors of Marxism" (Křivský, 1978: 141), he mentioned that the Englishman "could not be aware of the massive expansion of productive forces caused by technological development, and thus he had to choose between higher productivity and more free time. He chose more free time, but was thus able to satisfy all basic human needs, if nothing beyond that" (Křivský, 1978: 131). It is implied, however, that while the "suffering and hungry masses of English vagabonds"

(*ibidem*) could not wish for anything better, for "real socialism" such scarcity was not necessary. Křivský, however, noted that More's Utopia was "wisely governed" by the merchants. In some ways, these 1970s blurbs about the classics anticipated the afterword that accompanied a 1985 translation of James Harrington's *Oceana*, in which Jan Kumpera neither openly defended private land ownership and hierarchic social arrangements, nor did he critique Harrington's values with Marxist theory.

During the normalization era, further western science fiction was translated, both in periodicals such as *Světová literatura* and in book form. An example includes the anxiety-ridden *The Day of the Triffids* (translation 1972) by John Wyndham, which nevertheless was published with "corrections": Adamovič noticed that while in the original, the Russians invent a machine that blinds humanity, in the Czech translation, those responsible for the invention of the infernal device are the Chinese (Adamovič, 2010a: 49). Selected short stories by Robert A. Heinlein, Isaac Asimov and others appeared in anthologies, and Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* was translated in 1973 – alhough, as Neff observed, Vonnegut was translated because he could pass for "a progressive writer from East Germany, since his name was Kurt and he wrote about the barbarian American bombing of Dresden" (Neff, 1995: 12). The regime's treatment of Orwell crowns such absurdities and indicates that, even in the 1980s, struggles with censorship continued. While *Nineteen Eighty-Four* officially did not exist in Czech, a critical study of Orwell's dystopia came out in 1985.[5] The study was written by Josef Skála, who demonstrated not only that "the sad heroes of this anti-utopia barely survive in London" (Skála, 1985: 5), but the vision of the "sullen and gloomy fantasist" Orwell (Skála, 1985: 19) applies to the contemporary United States. To prove his point, Skála reproduced extracts from an application for unemployment benefits in South Dakota, which he found in an "immensely popular" American publication *Big Brother's Collected Writings*. This South Dakotan application, Skála wrote, included questions such as, "When and where did you have your first sexual encounter? How often and for how long did you practice sexual intercourse? Was anyone else present? If so, list their name, surname, date of birth and address" (Skála, 1985: 27).

Conclusion

Skála's study was a swan-song of pro-Soviet criticism, and soon after the world of Czech science fiction turned fully dystopian. In the 1990s, in a climate that Adamovič described as "a trash-heap of utopia, the sale of unfulfilled dreams" (Adamovič, 2004: 2), there appeared texts previously published abroad or in samizdat as well as new works that reflected the era's spirit of revenge against the previous system, disillusionment with human nature, and fears of ecological disasters, genetic deformations and psychological mutations. "With some exceptions which derive from the socialist era (e.g. Eduard Martin)", as Aleš Langer wrote, "Czech authors [of science fiction] regard the future of humanity with skepticism" (Langer, 2006: 18). Several women made themselves visible in the genre, but with titles that illustrate the mood of their authors: "Our Home in Agonia" (Eva Hauserová, "U nás v Agonii"); *Magoria* (Alexandra Berková, *Magorie*); *Madwoman* (Eva Hauserová, *Cvokyně*); and *There Will Be Darkness* (Vilma Kadlečková, *Jednou bude tma*). Male writers are equally "sullen and gloomy": in Ladislav Řezníček's "The Community of Bliss" ("Společenstvi blaha", 1991), the protagonist's refuge is a public toilet, and Ivan Kmínek published a satirical *Utopia – the Best Version* (*Utopie, nejlepší verze*, 1990). One exception may be *The Golden Age* by Michal Ajvaz (*Zlatý věk*, 2011), but the fairy-tale, misty island it depicts is far removed from the social visions of H. G. Wells.

A comparable tendency has marked post-89 translations. "Catching up with the West" in the field of science fiction has meant catching up with dystopias and fantasy. Taking a cynical view, one may remark that Huxley, Orwell and Burgess have reached the status of London: while *A Clockwork Orange* was not issued before 1989, five editions have appeared since 1989; Huxley's *Brave New World* was published four times and so was Orwell's *Animal Farm*. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was published five times (Orwell is now standard high-school reading). Zamyatin's *We*, too, got published six times. New translations of utopias include Ayn Rand's work, whose *The Fountainhead* was translated into Czech in 2000. A recent publication about Rand includes a preface by the former President Václav Klaus as well as extracts from *Atlas Shrugged*, which is cited as the second most influential text in the United States after the Bible (Hynst, 2005: 38). The optimism of those who admire Rand's "virtue of selfishness" is undeniable: Vavřinec Kryzánek boasts in the collection that

the strength and vitality of capitalism are the reasons why Islamic fundamentalists hate America. They know that in a world where information is relatively accessible, their primitive religious culture, binding traditions and lack of freedom cannot in the long run compete with the possibilities offered by America. (Kryzánek, 2005: 21)

Other utopias beyond those of capitalism that were translated after 1989 in the present-day Czech Republic were religious texts or works with escapist, mystical leanings. C. S. Lewis is popular, and other newly translated texts include Walter M. Miller's *Canticle for Leibowitz*, Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land*, and Huxley's *Island*. Most utopias from the 1960s and 1970s, however, remain untranslated: besides Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* and two parts of Kim Stanley Robinson's Mars trilogy (1999, 2006), there is virtually nothing: no utopias by Ernest Callenbach, Dorothy Bryant, Joanna Russ, Marge Piercy, Samuel Delany or Octavia Butler; in Czech, there is no Sally Miller Gearhart, Suzette Haden Elgin, Joan Slonczewski, Sheri Tepper or James Tiptree. Utopia, understood as a better society possible in this world, has been pushed to the margins (unless we accept the aforementioned capitalist version). A nice illustration is the transformation of Thomas More from a "great ideological predecessor (…) of Marxism" (Křivský, 1978: 141) who "[i]n his happy moments (…) dreamed of the communist future" (Šimečka, 1963: 40) into a martyr, whose *Utopia* is on the one hand a critique of the social and moral values of his era but on the other hand a "testimony of the author's unrelenting faith, the power of penitence, the seriousness with which More considered the sacred ceremonies of the Church, and the distaste he felt towards religious reformers, whom we nowadays would unhesitatingly call the moderns" (Vokoun, 2001: 7-8).

Glancing now at this history of translating utopias in the Czech lands, one is struck by the disparate ways in which the same text has been incorporated into the Czech context depending on the ideological climate. Above all it seems that the utopian impulse behind these works has been largely lost in translation. If, in their original context, utopias were written to challenge the status quo, to stimulate hope and to think about alternatives, only a fraction of that impulse has survived when these utopias were transferred to the Czech context, where foreign utopias were introduced in order to warn against revolutionary violence and irrationalism (1920s), to boast about what had already been made a reality (1950s-1980s), and to warn against attempts to reform the present world (1990s-2010s).[6]

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Notes

[1] All quotations from Czech articles as well as fictional works are my translations, with the exception of quotations from Bohuslav Mánek's essay, which appeared in English.

[2] The Soviet Union figured as a model for other Czech dystopian works of the era, most notably Jan Barda's *The Re-educated* (*Převychovaní*, 1930), where fears of Stalinism and Nazism blend into a text that some critics have ranked with the dystopias of Zamyatin, George Orwell, and Aldous Huxley.

[3] Machek's definition of utopia is contemporary yet it remains rather broad as he includes works in which the description of the imaginary good world is marginal as well as works that culminate with a potentially utopian transformation.

[4] Worth mentioning in this context is J. M. Troska (pseudonym of Jan Matzal), particularly his trilogies *Captain Nemo* (*Kapitán Nemo*, 1939) and *Fighting Heaven* (*Zápas s nebem*, 1940), which depict an underground technological utopia. Although Troska's texts look back to Jules Verne, they also engage with Wells's science fiction, particularly *The Time Machine* and *The First Men in the Moon.* The trilogies, marked by the ideological climate of the interwar and war years, were republished in the 1960s in a purged form, without pro-German and anti-Semitic passages for example.

[5] A Czech translation of Orwell's dystopia was published in 1984 by Index in Cologne and it circulated in the underground. Skála's study was likely a delayed attempt to disarm the "non-existent" Czech translation.

[6] The author wishes to thank her colleagues and students at Charles University, Prague for their continuous input. Special thanks go to Zdeněk Beran, who caught several factual errors and enriched the article with additional information, and to Justin Quinn, for his help with copy-editing.

A Lantern in the Darkness?
How Were Robert Owen's Essays on
A New View of Society Influenced by the
Scottish Enlightenment?

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The methods of the new historicism and attention to a fragment of Owen's historical record can be revealing, but much eludes us and especially about this pre-propagandist phase of his career.

Influences on Owen's thinking in the early 1800s are certainly much discussed and debated, because despite extensive decoding of the essays themselves and of his wider agenda for reform, a great many black holes exist beyond what we know about his deploying and explaining his own experience as a humanitarian employer in Manchester and at New Lanark.

Some of this paper derives from a recent bi-centennial article on the essays in *History Today*, but it mainly incorporates speculations about the business and intellectual world beyond New Lanark which Owen entered on his arrival in Scotland, and then around the time he was composing *A New View of Society*. Inevitably some is going over old ground, but I feel that there is a considerable amount more can be discovered to fill in a few of the blanks about this period in Owen's career, what was going on in the community, and how he saw its application in his plans for social regeneration.

The context of much of this is thus highly speculative, as we just do not know to what extent Owen was influenced directly or indirectly by Scottish thinkers and their ideas, but it does seem likely given his previous contacts with enlightened, reforming elites in Manchester, some of whom (as Non-Conformists barred from Oxford and Cambridge) had been educated in the Scottish universities. With remarkable speed Owen seems to have

integrated himself into similar circles in Glasgow and probably also in Edinburgh, far less such contacts as he established elsewhere, notably in London.

The last, of course, included, at the time he was supposedly composing his essays, the well known liaisons with the philosopher, William Godwin, possibly dating to 1808 or earlier, and with radical bookseller, Francis Place, among others. But caution is needed in Owen's reflections on their contributions to his thinking, and, indeed, what he said about them in his much later writings and his autobiography. We might just note, for those who do not know this, that very little Owen correspondence survives from this period either in Owen archives or those of possible recipients.

More widely there is also considerable debate about the origins and development of the Scottish Enlightenment and what made it distinctive. Certainly there were much higher levels of literacy in Scotland, encouraged since the Reformation, a higher proportion of participation in advanced schooling and higher education, and more direct contact with ideas from Europe and especially France and the Netherlands than from England. An extraordinary flowering of ideas and teaching in the natural and other sciences and in medicine, for which the Scottish universities were famous, occurred. *What* is well understood, *why*, however, is a matter of on-going contention.

A great deal was about practical application, as it was in thinking about the natural sciences, the economic order of society, seen most famously in Adam Smith's work, the rapid emergence of the new social sciences, in moral philosophy, in the advance of more secular ideas, in the upholding of the long established democratic tradition in Scottish education, and in how the poor, the sick, the aged and the infirm should be perceived and cared for.

Some of this had already touched Owen in Manchester (and would do so later in London) but I believe the influence of his new found context and circle in Scotland after 1800 may well have enhanced his confidence and confirmed his ideas about social reform issues and how people should be treated in the new industrial order, especially with regard to work in the factory system, the condition of children, the plight of the poor and the unemployed, education for the masses, and health and welfare generally.

Much of this was at an intellectual level, certainly, but it seems likely that Owen perceived the humanitarian thrust of much of this thinking on the part of some elites,

philanthropic individuals like Dale, other employers and improving landowners. At its most cynical philanthropy which paid profits was worth investment.

However as Owen soon found, the civic authorities in the burghs, the church or kirk, the clergy, or the ministry as it was known in Scotland, the local elites and nobility in the Scottish lowlands, were generally aware of enlightened ideas about improvement. Their implementation brought prosperity, New Lanark being an excellent if exceptional illustration, and with its philanthropic provisions, a possible counter to any breakdown in moral order among the working class so much feared by many of the elites.

However, as we will see under the general issues which prevailed in the background to Owen's writing the essays, the enormously rapid and concentrated industrialisation and urbanisation in the Scottish lowlands, later and faster than in England, especially in the lower Clyde region, had undoubtedly and obviously even by 1800 greatly exacerbated the social problems created by economic and social change.

As to key figures influencing Owen's thinking there were many within his circle, beyond the greatest and possibly most influential mentor, his father in law, David Dale. The extent of Dale's role as philanthropic employer at New Lanark and elsewhere nationally and internationally was well known before 1800. His participation in other humanitarian activities was extensive: poor relief, health and hospital provision, and recently revealed – prison reform and the anti-slavery movement. Owen thus became involved in much enlightened activity in Glasgow and beyond. He was effectively heir to this portfolio of practical reform – as much as a fair proportion of Dale's fortune after the latter's death in 1806. And the Dale family, notably his wife, Ann Caroline, should not be overlooked (among many other women) as humanitarian and enlightened influences.

Dale was also a significant gatekeeper to both the attitudes and other people of reforming instincts, of whom we have time to characterise only a few. Needless to say in the small enclosed world of such elites, almost all knew each other through overlapping connections in the universities, particularly Glasgow and Edinburgh, the kirk, the law, commercial enterprise, the landed gentry and politics. All of these flourished and it is often forgotten, particularly by English historians, that even after the union of 1707, Scottish governance and the Scottish administrative state maintained their independence and continued to exercise huge influence over many aspects of life and society.

For one thing, it needs to be emphasised how significant was the role of the kirk in both education and poor relief, surely a factor in Owen's later controversies locally and nationally promoting his ideas in contradistinction to long established systems and institutions. Of course, he was not alone in this, Joseph Lancaster (a leading promoter of the monitorial system) and other non-conformist educational reformers facing similar challenges.

Patrick Colquhoun, successful merchant and a founder of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, although he had moved to London long before Owen's arrival in Scotland, was I think a highly influential figure, partly by virtue of his long association with Dale and his interest in reform. After shifting to London in 1788-89, he became a magistrate and concerned himself with police reform. His police proposal developed after 1792 was a system of regulations and agencies to supervise morals, manners and the health of society, published ultimately in 1796. Beyond this he interested himself in problems of the labouring poor, relief of indigence and provision of cheap elementary education. His promotional activities in tracts and pamphlets and lobbying politicians and the like, closely resembled the tactics adopted by Owen. Interestingly his *New System of Education for the Labouring Poor* appeared in 1806 and his *Treatise on the Population, Wealth, Power, and Resources of the British Empire* (1814) was said by Robert Dale Owen to be regularly consulted, indeed, pored over, by his father.

Of countless others, mainly the clergy and landowners, interested in humanitarian objects, those with quite specific interests in the poor included two leading Scottish kirk ministers, Henry Duncan and Thomas Chalmers, the former apparently a visitor to New Lanark on a number of occasions.

Duncan was an interesting figure who deserves a modern biography. The interests that may have influenced Owen were his activities in poor relief in a rural parish of Dumfriesshire, poor law reform nationally, plus his promotion of savings banks for the working class. He was another remarkable propagandist as a newspaper owner and editor, pamphleteer and novelist, as well as radical preacher who got himself into trouble with the authorities.

Chalmers was another reformer who started a distinguished career in the rural parish of Kilmany in Fife where he implanted reforms in the kirk's treatment of the poor. He soon

broadened his interests, as did Owen at the same time, to publish a typically enlightened work, *An Enquiry into the Extent and Stability of National Resources* (1808) and later a much more specific work on *The Temporal Necessities of the Poor* (1813). By 1815 Chalmers was in Glasgow where his work on improving the condition of the labouring classes really began. He found that what worked in a small agrarian community needed substantial modification in an urban industrial context, but it is surely not without its interest that Chalmers broke his new, larger, and much more populous parish into wards of similar population to New Lanark. Chalmers and Owen became acquainted and the former was a visitor to New Lanark, we think on several occasions.

Apart from Owen's well known connections with the popular educator, Lancaster, he was almost certainly in touch with Andrew Bell, co-originator of the monitorial teaching system. Like Chalmers, Bell had St Andrews connections, though his version of the system was developed in India running schools in Madras, where it was deployed as early as 1792. By the early 1800s he was promoting it in England, by which time it had been taken up by Lancaster. Later in 1811 he was persuaded by Anglicans to deploy his system along religious lines, the National Society for the Education of the Poor being designed to counteract dissenting notions promoted by Lancaster and Owen. Bell, like Owen, visited the educationists, von Fellenberg and Pestalozzi, whose methods, as it happened, generally eschewed anything resembling rote learning, but were adopted in part at New Lanark.

James Mylne and George Jardine were both professors in Glasgow, known to Owen through Dale and other over-lapping members of the Glasgow Enlightenment. For their time, even in a Scottish university system that was far more progressive than that in England, especially in the teaching of the natural sciences, philosophy and the social sciences, these two individuals stand out as innovators. This was particularly true of their closely proscribed curricula, plus what we might call instructional manuals, and experiments in teaching methods and assessment. They certainly seem to have had some affinity with public education and were present as supporters at the top table when Owen chaired Lancaster at a public meeting in Glasgow in 1812.

We might just note while dealing with university connections that many of the professoriate at both Glasgow and Edinburgh are recorded as visitors to New Lanark in Dale's time, and although no record of visitors survives for the early 1800s, this probably

continued. These people, like the many women who accompanied them, were clearly interested in the health and condition of children and in the school. Is it possible too, given the large numbers of university students signing in, and especially those studying medicine, that they were actively encouraged by their teachers to inspect the community as an example of enlightened practice?

Henry Brougham, who was prominent as an anti-slaver and supporter of Wilberforce, as well as a reformer on many fronts, notably education, studied at Edinburgh, becoming a lawyer. He was apparently a regular visitor to New Lanark, well known to Owen and sympathetic to his educational aims, which he may well have influenced. Indeed, Brougham was himself an exponent of working class education which became a key concern early in his career. He was mainly in London from 1803, becoming an MP in 1809, but the Scottish connection was strongly maintained both on reform issues north of the border and his interest in the famous periodical, the *Edinburgh Review*, which he co-founded in 1802.

Beyond the obvious personalities, of whom these are a small sample, there were numerous other individuals of reforming inclinations likely to have influenced Owen's thinking when he was writing the essays.

Kirk ministers and landowners, including many known to Owen, all had a stake in poor relief, schooling, public health and moral order, for which New Lanark seemed a model. The place was known for its humanitarian regime, particularly the treatment of children and its educational provision, and all of this made it an object of curiosity. Of course the relationship to enlightened improvement would be immediately obvious to most landowners and industrialists, as it must have been to Owen, since the planned village, a particular feature of Lowland Scotland, answered many of the problems of employing and housing displaced or migrant workers – and exercising social control over them. It is surely no accident that the later Village Plan was closely modelled not only on New Lanark, but other communities scattered around the Scottish landscape of improvement.

Some major if familiar issues briefly set the context in which Owen wrote his essays, notably, economic, social and political dislocation caused by rapid industrialization, the impact of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, the major economic downturn(s) especially 1812 onwards, and real and potential social/political unrest. All of this undoubtedly disturbed the elites, locally, and nationally, as no doubt it did Owen personally.

But in explaining the causes and suggesting the solutions he took an enlightened view that at least in terms of social policy reflected the Scottish context.

Indeed Owen's agenda spelled out in the essays embraced many enlightened notions - including trying to mitigate the problems of rapid industrialization and social breakdown, promote progress, social and moral behaviour, plus "happiness", using New Lanark as a test-bed and model, and in the final essay, national and international applications of his ideas.

I would argue strongly for *A New View of Society* being read as a Scottish Enlightenment text which sees human nature as universal, that reason will dispel error and darkness from the human mind, that superstition can be attacked by reason, stressing the importance of education, of self-knowledge, and the reasoned conditioning of people. It also appeals to nature and the natural environment as part of a sustainability and environmental agenda, and, educationally as part of the curricula at New Lanark.

A New View of Society is a brilliant illustration of the notion that there are general, universally applicable rules that can be discovered through empirical means and the use of reason, which once identified will lead to progress and greater happiness. Enlightened ideas, says Owen, should be applied to reform issues – poverty, poor housing, diet, health, lack of educational opportunity. Finally, enlightened ideas do not progress neatly and steadily, but *experiment* (his emphasis) will prove their worth.

Concluding, I think Owen's links to the Glasgow Enlightenment are perhaps a little more obvious than they were, but further research is needed. That "Hot Bed of Genius", the Edinburgh Enlightenment, might also have influenced Owen for he is known to have visited the city from time to time, as the Dale sisters were being schooled there, and visits of inspection to another Dale enterprise in Perthshire involved travel via the city. Certainly the intellectual life of both cities was closely inter-related through over-lapping memberships. It is invariably forgotten too that Lanark historically had much stronger links with Edinburgh than with Glasgow, though I doubt if that was of much consequence to Owen.

To Owen's later detractors as a utopian visionary we should respond that he saw and spoke of his many schemes for reform as "experiments" or "trials", and as such, and in the context of the time, can be seen as remarkably innovatory. Much of what went on here in the

early 1800s and was cleverly promoted in his essays as a vision for the future, can be seen in this light.

Sadly, despite remarkable economic and social progress, some of the defects he describes are still prevalent, and ever aware of the danger of historical analogies, his proposed solutions have immediate meaning and value. It is no surprise, therefore, that two hundred years on they are still in print and serve as incentives to co-operation and social idealism.

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The Individualistic Socialism of
William Morris and Edward Carpenter:
When Angel-winged Utopia
Becomes an Iron-clad Political Project

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I. Introduction

When Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx chose to define two categories of Socialism in *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* (1880), little did they know that their dividing strategy would work for so long. Utopian Socialism, also called "doctrinaire" by Marx, was supposed to be a sort of proto-specimen of Scientific Socialism, decisive in the defining of the movement but archaic and unaware of the historical process. Utopian scholars (Michèle Riot-Sarcey[1] and Gregory Claeys[2] for instance) have recently argued that Utopian Socialism was not something designed by and for dreamers, thus rendering Engels's classification obsolete, but no one had yet given a different name to that branch of Socialism which included Fourier, Saint Simon and Owen according to both German philosophers. We believe that those precursors and their heirs can be described as Individualistic Socialists, who considered the individual and its development as paramount conditions to a better world. Owen's legacy but also Fourier's are incarnated namely in William Morris and Edward Carpenter. In Britain and in France, there is definitely a philosophical tradition which started with the Enlightenment, encompasses the Socialism that Engels defined as "utopian" and runs through the twentieth century. While doing some research on that movement, it appeared that the common denominator between altogether very different thinkers was their attention to the individual. Contrary to Scientific Socialism, which emphasizes the greater good of the community and subordinates man to a superior cause, Individualistic Socialism warns against such a foible and tries to adopt an approach based on the human being himself. The phrase may sound oxymoronic but we think that the antithesis

sums up fairly well the contradiction that arises when the good of everyone is targeted without hampering people's liberties.

Moreover, albeit familiar with Marx's writings, William Morris and Edward Carpenter did not find their whole inspiration in them, but in John Stuart Mill's. Their particularly sharpened sensitivity led them to refuse a poverty that they observed from afar and to get involved more or less concretely to try and change things. Thus, when they started analyzing their society and its flaws, they considered that art was one of the surest means to obviate the situation, an idea which earned them criticism. They were often considered as elitists or dreamers by their coevals, such as Engels, who brought Morris into disrepute by picturing him as a contemplative romantic who was unfit for politics. It is true that it could seem absurd to demand that all men should take advantage of an artistic environment whatever their salary or that the most insignificant object may be wrought like an artifact. However, we now know that mitigating the obnoxious effects of the Industrial Revolution with more industry, more growth and more progress did not have the expected result, on the contrary.

The object here is to see how Carpenter and Morris fit the definition of Individualistic Socialists and how this trait is visible in their lives and writings. We will therefore concentrate first on a definition of what Individualistic Socialism is and in what way it is associated with John Stuart Mill but also with the "utopians", Owen and Fourier. Our concern is also to demonstrate that two of the characteristics of Individualistic Socialism, a concern for hedonism and Art, were definite priorities for Morris and Carpenter. The division between collectivism and Individualistic Socialism is about the role of the individual but the roots of both trends are also different if we realize how great a part nature had in Morris's writings as well as in Carpenter's. Far from desiring a return to Merry England and pre-industrialization, both men hoped for a rationalized use of machinery and a spiritual return to nature followed by uninhibited relations between the sexes.

II. William Morris and Edward Carpenter: Individualistic Socialists

In an essay entitled *How I Became a Socialist*, William Morris described how he became certain that Socialism was a necessary change after reading John Stuart Mill's pages on the subject. However, he declared having been converted against Mill's intention, Mill

being considered at the time as one of the theorists of liberal economy. Those essays, now gathered under the title *On Socialism*, were a collection of articles published in *The Fortnightly Review* which endeavoured to sketch the Socialist movement without endorsing any opinion, favourable or antagonistic. Nonetheless, contrary to what Morris seemed to think, Mill was not adverse to Socialism, far from it, and even seemed sympathetic to the ideas exposed in his articles. Studying the case of Fourierism, he appeared to be favourably impressed by Fourier's ideas as well as Considérant's. The Utopian Socialists, as they would be called, gave Mill the impression of having found the social answer to his own philosophical frame of mind. Indeed, Mill was an individualist, adamant on the fact that it would be the greatest of shames not to make the most of man's idiosyncratic capacities for the best and for society's well-being. In his understanding of individualism, there was no question of thinking about the self only but it was important to remember that man was not only an atom in society, always and solely working for a whole.

That interpretation of individualism was also adopted by William Morris, who made clear the difference between vulgar selfishness and philosophical individualism. At the end of 1884, Morris founded the *Socialist League* and wrote a *Manifesto* along with Belfort Bax to explain the principles of that organisation. He insisted on the opposition between an individualism related to capitalism which represented for him a form of selfishness, on the one hand, and philosophical individualism, which was defined as taking an interest in the individual's well-being, on the other. William Morris has often been labeled a Marxist and he is still considered as such by Marxist organisations in spite of some reassessments. Of course, one has to admit that when the founder of the Arts and Crafts movement started being involved in politics, he belonged to self-proclaimed Marxist organizations. Indeed, when he decided to become part of a Socialist group, he chose to join Henry Hyndman's *Social Democratic Federation*.

Starting with the SDF meant, for Morris, to acquaint himself with Marxist ideas. According to Hyndman, that first step was paramount for anyone wanting to speak on Socialism: "You must read Marx or you can't argue" (Eshlemann, 1971: 200). Morris decided to read the great theoretician whose ideas were said to be so fundamental. We know the throes of confusion he experienced whilst he was reading *Kapital*, translated into English for the first time in 1887 and which he probably read in French (the 1872-1875 version).

Those happily-confessed troubles contributed to Engels's view of Morris as a dreamer. The distance that Morris felt to Marx's abstract and abstruse writings was made clear one day, as he was addressing a crowd of SDF comrades assembled in Glasgow. Someone asked him whether he accepted Marx's theory of surplus-value, and Morris answered: "To speak quite frankly, I do not know what Marx's theory of value is, and I'm damned if I want to know. (...) And it does not matter a rap, it seems to me, whether the robbery is accomplished by what is termed surplus value, or by means of serfage or open brigandage" (Thompson, 1955: 356).

If the Socialism favoured by the writer-designer did not have the good fortune of being appreciated by Engels, the reason may lie in the fact that the two Socialisms were radically different. Engels did not have anything against Morris, but he wrote in a letter to Laura Lafargue that Morris was sentimental and incapable of controlling himself:

> Morris is a settled sentimental Socialist; he would be easily managed if one saw him regularly, a couple of times a week, but who has the time to do it, and if you drop him for a month, he is sure to lose himself again. And is he worth all the trouble even if one had the time? (Morris, 1885-1888: 353)

William Morris had very early shown some reluctance towards any systematisation and towards the State Socialism desired by the Fabians, for example. Decentralized Socialism and the developing of a strong individuality was what Morris yearned for. He advocated a federation of communes à-la-Proudhon and indeed pictured an extremely decentralized society in *News from Nowhere*. The novel's patriarch tells the reader about Morris's inspiration: "Fourier, whom all men laughed at, understood the matter better" (Morris, 1891: 85). Charles Fourier and Mill are partly responsible for Morris's arrival on the political scene and his conversion to "practical socialism". Two years before his death, Morris told in an article published in *Justice*, the *Democratic Federation*'s journal, how he became a socialist and mentioned Mill's writings on Fourier and on Socialism: "Those papers put the finishing touch to my conversion to Socialism" (Morris, 1894: 34).

Similarly, Carpenter sought to attain the "great individuality" (Carpenter, 1885: 29) that Morris also longed for. Hence his admiration for Walt Whitman, whom he considered as an unsurpassable artist, someone who had realized his personality without paying heed to what one should do or conform to. For Carpenter, the most natural situation for man was to

have a free individuality. Unfortunately, his understanding of individualism, just as positive and community-oriented as Morris's vision of Socialism, won him the reputation of a misfit in the movement. It was all the more surprising for Carpenter definitely had a sense of the political, but it was linked to the individual without being underrated for all that. He summed it up in his autobiography, *My Days and Dreams*:

> [Socialism] has set before itself the ideal of a society which, while it accords to every individual as full scope as possible for the exercise of his faculties and enjoyment of the fruits of his own labour, will in return expect from the individual his hearty contribution to the general well-being. (Carpenter, 1916: 127)

Obviously, different conceptions of Socialism shared the political scene at the end of the nineteenth century and, for instance, the Fabians' idea of the movement was miles away from Carpenter's. The latter was entirely satisfied with the fact that the movement had been pocketed by no one and was fueled by all the different groups, a reality that some saw as a drawback. To Carpenter, it was a definite boon which meant a renewal of values, a real foundation of society on different bases and not just the short-term goal of political representation in Parliament.

Edward Carpenter was so anti-systemic that he was sometimes considered an Anarchist. He was not and never followed the same road as the Anarchists, he was even criticized by them for his nuanced understanding of politics. However, he was diffident of the State: "his political libertarianism led him to suspect it as inherently coercitive" (Rowbotham, 2008: 307). In his autobiography, he also expressed his belief that the aim of Socialism was to realize the Anarchist ideal: to do without the State in order to replace it with what Morris himself called public consciousness and what Carpenter defined as "the voluntary and instinctive consent and mutual helpfulness of the people" (Carpenter, 1916: 127). The formation of a new individual with new behaviour was what moved him and what defined his struggle as a Socialist, like William Morris. Sheila Rowbotham describes both men's political efforts as very similar: "Both men's politics arose from a longing for free and equal human relations and both imagined these as enabling individuals to realise aspects of themselves denied under capitalism" (Rowbotham, 2008: 84). Hence their interest in federalism and their admiration for Prince Kropotkin's alternative to traditional economy. Morris and Carpenter agreed on the association between industry and agriculture.

III. Socialist Artists and Hedonists

In a book called *Angels' Wings*, Carpenter expressed his views on Art, namely on literature, painting and music. He drew a parallel between three artists: Millet, Whitman and Wagner, and explained why he thought they deserved his attention. To him, they were simply three great individualities. Carpenter was seduced by the extraordinary potential in every individual: "there is something original, authentic, in every individual – that which makes him different from every other in the universe" (Carpenter, 1898: 118). Like John Stuart Mill, he found that the great difficulty was in being able to think outside preconceived judgments, outside tradition. And still, like Mill, he believed in the importance of the individual impetus in Art. Like Individualistic Socialism, which stems from a great, developed and happy individual who works for himself and the community, similarly "the greatest artist is one whose point of view is intensely his own, and yet so large and broad that it reaches down and includes the general view" (*idem*, 131-132). That is how the artist can be a Socialist, namely because what Carpenter believes in is an "Art of the People", to use Morris's phrase. Both artists were far from being elitists, in the negative sense that the term usually has, and were "at the farthest pole from the elaborate study of artificial effects and the 'grand style'" (*idem*, 4). That was the reason why Carpenter was seduced by Walt Whitman, because the American poet identified himself with objects and people. As ridden with guilt as Morris was to be all his life – both men could not stand being rich and felt the injustice deeply – Carpenter never turned a deaf ear to the people's sufferings and never pursued an ideal of elitist art, aimed only at beautifying rich people's lives: "By the attentive ear the cry of starving children can be heard though the rustles of silk and clink of glasses" (*idem*, 213). Just as Individualistic Socialism means developing the individual and enabling man to become what his personality dictates, Art's aim is to do the same: "When the time at length arrives for life itself to become lovely and gracious, Art as a separate thing from actual life will surrender much of its importance, the sense of expression of Beauty will penetrate all our activities" (*idem*, 22). So every field of life should be artistic, including labour: "Manual work, once become spontaneous and voluntary, instead of servile – as it is today – will inevitably become artistic" (*idem*, 219). Carpenter's wish was to live in Nowhere, Morris's utopia, in a world where work had become the supreme way of realizing one's personality and devoting oneself to pleasurable tasks.

Indeed, Morris's strength resided in his artistic personality, the keystone to all his work, in literature, design and politics. His utopia was inspired by art, and his vision of it. According to William Morris, art was moribund at the time of Victoria but could definitely know the fate of the phoenix. Morris believed it would then bring solace and a reason to live to all human beings. Morris insisted on a eudaemonistic politics whose major instrument and end was art. In a conference entitled *The Socialist Ideal: Art*, Morris reminds his readers that, for Socialists, art is not elitist in the least inasmuch as any manufactured object should be a work of art. According to him, the capitalist, the "commercialist", as he called industrialists, makes a difference in manufactured objects between those he considers as art and the others which do not need to have any artistic qualities.

Morris aimed at happiness as an end for humanity; happiness which he linked to pleasure. When the workers own the means of production, Morris explained, they will be able to concentrate on a beautiful artistic production. Similarly, with more leisure, they will have more desires and so a desire for beautiful things which will be salutary for art. Hence the reason why Morris's first lectures on art were mostly about the link between art and Socialism, so eager was he to awaken the masses to necessary beauty through a simple and functional art. In a letter to Thomas Horsfall who wanted to establish a Workman's Model Cottage, Morris explained his vision of art: "beauty and convenience, not show and luxury, in such matters, should be every man's rule" (Morris, 1881-1884: 36).

Art is also an excellent test for equality. Like Fourier, who declared that the state of a civilization could be measured in the light of the condition of women's lives, Morris uses the same measure with art. Apollo's protected domain being a luxury in Great Britain, it shows for Morris that his country is not a real democracy. Art should be part of the necessary things to be enjoyed by each and every citizen: "The Socialist claims art as a necessity of human life which society has no right to withhold from any one of the citizens" (Morris, 1891). An art used to measure the state of equality in a society, a simple and functional art; to all that Morris adds an art which is not afraid of revealing its kinship with nature and dares to go back to its roots.

IV. Countryside Socialism versus Factory Collectivism

When the ugliness of his surroundings proved too hard to bear, Morris found great solace in his walks in the countryside and his activities of amateur gardener. When reading *News from Nowhere,* one becomes aware of the importance of nature in Morris's eyes. Not only does the reader feel projected in a pre-Industrial Revolution world but it is also a prelapsarian universe as the relations between the sexes seem as natural as they are presumed to have been before the Fall. De facto, it is post-revolutionary, as the reader learns from old Hammond, who is the narrator's contact with the past, that in the nineteenth century violent riots led to the utmost confusion and then to the peace of Nowhere. In literary utopias, nature is usually tamed and fitted to be used by human beings and the latter mostly live in cities with gardens but no wild nature. Nowhere is the exception. The inhabitants have also decided to produce and consume what they need only. It all seems natural and logical to a twenty-first century reader – more than ever aware of environmental problems – but that Morris, the son and product of a century which fiercely believed in endless progress, should advocate it in his novel is a great deal more surprising. The consequence is a capacity to enjoy things without any complexes. If craftsmen make beautiful objects and garments, the inhabitants do not see why they should not wear them. They adorn themselves with bright cloths, smoke the best tobacco contained in a snuffbox which is so beautiful that the narrator is astonished, and they drink excellent wines. Sounding like a connoisseur, the narrator mentions a Steinberg[3] that the narrator enjoys along with his charming hosts: "for if ever I drank good Steinberg, I drank it that morning" (Morris, 1891: 36). The people of Nowhere drink Steinberg and Bordeaux wines, they know how to make strangers welcome, they are aesthetically-minded; all things which show that, revolution or not, the inhabitants of Nowhere have not forgotten about what is essential or, at any rate, what for Morris was necessary to well-being.

When Sheila Rowbotham tried to pin down the difference between Carpenter and Morris, here is how she described the founder of Morris & Co: "Morris was a bon viveur who loved wine, beautiful objects, rich textures and old books" (Rowbotham, 2008: 84). Indeed, Carpenter followed a different diet and way of life, as he did not like to be surrounded with particularly luxurious objects and ate little; anyone next to Carpenter would look like a riotous hedonist. Morris did lead a very different life from the men of his fortune

at the time: there was nothing wasted at the Morris's and most of his money was destined to finance the different socialist journals and even sometimes the organisations themselves. Morris's pleasures were considered by him as simple and natural because they were linked to the love of Beauty. The "rich textures" mentioned by Sheila Rowbotham are not at all out of place in the world of Nowhere: it really is perceived as luxury only by people who are deprived of beauty in their daily lives but to those who have become craftsmen mindful of their work's quality it is only normal to walk around dressed as a "Middle-Age gentleman". E. P. Thompson summed up extremely well this balance between luxury and simplicity which ruled Morris's life: "Simplicity did not imply deprivation of the senses, but the clearing away of a clutter of inessentials" (Thompson, 1996: 704).

Morris's attitude towards machinery is that machines have proved to be labour-saving, meaning that they do not alleviate the pain of labour but simply replace men, stealing their jobs from them. It saves manpower instead of saving efforts. In an ideal society, machines would be man's slaves, and certainly not the contrary, like in *News from Nowhere*, where "All work which would be irksome to do by hand is done by immensely improved machinery" (Morris, 1891: 280). Going back to nature also signifies finding the source of natural relationships between the sexes. In *News from Nowhere*, marriage means two people cohabiting and has lost the restrictive and confining characteristics it had in the nineteenth century. Divorce has disappeared and unions can be made and unmade at one's own will. Free love does not prevent Nowhere's inhabitants from having emotional issues to deal with, but for Morris his system is still the best. Nowhere perfectly symbolizes a return to nature, the disappearance of private property and a society free from prudery in which women blush from pleasure and not from a false modesty imposed by a self-righteous world.

All that could not but appeal to Carpenter, whom George Bernard Shaw nicknamed *the Noble Savage*. Indeed, E. M. Forster wrote of him: "What he wanted was *News from Nowhere* and the place that is still nowhere, wildness, the rapture of unpolluted streams, sunrise and sunset over the moors" (*apud* Rowbotham, 2008: 442). Like Morris, Carpenter tried to resist industrialization in a rational way, not for the sake of it but because he did not find the landscapes around him, the black chimneys of Sheffield and its polluted atmosphere, to be the ultimate panacea.

His way of life definitely embodied a return to nature, perhaps a bit exaggerated, like every reaction to an extreme situation. Nature for Carpenter was the epitome of individualism, his chosen philosophy: "How sacred, how precious is the individual! Not in humanity only, but in all her forms, is it not true that Nature is individual to her very fingertips?" (Carpenter, 1898: 127). Carpenter, like Morris, saw nature not only as individual; it was also a sane return to healthy relationships between the sexes: "The redemption of Sex, the healthy and natural treatment of it in Art, is one of the greatest works any artist of to-day has before him to carry out" (*idem*, 80).

Risking the tautology, Carpenter considered that sex was the union of all beings just as art was, and he drew the conclusion that sex was art. Case made… The free, sane acceptation of the human body being the key to the art of the future, there lay in that programme the direction towards which Socialism should have headed forward. Carpenter's writings on sex are well-known but the link with politics is rarely underlined. We think, however, it is the only way to understand Edward Carpenter fully. He was not a political campaigner who wrote about sex but someone who was interested in sexuality because it held a key to the new life that could eventually be brought about by Socialism: that is the reason why he thought it was a good thing that different organizations preached for Socialism because the ideas were all the more abounding.

V. Conclusion

Uniting body and soul, constructing happy individuals respectful of others and developing real personalities, such were the aims of Individualistic Socialism. Karl Marx did not want to stifle the individual and he really tried to alleviate the workers' sufferings, but, on the other hand, one can find in his writings an attitude to the individual which could not have been further from Morris or Carpenter's ideas, among others. In *The Class Struggles in France*, he wrote:

> Thus, while *utopia, doctrinaire Socialism*, which subordinates the whole movement to one of its elements, which puts the cerebrations of the individual pedant in place of common, social production, and above all, wishes away the necessities of the revolutionary class struggles by petty tricks or great sentimental rhetoric (…) the proletariat increasingly organises itself around *revolutionary Socialism*, around *Communism*, for which the bourgeoisie itself has invented the name of Blanqui. (Marx, in the *Human Rights Reader*, 1997: 326)

In spite of Marx and Engels's attempts at stigmatizing what they called Utopian Socialism, the good fortune of Individualistic Socialism was that its advocates never felt that they belonged to any party and therefore escaped dogmatism. Unfortunately, they were cursed for the very same reason because, contrary to what Edward Carpenter seemed to think, Socialism could not but become a unified party in order to represent a counter-power and a political alternative. Thus, Edward Carpenter's ideas went down in history insofar as they concerned ways of life and sexuality but not really politics. And Morris is still, for some, a medievalist and a dreamer. Nevertheless, the link they established between daily life and politics, the care they had for the individual inside society and the way they celebrated every part of a man's existence makes their thoughts more topical than ever.

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Notes

[1] Cf. Riot-Sarcey's *Le Réel de l'utopie: essai sur le politique au XIXème siècle* (1998).

[2] Gregory Claeys contends that the differentiation between Scientific and Utopian Socialism "is no longer tenable in light of modern scholarship", *Citizens and Saints, the Rise of Early British Socialism* (2002), Cambridge: Campbridge University Press [1989], p. 8.

[3] Steinberger, in Hattenheim, takes its name from the old Steinberg monastery and is a very famous German wine appellation.

The Ethics of Unseeing: Exploring Utopia between Miéville and Agamben

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Introduction

This article is not grounded in sociological theory *per se*; however, it does argue that a contribution to the field itself may be found in otherwise strictly literary or philosophical texts. Recent sociopolitical uprisings have again demonstrated the tendency to think that genuine change can only be enacted through mass revolt. Critics and opponents of these movements have pejoratively declared them failure because they lack a "positive vision". Is there a crisis in utopian thinking today? Perhaps. It is thought that mass movements constitute a power onto themselves capable of bringing about genuine change in the world. However, these movements are eventually met with what Slavoj Žižek calls "the proverbial morning after question" (What happens tomorrow morning?) (see Žižek, 2012). Maybe the masses are not the only valid conduit by which to change the system; what is needed is a personal comportment to the world which allows for continuous utopian potential to be lived through and change enacted through. Perhaps one ought to revisit the site of the individual for a possible analysis of overlooked utopian potential. To begin the return to the individual I propose a quasi-hermeneutic move to address the concept of utopia itself, originating as it did with the work of Thomas More in 1516.

Fátima Vieira writes that More's imaginary island was originally to be called "Nusquama", from the Latin word "Nusquam", which means "nowhere", "no place", "on no occasion". However, More wanted to convey a meaning that exceeded this notion. Inspired by the travel/imperial expeditions of his time (e.g., Amerigo Vespucci, Christopher Columbus, and Angelo Poliziano) and the then blossoming capitalist markets, More wanted

the name of his fictional island to reflect a sense of possibility and hope that the Otherness of these new lands (the New World) would bring for Europe. Furthermore, More wanted to convey the idea of an ideal society that "existed" somehow without being reified *qua* plan as in the *Republic* or *Laws* of Plato (Vieira, 2010: 3-4). As such the Western tradition was indelibly marked by what I will call – echoing Alain Badiou – the More-Event: the invention of the word "utopia": "derived from the Greek '*ou*' ('non-') and '*topos*' ('place'), means 'no-place' (with a possible pun on '*eu*' ('good'): 'good-place')" (Bruce, 2008: xxi). The use of the Greek over the Latin in the naming of Utopia was also intended as a homage to the Classical Ancient period of the Greeks that was thought by those Renaissance Humanists – of which More is counted – as the height of human achievement and culture.

But what of this no-place today? How might it to be interpreted today? I believe that insight might be gained if no-place (utopia) is thought of as an always-already being-in-no-place as opposed to no-place as such dwelling just behind the horizon (but close enough that one senses its presence) as it is commonly understood today. This amounts to a veritable involution of no-place from an "out-there" to an "interior" (i.e., subjective) comportment with respect to the world. Indeed there are some contemporary cultural markers which point to the gradual awareness of this involution of the notion of no-place. My argument can be sensed in the words of the nineteenth-century historian Jacob Burckhardt: "We would like to know the waves on which we sail across the ocean; but we ourselves are these waves" (qtd. in Blumenberg, 1997: 69). Here Burckhardt alludes to the limitless frontier that is the face of all that is possible and encourages the recognition that one is already that frontier. It is the responsibility of the subject to "float" upon the "waves" to the point where, like Burckhardt, "we ourselves are these waves". Jacques Rancière helps clarify this sentiment when he tells of Wordsworth's experience of the festivals of revolutionary France: "Wordsworth's path is the poetry of the humble, dedicated to glorifying, in the language of the simple, the most modest of wildflowers that the walker ignores or steps on" (Rancière, 2003: 23). For Wordsworth, one was able to experience the utopian nature of the moment, the here-and-now. Wordsworth writes,

> Not in Utopia, subterranean fields,
> Or some secreted island, Heaven knows where!
> But in the very world, which is the world
> Of all of us. (qtd. in Rancière, 2003: 11)

It may appear that what Wordsworth presents his reader with is the very thing Marx and his followers wanted to abject from the consciousness of man; that is, a form of utopianism which descends into idle daydream and lack of political efficacy. In the words of Žižek – and to reverse Marx – perhaps "the only way to stop the system from working is to stop resisting it" (Žižek, 2012: 108). One may rightly be skeptical of this proposition. However, there is a politically disruptive aspect or potential in perceiving utopia as embedded in the real of the here and now. M. H. (Behooz) Tamdgidi has perhaps argued for this point strongest in the recent literature. Tamdgidi's claim is that utopia is not a (no-)place properly speaking, nor is it strictly speaking a "desire" for something better; rather, utopia is an "attitude":

> In contrast to reactive modes of anti-systemic behavior that concentrate on building a movement that instrumentally focuses on the destruction of the old order in order to reach a good life projected into the future (be that future distant or near, illusively or "realistically" conceived), the utopian attitude involves making effort, whatever their scope, towards imagining, theorizing and/or practically realizing that future goal in the here and now. (Tamdgidi, 2003: 131)

My argument is one that espouses a form of Quixotism, where "inns must be castles" (De Unamuno, 1954: 327), or, like the response to Billy's questions "where am I?" and "how did I get here?" upon being abducted by the Tralfamadorians in Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five*:

> It would take another Earthling to explain it to you. Earthlings are the great explainers, explaining why this event is structured as it is, telling how other events may be achieved or avoided. I am a Tralfamadorian, seeing all time as you might see a stretch of the Rocky Mountains. All time is all time. It does not change. It does not lend itself to warnings or explanations. It simply *is*. Take it moment by moment, and you will find that we are all, as I've said before, bugs in amber. (Vonnegut, 1991: 85-86)

Utopia is to be sensed and developed as such from the non-signifying experiences of the individual. This sensation is an affective quality inherent to one's comportment with respect to the world that can then be emitted outward into the greater social body, continuing to balloon outward until "utopia" comes to affect all things in the cosmos. The catch, however, is that, much like Vonnegut's Tralfamadorians, Tamdgidi's seemingly expanding balloon of utopia does not begin in the individual and end with the cosmos; it simply *is*.

At this point I will transition to a working example or case study through which I hope to develop a more concrete interpretation of the conception of an interior foundation for utopia. I think China Miéville's *The City and the City* beautifully expresses the intimate connection between the cosmic and the non-signifying – "silent utopias" – which "never find expression in any tangible literary or communal forms" (Tamdgidi, 2003: 137) and yet no less constitute Utopia. This potential is located in Miéville's brilliantly weird concept of "unseeing".

Unseeing/Seeing and Seeing/Unseeing: Miéville's "weird" topos

Keeping in mind Miéville's Marxian commitments, one must not automatically discount the insights to be gained from reading his novels that appeal to the more strictly psychological side of things. That is to say, insofar as utopianism in general is significantly influenced by the Marxism of many literary utopias (Moylan, 1986), an examination of the personal, psychic, and/or subjective conditions necessary for utopia must not be discounted. Indeed such aspects of utopia are rarely ever considered. I do not wish here to attack those Marxist utopians for "wrongly ignoring" the individual subject; rather, I as a more psychoanalytically-inclined thinker am more interested in the personal conditions of utopia, rather than the properly social. That said, my hopes are that my work on the personal might work to complement the social emphasis from the Marxist utopians with an eye to a more encompassing utopian project.

Justine Jordan's article on Miéville (Jordan, 2011) tells her reader that Miéville is often asked where his revolutionary politics and his fantastical world-building meet. Jordan reports that Miéville is wary of making too strong a connection between the two: "I'm not interested in fantasy or SF as utopian blueprints, that's a disastrous idea" (*ibidem*). Along the same line of thought, Marxian literary critic Carl Freedman tells his reader:

> Weird fiction [which Miéville is the modern figure-head of; perhaps second only to H. P. Lovecraft] necessarily insists on going beyond the mundane, and (especially in its science-fictional version) may thereby create special opportunities for what Ernst Bloch called the utopian function of art by showing a world beyond the privation and violence of the actual to be conceivable; this function is, indeed, exercised with rare brilliance in *Iron Council*. By contrast, the genres of crime fiction tend to be deflationary and opposed to the idea of utopia. Especially since Hammett, the main tendency of crime fiction has been to assume that there is generally less, rather than more, to reality than may first meet the eye, and that the most ordinary, familiar, unsurprising, and petty of human motives are generally the most consequential. Though crime fiction indulges in overt socio-political speculation

far more rarely than science fiction, its default assumption is normally that nothing very much better – or very much worse – than the mundane world we see around us is ever likely to come to pass. (Freedman, 2012)

One can see this strange dialectic unfold in *The City and the City.* The story itself takes place in and between two fictional cities, Beszel and Ul Qoma, where a detective (Tyador Borlu) is investigating the murder of a graduate student who at the time of her death was conducting research in Ul Qoma but whose body was found in Beszel. As the narrative develops it becomes necessary that in order for Borlu to continue his investigation he must cross over into Ul Qoma. Herein lies the fantastical nature of the story that is so typical of Miéville: the two cities – Beszel and Ul Qoma – share the same physical space. The sharing of space in this story is not an East/West sharing insofar as "I am on this side of the divide and you are on that side of the divide"; the space is shared insofar as the two cities are superimposed. In the wake of harsh socio-political relations between the two cities, citizens of each respective city must conduct their daily affairs completely unsensing those from the other city – which at times are mere inches away. This "general" unsensing includes "specifically" unseeing, unhearing, unsmelling, etc. Any violation (a.k.a. breach) of this unsensing is quickly managed by an Orwellian thought-police agency known only as the "Breach". The only way to legally move from one city to the other is by means of what is known as "Copula Hall". The description of Copula Hall illustrates the weird topological understanding of the two cities:

> pass through Copula Hall and she or he might leave Beszel, and at the end of the hall come back to exactly (corporeally) where they had just been, but in another country, a tourist, a marvelling visitor, to a street that shared that latitude-longitude of their own address, a street they had never visited before, whose architecture they had always unseen. (Miéville, 2010: 70)

The remainder of the narrative is not overtly critical to the points I am trying to work through in the present article. I am only interested in the superimposed cities, the one – if you are a citizen of the other – you have never seen (yet). With this literary schema of the unseen-of-the-here-and-now, I am interested in how it is possible to work the seeing of the unseen into a utopian project.

Consider the banality of the crime genre and the potential utopian nature of weird fiction: the latter evoking a sense of wonder, something beyond the here-and-now; the

former deflating us with the realization that the here-and-now is usually all we are ever likely to get. Miéville does indeed play with the ambiguity of these genres throughout the telling of his story. This might tempt a reader into hypothesizing that the murdered graduate student may have been murdered because of her stumbling upon the existence of the postulated secret third city – Orincy – whose existence the reader is never confirmed nor denied. If it exists at all, Orincy is thought to exist between the two cities in spaces Baszel takes to be Ul Qoma and Ul Qoma takes to be Baszel. Orincy is thought to have powers that go beyond that of Breach. So the possibility that the fallen student was murdered because she was creeping up on the heals of a lost civilization is deflated when it turns out that she was simply murdered because she was unknowingly interfering in an economic ring of selling ancient artifacts of Bezsel to some American corporations for profit. She was killed for the sake of money. And Orincy never existed as such.

That *The City and the City* contains an implicit narrative which discusses the ideological blinders that so many of us (people and populations) assume in our various socio-political relations with one another and the world (thereby propagating a system that is poorly suited for our general well-being: utopia) is not what I want the reader to focus on (although that is an interesting and important narrative), nor do I wish to critique the apparent success of the one genre over the other (i.e., crime noir over weird fiction) and thus the mundane over the utopian; rather, I think there is value in the story to suggest that *there is nothing spectacular or extraordinary about seeing the unseeable in the here-and-now*. In other words: the extraordinary (seeing the unseen previously hidden – think of crossing over via Copula Hall) is ordinary. This thesis echoes the dictum of Raymond Williams in his essay "Culture is Ordinary" wherein Williams makes the claim that culture is not something high-brow and reserved for those who read Chaucer and listen to Shostakovich, or watch strange art house films; culture is the multiple and diverse ways that we make our way through the world. I would like to take this framework and do the same for utopia. That is to say, utopia is not something that is deferred in time or space; rather, utopia is something that is the "negation" of the now, or the unseen of the now. What can this possibly mean? I will hopefully clarify these statements in the following critical exegesis of Agamben.

From Whatever to Nowhere and Back: Giorgio Agamben's Utopia

When I speak of utopia as the negation of the now what I mean is something different than the old existentialist dictum "I am what I am not, and am not what I am" (e.g., Kierkegaard). The nothingness of which existentialism speaks, it is true, can be something "full" of potential; that is, to make something out of nothing. But it can also be all-consuming, and lead to nihilism, taking on the cultural cliché "if I am nothing, what is the point?" (e.g., Camus). The negation that I am discussing at present is not a negation defined by lack, but rather a negation in the open sense of the term: a negation which is in excess of itself. Empty with fullness. What in fact I am getting at is very much akin to what the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben calls the "Whatever Singularity". To explain this concept and how it relates to Miéville's unseeing (or seeing the unseen) I will use the example of the Lovers that Agamben draws the reader's attention to at the beginning of *The Coming Community*.

Agamben's example of the Lovers suggests that "I do not love you for the independent features that make you *you*" (e.g., brown hair, blue eyes, tall, etc.) but neither is it the case that "I love you because of something that subsumes you under its generality" (e.g., the Platonic Form of Love [Universal love]); yet, nonetheless, "I love you". What can be made of this? Agamben claims that the notion of the "Whatever Singularity" – insofar as it is singular (that is, not within the domain of the particular or the universal) – frees one from the "false dilemma that obliges knowledge to choose between the ineffability of the individual and the intelligibility of the universal" (Agamben, 2009: 2). It would be wrong to think of this "Whatever Singularity" as that which radiates from "within" the thing in question, it is more a concern of the borders and limitations of the thing. It is neither the universal nor the particulars of the thing that cause me to love the thing, or that I simply love in and about the thing. It is that which escapes me and yet, simultaneously, that which I must participate within.

In another section of *The Coming Community* Agamben draws this point out further using a parable about the Kingdom of the Messiah that Walter Benjamin told to Ernst Bloch. The parable reads thus: "[I]n order to establish the reign of peace it is not necessary to destroy everything nor to begin a completely new world. It is sufficient to displace this cup or this brush or this stone just a little and thus everything" (qtd. In Agamben, 2009: 53).

Everything will be as it is now, just a little different. Digressing for one moment a returning to Žižek's suspicion that "the only way to stop the system from working is to stop resisting it", this parable as reported by Agamben closely resembles Žižek's quotation of Jean-Luc Godard: "*Ne change rien pour que tout soit différent*" (change nothing so that everything will be different) (Žižek, 2012: 111). But how is it that that which is perfect can be other than what *it is*? Agamben makes reference to Saint Thomas's treatise "On Halos" to answer this: "The halo is this supplement added to perfection – something like the vibration of that which is perfect, the glow at its edges" (Agamben 55). The halo designates the zone in which possibility and reality become indistinguishable. The halo, or the gift of supplemental possibility, is the gift that a being that has reached its end receives after having consumed all its possibility. The halo is a good illustration of the "Whatever Singularity".

In terms of how this aspect of Agamben's philosophy maps onto the literature of Miéville, one ought to consider the events at the end of the novel: following the revelation of the meaning behind the death of the fallen graduate student, Tyador Borlu is recruited by the Breach. The last paragraph of the story reads as Borlu's new-found role:

> This is the end of the case if Orincy and archaeologist, the last case of Inspector Tyador Borlu of the Beszel Extreme Crime Squad. Inspector Tyador Borlu is gone. I sign off Tye, avatar of Breach, following my mentor on my probation out of Beszel and out of Ul Qoma [he was quarantined by breach for necessarily having had to breach the unseeing in order to conduct his investigation in Ul Qoma]. We are all philosophers here where I am, and we debate among many other things the question of where it is that we live. On that issue I am a liberal. I live in the interstice yes, but I live in both the city and the city. (Miéville, 2010: 312)

As an agent of the Breach Borlu can now openly flit between the two cities, the two cities that I am using here as a metaphor for our own and that which is unseen everyday; that is, that aspect of the world described by Agamben in the two examples above: the halo to all being and the Whatever Singularity (i.e., the Lovers). There is, contrary to much of the criticism of Miéville's story, much utopianism pregnant within Borlu's becoming part of the Breach and living in both "the city and the city". His character metaphorically stands in for the subject who can have one foot in this mundane-world (i.e., the world of here-and-now) while simultaneously having the other in the unseen utopian-world of the here-and-now.

Response to Salzani and the Question of Ethics

Emmanuel Levinas reverses the metaphysics of Descartes by replacing epistemology with ethics as First Philosophy. Levinas's thought is anchored in what he denotes as "the call of the ethical" which comes from the Other; that is, from the "face" of the Other (hence the subtitle "An Essay on Exteriority"). Levinas's ethics (one might be tempted to say that his ethics is synonymous with his metaphysics), like all other conceptions of the good, can easily be read as utopian. Levinasian ethics is not a plan that needs to be engineered, for it already exists among us. In other words, where the ends of the utilitarian project are located somewhere in the future (and possibly deferred in space as well), the ends of the Levinasian project are located here and now. That is to say, Levinas's utopia begins and ends with the face of the other. He writes,

> Peace (…) cannot be identified with the end of combats that cease for want of combatants, by the defeat of some and the victory of the others, that is, with cemeteries or future universal empires. Peace must be my peace, in a relation that starts from an I and goes to the other, in desire and goodness, where the I both maintains itself and exists without egoism. (Levinas, 1969: 306)

Levinas is arguing for a completely non-egocentric ethical structure, while struggling to find a way to keep the individual in the world. His is not a "mystical" ethics that might seek to do away with the individual altogether, but rather an attempt to find a way of interacting with the other (individual) that is not reducible to instrumental relations. That is to say, humans are always-already engaged in an open world with the Other, and are always fighting against the closure of that open relationship.

In a recent article on Agamben, published in the journal *Utopian Studies*, Carlo Salzani argues that Agamben's position is not a "yearning for a utopian future" but rather one that recognizes "a profound presentness, in the realization that within the present lies the possibility/potentiality of change and transformation" (Salzani, 2012: 224). The emphasis on the "profound presentness" is interpreted as promoting anti-utopianism insofar as the future as such is not privileged, thereby eliminating the major "dwelling" of utopia in a time to come. I agree with Salzani's interpretation of Agamben's argument, but I differ on Salzani's interpretation of Agamben's position as one that is "anti-utopian". Salzani writes: "We do not need utopias. What we need is to uncover that 'little bit' that lies hidden in the potentialities of the present" (*idem*, 230). On the contrary, I read Agamben's argument as

utopian precisely because he focuses on the "potentialities of the present". Utopias do not need to be displaced in time and/or space for humans to be constantly approaching their shores; utopias can be and – indeed I argue – are here and now. Recall my use of "negation" above: the negation of the here-and-now world that we are common to and normalized with regard to *is* a constant process of learning to "unsee" that which is the world before us. I say that we must constantly struggle to unsee the world before us because the overtly reified culture that we live in so easily sneaks back into our lives – on an instrumental level – whereby we find ourselves disgusted by the mere thingness of things. Utopia, in this sense, is never as readily accessible as it is for Borlu when he becomes recruited by the breach to live in both the city and the city. Like Borlu, we always-already inhabit the other city (i.e., utopia *qua* no-place with respect to the here-and-now) simultaneously as we live our lives here and now.

These are the grounds upon which I interpret and understand Agamben's statement: "The taking-place of things does not take place in the world. Utopia is the very topia of things" (Agamben, 103). Everything has a "topos" and a "topos", just like Miéville postulates in his novel. Are we not capable of recognizing that we live in both "topoi" just like Borlu lives in both cities? I think we can. For learning to unsee the world around us is the necessary first step in becoming the right and proper subjects for utopia.

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Architectural Typologies
as Utopian Educational Values

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Utopia has been for centuries the energy of transformation used by universities to renew their ideals, their missions and their physical spaces. Wherever Utopia has been a locomotive of idealism, a transcendental metamorphosis has occurred in the educational aims and methods, but also in the urban and social university environments.

University education has a higher purpose: to build up the formation of human beings, providing the individual with an overall integrated training. This mission imposes special emphasis on the proper arrangement of physical space in which this central undertaking takes place. Observed throughout history, the university's finest goal has been the raising of good citizens (see Nussbaum, 1997). Beyond a shadow of doubt, the quality of the university is directly connected with the quality of its architecture.

Any educational environment, including both architecture and open spaces, ought to express a special engagement to its specific natural (landscape, ecology and climate), social and urban context. Some principles are critical, the guidelines before starting any campus plan. As a first approach, the interference of foreign styles improperly understood should be avoided, in particular those whose origin, essence or formal display would not fit in with local cultures (see Chaabane / Mouss, 1998).

The planning process of any campus has to go beyond merely providing facilities. Designing a complex site demands artistic purpose as a mandatory requisite, and open spaces must play as great a part as built space in the project's development. Architecture, if not resolutely related to human beings, risks becoming an empty, cold and meaningless shell. By its nature, architecture may be considered as a genuine form of public art. And

whilst we may marvel at the links it creates with its metropolitan systems, the need to provide intelligent and bold forms in education planning cannot be separated from the inspiration that shapes its architecture.

Within a campus, architecture stands as an interactive dialogue between buildings and individuals; a dialogue which, related to human attitudes, should also be present between faculty and students.

II. Architectural Typologies for Educational Paradigms: The University of Virginia's Academical Village and the Case of the University-City of Madrid

Quality in education is intimately tied in to the quality of the physical setting where it is sited. And utopia has had narrow connections with architecture through the history of universities. One famous case was the utopian dream of Thomas Jefferson, when founding his "Academical Village" in Charlottesville (1817). Jefferson conceived a spatial typology that dressed architecturally the vision of a community of learning. Thus, architecture became a projection of the educational values of the brand-new institution. The unity underlying the overall scheme incorporated neo-classical architectural influences, as well as those learnt from the Italian Renaissance master Andrea Palladio. Some of Jefferson's notions drew on Greek sources – particularly the principle of life shared together by masters and disciples that today are termed "residentiality" – as well as Roman – in the architectural spatial layout. Amongst other influences thought to have exercised a role at the planning stage of Jefferson's vision was the Villa Trissino, which he knew from his European travels (Wilson / Butler, 1999: 7). The core of the campus (the "Lawn") embodies the shared space for faculty and students: a version of the ideal spatial typology of the original British *quadrangle*.

Since its origins, the American model has experienced many variations in its general setting and style. We can briefly mention, in chronological order, the repertoire of those diverse types employed, according to Paul V. Turner's classification: from the first open *quadrangles* of the colonial settlements inspired by the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge (like Harvard and William&Mary); the nineteenth-century complexes dominating a natural environment; the park-like campus proposal of the early Land Grant projects; the Beaux Arts fashion (like the University of California, Berkeley); later

revivals of the English intimate *quadrangle*, as a built symbol of a conservative educational philosophy; and recent plans, in which priority is given to circulation schemes. The chronological evolution of all these (and maybe some others) planning composition models can be identified even in one specific project; that would be the case of Princeton University (New Jersey), or the College of Lake Erie (Ohio). The scenario of the American campus was in the beginning of the past century quite diverse, but yet unknown in the Old Continent. Its utopian values and spatial typologies had no echo in European universities.

But an outstanding example, one of the most notable in recent history, took place in Spain: the planning and construction of the University-City of Madrid. The "Moncloa precinct" was the first Campus ever designed and built in Europe to follow the American paradigm.

It was in 1927, during the reign of King Alfonso XIII, that a utopian dream came true. Dissatisfied with the odd spatial arrangement of university buildings in Madrid, Alfonso XIII took the decision of creating a modern University-City, which he conceived as a new model for both Europe and Latin America.

> It is necessary, with pride and hope, to try to carry out this great work so that this university is one of the foremost of the world… My golden dream is to see in Madrid, created during my reign and for the good of our country's culture, a university renowned for being a model center of scholarship.[1] (King Alfonso XIII, 1927)

The King's ideal was to build a new university to be acknowledged worldwide. And the decision was to take the *campus* (yet unknown in Europe in those times) as a paradigm to redefine a new typology of urban layout, and a whole innovative understanding of universities' lifestyle. For such a purpose, a trip to visit the most relevant American universities was planned. In October 1927, a group of advisors of King Alfonso XIII, led by the architect Modesto López-Otero, planned a trip to the United States. Their aim was to study the American University as a model for the design of the new University-City in Madrid (see Campos, 2006). The American institutional model and spatial typologies thus stood as the doctrinal godfather of the formal manner in which the Madrid project was structured.

Before this time, European universities had been basically designed according to the cloister heritage, which reflected their medieval roots. This emblematic element (the cloister) created insular and self-sufficient learning environments. A big change was about to occur…

By means of the historical journey that took place in September-November 1927, the Old Continent came to investigate the American *campi*. The Spanish Commission set off this "Journey of Utopia", having previously traveled to several European cities, where they examined the medieval origins of some famous centers. Looking for inspiration, they visited Harvard, Boston, Yale, Michigan, Rochester, Washington, Baltimore and New York. They also visited Toronto and Montreal in Canada.

Amongst other lessons, the four Spanish delegates realized how the American and Canadian campuses they visited embodied university ideals through a planned arrangement of spaces, above all, the *quad.* As already mentioned, this architectural typology received the heritage of the European *quadrangle.* Personified by the already mentioned paradigms of Oxford and Cambridge, the English university concretized the pioneer formalization of the integrated utopian ideal in which University and City were merged by means of the expansion and superimposition of the different colleges along the urban fabric. These academic built units came to be architectural elements of foremost repercussion in the Old Continent scene; later transported overseas to seventeenth-century North America, they evolved into the emblematic *campus* prototype. The English college plan was formed in a square or a rectangular shape, and its central court (the *quadrangle*) became the enclosed area in which teachers could exert their control over students' life. The geometrical configuration of these collegiate organizations made easy to place them within the city lots, thereby profitably improving the land.

In the American campus panorama visited by the Spanish Commission in 1927, the *quad* played a key role in the organization of the university space. The influence of this architectural type was clearly demonstrated in the original Master Plan of the University-City of Madrid, as designed by the Director of the School of Architecture of Madrid, Modesto López Otero, in December 1928.

The huge cultural enterprise of the Madrid University-City meant the assumption of a new concept on Higher Education, one coming from North America and Canada. The importance of this event leans on the subliminal transformation of the university space that took place as a result. Somehow, it could be named as the "return-trip" of the one which happened during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, beginning from its medieval germ in Europe: the exodus of the "seed" of its embodied soul (the *quadrangle*) to the New World, the birth and diversification of the novel model (*campus*) and, finally, the described "return trip" of 1927 to Europe of this modern idea, and the prolific heritage that it has generated in the Old Continent since then. Under that same energy of utopia, the spaces of knowledge returned to the Europe of cloisters, to the compact "*Palaces of the Muses*" and to the "*Domus Sapientia*", which came back to its origins with the same yearning to seek out the "Ideal City of Study" with which it had gone to America.

The notions of philanthropy together with such functions as "college + sports" were certainly inspired by the American campus, in both urban layout and functional program. But the architectural style came to reflect the European vanguard, the Modern Movement. Some decades earlier, Europe had been the birthplace of a new style in architecture. As a consequence, the emerging archetype of the University-City of Madrid became a hybrid project, an intelligent combination of two trends: university in its urban and landscape dimension (American influence), together with detailed architectural configuration (European avant-garde movements). Designed and built in Spain's capital, the University-City bade fair to inaugurate in Europe a model that could be considered revolutionary; a style very different from the traditional university of earlier centuries, whose identity had rested on being at the historic center and in separate buildings (see Merlin, 1992).

The University-City of Madrid began its construction process in 1929. After the destruction of most of the buildings during the Civil War (1936-39), the *campus* experimented several stages of development, amounting to a sad loss of the original design spirit. But it never renounced its own continuity (see Campos, 2004).

The Madrid campus meant a critical change in the spatial history of the universities of the Old Continent. It had a wide influence across Europe and in Latin America since it

was created. And utopia must be acknowledged as the driving force, the guiding light for the four travelers in their 1927 journey around American *campi.* But utopia also carries with it a deeper inner meaning, as the legacy of progress achieved through the *Spaces of Knowledge* across the centuries.

And we must remark again that utopia finds its proper accommodation within the living reality of the *campus*. That quest for excellence guided the King of Spain to explore the New World in search of modernity and excellence. During that epoch-shaking journey, utopia acted as a true invitation to the adventure of thinking towards the future: it was a unique example of how – across history – universities served as links beyond frontiers (see Castrejon, 1990).

The fruit of the described "Journey of Utopia" was the establishment in Madrid of the first *campus* in Europe, as already explained. It was an historical connection between utopian dreams (connecting America and Europe) and a true bridge between cultures.

III. Conclusion: Utopia, University Values and Planning

Utopia must influence the foundation and evolution of any university seat. Some of the reviewed paradigms of history (Jefferson's Academical Village, the University-City of Madrid) must reinforce the need of utopia when planning university seats worldwide. The window of opportunity which the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) has opened up reinforces the importance of planning, both as a technical and an ideological lever to help universities reinforce their institutional, academic and spatial values.

Planning has many faces. This article has examined one face in particular: viewing planning as the way through which the energies of a utopian vision are harnessed to meet a purpose that is realistic, realizable and operational. Converting ideas into practice is the business of campus planners (see Dober, 1997). Often it is carried out through a collaboration amongst several professionals: architects, landscape designers, psychologists, historians, educationists, as well as local experts whose knowledge of the immediate community, its culture and economy, allow the identification and subsequent inclusion into the university's mission of specific features that find a sound echo in the local community.

Planning a campus implies a unique understanding of spaces dedicated to human formation. Thomas A. Gaines expresses this idea in quite a simple way:

> Unlike the two-dimensional art of painting, the three-dimensional art of sculpture, and architecture, in which the fourth dimension is function, a campus has a fifth dimension: planning. The well-planned campus belongs among the most idyllic of man-made environments and deserves to be evaluated by the same criteria applied to these other works of art. (Gaines, 1991: ix)

The principle of human scale must be compatible with organizing the urban layout of a very large site. Furthermore, it demands the nicest of judgments in gauging the weight to be placed on physical space, as the prime agent in optimizing and sustaining human contact.

Utopian ideals have inspired universities for centuries. Sheldon Rothblatt, a leading scholar in the intellectual history of Universities British and American, reminds us:

> The university, by virtue of its long and unbroken history and its central place in the definition of modernity, possesses features that can be described as "utopian" because some half dozen attributes are the result of a struggle between its desire to create an ideal world for itself and its unavoidable obligation to accommodate outside pressures. (Rothblatt, 2006: 56)

Throughout their history, utopia has always been a source of critical inspiration for universities in their unceasing quest for excellence and renovation. Should they then seek to recall the forgotten world of harmony, of a life shared in common on campus, rather than dissolve that human dimension, once inseparable from excellence and renewal, in the ethereal channels and networks of modern telecommunications?

Utopia has acted as a constant invitation to think about the future and to do so in the long term. In the recent past, the drive towards realizing the physical expression of major change and substantive improvements in Higher Education Institutions has drawn on town planning, urbanism and architecture. As a restatement of the utopian vision inserted into the mainly utilitarian priorities that higher education policy calls for today, the "Educational Campus", which emphasizes both the spiritual and the ideal, the basic components of utopianism, can help universities in their unceasing search for excellence (see Campos, 2010b).

Education is a spatial, affective and collective act. Universities do well, then, to pay close and critical attention to the design of their physical facilities, if only because the quality of learning is intimately related to the quality of the architecture that houses it.

University urban planning and architecture provide the frame for an on-going and ever-renewed dialogue between buildings and individuals, a dialogue which transcends the mere supply of spaces. As a consequence, its planning process has to excel a mere provision of available areas. The clear artistic intention in the design of the *campi* must be a mandatory requisite, and it would be advisable that, in the development of the master plan, open spaces, works of art and nature were as essentially taken in account as the built volumes.

Artistic intention, clear and unambiguous, incorporated into and emerging from the design of the many complexes that make up a university, is the *conditio sine qua non* that ensures a "campus" built is also an "Educational Campus" with a clear commitment to innovative learning that reflects the goals and ambitions of the European Higher Education Area (see Campos, 2009). This new concept has been assumed by the Programme "Campus of International Excellence", launched in 2009 by the Ministry of Education of Spain, a country with 77 Universities (50 public and 27 private) (see Campos, 2010b and Campos, 2011).

The design of a Higher Education nucleus must pay special attention to the symbiosis City-University, bearing a solid commitment to its social, natural and urban environment. This implies that the architecture of the university must be oriented towards the achievement of some fundamental objectives regarding the utopian educational ideals, so as to promote the processes of creation and knowledge transference, generating therefore a solid empathy between the scholars and the physical layout of the university. Finally, it must build up an organization of spaces over which their users can draw up the emotional memory of such a unique period for the human being.

Space (open areas and architectural typologies) plays a key role in the motivation of campus users (students, faculty and staff), as well as enriches the use of university zones for general citizens of the urban contexts. It has been pointed out that a stable social environment may reduce attrition rates, and help students achieve academic and social aims (Wisely / Jorgensen, 2000: 16-28). Thus, an appropriate spatial framework has the

capacity to foster positive attitudes, which may build into excellence in education itself. Amongst others, some factors contribute to the mentioned desirable attitudes in students: visual, psychological and environmental comforts; curiosity; positive perception of shape and form, overall feeling of wellness. All have then to be borne in mind before starting the formal design of a campus, or of any human settlement, especially those which have to host human formation processes (see Alexander *et al.*, 1976).

The designing of urban and architectural spaces is an all-consuming vocation, for two main reasons: first, those spaces express, or can be made to express, certain values – sustainability and aesthetics, for instance; second, they sustain creative, human contact, as the basic value on which the university is founded.

We must redeem the lost energy of utopia, starting new journeys that lead us to the quality of Higher Education all over the world. Under the impulse of utopia, good architecture enables and stimulates good human formation.

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Notes

[1] King Alfonso XIII: Before the Construction Board of the University-City, June 1, 1927 in Historical Archives of the City of Madrid, Complutense University in collection "Construction Board of the University-City of Madrid" Volume of Minutes 1927-1932, Minutes of Meeting June 1st 1927.

***The City Crown*:**

An Utopianist's Vision of a Better World

by Bruno Taut

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In the early part of the twentieth century Bruno Taut developed an urban concept that used architecture to overcome national and social differences. Taut's imagined city was an utopian garden city and socialist community that would be crowned by a communal center modeled after the medieval cathedral or temple. His idea of using an individual structure to give definition to and affect the planning of an entire city was championed in his anthology, *Die Stadtkrone* [The City Crown].

This article will give a short introduction to the work of Bruno Taut in order to place his architectural programs – comprising visionary writings and drawings – in context with his built work. Then Taut's presumptuous definition of the role and function of architects within society will be discussed. Centered on the work of the *City Crown*, I will reflect upon his notion of *Baukunst* [building art], weigh his vision against his own projects and examine Taut's influence on his peer architects in Germany. I hope to give a broader perspective of the work of this German architect, who – in the English-speaking world at least – is currently known mostly for his visionary *Alpine Architektur* [Alpine Architecture], written in 1917, and *Die Gläserne Kette* [The Crystal Chain Letters], written between 1918 and 1920.

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In 1972 Shirley Palmer first translated "Alpine Architecture*"* for publication in conjunction with Paul Scheerbart's *Glasarchitektur* [Glass Architecture]. Scheerbart

fathered the fascination of Taut and other architects who used glass as a substance and building material in the early twentieth century. For a reprint of the *Alpine Architecture* folio in 2004, Matthias Schirren retranslated the texts, that accompany a set of very beautiful and expressive drawings and watercolors.

The *Crystal Chain Letters* is an exchange of letters between several architects during World War I, ending in December 1920 once the friends were able to not only theorize but also build again at last! Among the co-authors of the *Crystal Chain Letters* were the Taut brothers, Bruno and Max, the brothers Hans and Wassili Luckhardt, Hans Scharoun, Walter Gropius and a few other friends. In 1985 their correspondence was published in English.

However, the very select availability of texts in English led to a rather partial view on Taut's oeuvre. In Germany, Bruno Taut is best known for the quality of his colorful post-war housing projects and his urban planning initiatives. Iain Boyd White attributes Taut's development during the First World War to his work as architectural activist, rather than as an expressionist (Boyd Whyte, 1982). Though an older Taut himself dismissed his earlier dreams as "symptoms of an illness", I feel the ideas in *The City Crown* are visible in his later, more functionalist works (see Taut, 1929: 40).

<center>***</center>

Bruno Taut was born in 1880 in Königsberg, Prussia, and died in Ankara, Turkey, in 1938. He belonged to a generation of architects born in the same decade: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, Hugo Häring, Le Corbusier and Erich Mendelson. Already before 1914 he was – along with Gropius – recognized as one of the most influential young men of the German Werkbund. Like the works of Behrens, Muthesius or Schumacher, his buildings were good examples of the first generation of a new kind. These distanced themselves from "the new Biedermeier", rejected conventions and boredom and were in themselves artistic creations. In his apartment buildings, like the ones at Kottbusser Damm (1910/11) or Hardenbergstraße (1911), he never showed the slightest routine or the intention to develop a particular personal style. Despite the fact

that these projects were not very lucrative for the architect, each design displayed the creativity of an artist and a highly ingenious potential.

Inspired by the architectural visions of poet and writer Paul Scheerbart, Bruno Taut designed and realized the Pavilion for the German glass industry for the Werkbund (the German Work Federation) exhibition in Cologne in 1914. The Glass House celebrates glass as a building material with colored glass, mosaics, glass paintings, glass bricks and floors. Julius Posener once said that, in Taut's hands, Glass had a new meaning, an "old-new meaning" similar to the examples of Gothic churches. He actually went so far to compare the Glass House to the Sainte Chapelle (Posener, 1980: 54-55). Unfortunately, the building was only a temporary structure and was thus lost, except for some photo documentation and plans. This exhibition pavilion for the glass industry immediately drew wide attention and spurred Taut's international reputation.

As early as February 1914, Taut had already proposed in the Expressionist journal *Der Sturm* [The Storm] that the Gothic Cathedral was the greatest example of the unification of the arts. To him, these structures were not mere displays of masterful skill and architectural virtuosity; their creation was possible only through social unity based upon religious belief. It was shortly after the revival of his early utopian aims at the *Arbeitsrat für Kunst* [Worker Council for the Arts] that Taut invited Erich Baron, Adolf Behne and Paul Scheerbart to submit essays that would support the creation of a new society, to be manifested in a new city, crowned by a non-religious, [1] crystalline, cathedral-like structure.

Taut's city is concentric, following the pattern of most humanist utopias. Within this layout he developed a hierarchy of zones: from the profane at the perimeter (housing, business, industrial and recreational zones) toward the sacred – the common core in the very center. The city is a microcosm in itself, conceived as *axis mundi*. In the description of the layout, Taut gives most detail for the following two areas: the residential quarters and the intellectual and cultural center of his city.

> In the residential quarters, streets mainly run from north to south, to provide the front of the houses on both east and west sides with sunlight as well as windless streets and gardens. The houses are entirely conceived in the character of a garden city in low single rows with deep gardens for every house, such as that of figures 13 and 14, so that the residential area itself is a horticultural zone making allotment gardens unnecessary. (…)

This garden city type of development allows for 300,000 inhabitants, or 150 souls per acre, with the possibility of expansion up to 500,000 inhabitants. [Although] green areas, playgrounds and park strips are intermingled in between residential and industrial areas to separate them, no further details are indicated. The distance from the periphery to the city center is not more than 3 kilometers = 1/2 hour walking time. The streets within the residential quarters themselves are as narrow as possible (5 to 8 meters) in order not to waste unnecessary resources. Thoroughfares are designed to accommodate streetcars and abundant car traffic.

According to the principles of the garden city, the height of houses in residential quarters remains as low as possible. Business and administrative buildings are allowed, at maximum, one floor above the houses. In this way, the city crown reigns powerfully and unreachably above the entire city.[2]

These residential areas are squatted around the epicenter of the city like the modest houses of a medieval town around the cathedral or Asian huts around the main pagoda. They form the profane ring around the sacred center of the municipality. At the end of his essay as final figures, Taut included the examples of his own Falkenberg Estate design, which was only partially executed. This can lead us to the assumption that he envisioned residential buildings that were very much like the ones he had previously designed. Detailed descriptions of the communal buildings for the spiritual and intellectual life of the city then follow. They include parks and gardens, an aquarium and plant houses for leisure and distraction, a theater, a library with reading houses, an opera house and a variety of assembly rooms for various social and communal functions. Higher in scale, these buildings build the base for the ultimate structure, void of any function, the so-called *Kristallhaus* [crystal house].

The upper crown is visible by the symbolic form of a cross, expressed by the masses of the four large buildings. The socially directed hopes of people find their fulfillment at the top [of the edifice]. The drama and the play of music provide a unified people their inner momentum, a drive they long for in their everyday life. Their reunion in community centers enables them to feel what they have to give to one another as humans. This leads the herd instinct, the elementary power of amalgamation, to its most refined statement. (Taut, 1919: 50-70)[3]

Taut's city is a proposal to re-tune *Geist* (the spirit) and *Volk* (the mass of humanity, the people) according to Gothic or oriental models.[4] This is an idea that is based upon the writings of Gustav Landauer, who Taut clearly must have read: the creative individual is spiritually inspired (*Geist*) and becomes a link between humanity and the universe.[5] At the same time, this spirituality is equally related, to the people (*Volk*). For Landauer, the Christian Middle Ages were models of the ideal of community.

For Taut the ideal society is founded in its faith into an equitable and harmonious community:

> It is the urge to somehow help the well-being of mankind, to achieve salvation for self and others and to feel as one, solidly united with all mankind. This feeling lives, or at least slumbers, in all mankind. Socialism, in its non-political sense, means freedom from every form of authority as a simple, ordinary connection between people and it bridges any gap between fighting classes and nations to unite humanity. – If one philosophy can crown the city of today, it is an expression of these thoughts.[6]

From further description we can gather that Taut sees the city crown as a space rather similar but much larger in scale than the Glass House he built in 1914. This crystalline structure would be the spiritual and intellectual center and, at the same time, the secular beacon towering over the new city. Owing to its imposing scale, its communal functions, but especially due to its striking beauty, the city crown would be the cultural fulcrum of a unified living community, where individuals would be inspired by transcendent ideas of the collective good. The effects the structure might have had can be guessed by these images of a model reconstruction of the Glass House:

> An iron concrete construction lifts it above the volume of the four large buildings, which forms its framework. Between them, the entire rich scale of the architecture hangs resplendent in prismatic glass fillings, colors and colored glass mosaics. The crown contains nothing but a wonderful room (…).
> All deep and great feelings are awakened, as full sunlight showers in a high room and splits into numerous fine reflections or when the evening sun fills the upper vault and its red light deepens the rich chromaticity of the glass images and the sculptural work. Here architecture again renews its beautiful bond with sculpture and painting. (…)
> The ultimate is always quiet and empty. (…) The Cathedral was the container of all the souls that prayed in this way; and it always remains empty and pure – it is "dead". The ultimate task of architecture is to be quite and absolutely turned away from all daily rituals for all times.[7]

Like many other members of the avant-garde, Taut hoped for an intellectual revolution. The First World War had started in 1914 and during the early years there was hope for a quick end as well as a renewal of society through the accomplishment of modern times: industrial progress and a more equal society – "socialism in its non-political sense".

When Taut wrote his essay around 1917, the political revolution had not yet failed. We can even say that at the time it might still have appeared that the members of the avant-garde – artists and architects – could create a better future and a more peaceful world. The city Taut envisioned sought to overcome societal differences through the construction of architecture, specifically of its city crown, the climax of the city. Architects always work toward the future. They have done so throughout all times – during the Greek and Roman period as well as during the Gothic or the Renaissance. Each true piece of architecture goes beyond its own time and has the ambition to create something new, something lasting. In Taut's own words, he encourages architects to be the "creator", the "spiritual leader":

> What in stone extends for centuries into the heavens, as a monument of the human spirit, must be based on a broad and strong perception. Although one individual may be its spiritual creator, a building needs many hands and material means for its construction. The architect must carry within himself an awareness and knowledge of all the deep feelings and sentiments for which he wants to build. Of course, his work aspires not only to the ephemeral, in that it calls to the *Zeitgeist*, but also to those dormant spiritual forces of generations, cloaked in beliefs and aspirations. At first, it appears necessary to solve tasks based solely on need. Yet, in reality, it is not practical demands, but rather the imagination, that creates architecture.[8] This shows that the will of the building artist is directed by something entirely different from a specific purpose and that this will lies above and beyond mere functionality. Buildings that exhibit a minimal practical purpose or none at all, best demonstrate an architect's volition.[9]

Admittedly, art and architecture have to accomplish a bit too much. Taut has very high ambitions for the profession. His dream unfortunately never came true. The publication of *Die Stadtkrone* in 1919 coincided with the end of World War I and subsequent speculations about the construction of postwar German architecture. Published only after the end of one of the deadliest conflicts of human history, Taut had developed the City Crown as an urban proposal of "apolitical socialism"[10] where people would live in peaceful collaboration. After Germany's defeat in World War I and the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm on 9 November 1918, many architects sought to join with the Socialists in Berlin to help forge a new republic. In Berlin, these artists and architects became known as the *Arbeitsrat für Kunst* [Workers Council for the Arts] and rallied themselves around both Taut's *Ein Architektur Programm* [An Architecture Program]

and Walter Gropius's proposal for the construction of the new German architecture as the *Zukunftskathedrale* [Cathedral of the Future].

In 1921 Taut accepted the position as Stadtbaudirektor [City Architect] in Magdeburg. Here he started to implement some of his ideas. Though constrained by reality with many functional, financial and urban requirements, the residential quarters Bruno Taut designed during his career in Magdeburg and later in Berlin show a delicacy and consideration for the inhabitants. They were a step for social progress and provided very adequate solutions for the needs of the workers at that time. Unfortunately, the political climate in Germany changed during the Weimar Republic and the Nazi regime and the modern movement in Germany came to a halt.

At its time, Taut's anthology was intended to encourage architects to build and at the same time to strive for the ideal rather than the realistic. Though he was never able to build a complete city after his City Crown model, Taut's thoughts and especially his later-realized housing projects carry the seed for a new society with a better future in them and were highly respected. The movement to which Taut and his peers belonged ignited new ideas. However, only when the shift from spiritual thoughts to more technological concepts, from the initial notion to create the one and ultimate – and lastly static – monument towards an interest in the process and fabrication occurred, did these ideas have a final breakthrough in Functionalism. Still, Taut can be considered as one of the influential men of the modern movement and his thoughts and writings had a high impact on the architectural world. This first English translation of Taut's anthology should become a critical text in architectural studies today on the history of European Modernism and urban design theory with a similar impact as other works by Taut. At the same time, it will help to view this influential architect and thinker in the broader context of his own work.[11]

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Notes

1   Inspired by Friedrich Nietzsche's writings, to Taut as to many other Expressionists of his time, socialism became a substitute for religious belief.

2   Translations are mine. Taut, Bruno (1919), *Die Stadtkrone*, First Edition, Jena, Eugen Diederichs, pp. 50-70:

> „Die Straßenzüge der Wohnviertel laufen im wesentlichen von Norden nach Süden, um den beiderseitigen Hausfronten Ost und Westsonne zu geben und windstille Straßen und Gärten. Ihre Ausbildung selbst ist völlig im Charakter der Gartenstadt gedacht, mit niedrigen Einzelhausreihen und tiefen Gärten für jedes Haus, etwa im Sinne von Abb. 11 und 12 (im Original Abb. 50 und 51), so daß das Wohngebiet selbst als Gartenbauzone gilt und Laubenkolonien erübrigt. Außerhalb des peripherischen Parkgürtels schließt sich die Ackerbauzone an: Die Gesamtfläche der Stadt beträgt 38,5 qkm, die des Wohnareals etwa 20 qkm und würde bei gartenstadtartiger Bebauung Raum für 300 000 Einwohner, d. h. 150 Seelen pro Hektar, im Erweiterungsfalle bis 500000 geben. Dazwischen eingesprengte grüne Anlagen, Spielplätze, Parkstreifen zur Trennung der Wohn- und Industriegebiete und sonstige Einzelheiten sind nicht besonders gezeichnet. Die Entfernung von der Peripherie bis zur Stadtmitte beträgt also nicht viel mehr als 3 km = 1/2 Stunde Fußweg: Die Straßen innerhalb der Wohnviertel selbst sind so schmal (5 bis 8 Meter), wie sie gerade sein können, um hier nicht unnötige Mittel zu verschleudern. Die Verkehrsstraßen sind zur Aufnahme von Straßenbahnen und reichlichem Wagenverkehr eingerichtet.
>
> Die Haushöhen der Wohnviertel bleiben nach dem Grundsatz der Gartenstadt so niedrig wie möglich. Die Geschäfts- und Verwaltungsbauten dürfen sie höchstens um ein Geschoß überragen, damit mächtig und unerreichbar die Stadtkrone über allem throne".

3   *Idem*, pp. 50-70: „Die obere Bekrönung bildet das Massiv der vier großen Bauten, als sichtbarer in seiner Kreuzform symbolischer Ausdruck der Erfüllung. Die sozial gerichteten Hoffnungen des Volkes finden hier auf der Höhe ihre Erfüllung. Das Drama, das Musikspiel gibt den hier vereinten Menschen den Seelenschwung, den sie im Alltagsleben ersehnten, und die Zusammenkunft in den Volkshäusern läßt sie fühlen, was sie als Menschen einander zu geben haben, und führt den Herdentrieb, die Urkraft des Zusammenschlusses, zur Veredelung".

4   Compare also Boyd Whyte, Ian (1982), *Bruno Taut and the Architecture of Activism,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 76.

5   *Apud* Landauer, Gustav (1903), *Meister Eckharts mystische Schriften, in unsere Sprache übertragen*, Berlin, K. Schnabel. Eckhart von Hochheim, also known as *Meister Eckhart*, was a medieval monk, philosopher, and assumed mystic. The publication of some of his writings in contemporary German by Landauer attracted much attention at the time and also influenced Taut's thinking.

6   Taut, Bruno (1919), *Die Stadtkrone*, First Edition, Jena, Eugen Diederichs, pp. 50-70:

> „Das Gefühl, irgendwie an dem Wohl der Menschheit mithelfen zu müssen, irgendwie für sich und damit auch für andere sein Seelenheil zu erringen und sich eins, solidarisch mit allen Menschen zu fühlen, – es lebt, wenigstens schlummert es in allen. Der Sozialismus im unpolitischen, überpolitischen Sinne, fern von jeder Herrschaftsform als die einfache schlichte Beziehung der Menschen zu einander, schreitet über die Kluft der sich befehdenden Stände und

Nationen hinweg und verbindet den Menschen mit dem Menschen. – Wenn etwas heute die Stadt bekrönen kann; so ist es zunächst der Ausdruck dieses Gedankens".

[7] *Idem,* pp. 50-70:

Eine Eisenbetonkonstruktion hebt es über das Massiv der vier großen Bauten heraus und bildet sein Gefüge, zwischen dem in Prismenglasfüllungen, farbigen und Glastafeln die ganze reiche Skala der Glasarchitektur prangt. (…)

„Alle innigen und alle großen, Empfindungen sollen hier wach werden, wenn das volle Sonnenlicht den hohen Raum übergießt und sich in zahllosen feinen Reflexen bricht, oder wenn die Abendsonne die obere Deckenwölbung erfüllt und mit ihrem roten Schein die reiche Farbigkeit der Glasbilder und plastischen Arbeiten vertieft. (…)

Immer ist das Letzte still und leer. Meister Eckhart sprach: »Ich will Gott niemals bitten, daß er sich mir hingeben soll; ich will ihn bitten, daß er mich leer und rein mache. Denn wäre ich leer und rein, so müßte Gott aus seiner eigenen Natur sich mir hingeben und in mir beschlossen sein.« Der Dom war das Gefäß aller Seelen, die so beteten. Und es bleibt immer so - leer und rein - »tot« -, still und ganz und gar abgewandt den Tageszwecken bleibt für alle Zeiten das Letzte der Architektur. Hier verstummt immer der Maßstab praktischer Forderungen - ähnlich wie bei dem Münsterturm, der im Verhältnis zu dem ohnehin schon »unpraktischen« Schiff noch weit über das hinausgeht, was dieses Kristallhaus im Vergleich zu den vielen von einer höheren Zweckmäßigkeit geborenen Bauten bedeutet".

[8] It is difficult to imagine that Le Corbusier's claim that architecture is a "pure creation of the mind" in *Toward an Architecture* is not influenced by the distinction Taut makes here. See: Le Corbusier (2007), "Architecture, Pure Creation of the Mind", in *Toward an Architecture*, trans. John Goodman, Los Angeles, Getty Publications, pp. 231-251. The original printing of the essay as "*Architecture III; pure création de l'esprit*" occurred in the 1920s.

[9] Bruno, Taut (1919), *Die Stadtkrone*, First Edition, Jena, Eugen Diederichs, pp. 50-70:

„Was in Stein als Denkmal menschlichen Geistes für Jahrhunderte in die Höhe ragt, muß auf einer breiten und starken Grundlage des Empfindens beruhen. Ist wohl ein Einzelner der geistige Schöpfer, so braucht doch ein Bauwerk zu seiner Entstehung viele Hände und viele materielle Mittel, und um diese zum Regen zu bringen, muß der Architekt das Bewußtsein und die Kenntnis aller tieferen Empfindungen und Anschauungen in sich tragen, die die Gesamtheit beherrschen, für welche er bauen will, freilich nicht allein die ephemeren, das was man den »Zeitgeist« nennt, sondern vielmehr jene noch schlummernden latenten Seelenkräfte des Volkes, die, in Glauben, Hoffnung und Wünschen verhüllt, ans Licht streben und im höheren Sinne »bauen« wollen. Dies ist schon dazu nötig, um die Aufgaben zu lösen, welche scheinbar nur auf dem Zweck beruhen, da schon dabei nicht die praktische Forderung, sondern die formende Phantasie die Architektur erzeugt. So zeigt es sich, daß es etwas ganz Anderes als die Zweckgebundenheit ist, was den Willen des Baukünstlers ausmacht, und so erklärt es sich, daß dieser Wille über und jenseits des eigentlich Praktischen liegt und daß das Höchste, wonach sein Wille strebt, in den Bauten liegt, deren praktischer Zweck ein geringfügiger oder gar keiner ist".

[10] Boyd Whyte, Ian (2001), "*Der Visionäre Bruno Tau*t", in *Bruno Taut – Architekt zwischen Tradition und Avantgarde*, Stuttgart, DVA, pp. 68-89.

[11] At this point I would like to acknowledge Matthew Mindrup of Marrywood University, Scranton, PA. He initiated and cooperated with me on the translation of Taut's essay "Die Stadtkrone" into English. A complete publication of the translation of the full anthology "The City Crown" is planned. As a preview, the main text of this book was published in JAE 63.1, the *Journal for Architecture and Education*, a publication of the American Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture.

The Body as Non-Place: Utopian Potential in Philippe Decouflé's Dance Film *Codex*

spaces
of utopia

2ⁿᵈ series, number 2

Franziska Bork Petersen│ Stockholm University/ FU Berlin

En tout cas, il y a une chose certaine, c'est que le corps humain est l'acteur principal de toutes les utopies.

Michel Foucault 'Le corps utopique'

Introduction

The body is a problematic site for utopia. Literary utopian accounts of "a better way of being and living" (Levitas 1990: 7) describe bodily states in abundance – and often as a primary concern. The live body in the performative arts, however, constitutes a problem. Its very *life* is in a logical contradiction to utopia's constitutive impossibility. At the same time, physical practices such as body building, plastic surgery, the use of make up and medicine let everyday bodies emerge as 'utopian objects' (Gebauer 2001: 888). In what follows I examine the utopian potential of the body in artistic performance. I focus my considerations on the bodies of dancers in the opening sequence of French choreographer Philippe Decouflé's dance film *Codex* (1987). My aim in this is to argue for the body in the performative arts as a site with utopian potential that goes beyond an insular 'enhancement' of human capacity – be it health or beauty-wise. As a site of live performance, the body brings utopia to the present.

Artistic utopias are most commonly designed and conceptualised in literary form. Without wanting to ignore utopian trends in architecture or artistic experiments in Situationism, it is fair to say that utopia is most usually thought of as a literary genre. Some authors even see the literary form of both artistic and political utopias as a necessity: as a medium, the book (or another written account) allows for a formulation of utopian thoughts

without standing in the way of the ultimate impossibility that some theorists consider essential for utopias (see Seel, 2001).

Much has been written about utopia in art – and art as generally utopian (Marcuse, Adorno, Bloch). Research also exists on the utopian potential of performative art in particular (see Dolan, 2001, 2006). In this text, however, I don't want to investigate the progressive communality of art performances that includes performers and their spectators. Neither is my aim to suggest that (and how) bodily artistic experiments might transform those bodies that make up society. My focus is, rather, set on exploring possibilities and media conditions for extending the site of artistic utopia from the printed page to the dressed and moving body. Departing from Decouflé's *Codex*, I want to reflect the potential for not merely *thinking* a 'different being', but for *embodying* it in the performative arts.

Philippe Decouflé: *Codex*

Film still from Philippe Decouflé's *Codex* (1987)
copyright DCA/naïve vision

In the opening sequence of *Codex* Decouflé's dancers appear as indeterminable moving figures. They are clad entirely in black and filmed against a white background, which makes it impossible to discern their features in detail. Dark leotards that cover the entire body and face, peculiar flippers with fringes and equally fringed headpieces detach the dancers' appearance further from 'human' and makes it impossible to distinguish even between male and female dancers.

The choreography consists of elements reminiscent of the classical Indian Bharatanatyam interspersed with everyday movements, like running. This contrasts with the dancers' uprightness, their turnout (rotation of the legs which causes the feet to turn outward), controlled *pliés* (bending of the knees) in the first position and some of their *port de bras* (arm movements) that repeatedly remind the spectator of ballet technique. The movement vocabulary alternates between the dancers moving their arms and tilting or rotating their upper bodies without moving in space much, and expansive steps and jumps through the studio. Additionally abstracting the image, the entire cast of ten dancers, at times divided into smaller groups, often carry out movements synchronously.

The impact of film and the costumes contribute to the dancers' detachment from customary notions of dancing human figures. The flippers make their movements appear clumsy and ungraceful. Decouflé films them from angles that add to their schematic appearance: close-ups of bodies turn into large black patches on screen, and overhead shots show the dancers from an altogether unfamiliar perspective. In editing, the choreographer overcomes the usual 'problem' of gravity in dancing when he shows images upside down. Edits also allow Decouflé to use movements at a speed that would be impossible on stage: the dancers oscillate in the air in impossibly long jumps, their steps appear bustling when sped up in fast-motion towards the end of the sequence.

Bodies in Utopian Art

> Gewöhnlich beginnt die Geschichte mit einer Reise, zu Schiff oder zu Lande; immer geschieht etwas, was die gewöhnliche Erfahrung aus den Angeln hebt: Die Ebenen erstrecken sich ins Unendliche, das Meer wird immer gewaltiger, der Raum dehnt sich, verliert seine Struktur, ein Wirbelsturm kommt auf, der Kompaß fällt aus, die Orientierung geht verloren, schießlich bricht die Zeit. Am Anfang der Utopie steht eine Verwirrung der Sinne; die zeitliche und räumliche Orientierung geht verloren. (Gebauer, 2001: 885)

[The story usually begins with a journey, by ship or by land; something always happens that unhinges usual experience. The plains extend into infinity, the sea becomes vaster and vaster, space expands, loses structure, a hurricane develops, the compass fails, orientation gets lost, eventually time breaks. Utopia starts out with a confusion of the senses; temporal and spatial orientation gets lost.]

To start off, I want to link the spatial and temporal distortion in Decouflé's opening sequence to that in the beginnings of the classical literary utopias. In the above quote, the German philosopher and anthropologist Gunter Gebauer hints at the reoccurring motive of shipwreck and unknown islands geographically removed from Europe, such as Atlantis (Plato), Bensalem (Bacon), Taprobana (Campanella) or Utopia (More). The spatial distortions function to legitimise the secluded islands' existence 'off the map', but they are also a way to introduce and express a desire for radical difference.[1]

While More lays out a complete utopian vision and agenda which express a desire for social change, Decouflé's staging confronts the viewer with the unfamiliar. Following Levitas, I consider the *expression of desire for a radically different being* to constitute the fundamental defining characteristic of utopian art (see Levitas 1990: 7-8).[2] While More's and Decouflé's distorted set-ups of place and time both have in them utopian potential, their respective depictions of 'radically different being' couldn't be further apart. The two artworks *Utopia* and *Codex* depict bodies that diverge in content and function, as well as in form. More's *Utopia* strictly ties bodily efforts to functional ideals of human survival, whilst the content of Decouflé's body depictions is an experiment with staging dancers in a way that lets them appear non-human and unfamiliar. Both constructions of bodies happen in the realm of art. Yet, More's bodies function as the constituents of a desirable society. Decouflé's bodies, conversely, present a bodily state of radical difference that is devoid of a superordinate system.[3] Instead of describing bodies within a blueprint for better society, Decouflé explores the body as a medium of art.

What interests me particularly are the blatantly different body depictions regarding their form: where Decouflé's dancers *embody* a different state of being, More tells the reader about it in the form of literary fiction. The bodies and the order they are part of in *Utopia* are rendered through their author's language: the regulated, steadily moving individuals all clad in the same clothes form a mass-body fuelled by a uniform will that More portrays as unthreatening. Gebauer wonders what *Utopia's* disciplined, ascetic bodies would look like as enacted. But *Utopia* does not aim at such visibility – the body is part of a bigger narrated generality; an idealisation that is constructed by the text and one that, according to Gebauer, defies visual depiction altogether (2001, 885-6).

What are the formal implications of Decouflé's body depictions? Of a performance that makes dancers appear as distinctly detached from customary human form and movement? How can we categorise and deal with such a performance aesthetically, analytically and with regard to its utopian potential? We have seen that the bodies' different state of being doesn't raise a claim for utopian superiority. But doesn't the act of bodies abandoning human form and movement perhaps in itself have an implication that could be called utopian?

Reflections on Contemporary Utopia

I shall introduce my investigation of the body as a medium for utopian art with some reflections on the status of contemporary utopianism and outline the body's role in it.

<u>Present, not future</u>

While the body is prevalent as a *topic* of, for instance, Science Fiction literature, several factors appear to disqualify it as a possible *medium* of utopian art. A crucial one is that the body cannot really 'do' a future mode; unless it relies on assuming narrative meaning (by using gestures or language) it is a medium invariably tied to both the temporal and spatial presence. Whereas the mind is associated with 'thinking' (potentially into the past, the future and to somewhere far away), the body is located firmly in the field of 'doing'.[4] It simply isn't a place where speculations about – and conceptualisations of – the future tend to happen. Consequentially, artistic performance is determined by the body's spatial presence; bodily practices are supposedly tied to the here and now.[5]

This argument for excluding the body as a medium of utopian art is valid to a certain extent: in expressing temporal and spatial distance bodies might lack the efficiency of language. But then: are utopias really unequivocally about rendering faraway places or anticipated times to come? Utopia's traditional tie to the future seems to have become its most questioned feature in recent scholarship (Sargisson, 1996; Gebauer, 2001; Garforth, 2009; Kraftl, 2007, 2009):

Utopia has shifted from a context of social theory wedded to rationality, perfectability, and progress to one characterised in terms of desire, anti-foundationalism, and fragmentation. In that shift the link between utopia and the intention of securing a better

future becomes problematic. Indeed, the articulation of utopian visions and hopes with concrete prospects for future social improvement or transformation might be seen as a temporary product of the historical conditions and philosophical discourses of modernity. (Garforth, 2009: 9)

> According to this approach, contemporary utopianism has a transgressive, subversive function that is directed towards acting critically in the present, rather than designing in detail a desired future.[6] The decline of metanarratives lets the present's 'truths' disappear. Without such a stable foundation, thinking a better future has become problematic. (Garforth, 2009: 12-14)

The reflex association of utopia with narratives of future progress and revolution then emerges as deeply rooted in and specific to its modern context. Today, it seems that expressions of utopian desire are not so much about transforming the future but, rather, creating estrangements from the world as experienced in the present. Implying a temporal difference (as is done in Science Fiction) or a spatial difference (as was done in the classical utopias) might serve to further demarcate the radical difference that utopian artworks present from the way things customarily are at the time. Most importantly, however, utopias (re-) present a radically different form of being *in the present*. To have an impact, difference has to appear in the here and now.

Different, not better

Another factor that makes the body appear as a difficult – and even redundant – medium of utopian art is perhaps that bodies are already subject to relentless betterment in everyday life. We constantly enhance our ordinary human capacity and beautify our appearance. Bodies in the contemporary Western world are utopian objects in the sense that they are constantly 'under construction'; unceasingly on their way to a new, younger, more relaxed, fitter, less wrinkly, slimmer, healthier, tougher ideal (Gebauer 2001: 888). In 'makeover culture' (Jones) it doesn't take utopian art to make a better body. At the same time, the everyday body is only one instance that shows how problematic the notion of something unambiguously 'better' has become today. Unequivocal blueprints of progress – the progression towards a 'better' state – also necessarily entail stasis (a defined goal). In contemporary makeover culture, bodies are constantly in the making; they reach their ideal weight, only to be ready for breast implants, receiving an optimal nose and so on and so

forth. To evoke conditions that differ radically from the contemporary everyday it seems that utopian desire creates experiences of *alterity*, rather than improvement.

Individuals, not collectives

One final issue I want to touch on before turning to performing bodies in artistic contexts is utopian *agency*. In an age in which the belief in metanarratives and modernist or positivist goals have been questioned the idea of a collective striving towards 'the better' seems obscure. The working-class has lost its utopian impact while, at the same time, other groups do not currently have the same revolutionary potential, stresses Levitas (1990: 197). But instead of killing off utopian agency as such, it seems that we are dealing with the loss of a unified collective as a utopian agent. In a time of individualisation we cannot necessarily uphold collectivity as a defining characteristic of utopia. One could of course argue that – in this age of the database – the predominance of networks seems to negate any such individualism. There is much to be said for this, but it appears to me that we use – and exist in – networks such as Facebook primarily to advertise ourselves as individuals.[7]

Unfamiliar Bodies in Performative Art

Within this context, how can bodies in artistic performance be utopian? What embodied form can the desire for a *radically different way of being* take? In my discussion, I have touched on the waning role of the future in utopianism, the increasing normalisation of physical enhancement and the loss of the collective as a utopian agent. Having these as subject matter, then, is no longer enough for contemporary performative arts to be considered utopian. In a period when physical enhancement has become the norm and utopia is rooted in the present, rather than the future, in the individual rather than the collective body, performance has to take quite a different stance to embody – or embody the desire for – singular experiences of alterity.

The defining quest for a different *being* in utopian expression suggests to me the body itself – the *medium* of the performative arts – as a site for utopia. The body in performance would use its unique potential to *embody* utopian desire, instead of reproducing literary means to *tell* the spectators about bodies in a different time and space. When the utopian desire for difference is expressed in a story narrated *by* bodies, that could make the story's

content utopian, but not the bodies' *being*. If the performing body presents nothing but itself, then the question of its plausibility becomes moot: the performing body is already always a reality.[8] The utopian body in performance does not defeat reality when it defies gravity in dance, when it merges with technology to become a cybernetic organism or when it is twisted out of recognition in contortion. In such performances of *desire for different being*, bodies enact Deleuze and Guattari's dictum: "If desire produces, the product is real. If desire is productive, it can be productive only in the real world and can produce only reality" (2004: 28). As a sensation of presence in the event – rather than as part of a narrative – the performing body communicates through its production of affects. These moments of intensity, as O'Sullivan describes affects, are not primarily concerned with creating knowledge or meaning; "indeed they occur on a different, *asygnifying* register" (2001: 126).[9] Indeed, in exploring the utopian potential of bodies as media in performative art it seems productive to consider their 'asignifying' potential – the affective impact they make on our own bodies: "you cannot read affects, you can only experience them" (*ibidem*).

So where does that leave us? I have defined the artistic mode of presentation in which utopia could be embodied, rather than narrated. But if a performer would just enact his/her own presence that would hardly make for utopia. To become utopian a body would have to do more than simply embody its own being, it would have to be radically different. Let's pause to consider: if performing bodies cease to execute neat logically motivated actions that represent stable characters who make up a fair amount of artistic narratives, then this already alters performance significantly. Bodies become unfamiliar in their mere capacity of being non-representational. This mode of performing lets the body appear in a 'new', creative, affectual – utopian – way. The 'revolution' of embodying such a qualitative difference of physical being is in itself unsettling (see Kraftl, 2007: 122). There are several ways in the performative arts to create affects, which turn the human body into a 'radically unfamiliar being' and let the viewer perceive atypical orders of intensity. Deleuze and Guattari, for instance, suggest in their essay on the *body without organs* (2007) a whole range of connections to non-human systems and structures. In dance – or in its analysis – there's a tradition to relate human movement to the movement of machines or animals.[10] These strategies do not necessarily aim at imitating the other organisms' movement. Rather,

they are driven by an interest in exploring the moving body's possibilities themselves, and not how they can be made to signify something else.

The Finnish performance theorist Esa Kirkkopleto formulates his "Manifesto for generalized anthropomorphism" (2004) against a fundamental problem of theatrical performance: according to Kirkkopelto, the contemporary theatre's shortcoming is that it uses its key medium – the human figure – in a limiting manner (1). To Kirkkopelto, the theatre seems frustratingly restricted to the acting human beings' concerns with "the body, gender, background, history, community or race" (*ibidem*). As theatre limits itself to treating the struggle with these parameters, "freedom" is only considered as "a concern for shifting boundaries, for pushing and redrawing them" (*idem*, 2). Freedom in theatre is not – but should be – understood as a "freedom surpassing the human" (*idem*, 3). It is Kirkkopelto's vision to detach the phenomenal body from a predefined human figure. Kirkkopelto acknowledges in his manifesto that dance – as opposed to theatre – is one of the art-forms that has sometimes overcome these restrictions and "managed in the past centuries to break into what is generally referred to as 'non-figurative' art" (*idem*, 2). The practice of abstracting the human figure in dance can be traced in 20th and 21st century choreography from Loïe Fuller, Valentine de Saint-Point and futurist dance, Oskar Schlemmer's work at the Bauhaus to Alwin Nicolais, Merce Cunningham and postmodern dance as well as in contemporary choreography by, for instance, William Forsythe or Brice Leroux. Abstraction in dance leads to different forms of 'dis-embodiment': not only the stylisations of the ballerina's body as a sign of weightlessness (as in the romantic ballet), but radical acts of re-coding. It can deconstruct or even erase the body in its more common construction as 'body' – and with the goal to extract it as a sheer medium of movement[11] (Brandstetter, 1995: 366).

Philippe Decoufé's dance film *Codex* should be seen in this tradition of dance. The bodies in it oppose the assumption that they represent 'selves' who perform actions that are psychologically motivated. Even if their shape is vaguely reminiscent of the human body, they also assume animal characteristics. One ought perhaps to describe them in terms of graphic shapes. As such, their headstands in the beginning of the film choreography create an ambivalence – and indifference – between what is up and what is down. They challenge the organic structure of the physical body.[12] Deleuze writes about the figures in Francis Bacon's paintings that they seem to want to 'escape themselves' (2005). Like the bodies in

Codex, Bacon's figures challenge a presupposed organic structure. They refuse to fit in to any pre-given signifying organism. When a body appears in works of art, it immediately becomes subject to various ways of being organised, according to Deleuze and Guattari (2007; see also Deleuze 2005). Not only does the physical organism impose certain limits on the live body – the position of the limbs always structures its appearance in a certain way. Social conventions necessarily govern bodies' artistic depiction, with regard to how they move and dress to mark their age, gender and social position. If these are organisations any body has to deal with, bodies in art are, in addition, subject to the codes and conventions of genre. For works of art, it is still customary to have a meaning. In the performative arts, the body most often depicts this meaning by referring to a human concern. The utopian mission for performing bodies would be to show that these organisations – if perhaps not entirely overcome – can be challenged.

Utopian Potential in Decouflé's *Codex*

Whether the bodies in Decouflé's *Codex* are utopian depends to a large extent on definition. They are if one accepts their expression of a seemingly impossible desire to escape their human organism as a sign of embodied utopianism. In the dance film sequence that I described above the dancer's embodiment of radical difference is affective, experimental and lacks the desire for a different social system. The desire they embody is for difference within their own art form. Decouflé's creative approach suggests to me that desire as a motivation for utopian expression doesn't necessarily manifest itself as a content of 'better' conditions. As indicated earlier it might be not so much the outcome – a certain goal that is the end of a linear progression – as the (process of) change and the novelty of the unknown that characterises utopian desire.[13] Obviously, Decouflé's dance film sequence does not suggest that the world would be a better place if more people walked around with huge fringed flippers and headpieces. What it suggests to me is, rather, the body's suitability as a site for affective expressions of utopian desire. In Decouflé's staging, the synthesis of utopia and the body goes beyond unambiguous physical enhancement. The body, like literature, is a place where conditions can be imagined that differ radically from the everyday. Much as literature has a capacity to imagine and describe utopian worlds, Decouflé's dancers embody a different way of being.

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Notes

[1] Difference from the everyday, but perhaps also difference in itself. For notions of the unsettling, discomforting in utopias see Kraftl, 2007. He writes that poststructuralist writing on utopia has begun to: "disrupt the comforting, stable 'good' of the traditional utopia to imagine spaces that are unknowable, perhaps 'unthinkable'" (125).

[2] A more extended discussion of contemporary utopianism follows below.

[3] We have seen that not even a particular dance technique, to which dancing bodies are often subordinate, takes the ordering function of such a system in *Codex*.

[4] To rigidly dissociate the body from any conceptual – any *intellectual* – mode repeats the Cartesian dualism of *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. Underlying this are persistent residues of the flawed assumption that the mind is free to construct any scenario imaginable, whereas the body is biologically determined. This association of the body with nature and the idealisation of its authentic expression of interiority was cultivated during the Enlightenment.

[5] See Seel who holds that situations of extreme physicality (Seel refers to depictions of sex and violence) are used to add to an illusion of 'presence' in art (2003: 295-323).

[6] It can be argued that utopias have always had the primary function to provoke in their present context.

[7] In considering contemporary utopianism, we must pay attention to yet another change in agency. If the utopian can today be associated with the individual, rather than with the collective, we should bear in mind that the notion of coherent, rational intending individual subjects is in postmodern terms "at worst an illusion, at best a partial truth" (Garforth, 2009: 11). Literary utopias mirror this tendency. The classic utopias rarely made individual bodies visible and rather merged them into a great utopian whole. Contemporary utopian authors like Ursula Le Guin, Joanna Russ, Marge Piercy, Samuel R. Delaney or Dietmar Dath do not only portray individuals, but show them as unstable and fragmented.

[8] See also Foucault's essay on "The corps utopique" in which he initially argues that all utopias must have been created *against* the body – to make it disappear. Towards the end he concludes that to be a utopia one only needs to be a body (2005).

[9] For a more comprehensive reflection on affects in the arts, see also Cull (2012).

[10] Much has been published in this area. For a very selective overview see Brandstetter (2010); McCarren (2003).

[11] But in dancing, a strong tradition of the opposite also exists: Isadora Duncan and Martha Graham's modern dance presents the body as a purveyor of insights into the self. In line with psychoanalytic theory, the underlying assumption is that the body keeps genuine what the mind distorts, making it an ideal representation of the self. As such, the body is expressive and interpretable. And it is always signifying something (the soul/emotion/the unconscious). If the notion of revealing a 'genuinely natural body' is less prevalent in the traditional classical ballet, the dancing body nonetheless is similarly constructed as a figure of unity. Not only is the dancing figure governed from a clear centre of gravity, the movement is ruled by a strict code of smoothly connected movement figures, performed with an unbroken flow. The ballet creates a unity of one movement in relation to the following one; each movement is embedded in its choreographic context (see Brandstetter, 1998: 45).

[12] In a body without organs, Deleuze and Guattari hold, any organ can produce any function (2007: 167).

[13] Kraftl suggests contingency and an open-endedness in utopian action (2007: 126). For an investigation (and questioning) of the necessity of 'intention' for utopian expression, see Garforth, 2009.