

DOUWE FOKKEMA

Perfect Worlds

Utopian Fiction

in China

and the West

乌
托
邦
小
说

PERFECT WORLDS

Douwe Fokkema

Perfect Worlds

Utopian fiction in China and the West

Amsterdam University Press

This book is published in print and online through the online OAPEN library (www.oapen.org).

OAPEN (Open Access Publishing in European Networks) is a collaborative initiative to develop and implement a sustainable Open Access publication model for academic books in the Humanities and Social Sciences. The OAPEN Library aims to improve the visibility and usability of high quality academic research by aggregating peer reviewed Open Access publications from across Europe.



Cover design: Geert de Koning, Ten Post
Lay-out: Adriaan de Jonge, Amsterdam

ISBN 978 90 8964 350 6
e-ISBN 978 90 4851 486 1
NUR 617,635

© D.W. Fokkema / Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2011

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the written permission of both the copyright owner and the author of the book.

Preface

Utopian fiction is arguably the most political of all literary genres and can be studied from a literary as well as a political point of view. Political scientists have taken the vantage point of their own discipline in their studies of utopian designs and projects. However, in my examination of utopian narratives, I have chosen the framework of literary scholarship, assuming, as Ricoeur has done, that narration employs specific strategies of persuasion that expository arguments do not and that the cognitive and emotive effects of narration on the readers' mind differ from those of predominantly rational expositions. In a literary reading, formal devices, such as metaphor and hyperbole, setting and plot, irony and parody, add to the significance of a text. Historical research about the rise and diffusion of a literary genre requires examination of the reception of texts, including creative response, rewriting, and intertextual relations.

Writers of utopian fiction often emphasize the literary tradition to which they wish to belong. They claim a respectable lineage and by doing so underscore the respectability of the genre as well as their own utopian narrative. For instance, Cabet refers in his utopian novel to Rousseau, Campanella, Bacon, Thomas More, and Plato. Wells cites Bellamy, Morris, Cabet, Bacon, and Campanella, and also More and Plato. Skinner mentions a similar list of predecessors, including new names such as Thoreau, Butler, and Hilton. Such tributes to the authors of utopian fiction indicate the awareness of a limited and valuable body of utopian narratives – a “canon” of utopian literature – that have influenced the selection of texts discussed in this book.

In Chinese literature, intertextual references similarly provide a lead for finding interesting utopian texts. Here Confucius' utopia, which can be gleaned from the *Analects*, is a point of departure and has triggered both approbatory and, in modern times, rather critical reactions; the Confucian legacy has been subjected to fundamental criticism in Lu Xun's dystopian narratives. Lao She shows in his *Cat Country* to be indebted to Swift; Lin Yutang refers to Rousseau and Zhuang Zi; Wang Shuo's dystopian fiction ridicules the heroic, indeed utopian, models of Maoist times. As Zhang

Longxi has shown, Tao Yuanming's "Story of Peach Blossom Spring" (c. 400 AD) can be considered the foundational text of the Chinese literary utopian tradition: it has been imitated many times and is still very much part of contemporary cultural memory. Both in China and in the West, the setting and themes of utopian writing further identify the genre.

The intercultural comparison of a particular literary genre involves some methodological problems. This study is based on the consideration that the mental faculty of distinguishing genres is not restricted to Western readers, as appears most clearly from Liu Xie's *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (c. 500 AD). The concept of genre can be considered universal, whereas the various specific literary genres, including utopian fiction, show differences from culture to culture as well as intercultural similarities. The differences derive partly from different successful prototypes: More's *Utopia* (1516) and "The Story of Peach Blossom Spring." By accepting the different appearance of utopian fiction in China and the West, the pitfall of Eurocentrism could be avoided.

I found it attractive to study the interface of literature and politics in utopian fiction. In my early career I was an embassy secretary and chargé d'affaires of the Netherlands diplomatic mission in Beijing during the first two years of the Cultural Revolution, and from 1979 I visited China as a professor of comparative literature about every other year. Decades of literary studies could not erase the memories of the political turbulence of the years 1966-68 and my later visits to China kept me fully interested in more recent and more hopeful political and cultural developments. I appreciate having found a way in this study to combine that more general political interest with concrete comparative literary analysis. The combination led inevitably to a comparison not only of utopian and dystopian writing in China on the one hand and in Europe and America on the other, but, perhaps recklessly, to a comparison of Chinese and Western culture as well.

When rendering quotations from foreign language texts into English I made use of existing English translations as much as possible. Where no published English translation is mentioned, the translations from French, German, Dutch, Russian, and Chinese sources are mine.

I am indebted to numerous colleagues and friends for their help and advice. In particular I wish to thank Jan den Boeft (Leiden) for his translation of the Latin text by Isaac Vossius, Gerd Labrousse (Berlin) for providing me with documentation about national socialist fiction, Zhou Shaoyi (Beijing) for kindly sending me a copy of the Chinese edition of Wang Shuo's *Please Don't Call Me Human*, Wang Lei (Anshan) for informing me about the

many Chinese translations of Hilton's *Lost Horizon*, and Chen Xiaomei (Ohio) for sharing her ideas about Occidentalism. Others encouraged my research on Chinese literature and culture by inviting me to teach in China, such as Yue Daiyun (Beijing), Wang Ning (Tsinghua), and Cao Shunqing (Chengdu). I am indebted also to Tao Dongfeng (Beijing), Henry Zhao (Zhao Yiheng, Chengdu), Zhang Longxi (Hong Kong), Zhang Xiaohong (Shenzhen), Ji Jin (Suzhou), Lisa Block de Behar (Montevideo), and Stefan Landsberger (Amsterdam and Leiden).

However, most of all I wish to thank Elrud Ibsch, my wife and ever-loyal first reader; without her patience and support the book would not have been completed. I also owe a large debt of gratitude to my daughter Aleid Fokkema of Lighthouse texts, who accurately and professionally corrected the American English style used in this book.

Finally, I am indebted to the two reviewers who were asked by the publisher to read the manuscript. Their generous and pertinent commentaries led me to make some necessary corrections. I also thank Amsterdam University Press for seeing the book through the production process with diligence and academic expertise as well as Ed Hatton for his pertinent editorial comments.

Douwe Fokkema
Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature
Utrecht University

March 2011

Acknowledgements

Quotations from Confucius, *The Analects (Lun yü)*, translated with an introduction by D.C. Lau, copyright © D.C. Lau, 1979; quotations from Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, translated by Ronald Wilks, copyright translation and notes © Ronald Wilks, 2009; quotations from *Mencius*, translated with an introduction by D.C. Lau, copyright © D.C. Lau, 1970; quotations from Thomas More, *Utopia*, translated with an introduction by Paul Turner, copyright translation © Paul Turner, 1965, 2003; quotations from Plato, *The Republic*, translated with an introduction by Desmond Lee, 2nd edition, copyright © H.D.P. Lee 1955, 1974, 1987; quotations from Marco Polo, *The Travels*, translated with an introduction by Ronald Latham, copyright © Ronald Latham, 1958; quotations from Ivan Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons*, translated by Rosemary Edmonds, copyright © Rosemary Edmonds, 1965; quotations from Voltaire, *Candide or Optimism*, translated by John Butt, copyright © John Butt, 1947, are reproduced by kind permission of Penguin Group UK.

Quotations from Richard Hare, *Maxim Gorky: Romantic Realist and Conservative Revolutionary*, 67w from pp. 122-123, copyright © Oxford University Press, 1962; quotations from Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Devils*, translated by Michael R. Katz, 211w from pp. 263-264, 320, 426, 429-430, 692, copyright © Michael R. Katz and Oxford University Press, 1992, are reprinted by kind permission of Oxford University Press (www.oup.com).

Quotations from Ursula Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*, copyright © Ursula Le Guin, 1974; quotations from Michel Houellebecq, *The Possibility of an Island*, translated from the French by Gavin Bowd, copyright of the translation © Gavin Bowd, 2005, are reprinted by kind permission of Orion Publishing Group Ltd.

I am indebted to these publishers, as well as to those who considered my quotations fair use.

Attempts have been made to approach all holders of copyright material quoted in this book. However, not all of them could be traced. In case of any oversights please contact the author (www.douwefokkema.nl).

Contents

- Preface 5
Acknowledgements 9
- 1 Introduction 15
Utopian fiction in times of crisis 16
Secularization 19
Dystopia versus eutopia 19
Cultural differences and the opposite development of Chinese and European utopian thinking 22
Narration and description 26
- 2 The Utopia of Thomas More 31
Where Thomas More corrected Plato 43
- 3 From Rational Eutopia to Grotesque Dystopia 49
The discovery of the sciences: Campanella and Bacon 49
Fools in a world upside-down: Joseph Hall 61
Debunking the pursuit of eutopia: Mandeville 69
Internalized utopia: Swift 72
- 4 Interlude: The Island Syndrome from Atlantis to Lanzarote and Penglai 83
The changing European tradition 83
The setting of Chinese utopias 91
- 5 Enlightenment Utopias 95
Relativism versus utopianism 95
Voltaire's globalist metaphors 100
Candide 104
The Princess of Babylonia 108
The discovery of sentiment 113
The supremacy of virtue over nature 118
The invention of progress 124

- 6 Orientalism: European Writers Searching for Utopia in China 135
Is Marco Polo's China a utopia? Calvino's answer 135
Confucianism in Krinke Kesmes 139
The Enlightenment philosophers on China and Voltaire's L'Orphelin de la Chine 145
Goethe, Hesse, Brecht, and the "pure Orient" 150
Shangri-La 156
- 7 Chinese Philosophers and Writers Constructing Their Own Utopias 165
The Confucian concept of perfect virtue 166
Mencius' commentary and additions 172
Daoist metaphysics at odds with utopianism 177
Peach Blossom Spring 180
Flowers in the Mirror, or eutopia as illusion 184
- 8 Small-Scale Socialist Experiments, or "The New Jerusalem in Duodecimo" 195
Cabet's Voyage en Icarie 196
Souvestre's dystopian view of progress 203
Engels's criticism of utopian socialism and the perspective of a Marxist utopia 207
- 9 Chernyshevsky's *What Is to Be Done?* and Dostoevsky's Dystopian Foresight 211
Utopian rationality in What Is to Be Done? 211
Dostoevsky's Notes from Underground 219
Nihilism in Fathers and Sons: Pisarev's and Chernyshevsky's interpretations 223
The dystopian consequences of nihilism in Devils 226
- 10 When Socialist Utopianism Meets Politics ... 233
Morris's aesthetic utopia 233
The spirit of music of the new humankind: Herman Gorter 239
- 11 Bellamy's Solidarity and Its Feminist Mirror Image in *Herland* 255
Looking Backward and the Nationalist movement 256
Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Herland 265
- 12 Chinese Occidentalism: The Nostalgia for a Utopian Past Gives Way to the Idea of Progress 271
The Taiping Rebellion and the threat of Western colonization 272

	<i>Kang Youwei and the Reform Movement</i>	276
	<i>Kang Youwei's essay on utopia</i>	278
	<i>The May Fourth Movement, political turbulence, and the dystopian response</i>	280
13	H.G. Wells and the Modern Utopia	289
	A Modern Utopia <i>and Men Like Gods</i>	290
	<i>Was Wells a socialist?</i>	297
14	Dystopian Fiction in the Soviet Union, Proletkult, and Socialist-Realist Utopianism	301
	<i>The plot of Zamyatin's We</i>	303
	<i>Absurdism contra Proletkult and Socialist Realism</i>	310
	<i>The Heart of a Dog by Mikhail Bulgakov</i>	314
	<i>Platonov's Foundation Pit, or failed utopianism</i>	316
15	Mao Zedong's Utopian Thought and the Post-Mao Imaginative Response	321
	<i>Mao's utopian dreams and their calamitous realization</i>	321
	<i>The Chinese interpretation of socialist realism: Revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism</i>	324
	<i>The model-soldiers and model-workers of the 1960s</i>	327
	<i>Rediscovering the imagination</i>	330
	<i>Lin Yutang's syncretist utopia</i>	333
	<i>Wang Shuo's political dystopia</i>	338
16	Utopias, Dystopias, and Their Hybrid Variants in Europe and America since World War I	345
	<i>Technological and political anti-utopias: From Huxley and Orwell to Borges and Perec, Bradbury and Atwood</i>	347
	<i>Attempts at eutopian fiction: Skinner and Huxley</i>	370
	<i>Ambiguous utopias: Le Guin, Le Clézio, and others</i>	383
	<i>The ambiguity of Houellebecq's Possibility of an Island</i>	387
17	Concluding Observations	399
	References	411
	Subject Index	431
	Index of Names	441

I

Introduction

“I venture to think that without these idealists practical people would be in a much worse plight than they now are; they would have but a dull history of the past, a poor life in the present, and no hope for the future.”

—William Morris, 1886

Among humankind no urge seems stronger than the desire for a better world. From Thomas More’s *Utopia* or even earlier, from Plato’s *Republic*, from the chiliastic dreams of Christianity, or Confucius’ concept of a harmonious society, to the recent fictional representation of a world of cloned humans by Michel Houellebecq, human beings have been thinking of alternatives to their present life with its misery, want, and worries. There is no reason for assuming that the representation of such imagined worlds will ever come to a halt.

The combination of desire and imagination has pushed the shape of these other worlds into varying directions. Different from the bucolic idyll and the fairy tale, utopian fiction offers an alternative society that, in addition to being attractive, could be realized in principle. The utopian narrative teaches us how to live; it is always more or less didactic. It does not simply indulge in wishful thinking or fantasy, but includes details about the political and economic aspects of society, notably in the European variant of the genre. Yet it differs from the political tract and party program, which aim at short-term change, as it may make a great leap forward into an imagined future that still may be hundreds of years away.

In order to be convincing it will tell about a secluded world, uncontaminated by the evils of contemporary life. Usually it begins with a journey to an island or an inaccessible mountain range, to some imaginary country or another planet, or into faraway times. Utopian fiction is a genre that clearly depends on our willingness to accept the improbable setting. Thus it calls for a robust activation of the literary convention originally defined by Coleridge as the “willing suspension of disbelief” (1907: vol. 2, 6). Writers of utopian narratives therefore affirm their literary lineage rather ostenta-

tiously by way of explicit intertextual relations, such as Huxley referring to Shakespeare, Swift and Wells to More and Plato, Houellebecq to Wells, Lao She to Swift, Lin Yutang to Rousseau and Zhuang Zi. Usually the plot of positive utopias (or eutopias) ends in a kind of conversion; and that of negative or anti-utopian fiction (or dystopias) in the protagonist's escape or his/her suppression. In addition, the genre makes room for explicit explanation, often in the form of a dialogue between outsider and insider, and in such discussions the characteristics of an ideal society are related, including ethical and social issues. Despite the distance in space and time separating the setting of utopian narratives from the world we live in, utopian fiction's social and moral implications are pertinent to our present condition. Modern utopias refer to live topics such as overpopulation and overorganization, inequality, oppression, and lack of purpose; whereas marriage and sexual relations, eugenics and euthanasia, and questions of common or private property discussed in older works are as relevant now as they were then.

It is generally assumed that in Europe the genre of utopian fiction goes back to Thomas More. His *Utopia* (1516) was partly inspired by issues discussed in Plato's *Republic*, but he was mainly motivated by the social, political, and religious conditions of his own days. Appearing only twenty-four years after Columbus had set foot on American soil, the novel described an apparently perfect society on an island near the Brazilian coast. More's *Utopia* laid the foundation for a long tradition of utopian fiction in modern Europe, as may be concluded from the numerous references to his work in later texts. Fortunati and Trousson have good reasons for taking More's *Utopia* as their point of departure in their invaluable *Dictionary of Literary Utopias* (2000).

Utopian fiction in times of crisis

In my discussion of utopian fiction I will be guided by *four hypotheses*. The first one pertains to the cultural and historical conditions favorable for the writing and reception of utopian fiction: *writers resort to inventing and sketching a better society, or what they consider as such, in moments of crisis, that is, when dominant ideologies can no longer answer the needs of the day*. In Europe, the early sixteenth century constituted such a moment. Various well-known factors, which can only be summarily indicated here, demanded a complete re-orientation in philosophy, religion, politics, literature, and the arts:

- The rediscovery of classical antiquity and a philosophical tradition that was a challenge to the monopoly of Christianity, thus giving rise to critical self-reflection and a Renaissance in thought and the arts;
- The discovery of other continents and reports about (until then) unknown, faraway countries where people were living under completely different conditions;
- The Reformation and the rise of Protestant denominations, which challenged the position of the Roman Catholic Church and made religious belief in principle a matter of choice;
- The wide use of the printing press and the improved distribution of books, which shaped an audience of independent readers who were interested not only in religious matters but also in secular knowledge about the organization of social and political life and in scientific experiments.

These mutually reinforcing developments were certainly not welcomed by all. In fact, many observers in those days found them disturbing, even more so since their consequences were aggravated by dissension, persecution, and war. A fundamental renewal of sociopolitical structures was required in order to cope with religious intolerance or redefine the position of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as to meet the challenge of political awareness among larger groups of people and demands for a fairer treatment of the native inhabitants in the new colonies. The need for original thought about a more satisfactory polity made More's *Utopia*, Campanella's *City of the Sun* (*Civitas solis*, 1623), Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), and subsequent utopian narratives more than an abstract fancy.

The wave of these imaginative experiments with ideal political structures and exemplary ways of life soon was met with skeptical criticism from Mandeville, Swift, Montesquieu, Voltaire, and others who, while resorting to varying arguments, doubted that a perfect society could ever materialize in this world. It was what Jonathan Israel calls the radical Enlightenment that gave another boost to the writing of utopian fiction in the second half of the eighteenth century. Skepticism about the sources of revealed religion, the exposure to other valuable religious and moral traditions than Christianity, and the more or less straightforward consideration of atheism and materialism contributed to a situation in which the Judeo-Christian millenarianist prophecy of a thousand-year reign of peace was increasingly challenged by a secularized concept of history that allowed for gradual progress on the basis of rational human efforts. The utopian community established by the nonreligious Wolmar, as described in Rousseau's other-

wise ambivalent novel *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), is a case in point. In *L'An 2440* (1771, *The Year 2440*) Louis-Sébastien Mercier went one step further by situating his utopia in the future and in familiar France, not in some kind of secluded area, as if the perfect society was within reach of the coming generations who were to be guided by the principles of equality, toleration, and reason. In his *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (1795, *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*), Condorcet provided a philosophical justification of the utopianists' confidence in the future.

The nonreligious doctrine of historical progress that replaced the Judeo-Christian millenarianist tradition enabled Mercier and others to project their eutopian designs into foreseeable future times. The secular paradigm of progress was a correlative to the philosophical and political movement that led to the French Revolution. It suffered setbacks but survived the schism between the Girondins and the Jacobins, the Napoleonic Empire, and the subsequent Restoration under Louis XVIII, to remain a guiding principle well into the nineteenth century. Even today, the political credo of most governments is built on the expectation of future improvement and progress. Confidence in the possibility of a future eutopia appears most clearly from *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), with its promise of a classless society. Marx and Engels were inspired by utopian thinkers such as Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Owen, as well as by Cabet's novel *Voyage en Icarie* (1840, *Travels in Icaria*), though they were highly critical about utopian ideals that had no basis in historical materialism and its main tenet of the class struggle.

In China the political and cultural crisis of the late nineteenth century effected the abdication of the Qing emperor and the proclamation of the Republic, the abolition of the Confucian examination system, the introduction of the vernacular as a means of written intellectual communication, and a confrontation with and often acceptance of Western philosophical and literary ideas notably at the time of the May Fourth Movement of 1919. This landslide of cultural change also called for utopian thinking, expressed in political programs as well as in eutopian and dystopian fiction.

I will abstain now from attempting to argue that at present the world is in a similar philosophical and ideological crisis as in sixteenth-century Europe or during the transition from Imperial to Republican China. The question whether we now live in a juncture of relative instability and radical change calling for an upsurge of utopian writing will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

Secularization

The second hypothesis that serves as a landmark in my argument concerns the process of secularization, briefly indicated above and understood as a backing away from indisputable, in the sense of unfalsifiable, religious persuasion. In cultures dominated by revealed religious dogma there is no room for a radical rethinking of the structure of society. The insuppressible desire for a better world is channeled into ethical obligations dictated by religious tradition and expectations of immortal happiness in the hereafter. Dreams about a blissful life after death may in some respects resemble a eutopian condition, such as in the story of Ibrahim as told in Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* (discussed in chapter 5), but have no effect on earthly reality. Religiously inspired moral behavior may enhance social well-being, but is usually not strong enough to plan and materialize a eutopian society, with the possible exception of the monasteries and convents of religious orders that are, however, in the view of most people, not as attractive as they look in the abstract.

Dreams of entering paradise after death preempt the utopian impulse, as was also argued by Kumar (1987). Zhang Longxi (2002) has convincingly shown that utopianism flourished in a secularized context in China as well. Confucianism, as expressed in the *Analects* (*Lunyu*), is primarily concerned with secular matters in contradistinction to Daoism, which tends to avoid the realities of politics and socioeconomic organization. Chinese utopias appear to fit in with the secular Confucian tradition. This leads to my second hypothesis, that is, that *we will see an upsurge of utopian narratives among writers who have emancipated themselves from revealed religion*. By extension, I will argue that the emancipation from the unfalsifiable tenets of any given ideology which in its claim to truth resembles religious dogma may have similar consequences, though strictly speaking the term secularization does not apply here. Whenever we witness moments of emancipation from unfalsifiable truth, we may look for and probably will find eutopian or dystopian fiction.

Dystopia versus eutopia

The opposition between eutopia and dystopia serves as another guideline in this study. Although some dystopian writing can be found in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it came to full development only under

the harsh regimes of the Communists and the Nazis, which aimed at solidifying eutopian fictions into real-life model states, but with completely adverse results.

In the case of the Communist nations, it is tragic to observe that eutopian ideals were used as political instruments for amassing power but that, once Communist power was established, political pragmatists came to the fore to sidetrack and persecute the idealists who had remained loyal to the original eutopian perspective. Under Communist rule utopianism became a dirty word. The pertinence of the saying that the revolution devours its children, manifest during the French Revolution, was confirmed in the years after the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917; and again after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, notably at the time of the Cultural Revolution. The unmistakably eutopian flavor of socialist-realist fiction could never be called utopian by literary critics loyal to the Communist regime in the Soviet Union or China. They rather emphasized the realist perspective of these works.

Soon after the Bolshevik victory, Zamyatin wrote his dystopian novel *We* (*My*, 1920-21, published later outside the Soviet Union). Responding to the dictatorship of the proletariat, Zamyatin showed the absurdity of a perverted Communist idealism. Mikhail Bulgakov and Andrei Platonov in Russia, George Orwell in England, and many others followed his example. There is a fundamental difference between eutopian and dystopian fiction, although both are considered branches of the utopian genre. Eutopian narratives propose nearly always an attractive abstraction, are set in faraway times or places, and exist only in the imagination. Dystopian writing, however, is usually inspired by a dreadful sociopolitical reality; in fact, its anti-utopian bias is often directed against a half-way materialized, perverted eutopia (see chapter 14).

Though ideologically much less developed than Marxism, Nazi utopianism, which was based on the cult of youth and strength, racial prejudice, the supremacy of the Führer, and totalitarian government, was also instrumental in establishing a quasi-model state. The abject consequences of Nazi ideology were subjected to devastating criticism in Georges Perec's novel *W ou le souvenir d'enfance* (1975, *W or the Memory of Childhood*) and other texts (chapter 16).

The distinction between eutopia and dystopia cannot be made mechanically and shifts with the subjective position of writer and reader. The Nazi regime was a perversion from beginning to end, in theory and in practice, and must have appeared eutopian only to a few blind people and

their misled followers. Percey described it as a dystopia. Similarly, what Communist militants saw as a long way to a eutopian society was dystopian misery in Zamyatin's or Platonov's view. Also in less obvious cases the terms eutopian and dystopian can be used variously, depending on the judgment of the speaker. For a long time many readers considered the society described in Plato's *Republic* a eutopia, but more recently, partly under the influence of Karl Popper's sharp analysis, many critics have come to believe that Plato's argument in favor of the abolition of family life, regulated promiscuity, eugenics, and communal – as opposed to individual – happiness precludes an affirmative judgment. For many modern readers the ideal society in Plato's *Republic* is not ideal at all, and therefore dystopian rather than eutopian. Similarly, the lack of free movement of individual citizens on the island described in More's *Utopia*, though not considered a noticeable detail in previous ages, is a dystopian blemish in the eyes of contemporary readers.

As to the semantic opposition of eutopia and dystopia, it is advisable to use the two terms, which imply a value judgment, only in relation to the known or assumed position of the writer or reader. What one may consider eutopian, the other may call dystopian, and vice versa. This is why I will often prefer the more neutral term “utopian.”

In view of the rather late rise of what is generally considered dystopian fiction, my third hypothesis is that *the closer we are to the practice of political structuralization and social engineering, including the realization of eutopian principles, the greater the chance that we will see an increase of dystopian writing that aims to expose the adverse results of any good intention.* The hypothesis finds support in the overwhelming production of dystopian fiction in the last hundred years, certainly in Europe, but also in China. A well-known example of Chinese dystopian narrative of the 1930s is Lao She's *Cat Country*. In 1989 Wang Shuo wrote his unsurpassed satire of Maoist voluntarist ideology and the cultivation of heroic models, translated as *Please Don't Call Me Human*; the novel was first published in Taiwan, but appeared later also in the People's Republic. Su Tong's *My Life as Emperor* (1992) can be read as a grim, dystopian story of imperial court life in an undetermined past (chapters 12 and 15).

Cultural differences and the opposite development of Chinese and European utopian thinking

Ever since Marco Polo, philosophers in Europe have been intrigued by traditional Chinese civilization, which developed independently from European intervention and achieved a level of political organization, economic prosperity, and cultural splendor that in medieval and early modern times surpassed European conditions in many respects. Because of its relative isolation and autonomous development, Chinese culture cannot be adequately described in terms derived from Western categories without some qualification. Even the most general concepts, such as those of time and space, connote different meanings in Imperial China and the West. As I shall argue, these rather basic differences have their correlative in different worldviews.

When in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries first-hand knowledge of China became available in Europe, partly as a result of commercial relations and partly through reports from Jesuit missionaries (Zürcher 1995), philosophers such as Isaac Vossius, Pierre Bayle, William Temple, Leibniz, and Voltaire were highly positive about Chinese philosophy and polity. China was a hot topic in the Enlightenment debate, which included, for instance, a discussion of the question whether or not Confucianism recognized a supreme divinity. Bayle considered China's philosophy and government as essentially atheistic, but Voltaire disagreed (Israel 2006). The debate, in which many philosophers, notably in Holland, England, France, and Germany participated, touched on various related questions, such as whether Confucian doctrine allowed for a Last Judgment and life in the afterworld.

When some philosophers, following Bayle, concluded that Confucianism was atheistic, they were confronted with the problem of how an atheistic philosophy could yield a virtuous morality, for almost everyone in early-eighteenth-century Europe was convinced of the high level of moral life and government in contemporaneous China. However, it would be embarrassing to the Roman Catholic authorities to acknowledge that somewhere else in the world a highly developed virtuous society could exist that ignored the existence of a supreme divinity. For in that case, religion could easily be considered superfluous. The Roman Catholic Church finally rejected the idea of virtuous atheism, judging that the Chinese were both atheists *and* lacked respectable morality. This view was reflected in the official condemnation of Confucianism by the Sorbonne in 1700 (Harrison 1990: 137-138; Israel 2006: 648).

It is extremely difficult to establish whether Confucianism, in its various historical varieties, allows for a providential God. The Confucian and Christian worldviews, based on different concepts of time and space, simply do not match. The Confucian concept of historical time differs strikingly from its Judeo-Christian counterpart. On the one hand, China had a strict calendar time based on astronomical observation. The lunisolar calendar provided a basis for the cyclical experience of time, which in combination with other theories of change yielded various forms of dynastic legitimation (Twitchett and Loewe 1986). On the other hand, historical feats accomplished by valiant kings or the wisdom of ancient sages remained part of a collective memory, usually without a precise indication of chronological data. History consisted of memorable precedents, including records of a blissful life resembling the perfect society that European writers contrived in their utopian imagination. Confucian utopianism looked backward for a past of wise rulers, peace, and affluence. It is undeniably *nostalgic*, though, as Zhang Longxi (2002) argues, the virtuous behavior of the ancestors may become a source of inspiration for building a more perfect society in the present.

The cultural differences between China and the West are largely of a conventional nature, but those that are related to the notion of space can be elucidated by referring to the different geophysical settings of Chinese and European culture. The origins of European culture were concentrated around the Mediterranean, with major cities not far from the coast. Separated by sea, the civilizations of Egypt, Phoenicia, Crete, Athens, and Rome each had their own, clearly recognizable identity. The clear distinction of land and sea was thrust upon everyone's mind and, I presume, enhanced other sharp distinctions, such as in philosophical and religious conceptualizations – allowing for hairsplitting discussions about the existence of a personal or providential God and other theological questions. China is known as the Kingdom of the Middle, or Central Kingdom(s), which is the literal translation of *Zhongguo*, the name for China in Chinese. It is a continental civilization with its successive historic capitals at a considerable distance from the sea. The power of the Son of Heaven reached to the borders of the empire, which were always relative and porous and marked by a range of principalities that strictly speaking did not belong to the empire, but were paying tribute to the imperial court, thus fostering the politico-cultural idea that all people under heaven respected the authority of the emperor. The Chinese concept of space is diffuse and undivided. In a discussion of the relation between the geographical setting and cultural identity

of China and the West, Hua Shiping (2009) argues along more or less similar lines.

The Chinese concept of space affected the idea of utopia as much as the backward-looking concept of history did. The all-inclusive notion of space rather precludes the imagining of a utopia – literally meaning “no-place” – except in a supernatural world of spirits and fairies. An early Chinese text that closely resembles the European genre of utopian fiction is “The Story of Peach Blossom Spring” (“Taohua yuan ji”) by Tao Yuanming (365-427). If the story evinces a utopia, it is one situated *within* the Chinese empire, though hard to locate. However, the brief description of this utopia is not in any way specific about its social structure or economic organization: it describes a simple, idyllic, and rustic way of life rather than the political and economic dimensions of a perfect society, going back in time and recalling the peaceful times and wise government of an earlier dynasty (see chapter 7).

Here we touch on a basic difference between the European and Chinese theoretical views on government. In the Confucian tradition, a perfect society is created by virtuous behavior, respect for the natural order of things, worship of the ancestors, and traditional ritual. Perfection can be reached through an exemplary moral attitude of both the ruler and his subjects, not by means of political and economic measures imposed on the people. Confucius (551-479 BCE) emphasized the harmonious relation of the individual with the universe and offered, in the interpretation of most of his followers, a predominantly secular moral philosophy, not a political theory. In the *Analects* he covered more or less similar ground as Montaigne, the sixteenth-century agnostic French philosopher, but he did not reflect on the balanced organization of government, a topic central in the work of Montesquieu two centuries later. The neglect of political theory remained a striking feature of Confucianism up to the late nineteenth century.

Since Confucianism did not show much interest in political and economic details, it is not surprising that Chinese utopian fiction lacked that interest as well and restricted itself to the representation of pastoral, virtuous, or mystical bliss. The continuous predominance of Confucianism restrained any deviation from the *Peach Blossom Spring* model. If More’s *Utopia* is the prototype of European utopian fiction, “The Story of Peach Blossom Spring” is that of the Chinese utopian narratives.

The continuity of the Confucianist state ideology coinciding with the equally continuous traditions of Daoism and Buddhism, both offering a metaphysical escape from the severe Confucian moral and social strictures,

precluded a deep cultural crisis in China comparable to that of sixteenth-century Europe or the incisive effects of the French Revolution until the late nineteenth century. The transition from Imperial to Republican China had been prepared by translations of European and American authors and political reform movements, such as those initiated by Kang Youwei, Sun Yat-sen, and others. The cultural crisis that resulted from the sudden confrontation with Japanese and Western modernization called for a mental reorientation that found expression in political action as well as literary writing, including utopian fiction.

Darwin and Marx were feverishly studied in China, with about equal zeal as in the West. Around the turn of the century the concepts of evolution and progress entered Chinese discourse to become, from the mid-twentieth century, absorbed in historical-materialist terminology. After the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, “progress” was increasingly interpreted in strictly economic terms. As any reader of newspapers knows, in recent years China’s economic growth rates have well exceeded those of Europe and America.

Whereas the pragmatic materialism of the Western capitalist model is more clearly visible in present-day China than anywhere else, the Western world appears to relativize its own economic achievements by embracing values inherent in Chinese and other Asian traditions, such as respect for the natural environment and concern with stability and immaterial well-being. As a corollary, various manifestations of popular mysticism and philosophy in the West have been inspired by Daoism and Buddhism. Traces of admiration for Eastern wisdom can be found in Western utopian fiction, such as Hilton’s immensely popular *Lost Horizon* (1933), Hesse’s *Das Glasperlenspiel* (1943, *The Glass Bead Game*), Huxley’s *Island* (1962), Houellebecq’s *La Possibilité d’une île* (2005, *The Possibility of an Island*), or indeed many other utopian novels.

It would of course go much too far to consider present-day Western culture as the guardian of traditional Chinese values, but it cannot be denied that while China is imitating rampant capitalism, the West has begun to emphasize immaterial values that happen to coincide with the Chinese philosophical tradition. Chinese culture has absorbed Western economic materialism and Western culture has assimilated basic values of the Chinese – Confucianist as well as Daoist and Buddhist – tradition. These opposite developments attest to the duplicity of globalization. In the West, various eutopian novels are inspired by oriental, including Chinese, culture, whereas dystopian fiction in China recalls the dystopian narratives of *Brave*

New World and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This admittedly rather schematic framework leads to my fourth hypothesis: *Chinese and European utopian fictions have gone through opposite historical developments*. The elaboration of this view in later chapters must show whether it can be maintained.

Narration and description

Utopian fiction is motivated by a desire for a better world. It sketches a society that is different from the reality we live in, yet pertains to that reality which it aims to change and improve. This concept of utopia coincides with that of Mannheim (1966) and Ricoeur (1986): different from the idyll or fairy tale, which are like dreams without any pertinent relation to reality, there is in utopian fiction always a sense of the real world, which serves as a counterfoil. Utopian fiction is also different from mere critical satire, because the utopian imagination designs an alternative way of life that ideally could replace the prevailing order of things.

The balance between narration and description is somewhat precarious in utopian writing. A guide may appear in such fictions who serves to explain the sociopolitical organization of the nation or community, but he or she often lapses into long and tedious expositions without any action or expression of individual emotion. Too much of such description makes the text into an essay rather than a story. In More's *Utopia*, Raphael Hythlodæus reports on what he supposedly has seen in the ideal society of Utopia, but he had hardly participated in it, except for some minor activities such as teaching Greek to the Utopians. In order to persuade his readers that the inhabitants of Utopia really are living a happy life, More should have added some introspective views or stories of the interaction between various characters, such as Wells, Huxley, Houellebecq, and others have done in modern times. A larger dose of fictional imagination would have resulted in a more persuasive account of people's happiness than simply by reiterating how pleasant their life was.

Narration, however, may offer some access to the inner feelings of individual characters, either by way of interior monologue or by relating the interaction with other individuals. Montesquieu writes in *Lettres persanes* that there are certain truths that do not convince if one relies on abstract reason alone. Those are the moral truths, which can be elucidated by telling a story. Or, in his own words: "il y a certaines vérités qu'il ne suffit pas de persuader, mais qu'il faut encore faire sentir. Telles sont les vérités de morale"

(Montesquieu 1956: 22). The question of happiness is a moral problem as well as one of sentiment, which both can best be explored in narratives.

The discussion of moral problems requires a particular point of view and reflection on one's attitude toward others. Narration provides a framework for such discussion, both in historiography and in fiction; but utopian morality, being different from what historical reality can offer, must be expressed in *fictional* narrative. This also applies to Chinese nostalgic utopianism, which in harking back to historical times adds a kind of idealization of the historical conditions that makes the narratives into attractive fictions. For probing the sentiment of assumedly happy individuals in an imagined utopia the device of fiction is indispensable. Thus I agree with Ricoeur's observation that "it may be part of the literary strategy of utopia to aim at persuading the reader by the rhetorical means of fiction" (Ricoeur 1986: 270).

Although he knows that there is a wide variety of themes in utopian fiction and hesitates to enumerate them, Ricoeur sees "a recurrence of themes about the family, property, consumption, social and political organization, institutionalized religion, and so on" (270). Utopian fiction sketches not only a perfect society, but also the individuals' well-being. Therefore, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, many utopian novels focus on problems of marriage and sexual relations, eugenics and euthanasia, and most important of all, the significance of life, which several writers interpreted as the realization of a long life, without paying much attention to the question of its significance. The prolongation of life was, for instance, part of the research program of Salomon's House in Bacon's *New Atlantis*, which was subsequently ridiculed by Swift. Julian Barnes wrote an eerie, devastating critique of eternal life in heaven that remains without any lasting personal satisfaction ("The Dream," in Barnes 1990). Nevertheless, longevity is a recurrent theme in several utopian novels, notably in James Hilton's *Lost Horizon*. It is also a dominant issue in Daoist mysticism.

There is a kind of permanent dialogue among writers of utopian fiction about whether individual or collective happiness is to be preferred. Plato focused on the latter, and so did More, and to some extent also Bacon. In modern times the emphasis shifts to individual happiness with Huxley's *Island* and Houellebecq's *Possibility of an Island*. H. G. Wells, in his various novels, tried to steer a middle course. The political organization of collective happiness under Communist rule called for a dystopian reaction motivated by a search for individual freedom. In all utopian writing there is a more or less explicit opposition between collective and individual bliss, except perhaps in Chinese utopias where, if I may generalize at this point, the

distinction between the collective and the individual appears to be expressed in less sharp tones.

Stock narrative devices in utopian writing, such as the journey to an island and the dialogues between insider and outsider, also include the use of a general structural technique, which consists of the inverse representation of things. This is an old device, related to play and carnival. Curtius (1990: 95) traces it back to the Greek poet Archilochus (7th century BCE) and the early-fourth-century BCE plays *Parliament of Women* (*Ecclesiazusai*) and *God of Wealth* (*Ploutos*) by Aristophanes. The formal principle of stringing together impossibilities became the topos of a world upside-down. In *Another World and Yet the Same*, Joseph Hall, inspired by Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*, applied the device rather consistently, often in a dystopian perspective, most clearly in his description of a country dominated by women. The whole idea of Amazon warriors and female roles for their men relies on the topos of a world upside-down, which perhaps can be considered an anthropological constant since it can be found not only in Occidental sources but also in traditional Chinese culture. A Chinese representation of an inverse world appears in *Flowers in the Mirror* (*Jing hua yuan*, 1828) by Li Ruzhen, which in several chapters describes men dressed like women and taking care of the home, while women behave like men and manage affairs outside it. As we will see, the novel is an interesting specimen of the genre of Chinese utopian fiction: one of the main themes of the novel is the Daoist search for immortality, a utopian quest that combines with social criticism (see chapter 7).

Several structural principles and a number of thematic preferences constitute the genre of utopian fiction. However, each utopian story has its own identity and offers access to individual experiences. Narration succeeds where the generalities of description fail. It is a platitude to say – but true nevertheless – that of all the fifty-two volumes of Voltaire's *Oeuvres complètes* almost only his fiction is still being read, and of this mainly *Candide*, a witty satirical variant of the utopian narrative that ends with making the reader feel the joy of cultivating one's garden.

There are ups and downs in the history of utopian fiction. I pointed already to the link between the awareness of a cultural crisis and the rise of utopian fiction. In his influential study *Ideology and Utopia* Karl Mannheim sees another trend, notably at the level of politics. In the history of utopian thinking he observes a gradual decline of radical religion-based chiliastic utopias and a mitigation of the incongruity between utopian designs and the social reality in which they have been conceived. In recent times,

Mannheim argues, the distance between social reality and utopia has decreased to being almost nonexistent, at least in politics; this development is supposedly due to parliamentary democracy, which compels different parties to accept compromise and small-scale improvements.

Mannheim observes in Europe “the complete disappearance of all reality-transcending doctrines – utopian as well as ideological” (1966: 229). The same view can surprisingly be found in the earlier edition of *Ideology and Utopia* of 1936, and even in the German version of 1929. Mannheim anticipated Lyotard’s (1979) pronouncement on the end of ideology and Fukuyama’s (1992) prognosis of the universal victory of liberal democracy by several decades. He also preceded Popper’s anti-utopian argument in favor of “piecemeal social engineering” (1971: 1), first phrased in the 1940s, which resembles the gradual and small-scale improvements Mannheim expects in a parliamentary democracy. However, Mannheim’s observation was premature, if not wholly wrong, in view of the role of Communist ideology in the Soviet Union, the rise of National Socialism in Germany in the 1930s, and the persistent presence of religious fundamentalism and its chiliastic dreams. Lyotard and Fukuyama have also been duly criticized. Given the undeniable significance of new ideologies, such as multiculturalism, feminism, global economic materialism, and environmentalism, Lyotard’s and Fukuyama’s signaling the end of ideological competition is unconvincing. Popper’s argument against *all* utopian thinking without distinguishing between its various manifestations was equally ill-founded, as we will see in chapter 2.

Mannheim describes changes in the historical context of utopian thinking but pays no attention to literature. He deals with the conditions of political utopias in Europe and concludes that utopian thinking was replaced by a sociopsychological focus on human drives and morality. Early traces of this trend, Mannheim avers, can be seen in the writings of the eighteenth-century English philosopher David Hume, whose *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* he quotes at length. Hume’s universalist, empirical conception of human nature appears incompatible with utopianism. Human beings have always remained the same, Hume argues, implying that they also will not change under any utopian conditions or, as Mannheim (1966: 230) quotes:

It is universally acknowledged that there is a great uniformity among the actions of men, in all nations and ages, and that human nature remains still the same, in its principles and operations. The same motives always

produce the same actions. The same events always follow from the same causes. Ambition, avarice, self-love, vanity, friendship, generosity, public spirit: these passions, mixed in various degrees, and distributed through society, have been from the beginning of the world, and still are, the source of all the actions and enterprises which have ever been observed among mankind.

This focus on human drives and the individual's mindset does not only divert the attention from utopianism, but also draws near the – admittedly more optimistic – Confucian universalist humanitarianism, which avoided becoming a full-fledged reality-transcending doctrine.

It remains to be seen whether Mannheim's premature generalizations indicate some future trend. However, the limited scope of his observations impairs his conclusions. His argument centers on Europe, but not all of Europe, for Bolshevism is treated as an exception from the Enlightenment model. Other continents and other civilizations remain outside the realm of consideration. And he restricts himself to a study of the conditions of utopian thinking and ignores the experiments with individual happiness as can be found in real-life utopian communities or in fictional narratives, such as those discussed in the following chapters.

Mannheim and Popper theorized about the social aspects of utopias but could not grasp the notion of individual sentiment or the individual's experience of happiness. It is here that narration must show the way, because it is in fictional narratives, as Ricoeur sensed, that we encounter such individual experiences, which may inspire readers to find their own utopian ways, for to the list of passions mentioned by Hume in the excerpt just quoted we should add: the desire for a better world.

The Utopia of Thomas More

More's *Utopia* (1516) set an example for later writers who criticized the social conventions of their times by designing an ideal society. For the remarkable thing of More's fiction is that it combined an abstract discussion of a utopian society with hardly veiled political criticism of autocratic rulers, such as the English and French kings in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The independent opinions expressed by More in his various functions – as a member of parliament, a privy councillor to Henry VIII, and lord chancellor of England – were bound to bring him into conflict with the king. When he refused to acknowledge Henry VIII as the supreme head of the Church, he was charged with treason and beheaded in 1535. More's intellectual independence and courage already appeared from his social criticism in *Utopia*. Its combination of a sketch of the ideal society and a critique of contemporary government has remained a characteristic of the genre of utopian fiction and has set it apart from the idyll as well as the satire by combining elements of both.

In *Utopia* the narrator, who bears the name of the author, records a story that is told to him by Raphael Hythlodæus – or, in Turner's translation, Raphael, the dispenser of nonsense – about his journey to an island off the Brazilian coast, where he found a sort of welfare state providing every member of the community with the necessary food, clothing, housing, education, and medical treatment. It is a society characterized by a communal way of life without money, or, in Turner's highly naturalizing translation, "communism minus money" (More 2003: 113). A more literal translation as well as the original Latin text can be found in an edition by Logan et al. (More 1995: 246-247).

Utopia is divided into two books: the first one, which is structured as a dialogue between Raphael and More and refers to the mismanagement and abuses of power in Tudor England, was written after the second; the second book, written during a long sojourn in the Southern Netherlands in 1515, is an uninterrupted description of the Utopian Republic and reads like an essay rather than a story. More's *Utopia* has several references to Plato's imaginary republic, and Plato is also mentioned in Peter Gilles's letter of

November 1516 to Busleiden, a patron of scholarship, in which he recommends the account of Utopia as being “like Plato’s *Republic*, only better” (More 2003: 11). Indeed, More’s *Utopia* can be considered a mitigated and perhaps more rational rewriting of Plato’s provocative exposition of an ideal society that was partly inspired by Spartan practices. To what extent More’s conception of an ideal society coincides with that of Plato is a question we shall return to below.

It is in Book One that Raphael expresses a number of commonsensical opinions on contemporary politics. Where his views are rather unconventional, More, the narrative character, grasps the opportunity to distance himself from Raphael’s ideas, thus trying to make the real-life author More immune to criticism from the conservative authorities. The various contrived mock names, such as Hythlodæus and the name of the island of Utopia (No place), which also became the name of the genre, or Anydrus (the name of a river) meaning “No water” (52), Ademus (the title of a mayor) meaning “No people” (58), and *In senatu Amaurotico* meaning “in the obscurantist Parliament” (65; 1995: 144), emphasize the mocking tenor of the argument. These paradoxical coinages have a carnivalesque effect with which the author may have wanted to hoodwink the censors. Vita Fortunati rightly observed that such “subtle intellectual play does not exclude a serious intentionality” (Fortunati and Trousson 2000: 156). Like his contemporary and friend Erasmus, who wrote *Praise of Folly* in 1509 while staying in More’s home, More appreciated the classical tradition of treating serious matters in a frivolous, witty style.

Raphael analyzes the rivalry between the kings of France and England, discusses the ambition of Charles V of Spain, and shows the stupidity of warfare, arguing that a king may succeed temporarily in expanding his empire, but that the larger it becomes, the greater the difficulties he will have in ruling it well; internal rebellion would never end and therefore it would be necessary to maintain a strong army, which would deplete the treasury.

He also has pertinent opinions about criminality and argues against punishing theft with capital punishment. He suggests that stealing should be prevented by a program of creating jobs for the poor, adding the Machiavellian argument that a poor population is more dangerous to a ruler than a prosperous one: “Beggars are far the most quarrelsome section of the community” (More 2003: 40).

The division between the rich and the poor is a recurrent theme in Raphael’s analysis of contemporary conditions. As an example he discusses the trend of a few rich men to buy farmland or, worse, to chase the petty

farmers and their families away from their land in order to let their own flocks graze there, with the adverse consequence that the cultivation of grain comes to a sudden halt. Raphael explains that the raising of sheep requires less labor, but that it is advantageous only to a small group of greedy men: the proprietors of large areas of pastureland and the wool merchants, who form an unassailable cartel. As a consequence many farmers lose their jobs and source of income.

This kind of land requisition criticized by Raphael seems to prefigure the tricks of monopoly capitalism in our days, notably in countries like China and India. Since Raphael recounts that he returned from his five years' stay in Utopia via Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and Calicut in Kerala, India, where he found a Portuguese ship to bring him back to Europe, we may take our cue from the same geographic context and refer to an article in *The Times of India* (Kolkata edition, January 22, 2007). The newspaper reported the "Bhoomi puja," the ceremonial inauguration of the building of a Tata Motors car factory in Singur, West Bengal, and simultaneous protest demonstrations by local villagers who had lost their farmland to make way for the factory and apparently had not received satisfactory compensation. The protest is representative of thousands and thousands of cases of similar opposition to globalized industrial expansion. Raphael's (or More's) complaint is pertinent to all times. In the case of the car factory in Singur, the protest was successful and the Tata management decided to withdraw its plans.

This brings me to Raphael's argument against private property, which rather differs from the arrangements in Plato's ideal state, for Plato argued in terms of a system of three castes: the guardians or rulers, their auxiliaries, and the producers, merchants, farmers, and other working people. In the *Republic* it is only the guardians and their auxiliaries who are supposed to "have no private property beyond the barest essentials" (Plato 2003: 416d), no houses of their own, and no family. But in More's *Utopia* Raphael's argument is concerned with the whole population: "I'm quite convinced that you'll never get a fair distribution of goods, or a satisfactory organization of human life, until you abolish private property altogether" (More 2003: 45). This is a view that More, the narrator, rejects – and that he is bound to reject in order to avoid censorship. He argues that, without a profit motive and the possibility of acquiring private wealth, people will not be stimulated to work and no reasonable standard of living and adequate social organization can be achieved. But Raphael replies that the Utopian Republic he has seen in the New World was extremely well organized. Then More in-

vites Raphael to give a more systematic account of Utopia, which he does and which is recorded in Book Two.

Raphael begins to give some particulars about the geographical position of the island and then offers a detailed description of the Utopian Republic in terms that betray his fascination with the then recent discovery of America, as reported by so many travelers: Columbus, of course, but also Amerigo Vespucci (1451-1512), who reported on his voyages across the Atlantic Ocean in various, not always reliable, ways. Fernández-Armesto (2006) has analyzed early manuscripts as well as the numerous editions of *Mundus novus* (*New World*) that appeared in Florence, Augsburg, Paris, and elsewhere under Vespucci's name from 1504 onwards, in addition to a similar text, known as *The Four Voyages* (*Quattuor Americi Vespuccij navigationes*), which was published in St. Dié, France, in 1507. Both books were immediate bestsellers, with *Mundus novus* running into twenty-three editions between 1504 and 1506. However, Fernández-Armesto and other historians doubt the reliability of the printed texts, which often seem a patchwork of literary topoi adjusted to the taste of a wide readership rather than a report based on first-hand observation. Fernández-Armesto sees traces of Pliny the Elder, Dante, Petrarch, John Mandeville, Marco Polo, and Columbus in the two books that appeared under Vespucci's name, notably where stories about giants, an island of women, and other marvels are told, but he does not mention Plato in this context, although Vespucci must have been acquainted with his work because Amerigo's uncle and tutor in Florence, Giorgio Antonio Vespucci, belonged to a group of students and patrons who called themselves the "family of Plato" and considered reenacting his symposia as one of their principal leisure activities (2006: 9). It is very unlikely that Amerigo Vespucci was not aware of Plato's description of a perfect state and did not remember the utopian themes of the *Republic* while writing about the people he saw in South America. Many travelers hoped and expected that the New World would disclose a way to the biblical Eden or some other kind of eutopia, and Vespucci was no exception.

More was notably inspired by the report on Vespucci's first voyage and the – largely fictional – account the latter gives of the natives he supposedly encountered. Vespucci writes that these people take their wives along with them when they go into battle, and in times of peace live in communal dwellings. In their sexual relations they have no legal obligations: "each man has as many wives as he covets, and he can repudiate them later whenever he pleases, without its being considered an injustice or disgrace, and

the women enjoy the same rights as the men” (Vespucci 1507: 96). They evidently do without money, for

there is neither buying or selling, nor is there an exchange of commodities, for they are quite content with what nature freely offers them. They do not value gold, nor pearls, nor gems, nor such other things as we consider precious here in Europe. In fact they almost despise them, and take no pains to acquire them. (98)

Did Vespucci really see all this? Whether he did or not, these observations show a striking resemblance to themes in Plato’s *Republic* that have become the topoi of utopian writing. This may enhance our doubts about the reliability of Vespucci’s report. Moreover, I am not convinced that the natives, who could be impressed by “mirrors and pieces of crystal and other such trifles” (91), did not value gold, whereas there was at least one civilization in South America, that of the Incas, which produced the most beautiful gold ornaments. Fernández-Armesto also notes that on the Caribbean coast in those days there was trade in ear ornaments of gold and copper, which had come overland from the northern Andes.

Thomas More had read Vespucci’s *Four Voyages*: he mentions it in Book One when he introduces Raphael as one of the twenty-four men who, as related in Vespucci’s report on his fourth voyage (which, according to Fernández-Armesto, never materialized), voluntarily stayed behind in a fort on the Brazilian coast, where they made friends with the tribes of that region. This is where More’s imaginary Utopia is situated, anchored in quasi-maritime history as recorded by a fabulating Vespucci.

At some distance from the fort, Raphael discovered the island of Utopia and lived there for more than five years. He informs us that the middle of the island measures about two hundred miles across, but its far ends are bent to form a sort of crescent, thus creating a natural harbor. Because of many invisible rocks it is dangerous for foreign ships to enter the bay. Originally the island was a peninsula, and it was made into an island by Utopos, an early ruler who had ordered to dig a canal through the isthmus in order to protect himself against possible attacks.

The island is described as a nearly completely secluded world, and its inhabitants are aware of potential enemies against whom a defensive war might be fought. In fact, the number of pages devoted to a discussion of warfare – about 20 percent of Raphael’s exposition – is rather remarkable in a utopian treatise on happiness in a socially balanced society. Perhaps the

political context of More's writing can explain this focus on war. In early sixteenth-century Europe wars were a frequent phenomenon and their cruelty stood in sharp contrast to any dream of a better society. Thomas More was bound to deal with the subject of war, and he discussed which kinds of war should be considered justified and how to wage a war without too much material and human damage. Utopia's strong defense policy was also a narratological necessity, suggesting that the ideal society on the island was capable of remaining uncontaminated by alien ideas.

Raphael first mentions overpopulation on the island as an excuse for war. Overpopulation may motivate some of the islanders to "start a colony at the nearest point on the mainland where there's a large area that hasn't been cultivated by the local inhabitants" (More 2003: 60). Such colonies were governed by the Utopians and if the natives should not be inclined to do as they were told, they were to be expelled from the area the Utopians wished to annex. If they resist, "the Utopians declare war – for they consider war perfectly justifiable, when one country denies another its natural right to derive nourishment from any soil which the original owners are not using themselves" (60).

Raphael assures us that the Utopians see nothing glorious in war, and at this point they differ from the guardians in Plato's ideal state, who cultivate courage, physical strength, and competition, in addition to a philosophic disposition. On the other hand, without saying so, Raphael follows Plato in recounting that in Utopia "both sexes are given military training at regular intervals" (90). Both men and women partake in combat, as also Vespucci wrote, and they bring their children to the battlefield as well. This is to increase their fighting spirit, for it would be "a terrible disgrace for a husband to come back without his wife, or a wife without her husband" (95). In Plato's *Republic* a similar situation is sketched, though an important difference remains that the guardians have no family, and that no father or mother knows who their children are.

As Raphael explains, the Utopians do not cultivate violent behavior in military action. They prefer to defeat the enemy by stratagem or to pay mercenaries to do the fighting for them. However, there were ample opportunities to become engaged in warfare. Apart from wars to occupy unused land in neighboring territories and cases of plain self-defense, the Utopians consider it justified to repel invaders from allied territory or to liberate the victims of dictatorship for humanitarian reasons. They also take military action to protect the rights of their traders if they happen to be subjected to legal injustice in foreign countries. Like the occupation of unused land in

neighboring states, this is a point that was rather pertinent in the early days of colonialism.

Although Thomas More was highly interested in international law and the justification of war, in his *Utopia* he deals primarily with issues of private and public life, with the economic system, and with the conditions of individual happiness. Whereas Plato focused on the well-being of society as a whole, More does not overlook the individual, and with all the austerity that he may have in common with Plato, More's focus on individual happiness makes him a man of the Renaissance, a modern man – although his views of course are not up to the standards of twenty-first-century human rights conceptions.

Politically, everything is neatly organized in Utopia. Each of the fifty-four towns of the island sends three of its senior and more experienced citizens to an annual meeting in Aircastle, the capital of the Utopian Republic. No town has the wish to extend its boundaries as they do not regard their land as their property but merely as soil for cultivation. Town dwellers take turns in assisting in the agricultural production, staying at big farm houses for a period of two years. If they need anything that is not available in the countryside, they simply go to the nearest town and ask an official for what they want and then they receive it without payment, for, as I mentioned, there is no money in Utopia.

After a discussion of the local political organization, Raphael turns to discuss work and family life. All people, irrespective of sex, have to learn farming. In addition, each person is taught a specific trade and learns to process wool or becomes a stonemason, blacksmith or carpenter. There are no tailors or dressmakers because everyone wears the same sort of simple homemade clothes. As a rule women are given the lighter jobs, like spinning and weaving. In Utopia “everything is under state control” (58), which prevents unnecessary luxury and waste. Hence it is possible to restrict work to six hours a day; the remaining time being mostly spent on further education. Cultivation of the mind is regarded “as the secret of a happy life” (59). If a manual worker studies hard in his spare time and makes good progress, he can be promoted to the class of intelligentsia from which diplomats, priests, and mayors are recruited. A similar idea was expressed in Plato's *Republic*, where merchants or workers could be promoted to the castes of guardians and auxiliaries, but the distinction between castes or classes in Plato's ideal state is more rigorous than in More's proposal.

Each town consists of six thousand households and each household contains between ten and sixteen adults under the authority of the oldest male.

Wives are subordinate to their husbands, and, more precisely, “husbands are responsible for punishing their wives” (85). Meals are taken in communal dining halls where thirty households – perhaps four hundred or five hundred adults and children – take their lunch and dinner together. Unlike the extreme arrangements in Plato’s ideal state, there is no birth control in Utopia, let alone abortion, as a result of which households may grow above the required figure. Supernumerary adults will move to smaller households, and in case the whole town or the island becomes overpopulated, people are encouraged to establish a colony on the mainland.

To what extent does More emphasize the individual’s consciousness as the locus of possible happiness? Where does he stand between Plato’s concept of collective bliss and modern concepts of individual happiness? These questions are not easy to answer. One clue is provided by More’s interest in monastic life. Clothes in Utopia resemble a friar’s habit, and the absence of private property may have been inspired by Plato as well as by the organization of Roman Catholic religious orders. Plato’s guardians “eat together in messes and live together like soldiers in camp” (Plato 2003: 416e), but More’s dining halls resemble rather a monastic refectory. In any comparison of Plato’s and More’s ideal states, the significance of the Church in More’s days should not be overlooked.

The organization of communal dining halls is an indicator of where a utopian society stands on the collectivism/individualism scale. In More’s Utopia,

no one likes eating at home, although there’s no rule against it. For one thing, it’s considered rather bad form. For another, it seems silly to go to all the trouble of preparing an inferior meal, when there’s an absolutely delicious one waiting for you at the dining-hall just down the street.
(More 2003: 62)

In the dining halls the dirty work is done by slaves, but the cooking is done by the women of the household on duty. There is a rather strict sitting order, with the head of the district and his wife sitting on a platform, together with the priest and his wife (if there is a church in the district) and other senior people. Like in a monastery, the meals begin with reading an improving text aloud. More describes these dinners as offering enough to everyone. So does Bellamy in *Looking Backward*, but the practice in the communal dining halls in China at the time of the Great Leap Forward was rather different. Not everyone eats in the communal dining halls in Utopia: in the coun-

tryside the farmers eat at home because of the greater distances between the households.

Another indicator for a position on the collectivism/individualism scale is freedom of movement. For any traveling in Utopia you need permission and you will travel with a group on a joint passport that stipulates when you have to be back at work. Under certain conditions one could go somewhere and take up a job there. The main principle is that you always have to work. Social control is inescapable and leaves little room for privacy, as appears from a passage that ominously prefigures Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*:

Wherever you are, you always have to work. There's never any excuse for idleness. There are also no wine-taverns, no ale-houses, no brothels, no opportunities for seduction, no secret meeting-places. Everyone has his eye on you, so you're practically forced to get on with your job, and make some proper use of your spare time. (More 2003: 65)

The effect of this system is high productivity and plenty of everything, which is "divided equally among the entire population" (65). Any superfluous goods are exported and the positive trade balance of Utopia has enabled it to build up huge reserves of gold and silver, which in case of war may be needed in order to pay foreign mercenaries.

Vespucci had observed that natives in South America could dispose of a great deal of gold but did not consider it to have particular value, and Plato too had stipulated that the guardians attached no value to silver or gold. Similarly, in More's Utopia silver and gold are valued far less than iron. These precious metals are used to make chamber pots or chains to immobilize slaves. And "anyone who commits a really shameful crime is forced to go about with gold rings on his ears and fingers, a gold necklace round his neck, and a crown of gold on his head" (67). The Utopians do everything to discredit the value of gold, but the hardly veiled satiric allusion here is that any person in England who is displaying rings or a crown of gold might have acquired these things in an unlawful way. The theme of the inverse value of gold, silver, and jewelry, hinted at in Vespucci's travelogue, is extensively discussed by More; it returns in Voltaire's *Candide*, where it is treated with a great sense of humor.

Raphael was impressed by the educational system and the Utopians' achievements in astronomy and philosophy, notably logic and ethics. A chief subject of ethics is the nature of human happiness, of which they "take a hedonistic view, for according to them human happiness consists largely

or wholly in pleasure” (71). However, along lines that remind us of Plato (2003: 558d), who distinguished between “necessary” and “unnecessary” pleasures, the hedonism that More has in mind is mitigated by reason:

The Utopians ... regard the enjoyment of life – that is, pleasure – as the natural object of all human efforts, and natural, as they define it, is synonymous with virtuous. However, Nature also wants us to help one another to enjoy life, for the very good reason that no human being has a monopoly of her affections. She’s equally anxious for the welfare of every member of the species. So of course she tells us to make quite sure that we don’t pursue our own interests at the expense of other people’s. (More 2003: 73)

As a result the Utopians keep their promises in private life and obey the laws regulating the equal distribution of goods. A Christian tinge is added when it is considered wrong to deprive someone else of a pleasure that you enjoy yourself, whereas to deprive yourself of a pleasure in order to enable someone else to enjoy it is considered an act of humanity, “by which you always gain more than you lose” (73). The mere idea of having done somebody a kindness gives spiritual satisfaction. Moreover, in the Last Judgment such unselfishness will be rewarded. As Plato also acknowledged, every soul is immortal. The divine judgment of the dead is referred to both by More and by Plato as encouraging righteous behavior in the present world.

Following Plato and in keeping with the Christian tradition, More argues against any form of indulgence, against pleasures that hurt other people or cause unpleasant aftereffects. He despises a passion for jewels and the accumulation of superfluous wealth, gambling, and hunting, but approves of physical pleasures such as eating and drinking to satisfy a body’s need and “the discharge of some excess, as in excretion, sexual intercourse, or any relief of irritation by rubbing or scratching” (77). This is one of the few places where More mentions the topic of sex and, as is evident from the context, he makes a mockery of it. The Utopians appreciate in particular mental pleasure deriving from good behavior and a clear conscience. This they have again in common with the guardians in Plato’s ideal state.

In More’s *Utopia* there are explicit links to Greek antiquity, not only because Plato is mentioned several times, but also because Raphael tells that he has been teaching Greek to the Utopians, who were eager to study the original texts. On his last journey to Utopia he brought a large trunk full of books with him, including Plato, Aristotle, Plutarch, Lucian, Aristophanes, Homer, Euripides and Sophocles, Herodotus and Thucydides.

More is certainly serious in displaying respect for the writers of ancient Greece, but he is not always serious in what he writes. From his early childhood he had, as Erasmus recalls, a passion for jokes (More 2003: xii) and reading Aristophanes may have inspired him to bring the art of ridicule to perfection. When Raphael relates the details of marriage and divorce in Utopia, he mentions an arrangement that appears rather bizarre. Premarital intercourse is severely punished, but in order to avoid embarrassing disappointment among recently married couples the prospective bride is exhibited stark naked to the prospective bridegroom before the marriage, and the other way round, the man is shown naked to his prospective wife. Of course, both confrontations are arranged under the supervision of respectable chaperones. If the impression of one or the other is unfavorable, the marriage can be cancelled. The Utopians defend the procedure as follows:

No doubt you needn't worry, if moral character is the only thing that interests you – but we're not all as wise as that, and even those who are sometimes find, when they get married, that a beautiful body can be quite a useful addition to a beautiful soul. (84)

It is not easy to interpret these lines. We should perhaps conclude that More values “moral character” more than a beautiful body, but we may doubt that he indeed wishes to arrange for the premarital exhibition of the naked bodies. The idea of showing a man or woman naked to their prospective partners betrays More's intention to interlard his serious argument with an occasional joke. It also is an oblique reference to Plato's suggestion that female guardians should take their athletic exercise naked, together with equally naked men. In fact, the only thing we may conclude with some certainty is that More found sexual desire a problem that might disrupt a marriage. In Utopia divorce is not easily permitted. Adulterers are heavily punished, and recidivists are executed. The normal penalty for any crime is slavery, which can be cancelled in case of good behavior and signs of regret.

Unlike Plato, More does not say a word about eugenics, but in Utopia euthanasia is admitted under certain conditions, such as an incurable disease causing excruciating pain. If a fatally ill patient asks for euthanasia, he or she can be given a soporific. The Utopians insist, however, that the decision to opt for euthanasia is strictly voluntary.

Finally, More devotes a dozen pages to religious matters, an extremely hot topic in his day. Not surprisingly, his message is toleration. All different

religious sects in Utopia agree that there is one Supreme Being with the name of Mythras. However, when the Utopians were told about Jesus Christ, many were easily converted to the Christian faith. Raphael believes that they were favorably impressed by the information that Christ wanted his disciples to abstain from acquiring private property and to lead a communal way of life, as still could be found in monasteries and convents. One Utopian convert started giving public lectures on the Christian faith but did it with so much zeal that he began to condemn all other forms of religion. After some time he was charged with disturbance of the peace, convicted, and sentenced to exile. That was how the Utopians protected the principle of religious toleration, which Utopos, the historical founder of Utopia, made into a law stipulating that “everyone was free to practice what religion he liked, and to try and convert other people to his own faith, provided he did it quietly and politely, by rational argument” (100). Utopos left the choice of creed an open question, to be decided by each individual, except that

he strictly and solemnly forbade his people to believe anything so incompatible with human dignity as the doctrine that the soul dies with the body, and the universe functions aimlessly, without any controlling providence. (101)

In Utopian society there was no place for atheists, who were not allowed to hold any public appointment and were regarded as utterly contemptible. But they were not punished in any other way.

The difference between Utopian theory and English practice is rather wide here, for it is known, as Turner explains in a note, that More as a chancellor sentenced several people to death for heresy (132). Similarly, in Utopia male priests are allowed to marry, but in *A Dialogue concerning Heresies* (1528) More condemned the possibility of priests getting married in strong words. The distance between theory and practice affects our reading of More’s *Utopia*, which must be interpreted as a thought experiment rather than a blueprint to be realized. However, we must also take into account that More’s political responsibility as lord chancellor later in life and his partly jocular idea of Utopia are separated by about fifteen years. It is unclear to what extent More’s firm intention to support the unity of the Church made him change his mind about the treatment of heresy, or whether the necessity of political compromise compelled him to resign to a rigorous persecution of Protestants. In any case, More’s theoretical tolerance expressed in *Utopia* dissolved completely during the years of his chancellorship.

Raphael concludes his lengthy exposition by acknowledging that the Utopian Republic, where everything is under public ownership, is “the best country in the world” (More 2003: 109). We could have adopted the Utopian system long ago, if “that beastly root of all evils, pride” (112) had not prevented it. The Utopian way of life provides not only the happiest basis for a civilized community, but also one which is supposed to last forever.

At the end of Raphael’s monologue, the first-person narrator, More, takes over and airs his strong doubts about the communal way of life without money in Utopia, which – he adds, tongue-in-cheek – “would mean the end of the aristocracy, and consequently of all dignity, splendour, and majesty, which are generally supposed to be the real glories of any nation” (113).

Let us ask again where More’s Utopia stands on the collectivism/individualism scale. It certainly guarantees more freedom for the individual than Plato’s ideal state. But the social discrimination of those who adhere to atheism and philosophical materialism restricts the individual freedom of belief. On the basis of his having lived in Utopia for several years, Raphael argues that “perfect happiness implies complete freedom of movement” (102), but, as I mentioned, traveling around is subjected to all kinds of regulations and permissions. If a traveler has received the necessary permissions and offers to do some work, he can knock on any door and ask to be lodged and fed, which, in our modern Western world, would be considered an infringement on the privacy of the prospective host. That is the dark side of the absence of private property: there is no private space. Privacy is also under pressure by ubiquitous supervision: “Everyone has his eye on you” (65). Another consequence of the absence of private property is that you have to work as long as you can. The ethical imperative of always doing useful work restricts individual freedom further and, possibly, individual happiness, too. The communal way of life, which Turner transcribed as “communism,” holds the germs of a terror that became fully manifest in the practice of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union and other countries.

Where Thomas More corrected Plato

In the *Republic* Plato (c. 427-347 BCE) advanced a range of arguments against democracy, of which he had a low opinion because of his negative experiences with populist forms of democratic government. Plato grew up in a time of great political turmoil marked by the Peloponnesian War,

which lasted until he was twenty-three, when Sparta defeated Athens. In these days of great confusion the Athenian government was alternately in the hands of the democrats and their opposition, the “oligarchs.” When the democrats were in power Socrates was brought to trial on the fake charge of impiety and corrupting the young, and he was condemned and executed in 399 BCE. Plato hated the democrats for this more than for anything else (Lee 2003: xvi).

The *Republic*, which was written about 375 BCE, took the form of a dialogue in which Socrates is the “I”-narrator who does most of the speaking and sketches an ideal state in order to explain what the notion of justice means. The dialogue, written a quarter of a century after Socrates’ death, cannot be a precise account of what he once said and must be considered a partly fictional reconstruction of a discourse in which the voices of Socrates and Plato are merged. Or, as Popper explained in 1943 in much stronger words and with abundance of detail, Plato used the character Socrates to express opinions that were his own and not Socratic at all: “He betrayed Socrates” (Popper 1971: 194). However, the question is not only who is speaking but also what the argument is, an argument that is heavily conditioned by the particular political circumstances in which Plato lived and by his aversion to populist democracy.

Plato describes how democracy is introduced when groups of poor people seize power and “give the rest equal civil rights and opportunities of office, appointment to office being as a rule by lot” (Plato 2003: 557a). There is freedom of speech and every individual is free to do as he likes. There is no compulsion to exercise authority if one is capable of doing so, or to submit to authority if people do not want to. Plato concludes by saying that it is “an agreeable anarchic form of society, with plenty of variety, which treats all men as equal, whether they are equal or not” (558c).

In a democratic society, Plato argues, people tend to indulge in unnecessary and useless desires. He sketches a dark future in which excessive desire for liberty destroys democracy. Children no longer obey their parents, no distinction is made anymore between citizens and foreigners, pupils despise their teachers, the elders try to ape the young, and, on top of that, there is “complete equality and liberty in the relations between the sexes” (563a). Liberty affects even the life of animals: “They are in the habit of walking about the streets with a grand freedom, and bump into people they meet if they don’t get out of their way” (563c). Democracy reaches the end of the road when the citizens, in their determination to have no master, disregard all laws.

Although we may recognize some excrescences of contemporary democracy in these caustic observations, Plato presents a form of democracy that, in our eyes, is no more than a caricature. Democracy does not necessarily lead to anarchy.

However, once Plato's depressing picture of democracy is accepted by his interlocutors, he is free to develop the idea of a caste of philosopher-rulers or guardians, enlightened despots of a sort, the only ones invested with administrative power. Thomas More in contrast does not think in terms of a strict division into two or three castes and nowhere does he say that the merchants, farmers, and other working people are without political power. They have the right to vote, though only intellectuals can stand as candidates in elections for the higher administrative positions. Karl Popper's harsh criticism of Plato's perfect state is first of all directed against the idea that all power is to be concentrated in the hands of a few, co-opting rulers, whose position is unimpeachable. Popper defends the individuals' right in a democratic society to criticize the authorities and call them to account.

In Plato's argument things go blatantly wrong when Socrates stipulates that the rulers are expected to lie "for the good of the State" (389c). The rulers are allowed to resort to lies and cheating, in particular when they make arrangements to improve the quality of the population by organizing marriage festivals during which "the best of our men [mate] with the best of our women as often as possible" (459e). The system implies a drawing of lots, which is manipulated in such a way that the more inferior guardians will have little chance to find an attractive woman but can blame only the lottery and not the rulers. As we will see later, Georges Perec has ridiculed these marriage festivals.

Plato's eugenics project is completed by the use of abortion and infanticide; infanticide was practiced at Sparta and to a limited extent also elsewhere in the Greek world (Plato 2003: 174-175). Plato envisages the complete abolition of family life among the guardians. Parents do not know who their children are and children are unaware of the identity of their fathers and mothers. None of these extreme solutions occur in the Utopia of More, who allows for family life and does not discuss anything that reeks of eugenics. Popper of course castigates Plato's defense of infanticide, but such critique does not apply to More.

Plato tries to justify the rule that the guardians have no private property by way of a psychological argumentation that downgrades individual opinion. Because of their commitment to a common interest, the guardians are

supposed to share each other's feelings of joy and sorrow. Without private property, without a wife or children, without private joys and sorrows there is no chance of dissension. As a consequence, litigation will almost completely disappear, but, we may add, individuality as well. Plato's aim is to construct a happy community by securing the happiness not of individuals, nor of a select minority, but of the whole society.

Plato's dismissal of individual opinion has enormous consequences that are reflected in his well-known and discreditable theory of art and poetry, which begins with the statement that "the art of representation is something that has no serious value; and ... this applies above all to all tragic poetry, epic or dramatic" (602b). Plato believes that literary works "have a low degree of truth" and deal "with a low element in the mind" (605b). He adheres to an extreme concept of realism that was convincingly criticized by Aristotle, who in his *Poetics* (c. 330 BCE) argued that poetry often deviates from a depiction of historical truth and expresses things that *may* happen or could have happened and as such are accepted as truthful, thus laying the foundation for the notion of literary fiction. Plato distrusts the effects of literature. He wishes to emphasize reason and restraint, and is afraid that literature that reminds us of our sufferings might elicit an irrational or depressive response. He distinguishes between healthy (profitable) and unhealthy (unprofitable) literature – a distinction totalitarian rulers in modern times have made as well. Except for the reference to the gods, the following quotation can be considered a justification of socialist realism in the Soviet Union or China:

the only poetry that should be allowed in a state is hymns to the gods and paeans in praise of good men; once you go beyond that and admit the sweet lyric or epic muse, pleasure and pain become your rulers instead of law and the rational principles commonly accepted as best. (607a)

The attitude toward literature is a litmus test to distinguish democracy from totalitarian rule. The treatment of literature can also serve as a yardstick in judging the quality of a utopia. Plato is highly critical of the psychological effects of reading Homer and the performance of the tragedies. More does not share that suspicion and relates how the Utopians love to read the well-known writers of ancient Greece. The authoritarian censorship in Plato's ideal state causes mental slavery. Except in the case of writings that advocate atheist materialism, More nowhere mentions the possibility of censoring what to read.

Somewhat surprisingly Popper does not comment on Plato's treatment of literature. He focuses on Plato as a political propagandist and a cunning rhetorician, who in real life may have hoped to realize his dream of the perfect state by establishing an authoritarian government. The only point in Popper's argument that vaguely hints at Plato's lengthy discussion of unhealthy literature – such as poetry that “has a terrible power to corrupt even the best characters” (605c) – is where Popper refers to the “censorship of all intellectual activities” in the perfect state (Popper 1971: 86). If Popper had had slightly more affinity with literature, he would have enlarged on the reasons Plato gives for introducing a strict regime of censoring literature, which more than anything else betrays his intention to curb independent thinking. But Popper had little understanding of literature. Although he in one instance calls the *Republic* “a great work of literature” (155), he refuses to see that Plato's text can be read in more than one way. Writing in 1943 he interprets the *Republic* primarily as a political tract, different parts of which have inspired Nazis as well as Communists. The wittiness of Plato's intellectual experiment became invisible amid the gun smoke of World War II.

As we have seen and as has been emphasized by other interpreters, such as Thomas White (1982), there is also continuity between the themes elaborated by Plato and More. They share, for instance, the idea of the abolition of private property and of taking meals in communal dining halls, the themes of military training of both sexes, the depreciation of silver and gold, the austerity of living conditions and a high work ethic, and the belief in a Last Judgment that is to encourage good behavior on earth. But the crucial issues in Plato which Popper criticizes do not occur in More's *Utopia*, with only one important exception: both Plato and More have written utopias. Popper argues against the utopian approach and favors piecemeal social engineering instead (1971: 1, 157). His argument holds only if the utopia that has been described is supposed to serve as a blueprint on the basis of which action is to be taken, perhaps in the form of a revolution. It does *not* hold if it serves as a thought experiment to stimulate our fantasy or to help us think about alternative forms of social organization, which may appear eutopian, or dystopian, or a mixture of the two, depending on the value system of the interpreter. Nowadays many readers will interpret Plato's ideal state as dystopian. Popper, however, fails to place Plato's *Republic* in the tradition of the genre of utopian fiction, where it appears to be a pretext of More's *Utopia* and other utopian novels. He reads this text as a disturbing blueprint for political action, not as the description of a fictitious society. Most utopian narratives, however, are fictional experiments that

cause no damage and do no harm to anyone in real life, but sharpen our mind in questions of where we want to go and which forms of political organization might be preferred over the present state of affairs.

Popper's construction of a dichotomy of thinking about ends (the utopian approach) and solving pressing social problems (piecemeal social improvement) is highly artificial – as artificial as keeping philosophy and sociology apart. Thomas More wrote a story that contained pertinent social criticism as well as a sketch of how things might be organized differently, and he presented his utopia as fiction. There are reasons to read the *Republic* primarily as a thought experiment and not as a political program. Plato's dialogue, too, contains both relevant social criticism and an abstract, highly impracticable construction of a supposedly perfect society. Hence at one point Plato can write: "I was forgetting that we are amusing ourselves with an imaginary sketch" (536c). At no place in his lengthy argument does Popper show that he understood the purport of that and similar statements which, like the fictitious dialogue framing Plato's argument, divert the reader from a one-sided political interpretation.

Popper is convincing where he attacks the idea of collective bliss and the downgrading of individual judgment, where he defends democracy, or where he castigates Plato's proposals to improve the human race by way of eugenics and infanticide. But these objections cannot be extrapolated to a condemnation of all utopian writing, and certainly do not apply to More's *Utopia*.

From Rational Eutopia to Grotesque Dystopia

In comparison with More's *Utopia*, Campanella's description of a perfect society known in English as *The City of the Sun* appears to be both one step back and one step forward. Campanella's utopia manifests regression in that it has a millenarian inspiration and shows the realization of biblical prophecies in a theocratic society. Thomas More, however, in his *Utopia* – though not as lord chancellor – argued for toleration of different beliefs and, in principle, expounded the idea of a separation of church and state. On the other hand, Campanella is more modern than More in his firm defense of unrestrained scientific investigation. He shares this scientific orientation with his slightly older contemporary Francis Bacon, but there is no indication that he knew Bacon's publications, nor that Bacon had more than superficial knowledge of Campanella's work.

The discovery of the sciences: Campanella and Bacon

Born into a poor family in Stilo, Calabria, Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639) became a Dominican monk when he was fourteen years old. He hoped to receive a solid education in this way and indeed was soon considered one of the most learned scholars of Italy. But he did not have much luck in his career. His independent interpretation of the patristic tradition and the Bible brought him into conflict with the Inquisition, while at the same time he was persecuted for his participation in an unsuccessful rebellion against the Spanish domination of southern Italy. In 1599 he was arrested by the Spanish authorities. He could escape execution by pretending insanity but remained in various prisons for most of the rest of his life. Nevertheless, he wrote a voluminous oeuvre on a wide range of subjects – on poetics and metaphysics, theology and medicine, the empirical sciences and astrology – both in Italian and Latin. Some of these works have been lost; others were smuggled out of prison and published.

Before his arrest he stayed briefly in northern Italy, in Bologna and Florence, and in Padua, where he enrolled at the university and in 1593 met

Galileo, four years his senior. His admiration for and loyal friendship with Galileo appears from his *Defense of Galileo* (*Apologia pro Galileo*), written in jail in 1616 and published in Germany in 1622. Four years later his confinement finally ended but his position remained precarious. Pope Urban VIII, who appreciated Campanella's astrological expertise, protected him and together with the French ambassador arranged his escape to France. After his arrival in Paris in 1634 he was received by Richelieu and King Louis XIII, and settled in a Dominican monastery, where he died several years later.

The City of the Sun was written under extremely harsh conditions in a Neapolitan prison in 1602. It is necessary to add here a brief note on the text I will refer to. The original Italian manuscript was circulated in different versions and it was only in the twentieth century that a reliable edition was published. This edition was translated into English by Elliott and Millner (Campanella 1981a) and another translation was made by Daniel J. Donno (Campanella 1981b). During Campanella's lifetime *The City of the Sun* appeared only in his own Latin translation under the title *Civitas solis*, printed in Frankfurt in 1623 as an appendix to his *Politica* and republished in Paris in 1637. Six years later the Latin edition was reprinted in Utrecht, bound up with the Latin translation of Bacon's *New Atlantis* and Hall's *Mundus alter et idem* (*Another World and Yet the Same*), which confirms its recognition as a specimen of utopian fiction. Campanella made the Latin translation of *La città del sole* in view of an international readership and publication outside Italy. The Latin version has several additions, such as the references to Thomas Aquinas at the end of the text, in order to appease the ecclesiastical censors. This is why most commentators prefer the original Italian text. My quotations are, as indicated, mainly from the English translation of the Italian version in the bilingual edition by Daniel J. Donno (1981b), which enables me to refer occasionally to the Italian text.

The literary form of *The City of the Sun* reminds us of More's *Utopia*, which Campanella certainly knew and which he follows in several details. The description of the perfect city-state is couched in a dialogue between a Knight Hospitaller and a Genoese mariner. Just as Raphael in *Utopia* is introduced as a companion of Vespucci, the mariner from Genoa belonged to the crew of Columbus. The framework of the story is a voyage in which the island of Taprobana – Latin for Ceylon or Sri Lanka – is explored, but it provides even less action, less movement and fewer details of characters than the plot of *Utopia*, which was already close to plain, expository description. At the request of his interlocutor the Mariner tells that he was forced to land on the island and, threatened by unfriendly natives, had fled into

the interior where “rising from a broad plain, there is a hill upon which the greater part of the city is situated” (1981b: 27).

In the description that follows that city appears to be more Italian than Ceylonese, but more importantly it is constructed in accordance with numerological and astrological principles. It is divided into seven large circular areas named after the seven planets. In the center, on the summit of the hill, stands a large temple. Above the altar two large globes are hanging: one depicting the whole sky, the other representing the earth.

It is here that their high priest and prince (*principe sacerdote*) resides, whom they call Sun; “in our language he would be called Metaphysician” (31). At this point we may recall Plato’s philosopher-ruler. The city-state is indeed a republic and the way it has been arranged reminds us of Plato in several respects. The Solarians, citizens of the City of the Sun, have no private property and no family life:

They resolved to live in a philosophical community. Though community of wives was not practiced in the land they came from [India], they do practice it now.... All things are held in common, but the dispensation of goods is left in the hands of officials. Not food alone, but arts, honors, and pleasure are also shared in common in such a way that no one can appropriate anything.

They claim that property comes into existence when men have separate homes with their children and wives. From this self-love is born; for in order to increase the wealth or dignity of his offspring or leave him heir to his goods, every man becomes publicly rapacious if he is strong and fearless, or avaricious, deceitful, and hypocritical if he is weak. When self-love is destroyed, only concern for the community remains. (39)

The wording of this passage is close to Plato’s argument about communal property among the guardians (2003: 416d, 464a-e), but Campanella makes no class distinctions and extends the communal way of life to all citizens. At this point the Knight objects, saying: “Then no one must be willing to work, while he ... expect[s] everyone else to do so, as Aristotle charges in reply to Plato” (1981b: 39).

In almost similar terms the character More in Book One of *Utopia* had riposted that “in the absence of a profit motive, everyone would become lazy” (More 2003: 45), without mentioning that Aristotle in his *Politics* had raised this argument as well.

The Metaphysician or Sun has three associate rulers or *principi collateralis*,

with the names Pon, Sin, and Mor, which stand for Power, Wisdom, and Love. Their functions remain abstract as in a medieval morality play. They are assisted by several officials who represent generosity, magnanimity, chastity, fortitude, justice, diligence, truth, beneficence, gratitude, compassion, and so on. The four rulers select these officials from among the most capable people with the best results in their education and on the recommendation of masters in various disciplines. For the highest function, that of the chief priest and prince, no one is eligible unless he knows the history of all the different peoples as well as the mechanical arts and the sciences.

He must be a metaphysician and theologian who understands the theory and practice of every art and every science, the similitudes and differences among things, the Necessity, Fate, and Harmony of the world, the Power, Wisdom, and Love of God and of all things, the degrees of being and their correspondence to celestial, terrestrial, and marine things; and he must study astrology and the prophets carefully. (1981b: 45)

The Metaphysician holds his office permanently, until someone is found who knows more and is better fitted to rule. In a further explanation the Mariner expresses himself against the value of the grammar and logic of Aristotle or any other author. The Solarians favor the study of things and the ways of nature over knowledge derived from books.

Political decisions such as going to war are taken in the Grand Council (*consiglio grande*), which is attended by all persons over twenty years of age, including women. The council meets every new moon and every full moon in order to discuss what is lacking in the city or to address any complaints about the officials. At the end of each week the Metaphysician and his three assessors and the other officials meet, no more than forty persons. Similarly the heads of groups of ten or fifty or a hundred people meet to discuss administrative matters. This is about all *The City of the Sun* has to say about the sociopolitical organization of the city, but it is enough to suggest that the government of the ideal city does not depend on the checks and balances of a well-defined political system. Instead, it is motivated by a mystic belief in the unity of power, knowledge, love, and religious submission. Campanella's utopia is an eschatological prophecy of heaven on earth, as also appears from the Italian subtitle of *La città del sole* in various manuscripts: "a dialogue of the republic in which the idea of a reform of the Christian republic is described in accordance with God's promise to Saint Catherine and Saint Bridget" (Campanella 1993: 60).

As in so many utopias, in *The City of the Sun* education is also of pivotal importance. From the age of three, children are subjected to a rigorous educational program that includes the teaching of the natural sciences. The associate ruler, Wisdom, is in charge of all the sciences and is assisted by the astrologer, the cosmographer, the geometrician, the logician, the rhetorician, the grammarian, the medical officer, the physicist, the politician, and the moralist. The Mariner reports that all knowledge is represented in paintings on the walls of the various buildings and fortifications. On the wall of the sixth circle “all the founders of laws and of sciences and inventors of weapons” are depicted: Moses, Osiris, Jupiter, Mercury, Muhammad, and others. “In a place of special honor I saw Jesus Christ and the twelve Apostles, whom they hold in great regard. I saw Caesar, Alexander, Pyrrhus, and all the Romans” (1981b: 37). When the Mariner expresses surprise at the historical knowledge the Solarians apparently possess, the answer is that they know the languages of all nations and have sent ambassadors all over the world so as to learn about the different peoples. The Mariner learns that “explosives and printing were known in China before they became known among us” (37). The author attempts indeed to design a multicultural, syncretist, and unified world.

Campanella takes great pains to reconcile Plato with the Christian tradition. Like Plato and in accordance with Christianity, the Solarians believe that the human soul is immortal. Communal property is advocated by Plato but it was also practiced among the apostles and early Christians. Like Plato, the Solarians argue that the community of property should also include the community of women, but Campanella meets substantial difficulties in proving that there is support for this idea in the Christian tradition. In his splendid study of Campanella and his time, Headley (1997) discusses the matter at length. In any case we should keep in mind that Campanella was not in favor of the flirting type of woman who would use makeup or wear dresses with long trains. Rather drastically, those women would deserve the death penalty. Sexual intercourse should principally take place in view of procreation:

If a man becomes enamored of a woman, he may speak and jest with her, send her verses, and make emblems out of flowers and branches for her. But if his having intercourse with her is deemed undesirable by reason of the offspring that might result, it will by no means be permitted unless she is already pregnant or is sterile. As a result, only loving friendship, rather than concupiscent ardor, is recognized among them. (1981b: 63)

Procreation is not a private affair but restricted by regulations and guided by medical and astrological officials. Like the ancient Greeks, Campanella writes, all males and females are naked when they take part in wrestling exercises, so that “their teachers may readily distinguish those who are able to have intercourse from those who are not and can determine whose sexual organs may best be matched with whose” (55). The author offers more particulars about the right moment of the intended intercourse, always under the supervision of watchful experts. Although Campanella does not mention the possibility of infanticide and also rejects Plato’s cheating with ballots so as to prevent jealousy among the less fortunate couples, Popper’s objections to the farfetched supervision of private life and its eugenic effects also apply to *The City of the Sun*. Campanella writes that the newborn children stay with their mother for about two years, after which they receive a communal education.

Several reasons can be adduced to explain this peculiar matchmaking geared toward creating a strong and beautiful race, but no single argument is completely convincing on its own; perhaps they are in combination. First, we should remember that Campanella wrote his utopia of the Sun City while living in the darkness of a Neapolitan dungeon and may have been driven by the psychological desire to imagine a world totally different from his own situation. Second, *The City of the Sun* can be read as a justification of the unsuccessful rebellion against the Spanish viceroy. It is highly probable that Campanella played a central ideological role in the insurrection, prophetizing a perfect society whose arrival he saw announced in specific astrological combinations. We may assume that his dialogue on eutopia reflects the contents of his eschatological preachings, which announced a world of innocent love without passion or pain. Campanella seems to have firmly believed in his sketch of a perfect world. We should note that, different from More’s *Utopia*, there is no sign of irony in his text. Third, procreation is always a problem and as such a topos in utopian writing, from Plato and Campanella to *Herland*, *Brave New World*, *The Handmaid’s Tale*, and *The Possibility of an Island*. The problem becomes paradoxically enigmatic if raised by a celibate clergyman, and under such circumstances it may call for extreme solutions.

There is one more factor at stake here: Campanella’s interest in the laws of nature, including the nature of human biology. He maintained that the study of real things is at least as important as knowledge derived from books or dogmas. This was Campanella’s early conviction, and was only confirmed when he read Galileo who likewise had said: “Nor doth God

less admirably discover himself unto us in Nature's Actions than in the Scriptures' Sacred Dictions" (quoted in Campanella 1937: xxviii). In his defense of scientific investigation, Campanella joined the more advanced forces of his time. Even the priests' astrological predictions in the *City of the Sun* are subjected to empirical checks, at least in the Latin version of the text:

It is their [the priests'] duty to watch the stars and, with astrolabes, to note all their movements and the effects which they produce on human affairs and which are their virtues. In this way they know which change is effected or will be effected, in which region of the world and at which moment. They send people to verify whether things have taken place according to the prediction and to note truthful as well as false predictions, in order to learn, on the basis of experience, to predict most correctly (*ex experientia rectissime praedicere*). (Campanella 1993: 184)

The passage is interesting because it shows how Campanella reconciles astronomy and astrology without sacrificing empirical observation. Notwithstanding his proclivity toward the study of the natural world, he always remained a loyal member of the Roman Catholic Church. He ardently hoped that the regular clergy would aspire to intellectual leadership in matters of scientific research – a hope that was never fulfilled.

Campanella must have been a formidable personality, having survived severe torture and many years of imprisonment and yet being capable of creating an impressive oeuvre. His utopia was not a product of a youthful whim but meant much to him throughout his life. Many themes of *The City of the Sun* recur in his other publications. He lived through extreme experiences, being persecuted by papal and secular authorities as well as welcomed at the court of Urban VIII and that of the king of France. Cardinal Richelieu invited Campanella to prepare a natal horoscope of the son of Louis XIII and Queen Anne of Austria, the later Louis XIV, born in September 1638. Not only did Campanella take up the challenge, but he also wrote an eclogue in Latin celebrating the birth of the dauphin, of whom he expected an auspicious reign that could equal the ideal society of *The City of the Sun* (Headley 1997). I do not know whether the Sun King ever read this sketch of a golden age in which he was supposed to play a central role. Of the numerous biographies of Louis XIV that I consulted, only the one by François Bluche refers briefly to Campanella's prediction, without further commentary (1986: 31). At last Campanella had made an attempt to link his

visionary fiction to future realization. Five months after the publication of the eclogue he died.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) is in many ways Campanella's antipode. It is not only the difference between Reformation and Roman Catholicism that separates them, but their careers too are markedly different, with Bacon enjoying royal favor and rising to the position of lord chancellor under James I in 1618. He, too, had his days of misfortune, but unlike Campanella he did not spend years in jail. Like Campanella he had a keen interest in scientific investigation, but whereas the latter lost much time in attacking scholastic interpretations of the scriptures, Bacon more practically explored the results of scientific examination. He was, moreover, averse to the study of preternatural phenomena, which Campanella often gave the benefit of the doubt.

Bacon's *New Atlantis* is firmly entrenched in the canon of utopian fiction, but it remained unfinished. Why it was not completed is unclear. As Brian Vickers concludes, it was written in the early 1620s (Bacon 1996: 787n), when Bacon had withdrawn from political life and certainly could have found time to complete the manuscript. William Rawley, Bacon's chaplain and literary executor, explains that in addition to the detailed description of Salomon's House, an institution of scientific research, the author had also planned "a frame of Laws, or the best state or mould of a commonwealth, but foreseeing it would be a long work, his desire of collecting the Natural History diverted him, which he preferred many degrees before it (785n).

The *Natural History* Rawley speaks of is also known as *Sylva sylvarum*, at the end of which the "fable" *New Atlantis* was added. Both works were published together posthumously in 1627.

On second thought Bacon refrained from writing a full-fledged utopia. Having promulgated real laws when he was lord chancellor, he probably did not feel like inventing fancy ones. Instead, as Rawley says, he preferred to work on his natural history.

There may have been an additional reason for Bacon to stop halfway. It is possible that he had seen or heard of the 1623 Latin edition of Campanella's *City of the Sun*, which contained a preface by Tobias Adami, who emphasized the similarities between Bacon's inductivism, as expounded in his *Novum organum* (1620), and Campanella's concept of sensory perception (Headley 1997: 81). Bacon may have disliked Campanella's syncretism in *Civitas solis*, to which he could have responded only by writing a more evangelical utopia, but that probably appeared a difficult thing to do.

Thomas More and Campanella were both inspired by Plato's *Republic*,

and Bacon did not want to follow their example. He does not mention the *Republic* and dissociates himself from More in that he lets a character in *New Atlantis* pronounce a negative comment on *Utopia*:

I have read in a book of one of your men [i.e., Thomas More], of a Feigned Commonwealth, where the married couple are permitted, before they contract, to see one another naked. This they [i.e., the citizens of Bensalem] dislike; for they think it a scorn to give a refusal after so familiar knowledge. But because of many hidden defects in men and women's bodies, they have a more civil way; for they have near every town a couple of pools (which they call "Adam and Eve's pools"), where it is permitted to one of the friends of the man, and another of the friends of the woman, to see them severally [i.e., separately] bathe naked. (Bacon 1996: 478)

It seems characteristic of the difference between Bacon and More that the latter's jocular suggestion becomes a serious issue in Bacon's hands. Different from Bacon, in his story of the utopian island of Krinke Kesmes (*Beschryvinge van het magtig Koningryk Krinke Kesmes*, 1708) the Dutch surgeon Hendrik Smeeks offers a more positive response to the idea of premarital inspection of the prospective partners' bodies (see chapter 6).

In accordance with the generic rules of utopian fiction, *New Atlantis* begins with a voyage from Peru in the direction of China and Japan, which brings the sailors unintentionally to the unknown, fairly large island of Bensalem, 5600 miles in circuit, somewhere in the southern part of the Pacific Ocean. Initially, the local people are not particularly friendly, but gradually they appear more and more hospitable, notably when they have ascertained that the members of the English crew are true Christians and not pirates. Christianity is an important topic in the dialogue between the narrating "we" and the various local personalities whom the Englishmen meet. The locals know Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Spanish, but conversations are mostly conducted in Spanish. One of the first questions the English guests ask is how the people of Bensalem – a conflation of Bethlehem and Jerusalem – were converted to the Christian faith. The governor of the House of Strangers where the sailors are lodged replies that twenty years after the ascension of Jesus Christ a miracle occurred: a pillar and a cross of light were seen and a letter was received from the apostle Bartholomew as well as a book containing the Old and the New Testament. Another miracle was that the Hebrews, Persians, Indians, and natives of the island all could read the book as if it had been written in their own language.

The English mariners' next question is how it is possible that the people in Bensalem know so much about the European countries. This is a topic that also occurs in *The City of the Sun* and the answer that their interlocutor gives resembles the solution described in Campanella's story. The governor explains that about three thousand years ago there was intensive navigation – by Phoenicians, Carthaginians, as well as by the Chinese and the inhabitants of “the great Atlantis (that you call America)” (467), but a long time ago King Solamona had ordained that the island should be self-sufficient and should therefore cut off all ties with other countries, just as “the admission of strangers without licence is an ancient law in the kingdom of China.” He also erected “Salomon's House,” named after the king of the Hebrews, which is dedicated to the study of “the Works and Creatures of God” (471). However, in order to keep up with developments abroad, every twelve years two ships with some fellows of Salomon's House set out from Bensalem in order to collect information about the rest of the world in unobtrusive ways. The governor does not want to disclose any details about these secret missions, but in fact the way Bensalem remains in contact with the outer world is rather similar to the arrangement in the City of the Sun, which sent out ambassadors to foreign countries in order to be informed of what happened abroad.

In the discussion the governor refers to “a great man with you,” who had written about Atlantis and its disappearance. Here Bacon invokes the authority of Plato, but by referring to *Timaeus* and *Critias*, where Plato discusses the fate of Atlantis, and not to the *Republic*, Bacon may have wanted to express his critical stance toward Plato's ideal state. The governor believes that he differs from Plato's explanation of the destruction of Atlantis, saying that it was not an earthquake but a “particular deluge or inundation” (468) that destroyed most of great Atlantis, leaving only what is now called America with a thin and rather uncultivated population. In fact, Plato writes that both earthquakes and the ensuing deluge caused the disappearance of Atlantis. The geological disaster that destroyed the civilization of Atlantis, the governor continues, effected a sharp decrease in intercontinental navigation. Plato, too, mentions that the sea beyond the Pillars of Hercules – the Strait of Gibraltar – had become unnavigable because of the appearance of impervious mud after the Atlantic island had been submerged (Plato 1997: *Timaeus*, 25d, and *Critias*, 108e).

In Bensalem a “Feast of the Family” is occasionally celebrated. It is granted to a man who lives to see thirty descendants alive at the same time. It is a celebration of family life and as such is completely at odds with the

abolition of the family as proposed by Plato and Campanella. Marriage laws are further elucidated in a conversation that the first-person narrator has with Joabin, a Jew. Polygamy is not allowed and in all respects the people of Bensalem are the most chaste of all mortal men. They have no saunas, brothels, courtesans, or anything like that.

Then, as a climax of this well-written but rather dull story, one of the fathers of Salomon's House appears to explain the work of that learned institution, which is also called the College of the Six Days' Works. Bacon takes a full page to describe the dignified stature of the man and his expensive attire with panels of sapphires, green emeralds, and borders of gold. The Father speaks Spanish and holds a long monologue about the purpose and the activities of Salomon's House: "The end of our Foundation is the knowledge of Causes, and secret motions of things; and the enlarging of the bounds of Human Empire [i.e., mastery over nature], to the effecting of all things possible" (Bacon 1996: 480). They conduct experiments in the thickening of liquids, the hardening of solids, and refrigeration. They use water power (streams and cataracts) which effects various motions and also engines that can control the wind. They have water that is good for your health and prolongs life. They have spacious halls where they replicate meteorological phenomena, such as snow, hail, and rain, and they are active in cultivating new kinds of plants that bear larger and sweeter fruit. They also conduct tests on animals and generate special breeds of worms and flies to serve specific purposes. Having mastered the mechanical arts, they have machines that generate heat by the use of friction and have developed optical instruments, including telescopes and microscopes. The Father enumerates a long list of accomplishments, culminating in:

We imitate also flights of birds; we have some degrees of flying in the air; we have ships and boats for going under water.... We have divers curious clocks, and other like motions of return, and some perpetual motions. We imitate also motions of living creatures, by images of men, beasts, birds, fishes, and serpents. (486)

The list of what the fellows of Salomon's House are capable of is about as long as the catalogue of inventions in *The City of the Sun*, which includes carts with sails driven along by the wind, ships which move without either wind or oars, as well as the art of flying. Bacon, however, goes much more into details when describing the work of Salomon's House. Many of the inventions mentioned were known in his days and had been demonstrated in

London by craftsmen such as the Dutchman Cornelis Drebbel and the Frenchman Salomon de Caus (Vickers in Bacon 1996: 787n).

The spokesman of Salomon's House concludes the survey of the work they do by telling the narrator that he will grant him permission to publish about their work "for the good of other nations" (488). It is here that the story abruptly ends. No further information is given about the island of Bensalem, nor about the way the narrator and his companions could return to England. The only further addition is an enumeration of research projects, under the heading *magnalia naturae*, the "wonderful works of nature," a term that emphasizes empirical investigation and is used in contradistinction to the biblical phrase *magnalia Dei*, "the wonderful works of God" (Vickers in Bacon 1996: 801n). The list begins with "the prolongation of life," which was also a topic in *The City of the Sun* where we read that people in Taprobana live for at least a hundred years and in very rare cases even two hundred years (Campanella 1981b: 89). In the twentieth century James Hilton would make longevity a central theme of his novel *Lost Horizon*. Other research interests are the curing of diseases considered incurable; increasing one's ability to withstand torture and pain; the improvement of the intellectual capacities; the creation of new species; inventing instruments of destruction for warfare; making rich composts for agriculture; drawing new foods out of substances not in use; turning crude and watery substances into oily and unctuous substances; and the production of artificial minerals and cements (Bacon 1996: 489).

This down-to-earth list of desirable research served as a practical guideline for groups of experimenters in England and, when the popular Latin edition of 1643 had appeared, elsewhere in Europe, too. Vickers mentions that between 1627 and 1685 *New Atlantis* together with *Sylva sylvarum* was reprinted thirteen times. Starting in mid-century more or less permanent research groups were set up, leading to the foundation of the Royal Society in England in 1662 and, in imitation of that institution, to the establishment of learned societies and academies throughout Europe (789n). I assume that it was not the literary value of *New Atlantis* that made it so popular, but rather its perspective on practical research.

However, one should bear in mind that the research projects enumerated in *New Atlantis* were encased in an exemplary Christian setting. The citizens of Bensalem are perfect Christians: devout, chaste, hospitable, and generous. The aim of their experimenting is to reveal the wonderful nature of God's creation. The Feast of the Family is described as "a most natural, pious, and reverend custom . . . , shewing that nation to be compounded of

all goodness.” As a relative outsider, Joabin, the “good Jew,” praises the people of Bensalem to the skies: “there is not under the heavens so chaste a nation as this of Bensalem; nor so free from all pollution or foulness. It is the virgin of the world” (476). It was probably impossible for Bacon to add anything to this laudation, impossible to invent laws that would supplement the biblical rules by which the perfect Christians of Bensalem lived. In fact, it was not really necessary to complete the story of *New Atlantis* and Bacon may have realized that, for he had already sketched a Christian utopia through the blameless conduct of Bensalem’s Christians.

Fools in a world upside-down: Joseph Hall

When the Cambridge student Joseph Hall (1574-1656) began writing his fantastic story of the unknown southern continent, he was much under the spell of Erasmus’s erudite wit and pertinent criticism. In *Another World and Yet the Same* Hall expresses his admiration for “Desiderius” more than once. In fact, the book is heavily indebted to *Praise of Folly* (1512), as appears from the stylistic device of frequently alluding to writers from Greek and Roman antiquity employed by Hall as well as Erasmus, and also from their common theme of denouncing social abuse, prevalent gullibility, and religious hypocrisy. Both Erasmus and Hall, who in 1627 became a bishop in the Church of England, were deeply religious men. At the same time they liked to convey their message with stinging irony.

However, Hall went beyond the scope of *Praise of Folly* in that he berates the fantastic things discoverers had supposedly seen in far-away continents. While the setting of *Praise of Folly* is an edifying monologue addressed to a large imaginary audience, *Another World* is presented as a traveler’s account that enables the author to describe unknown countries and unexpected events. The static setup of *Praise of Folly* becomes a dynamic one in *Another World*. Because of its rather negative description of the social and political conditions in the newly explored southern continent, Hall’s narrative generally is considered the first specimen of European dystopian fiction. It set an example for a wide range of later negative utopian writing. The topos of irrational and unrestricted violence combined with absolute authoritarianism or totalitarian rule recurs in dystopian fiction of the nineteenth and twentieth century – Souvestre, Zamyatin, Huxley, Orwell, Atwood, and others – as well as in contemporary Chinese novels such as Su Tong’s *My Life as Emperor* and Wang Shuo’s *Please Don’t Call Me Human*. In the pref-

ace to *Another World* William Knight, most probably with Hall's approval, explained the social critique and satiric purport of the book, writing that "you [the reader] will recognize the shape of this old world to be such that although you see it to be another world, you will believe it to be the same" (Hall 1981: 3). These lines also elucidate the title of *Another World and Yet the Same* or, as it first appeared in Latin in 1605, *Mundus alter et idem*. The first English translation came out four years later.

In the introductory pages of *Another World* the first-person narrator relates how he meets his friends Beroaldus, a Frenchman, and Grogius, a Dutchman, and discusses the possibility of discovering the *Terra Australis incognita* that is mentioned on geographical maps. Notably Beroaldus is expecting much of such a voyage, which is the only way of finding out what the southern continent would look like. In words that foreshadow the cultural relativism of the Enlightenment, he argues:

There is heaven, there is earth, and without a doubt there are men, perhaps no less cultured than we. Who would have expected such acuteness and skill among the Chinese? Why so many arts and such complex scientific achievement? While we believe that all Muses have been limited to our occidental hovel, the Chinese laugh – not without reason – at the thought that there are other learned people besides themselves, for they contend that they are the only real seers. (13)

However, at the last moment, Beroaldus decides to stay in France and Drogius returns to Delft. Only the narrator continues his imaginary voyage on a ship named "Phantasia" and after two years he reaches the country Crapulia, south of the Cape of Good Hope.

In Book One the narrator reports on Crapulia that it is divided into the provinces Pamphagonia, inhabited by gluttons, and Yvronia, a "land of drunkenness," as Hall explains in a marginal note. Book Two, dealing with the discovery of Viraginia, depicts a world dominated by women. Book Three describes Moronia, a "land of fools," and Book Four tells us about Lavernia, a "land of thieves," where the goddess Laverna is worshipped. The descriptions of Crapulia and Moronia are relatively extensive; Book Two and Four do not exceed a dozen pages in English translation. Together, the four books, including Hall's index of made-up geographical and proper names, run to little over a hundred pages.

The narrative structure of the text calls for a comparison with other travel accounts. The author seems disturbed by the fantastic descriptions that

other – real or armchair – discoverers had committed to paper and responds by taunting the credulity of his readers even more by way of aggrandizement and hyperbole, making things even more fantastic than anyone had done before, constantly reminding us, however, that similar or almost similar observations had been made by John Mandeville in the fourteenth century, by Sebastian Münster in the first half of the sixteenth century, or by Diodorus of Sicily, Herodotus, and Plutarch in Greek antiquity.

Harking back to More's idea of premarital inspection of the prospective bridal couple, Hall writes that in Pamphagonia, the land of gluttony, men with fat and heavy bodies are greatly admired and respected.

No one is worthy to be kissed whose chin does not reach all the way to the middle of his chest and whose belly does not protrude and hang down to the lowest part of his knees. Nor is the case otherwise for women...; maidens are not permitted to marry until a public examination has been made and the men have decided that their hanging chins have reached their breasts. (29)

In this land of gluttons the law focuses on food. It is, for instance, forbidden to have only one meal a day. The greedy-guts do not use money but just exchange one kind of food for another. Here the author resumes the economy-without-money topos elaborated in More's *Utopia*: "These people do not employ money, nor, indeed, do they consider such dead and unsavory metals of much value. Rather, they buy and sell goods only by barter, which Aristotle teaches was done in antiquity" (34).

In a marginal note Hall refers to Aristotle's *Politics*, and John Wands, the meticulous editor of *Another World*, has found the place where Aristotle indeed wrote that "many barbarian tribes ... do not go beyond exchanging actual commodities for actual commodities ..." (145). Hall had read not only Aristotle but, as he explicitly admits, also More. In his story Hall mentions a river with the name "Sans-eau" (74), which equals Anydrus, as he explains in a marginal note referring to More's *Utopia*. By linking his own work to that of More, he seems to suggest that the two books can be read as belonging to the same genre.

Hall's eclectic descriptions of various monsters cannot fail to achieve the desired effect of increasing the readers' incredulity. He mentions the horribly shaped, headless beast "Nuchtermagen" or "Empty stomach"; the *cercopithec*i, a kind of monkeys who, according to J. C. Scaliger, when hungry devour their own tails; a small whale in the River Licoris that has the habit of

spewing a fountain of liquor, which people are eager to collect; creatures that resemble human beings but walk like quadrupeds, such as also recorded by John Mandeville; and two-faced people with two tongues, their front half the shape of an ape, their rear that of a dog, “so that they all seem composed of man, dog, and ape” (92), as described by Münster in his *Cosmographia*. The inhabitants of Lavernia, the land of thieves, look like human beings but have hooked claws instead of hands. Hall informs us that Lucian described Mercury in a similar way. Finally there are the rapacious Harpies, who “in front resemble an owl, in back and in their bodily size an ostrich, in their wings a porcupine, in their beak and claws an eagle” (112). The Harpies accept the local inhabitants as friends but attack any foreigner, just as Aristotle described the birds flying around the island of Diomedea.

Hall probably wished to display a number of outlandish frightening images that precisely through their random accumulation were supposed to enhance the readers’ skepticism. And if any reader would still be inclined to accept Hall’s stories as possibly truthful, there are completely nonsensical observations to undermine any remaining gullibility. For instance, in Moronia, the land of fools, people “sell for nothing today things which, if they hear that these have pleased the buyer, they will buy back tomorrow at great expense” (75). Some people do not feed on bread or other food but on tobacco fumes, just as Pliny recorded that there are “natives in India who live on the air they breathe and the scent they inhale through their nostrils” (178). In eastern Moronia, also called Moronia Mobilis, everything is fashioned anew from day to day. Cities receive new names and, if they are on wheels, change their locations as well, moving for instance from a place in a valley to the top of a mountain. In Moronia Aspera, situated under the Antarctic Pole, no one is to leave his home except in case of necessity, and if they have to go out they should not salute anyone along the way, “except on Thursday” (80). In another region again people have the habit of ripping out one eye, for they know that “always when one eyelid is shut we see more distinctly and intently” (87). In their parliament they discuss the possibility of digging a canal right through the mountains in order to bring the sea closer to the city because someone had noticed that other cities were “wonderfully enriched by the sea’s proximity” (90). Clearly, readers must have understood that not everything Hall had written should be taken seriously.

However, in some respects Hall was indeed serious. He carefully avoids a discussion of dogmatic questions but his descriptions of other religious matters can very well be interpreted as a criticism of the negative excrescences of religious life, in particular the Roman Catholic Church and papa-

cy. The Pamphagonians worship the God of Time, “the most devouring of all things,” who once a year, on the day before Ash Wednesday, appears in the shape of an extremely large and voracious type of bird they call a *ruc*. Here, as the editor suggests, Hall follows Ovid’s saying *tempus edax rerum* (“time devours things”), as well as Marco Polo’s description of the bird *ruk* that is capable of lifting an elephant in its claws (145). When the Pamphagonians expect the sacred bird to appear, they prepare a huge quantity of offerings, including poultry, cattle, camels, and elephants. After hours of waiting the frightening bird finally arrives, accompanied by Harpies, vultures, and hawks. The people “shout, pray, tremble, and rejoice” (35). When the birds have had their fill, the spectators throw themselves on the leftovers and stuff themselves so excessively that for nearly forty days they have to abstain from meat. The first-person narrator guesses that “the 40-day religious fast in the regions of the Papacy may have come into practice from here” (36).

The religious clergy of Moronia are called Morosophers, a term meaning “foolish wise men,” also used by More and Erasmus and apparently coined by Lucian. Hall comments that they have the same influence in Moronia as Buddhist monks in China. He distinguishes several religious orders which resemble those of the Roman Catholic Church: the Cluniachi, Lateranensi, Carthusians, Capuchins, Brethern of the Common Life, and others. It is somewhat surprising to find these European orders in the imaginary southern continent. Apparently the two worlds are not that much separated. As a result, the narrator can ridicule the monks of Moronia implying without a shadow of doubt the Roman Catholic orders in his sarcastic critique:

They scarcely salute any human being, nobody who is not a stone or a cross. With whips they mercilessly scourge themselves to such an extent that they revive in a crueller version the old whipping customs of the Spartans.... They cheat the credulous people so beautifully that they themselves live excellently, expensively, and idly on others; and, unwilling to create a torment in their own home, they enjoy the wives of others (ingeniously, according to [J. J.] Scaliger), and the little babies they themselves produce they prefer to deposit secretly in other birds’ nests to be reared. (71)

The narrator describes a pilgrimage to the crystal palace of Fortune, the goddess of fools, on top of a mountain. From all parts of the world people flock together here to ascend the mountain on their knees. The divine attraction of this place, the narrator argues, is far superior to that of the Lady of Loreto, the shrine of St. James at Compostela, or “our Parathalassia of

Desiderius" (97). Under the name *Parathalassia* ("By-the-sea") Erasmus had ridiculed the adoration of Our Lady in Walsingham, Norfolk. With Erasmian fervor Hall describes at some length the self-torment, stupidity, and superstition of the pilgrims who are cheated by sly monks.

You ask, Reader, and wonder what business all these people carry on. Certainly, desire for worldly goods summoned them all here, and hope keeps them here: all offering prayers to the Goddess so that they may be allowed to attain their long-sought desire. (98)

One pilgrim may pray for domestic tranquility, another for love that remained unrequited, another again for wealth or beauty. Each desires something different.

The religious conditions in Moronia are appalling. As if he had not yet been clear enough that his criticism pertained to the European situation, the narrator notes that there are cities in Moronia where every other house is a brothel, either for young men or for women. The whores pay a yearly fee for being able to practice their profession. This induces Hall to add in a marginal note that the prostitutes of Rome paid an enormous amount of money to the pope, and that Pope Paul III had 45,000 prostitutes in his records from whom he exacted a tax every month. Even if the figures are strongly exaggerated, the accusation is considerable.

The conditions in Crapulia, Moronia, and Lavernia are frightening, and by no means would anyone want to live there. Little has been said so far about the governments of these countries, and indeed Hall does not devote much space to administrative matters. What he writes, however, is enough to confirm our impression that *Another World* represents a dystopian society. In a part of Moronia that Hall calls the "land of choleric fools," there are no laws and all issues are decided by force. Here the Duke of Courroux presides, a tyrant who exceeds all others in cruelty and unpredictability. He is surrounded by blacksmiths, executioners, and butchers. Human flesh is his daily food; cannibalism the order of the day.

Things are more peaceful in Pazzivilla – the "city of fools" – but here people are mostly concerned with silly or fanciful projects: a parliament is convened to debate how the city's dignity or loveliness could be improved. This is where the idea arises to dig a canal right through the mountains. Finally, they decide unanimously to erect a spire on each house, since that would supposedly look nice.

The governments of most cities are midway between an aristocracy and

a democracy. The people can elect the senators they wish but there is no fixed term of office and senators can be sent home at the will of the electorate. Moreover, all provinces have a sort of governor who is both the main administrator and priest. His election resembles that of a pope, which occasions Hall to ventilate some more criticism against papacy.

Sociopolitical conditions are also discussed in Book Two, which offers a description of the land of “Viraginia, or New Gynia,” which is dominated by women. Men have no rights here and are held in slavery. In his first-person narration the traveler tells that he was seized at the border of Loçania. Only after he could persuade his female abductors that he had nothing to do with the evil practices of the men of Loçania, he is set free and granted permission to travel around. The narrator understands why the women hate the Loçanians and imprison them:

For even though these men are so lecherous and so much inclined to sex that their lust burns with desire for boys, for whores, and perhaps even for mules and cattle, they either neglect their wives entirely or else hold them prisoners out of jealousy and suspicious zeal. (58)

Before attaining freedom to move around the traveler has to declare under oath that he “should voluntarily praise women’s intelligence, beauty, and eloquence and defend them from all malicious detractors” (59).

However, in the next chapter he is already criticizing their intelligence and eloquence, for their seemingly democratic government produces chaos – a complaint that goes back to Plato. Everybody studies how to govern but no one wants to be governed. Parliament is almost continually in session but it is hardly useful to adopt a law, as the next day it may be retracted with a plebiscite. Most matters are decided by public vote – if it comes to that, for all members talk at once and no one listens to anyone else.

Entering the province Aphrodysia, where beautiful women dwell in glass houses that are transparent on all sides, the narrator is concerned about his safety. The elegant women of this prosperous place are compared to spiders intent on catching travelers from Loçania, even though they are deadly enemies. If their flirtations do not work immediately, they entreat their captives rudely and “compel the men to serve their most unseemly lusts by force” (62). Once they have made love the men are kept in a stable, “no differently than stallions are kept at stud for mares” (62). The narrator is able to escape from Aphrodysia, not because of his learning or intelligence but due to his unattractive appearance. Being ugly saves him.

After a brief sojourn on Hermaphroditica Island he arrives in Amazonia, a “land of shrewes,” where the peaceful nation Viraginia is defended by female warriors against possible attacks from their neighbors, notably the Loçanians. In Amazonia “the women wear the breeches and sport long beards, and it is the men who wear petticoats and are beardless, who remain at home strenuously spinning and weaving while the women attend to military matters and farming” (64).

Hall follows here a description by the Greek historian Diodorus of Sicily (1st century BCE), who informs us of the Amazon warriors and the female roles of their men. In ancient times the Amazons were thought to have lived somewhere in Turkey or Scythia, but later they were believed to inhabit the river basin of the Amazon in northern Brazil, and Hall finally situates them in the unknown southern continent of his fantasy. In reality they are probably merely a product of the male mythological imagination, motivated by desires and fears that Freud would not have found difficult to explain.

The inverse roles of women and men in Viraginia should be interpreted as a criticism of male dominance and the suppression of women in England, but Hall’s depiction of female dominance and especially the female way of government is counterproductive. He fails to offer us a glimpse of what equality in sexual matters might look like. That problem will recur in our exploration of other utopian fiction, including the early-nineteenth-century Chinese novel *Flowers in the Mirror*. In fact it is a never ending issue, ranging from sentimental adoration of a woman, as in Bernardin’s *Paul et Virginie*, to the feminist idea of Gilman’s *Herland*, to the partly lived, partly reduced eroticism in Houellebecq’s *Possibility of an Island*.

At the end of Book Four, the narrator, in a moment of reflection on his own style, defends his many references to earlier authors. Didn’t the writers of classical antiquity and the Italian Renaissance do the same? “I have found many small verses in Virgil which are an almost word-for-word plagiarism from Homer and Hesiod, and I don’t know how many pages are carried over to Petrarch from a certain vernacular Tuscan poet [Dante]” (116).

It would have been presumptuous for Hall to put himself plainly on a par with Virgil and Petrarch, but here in the penultimate chapter of the book, entitled “The Province of Plagiana,” at least the suggestion of similar ways of rewriting is made. Hall claims to have written more than an intertextual patchwork. Indeed, he has produced a consistent argument against superstition, credulity, stupidity, cruelty, and selfishness, doing so in a playful

way, arguing for moderation and self-control. Through his many direct and indirect quotations he claims a place in literary history and, partly following the example of Thomas More, also in the genre of satiric utopian fiction.

Debunking the pursuit of eutopia: Mandeville

It can indeed be argued that Joseph Hall's fantastic description of the unknown southern continent is an early example of dystopian fiction. Like More, Bacon, and Campanella, he reports on a fictional visit to a distant and secluded part of the world, but what the narrator observes there is the reverse of a eutopian society: a world of thieves, drunkards, gluttons, cannibals, and fools. The cruel regime of the Duke of Courroux certainly is a hateful dystopia. But Hall offers no reflection on the genre of utopian narrative. He neither argues that the fulfillment of a utopian dream will inevitably lead to a dystopian reality, nor does he declare the attempt to realize a utopia as self-defeating or plainly false. On the contrary, nowhere does he exclude the materialization of a eutopian design. A faithful Christian, Hall was averse to cynicism or misanthropy. Without giving up the hope for a better society, he concentrated on satirizing the most serious aberrations of his time disguised as the grotesque conditions of a loathsome continent.

A less faithful believer was needed to break the spell of the utopian dream. Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733) was such a man. Though belonging to the Church of England, any expression of Christian belief in his work sounds like lip service aimed at avoiding censorship. Born and raised in Holland, where Spinoza published his unorthodox views on the origin of the books of the Bible and John Locke had his *Letter concerning Toleration* printed both in Latin and Dutch in 1689, Mandeville grew up under conditions that favored independent thought. Having studied in Leyden, where he took the degree of Doctor of Medicine in 1691, he was familiar with the tolerant practices of the major cities of the Dutch Republic. In the 1690s he went to England where he married and stayed for the rest of his life. Here he published some fables, inspired by La Fontaine, and one of these, *The Grumbling Hive, or, Knaves Turn'd Honest* (1705), would make him famous, notably after it had been reprinted in 1714 and later editions as part of *The Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices, Publick Benefits*.

In little over four hundred brief rhyming lines *The Grumbling Hive* tells the story of a community of bees living and acting like human beings. Their

society is flourishing in the economy, the sciences, and the arts, and their government is relatively modern:

They were not slaves to tyranny,
Nor rul'd by wild democracy;
But kings, that could not wrong, because
Their power was circumscrib'd by laws. (Mandeville 1962: 27)

However, this society of bees is plagued by corruption, cheating, and fraud: “every part was full of vice, / Yet the whole mass a paradise” (31). This, in a nutshell, is the point Mandeville wishes to make, as is also expressed in the title: “Private Vices, Publick Benefits.” It is precisely because vices such as self-love, ambition, pride, and prodigality are winked at that a nation can flourish. Or, as Mandeville writes in his essay “A Search into the Nature of Society” (1723), “private vices, by the dexterous management of a skilful politician, may be turned into public benefits” (1962: 188). It should be noted that Mandeville’s worldview includes a strong government and lacks any scruples about colonialism or a strong class division.

The bees that live so well in relative prosperity have the habit of complaining about the low morality of their fellow bees, while forgetting their own fraudulent behavior: “All the rogues cry’d brazenly, / Good gods, had we but honesty!” Jupiter hears that hypocritical complaint and decides to rid the bees of fraud and make them the most honest creatures of the world. The poet then sketches the disastrous results: debtors start paying their debts, lawyers lose their jobs, taverns no longer have customers, the price of land and houses fall, industry is neglected, trade declines:

The haughty Chloe, to live great,
Had made her husband rob the state:
But now she sells her furniture,
Which th’ Indies had been ransack’d for. (37)

At the end of the poem we find a summary of the moral:

Then leave complaints: fools only strive
To make a great and honest hive.
T’ enjoy the world’s conveniences,
Be fam’d in war, yet live in ease,
Without great vices, is a vain
Eutopia seated in the brain. (38)

Only fools would attempt to realize a eutopia, such as described by More or Bacon, or announced from the pulpit on behalf of the Church. However, those who wish to revive “a golden age” should spare themselves the trouble of being honest.

This boisterous conclusion may be partly due to overconfidence stimulated by the affluent society in which Mandeville was brought up and which he also found in England. But economic prosperity cannot fully explain his cynical, anti-utopian position. We come closer to an explanation if we recognize that it is primarily the prevalent hypocrisy that Mandeville is attacking. He observes the luxury and easy life of the rich and is annoyed that they are not aware of how their wealth was acquired.

After the playful fable of *The Grumbling Hive* Mandeville composed a number of commentaries and essays in which he more seriously expounds his ideas about human nature, the economy, and the origin of government. His view of human nature is pessimistic, misanthropic, or perhaps we should say realistic, and is corroborated by his training and experience as a medical doctor. This is another factor that made him skeptical about the possibility of creating a eutopian society. He rejects the idea that human beings are controlled by rationality and instead recognizes the force of passions, such as anger, pride, fear, or lust. He praises the government of the city of Amsterdam, which enables sailors (who can arrive in their thousands on a single day) to go houses where they may find girls of easy virtue “at reasonable prices.” In this way honest women can walk the streets unmolested. Mandeville writes:

It would be an unspeakable felicity to a state if the sin of uncleanness could be utterly banished from it; but I am afraid it is impossible: The passions of some people are too violent to be curbed by any law or precept. (71)

Mandeville was not only a misanthropic realist, but also a relativist. He turns against the universalist pretensions of Shaftesbury, who in his *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711) had posited that man by nature is a social creature and harmony between his self-interest and the requirements of society can easily be achieved. Perhaps more clearly than any of his contemporaries, Mandeville disentangles natural propensity and social convention or, as he says, “custom.” Morality is restricted by social and historical conditions.

Plurality of wives is odious among Christians and all the wit and learning of a great genius in defence of it has been rejected with contempt. But polygamy is not shocking to a Mahometan. What men have learned from their infancy enslaves them, and the force of custom warps nature and, at the same time, imitates her in such a manner that it is often difficult to know which of the two we are influenced by. (159-160)

The great genius is, of course, Plato, whose views on sexual life were rejected by More and Bacon. Recognition of the “force of custom” leads to cultural relativism, to which Hall already gave timid expression but which Mandeville more emphatically embraces.

In fact, the notion of cultural relativism implies a certain distance from actual social and cultural life, and requires independent judgment. Mandeville clears the way for such intellectual independence. He appears to think for himself instead of joining fashionable political or clerical opinion.

Mandeville’s views on human nature and in particular the relation between rationality and emotion anticipate ideas that would constitute the Enlightenment. The idea of self-interest as a pardonable vice that contributes to the flourishing of a society returns in Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) and later justifications of capitalism. Mandeville’s down-to-earth realism was incompatible with the traditional utopianism of More and Bacon.

Internalized utopia: Swift

Like Joseph Hall in *Another World and Yet the Same*, Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) protests against the fanciful accounts of explorers by offering similar incredible stories in *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726). Moreover, both use their imaginary travel books to satirize social evils in their own country or in continental Europe; Hall focusing on the depravity of humankind, in particular the Roman Catholic clergy, and Swift on the corruption of politics and the general ailment of hypocrisy. Satire rather than utopian imagination is the major characteristic of their work. Yet, part of Hall’s fiction is plainly dystopian and numerous reflections in *Gulliver’s Travels* betray a eutopian impulse. Swift is aware of More’s *Utopia* and Bacon’s *New Atlantis*, but has lost confidence in the possibility that any eutopia can be realized on earth. This is also the point that Bernard Mandeville articulated in *The Fable of the Bees* – a message that Swift repeats with unsurpassed irony.

In the earlier part of his life Swift was deeply involved in politics. Born and educated in Dublin he lived both in England and Ireland. For several years he was an associate of the Tory ministers who controlled Parliament between 1710 and 1714. When the Whigs took over, Swift went back to Ireland to become dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin. That position was below his expectations, but it left him time to write and publish. He wrote *Gulliver's Travels* between 1721 and 1725 (Demaria 2003).

Gulliver's education and background differs from that of his creator Swift, who was ordained an Anglican priest of the Church of Ireland in 1695 (Fox 2003). Gulliver is introduced as an Englishman who went to Emanuel College in Cambridge and later was an apprentice to a surgeon in London. In his early twenties Gulliver went to Leyden and stayed there for more than two years to study medicine, just as Bernard Mandeville had done. This part of Gulliver's fictional career may have been motivated by the narrative necessity to explain his intellectual independence and open-minded observations.

After his return from Leyden Gulliver makes several voyages as a surgeon to the East and West Indies; and also one to the South Sea, where he is shipwrecked and arrives in Lilliput as the crew's sole survivor. The well-known story of the little people who are less than six inches high is told with great attention to detail. After two years he manages to return to England. The second voyage brings him to Brobdingnag, the country of giants, where he stays for more than two years. The next voyage lasts almost four years and takes him to the flying island of Laputa, to Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, and finally to Glubbdubrib. His fourth expedition, now as the captain of a ship, involves an unintended visit of several years to the country of the Yahoos and Houyhnhnms.

One of the prominent terms in – to give the full title of the book – the *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World* by Lemuel Gulliver is the word “reason,” but its use is somewhat misleading. I do not think that Swift believed that more rationality would cure the world of all abuse. In fact, he seems to imply that there is no cure at all. His Christian beliefs, however, prevented him from becoming a downright cynic.

John Boyle, the fifth earl of Orrery, wrote in a letter to his son in 1752 that Swift was disappointed in his career and, perhaps, also other reasons “rendered him splanetic, and angry with the whole world” (Williams 1970: 121). Several critics have called Swift a misanthrope, and I can understand that qualification, but his skeptical views of humankind did not keep him from becoming a prolific writer and describing Gulliver as a man en-

dowed with a “natural Love of Life” and capable of “inward Motions of Joy” (Swift 2003: 146). If the characterization of misanthropy is correct, it is a qualification that does not exclude an unrestricted imagination, witty references to earlier writers, an irreverent *joie de vivre*, and, in combination with all this, a tendency to use rational devices for displaying nonsense. Some of the most striking nonsensical projects will be discussed below. It is Swift’s ability to explore the limits of rationality and credulity that caused contemporary critics such as Alexander Pope and Henry Fielding to compare him with Cervantes and Rabelais (Williams 1970: 11, 109).

In his account of the third voyage Gulliver discusses a number of scientific projects of the Academy of Lagado, which all turn out to be fanciful chimeras with no positive results to be expected. He refers, for instance, to a project of the School of Language that aims at abolishing all words. The reason for attempting to do this is that speech fatigues our lungs and consequently contributes to the shortening of our lives. The project is based on the consideration that “Words are only Names for Things” (Swift 2003: 172), which probably is a deliberate distortion of John Locke’s philosophy of language, who in his *Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1689) emphasized that words signify ideas we have in our minds, not things (Locke 1975: 407). The learned professors of the Academy have concluded that it would be more convenient for everyone to carry with them all things that could express “the particular Business they are to discourse on,” the only disadvantage being that if many topics are going to be discussed a man must carry a great bundle of things upon his back or arrange for one or two servants to attend him (Swift 2003: 172). An obvious advantage, however, is that this invention could serve as a universal language shared by all civilized nations which are accustomed to more or less the same kind of goods and utensils. Another nonsensical invention is practiced in the School of Mathematics. Here a professor teaches his students a rather peculiar method of remembering mathematical formulas:

The Proposition and Demonstration were fairly written on a thin wafer, with Ink composed of a Cephalic Tincture. This the Student was to swallow upon a fasting Stomach, and for three Days following eat nothing but Bread and Water. As the Wafer digested, the Tincture mounted to the Brain, bearing the Proposition along with it. (174)

Gulliver offers a long list of fancy projects that are evidently meant to parody the experiments of Salomon's House in *New Atlantis* as well as projects of the Royal Society. He meets a man who has been working for eight years on "a Project for extracting Sunbeams out of Cucumbers." Another project that certainly satisfied Gulliver's scatological interest is "to reduce human Excrement to its original Food." In a different endeavor an architect had invented a new method for building houses, "by beginning at the Roof and working downwards to the Foundation" (167-168). Another project consists of teaching hogs to plow the ground so that the charges of plows and labor can be saved. Swift records several more of such projects that are less easily summarized.

Gulliver himself has something to contribute in return. He tells his guide that in the kingdom of Tribnia, which is called Langden by its inhabitants, people use acronyms and anagrams to compose secret messages. Tribnia is an anagram of Britain, and Langden of England. Since there are many anagrams or partial anagrams in this novel, Gulliver's explanation is a metalinguistic commentary on Swift's text as well.

By contesting the value of peculiar research projects and ridiculing the practices of the Academy of Lagado, Swift demonstrated his thinly veiled hostility to Isaac Newton, president of the Royal Society from 1703 to his death in 1727. In particular, Swift cast doubt on Newton's studies of gravity. Laputa, the island that floats in the air, can be interpreted as representing a denial of the laws of gravitation and by invoking the authority of Aristotle, whose spirit has been called from the realm of the dead by a necromancer, it is suggested that all physical laws are subject to fashion.

He [Aristotle] said, that new Systems of Nature were but new Fashions, which would vary in every Age; and even those who pretend to demonstrate them from Mathematical Principles, would flourish but a short Period of time, and be out of Vogue when that was determined. (184)

However, Swift's animosity towards Newton seems to have had also a political motivation. He charged Newton with having misused his authority as a scientist to support a political measure adverse to the interests of Ireland. Whatever the grounds of their strained relationship, Swift was and remained critical of the promise of scientific progress that so strongly held sway in his age and was embodied in Bacon's *New Atlantis* as well as in the Royal Society. His resistance to outlandish scientific experiments fits into a more general doubt about the high expectations of unflinching rationality.

Swift's reserved attitude to mere reason was reinforced by his observation that precisely those who boasted of their scientific explorations indulged also in highly unscientific behavior, studying alchemy and astrology.

Early critics of *Gulliver's Travels* noticed that Swift's satiric treatment of scientific research was aimed at the most famous physicist of his time, who surprisingly devoted part of his time to alchemistic studies. Another target was Campanella, although this was rarely, if ever, mentioned by Swift's contemporary critics. No doubt Swift knew about his work, if not directly then via Cyrano de Bergerac (1619-1655), whose posthumously published *Histoire comique: Les États et empires de la lune* and *Les États et empires du soleil* served as a source of inspiration for *Gulliver's Travels* (McCabe 1997). During his visit to the Sun the first-person narrator in *Les États et empires du soleil* – English translation by A. Lovell, *The Comical History of the States and Empires of the Worlds of the Moon and Sun* (1687) – meets the soul of Campanella, who becomes his mentor. They encounter inhabitants of the Realm of Love, where the relations between the sexes are arranged as in *The City of the Sun*, including eugenic measures to procure a healthy offspring. When Gulliver spots the flying island of Laputa he describes it as “encompassed with several Gradations of Galleries, and Stairs, at certain Intervals, to descend from one to the other” (147). This fits Campanella's description of the City of the Sun. At the top of the island the ruler resides, both in Laputa and Sun City. In order to remove any remaining doubts that the text obliquely refers to Campanella's utopia, Swift makes the people of Laputa speak “a clear, polite, smooth Dialect, not unlike in sound to the Italian” (147). However, some prudence is called for because neither Cyrano de Bergerac nor Campanella are mentioned in the auction catalogue of Swift's library (Williams 1932). But it is of course possible that Swift had borrowed these books from his friends, or that his friends had told him about the “empire du soleil” or the City of the Sun.

Traces of Campanella as well as Plato – Swift possessed his *Opera omnia* – can be found in the account of the fourth voyage that leads to the country of the Houyhnhnms.

As these Noble Houyhnhnms are endowed by Nature with a general Disposition to all Virtues, and have no Conceptions or Ideas of what is Evil in a Rational Creature, so their Maxim is, to cultivate Reason, and to be wholly governed by it. (Swift 2003: 245-246)

In short, the country of the Houyhnhnms is described as a perfect society, except that the ugly and stupid Yahoos are also living there, a grotesque species of monsters, whose faces look like those of human beings. The word Houyhnhnm means “horse,” “and in its Etymology, the Perfection of Nature” (217). The way the Houyhnhnms live suggests an ideal society that resembles both Plato’s Republic and the City of the Sun. If family life exists at all, it is strictly controlled by “reason.” Swift writes that “when the Matron Houyhnhnms have produced one of each Sex, they no longer accompany with their Consorts, except they lose one of their Issue by some Casualty” (246).

There are measures to prevent the country from becoming overburdened with too large a population. Only the lower classes of Houyhnhnms may produce up to three foals of each sex. The social distinction between classes reminds us again of Plato, but the eugenic birth control recalls both Plato and Campanella. Swift describes the eugenic conditions among the Houyhnhnms in terms of the complementary characteristics of male and female:

In their Marriages they are exactly careful to choose such Colours as will not make any disagreeable Mixture in the Breed. Strength is chiefly valued in the Male, and Comeliness in the Female, not upon the account of Love, but to preserve the Race from degenerating; for where a Female happens to excel in Strength, a Consort is chosen with regard to Comeliness. (247)

Eugenics fits in with the purely rational approach to marriage, which is considered “one of the necessary Actions of a Rational Being” (247). A married couple show each other the same kind of friendship that they feel for all others of the same species. A political assembly, the representative council of the whole nation which decides on economic questions of how to balance want and surplus, deals in a similar vein with the regulation of children. If a Houyhnhnm has two male foals, he exchanges one of them with another Houyhnhnm who has two females. And when a child has been lost by any casualty and the mother is past breeding, it is determined which family shall breed another to supply the loss. With respect to education, the Houyhnhnms appear to give the same treatment to the young of both sexes: males as well as females are trained to become strong, fast, and hardy, by exercising them in running races up and down steep hills and over hard stony ground. Such a rational approach seems inherent to any imagined perfect society. We see traces of Plato, Campanella, as well as Cyrano de Bergerac,

without being able to disentangle precisely the respective sources of Swift's imagination.

The accounts of the first two voyages of Gulliver to Lilliput, the country of small people, and Brobdingnag, the country of giants, are experiments in relativism. Swift treats the reaction of Gulliver to these different conditions with great consistency and a considerable sense of humor. Think of his description of needlework in Lilliput: Gulliver observes "a young Girl threading an invisible Needle with invisible Silk" (55). Another famous instance is the way Gulliver succeeds in extinguishing the fire in the queen's palace by directing a squirt of pee on the burning apartments.

A sense of relativism is indeed what Swift attempts to convey. When Gulliver has explained the details of English politics, the wars by sea and land, the religious schisms, and the quarrels between Whigs and Tories, the giant king of Brobdingnag after a hearty fit of laughter observes "how contemptible a Thing was human Grandeur, which could be mimicked by such diminutive Insects as I [i.e., Gulliver]" (100).

The psychological consistency with which the tales of Gulliver are told is impressive, thus enhancing their credibility. Having returned from Brobdingnag, Gulliver still has the habit of shouting as he did in the country of the giants who found it difficult to hear his weak voice. And since his eyes have become accustomed to people of the size of giants, Gulliver believes that Englishmen "were the most little contemptible Creatures" (137). Similarly, coming back from the country of the Houyhnhnms and meeting the "Yahoos" of his own family, he is disgusted by their smell and lack of cleanliness. It takes Gulliver weeks to become used to his family and friends. Touching on a theme also raised by More at the end of his *Utopia*, Gulliver in particular cannot stand the manifestation of pride. He will never understand how his fellow human beings dare to display that vice, for which the Houyhnhnms did not even have a name.

The question we should ask is whether Swift in the various countries that Gulliver visits sketches a eutopia, or dystopia, or neither? We understand that he is primarily a satirist, but that does not preclude his positioning himself within the tradition of utopian writing, as he appears to do when referring to Plato, Bacon, Campanella, and also More, whose *Utopia* he mentions in a letter "from Captain Gulliver to his Cousin Sympson." The letter, dated April 2, 1727, served as a kind of preface to later editions of *Gulliver's Travels*. In a paradoxical twist, Swift repudiates the criticism "that the Houyhnhnms and Yahoos have no more Existence than the Inhabitants of Utopia" (Swift 2003: 7). Here Swift, or rather Gulliver, poses as a

writer of veracious stories and as a moralist who ventured the absurd project of reforming the Yahoos in England.

Swift is quite aware of the utopian tradition and he experiments with different forms of sociopolitical organization in Lilliput, Brobdingnag, and Houyhnhnmland. Lilliput certainly does not offer an attractive way of life. Among the positive characteristics Gulliver notes is the fair balance between reward and punishment, and that people are chosen for employment on the basis of their moral behavior rather than extraordinary ability. But in practice the Lilliputians are just as corrupt as ordinary human beings. Gulliver also shows little sympathy for the relation between men and women, which seems wholly dictated by lustful desire. Therefore, the education of children from the age of twenty months is entrusted to public nurseries. Lilliput deviates from Plato's Republic in that parents know who their children are and are allowed to visit them briefly twice a year. However, Swift follows Plato again in that the treatment of the children differs in accordance with the social class to which the parents belong. When at last Gulliver on the basis of malicious gossip is unjustly accused of high treason, the reader knows for sure that Lilliput is far from a eutopia.

In Brobdingnag, the country where people are as tall as a church steeple, nothing eutopian can be found. Here Gulliver gets the opportunity to explain the workings of the English parliament to the king. The picture he presents sounds like a panegyric upon England and its quasi-ideal government, but the king listens very attentively and begins to ask critical questions about bribery, the national debt, the expensive wars, and the large mercenary army. Eventually the king becomes extremely critical:

He was perfectly astonished with the historical Account I gave him of our Affairs during the last Century, protesting it was only an heap of Conspiracies, Rebellions, Murders, Massacres, Revolutions, Banishments, the very worst Effects that Avarice, Faction, Hypocrisy, Perfidiousness, Cruelty, Rage, Madness, Hatred, Envy, Lust, Malice, or Ambition could produce. (122)

Gulliver's praise of England is unmasked as referring to a most abject, grotesque dystopia. But Brobdingnag itself is no eutopia either, for its inhabitants have been troubled with the same disease that has affected all of mankind: "the Nobility often contending for Power, the People for Liberty, and the King for absolute Dominion" (128).

Houyhnhnmland, the country of the perfection of nature, could be the

strongest case for being considered a eutopia, but the consistent rationality that permeates the society of the Houyhnhnms destroys their chances. They have no word for pride, nor for lying or falsehood. And these creatures that exemplify the perfection of nature cannot understand why one should cover one's private parts, for why should Nature "teach us to conceal what Nature had given" (219)? They believe that "Nature and Reason [are] sufficient Guides for a reasonable Animal" (229). Any form of passion is beyond the lifestyle of the Houyhnhnms. Therefore, they hate the Yahoos who, like other brutes, "had their females in common; but in this they differed, that the She-Yahoo would admit the Male, while she was pregnant, and that the Hees would quarrel and fight with the Females as fiercely as with each other" (242).

Such grotesque brutality – admitted in the City of the Sun – is repudiated by the Houyhnhnms, but the reduction of erotic passion to disinterested friendship cannot be a solution either. Gulliver observes that parents have no fondness for their children. Neither do the Houyhnhnms show any grief if one of their close relations dies. Here the judgments of Gulliver and Swift differ. Whereas Gulliver expresses unrestricted admiration for Houyhnhnmland, Swift, by recording the lack of love for one's children and the absence of mourning, appears to argue that nature and reason alone are not sufficient to produce a eutopia. He experiments with a society built on reason, but, as Rawson (1973) maintains, Houyhnhnmland is not a model to be imitated. Rationality alone would not be capable of producing a better world. Swift intimates that such a world cannot be expected to come about, unless we arrive at a better understanding of human nature and are able to live by an internalized morality which in his view would certainly have its foundation in religion. He laughs at utopian experiments, including his own. Eutopia, he seems to say, can exist only as an idea, as a mental projection, whose realization cannot be found in this world.

Gulliver's Travels is open to various interpretations and this may partly explain its enormous success. Within a couple of weeks thousands of copies were sold in London (Williams 1970: 82). The domestic buyers were very much attracted by the thinly veiled critical discussion of English politics and the royal court, and foreign readers, who did not immediately recognize the caustic hints at the various political factions, appreciated the book for its entertaining stories and wit. Voltaire, who was in England at the time *Gulliver's Travels* appeared, called Swift "the English Rabelais" and advised one of his correspondents to translate the novel into French. However, Voltaire's interest in the book was restricted to the "Voyage to Lilliput"; he

was much less favorably impressed by the later parts, since the “continued series of new fangles, follies of fairytales, of wild inventions pall at last upon our taste” (73-74). The French translator, Pierre François Guyot Desfontaines, appears to agree with this judgment, for, as he explains in the preface to his translation, he adjusted the text to “the good taste which reigns in France” (79). The highly naturalized French translation was such a great success that the translator decided to write a sequel, *Le Nouveau Gulliver; ou voyages de Jean Gulliver, fils du Capitaine Gulliver* (1730), which became equally popular, was reissued several times, and appeared in English and Italian translations in 1731.

However, the reception of *Gulliver's Travels* certainly was not unconditionally positive. Critics who failed to differentiate between Gulliver and Swift rejected the misanthropic observations on humankind expressed in particular in the last part of the novel, the description of Houyhnhnmland, as if those represented Swift's own opinion. Nevertheless, the novel was destined to have a long life. The words “lilliputian” and “yahoo,” coined by Swift, were added to the English language. On the penultimate page of the book Gulliver returns to his home “to enjoy my own Speculations in my little Garden at Redriff,” an anti-utopian conclusion that Voltaire, in spite of his reticence concerning Swift's “wild inventions,” copies at the end of his own *Candide* (1759), a story that equals or even surpasses *Gulliver's Travels* in fantasy and wit.

Interlude: The Island Syndrome from Atlantis to Lanzarote and Penglai

Until the eighteenth century most European stories about utopian societies were situated on an island. Undoubtedly that convention was partly motivated by the discovery, since the days of Columbus and Vespucci, of faraway territories. Often, the land where seafarers anchored after voyages of many months was an island, with a mild or tropical climate, lush vegetation, and rich wildlife. The natural setting appeared idyllic, and if the inhabitants were not openly hostile their different way of life could arouse the utopian imagination and would stimulate the projection of an ideal state without religious conflict, political corruption, economic hardship, or oppressive sexual morality. Thomas More set an example in this respect too, as his *Utopia* was situated on an island near the Brazilian coast. The insular geography provided an ideal setting for the construction of a perfect society. The inhabitants could easily ward off unwelcome intruders and contact with the depraved outer world was not encouraged.

The changing European tradition

The seafaring explorers of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries were not the first to consider the island a topos of potential bliss. A thousand years earlier the legendary Irish monk Saint Brendan had located a mythical island resembling paradise that some commentators have identified as one of the Canary Islands. Still earlier, in Greek mythology, the Garden of the Hesperides with its much desired sacred apples was situated on an island west of the Strait of Gibraltar, and Plato recorded the oral tradition of the beautiful island of Atlantis to which Bacon referred in his *New Atlantis*.

Critias, one of the characters in the dialogues *Timaeus* and *Critias*, is the major source of information about Atlantis. Plato goes to some lengths to emphasize the historical reliability of Critias's story by explaining its narrative genealogy. As a young boy Critias had learned from his grandfather about the visit of the statesman and poet Solon (c. 640-c. 560 BCE) to Egypt. An elderly Egyptian priest had told Solon that, different from the Greeks,

they had recorded the ancient history of Athens and Atlantis in the sacred writings that were preserved in their temples. Whereas the Athenians remembered only their recent history, the Egyptian priests were aware of the laws and history of the two illustrious states nine thousand years before their own days.

Critias's tale is not without nostalgia. Both Athens and Atlantis were once almost perfect societies, reminding us in various ways of Plato's *Republic*. In mythical times the military class in Athens lived apart from other citizens occupied in agriculture or the handicrafts.

[The warrior class] had all that was appropriate to their training and education. None of them had any private possession, but they thought of all their possessions as the common property of all, and they asked to receive nothing from the other citizens beyond what they needed to live. (Plato 1997: *Critias*, 110c-d)

Critias remembers that on an earlier occasion – i.e., in the dialogue recorded in the *Republic* – they called these military men “guardians” who lived a modest communal life, avoiding luxury and making no use of gold or silver (112c). It was a stable society of great prosperity that, however, steadily declined in the course of nine thousand years because of geological and climatological changes. Greece was partly inundated and reduced to the string of dispersed islands and mountainous areas that it was in Plato's day and still is today.

In spite of Plato's attempt to stress the reliability of Critias's story it remains a myth, notably where it relates what Solon had heard in Egypt about Atlantis, whose history appears partly determined by gods. When the gods divided their power over different parts of the world, Poseidon was allotted the Atlantic island, where he settled “the children he had fathered of a mortal woman” (113c). The ensuing description of Atlantis mentions a city on a hill in the middle of a plain, stipulating the mathematical principles according to which it was built. (This may have inspired Campanella's account of Taprobana and the City of the Sun.) Poseidon's first-born son was called Atlas, whence the name of the island and the surrounding sea. Atlas became king of the island, and his descendants assumed that position after him. Like prehistoric Athens, Atlantis was abundantly fertile, prosperous, and well administered. The empire stretched to Libya and the Tyrrhenian Sea. It tried to subdue Athens, but failed due to the firm resistance of the courageous Athenians and their allies.

The government of Atlantis consisted of a confederation of ten princes, who each had absolute power in their own region. But their mutual relations were determined by the precepts of Poseidon as inscribed on a pillar erected in a temple in the center of the island. Every fifth or sixth year they assembled in the temple to deliberate on public affairs, inquiring whether anyone had acted improperly. The meeting was given added luster by sacrificing a bull and swearing to faithfully respect the law. They pledged:

to help one another should anyone in any of their cities make an attempt to overturn the divine family; that they should deliberate together, as had their ancestors before them, over their decisions concerning war and their other actions, but that they should cede leadership to the royal family of Atlantis; and, finally, that the king should have power to put none of his kinsmen to death, if he could not obtain the approval of the majority of the ten kings. (120c-d)

The story continues to explain that they despised everything except virtue and were not intoxicated by luxury. Plato seems to evoke here again the idea of the wise philosopher-ruler – now, however, bound by ties of family relations and libations of blood and wine.

However, after many generations the Atlantic rulers no longer lived up to their high ideals, and their “true way of life oriented to happiness” (121b) came to an end. Zeus, the god of gods, decided to punish them. It is at this point that Critias’s story breaks off and the dialogue that bears his name abruptly ends. However, by implication the punishment that Zeus was thinking of is clear, for it had been mentioned earlier, both in *Timaeus* and *Critias*, that the island of Atlantis was to be hit by earthquakes and engulfed in the waves.

Was Atlantis a perfect state, before the rulers forgot their divine destiny and the island was destroyed? If Plato had meant it to be a eutopia, it was one of revealed religious law and little individual freedom, of power in the hands of a few princes of royal blood and mute obedience of the common people. It offered safety and stability, but also war and conquests. However, this eutopia, if it was one, did not last. When the princes who ruled the country by hereditary succession began to act disgracefully, driven by lawless ambition and the desire for power, the island vanished. Plato seems to invest the myth with allegorical meaning: hereditary succession cannot guarantee wise government. Apparently he prefers his ideal of the philoso-

pher-ruler, as developed in the *Republic*: rulers who were chosen on the basis of their capability, not because of any hereditary claim.

Obviously, not all imaginary islands harbor a utopia. The island in literary fiction can have many different functions. Apart from offering the setting of a perfect state, such as in More's *Utopia* and Bacon's *New Atlantis*, the island could serve as a refuge, a place of exile, or a prison. Both in fiction and real life the island provided survival conditions for shipwrecked mariners and, as has been said about Robinson Crusoe's island, "an opportunity for colonial expropriation" (Richetti 2001: xxii). Uninhabited islands with a dense vegetation, abundant wildlife, and rich deposits of minerals were a welcome prey for seafaring nations; and inhabited ones evoked the comparison with one's own civilization, which led either to criticism of the cruel and uncivilized natives or to praise for their assumedly eutopian behavior and social organization; and finally to the more neutral attitude of cultural relativism.

The emblematic island in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, written almost a century after More's *Utopia* and in some aspects pertaining to the utopian tradition, combines several of these functions. It served once as a place of refuge for Prospero, the shipwrecked deposed duke of Milan, and his daughter Miranda, who have lived there for twelve years when another shipwrecked group arrives: Alonso (king of Naples), his brother Sebastian, Antonio (Prospero's brother, who had usurped the title of duke of Milan), Ferdinand (son of Alonso and the crown prince), Gonzalo, the honorable old counselor who had saved Prospero and Miranda from a certain death by arranging a ship by which they could flee, as well as some noblemen, a jester, and a drunken butler. The island was initially inhabited by two more people: Sycorax, a witch born in Algeria and banished to this place, and her deformed son, Caliban. At the time of the play's action, i.e., when the second group arrives, Sycorax has died and Caliban is being exploited as a slave. Postcolonial criticism focuses on the colonial attitudes of Prospero, who considers himself owner and ruler of the island and completely ignores any rights of Caliban, a native indeed since he was born here, as well as on the character of Gonzalo, the respectable elderly counselor who starts dreaming about shaping the island after his utopian design. The postcolonial reading, though anachronistic, is pertinent and throws a critical light on commonplace ideas about the exploration and exploitation of unknown territories, inhabited or not, in Shakespeare's day.

Gonzalo, assuming that the unidentified island (which commentators have located somewhere in the Mediterranean Sea between Naples, Tunis

and Algeria) is uninhabited, observes the mild climate and lush flora, concluding: “Here is everything advantageous to life” (Shakespeare 1979: 1545). Next, he elaborates a colonial program that is utopian at the same time, imagining how he would cultivate the island, if he were king:

I’ the commonwealth I would by contraries
Execute all things; for no kind of traffic
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
Letters should not be known: riches, poverty,
And use of service, none: contract, succession,
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
No occupation; all men idle, all;
And women too, – but innocent and pure;
No sovereignty: – (1546)

And after a critical remark from his audience that he, paradoxically, wants to be king and abolish sovereignty at the same time, Gonzalo continues:

All things in common nature should produce,
Without sweat or endeavour: treason, felony,
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine,
Would I not have; but nature should bring forth,
Of it own kind, all foizon, all abundance,
To feed my innocent people. (1546)

Gonzalo’s visionary exaggeration may be interpreted as having an ironic effect, but not necessarily so. It may also recall the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount – the birds that neither sow nor reap, the lilies of the fields, which do no work and do not spin (Matthew 6) – and certainly echoes several aspects of More’s Utopia, such as the prohibition of private property, the absence of trade, the equal distribution of the products of nature among all, and the chastity of men and women. Gonzalo concludes his peroration by suggesting that his government would surpass that of a “golden age” (1546).

A second passage that pertains to the utopian tradition is phrased by the fifteen-year-old Miranda, who has been spending her days in the company of her father and the deformed slave Caliban for a long time. Her knowledge of the world is limited, until her father discloses who he is and how his brother, Antonio, had forced him to leave Milan, but this does not change

the fact that the only human beings she has ever seen are Caliban and her father. No wonder that, when she meets Ferdinand, the crown prince of Naples, she is immediately struck by his handsome appearance. Acting, as he says, under favorable astrological conditions, Prospero has used his supernatural powers and intentionally arranged the shipwreck of his enemies as well as the happy encounter between his daughter and the prince and their awakening love. The Greek goddesses Ceres and Juno, appearing in the atmosphere of a pastoral idyll, confirm the engagement between Ferdinand and Miranda. At this point Prospero forgives both his brother, Antonio the usurper, and Alonso, who, as king of Naples, has subjected Milan. When they finally appear with their retinue, the prospective marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda reconciles the former enemies. Seeing all these noblemen, Miranda exclaims in all her naivety and blinded by her tender love:

O, wonder!

How many goodly creatures are there here!

How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,

That has such people in 't! (1570)

The spectators of the play are aware of who these beauteous people really are, several of them criminal plotters, which provides ground for an ironic interpretation of Miranda's naive judgment. When Aldous Huxley quoted Miranda in the title of his dystopian novel *Brave New World* (1932) he implied a similar ironic effect. However, whereas Miranda believed without reservation what she was saying, Huxley implied the opposite meaning of these words.

In literary fiction islands can be invested with different meanings, and the appearance of an island in a fictional narrative is not nearly sufficient to make us consider it utopian. And, the other way round, if we chance upon utopian fiction it is not necessarily set on an island. Some sort of well-protected location, such as the prototypical Garden of Eden, is indeed necessary as one of the elements of the generic syntax of the utopian narrative. Apart from the Old Testament it is again Plato who has shown the way. In *Laws* the composition of a legal code is discussed for a colony that is to be established on Crete. The Athenian participating in the dialogue inquires rather critically about the colony's geographic position, but is completely satisfied when he hears that it is economically self-sufficient, has no direct neighbors, and is difficult to reach. He concludes that it "will have tolerably healthy prospects of becoming virtuous" (1997: 704e-d).

Whereas the utopias of More, Campanella, Bacon, and Hall were all set on islands, from the mid-seventeenth century the location of utopia, difficult to access and hazardous to leave, becomes increasingly variegated. Cyrano de Bergerac situated his utopia on the Moon and the Sun, and by setting the example of traveling into outer space inspired later writers of science fiction. Bernard Mandeville introduced elements of the animal fable into his tale of the bees, which allegorizes the futile attempt of trying to achieve eutopia. Swift experimented with countries populated by dwarfs and giants, situated on an island and a peninsula, and followed the tradition of the animal fable in describing the experiences of Gulliver in a country of horses. D'Argens offered an ironic description of a republic of apes in the first two chapters of his *Songes philosophiques* (1746, *Philosophical Dreams*), and some forty years later Gerrit Paape, alias J. A. Schasz, M.D., published *Journey through the Country of Monkeys* (*Reize door het Aapenland*, 1788), a dystopian satire. Animals remained part of the stock repertoire of utopian and, in particular, dystopian writing, as in Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), Bulgakov's *The Heart of a Dog* (*Sobach'e serdtse*, written in 1925 and published much later), and Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945). The Danish writer Ludvig Holberg relates the adventures of Niels Klim, who fell into a deep hole and reached the center of the Earth, which appeared to be inhabited by intelligent trees that are free to move around (*Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum* [*The Subterranean Journey of Nicholas Klim*], 1741). Part of the story is utopian; other parts discuss the negative aspects of various utopian solutions.

A simple way of traveling to another world is provided by the device of the dream as employed by Mercier who, as Trousson observed, replaced the Christian millenarianist prophecy by a secular doctrine of progress in *The Year 2440* (*L'An 2440*, 1771) (Fortunati and Trousson 2000: 45). His projection of utopia into a faraway future was echoed in many later attempts, among them Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888), which uses the device of a long hypnotic sleep after which the main character awakes in the year 2000. A more complex device is the construction, under the influence of Einstein's theory of relativity, of a parallel world in another dimension of space, as in H. G. Wells's *Men Like Gods* (1923).

There are numerous solutions for designing a secluded world, but while outer space and the center of the Earth, the distant past and future times, the life of animals and trees, the dream and the effects of relativity theory were explored as utopian settings, many writers persisted in using the conventional device of imagining inaccessible parts of the real world, such as

the forgotten country of women in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915) or the Tibetan mountains in James Hilton's *Lost Horizon* (1933), or continued the well-tried traditional topos of the island: Aldous Huxley, Lin Yutang, Michel Houellebecq.

The generic syntax of utopian fiction – as of any literary genre – is subject to continual change. Whereas the means of expression and in particular the location of the setting of the story changed, the semantics of utopian fiction went through a process of differentiation as well. Mandeville, Swift, and Holberg challenged the one-way search for eutopia. Their fiction included reflections on whether we should attempt to realize utopian ideals. They introduced the mode of meta-utopian writing, distinguishing between eutopia and dystopia. It is true, in his *Another World and Yet the Same* Joseph Hall had already inserted dystopian scenes, but Mandeville was perhaps the first to argue explicitly that only fools would attempt to realize a utopia without vices. His reflections on the feasibility of a perfect state cleared the way for questioning the various utopian goals, such as the ideal of longevity, ridiculed by Swift, or of permanent health, which, according to Holberg and others, would inevitably lead to boredom. In *Gulliver's Travels* satire replaced the eutopian impulse. Swift's Lilliput, Brobdingnag, Laputa, and Houyhnhnmland describe nonexistent countries and could, strictly speaking, be called utopian, but they represent neither eutopia nor dystopia. His critical genius was motivated by a down-to-earth realism. Similarly, Voltaire confronted the blind optimism of believing our world to be the best possible one with the real experience of suffering.

The general reshuffling and differentiation of genres in the eighteenth century included a splitting up of utopian fiction into eutopia and dystopia, meta-utopian reflection and sociopolitical criticism, political pamphlets, declarations of human rights, and calls for revolution. *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) was partly inspired by Cabet's utopian fiction in *Voyage en Icarie* (1840), but Marx and Engels's political analysis stood at the beginning of realizing utopian ideals in the world of here and now. Marxism and other revolutionary movements required manifestoes, statutes and bylaws to institutionalize their organization and political programs. As we shall see in chapter 10, utopianism became the enemy and victim of these political realists. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, party programs absorbed part of the utopian legacy by domesticating its ideals. Where their political effectuation led to adverse results we witness an increase of dystopian narratives, such as Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), exposing communist dictator-

ship, and Perec's *W or the Memory of Childhood* (*W ou le souvenir d'enfance*, 1975), showing the ideological basis of Nazi racist persecution.

And yet utopian fiction continued to be written, sometimes, as by William Morris and Herman Gorter, in competition with the political realists. In other cases authors felt that politicians lacked the grasp of what was really important in life, as appears from Lin Yutang's *The Unexpected Island* (1955) and Huxley's *Island* (1962). Other authors, such as Houellebecq, introduced a time scale in their work for which political planning had a blind eye. The various challenges of global warming, genetic manipulation, electronic communication, and nuclear energy call for a broad conception of long-term development. Whether intentionally or not, Houellebecq in *The Possibility of an Island* (*La Possibilité d'une île*, 2005) made the volcanic island of Lanzarote a mirror image of the lost Atlantis. In Houellebecq's novel the ocean that swallowed up the Atlantic island has retreated, thus enabling travelers to reach Lanzarote on foot. However, this is only one aspect of that highly interesting novel, which I will discuss at length in chapter 16. In any case, precisely by resorting once more to the device of the island as a goal to achieve, the author alerts the reader to interpret the text as utopian fiction, although it offers hardly any hints of a tempting perfection.

The setting of Chinese utopias

In the Introduction I discussed some obvious differences between Chinese and European culture that affected the form of utopian narratives. Confucian utopianism can be considered nostalgic and, although Plato also tended to look backward to a presumably more attractive ancient tradition, his rationality prevented him from accepting ancient customs without extensive discussion. In line with the Confucian emphasis on precedents worth imitating, the prototype of Chinese utopian fiction, "The Story of Peach Blossom Spring" ("Taohua yuan ji") by Tao Yuanming (365-427) recalls the peaceful times and wise government of earlier times.

The setting of that concise story is not an island but an inaccessible rural area hidden behind the narrow passage of a cavern, providing similar conditions for protection against unwelcome visitors. The utopian idea required such protection, whether in China or in Europe; and that the one culture made use of the device of a cavern and the other preferred the setting of an island is partly a matter of chance and to some extent also the logical effect of different geographic conditions, as suggested in the introduc-

tion. There I argued that China can be characterized as a continental civilization, whereas the origins of European culture are concentrated around the Mediterranean Sea. “The Story of Peach Blossom Spring” became a standard of utopian thinking in China and has evoked abundant commentary. Chinese utopian writing has often resorted to the topos of the cavern, which appeared a casual solution in the hands of Tao Yuanming but became a narrative convention because of the success and prototypical effect of “Peach Blossom Spring” (see chapter 7).

However, not all Chinese utopian narratives refer to a subterranean passage through a cavern. In Chinese mythology fairies and celestials live high up on mountains, either in the western part of the continent or on islands in the east. The paradisiacal conditions of the living quarters of these otherworldly creatures have found their echoes in utopian fiction, notably in the eighteenth-century partly utopian novel *Flowers in the Mirror* (*Jing hua yuan*) by Li Ruzhen (chapter 7).

As Michael Loewe writes, originally the mountainous islands in the east were believed to be inhabited by immortals who possessed the elixir of life (Twitchett and Loewe 1986). The first Qin emperor (3rd century BCE) and Han Wudi (2nd and 1st century BCE) searched for means to prolong life and avoid death by trying to acquire the elixir from these islands, of which Penglai is the most well-known. The *Book of History* (*Shiji*) records that in 219 BCE the first Qin emperor sent Xu Fu in search of the fabled islands, but he returned empty handed (Yü Ying-shih 1986). In a second maritime expedition Xu Fu, accompanied by various craftsmen and a great number of boys and girls from the best families, sailed eastward in another attempt to acquire the elixir of life. As the *Book of History* relates, Xu Fu arrived at peaceful and fertile land, made himself king, and never returned to China (Bauer 1989: 104). Some commentators have guessed that he settled down in Japan.

Whatever the historical value of these stories, it is clear that islands play also a crucial role in Chinese mythology concerned with immortality and celestial conditions. When Li Ruzhen referred to a number of islands in *Flowers in the Mirror*, among them one or two that can be considered utopian in both Chinese and Western terms, he was appealing to common cultural knowledge. In Imperial China it is not only the cavern and its narrow subterranean passage but also islands such as Penglai that may serve as a conventional setting of utopian narratives.

From the May Fourth Movement of 1919, when Chinese intellectual life absorbed Western literature without any restrictions, the narrative

models of utopian fiction became more variegated, in principle as varied as in Europe and America. For instance, Lao She situated his dystopian *Cat Country* (*Mao cheng ji*, 1933) on a planet, supposedly Mars, where the aircraft carrying the main character has crashed.

However, it appears that the setting of dystopian narratives is less rigorously subjected to conventional restrictions than that of eutopian fiction. The dystopian narrative is concerned with the negative features of a society that have materialized in reality, or threaten to be realized. The evil is considered to be real and ubiquitous, which is the reason why many dystopian narratives are set in realistic conditions close to our world. Although some dystopias, such as those written by Lao She or, in Europe, by Perec, still have well-delineated settings, most dystopian writing appears to lack such specific restrictions. It may be helpful to keep these generic distinctions in mind. They are largely conventional, but to some extent also logical.

Enlightenment Utopias

The Enlightenment took varied forms and proceeded at different paces across Europe, but there is one characteristic that can be recognized in the variegated manifestations of Enlightenment thought: the emancipation from authoritative conceptions of religion, government, and philosophy as they appeared to be incapable of withstanding rational criticism and individual empirical observation. Through the course of the eighteenth century people attached greater and greater value to individual judgment.

Not everyone shared in this development, which, for a long time, remained restricted to an elite of writers and philosophers, but by the end of the century the critique of divine revelation, despotic government, and abstract speculative philosophy had become widely accepted. The trend toward secularization, democracy, and empiricism was openly discussed and led to institutional changes. These occurred slowly in some countries; in France it took place by way of an abrupt revolution in which the banner of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* was raised and a utopian project was acclaimed that never fully materialized, but has remained an elusive ideal ever since.

Relativism versus utopianism

In contrast to the decades just before the French Revolution, the first half of the eighteenth century was not propitious for writing eutopian narratives. Mandeville, who excused private vices as the unavoidable ingredients of public benefits, had absolutely rejected the endeavor of realizing a eutopia. Swift was skeptical about attempts to design a perfect world. Montesquieu and Voltaire doubted the significance of utopian experiments; they were relativists, not utopianists.

In his *Lettres persanes* (*Persian Letters*), published anonymously in Amsterdam in 1721, Montesquieu was critical of the religious and administrative conditions in both Persia and France. One of the early epistolary novels, it has the charm of novelty. Its combination of imagined inside information about Persian customs and Islamic culture with a quasi-outsider's view of

the Roman Catholic Church and French civil authorities, with a special interest in irrational behavior and abuse, was also surprisingly new. It is a great satirical novel, and not a utopian narrative, except for some letters (10 to 14), which go into the question of whether human beings are “happy because of the pleasures and satisfactions of the senses, or because of the practice of virtue” (“heureux par les plaisirs et les satisfactions des sens, ou par la pratique de la vertu” [Montesquieu 1956: 21]). The episode serves as a *mise en abyme*, a story within the story that encapsulates the purport of the whole text and arguably also of Montesquieu’s later work on political theory, such as *De l’esprit des lois* (1748, *The Spirit of Laws*). There is one more letter (141) that can be subjected to a utopian reading, to which I will refer later.

Usbek, one of the main correspondents in *Lettres persanes*, answers the question about the origin of happiness by way of a fable about a people of primitive cave dwellers or troglodytes in Arabia. They behave like savages, kill their king and his family, proclaim the republic, and install a new government. However, they are soon dissatisfied with the new rulers and kill them also. The troglodytes now decide to do without any administration at all and care only for one’s own property and advantage. When the people living in the mountains die of hunger, the farmers in the valleys will not help them, and when the latter suffer bad harvests, the people in the mountains will not come to their relief.

A man falls in love with the wife of an important troglodyte and kidnaps her. The two men start a fight, and after having wounded each other they decide to ask a much respected third person to act as an arbiter. But this man refuses to serve as a judge, saying that he could not care less to whom the woman should belong and would not waste his time on the matter. Thus their case remains undecided. The abductor refuses to return the woman and, since he is stronger than the husband, the latter has to acquiesce in the situation. On his way home the husband meets a young woman fetching water whom he finds very attractive, the more so as she appears to be the wife of the man who had refused to act as an arbiter. Therefore, he abducts her and brings her into his home.

Usbek adds some more examples of crude, illegal behavior. A farmer was chased away by his neighbors from his own fields, which he had carefully ploughed and sowed. The two neighbors who had conspired to occupy that fertile land began to quarrel among themselves and one of them was killed. Some days later the survivor was put to death by two other troglodytes. Usbek describes a complete anarchy – indeed, a dystopia – without rules of social conduct, without medical service or administration of justice, without

any humane considerations. Montesquieu thus sketched the flip side of Mandeville's philosophy by showing that "private vices" may create public doom.

Many troglodytes died violent deaths, while others succumbed to famine or illness. Only two families escaped that tragic fate. They "maintained humane social relations, treated each other fairly, and loved virtue" ("ils avaient de l'humanité; ils connaissaient la justice; ils aimaient la vertu" [Montesquieu 1956: 25]). Working with equal solicitude for their common benefit, the husbands loved their wives and children and emphasized the importance of a virtuous education. Their manners, which nature had left unpolished, were softened by religion. They worshipped the gods with dance and music, and lived a life of rustic happiness reminding us of a pastoral idyll and anticipating Rousseau's celebration of nature. Living like one family, being of one mind and sharing their property, these troglodytes had realized a eutopian society (27).

However, in the next letter Usbek notices that even among such a happy people crime could exist. Moreover, a neighboring people who had become envious entered the land of the troglodytes who, however, defended themselves well, in a fashion that ironically recalls Plato's *Republic* and More's *Utopia*, for, while fighting, "they had their wives and children among them" ("ils avaient mis leurs femmes et leurs enfants au milieu d'eux" [29]). It was a fight between Injustice and Virtue that was won by Virtue.

In letter 14 Usbek continues his tale, which now takes a disappointing turn in that the happy troglodytes wish to choose a king and offer the crown to one of their most righteous and venerable elderly men. This move makes the prospected king extremely unhappy. Why, he asks, do you want to be subject to my rule instead of being free? Is it too heavy an obligation to be virtuous on your own initiative? The king designate is utterly distressed since his compatriots wish to live "under another yoke than that of Virtue" ("sous un autre joug que celui de la Vertu" [31]).

It is here that Usbek's fable abruptly ends. Montesquieu must have been dissatisfied with this unexpected ending for he continued the story of the troglodytes at a later stage as follows. When the first king died, a second one was elected, the wisest and most righteous man of the royal family. It is the people that wanted royalty, which is an argument that appears still valid even in the twenty-first century. In the continuation of the story the people also wanted commerce, art, and wealth. The king concluded that in order to satisfy the expectations of his subjects he must show riches and therefore is compelled to levy taxes. The people are drawn into a vortex of avarice and prodigality (282-284).

Even without this sequel to the story of the troglodytes, the king's distress in the version of 1721 is extensively emphasized, suggesting his deep concern with the pitiful human condition. The choice between kingdom and republic is of secondary importance; whatever their preference will be, the people, if not checked, will spoil their own opportunities. Any search for abstract eutopian structures is bound to fail. This seems to be the meaning of the fable and of Montesquieu's later writings. Driven by a strong historical interest, Montesquieu developed into a relativist, traveling widely, studying various European governments, and writing his famous and best-selling *De l'esprit des lois*, in which he argued for a constitution ensuring the separation of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches – the *trias politica* – and appeared to favor institutional checks and balances that would constrain abuse and curb rampant self-interest. Institutional reform must save the subjects of a nation from both royal despotism and republican egalitarianism (Israel 2006).

We remember Montesquieu primarily as a political theorist with a strong interest in historical reality, contextual conditions, and cultural differences. However, in *Lettres persanes* he is also a fabulist. Many letters of his various characters contain a little story, whether about visiting a library or attending a reception, about administrative practices, religious matters, or the behavior of women. In an early letter to his wife Roxane, Usbek complains of the lack of discretion among French women who try to attract the attention of men with coarse impudence wherever they meet them. How happy Roxane must be to live so well protected in the seraglio in Ispahan! But as the years go by it appears that life in a Muslim harem is not that pleasant at all. The women are envious of each other, try to seduce the eunuchs, or hope to meet lovers who by cunning and secret means manage to enter their living quarters. If the women are found guilty of infringement of the rules, their punishment is extremely cruel. Eight years after Usbek has left Ispahan, the eunuchs carry on a reign of terror but have no authority over the women anymore. As a result the seraglio is in chaos.

The story that gradually takes shape in the various letters that Usbek receives from his eunuchs and different spouses focuses on the problematic nature of sexual relations, in particular the sadistic oppression by the eunuchs as well as the master of the house: Usbek, the absent husband. Jonathan Israel observes a “subtle anti-feminism” running through Montesquieu's work (705), but I am not inclined to interpret the elaborate sketches of the dire fate of the women in the seraglio as anti-feminist, the more so since their condition is thematized and reversed in the story of

Ibrahim (letter 141), which provides a specimen of “a world upside-down,” a device akin to the utopian genre, which opens a perspective on a world totally different from current deplorable conditions.

In a letter from Usbek’s traveling companion, Rica, under the title “Histoire d’Ibrahim,” the following story is told. In the time of Sheikh Ali Khan there lived a woman, Zulema, who was extremely pious and knowledgeable. She knew the Quran by heart and was often approached with questions about Islamic tradition. One of her companions in the seraglio asked what she thought of the hereafter and whether she attached credence to the traditional view that only men are admitted to paradise. Zulema answered that God judges the virtue of human beings without restrictions. Men who have lived a virtuous life will enter a paradise with plenty of delightful celestial beauties; but virtuous women will also live in a place of extreme pleasure where they “will be intoxicated by a torrent of voluptuous delights with divine men who owe obedience to them” (“seront enivrées d’un torrent de voluptés avec des hommes divins qui leur seront soumis” [Montesquieu 1956: 247]). Each of these women will have a seraglio in which their men are locked up and guarded by loyal eunuchs.

Zulema tells that she has read in an Arabic book about an exceptionally jealous man named Ibrahim. He held twelve extraordinarily beautiful women in his seraglio under a most strict regime, which they found unbearable. Finally, at a meeting with Ibrahim where all women were present, one of them, Anaïs, spoke up and exposed the cruel behavior of their master. He reacted furiously and killed her with his dagger. Upon her death she was admitted into paradise and lived as an immortal in a pastoral setting with beautiful gardens and a superb palace where heavenly men welcomed her and promised exciting pleasures. Two men come to sleep with her in a beautiful bed, and she experiences delights that surpass her desire. In the seraglio of which she is the mistress there are fifty male slaves of a miraculous beauty at her disposal. At last, however, the immortal Anaïs recalls the miserable fate of her companions in the seraglio of Ibrahim and decides to liberate them from their cruel treatment. Having sent a celestial look-alike of Ibrahim to her former domicile she succeeds in liberating the women in the seraglio on earth.

The fable, which is incorporated in a letter to Usbek, has no consequences and fails to persuade him to discontinue his sadistic instructions to the guardians of his own seraglio in Ispahan. Utterly desperate under the terror of the eunuchs, Roxane decides to commit suicide, as she announces in the last letter of the book. Within the context of *Lettres persanes* the heav-

enly mirror image that reverses earthly misery remains literally utopian and has no effect on common reality. This may be typical of all religion-inspired utopias. The experiment of materializing a utopian society here on earth, first with the French Revolution and later, in the twentieth century, under the aegis of Nazi and Marxist ideologies, had a clearly secular motivation.

Voltaire's globalist metaphors

Like Montesquieu, Voltaire (1694-1778) traveled widely in Europe, visiting the Dutch Republic on several occasions, first in 1722, and staying in England between 1726 and 1728. After a long period in France, from 1734 to 1749 mainly at the castle of Madame du Châtelet in Cirey-en-Champagne, he accepted an invitation from Frederick the Great, King of Prussia. Between 1750 and 1753 he lived in Berlin and Potsdam to settle finally in Geneva in 1755, away from French jurisdiction that frequently had looked at his writings with great distrust; and four years later in Ferney, in France but very close to the Swiss border.

Voltaire was most impressed by his stay in England, again like Montesquieu, but he lacked the latter's interest in constitutional problems and the checks and balances of government. Voltaire lauded the freedom of expression and toleration he found in England and admired Locke and Newton, though he tended to secularize their ideas on various points. Most importantly, he denied Locke's claim that only through Christian belief had mankind been capable of instituting the basic principles of morality. Voltaire argued that other traditions, such as those of the ancient Chinese and Indian cultures, had invented and lived up to moral rules that were of at least equal value in comparison with those maintained in Europe. The question whether a high morality could exist without Christian inspiration, to which Voltaire gave an affirmative answer, was a hot topic in the Enlightenment debate. A recurrent theme in Voltaire's fiction is the search for happiness – not the dogmatic abstraction of a postulated happiness, but a lived happiness experienced by particular individuals. If any utopian impulse is to be discovered in Voltaire's writings it is, with few exceptions, an internalized utopianism that serves as a yardstick in his pertinent criticism of intolerance, superstition, and stupidity. As argued in "Songe de Platon" (published in 1756 but conceived in the 1730s), Plato's *Republic* represents an abstract ideal without practical significance, a dream from which one must wake up (Voltaire 1979: 15-17).

Although Voltaire never left Europe, his work is impregnated by a universal interest in non-European cultures, setting no limits on his eagerness to learn about Confucian China, Indian religion, or Islam; nor to his fantasy when exploring distant countries or even outer space, as in the story *Micromégas*. He admired *Gulliver's Travels*, at least the first part of it, "A Voyage to Lilliput," and compared Swift to Rabelais, as mentioned in chapter 3. He also had a high opinion of Swift's satiric treatment of the different variants of Christianity – Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism – in his *Tale of the Tub* (Williams 1970: 74). Moreover, in *Micromégas* (1752), probably a rewriting of a story he mailed to Frederick the Great in 1739, Voltaire appears to have been inspired by a Swiftean device: the confrontation of opinions voiced by human beings of very different size. Micromégas, who lives on a planet circling around Sirius, is eight leagues tall. He loves to travel from planet to planet and one day arrives on Saturn, a planet of our solar system, where he meets people who are relatively small, only about two thousand yards high. In a conversation with the secretary of the Academy of Saturn, Micromégas phrases the typical Enlightenment idea that "all thinking creatures differ, and all basically resemble each other on the account of their ability to think and to desire" ("tous les êtres pensants sont différents, et tous se ressemblent au fond par le don de la pensée et des désirs" [Voltaire 1979: 23]).

The two men decide to make a philosophical journey and by way of Jupiter and Mars they finally arrive on Earth, where everything, as you would expect, is extremely small to them. They can satisfy their appetite at breakfast only by eating two mountains. In their eyes things are so tiny on Earth that they can hardly distinguish a whale from a ship. Human beings are "infinitely small" ("infiniment petits" [30]) and can be observed only under a microscope, just as the Dutch naturalists Leeuwenhoek and Hartsoeker had done in their investigations of red corpuscles and spermatozoa. Voltaire mentions the names of these scientists, as well as Swammerdam and Réaumur, thus showing his interest in experimental research. But the gist of the story betrays the influence of Swift: the size of things is always relative and, in the eyes of Micromégas and his companion from Saturn, the battle between these infinitely small humans over a village appears utterly ridiculous. The passage reminds us of the opinion of the giant king of Brobdingnag – quoted in chapter 3 – on the mistaken arrogance in times of war and peace of "such diminutive Insects" as Gulliver. More concretely, Micromégas expresses his disgust over the war between a hundred thousand men with hats and a hundred thousand others with turbans, an allu-

sion to the war of the Austrians and Russians against the Turks (1736-1739).

When all is said and done, it appears that for Voltaire a concrete political judgment carries more weight than philosophical abstractions, although there is one problem that throughout his long life he finds particularly intriguing because of its pertinence to human behavior and the possibility of introducing political reform, that is, the question of how to match providential determinism to the free will of individuals. For without free will there is no way of changing the world, no way of realizing utopian desires.

Rejecting revelation as representing divine truth, Voltaire embraced the Deist position that the universe is proof of God, just as a clock is proof of a clockmaker (“qu’une horloge prouve un horloger et que l’univers prouve Dieu” [Voltaire 1979: lix]), but, as he writes in a letter to the German philosopher Ludwig Martin Kahle of 1744, he cannot comprehend how the free will of human beings can be combined with divine predestination: “if you will discover how everything being necessary man is free, you should please inform me” (“si vous découvrez comment tout étant nécessaire l’homme est libre, vous me ferez plaisir de m’en avertir”). And, fully aware of the concrete relevance of the problem, Voltaire asks Kahle to explain also why so many people slaughter each other “in the best of all possible worlds” (“dans le meilleur des mondes possibles”), a reference to Leibniz’s ideas of a preestablished harmony and providential determinism (Voltaire 1979: lix).

As appears from the letter to Kahle, Voltaire had his doubts about how belief in a providential Deity could be combined with the concept of a free will, but in public he defended the position that “the autonomy of the Deity must be reflected in a small and fragmentary way in the freedom of the human will,” and that the moral choice of human beings is part of God’s design (Israel 2006: 768, 782). But this does not prevent Voltaire from questioning and satirizing the idea of providential determinism in his fantastic oriental story *Zadig ou la destinée* (1747, *Zadig or Destiny*), and later again in *Candide ou l’optimisme* (1759, *Candide or Optimism*).

Zadig is a well educated young man in Babylonia who in spite of his several attempts to rescue other people from their distressful situations experiences setbacks and persecution. He believes that he is always punished for his unselfish interventions. The basic theme of the story is how to become happy. However, when Zadig seems to have reached the zenith of happiness as a much respected minister at the court of King Moabdar, he must flee from the capital because Queen Astarté appears to have fallen in love

with him. Zadig wanders through Babylonia, Egypt, Arabia, and Syria. When he hears that Moabdar has been killed, he decides to return to the capital. On the way he meets several people, most of them unhappy, but he also encounters a hermit who accompanies him for most of the journey. At the end of the day they enjoy the hospitality of a marvelous castle and are given the opportunity to wash in a golden bowl and sleep in a richly decorated room. The next day Zadig notices that his companion has stolen the golden bowl, which he presents to their next host, a rich miser in a small cottage. When they are on the way again, Zadig asks his companion why he has treated the two hosts in such unexpected ways. The hermit explains that the host in the castle must be cured of his vanity and the miser had to learn what generosity is.

At their next stop they have a pleasant conversation with a philosopher. They agree that things in this world do not always go as wise people would hope for, whereupon the hermit avers “that one did not know the ways of Providence and that humans were wrong to pass a judgment on the whole of which they could see only a tiny part” (“qu’on ne connaissait pas les voies de la Providence, et que les hommes avaient tort de juger d’un tout dont ils n’apercevaient que la plus petite partie” [Voltaire 1979: 112]). The conversation continues and the hermit, who seems to air Leibnizian opinions, declares that life is dangerous here on earth, but “everything is necessary” (“tout est nécessaire” [112]). Zadig admires the wisdom and eloquence of the hermit, but there is unmistakable irony in the way the narrator represents Zadig’s admiration. In the end the hermit appears not to be the trustworthy and admirable person Zadig had taken him for. When they leave the philosopher’s house the next morning, the hermit sets it on fire. Zadig tries to prevent this, since the philosopher has treated them very well, but he fails and his distrust grows.

The next night a virtuous widow is offering them hospitality. When in the morning the two travelers wish to continue their journey, she asks her fourteen-year-old nephew to accompany them to a partly destroyed and dangerous bridge. On reaching the bridge the hermit tells the young man that he wants to thank his aunt for her kind hospitality and then throws the young man into the river, where he drowns. Now Zadig protests vehemently, but the hermit defends himself by saying that the philosopher will find an immense treasure under the ruins of his home and that the young man drowned by Providence would have murdered his aunt within a year and also Zadig within two years. The latter continues to raise objections, but the hermit changes into an angel who complains that human beings always

judge without sufficient knowledge and solemnly declares that “there is no evil that doesn’t bring forth something good” (“il n’y a point de mal dont il ne naisse un bien” [114]). However, Zadig’s doubts have not been dispelled and he continues to ask questions, but the angel ascends to heaven and urges him to go to the capital. This is what Zadig does. In the end he marries Queen Astarté and becomes king of Babylonia. Thus the two extremes of the alphabet, Z and A, are finally united in a happy ending.

The story does not at all unequivocally show how everything is determined by divine foresight. Zadig doubts the explanations of the hermit who turned into the angel Jesrad, and the narrator seems to doubt them even more. The text can be deconstructed as one big philosophical question mark. Voltaire’s skeptical view of the providential order of things appears also, and more biting, from *Candide ou l’optimisme*, which decries the optimism of those philosophers, followers of Leibniz, who maintain that all evil will yield something good, and that even catastrophes (such as the disastrous Lisbon earthquake of 1755) fits into a providential design.

Candide

In 1759 Voltaire published *Candide ou l’optimisme* anonymously in Geneva, with a title page that suggested the book had been translated from German by a certain Dr. Ralph. It had all the appearances of a picaresque novel, describing the extravagant adventures of a young man, Candide, who in the course of the story pierces three men with his unfailing sword, remains loyal to his love for the noble Cunégonde, sails to Lisbon, experiences storms, shipwreck, and an earthquake, is persecuted by the Inquisition and flees to Buenos Aires, finds utopia somewhere in the interior of Latin America, leaves that beautiful country with lots of diamonds in his baggage, is cheated by a Dutch merchant, arrives in France where he falls into the hands of various swindlers, sails to Venice and from there to Constantinople, where he finally is united with his beloved Cunégonde, now turned ugly and cantankerous. Together with other companions they start working on a small farm in Turkey and lead a poor but decent life.

However, Voltaire cleverly used the adventure story to disguise a philosophical novel, just as, a century later, Dostoevsky used the melodramatic intrigues of pulp fiction to create the psychological novel. Voltaire’s preoccupation is the question of how human beings can be happy, and how to compare the happiness or unhappiness of particular humans with that of

others. In the background of these questions looms Leibniz's idea that God has created a perfect and harmonious world in which humans should be happy, whatever temporary setbacks they may suffer. Pangloss is the philosopher who time and again, irrespective of the adverse conditions that he experiences, airs the Leibnizian optimism that Voltaire satirizes. But Leibniz's belief that we live in the best of all possible worlds and that "private misfortunes contribute to the general good" (Voltaire 1947: 31; "les malheurs particuliers font le bien général" [Voltaire 1979: 154]) is hilariously exposed and convincingly rejected. The story contains no evidence in support of Leibniz's philosophy. Voltaire could not accept Leibniz's views, as he sensed that the idea that we are living in the best of all possible worlds weakens the will to resist evil and build a better world.

Two passages in particular pertain to the problem of utopia. The first describes the arrival and experiences of Candide and his native companion Cacambo in Eldorado. Voltaire devotes two short chapters to this episode, or less than ten pages. On their way to Cayenne in French Guiana the two travelers chance upon a river where they find a canoe that carries them downstream, at one point faster than they can master. The canoe disappears into a cave under mountains of terrifying height. When they see daylight again, their boat is thrown against the rocks and smashed to pieces. They save their lives by creeping from rock to rock for several miles, whereupon they find a quiet, open plain, surrounded by inaccessible mountains; in short, an area that is well protected by natural obstacles and fits the cliché of a secluded spot where a utopia might be created. They are impressed by the pastoral beauty of the scenery:

The farmer and the landscape gardener had been equally busy in this countryside, and everything which served the needs of man was pleasing to the sight. The roads were crowded, or rather adorned, with carriages, magnificent in appearance and material, drawn by huge red sheep faster than the finest horses of Andalusia, Tetuan, or Mequinez, and in them sat men and women of matchless beauty. (1947: 74) (Le pays était cultivé pour le plaisir comme pour le besoin; partout l'utile était agréable. Les chemins étaient couverts ou plutôt ornés de voitures d'une forme et d'une matière brillante, portant des hommes et des femmes d'une beauté singulière, traînés rapidement par de gros moutons rouges qui surpassaient en vitesse les plus beaux chevaux d'Andalousie, de Tétuan et de Méquinez. [1979: 184])

However, even more than by the idyllic landscape they are intrigued by children playing at ninepins. Their skittles are pieces of gold, emeralds, and rubies, which the children leave behind when they are called by their teacher. Candide and Cacambo pick up some of the gold nuggets and precious stones to return them to the teacher, who however finds them of no value and throws them away, much to the surprise of the two travelers. The inverse value of gold and jewels is a topos in stories about America and was discussed, among others, by Amerigo Vespucci. Thomas More also writes that in his *Utopia* no value is attached to gold and silver (see chapter 2). When Candide and Cacambo enter a restaurant where they are served a copious meal and want to pay with the gold they have found, they are laughed off because the gold nuggets are considered without value and moreover the meal in the inn is being paid for by the government. Differently from More's *Utopia*, people in Eldorado apparently use money though no payment is required in government-run inns.

Candide and Cacambo are introduced to a venerable elderly man, 172 years of age, who instructs them on the history and customs of the kingdom of Eldorado. No inhabitant of Eldorado is allowed to leave the country, "and that is how our innocence and happiness have been preserved" (1947: 78; "et c'est ce qui nous a conservé notre innocence et notre félicité" [1979: 187]). They speak about the form of government, the position of women, public ceremonies and so on, but the narrator does not provide any details on the content of this part of the conversation. Only when Candide inquires what religion was practiced some particulars are given by the old man. In Eldorado there is only one religion, which they consider to be the religion of all mankind. They do not have the habit of praying, for they have nothing to ask of God since He has given everything they need. And to the relief of Candide, there are neither priests nor monks in Eldorado. There are no law courts either, but much attention is given to scientific research.

At the end of the meeting with their informant they are brought to the king's palace where they are received in the most lavish and distinguished manner, described with a considerable degree of exaggeration: numerous beautiful young ladies waiting on them, music by thousands of musicians, superior royal witticisms, and the most delicious food.

The two travelers spend a month at the royal palace, enjoying the peaceful atmosphere and abundant luxury, but in the end they become restless. Candide longs for Cunégonde, whom he had to leave behind in Buenos Aires, but the most interesting argument for his wish to leave is that he does not want to end up like those other happy people in this eutopia:

If we stay here, we shall be no different from anybody else; but if we go back to the old world with a mere twelve sheep laden with Eldorado stones, we shall be richer than all the kings of Europe put together. (1947: 82) (Si nous restons ici, nous n'y serons que comme les autres; au lieu que si nous retournons dans notre monde seulement avec douze moutons chargés de cailloux d'Eldorado, nous serons plus riches que tous les rois ensemble. [1979: 190])

It is the impulse to distinguish themselves that makes them ask the king for permission to leave. Both Candide and Cacambo are anxious to show their friends how rich they have grown and to boast about what they have seen. Here Voltaire observes a crucial psychological motive that accounts for the reason why human beings probably will never be content to live in a perfect society. In order to be different from other happy humans, the two visitors of Eldorado decided to be happy no longer.

The king finds their plan to leave foolish but does not want to keep them back. He warns that it will not be easy for them to climb the mountains surrounding the kingdom and gives orders to his engineers to build a machine for hoisting the two foreigners over the ten-thousand-foot-high mountain range, not only them but also a number of sheep saddled with food, precious stones, and gold. The king does not understand the European taste for the stones and the “yellow mud,” but they are allowed to take as much as they want. The gold and the diamonds will prove to be helpful as a narratological ploy, for only by paying lavishly with gold and jewels can the story of traveling to Europe, rescuing Cunégonde, and liberating Cacambo and Pangloss from slavery be continued.

The other fragment relevant for the discussion of utopia can be found in the last chapter of the book. The king of Eldorado had already advised that “a man should be satisfied with what works moderately well” (1947: 83; “quand on est passablement quelque part, il faut y rester” [1979: 190]). At the end of their journey, when Candide, Cunégonde, Cacambo, Pangloss and other friends have finally settled down in the small farm near the coast of the Sea of Marmora, they seem to have found a place to be content with. But not much is happening there and someone concludes “that man was born to suffer from the restlessness of anxiety or from the lethargy of boredom” (1947: 140; “l'homme était né pour vivre dans les convulsions de l'inquiétude, ou dans la léthargie de l'ennui” [1979: 230]). Candide does not react to this view but, abandoning all philosophizing and imitating Gulliver who, having returned home from his travels, enjoys his little garden at

Redruff, launches his own, now famous idea that “we must go and work in the garden” (1947: 144; “il faut cultiver notre jardin” [1979: 233]). This implies that everyone is to develop his or her own expertise. But it also means that the desire for a perfect society has been reduced to down-to-earth, relativist proportions. The concluding chapter of *Candide* leads away from Leibnizian abstractions about the best of all possible worlds to focus instead on the practical problems of here and now.

The Princess of Babylonia

After the brief sketch of Eldorado in *Candide*, Voltaire’s versatile mind attempted once more to construe a utopian civilization in *La Princesse de Babylone* (1768, *The Princess of Babylonia*). The story begins like an oriental fairy tale in the vein of *Zadig* but gradually shifts to a critical survey of enlightened politics in Europe. Voltaire’s inclination to offer rational commentary on current affairs appears stronger than his interest in abstract ideals and even his love of exotic fabulation.

Bélus, the elderly king of Babylonia, intends to give his only daughter in marriage to a most capable, valiant, and wise prince. Princess Formosante is, of course, an exceptionally beautiful young woman. Many centuries later her portraits and statues were copied by the sculptor Praxiteles, whose statue of Aphrodite is known as the prime example of classical Greek art. In this way the story is set in prehistoric, mythical times, long before Greek antiquity, as is confirmed in chapter 4 of the story where we read that the Trojan War occurred several centuries later.

Bélus organizes a tournament where three competitors will vie with one another for Formosante’s hand: the king of Egypt, the king of India, and the king of Scythia. Inspired by Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso* and the oriental setting of *A Thousand Nights and One Night* (cf. Voltaire 1979: 1005), Voltaire shows again his amazing talent for fantastic fabulation. The three kings fail already in the first test, that of bending Nembrod’s bow, but an unknown handsome young man, accompanied by a page and a beautiful bird, arrives and appears capable of drawing the bow. The crowd in the amphitheater – about half a million people, as the narrator informs us with deliberate exaggeration – as well as the king and the princess are full of admiration. Suddenly a messenger appears to report to the stranger that his father is dying, whereupon the young hero mounts his unicorn and departs, leaving the bird with Formosante.

The princess grieves for the sudden departure of the young man, but the bird consoles her. The handsome young man, whose name is Amazan, will certainly return, the bird says – for it can talk. It was born 27,900 years ago, in the time when animals still were speaking, a habit they gave up when people began to kill and eat them. The country where Amazan comes from is the only place where animals and people still live peacefully together and communicate with each other. The bird unfolds a eutopian picture of the country of the Gangarides on the eastern bank of the river Ganges. It is probably the only place on earth where people are treating each other fairly (“c’est la seule contrée de la terre où les hommes soient justes” [Voltaire 1979: 364]). The Gangarides are all equal and have no king. They are the owners of large flocks of sheep and other animals grazing on fields always covered with flowers. The sheep produce the finest wool one can think of and are never killed. In other respects the country offers everything that can please human desires. Of course, Formosante wants to visit that country, expecting to find Amazan there, whom she loves and hopes to marry.

However, things take an unexpected turn. King Bélus has consulted an oracle, which answered that his daughter will marry only after she has traveled all over the world. He decides that she must make a pilgrimage to a chapel in Bassora. However, just before her departure the king of Egypt manages to kill the beautiful bird that has disclosed so many details about Amazan and the life of the Gangarides. Before it dies in the arms of Formosante, it is still capable of instructing her how it should be cremated:

Burn me, and do not fail to bring my ashes to Fortunate Arabia, east of the ancient city of Aden or Eden, and to expose them to the sun on a small pyre of clove and cinnamon. (Brûlez-moi, et ne manquez pas de porter mes cendres vers l’Arabie Heureuse, à l’orient de l’ancienne ville d’Aden ou d’Éden, et de les exposer au soleil sur un petit bûcher de gérofile et de cannelle. [368])

By referring to “Fortunate Arabia” and adroitly making use of the English pronunciation of “Aden” to suggest a paradisiacal atmosphere, Voltaire opens the way to a preternatural continuation of the story.

On the way to Bassora, Formosante falls into the hands of the untrustworthy king of Egypt from whom she can only escape by pretending to love him and offering him some wine with a sleeping potion. Her first aim now is to follow the peculiar instructions of the bird, whose ashes she carries with her in a golden vase. When she has scattered the ashes on a pyre of

clove and cinnamon, to her surprise the rays of the sun start the fire and after a while a phoenix arises from the ashes in full vigor and with the memory and knowledge of the dead bird. As Formosante wants nothing more than to go to the Gangarides in order to find her beloved Amazan, the phoenix is willing to organize the journey with the help of two griffins, who will transport her and her chambermaid through the air, just as Astolfo in *Orlando furioso* flew on the back of the *ippogrifo* or hippogriff, or Gulliver escaped from the country of Brobdingnag by being lifted by an eagle.

Arriving near the home of Amazan, Formosante is disappointed to find that he just has left, but she is welcomed by friendly people and lodged in eutopian fashion. The next day the phoenix arranges a visit to Amazan's mother, who reminds the princess that on the way to Bassora she dined with the king of Egypt and kissed him, according to a blackbird who had seen them together. Upon hearing this disturbing news, Amazan had gone mad with envy and left his homeland in despair. Amazan's mother also discloses that Amazan is a second cousin of Formosante, and thus of equally noble extraction: their grandfathers were brothers. The father of Bélus had dethroned his elder brother, the rightful king of Babylonia. The latter's son had taken refuge with the Gangarides and was the father of Amazan. Now that Amazan had left and his father – her husband – had died, the lady felt utterly distressed. The phoenix decides to help Formosante to find Amazan so that she can explain the circumstances of her kissing the king of Egypt. Thus they depart in pursuit of Amazan who, believing that Formosante has betrayed him, always appears to have just left the place where she expects to find him.

Since Amazan has departed for China, Formosante and the phoenix follow him to the capital of that country. Here the narrator switches from mythical to historical time, referring to emperor Yongzheng who reigned between 1723 and 1736 and is praised for having expelled the Jesuit missionaries who had come to China “to preach dogmas of intolerance in the most tolerant nation on earth” (“prêcher des dogmes d'intolérance chez la nation la plus tolérante de la terre” [370]). The narrator sees eutopian conditions in China. The emperor is the fairest, wisest, and most polite monarch of the whole world. As an example of his wise demeanor it is mentioned that he had tilled a small plot of land in order to make agriculture more respectable among his people. In his praise for China the narrator speaks also for Voltaire, who had a lifelong admiration for Confucianism. It is true, he showed a keen interest in the Indian tradition as well; but he preferred China, in particular Confucian China, over India, because he saw

less room for superstition under the aegis of Confucianism (cf. Voltaire 1979: 1015).

One of the reasons why Voltaire was interested in the Chinese and Indian civilizations was that they both appeared to be older than the Hebraic tradition. This casts doubts on the biblical myth of the origin of mankind and its dissemination over the world; and in any case relativizes the monopolistic pretensions of orthodox Christianity, in particular the Roman Catholic Church. Moreover, Confucian China, as interpreted by Voltaire, served as a shining example to underscore his argument that in matters of government reason is to be preferred over the authority of revealed religion.

After China, Amazan travels to Scythia (in Siberia) and Russia. Formosante's arrival in Moscow occasions praise for the cosmopolitan character of the legislation instigated by Catharine the Great. She has adopted a policy of toleration of different religions, knowing that "although the forms of worshipping may be different, the ethical principles are everywhere the same" ("si les cultes sont différents, la morale est partout la même" [Voltaire 1979: 385]). In pursuit of Amazan, Formosante also visits Germany where all princes have sanctioned the freedom of thought.

When Amazan arrives in Holland ("chez les Bataves" [387]), he is satisfied to see a weak image of the country of the happy Gangarides: freedom, equality, cleanliness, wealth, and tolerance. But the women are not very attractive and hardly notice him. The country is a marketplace: the Dutch are completely commercialized and sell even the *esprit* of other nations in addition to the food they produce (388) – an obvious reference to the many books by French authors, including Voltaire himself, that were published in Holland.

In England, Amazan discovers an almost perfect government, with a king whose powers have been restricted by Parliament. In Paris, however, he meets with artistic circles and forfeits his reputation of being impeccably faithful to his beloved Formosante, precisely at a moment when the latter finally manages to catch up with him. When she looks him up in his hotel, the unfortunate Amazan is lying in the arms of a young lady, a sight that plunges Formosante into grief and anger and makes her flee the scene in despair.

Now the roles of fugitive and pursuer are reversed. Formosante and the chambermaid, the phoenix, and the two hundred Gangarides on their unicorns, who have accompanied her all the way from the east bank of the Ganges, head for Spain, from where she and her retinue intend to embark

for Tyre, the ancient capital of Phoenicia. Having arrived in Baetica, present-day Andalusia (which had been discovered by the Phoenicians about 12,000 years before, just like the large island of Atlantis that was submerged several centuries later), Formosante gets into difficulties because of her contacts with two Palestinians who offer to provide her with three ships. She is betrayed by them and given up to the Inquisition, who arrest the whole group and plan to burn Formosante, the chambermaid, and the two Jews. The two hundred Gangarides and their unicorns are also captured, but the phoenix manages to escape and warn Amazan, who is already close to Seville. First he liberates the Gangarides, then the numerous guards are chased away or killed, next the Inquisitors are thrown onto the already burning pyre. At last, Amazan kneels at the feet of Formosante, who forgives him his infidelity with the young actress in Paris.

The king of Baetica arrives to pay homage to Amazan and thank him for his admirable and effective action. He also praises the phoenix, adding that he now understands that the people in the West, who have the habit of eating animals and no longer comprehend their language, are ignorant and brute barbarians. The king avers that “the Gangarides are the only ones to have preserved the nature and primitive dignity of mankind” (“les seuls Gangarides avaient conservé la nature et la dignité primitive de l’homme” [408]). The king offers a festive banquet to celebrate the victory over the Inquisition and provides a contingent of Spanish soldiers to accompany Amazan, Formosante, and the Gangarides during their dangerous return journey to Babylonia, during which they may be threatened by the armies of their hostile neighboring countries.

At this point narrative time switches back again to mythical times, for the fleet under Amazan’s command makes anchorage at a place where centuries later Dido, the sister of Pygmalion, landed after journeying from Phoenicia to found the city of Carthage. The narrator adds some reflections that cast doubt on the reliability of this episode of ancient history (411), and in doing so he certainly voices the opinion of Voltaire that one should not blindly trust these ancient stories, including the one he is now on the point of completing. Amazan defeats his numerous enemies and enters the capital of Babylonia to marry Formosante and inherit the crown.

For Voltaire the story is half *divertissement*; the other, more serious part consists of a survey of the extent to which enlightened reason has been accepted by the various governments in the capitals visited by Amazan and Formosante, notably in northern Europe. This *tour d’horizon* is not without optimism, as Deloffre and Hellegouarc’h observe in their commentary in

the Pléiade edition. Voltaire's judgment on the progress of enlightened reason suggests another utopia, they argue, different from that of the Ganarides and more real, but "this utopia, like many utopias, is sometimes close to a deadly nightmare" ("cette utopie, comme beaucoup d'utopies, n'est pas toujours loin de ressembler à un cauchemar meurtrier" [Voltaire 1979: 1014n]). I do not believe that the latter remark, perhaps justified in other contexts, is appropriate here in view of Voltaire's life-long struggle to expose judicial mistakes, authoritarian abuse, and blind superstition.

The discovery of sentiment

This section, in which Rousseau's attempt to sketch a utopian community in *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* (1761, *Julie, or the New Heloise*) will be discussed, could also have had a different heading, such as "the discovery of nature" or "the discovery of solitude." Yet, the overriding impression that this epistolary novel makes is one of unrestrained subjective emotion. This applies in particular to the letters written by Saint-Preux, "a key model of the sensitive hero" (Dieterle 2008: 26). Admittedly, not all of his letters celebrate subjective feeling and some are long-winded and rather tedious. The relation between Saint-Preux and Julie, however, is described in an emotional style that was totally new. It was imitated in Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* (1774, *The Sufferings of the Young Werther*) and served as a source of inspiration for many romantic writers.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was only eighteen years younger than Voltaire but he seems to have opened up a different world, exposing the limitations of reason. Whereas the Princess of Babylonia visits the major capitals of the world, occasioning observations on the quality of government in the various nations, the author of *Julie* concentrates on a rural community in the Swiss countryside. The differences between Voltaire and Rousseau can be phrased in terms of town vs. village, cosmopolitanism vs. a closed community, civilization vs. nature, toleration vs. zealotry, irony vs. melancholy. No wonder Voltaire disliked *Julie*, as appears from his "Lettres à M. de Voltaire sur *La nouvelle Héloïse*" (1761), reportedly written by the Marquis de Ximenez but in fact by Voltaire himself, and his "Lettre au docteur Pansophe" (1766) (Voltaire 1961: 395-409 and 849-857).

There is still another difference between Voltaire and Rousseau that should interest us here, that is, their varying attitudes toward the possibility of a utopia. Voltaire was nearly always skeptical, notably in *Candide*, but

Rousseau made a serious attempt to describe a utopian community near the village of Clarens, though working himself into contradictions that precisely result from his discovery of egocentric sensitivity.

The description of the perfect and happy community on the northern shore of Lake Geneva is embedded in a tragic love story that made most readers forget about the utopia sketched in part 4 and part 5 of the novel. It is not the detailed report on the economy of the household of Mr. and Mrs. de Wolmar but the sensitive letters of Saint-Preux, his beloved Julie, and her cousin Claire that made the book immediately into a bestseller. And in order to understand the significance of this rural eutopia in one of the most beautiful regions of the world we cannot ignore the love story in which it is framed.

Saint-Preux has been hired as a teacher for Baron d'Etange's only daughter, Julie, and falls in love with her. They have sex and wish to marry, but the baron objects because of the social difference between the two lovers. Saint-Preux has to leave and wanders about the world for almost four years. When he returns to Switzerland, Julie has been married to Mr. de Wolmar, an elderly nobleman of Russian origin. They have two children and live quietly under idyllic conditions near Clarens. Mr. de Wolmar has been informed of the love affair between Julie and Saint-Preux, but believing that Saint-Preux's former impetuous erotic feelings for his wife have subsided he magnanimously invites him to join them in Clarens. This enables Saint-Preux to write to his friend and protector, the English lord Edouard, about the economy and social organization of the farm of his hosts.

Intertextual relations with other utopian narratives are evident in the description of the estate at Clarens. The view of Lake Geneva and the surrounding mountains reminds Saint-Preux of the beautiful island of Tinian, near Guam in the Pacific Ocean, which he visited when traveling around the world. The estate where the de Wolmar family and their employees and farm laborers live is as much secluded as an island. The employees and laborers are discouraged to leave the farm. In order to prevent them from developing undesirable acquaintances in the village, Mr. de Wolmar organizes games and festivities on the estate on Sundays, and he and his wife supervise these happy gatherings. The island metaphor enhances the interpretation of the Clarens estate as a utopian socioeconomic community.

Several pages are devoted to an explanation of the system of remuneration, which consists of a basic wage with additional payments if the work delivered is of high quality. Moreover, in order to ensure long-term loyal service to their employer the employees are offered a 5 percent increase in their

wages every year. Mr. de Wolmar also takes care of the workers after retirement. In short, he treats them as a father would his children. In return, the employees serve him with unconditional loyalty, but they also have lost their independence. It is the calm and rational personality of Mr. de Wolmar who establishes all regulations; he is the indubitable master of this community of several dozen people. Wolmar is the prototype of the enlightened despot, if not the modern dictator, although Rousseau, eloquent defender of paternal authority, would dismiss these negative qualifications (1964: 182). James F. Jones too concludes that “the degree of control, of absolute rule, marks the utopia of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* as containing some definite totalitarian overtones” (1977: 66). Wolmar is assisted by his wife Julie, whose decisions carry even more weight than his. Mr. and Mrs. de Wolmar lead a happy family life and act as they please, in contradistinction to the various sorts of servants and workers they have, who live without any privacy and can choose their partners only with the consent of their masters.

In their contacts with the outer world the role of money is very much restricted. Trade consists mainly of the exchange of goods and services. This eutopia depends on agriculture, avoids luxury, and abhors the decadence of city life. It has little to do with the political structures of modern government described in Rousseau’s *Du contrat social* (1762, *The Social Contract*), but rather resembles the intermediary stage between the natural condition and civilized society as sketched in his other major theoretical essay *Discours sur l’origine et les fondements de l’inégalité parmi les hommes* (1755, *Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality among Men*). The period of the rural community that steers a middle course between the indolence of the primitive condition and the exuberant egocentric activity of modern life is the “most happy and most durable epoch” in human history, Rousseau argues (“l’époque la plus heureuse, et la plus durable” [1964: 171]). Each step taken in the direction of the perfection of the individual has led to increasing the decrepitude of humanity.

The estate of Mr. de Wolmar has a secluded, self-sufficient economy, and, in order to be doubly safe from outside interference, within their eutopian domain Julie has arranged an enclosed part of seemingly wild nature, of which only four people possess a key and which she calls the *Élysée*, or Elyseum. Saint-Preux is shown this very private place by Mr. and Mrs. de Wolmar, which occasions some ruminations about the merits of various types of gardens. The proprietors of “this pleasant refuge” (“cet agréable azile” [1961: 475]) detest symmetry and long, straight avenues and have imitated nature as much as possible. Lord Edouard has taught them how to

grow the moss that covers some of the paths according to English fashion. In comparison with Chinese gardens, which Saint-Preux has seen during his journey around the world, the *Élysée* is simpler and more natural. Julie admits that it reminds her of the bliss of the hereafter – an anticipation of her early pious death. Saint-Preux again thinks of Tinian, and of the island of Juan-Fernández in the southern Pacific. The next morning Saint-Preux returns to the *Élysée*, this time alone: “with the eagerness of a child I have gone to lock myself up in the desert Island” (“avec l’empressement d’un enfant je suis allé m’enfermer dans l’Isle déserte” [486]).

Rousseau articulated the psychological notion of solitude perhaps more persuasively than any European writer before him. Even love cannot free human beings from their self-engrossed individuality, he seems to argue. Inevitably, Saint-Preux’s love turns into self-pity and melancholy.

The title of the novel, which refers to the tragic love of Abélard and Héloïse, has an ominous significance. In part one of the novel Saint-Preux mentions the letters of Abélard and Héloïse, written in the first half of the twelfth century, but he does not go into details about their secret marriage and Abélard’s punishment – castration – and what it meant to their relation: both ended up in religious orders and were permanently separated. “I have always pitied Héloïse,” Saint-Preux writes; “she had a heart destined to love: but Abélard has appeared to me merely a miserable man deserving his fate” (“J’ai toujours plaint Héloïse; elle avoit un coeur fait pour aimer: mais Abélard ne m’a jamais paru qu’un misérable digne de son sort” [85]). This harsh judgment is a surprise, but Saint-Preux concludes this letter in the same vein by saying that, if he must choose between his honor and Julie, he is prepared to lose her. In fact, the choice is between a virtuous respect for a hierarchically structured society and a passionate love that ignores the norms and expectations of the genteel establishment. Saint-Preux and Julie try hard to transform their love into friendship but never completely succeed in doing so. He exhibits virtuous continence and rejects the possibility of being married to Julie’s cousin, as suggested by Julie. Moreover he urges his friend Lord Edouard to give up his plan to marry Lauretta Pisana, an Italian prostitute, who is persuaded by Saint-Preux to take the veil, just as many centuries before Héloïse had done. It is as if Saint-Preux considers celibacy almost a normal way of life that others should adopt as well. As if, as Bernard Gagnebin observed, the power of pure love is sterilizing (in Rousseau 1961: lx).

The social context of the eutopian community at Clarens is equally sexless. Mr. de Wolmar seems to love his wife, but Julie does not return those

feelings and treats him merely as a dear friend. There are moments that Wolmar, Julie, and Saint-Preux live happily together in a perhaps utopian *ménage à trois*, but this is possible only because of the absence of any articulation of erotic attachment. The story of the community at Clarens is partly motivated by the desire to expand it by inviting others to join it, such as Julie's cousin and Saint-Preux's protector Edouard, both single and remaining so. If we realize that the men and women among the servants and farmhands are also strictly separated, the conclusion can only be that this utopia excludes all eroticism, thus eliminating an important but, in the eyes of many utopianists, often disturbing factor.

However, celibacy is too facile a solution in Rousseau's utopian design. It works as little in the fictional world of *La nouvelle Héloïse* as in reality. After Julie's death we hear no more of the ideal community at Clarens. Most probably, the narrator was bound to insert Julie's illness and death in order to avoid a different, more emotional and down-to-earth ending to the narrative. Before passing away Julie still manages to write a last letter to Saint-Preux, expressing her love for him and her expectation that they will be united in the hereafter.

During the years of her marriage with Wolmar, Julie sublimated her passionate love for Saint-Preux into an equally ecstatic Protestant belief. In a letter in part 4, Claire writes to Julie: "Cousin, you were a lover like Héloïse, and now you are as devout as she was" ("Cousine, tu fus amante comme Héloïse, te voila dévote comme elle" [1961: 500]). The only reason why she is unhappy, Julie says, is because her husband, raised in the Greek Orthodox tradition, has become an atheist. This is what she tells her lover, again sublimating the absence of erotic love for her husband into an attempt to convert him to her pietist sentiments. Julie translates the relation with her lover as well as with her husband into religious terms. Her real feelings disappear behind the smoke screen of pietism.

Not many eighteenth-century readers will have shared this interpretation, but Voltaire could have endorsed it. As Nicolas Wagner argues, the "pietist utopia" is directed against the *philosophes*, against reason (1970: 233). As we will see, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre continued and perhaps even surpassed Rousseau's exploration of virtuous love based on silent understanding and the hope for spiritual unification in the hereafter. Of course, in Bernardin's hagiographic eutopia Virginia's attempts at religious perfection are of a completely different order than the socioeconomic eutopia at Clarens. We should notice that the eutopian estate at Clarens was an invention of Mr. de Wolmar, a secular man and atheist, which confirms the par-

ticular relation between socioeconomic utopianism and secularization – an aspect Rousseau may not have been fully aware of.

The supremacy of virtue over nature

In China the Confucianists reconciled nature and virtue by shaping the immanent concept of the Way, which connected both. Within a totally different cultural context Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (1737-1814), an admirer of Rousseau, attempted a similar fusion of the two concepts, but inevitably failed as his notion of virtue was determined by the Christian tradition, which emphasizes the opposition of body and soul, nature and transcendental belief. Yet he made a serious attempt and came close to merging nature and virtue by introducing, in the words of the main narrator in *Paul et Virginie* (1788), an idea of God that is manifest in nature and could be “proved,” if one were pressed to do so – not unlike the Deist position as articulated by Voltaire but without accepting the implication of a Deist concept of morality: “There is a God...: all of nature betrays Him; I need not prove his existence” (“Il y a un Dieu...: toute la nature l’annonce; je n’ai pas besoin de vous le prouver” [2004: 239]).

If Bernardin had succeeded in reconciling God and nature, his story would have been less dramatic and not at all tragic. However, from the very beginning the exotic and geographic context in which the story is set displays sadness and doom. The author could not completely distance himself from the biblical concept of virtue. In the novel, irrational belief is shown to be stronger than the natural instinct toward survival. Virtue may seem superior, but it causes death.

Bernardin is known to have been a restless personality, sailing at the age of twelve with one of his uncles to the island of Martinique, and later, in 1768, when he was thirty-one, to Madagascar and the Île de France, nowadays known as Mauritius, where he stayed for three years. In between he went to Jesuit schools and studied engineering. His work as a military engineer enabled him to visit several European countries, including Russia, where he considered establishing a model republic near Lake Aral. His career was often disturbed by strife and animosity. He seems to have had an egocentric character and he was driven by extreme ambition, and not inclined to accept compromise. In 1784 he published his *Études de la nature* (*Studies of Nature*), which offers more philosophy of nature and reflection on morality than botany. The republication of that book in 1820 contained

the story of Paul and Virginie (in volume 3), for which he used his own background knowledge of the Île de France. As suggested by Jean Ehrard in his 2004 edition of *Paul et Virginie*, the narrator's analysis of European hypocrisy and corruption contributed to preparing the ground for the French Revolution of 1789, which Bernardin easily survived. He was successively director of the Jardin des Plantes, the main botanical garden in France, and a professor of republican morality at the École normale supérieure, to become finally president of the Académie Française in 1807.

The highly popular novel *Paul et Virginie*, which was repeatedly reprinted, owes its success to a paradoxical combination of rationalist criticism of European social conventions and pious respect for religious belief, held together by an affecting love story. The sentimental plot is based on the distressing fates of two female characters: Madame de la Tour, who had married below her social position and settled with her husband in a French colony, and Marguerite, originating from a humble family of Breton peasants, who had been seduced by a man who refused to marry her and escaped shame by going to one of the colonies. Mr. de la Tour died of a tropical fever in Madagascar and his widow, who had stayed behind on the Île de France, gave birth there to a daughter: Virginie. Almost simultaneously, Marguerite gave birth to Paul.

The setting of the story is the Île de France and on that island a visitor finds the ruins of two small cabins in the center of a basin enclosed by high rocks except for one passage to the north. The visitor is intrigued by the ruins of the old huts and one day, when he is sitting and looking at them, an old man appears and begins to relate the history of the ruins and the surrounding land, which once had been cultivated. This man becomes the main, almost omniscient narrator, who, with incredible clarity, appears to remember the words he had exchanged with Madame de la Tour and Marguerite, as well as with Paul and Virginie. It is through his eyes that the story of the happy childhood of Paul and Virginie unfolds, two children who were raised as brother and sister, sleeping in the same bed, even fed by the same breasts of their interchangeable mothers. Both Marguerite and Madame de la Tour are called mother by the two children, who will never know their fathers but enjoy a happy family life.

Through his education Bernardin was acquainted with the main works of Greek and Roman antiquity. The narrator evokes Horace, Virgil, Homer, Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras, Xenophon, and Lucullus. We may assume that Bernardin was aware of the ideal society described in the *Republic* and knew about the dissolution of family life as suggested by Plato. Con-

trary to Jean Ehrard, who places the story in a purely pastoral tradition and considers *Paul et Virginie* an idyll, I would argue that the story is describing a perfect society or utopia, not only because it is situated on an island – and a secluded area on the island, at that – but also because it echoes several utopian themes by rejecting commerce, suspecting the use of money, and criticizing the decadence of Europe. Of course, it is a small-scale rural utopia, like Clarens, with which it shares a connotation of chastity, if not sterility. Bernardin compares the happy innocence of Paul and Virginie to that of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. But he also devotes ample space to social criticism, placing the story in the tradition of More's *Utopia*. In his foreword to the first edition, Bernardin writes: "I have wished to combine the beauty of nature in the tropics with the moral beauty of a small society" ("J'ai désiré réunir à la beauté de la nature entre les tropiques la beauté morale d'une petite société" [251]).

The depravity of Europe derives from the overwhelming power of money that sickens and corrupts all corners of society. In a dialogue with Paul, the old man posits that everything is for sale in France ("tout est devenu vénal en France" [199]). If one does not belong to a well-respected family and has no connections, and has not learned how to flatter and cheat, it is impossible to be successful. And, as if he remembers the concluding pages of More's *Utopia*, the old man castigates in particular the pride that is born from riches.

Madame de la Tour and Marguerite and their children, who enjoy a peaceful and happy life, together with the slaves they have bought and who they believe are equally happy, are not interested in the accumulation of money. They do without commerce, giving away any surplus if their harvest has yielded more than they need. Virginie maintains: "We cannot become happy unless we concern ourselves with the happiness of others" ("On ne fait son bonheur, disait-elle, qu'en s'occupant de celui des autres" [153]). In Europe, the old man says, working with your hands is a shame, a view that Paul, who tills the soil every day, cannot understand. Paul and Virginie have no watches and no books of history or philosophy. They know the time of the day by the shadow of the trees and count the years by remembering the harvests they have reaped. Impatience or passionate feelings do not disturb the innocent happiness of their childhood.

The idyll of their childhood ends rather suddenly, however. Virginie is the first to feel that her innocent relationship with Paul cannot continue and she turns away from him when he wishes to embrace her. At about the same time a ship calls at Port-Louis, the harbor of the island, carrying a let-

ter from a distinguished, well-to-do, and elderly aunt of Madame de la Tour who, having no other heirs, wishes to reestablish contact with her, inviting her to return to France. Or, if she cannot make the journey herself, to send her daughter, to whom she intends to give a good education. The letter causes much uneasiness, as all the members of the two families understand that this is the end of their way of life. Not long after the letter has arrived the governor of the island pays a visit to Madame de la Tour and tries to persuade her to accept the proposal and send Virginie to her great-aunt in France. A Roman Catholic missionary uses his authority to put pressure on Virginie and her mother:

... you, young lady, have no excuse. You must obey Providence and the elderly members of your family, even if they have been unjust. It is a sacrifice, but God wants it. He has devoted himself to us. Following His example, you must devote yourself to the well-being of your family. Your voyage to France will have a happy ending. You are rather willing to go there, isn't it, my dear young lady? (... vous, jeune demoiselle, vous n'avez point d'excuses. Il faut obéir à la Providence, à nos vieux parents, même injustes. C'est un sacrifice, mais c'est l'ordre de Dieu. Il s'est dévoué pour nous; il faut, à son exemple, se dévouer pour le bien de sa famille. Votre voyage en France aura une fin heureuse. Ne voulez-vous pas bien y aller, ma chère demoiselle? [170])

In spite of the shaky logic of this appeal, which identifies obedience to one's parents or elderly members of the family with obedience to the Lord, the words of the priest have effect on the simpleminded, overly pious, and increasingly bigoted Virginie, who humbly answers: "If it is God's order, I will not resist it. That the will of God be done!" ("Si c'est l'ordre de Dieu, je ne m'oppose à rien. Que la volonté de Dieu soit faite!" [170]).

Paul suspects that Virginie will leave and falls into a deep sadness and melancholy. Some time earlier Virginie had asked him to give her his miniature portrait of St. Paul, the hermit who lived in the desert in the third century as one of the first anchorites and whose looks vaguely resemble those of Paul. On that occasion Virginie had solemnly declared that she would never forget that he had given her the only thing he possessed in this world, promising him she would always carry it with her.

Madame de la Tour intends to arrange a marriage between her daughter and Paul, but finds them to be still too young. She shares this plan with Virginie, advising her, however, to hide her love from Paul – an advice she does

not heed. The narrator relates the last conversation between Paul and Virginie, which he overheard: Paul announced that he would leave the island together with Virginie and go with her to France, where he, the illegitimate child, would serve her as a slave. Virginie explained that she would leave the island because of him, expecting to return soon with a fortune that she would share with him and their parents. Virginie admits: “Oh Paul! You are much more dear to me than a brother” (“O Paul! tu m’es beaucoup plus cher qu’un frère!” [176]). She promises to return and belong to him.

At an unexpected moment and without Paul being aware of it, Virginie embarks for France, where she stays for about two years and learns to write and read. Since her great-aunt disapproves of her having contact with her mother and friends on the Île de France, it is only after a year and a half that Virginie manages to write a letter that reaches the island. In the meantime the old man has taught Paul to read. However, the ship that after her long absence finally brings her back to Port-Louis gets into heavy weather and strikes rocks within a hundred yards of the coast. Several mariners and passengers save their lives by swimming to the beach. Fixed to a rope, Paul attempts to swim to the ship. Virginie, who sees how he makes an effort to reach her, stretches out her arms to him, but in a most dramatic scene shame prevents her from undressing and throwing herself into the waves. She would rather die than lose her dignity. The next day her dead body is found, half buried in the sand of the beach, one hand protecting her clothes and the other holding a box containing the portrait of St. Paul.

Everyone is impressed by her loyal love as well as her dignity, for which she had to pay with her life. The governor orders that she receive a splendid funeral, but that, of course, cannot cancel the deep distress of her mother, Paul, and Marguerite. They all succumb and die, first Paul, two months after the death of Virginie, then his mother, and a month later Madame de la Tour. The old man who narrates the story was helpless to prevent their deaths. The last sentences of the text emphasize the solitude of the narrator, who was a close friend of the two families. He parts in tears from his addressee, who is weeping as well. The story he listened to is not only a tale of a family-size utopia, but also a prototypical piece of sentimental fiction.

Bernardin cannot reconcile nature and Christian virtue, however much he may have wanted to. Virginie’s extreme conception of chastity causes her death, whereas yielding to the natural inclination toward survival would have saved her and harmed no one.

As Friedrich Engels could have said, it is a “triumph of realism” that Virginie and her ill-conceived virtue must drown. Virginie’s untimely death

betrays Bernardin's subconscious conviction that irrational belief is the enemy of nature, of childhood happiness, of idyll and utopia. The first part of the story sketches a small-scale utopia, indeed. Money, riches, pride, the suppression of the weak and insignificant, and most of all the hierarchical order of government, church, and society have destroyed this utopia. In my interpretation, Bernardin has not shown how to achieve heavenly bliss in the hereafter, but rather, implicitly, how to preserve the condition of a simple utopia: by rejecting the cruel orders of people in high positions in the hierarchies of church and state and by repudiating the devout interpretations of a fundamentalist belief.

The success of *Paul et Virginie* made Bernardin believe that it was a masterpiece and he himself a great writer who, in the verbose, maudlin, and self-congratulatory preamble that he wrote for the illustrated edition of 1806, compared himself to Homer and Euripides. Whoever expects to find in those eighty pages a further explanation of his paradoxical praise for both nature and virtuous chastity will be disappointed. The author addresses his financial problems and his quest for subscriptions, praises Napoleon and his brother, Joseph Bonaparte, discusses his incredible theory of the tides as well as the sentimental effect of his novel, but does not devote a single word on that barely understandable refusal of Virginie to take off her dress in order to save her life and her love.

I am inclined to prefer the matter-of-fact, first-hand observations in Bernardin's *Voyage à l'Isle de France* (1773) over *Paul et Virginie*. In the *Voyage* we find a dry, Stendhalian style and, through its directness, a painful description of slavery that cannot fail to make a deep impression – a slavery that was maintained by all colonial powers and condoned by the Church. Here his representation of the colonial society of the Île de France is far from flattering. The white population of the island consists of moral bankrupts, ruined libertines, rakes, and villains who had been forced to leave Europe. They buy black slaves from Madagascar for pittance and treat them brutally, causing them unbearable suffering, and, if they attempt to escape, subject them to painful punishments, mutilation, and often death.

Paul et Virginie is a utopian novel, perhaps motivated by Bernardin's wish to step back from his severe diagnosis of colonial society in the *Voyage*. It is a utopia criticizing abominable social practices. It would have been more convincing if Bernardin had more straightforwardly repudiated the role of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the representatives of colonial power.

In 1771 Louis-Sébastien Mercier published his epoch making utopian novel *L'An 2440* (*The Year 2440*). It appeared anonymously in Amsterdam, although the title page indicated London. As Trousson observes in his preface to a reprint edition (Mercier 1979), there had been several earlier attempts to dream of future moments or imagine histories of the future but, as an elaborate extrapolation from manifest tendencies in the Age of Enlightenment, Mercier's utopia became more popular than any of the previous futurological experiments.

The idea of gradual sociopolitical progress was alien to the orthodox Christian belief that emphasized original sin and the promise of redemption as revealed in the Bible. Sociopolitical progress is not a Judeo-Christian concept, but an invention of an at least partially secularized Enlightenment. In order to think in terms of such progress, philosophers following Fontenelle and Boulainvilliers had to distance themselves from revealed religion, and they did so in various degrees, by embracing Deism – which asserted the sufficiency and universality of natural religion and denied the necessity of revelation (Harrison 1990) – or, as a more extreme solution, by becoming atheists.

It was a point of debate how the concept of “natural religion” should be interpreted. Some philosophers, such as, for instance, Voltaire in his *Essai sur les mœurs* (*Essay on Manners*), held that the term applied to all historical religions once these were stripped of their specific theology. It referred to the essence of Christianity, as well as of Islam, Buddhism, and Confucianism (Israel 2006: 771). Mercier, however, did not completely dechristianize his concept of religion. He writes that in the year 2440 the differences between Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism have been overcome, resulting in a unified Christianity (chapter 45 in Mercier 1979), and is critical of theocratic tendencies in Islam and Lamaism, adding rather optimistically in a note that “religion will purify itself under the influence of the progress of philosophy, and one sees indeed that superstition decreases every day” (“La religion s'épurera d'elle-même par le progrès de la philosophie, et l'on voit en effet la superstition s'éloigner de jour en jour” [Mercier 1979: vol. 2, 241]).

Closer to Rousseau than to Voltaire, Mercier considers religion a natural sentiment, an undeniable intuition, supported by metaphysical questions that supposedly cannot be answered without resorting to the idea of divine interference. Chapter 21 (“Communion des deux infinis”) describes how

young people learn about the wonders of Creation by using scientific instruments, such as the telescope and the microscope, thus recalling a theme discussed by Voltaire in his *Micromégas*. “The abyss of the infinite” (“L’abîme de l’infini” [Mercier 1977: 119]) apparently suggests a creator God.

Born in 1740, Mercier participated actively in Parisian literary circles both as a writer of fiction and theatrical works and a commentator of contemporary conditions, such as in his *Tableau de Paris* (1781), which was extended and reprinted many times. He was indeed a prolific writer: not content with the 1771 edition of *L’An 2440*, containing 44 chapters, he expanded it to 82 chapters in three volumes in 1786, known as the definitive version. The latter edition was republished without changes in 1787, 1793, and 1799; in 1799 for the first time the name of the author appeared on the title page, and a foreword was added that boasted that the book had announced and prepared the way for the French Revolution: “Therefore I am the real prophet of the revolution” (“Je suis donc le véritable prophète de la révolution” [Mercier 1979: vol. 1, ii]).

However, in real life Mercier favored rather moderate changes; and as a member of the Convention he argued for a constitutional monarchy and suspension of the execution of Louis XVI. He was arrested in 1793 and remained in prison for several months, being saved from the guillotine only by the fall of Robespierre, whom he had openly opposed (Trousson’s preface in Mercier 1979).

Mercier’s foreword to the 1799 edition confirms his anti-Jacobin position. Similarly, the story of *L’An 2440* offers moderate improvement rather than revolutionary solutions. The novel conveys the observations of a citizen of Paris who, born in 1740 and resembling the author also in other respects, wakes up in 2440, after having slept for almost 700 years, and is introduced to the nearly perfect conditions of a modern society. In a dialogue with friendly twenty-fifth-century interlocutors, the political system appears to consist of a constitutional government initiated by a king-philosopher (“roi philosophe”). In the “Avant-propos” of the 1799 edition Mercier admits that his idea of utopia was inspired by Plato:

However, do we know what perfection is? Can it be the lot of a feeble and limited human being? Is this great secret not hidden below that of life? And should we not have to cast off our mortal garment in order to answer this sublime question? In the meantime, let us try to make things tolerable, or, if that is still too much, let us dream at least that they are so. As far as I am concerned, following Plato, I dream like him. (Mais savons-nous

ce que c'est que perfection? Peut-elle être le partage d'un être foible et borné? Ce grand secret n'est il pas caché sous celui de la vie? et ne faudra-t-il pas dépouiller notre vêtement mortel pour percer cette sublime énigme? En attendant, tâchons de rendre les choses passables, ou, si c'est encore trop, rêvons du moins qu'elles le sont. Pour moi, concentré avec Platon, je rêve comme lui. [xxxviii])

This is a rather modest expression of Mercier's sense of his achievement, but his book is important as it offers a crucial link between the abstract designs of the classical utopian tradition of More, Bacon, and Campanella, which were strongly influenced by the *Republic*, and modern utopian writing focusing on possible sociopolitical developments that in a more or less nearby future just might come true. The novel combines both traditional and modern elements. The adverse result is that Mercier appears to contradict himself more than once.

A case in point is the discussion of constitutional government, which is called neither monarchical, nor democratic, nor aristocratic (chapter 36 in the 1771 edition, and chapter 38 in that of 1799). Yet the head of the government is called a king and he will be succeeded by his son, who admittedly has received a splendid education and is under the constant supervision of the censors, who resemble the guardians in Plato's *Republic*. The States General possesses the legislative power. The administration is entrusted to a Senate that is accountable to the monarch, whereas both the Senate and monarch are accountable to the States General, but neither in the edition of 1771 nor in that of 1799 is any mention made of elections. At this point Mercier seems to waver between the system of Plato's *Republic* and modern ideas of government made legitimate by the people. In a footnote in the 1799 edition he acclaims Plato's view that in a state governed by the people ("un État populaire") everyone is intoxicated by freedom. The monarchy, avoiding the dangers of despotism as well as of the democratic republic, provides therefore the best guarantee of freedom (1979: vol. 2, 111). However, twenty pages later Mercier suggests that one day the French people may adopt the principles of a republican government (131-132).

Although Mercier does not avoid the word "revolution," he argues in fact for moderate, gradual improvement, and openness in the process of change. In 240 there are no extremes of luxury or poverty. People are allowed to possess private property and there is no suggestion that money has been abolished. Mercier is primarily interested in matters of education, religion, and culture, as well as international affairs. Most of these issues

are elucidated in a dialogue between the seven-hundred-year-old Parisian and his guides. The rather moderate solutions that characterize French society of 2440 are close to a Voltairean pragmatism – without his irony or cynicism – for Mercier somewhat unexpectedly writes that the most developed art in his utopia is gardening, rewriting the last sentence of *Candide* as: “Chaque citoyen cultivoit son jardin” (1979: vol. 3, 13).

Rather original is Mercier’s attempt in chapter 25, inserted in the 1786 edition, to provide an idea of the future society by summarizing a book that from the point of view of 2440 offers a *histoire universelle*. This is original in the sense that the cultural identity of twenty-fifth-century France is explained by way of historiography projected onto the future. The “universal history” focuses on the many empires, from the early empire of the Assyrians, to the short-lived empire created by Alexander the Great, to the long-lasting Roman Empire, which flourished and declined. It shows an uninterrupted chain of violence and war. It castigates the establishment of the Islamic caliphates by the combined power of the armed forces and religion, and criticizes the Spanish subjection of South America. The cruel fanaticism of Philip II led to the birth of “this famous republic of the seven United Provinces” (“cette fameuse république des sept Provinces-Unies” [1979: vol. 1, 231]). The intellectuals of 2440 observe that they are still reading Homer, but have forgotten the kings and generals who made history into a succession of violence, misery, and war. The development of the arts and the sciences is more important than the feats of conquerors and tyrants. And yet, Mercier continues in a pessimistic mood, we know little about the origin of mankind and can not be certain about the future. Just as Atlantis once was engulfed by the waves, European civilization may be erased from the face of the earth. With this relativistic note Mercier concludes his summary of universal history, adding that printed books (just like manuscripts) may be destroyed in a geological catastrophe and all present knowledge may be lost.

Though critical of the egalitarian aspects of the *Republic* (1979: chapter 71), Mercier maintains Plato’s suggestion to distinguish between “healthy” and “unhealthy” literature and offers a selected canon of French and other European literatures that foreshadows the practices of twentieth-century totalitarian censorship. The matter is discussed during a visit that the Parisian observer pays to the royal library, which appears to him much smaller than he had expected. He asks, has there perhaps been a fire, destroying much of the collection? The librarian explains that there was indeed a fire but that it was alighted on purpose and by unanimous consent:

By unanimous consent we have brought together on a vast plain all the books we considered frivolous, useless or dangerous; we built a pyramid of them resembling in height and size an enormous tower: it was certainly a new Tower of Babel. Newspapers crowned the strange building, and it was flanked on all sides by episcopal letters, remonstrances of parliaments, indictments, and funeral orations. It consisted of five or six hundred thousand dictionaries, a hundred thousand volumes of jurisprudence, a hundred thousand poems, one million and six hundred thousand travel books, and a billion novels. We set this appalling mass on fire, as an expiatory sacrifice offered to truth, common sense, and good taste. (D'un consentement unanime, nous avons rassemblé dans une vaste plaine tous les livres que nous avons jugés ou frivoles ou inutiles ou dangereux; nous en avons formé une pyramide qui ressemblait en hauteur et en grosseur à une tour énorme: c'était assurément une nouvelle tour de Babel. Les journaux couronnaient ce bizarre édifice, et il était flanqué de toutes parts de mandements d'évêques, de remonstrances de parlements, de réquisitoires et d'oraisons funèbres. Il était composé de cinq ou six cent mille dictionnaires, de cent mille volumes de jurisprudence, de cent mille poèmes, de seize cent mille voyages et d'un milliard de romans. Nous avons mis le feu à cette masse épouvantable, comme un sacrifice expiatoire offert à la vérité, au bon sens, au vrai gout. [1977: 159])

The “unanimous” decision to destroy “useless” and “dangerous” books, in the name of truth, common sense, and good taste, recalls similar destructive burnings by the Inquisition, as well as by the National Socialists following Hitler’s campaign against *entartete Kunst* (degenerated art), or the burnings of books during the Cultural Revolution in China.

Rather surprisingly, Mercier goes on to illustrate the annihilation of cultural capital with some concrete examples. Of ancient Greek literature, the royal library holds volumes of Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, Demosthenes, Plato, and Plutarch; but Herodotus, Sappho, Anacreon, and “the vile Aristophanes” (1977: 160) have been burned. Of the Latin authors most of the poetry of Lucretius was destroyed because his moral attitude was considered dangerous. The works of Catullus and Petronius were burned as well. Tacitus has survived the selection process, but only properly educated people (“des coeurs bien faits” [160]) are allowed to read his cynical descriptions of human nature.

Of English literature Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, and Richardson have been preserved, but the work of several skeptical philosophers who had

questioned the foundations of morality has been destroyed. No names are mentioned here, but Bernard Mandeville would certainly belong to this category. A brief discussion of Italian authors follows, but none of German literature. Finally eight pages are devoted to French writers.

Montaigne has been bowdlerized, the work of Malebranche and Bossuet was completely destroyed. Many of Voltaire's writings have disappeared. He was judged to be quick-tempered, and his ideas were often considered immature. The librarian has some praise for his love of humanity and reproof of persecution, but detests his offensive critique of Rousseau, whose genius is much admired by the librarian – and also by Mercier. The Parisian observer is pleasantly surprised to find “the complete Jean-Jacques Rousseau.” He has praise for *Émile* and expresses his admiration for the sensibility that transpires from *La nouvelle Héloïse*. Diderot's *Encyclopédie* has been thoroughly edited and revised. The arrangement of the articles is now more systematic, and “everything that had been written against the Christian religion had been burned like books that have become absolutely useless” (“tout ce qu'on avait écrit contre la religion chrétienne avait été brûlé comme livres devenus absolument inutiles” [1977: 169]). Here Mercier's description of future intellectual life favors again the position of Rousseau. Regrettably, his interpretation of Rousseau's legacy allows for moralistic censorship and sets a negative example that was followed by shortsighted totalitarian regimes. Modern readers will consider the censorship in twenty-fifth-century France dystopian rather than eutopian.

There are almost no references to non-European literature or philosophy, and Eurocentrism characterizes also other parts of the novel, such as chapter 42 (“Les gazettes”) in the edition of 1771 and chapter 59 (“De l'Afrique”) in that of 1799. It appears that the wise and generous Louis xxxiv has liberated Greece and Egypt from their despotic rulers and colonized these countries. There are also some observations on China. Voltaire's play *Orphelin de la Chine* (*Orphan of China*), which I will discuss in the next chapter, is said to have been performed in Beijing. In the year 2440 the Chinese are still worshipping Confucius, but have simplified their writing system, probably by adopting the Latin script although the text does not give any examples (1977: 258); in any case communication with France has become much easier.

As noted earlier, the book found a wide readership. Trousson mentions four English translations between 1772 and 1808, all based on the first edition. A German translation appeared in 1772 and was reprinted ten years later. The final version of 1786 was translated into Dutch and appeared in

three volumes in 1792-1793. At the same time there were many adapted or plagiarized editions, notably in Germany, France, and Holland.

The Dutch novelist Betje Wolff wrote a brief and rather insipid imitation under the title *Holland in the Year 2440* (*Holland in 't jaar MMCCCXL*, 1777), in which she selectively follows *L'An 2440* (Kloek and Mijnhardt 2004). The text has the form of a letter to a friend. Like Mercier, she observes the absence of theological polemics, the use of the vernacular in the universities instead of Latin, and the role of the telescope and microscope in discovering the wonders of the universe, which is supposed to enhance respect for God. But she says very little on the future form of government, and nothing at all about international relations. Surprisingly, Mercier's elaborate description of censorship does not elicit a word of protest. In *The Batavian Republic ... or Revolutionary Dream in 1798 concerning Future Events until 1998* (*De Bataafsche Republiek ... of revolutionaire droom in 1798: wegens toekomstige gebeurtenissen tot 1998*, 1798) another Dutch author, Gerrit Paape, offers an imitation of *L'An 2440* that is more original and more amusing, and also closer to the political realities of the Dutch Batavian Republic. In addition, Arend Fokke Simonsz, an encyclopedic mind who used to impress his audience with jocular declamations, published *The Coming Year Three Thousand* (*Het toekomstend jaar Drie Duizend*, 1792), which referred to the tradition of Plato's *Republic*, More's *Utopia*, and Mercier's *L'An 2440*. However, he inverted Mercier's argument for using the vernacular instead of Latin and tried to be funny by offering commentary in Latin on Dutch poetry. Whatever the merits of this text, it testifies to the popularity of the futurological novel and of Mercier, in particular.

Stimulated by a critical attitude toward literal interpretations of the Bible, the idea of social and political progress was a recurrent topic among eighteenth-century philosophers. After the various approaches of Fontenelle, Boulainvilliers, and Turgot, Condorcet crowned the debate with his brilliant, balanced, and comprehensive *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (*Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*). For various reasons this is a remarkable essay. Like Mercier, Jean-Antoine-Nicolas de Caritat, marquis de Condorcet, was a member of the Convention and opponent of Robespierre. In the summer of 1793 he was forced to go into hiding in a small hotel near the Luxembourg, where he prepared the final text of the *Esquisse*. On March 27, 1794, he was arrested and one day later he was found dead in his prison cell. It is unclear whether he committed suicide or died from exhaustion. In April 1795, less than a year after the execution of Robespierre, the Conven-

tion rehabilitated Condorcet by deciding to buy and distribute 3000 copies of the *Esquisse*, the publication of which had been arranged by Madame Condorcet (Pons's introduction in Condorcet 1988: 11).

It is not only the circumstances under which the *Esquisse* was written and published that made it into a remarkable book. The essay was the prototype of a survey of modern scientific achievements as a justification of politics, and it anticipated many similar treatises that were to appear in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It ends with a well-reasoned view of possible future developments, rather different from Mercier's fictional description of France in the year 2440. Condorcet's scientific argument established a new genre that ranges from sociological and economic observations to party programs, but distances itself from utopian experiments in fiction. Condorcet offers a theoretical justification of thinking about the future, but has no affinity with the dreamlike vision of a Mercier. If the latter had already added credibility to his utopia by situating it in a conceivable future and in his own country – and not on a faraway or imaginary island – the credibility of Condorcet's predictions is enhanced by their being based on scientific knowledge and logical analysis.

I mentioned that Mercier was original in his way of characterizing French cultural identity in the twenty-fifth century by referring to history; this was a history of wars, persecution, and oppression from which the new, future society had arisen as a magical negation. Similarly, Alain Pons argued in his introduction to Condorcet's *Esquisse* that Mercier's view of the future lacks an explanation of how the eighteenth-century present was connected with the twenty-fifth century future. Mercier's future society appears to be the product of a spontaneous Rousseauist conversion. Condorcet's concept of history is completely different in that his description of the past is guided by some clear principles on how change was brought about. After the invention of the script, the intellectual discovery of the world is considered the major driving force in history. An admirer of Locke and Voltaire, Condorcet looks for laws or regularities in the history of mankind. Human rights are predicated on the conviction that "man ... is a sensible being, capable of reasonable arguments and of acquiring moral ideas" ("l'homme ... est un être sensible, capable de former des raisonnements et d'acquérir des idées morales" [1988: 217]). He rejects the idea of divine providence as well as the compromise of a Deism that curtails reason: "There is no religious system nor supernatural extravagance that is not based on insufficient knowledge of nature" ("Il n'existe, ni un système religieux ni une extravagance surnaturelle, qui ne soient fondés sur l'igno-

rance de la nature” [1988: 253]). The history of human civilization is explained as a long process of exposing prejudices, and the sciences are crucial instruments in this process. Among his heroes, apart from Locke and Voltaire, are: Luther, Bacon, Galileo, Descartes, Huygens, Newton, Adam Smith, and d’Alembert. Condorcet boldly – but in the context of his essay not unwarrantedly – claims: “All errors in politics and in morality have their basis in philosophical errors, which in turn are linked to errors in physics” (“Toutes les erreurs en politique, en morale, ont pour base des erreurs philosophiques, qui elles-mêmes sont liées à des erreurs physiques” [1988: 253]). This scientific point of departure fostered Condorcet’s interest in physics, but made him also search for laws in sociology, economics, and the arts. Such a systematic approach is completely absent from Mercier’s novel. In the last part of the essay, “On the future progress of the human mind” (“Des progrès futurs de l’esprit humain”), Condorcet discusses three major problems: the elimination of the inequality between nations; the progressive equality among the people of one nation; and the process of really perfecting human beings (“le perfectionnement réel de l’homme” [1988: 265]).

As to the first problem Condorcet observes that the commercial monopolies of colonial powers will come to an end if the principle of free trade is accepted. Considering the inequality among the people of one nation, he discusses the differences between the class of capitalist entrepreneurs obliged to take risks and that of the workers, thus touching on a problem Karl Marx would deal with more extensively half a century later. In the relation between entrepreneurs and workers Condorcet sees “an inevitable cause of inequality, of dependence and even misery, which incessantly threatens the most numerous and most active class of society” (“une cause nécessaire d’inégalité, de dépendance et même de misère, qui menace sans cesse la classe la plus nombreuse et la plus active de nos sociétés” [1988: 273]). Condorcet’s optimistic solutions are reformist: private insurance, social services, and general education. With respect to the problem of how to make human beings more perfect, Condorcet offers a number of suggestions, such as self-reflection and the cultivation of “gentle sentiments which merge our good fortune with that of others” (“des sentiments doux qui confondent notre bonheur avec celui des autres” [1988: 285]), presented as the logical consequence of a serious study of morality and social equality. He also mentions more practical measures, such as the elimination of inequality between men and women, and, again, the advancement of general education.

Both Mercier and Condorcet conclude the enlightened debate of the eighteenth century but also anticipate the themes of our era; the one by dreaming, the other by way of a commonsensical futurological argument. Here the two genres of imaginative fiction and rational exposition, still merged in Voltaire's narrative search for a utopian prospect, are parting. Condorcet had probably not much affinity with the imaginative world of literature and the arts and says little about it, whereas Mercier avoided the problem of a possible logic of social evolution. However, notwithstanding its rationality, Condorcet's *Esquisse* underpins the credentials of utopian writing, as may appear from the last – and only personal – sentence of his essay, in which unexpectedly the words “asile” and “élysée” appear:

This contemplation [of the picture of the human kind] is for him [i.e., the philosopher] a refuge, where the remembrance of his persecutors cannot follow him; where, living through his thoughts with human beings who have been restored in the rights as well as in the dignity of their nature, he forgets those who have been plagued and corrupted by greed, fear, or envy; it is there that he truly exists among his equals, in an Elyseum that his reason could create, and which his love of humanity embellishes with the purest enjoyment. (Cette contemplation [du tableau de l'espèce humaine] est pour lui [i.e., le philosophe] un asile, où le souvenir de ses persécuteurs ne peut le poursuivre; où, vivant par la pensée avec l'homme rétabli dans les droits comme dans la dignité de sa nature, il oublie celui que l'avidité, la crainte ou l'envie tourmentent et corrompent; c'est là qu'il existe véritablement avec ses semblables, dans un élysée que sa raison a su se créer, et que son amour pour l'humanité embellit des plus pures jouissances. [1988: 296])

With his *Esquisse*, completed under the most dramatic circumstances, Condorcet has created a landmark in the history of utopian thinking. His open-ended search for a logic of social evolution was motivated by an empathic love of the human kind. A product of the French Revolution, the *Esquisse* rejects violence, persecution, and oppression and connects with the best traditions of scientific research and respect for human rights.

Orientalism: European Writers Searching for Utopia in China

If we are to believe the Enlightenment philosophers, Confucian China compared favorably to the European nations, which were divided by religious discord and political conflict. Therefore it could serve as the location of an alluring utopia, which because of its inaccessibility remained very much a product of the imagination. If I call this utopian interest in China a mode of Orientalism, I use the term in a neutral sense, differently from Edward Said (1978) whose references to Orientalism nearly always imply a pejorative judgment. (The use of the term Orientalism is more elaborately discussed in chapter 12.) The image of China in the years of the early Enlightenment was predominantly shaped by the enthusiastic reports from Jesuit missionaries active in the Middle Kingdom, and not by the earlier account of Marco Polo, which played almost no role in the debate of the seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century sinophiles. Yet the idea of a splendid Chinese civilization had already been fostered by the Venetian merchant and remained influential up to the present day.

Is Marco Polo's China a utopia? Calvino's answer

Marco Polo's *Description of the World* (*Divisament dou monde*), which survived in various manuscripts from the early fourteenth century and in its printed versions usually is referred to as *The Travels of Marco Polo*, is an account of an amazingly adventurous journey of Marco, his father Niccolò and his uncle Maffeo from Venice through the Middle East to Karakorum, the ancient capital of Mongolia, and Khanbalik, present-day Beijing, the residence of Kublai Khan, founder of the Mongol or Yuan dynasty and from 1280 emperor of China. From Khanbalik Marco Polo traveled widely in China, going to regions which nowadays are known as Sichuan and Yunnan as well as to the coastal provinces, to return after many years with his father and uncle by sea via Sumatra, Ceylon, India, and Aden to Venice, where they arrived in 1295.

Like his father and uncle, Marco Polo had a commercial interest in visit-

ing China and neighboring countries. He provides detailed information about the geographical and climatological conditions, military operations, livestock and other means of subsistence, ways of transportation, crime, and punishment. It appears that Kublai Khan, who reportedly had never met any “Latins” before the Polos arrived in Khanbalik, appreciated the company of the young Marco and even entrusted him with certain diplomatic missions. Problematic, however, is the authenticity of some parts of Marco Polo’s story, which was recorded by Rustichello of Pisa, whose experienced hand as a writer of romances is clearly visible in the various stock phrases, numerous accounts of military exploits and battles, as well as his interest in marriage customs and erotic matters. Rustichello yielded to the temptation of exaggeration when mentioning the existence of unicorns, human beings with tails or with dog’s heads, and other fantastic creatures, including the “gryphon bird” or griffin, also called “rukḥ,” able to lift and kill an elephant, which I referred to in my discussion of Joseph Hall’s *Another World and Yet the Same*. However, these mythological digressions were inserted in reports about kingdoms outside China and do not occur in the account of China proper (Polo 1958: 256, 258, 300-301).

The chapters dealing with China proper – Cathay and Manzi – are more trustworthy and convey a remarkable picture of a well-ordered and prosperous society. Following John Larner (1999), Zhang Longxi (2004) provides several arguments supporting the authenticity of Marco’s observations on Tartar customs and Chinese affluence. The extensive description of the beautiful city of Kinsai or Quinsai, present-day Hangzhou, south of the Yangtze River on the shores of a magnificent lake, is partly based on a report persuading the Great Khan to abstain from attacking and sacking the city, but betrays also first-hand observations about its thriving industry, luxurious appearance, and decadent lifestyle. Marco Polo describes the continuous traffic of carts on the paved streets and of boats on the watercourses, the abundance of food on the markets, the many bathhouses, the elegant women of easy virtue, the various trades and handicrafts. The natives of Kinsai love peace and have no experience in handling arms. The women adorn themselves with silk dresses, gems, and pearls. The large Tartar occupation force consisting of uncouth horsemen is stationed outside the city; inside there are only Cathayan and Manzi soldiers loyal to the Great Khan. This may be the reason why we get the impression that the highly civilized life in Kinsai is hardly different from the flourishing economic and cultural conditions under the preceding Song dynasty (960-1279).

Marco Polo, who supposedly visited Kinsai several times, calls it “without doubt the finest and most splendid city in the world” (213), but says little about its government or religious matters except that he uses the stock phrase that “the people of Kinsai are idolaters, subject to the Great Khan and using paper money” (220). The frequent references to paper money are the only hint that Marco Polo was aware of the art of printing without, however, seeing its full significance. The term “idolaters” does not point to any specific religion. Elsewhere, in the report on the journey to India, the text mentions Brahmans and Sakyamuni Burkhan (i.e., Buddha) and describes a religion that can be identified as Hinduism, but among all the information about China Marco Polo rather surprisingly says not a word about Confucianism, perhaps because he had acquired the habit of looking at China through Tartar spectacles. He probably knew Turkish and Mongol, but seems to have had no knowledge of Chinese (28). All Cathayans are “idolaters,” he writes, which means that:

Every man has in his house an image hanging on his chamber wall which represents the High God of Heaven, or at least a tablet on which the name of God is written. And every day they cense this with a thurible and worship it with uplifted hands, gnashing their teeth three times and praying that the god will give them a long and happy life, good health, and a sound understanding. From him they ask nothing else. But down below on the ground they have another image representing Natigai, the god of earthly things, who guides the course of all that is born on earth. They make him with a wife and children and worship him in the same way, with incense and gnashing of teeth and uplifted hands; and to him they pray for good weather and harvests and children and the like. (160)

The religion of the Tartars is described in similar terms. On the religious diversity as well as the administrative organization of China, Marco Polo provides very little information, whereas these aspects are always due to be extensively discussed in any European utopian narrative. In certain realms of the Tartar empire, worshippers of Mahomet, Nestorian Christians, Jews, and “idolaters” live side by side, usually not very peacefully. In one manuscript version of *The Travels of Marco Polo* Kublai Khan is portrayed as being interested in Christianity and emphasizing toleration in religious matters, but these passages may have been inserted in order to cater for a Christian audience (47, 119).

Marco Polo was and remained primarily a merchant who after his return

to Europe together with Rustichello wrote a rather matter-of-fact book for other merchants to find their way in Asia. He is not a philosopher in search of a utopia. The utopian aspects of Marco Polo's travels only came to the fore in Calvino's fantastic account of Marco's conversations with the Great Khan in *Invisible Cities* (*Le città invisibili*, 1972).

Calvino offers a very specific interpretation of Marco's visit to the court of Kublai Khan. In contradistinction to Zhang Longxi, he emphasizes the unreal in Marco's stories about the cities he had seen, which all have names of women, sometimes invented, sometimes historical or mythological, such as Zenobia, Berenice, and Penthesilea. In Calvino's view the conversations between the Great Khan and Marco Polo remain rather chimerical. In the beginning Marco did not know any oriental language and had to resort to gestures, shouts, or the imitation of the sounds of animals, or a display of objects he had collected. Gradually he learned the Tartar language, but also when he used words and complete sentences his communication with the Khan was far from perfect, for repeatedly the narrator ventilates a skeptical view of linguistic expression and understanding. Once memories have been expressed in words, Marco avers, they are erased. There is no language without delusion. The Khan wants to know whether the cities on which Marco reports are real, but time and again they appear to be a product of the imagination.

Calvino's skeptical view of any communication, whether by way of gestures or words, has a basis in semiotic theory and a postmodern concept of language. And yet Marco succeeds in making precise, convincing distinctions; for instance, when he discusses the relations between eutopia and dystopia, without using these terms, in a description of Marozia. A Sibyl had predicted that Marozia in fact consisted of two cities, one of rats and one of swallows. However, when the time came for everyone in Marozia to fly like swallows in the summer air, the time of the rats was never far away. Perhaps, Marco observes, we should not hope for more than that people experience pleasure in doing things and wish to share that pleasure with others. But these felicitous moments happen by chance and cannot be planned.

Kublai Khan and Marco are aware of the tradition of utopian fiction, for in the Khan's atlas there are promised lands that have been imagined but not yet realized, such as New Atlantis, Utopia, City of the Sun, Icaria, and others. The Khan asks Marco on the last pages of *Invisible Cities* how to reach these attractive places. Marco cannot give a straightforward answer. He says that he would be content with a perspective in a disjointed landscape, some lights in the fog. He might construct the perfect city from sepa-

rate fragments and isolated moments, always aware that the end of the journey will never be reached.

The Great Khan seems rather disappointed and finds in his atlas maps of cursed places such as Babylon, Yahoo, and Brave New World. But Marco refuses to acquiesce in the inevitability of these nightmarish experiences and argues that, if there is a hell, it is the one we are living in. There are two ways to endure it. Either we accept this hell and become part of it so that we do not see it anymore. Or, we search for people and things that do not belong to this hell and make room for them, let them grow.

Here, at the very end of *Invisible Cities*, Marco is no longer talking of China or Asia. He has already switched to reminiscences of Constantinople, Lübeck, Amsterdam, and San Francisco. If there is a utopia, it is a universal potentiality, and not restricted to China. In the hands of Calvino, the reality of Marco Polo's China is transformed into a fantasy that can take us anywhere. There are no geographical restrictions, no linguistic limitations, and no preconceived mental models capable of curbing that fantasy. This is a modern, twentieth-century interpretation of utopia. Calvino emancipated utopian thinking from its shackles. By departing from Marco Polo's down-to-earth realism, Calvino seems to have restored the idea of utopia to its universal glory, but at the same time it appears as fugitive and as volatile as a swallow on a midsummer day.

As we shall see, in the seventeenth century writers still embraced a more tangible and more concrete concept of utopia that was located in real or quasi-real geographical conditions, sometimes indeed with hints of China or suggestions of Chinese culture.

Confucianism in Krinke Kesmes

Towards the end of the seventeenth century the attention of real and arm-chair explorers shifted to the unknown Southern Continent that Joseph Hall had described in *Another World and Yet the Same* (1605). The east coast of Australia had been explored by Spanish and English seafarers, but in the second half of the seventeenth century the Dutch were active along the western and southern coast, the precise location of which remained for a long time uncertain. The *Terra Australis incognita* incited the imagination of Gabriel de Foigny (*La Terre Australe connue*, 1676) and Denis Veiras, also spelled Vairasse (*Histoire des Sévarambes*, 1677-1679, part of which had appeared in London as *The History of the Sevarites*, 1675), as well as many oth-

ers, among them the Dutchman Hendrik Smeeks. Different from Foigny and Veiras, Smeeks observes Chinese influences in the Southern Continent. His *Description of the Mighty Kingdom of Krinke Kesmes* (*Beschryvinge van het magtig Koningryk Krinke Kesmes*, 1708) attributes some role to Confucianism in what appears to be a society which in religious matters is eclectic and tolerant, with some preference for a nondogmatic Christian belief. As such it positions itself between Bayle's atheism and Voltaire's minimal Christianity.

No doubt the text of *Krinke Kesmes* invites a utopian reading. The fictitious kingdom – Kesmes is an anagram of the author's family name – is situated on a large island, a hundred hours' walk in length and in breadth, having a circumference of about two thousand kilometers. It does not allow its inhabitants to leave the country, nor does it want its location to be known to foreigners. De Posos, the first-person narrator, and several other mariners have arrived in the southern country by chance; they were on their way to the Philippines to buy Chinese and Japanese merchandise when a storm caused the ship to drift away from the right course. The group is well received and shown part of the island. Their guide, "the Garbon," sometimes assisted by the Dutch speaking El-ho, explains the political organization and the relation between the various religious sects in the kingdom.

At one point the author refers to the premarital visitation of the naked prospective partners as practiced in Krinke Kesmes. De Posos remembers that he had read about this custom in More's *Utopia* and had never believed it. However, it now appears to be current practice in Krinke Kesmes. When he expresses some moral objections, El-ho retorts in good early Enlightenment fashion that the Europeans are not necessarily wiser than the Asians. The Europeans have strange habits as well. When they wish to buy a horse or any other animal, they touch it from all sides and inspect it thoroughly in order not to be cheated, but when they intend to marry a woman, with whom one has to spend one's whole life, they abstain from any examination (Smeeks 1975: 204). The topos, including the comparison with buying a horse, is found in More and has been discussed earlier in chapter 2, but goes back as far as Horace (More 2003: 84, 130n).

However, Smeeks is not only aware of More's *Utopia* but appears also to have read Bacon's *New Atlantis*, although he does not explicitly mention it. As in *New Atlantis*, the inhabitants of Krinke Kesmes speak Spanish with their visitors and know many other languages. They have invented the *perpetuum mobile* (Smeeks 1975: 137), which the fellows of Salomon's House also claim to have constructed, as appears from Bacon's reference to "per-

petual motions” (quoted in chapter 3); and they are engaged in all kinds of research in the two academies, one on the island of Nemnan, where only male researchers are admitted, and one on Wonvure, the island of exclusively women scholars. The fictional character of the report on their activities is supported by the anagrammatic names of the two islands: Nemnan is a rearrangement of the letters of the Dutch word “mannen” (*men*), and Wonvure is a respelling of “vrouwen” (*women*).

The academic research that is concentrated on the islands symbolizes two hot issues in the Enlightenment debate: first, the independence of research and the freedom of discussion and, second, the emancipation of women. The description of the Academies of Nemnan and Wonvure occupies a considerable part of the book and focuses in particular on the abstract philosophy of Descartes, which, as Buijnsters in the introduction to his edition of *Krinke Kesmes* suggests, is defended by the men. The women favor a more empirical, Newtonian approach. They have read books that were found in a shipwrecked Dutch vessel and quote in particular from the letters of Antoni van Leeuwenhoek. In the correspondence between the two academies, initiated by the women but remaining unanswered by the men, Wonvure clearly gains the upper hand. However, not all of Wonvure’s inhabitants are scholars. Many of them are taught a trade or trained in riding and handling arms. If there ever was a country of Amazons, the Garbon argues, it is here.

The two academies were established about 12,700 years ago, which means that they are considerably older than the Earth according to the orthodox Christian views of those days. This is a third recurrent topic in the Enlightenment debate, also discussed elsewhere in the text. The Garbon explains that *Krinke Kesmes* has been inhabited as long as China and that the first kings of the country reigned about 20,000 years ago, adding: “We do not believe like the Europeans that the world was created five or six thousand years ago” (127, cf. 236-237).

The Garbon relates that in the eleventh century a Persian ship on its way to Mecca was shipwrecked on the coast of *Krinke Kesmes*. It was carrying about 300 people of different origins and a freight of numerous books in several languages, among them Hebrew Bibles, Greek Testaments, and Arabic Qurans. The then ruling King Chamhazi decided that the mariners and passengers as well as the books should remain in the country and that the various languages should be studied by groups of young people. However, the students of Persian, Turkish, and Arabic soon started quarreling about the correct interpretation of the Quran, for some youngsters who

had been assigned to study these languages had also adopted the Muslim belief. The students of Hebrew, Latin, and Greek behaved no better; they too got into religious conflicts. Advised by independent scholars, the king became convinced that of all the holy scriptures, the New Testament appeared superior to the others, but he abstained from imposing this book on the whole population as the only sacred text to be used, as this might cause great upheaval, the more so “since the Greeks, the Italians, and the Dutch did not agree about its interpretation” (129).

The old philosopher Sarabasa, who in Krinke Kesmes “was almost as much respected as Confucius in China” (129), advised the king to build *one* church for all beliefs and arrange for a debate between the various denominations, which, however, soon degenerated into open conflict. Seeing that the various disputes had resulted into chaos, the king asked his advisory council to find a solution that would be compatible with orderly government. The advisers proposed five rather simple commandments that separated belief in an almighty God from obedience to the local authorities, emphasized equality and justice, and summarized the overriding principle: “Treat others as you would wish them to treat you” (“Gij zult aan een ander niet doen, als ’t geene gy begeerd dat een ander aan u zal doen,” 132), which is both a Christian (Matthew 7: 12 and Luke 6: 31) and a Confucian maxim from *The Analects* (“Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire” [Confucius 1979: xii, 2, and xv, 24]). This rationalist and not specifically religious maxim was popular among writers of utopian narratives. It was mentioned by Fontenelle in his *République des philosophes* (written c. 1682, published only in 1768) and by Tyssot in *Voyages et aventures de Jacques Massé* (c. 1720) (Titzmann 2010). Departing from the Christian tradition, the fifth commandment demanded that every morning all citizens salute the angel Baloka, who resides in the Sun and keeps record of all good and evil deeds.

These commandments were imposed on the people of Krinke Kesmes. Moreover, all debate about the interpretation of holy books, whether orally or in writing, was forbidden under penalty of death. Here an important conclusion can be drawn: private belief is subordinated to obedience to the lawful authorities in Krinke Kesmes. In principle, there is a separation of church and state but, if necessary, the state must check the excrescences of religious discord. This, of course, is in line with a crucial philosophical achievement of the Enlightenment and can be considered the fourth contribution of Smeeks to the Enlightenment debate. In order to appease the local clergy the ceremony of greeting Baloka is maintained as a diluted

form of state religion. The prime motive of these regulations is the desire for an orderly society in which private beliefs remain strictly private and cannot become an occasion for condemnation, discrimination, or persecution. The strong arm of the state must protect the freedom of conscience. It is not difficult to recognize the influence of Spinoza here (Schuyt 2004).

The despotic rule of the king, who is assisted by learned advisers, reminds us not only of the enlightened despotism that became fashionable in Europe in the course of the eighteenth century, but also of the political organization of imperial China. Several times China is mentioned in the text; and it apparently serves as a foil for relativizing the European tradition. The Garbon guides de Posos through the city of Taloujaël and explains the meaning of the four triumphal arches on the market square in the center. The first arch was built 19,038 years ago, which provides the Garbon with another occasion to boast that their civilization is as old as that of China. The second arch is decorated with dragons and a Chinese figure writing in a book, the third one was erected in honor of King Chamhazi and the philosopher Sarabasa, the fourth one represents flowers, festoons, and cornucopias.

De Posos inquires about the second triumphal arch, which, the Garbon says, was built 2250 years previously, i.e., in the middle of the sixth century BCE, in honor of the philosopher Krakabas, who was a follower of the “wise Confucius in China” (Smeeks 1975: 238). The first foreign visitor to Krinke Kesmes, Krakabas became an important legislator in the service of the king. His arrival on the island was effected by a miracle. When he was walking near Nanjing in China, the angel Baloka had appeared to him saying that he had received order from the Sun to transport him through the air to the capital of Krinke Kesmes. After his arrival Krakabas immediately began to study the local language and was very much respected because of his virtuous way of life. The laws he made were all confirmed by the king and his council. The day of his arrival was counted as the beginning of their era. Thus Krakabas is put on a par with Jesus Christ in the European tradition. Historically, Confucius, who was born in 551 BCE, could never have had a disciple at the time of his birth, but this mistake in Smeeks’s calculation does not detract from the suggestion that the significance of Christianity must be relativized in view of the existence of other highly valued traditions. Smeeks though is not the only one in his days to err about the year of Confucius’ birth; Voltaire, too, believed that Confucius lived about 600 BCE (1967: 481).

Apart from the five commandments, the citizens of Krinke Kesmes also

revere a number of aphorisms presenting guidelines for everyday life. In his introduction, Buijnsters explains that in incorporating these maxims, Smeeks was mainly inspired by two sources: *L'explorateur turco* (1684, *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy*) by the Italian refugee Giovanni Paolo Marana, then living in France, of which in the same year a French translation appeared, *L'Espion du Grand-Seigneur et ses relations secrètes envoyées au divan de Constantinople*; and *El oraculo manual y arte de prudencia* (1647) by Baltasar Gracián y Morales, translated into Dutch as *De Konst der Wijsheit* (1686, *The Art of Wisdom*). Anticipating the device of Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes*, Marana invented the character of a "Turkish spy" to expose various clerical and political abuses in France under the reign of Louis XIV and to criticize intolerance, superstition, and abstract metaphysical speculations. Being driven by notions of toleration and cultural relativism, his argument coincides well with the preferences of Smeeks. However, the maxims, whether borrowed from Marana or Gracián, resemble also the humanitarian wisdom of Confucius. The religion of the inhabitants of Krinke Kesmes can be called eclectic, or perhaps syncretic, but its most important characteristic is that it is subject to a state control that aims at moderation in an orderly society.

Finally a word should be said about the rather unbalanced structure of the novel. The author, a surgeon from the city of Zwolle, clearly is not an experienced writer. The second chapter contains a long medical treatise (11 pages) on scurvy, the most dreaded illness during long voyages, which plays no role in the remainder of the novel. The sixth chapter consists of the story of the young Dutchman El-ho (40 pages, or one-fifth of the book) who, searching for the mariners of the Dutch ship *Gulden Draak* (the *Golden Dragon*), which was actually wrecked on the western coast of Australia in 1656, had lost contact with his group and stayed behind on the beach of Krinke Kesmes like a proto-Robinson Crusoe. The reference to a historical fact (the shipwreck of the *Golden Dragon*), perhaps in imitation of Veiras's *Histoire des Sévarambes*, serves to authenticate the fictional story. However, the account of El-ho's survival, a Robinsonade *avant la lettre*, has little to do with the experiences of de Posos and his company. El-ho does not reappear in the two remaining chapters (7 and 8), which are devoted to a visit to Taloujaël and its various institutions, commerce, and the departure for Europe.

Smeeks may have been more of a medical man than a writer, but his ideas are consistent and in his narrative about Krinke Kesmes he has shown, in the words of El-ho, a country of happy citizens, proud of their government

and educational system. Reprinted five times before 1780 and translated into German, the book was very successful, but the author fared less well. The Reformed Church in his hometown Zwolle accused Smeeks of atheism and Spinozism (“Spinosterije”), and forbade him from attending the Lord’s Supper. He died in 1721.

The Enlightenment philosophers on China and Voltaire’s L’Orphelin de la Chine

What could Hendrik Smeeks in 1708 have known about China and Confucianism? Numerous sources were available, but none were particularly reliable. The learned librarian Isaac Vossius (1618-1689) had high praise for Chinese philosophy, morality, and culture, but did not know Chinese, nor had he visited China. However, he correctly pointed to similarities between the organization of Plato’s Republic, with its philosopher-ruler and guardians and marginal role for religion, and Confucianism’s even more secular polity, sustained by a class of literati. In a chapter on the proper administration of the major cities of China, he writes:

These things may appear incredible, but merely in the eyes of those who do not know that in China [the administrative practice of] the Platonic Republic has always flourished and that since so many thousands of years almost only philosophers and lovers of philosophy have ruled [the country].... There is no hereditary nobility, but among the Chinese the literati are of noble rank. (Incredibilia haec possint videri, sed iis qui nesciunt apud Sinas Platonicam semper viguisse republicam, & jam à tot annorum millibus solos fere ibi regnasse Philosophos aut Philosophiae amantes.... Nulla ibi hereditaria nobilitas, soli apud Sinas literati sunt nobiles. [Vossius 1685: 58])

Here Isaac Vossius’ eulogy goes as far as to compare China to Plato’s imagined utopia. In spite of the critique Vossius was subjected to by his many detractors, the admiration for China was to remain a constant factor in the Enlightenment debate. Both Sir William Temple (1628-1699), the famous English diplomat who resided for several years in the Hague, and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) in Germany were influential sinophiles. In the foreword to his *Novissima sinica* (1697) Leibniz considered the Chinese far more advanced in ethics and politics than the Europeans. He admired in

particular the peaceful organization of social life, the respect for the elderly, filial piety, and in general the loyal obedience to any person in a higher position in the social hierarchy (Hsia 1985).

The discussion took a theological turn through the publication, by a group of Jesuits, of several Confucian texts in Latin translation under the title *Confucius sinarum philosophus* (1687). Headed by Philippe Couplet, the Jesuits argued that Confucianism allowed for a concept of divinity. As summarized by Israel, “for centuries before Moses, as well as Christ, ... the Chinese had possessed genuine knowledge of the true God, and of morality, gleaned from nature but especially tradition” (2006: 643). However, this spiritualized interpretation of a predominantly secular Confucianism was rejected by the Sorbonne in 1700, and shortly afterwards also by the Vatican (597, 648).

Different from the Jesuits, the Protestant theologian Pierre Bayle (1647-1706) – who had taken refuge in Holland in 1681, four years before the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and was teaching philosophy and history at the Illustrious School in Rotterdam (Bayle 2001) – argued that the Confucianists were atheists but nevertheless espoused an admirable morality. In fact, as Pinot (1932: 321n) has shown, Bayle expressed himself on Confucianism at a rather late stage. It is only in 1705, in his *Continuation des pensées diverses*, that Bayle writes that in China, “the most learned and ingenious nation of the Orient” (“la nation la plus savante & la plus ingénieuse de l’Orient” [1705: 68]), there is a sect of atheists to which the majority of the literati or philosophers belong. He also notes that some observers have suggested that atheism reigned in China until the days of Confucius and “that the great philosopher himself was infected by it” (“que ce grand philosophe même en fut infecté” [134]), and finally concludes that the Chinese philosophers have embraced atheism but nevertheless on a rational basis have developed an excellent ethical system that aims to serve the common good (“le bon public” [538, 729]). Bayle argues that it is quite well possible that those who deny “l’existence de la divinité” may still make a distinction between vice and virtue (730). Though phrased with great caution, Bayle unmistakably contributed to the idea that morality could be independent from religion and that a virtuous atheism could exist, which not only relativized the value of the Christian tradition but also made the Christian belief in fact unnecessary.

Indeed, when Smeeks began writing his novel there were plenty of sources he could have consulted. Although, as a practicing surgeon, he may not have followed the various opinions on Chinese civilization in detail, he

must in any case have heard about the debate that observed parallels between the political systems of Confucian China and Plato's Republic and that viewed Confucius' philosophy either as a monotheistic religion compatible with the Christian belief or, on the contrary, as an atheism that showed similarities with Spinozism. The Protestant church in Zwolle interpreted Smeeks's eclectic religious views inspired by Confucianism as reeking of atheistic Spinozism. Indeed, Plato and Spinoza were crucial parameters in the Enlightenment debate on Confucius' philosophy.

The debate was continued throughout the eighteenth century, by Christian Wolff, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Diderot, and numerous others. While Montesquieu was skeptical about the Chinese political institutions and Diderot outright critical, Voltaire always remained a staunch defender of Confucianism. Like Leibniz, Voltaire considered the classical Chinese thinkers not as atheists but, in the words of Israel, as "adherents of 'natural religion' without divine revelation" (2006: 658).

In his *Dictionnaire philosophique*, first published in 1764 but expanded and reprinted in subsequent years, Voltaire aired his high praise for China again. In the entry "de la Chine" he referred to Christian Wolff, a follower of Leibniz and professor at the University of Halle – "le célèbre Wolf," as Voltaire misspells his name – who in 1721, five years after Leibniz's death, in a public lecture had praised the rationality of Chinese philosophy to the skies, suggesting conditions in China that were close to ideal. The lecture caused such upset that Wolff, at the instigation of his enemies, was dismissed from his post at the university and had to leave Halle. Voltaire describes the intrigues that led to Wolff's expulsion from Prussia with superb irony.

Voltaire is more moderate in his eulogy of China than Wolff and yet the claims he makes are considerable:

the organization of their empire is really the best in the whole world, the only one that is consistently based on paternal authority; ... the only one that has set up prizes for virtuous behavior whereas everywhere else the laws are restricted to punishing crime; the only one that has persuaded its conquerors to adopt its laws (la constitution de leur empire est à la vérité la meilleure qui soit au monde, la seule qui soit toute fondée sur le pouvoir paternel; ... la seule qui ait institué des prix pour la vertu, tandis que partout ailleurs les lois se bornent à punir le crime; la seule qui ait fait adopter ses lois à ses vainqueurs ... [1967: 108])

That conquerors could adopt the laws of the people they have subjected is the theme of *L'Orphelin de la Chine*, which I will discuss shortly. Apart from these positive points, Voltaire also asserts that as to scientific development the Chinese are two hundred years behind the Europeans. Moreover, "like us," they have their ridiculous prejudices. They believe in talismans and in astrology. But, as the edition of the *Dictionnaire philosophique* of 1765 adds, the literati's religion is admirable, without any superstition, any absurd legends or dogmas that contradict reason or nature (109).

In this civilization built on rationality the Jesuit missionary work was bound to fail and, with much approval, Voltaire relates in an addition of 1770 how the Jesuits were expelled from China by the Qing emperors Yongzheng (ruled 1723-1736) and Qianlong (ruled 1736-1795). The reasons why they decided to expel the Roman Catholic missionaries were, according to Voltaire, that they taught the Chinese to abstain from worshipping their ancestors and undermined the respect that children should pay to their parents. They brought young men and women indecently together in churches and "let the girls kneel between their legs, speaking to them in that position in a low voice" ("de faire agenouiller les filles entre leurs jambes, et de leur parler bas en cette posture" [483]). The practice of the confession was totally unacceptable to the Chinese magistracy.

There were more differences between Chinese philosophy and Christian beliefs. The two maintained completely different conceptions about the origin or creation of the world. In contradistinction to the cosmic drama described in Genesis, the Chinese tradition allowed for a slow evolutionary cosmogonical process (Zürcher 1995). Neither could the biblical chronology be easily accepted by the Chinese, who judged the world to be much older than six or seven thousand years. Thus, Smeeks's *Krinke Kesmes* draws on the Chinese calculations. With respect to both the age of the world and its creation, the Chinese tradition was of course closer to present-day scientific opinion than the orthodox Christian view.

However, Voltaire refused to become entangled in these disputes, to which he referred only in order to ridicule them. He hated the petty rivalry, myopia, and provincialism of most of these debates. He was not only a pragmatist, but also a universalist open to the idea of what we now call cultural relativism. With supreme irony, Voltaire argued that "we should allow the Chinese and the Indians to enjoy in peace their beautiful climate and their antiquity" ("laissons les Chinois et les Indiens jouir en paix de leur beau climat et de leur antiquité" [1967: 108]). He was greatly annoyed by the ignorance of and the absence of serious interest in non-European civilizations among many of his contemporaries.

When in 1761, driven by a utopian impulse, Rousseau published his summary of the project for lasting peace proposed by the abbot of Saint-Pierre (“Extrait du projet de paix perpétuelle de Monsieur l’abbé de Saint-Pierre” [Rousseau 1964: 563-589]), Voltaire responded by criticizing the narrow European scope of the project. Both the Abbé de Saint-Pierre and Rousseau had deliberately overlooked the Asian countries, including China. This is what Voltaire castigates in a highly ironic fictive complaint supposedly written by the Chinese emperor and published under the title “Re-scrit de l’Empereur de la Chine à l’occasion du projet de paix perpétuelle” (Voltaire 1961: 411-413).

Voltaire substantiated his interest in Chinese philosophy by writing a tragedy set in China: *L’Orphelin de la Chine* (*The Orphan of China*), first performed in 1755. It was adapted from a French translation of the Chinese play *Orphan of the House Zhao* (*Zhao shi gu er*), attributed to Ji Junxiang, a playwright living at the time of the Yuan dynasty (1280-1368). In Voltaire’s version the play is set in the days immediately after Genghis Khan (d. 1227), the grandfather of Kublai Khan, had captured Cambaluc (or Khanbalik), present-day Beijing, and occupied the Imperial Palace in the Forbidden City. The Tartar army has established a reign of terror, eliminating the last vestiges of resistance, killing all members of the imperial family except one – the orphan of the play – and frightening the common people.

It is certainly no utopia that Voltaire evokes, but the play allows him to make several points that are recurrent themes in his lifelong argument for more reasonable and peaceful politics. First, the play epitomizes the spiritual resistance to violence, bloodshed, and brute killing. Anachronistically, it can be characterized as an “antiwar” play, showing that in the end the conquered people are victorious over the conquerors. Second, it repudiates the idea that there is any wisdom among the soldiers and lieutenants of Genghis Khan, who are depicted as brute savages. This recalls Voltaire’s criticism of Rousseau’s conception of the virtue of savages in his “Lettre au docteur Pansophe” (1766, in Voltaire 1961: 849-857). Third, the play illustrates the Deist position that there are highly civilized, non-Christian humans in China who are exemplarily virtuous. It is their virtue that subdues the violent demeanor of Genghis Khan. This is as close as Voltaire can get to utopia.

The core of the dramatic action consists of Zamti having promised the defeated Emperor to take care of his only remaining son, the orphan of the play. Zamti’s loyalty to the imperial family appears stronger even than his attachment to his own son, whom he is prepared to sacrifice instead of the

young prince. However, Idamé, his wife and the mother of his son, resists this decision and has a fierce discussion with Genghis Khan, who urges her to divorce her husband and become his spouse. That would save the life of the two children as well as that of Zamti. Idamé, however, remains loyal to her husband and decides to commit suicide together with him. Just before they can carry out their plan, Genghis Khan repents, revoking his former threats and allowing the two boys to live. He also asks Zamti to continue his work at the court as an interpreter of the law:

Please be here the supreme interpreter of the law;
Make their ministry as sacred as you are yourself;
Teach reason, justice and the moral rules.
That the conquered peoples rule the conquerors,
That wisdom reign and preside over courage;
(Soyez ici des lois l'interprète suprême;
Rendez leur ministère aussi saint que vous-même;
Enseignez la raison, la justice et les mœurs.
Que les peuples vaincus gouvernent les vainqueurs,
Que la sagesse règne et préside au courage. [Voltaire 1923: 474])

In this way, Voltaire expressed his admiration for Confucian ethics. In the end Idamé, who can hardly believe Genghis Khan's reconciliatory ordainment, asks him what made him change his mind. His answer is: "Your virtues" ("Vos vertus" [474]), which are the last words of the play.

Goethe, Hesse, Brecht, and the "pure Orient"

Goethe's views on China have been thoroughly investigated and the results are expertly summarized in a volume edited by the sinologists Günther Debon and Adrian Hsia (1985). Apart from Goethe's observation that the travel book by Marco Polo was preeminently capable of "eliciting in us the feeling of infinity and awe" ("das Gefühl des Unendlichen, Ungeheuren in uns aufzuregen" [Goethe 1961-63: vol. 5, 217]), two questions received much attention. The first was concerned with what knowledge Goethe (1749-1832) could have had of Chinese fiction, and the second with how to interpret his adaptations and imitations of Chinese poetry.

Debon (1985) shows in an exhaustive essay that Goethe in 1796 read the seventeenth-century Chinese novel *The History of a Well-Chosen [Bride]*

(*Hao qiu zhuan*) in a German translation of 1766. It is a story of chastity and Confucian virtue. In May 1827 he read the romantic seventeenth-century novel *The Two Cousins* (*Yu jiao li*) in a French or German translation. Earlier that year, he discussed another Chinese text with his loyal interlocutor Eckermann: a narrative in verse, which had appeared in an English translation under the title *Chinese Courtship* (*Hua jian ji*, literally meaning *The Story of Flower Paper*). That discussion triggered Goethe's well-known remarks on world literature.

In Goethe's argument, "world literature" is more than merely a technical literary term. It suggests the equality of all human beings and the unity of humankind – indeed a utopia, although Goethe does not see it like that and does not use the word. As Eckermann has recorded, Goethe said he was convinced

that poetry is the universal possession of mankind ["dass die Poesie ein Gemeingut der Menschheit ist"], revealing itself everywhere and at all times in hundreds and hundreds of men.... National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach. (English translation quoted from Damrosch 2003: 1 [German original in Eckermann 1949: 228-229])

The idea of the unity of humankind, in spite of obvious differences, forms the backdrop of Goethe's statement on world literature, for he believes that "the Chinese think, act, and feel almost exactly like us; and we soon find that we are perfectly like them, except that all they do is more clear, pure, and decorous, than with us" (Damrosch 2003: 11; Eckermann 1949: 227). No doubt Goethe was impressed by Chinese culture as he knew it from what he had read.

In his *West-östlicher Divan* (first edition, 1819) Goethe imagined an escape from the Napoleonic wars and the political events of his days, a flight that made him study "the pure Orient" ("der reine Osten") of which the first poem of this volume speaks, but which here is restricted to the Middle East. Later, in 1827, he wrote "Chinesisch-Deutsche Jahres- und Tageszeiten," a cycle of fourteen poems that were published in a periodical in 1830 and later reprinted as part of his poetic legacy (Goethe 1961-63: vol. 3, 39-43; Lee 1985). When Goethe attempted to render these Chinese poems into German, he was in his late seventies and increasingly alone. Yet, the impulse to identify with a distant culture and to enact the idea of the unity of humankind was probably still the same. If initially Goethe was pri-

marily acquainted with Confucianism, now in his later years he developed a keen interest in Daoism. He recognized affinities between the Daoist celebration of nature and his own pantheism (Mommsen 1985: 30). As a corollary, he emphasized the individual experience of the sublime rather than an imagined utopia, which always has a social dimension.

The eleventh poem invokes a Daoist-inspired image of immortality: “the eternal law / that makes the rose and lily bloom” (“das ewige Gesetz / Wonach die Ros und Lilie blüht” [Goethe 1961-63: vol. 3, 42]). The awareness of the eternal law of growth and decline is the result of an individual experience, a moment of rapture (“Begeisterung”), as described in the thirteenth, perhaps most “Chinese” and Daoist poem of the cycle:

Do you wish to disturb the peaceful bliss?
Let me drink my cup of wine;
We need others to discuss and learn,
To become enraptured one must be alone.
(Die stille Freude wollt ihr stören?
Lasst mich bei meinem Becher Wein;
Mit andern kann man sich belehren,
Begeistert wird man nur allein. [Goethe 1961-63: vol. 3, 42])

Goethe appears here to have withdrawn from the dream of unified humankind, having turned to a Daoist epiphany that is strictly personal. If at one point he envisioned the unity of humanity, here the poet perceives that “to become enraptured one must be alone.” In these verses Goethe’s affinity with a utopian design, which a few years before he had expressed in his talks with Eckermann, seems to have given way to the espousal of a more mystical experience.

Perhaps more than any other German writer, Hermann Hesse (1877-1962) was inspired by Indian and Chinese philosophy. In his study *Hermann Hesse und China* (1974) Adrian Hsia tried to disentangle the various traditions which in different stages of Hesse’s life had influenced his work. However, Hesse’s overall aim was not to identify with oriental traditions but to emphasize, as Goethe had done in a similar utopian turn of mind, the unity of humankind. After a visit to India, Hesse observes in 1918 that, although it is possible to distinguish between East and West, Europe and Asia, “beyond these distinctions people belong to a community called humanity” (Hsia 1974: 17). That human beings living in different cultures basically share the same desires, fears, and worries, and know similar ways to

control or avoid them detracts from the rationale to distinguish between Indian, Chinese, or other philosophical sources. Indeed, a major characteristic of Hesse's work is his eclecticism.

Nevertheless, Adrian Hsia has convincingly argued that Hesse had a preference for the Daoist tradition, mainly represented by Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi, as well as for Buddhism, and only in his later years became interested also in Confucianism. Hesse was attracted by the mystical and esoteric aspects of Chinese philosophy, as appears from his studies of the *Book of Change (Yijing)*, a text which originally was a collection of oracular sayings and a handbook for fortune-telling dating from the early Zhou dynasty before commentaries were added from the fifth century BCE, which facilitated its incorporation into the Confucian canon (Bauer 1989). In 1914 Richard Wilhelm had made the *Book of Change* accessible to German readers. Hesse granted it a crucial role in his last and most "Chinese" novel, *Das Glasperlenspiel* (1943, *The Glass Bead Game*).

Perhaps it should help us to understand Hesse's fiction and poetry if we are aware of his early interest in aestheticizing experiences and the mystical aspect of the supernatural, as appears, for instance, from his laudatory review of Hans Bethge's *Die chinesische Flöte* (1907, *The Chinese Flute*), notably his high praise for the poetry of Li Taibo or Li Bo (701-762), and his admiration for *Chinesische Geister- und Liebesgeschichten* (1911), translated by Martin Buber from the English *Chinese Ghost and Love Stories*, a selection from Pu Songling's fiction (early Qing dynasty). There has always been a mystical, esoteric, and elitist bias in Hesse's work. Living since 1923 near Lugano, Switzerland, where he wrote *Das Glasperlenspiel* far from the turbulences of World War II, he conceived a way of life that supposedly offered a response to the filthy world that surrounded him.

Critics have interpreted *Das Glasperlenspiel* as utopian fiction, and indeed it shares certain characteristics with the genre of utopian writing. The novel is situated in vaguely indicated future times, from which the contemporaries ("die Heutigen") look back at the spiritual poverty of the twentieth century. A more concrete indication of narrated time is the remark that Pope Pius xv once had been a good glass bead player (Hesse 1943: 33); this imaginary pope must be one of the future successors of Pope Pius xii, who died in 1958. The novel's geographical setting is equally vague, though we may assume that the province of Castalia, where the "Order" of glass bead players is located but which cannot be found on any map, is a mountainous area with beautiful lakes, such as in Switzerland. Apart from the story being situated in future times and in an undetermined location, it is further pro-

tected against any pragmatic interpretation by an avalanche of erudition, spiritual abstractions, musicological observations, references to Hesiod, Plato, and, of course, Chinese philosophy, in particular Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi, and also to the *Book of Change*, whose hexagrams – the six interrupted or uninterrupted lines from which the oracular predictions can be deduced – have inspired the glass bead game.

The novel describes the life of Josef Knecht, who gradually reaches the position of master of the game (“magister ludi”), the highest position in the hierarchy of the Order. Like the guardians in Plato’s Republic as well as the members of Roman Catholic orders, the players have no private property and remain unmarried. Women play no role in the secluded community. In the end, Josef Knecht resigns from his high position as master of the game to return to the worldly life outside the Order and become an unpretentious private teacher. Challenged by his pupil, he tries to swim across a lake and drowns in the cold water.

Josef Knecht’s escape from his high function in the Order of glass bead players and his acceptance of social responsibility in the outside world can be interpreted as prompted by the Daoist belief that no words, rules, or rituals have lasting value and that everything is subject to change. But it can also be read as an expression of the superiority of Confucian social obligations over acquiescence in Daoist mysticism. Whichever interpretation one may prefer, the last twenty pages of the biography of Josef Knecht, somewhat surprisingly, turn the story of the preceding three hundred pages into a mannered spiritual experiment, reducing it in fact to the *Spielerei* of a guru who possessed all the required qualifications for posthumously becoming an icon of the Flower Power movement, which aimed to realize a eutopian atmosphere in real life. The novel that Hesse constructed, with its many do’s and don’t’s, its distinction of outsiders from the initiated, its praise of celibacy, and its ban on private property, all regulated in a strictly hierarchical order, has its admirers as well as detractors. The latter interpret the novel as dystopian rather than eutopian.

Perhaps it is the ambivalences of the novel – not only the opposite judgments of dystopia and eutopia, but also the tension between philosophical wisdom and social commitment, or Daoism and Confucianism – that made the Swedish Academy award the Noble Prize in Literature to Hesse in 1946.

The way Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) was inspired by China and Chinese literature, theater, and philosophy is totally different from Goethe’s idealistic universalism or Hesse’s oriental mysticism. In opposition to Hesse’s ad-

miration for the wandering Li Taibo with his Daoist sympathies, Brecht preferred the younger poet and official Bai Juyi (772-846), whose social commitment he had more affinity with (Tatlow 1973). He dismissed Goethe disparagingly as a paragon of virtue (“ein Musterknabe” [Brecht 1967: vol. 1, 96]) and likewise belittled Confucius, whose exemplary virtuous behavior, Brecht argues, could be imitated in a way that appears remarkably useful for achieving respect in society. Goethe’s model behavior and erudition were nationalized by the State, Brecht asserts: “Nevertheless we know of the brute and essentially servile nature of this good Goethe” (“Trotzdem wissen wir von der brutalen und im wesentlichen servilen Art dieses guten Goethe” [96-97]), who did not show much interest in the social conditions of his days.

Brecht was much better informed about China than Goethe and would never speak of a “pure Orient.” Quite the reverse: his China, where people cheat and exploit each other, is filthy, cruel, and poor. Brecht’s play, *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* (1940, *The Good Person of Szechwan*), presents anything but a utopian picture of China. The play was influenced by Chinese traditional theater; the actors on stage shatter the theatrical illusion by addressing themselves directly to the audience, as in Beijing opera, and Shen Te can impersonate Shui Ta by wearing a mask.

The play’s main theme centers on the question three gods pose themselves, that is, whether there still are any good people on earth who live in accordance with the ancient commandments. The gods are looking for a place to sleep and after having been refused several times, they are taken in by the good prostitute Shen Te. Her hospitality is generously awarded. She receives more than a thousand silver dollars, money she uses to buy a tobacco shop. She hopes to continue offering rice to her poor friends and help others in similar ways, but time and again she is cheated. The only way out is to dress up as an imaginary cousin, Shui Ta, who poses as a shrewd businessman representing her interests. The intrigue comes to a climax when it appears she is expecting a baby from a young man who wants to become a pilot, but whom she cannot trust at all as he is out for her money.

Shui Ta is accused of keeping Shen Te in confinement or even having killed her. He is brought to court, where the three gods serve as judges. Finally Shen Te takes off her mask and male attire, and admits that she is both Shui Ta and Shen Te. She confesses: “To be good and yet to live / tore me as a lightning into two halves” (“Gut zu sein und doch zu leben / zerriss mich wie ein Blitz in zwei Hälften” [1957: 401]). There must be something wrong with the world such as the gods have arranged it. They respond,

however, that they will never change the commandments. Standing on a rosy cloud, the gods are slowly lifted into the air, while speaking their last words: that everything is in order. Shen Te remains behind, desperate. The play's ending is inconclusive.

In *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* the gods are the losers. Their commandments are too strict and they refuse to offer any real help to the people. In the epilogue the audience is challenged to conclude that human beings themselves must solve their political and economic problems. Paradise is a dream that will never come true. It cannot be expected that all people will suddenly become virtuous. Brecht appears to exclude the possibility of a eutopia. Yet, his sarcastic criticism of the present political and economic order is motivated not only by a warm interest in the fate of the poor and the humiliated, but also by the prospect of a classless society that has liberated itself from religious hypocrisy. When it comes to the crunch Brecht, too, was driven by a utopian impulse, but he harbored no illusions about the swift realization of any eutopia in this world, including China.

Shangri-La

Among the twentieth-century writers of utopian fiction, James Hilton (1900-1954) has been one of the most successful. Part of the success of his novel *Lost Horizon* (1933) is due to a persuasive combination of mystery and credibility. The story about a Lamaist monastery with traces of a Christian tradition in the forbidding mountains of Tibet is framed by a rather realistic prologue and epilogue that serve to enhance its plausibility. The isolated lamasery has all the appearances of a traditional utopia: geographic inaccessibility, a quiet community that offers spiritual and aesthetic satisfaction, the ideal of longevity, strict rules (including a ban on leaving the place), and a hierarchical organization headed by the High Lama, all set in a most splendid environment.

The prologue focuses on a meeting of several Englishmen in Berlin in 1932, and in particular on a dialogue between the novelist Rutherford and the first-person narrator who presents himself as a neurologist specialized in amnesia. They have learned about the hijacking of a plane in Central Asia which had four passengers on board, among them their friend from their school and university days, Hugh Conway, a British consul. All four passengers are believed to be dead. The two friends discuss Conway's physical and intellectual qualities as they remember him: "He was tall and ex-

tremely good looking, and not only excelled at games but walked off with every conceivable kind of school prize” (Hilton 1934: 10). He read Latin and Greek and studied oriental languages in Oxford, a true member of the British intellectual elite, and apparently absolutely trustworthy, since the narrator observes that “our civilization doesn’t often breed people like that nowadays” (11).

Then Rutherford discloses that Conway is not dead and that he met him several months after the plane was hijacked in a hospital in central China, where he seemed to have lost his memory. Rutherford and Conway left the place and traveled together by train and boat with the United States as their destination. On a luxurious Japanese liner something surprising happened. Conway was giving a piano recital, playing music that sounded like Chopin’s although it had never been heard before, as if he were impersonating Chopin himself. After that recital his memory returned and he told his friend what had happened to him after the plane had been hijacked. Rutherford wrote down the story and now offers it to the neurologist. He adds that Conway departed from the ship in Honolulu and returned to Bangkok, traveling from there in northwestern direction, evidently in search of the Tibetan mountains where he had spent such happy days. Nothing was ever heard of him again.

The epilogue, which refers to another meeting between Rutherford and the narrator who meanwhile has read Conway’s story as recorded by the novelist, adds some more information meant to enhance the story’s credibility. It appears that after his escape from Shangri-La Conway was brought to the hospital in a very poor condition by a very old Chinese woman who was ill herself and died almost immediately. Readers of the novel will assume that it was Lo-Tsen, one of the characters in the story of Shangri-La. Like Huxley and Wells, Hilton is an experienced writer capable of making readers believe his fictional narrative.

What happened after the hijacking? As Conway had told Rutherford, the plane had landed on a small strip of land between steep mountains from where it seemed impossible to take off again. In any case, the pilot did not survive the landing. Just before dying he was able to tell them that they were in Tibet, not far from the lamasery Shangri-La. An elderly Chinese named Chang then turned up with several companions to guide them to the lamasery, which gave Conway the sensation of “having reached at last some place that was an end, a finality” (82).

Conway’s personality is a clue to the interpretation of the novel. He is not only a highly talented man but also someone whose character, at thirty-

seven, appears to have been impregnated by his experiences as a soldier in World War I. In addition, he is well aware of the 1929 stock market crash and the subsequent world economic crisis. Readers are vividly reminded of the financial malaise, since one of the four foreigners who were unwittingly transported into Tibet is the manager of a trust company; the man has been accused of having lost a hundred million dollars through speculation on Wall Street and is now sought by the police. He is traveling under the false name of Barnard. On various occasions, the novel emphasizes that the world is dangerously close to collapse or, as Barnard phrases it, “the whole game’s going to pieces.” Conway concludes that there hangs “a reek of dissolution” over the world (151).

Conway has not become a cynic, but avoids ardent emotions. During one of his frequent conversations with the High Lama he admits that “perhaps the exhaustion of the passions is the beginning of wisdom” (213). The High Lama concedes that this is also the doctrine of Shangri-La.

Chang serves as the guide in the monastic utopia. The people in the valley of Blue Moon beneath Shangri-La are governed by the lamasery with casual benevolence. The valley people have no democratic rights and yet are very content with the autocratic rule of the lamasery. Conway, who pays several visits to the valley, sees no soldiers or police. Crime was very rare, he is told. Only in very serious cases the officials of the lamasery had power to expel an offender from the valley. The basic rule of social behavior is “good manners,” such as hospitality to foreigners, the avoidance of acrimonious disputes, and lack of rivalry (138). Good manners also regulate erotic relations. The keyword is moderation or, as Chang says: “We inculcate the virtue of avoiding excess of all kinds – even including, if you will pardon the paradox, excess of virtue itself” (91). The women of the valley, as Barnard to his satisfaction experiences, happily apply “the principle of moderation to their own chastity” (188).

Conway appreciates the unhurried life at the lamasery, “the gradual revelation of elegance, of modest and impeccable taste, of harmony” (113). Hilton continues to describe the atmosphere in lyrical terms: the splendid library with the world’s best literature, including Plato and Thomas More, but also travel books and maps. However, as Chang warns, Shangri-La is not mentioned on any map. The group is shown around the lamasery and arrives at a pavilion with a harpsichord and a modern grand piano. A young lady in Chinese dress, Lo-Tsen, plays a gavotte by Rameau on the harpsichord. Conway is entranced by the aesthetic matching of the “silvery airs” of the music with the Song vases and exquisite lacquers and the nearby lo-

tus pool (120). Mallinson, the youngest member of the group, will fall in love with her; a love which she is expected to return only with moderation.

Conway and his three companions, two men and one woman, are confronted with several mysterious questions, such as how did the Chinese girl, a Manchu princess, arrive in the lamasery? Or how could the grand piano have been transported to this place? Or, more importantly, why was their group brought to the monastery where Chang, their guide, is not particularly helpful in arranging for their departure? Was there perhaps a premeditated plan to bring them here? Rather early in the story Conway suspects that such is the case. These questions keep the story going and its readers interested.

Mystery also surrounds Conway's talks with the High Lama. Their frequent conversations are very much exceptional, Chang assures. Usually visitors may meet the High Lama only after having spent several years at the lamasery. The High Lama tells Conway about the foundation of the monastery. In the year of 1719 four Capuchin friars had set out from Beijing in search of remnants of the Nestorian faith. (Earlier in this chapter I mentioned that Marco Polo recorded the presence of Nestorian Christians in the Tartar empire.) The Capuchins did not find any traces of the Nestorians and three of their group died on the way. Finally, the last one of them, Perrault, originating from Luxembourg, reached the valley of Blue Moon, where he was well received by a prosperous and hospitable people who had settled there. They were Buddhists but listened patiently to his preaching the Christian gospel. Perrault decided to found a Christian monastery in a deserted lamasery above the valley. The villagers helped him repair the buildings. That was in 1734, when he was just over fifty years of age.

The religion of the monastery became mixed with Buddhist elements, and Perrault did not object to the prevalent consumption of the "*tangatse* berry," which was supposed to have a healthy effect but which also was mildly narcotic (163). The people in the valley and the monks venerated him. Meanwhile, Perrault grew older, fell ill, began to experiment with deep-breathing exercises, and recovered. As the High Lama finally discloses, Perrault has survived until the present day, that is 1931, and is none other person than the man now talking to Conway.

Since the elderly monks were dying the monastery was in need of new arrivals to fill the vacancies. Usually they happened to be half-lost wanderers who were well received at the lamasery and after years of waiting could be initiated as lamas to spend the rest of their life in meditation. No one was allowed to leave the lamasery, which was nearly impossible anyway, since the

valley was surrounded by high mountains and difficult passes. In the last decades fewer wanderers had arrived and thus the idea was born to kidnap a group of foreigners. That group included Conway.

Both Lo-Tsen and Chang have profited from methods to forestall aging that work only at the elevation of Shangri-La. Though they look much younger, they are in fact in their seventies and nineties respectively. Another person of high age but appearing rather young is the musician Alphonse Briac, a former pupil of Chopin, who is capable of playing compositions that Chopin had never published. Conway learns to play them, too. He understands that longevity is a major goal of Shangri-La, just as it was for Bacon and in spite of Swift's attempt to ridicule it.

The conversations between Conway and the High Lama, who has begun to like and trust his interlocutor, reach a climax when Perrault emphasizes that he may have succeeded in forestalling death but that he has not achieved eternal life. Feeling that his death is near, he enlarges on the rationale of the monastery. The lamasery may serve as an alternative to the dissolution of the outer world. Here in Shangri-La the most valuable books, scores of music, and philosophical wisdom will remain untouched by war and economic crisis. The High Lama proclaims: "When the strong have devoured each other, the Christian ethic may at last be fulfilled, and the meek shall inherit the earth" (191).

At their last meeting the High Lama decides to assign Conway, with whom he feels so much affinity, as his successor: "I place in your hands, my son, the heritage and destiny of Shangri-La" (236). Conway is too much impressed – and perhaps also under the influence of the *tangatse* drug – to decline that task. He appears to concur with the High Lama's prediction that Dark Ages are coming and that Shangri-La will survive the storm and be the beginning of a "new Renaissance" (238). Here Perrault suddenly stops speaking and dies, leaving Conway behind in a bewildering trance that makes him feel to be the "master of Shangri-La" (239).

The strength of the novel is that readers may find Conway's identification with the principles of Shangri-La quite plausible, but some moments later are equally convinced by Conway's conflicting decision to leave the lamasery and help Mallison escape together with Lo-Tsen, the Manchu princess. It is true, Conway's decision to desert Shangri-La is not an easy one. Chapter eleven contains a long dialogue between Mallison and Conway, in which the latter warns his young friend about the real age of Lo-Tsen and displays many other concerns. Finally Conway is persuaded to depart together with them. He had to choose between the passionless

utopia of Shangri-La and his sympathy for the youthful love of Mallison and Lo-Tsen, between meditation in search of lasting wisdom and action that may lead to transitory rapture. The utopian dream dissolves in the confrontation with a passionate love. Perhaps utopia and eros are always at odds?

The utopia of Shangri-La is not in every respect attractive. As in many other utopian communities the social relations are determined by a strict hierarchy and an autocratic leader. Strangers are welcomed but not allowed to leave. The kidnapping of the group of foreigners to which Conway and Mallison belong was effected without the High Lama's knowledge but neither did he disapprove of it. The organization of Shangri-La relies on limited violence and casual despotism. The people in the valley of Blue Moon have no democratic rights. Apparently there is a strained relation between utopia and democracy, just as between utopia and eros. For democracy and erotic love have one thing in common, that is, the individual decision, which may depart from a premeditated abstract ideal.

Attractive, but rather artificial, is the economic basis of Shangri-La, where no one seems to work because the valley holds huge quantities of gold, which is used to pay for everything. Hence, the initiated and as yet uninitiated inhabitants of Shangri-La can allow themselves to meditate or to be slack. If many aspects of the lamasery can be imitated elsewhere, the golden standard of its economic basis cannot easily be duplicated.

When Conway arrives at Shangri-La, he has the half-mystical, half-visual sensation, as quoted above, of "having reached at last some place that was an end, a finality" (82). That attitude determined his favorable reaction to the ways and rules of the lamasery. The search for "an end, a finality" is definitely something inherent in most human beings. The awareness that we are in need of an end enhances the credibility of Shangri-La as well as other utopias. Although the economic basis of the lamasery may appear artificial and its social structure hierarchical and autocratic, Hilton's experiment has remained attractive to many readers because of its philosophical perspective.

Hilton's novel became a bestseller and was translated into many languages. Between 1991 and 2007 no less than eight Chinese translations were published under the titles *Xiangge lila* (*Shangri-La*) and *Xiaoshi de dipingxian* (*Vanishing Horizon*). Although Shangri-La does not occur on any map, explorers have tried to locate it in southwest China. As the English language newspaper *China Daily* of September 24, 2005, reported in a long article on Hilton, the county of Zhongdian in northern Yunnan has official-

ly renamed itself as “Xiangge lila,” thus attempting to make a fiction real and, more pragmatically, to attract tourists – a plan that has indeed worked. The Lonely Planet guide for southwest China records that Zhongdian, at an altitude of 3200 meters, is primarily a Tibetan town profiting from “a boom in Shangri-La driven tourism” (Mayhew et al. 2002: 374). The name of the international hotel chain Shangri-La also derives from Hilton’s novel. Clearly, fiction can affect reality. It may also inspire other writers to create their own, intertextually related fiction.

In France Hilton’s *Lost Horizon* was rediscovered by Patrick Modiano, as appears from his novel *Dans le café de la jeunesse perdue* (2007, *In the Café of Lost Youth*), which features an enigmatic character, Louki, whose real name is Jacqueline Delanque. *Horizons perdus*, the French translation of Hilton’s novel first published in 1956 and reprinted in 1973 and 2006, is mentioned several times. Louki carries it with her when she visits the café Le Condé where she meets her friends. Guy de Vere, a man with paranormal gifts who organizes occultist sessions in which she participates, has advised her to read *Horizons perdus*, “the history of people who attained the mountains of Tibet and lived in the monastery of Shangri-La in order to learn the secrets of life and wisdom” (“l’histoire des gens qui gravissent les montagnes du Tibet vers le monastère de Shangri-La pour apprendre les secrets de la vie et de la sagesse” [Modiano 2007: 94]). However, Louki knows that it is not necessary to go as far as Tibet. Similar mystical moments that equally offer the sense of an end, a finality, can be experienced in the streets of Paris.

Although Louki poses as a student of oriental languages and the narrative refers several times to Nietzsche’s idea of the Eternal Return, Modiano resolves the idea of a mystic experience into the wish to escape from a drab, ordinary life. Louki attempts to get away from an uninteresting existence without education or professional challenge by attending the sessions of de Vere, or by way of her adventurous walks through Paris, or a sudden marriage that does not last long, an equally brief love affair, and the use of drugs, which she consumes with her friend, Jeannette Gaul. She escapes definitely from her superficial attachments by jumping out of a window. Jeannette attempts to prevent this but fails.

The story is written from different narrative perspectives: that of a visitor to Le Condé, a detective hired by Louki’s husband, Louki herself, and finally her lover, Roland. These various narratives partly overlap but also demonstrate that it is impossible to know the full truth about any other person. People can be known by their name, which may not be their real name, or by their address or profession, which perhaps are false as well. Even in

love there always remains something mysterious. Louki's suicide finally comes as a complete surprise.

If Modiano's *Dans le café de la jeunesse perdue*, which like Hilton's novel avoids the word utopia, relates to the utopian tradition, it is because of the human desire to escape from an ordinary reality that offers neither a salving anchorage nor a promising perspective. It emphasizes the negative motivation of the desire for another world.

Chinese Philosophers and Writers Constructing Their Own Utopias

Since the desire for a better world is an anthropological constant, it is not surprising that Chinese writers in one way or another have also conceived utopian communities. The form of their narratives follows more or less logically from their intention to construct a world different from the one they are living in, but the results of these attempts are impregnated by Chinese geographical conditions and cultural preoccupations. Chinese writers of utopian fiction posit a secluded world that is difficult to access and hence protected against outside influences: situated in a mountainous region, far-away borderlands, or overseas. It is projected into a distant, little-known past or a completely imaginary fairyland. The values prevalent in such utopias contravene the sordid practice of synchronous politics and social conventions.

In several – but not all! – respects Chinese utopian narratives happen to resemble European and American utopian fiction. This becomes apparent from observing the development of Chinese utopias from its early days, when there was no Western influence on Chinese culture at all, up to the present. This is not a case of implying a Western genre concept on non-Western texts, but one of acknowledging the utopian impulse as a universal phenomenon and the specific Chinese manifestations of that phenomenon as resulting from the Chinese imagination and conditions. I am not saying that concepts originated in the West have played no role in my argument, but some of these concepts are universally applicable. For instance, I have used a concept of genre conceived by Western scholars that enabled me to indicate the principal features of a set of texts in shorthand. The recognition of a certain genre is based on conventional and unavoidably simplifying categorizing that may go back to a certain prototype. Thomas More's *Utopia* has been considered a prototype of the genre of utopian fiction in the West. In a similar way, "The Story of Peach Blossom Spring" ("Taohua yuan ji") by Tao Yuanming, also named Tao Qian (365-427), serves as a prototype of the Chinese genre of utopian fiction. These different prototypes account for part of the differences between the Western and Chinese concepts of utopian fiction.

The notion of genre is universally applicable, I assume. To substantiate this view I could refer to the many studies on the nature of genres, but in this context I must restrict myself to some recent propositions. From a psychological point of view, genres have been defined as “cognitive schemata” (László and Viehoff 1993), partly relying on prototypes (De Geest and Van Gorp 1999, Sinding 2002). Or, in more general terms, genres refer to conventional, “interpersonal” knowledge (Fowler 1982, Guillén 1993). The cognitive capability of human beings enables us to develop mental instruments – methods of analysis, procedures of simplification and generalization, abstract concepts – that help us to recognize and classify texts as belonging to a certain genre. That psychological faculty is of course *not* restricted to Western researchers but was already manifest in Confucius’ *Analects* (*Lun yu*), the sayings of Mencius (fourth century BCE), and the late-fifth-century treatise *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (*Wenxin diaolong*) by Liu Xie (465–522), which more specifically deals with literary genres. We may safely conclude that the *concept* of genre can be considered universal, whereas the various specific genres of literature, including the genre of the utopian narrative, show differences from culture to culture as well as intercultural similarities. In this chapter I will examine various manifestations of Chinese utopian narrative up to the nineteenth century and note in what respect they differ from or have elements in common with Western utopian stories.

The Confucian concept of perfect virtue

Expression of the utopian impulse can be found in China well before Tao Yuanming. Just as Plato’s *Republic* preceded and inspired More’s *Utopia*, “The Story of Peach Blossom Spring” is anticipated by the Confucian conception of the exemplary moral person or “gentleman” (D. C. Lau’s translation of *junzi*). The various characteristics of the perfect gentleman, all oriented on aspects of virtue, incorporate an internalized utopian program not unlike the characterization of the guardians in the *Republic*.

Confucius (Chinese name: Kong Zi, 551–479 BCE) lived more than a century before Socrates (469–399 BCE) in a feudal society that had little in common with the political organization of Athens. In Socrates’ day Athens was ruled alternately by the democrats and their opposition, the oligarchs. The political situation was confused and far from what we nowadays would call democratic, but there were laws that regulated citizenship and the preroga-

tives of citizens, including their participation in political decisions and religious functions. Notwithstanding the different political situations in Central China and Attica, numerous philosophers, including Kant and Schelling (Hsia 1985), as well as Feng Youlan, author of the renowned *History of Chinese Philosophy* that is available both in English and in Chinese, have commented on the similarities between Confucius and Socrates. In particular a comparison between the characterization of the *junzi* or gentleman in the *Analects* and the role of the guardians in Plato's *Republic* is often invoked. There are no texts written by Confucius or Socrates themselves. They were teachers, and all that we have are Confucius' sayings, as recorded by his admiring students and collected in the *Analects*, and Plato's partly fictional representation of dialogues in which Socrates is supposed to have participated.

First of all, it should be emphasized, as Schelling already did in 1857, that the statements and reasoning in both the *Analects* and the *Republic* avoid religious questions, with the exception of the last section in the last book of the *Republic*, "The Myth of Er," in which Plato somewhat unexpectedly relates the story of Er, son of Armenius, who was killed in battle but after twelve days came to life again and told what he had seen in "the other world." He had observed the Last Judgment, souls being sent to heaven or down into an earthly chasm, and had watched the process of transmigration. The story exemplifies what kind of rewards human beings may expect in the afterlife and serves to bolster virtuous behavior in this world. Whatever Plato may have thought of the myth, he must have found it useful to hold out the prospect of heavenly rewards to virtuous humans.

Confucius, however, refuses to deal with such matters, as appears from the following fragment from the *Analects*:

Ji Lu asked how the spirits of the dead and the gods should be served.

The Master said, "You are not able even to serve man. How can you serve the spirits?"

"May I ask you about death?"

"You do not understand even life. How can you understand death?" (Confucius 1979: XI, 12)

In the valuable introduction to his translation of the *Analects*, D. C. Lau argues that as to life after death, Confucius' attitude can be described as "agnostic" (Lau 1979: 12). This judgment is supported by the observation in the *Analects* that "the topics the Master did not speak of were prodigies,

force, disorder and gods” (Confucius 1979: vii, 21). The Hong Kong-based comparatist Zhang Longxi also emphasizes that Confucius was more concerned with the here and now than with whatever was going on in heaven or in the underworld. There are nevertheless two topics in the *Analects* which border on a religious tradition, that is, Confucius’ ideas about rituals, which in his view have primarily a moral function, and his various statements on the destiny of man and Heaven’s decree, which however remain far from the concept of a providential God and rather appear to designate a mild form of fatalism. Without any reference to revealed religion, early Confucianism must be considered a secular moral philosophy. As suggested in the first chapter of this book, secularism provides a fertile soil for utopian thinking. In his essay “The Utopian Vision, East and West,” Zhang Longxi argues along similar lines, emphasizing that in the Confucian program of education it is “a human effort unsustainable by divine intervention” that will lead to future perfection (2002: 8).

Some interpreters, such as Henry Rosemont, have seen religious aspects in Confucianism, especially in Neo-Confucianism, which incorporated Buddhist and Daoist elements. But Rosemont must admit that the Confucian “canon speaks not of God, nor of creation, salvation, an immortal soul, or a transcendental realm of being” (Rosemont 2008: 46). His conclusion that the human endeavor to become an exemplary person (*junzi*) or even a sage (*sheng ren*) is “a religious quest” (46) either implies an unusually broad concept of religion, or should be considered mistaken. My argument aligns with Zhang Longxi’s view that the *Analects* express a predominantly secular worldview.

The desire for a better world was translated by Confucius into the image of the exemplary moral person or gentleman. Not everyone can be expected to become a gentleman; only those who seriously study human character and cultivate their own behavior will be able to achieve the stage of gentleman and, in very rare cases, the even higher level of sage. Confucius distinguished between the *junzi*, who is eligible to take office, and the common people (*min*), who are destined to be ruled. In between, D. C. Lau argues, there are the “small men” (*xiao ren*), who in general are ruled as well but through study may acquire the right to take office. This tripartite – essentially moral but in effect also social – division reminds us of Plato’s three-fold distinction between a caste of guardians, who have administrative power, their auxiliaries, and the caste of merchants, farmers, and other working people. I will not analyze this parallel further, but I maintain that both Confucius’ gentlemen and Plato’s guardians are a privileged class from which a

sage-king or philosopher-ruler may arise. When asked whether he saw himself as a *junzi*, Confucius refused that qualification. Even less did he want to consider himself a sage (vii: 34). Clearly, the *junzi* is an almost unattainable ideal and even more so the sage, whose perfect virtue is shrouded in the mystery of an irretrievable past. The perfection of moral character to the level of the sage is framed in terms of the historicized utopia of the early Zhou dynasty (11th century-255 BCE).

The primary feature of the gentleman is benevolence (*ren*). As Confucius explained in the answer to a question from one of his disciples: "To return to the observance of the rites through overcoming the self constitutes benevolence" (xii: 1). The rites are a code of traditional precepts that govern action in every aspect of life and form a repository of moral insights. The major moral rules pertain to the relation between father and son, elder brother and younger brother, husband and wife and, on the analogy of these family ties, the relation between ruler and subject, between host and guest, and between friends. In these relations the gentleman should be guided by benevolence or selflessness. To another follower Confucius explained the meaning of benevolence as: "Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire" (xii: 2; also xv: 24) which, as was mentioned in chapter 6, comes close to a similar maxim in the New Testament. Selfless consideration of other human beings (*shu*), modesty, restraint in speaking and action, loyal commitment (*zhong*), and generosity are aspects of benevolence. The gentleman avoids excesses, like Plato's guardians, More's and Campanella's utopians, and the residents of Hilton's Shangri-La.

In matters of government, the gentleman who is asked to participate in the administration should be reverent in the service of his lord and generous to the people (v: 16). He should take care that the common people have enough food and receive sufficient military training. It would be a mistake to send the people into war without adequate arms and training (xiii: 30). When pressed to say which was more essential, food or arms, Confucius, who had little affinity with the military, attached more value to the production and fair distribution of food.

In Confucius' teachings, government has a strong moral basis. His advice was to avoid edicts and punishments as much as possible and to rely instead on the example of the ruler's virtuous conduct, which would elicit equally virtuous behavior among the common people (xii: 19). Righteousness (*yi*) is the overriding principle that makes the gentleman decide how to act and how to select the rites that in specific circumstances should be emphasized and applied. In the final instance, each particular decision must be

judged in terms of righteousness. In this way, slavish imitation of the rites can be avoided. Confucius looked into the past for inspiration but was not a reactionary, even though many of his later followers were.

Confucius appears to have been aware of the difficulty of bringing his teachings into practice, thus creating a utopian distance between his concept of perfect virtue and its realization. No one understands me, Confucius complained (xiv: 35). One of his disciples observes: “The gentleman takes office in order to do his duty. As for putting the Way into practice, he knows all along that it is hopeless” (xviii: 7). In a similar vein a gatekeeper remarks about Confucius that he “keeps working towards a goal the realization of which he knows to be hopeless” (xiv: 38).

Confucius projected his utopian concept of perfect virtue onto a partly historical, partly mythical past. He revered the Duke of Zhou – younger brother of King Wu, the founder of the Zhou dynasty – who served as regent for his nephew, the young King Cheng, and introduced the clan inheritance system that emphasized family ties, notably between the father and the principal wife’s eldest son. As a result the Duke had provided the Zhou dynasty with a firm material basis. As can be gleaned from scattered references in the *Analects*, the utopian story of the early Zhou is one of a splendid culture following the great example of two earlier, largely mythical dynasties, Xia and Shang (also called Yin), which go back to the third millennium before our era. However, Confucius believed that the virtue of the Zhou was the highest of all. It was a society dedicated to serious study and observant of the rites. If given the chance, Confucius would like to create another Zhou civilization (xvii: 5). There is only one place in the *Analects* where a saying of the much admired Duke is directly, though probably apocryphally, quoted. The Duke explains the behavior of the gentleman, in particular his benevolence and equanimity:

The gentleman does not treat those closely related to him casually, nor does he give his high officials occasion to complain because their advice was not heeded. Unless there are grave reasons, he does not abandon officials of long standing. He does not look for all-round perfection in a single person. (xviii: 10)

As D. C. Lau explains, family ties became the basis of Confucius’ moral system and provided a model for political allegiances (1979: 17-18). The overall political goal is harmony, or as You Zi said with reference to earlier times:

Of the things brought about by the rites, harmony is the most valuable. Of the ways of the Former Kings, this is the most beautiful, and is followed alike in matters great and small, yet this will not always work: to aim always at harmony without regulating it by the rites simply because one knows only about harmony will not, in fact, work. (1: 12)

The political ideal of harmony controlled by authoritative regulations is as vital in contemporary corporate China as it was in Confucius' day. The leadership of the Communist Party is at present more interested in the idea of sociopolitical consensus than in the Marxist concept of class struggle. The Chinese leaders do not conceal the Confucian origin of the idea of harmony. On the contrary, they are proud of a two-and-a-half-thousand-year-old Confucian tradition that still appeals to a large segment of the population.

We have found several similarities between Plato's *Republic* and the *Analects*. I mentioned that both Socrates and Confucius were teachers surrounded by students or disciples who transmitted their sayings. The ideal society depends in both cases on a more or less rationally operating elite of exemplary moral individuals and not on religious commandments ordained by holy scriptures. Both Socrates and Confucius took positions against excessive emotions. And neither Socrates nor Confucius believe that their ideals can be easily realized.

However, there are also important differences. Plato pays more attention to life after death and religion in general than the *Analects* do. Plato is also much more specific as to the arrangement of marriage among the common people, the nonexistence of family life, and a ban on private property among the guardians, as well as eugenics and infanticide. In short, the *Analects* show much less interference with the private lives of the people and focus primarily on the moral example of the *junzi*. Young people should beware of "the attraction of feminine beauty" (xvi: 7). That is about all Confucius has to say about sexual relations. If the moral behavior of the ruler is impeccable, the common people will trust him and their welfare will increase. The message is: virtue pays, edicts and force do not.

A further difference between Socrates and Confucius is their different teaching style. It is true, both teach in the form of dialogues, but whereas Socrates usually asks questions and continues his questioning when he has received an answer, gradually bringing the dialogue to a conclusion he probably had in mind from the very beginning; in the *Analects* it is mostly the interlocutors who ask the questions and Confucius who gives the an-

swers, as a sage proclaiming his wisdom although he modestly denied to be one. The difference in didactic style in what probably are the two most influential teachers in China and the West seems to have resulted into two different concepts of knowledge. In premodern China, authoritative wisdom was to be transmitted to future generations. In the West, rational criticism of current knowledge was valued (Socrates). Later, the Western tradition produced the concept of provisional knowledge to be questioned unendingly, without yielding any definite truth (Nietzsche, Popper). The Western epistemological approach has facilitated specialization and has offered more and more precise results. The Confucian method, however, has been more open to holistic solutions in ethics as well as epistemology. If, in the West, individuals were groping for holistic solutions they could always turn to revealed religion, which many did although they knew that their belief was not supported by reliable knowledge. This was unnecessary in China, where Confucianism offered a holistic view of humankind and its place in the universe. Of course, there were also Daoism and, from the first century, the slow dissemination of Buddhism to satisfy metaphysical needs, but in China these worldviews were less important from a social point of view than the various denominations of the Christian and Jewish religions in Europe and elsewhere in the Western world.

Mencius' commentary and additions

Mencius (Chinese name: Meng Zi, 4th century BCE) is the next important philosopher in the Confucian tradition. He explained the sayings of Confucius and in doing so made Confucian philosophy more consistent and more explicit. For instance, in response to Mo Di (5th century BCE), who had propounded the idea of “love without discrimination” (Mencius 1970: 111b, 9; 711a, 26), i.e., love irrespective of a family relation, Mencius, as recorded by his disciples, stipulated that there are gradations of love in accordance with the closeness of a particular family tie or the absence of any kinship. The ties between the father and the eldest son are of primary importance, the care or respect for other family members and people outside the family are of a lesser degree. At one point the various relations are described as follows: “love between father and son, duty between ruler and subject, distinction between husband and wife, precedence of the old over the young, and faith between friends” (111a: 4). In the same paragraph a class difference is made between rulers and workers, “those who use their minds and ... those

who use their muscles.” Confucius had not been that explicit about either the “gradations of love” or about the social distinction between rulers and the working people. The result of Mencius’ commentary was that the conservative nature of Confucianism, evident already from Confucius’ advice in the *Analects* that “the ruler be a ruler, the subject a subject, the father a father, the son a son” (xii: 11), was confirmed. In other matters Mencius also expressed himself more clearly than Confucius had done. Mencius developed a theory of human nature and, in contradistinction to Xun Zi, asserted that human nature is intrinsically good. As D. C. Lau argues, Mencius also appears to have allowed Heaven a more specific role in the individuals’ pursuit of morality than we can find in the *Analects* (Lau 1970: 45).

In view of my thesis that Confucian utopianism looked backward and is unmistakably nostalgic, as argued in the introductory chapter of this book, it is interesting to see that the sayings of Mencius fit into this pattern as much as the *Analects*. Mencius looks back not only to earlier dynasties but also to Confucius, who lived almost two hundred years before him. He remembers the Duke of Zhou, as Confucius had done, and mentions the Duke and Confucius in one breath (111a: 4).

The Duke of Zhou, we learn from Mencius, subjugated the northern and southern barbarians and brought security to the people. He acted as a Confucian ruler *avant la lettre* in punishing those who ignored their fathers or did not respect their rulers. Mencius says that he wishes to follow in the footsteps of the Duke of Zhou and hopes to rectify the hearts of men, oppose heresies, and banish “excessive views” (111b: 9). It appears that the Duke of Zhou, in spite of his being considered a sage, committed a political mistake. He made his elder brother Guan Shu overlord of the defeated Yin, but Guan Shu used the Yin for staging a rebellion against the House of Zhou. This is what the Duke had not foreseen and it was a serious setback in the struggle of King Wu and the Duke of Zhou to establish the Zhou dynasty. Yet, Mencius judges that the Duke could hardly have bypassed his elder brother Guan Shu and that his mistake was a natural one, adding that “when he made a mistake, the gentleman of antiquity would make amends, while the gentleman of today persists in his mistakes” (11b: 9). Again it is in antiquity that we must look for better times.

Mencius’ ideas about benevolent government contain detailed advice to rulers about how to operate wisely in agriculture, forestry, and fishery. Allow the farmers time to sow and to harvest, Mencius suggests. Do not interfere with the busy seasons in the fields by calling them up to fight a war. As a result food will be plentiful. The basic advice is to care for the people by al-

lowing them to enjoy what a ruler enjoys. The people who had dug a pond and built a terrace in the park of King Wen were allowed to enter the park and rejoice at the sight of sleek deer among the trees and fish leaping in the water. Mencius quotes a poem from the *Book of Songs* (*Shi jing*), allegedly edited by Confucius, to describe the idyllic scenery:

He [i.e., King Wen] surveyed and began the Sacred Terrace.
He surveyed it and measured it;
The people worked at it;
In less than no time they finished it.
He surveyed and began without haste;
The people came in ever increasing numbers.
The King was in the Sacred Park.
The roe lay down;
The roe were sleek;
The white birds glistened.
The King was at the Sacred Pond.
Oh! How full it was of leaping fish! (Ia: 2)

Mencius concludes that “it was by sharing their enjoyments with the people that men of antiquity were able to enjoy themselves” (Ia: 2).

The principle that a ruler should share his delight with the people provides an answer to a number of problems. To a king who admits that he has the weakness of being fond of money, Mencius replies that he need not worry about it “so long as you share this fondness with the people.” Similarly, when the same king confesses that he is attracted by feminine beauty, Mencius answers that “so long as you share this fondness with the people, how can it interfere with your becoming a true King?” (Ib: 5)

Mencius was indeed much more explicit than Confucius in offering advice about how to achieve a happy life in a disorderly and sordid world. There is no disorder in Mencius’ semantic universe. He advocates measuring and weighing, and prefers to count in round figures. He speaks of a state of ten thousand chariots and a vassal with thousand chariots. The domain of the Emperor must be a thousand *li* square and that of a feudal lord a hundred *li* square. (A *li* is about 500 meters.) An equally schematic idea in Mencius is the well-field (*jing tian*) system, which has remained a topic of hot discussion up to modern times. In this debate the main questions are: did the well-field system ever exist, or was it merely a product of Mencius’ fantasy? If it was a utopian sketch, could it ever be realized? The historical

debate has yielded a great number of different answers to these questions.

The well-field system was inspired by the shape of the character that represents the Chinese word *jing* (well), written as 井 – two parallel horizontal strokes crossing two more or less parallel vertical ones. Mencius suggests that land be divided according to the structure of the character *jing*, with the eight outer plots being owned by eight different families, and the central plot belonging to the state to be tilled by the joint families as a kind of taxation. The idea has eutopian connotations, as appears from Mencius' phrasing (in which I have substituted the Wade-Giles romanization with the current pinyin system):

If those who own land within each *jing* befriend one another both at home and abroad, help each other to keep watch, and succour each other in illness, they will live in love and harmony. A *jing* is a piece of land measuring one *li* square, and each *jing* consists of 900 *mu*. Of these, the central plot of 100 *mu* belongs to the state, while the other eight plots of 100 *mu* each are held by eight families who share the duty of caring for the plot owned by the state. Only when they have done this duty dare they turn to their own affairs. (IIIA: 3)

The quoted fragment is of particular importance as it pertains to the problem of private versus collective land ownership. The first sentence, mentioning that farmers “will live in love and harmony” sounds rather idyllic. But the last sentence emphasizes the difference between the common people and the ruler, and points in fact to a feudal relationship between them.

Nevertheless, the well-field system has been exalted to the skies as a most adequate way of distributing land in ancient times, which assumedly was abolished by the cruel Qin dynasty (221-206 BCE). Although many critics knew that it could not easily be reintroduced, it stood out as an icon in the debate on land reform ever since Mencius recommended it. The historical uses and misuses of the idea of the well-field system, thoroughly investigated by Joseph Levenson (1968), may instigate us to reflect on the relation between utopian design and historical reality. But let me first discuss some facts of the historical response to Mencius' description of the well-field system.

Orthodox Confucianists did not doubt the historicity of the well-field system for a period of about two thousand years from the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) and deplored its disappearance. Some argued that it could be revived; others considered this impossible and saw the decline of the well-

field system as just one more indication that things in antiquity had been better. The past was idealized and a thirteenth-century critic lamented that under the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties, when the well-field system supposedly was in use, the people were living in happiness since “there were no very rich or very poor” (quoted in Levenson 1968: vol. 3, 20-21). Those who wished to revive the system met all kinds of practical difficulties and had to adjust their ideals. The essence of the well-field system, they argued, was to check the unequal distribution of land. The original ideal described by Mencius remained a source of inspiration for various attempts at less rigorous but practicable land reforms.

The debate took a modern turn with the reformist philosopher and politician Kang Youwei (1858-1927). The well-field system ceased to be an internal Confucian issue and became a topic in competition with Western concepts of socioeconomic reform. According to Kang Youwei, the well-field system had meant that land was allotted to every man and that it therefore had put an end to slavery in ancient China. Liang Qichao, also a modern reformer, maintained in 1899 that “China’s ancient *jing tian* system stands on the same plane as modern socialism” (quoted in Levenson 1968: vol. 3, 26). Others expressed themselves in similar terms.

However, with the May Fourth Movement of 1919, modern Chinese scholars became critical of the traditional tendency not to question the historical value of events and situations described in the Confucian canon. Hu Shi, for instance, claimed that no one could prove the existence of land distribution according to the well-field system on the basis of Mencius’ description or any other historical source (28). In 1930 Guo Moro in effect sided with Hu Shi’s argument. Nevertheless, the problem of whether the well-field system had ever existed in history was not brought to a generally accepted conclusion, since the idea of its historicity was too attractive to political groupings who wished to discredit “contemporary inequality by reference to early (i.e., natural, fundamental) communal institutions” (33).

Reflecting on the relation between utopian image and historical reality from a more abstract point of view, it appears that utopian ideas may become part of a political reality. Within its original Confucian context, Mencius’ sketch of the well-field system described undoubtedly a feudal utopia, which later Marxist critics considered a dystopia, whereas others, such as Liang Qichao, read it as a prefiguration of modern socialism, or as a system that in the words of Tan Sitong (1865-1898), another reformer, could even unify the governments of the world, as it “makes the rich and the poor equals” (26).

The question of whether the well-field system had ever existed remained unsettled. However, as a malleable utopian image it was a recurrent topic in the very real debate about social and economic reform. If the personification is permitted: all utopias “want” to be realized, but some are more pertinent than others and have more chance to be effected. In China the utopian designs of land distribution have always called for serious attention among politicians and government officials, who attempted their realization – often with adverse results.

Daoist metaphysics at odds with utopianism

In the course of the four centuries of the Han dynasty Confucianism became gradually accepted as the dominant school of thought, but this did not mean that other worldviews were reduced to negligible significance. On the contrary, as appears from Wolfgang Bauer’s inexhaustible study of the Chinese search for happiness (1976, 1989), the early centuries of our era yield a great variety of escapes from the Confucian doctrines.

Daoism is one of the most persistent philosophical schools opposing Confucianism. One of its sources is the *Dao de jing* (*Classic of the Way and Virtue*), which is attributed to Lao Zi about whom nothing is known with certainty; D. C. Lau suggests even that he was not a historical figure at all (Lao Tzu 2000: xi). The book consists of 81 brief chapters and originates from the 4th century BCE (with some more recent additions). It rejects the major Confucian values, as appears from chapter 19:

Discard cleverness and wisdom
And the people will benefit themselves
a hundredfold;
Discard benevolence and rectitude
And the people will again become
filial and loyal;
Discard ingenuity and profit
And theft will no longer exist.
It is not enough to have these points
as governing principles,
So the people must be made subject
to the following:
keep being simple in nature and mind,

Discard selfishness and weaken desires.
Discard cultural knowledge
and worries will disappear. (Lao Zi 1995: 19)

To do away with benevolence and righteousness (rectitude) strikes at the heart of Confucianism. The appeal “to discard cultural knowledge” or, more literally, “to stop studying” (*jue xue*) confirms the anti-Confucian purport of the text.

The Daoist tradition has remained a significant factor in Chinese history that made itself felt at irregular intervals up to the present day. In the twentieth century the negative attitude toward learning was revived during the Cultural Revolution, when the Communist Party decreed that “the more one studies, the more stupid one becomes” (*People’s Daily* [*Renmin ribao*], July 12, 1966). This view held sway for about three years, until the Party journal *Red Flag* (*Hong qi*) of 1969, no. 3-4, judged that the slogan was a reactionary one. This episode illustrates the continuous awareness of the Daoist tradition among the Communist leadership – notably Mao Zedong – which could be activated in the struggle against the conservative tendencies in Confucianism and society in general. Not only in modern times, but throughout the last two thousand years Daoism was always hovering at the background of philosophical and political thought and could easily become a threat to the establishment. Its anarchism and individualism, backed up by the mystical experience of being one with nature, seemed to offer an alternative to Confucian ideals that often had the adverse effect of protecting the elite, suppressing and exploiting the people, and condoning corruption.

In principle Daoism avoided the realities of politics and socioeconomic organization. It celebrated the idea of doing without a ruler (*wu jun*) and preferred to abstain from action (*wu wei*). Chapter 80 of the *Dao de jing* offers a rare glimpse of social life from a Daoist point of view. However, it is hardly possible to read this often quoted text as describing a viable political ideal, for it evokes the secluded life of people living in closed communities who impractically refuse to make use of tools or carts and nostalgically yearn for an utterly primitive life. The chapter is quoted in full, though with one alteration: I have translated *zhong si* as “to think of death” instead of “to fear death,” as according to Daoist philosophy death is not a thing to be afraid of.

The state should be small;
The population should be sparse.
Tools, though of many kinds,
Should not be used.
Teach the people to think of death
And not to migrate to remote places;
Although they have ships and carts,
They will have no need to use them;
Although they are well armed
 with weapons,
They will have no place
 to make them effective.
Encourage the people
 to return to the condition
Under which the knotted rope was used
 to record things.
The world best ruled
 is a place where
The people will have delicious food,
 beautiful clothes,
 comfortable living quarters,
 cheerful customs.
Though within easy reach
 of neighbouring states,
The dog's barking
 and the cock's crowing
 in one state are heard in another;
The people of one state
 will never have dealings
 with those of another,
Even if they get old and die. (Lao Zi 1995: 80)

If this describes a Daoist utopia, it represents the ideal of withdrawing from the world and finding satisfaction in isolation.

The texts I have discussed in this chapter – the *Analects*, the *Mencius*, and the *Dao de jing* – are a blend of description, argumentation, and narration in which the descriptive element appears stronger than the narrative one. Things are different in another major source of Daoism, the *Zhuangzi*, a text partly attributed to the philosopher Zhuang Zi (c. 360–300 BCE) but

also containing later additions, in which the narrative element is surprisingly strong. However, the utopian perspective, suggested in the *Analects* and the *Mencius* and though rather idiosyncratically also in the *Dao de jing*, has faded away completely in the *Zhuangzi*.

The *Zhuangzi* is a composite book of skeptical philosophy, consisting of stories, parables, ancient myths, dialogues, and mystical poems. The paradoxical style can change abruptly from solemnity into humorous absurdity. There is a striking tendency to distrust or deconstruct the traditional meaning of words, particularly the key terms of Confucian philosophy, such as benevolence, righteousness, and virtue. This tendency could already be seen in the *Dao de jing*, for instance, in chapter 19 quoted above. However, the more voluminous *Zhuangzi* abounds in diatribes against Confucian jargon and resorts moreover to the rhetorical trick of making Confucius a spokesman of anti-Confucian ideas. When the *Zhuangzi* suggests that we should not interfere with what happens in the world and governments must be considered superfluous, we may suspect that there is no place in this view of Daoism for the idea of constructing a utopian community.

At one point the text discusses the clichés of perfect happiness, such as wealth, an important position, a long life, and a good reputation, to conclude that these aims merely cause worries and real happiness consists in doing nothing (*wu wei*). The Way can be achieved by identifying with the infinite, by completing what Heaven has ordained. The perfect man uses his mind as a mirror that reflects the coming and going of things, without trying to retain anything (Zhuang Zi 1968, 2007: chapter 7). This is only a small step to the celebration of death as pronounced by a skull exclaiming that even a king on his throne can have no more happiness than the dead enjoy in afterlife (chapter 18). The fatalist and basically religious theme of *vanitas vanitatum* is incompatible with purposeful action and thus prevents the consideration of a utopian community. A secular philosophy such as Confucianism offers a more favorable context for utopian thinking than the mystical experience of unity with the universe. The *Zhuangzi* offers interesting, paradoxical, at times comical and even hilarious narratives, but for a utopian narrative we shall have to look elsewhere.

Peach Blossom Spring

Tao Yuanming's brief "Story of Peach Blossom Spring" ("Taohua yuan ji") is generally considered the "most famous literary utopia" in the Chinese

tradition (Zhang Longxi 2002: 13). Kao Yu-kung called it “a subdued romance, ... expressing strong utopian yearnings” (1977: 232). It has been translated by Cyril Birch and is included in his *Anthology of Chinese Literature* (1965: 167-168). Its form differs from earlier Chinese texts suggesting a utopian ideal in that the story is framed in a clearly fictional context. This is probably why “The Story of Peach Blossom Spring” has been read as a product of literary imagination rather than as a historical or philosophical text. The highly unlikely adventure of the fisherman who unintentionally discovers a utopian community, returns to his home village, but then decides to visit that utopia again and fails to locate it, calls for the suspension of disbelief that is a corollary of a fictional reading.

The story is set in the fourth century. A fisherman living in Wu Ling follows the course of a river that brings him to a place where he has never been before. The banks of the river are lined with peach trees in full bloom. He continues his way, wondering where the grove of peach trees would lead to. It ends at a spring, from where a narrow path leads through a cavern where at the far end a glimpse of daylight can be seen. The fisherman leaves his boat behind and enters the subterranean passage. Finally he arrives at a splendid rural area with imposing buildings “among rich fields and pleasant ponds all set with mulberry and willow.” Connecting paths are everywhere, “and the fowls and dogs of one farm could be heard from the next” (Tao Yuanming 1965: 167). People working in the fields, children and elderly men and women appear happy and at ease. Some people approach the fisherman and are surprised that he has found this secluded spot. They receive him in their homes and offer food and drinks. Their ancestors, they say, had fled from the cruel government of the Qin dynasty and from then on they have lived in this beautiful area for almost six centuries, without any communication with the outer world. When after several days the fisherman decides to leave, they urge him not to disclose their whereabouts and not to tell anyone about them. However, he ignores that request and marks his way back, expecting to inform others about this quiet and peaceful place. An official expedition then is dispatched to find the way to this idyllic spot, but the place cannot be retraced.

The story of Peach Blossom Spring had an enormous impact, partly because of the stature of Tao Yuanming as a poet and partly also because of its felicitous combination of Confucian and Daoist elements. The story is situated in historical times since the settlers of this happy land had fled from the cruel despotism of the Qin, which means that they recalled the better conditions under the preceding Zhou dynasty that was so much revered by

Confucius. On the other hand, the story repeats the Daoist topos of the dog's barking and the cock's crowing that can be heard from one farm to the next (*ji quan zhi sheng xiang wen*), occurring in chapter 80 of the *Dao de jing* (quoted above) and also in chapter 10 of the *Zhuangzi*. The topos suggests a peaceful countryside without any government interference.

Zhang Longxi has noted that the reception of the story went into two different directions. There were rewritings, such as by the Tang poets Wang Wei and Meng Haoran, which emphasized transcendental aspects and interpreted the text as hinting at a fairyland of immortals. But there were also secular interpretations, such as by the Song poet and political reformer Wang Anshi (1021-1086) in his "Ballad of Peach Blossom Spring", who read the text of Tao Yuanming as describing "a human community, not the land of mythical and immortal beings" (Zhang Longxi 2002: 16). As recorded by Bauer, the chronicler Kang Yuzhi (12th century) noted a story of three brothers of the Yang family, which is an elaborate prose variant of the *Peach Blossom Spring* theme. The three brothers were well versed in divination and geomancy, but also in military strategy, which enabled them to become famous generals. In the mountains near Kaifeng they met an old man who urged them to withdraw from worldly obligations and seek a life in seclusion. He showed them a cave which had a narrow subterranean passage that led to a peaceful landscape of fields and farms with poultry and dogs, and several shops. The people living there were most hospitable and offered wine and food to their guests. They explained that they were of different families but trusted each other unconditionally and lived together in complete harmony, as rarely can be found even between members of the same family. They had no private property but possessed everything in common, and had no use for gold, pearls, or other valuable things. Land was allocated to every family in accordance with its size. In this way enough rice, firewood, fish and meat were produced. As they were no scholars or high government officials the three brothers were invited to join this happy community and instructed to come with empty hands. Life was simple here (Bauer 1989: 320-322). The purport of the story is anti-Confucian, as appears from the observation that the three brothers are welcomed in this community because they are not officials or literati. Of course, the egalitarian tenor and the depreciation of the family system also point to Daoism rather than Confucianism. The topoi of common property and the denial of the value of gold and pearls in this harmonious community, which also occur in Plato's *Republic*, More's *Utopia*, and so many other fictions about perfect societies, suggest an almost universal utopian imagination.

We may perhaps assume a continuous but rather restricted Chinese tradition of utopian narrative in which Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism merge. When the Ming dynasty collapsed in 1644, Huang Zhouxing, a Ming loyalist, responded by contriving an imaginary garden that served as an antidote to the political setback he was confronted with. In *The Story of the Jiangjiu Garden* (*Jiangjiu yuan ji*, 1674) and related works Huang describes a utopian community where no distinction is made between poor and rich, food and clothing are abundantly available, and men and women are considered equals (Widmer 2006). Or to mention some other examples, utopian elements have been spotted in *A Sequel to Water Margin* (*Shuihu houzhuan*, 1664), written by Chen Chen, another Ming loyalist, though this is primarily a story of martial exploits. The escape of a number of righteous outlaws from Liangshan to the islands of Siam and the happy ending in which the brigands become officials and celebrate their marriage ceremonies are only marginally utopian, as Widmer expressed in the title of her book *The Margins of Utopia* (1987). Xia Jingqu wrote *A Rustic's Idle Talk* (*Yesou puyan*, 18th century), which epitomizes Confucian virtue in its main character Wen Bai and may be considered to some extent utopian (Hsia 1977). In the early twentieth century a reference to “The Story of Peach Blossom Spring” can be found in Liu E’s *The Travels of Lao Can* (*Lao Can youji*, 1907), which in the chapters eight to eleven describes the visit of one of the characters to the Peach Blossom Mountains, a secluded area inhabited by exceptionally civilized and kind people. However, readers learn little about the social structure of this happy community.

Whatever its various interpretations, “The Story of Peach Blossom Spring” remained the classical example of the Chinese rural utopia. It was utopian also in the sense of being nonexistent, as was pointed out by the twentieth-century novelist Shen Congwen in a caustic remark about Wu Ling (literally: the “Martial Hills”), an area in western Hunan where his home town Fenghuang was situated. As quoted by David Wang (2004: 36), Shen warned credulous readers that whereas his home region was considered the alleged site of the Peach Blossom Grove – the ultimate Chinese utopia – “in reality it is known for banditry, superstition, voodoo, and tribal warfare.”

In spite of this skeptical view, Hunan provincial authorities have taken the trouble to reconstruct the fictional land of Peach Blossom Spring and make it into a much visited tourist spot. A bilingual booklet in Chinese and English, published by Xia Yuanqi and Tian Jianzhong in 1993, explains that attempts to construct Peach Blossom Spring and the surrounding fields

and buildings have a long history, going back to the Tang and Song dynasties. The recent plans for rebuilding the utopian site have been realized under the supervision of the “Administration Committee and Corporation for Tourist Economy and Development in the Land of Peach Blossoms.” When in 1993 the delegates of the 4th Congress of the Chinese Comparative Literature Association on their way from Changsha to Zhangjiajie made a detour to visit the park of Peach Blossom Spring, they saw that a number of tourist buses had already arrived. Throngs of people walked a path lined by peach trees along a small stream and finally reached its spring from where a low underground passage led into an open field. Here the refugees from Qin times supposedly had lived. The fake land of Peach Blossom Spring looked remarkably real, without a trace of banditry or tribal warfare.

Flowers in the Mirror, *or eutopia as illusion*

The generally accepted view of China as a continental civilization does not mean that the islands east and southeast of China never played a role in Chinese narratives. There were periods in Chinese history of regular trade relations with countries overseas. During the early Ming dynasty (1368-1644), more precisely between 1405 and 1433, seven enormous maritime expeditions were dispatched from China to ports in South and Southeast Asia, sailing as far as Calicut on the western coast of India and even further (Dreyer 2007, Church 2007). We also know that Marco Polo with his father and uncle sailed from China to Sri Lanka and India, and reached Venice in 1295. Archeological discoveries confirm that trade between China and Persia and East Africa existed as early as the second century before our era, although Chinese ships did not necessarily go as far as the African coast in those days: most trade up to Ming times made use of Arab and Indian intermediaries.

After the fall of the Yuan or Mongolian dynasty (1279-1368), the overland silk route passed into disuse and the succeeding Ming attempted to find an alternative route overseas. The large Ming expeditions had commercial as well as diplomatic purposes; the latter were, as Dreyer suggests, to extend the tributary system to the states of Southeast Asia. However, the naval expeditions were frowned upon by conservative pressure groups, who considered them a waste of money, whereas other projects, such as the military campaigns against Vietnam in the south and the Mongols in the

north, the construction of a northern capital – which grew into present-day Beijing – and the renovation of the Grand Canal, appeared more urgent. After 1433 there were no more large-scale maritime expeditions. Internal preoccupations prevented the development of overseas diplomatic and commercial contacts. The Confucianists, who had a low opinion of commerce as an occupation, were finally successful in preventing further maritime activities.

During the early Tang dynasty (618-907), when foreign trade was not yet a state monopoly, private entrepreneurs were sending ships to islands in the east and southeast for commercial reasons. It is in this historical period, favorable to private overseas trade, that Li Ruzhen's novel *Flowers in the Mirror* (*Jing hua yuan*, literally: the destinies of flowers in the mirror, 1828) is set, which accounts for the considerable role in this novel of islands and the specific customs of people living there. However, the voyages of merchant Lin Zhiyang, his brother-in-law, Tang Ao, and the elderly helmsman, Duo Jiugong, to more than thirty islands, where they find as many different countries inhabited by a strange variety of people, do not make the book into a full-fledged utopian novel. The story is inspired by Daoism rather than Confucianism; so it expresses social criticism without the prospect of an attractive utopia, except in one or two chapters, such as the ones dealing with the Country of Gentlemen and the Country of Giants. Zhang Longxi judges that *Flowers in the Mirror* combines “social satire with positive models of imaginary societies” (2005: 193).

Irony, hyperbole, and thematic complexity prevail throughout the novel. It offers the paradoxical plot of highly talented and emancipated girls helping to depose an empress who favored their emancipation and crowned their intellectual qualities with honorable titles. Paradoxical also are the references to a well-known historical background and the supernatural intervention of Daoist fairies and celestials. Evidently, Li Ruzhen wished to entertain his readers by telling a story of exciting adventures and to express genuine social criticism at the same time. The combination of light-hearted entertainment and pertinent social critique is another paradox characterizing Li Ruzhen's narrative.

Li Ruzhen lived between about 1763 and 1830 and was a *xiucai*, a scholar of the lowest rank, having passed the Imperial civil service examinations only at the county level. But, as Lin Tai-yi in the introduction to her abridged translation of *Flowers in the Mirror* observes, Li had too much common sense to bother about his low scholarly position. Li became what we now would call an “independent scholar” with great knowledge of sever-

al disciplines. In 1810 he published a book on phonetics, but he was equally at home in astrology, medicine, poetry, and other fields. His elder brother supported him financially for many years (Li Ruzhen 1965; Hsia 1977). The Chinese edition of *Flowers in the Mirror* I will refer to was published in Shanghai in 2006.

The historical framework of the novel involves the rise to power of Empress Wu Zetian of the Tang dynasty in 684 by ousting the rightful sovereign, her son Tang Zhongzong, and usurping the throne for twenty years. Many characters in the novel are in some way or another connected with the resistance to this usurpation or are instrumental in installing Tang Zhongzong on the Imperial throne in 705.

Perhaps more important than this historical frame is the supernatural metanarrative interfering with the historical and fictional story of human intrigues and exploits. The supernatural narrative concerns the Fairy of a Hundred Flowers (*Baibua xianzi*), who is in charge of all the flowers on earth and lives on the mysterious island of Penglai. On the occasion of the birthday of the mythological Western Queen Mother (*Xi Wang Mu*), many fairies and spirits assemble at her residence in the Kunlun Mountains. Here the Fairy of a Hundred Flowers gets entangled in a – very human – quarrel with the Lady of the Moon (*Chang'e*), who challenges her to order “a hundred flowers to bloom at the same time” (*baibua yiqi kaifang*) (Li 2006: 4; 1965: 19) – a phrase that with a minor variation was echoed by Mao Zedong when he announced his Hundred Flowers policy in 1956. The Hundred Flowers Fairy refuses the challenge and pledges that, even if the earthly ruler would request her to let all flowers bloom at the same time, she would not make that happen “unless the Deity (*shangdi*) agreed to it” (2006: 6; 1965: 21). Several years later Empress Wu, possessed by an evil spirit, orders all flowers to bloom and they obey, without the Hundred Flowers Fairy being capable of preventing it. As a consequence, the Fairy, together with the spirits of every separate flower, is punished and has to suffer transmigration into a human being. She becomes the talented daughter of Tang Ao, one of the principal characters of the novel, and receives the name Little Hill (*Xiao Shan*). This is one of the occasions where a connection between supernatural and earthly existence is established.

In spite of his low rank as a scholar, Tang Ao decides to participate in the Imperial examinations and ends nationwide as number three. However, this excellent result is not recognized by the Empress and she refuses to grant him the title of *tanbua* since one of her advisers reminds her that Tang Ao was associated with the – historical – rebellion of Xu Jingye and Luo

Binwang, who had resisted the Empress Dowager's attempts to become the first female Emperor of China. After this humiliation, Tang Ao decides to detach himself from his worldly obligations and seek the enlightenment of Dao. In a temple he meets an old man who tells him that the spirits of a hundred flowers were punished and had to transmigrate into human beings, of which twelve have drifted overseas. He counsels that Tang Ao should travel abroad, find them, and bring them back to China. If he can accomplish that task without any selfish proclivity, he might be rewarded and have the prospect of becoming an immortal on the island of Little Penglai, the earthly variant of heavenly Penglai.

Tang Ao persuades his brother-in-law, merchant Lin Zhiyang, to sail to the islands in the east and southeast. Lin's wife and their daughter, Pleasant, join them on the junk, as well as Old Duo, the helmsman, and a number of sailors. During this first journey they visit a great number of islands, go ashore, meet the strangest kinds of monstrous creatures, escape from innumerable dangers, and save the life of several beautiful girls. Of the more than thirty countries they visit, the more interesting are the Country of Gentlemen (*Junzi guo*), the Country of Giants (*Da ren guo*), and the Country of Women (*Nü er guo*).

The Country of Gentlemen represents an almost perfect eutopia built on the Confucian idea of benevolence. The city gate is decorated with the words "Only kindness [or virtue] is precious" (*wei shan wei bao* [2006: 46; 1965: 57]). Here the needs of others matter more than one's own selfish interest. However, in describing commercial negotiations on the market, Li Ruzhen cannot withstand the temptation of resorting to satire. Customers ask the shopkeepers to raise the price but the shopkeepers are rather inclined to lower it and refuse to do so. Tang Ao and Old Duo conclude that customer and shopkeeper have changed places. In this inverted world there is still a lot of bargaining but now the buyer wants the seller to make more profit and the seller thinks only of the buyer's advantage. The commercial haggling is equally time-consuming as in our present world. But in other respects the Country of Gentlemen seems rather perfect. When Tang Ao and Old Duo meet two stylish gentlemen who happen to be brothers, they are invited to their home. The Wu brothers ventilate some commonsensical criticism of geomancy and Confucian rituals concerning birth and death, which they find senseless or extravagant. They also criticize the snobbish behavior of people who consider food a delicacy simply because it is rare, and in particular ridicule consuming the gel of birds' nests, which is tasteless and has no nutritional value. Merchant Lin, who has gone ashore

to sell some goods, is not successful as he sees that there is plenty of everything in the Country of Gentlemen. He also learns that – as in European utopias – jewels have no value here.

In the Country of Giants, where they arrive next, the people are very much like those living in the Country of Gentlemen so that merchant Lin considers it useless to try selling any merchandise. But together with Tang Ao and Old Duo he goes ashore to observe the people. The “giants” are two or three feet taller than people in China and everyone walks on a small cloud. As they learn from an old monk these clouds take on different colors in accordance with the character and moral intentions of their owner. The rainbow-colored cloud is supposed to be best, yellow is second, and black the worst. Since everyone can see the color of these clouds, all people try to pursue a virtuous life. If the Country of Giants must also be considered a eutopia, it should be noted that, just as in the Country of Gentlemen, the emphasis is on virtue. We learn very little of its social organization, except that, as we may conclude, the right of individual opinion and respect for privacy are not highly esteemed values in this ideal country.

The voyage continues to the countries of Restless People, Intestineless People, Dog-headed People, Deep-eyed People (who have eyes on their hands), Sexless People (who think of death as sleep and life as a dream, and whose procreation is arranged by way of reincarnation), Little People, Tall People (as if the author had heard about *Gulliver's Travels*, which is almost impossible), Pure Scholars (who appear to be stingy), and Intelligent People (who all look very old since their minds never stop working). Tang Ao and his friends visit many more countries with strange creatures and customs, too many to name them all. Li Ruzhen's fantasy, partly inspired by ancient Chinese geographic texts (Hsia 1977), puts those of John Mandeville or Joseph Hall to shame. Under weird circumstances, Tang Ao also meets several young and highly talented girls, all reincarnations of flower fairies whom in some cases he has to rescue from a dire predicament.

When they reach the Country of Women, merchant Lin gets into trouble and must be rescued. It is a country where men dress as women and women as men. Men must obey the women, who behave like Amazons in the European tradition. Merchant Lin tries to sell cosmetics in this country and is so successful that he is received by the “King,” who in fact is a woman and immediately falls in love with him. The “King” decides to make Lin the Royal Consort. Now he is subjected to a feminine transformation of which the binding of his feet is a most painful experience. Li Ruzhen's detailed description of the practice of foot-binding has often been mentioned

as an essential aspect of his social critique. Indeed, the story can be interpreted as an indictment of the inequality between men and women. In a sense the Country of Women is a feminist paradise, but there is too much distrust, violence, and cruelty to consider it a real eutopia.

It takes a lot of bargaining and cunning before Tang Ao manages to liberate merchant Lin as well as the crown “prince,” a beautiful young girl, who is on the point of becoming a victim of palace intrigues. On earlier occasions Tang Ao had acquired supernatural skills and he is able to jump and fly with a man on his back and a girl in his arms. Thus he can jump over the palace walls and bring merchant Lin and the “prince” into safety on board of the junk, which immediately sets off.

The girl’s name is Yin Ruohua, translated as “Flowerlike.” Tang Ao realizes that the many girls he met during this voyage, now twelve in all, all have the name of a flower. It reminds him of the prediction by the old man in the temple that, if he would succeed in finding the twelve incarnations of the flower spirits who were living outside China, he might be eligible for becoming an immortal. When a storm blows their ship to Little Penglai, Tang Ao takes his chance and, leaving his companions behind, disappears on the island. Merchant Lin and Old Duo try to find him, but when they see a stone tablet with a text that bespeaks Tang Ao’s definite retreat from this world, they acquiesce in his disappearance and return to China. Tang Ao has achieved his one-man Daoist utopia.

When merchant Lin and Old Duo return from their long journey, the Empress is celebrating her seventieth birthday by issuing a number of decrees that favor the emancipation of women. The most significant is that for the first time Imperial examinations for girls will be held. Although the *historical* Empress Wu had several female advisers, she never ordered the institution of official examinations for young women; the examinations for women are entirely a product of the novelist’s fantasy. Little Hill, the intelligent daughter of Tang Ao, is enchanted by the idea and definitely wants to participate in the examinations, but when she learns that her father has decided to become an immortal and is staying behind on Little Penglai, she begs her uncle, merchant Lin, to sail once more to that island and help find her father. Flowerlike wants to join her and also Old Duo participates in this second voyage, which provides another occasion for perilous adventures, narrow escapes from great danger, and Daoist mysticism.

Having gone ashore on Little Penglai, Flowerlike and Little Hill do not succeed in finding Tang Ao, but they meet an old woodcutter who tells them that the mountain they see is called the Peak of Flowers in the Mirror

(*Jing bua ling*) and beneath in the valley is the village called Moon in Water (*Shui yue cun*). These names convey a Daoist-Buddhist imagery. The old man happens to know Tang Ao and even carries a letter from him, which he hands to Little Hill. Tang Ao writes that they will not meet until she has passed the Imperial examinations for women and he gives her a new name, Daughter of Tang, to show her loyalty to the Tang dynasty precisely now that the Empress wishes to establish a house of her own, which she calls the Zhou dynasty, written with the same character as the long reigning Zhou dynasty that Confucius revered. The historical Empress Wu Zetian did indeed have the ambition to establish a new Zhou dynasty. This passage is a pivotal link between the supernatural and the historical metanarrative.

Driven by filial piety, Little Hill does not immediately give up the search for her father, and the two girls continue their trek through the woods. On leaving the forest they chance upon a view of paradisiacal beauty. On the top of a distant mountain they see caves of jade and golden palaces and altars. Then a red pavilion appears in a golden aura surrounded by bamboos and flowers. The Star of Literature (*Kuixing*) appears in female form and floats away again. When they enter the pavilion, they see a tablet of white jade carrying the names of a hundred talented girls. A list of all these names is incorporated in chapter 48 (chapter 19 of the English translation). Little Hill sees her own name mentioned as no. 11, Spirit of a Hundred Flowers, Daughter of Tang (*Tang Guichen*), with the characterization “dream within a dream” (*meng zhong meng*). Except for the qualifications, the list is similar to the one recorded in chapter 67 (chapter 26 of the English translation) when the same hundred girls have passed the Imperial examinations. The order in which their names are mentioned corresponds to the official appreciation of their examination papers, but when the Daughter of Tang sees the list in the red pavilion, its meaning still is a complete mystery to her as well as to Flowerlike, whose name occurs as no. 12. They cannot know that the list in fact predicts their future intellectual accomplishments. The Daughter of Tang copies the list on banana leaves and rewrites it later on paper. They receive another token that she will not be able to meet her father now, and after many days of wandering about the island the girls return to the junk, which brings them back to China.

Henceforth, the story takes a relatively more down-to-earth turn. Talented girls prepare for the examinations and young men plan the overthrow of Empress Wu. The preparations for the examinations take place within a Confucian context, but there is still ample opportunity for supernatural interference. The twelve girls who have passed the district examina-

tions travel to Chang'an, the capital, to participate in the palace examinations, chaperoned by Old Duo and the nun Ultimate Emptiness (*Mo Kong*). There they meet the other girls and all hundred of them pass the palace examinations as predicted on the jade tablet in the red pavilion. After the examinations, they celebrate the successful outcome with a number of banquets and have a merry time, enjoying intellectual games which enable them to show their knowledge of the classics. This episode – largely omitted in the translated text – recalls the atmosphere of the eighteenth-century novel *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Hong lou meng*). There is a final attempt by two villainous women, Wind and Moon, to disturb the festivities. The Daughter of Tang suspects that they represent the malicious Lady of the Moon. The Star of Literature appears in the form of a beautiful girl and warns the two evil spirits to finally forget the earlier quarrel in heaven, whereupon they disappear.

Flowerlike, the “prince” of the Country of Women, is called upon to accept the throne of that country and together with three other girls departs by a flying contraption with horizontal and vertical wheels to her home country. As if in prefiguration of science fiction, a detailed description of this flying vehicle is given (Li 2006: 458; 1965: 251) – in *La Princesse de Babylone* Voltaire had arranged similar transportation through the air. The Daughter of Tang, having fulfilled her father's wish by passing the palace examinations, asks merchant Lin to bring her back again to Little Penglai where she hopes to be reunited with her immortal father. Purple Silk (*Yan Zixiao*), who as a child was trained in martial arts, accompanies her on this third and last voyage. The two girls disappear on the island, as their family and close friends had expected.

Now the plot focuses on the military campaign under command of the sons of Xu Jingye and Luo Binwang. Some of their warriors marry a flower girl, but the story remains a very chaste one. The campaign does not run smoothly as the enemy defends four important mountain passes by magic: the Tang faction must overcome the temptations of wine, irascibility, sex, and money. For the warriors this is a final lesson in both Confucian and Daoist values. It is only after the arrival of five fairies who had pledged to help the Hundred Flowers Fairy and her ninety-nine flower spirits, that the magic spell of the last pass can be broken. Finally, the army of the Tang faction can enter Chang'an; Young Luo and Young Xu escort Emperor Zhongzong to the Throne Hall.

In the final part of the novel, both martial arts and magic play a considerable role and the story seems to have drifted away from its focus on utopian

themes. Yet, within the Confucian worldview the restoration of the rightful sovereign of the Tang dynasty to the Imperial throne is a eutopian accomplishment. Moreover, the Daughter of Tang represents a perfect blend of Confucian filial piety and Daoist enlightenment, and thus offers a glimpse of a eutopian world. However, the separate utopias that Li Ruzhen sketches, such as the Country of Gentlemen and the Country of Giants, are all tainted by a flaw; excessive inverted bargaining in the first case and a lack of privacy in the second. He also points out that the Country of Pure Scholars is inhabited by misers. And on reflection the feminist paradise in the Country of Women is not ideal either.

We are bound to conclude that Li Ruzhen does not believe that any utopia can fully materialize in this world. He seems to be proud of Chinese culture as he knows it, but cannot consider Confucianism as the vehicle that leads to a perfect state, nor does he view Daoism or Buddhism as the ultimate solution. Both the Confucian and Daoist-Buddhist worldviews are described with some degree of irony. Confucian benevolence makes no sense on the market place, and Daoist fairies and celestials quarrel in heaven. In the final instance, the image predominates of flowers in the mirror – the title of the novel – or moon in water, suggesting that appearances are not real and life is but a dream. But even this idea is framed in the self-irony of the narrator who in chapter 100, on the last page of the novel, explains how he acquired knowledge about the flower fairies. The copy which the Daughter of Tang had made of the list of their names on the jade tablet in the red pavilion, which contained also a characterization of each girl, had been snatched from her hands by an immortal white ape who for many centuries was looking for a writer who would be willing to tell the story we have just read. Several well-known authors refused for all sorts of reasons. Finally he found a writer living at the time of the Qing dynasty, a descendant of the pseudo-historical Lao Zi who supposedly had the family name Li. It is an ironical way of purporting that Li Ruzhen received the sacred record of the Hundred Flower fairies from the gibbon and was entrusted by destiny to write the story of *Flowers in the Mirror*.

Though not a full-fledged specimen of utopian fiction, Li Ruzhen's novel offers various glimpses of utopia. Except for the brief "Story of Peach Blossom Spring" and its rewritings, such as Wang Anshi's "Ballad of Peach Blossom Spring" or Kang Yuzhi's egalitarian Daoist story, it is difficult to find texts in the Chinese tradition up to the nineteenth century that represent utopian societies only. If there is a tradition of utopian narrative in China, its manifestations are sporadic and diffuse. The idea of utopia is usually

embedded in philosophical writings, lyrical poetry, and fiction with a more general purport. Up to modern times the genre of utopian fiction appears to have been less widely practiced in China than in the European tradition of More, Bacon, Campanella, Holberg, Mercier, Cabet, and others. One explanation is that in China the utopian desire is always connected with a strong emphasis on virtue, and virtue can be portrayed only by contrasting it with either its opposite or with realistic conditions. This favors the incorporation of utopian elements in a narrative that comprises also other themes. The emphasis on virtue implied that Chinese utopian thinking rather ignored the social structure of imagined utopias, which further reduced the narrative space of fictional plots to a point where the writing of a utopian novel became almost impossible.

However, perhaps a more pertinent explanation is suggested by the Chinese tendency to think in terms of integration rather than separation, which can be found at all levels of Chinese culture: in philosophy, in politics, in medicine, and of course also in concepts of literature. Li Ruzhen's novel is a prime example of this tendency toward cultural integration, joining Confucianism and Daoism, earthly life and supernatural existence, history and fiction, myth and utopia.

Small-Scale Socialist Experiments, or “The New Jerusalem in Duodecimo”

At the time when Li Ruzhen wrote his *Flowers in the Mirror*, Europe was gradually recovering from the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. The first decades of the nineteenth century were marked by a period of cultural crisis, with the utopian imagination trying to find a solution for the urgent social problems which the French Revolution had brought to the surface but had failed to solve. European intellectuals and politicians were torn between rationalism and romanticism, agnosticism and religion, reactionary forces and imminent revolution. They were challenged to choose between, on the one hand, the rationalist legacy of Condorcet and the technological utopianism of Saint-Simon, and, on the other, the tradition of celebrating nature in the wake of Rousseau and a free play of the emotions in the utopianism of Fourier, a precursor of Freud according to Ricoeur (1986). In the political and intellectual turmoil of the first half of the nineteenth century small-scale experiments were launched, designed to implement various shades of socialism. North America offered a hospitable environment for such experiments with communal ways of life. Ever since the Declaration of Independence of 1776 America had played an increasingly important role in the Enlightenment debate and the subsequent discussion on democracy. Even the old Goethe incorporated the theme of emigration to North America in his partly utopian novel *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* (1829, *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*).

It was a period of boiling activity, both intellectually and in industry. The steam engine inflamed the imagination. Technological progress as evidenced in the railway system and new means of communication raised the expectation that social problems could also be solved. The industrial and political fervor in Europe differs strikingly from the ironic complacency with which Li Ruzhen looked at the Chinese cultural tradition. As we shall see in chapter 12, it was little over a decade later, notably during the Anglo-Chinese War of 1839-1842 – the so-called “Opium War” – that China was confronted with a technologically and militarily superior European power, as a result of which it was forced to give up its splendid cultural isolation that had protected a stale Confucianism and an escapist Daoism.

The socialist experiments, both on paper and in practice, of the first half of the nineteenth century were indeed small-scale endeavors. No one phrased the diagnosis of these movements in sharper terms than Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848). They characterized Fourier's *phalanstères*, Owen's *home-colonies*, and the imitations of Cabet's Icaria as products of "utopian socialism and communism" (Marx and Engels 1966: 83) and criticized these projects, which depended on philanthropic contributions by the bourgeois establishment, as objectionable attempts to blunt the class struggle. Cabet's utopian fantasy was disposed of as a "new Jerusalem in duodecimo" ("Duodezausgabe des neuen Jerusalem's" [85]). In the early 1880s Engels discussed the difference between utopian and so-called scientific socialism more elaborately. I will return to Engels's views on this matter later in this chapter.

Voyage et aventures de Lord William Carisdall en Icarie (1840), published as a translation from English but in reality written by Étienne Cabet, is one of the best-known fictional representations of a "pocket-size" socialist experiment. I consulted the second edition, which appeared as *Voyage en Icarie (Travels in Icaria)* in 1842 and mentions Cabet as the author on the title page.

As the author explains in his preface, *Voyage en Icarie* is a moral and philosophical essay in the form of a novel. Indeed, the adventures of Lord Carisdall yield a rather thin plot. When Carisdall, a rich and well-traveled young man, meets the narrator, the latter lends him a book about the Icarian language, which appears easy to learn and could very well be used all over the world. The attempt to construct a universal language is a recurrent theme in utopian fiction and a dream of philosophers, which was ridiculed by Swift in *Gulliver's Travels*. Carisdall does not show any awareness of the debate about a universal language and simply begins to study the Icarian grammar and vocabulary with great zeal and quick success.

The first-person narrator had received the book about the Icarian language from a traveler who had a very favorable opinion of Icaria and had described it as a sort of New World, smaller than France but with a population equal to that of France and England together, technologically very much advanced, and well organized. It was indeed considered "a second promised land, an Eden, an Elyseum, a new earthly paradise" ("une seconde Terre promise, un Éden, un Élysée, un nouveau Paradis terrestre" [1842: 3]). No doubt the novel presents Icaria as a eutopia, which, as the

word “Élysée” indicates, is partly inspired by Rousseau. It does not take long before Carisdall, who is eager to see a perfect society and a completely happy people, decides to visit this eutopia. He departs in December 1835 from London, to arrive four months later at the port of Camiris from where he embarks on a ship that carries him to Icaria, an isolated country that because of inaccessible mountain ranges in the north and the south cannot easily be approached overland. After about a year in Icaria, Carisdall returns to Europe, a sick man, almost dead. He asks the narrator, who is hardly distinguishable from the writer Cabet, to publish the diary that he kept during his stay and which after some rewriting forms the major part of the novel.

Before embarking on the ship that is to bring Carisdall and other foreign visitors to the port of Tyrama in Icaria, they are briefly informed about the main customs of the country. As in other utopias, there is neither trade nor money in Icaria. It is therefore reasonable that foreign visitors are expected to pay the considerable sum of 200 guineas for a sojourn of several months during which they are allowed to make use of all available services.

The founder of the Icarian Republic, Icar – whose name derives from Icarus, the figure from Greek mythology who in his reckless flight approached the sun too closely – had decided to abolish money and private property. Also in other respects the nation is indebted to “the good Icar,” who in 1772 had taken the initiative to chase away the old tyrant Corug and with infallible foresight had established the democratic institutions of the Icarian Republic. Icar died in 1798 but almost forty years later he is still worshipped as a hero.

The novel was certainly inspired by More’s utopian fiction and that of others too, sharing with these works the negative attitude toward money and property, but it also anticipates later developments in Marxist theory and Soviet practices, as is evident from its concept of work, the role of the arts (which I discuss below), the personality cult of Icar, as well as the use of propaganda slogans and censorship. When Carisdall arrives in Tyrama he reads this slogan mounted on the city gate: “The Icarian people are the brothers of all other peoples” (“Le Peuple icarien est frère de tous les autres Peuples” [10]). In itself an innocent claim, but in the perspective of practices under totalitarian regimes it becomes quite dubious. Or have I become too sensitive to traces of officially imposed thought control? There is no reason to suspect any malicious intentions behind this slogan; or, to mention another example, behind the adage “Only kindness is precious,” written on the gate leading to the Country of Gentlemen in *Flowers in the*

Mirror: And yet such anonymous phrasings are expressions of a monopolistic state ideology.

Lord Carisdall is highly impressed by the city of Tyrama, which has districts that are more beautiful than the Rue de Rivoli in Paris or the area around Regent's Park in London. His guide is a young man, Valmor, whose name appears a variant of Wolmar, one of the characters in Rousseau's *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* and supervisor of the utopian community at Clarens. Valmor explains that "le bon Icar" had introduced the principle of seeking what is useful and pleasant, but had advised them always to begin with what is necessary.

The abolition of private property and money obviously was a necessary measure to start with. All industries and all means of public transportation in Icaria are state owned. Industry is controlled by a Committee of Industry as well as by the National Assembly. Everyone has the duty to work and whatever is produced belongs to the state and is distributed equally. There are no lazy people, due to a well-organized educational system. Crime does not exist, either. The novel touches cautiously on the possibility of improving the human race ("le perfectionnement de l'espèce humaine" [122]). A medical committee will forbid the marriage of young people who carry the risk of having disabled children. In the past, aristocratic and monarchic regimes had neglected this aspect of procreation, although much time and energy was spent on the racial perfection of dogs and horses, tulips and peach trees. The argument is an old one. In the *Republic*, Plato too draws a parallel between breeding dogs and horses and begetting children (459a-b). But in his eugenic program Cabet does not go as far as Plato; he simply observes that in Icaria brown mixes with blond, north with south; in addition, beautiful children are adopted from abroad.

One of Icaria's major assets is modern technology, which allows for order and luxury. The ferry that brings Carisdall to Tyrama is a "floating palace" with a piano on board. Together with Valmor, he continues his journey by horse-drawn coach to Icara, the capital, where public omnibuses dominate the traffic. Energy derives from coal and steam, as well as from *sorub*, a substance more effective and more readily available than coal, but whose qualities are not further explained. The regular town planning of the capital began half a century ago. The houses in a single street are all similar and have similar furniture, but the streets themselves differ from each other. The city owes part of its charm to splendid gardens and canals. Technological progress has also enabled the Icarian people to develop an extensive railway system, as well as airships and submarines for transporting travelers.

The political system is republican, democratic, and egalitarian. The second part of the novel, which largely consists of a historical survey presented to a group of foreign visitors by the knowledgeable Dinaros, explains Icar's basic political principles: "sovereignty of the people, universal suffrage, equality, brotherhood, general happiness" ("souveraineté du Peuple, suffrage universel, égalité, fraternité, bonheur commun" [1842: 337]). Of the three political aims of the French Revolution, "liberté, égalité, fraternité," Icar maintained the last two but did not emphasize freedom. Apparently, freedom does not belong to the major principles of Icaria.

Carisdall, however, does not bother much about these abstract principles. He is curious about everything and elated at what he sees. As a loyal follower of Rousseau, Cabet does not forget to write about his characters' emotional experiences. Valmor is in love with Dinaïse, but as soon as she has seen Carisdall she falls in love with the latter. Carisdall is equally impressed by Dinaïse. After moments of disappointment and sadness – moods which have not been completely extirpated in Icaria – Valmor becomes infatuated with Alaé, which leads to a happy ending for the two happy couples. Somewhat unexpectedly, Carisdall decides to return to Europe, alone and sad, but Dinaïse, who has fallen ill, will follow him. Before we may learn about the emotional shock of their reunion, the narrative ends. Rousseau's influence appears not only from these love stories but also from the form in which they are told, that is, by way of an exchange of letters between Dinaïse and Corilla, Valmor's sister, and between Valmor and Corilla. The tone of these letters closely resembles that of the epistolary confessions in *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse*.

Cabet's story of these sentimental relations is in sharp contrast with the matter-of-fact episodes about the political organization of Icaria. The country is divided into a hundred provinces, each of them consisting of ten municipalities. Each municipality, which comprises eight villages as well as some scattered farms, sends two deputies to the National Assembly. As in More's *Utopia*, the colonization of fertile land that is hardly used is defended as a natural right, although the Icarians are adamantly opposed to violence.

Daily life is regulated in great detail by committees of specialists. All citizens receive the same amount of food, and at every meal they propose a toast to the glory of "the good Icar." Life is simple and no household has any domestics. This sort of equality also extends to industry, where each worker always makes the same product.

Education must prepare the population for mutual respect on the basis

of the equality principle. In order to advance technological development the curriculum focuses on the sciences. There is no need anymore to teach Latin and Greek, since all “useful” works have been translated. Usefulness is a primary criterion for banning licentious fiction, obscene songs, and mediocrity. Following Mercier, Cabet records that books with all sorts of flaws have been rewritten and all ancient works considered either dangerous or useless have been burnt (127). Valmor mitigates this point by saying that the national libraries have stored a few copies of all the ancient books. Still, seventy years after *L’An 2440* was published, Cabet joined Mercier in having no scruples about the propagation of bowdlerizing and censorship. He explains his position in terms that sound familiar to anyone aware of the usual defense of censorship under totalitarian rule:

The fine arts are not indispensable for the happiness of humankind. However, a better social organization would nevertheless produce them likewise and even in a way that is more suitable for gaining approval among the whole population. (Les beaux-arts ne sont pas indispensables au bonheur de l’Humanité, tandis que même, d’un autre côté, une meilleure organisation sociale les produirait également et mieux encore pour l’agrément du Peuple entier. [394])

The view that literature and the arts – the preeminent expressions of human consciousness – play no essential role in the attempt to realize a happy life is of course questionable, the more so since religion in Cabet’s novel offers no avenue to metaphysical reflection either and is reduced to a secular moral philosophy on the basis of the earlier mentioned – both Confucian and Christian, but in fact humanist – maxim: “Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire” (171, 470, and 554). Though, like Saint-Simon, admiring the community of the early Christians, Cabet explicitly rejected the ordinances and exhortations of revealed religion, just as some years later Marx and Engels were to do as well.

The arts as well as religion are of secondary importance in the Icarian value system, which is primarily determined by the duty to work and the fair distribution of goods. Cabet is one of the early authors to write about “socialism,” which is to replace individualism (397). Dinaros asks rhetorically, since all people have equal access to air and the light of the sun, why shouldn’t there be a common property of land? His argument reads like a catechism, with questions and responses, arguments and counterarguments. A fictive objection is that common property (“communauté”)

would be incompatible with freedom (“liberté”). However, in Icaria egoistic freedom that goes against the interests of other citizens is disapproved of. Citizens are “everywhere dependent on society, on its laws, on its morals, on its customs, and on public opinion, which are also laws” (“partout dans la dépendance de la Société, de ses lois, de ses moeurs, de ses usages et de l’opinion publique, qui sont aussi des lois” [404]). There seems to be no way to escape from the norms adopted by society, which means that both creative criticism and innovation are precluded. Dinaros, Cabet’s loyal spokesman, posits that “the blind passion for freedom is a mistake” (“la passion aveugle pour la Liberté est une erreur” [404]) and in Orwellian Newspeak *avant la lettre* he claims that “all friends of freedom must want a communal way of life” (“Tous les amis de la Liberté doivent vouloir la Communauté” [405]).

As if Cabet intuits the weakness of Dinaros’s exposition, the text lists a great number of writers and philosophers, from Plato onward, who were more or less sympathetic to equality and communitarianism. Dinaros argues that Thomas More’s *Utopia* is the first work where the idea of common property was applied to a whole nation. He also cites Campanella’s *City of the Sun*, Bacon’s *New Atlantis*, Harrington’s *Oceana* (1656), Wieland’s *Goldne Spiegel* (1772, *Golden Mirror*), and further Rousseau, Adam Smith, Condorcet, and many others, thus constructing a lineage of utopian writers and philosophers that must back up the perspective of a world progressing towards democracy, advanced technology, equality, and communitarianism.

Dinaros also discusses contemporaries who experimented with small-scale socialist communities, not only on paper but also in real life, as Cabet himself at a later stage would do as well. However, in order to justify the Icarian design, Dinaros must show where others, such as Owen, Saint-Simon, and Fourier had failed. Robert Owen (1771-1858) founded a community of two thousand workers in the large cotton-spinning factory of New Lanark in Scotland, but failed, Dinaros argues, because after having invested a huge amount of his own capital in this spinning mill, he relied too much on other aristocratic benefactors, who were less helpful. (In fact, the spinning mill of New Lanark was a great success, but similar experiments in the United States failed.) The followers of Saint-Simon (1760-1825) made the mistake of considering their leader a second Jesus Christ. They wished to abolish private property as the early Christians supposedly had done, but some of them were so fanatically religious that schisms could not be avoided. Their experiments all ended in failure. Charles Fourier (1772-1837) hoped to establish a commune of 300 or 400 families in one

large building, a so-called *phalanstère*. This would serve as an example to be imitated all over the world. On paper it was a real community, though a defective one, Dinaros believes. Fourier's plans did not materialize during his lifetime because of a lack of financial support.

However, Dinaros argues, after the invention of printing, the steam engine, and the railway, who can deny the perfectibility of humankind? The audience that has been listening to his long address responds enthusiastically, deciding to spread the message of communitarianism all over the world. Their fictional enthusiasm prefigured an unforeseen effect: in historical reality the utopian message of a communal way of life conquered half the world under the banner of Communism, though often in ways different from what Cabet, who abhorred violence, had envisaged.

It is not farfetched to assume a link between Cabet's imagination and Marxist revolution. As *The Communist Manifesto* shows, Marx and Engels were well aware of utopian socialism, including the Icarian utopia. The third, not fictional but expository, part of *Voyage en Icarie*, which once again elaborates on the principles of communitarianism, reveals how much common ground there is between Cabet's social philosophy and the idea of a communist society as propagated by Marx and Engels. Discussing the problem of rights and duties in Icaria, Cabet observes:

Everyone has the duty to work an equal number of hours a day, in accordance with one's ability, and the right to receive an equal part of all products, in accordance with one's needs. (Chacun a le devoir de travailler le même nombre d'heures par jour, suivant ses moyens, et le droit de recevoir une part égale, suivant ses besoins, dans tous les produits. [557])

Distinguishing between the socialist and the communist stage, Marxism-Leninism stipulated that during the socialist stage everyone has the duty to work in accordance with one's ability and will be rewarded according to one's labor; whereas in the communist stage, when there will be an abundance of goods, society will demand work from everyone in accordance with one's ability and provide everyone according to one's needs. The first formulation, describing the socialist stage, was incorporated in the constitution of the Soviet Union of 1936 (Wetter 1958: 124). It is true, Cabet's phrasing shows an internal contradiction, for the *equal* part that everyone will receive may become *unequal* if people have different needs. In the definition of the communist stage, Marxism-Leninism avoided that contradiction and chose the formula: from each according to his abilities, to each ac-

ording to his needs. In this context the reference to the equal distribution of goods is deleted. Nevertheless, the Icarian view of work and remuneration contained all the ingredients of the later Marxist-Leninist definition of the communist stage.

In the third part of the novel, the idea of “common happiness” (“le bonheur commun”) again is emphasized, as communist ideology was to do as well and More had already suggested in his *Utopia*. Because he was inclined to ignore the privacy of individuals, Thomas More was respectfully commemorated by Lenin in 1918, along with Marx and others, on an obelisk in Moscow (More 2003: ix). More, Cabet, Marx, and Lenin all agree that the happiness of the community should prevail over individual feelings of well-being.

Whether reading Cabet or Marx and Engels, two fundamental questions urge themselves upon us. First, how to strike a balance between individual happiness and that of the whole people or, going one step further, of humankind? Second, how to encourage workers to employ the best of their capacities if, as in the communist stage, there is no direct relation between their efforts and the reward they will receive on the basis of the intentionally fair but always disputable distribution of goods? These two problems, which are partly overlapping, recur in all modern utopias, but so far have remained unsolved. It must be doubted that any general solution will ever be found, though in individual cases generosity may exceed greed and the satisfaction of altruism may be more attractive than the egoistic search for happiness.

Like Robert Owen and the followers of Saint-Simon and Fourier, Cabet tried to put his ideals into practice. In 1848 he led a group of sympathizers to the United States, where an Icarian colony was established in Nauvoo, Illinois. However, the settlement experienced internal dissent and so it never lived up to Cabet’s eutopian expectations. He was forced to leave it and he died in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1856.

Souvestre’s dystopian view of progress

Voyage en Icarie was widely read and elicited approval as well as protest. Émile Souvestre (1806-1854), author of more than thirty novels and a writer known for his nostalgic sketches of Brittany and the Bretons, responded to the optimistic view of technological progress as reflected in the writings of Cabet and others with a dystopian novel about the year 3000: *Le*

Monde tel qu'il sera (1846, *The World as It Shall Be*). There are several indications that in expressing his doubts about the blessings of industrialization and modern means of transportation, Souvestre aimed to deride in particular the Icarian utopia, but his criticism is not restricted to Cabet's novel.

Among the seemingly insignificant but unmistakable hints that Souvestre's critique was addressed at *Voyage en Icarie* is the peculiar habit of the narrator in *Le Monde tel qu'il sera* to emphasize audience approval whenever eutopian conditions are praised by a speaker. Here Souvestre copies a stylistic twist from *Voyage en Icarie*. Both novels refer between brackets to applause, lengthy applause, or even "thunderous applause" ("tonnerre d'applaudissements" [Cabet 1842: 387; Souvestre 1846: 20]). Another link between the two novels is the absence of domestic servants. Souvestre ridicules this point by relating that, at a dinner table, bottles of wine bend themselves on their own initiative in order to fill the glasses, soup is served automatically, and dishes are filled with food without any human effort. Again, another common theme is traveling by means of a submarine. The citizens of Icaria are proud of their underwater transportation, but Souvestre shows how perilous this can be. In the utopia of *Le Monde tel qu'il sera* the visitors Maurice and Marthe go aboard a submarine, called *dorade accélérée* ("accelerated sea bream"), but it is swallowed by a whale. Since the submarine is rather indigestible and the smoke from the steam engine makes the whale feel sick, the vehicle is spat out and hits a rock. There are several casualties, but Maurice and Marthe survive.

Apart from these incidental intertextual references, there is one crucial theme that firmly connects the two novels: rationality. Both Cabet and Souvestre base the social and economic structure of their fictional society on reason: in Cabet's novel the result is eutopian, but in Souvestre's dystopian. It appears that argumentation based solely on reason can have opposite results. Souvestre's grim picture of a totally mechanized and globalized world inhabited by narrow-minded egoists contradicts Cabet's conclusion that reason will inevitably lead to the perfection of humankind and a communal way of life. Cabet wrote a novel that argued against revealed religion and showed the hopeful way to socialism; Souvestre's conservative narrator castigated a depraved individualism that can only be cured by the values of a truly Christian belief.

Le Monde tel qu'il sera opens with a romantic cliché. Two lovers, Maurice and Marthe, contemplate the world from the simple attic room in Paris where they live: Maurice looking at the numerous houses beneath him; Marthe watching the sky. Maurice is intrigued by the question of how peo-

ple may become happy, Marthe has similar sublime thoughts. (Here the cliché ends.) Maurice has read Robert Owen, Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Swedenborg, but was disappointed by their work. Marthe wonders where the guardian spirit (“génie protecteur” [7]) of their time is. Almost immediately a strange person seated on a small English locomotive arrives near the open window and presents himself as Mr. John Progrès, member of all associations for the perfection of Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Oceania; address: Rue de Rivoli. He had heard Marthe sigh for a perfect world and offers to transport the couple to the happy life of the year 3000. The only thing they have to do is to fall asleep for more than eleven centuries, and he can make them sleep that long.

Marthe and Maurice wake up in the year 3000 on Tahiti, from where they travel to Borneo, now called “île du Budget” (Budget Island) which is the center of civilization. The various peoples of the whole world have been united in one state, the Republic of United Interests. Its economics is characterized by specialization as well as globalization, and social relations in this utopia are determined by the collective nursing of children and the manipulation of adults into dumb and docile creatures who only think of their own pleasure and well-being.

The Republic of United Interests has attributed one sort of specialized work to each of its peoples. For instance, one people exclusively make pins, another produce wax, a third specialize in the production of moulds for buttons, etc. Budget Island is an exception to the rule of geographic specialization. Here all industries are represented.

Modern technological inventions have enabled the Republic to develop extremely fast means of transportation. It takes no more than two hours to travel from the capital Sans-Pair to Brazil. One may buy tea in Canton, perfume in Baghdad, coffee in Moka, and still be back home the same day. Trade and consumption are completely globalized (even though the term has not yet been coined). The effect of a totally interconnected world is that nationality has become meaningless. No one feels particularly at home anywhere. All products and services are expressed in money. Commerce has become a much favored occupation.

Souvestre is strikingly modern in the description of the nursing and education of children – modern in the sense of anticipating *Brave New World*, Huxley’s dystopian novel of 1932. Maurice, Marthe, and their guides, Mr. and Mrs. Atout, pay a visit to a nursing home for babies (“la maison d’allaitement” [78]). Mrs. Atout, whose maiden name is Ennui, expressed the wish to see her son and this is where she can find him. The nursing home is

an immense building that looks like military barracks or a large hospital. Immediately after their birth babies are brought here to profit from the rational ideas and practices concerning the raising of children. To begin with, mother's milk has been replaced by a beverage consisting of gelatine, gluten, sugar, and water. Any layman can see that this rational alternative is no improvement at all, and indeed it causes many children to die early. A steam engine distributes the concoction in predetermined quantities to every baby. Mrs. Atout finds her son in the Hall Jean-Jacques Rousseau, shelf 4, compartment D, under no. 743, but he is not in good health and suffers from colic. The mother is not much impressed, however, nor is the father who mainly wonders what might be the etymology of the word "colic." The system has freed the parents from worrying about their children and the children have been liberated from their parents' interference. Both parents and children enjoy more freedom now than ever before. The lack of emotional involvement is seen as a big step forward.

There are nine nursing halls corresponding with the nine different social classes. Children of poor people receive a fraction of the beverage that children of millionaires are given to drink. In this way they become acquainted with social inequality from early on. This sort of conditioning by way of food and education is continued until the children are 18 years old. Mr. Atout explains: "The human kind is no more than living matter, to which we give a particular shape and a destination" ("L'espèce humaine n'est plus qu'une matière vivante, à laquelle nous donnons une forme et une destination" [83]). The future occupation of the children is determined on the basis of phrenological data. The narrator does not shrink from absurd exaggeration and notes that some children, exposed to high temperatures, may develop into geniuses within a couple of years. Equally absurd are the requirements for the bachelor's degree at the University of United Interests. The final aim of education is "devotion to oneself" ("dévouement à soi-même" [90]).

The conditioning of human beings is continued in the factory of Isaac Banqman, who is boasting that the government often consults him about the main problems of political economy, since he specializes in the production of moulds for buttons. He is eager to show his visitors a model colony that deserves to be imitated on a larger scale. If applied all over the world, one day a golden age would be realized. Clearly, Souvestre wishes to place his – anti-utopian – novel in the utopian tradition. The idea that the model colony should be imitated and spread throughout the world echoes similar pretensions phrased by Cabet, Fourier, and other experimenting socialists.

On their way to the model colony, the visitors see splendid machines and a group of numbed workers, worn out by long hours of heavy labor. The image of exhausted men who appear to be the slaves of perfect machines also occurs, as we shall see, in the work of Marx and Engels. Finally the visitors arrive at the department of perfect human beings, consisting of a series of compartments, each occupied by a man and a woman without children. They are well housed, well fed, well dressed, apparently wise and happy, and need not worry about anything. But Maurice observes that there is no care or affection in their way of life. The rare man or woman who, dreaming of love, resists these ideal conditions is considered incurably mad and deported to the island of outcasts (“l’île des Réprouvés” [182]) – a solution that Huxley copied in *Brave New World*.

In *Le Monde tel qu’il sera* Souvestre pours scorn on the so-called National Church for having adopted a liturgy in the vernacular instead of Latin, and on a feminist group’s revolt which recalls the *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes and proclaims that “God will henceforth be of the female sex” (“Dieu sera désormais du genre féminin” [288]). Needless to say, Souvestre detests these developments. He also abhors the mixing of races as much as the merging of French, English, and German into one national language, and signals the impossibility of changing anything because of the power balance between the two incapable chambers of the National Assembly and the President of the Republic, who is a governmental fiction in the form of an empty armchair. Real power is in the hands of the bankers.

Maurice and Marthe are utterly disappointed by this world, which has made human beings into the slaves of machines and exchanged love for economic interest. They fall asleep, and then in their dream God, as a literal *deus ex machina*, proclaims: Peace to all men and women of good will. Humankind will be reborn and the world will recover from its ruins. With these words the novel ends.

Engels’s criticism of utopian socialism and the perspective of a Marxist utopia

In “The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science” (“Die Entwicklung des Sozialismus von der Utopie zur Wissenschaft,” 1882) Friedrich Engels resumed dealing with the problem of utopian socialism that had been dealt with briefly in *The Communist Manifesto*. As in 1848, Engels’s criticism is based on the assumption that class struggle is the primary agent of human history. That assumption depends on the interpretation of

historical facts, but in Marxist theory it gradually develops into an unshakable thesis, a belief rather than a falsifiable proposition. The concept of class struggle contradicts Cabet's conviction that "the rich are human beings as well as the poor, and our brothers just like these" ("Les riches sont hommes comme les pauvres, et nos frères comme ceux-ci" [1842: 562]). Admittedly, Engels does not mention the name of Cabet in his essay on utopian and scientific socialism, but Cabet's utopian communitarianism must still have been very much on his mind, as appears from a reference to Icarian communism in the preface that Engels wrote to a new edition of *The Communist Manifesto* in 1890. Whether class struggle or the notion of a common human nature should prevail in understanding the history of humankind has remained a hot issue in Marxist thought until the present day, in Europe as well as China.

Whether assumption, thesis, or undoubted truth, the class struggle was Engels's yardstick in judging the value of utopian socialism. That Saint-Simon had analyzed the history of the French Revolution in terms of class struggle was proof of his genius, Engels argued, although the French socialist's division of opposing classes was different from the Marxist one, as he constructed an opposition between working people consisting of manual workers, industrialists, businessmen, and bankers on the one hand, versus idle people who without participating in production or commerce were living on the interest of their capital on the other.

According to Engels, the main mistake of Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Owen was that they had no clear idea of the materialist economic basis of the class struggle. They acted prematurely at a moment when the opposition between workers and capitalists had not yet developed to a point where revolution had become inevitable. Engels voices his admiration for Robert Owen, who initially was very successful as a social reformer but in a later stage lost his political influence. On balance, the scattered socialist and communist experiments yielded an "eclectic average socialism" ("eklektischer Durchschnitts-Sozialismus" [Engels 1966: 156]), which badly needed a scientific basis in order to overcome its utopian origins.

Engels posits that the historical materialist theory of the class struggle is the basis of scientific socialism. Socialism is not the accidental discovery of some brilliant personalities but the "inevitable result" ("notwendige Erzeugnis" [163]) of the struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie. The use of advanced machinery and the reduction of the labor force intensified the class conflict. Machines became the most powerful weapon of capitalism against the workers. Engels quotes Marx, who in *Das Kapital* had ar-

gued that the accumulation of capital causes an accumulation of misery, slavery, ignorance, and moral degradation on the side of the workers. The result is, as Souvestre and other writers have shown, a sharp contrast between splendid machines and numbed workers worn out by long working days. The conflict between capitalism and labor, between the efficient machines and the exploited workers, will *inevitably* lead to a clash. The recognition of this inevitability is part and parcel of scientific socialism which, writes Engels, therefore is superior to the earlier utopian experiments.

The pretence at objectivity of the Marxist worldview incited the fantasy of numerous followers. Engels, himself a believer in the necessity of the developments he predicted, announces that the proletariat will nationalize the means of production. As a consequence – and here Engels introduces his own utopia – the proletariat abolishes itself as a class and thereby eliminates all class distinctions and class conflict. Eventually, the state as an institution used for ruling and repressing the people will wither away (176-177). In this new situation everyone can achieve a decent life, perfectly satisfactory from a material point of view but also opening ways to free education and the development of everyone's physical and intellectual talents. Engels further specifies his utopian vision by saying that only then people will be able to lead a truly human life. Humankind will leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom (179). Since this attractive perspective has not yet been realized and it is doubtful that it ever will be, the withering away of the state and the complete physical and intellectual development of the people, such as it was predicted by Engels and other Marxist theorists, must indeed be considered utopian.

Chernyshevsky's *What Is to Be Done?* and Dostoevsky's Dystopian Foresight

Dostoevsky had a clear idea of the philosophical background of utopian socialism and predicted its political consequences in *Devils* (*Besy*, 1871-72), also translated as *The Possessed*. The novel is based on his knowledge of Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Cabet, as well as Russian materialist philosophers such as Chernyshevsky and Pisarev; and, in particular, on documentation about the radical activities of Sergei Nechayev. In Dostoevsky's fictional reconstruction of the political debate of the 1860s, one of the main characters, the conservative Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky, tries to understand his radical son Peter by reading Chernyshevsky's *What Is to Be Done?* (*Chto delat'?*, 1863). Verkhovensky considers this novel a catechism of the radical movement and wants to know it in order to be able to counter its pernicious influence. We, too, if we wish to understand the background of Dostoevsky's repudiation of nihilist politics, cannot circumvent *What Is to Be Done?* It is an early expression of philosophical materialism and explores its ideological consequences, which were totally rejected by Dostoevsky.

Utopian rationality in What Is to Be Done?

Chernyshevsky is a pivotal but much neglected figure in the history of pre-revolutionary Russia. Neither a great thinker nor a gifted writer, his crucial role has been easily overlooked. Yet, Joseph Frank was probably correct in observing that no work in modern literature, with the possible exception of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, can compete with *What Is to Be Done?* in its historical effect. As Frank writes, "far more than Marx's *Capital*," Chernyshevsky's novel, with the telling subtitle "From stories about the new people" ("Iz rasskazov o novykh lyudyakh"), "supplied the emotional dynamic that eventually went to make the Russian Revolution" (quoted by Katz and Wagner 1989: 1). Among all leftist criticism of Russian politics and culture it is primarily Chernyshevsky's utopian novel that added the particular momentum to the Russian revolutionary movement.

That Dostoevsky in his fiction has numerous references to Chernyshevsky, and none to Marx, confirms Frank's judgment.

Nikolai Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky (1828-1889) grew up in Saratov, a provincial town on the middle Volga, where his father was a priest in the Orthodox Church and where he attended the theological seminary in Saratov between 1842 and 1846. When he was eighteen years old he moved to the University of St. Petersburg, where he stayed for five years during which he discovered French utopian socialism, notably the work of Charles Fourier and his follower, Victor Considérant, as well as Feuerbach's materialist critique of religion. The combination of utopian socialism and atheistic materialism in Chernyshevsky's work convinced Dostoevsky that socialism was inherently atheistic. Since his dissertation on the materialist interpretation of art was not well received, Chernyshevsky could not pursue a scholarly career and turned to journalism instead, publishing mainly in *Sovremennik* (*The Contemporary*), to which Turgenev also contributed. The latter despised Chernyshevsky's rigorous materialism, arguing that he arrogantly strove to wipe poetry off the face of the earth and wished to replace it by his "coarse seminarian principles" (Katz and Wagner 1989: 13).

It is not unexpected to see a link between the Orthodox education of Chernyshevsky and his fanatic defense of ascetic materialism. Many radicals who came to embrace atheism had a similar background, the literary critic N. A. Dobrolyubov being among them – not to mention a certain Joseph Stalin. Berdyayev has suggested that an almost logical connection exists between nihilism and the Orthodox belief. Nihilism is supposed to have grown on the spiritual soil of Orthodoxy and "could appear only in a soul which was cast in an Orthodox mould." He argued that "at the base of Russian Nihilism ... lies the Orthodox rejection of the world ..., the acknowledgement of the sinfulness of all riches and luxury, of all creative profusion in art and thought" (quoted in Frank 1976-2002: vol. 2, 245n). Berdyayev's view of nihilism applies also to the related but less radical ideology of materialist determinism propounded by Chernyshevsky. The many examples of religious phraseology used to characterize the protagonists in *What Is to Be Done?* support Berdyayev's analysis.

In the early 1860s Chernyshevsky was writing more and more on political affairs and social theory. Since the abolition of serfdom in 1861 did not reduce the rift between moderate and radical intelligentsia, the debate became increasingly fervid. Though Chernyshevsky tried to remain within the boundaries of tsarist censorship, he was accused of being connected with student protests in 1862 and was arrested in July of that year. While

imprisoned in the Peter and Paul Fortress in St. Petersburg, he wrote his last major work, the utopian novel *What Is to Be Done*. As Katz and Wagner record, in 1864 Chernyshevsky was convicted of subversion, largely on the basis of false evidence, and sentenced to fourteen years of hard labor in Siberia (Katz and Wagner 1989: 14-15). The many years in prison and exile broke his health and mental resilience. Only during the last years of his life was he allowed to settle in Astrakhan, together with his wife. In the meantime he had grown into a martyr of the radical movement, and this undoubtedly enhanced the popularity of his novel.

Except for the last pages of *What Is to Be Done?*, where a woman in black appears who is reminiscent of a sad and sorrowful Olga Sokratova, Chernyshevsky's wife, the tone of the novel is far from tragic. On the contrary, it is leavened with optimism and hope. Not only the dreams of the female protagonist Vera Pavlovna but the whole novel must be considered utopian in the sense of offering the prospect of a bright future, be it difficult to realize. The end of the story implies that the revolution will occur within a couple of years.

The novel focuses on two themes: the emancipation of women and the abolition of poverty. Tsarist censorship allowed the author to deal rather explicitly with women's liberation but it made him extremely cautious in writing about the social problem of poverty and the dependence of the lower classes, which is touched upon only in passing or suggested in vague terms. However, perspicacious readers trained in interpreting Aesopian language had no difficulty in recognizing Chernyshevsky's call for political action. Therefore, it remains amazing that neither the prison censor nor the censor of the journal *Sovremennik*, which published the novel in installments in 1863, spotted the subversive nature of the story that more than any other text prepared the Russian people for revolution. The novel appeared as a book two years later.

The romantic plot suited the taste of the Petersburg elite spoiled by Verdi's operas and French novels. Against the wish of her parents, Vera Pavlovna refuses to marry a rich man and begins to like Lopukhov, a medical student and tutor of her younger brother. He maintains high ideals and fully respects the independence of women in matters of marriage. In all respects Lopukhov is a modern man, intrigued by scientific research. He relates that he has a fiancée, who turns out to be an allegorical representation of the revolutionary transformation of society and is called "Love of Humanity" (Chernyshevsky 1989: 131), and he recommends to Vera that she read Considérant's *Destinée sociale* and Feuerbach's critique of religion. He ex-

plains his materialist conception of the human will and believes “that man acts out of necessity and that his actions are determined by the influences under which these actions occur” (117). However, none of the characters in the novel appear to behave as a product of materialist determinism.

Lopukhov and Vera become close friends and fall in love without any show of passion. He abducts her (with her full consent and cooperation, of course) and asks a priest he knows to marry them. Preparing his bride for the celebration, he asks her: “You do know that during the ceremony the couple is supposed to kiss?” Whereupon she says: “Yes, my dear. How embarrassing!” (157). It appears from the context that Vera is not joking, but the narrator is being unmistakably ironic. The passage anticipates the chastity of their married life and its final breakup. However, before this happens, Vera starts a cooperative dressmaking shop inspired by French utopian socialism. Kirsanov, a former friend of Lopukhov and now a medical doctor with a strong interest in the modern experimental physiology of Claude Bernard, turns up and falls in love with Vera. In a modern, rational way Lopukhov draws his conclusions and “quits the scene” by committing suicide on a bridge over the Neva. His cap is found with a bullet hole in it, but his body is never retrieved. Immediately after Lopukhov’s death, Rakhmetov pays a visit to Vera and explains that she should not regret her husband’s suicide and should feel free to marry Kirsanov.

Rakhmetov belongs to a network of young revolutionaries and displays all the qualities of an “extraordinary man” (271; “osobennyj chelovek” [Chernyshevsky 1966: 289]). He stands at the origin of a long pedigree of “positive heroes” (Mathewson 1975), not only in Russian fiction but also in Chinese literature. Chernyshevsky needs about twenty pages to sketch the uncommon qualities of Rakhmetov, a descendent of a distinguished but now impoverished family, a strong man in the tradition of the *bogatyr* (an heroic warrior), with an enormous strength of will, who once worked as a barge hauler along the Volga. When Kirsanov persuades him to read books, his physical strength is matched by an equally strong intellectual interest. His switch to reading progressive works is considered a conversion or rebirth (Chernyshevsky 1989: 282; “pererozhdenie” [1966: 301]), and this is not the only reference to a quasi-religious commitment. He abstains from wine and promises never to touch a woman in order not to be distracted from his goal. He has principles but no passions, convictions but no personal desires. Except for eating huge quantities of beef to maintain his physical condition, he leads an austere life, having only one weakness and that is a particular liking for cigars, on which he spends a considerable part of his income.

When selecting his books he reads only “what was absolutely necessary” (1989: 282). He maintains:

There are only a few fundamental works on every subject. All the rest merely repeat, dilute, and distort what’s more fully and clearly stated in these few fundamental works. One need read only those; anything else is a terrible waste of time.” (282)

Rakhmetov has restricted his reading of Russian literature to Gogol and has further studied the economists Adam Smith, T.R. Malthus, David Ricardo, and John Stuart Mill. Of English literature he has read only Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair*, the novel that exposes the superficiality and snobbery of the British upper middle class. Gymnastics, physical labor, and reading occupy about a quarter of his time. The remainder is devoted “to matters of concern to others or to no one in particular” (284), a phrasing which has been interpreted as an allusion to revolutionary activities. In order to test his own willpower Rakhmetov once slept on a blanket with hundreds of nails, hurting his body and getting covered in blood, just as saints supposedly did in order to avert temptation.

In his talk with Vera after Lopukhov’s suicide, Rakhmetov reproaches her for considering giving up the dressmaking cooperative. That would harm the cause of all humankind and betray the idea of progress. “In ecclesiastical language,” says Rakhmetov, it would be called “a sin against the Holy Spirit” (302). This severe judgment and, more in general, his interference in Vera’s life at this particular moment, immediately after her husband’s suicide, appears rather distasteful, and quite logically Vera protests. Then Rakhmetov produces a letter written by Lopukhov shortly before his death, asking Vera to listen to everything Rakhmetov has to say, though he does not know what he will tell her: “But I know that he never says anything unnecessary” (304). Here Lopukhov is asking for blind obedience, a secularized trust in the superhuman qualities of the “positive hero.” Of course, the hero also accomplishes heroic deeds. One day, not far from St. Petersburg, Rakhmetov saw that a horse pulling a lady’s carriage had bolted. The lady who was driving had completely lost control of the horse. Rakhmetov grabbed the rear axle and with great effort brought the carriage to a halt. He was seriously wounded on one leg and asked for Kirsanov to treat him. The lady cared for the wounded man and began to like him, but Rakhmetov resisted the temptation. In her dreams she sees Rakhmetov with the halo of a saint (289).

No wonder Vera heeds the advice of this extraordinary man and marries Kirsanov a week after Lopukhov's disappearance. Her decision is in accordance with the materialist theory of rational egoism, of which both Vera and Kirsanov apparently approve (323-327) and which Chernyshevsky had defended earlier in an essay on the anthropological principle in philosophy (180n).

This whole episode from Rakhmetov's meddling in Vera's personal affairs to the hasty marriage with Kirsanov is rather unpalatable from a psychological point of view, and Chernyshevsky seems to have known it since he supplements the abstract, all too schematic plot construction with commentary by the narrator. At one point the narrator also participates in his own story as a character, called Mr. N., with whom Rakhmetov wishes to make acquaintance (285). The metanarrative commentary predicting further plot developments must evidently make up for the lack of psychological motivation among the various characters, who remain puppets voicing abstract ideas about women's liberation and social revolution.

Apart from the lack of psychological realism, there is the dubious paradox of combining voluntarist heroism (embodied by Rakhmetov) with the tenet of materialist determinism. This touches upon a general problem and a brief comment may be appropriate here. Chernyshevsky nowhere explains how the course of history that is determined by material conditions could be altered by a single strong-willed individual. If the individual is the product of physiological matter and social environment, what difference can he make? Marx and Engels addressed the question of the revolutionary commitment of individual people in a world determined by the laws of historical materialism. They tried to solve the paradox by proposing that an individual who is aware of those laws should try to act in accordance with them: to help historical development, so to speak, by not obstructing it. In *Anti-Dühring* (1878) Engels advanced the tortuous reasoning that "freedom consists in the control over ourselves and over external nature, which is founded on knowledge of natural necessity" ("Freiheit besteht also in der, auf Erkenntnis der Naturnothwendigkeiten gegründeten Herrschaft über uns selbst und über die äussere Natur" [1988: 312]). A similar way out is suggested in *What Is to Be Done?*, but this solution, too, is not very satisfactory, as it posits an individual free will independent from determining material conditions, which is logically impossible. Therefore, a choice must be made: *either* people are completely determined by genetic conditions and their social and material environment, *or* they have at least to some extent a free will. The question has haunted numerous writers of eutopian as well as

dystopian fiction, Dostoevsky being the most prominent among those dealing with the problem. The discussion pertains to Mao Zedong's voluntarist pronouncements (see chapter 15) and it is still continuing both within and outside of the Marxist context. At one point some advance was made, however, since the idea that there are laws of historical development that blindly steer our social life, as propounded by Marx and Engels, is generally no longer accepted.

Vera Pavlovna exemplifies the role of a strong-willed personality just as well as Rakhmetov and Kirsanov. She wants to be equal to her husband and become a medical doctor. She has fantasies about a better world and in particular her fourth and last dream conveys a utopia that has stimulated the imagination of many readers. In this dream she sees various historical stages of increasingly perfect societies. Goethe is quoted to evoke an idyllic scene: "How splendid the brightness / Of nature around me" ("Wie herrlich leuchtet / Mir die Natur" [359]). Rousseau's *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* is cited as a step forward in the emancipation of women (365). Chernyshevsky also follows Rousseau in his decision to select a rural setting for Vera's utopian dream. Actually, Rousseau's novel served in various respects as a source of inspiration. There are parallels between the plot of *Julie* and that of *What Is to Be Done?*, for instance, where both Saint-Preux and Lopukhov abruptly disappear because of a frustrated love relation. The two novels also share an ascetic interest in the ecclesiastical culture of the Middle Ages.

When her dream switches to modern times, Vera sees a large building of cast iron and crystal, resembling, as she says, the Crystal Palace at Sydenham in south London (370), which was originally erected in Hyde Park for the Great Exhibition of 1851 and was destroyed by fire in 1936. But it also recalls Fourier's *phalanstères*, as it houses hundreds of people under utopian conditions. It is a miracle of science and technology, in particular because of its use of aluminum – produced industrially only since the middle of the nineteenth century. The narrator is enraptured by the view of cast iron, glass, and aluminum: "The entire house is a huge winter garden" (370). Several years earlier Victor Considérant had mentioned in a book on architectonics that in the central square of a phalanstery an enormous "jardin d'hiver" was to be erected (1848: 62).

She dreams that people return from the fields where machines have been doing almost all the work. They dine together in one of the huge halls, at least a thousand of them, but not everyone has come. Those who prefer to eat in their own rooms can do so. Elderly people and children who did not

work in the fields have prepared the food. The meal is free of charge, except if one wishes to have extra dishes. Vera is assured that everyone likes the arrangement and is completely happy. There are numerous opportunities for relaxation, including making love, but how this is arranged remains rather mysterious. The allegorical goddess who proudly declares that she reigns here and everything is done for her sake is equally a mystery: paradoxically she claims to constitute “the purpose of life,” yet everyone can live life as they wish: “Each and every person has a complete will, yes, free will” (1989: 378; “vsem i kazhdomu – polnaya volya, vol’naya volya” [1966: 411]). A sister of the goddess appeals to Vera to communicate what she has seen to other people. The future will be radiant and beautiful. “Strive toward it, work for it, bring it nearer, transfer into the present as much as you can from it” (379). With these words the dream ends.

It is not only this dream that makes *What Is to Be Done?* into a utopian novel. The behavior of the various exemplary characters – the emancipated Vera, the progressive Kirsanov and Lopukhov, and the positive hero Rakhmetov – and their mutual relations suggest a utopian ideal as well. The story continues and introduces a man born in Russia who has spent many years in the United States and is rabidly on the side of the abolitionists. In addition, this Charles Beaumont, as he is called, defends the rights of women; and Katya, his prospective fiancée, calls him teasingly “the Harriet Beecher Stowe of the woman’s question” (425). Katya has been treated by doctor Kirsanov and talks about him and his wife. Beaumont is particularly curious about Vera. In short, as the kitschy plot develops, Beaumont turns out to be Lopukhov who had “quitted the scene” and now reappears alive. He had not committed suicide but had emigrated to the United States. Back in Petersburg again he marries Katya. Kirsanov and Vera are filled with joy when they hear that Lopukhov has returned to life. Vera exclaims in terms from the Orthodox Easter liturgy: “Verily He is risen” (1989: 427; “voistinu voskres” [1966: 467]). From then on the four friends live in the greatest harmony. Like Saint-Preux, Lopukhov considers his former love a good friend. Katya assists Vera, busy with her medical examinations, in her cooperative dressmaking shop and also establishes one of her own. They all look forward to the revolution, which they expect to happen at any time.

Dostoevsky's Notes from Underground

Immediately after *What Is to Be Done?* had appeared, Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881) wrote a polemical reaction which under the title *Notes from Underground* (*Zapiski iz podpol'ya*) was published in the journal *Epokha* in the first half of 1864. However, it would be a simplification to see *Notes* as directed only at Chernyshevsky's novel. In fact, it also contained a critique of French utopian socialism, which was much debated among the Petersburg intelligentsia in the 1840s and found many admirers, notably in the Petrashevsky Circle, which Dostoevsky had participated in, although he did not share the unconditional admiration for French utopianism displayed by the other members of the group. He doubted that communist egalitarianism was the only true form of Christian belief, as Cabet had argued, and considered it unlikely that socialist theory could work in practice (Frank 1976-2002: vol. 1, 252).

Although Dostoevsky played no central role in the Petrashevsky Circle, his participation in the discussions of that group was the major reason for his arrest in 1849. Sentenced to hard labor in Siberia, later changed into compulsory military service, he was only allowed to return to St. Petersburg in 1859. *Notes* as well as his other work bear the traces of this ten-year period of imprisonment and exile. In a letter of 1854 Dostoevsky writes:

It is now almost five years that I have been under guard among a crowd of people, and I never had a single hour alone. To be alone is a normal need, like eating and drinking; otherwise, in this enforced communism one turns into a hater of mankind ["v nasil'stvennom ètom kommunizme sdelayesh'-sya chelovekonenavistnikom"]. The society of other people becomes an unbearable torture, and it was from this that I suffered most. (Quoted in Frank 1976-2002: vol. 2, 151-152 [Russian text: Dostoevsky 1968: 143])

The wish to be sometimes alone in a "communist" environment in order to be able to think for oneself and to feel independent from others is clearly echoed in *Notes*.

While still in Siberia, Dostoevsky married Marya Isayeva. Six years later, in 1863, he began a tortuous liaison with Apollinaria Suslova, who accompanied him on some of his journeys to western Europe. Marya was fatally ill and died of consumption the next year. The complexity of the author's personal situation is reflected in *Notes*, which describes a wide range of fluctuating moods, making the short novel into a sourcebook for students of psy-

chology. However, the text mainly focuses on the crucial question of materialist determinism and its impossible consequences and is, as I see it, primarily a *philosophical* novel. In *Devils* Dostoevsky continued this subject matter with an additional discussion of the *political* effects of a totalitarian worldview.

The first-person narrator in *Notes from Underground* presents a sustained argument against any attempt to realize a eutopian society. Chernyshevsky's *What Is to Be Done?* provided Dostoevsky with a welcome occasion to vent his fundamental objections to the arrogance and shortsightedness of those who believed that communal bliss would be capable of satisfying individual want and desire, if people would only see their true interests. The story is a running indictment against overestimating the value of science, mathematics, and rationality. It challenges the arithmetic of two times two is four by suggesting that the proposition that two times two is five is also something worth contemplating. The underground man considers his capacity for reasoning to be only a small part of his entire capacity for living:

What does reason know? Reason only knows what it has managed to discover (the rest, perhaps, it will never discover; that's little comfort, but why not say it outright?), whereas human nature acts as a whole, with everything it comprises, conscious or unconscious; it may talk nonsense, yet it lives. (Dostoevsky 2009: 26)

The underground man claims the right to desire what in the eyes of others may appear stupid and rejects the obligation to desire only intelligent things. Rather persuasively, he values freedom of decision more than enforced happiness, being afraid that the predictable outcome of applied reason will crush his personality. He prefers being independent and unhappy over a collective happiness that other people tell him to join. With an obvious gibe at Fourier's (1841) extravagant systematization of linking character traits, educational methods, and prospective professions, as well as his idea of the general keyboard ("clavier générale") of a phalanx, the underground man argues that people are not piano keys played by the laws of nature "until nothing can be desired that is not tabulated in the directory" (Dostoevsky 2009: 28; cf. Frank 1976-2002: vol. 3, 325).

As a fictional character, the self-conscious underground man must be unhappy in order to substantiate the argument against rationally invented communal bliss. But "unhappy" is too weak a term: he is a sick man, unattractive, lazy, moody, suspicious as well as superstitious, a coward, a spiteful

civil servant, rude and enjoying being rude, vain but at the same time timid and without self-respect, in short, socially and mentally the prototype of the underdog or, to use Dostoevsky's term, an "antihero" (117; "antigeroj" [2006: 698]). The underground man is constructed in opposition to the heroic characters of *What Is to Be Done*. He is ill but avoids consulting a physician, whereas three protagonists in Chernyshevsky's novel study medicine or work as doctors. He is indecisive; they are men of action. He distrusts science or sees only a very limited role for it; they build their world view on materialist physiology and rational egoism. He acts completely irrationally in an erotic encounter and appears incapable of love; they love rationally, with subdued passion, extending that love to all humanity. He abhors the Crystal Palace, which Vera Pavlovna in her dream considers the pinnacle of scientific ingenuity and technological potential.

Dostoevsky had visited London in 1862 and was struck by the sordidness and mass misery of the city. He also saw the Crystal Palace, which he writes about in his travel diary. It seems so "majestic, victorious, and proud that it takes your breath away." One feels "that something has been finally completed and terminated," fulfilling a "prophecy of the Apocalypse" (quoted in Frank 1976-2002: vol. 3, 239). The contradiction between this triumph of modernity and the low life of the people in the streets, looking for material gain and sensual pleasure, confirmed Dostoevsky's idea of the depravity of western European culture and made him turn to traditional ideas of the Russian peasants' community, the *obshchina* – the Russian variant of the Chinese well-field system.

In *Notes from Underground*, Dostoevsky attacks Chernyshevsky's favorable description of the Crystal Palace in Vera's fourth dream, but he does not discuss the paradoxical claim of the goddess that she embodies the purpose of life while at the same time everyone has a will that is completely free. The erection of the Crystal Palace, the underground man suggests, signals the beginning of a Golden Age, in which all desires will be fulfilled and which, therefore, might be incredibly boring. One could even suspect that one day a reactionary and mocking man would arise "amidst this universal good sense" and call on people to get rid of good sense and begin "to live according to our own foolish will" (2009: 23). The underground man predicts that the call to follow one's own volition would have an enormous response. Here Dostoevsky has phrased a psychologically convincing, fundamental objection to any attempt at realizing a eutopia on earth. Julian Barnes (1989), assuming that heaven will be boring, argued along more or less similar lines.

The underground man concedes that man, as a creative animal, will always strive towards a goal and will construct a road for himself “wherever it may lead” (30). However, achieving the goal, without seeing a new one, is frightening. The terrifying thing of the Crystal Palace is that it is at the very end of the road; that it is “completed and terminated,” as Dostoevsky noted in his travel diary. Joseph Frank and other commentators have assumed with good reason that in chapter 10 of the first part of *Notes from Underground* Dostoevsky had intended to show that the Christian faith can offer a way out of the materialist worldview, a life beyond the satisfaction of material needs, but that censorship suppressed those passages for unclear reasons. Perhaps Dostoevsky wished indeed to bring in religious salvation as a way to rescue humans from the idea of being capable of achieving eutopia and from the concomitant boredom. Some passages in chapter 10 point in that direction, for instance, where the underground man considers an alternative to the Crystal Palace, namely a hen house or a mansion: “Give me another ideal,” he says (33). Whether Dostoevsky had wanted to refer to the House of the Lord cannot be decided, but it is not improbable. Whatever the case, he was probably motivated by his Orthodox belief in rejecting attempts to realize a utopian society on earth. Again it emerges that a proponent of revealed religion has less affinity with utopian projects than secular thinkers. It is of course easier to be critical of utopianism if you believe that the promise of perfection will be redeemed in the hereafter.

While the first part of *Notes from Underground* offers an abstract philosophical monologue uttered by the underground man who addresses some imagined gentlemen and their ideas of materialist determinism, the second part contains a dialogical representation of haunting memories of personal experiences, such as a humiliating meeting of the underground man with former friends and an encounter with a prostitute whom he ostensibly wants to save from her dreadful existence and then insults and betrays. This second part is also a denial of heroic action and shows, at the other extreme, the miserable underground man combining the roles of an utterly despicable character and unreliable narrator. His confessions are a game, a game that fascinates him, but also more than a game (93). They are lies, just as Rousseau in his *Confessions* undoubtedly lied about himself (36).

The prostitute is called Liza, which is also the name of the female protagonist in Turgenev’s novel *Home of the Gentry* (*Dvoryanskoe gnezdo*, 1859). But where the love affair between Liza and Lavretsky has a respectable ending in her taking the veil, the false and frustrating relation between the underground man and Liza in *Notes from Underground* ends in painful misery

and lies. Perhaps Dostoevsky, never a wholehearted supporter of Turgenev, wanted in this way to express his doubts about the conventional self-sacrifice of the other Liza. The narrator also refers to N. A. Nekrasov and quotes a fragment from a poem about the salvation of a prostitute as an epigraph to the second part of *Notes*, repeating several lines in the text to ironical effect. However, in contradistinction to Nekrasov's dealing with this topic, the underground man is totally incapable of liberating a girl of easy virtue from her sordid profession, incapable of acting according to the cliché of the redeemed prostitute elaborated by George Sand and other French romantics (101). It is as if the cynical narrator wants to say that not only the underground man but also humans in general are not capable of any noble action. No one can live up to the ideal of perfection, which Chernyshevsky's heroes intend to realize in their eutopia but which Dostoevsky considers beyond the reach of human beings, except in a total surrender to the Orthodox faith. If this interpretation is correct, it confirms again my assumption of the incompatibility of revealed religion with any form of earthly utopianism.

Nihilism in Fathers and Sons: Pisarev's and Chernyshevsky's interpretations

The untimely deceased but influential literary critic Dmitry Pisarev (1840-1868) played a crucial part in bringing about a schism between moderate and immoderate revolutionaries in Russia. With obvious sympathy for the latter faction he summoned the radicals in an 1861 article to "strike right and left, no harm can come of it and no harm will come," because "what resists the blow is worth keeping; what flies to pieces is rubbish" (quoted in Frank 1976-2002: vol. 4, 70). He provided the ideological justification for total negation and at the same time made the revolution a kind of personal fulfillment, an emancipation of the individual. It is the combination of arrogance and extremism that characterizes the nihilists, as well as, I would add, later Communist leaders who succumbed to totalitarian proclivities. When referring to the theory of rational egoism, Chernyshevsky had never advocated individual caprice. It is a new element, which introduced a division between quasi-infallible leaders and the inert masses, a division which left its mark on the development of Marxism-Leninism but which democratically oriented leftists, such as the Dutch communist Herman Gorter, could not accept.

Pisarev's distinction between moderate and immoderate radicals be-

came widely known through his lengthy review of Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* (*Ottsy i deti*, literally: "Fathers and Children," 1861), in which Turgenev had portrayed the radical student Bazarov rather unfavorably. That, at least, is what Chernyshevsky to his chagrin and Dostoevsky to his relief read in the novel, and they were not the only ones, for a leftist critic publishing in *Sovremennik* castigated Turgenev for having slandered the radical movement (Frank 1976-2002: vol. 4, 70-71).

In order to understand Pisarev's essay "Bazarov" (1862), it is necessary to say a few words about *Fathers and Sons*. In Turgenev's novel we get to know Bazarov as a young man in his early twenties who together with his friend Arkady Kirsanov visits the latter's father as well as his own parents after several years of study at the University of St. Petersburg. He is interested in the natural sciences and aims to take a degree in medicine, but has no affinity with art or letters. Arkady explains that Bazarov is a nihilist, and "a nihilist is a person who does not take any principle for granted, however much that principle may be revered" (Turgenev 1975: 94). He is a virile "angry young man" with long hair and a broad forehead, self-assured and intelligent. "A decent chemist is twenty times more useful than any poet," Bazarov says (97). He argues that "what is important is that two and two make four, and the rest is just trivial" (116), which three years later may have instigated Dostoevsky to consider the possibility that two times two is five in *Notes from Underground*. Bazarov has brought a microscope with him and spends hours on studying plants and seeds or the entrails of a frog. He persuades Arkady that his father should not read Pushkin or similar romantic rubbish but a book by the German materialist Ludwig Büchner. And anticipating the Futurists he considers Raphael not worth a penny. No wonder that Arkady's conservative uncle, Pavel Petrovich, considers Bazarov an arrogant, impudent, cynical, and vulgar fellow. As Goudsblom (1980) has shown, Bazarov represents only one particular variant of nihilism among the many uses of the term in nineteenth-century Europe.

Like Chernyshevsky's heroes, Bazarov bases his conduct on what he recognizes as useful, but unlike them he argues that "in these days the most useful thing we can do is to repudiate," that is, to repudiate everything (123). Destruction precedes construction, "the ground must be cleared first" (124). Bazarov ventures that so far the progressives and reformers did not accomplish anything and "even the emancipation of the serfs ... is not likely to be to our advantage, since those peasants of ours are only too glad to rob even themselves to drink themselves silly at the gin-shop" (126). Here the difference which Bazarov, in line with Pisarev, makes between

himself and the masses comes to the fore. Pavel Petrovich, the aristocratic opponent of Bazarov in the debate, notices a “Satanic pride” in him (127). Later Bazarov talks superciliously about his loyal disciple Sitnikov. I need such louts, he says, but they are different from the gods. At this point Arkady becomes aware of the depth of Bazarov’s conceit and he realizes that in the eyes of the quasi-godlike Bazarov he too belongs to the fools (188).

Bazarov has a weakness for women, declares his love to a young widow, and flirts with Fenichka, the wife of Arkady’s father. The latter episode is reason for a duel with Pavel Petrovich and for Bazarov’s departure. He returns to his middle-class parents and assists his father, a retired army doctor, in his medical work. This is how Bazarov is infected with typhus, which causes his death.

Is Bazarov a positive or a negative character? Apparently Turgenev, politically aloof and indecisive, was not sure himself. When he began writing the novel he did not know where the story would lead (Berlin 1975). In *What Is to Be Done?* Chernyshevsky tried to improve the image of the rebellious hero and recast the cynical Bazarov, who had neither a political program nor any valuable allies, in the shape of the more positive character of Rakhmetov. By choosing the name Kirsanov for one of his other heroes, Chernyshevsky obviously wished to establish a link with his namesake Arkady Kirsanov and his family in *Fathers and Sons*. Chernyshevsky must have been extremely unhappy about the portrayal of the cynical Bazarov.

Pisarev wrote his defense of Bazarov in March 1862, briefly after *Fathers and Sons* had appeared and several months before Chernyshevsky was arrested and began writing his novel. Under Pisarev’s pen, all the traits of Bazarov’s character that others had considered negative became the correct representation of a social phenomenon. When Turgenev makes Pavel Petrovich say that Bazarov is driven by satanic pride, Pisarev writes that the expression is very well chosen and precisely characterizes “our hero” (Pisarev 1968: 53). He notes that Bazarov is guided by personal calculation or personal caprice and is not bound by any moral laws or principles. He has neither high aims nor high thoughts, but disposes of an enormous strength. Except for his personal taste, nothing can prevent him from killing or robbing. Many people say that he is a totally amoral man, a scoundrel, and Pisarev agrees, but he adds that the image of Bazarov cannot be destroyed. If Bazarov represents a disease, it is a disease of our time, which we must endure (54). Bazarov, Pisarev concludes, stands for a radical development among a new generation in Russia, which is drawn to extremism and in its

enthusiasm shows a new force and an incorruptible mind. “Without any outside assistance or encouragement this strength and this spirit lead young people on the right road and provide them with a prop and stay in their life” (95). In the last paragraph of his essay he asks: “What is to be done?” – a question Chernyshevsky took up and, as we have seen, answered rather differently from what Bazarov, or Pisarev, had in mind.

The dystopian consequences of nihilism in Devils

Peter Verkhovensky, the main character in *Devils*, is modeled after the notorious nihilist Sergei Nechayev, leader of a small group of radical students in Moscow, who on November 26, 1869, murdered one of the members of that group, probably merely because of his wish to assert his right to absolute dictatorial control (Frank 1976-2002: vol. 4, 400). Nechayev was an effective agitator and had in the past been helped by Mikhail Bakunin, the anarchist living at that time in western Europe, in mailing inflammatory pamphlets to Russia. After the murder, Nechayev managed to escape to Switzerland but was arrested by the police in 1872 and extradited to Russia, where he was sentenced to twenty years of hard labor and exile to Siberia. However, by personal order of Tsar Alexander II he was secretly kept for life in the Peter and Paul Fortress in St. Petersburg. Thanks to good relations with his guards, he managed to remain in contact with revolutionaries outside the Fortress. He died in prison in 1882 (443).

In the novel Peter Verkhovensky, no less cunning and cruel than Nechayev, is at the center of a frightening dystopia. He is the product of an ideology that Dostoevsky aims to trace back to its origins. Dostoevsky was very much upset by the growth of extremist tendencies among the radicals, which partly resulted from frustration over a revolution that did not take place, a revolution that was expected in the wake of the abolition of serfdom in 1861 but failed to materialize. He was shocked by Pisarev’s interpretation of *Fathers and Sons* and his suggestion that young people should follow Bazarov’s example. As Pisarev had written, Bazarovism allowed for robbing and killing. Dostoevsky reacted by creating the character Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* (1866) and showing the consequences of a senseless murder. In *Devils* he resumed the theme, now extended to a search for the origins of nihilist violence, which led him to a critique of socialist utopianism and materialist determinism, as well as an analysis of the atheist conception of free will, the desire for dictatorial control among young radicals,

and the complacency and hypocrisy of the elder generation. He showed the disastrous effect of nihilism on various characters involved in murder or suicide. Not only did he criticize the Bazarov syndrome but also Turgenev's wavering presentation of his nihilist hero. In *Devils*, the vain and self-concerned Karmazinov is a caricature of the westernized Turgenev.

The novel is set in a provincial town, not far from Moscow, and the story is told by a narrator who wants to record spectacular events that "recently" occurred but that can only be understood by going several decades back in time. Thus the novel opens with a sketch of the career of Stepan Verkhovensky, Peter's father, a spineless liberal intellectual who accepts the offer to become the private teacher to the son of Varvara Petrovna Stavrogina, a rich woman living on a magnificent estate just outside town. Stepan, a widower, maintains close but often strained ties of friendship with her for many years. When their sons have grown up they meet and collaborate, with great admiration from the side of Peter for the arrogant and demonic Nikolai Stavrogin. This constellation of principal characters enables Dostoevsky to write about the clash between two generations, just as Turgenev had done.

Indeed, Peter and, in a different way, Nikolai show many traits of Bazarovism. Stepan Verkhovensky, Varvara, and other characters of their generation represent the weaknesses and wavering of the Kirsanovs in *Fathers and Sons*. Where Turgenev abstained from a clear moral judgment on Bazarov, Dostoevsky shows the full consequences of nihilism and leaves no doubts about what he thinks of it. The citation from Luke 8: 32-35, relating how Jesus ordered evil spirits to leave the man they possess and enter a herd of swine, serves as an epigraph to the novel and must be interpreted rather literally as (Orthodox) Christianity being capable of providing a cure to demonic nihilism. This is Joseph Frank's interpretation of the epigraph and I find it convincing in view of the role of Stavrogin that Dostoevsky originally had in mind, as it appears in a chapter that remained unpublished during the author's lifetime and only appeared in print in the 1920s – it is usually added as an annex to recent translations and also to the 2005 Russian edition used here. In this chapter, the unpredictable Stavrogin seeks a meeting with the Orthodox bishop Tikhon and asks him to read the confession he has written. In the originally published novel no mention is made of any confession by Stavrogin.

The other epigraph, a quotation from Pushkin's lyrical ballad "Devils" ("Besy," 1830), is equally important. Not only did it provide the title for Dostoevsky's novel, but the quoted fragment contains also the phrase

“What are we to do?” (“Chto delat’ nam?”), a question that occupies Dostoevsky as much as Chernyshevsky and Pisarev (Dostoevsky 1992: 2; Dostoevsky 2005: 109). I am not suggesting that intertextual relations are the primary constructive principle of this novel of ideas, but they do testify that Dostoevsky was involved in a continuous dialogue with other writers of his time.

One of the places where the various characters meet is Varvara Petrovna’s estate, Skvoreshniki. Here she held her soirées, allowing her guests to participate in intellectual debate, to make music or play cards, and of course to eat and drink. It is in this frivolous company sketched with satirical effect that we must look for those who, according to Dostoevsky, can be held responsible for the nightmare of nihilism. Here, all kinds of loose opinions are launched without any particular consequences. Stepan Verkhovensky calls himself a “higher liberal,” that is, a liberal without goals (1992: 33). He also has the reputation of being an atheist, although he really is not one, and he loves to talk about the Russian spirit, the fate of Europe and all mankind. He can be considered progressive, being an admirer of George Sand, who eloquently defended the rights of women.

Another character, Liputin, is a Fourierist and enthuses over a book by Victor Considérant. Shatov, however, does not share this admiration for French utopian socialism, and poses as a Slavophile instead. He maintains that “socialism by its very nature must be atheism” (263), although Cabet and Saint-Simon were of a different opinion. His defense of Pan-Slavism shows several parallels with the argument of the underground man, mentioned above, that the human capacity for reasoning is only a small part of one’s entire capacity for living:

Reason and science have always, now and from the beginning of time, played only a secondary and subordinate role in the life of nations; and so it will be until the end of time. Nations are formed and moved by some other force that commands and dominates them, whose origin is unknown and inexplicable. This force is the force of an insatiable desire to go on until the end, while at the same time denying that there is an end. It is the force of a continual and indefatigable affirmation of its own being and the denial of death. (264)

Shatov believes that the goal of every national movement solely is the search for God. There has never been a nation without religion and without a conception of good and evil, he says, adding that “every nation has its

own conception, and its own particular good and evil” (264). Dostoevsky sketches the Slavophile worldview with some sympathy, but cannot fully endorse it as it detracts from the universalist claim of the Orthodox belief (Frank 1976-2002: vol. 4, 483). Yet, Shatov appears to speak again for Dostoevsky when he maintains that “reason has never been powerful enough to define good and evil or to demarcate good from evil” (1992: 264). This is a crucial observation of which Dostoevsky wishes to show the consequences. Nihilism is conceived of as a product of cold reason, and its exponents Peter Verkhovensky and Nikolai Stavrogin cannot distinguish between good and evil and are shown to indulge in lies and crime. The idea of the virtuous atheist, propounded by Bayle and other Enlightenment philosophers, does not fit in with Dostoevsky’s semantic universe. The Confucian as well as Christian admonition to treat others as you would wish them to treat you, based on rational convention and widely accepted, remains below Dostoevsky’s exalted conception of religion as total surrender and absolute unselfishness.

Dostoevsky’s dystopia begins with atheism, which in his view implies the impossibility to define good and evil and thus prohibits any attempt to establish paradise on earth. Thus *What Is to Be Done?*, including its discussion of French utopian socialism, must be repudiated. However, when Stepan Verkhovensky reads this “catechism” of the young revolutionaries, including his own son – who in fact have more in common with the nihilist Bazarov than with the socialist Rakhmetov – he develops some sympathy for Chernyshevsky. The author’s idea of revolutionary change is mainly correct, Stepan admits: “We were the first to plant it, nurture it, prepare the way – what could they possibly say that was new after us?” (320). The nihilists, however, went beyond utopian socialism and rejected the idea of a socialist revolution that had a clear goal and a moral justification.

At a political meeting convened by Peter Verkhovensky on the pretext of having a birthday party, Shigalyov presents a peculiar outline of how to solve all social problems and establish a perfect society. He admits that he will begin with the idea of unlimited freedom, although it inevitably will lead to unlimited despotism, but that does not prevent him from explaining his plan. So far, he argues, all creators of social systems failed. “Plato, Rousseau, Fourier, aluminium columns – all that is good only for sparrows, not human society” (426). The aluminum columns refer of course to Vera Pavlovna’s dream in *What Is to Be Done*. Shigalyov proposes to divide humanity into two unequal parts. One-tenth will have personal freedom and unlimited power over the other nine-tenths, who will be reeducated on a

scientific basis and in the course of several generations will become deprived of their will, regaining a kind of primeval innocence although they still have to work. This plan reminds us of Émile Souvestre's dystopian *Le Monde tel qu'il sera* (discussed in chapter 8), which Dostoevsky may have known or heard about since, as Frank (1976-2002: vol. 1, 128) mentions, he was acquainted with other work by the same author. Shigalyov's proposal anticipates the artificial division into social classes by way of genetic manipulation and psychological indoctrination in *Brave New World*.

Peter Verkhovensky, presiding over the meeting, cuts the discussion short by saying that "all these books by Fourier and Cabet, all this 'right to work' talk, this Shigalyov scheme – it's all like novels ... An aesthetic pastime" (1992: 429). Someone mentions that pamphlets of foreign origin have been distributed urging to form small groups "for the sole purpose of bringing about total destruction" (430). Finally Verkhovensky manipulates the meeting in such a way that no one dares to object to swift action in the spirit of the pamphlets.

The theory of nihilism is quickly summarized, but its true nature appears more clearly from what the nihilists in the novel actually do. In the absence of any ethical rules and with the goal of total destruction in mind, everything is permitted, including deceiving one's close allies. Several men willing to act mistakenly believe that the organization has a central committee and numerous branches. However, Peter informed Stavrogin that the two of them alone form the central committee and that there is only one circle of five active rebels, whereupon Stavrogin suggested to persuade four members of the circle to liquidate the fifth on the pretext that he is a potential informer. The blood thus being shed would bind them together (408). This cunning scheme is indeed followed in the disgusting sixth chapter of part three of the novel.

Peter Verkhovensky selects Shatov, the Slavophile, for the role of victim. Although Shatov had made it clear that he did not want to be involved anymore in revolutionary action, there is not the slightest indication that he will betray the nihilist circle. Nevertheless, he is lured to a remote pond in the park of Skvoreshniki, seized by his former comrades and shot by Peter. They make his body heavy with stones and throw it into the pond. The various reactions of the perpetrators are subdued by the terror Peter exerts on them.

However, Peter's villainous scheming does not end here. He knows that Kirillov, also a nihilist, is considering committing suicide in order to prove that he has a free will and God does not exist; it will be, in Kirillov's words, a

suicide “without any reason, simply out of self-will” (692; “bezo vsyakoj prichiny, a tol’ko dlya svoevoliya” [2005: 624]). Elsewhere I have discussed his precise argumentation, which attracted much attention from later writers such as Gide and Camus (Fokkema 2002). Here it is relevant to consider the use Peter wishes to make of the suicide, thereby showing another repugnant aspect of this nihilist plotter. Kirillov’s existential problem is no more than a utility for Peter, who tries to persuade Kirillov to falsely confess to having murdered Shatov. As a nihilist on the brink of death, it should make no difference to write such a confession, Peter argues. After some hesitation Kirillov agrees to do so and he asks Peter to dictate the statement. He intends to sign in French with “de Kirillov, gentilhomme russe et citoyen du monde” (1992: 696), a phrase which he then reconsiders and changes into “gentilhomme-séminariste russe et citoyen du monde civilisé” (696-697), as if he is enjoying the stylistic play until his very last hour; unwittingly he anticipates Berdyayev’s observation about the link between Orthodoxy and nihilism. The subscription in a foreign language makes the suicide also into a symptom of pernicious Western influence. The strongest disapproval of the suicide, however, is that a cunning scoundrel such as Peter can so easily take advantage of it: Kirillov, who in his naivety imagines himself to be a savior of humankind, a second Redeemer, is in fact made into an accomplice in the murder of Shatov. Kirillov can sign the false statement since “it’s all the same” (685) to him. From the perspective of absolute freedom, all moral problems evaporate. That same night Kirillov shoots himself.

The intrigues, intimidation, and criminal activities of Peter Verkhovensky have been interpreted as a distortion of the history of the leftist movement in Russia, but drawing on extensive documentation about the Nechayev case, Joseph Frank succeeds in refuting this negative judgment. From hindsight, the liquidation of Shatov, the deception of common people, and the manipulation of facts can be considered a prefiguration of Stalinist terror in the 1930s. In 1990, a study appeared in Moscow that confirms this interpretation and sees *Devils* as a premonition of the political dystopia under the Soviet regime (Saraskina 1990).

In the concluding chapter Dostoevsky writes that all accomplices of the murder were soon arrested, but the murderer himself managed to go abroad and escape, just as the historical Nechayev successfully fled to Switzerland and avoided arrest for about three years. The very last pages of the novel are devoted to the enigmatic Nikolai Stavrogin. Three months after the fateful event in the park of Skvoreshniki, Darya Pavlovna, Shatov’s

sister, receives a letter from Stavrogin inviting her to join him and settle in Switzerland, where he has bought a small house. It is a strange epistle, printed in full in the novel and thus showing the contradictions it contains. In the first paragraph he asks her to go with him, but further on he writes that it would be better if she would not come. He admits taking pleasure in doing good, but at the same time wishes to do evil. He says that he will never lose his reason, but I observe no rationality in what he does or says in the novel. Physically strong, like Bazarov and Rakhmetov, Stavrogin has been described as shy, or ill, or mad, impulsively and irresponsibly courting women and taking pleasure in hurting and destroying them. He felt attracted to malicious caprice: for instance, grasping someone by the nose or biting in the ear of the provincial governor. It is Stavrogin who suggests to Peter Verkhovensky the perfidious murder of a comrade simply to achieve blind obedience and dictatorial control. The nihilist frame of mind has not only dislocated his capacity for reasoning but also his control of emotions. When Darya Pavlovna and Varvara Petrovna try to find Stavrogin, it appears that he has hanged himself in a remote building of the estate, although he had written in his letter that he would never do that.

Devils is a highly disturbing dystopian novel anticipating the host of anti-utopian political fiction that was to appear in the twentieth century.

When Socialist Utopianism Meets Politics ...

In the course of the nineteenth century we witness a flourishing of utopian fiction, not only on the European continent but also in the United Kingdom and North America. It took some time before the horrors of the French Revolution – itself partly motivated by utopian thinking – had receded into the background. Then, half-way through the century, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) and Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) offered a worldview with an apparently scientific basis, which aroused hopes and raised the expectation that one day the utopian dream might come true. Intellectuals like Chernyshevsky believed that humankind could evolve to a higher level and that the social and economic obstacles to its development could be overcome by the combined process of historical determinism and political action. Utopianism became a serious thing and turned from a romanticist ideal into a significant factor in the struggle for equality and democracy – and finally, when the first results had been achieved, surprisingly into an invective for castigating political opponents.

Morris's aesthetic utopia

The various stages of this development are reflected in the careers of several outstanding writers and political activists. In England the poetry of William Morris (1834-1896) represents a romanticist idealism by way of glorifying medieval culture, Icelandic sagas, and Greek mythology. He became interested in community art, and later devoted part of his life to political lecturing and writing. Morris founded the Socialist League in the mid-1880s, called himself a Communist, and wrote the novel *News from Nowhere*, which sketches a charming utopian society but does not conceal the civil war that was necessary to realize it. The life of William Morris covers several stages of the development I wish to sketch. However, the turn from aesthetic enchantment to utopian narrative, followed by political activism, and leading finally to disappointment with political practices is most clearly reflected in the work of Herman Gorter (1864-1927), one of the ma-

for, if not *the* major Dutch poet of the late nineteenth century. William Morris and Herman Gorter are the main protagonists in this chapter.

The bent of Morris's imagination appears from his epic poetry, in particular *The Earthly Paradise*, originally published in four volumes in 1868-1870. The title apparently refers to a well-known pre-text, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, but not many critics have commented on the connection. Both texts are long narrative poems divided into twelve books or chapters, each preceded by a summary of the "argument." Morris responded to the biblical story of the Fall of Man with verse about Greek and Germanic myths that reflected a search for "isles of bliss." They were usually far away, geographically and historically, but were always projected onto this world, and not in heaven – or it must be a heaven inhabited by Greek deities. Walter Pater, who had high praise for Morris's epic poetry, noted an "incurable thirst for the sense of escape" (Faulkner 1973: 80).

The Earthly Paradise is loosely structured according to the twelve months of the year, from March to February. The edition of 1903 which I consulted has almost 500 pages, printed in two columns. The poet used ample space for his wanderings through Icelandic tales, Greek mythology, stories of love and separation, far journeys, and comforting natural scenery. It is difficult to find a specific highlight in this overwhelming, long-winded book of rhyming verse, seemingly written without any effort and without much variation in the versification. All lines follow more or less the same pattern, of which the beginning of the chapter "May" can serve as an example:

O love, this morn when the sweet nightingale
Had so long finished all he had to say,
That thou hadst slept, and sleep had told his tale;
And midst a peaceful dream had stolen away
In fragrant dawning of the first of May,
Did thou see aught? didst thou hear voices sing
Ere to the risen sun the bells 'gan ring?

For then methought the Lord of Love went by
To take possession of his flowery throne.

(Morris 1903: 97)

In the "Prologue: The Wanderers," Nordic mariners who had heard of the Earthly Paradise, set sail to find it and after many years arrived in some Western land where they lived and died happily. In another poem we learn

about Atalanta, who asked her suitors to run a race with her. If they failed to win, they were put to death; finally, of course, a young man appears who with the help of Venus outruns her and weds her. Venus plays an important part in the other tales as well, such as in “The Story of Cupid and Psyche.” I cannot summarize the plot of all poems here. Let it suffice to say that Morris writes about Alcestis, Pygmalion, Helen and Paris, “The Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon,” Gudrun’s lovers, Hercules’ journey to the West, “The Hill of Venus,” Pyramus and Thisbe, Tristram and Yseult, Orpheus and Eurydice, Dido, and so on.

The poems’ verbosity suggests that time and again the essence of what the poet wanted to say escaped him. Apparently the ultimate, sublime experience cannot be grasped in words. Morris is attracted by the exotic and erotic, but searches further, seeking to probe the mystery behind desire, just as Keats, whom he much admired, had done in *Endymion* – that long concatenation of dreams that makes the protagonist a witness of boundless and often hopeless love, such as between Venus and Adonis, or Glaucus and Scylla, and finds its apotheosis in the perfect bond between Cynthia and Endymion. Their love appears to surpass the erotic. In the final pages of the poem Endymion discovers Chastity and is ready to die. Only then, when Cynthia observes that Endymion is “spiritualized” (Keats’s term), she confesses her unconditional love, whereupon they escape from mortality and disappear. Morris must have been impressed by the theme of Endymion and Keats’s interpretation of it.

In commenting on Morris’s *Love is Enough* (1873), May Morris calls it a story “which expresses the passionate desire of the soul to come into contact with something utterly beyond worldly experience.” As in *Endymion*, I would suggest, the love William Morris is hinting at is what his daughter calls “not the world’s love and contentment, but that final absorption in eternal good, that something-beyond-all for which the speech of man can find no defining words.” In the end, “human language and human experience become as nothing on the threshold of the unknown” (May Morris 1936: vol. 1, 441-442). Here she refers in particular to the lines:

How shall the bark that girds the winter tree
Babble about the sap that sleeps beneath,
And tell the fashion of its life and death?
How shall my tongue in speech man’s longing wrought
Tell of the things whereof he knoweth nought? (443)

Such metalinguistic self-reflection is rare in Morris's poetry, but it provides a clue to his unrelenting and perhaps tragic effort to approach the mysteries of love and life. His poetry is built on the paradoxical combination of verbosity and the awareness of the inadequacy of linguistic expression.

Morris had no affinity with religion and called himself "a pagan" (Morris 1910-15: vol. 22, xxxii), but he was neither a materialist nor a positivist. He embraced a brand of socialism that meant more than an economic arrangement – it was guided by a vision of perfect human relations. In this respect there is continuity between his poetry, decorative art, and way of life; between his artistic style and the phrasing of his political lectures. One example from the lecture "The End and the Means" (1886) may suffice. After having exposed exploitation in "a society founded on robbery," Morris switches to a utopian view of a world without fear:

Have you never thought any of you what a changed world it would be if this fear, the basest of all passions, were absent from our lives? how full the streets would be of pleasant faces instead of those worn and dragged and anxious features which are our wear now-a-days; how merry we should be over our work; how kind would be our intercourse with each other; how delightful, how rich with beauty and pleasure our contemplation of the past and the present, and our hopes for the future? And but one thing is needed to bring all that about, the society should be based on helpful honesty and not a wasteful robbery." (May Morris 1936: vol. 2, 432-433)

This is far removed from any Marxian analysis, and yet, in the same lecture, Morris refers to Karl Marx, in a context which also mentions John Ruskin, Thomas Carlyle, the men of the Paris Commune, and Peter Kropotkin. Morris distinguishes between medieval feudalism and the subsequent commercial period. The latter is characterized by a situation in which one class owns "all the means of production of wealth" and the other owns "nothing but the labour power inherent in their bodies" (428). This is as close to Marx as Morris has ever been. As G. B. Shaw pointed out, Morris did not need Hegelian dialectics or Marx's theory of surplus value to explain his own vision of a Communist society (vol. 2, x). Morris's biographer, E. P. Thompson, confirms the continuity in his thought and writing as well as his strained relations with Friedrich Engels. The two men had met in London several times and were more or less acquainted; Morris once read from his medievalist poetry to Engels, who happened to listen with good-hu-

mored toleration (Thompson 1977: 371, 785). However, politically they were far apart. Engels reproved Morris for his unscientific political attitude and wrote disparagingly, in a letter to Laura Lafargue, that he was “a settled sentimental socialist” (Faulkner 1973: 19). Engels also warned Kautsky and Bebel that Morris was a “rich artist-enthusiast” and an “untalented politician,” who had become “a victim of the anarchists” (Thompson 1977: 342, 422).

Indeed, Morris was not an abstract theoretician but had a vision of what society could and should be like, which he elaborately expressed in *News from Nowhere*, printed first in *The Commonwealth* and republished as a book in 1891. The novel became very popular and was reprinted many times. Morris was well aware of the tradition of utopian fiction, as appears from his 1889 review of Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, whose ideas about national centralization and the mechanization of industrial production he rejects, and from the preface he wrote for Ralph Robinson's translation of More's *Utopia*. Characteristically, he sees the work of Thomas More rather as a late echo of medieval communism than as a foreboding of new developments, such as the progressive movement of the late nineteenth century (May Morris 1936: vol. 1, 289-292).

Morris's utopia is strongly imbued with an aesthetic view of life. The first observations of the protagonist/narrator in *News from Nowhere* pertain to the architecture of utopian London. The “ugly suspension bridge” over the Thames has been replaced by a stone bridge more beautiful than the Ponte Vecchio in Florence. Beauty, harmony, and peace characterize human relations in the utopian society of two hundred years later. Men and women are equal, but “the women do what they can do best, and what they like best” (Morris 1913: 69). Maternity is highly respected, but women are not idealized as perfect superhuman beings. Women as well as men are strong and healthy of body and soul, living easily, without exaggeration of sentiment and sensibility. There are no quarrels over private property, nor any “law courts to enforce contracts of sentiment or passion.” And “there is no code of public opinion which takes the place of such courts” (68).

Morris must have sensed that the psychological relation between man and woman is crucial in any description of a utopian society. Next to power, erotic desire can be the major obstacle to a perfect world. With his emphasis on physical health and beauty, Morris offers an aestheticized solution. I cannot help thinking that the inhabitants of utopian England were modeled after the image of his own wife, Jane Burden, who in Rossetti's paintings appears as the epitome of exemplary beauty and subdued desire.

Significantly, the subtitle of *News from Nowhere* is *An Epoch of Rest: Being Some Chapters from a Utopian Romance*. Morris wrote the novel at the age of 56, six years before his death. Toward the end of the story, one character, Ellen, sends the narrator back to his own time and world, saying that “there is yet a time of rest in store for the world, when mastery has changed into fellowship” (246). Obviously, for Morris “rest” is a welcome alternative to the struggle and strife of his own days, but in using that word he unintentionally points to a weak aspect of his utopia, or any utopia: the fact that it may be without challenge and therefore dull. Lionel Johnson, a contemporary critic expressing similar doubts, believed that in *News from Nowhere* “the very joy and pleasure of books and learning” had been underrated and that “Morris’s Utopia or Arcadia, for all its beauty and its energy, would be a little stupid” (Faulkner 1973: 342).

One chapter of the novel is completely devoted to a description of the revolution that had brought about this utopia. Hammond, an elderly man with an interest in history, relates how first a shorter working week was introduced, then minimum wages, and next maximum prices. A kind of state socialism was established, with government factories for the production of necessary wares and state markets. However, a confrontation between revolutionary workers represented in the Committee of Public Safety and the old government was inevitable. The army was ordered to shoot with machine guns into a crowd of demonstrating workers and made more than a thousand casualties during the so-called massacre of Trafalgar Square. After this setback a new network of workmen’s associations was formed, whose avowed object was, in Morris’s words, “the tiding over of the ship of the community into a simple condition of Communism” (Morris 1913: 139). The expressive phrasing here and elsewhere shows that the clearness and beauty of style which Morris notices in More’s *Utopia* is characteristic of his own *Nowhere* as well.

Whatever the merits of his style, Morris cannot avoid the issue of bloodshed and civil war. In *News from Nowhere* the revolutionary workers are victorious, because in a second confrontation the army disobeys the orders to shoot and sides with the Communists. The question of how to take over power from the capitalist class was a crucial issue in the debate on the tactics of the progressive movement, in the United Kingdom as well as on the European continent. Morris discussed socialist tactics not only in his novel but also in his political speeches and, like Marxists such as Herman Gorter, expressed himself in favor of a “Policy of Abstention” (May Morris 1936: vol. 2, 434-453) and against attempts to improve the conditions of the

working class by means of parliamentary action, as proposed by the Fabian Society. Morris was afraid that, if socialists would become members of Parliament, they would be forced to accept compromises and their ideals could be corrupted. His choice here is again an aesthetic one: for purity and clarity, in favor of a dramatic confrontation with monopoly commercialism by means of general strikes and armed struggle.

As we shall see, Herman Gorter took the same position and was probably similarly attracted by the purity and clarity of the utopian ideal. However, Morris's political stance appeared impracticable and he lost ground to socialists who in the reformist tradition of Robert Owen embraced parliamentary action and were quite successful in this, notably at the level of municipalities. In the 1890s it began to dawn on him that he had bet on the wrong horse, and he mitigated his disgust with the materialistic preoccupations of the Fabians (333-334). In these years he also backed away from straightforward political action, but continued to write on the future of the fine arts in a Communist society and became absorbed in his work for Kelmscott Press. In the spring of 1892 the Independent Labour Party was formed with Richard Blatchford as its short-lived president, soon to be renamed as the National Independent Labour Party under the chairmanship of Keir Hardie. In 1906, at last, a substantial number of candidates for the Labour Party entered the House of Commons, ten years after Morris's death. In an obituary of Morris, Peter Kropotkin, the Russian prince and anarchist who lived in London, expressed a fair judgment of Morris's political significance, writing that it was greatly due to his influence that "the Socialist movement in England did not take that authoritarian and functionalist character which it took in Germany" (Faulkner 1973: 400). It is the German kind of socialism that inspired the October Revolution and later Soviet practices.

The spirit of music of the new humankind: Herman Gorter

Thirty years younger than Morris, the Dutch poet Herman Gorter witnessed the realization of a Communist revolution in Russia and thus experienced the whole range from romantic vision to holistic philosophical worldview, followed by political activism and, finally, disappointment in the results of the October Revolution.

Gorter's poetry is characterized by youthful passion: the struggle for perfect love and absolute understanding contained in a natural, highly effec-

tive form. Like Morris, Gorter admired Keats and probably read *Endymion* before he conceived his about equally long narrative poem *May* (*Mei*, 1889). The two poems, both written in rhyming couplets of iambic pentameters, are major accomplishments, the more so since they were composed at a rather young age: Keats was twenty-two when he wrote *Endymion*, Gorter nearly twenty-four when he completed *May*. With 150,000 copies sold within the century after its first publication (Van den Berg and Couttenier 2009), *May* is the most popular narrative poem of Dutch literature.

Keats based his plot on a Grecian myth, although he did not know Greek, whereas Gorter, who read the Classics in the original, incorporated references to both Grecian and Germanic mythology. Their love of nature is a common feature, but natural scenery in Gorter's poem is more realistic and closer to the world as we know it than similar descriptions in *Endymion*. In the first and last parts of the poem Gorter allows the lyrical "I," who poses as a poet, to participate in the narrative and to fall in love with the nymph May he had created, thus shortening the distance to Arcadian scenery and supernatural myth. It appears in homage to Keats that Gorter in his poem mentions Cynthia, the mother of May and the other months, which, as they come and go, represent mortality. May reminds her mother of her love for Endymion when she was young, which now finds a parallel in her own fascination with Balder, the youthful, self-involved god who has left his father Woden and the other gods in search of supreme solitude. He is enchanted by music and sings a couple of lieder, which are reminiscent of arias from Wagner's operas. However, May's love for Balder is doomed to fail. When she believes herself to be close to him and declares her love, emphasizing their union and complete identification, Balder refuses her abruptly and withdraws into his own world of music, the expression of his deepest thoughts and sensations. He calls himself a god, "the only God," one who is proud to be blind, unable to see or feel anything but his own soul and who knows neither future nor memory and always is the same. In a final confession, even music no longer appears to be a reliable expression of emotion. Balder reduces himself to an abstraction in a forced attempt to make the sensation of epiphany last forever.

The role Balder chooses for himself is not described as an enviable one, and the utopian space into which he – blind, alone, and self-engrossed – disappears is not particularly attractive. The poet's mind is closer to the Arcadian reality of the sea and the dunes, the old town where he lives, and the woman he can see and embrace, than to the celestial music Balder seems to

hear. The metaphor of music remained important throughout Gorter's career as a poet and political activist. This appears from his later poetry, as well as from the dedication of his *Songs* (*Liedjes*, 3 vols., 1919-24, printed in only few copies for private distribution): "To the spirit of music of the new humankind" ("Aan de geest der muziek der nieuwe menscheid"), which, rather curiously, combines a reference to Nietzsche with a firm belief in the new era of Communist revolution (see the foreword in Gorter 1948-52: vol. 6, 7). And yet, as I read Gorter, he is primarily a visual and visionary poet. In the third part of *May* the poet listens to what May tells him of Balder and the words he has spoken. The poet listens silently to her story, but he fails to understand it. He cannot comprehend how any human being could wish to live without eyes or ears, without "desire for other things and more" ("wensch / Naar anders en naar meer" [vol. 1, 124]).

Music is a frequent metaphor in *May*, but more frequently we are invited to *see* a golden or silver light, clarity and purity, usually in combination with the physical touch of nature or some sensual imagery. When her life draws to an end, the poet and May have a last and sad encounter. He sings a song and they embrace, and though she seems to think of Balder, the lyrical "I" enjoys the fleeting moment (133). The next twelve pages are among the most beautiful ever written in the Dutch language. May leaves the poet alone and he knows what will happen. She must die in order that June may take over her role. When the tritons, gnomes, and fairies have completed their funeral ritual by the sea, they retreat and leave the poet alone with her dead body. The poem ends with these lines:

I dug a grave where waves are
moistening the beach and put her down
to cover her with sand: the waves are coming
again and then go down, now laughing then weeping –
There lies buried my fragile May.
(Ik groef een graf waar golven komen toe-
Dekken het zand en legde haar daar neer,
Daarover zand: de golven komen weer
En dalen weer met lachen of geschrei –
Daar ligt bedolven mijne kleine Mei. [146])

This is not a utopian ending, one might object, but under the condition of human mortality it is an expression of the continuity of life and of love that seems far superior to the abstract epiphany experienced by Balder.

There is no evidence that Gorter when he was writing *May* knew Morris's *Earthly Paradise*, although that poem was structured according to the names of the twelve months, and dealt with May also, just as Gorter was to do twenty years later. The versification is more or less similar, but Gorter's *May* shows no tendency toward archaic language, and no "incurable thirst" for escape. On the contrary, the semantic world of *May* is ostentatiously modern, allowing for a comparison of the human psyche to a piano, and of Nordic gods to cyclists competing in a race. Gorter's paradise then is more worldly than that of *The Earthly Paradise*, and more directly erotic.

Yet, the romantic idealists Gorter and Morris have much in common. They share a particular psychological disposition that combines sensitivity and discontent, intellectual ability and imaginative power, self-consciousness and social commitment. Both abandoned the tradition of Christianity but could not live without a dream of happiness and beauty. Their work confirms the assumption that secularization has boosted utopian thinking. Religion provides a response to the shortcomings of the human condition, which, if the religious solution is rejected, remain a challenge to the unbelieving mind. The utopian dream is motivated by unanswered desire – a desire to be one with nature and humankind, to combine eros and agape, and to create a new world, different from our present condition of suffering and hardship, indifference, and oblivion, or, as Gorter wrote, a "desire for other things and more."

In *May* Gorter expressed the ideal of celestial bliss as well as that of a worldly union with the beloved other. Though in my interpretation the lyrical "I" shows a preference for concrete and visual experiences, Gorter made no definite choice between abstract enrapture and earthly desire but forced himself to project his idea of heaven onto the world he dreamt of. The two poles of his semantic universe remained intact – though not always in perfect balance – throughout his career as a poet and Marxist theoretician, and they formed the basis of his utopian narrative poetry.

After the completion of *May*, Gorter was exhausted but did not stop writing. He attempted a direct observation of empirical reality and the unmediated recording of mental impressions. His lyrical poetry of these days, published as *Verses* (*Verzen*, 1890), reflects the fluctuations of a highly sensitive mind. Enno Endt, Van Halsema and other literary historians who published on this episode of Gorter's life conclude that, under the influence of a subjective impressionism and Zola's naturalism, Gorter lived in an increasingly fragmented world that brought him to the brink of a mental breakdown. Two things, I would suggest, saved him, in chronological or-

der: his marriage in July 1890 to Wies Cnoop Koopmans, who came from a well-to-do family and provided psychological support in addition to material security, and his discovery of Spinoza, whose work he began to study with the fanaticism that marked all his new projects. Gorter's lyrical work took a new direction rather abruptly and, while working on a translation of Spinoza's *Ethica* into Dutch, which was published in 1895, he began writing verse expressing the pantheistic conceptions of Spinozism. Literary critics, who had found it difficult to appreciate the experimental poems in *Verses*, were now equally disappointed.

In the preface to the volume *The School of Poetry* (*De school der poëzie*, 1897), Gorter distances himself from French naturalism, from what he now calls "superficial sensations," and confesses to search for laws that regulate those sensations. He admits that he is not quite content with the poetry in this volume, "because, whereas I looked for Nature, I could not elucidate Society" (1948-52: vol. 2, 444). This phrasing is intriguing, for it suggests that his trust in Spinoza was waning and being replaced by an interest in Marx. In the summer of 1896 he had begun to read *Das Kapital* and other Marxist writings, including the work of Karl Kautsky. In a new preface to a much enlarged edition of *The School of Poetry* (3 vols., 1905) Gorter explains his indebtedness to Marx, who had shown him "the way to the universal beauty of our immediate world, our society" (vol. 2, 446).

Gorter continued to write lyrical verse, now in the perspective of a Communist future, but he expressed his vision of workers preparing for the revolution and his utopian dream of a classless society more elaborately in his epic poetry. He wrote the long narrative poems *A Brief Heroic Poem* (*Een klein heldendicht*, 1906) and *Pan*, first published in 1912 and reprinted four years later in a much enlarged (in fact, three times longer) version, which takes up more than 400 pages in Gorter's *Collected Works*. Let me posit from the outset that it would be a mistake to believe that the narrative poem *May*, the sensitive *Verses* of 1890, the poetry inspired by Spinoza, and the Marxist epics could be easily differentiated as to style and intent. In *Pan*, for instance, we find traces of Spinozism as well as of the early sensitive impressionism, and, conversely, some phrasings in *May* and the *Verses* of 1890 prefigure the language of *A Brief Heroic Poem* and both versions of *Pan*. I venture to say that throughout the whole of Gorter's oeuvre we find a strong tendency to reach for an experience of absolute beauty and harmony, a tendency to identify with a single woman or the whole of humanity, or indeed both at the same time. In real life a strong and tall man, a teacher of classical languages, a sportsman and womanizer, Gorter was always driven by the utopian vision of a flawless world.

It was probably Frank van der Goes, editor of a literary journal and Gorter's cousin by marriage, who had persuaded Gorter to read Marx. Van der Goes had been a socialist since the early 1890s. He had translated chapters from William Morris's *News from Nowhere*, which were published in installments in a periodical in 1891 and six years later as a book under the title *Nieuws uit Nergensoord*. (Earlier van der Goes had translated Bellamy's *Looking Backward* into Dutch.) Gorter for his part urged Henriëtte and Richard Roland Holst to read Marx and Engels, but Richard, a supporter of community art, was more interested in the work of William Morris, whom he had visited during a brief stay in London – a visit that is recorded neither by May Morris, nor by E. P. Thompson. After Morris's death, Henriëtte Roland Holst and Gorter published a Dutch translation of *A Dream of John Ball* and several of Morris's lectures on art and socialism (Brandt Corstius 1978). The booklet *John Ball and Other Translations* (*John Ball en andere vertalingen*, 1898) appeared with an introduction by Henriëtte Roland Holst, in which she offered a rather strict Marxist interpretation of Morris's position, rejecting his struggle against mechanization and characterizing him as a utopianist who, as Engels had also judged, was taken in by anarchism. However, she was not only interested in politics, but also in Morris's attempts at socialist poetry in *Poems by the Way* (1891), which is a selection of ballads and lyrics from work he wrote between 1860 and 1891. It contains four poems from the pamphlet *Chants for Socialists* (1885), a cheap one-penny Socialist League production for propaganda purposes. It is not completely clear what Henriëtte, herself a young but already fairly well-established poet, thought of these popular songs, but she does distinguish poetry from propaganda without hiding her reservation with respect to the latter. Paraphrasing Morris, she suggests in her introduction that "only in a socialist society the conditions could arise for an organic revival of all arts" (Morris 1898: ix). What Gorter thought of "All for the Cause" and the other songs from *Chants for Socialism* reprinted in *Poems by the Way* is unknown, nor can we be sure he ever read them, although Henriëtte must have asked him to do so. As far as I can see, they left no traces in Gorter's lyrics or epic poetry of his socialist period. We can assume that Gorter had no affinity with the steady rhythm, predictable rhyme, traditional metaphors, and archaic language in Morris's verse. Some examples will be more convincing than my brief characterization of these songs. The last stanza of "The Voice of Toil" runs as follows:

Come, shoulder to shoulder ere Earth grows older!
The Cause spreads over land and sea;
Now the world shaketh, and fear awaketh,
And joy at last for thee and me. (Morris 1994: 178)

Or, the first and last stanzas of “All for the Cause,” which are identical:

Hear a word, a word in season, for the day is drawing nigh,
When the Cause shall call upon us, some to live, and some to die!
(185-186)

Some of these lyrics were meant to be recited aloud or to be sung. In the case of “The March of the Workers,” for instance, Morris indicated that it could be sung to the tune of “John Brown.” Gorter never gave such instructions, nor was his lyrical verse suitable for being sung.

Gorter’s *Brief Heroic Poem* was dedicated to the memory of Karl Marx. It is a narrative poem in blank verse about growing class consciousness among industrial workers. It shows the hesitation of Willem, one of the workers, over whether to support a strike or not, and the same indecision in Maria, his love. Finally, both decide to be firm and join the class struggle. Willem attends a meeting where Bebel reports on the situation in Germany and Vaillant recalls experiences of the Paris Commune. In the days of the Commune, the poem suggests, Paris had become beautiful and emptied of lords and prostitutes, thieves and murderers. People were hopeful, but the Commune was defeated because of a lack of organization. Next we find a lesson in Marxist analysis and an explanation of exchange value and surplus value: “and every year the surplus is added to the capital” (“en ieder jaar / wordt gevoegd het surplus bij ’t kapitaal” [Gorter 1948-52: vol. 4, 81]). Finally the workers demand an eight-hour working day because they want to be free to enjoy nature – the woods, the beach, and the music of the sea – to visit museums, to study, and to have time for their children. Gorter develops the prospect of a free and easy and civilized life, if only the eight-hour working day would be introduced (67-72). At the time these pages were written, the eight-hour working day was still a utopian demand, but when it was realized – in the Netherlands shortly after World War I – the splendor of the promised leisure waned. The description of Paris in the time of the Commune is also utopian, as well as the kind behavior and gentle manners of the workers as sketched in the poem. At last, Willem envisages how he and his love and all humanity become united.

The first and second versions of *Pan* were both dedicated to the “beautiful spirit of the new music” (“Aan U schoone geest der nieuwe muziek”), a variation of the inscription in *Songs* mentioned earlier. Throughout both versions “music” remains a crucial metaphor for the victory of the workers and the experience of supreme bliss. I will restrict my search for utopianism to the shorter version of 1912, because some of the additions in the expanded text contain so much Marxist phraseology and repetitions that several pages resemble a political pamphlet rather than a poem.

The first version of *Pan*, to which I shall refer as *Pan I*, consists of three parts, like *May*. In the first part Pan, the god of nature and of music, and the golden maiden (“het gouden meisje”), representing the future, meet but cannot stay together; in the second part the struggle and final victory of the workers is described; and in the last part Pan and the maiden meet again and find the highest form of unity and happiness. It is in this last part that a utopian vision is to be found, but in order to see it in proper perspective, we cannot omit a discussion of part one and part two.

The poetical form of *Pan I* more or less follows that of *May*. Part one and part three have rhyme, but not as consistently as in *May*; most of part two, however, consists of blank verse or has half-rhyme only. Apparently Gorter believed that rhyme should be restricted to the lyrical parts and was not suited for describing the scenes that contained action. In *Pan I* lyrical poems and fragments of prose have been inserted which Gorter had published earlier or borrowed from other writers, such as Shelley, Van Looy, and Van Deysel. He refers to the days of Homer and mentions Dante’s poetry, speaking of “The All-powerful Love / That once vexed Dante and Beatrice” (“De Almachtige Liefde, / Die eens Dante en Beatrice grievede” [230]), and that now affects Pan and the maiden. Gorter had the ambition to follow in the footsteps of the greatest poets, and his studies of Aeschylus, Dante, Shakespeare, and other canonized writers, published posthumously in 1935, confirm that he feels at home in that “great tradition.” However, the reviews of *Pan I* were rather negative and no more than a few hundred copies of the book were sold during Gorter’s lifetime. Only close friends such as Henriëtte Roland Holst hailed *Pan I* as a work of high literary quality (Liagre Böhl 2000).

United in love, Pan and the maiden symbolize the victory of the workers. That their love is compared to that of Dante and Beatrice subordinates the political struggle to a literary icon. This conclusion is not too farfetched, in view of the elaborate confession that Pan hears from a poet, which I discuss below.

In the second part Pan observes how the workers make revolution. They are guided by the idea of “No God and no Master anymore” (“Geen God meer en geen Meester” [vol. 4, 113]) – which is the gist of “The Internationale,” the anthem of the First, Second, and Third International – and reject any form of religion that justifies oppression and slavery. The only acceptable religion is that of universal, pantheistic love. Pan’s historical consciousness grows when he sees how workers organize a strike in factories and docks, of the railroads, among miners and farm laborers. “The spirit of Freedom, Equality, and Human Love” prevails, and, resorting to evocative imagery, the poet writes:

The earth had become desolate, without labor,
Quiet as the sea, quiet as a lonely love.
(Eenzaam lag daar de aarde zonder arbeid,
Stil als de zee, stil als eenzame liefde. [169])

The strike is successful for seven days, but then the dark forces of the rulers hit back. They aim to set up the nations against each other, but the people refuse to go to war as well as to their work. Then the army occupies the storehouses and tries to starve the workers, but they take up arms and fight a bloody battle in which many die. Pan attends a meeting where the workers discuss the appropriate strategy. Some are in favor of negotiating with the rulers and are prepared to make concessions; others want nothing less than to have complete power over the means of production and therefore vote for an all-out war against capitalism. The latter appear to be in the majority and a bloody war follows in which millions of people die, but in the end the workers are victorious.

In view of our interest in utopian visions, Pan’s inquiry into the motivations of the people who participate in the class war is revealing. A woman answers that she acts out of love: love for myself, for them, and for you. A mother with many children says that she wants bread. The sick and weak hope for good health. Others want to find happiness or secure the love of a woman. Many answer: Because I want to be myself; and an even greater number acknowledge that they want to be free and equal with all other workers, and that love is their only motivation. However, some also say they are seeking beauty:

Only if one does not oppress, nor is oppressed,
Will one see Nature in its naked beauty.

(Alleen als men niet heerscht en niet beheerscht wordt,
Ziet men de Natuur in haar naakte schoonheid. [194])

This passage forms a transition to a confession by the persona representing a poet, which is by far more elaborate than any of the previous answers and of an intensity that alerts us that it may be Gorter himself who is speaking here. The poet admits that he has always lived for poetry: “With all my blood I have lived for you / O poetry ...” (“Met al mijn bloed heb ik voor u geleefd, / O poëzie ...” [194]). He relates how he once felt depressed, incapable of hoping for an end to the slavery and submission of the workers. Talking to an elderly and trustworthy worker he confesses to long for complete happiness, which so far he has not found. The worker predicts that their action will spread and achieve the golden ideal. The poet senses that “Labor, fatiguing Labor, / Is the brother of toilsome Art” (“De Arbeid, de moe overwerkte Arbeid, / Is de broer der zich moe zwoegende Kunst” [198]). A true Marxist might frown at the idea that labor and art are considered to be on a par. Indeed, when the poet has another moment of dejection, he is being reproved by his friend, who grumpily advises him to abandon his old aesthetic ideals and identify completely with the struggle of the workers; only then would he be capable of finding true satisfaction. However, on a third occasion, when the poet consults his comrade again, the latter regrets this harsh advice and assures him that in conjunction with the struggle of the workers there is “a broad and splendid way to beauty” (“een weg / Een breede, heerlijke naar de schoonheid” [200]):

We workers, we are the Fathers of
Labor and the Mothers of Beauty.
(Wij arbeiders, wij zijn de Vaders van
Den Arbeid en de Moeders van de Schoonheid.” [202])

The poet tells Pan that, convinced by these words, he has decided to join the workers and to live or die with them.

In the third part of the poem the speaker, with the voice of an epic poet, describes himself as heralding a bright future – in lines that resemble the beginning of *May*, using the same rhyme. Then we read how the victory of the workers enables Pan, the dark spirit of nature, and the golden maiden, who represents the music of a new and free world, to meet again and celebrate their love in a union of body and spirit.

My commentary here is twofold: first, the quest for beauty and poetry is

what motivated the poet, and probably also Gorter, to embrace Marxism and join the political struggle, but such beauty implies an emotional identification with the workers and complete understanding, that is, agape as well as eros. Second, each human being – people in different professions and positions – has his or her own conception of what utopia might be. Some desire bread, others leisure and connection with nature, and others still freedom and equality, but the poet is seeking the beauty of poetry and Gorter is egocentric enough never to curb that inclination. Hence the long passage that explains the poet's motivation for joining the revolution – long indeed, if compared with the few lines that record the dreams of others.

This is not to say that Gorter never wavered. He must have realized that economy and politics were underrated in *Pan I*, so he decided to rework and expand the epic. There was also a new fact that motivated rewriting the first version. As was predicted in *Pan I*, World War I broke out, but contrary to Gorter's expectation and much to his disappointment, the workers did not resist being enlisted in the respective national armies. World War I meant the end of the Second International, the federation of socialist parties. Gorter, however, never gave up the international perspective of the Communist revolution, neither in *Pan II*, nor in his political pamphlets.

Gorter entered the scene of social democratic politics in 1897, together with Henriëtte and Richard Roland Holst, when they decided to become members of the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDAP), which had a political program based on Marxism. The history of socialism in the Netherlands is as complex as in the United Kingdom, but the details are not relevant here. Gorter read Marx and Engels and visited Karl Kautsky, who became a close friend, in Berlin. As a straightforward idealist averse to compromise, Gorter usually was on the side of the radical left in his speeches and pamphlets. He represented the SDAP at the congresses of the Second International in Paris (1900) and Amsterdam (1904), but was forced to leave the party in 1909 when it rejected the use of general political strikes as a means to fight capitalism and voted in favor of reformist action. Gorter persisted in his Marxist views, founded a new party (the Social-Democratic Party) together with other dissidents, and, as we have seen, explained the use of a general strike in *Pan I*. It was a bitter experience for him that his friend Henriëtte Roland Holst had sided with the reformist majority in the SDAP, but his friendship with Kautsky continued, at least for the time being. Kautsky occupied a central position in the German Socialist Party (SPD), the most powerful organization within the Second International, and resisted both the temptation of reformism and the radical left views of Rosa Luxemburg.

By nature impatient and opposed to compromise, Gorter had much sympathy for Luxemburg, which eventually alienated him from Kautsky. He worked hard for the admission of the newly founded Dutch Social-Democratic Party to the Second International, and in a personal meeting with Lenin in Brussels Gorter convinced him to support the request.

World War I exposed the failure of the Second International. The workers of the different nations were now fighting each other instead of forming a common proletarian front against the capitalist forces. In *Imperialism, the World War, and Social Democracy*, a long pamphlet published in Dutch in 1914, Gorter analyzed the new situation and castigated not only the reformists and “chauvinists,” but also the indecisiveness of Kautsky and his followers, who were opposed to massive political action. Gorter concluded his analysis of more than 140 pages with an appeal to the international proletariat to form a new International.

In the meantime, Lenin had moved to Bern, where someone showed him Gorter’s pamphlet. Although it was written in Dutch, Lenin took the trouble of reading it with the help of a dictionary. His reaction was extremely positive. On April 22 (May 5, according to the European calendar), 1915, he wrote an appreciative letter to Gorter, congratulating him for his splendid attacks on opportunism and Kautsky, and asking him to write one or two brochures in German that would further criticize the latter. In the same year Lenin wrote an article, “The Sofisms of Social-Chauvinists” (“Sofismy sotsial-shovinistov”), in which he repeated his praise for Gorter’s *Imperialism, the World War, and Social Democracy*. Lenin argued that, in attacking Kautsky and his followers, “the Marxist Gorter was a thousand times right” (Lenin 1958-65: vol. 26, 185; for Lenin’s letter, see vol. 49, 74-75). In those days Lenin considered Gorter a consistent and reliable internationalist.

However, in his own Social-Democratic Party in the Netherlands, Gorter did not receive the support he enjoyed abroad. His hope for a world revolution was not shared by his closest friends. In the summer of 1917 Gorter was in Switzerland for medical reasons, where he continued his political work and wrote the brochure *The World Revolution*, which was dedicated to Lenin but written in Dutch. The extended argument, a hundred pages long, ended with a political vision:

We see already in the near future, just before us: the New International, the Workers’ Councils of all countries of the World.

We see already before us at a close distance: the Central Workers’ Council of the World.

We see already before us the International Workers' Councils, the precursors of the New, Free, and Communist Humanity. (Gorter 1920: 108)

Apart from this utopian vision, *The World Revolution* also contains high praise for the October Revolution, Lenin, the Bolsheviks, and the role of the soviets, or workers' councils. However, despite Gorter's optimistic expectation that Communist revolutions would soon take place in other European nations, practical problems and tactical differences among the would-be revolutionaries emerged. Lenin intended to conclude a peace treaty with Germany and also appeared to be unhappy with the democratic nature of the workers' councils, which he found ineffective. Meanwhile, in Bern, Gorter received a letter from Lenin that convinced him of the necessity of peace with Germany, which was formalized in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918. In *The World Revolution* Gorter hailed the peace treaty as a model of international unity, "the first international unity of the world proletariat" (84).

The role of the soviets in Russia was a more fundamental problem. Gorter's long stay in Switzerland and his radical leftist views had rather alienated him from his Dutch comrades. One of them, Willem van Ravesteyn, called him "a utopist and no politician" (quoted in Liagre Böhl 2000: 416). In the summer of 1919 Gorter decided to leave the Social-Democratic Party, which had been rechristened as the Communist Party of Holland (CPH), but as a result of his contacts in Germany he could continue his political activities in the German Communist Party (KPD), where his ideas were more appreciated. When for tactical reasons Lenin changed his mind about the role of the soviets and emphasized the dictatorship of the proletariat as represented by the Party, he also resisted the formation of workers' councils in Western and Central Europe, advocating parliamentary action and trade union work instead. Simultaneously, the Comintern or Third International (a federation of Communist parties) became a strictly hierarchical organization dominated by the principle of "democratic centralism." The German communists split over this new political course, and from 1920 there was a Communist Party of Germany (KPD) as well as a Communist Labour Party of Germany (KAPD), each about equally strong – the latter holding on to the principle of "all power to the soviets" and the former following Lenin more strictly. Of course, Gorter joined the radical left again and became a member of the KAPD. Within no time he became one of the best-known propagandists for founding workers' councils, attacking Lenin in a pamphlet, written in German, entitled *Open Letter to*

Comrade Lenin. He objected to the policy of parliamentary action and cooperation with bourgeois parties and advocated the formation of workers' councils, the organization of strikes, armed struggle, and revolution.

The majority of the KAPD wanted to be admitted to the Comintern, but the negotiations were difficult. When at last a third delegation was sent to Moscow, consisting of Gorter, Karl Schröder, and two others, the final clash between Gorter's utopian vision, which he had so eloquently described in *Pan I*, and Lenin's pragmatic policies was unavoidable.

Traveling to Moscow in those days was far from easy. Gorter and Schröder made the journey as stowaways on a ship that was returning to Estonia with Russian prisoners of war. From there they continued by train, saw the misery in Petersburg, and shared the hunger of the local people. They were well received in Moscow, but the twofold aim of the German delegation was rather paradoxical and did not promise much by way of results. On the one hand the delegates hoped to convince Lenin and his associates that the policy of workers' councils was correct and should be continued, while on the other they wanted the KAPD to be admitted to the Comintern as a sympathizing member with advisory voting rights. The preliminary talks with Lenin were disappointing and, when Gorter was given the opportunity to speak for about an hour at a plenary session of the Comintern Executive, he did so in ominous circumstances. However, as usual, he accepted no compromise and announced that he had come to criticize the new strategy of the Comintern. An eyewitness reported that Gorter was highly emotional and at one moment began to weep. Some members of the Executive showed their contempt by smiling, and Trotsky retorted sharply that Gorter was a querulous eccentric, an individualist and aristocrat, and guilty of sectarianism (Liagre Böhl 2000). It was evident that, with respect to the workers' councils, the KAPD delegation had not been able to convince the Comintern Executive. Yet, the KAPD was admitted as a sympathizing member with advisory voting rights. The second goal had been achieved, but only temporarily. Rather disappointed, the delegation returned home.

In the spring of 1921 the sailors in Kronstadt demanded the reintroduction of soviet democracy, but their insurrection was violently suppressed. At the same time an attempt at revolution in Germany, organized by both Communist Parties (KPD and KAPD), failed miserably. As a result, the Comintern no longer tolerated any discussion of council democracy nor accepted attempts at violent revolution in Western or Central Europe. At the third congress of the Comintern in Moscow in the summer of 1921, not at-

tended by Gorter, Karl Radek poured ridicule on his political views, discrediting him as a “philosopher and poet.” He also attacked the sectarian course of the KAPD and held Gorter responsible for the confusion in that party.

Gorter’s vision of the ideal society had been crushed by the exigencies of political tactics. He had depended too much on the logic of his utopian dream, ignoring forces beyond his control. Like Morris, he abhorred centralized power and dictatorship, and like him, in politics as well as economics, he was in fact an early adherent of “small is beautiful,” a concept that in Marxist phraseology equals anarchism. Radek rightly characterized him as a philosopher and poet, but how Gorter, again like Morris, could combine his utopian vision with propaganda for a violent revolution remains a paradox that is hard to understand. During his last years, until his death in 1927, Gorter remained loyal to his leftist political ideas but devoted most of his time to writing, studying the “great poets,” and editing and publishing his own work.

Where the utopian socialist ideals were close to being materialized, they were first used as an instrument in the struggle for power to be abandoned as soon as they became an obstacle to maintaining or extending power. We may wonder whether this is always the case. Is it a law? At least in the case of the October Revolution and the early days of the Soviet Union the rule applies. Neither Morris nor Gorter could have foreseen that their socialist ideals were to be sacrificed so easily. While suppressing utopianism, Communist totalitarianism inadvertently called for a reaction in the form of anti-utopian fiction. Zamyatin’s *We*, Bulgakov’s *The Heart of a Dog*, and Platonov’s *Foundation Pit*, all written in the 1920s but not published in the Soviet Union in those years, are early examples of this new development (see chapter 14). Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) is probably the best known dissection of totalitarianism. Coming back to the title of this chapter: when socialist utopianism met politics, the politicians soon rejected the utopian idealism for tactical reasons. The ensuing general disappointment found an outlet in a surge of dystopian fiction.

Bellamy's Solidarity and Its Feminist Mirror Image in *Herland*

The American Civil War (1861-1865) marks a break between a period of practical experiences with small agricultural cooperatives, such as Brook Farm in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, which was based on transcendentalist ideals, and an era characterized by a more politically motivated search for happiness on a national scale. The small-scale communitarian experiments in the United States, inspired by Emersonian transcendentalism, socialist utopianism, or religious millenarianism, met with adversity; most were soon dissolved. For instance, Brook Farm existed only from 1841 to 1847, and the Icarian community in Nauvoo, Illinois, which was founded by Étienne Cabet in 1849, lasted no more than ten years. The religiously inspired sectarian communities of the Shakers and the Oneida group had a longer life but remained small-scale endeavors (Kumar 1987). As mentioned earlier, *The Communist Manifesto* had ridiculed these sporadic experiments as creations of a "new Jerusalem in duodecimo."

The smallest but perhaps most famous experiment was that of Henry David Thoreau, who between 1845 and 1847 lived in the woods near Walden Pond, not far from Concord, Massachusetts, and reported on his experiences in his partly fictionalized *Walden* (1854). Thoreau, a friend of Ralph Waldo Emerson, did not establish a community but is nevertheless commonly considered to have created one man's eutopia. He sought the solitude of the woods, although occasionally he received visitors from nearby Concord or went himself to that town. He was a romantic individualist, a solitary mystic waiting for sublime moments of unison with nature. Most of all he wanted to be a free man, free from economic bonds and superfluous duties, seeking leisure and time for reading and contemplation. In his autobiographical notes the aim of individual bliss has completely eclipsed that of collective happiness. Only later did he become interested in political action.

The devastating war between the Unionists and the Confederates, in which more than half a million men died, had made the exigency of social organization acute. After four years of intense combat, the Union victory, which put an end to slavery throughout the country, confirmed the unity of the American nation, making the United States more nationalistic than it had been ever before. This nationalism is reflected in the work of Edward Bellamy (1850-1898), who made no attempt in his best-selling *Looking Backward, 2000-1887* to insert his novel in the international tradition of utopian writing. There are no references to earlier utopian fiction, not even to Thoreau. Later American utopian writers, however, cannot avoid referring to *Looking Backward*, the first full-fledged and successful American utopian narrative. Bellamy's main sources of inspiration were the Bible, the solidarity he felt to have been characteristic of the Unionist army, and the technological progress that was boosting large-scale industrialization in the United States, whose economy recovered amazingly quickly after the end of the Civil War. (The text I will refer to is the second edition of 1888, which is more precise about the social and economic organization of the imagined America of the year 2000 than the first edition, which was published earlier that year. John L. Thomas republished the second edition with a valuable introduction in 1967.)

In the novel a thin framing story can be distinguished from the utopian program that is gradually revealed by Dr. Leete to Julian West, the main character, who after more than a century awakes from his long hypnotically induced unconsciousness in the year 2000. Let me first briefly explain the improbable plot.

Julian was born in Boston into a well-to-do family rich enough to allow him to pursue the pleasures and refinements of life without worrying about earning his livelihood. When the story starts he is a man of thirty who is engaged to Edith Bartlett, from an equally wealthy family. They are waiting for a new house, which is being built in one of the more prosperous parts of Boston. However, strikes are preventing a speedy completion of the house, and this annoys the young couple who begin to wonder when they ever can be married. This personal setback induces the narrator to discuss the nature of strikes, the fierceness of class conflict, the fear of anarchism; in short, what is generally known as "the labor question," for which no solution is in sight. Julian and his future father-in-law seriously discuss the possibility of emigration, to Greenland or Patagonia, or China even, which in

the eyes of Mr. Bartlett is a model of stability since it “refused to let in our western civilization” (Bellamy 1967: 104).

Julian suffers from insomnia and has asked an expert in animal magnetism to put him to sleep in the soundproof basement of his home. However, the house is destroyed by a fire and no one realizes that Julian has survived the calamity in the basement. Remaining in a deep sleep, he is found and woken up only in 2000, still only thirty years and with all his vital functions intact. Dr. Leete attends to his awakening and serves as his host and guide in a modern eutopian Boston.

Toward the end of the novel the framing story has two narrative surprises. The first is that Edith, the daughter of Dr. Leete and Julian’s new love interest, happens to be the great-granddaughter of his lost nineteenth-century fiancée Edith Bartlett. The second interesting ploy is that Julian in a dream imagines to be living in the old Boston of yore once again and meeting his old friends and acquaintances; the encounter with his mentor Dr. Leete and his family is considered to have been a dreamlike deception. Disillusioned with the sad look of the people in the streets and the old buildings of nineteenth-century Boston, he feels very much depressed, which is noticed by his friends. Julian reminds them of the misery he has seen and exclaims: “I have been in Golgotha I have seen Humanity hanging on a cross!” (307). Reading the table of contents of a newspaper he is struck by the number of reports about fraud, embezzlement, misappropriation of a trust fund, artificial manipulation of the price of coal, wheat, and coffee, corruption among Chicago officials, fears of a business crisis, etc. The news items under the heading of foreign affairs are not optimistic either. The only moment when his gloomy mood vanishes for a while is when he sees a military parade: “Here at last were order and reason, an exhibition of what intelligent cooperation can accomplish” (304). Rather soon Julian awakes from his dream and finds himself in the twentieth century again. His stay in eutopian Boston appears to be no dream after all and is as real as his new love for Edith Leete. Different from what he had been thinking, the brief return to the nineteenth century turns out to have been a dream.

The eutopian society of modern Boston has a twofold basis. On the one hand, as Dr. Leete explains, there is an “industrial army” (171, 175, etc.) which decides on the production and distribution of goods, and on the other there is the high ethical principle of devotion to the commonweal. There is no contradiction between these two aspects of economic organization. The present situation in the United States, Dr. Leete argues, is the result of a long evolution during which “a set of irresponsible corporations and syn-

dicates of private persons ... were intrusted to a single syndicate representing the people" (127). This was in effect a nationalization of all private enterprises. Indeed, the nation is

organized as the one great business corporation in which all other corporations were absorbed; it became the one capitalist in the place of all other capitalists, the sole employer, the final monopoly in which all previous and lesser monopolies were swallowed up, a monopoly in the profits and economies of which all citizens shared. (127)

Julian assumes that the change-over from many industrial and financial enterprises to one national business corporation would have met much resistance, but Leete answers that there was absolutely no violence involved. Public opinion had become ripe for it. It was a peaceful evolution, not a revolution. Instead of harping on the exacerbation of class conflict that inevitably would lead to a violent revolution, as in Marxism, Bellamy emphasizes the role of teaching the "habits of obedience, subordination, and devotion to duty" (171).

As a student in Germany in 1868-69, Bellamy had acquired some knowledge of Marxist socialism (Kumar 1987), but he was more impressed by the discipline of the Prussian army. This explains why Dr. Leete can compare the economic and political system of the United States in the year 2000 to "a disciplined army under one general – such a fighting machine, for example, as the German army in the time of Von Moltke" (Bellamy 1967: 253). In his introduction, John L. Thomas writes that Bellamy as a young man had tried to be admitted to the military academy at West Point but failed to get in for health reasons. The obsession with military discipline remained a significant factor in his utopian persuasion.

However, in Bellamy's view, military discipline is based on solidarity rather than coercion. His father was a clergyman in the Baptist church and, although Edward at a young age left the church, he had not renounced the basic principles of his Christian education. Moreover, in his essay "The Religion of Solidarity," written in 1874 but not published during his lifetime, we may see traces of Emersonian transcendentalism as he postulates that there is

a human instinct for perfect communion with the infinite, a psychic drive to break through the barriers of time and circumstance which prevent the individual soul from merging with the universe. (Quoted in Thomas 1967: 14)

Everyone enlisted in the industrial army is supposed to subject himself voluntarily to the discipline of the system. All working people are ranked in classes, stimulated by possible promotion and various sorts of prizes. There is only one exception to this eutopian view of labor discipline: a man able to work but persistently refusing to do so “is sentenced to solitary imprisonment on bread and water till he consents” (Bellamy 1967: 175). However, men who are deficient in mental or bodily strength are subjected to a very lenient regime. They form a sort of invalid corps, bearing its insignia. Dr. Leete argues that in fact no one is capable of self-support, at least not for his entire life. In complex civilizations mutual dependence is the universal rule. He tells Julian West:

If I were to give you, in one sentence, a key to what may seem the mysteries of our civilization as compared with that of your age, I should say that it is the fact that the solidarity of the race and the brotherhood of man, which to you were but fine phrases, are, to our thinking and feeling, ties as real and as vital as physical fraternity. (179)

This appeal to the solidarity of humankind makes it difficult to reject Bellamy’s utopianism offhandedly on the ground of its ostensibly military inspiration. As we shall see, in the reception of his novel two camps can be easily distinguished, one praising the ethical basis of his eutopia and the other criticizing its mistaken interpretation of a military organization.

Looking Backward discusses various details of the economic system of the year 2000. All citizens are employees of the nation and have the duty to work in the industrial army for 24 years, from the age of 21 to 45. After that period one is free to seek intellectual and spiritual enjoyment or other forms of recreation. During their apprenticeship these workers find out what kind of job they can do well. The allocation of work to everyone is not described as a difficult process nor is it painful for the individuals concerned – quite unlike the real practices and experiences in later Communist states. There are no merchants and no bankers, and money has been replaced by a credit-card system. As in More’s *Utopia*, gold has no particular value. Everyone receives the same remuneration for his or her work, whatever it is, for “all men who do their best, do the same” (152). Personal property is allowed on a limited scale and it can even be inherited, but the nation remains the sole capitalist and landowner. Commodities can be ordered at shopping centers that host sample stores where various articles can be inspected; the city’s central warehouse will home-deliver the ordered goods.

Bellamy emphasizes the positive role of technological progress in banning any scarcity. There is electric light and heating. At home one may listen to music broadcast over the telephone. In the same way Julian listens to a sermon of Mr. Barton which takes up twelve pages of the novel. As in Vera's dream in *What Is to Be Done?*, social life is concentrated in large public dining halls, though it is also possible to book a small room in the same building to have dinner with one or more guests, as Dr. Leete does when he invites Julian to have a meal together with Edith and Mrs. Leete.

Men and women are equal but the differences between the sexes are not ignored. As in many utopias, passionate attraction between men and women is looked down upon. What Julian admired in Edith Leete is her "serene frankness and ingenuous directness, more like that of a noble and innocent boy than any girl I had ever known" (262). Women are members of the industrial army, but since they are "inferior in strength to men and further disqualified industrially in special ways" (263), they have a sort of autonomous organization within the industrial army with a woman general-in-chief and an "exclusively feminine regime" (264).

The political system is meritocratic and corporatist. It is organized according to guilds or professions, each headed by the general of the guild. They cooperate in ten great departments or groups of allied trades. The officers heading these departments form a council chaired by a general-in-chief who is also the president of the United States. A person can rise to that high position through a combination of appointment and suffrage. The general of a guild, for instance, is chosen from among the superintendents by vote of the retired members of the guild. The president of the United States is similarly chosen from among the heads of the ten departments by retired members of the industrial army over 45 years of age. The system, which has neither parties nor politicians, is not restricted to the United States. The European nations, Australia, Mexico, and parts of South America have been remodeled likewise. These countries form a federal union. An international council regulates mutual relations and commerce as well as a joint policy toward "the more backward races, which are gradually being educated up to civilized institutions" (184).

In an attempt to appease those who would object to the lack of individual freedom in the eutopia of the year 2000, Dr. Leete argues that "our system is elastic enough to give free play to every instinct of human nature which does not aim at dominating others or living on the fruit of others' labor" (204). This sounds promising but, apart from writers, artists, medical doctors, and teachers, who can be exempted from the general rule of service in

the industrial army, no able-bodied man between 21 and 33 of age can avoid his share of work. After twelve years of service he can obtain discharge from the industrial army, provided he accepts for the rest of his life only half of the rate of maintenance other citizens receive, which means that on balance there are only twelve years of compulsory service. Whether this will satisfy those who are critical of the coercive aspects of Bellamy's system is doubtful.

The treatment of literature in eutopias is often a reliable criterion for judging the relation between personal and collective happiness. Dr. Leete's library contains volumes of Shakespeare, Hawthorne, and Dickens. Unlike Mercier, Bellamy does not mention any censorship of literary works. However, the reasons why certain writers of the past still are being read sound rather simplistic. Dickens, for instance, is admired because "his great heart beat for the poor" (191). When Julian is asked to read the story "Penthesilia" by Berrian – a famous writer in eutopian Boston – he is struck by the absence in the story of "all effects drawn from the contrasts of wealth and poverty, education and ignorance, coarseness and refinement, high and low, all motives drawn from social pride and ambition, the desire of being richer or the fear of being poorer, together with sordid anxieties of any sort for one's self or others" (204-205). "Penthesilia," which must have been modeled after the story of Achilles who, according to one tradition, killed the queen of the Amazons on the battlefield near Troy and fell in love with her when he removed her helmet and saw her dying, is reduced to a romance of "love galore": love "unfretted by artificial barriers created by differences of station or possessions, owning no other law but that of the heart" (205). Julian believes that "Penthesilia," more than Dr. Leete's scattered explanations, gives him "a general impression of the social aspect of the twentieth century" (205), a view which appears rather incredible, unless Berrian's romance, whose text unfortunately is not shared with the reader, deviates completely from the traditional myth of the interlacement of eros and thanatos and has smoothed out the sharper edges of human existence.

No, a coherent view of the social aspect of the eutopia of the year 2000 is not provided by literature but by a conversion to the religion of solidarity. *Looking Backward* contains several references to the Bible, culminating in Mr. Barton's sermon, whose main theme is human brotherhood and solidarity. The preacher argues that "the ten commandments became well-nigh obsolete in a world where there was no temptation to theft" (282). The ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity have been realized, he suggests. The sermon offers a splendid mystical perspective:

The way stretches far before us, but the end is lost in light. For twofold is the return of man to God “who is our home,” the return of the individual by the way of death, and the return of the race by the fulfilment of the evolution, when the divine secret hidden in the germ shall be perfectly unfolded. (285)

Note again the word “evolution” in this crucial passage, with which Bellamy explicitly departs from the necessity of a violent revolution. Bellamy’s eutopia may in various respects be called socialist, but he hated the connotation of labor conflict or class struggle of that term, and chose instead “nationalism” as the name for his eutopian ideology. At the same time he distanced himself from Marx as well as from European dissension. In view of the enormous popularity of his book, it is not farfetched to assume that his intervention in the ideological and political debate made the United States forever suspicious of Marxist socialism and its antireligious bias. In some way, *Looking Backward* epitomizes American culture, which is deeply rooted in a kind of ecumenical Christian belief, is more nationalistic than it at first sight seems to be, and has little sympathy for European diversity. Dr. Leete explains the idea of organicist nationalism as follows:

It was not till a rearrangement of the industrial and social system on a higher ethical basis, and for the more efficient production of wealth, was recognized as the interest, not of one class, but equally of all classes, of rich and poor, cultured and ignorant, old and young, weak and strong, men and women, that there was any prospect that it would be achieved. Then the national party arose to carry it out by political methods. It probably took that name because its aim was to nationalize the functions of production and distribution. Indeed, it could not well have had any other name, for its purpose was to realize the idea of the nation with a grandeur and completeness never before conceived, not as an association of men for certain merely political functions affecting their happiness only remotely and superficially, but as a family, a vital union, a common life, a mighty heaven-touching tree whose leaves are its people, fed from its veins, and feeding it in turn. (260-261)

Bellamy’s novel was an enormous success. Within a year of its publication, *Looking Backward* had sold more than a quarter of a million copies; within ten years it had sold half a million copies in the United States and hundreds of thousands throughout the world. The book was translated into all major

languages. In Russia, for instance, seven different translations were published before 1917 (Kumar 1987). In 1935 the *Publishers Weekly* mentioned *Looking Backward* as one of the four most influential works published since 1885, the other three being *Das Kapital*, *The Golden Bough*, and *The Decline of the West* (Fortunati and Trousson 2000: 360). In the autumn of 1888 the first Bellamy Club was formed in Boston with the purpose of spreading the message of Nationalism. In particular former military men supported Bellamy's ideas. By 1890 about five hundred of such clubs had been established throughout the country (Thomas 1967). In 1897, one year before his death, Bellamy published *Equality*, a sequel to *Looking Backward* which, however, never reached the popularity of the original work.

Motivated by the response to *Looking Backward*, Bellamy gradually became involved in politics, arguing that Nationalism, with its emphasis on economic equality, was the logical complement of the political equality promised in the preamble to the American Declaration of Independence of 1776. In this way he managed to connect his idea of economic equality with a glorious American past. This certainly accounts for part of the success of the Nationalist movement. In a political sense, things became more concrete when in 1892 Bellamy advised sympathizers of the Nationalist movement to vote for the presidential candidate of the People's Party, General James Baird Weaver, a Civil War veteran. Though the People's Party was much less ambitious than the Nationalists were, Bellamy evidently saw a chance to realize at least part of his utopian ideals. However, Weaver carried only six states with twenty-two electoral votes (Thomas 1967). The utopian society of the year 2000 remained a fictional utopia.

Of the many commentaries and critiques of *Looking Backward* that have been written, I will briefly discuss three rather significant ones only, those of General Francis A. Walker, William Morris, and John Dewey. General Walker, a man who, after his military career, became a professor of political economy and president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, published a critique of Bellamy's book in the *Atlantic Monthly* of February 1890. In it he posited that Bellamy held a wrong notion of military discipline and was mistaken in believing that it could be used to help to develop the American economy. He suspected that Bellamy did not turn to the military system of organization because he was a socialist, but rather became a socialist "because he had been moon-struck with a fancy for the military organization and discipline itself" (Thomas 1967: 75). Of course, Bellamy was hurt by this attack which was not completely ill-founded. In his defense he shifted to emphasizing civilian cooperation as in the civil service and the neces-

sity to nationalize telephone companies, railroads, mines, and the production and distribution of electricity. The workers involved in these branches of industry would, together with the civil servants, constitute the core of the industrial army that would profit from steady employment, fixed working hours, and social insurances. In this way, as John L. Thomas observed, Bellamy retreated to some extent from the military model of organization.

Half a year earlier, in June 1889, William Morris had published a review of *Looking Backward* in *The Commonwealth*. The argument was equally negative as Walker's but far more subtle. Rather pertinently, Morris ventured that "the only safe way of reading a Utopia is to consider it as the expression of the temperament of its author" (William Morris 1936: 502); this applies not only to *Looking Backward*, but, I would suggest, also to *News from Nowhere*, or later utopias and dystopias, such as those by Wells, Orwell, or Huxley. Bellamy's temperament is "unhistoric and unartistic" (502), Morris writes, whereas that of himself, I assume, expresses the vision of an aesthete and artist. Their views of utopia are completely incompatible. Morris holds against Bellamy that he focuses on the regimentation of economic organization, on the "mere machinery of life," whereas he himself would rather think "that true life implies free and equal life" (503-504). He castigates the idea of a sharp division between a period of work until the age of 45 followed by a time of recreation and cultural development after retirement. Instead, he believes that "the true incentive to useful and happy labour is and must be pleasure in the work itself" (506). In contradistinction to Bellamy's notion of national centralization, Morris holds that

it will be necessary for the unit of administration to be small enough for every citizen to feel himself responsible for its details, and be interested in them; that individual men cannot shuffle off the business of life on to the shoulders of an abstraction called the State, but must deal with it in conscious association with each other: ... that art, using that word in its widest and due signification, is not a mere adjunct of life which free and happy men can do without, but the necessary expression and indispensable instrument of human happiness. (506-507)

The quintessence of Morris's utopia can be characterized as: freedom, variety, and "small is beautiful." He focuses on individual experience rather than on collective stability. With Bellamy it is the other way round.

Writing almost half a century later, John Dewey, the Columbia University philosopher and psychologist who lectured in China for more than two

years during the heyday of the May Fourth Movement and was widely known in China as well as elsewhere (Chow Tse-tsung 1960), published a more favorable appraisal of *Looking Backward*, crediting Bellamy with having seen the undesirable social consequences of an unequal distribution of material goods. Under the title “A Great American Prophet,” published in *Common Sense* of April 1934, Dewey wrote:

Bellamy’s communism rests on an ethical basis rather than upon a view that is sometimes called “scientific” because of its abstraction from considerations of human well-being. But his ethical principle always takes cognizance of the dependence of human life and its supreme values upon equal access to and control over material things. (Quoted in Thomas 1967: 87-88)

From a certain historical distance it appears that Bellamy’s dependence on the model of military organization has faded, whereas his arraignment of the unregulated capitalist system stands out more clearly than ever. Despite some attempts in Europe and elsewhere to reduce differences in income, Bellamy’s analysis of rampant capitalism is as valid now as it was in his own or Dewey’s day. However, the perfect society that he designed as an alternative has so far remained truly utopian.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s Herland

The novel *Herland* (1915) by Charlotte Perkins Gilman is one of the many imitations of *Looking Backward*, but it has attracted particular attention since it sketches a utopia populated only by women. As such it can be read as a female complement to Bellamy’s predominantly masculine eutopia. Gilman read *Looking Backward* soon after its publication and, as Denise D. Knight writes in her introduction to *Herland*, “became a convert to Nationalism” (Knight 1999: xi). Gilman was impressed by Bellamy’s emphasis on the equality of men and women, while still recognizing the differences between the sexes. Gilman was particularly attracted by the idea of the economic independence of women and the restriction of household duties. Her biography may explain why she insisted so much on women’s rights. Morris’s suggestion that every utopia can be read as the expression of the temperament of its author applies to *Herland* as well.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935) had a difficult childhood. When

her father, Frederic Perkins, abandoned the family, her mother Mary, a part-time teacher, had to raise two children on her own. As an adolescent Charlotte rejected the conventional roles of married women. She studied drawing and painting at the Rhode Island School of Design. In 1882 she met Charles Stetson, an artist who proposed marriage to her. Charlotte declined as she feared that being married would interfere with her wish to work and devote her life to public service. In a letter to Stetson she wrote: "I am meant to be useful & strong, to help many and do my share in the world's work, but not to be loved" (quoted in Knight 1999: x). However, Stetson persisted and at last they were married in 1884. Within a year a daughter was born, after which Charlotte sank in a deep depression. A neurologist prescribed that she should have the baby with her at all times and forget about any other ambition, but the advice was counterproductive and led to having a nervous breakdown. In the fall of 1887 the couple agreed to separate. The next year Charlotte left with her daughter Katherine for California, where she began writing and lecturing about the marginalized status of women. This was the time when she read *Looking Backward*.

However, Charlotte found it increasingly difficult to combine her strenuous work with the education of her daughter. When Katherine was nine years old, Charlotte took the painful decision to relinquish custody of her daughter to Stetson, whom she divorced in 1894. Of course, she was criticized for this decision by her detractors, who considered her an "unnatural mother" (xi). But Charlotte had her own ideas about raising children, which crystalized into the notion of "social motherhood," later elaborated in her various essays as well as in *Herland*. It implied that child-care professionals would be involved in the raising and education of children, and also that some mothers would take care not only of their own children but also those of others. The publication of her feminist treatise *Women and Economics* (1898), which argues for the economic independence of women, made her an "authority on the relationship between female sexual oppression and economic dependence on men" (xi). In 1900 Charlotte Perkins married the attorney George Gilman and moved to New York, where she continued to write and lecture. In 1909 she launched the *Forerunner*, a monthly magazine in which her utopian narrative *Herland* was serialized in 1915.

Herland is indeed a utopia, an isolated country which, for the past two thousand years, has been populated by women who love "one another with a practically universal affection" and is a "very practical little heaven" (Gilman 1999: 95), characterized by untroubled peace, unmeasured plenty, and steady health. It is a country where "the drama, dance, music, religion,

and education were all very close together” (100), where children from their first memory knew “Peace, Beauty, Order, Safety, Love, Wisdom, Justice, Patience, and Plenty” (101), and where babies “never cried” (103).

Of course, the utopian country where only women live, about three million of them, is difficult to access. The story is told by a first-person narrator, the sociologist Van Jennings, who reports on his visit to Herland, where he had stayed for more than a year in the company of his two companions: Terry, a rich explorer with a strong sense of masculine pride, and the more feminine Jeff, who is an admirer of everything women do. The three men, all from the United States, were participating in a large scientific expedition to a barely explored wilderness when savages told them about a dangerous country beyond the mountains where no man lived. The three friends decided to return to this place in order to discover and explore that strange country.

Some time later the three men undertake the journey by boat and using a small aircraft they fly over the country – not larger than Holland – seeing indeed only women, and no men and no cattle. Landing their plane, they walk through the woods in the direction of a village. Finally, they meet the women, who at first had hidden themselves among the large trees. The three friends make acquaintance with Celis, Alima, and Ellador, but any further contact is difficult. Terry offers them a necklace of colorful stones and Alima is courageous enough to snatch it from his hands: “Her interest was more that of an intent boy playing a fascinating game than of a girl lured by an ornament” (18) – which is reminiscent of Julian’s characterization of Edith Leete as “a noble and innocent boy,” quoted above. The women of Herland are described as dispassionate and, because of the absence of men, unaware of the possibility of sexual attraction. It is different with the three men. In particular, Terry hopes to select a beautiful woman and have a good time with her, but the women who confront them in the village are all elderly, and look like “old Colonels” (22). Gilman here criticizes the typically male cliché that women should always be young and charming. The men dislike being surrounded by the athletic and strong (but asexual) women, and Terry pulls his revolver and fires it in the air. The result is that each of the three men is seized by several women and is anesthetized by means of a wetted cloth held before his mouth and nose.

From now on the men are prisoners, and they are kept under constant surveillance, compelled to learn the language as well as the customs of the country, and interrogated about the situation in the outer world. The women learn of the inequality, contagious diseases, wide-spread ignorance,

prejudices and unbridled emotion to be found there and conclude that the other world is not superior and that the three men can only be allowed to return to their own country if they will not disclose the location of Herland, which wants to maintain its splendid isolation and not be intruded upon by more foreigners. Van departs with his wife Ellador, Terry must choose between lifelong imprisonment and the firm promise never to return or to show others the way to Herland, but Jeff, married to Celis, decides to stay in this female eutopia.

It is of course rather improbable that in the age of increasing air traffic Herland could hope to remain hidden from the outside world for long. The utopia depicted in *Herland* remains a fictional one enlaced by a number of stories to make it appear as reasonable and credible as possible. One of these stories is about the historical origin of the country, another about the asexual begetting of children (who all happen to be daughters). Other stories concern the high technological development of the country and observations on education and religion, but I will mainly focus on the history of the country as told to the three men and the particulars of “parthenogenesis” (83).

Originally, about two thousand years ago, the country had access to the sea and was in contact with other civilizations. It had ships, an army, and a king, and the people were heterosexual and polygamous and held slaves. They engaged in wars with neighboring people but one time, when the army was defending the one mountain pass that connected the country with the outer world, a volcano erupted, filled in the pass, and killed most of the men fighting there. The slaves made use of the opportunity to free themselves and kill the few remaining masters and all young boys. They hoped to take possession of the land and of the remaining women. These, however, rose in sheer desperation and killed their conquerors. In this way the population of the country came to consist of women only.

Of course, the women worried about procreation, but unexpectedly, after about ten years, as a result of a “Supreme Desire, the overmastering demand for a child” (138), one of the young women became pregnant and bore a child without having been impregnated. This was interpreted as “a direct gift from the gods” (57) and the proud mother was placed in the Temple of Maaia, the goddess of motherhood. The allusion to the immaculate conception of Mary is clear, and is moreover made explicit when on another occasion Ellador hears about “the Virgin birth” in the Christian tradition and shows no surprise at all (109). (However, the civilization of Herland shows no other traces of having Christian beliefs. It is a predominantly

secular culture based on the idea of evolution, as in *Looking Backward*.) Biologically, parthenogenesis, or the development of an unfertilized gamete, is not impossible and occurs among certain insects, such as the *Mycocepurus smithii*, an ant observed in various parts of Latin America. A modern variant of this form of reproduction of living organisms is cloning. (It is a major theme in Houellebecq's *La Possibilité d'une île*, which I will discuss in a later chapter.)

The woman in the Temple of Maaia gave birth to four more daughters and when the girls had grown up they appeared to have the same faculty of parthenogenetic procreation, and so had their daughters and granddaughters. These women revered their original mother as a "Queen-Priestess" (59), and in the course of centuries they forgot about the gods and goddesses of antiquity and worshipped only their mother goddess. Their religion developed into a kind of "Maternal Pantheism" (61), which was rational, distrusted any revealed truth, and rejected notions of hell or other "horrible ideas" (110). To these women, "God is a Pervading Power, ... an In-dwelling Spirit, something inside of us that we want more of" (112):

All their wide mutual love, all the subtle interplay of mutual friendship and service, the urge of progressive thought and invention, the deepest religious emotion, every feeling and every act was related to this great central Power, to the River of Life pouring through them, which made them the bearers of the very Spirit of God. (138)

The echo of Emerson, either by way of Bellamy or more directly, can be recognized here. Ellador, who in a dialogue with Van Jennings explains their religion, is disgusted by the Christian idea of eternal life after death. In Herland the idea of continuing life is projected onto the younger generations, those of the children and the children's children. Motherhood stands at the center of their worldly religion, which favors birth control in order to prevent overpopulation and improvement of the race by dissuading "those held unfit" to become pregnant and encouraging others to bear more than one child. Motherhood is "the highest Social Service," even "a Sacrament" (70). In chapter six, the religion of motherhood is compared with the religion of solidarity and brotherhood, but Bellamy's name is not mentioned.

Gilman does not make parthenogenesis the condition of a perfect society. At the end of the story, Van marries Ellador, and Jeff takes Celis as his wife. Alima becomes the bride of Terry, but this turns out to be an unsuitable alliance and when he tries "to force her to love him as her master"

(140), she calls her friend Moadine and together they truss him up in no time. Macho behavior is not appreciated in Herland, but if love is unselfish, more agape than eros, a couple can experience the most supreme satisfaction. The women in Herland are convinced that dual parentage is a “Great New Hope” (137). When Celis announces that she is pregnant and Jeff is the father, she is celebrated as an example of “the New Motherhood” and honored all over the country. There is some hope that the best customs of Herland can be joined with the best traditions of the outer world.

However, the distance between the personal experiences of well-being and contentment in the world outside and the collective happiness among the Herlanders, who have no equivalent for the words “family” or “home” (95), is great. Literature can again serve as a yardstick. Gilman follows Bellamy rather closely in writing that certain motives simply do not occur in their literary writings: “they lacked the sex motive and, with it, jealousy. They had no interplay of warring nations, no aristocracy and its ambitions, no wealth and poverty opposition” (100). The narrator concludes that there is no dramatic tension in their writings, but the Herlanders have a highly developed and subtle child literature. The problem of how to write interesting fiction in a eutopian society appears again to be a difficult one.

Herland may be the expression of a woman who felt marginalized, but this utopian novel expresses a rather optimistic view of the world. Gilman hopes that the real world will learn from her eutopian community which is the result of a long, carefully steered evolution. Gilman shares her admiration for Darwin and Emerson with Bellamy, but diverges from him by insisting more forcefully on the equality of women and men – an equality that is approached and discussed from a position in which female values predominate.

Chinese Occidentalism: The Nostalgia for a Utopian Past Gives Way to the Idea of Progress

The term “Occidentalism” refers to a body of usually simplified and often biased views about Western culture. These mental constructions, carrying either positive or negative connotations, may become ideological instruments in polemics and politics (Carrier 1995). A nineteenth-century coinage, the term was introduced into critical discourse about China by Chen Xiaomei (1992), who in her *Occidentalism* (1995) mainly focused on anti-official Occidentalism in post-Mao China, a kind of counterdiscourse that purveyed a positive image of a scientific and modern West contradicting Maoist orthodoxy. Not being aware of Chen’s pioneering work, Buruma and Margalit use the term Occidentalism in a more limited sense as “a dehumanizing picture of the West painted by its enemies” (2004: 5). Chen Xiaomei as well as Buruma and Margalit are indebted to Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), an analysis of Western conceptions of the East. Crucial differences between Said and Chen are that the latter examines both positive and negative images of the Other, whereas Said does not investigate how the discourse of Orientalism relates to empirical knowledge of the East. He is concerned, “not with a correspondence between Orientalism and Orient, but with the internal consistency of Orientalism” (1991: 5). Nevertheless, Said’s Orientalism often implies a negative judgment as he interprets Orientalist discourse as an attempt to deprecate the Orient and, ultimately, to justify colonial politics. The genuine interest of Voltaire, Goethe, Hesse, Hilton, and Huxley in Eastern literature and philosophy falls outside his perspective (Fokkema 1996; Weiss 2004; Figueira 2008).

From a cognitive point of view, the term Orientalism is a shorthand name for a body of simplified views about “the East” current among writers and critics living in “the West.” And, the other way round, Occidentalism refers to a reductionist image of “the West,” maintained by writers and critics in “the East.” We cannot communicate without such reductive concepts that often are partly distortions and sometimes completely wrong. Yet, and here I agree with Chen Xiaomei rather than later critics, it is not necessary that these reductive concepts should implicitly have a pejorative meaning. In principle, they are neutral linguistic labels. As Chen has shown, Occi-

dentalism in China in the second half of the twentieth century served first to describe a repugnant West in an attempt to bolster Maoist orthodoxy, and later, after the death of Mao Zedong, functioned as a lever to undermine Maoist ideology.

In this chapter, the term Occidentalism is used in a neutral sense; depending on the particular pragmatic – historical and political – conditions, it acquires a positive or a negative value, or maintains its neutral meaning. We can see indistinct traces of Occidentalism in the Christian inspiration of the Taiping Rebellion, positive Occidentalism in Kang Youwei’s admiration for Western philosophy and political thought, and equally positive Occidentalism in Hu Shi’s liberalism and Chen Duxiu’s Marxism, as well as in the work of other intellectuals participating in the May Fourth Movement. There were also periods in modern Chinese history, such as the Cultural Revolution, when the West was demonized and Occidentalism, in the words of Chen Xiaomei, became “a discourse of oppression” (1995: 5).

The Taiping Rebellion and the threat of Western colonization

The self-confidence of the Chinese cultural elite, as evidenced by Li Ruzhen’s *Flowers in the Mirror* (1828), dwindled in the course of the nineteenth century as a result of internal strife and the aggressive behavior of Western colonial powers as well as Japan. The Chinese government had to defend itself on two fronts: against the internal enemies of the Qing or Manchu dynasty and against the foreign intervention that aimed at realizing favorable trade relations and gradually succeeded in occupying several ports and the adjoining land on the Chinese coast, the so-called concessions, where foreigners, merchants as well as missionaries, could live under foreign jurisdiction. I will come back to the military threat from abroad but will first discuss the Taiping Rebellion, which challenged the Confucian system and for a brief time posed a real threat to the ruling Qing dynasty. The foreign interventions and the Taipings created a sense of crisis among the Chinese establishment which paved the way for the utopianism of Kang Youwei and the short-lived success of the Reform Movement of the 1890s in which Kang played a central role.

China has a tradition of popular rebellion and in the nineteenth century other rebelling groups such as Muslim rebels in the southwest and the northwest were active, too, besides the Taipings, but the latter were by far the most dangerous to the government. The Taiping Movement was

founded as a religious cult by Hong Xiuquan (1814-1864), a scholar and mystic who had failed in the Guangzhou regional examinations and believed that he was called upon to be a new messiah, an idea he borrowed from Christianity (Fairbank et al. 1965, Bauer 1989, Spence 1996). Hong had some contact with Protestant missionaries in Guangzhou but concocted his own religion, which included the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament and the idea of establishing the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace (*Taiping tianguo*) on earth. Local militias that had been formed to maintain order where the imperial government appeared powerless formed the backbone of the Taiping army. Motivated by the faith of their leaders, the Taipings were rather successful from 1850 to the early 1860s. Hong had the ambition to establish a new dynasty and assumed the title of Heavenly King. In 1853 the rebels captured Nanjing, the second city of the empire, which remained their capital until its fall in 1864. At the height of their power the Taipings dominated the relatively prosperous plains of central China, covering large parts of Anhui, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, and Fujian provinces. Military expeditions to the southwest as far as Sichuan and to Shanxi in the north left deep marks of violence and destruction but ended in failure.

The ideology of the Taipings was a curious mixture of Confucian and Christian elements. It emphasized the equality of all people, quoting Confucius' saying that the gentleman considers "all within the Four Seas ... his brothers" (*Analects*, xii: 5; Bauer 1989: 395). However, different from Confucius but in keeping with Christian teachings, Hong Xiuquan ignored the Confucian idea of a hierarchy between elder and younger brothers and similar social distinctions. His notion of equality included equal relations between men and women: foot-binding was abolished and women could be appointed as administrators and army officers. They participated actively in several battles and occasionally appeared to be ferocious warriors. Quoting from a Taiping document of 1853, Bauer records that the equality of all men and women included a land reform through which everyone above 16 years of age should be allocated an equal share in proportion to the size of the family. It also stipulated that all land under heaven must be cultivated in a common effort. Nobody should consider his own lot as private property since everything belonged to God. All ceremonies should be abolished except those that were related to the worship of God, the Father in Heaven. Every Sunday the men and women should go to church, where they would be seated in separate rows and listen to a service based on the Old and New Testament as well as the book of proclamations of the Taiping sovereign.

In particular the abolition of traditional ceremonies and the destruction of Daoist, Buddhist, and Confucian temples were met with much resistance. Of course, the Taiping ideal of a communal way of life could not easily be put into practice and remained largely utopian. Although the Taipings preached monogamy, Hong Xiuquan and other leaders held many wives. While Hong in his palace in Nanjing gradually withdrew from routine government and became more and more convinced of his religious mission as the younger brother of Jesus, dissension among the Taiping commanders grew, ending in the assassination of the major rivals, which thoroughly weakened the position of the rebels and led to their complete defeat in 1864. Until the very end Hong maintained that the Kingdom of Heaven would be realized in China and that Nanjing, the Heavenly capital, was the “New Jerusalem” (Bauer 1989: 407). Hong Xiuquan died briefly before the Qing army entered Nanjing.

The Western powers, which at first were favorably impressed by the Christian inspiration of Taiping ideology, stayed for a while neutral in the conflict between the Qing and the Taiping forces. However, when the anti-foreign emperor Xianfeng died in 1861, the new Qing regime under the Empress Dowager Ci Xi, mother of the new emperor (who was a child), decided to give priority to putting down the rebellion, and tended to appease the foreign invaders with the aim to make China strong by borrowing Western technology. When in 1862 the Taipings threatened to occupy Shanghai, Britain and France cooperated with the Qing government to defend the treaty port. Chinese military forces were trained by British and French officers and, equipped with modern arms, managed to recapture Suzhou and Hangzhou. Partly under Western command, these mixed military contingents were a significant factor in weakening the rebellion, but the capture of Nanjing was the work of a Chinese army, without assistance of foreign military. The Qing victory over the Taipings has since been interpreted as a manifestation of the resilience of the Confucian system and administration (Fairbank et al. 1965).

The historical judgment of the Taiping Rebellion differs widely. It was not a modern movement, and although it was inspired by the Bible and held heterodox views of Christianity, it can hardly be considered a manifestation of Westernization or Occidentalism. However, the attempt to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth implied a search for happiness in the future. The teleological motivation of the Taiping religion was incompatible with the Confucian nostalgia for a utopian society that supposedly had existed in ancient times – a nostalgia that the Taiping converts were bound

to renounce. But the aim of realizing the Kingdom of Heaven in this world has the connotation of religious fulfillment rather than open-ended progress. The idea of social and technological progress became a topic in the public debate at a later stage, in relation to the Reform Movement of the 1890s and through the efforts of Kang Youwei and others.

The early communist evaluation of the Taiping Rebellion circled around the question of whether the peasants participating in the rebellion were conscious of their role in the class struggle. Orthodox communist critics had their doubts, but they praised the Taipings for their firmly anti-imperialist policies and their opposition to the Qing government, which connived with the foreign powers. Another question was to what extent the egalitarian land reform had indeed materialized. One author, writing in 1959, believed that in the beginning indeed some landlord holdings were confiscated and distributed to the poor and to Taiping officials, but that in most areas, because of the inadequacy of the Taiping administration, the old system of landlord-tenant relations was continued as before (Feuerwerker 1968: 202). Nevertheless, as the well-known historian Fan Wenlan argues, the equal distribution of land stipulated in the Taiping document of 1853 was a source of inspiration for the later Communist revolution (Bauer 1989: 411).

Cixi, the Empress Dowager, had given priority to suppressing the Taiping and other rebellions, but the greatest danger came from the more powerful foreign opponents, who in a series of military invasions encroached on Chinese territory. A mere listing of these military engagements speaks for itself: the Anglo-Chinese War (1839-42), the Anglo-French war on China (1856-60), the Sino-French War (1884-85), and the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-95). The latter was triggered by developments in Korea, over which China claimed suzerainty, a claim that was not recognized by Japan. In all these conflicts China was the losing party and again and again the Western powers exacted more concessions and more settlements under foreign jurisdiction. Being defeated by Japan was particularly humiliating for China, however, and so were the terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki (April 1895), which obliged China to cede Taiwan, the Pescadores, and the Liaodong peninsula in south Manchuria, in addition to paying an enormous indemnity (Fairbank et al. 1965). The conditions of the peace treaty with Japan caused great alarm at the court in Beijing and among the Chinese cultural elite. It is in this atmosphere of crisis that the Reform Movement, led by Kang Youwei, began to play a significant political role.

The scholar Kang Youwei (1858-1927) became involved in politics by presenting a long memorial to the Throne on May 2, 1895, signed by 1200 provincial graduates who were in Beijing for the triennial examinations. It advised the Chinese government to reject the peace treaty with Japan, to move the capital inland, and to continue the war. This unprecedented public protest was followed by the formation of political associations or “study societies,” in which scholars and gentry cooperated, such as the “Society for the Study of Self-Strengthening” (*Qiang xue hui*), founded in Beijing in 1895 (385). Journals and newspapers published debates about the reform of administrative institutions, dealing among other things with the basic question of the degree in which Western technology should be adopted, or to what extent the Confucian system could absorb Western education, notably instruction in the sciences. It was of course practical to have some railroads, which were being built during the 1880s and 1890s, but the question was whether this kind of technological development affected the basic values of the Confucian system and of popular beliefs. The simple slogan of Chinese essence and Western practical applications – which has a vague echo in present-day politics that wants to maintain the Chinese one-party system while accepting the advantages of a Western liberal economy – appeared in fact to be untenable. The Chinese intellectual elite sought feverishly to find a way to sanction Western modernization by reinterpreting the Confucian tradition. Kang Youwei was most prominent in this attempt, breaking with the fatalism that resulted from the concept of history as a more or less cyclical movement of growth and decline. Liang Qichao, one of the younger reformers, called Kang the “Martin Luther of Confucianism” (Levenson 1968: vol. 1, 83).

Kang Youwei presented a slanted interpretation of Confucian scholarship, which enabled him to construe an evolutionary concept of time and to divide history into three ages (*san shi*): the Age of Disorder (*luan shi*), the Age of Approaching Peace (*sheng ping shi*), and the Age of Universal Peace (*tai ping shi*) (Kang Youwei 1990: 249-251; cf. Feng Youlan 1953: vol. 2, 676-691). Confucius had said very little about the Age of Universal Peace, and Kang took it upon himself to describe the particulars of Universal Peace and the principles of Great Unity in the *Book of Great Unity* (*Da tong shu*, first concept in 1884, final text in 1902, published posthumously in 1935), which can be considered an essay on utopia. The *Book of Great Unity*, motivated by an outspoken Occidentalism, was for tactical reasons not pub-

lished during the days of the Reform Movement; it will be discussed in a separate paragraph below.

In the meantime Kang Youwei passed the highest examinations and became a Hanlin academician in 1895. Three years later he was recommended to the young emperor Guangxu and got a chance to develop his radical program for constitutional change, together with Tan Sitong, a brilliant philosopher from Hunan province, and other reformers. They proposed to turn China into a constitutional monarchy. During the “Hundred Days of Reform” Guangxu was persuaded to issue a number of radical decrees that would have changed political life completely if they had been duly carried out. But in September 1898 the Reform Movement was crushed by a coup d’état that brought the Empress Dowager back to power as a regent and put Guangxu under house arrest. Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao could escape to Japan, but Tan Sitong and other reformers were arrested and executed. The public domain for debate and political action appeared to be very restricted still. The events of September 1898 are another demonstration of the thesis that when utopianists become involved in politics, the politicians in power will go all out to destroy them. A long-term vision cannot easily be reconciled with practical politics and short-term self-interest.

There were striking differences between the Taiping Rebellion of the mid-century and the Reform Movement of 1895-98. The first was a peasant revolution, anti-Confucian and without much sympathy for Westernization, while the second was led by the intellectual establishment, had a basis in a radical interpretation of the Confucian tradition, and displayed an unreserved Occidentalism. Both the radical reformers and the Taipings failed because the traditional Confucian system appeared still to be too strong to be superseded. However, the process of Westernization continued in less radical ways and at a slower pace.

Translations of Western texts inspired attempts to combine futuristic speculations with Confucian ethics. Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* was translated into Chinese in 1892 and was quite influential. Lu Xun translated two of Jules Verne’s science fiction novels from their Japanese versions in 1902 and 1903. *The Future of New China* (*Xin Zhongguo weilai ji*, 1903) by Liang Qichao is set in the year 2062 and shows the success of social and political changes, including the widespread knowledge of the Chinese language among foreigners (Wagner 1985). As Ming Feng-ying (1998) explains, Wu Woyao’s *New Story of the Stone* (*Xin shitou ji*, 1905) – a sequel to the eighteenth-century novel *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Hong lou meng*) – combines scientific and technological exploits with the Confucian system of values.

Wang Xiaoming (1998) mentions numerous other specimens of futuristic fiction, but I believe no author went as far in his utopian claims as Kang Youwei in the *Book of Great Unity*.

Kang Youwei's essay on utopia

In the *Book of Great Unity*, partially translated by Laurence G. Thompson, Kang Youwei borrows eclectically from Western physics, Darwin's evolution theory, Marxism, and also, it seems, Plato's *Republic* and Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, although no precise references support this conjecture. The name of Darwin is mentioned twice. Kang explains that he accepts the theory of evolution but rejects the underlying notion of competition and natural selection. He also speaks of "Darwin's Utopia" (Kang Youwei 1958: 84), but the translator admits that he does not know what the author may have meant here. Darwin is one of the very few European philosophers Kang explicitly cites. He also refers to Mr. Fu (Fourier), "who wanted to support [groups of] a thousand persons by means of large 'well-fields' of ten [square] *li*" (211). However, Kang is more generous in mentioning political and historical figures, such as Bismarck, Napoleon, and Columbus. References to Marx are lacking, but Kang must have heard of the struggle between labor and capital, and the increasing disparity between the rich and the poor as a result of the use of machines, to which he refers (213). His own philosophy is expected to overcome the class conflict. The attempts to realize communism, Kang writes, failed during the French Revolution, and "even America up to the present has likewise been completely unable to carry it out" (212). The Chinese term for 'communism' used here is *gongchan zhi fa* (method of work production), with *gong* (first tone) meaning 'work,' which is a near-homonym of *gong* (fourth tone) meaning 'common' in the now current *gongchan zhuyi* (common production-ism). In speaking of an attempt to realize communism in America, Kang probably thinks of Bellamy's utopia and his Nationalist movement. Like Bellamy, Kang Youwei rejects the idea of class struggle and violent revolution. However, Bellamy's name is not explicitly mentioned, nor is that of Plato. But Kang must have been aware of the latter's work, as may appear from his remark about Socrates – somewhat surprisingly in the context of a discussion of erotic relations between men (251).

Feng Youlan (1953: vol. 2, 686) observes that Kang's argument is based on the fundamental ethical conviction that "all men possess a mind which

cannot bear to see the suffering of others, and that it is the existence of this mind that makes the teachings of the Great Unity possible,” a view which coincides with Mencius’ saying that “no man is devoid of a heart sensitive to the suffering of others” (11a: 6) but at the same time is so general that it could be traced to Western sources as well. Kang exhorts us to eliminate the restrictions that divide human beings:

First, let us eliminate the national sphere and unify the great world. Second, let us eliminate the class sphere and bring equality to all men. Third, let us eliminate the racial sphere and amalgamate the different races of mankind. Fourth, let us eliminate the sphere of physical division and maintain independence (for women as well as for men). Fifth, let us eliminate the sphere of the family and become “citizens of Heaven.” Sixth, let us eliminate the occupational sphere and foster means of livelihood common to all. Seventh, let us eliminate the sphere of political disorder and institute a government of Universal Peace. Eighth, let us eliminate the sphere of species and extend our love to all sentient beings. Ninth, let us eliminate the sphere of suffering and push on to the highest happiness. (Quoted in Feng Youlan 1953: vol. 2, 689)

The *Book of Great Unity* is a mixture of Chinese and Western utopian thinking. The last words of the quoted fragment, “highest happiness,” are a translation of a Buddhist term, *ji le* (Sanskrit: *sukhavati*), which indicates the Western Paradise of Buddhism. However, in general Kang Youwei is closer to Confucianism than to Buddhism, rejecting, for instance, the idea of deserting one’s family and not taking care of one’s parents. Again like Bellamy, Kang expects much of technological progress in the future world state. People will live in huge air-conditioned public apartments and eat in large common dining halls. Large airships, propelled by electricity or some other fine substance, will transport them to all parts of the globe. The world state will emerge within two or three centuries, have a universal language, and be governed by a people’s world assembly, elected through universal suffrage. Migration and intermarriage will gradually merge the various races, and class distinctions will also disappear. Women will enjoy the same rights and perform the same tasks as men, which is reminiscent of the Taiping ideology but also of Plato’s *Republic*. The family will vanish, and its functions – again as in Plato – will be performed by state-operated nurseries and schools. As in Plato, More, Morris, Bellamy, and other utopians, there will be no private ownership of agricultural, industrial, or com-

mercial enterprises, which all are under common supervision. Longevity is a goal and medical doctors feel responsible for increasing the life span of their patients, which may be extended to several centuries – a point that stood high on Bacon’s agenda and was resumed by James Hilton in his description of Shangri-La. In case of incurable illness euthanasia is admitted. Religions such as Christianity and Islam will wither away, and even Confucianism will have completed its historic mission so that the minds of the people will turn to Daoism and Buddhism. “After the Great Unity,” Kang Youwei concludes, “there will first come the study of the immortals and then that of Buddhism. Lesser wisdom will devote itself to the immortals, and higher wisdom to Buddhism. The study of Buddhism, however, will itself be followed by that of ‘roaming in Heaven’” (691).

It seems that after sketching his perfect society, Kang Youwei wrestled with the question of how to make sense of life in such a well-regulated world. Therefore he offers the mystic perspective of Buddhism and “roaming in Heaven.” Bellamy points at a similar religious perspective when he writes about the ultimate return of man to God and the way that stretches before us but whose “end is lost in light” (see above, chapter 11). In Kang Youwei’s as well as in Bellamy’s utopia, the escape into a mystic experience is to prevent us from asking any further – admittedly unanswerable – questions.

Kang Youwei’s utopianism had an enormous impact on later developments. The reverberations of the *Book of Great Unity* as well as Kang’s earlier publications were not restricted to the years before 1949. In the summer of 1958 Mao Zedong saw the *Book of Great Unity* as a source of inspiration for the introduction of the People’s Communes (Hua Shiping 2009).

The May Fourth Movement, political turbulence, and the dystopian response

The history of China in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is an epitome of chaos caused by various and partly contradictory political developments: a diminishing authority of the central government over the provinces, bribery and political assassination, warlordism, huge debts to foreign banks, various attempts to introduce a parliamentary system, the rise of political parties, and a fundamental cultural reorientation including all-out Westernization. The major events, such as the abolition of the Confucian examination system in 1905 and its replacement by modern schools with a Westernized curriculum; the death of both Cixi, the Empress Dow-

ger, as well as Guangxu in November 1908; the deposition of her successor and the end of the Qing dynasty in 1911-12; a brief interim period during which Sun Yat-sen acted as president; the formal founding of the Republic in 1912 with Yuan Shikai as a first president who, however, appeared to have monarchical ambitions but died four years later – these facts cannot tell the whole story, which is one that defies any summary description. Whoever has studied this period will understand the fear of China's current central government that it might lose control and endanger the unity of China by giving up the infelicitous one-party system and its authoritarian rule.

Towards the end of World War I, in 1917, China decided to declare war on Germany, hoping that it would be included in the peace negotiations. However, Japan, also on the side of the allied forces against Germany, had already taken over the German possessions in Shandong province, including the port of Tsingtao (Qingdao). At the peace conference in Paris the Chinese delegation appeared incapable of persuading the allies to restore Chinese sovereignty over the former German areas. This triggered a huge patriotic demonstration in Beijing near the gate of Heavenly Peace (*Tian an men*) on May 4, 1919, mainly led by students from the prestigious Peking National University and other institutions, which in recent years had profited from the newly introduced Western-style curriculum. The professors and students at Peking University formed a new cultural elite that became a significant factor in Chinese politics. Their aim was modernization conceived of as Westernization.

Chen Duxiu (1879-1942), the dean of the Faculty of Letters at Peking University, who had studied in Japan and in France, defended Occidentalism in every respect. He cooperated with Hu Shi (1891-1962), a young professor teaching Chinese philosophy, who had just returned from the United States where he had studied under John Dewey and received his Ph.D. at Columbia University. In 1917 Hu Shi launched the idea of writing in the spoken language (*baihua*) as the classical style (*wenyan*) hardly served to express modern thought. The article was published in *New Youth* (*Xin qingnian*), a journal edited by Chen Duxiu. In May 1918 the same journal printed Lu Xun's short story "A Madman's Diary" (*Kuangren riji*). It was written in the new medium and is one of the most commented upon stories of modern Chinese literature; rightly so because it is an extremely interesting text, both from a general cultural and a strictly literary point of view. To the many interpretations I will add the suggestion to read it as a dystopian narrative.

Lu Xun (1881-1936), who had studied in Japan for seven years and read Western literature in Japanese and German translations, was in particular interested in Russian fiction, of which he translated several novels and short stories, notably the work of M. F. Artsybashev, L. N. Andreyev, V. M. Garshin, and N. V. Gogol, showing a preference for romanticist and symbolist rather than realist fiction (Fokkema 1977). Late in life he translated Gogol's *Dead Souls*, which relates the bizarre fraud of Chichikov who intends to buy up "dead souls" (i.e., the names of serfs who had died since the last census and for whom their owners continued to pay tax) in order to earn money by pawning them. Lu Xun must have been intrigued by the eccentric characters in Russian literature: outcasts, frauds, and idiots, who from an outsider's position present a truthful picture of contemporary society. The first-person narrator in Dostoevsky's anti-utopian *Notes from Underground* is a similar outcast, and so is the madman in Gogol's "Diary of a Madman" (1835), a text which Lu Xun very much admired and imitated in his own story of the same title.

Different from Gogol, Lu Xun introduces the excerpts from the madman's diary as having been written by a sick man who has been cured since. The perspective of the insane appears to offer a more truthful and more penetrating, though slanted, interpretation of the world than that of a normal man. Lu Xun's madman appears to be not mad at all; in a polemical commentary on the Confucian tradition, he castigates the hypocrisy of Confucianism in the sharpest terms, setting its humanitarian ideals against the practice of suppression, humiliation, killing, and suicide, summarized in the hyperbolic metaphor of cannibalism. The madman phrases his criticism as follows:

Everything requires careful consideration if one is to understand it. In ancient times, as I recollect, people often ate human beings, but I am rather hazy about it. I tried to look this up, but my history has no chronology, and each page bears the words: "Virtue and Morality." Since I could not sleep anyway, I read carefully half the night, until I began to see words between the lines, the whole book being filled with the two words – "Eat people." (Lu Xun 1954: 21)

The Chinese text is even more specific than the translation "virtue and morality" and spells out the Confucian values as "benevolence, righteousness, truth [or: the Way], and virtue" (*ren yi dao de* [Lu Xun 1973: vol. 1, 281]). There are more quotations from classical texts and they all serve to

convince the reader that the madman's judgment of four thousand years of Chinese history is correct and that he has good reasons to fear that the people he knows, including his elder brother, want to eat him. The various references to this nasty elder brother are just as many indictments of the Confucian value system. The tenor of the story is to destroy the illusion of a Confucian utopia. The story ends with a call to put an end to the practice of cannibalism: "Perhaps there are still children who have not eaten men? Save the children ... (1954: 30; Chinese text 1973: vol. 1: 291). This appeal to future generations also contradicts Confucian utopianism, which was always bent on restoring a supposedly perfect past.

Also in his other writings Lu Xun often uses the device of telling a story from the point of view of an outcast or underdog. In "The True Story of Ah Q" (*A Q zhengzhuàn*, 1921) the main character is a despicable bastard who repeatedly cheats and is being cheated but never will admit that he has lost face. He ends up being sentenced to death for a crime he did not commit. In fact, he had wanted to participate in robbing his former boss, but no one had asked him to join the gang. As T. A. Hsia (1968) has shown, Lu Xun's oeuvre goes beyond politics and is of a more general human interest.

Leftist Chinese critics in the 1920s and 1930s tried hard to label Lu Xun as a Communist writer, although he never became a member of the Communist Party. Things were extremely complex in the 1930s when Stalin appeared to be in favor of a United Front policy against the threat of National Socialism and Fascism; Lu Xun did not follow that line and emphasized the class struggle instead. The struggle over the political significance of Lu Xun continued after his death, but his fiction and criticism remained accessible in the People's Republic even during the Cultural Revolution, the darkest period of censorship. It was, of course, difficult to outlaw one of the greatest writers of modern Chinese literature, someone who had been praised – though not unconditionally – by Mao Zedong in his political statement about the role of literature in the Communist revolution at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art, the so-called *Yan'an Talks* of 1942.

After the May Fourth demonstration, the literary field became increasingly politicized. Hu Shi appeared an ardent proponent of Dewey's liberal pragmatism, and John Dewey himself was invited to visit China and stayed for more than two years, from May 1919 to July 1921, to lecture at universities and public meetings in eleven provinces (Chow Tse-tsung 1960: 192). Bertrand Russell arrived in the autumn of 1920 and stayed for almost a year,

lecturing in Changsha among other places, where he criticized Russian Communist dictatorship and advocated realizing socialism by peaceful means, a view which Mao Zedong rejected (249n). Chen Duxiu was much impressed by the success of the Bolsheviks in Russia and became a central figure in the secret founding of the Chinese Communist Party in May 1920 and its first Congress in July 1921, attended also by Mao (248).

It was not a long gestation that preceded Chen's or Mao's decision to embrace Communism. Both had seriously considered other options as well. As an adolescent, Mao Zedong (1893-1976) had read about the Reform Movement of Kang Youwei, admiring him greatly. Later, as he confessed to Edgar Snow, Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu became his heroes, but the utopianism that Kang Youwei had dressed up in a Confucian jacket must have stirred a lasting interest in Mao Zedong. Looking back to the period of revolution and reorientation of the 1910s, Mao is reported to have said:

At this time my mind was a curious mixture of ideas of liberalism, democratic reformism, and utopian socialism. I had somewhat vague passions about "nineteenth-century democracy," utopianism, and old-fashioned liberalism, and I was definitely antimilitarist and anti-imperialist. (Snow 1973: 174)

Mao was probably also aware of Japanese experiments with a communal way of life, such as the New Village Movement which was inspired by the utopianism of L.N. Tolstoy (Haga 2011). He was finally attracted to Marxism by the utopian vision it offered of an ideal, classless society. As we will see below (chapter 15), this utopian aspect can be detected easily in his later policies, such as during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution.

In the early 1920s the Communist Party became a strong factor in close but always tense alliance with the Guomindang (the Nationalist Party or KMT), whose leaders, notably Sun Yat-sen (d. 1925), were persuaded to interpret Lenin's New Economic Policy as a rather fundamental mitigation of the class struggle rather than a short-lived tactical move. The public debate remained intense and loud, urging the writers to take sides in the political struggle, as appears for instance from a complaint of Shen Congwen, who in the preface to the second part of his satirical novel *Alice's Travels in China* (*Alisi Zhongguo youji*, 1928) laments that critics wanted to put a political label on his work. His answer is that he "cannot stop talking about maltreated human beings and animals simply because some young self-styled

'revolutionary writers' have called me 'discreditable' (*'gaiside'*)" (Shen Congwen 2002: vol. 3, 146). He claimed the right to remain himself and keep his independence. And that is what Shen Congwen, one of the most gifted writers of modern China, did: in 1949 he decided to stop writing fiction.

Another major writer, Lao She (1899-1966), who from 1924 stayed in England and taught Chinese at the School of Oriental Studies of the University of London, was highly disappointed by what he saw upon his return to China six years later: corruption, economic iniquity, and political confusion. He responded to the situation with a bitter satire, the dystopian novel *City of Cats* (*Mao cheng ji*, 1933). The novel was for a long time ignored but finally republished as part of his collected fiction in 1993.

During his long stay in London, Lao She had become acquainted with English literature, traces of which can be found in his own creative writing. He admired England and can be considered an Occidentalist. In several respects *Cat Country* – to use the title of the English translation by William Lyell – reminds us of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. It also follows the conventional form of the European utopian genre: a journey to an isolated country, a shipwreck (in this case the crash of an airplane), a guide who explains the particularities of the alien civilization, and the miraculous return to "my own great, glorious, and free China" (1970: 284). The bitter irony of the latter phrase will escape no one. The story tells us about a long journey by air to Mars and the plane's crash on that planet, which kills the pilot but leaves the other passenger, who also will be the narrator of the story, unharmed. In between his arrival and his rescue by a French exploration aircraft the first-person narrator reports on the strange, partly upside-down world he has landed in. The people he meets have cat faces, they are lazy, cruel, corrupt, selfish, eager to engage in a civil war, and subservient to foreigners. The national food, reverie leaves (*mi ye*), has the same effect as opium, and the national currency consists of "national spirit" (*guo hun*). The society of cat-people is a caricature of China just before the second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45). The various aspects of social life are extensively discussed: language, education, politics, national heritage, sexual life, and military affairs. The young Scorpion (*Da Xie*), the only inhabitant of Cat City with some common sense, serves as a guide to the observer from Earth, who learns that students graduate on the first day when they go to school, museums do not exhibit the national treasures but sell them to foreigners, young women find foot-binding a good idea, and that the various armies of Cat Country fight each other in order to be the first to surrender to the foreign enemy. Lao She ridicules the ide-

ology of Uncle Ma (*Ma zu zhuyi*) and the politics of Everybody-ism (*Dajia fu si ji*), making a thinly veiled attempt to mock the use of Russian Marxist jargon in the public debate in China. Not only the satirical tone and exaggeration but also the large role the writer attributes to animals or semi-animals reminds of Swift – and later experiments by Bulgakov and Orwell.

Lao She later admitted to having mixed feelings about this novel. He may have found the social criticism too crude and in an essay published in *An Old Ox and a Broken-Down Cart* (*Lao niu po che*, 1937) he called *Cat Country* a failure (1949: 42). It is not impossible that this was Lao She's sincere opinion, since by 1937, the first year of full-scale Japanese aggression, it seemed improper to present the Chinese army metaphorically as a bunch of cowards whose only ambition was to surrender to the foreign aggressors as soon as possible. The other fiction Lao She wrote is rather different from the dystopian *Cat Country*. His *Camel Xiangzi* (*Luotuo Xiangzi*, 1936; English translation 1981) about the life of a rickshaw man is celebrated as one of the great Chinese realist novels. His fiction and drama was much appreciated after 1949 as well, until the Red Guards of the Cultural Revolution took a different view and subjected Lao She to physical harassment and a humiliating interrogation, which drove him to commit suicide by drowning himself in one of Beijing's lakes on August 24, 1966. These events are elaborately documented in the Lao She Museum – his former home – in Beijing, which I visited in the summer of 1999. The museum exhibits photos of Lao She with Chairman Mao and Premier Zhou Enlai in better days, but these influential political leaders failed to prevent the disaster of his premature death. Lao She's persecution and suicide have been recorded by Hong Zicheng in his *History of Contemporary Chinese Literature* (2007: 191, 474).

The period between 1949 and 1979 in China is notorious for the intimidation and violent persecution of writers, but during the 1920s and 1930s writers and critics were also put under political pressure, intimidated, and at times openly persecuted. Many leftist intellectuals moved to the International Settlement in Shanghai in order to prevent arrest by the Guomindang (KMT) police. Writers had to face the dilemma of keeping their literary intuition intact and continuing to write, while being urged to support the current policies of the Communist Party or the KMT and to sign the political manifestoes of the different pressure groups. I assume that most writers hated the politicization of the literary field, which left little opportunity for individual reflection. Under these circumstances the dystopian imagi-

nation, as is seen in *Cat Country*, appeared stronger than the eutopian impulse. Moreover, too many utopian philosophies and optimistic sociopolitical programs were available already, from Confucianism to Liberalism, Marxism, and Sun Yat-sen's Nationalism, and too often the attempts to realize them had had negative results. The clash between so many ideals on paper and the frightening reality in which one had to live called for a strong dismissive response. Dystopian fiction provided a vehicle for such intellectual resistance. This may explain the scarcity of eutopian fiction in the first half of the twentieth century in China.

H. G. Wells and the Modern Utopia

As a prolific writer and prophet of optimism and progress, Herbert George Wells (1866-1946) played a crucial role in the history of utopian fiction. After a few stories which expressed his endeavor to wake up humanity and draw attention to the dangers ahead of us, including the disaster of increasing class conflict and the astronomical catastrophe of an earth inevitably cooling off, he projected different fictional blueprints of a world state unencumbered by a history of revolution. His attempts to revitalize the utopian tradition attracted not only a wide readership but also the interest of state leaders. Single-handedly he appeared to offer an alternative to Marxist revolution, Communist ideals, and Fascist politics. In the 1920s and later, however, he clearly overplayed his hand and was blamed for being naive. Nevertheless, his keen interest in scientific and technological innovation as well as his involvement in contemporary political developments made his work preeminently modern. Undoubtedly a man of high intelligence, his weakness was that he wanted too much and too soon. By the time of World War II, he had forfeited almost all credit that he had enjoyed at the turn of the century. He explicitly situated himself in the tradition of utopian writing and must have deplored the strong anti-utopian reactions triggered by his work. The dystopian narratives by Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell were a critical response to Wells's eutopian fiction as well as to current sociopolitical developments.

Still, dystopian themes and situations occurred in Wells's early fiction too, notably in *The Time Machine* (1895) and *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899). *The Time Machine* postulates a fourth dimension along which it is possible to travel by means of a vehicle designed by the time traveler. He finds that, more than eight hundred thousand years from now, mankind has evolved into two species, the Eloi, frail little creatures with the intellect of a child who live above ground, and the ape-like Morlocks, who live in a subterranean world. The Eloi, who in a somewhat different role occur also in Houellebecq's *La Possibilité d'une île*, live their decadent life in a quasi-paradisiacal landscape. Unchallenged by competitors and pampered by utopian conditions, they have lost the vigor and energy they once had. The simian

Morlocks originally were factory workers. With the advance of industrialization the factories had been relocated under ground and the workers had followed suit, thus confirming the split between the well-to-do Eloi in their dilapidated palaces and the poor, uncivilized Morlocks in their underground dwellings. In the end the latter grasp power from the Eloi and take over control of the world. With this novel Wells warned – as the biologist T. H. Huxley had done earlier – that evolution was morally blind and needed active human intervention in order to avoid a situation in which class conflict turned into brute violence (Hillegas 1967).

When the Sleeper Wakes similarly offers a grim picture of the struggle between the haves and have-nots, between capitalist tyrants and the oppressed proletariat in the twenty-second century. Again, there are subterranean factories, whose labor force is partly inspired by the description of labor conscripts in Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. Wells is indebted to Bellamy in other respects as well, but he also introduces new themes that recur in later dystopian writing, such as the opposition between the modern megacity and the wild countryside around it. The discovery of erotic love between humans who wish to escape from the oppressive and regimented life lived in a well-ordered city, as in "A Story of the Days to Come" (1897), is another important theme that was to be returned to in later anti-utopian writing by Zamyatin, Huxley, Orwell, Bradbury, and Houellebecq.

Primarily, however, Wells owes his social and political influence to his *eutopian* fiction, first of all *A Modern Utopia*, and not to his earlier pessimistic extrapolations based on class conflict and labor unrest in the nineteenth century.

A Modern Utopia and Men Like Gods

After publishing his thoughts on future trends in *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought* (1901) and *Mankind in the Making* (1903), Wells expressed his utopian ideas as fiction in *A Modern Utopia* (1905). The text can indeed be considered a novel, be it a peculiar one, close to an expository argument and much relying on the notion of hypothesis. The hypothetical imagination may remind us of the main theme and constructional principle of Butler's *Erewhon* (1872), but can also be seen as prefiguring the intellectualist reflection in modernist writers such as Joyce, Proust, and Mann. Virginia Woolf's harsh criticism of Wells and other Edwardians in "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown" (1924) was

motivated by Wells's optimism, his "materialism" and neglect of psychology, and his trust in the possibility of a well-ordered society, rather than by his resorting to hypothetical conjectures which, as a method, was very close to her own.

In a brief introduction, printed in italics, the author explains the hybrid nature of the text, which is both fiction and essay. There is an ongoing interaction in *A Modern Utopia* between the fictional narrative of two men who suddenly enter another, utopian planet that in appearance and geography resembles Earth and the critical discussion of earlier utopias involving references to Plato, More, Bacon, Campanella, Cabet, Bellamy, Morris, and others. Returning from mountain climbing in the Alps, the two men look for the inn where they had stayed the night, but by a whim of the imagination they are transposed to the other planet, beyond Sirius, light-years away from Earth: "Suppose that we were indeed so translated even as we stood," one of them says (1967: 13). The hypothesis has effect and thus the disappearance of the old familiar hotels in Lucerne is explained by referring to the hypothetical method: they have "vanished by hypothesis" (177). The same method is also used in the description of the utopian world state. It is a clever device that corresponds with the several possible motives people may have in trying to construct a better future, as was suggested by Gorter in *Pan I*.

Since "Darwin quickened the thought of the world" (5), modern utopia cannot be static and must be dynamic and open-ended instead. The description of life on the utopian planet is offered by way of hypothesis, a proposition that can be improved or replaced by other proposals. Apparently, Wells's intention was to stimulate thinking about the future of the world, which, a century ago, was believed to be no less globalized than it actually is. And more thinking must be done, he argues. In *News from Nowhere*, Morris's assumption that humankind would suddenly become wise, tolerant, noble, perfect, and able to live without government had been unrealistic; Wells posits that the "Will to Live sustains for evermore a perpetuity of aggressions" (7), although he emphasizes that the *conditions* of desire and conflict – the conventions and traditions, creeds and customs – can change. He holds that "the fertilising conflict of individualities is the ultimate meaning of personal life" (10-11) – a view that he tacitly abandoned in later years.

Wells's world state is what we now call Eurocentric, with a registry of births and deaths in Paris and a government center in London where the ruling council of the world assembles. Racism is not an issue in Wells's

utopia; in fact, he repudiates the concept of race. Utopia is a well-ordered society with freedom of movement for everyone and guarantees for the respect of privacy, although this appears to be contradicted by the precise registration of the whereabouts of each individual. Its ethic is democratic in principle, stipulating that a person's rights are limited "by the rights of others, and by considerations affecting the welfare of the community as a whole" (32).

In this utopia there is room for individual love. Wells objects to Plato and Campanella, who "carried communism to its final point and prescribed even a community of husbands and wives" (86). The state will not interfere with marriage as long as a man or woman remains childless. Wells follows Malthus in suggesting that the utopian world state will control the increase of its population, estimated in 1905 at 1.5 billion – almost the size of the present population of China alone. And he refers to Darwin in proposing:

an acceleration of physical and mental evolution, by preventing the birth of those who would in the unrestricted interplay of natural forces be born to suffer and fail. ... The ideal of a scientific civilisation is to prevent those weaklings being born. (181)

In order to have children, the prospective parents must demonstrate they have a certain minimum level of personal efficiency and are economically independent, above a certain age, and free of any transmissible disease. Regulating procreation in this way comes close to eugenics, a topic that Wells addressed in *Men Like Gods* (1923) and that is central to any modern utopian thinking; it is, for instance, a major theme in Houellebecq's *Les Particules élémentaires* and *La Possibilité d'une île*. The ground is slippery here, and Wells's propositions are certainly incompatible with present-day concepts of human rights. In his utopia criminals are excluded from parentage and isolated in island prisons, where men and women are separated in "island monasteries and island nunneries" (1967: 144), an idea which may have been inspired by the small islands in the Chiemsee, a lake in Bavaria, Germany – one of them originally occupied by nuns and another by monks.

There are limits to democracy in Wells's world state. "Utopian organisation demands more powerful and efficient methods of control than electoral methods can give" (258). The organization of the state depends very much on a class of voluntary nobility, the "Samurai." This caste is open "to every physically and mentally healthy adult ... who will observe its prescribed austere rules of living" (259). Wells distinguishes four classes: the

Poietic, to which the Samurai belong; the Kinetic, who have somewhat less imagination but still are clever and capable; the Dull, characterized by insufficient imagination; and the Base, the lowest class of people, who are egoistic, dishonest, cruel, and lack a moral sense. He postulates that poietic or spiritual development must precede political reconstruction: "Behind all this material order, these perfected communications, perfected public services and economic organisations, there must be men and women of will" (173). Literature is supposed to have a function here, but it must be an edifying literature showing how "the more immediate objects of desire" can be put into a secondary place – it will be "a living literature to sustain the harmony of their general activity" (173). Wells, the novelist, makes no exception to the rule that a utopian society demands of literature that it fits in with preconceived ethical ideals. Although he does not mention censorship or the destruction of existing texts, as Mercier had done, Wells's cunning rhetoric leaves little room for discussing the possibility of a free imagination or intellectual thought that would deviate from "the harmony of their general activity." The oppositions Wells constructs can be misleading, as for instance in his observation that "a socialism or a communism is not necessarily a slavery, and there is no freedom under Anarchy" (33), as if anarchy is the only thinkable alternative to socialism or communism.

The Samurai are expected to willingly submit to the utopian ideal, in which collective bliss is more important than individual preferences. No wonder that they have agreed to wear a uniform, and as to their moral and intellectual qualities and their duties they resemble Plato's guardians. Although celibacy is not prescribed, they live and behave almost like monks, more of the Buddhist than of the Roman Catholic kind. The Samurai began as a private aggressive cult but, since the time that peace was established forever, the fighting has ceased. Now they form the core of the utopian government and they are the only ones who have the right to vote. However, thinking further about the order of the Samurai, we are bound to conclude that among them there must be supervisors – and supervisors of supervisors – those who have the right to judge whether new candidates are qualified to become members of the order and to check that members, once they have been admitted to the order, remain loyal to its rules of conduct. Wells is vague about this, but I suspect that the order cannot do without a hierarchical organization such as in the Roman Catholic priesthood or in a Communist Party.

Wells's preference for clear-cut hierarchies, which in fact restrict the freedom of thought and action of individual citizens, makes his utopia less

attractive. This may be the inevitable result of the detailed texture of his utopia. He deals with all aspects of society in a way that is more complete than in *News from Nowhere* and most other utopian fiction. At the end of his novel he wards off possible criticism by emphasizing again that his utopia is no more than a proposal and that each generation will have its own version of utopia, until at last these utopias will serve as blueprints for shaping the final world state – a process of trial and error that on a limited scale can also be witnessed in present politics. I am thinking of the increasing role of the United Nations and its peacekeeping forces, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the International Criminal Court, and similar institutions.

The impact of *A Modern Utopia* was enormous. Henry James and Joseph Conrad immediately wrote letters to Wells expressing their unrestricted admiration (Hillegas 1967). Sydney Olivier, writing in the *Fabian News* of August 1925, judged that “Mr. Wells’ clean world does seem possible; and he makes us feel that it would be really agreeable to live in” (Parrinder 1972: 111). *A Modern Utopia* brought the discussion an important step forward by offering a concept of utopia in terms of a world state instead of an island or a small isolated community and by attributing a crucial role to science and technology to the benefit of humanity.

Did *Men Like Gods*, appearing eighteen years later, add anything significant to the concept of utopia developed in the earlier novel? A striking difference is that the utopia in *Men Like Gods* reflects a stage three thousand years later in the evolution of sociopolitical life. By then, government has completely withered away. The utopia in *Men Like Gods* has “no parliament, no politics, no private wealth, no business competition, no police nor prisons, no lunatics, no defectives nor cripples” (1923: 66). Education and eugenics have made any manifestation of government superfluous, but the registration of all individuals and their whereabouts still exists: “Everyone was indexed and noted” (225). Inferior individuals and class differences have disappeared from society. Everyone seems to be one of the Samurai. The further stage of utopian development in *Men Like Gods* implies also that the hypothetical method that guided the eutopian construction of *A Modern Utopia* has made way for a more straightforward description of the eutopian status quo. However, as Lychnis, a utopian woman, imparts, research about particular improvements still continues and may lead to further changes in the system.

We learn about all this through the observations of a small group of people who were traveling in different cars on a highway in England when they

were suddenly transposed to “some other dimension of space” (23). This is the unintended result of an experiment by scientists in a parallel universe; Einstein is mentioned in this context. One of the Englishmen guesses that they are in Nowhere, “or if you prefer the Greek of it, we are in Utopia” (24). It is a world where all decisions are taken by groups of experts who coordinate things in such a way that general freedom is secured. To the Earthlings it looks like anarchy. The journalist among the visitors, Mr. Barnstaple, does not see any money and argues that “by all outward appearance this might be a Communism such as was figured in a book we used to value on Earth, a book called *News from Nowhere*” (230). Having listened with great interest to a Utopian explaining that the work conducted in the various professions is carried out “in harmony and due proportion” without a central executive, Barnstaple also sees similarities with “the pluralistic state,” a concept developed by Harold Laski, and adds:

Even the Chinese have it. A Pekin[g] professor, Mr. S. C. Chang, has written a pamphlet on what he calls “Professionalism.” I read it only a few weeks ago. . . . He points out how undesirable it is and how unnecessary for China to pass through a phase of democratic politics on the western model. He wants China to go right straight on to a collateral independence of functional classes, mandarins, industrials, agricultural workers and so forth, much as we seem to find it here. Though that of course involves an educational revolution. (Wells 1923: 54-55)

Mr. S. C. Chang can be identified as the real-life Chinese jurist Zhang Shizhao (1881-1973), who studied in Japan and the United Kingdom, became a well-known lawyer, and was active as a politician in the People’s Republic of China, and, among other roles, was a delegate to the National People’s Congress (Chow Tse-tsung 1960: 43). In 1923 Wells refers to him with apparent approval as defending a corporatist organization of society, which in fact is also akin to social practices in present-day China. But where China has a Communist Party, which can adjudicate in cases when the “harmony and due proportion” between the various functional classes get into hot water (with all the negative consequences of such nondemocratic intervention), such an adjudicating institution apparently is not necessary in the utopian society where men are like gods.

Wells’s fiction includes elements of real-life politics not only in the case of S. C. Chang, but also in that of the character of Catskill. Modeled after Winston Churchill (Hillegas 1967: 78), Catskill leads an unsuccessful at-

tempt of the group of Earthlings to seize power from the utopians and build an empire where earthly values would prevail. Barnstaple does not join the revolt and criticizes Catskill's old-fashioned imperialism, which is incompatible with the utopian ideals. Catskill's ideology is that pain and hardship, competition and conflict, are essential characteristics of human life. The words Catskill uses in a dialogue with the utopian Urthred is reminiscent of the rhetoric of "blood, toil, tears and sweat" uttered by Winston Churchill so successfully during World War II – a thing Wells, of course, could not know in 1923:

At times life reeks and stinks. I admit it, Sir, I admit it. We go down far below your extremest experiences into discomforts and miseries, anxieties and anguish of soul and body, into bitterness, terror and despair. Yea. But do we not also go higher? I challenge you with that. What can you know in this immense safety of the intensity, the frantic, terror-driven intensity, of many of our efforts? What can you know of reprieves and interludes and escapes? Think of our happinesses beyond your ken! (Wells 1923: 82-83)

Urthred, the spokesman for Utopia, reproves the Earthlings that they do not see what "Mother Nature" is, do not see that she is "purposeless and blind," and therefore must be checked. Catskill's argument was carried on in somewhat different terms by George Orwell, who distrusted the idea of progress, in particular a progress based on the ubiquitous use of machines. In 1937 he wrote: "The truth is that many of the qualities we admire in human beings can only function in opposition to some kind of disaster, pain or difficulty; but the tendency of mechanical progress is to eliminate disaster, pain and difficulty" (Orwell 1937: 226). Orwell's judgment shows how realistic Catskill's opposition to Urthred's utopianism is. Yet, Wells sides with the Urthred he has invented and remains loyal to his own ideal of gradual evolutionary progress through education and eugenics. At the end of the road Wells, like Bellamy, rather unexpectedly sees the evolution towards utopia being crowned by a religious epiphany. In the words of a utopian spokesman:

Some day here and everywhere, Life of which you and I are but anticipatory atoms and eddies, life will awaken indeed, one and whole and marvelous, like a child awaking to conscious life. It will open its drowsy eyes and stretch itself and smile, looking the mystery of God in the face as one

meets the morning sun. We shall be there then, all that matters of us, you and I. (Wells 1923: 253)

Was Wells a socialist?

Like all utopianists, Wells was an impatient man who wanted to accelerate the evolution of humankind and see his dreams come true. Therefore he also engaged in journalism and politics. Impressed by his nonfiction meditations *Anticipations* and *Mankind in the Making*, Beatrice and Sydney Webb invited Wells to join the Fabian Society, which he did. He tried to change the Fabians into a community of Samurai but met much resistance, and he resigned in 1908. Parrinder observes that Wells's attempts "to engage in direct political activity, notably his campaign to reform the Fabian Society, often ended in fiasco" (1972: 3).

Was Wells a socialist? In a long essay, published in Petersburg in 1922, Yevgeny Zamyatin gave an affirmative answer and quoted Wells from his introduction to a Russian edition of his novels as having said:

I have always been a socialist, but not a socialist according to Marx. ...

For me, socialism is not a strategy or a conflict of classes: I see in it a plan for the reconstruction of human life, for the replacement of disorder by order. (Quoted in Parrinder 1972: 266)

However, in reading *A Modern Utopia*, Zamyatin is struck by the paradox of a supposedly socialist society led by a spiritual aristocracy, the Samurai. From a theoretical socialist or communist point of view, this is sheer heresy. I am inclined to share Zamyatin's doubts, but in the first decade of the twentieth century, very few critics objected to the contradiction. Apparently, it is only after the October Revolution and the introduction of universal suffrage in several European nations that intellectuals become sensitive to the contradictory combination of socialism on the one hand and a government based on a hierarchical division of society on the other. In reaction to the consequences of the dictatorship of the Communist Party, Zamyatin wrote his anti-utopian novel *We (My)* in 1920-21. Similarly, Gorter could not accept the liquidation of democracy through the abolition of the workers' councils. And on the basis of *News from Nowhere* we may assume that Morris too, had he lived long enough to see the practices of Communism in the Soviet Union, would have abhorred the lack of democratic freedom. But

Wells persisted in his opinion that the Samurai were to play an essential part in future government. In 1934 he wrote that *A Modern Utopia* “remains to this day one of the most vital and successful of my books,” and defended his invention of the Samurai class by saying:

The experience of the thirty years that have passed since I launched this scheme, and particularly the appearance of such successful organizations as the Communist Party and the Italian Fascists has greatly strengthened my belief in the essential soundness of this conception of the governing order of the future. (1934a: 659)

It is such statements that have made people think of Wells as politically naive.

The reception of Wells’s oeuvre in Russia was most remarkable. Par-rinder mentions that at least seven sets of his collected works were published in Russian, the first appearing in St. Petersburg in 1901, the second in 1908, whereas the third, under the editorial direction of Zamyatin, began to appear in 1918. By that time Wells was an international celebrity. He had visited the United States in 1906, where he had an interview with President Theodore Roosevelt. He traveled to Russia in January 1914 and again in 1920; during the latter visit he had an interview with Lenin through an introduction from Gorky. As Lovat Dickson records, Lenin talked about practical things such as restoring the economy through the electrification of industry and did not show much interest in theoretical ideas about education or changing the mentality of the people, topics raised by Wells. Legend has it that Lenin exclaimed after talking to Wells: “What a bourgeois he is!” (Dickson 1971: 285). Some years later, in 1934, Wells talked with President Franklin Roosevelt about his New Deal policy, and in the same year he had a three-hour interview with Stalin.

The *New Statesman and Nation* published a verbatim record of the *Stalin-Wells Talk* as a separate brochure in December 1934, together with commentary by Bernard Shaw, J. M. Keynes, and Ernst Toller. Wells confidently opens the dialogue by telling Stalin that he recently saw Franklin Roosevelt and “tried to ascertain what his leading ideas were. Now I have come to you to ask you what you are doing to change the world” (Wells 1934b: 4).

To what extent is what follows a reliable record of what was said? As Wells admitted, Stalin and he had to talk through an interpreter, the experienced Mr. Umansky of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who made notes of what Stalin said in Russian, which he subsequently translated into

English, and notes of Wells's interventions in English to be translated into Russian (Wells 1934a: 803). Neither Stalin nor Wells could check to what extent the translation by the interpreter was indeed accurate. We must also assume that, before the "verbatim record" was released, considerable editing took place. Therefore, the text cannot be considered to be the reliable report of a spontaneous dialogue; yet the exchange as we know it is rather revealing.

Wells argues that the so-called capitalist countries are on their way to socialism. The old financial world is collapsing. Capitalists have to learn to grasp the spirit of socialism. "The effect of the ideas of Roosevelt's 'new deal' is most powerful, and in my opinion they are socialist ideas," Wells says (1934b: 5). He believes that there are plenty of capable and devoted engineers and economists who are not aiming at personal profit. He relates that he has been engaged in propaganda for socialism and cosmopolitanism, has been talking to many people, and has come to regard the "simple class-war antagonism as nonsense" (8) – a view which Stalin of course cannot accept. Unabashed, Wells replies: "It seems to me that I am more to the Left than you, Mr. Stalin" (9).

Stalin appears to have been well briefed before the meeting: "You, Mr. Wells, evidently start out with the assumption that all men are good." And he calls Wells's expectation that the technical intelligentsia in England and France are willing to abandon capitalism utopian. I wonder whether Wells knew that the word "utopian" in Communist jargon was a strong invective. He betrayed his naivety when he tried to persuade Stalin to give up the idea of the class war. Equally naive is his observation that, though only one day in Moscow, he has "already seen the happy faces of healthy men and women," which he considers a confirmation that "something very considerable is being done here" (18). In order to please Stalin, Wells stooped down to assert that the capitalist world was collapsing and "degenerating into gangsterism" (13). On the other hand Stalin, who knew what totalitarian rule is like, in an oblique way taught Wells a lesson: "What will you do with the Fascists? Argue with them? Try to convince them? But this will have no effect upon them at all" (13). Wells did not notice the implied question: What do you want to do here? Argue with me?

No wonder G. B. Shaw, always looking for an opportunity to criticize Wells, finds fault with his part of the dialogue. The main objection is that Wells did not respectfully listen to Stalin and without due reverence confronted him with his own opinions about a "World State without Revolution" (26). In a second reaction Shaw even praises Stalin to the skies. Stalin,

he says, is not a dictator and should be treated “with the most distinguished consideration” (41). And the Communist Party is “a self-dedicated democratic priesthood,” more or less resembling the Samurai of Wells’s own invention (39). Was Shaw naive as well, or was he carried away by his own rhetoric for the sake of polemic? I hesitate to call Shaw naive, but he was certainly overstating his case. However, Wells’s naivety is unsurpassed. In his autobiography he summarizes his impression of Stalin as follows:

I have never met a man more candid, fair and honest, and to these qualities it is, and to nothing occult or sinister, that he owes his tremendous undisputed ascendancy in Russia. ... He owes his position to the fact that no one is afraid of him and everybody trusts him. (1934a: 806)

This is a stupendous error in view of the struggle for power, the purges, and show trials that characterized Stalin’s regime in the 1930s.

George Orwell is one of the critics who exposed Wells’s naivety. In 1941 he argued that, although “up to 1914 Wells was in the main a true prophet,” more recently, contrary to his predictions, scientific progress had not resulted in an increase of common sense. He charged Wells with underestimating the forces of nationalism, religious bigotry, and feudal loyalty, and therefore being incapable of understanding Stalin or Hitler. Wells, he concluded, “is too sane to understand the modern world” (Orwell 1998: 540).

In spite of his serious attempts at political engagement, Wells was denounced by the Webbs, snubbed by Stalin, and for different reasons rebuked by Shaw and Orwell. As in the case of Morris and Gorter, Hong Xiuquan and Kang Youwei, it appeared again that on the real political battlefield there was no place for a utopianist.

Dystopian Fiction in the Soviet Union, Proletkult, and Socialist-Realist Utopianism

Zamyatin, Bulgakov, and Platonov – writers of dystopian fiction – are included in the Russian canon of the twentieth century proposed by Igor Sukhikh in the volume of essays he published under the title *Books of the Twentieth Century* (*Knigi XX veka*, 2001). It is a small canon that comprises only seven more writers, among whom are Chekhov, Gorky, Nabokov, and Fadeyev, but not Ostrovsky, Gladkov, or Sholokhov. Of course, Sukhikh's canon represents a subjective selection. Yet the difference from official Soviet literary history is too striking not to notice. The history of Soviet Russian literature published by the Soviet Academy of Sciences in three volumes in 1958–61 (*Istoriya Russkoj Sovetskoi literatury*) mentioned Platonov only once, as a war correspondent, while Bulgakov received three brief mentions, and only Zamyatin was treated slightly more elaborately though without any particular appreciation of his work.

Nowadays, Yevgeny Zamyatin (1884–1937) is generally considered to have written one of the most impressive anti-utopian texts of the twentieth century. His novel *We* (*My*, 1921), of which an English translation appeared in New York in 1924, preceded both Huxley's and Orwell's dystopian narratives. Huxley claims not to have been acquainted with Zamyatin's novel when he wrote *Brave New World*, but Orwell was aware of *We* and expressed his admiration for it in a review published prior to the publication of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Hollis 1956: 199).

Zamyatin may not have known Souvestre's mid-nineteenth-century dystopian novel *Le Monde tel qu'il sera*, but he was well acquainted with H. G. Wells's early dystopian fiction of the 1890s, as appears from his long essay on Wells in the Russian journal *Epokha* (Zamyatin 1922, translated in Zamyatin 1970: 259–290). In several details he was probably also inspired by the Russian anti-utopian novel *A Night in 2217* (*Vécher v 2217*, 1906) by Nikolai Fyodorov, which is situated in a city – built of stone, steel, and glass and covered by a half-transparent roof that hides the sky – where everybody earns according to their needs and family life has been abolished. Sexual services are rendered on an impersonal basis and children are brought up by the state. One citizen resists the felicity imposed by decree but her

search for an alternative ends with suicide (Fortunati and Trousson 2000).

We circulated in manuscript and was widely acclaimed by the literary critic Yury Tynyanov, among others. Though well received in literary circles, the novel could not be published in the Soviet Union for political reasons until 1988. An abbreviated version of *We* appeared in Russian in the Prague émigré journal *Volya Rossii* in 1927, which provided ammunition for the author's critics and brought him into severe difficulties. Still in the late 1950s, long after Zamyatin's death, the *Istoriya Russkoj Sovetskoj literatury* interpreted the publication of *We* in Prague as a discreditable sign of "mental emigration."

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Zamyatin studied naval engineering at the Polytechnic Institute in St. Petersburg. He was arrested for his political activities, but completed his studies in 1908. In 1916 the government sent him to England in order to supervise the construction of some icebreakers that Russia had ordered, and he settled for more than a year in Newcastle-on-Tyne. However, news about the turbulent political developments of 1917 made him return to Petersburg in September of that year and join the revolution. By this time Zamyatin had written and published several stories and was considered an experienced writer.

The October Revolution was initially very successful, but it rapidly lost its luster when Lenin decided to dissolve the workers' councils and invested himself with almost dictatorial power in a situation of civil war, foreign intervention, economic misfortune, and shortage of food. Zamyatin was critical of the centralization of power in the hands of one man. In *We* he painted a grim picture of a totalitarian state ruled by a "Benefactor" who determines the people's social life in every respect. This quasi-utopia was established after a two-hundred-year-long war that had killed most of the people. Only 0.2 percent of the population had survived that devastating war, but the survivors are supposed to be always happy. Different from Souvestre or Wells, Zamyatin's dystopia is an extrapolation from things he saw happening in his own country, and this adds a particular weight to his always keen observations.

As a naval engineer, Zamyatin was acquainted with mathematics and recent developments in technology, so his play with mathematical metaphors has a substantial basis. At the end of the novel, in the 39th chapter or "record" in the diary of the first-person narrator called D-503, someone is quoted who claims to have discovered that there is no infinity and that everything can be calculated. But D-503 wonders what might exist beyond our finite universe, a question that remains unanswered. Similarly, the spec-

ulations about irrational numbers, such as $\sqrt{-1}$, do not lead to any solution. Undecidability challenges the exclusive reliance on the logic of reason that reigns in the thousand-year-old utopia.

Another characteristic of Zamyatin's fiction are his direct or indirect references to nineteenth-century Russian literature, in particular to Dostoevsky, who in *Notes from Underground* also speculates about arithmetic and impugns the idea that twice two would always be four. Or to mention another example: in *Devils*, Shigalyov, a revolutionary utopist, proposes to divide humankind into two unequal parts, one-tenths supervising the other nine-tenths, who must be educated on a scientific basis and deprived of their will (chapter 9). This is precisely what Zamyatin describes: people deprived of their private desires and imagination and who are controlled by a group of guardians (*kbraniteli*) unconditionally loyal to the Benefactor. The idea is reminiscent of Plato's *Republic* as well. Moreover, as we shall see, Zamyatin refers to the "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor" incorporated in *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Zamyatin profited from the seething cultural situation immediately after the October Revolution, in particular, from his contacts with the Serapion Brothers and with critics close to Russian Formalism. Not only Tynyanov, but also Vinogradov and Eikhenbaum discussed Zamyatin's narrative style (Striedter 1969). He was certainly acquainted with the early essays of Viktor Shklovsky, which called for a vivid narrative with striking, unexpected metaphors. However, in 1927 Shklovsky, motivated by political expediency, considered *We* "a failure" (Kern 1988: 50). No longer able to publish in the Soviet Union, Zamyatin wrote a letter to Stalin in 1931 asking permission to leave the country. With Maxim Gorky's intercession, Zamyatin and his wife were permitted to emigrate to Paris, where he died six years later.

The plot of Zamyatin's We

The story of *We* is told through the observations of D-503, the designer of a large rocket, the *Integral*, which is built in order to bring the happy news of the "One State" and its Benefactor to other planets. D-503 keeps a diary and the forty entries or records of that diary, destined to be carried by the *Integral* and addressed to the unknown readers in outer space, constitute the novel. It has been called "the best single work of science fiction yet written" (by Ursula Le Guin, quoted on the cover of the 1993 Penguin edition).

D participates in the daily routine of life in a completely regulated society that has put the principles of Taylorism into practice. As appears from the many references in his *Collected Works*, Lenin was very much impressed by Frederick Winslow Taylor's principles of scientific management and industrial efficiency, and Russian readers could have been expected to know about Taylor's management theory and to appreciate the caricature of it in *We*. Every citizen must wake up at the same time and go to the dining hall, where they are allowed to chew exactly fifty times on food that has been prepared on the basis of petroleum. The story does not refer to agriculture or animal husbandry, except for a brief remark that the old, primitive people living a thousand years ago knew about horticulture, poultry farming, and aquaculture, but astonishingly never drew the logical conclusion of eugenics, or the scientific production of children (3rd record). In the One State mating between humans is under the strict control of the government and no father or mother knows who their children are. The idea occurred in Plato's *Republic* (459, 460), including the precedent of the breeding of animals – in Plato's dialogue: hunting dogs, game birds, and horses.

There are animals outside the city on the other side of the Green Wall, where no one is allowed to go; that is where some descendents of the former, primitive people occupy a wild natural landscape. The idea of a strict separation between a highly developed city life and a wild countryside derives from Wells's *When the Sleeper Wakes* and "A Story of the Days to Come." It plays a major role in *We*, also.

In every apartment there is a kind of intercom screen indicating what the next activity of the always single occupant will be. O-90, a woman assigned to D-503, comes to visit him during their common personal hour, the only moment when the "numbers," a word D uses to indicate his fellow citizens, may get permission to lower the blinds of their living room, thus gaining some privacy in the transparent quarters built mainly of glass. When the weather is fine, they can take a walk, but only together with other numbers, marching in ranks of four. All are dressed in blue uniforms carrying golden badges displaying the state number of each individual. D-503 and O-90 decide to join the stream of marching people. O-90 walks on the left-hand side of D, and on his right-hand side are another woman, I-330, and a man whose number begins with S. The four of them turn out to be among the principal characters of the novel. I-330 tries to come into contact with D, by making a remark about his hairy, ape-like hands, a genetic trace of more primitive ancestors, of which D is rather ashamed but which I-330 seems to find attractive. (The theme of a simian appearance occurs also in Wells's

Time Machine, in which the Morlocks are described as uncultivated and primitive people resembling apes.) I-330 arranges for D to receive an order to attend a lecture and a musical performance in a large auditorium with a glass dome, along the lines of London's Crystal Palace. The lecture is about mathematical compositions produced by a machine that can perform three sonatas per hour. In order to show the contrast with the "irrational" music of the early twentieth century, a lady in a dazzling old-fashioned dress enters the stage, seats herself behind a grand piano, and plays some music by the Russian composer Alexander Skryabin, "something wild, spasmodic, jumbled – like their whole life back then, when they didn't have even the faintest adumbration of rational mechanics" (Zamyatin 1993: 18). The ravishing pianist happens to be I-330. D tries to sort out his bewildering impressions by reminding himself that the artists of barbarian times could compose music or literature only in a condition of "epilepsy," a mental illness which they called "inspiration." D of course has been educated with a completely orderly and rational concept of art. The most appreciated literary work of the past that was read at school was the railroad timetable. All art, philosophy, and ethics of ancient times were measured by mathematical principles. In the One State a scientific ethics has been developed, based on subtraction, addition, division, and multiplication (3rd and 4th record).

D looks forward to his personal hour with O that evening at ten o'clock. He hands the duty officer at the entrance of the apartment building his pink ticket and the woman, who is called U, gives him a pass indicating that he may close the blinds for one hour. When O arrives, she expresses the illegal wish to beget a child, a wish which D must ignore since she remains far below the maternal norm.

However, D is increasingly impressed by the charming I-330, and when she phones to invite him for a visit to the Ancient House, a kind of museum about the culture of barbarian times, he does not refuse. Looking into her eyes he feels captive to impenetrable dark forces. Once they have arrived in the Ancient House, the whole atmosphere, exuding from the old furniture, a statue of Buddha, and a picture of Pushkin – the same Pushkin whom Bazarov in *Fathers and Sons* believed it was ridiculous to read – enhances that feeling. I-330 asks D to stay with her in the Ancient House, although she knows that he has other obligations. She offers to persuade a medical doctor she knows well to certify that he is ill and cannot keep the earlier appointment, but D refuses and arrives in time at a lecture on art and sciences.

The next day, on his way to the plant where the *Integral* approaches com-

pletion, D reads in a newspaper about the discovery of traces of a secret organization aiming at the liberation of the numbers from the beneficent yoke of the state. The news makes D reflect on the notions of liberation, freedom, and crime, and in Orwellian newspeak *avant la lettre* he concludes that “the only means to rid man of crime is to rid him of freedom” (36).

In the 9th record of the diary, D describes a public execution in a large amphitheater on the Cube Square. It is a deeply serious and solemn occasion comparable to the religious festivities of the ancients. But their God, D writes, could think of nothing else than to sacrifice himself, whereas we make a well considered, rational sacrifice to the One State, which is our God. In a solemn liturgy, he continues, we remember the suffering of the two hundred years’ war and celebrate the victory of the many over the individual. Then the Benefactor appears, introduced by lyrical hymns recited by a state poet. His mighty hand presses the lever that switches on the current of the electrocution. Ten women adorn the Benefactor with a festoon and accompany him as he solemnly steps down from the podium, like a high priest, and amidst massive cheering, he leaves the amphitheater.

Meanwhile, D continues to see I-330 who, in addition to O, is officially assigned to D. Such double assignment is possible because an age-old *lex sexualis* stipulates that “any Number has the right of access to any other Number as a sexual product” (22). The result is that he falls in love with this enigmatic woman, who is not afraid to smoke and drink alcohol although this is forbidden and can be severely punished. These encounters enhance the primitive traits of his character, which in turn makes him more erotically attractive to O, who now is determined to ask D to make her pregnant. The woman guarding the entrance of the apartment building, who reads all the correspondence D receives, also develops feelings of affection for him. She starts talking and tells about her part-time work in the Childrearing Plant, ventilating the Orwellian idea that “cruelty is the highest, the most difficult kind of love” (118; “samaya trudnaya i vysokaya lyubov’ – èto zhestokost’” [Zamyatin 1990: 87]).

Halfway through the story D begins to suspect that I-330 is part of a conspiracy against the state, for instance, when she sends him a letter with a pink ticket indicating that they are entitled to a private hour together but also writes that she cannot come, asking him to lower the blinds just the same. He presumes that she needs a false alibi, but he is so much in her power that he will do anything she asks.

In the 25th record the celebration of the Day of Unanimity is described, a solemn ceremony comparable to what Easter meant to the Orthodox an-

cients. On this occasion the yearly reelection of the Benefactor takes place, usually unanimously, but this year there is a disturbing incident when more than a thousand hands are raised to vote against the Benefactor. In the confusion of the ensuing pandemonium, D and I-330 – who indeed turns out to be among the dissentients – happen to meet and she promises to show him the world outside the Green Wall the next day. Reporting on the Day of Unanimity, the *State Gazette* informs its readers that the Benefactor has been reelected unanimously, for no one would want to take the disturbance by a few enemies of happiness seriously.

I-330 keeps her promise and shows how one can reach the wild country outside the Green Wall. D has the astonishing experience of walking on grass instead of a paved road and of seeing naked human beings covered with short glossy fur, as on the stuffed horse in the Prehistoric Museum. I-330 appears to be a kind of leader of this group of wild people and in a speech tells them about the *Integral*, which is to bring the idea of forced happiness and protective walls to other planets. While a crowd of three or four hundred people are patiently listening to her, she announces that opponents of the One State, the Mephi – a word derived from Mephistopheles – are planning to be on board the *Integral* in order to prevent that ill-fated mission. She also points to the designer of the *Integral* and D is greeted with a shower of cheers.

Back in the world of the One State, I-330 explains her contact with the Mephi, who resist the overregulated and Taylorized society ruled over by the Benefactor. Using terminology that D can understand, she argues that there are two forces in the world: entropy and energy, one leading to a blissful balance and tranquility, the other to disturbance of that equilibrium and to perpetual movement. Your Christian ancestors, she says, made entropy their goal, but we, the enemies of Christianity, prefer energy. The Mephi resist the quasi-utopia of the One State but have no particular program to achieve. They are attracted by the uncertainty of an unknown future and abhor a world without problems. I-330 also prefers taking risks to a condition of equanimous bliss. Her plan to be on board the *Integral* and, together with other members of the Mephi, to take control of it when its first flight is hazardous and almost certainly doomed to fail. Aware of the risk, she nevertheless prefers that adventure over the regulated life in the One State. She is convinced that the revolution that brought about the One State cannot have been the last revolution – an opinion which made Zamiatin's critics suspect that he was infected with Trotskyism.

In the meantime O is expecting her illegal baby and D offers to bring her

to I-330, who could assist her in escaping to the world on the other side of the Green Wall. Since O hates I-330, she declines the offer at first but on second thought accepts it. She is the only one who will not be struck by the revenge of the Benefactor. D reads in the *State Gazette* that everyone must be subjected to a brain operation that will eliminate a node of nerves responsible for the imagination, including any thoughts about resisting the system. A simple operation by means of X-rays will cure the “illness” that is the last obstacle to collective bliss. Up to the novel’s last pages it is uncertain what D will do: will he attempt to escape on the *Integral* and surrender it to the Mephi, or will he submit himself to the brain operation?

The launching of the rocket does indeed take place. D and I-330 and her Mephi collaborators are on board, but the plan to capture the *Integral* has been betrayed by U, who has read D’s diary. The spaceship is compelled to return to its point of departure. When D is back in his own apartment he receives a phone call from the Benefactor, who summons D to come and see him immediately. The supreme ruler asks D whether he participated in the revolt and when D cannot but confirm this, he proposes that they talk to each other like adults. The Benefactor compares himself with the Christian god who sacrificed his own son and allowed the Inquisition to burn so many people accused of heresy at the stake. For ages this god was revered as a god of love, whereas he was indeed a cruel god. “A true algebraic love of humankind” (1993: 206), the Benefactor concludes, is necessarily inhuman. The talk partly follows the argument of the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov*, stipulating that people have always searched for lasting happiness and that he, the Benefactor, has arranged for such happiness, which does not allow for desire, pity, or love, just as in Paradise. Then the Benefactor reproaches D in a roundabout way: precisely when the system to guarantee happiness to all is nearly perfect and on the point of being spread all over the universe, D-503, the designer of the *Integral*, forsakes his duties. Did it never occur to you, the Benefactor suddenly inquires, that you have been lured into a conspiracy merely because the insurgents needed access to the *Integral*, and not for any other reason?

The suggestion that I-330 had not loved him at all and had only used him as a necessary pawn in the tactics of the Mephi has a most disturbing effect on D. He runs away to find I-330 in order to hear her confirmation or denial of the imputation. He goes to her room, which is in disorder and seems to be abandoned. There he finds pink tickets with his name on them but also one with the letter F, and he knows that their love was not as exclusive as he had presumed.

The next morning I-330 visits D and inquires whether he has visited the Benefactor. His answer makes her grow pale, and now, as we read in the 38th record, he is almost certain that her primary concern has been the conspiracy, not her love for him. Soon afterward D is arrested and subjected to the brain operation, with the result that he regains his composure and feels completely healthy again. He confesses everything he knows about “the enemies of happiness” and does so without regret. I-330 is brought in to explain her role in the conspiracy but she refuses to talk, even when she is placed under a glass bell from which air is gradually pumped away. She faints and is reanimated. This torture is repeated three times while she looks at him, but he looks at her without showing any emotion. The next day she will be electrocuted. Since parts of the Green Wall have been blown up and chaos still rules in the western part of the city, any further delay would be irresponsible. For, as the last sentence of the novel runs, “reason has to win” (225).

Notwithstanding the many intertextual references – to Plato, Wells, Dostoevsky, Pushkin, Fyodorov, and others – *We* is an original novel with a consistent style marked by grotesque metaphors, absurd imagery, and elliptic sentences representing the spoken language of dialogue or D’s interior monologue – which Zamyatin called “thought language” (*myslennyj yazyk* [Kern 1988: 120]). The unity of the novel is supported by the fantastic plot of the conspiracy and the ambivalent relations between D and three women: O, I, and U. Whether I-330 cares for D or merely uses him to gain access to the *Integral* cannot be decided on the basis of textual evidence, as Csicsery-Ronay observes (242). The real nature of their relationship remains indeed undecidable.

It is a thrilling story that keeps the reader in suspense up to the very last pages. Rather surprisingly in view of their existence as so-called numbers, the coherence of the intrigue is further enhanced by the psychological reactions of the main characters to each other. These have been described convincingly and with much subtlety; this is shown, for instance, when O first declines and on a second occasion accepts the assistance of I-330 to escape to the other side of the Green Wall, and when D begins doubting the sincerity of I-330’s love.

Among other utopian and anti-utopian fiction, Zamyatin’s *We* stands out as a story that needs very little description to convey the fraudulent nature of the utopia presented by the One State. We learn enough about the details of its social organization through the experiences, thoughts, and action of the protagonists. Neither Orwell nor Huxley in their dystopian nar-

ratives were quite as successful as Zamyatin in avoiding the need to provide extensive descriptions of their “utopias.”

Absurdism contra Proletkult and Socialist Realism

We bears unmistakably the imprint of the first hopeful and chaotic years after the October Revolution. Zamyatin’s reflection on the new social conditions coincided with numerous other reactions to the events of that time and his novel is partly a polemic against these other interpretations. Literary history, and in particular utopian and dystopian writing, can often be explained as being motivated by a polemical impulse. Note, for example, the polemical reactions of Swift against Bacon, Voltaire against Leibniz and Rousseau, Brecht against Goethe, Souvestre against Cabet, Dostoevsky against Chernyshevsky, Huxley against Wells. In the Chinese tradition, intertextual polemics are equally important, in philosophy as well as in poetry and fiction: Zhuang Zi ridiculing Confucius, Lu Xun castigating the hypocrisy of Confucianism, Lao She exposing senseless ideological clichés and, as we shall see in the next chapter, Mao Zedong in his poem “Snow” criticizing the nostalgia for the past in traditional poetry, or Wang Shuo’s hilarious rejection of the heroic models found in official propaganda. The target of literary polemics is not necessarily another literary text, but can consist of all forms of verbal expression, including newspapers, scientific publications, political speeches, ideological phrases, or propaganda material.

As recorded by Kathleen Lewis and others, Zamyatin’s *We* has numerous references to Dostoevsky and Wells but also engages in an ironic polemic against the proletarian poets, notably A. A. Bogdanov, founder of the Proletkult in 1917 – an organization initially supported by Lunacharsky, the Soviet commissar of education (Kern 1988: 186-208). The Proletkult aimed at the training of new literary cadres from among the workers and set up literary studios which had about 80,000 participants by 1919. The title of *We* refers to the glorification of collectivism by the proletarian poets who wrote several poems with the same title. The Proletkult poets incorporated propaganda slogans in their poetry and Zamyatin did the same in his novel, but with ironic intent: in *We* an article is quoted from the *State Gazette* that ends with “Long live the One State! Long live the Numbers! Long live the Benefactor!” (Zamyatin 1993:14). The imagery of steel, metal, factory, and forge that is commonly found in proletarian poetry is also parodied in *We*. In the 9th record a state poet recites a poem about

Prometheus containing the lines: “And in machines, in steel, he harnessed fire, / And chaos fettered he with hoops of Law.” D-503 summarizes the continuation of the poem as: “All was new, made of steel: a steel sun, steel trees, steel people,” and comments that the poet “couldn’t have picked more edifying and resplendent images” (47). Notwithstanding Zamyatin’s parody, the metaphor of steel, indicating strength and perseverance, of course remained popular and returned in later Soviet Russian fiction and poetry.

The idea of the cosmic spread of the revolution to other planets also derived from proletarian poetry (Kern 1988: 194) and was similarly imitated by A. N. Tolstoy in his science-fiction novel *Aelita* (*Aëlița*, 1923). This is a crucial plot element in *We*, as it provides the rationale for building the *Integral*. However, in a political sense it is absurd or, as Trotsky wrote (and published) in 1924, a “romantic” and even “mystic” idea, a symptom of escapism (1960: 210-211). The young Soviet Union was having a hard time maintaining itself and hesitated to encourage revolutions in other countries, and now there were visionary romantics launching the idea of conquering the universe! By elaborating on the idea of cosmic evangelization in *We*, Zamyatin in effect emphasized its absurdity. Other aspects of the novel are equally absurd, such as the idea that the Mephi, assisted by a handful of primitive people from the other side of the Green Wall, would be capable of overthrowing the regime of the Benefactor, which was equipped with the most advanced means of communication and control. In the struggle against “reason” the Mephi did not stand a chance. However, through their absurdist fiction, Zamyatin and others, such as Bulgakov and Platonov, did have the opportunity to successfully challenge the monopoly of rationality, even if the effect of their work became visible only posthumously.

The Proletkult aimed at constructing a utopia of steel and romantic imagination, but when it was criticized for leftist deviationism and ignoring the instructions of the Party, a brief period of relative freedom for the writers began. Nevertheless, soon their support of the First Five-Year Plan (1928-1932) was required and at the First Congress of the Writers’ Union (1934) the method of socialist realism was defined, which was to serve as a guideline for all Russian writers. As translated by Harold Swayze (1962: 113), the definition ran as follows:

Socialist realism, the basic method of Soviet belles-lettres and literary criticism, demands of the artist truthful, historically concrete representation of reality in its revolutionary development.

The formula has a utopian aspect as the notion of reality implies “its revolutionary development,” that is, the revolutionary beginnings of a bright future. This meant that parts or aspects of social and economic reality that offered such a hopeful outlook should be selected for narrative processing. Socialist realism was one-sided, if not distorted, realism. The selection of the advanced aspects of reality was guided by the Marxist interpretation of social and economic history, based on the historical materialist theory of the class struggle. As explained in the last section of chapter 8, Marxists considered class struggle to be the primary agent of human history; criticism of that view was not admitted. The question of identifying the class enemy in concrete situations and adopting the appropriate tactics to fight it was a matter to be decided by the Party or, more precisely, the Party leadership. To further clarify the relation between art and politics, the notion of “party spirit” (*partijnost*) was introduced in literary criticism. This required of writers the willingness to adopt the official Party stance and remain loyal to its continually changing policies. In this way, all writers were supposed to support the goals of the Communist Party and, as the method of socialist realism prescribed, they were expected to write about the germs of a blissful Communist future.

Indeed several novels were written portraying utopian characters and situations that offered glimpses of what a future Communist society might look like. The topics dealt with can roughly be divided in experiences of the civil war and the planning of the revolution on the one hand, and the industrial reconstruction and collectivization of farming in the 1920s and 1930s on the other. To the first category belonged, for instance, A. A. Fadeyev’s *The Nineteen* (*Razgrom*, 1927), about guerrilla warfare in the east Siberia, and N. A. Ostrovsky’s *How the Steel Was Tempered* (*Kak zakalyalas’ stal’*, 1934). Both novels were heavily edited to fit in with the requirements of socialist realism, and then became very popular both in the Soviet Union and China; *Razgrom* was translated into Chinese by none less than Lu Xun. Ostrovsky’s narrative describes a curious specimen of revolutionary heroism: *How the Steel Was Tempered* (English translation: *The Making of a Hero*, 1937) is partly autobiographical and tells the story of Pavel Korchagin – an exemplary “positive hero,” similar in character to Chernyshevsky’s Rakhmetov – who joined the Red Army as a young man, was severely wounded, and partially lost his vision. Although the author became blind and was half paralyzed, he nevertheless began writing his novel. As Mathewson noticed, Korchagin’s guiding principle is to serve: “service is happiness; happiness, service” (1975: 248). There are no other moral choices and

the only tests he can undergo involve his capacity to stand *physical* suffering. Being totally and infallibly absorbed in work for the Party, Korchagin is the exemplary warrior, endowed with technical skill and military resourcefulness, patience, indignation, courage and, in his fight against the class enemy, intolerance without mercy.

F. V. Gladkov's *Cement* (*Tsement*, 1925) narrates the rebuilding of a cement factory; M. A. Sholokhov's *Virgin Soil Upturned* (*Podnyataya tselina*, 1932) focuses on agricultural collectivization in the country of the Don Cossacks. The edited versions of these novels and other socialist-realist fiction all attribute a crucial role to the Communist Party, which has a final say in tactical and moral questions as well as in predicting what the Communist future will look like. Maxim Gorky, who just had become a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, wrote to a friend in 1929:

What is important for me is the rapid all-round development of human personality, the birth of a new man of culture, the workman in a sugar-refining factory reading Shelley in the original.... Such men do not need the petty accursed truth in the midst of which they are struggling. They need the truth they create for themselves. You may call me optimist, idealist, romantic, etc. (Hare 1962: 122-123)

Gorky admits being one-sided, arguing that his utopian vision prevails over a "petty accursed truth." This is another way of explaining socialist realism.

The Party plays a crucial role in defining the concept of socialist realism, for it is the Party that determines what the petty truth is and what the Communist future will be like. The Party is an external voice, imposing its conception of truth, including the axiom of the class struggle as the primary agent of history, and its authority in moral questions on the writers. Here a parallel is visible with the false utopia sketched in *We*, where the Benefactor is the moral and philosophical authority and the citizens follow his instructions – or not, and are killed. In *We* responsibility is transferred to the Benefactor from the citizens, who are liberated from doubt and hesitation and no longer have the need for independent thinking. As Mathewson suggests, the only tests are of a physical nature. Relegating the decision in moral and psychological questions to a higher authority – the Benefactor or the Party – implies that human beings surrender part of their faculties and remain far removed from the all-round human personality that was Gorky's ideal.

Abstention from moral and psychological judgments is difficult to com-

bat with rational means. Hence, it elicited ironic or absurdist reactions that aimed to broaden the scope of human understanding beyond a rationality fettered by preconceived ideas and false axioms.

The Heart of a Dog by *Mikhail Bulgakov*

Mikhail Bulgakov's *Heart of a Dog* (*Sobach'e serdtse*, written in 1925 but first published in a Russian journal in 1987) is a specimen of absurdism that avoids becoming entangled in a direct polemic with the new Soviet regime. Let me confess from the outset that I consider Bulgakov a great writer. He became famous through his long novel *The Master and Margarita* (*Master i Margarita*), completed in 1940, the year of his death, and published posthumously, first in a heavily censored edition in 1966-67, and finally in a more reliable version as volume 5 of the *Complete Works* (*Sobranie sochinenij*, 1989-90). *The Heart of a Dog*, a story of less than a hundred pages, shows all the mastery of the longer novel. Although both texts are equally critical of Communist practices, the plot of *The Heart of a Dog* is closer to the political realities of the 1920s.

The first pages of the story are told from the point of view of a hungry stray dog, which is taken to the home of a well-to-do gentleman. Of course, the dog cannot guess what the man has in mind but gradually it appears that Sharik will be subjected to a scientific experiment. The gentleman, Filipp Filippovich Preobrazhensky, is a medical professor who transplants the testes and hypophysis (pituitary gland) of a just-deceased man to the dog, hoping to find the means for a rejuvenation cure. Physically the operation is successful, but when Sharik begins to behave like a human being the result is rather disturbing. Professor Preobrazhensky and his assistant had not inquired about the identity of the man from whom the transplanted organs derive, and now that they begin to learn more about him it appears that he was a criminal and alcoholic. The dog has acquired the memory and hormone system of a hot-tempered drunk. Preobrazhensky also discovers that transplantation of the hypophysis does not lead to rejuvenation at all, but to the humanization of the animal. It appears that the dog knows how to laugh and to curse and he acquires quite a vocabulary. Preobrazhensky orders that men's clothes be bought for the dog.

The speech center of the dog's brain has been fully activated by the transplanted hypophysis. The assistant notes in his clinical report that a homunculus has been created without using retorts (1989: 164). His brain un-

folds on its own initiative, which can be considered a welcome confirmation of the theory of evolution. The assistant is in high spirits, but Preobrazhensky foresees all kind of difficulties and is less optimistic. Sharik develops into a nuisance, has no manners, offends everyone he meets, and cannot forget his old habit of chasing after cats. He insists that he have a name and a birth certificate so that he may be allowed to rent a room. Sharik, now renamed Sharikov and also provided with a self-styled personal and father's name, has established good relations with the new housing committee and is convinced that it defends the interests of "the working people" (171). This reminds Preobrazhensky of an earlier unpleasant encounter with the chair of the housing committee, who had demanded that he gave up two of his seven rooms so that other tenants could live there. But the professor had refused and called an influential friend who backed him up with temporary success. Preobrazhensky is of course not on good terms with the new housing committee, nor with their attempts to carry their revolutionary measures through. He deplores the fact that it appears normal now that overshoes are stolen from the entrance hall of the apartment building. Between 1903 and 1917 there had been no case of theft, but in March 1917 all overshoes, three walking sticks, a coat, and the samovar of the doorkeeper were stolen. Then, excused by the social revolution, the heating stopped and the stair carpet disappeared. "Did Karl Marx forbid to have stair carpets?" Preobrazhensky asks rhetorically (144). His political opinion is clear, and now he suspects that Sharikov, his creation, will side with those whom he despises. Bulgakov manages to sketch the world of a petty bourgeois and elucidates ideological questions by way of trifles from everyday life. *The Heart of a Dog* offers a grotesque analysis of the dystopian effects of the October Revolution at grassroots level. In addition, the story has the modern dressing of science fiction.

Sharikov confirms Preobrazhensky's suspicions. He appears to read the correspondence between Engels and Kautsky but cannot understand it. Therefore, he draws a simple political conclusion expressed in the slogan: "Grab everything and redistribute it all!" ("vzyat' vsyo da i podelit" [183]). Preobrazhensky knows that he has made a huge mistake: by carrying out the operation he has forced things and acted contrary to nature (193).

Readers may wonder whether Preobrazhensky's surgery has an allegorical meaning. Did Bulgakov mean to say that the operation was a failure just like the October Revolution? By emphasizing that the hypophysis stores the individual features of a human being and not his or her general human characteristics, the author seems to imply that a revolutionary change of

mind of the whole population will never occur: humans will always remain individuals. In chapter 9, the identification of Sharikov with the professional revolutionary, “the man in a leather jacket,” has become almost complete. The homunculus has been given a job in the Moscow sanitation department and – undoubtedly in view of his previous existence as a dog – is assigned to exterminate stray animals, such as cats. Whether the rude extermination policy of the sanitation department is part of the political allegory or rather a wry joke typical of Bulgakov, absurdity is the common feature of the two options and in his hands a most effective weapon against the false hopes of an ideology without civilization.

Preobrazhensky, who like the surgeon in Wells’s *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896) had changed an animal into a human being, finally decides to restore the original situation and transplant Sharik’s own hypophysis back into his brain. Sharikov’s human qualities – the foul language, lies, and stupidities – gradually disappear and are replaced by the quiet behavior of a contented dog.

Platonov’s Foundation Pit, or failed utopianism

Writing from personal experience, Andrei Platonov (1899–1951) discovered that a political revolution can never guarantee satisfactory philosophical insight and peace of mind. A self-made man, he began working in various jobs at the age of thirteen, supported the Bolshevik Revolution, and gradually acquired a technical education, which enabled him to participate in electrification and land-reclamation projects. His father was a metal fitter working for the railways.

Although a supporter of the October Revolution, he was soon disappointed by its effects: the bureaucracy, economic chaos, famine, and most of all, the arbitrary killing. In *Chevengur* (written in 1928, but published in the Soviet Union only in 1988) a group of idealists try to establish a Communist society but their dream evaporates (Fortunati and Trousson 2000). His next novel, *The Foundation Pit* (*Kotlovan*, written in the late 1920s and published in 1987 in the journal *Novyj Mir*) is even more an accumulation of disenchantment and misery, expressing a gloom that makes life appear as totally hopeless and absurd. I will refer to the bilingual edition by Thomas P. Whitney, published with a preface by the Nobel Prize laureate Joseph Brodsky.

The main theme of the novel is the mistaken idea that a political revolu-

tion will inevitably bring about happiness and equanimity to individual people. Platonov deplored the destruction that was considered necessary to pave the way for a new world. In one of his notebooks he wrote: “For the mind everything is in the future; for the heart everything is in the past” (quoted in Chandler 2008: ix). Platonov’s novel is tainted by the melancholy of futility, by what the Japanese novelist Kawabata in *Snow Country* called “wasted effort.”

Through the observations of Voshchev and other diggers at the foundation pit we learn about the preparatory work for “the construction of that one single building in which the entire local class of the proletariat would take up living quarters” (1973: 18). The “all-proletarian apartment-house” (27) is a far echo of Fourier’s phalanstery and refers more directly to Dostoevsky’s Crystal Palace, with the difference that the Crystal Palace once existed and the all-proletarian apartment building in Platonov’s novel remained an illusion.

The first paragraph of the novel introduces Voshchev, who is a pensive type, wanting to know why he is working and confessing to be a truth seeker. Safronov, a Communist activist and one of the senior companions at the foundation pit where Voshchev has joined the diggers, wonders whether “truth” is not merely a class enemy (45). Characteristic of Platonov’s style is that philosophical themes are often discussed in ideological terms, but the recurrent question is, in the words of Voshchev, “why the whole world was established?” (35).

Chiklin, a strong man and also a senior among the diggers receiving instructions from an engineer, is one of the few who shows moments of compassion. He remembers the girl who once many years ago kissed him. She happened to be the daughter of the director of a Dutch tile factory and thus has a capitalist background. He starts looking for her and succeeds in finding her in a room in the dilapidated factory building nearby that for years has suspended production. The woman is dying in the arms of her little daughter. Chiklin has arrived just in time to kiss the woman once more, whereupon she passes away. Leaving the factory he takes the small girl with him. She has been instructed by her mother never to tell who her mother was, to forget her class background, and to praise Communism. When the girl arrives at the foundation pit and meets the other diggers they ask her who she is. She answers that she is nobody and declares that she knows who the most important person is (“kto glavnyj” [217]). Safronov inquires who it is, and the girl replies:

“The main one is Lenin, and second is Budyonny. When they weren’t there, and only the bourgeois people lived, then I was not born, because I didn’t want to be. And when Lenin appeared then I came.”

“Well now that’s a real girlie” Safronov was able to declare. “Your mother was a politically conscious woman! And our Soviet rule is certainly profound if even children who do not remember their mother already sense Comrade Lenin!” (69)

Safronov is easily misled and takes her words at face value, which shows how the system is built on delusion and hypocrisy. “Grief is supposed to have been annulled in our country,” maintains Safronov (70). The girl becomes an icon of tenderness and all men want to care for her, give her food and warmth. Her name is Nastya.

While work on the foundation pit is progressing, though never coming to an end, an enormous half-naked peasant arrives from a nearby collective farm (*kolkhoz*) to claim a hundred wooden coffins, which have been found in a cave during the excavation work. Chiklin confirms that the coffins have been discovered and is prepared to return them to the original owners, except two which he had given to Nastya, one to sleep in and one to store her toys. After some bargaining the peasant departs with the coffins, which have been attached to each other by means of a long rope. It is bizarre to think that one man would be able to drag a trail of almost a hundred coffins over the dry soil.

Orders arrive from the city to extend the foundation pit further and Safronov and Kozlov go to the collective farm to advance collectivization, where they are killed by hostile peasants. The murderer commits suicide, and still another peasant is killed. The Party activist in the village decides that all four deserve a funeral procession. He gives orders to the people surrounding him to mobilize the collective farm, “so that all of them should feel the majesty of death during a time of the developing bright moment of socialization of private property” (90).

The setting of the action now has shifted to the village, where so far only the horses have been collectivized, for the Party activist had been afraid to appear overzealous. However, with the arrival of Chiklin and Voshchev the collectivization program is gathering momentum among the poor and middle peasants, i.e., those without property of their own and those who owned property but did not employ hired labor. As part of what is called a “cultural revolution” the activist meanwhile teaches the alphabet to the women and girls of the collective farm. Chiklin and Voshchev build a raft on which the

wealthy farmers or kulaks will be assembled and sent down the river into the open sea; in this way they plan to liquidate the remaining kulaks.

The kulaks have resisted the collectivization drive in various ways: by not feeding their livestock, by slaughtering and eating their cattle, and by carrying out other forms of sabotage. Chiklin notices that the majority of the kulaks have not yet been liquidated and plans to solicit the cooperation of a poor proletarian in order to identify who the real kulaks are. This leads him to a blacksmith – the icon of the revolution since the Proletkult – where a helper is hammering on a white-hot iron strip on the anvil. The helper is undoubtedly of the working class but surprisingly happens to be a bear. Nevertheless, he is quite intelligent and effective in pointing out where the kulaks live. In the company of Chiklin and Nastya he intimidates the kulaks, who promptly flee their houses. Relying upon an animal to determine who the kulaks are is of course an absurd move, and we may wonder what Platonov wanted to express by introducing the blacksmith's striker-bear as a humanized character. Is it to say that the division of people into classes of peasants and farmers was a rather arbitrary or at least inhuman operation? While the rich farmers are driven onto the raft to encounter certain death on the river or in the open sea, a message arrives from the provincial Party headquarters pointing out that the village activist who has supervised the collective farm “has already put the cart ahead of the horse and fallen into the leftist swamp of rightist opportunism” (144). Such a comrade cannot be maintained in a leadership position. The activist begins to weep and receives a blow from Chiklin, which kills him. The members of the collective farm remember that the activist had always spoken “precisely and correctly, fully in accordance with the gospel” (149) – the Russian term “zavet” (278) means gospel or testament, but it is also used in the phrase “zavety Lenina,” Lenin's last directives or heritage, an allusion to the connection between ideology and religion that gets lost in translation. The monopoly of truth or gospel, the activist's pretence “that all the universal truth, all the meaning of life, was located solely within him,” had made him a hated man. Although Voshchev had known him only briefly, he feels as if the activist “had sucked the blood not only from me but from the entire class as well, leaving us to wander about like quiet dregs, knowing nothing” (150). This is a theme similar to the one we found in Zamyatin's *Wē*, where individuals were supposed to surrender part of their moral and psychological faculties to the Benefactor. Here, Platonov describes how Voshchev resists having no say in what the truth or the meaning of life could be like. He refuses to surrender an essential part of his individuality.

Chiklin and Nastya return to the foundation pit, and later Voshchev and members of the collective farm who want to become part of the proletariat and help digging, also arrive. Now the foundation pit must become even deeper and bigger in order to accommodate a larger number of people. Meanwhile, Nastya falls ill and dies. This destroys the last bit of mental resistance of Voshchev and the other men. They would have reconciled themselves with the idea of perhaps never finding a universally valid truth, if only the girl would have stayed alive and healthy, for “communism is a thing for children” and should materialize in the future (157).

The digging of the foundation pit is a labor without end and its metaphorical meaning is overly clear: eutopia will never be realized on earth. It seemed within reach in 1917, but both circumstances and human nature prevented the realization of the eutopian dream. The 1920s witnessed the failure of utopianism, which was abandoned in Marxist–Leninist theory even before it got a chance to materialize in practice. In his utterly gloomy, indeed dystopian *Foundation Pit*, Platonov expresses the effects of a failed utopianism perhaps more convincingly than any other writer could have done.

Not all writings by Platonov are as somber as *Foundation Pit*. For instance, “The City of Gradov” (“Gorod Gradov,” published in the Soviet Union in 1927) is a highly ironic and at times hilarious story about a group of bureaucrats who as deputies of the proletariat claim to be the architects of a socialist world. However, although the tone of the story is lighter, the theme is the same: the revolution which seemed to open the way to a bright future has been betrayed. The society which was expected to realize a eutopian community has turned into a nightmare.

As Thomas Langerak records, Platonov once phrased his interpretation of communism in simple terms. Not trusting organizations and bureaucratic institutions, he emphasized the aim of producing things, containing the damaging influence of nature, and furthering the solidarity among people. This is, according to Platonov, the essence of communism: the intense solidarity between people (Langerak 1989: 135). In view of this ideal one must conclude that Platonov was bound to resist any simplified, mechanical conception of the class struggle.

Mao Zedong's Utopian Thought and the Post-Mao Imaginative Response

Marx and Engels had their utopian visions of a classless society and the withering away of the state, and so did Mao Zedong. But Mao's utopianism was different, in that it was embedded in the Chinese tradition, eschewed economic problems, was motivated by a subjectivist philosophy, and called for voluntarist action.

Mao's utopian dreams and their calamitous realization

The Hundred Flowers policy, which Mao announced in May 1956, was couched in traditional terms. "Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools contend" (*baihua qifang, baijia zhengming*) was the political slogan that remained valid for about a year until the policy was redressed and the Anti-Rightist campaign began. The second part of the slogan, as Lu Dingyi, director of the Propaganda Department of the Communist Party, explained, referred to the historical periods of the Spring and Autumn Annals (8th to 5th century BCE) and the Warring States (5th to 3rd century BCE), during which many schools of thought contended with each other for supremacy, thus creating a lively intellectual atmosphere. The lineage of the first part of the slogan, which pertained to the flourishing of literature and the arts, was not officially explained and has rarely been commented on in Western publications. It had been used earlier, in 1951, to boost theatrical reform and the development of different operatic styles. However, intellectuals with some knowledge of literary history must have surmised that the appeal to "let a hundred flowers bloom" derived from the novel *Flowers in the Mirror* in which Empress Wu in defiance of the Flowers Fairy ordered all flowers to bloom at the same time (see above, chapter 7). I do not know whether the origin of the slogan had any bearing on its meaning, but the wording of the phrase certainly has a voluntarist connotation.

Anglo-American sinologist Stuart Schram, an expert on Mao Zedong thought, detects a "utopian vision" (1991: 33) in the idea of a Great Leap

Forward and the establishment of the People's Communes in 1958. Founded on the basis of agricultural cooperatives, the People's Communes replaced the wage system by a free-supply system. The large common dining halls that were utopian in the fiction of More, Chernyshevsky (Vera's dream in *What Is to Be Done?*), and Bellamy were actually realized in the Chinese countryside. However, the free supply of food in the People's Communes, which according to Mao Zedong contained "sprouts of communism" (37), led to the disaster of the starvation of millions of peasants.

Schram also sees a "millenarian vision" behind Mao's famous dictum that the Chinese people were in an advantageous position because they were "poor and blank" (*yi qiong er bai*). For poor people, Mao argued,

want change, want to do things, want revolution. A clean sheet of paper has no blotches, and so the newest and most beautiful words can be written on it, the newest and most beautiful pictures can be painted on it. (36; originally published in *Red Flag* [*Hongqi*], June 1, 1958)

From a political point of view, this statement is interesting because it is a denial of Lenin's view that "the more backward the country, the more difficult its transition from capitalism to socialism" (Schram 1991: 103). The tenet that China was "poor and blank" provided also a rationale for the Cultural Revolution, which began in 1966 and in its early stage aimed at destroying the administrative and educational system, as well as existing expertise and material wealth, so that everyone would become equally poor, for only the poor were considered to be qualified for making revolution. The call to discard book learning and resist school education, published in the *People's Daily* of July 12, 1966, fits into the "poor and blank" pattern. As I argued in chapter 7, this rejection of book knowledge has an affinity with Daoist philosophy. Schram (45, 59) notes Daoist elements as well in Mao's style of government. In Mao's behavior as the supreme "helmsman" – for example, his aloofness during the later years of the Cultural Revolution and his tolerance of political chaos – we may indeed detect similarities with the attitude of a Daoist ruler. At the same time, he remained loyal to the vision of a change of mentality among the people.

Mao firmly rejected the Confucian nostalgia for a splendid past forever lost. In February 1958 he explained that the Communist Party wanted quick results and therefore belittled the past, believing blindly in the future, as reported by Guo Moro in the *People's Daily* of June 11 of that year. Mao's blind belief in a future that prevails over the past was also expressed in

terms of the emulation of heroes in his famous poem “Snow” (*Xue*), published in the first issue of the journal *Poetry* (*Shikan*) in 1957 but written in 1945. It confirmed his firm adherence to the idea of progress, as defended by Kang Youwei. Connoting a patriotic sentiment, the poem depicts the majestic Chinese landscape as seen from an airplane and recalls some exemplary historical figures, from Qin shi huangdi, the first emperor of the Qin dynasty (reigned 246-210 BCE), to Genghis Khan (reigned 1206-1227). However, they all had their defects and limitations and lacked culture or literary talent. The real heroes can be found only at present:

Such great beauty like this in all our landscape
Has caused unnumbered heroes to bow in homage.
But alas these heroes! – Chin Shih Huang and Han Wu Ti
Were rather lacking in culture;
Rather lacking in literary talent
Were the emperors Tang Tai Tsung and Sung Tai Tsu;
And Genghis Khan,
Beloved Son of Heaven for a day,
Only knew how to bend his bow at the golden eagle.
Now they are all past and gone:
To find men truly great and noble-hearted
We must look here in the present.
(Mao Zedong 1958: 22)

This poem in the classical style is an anomaly in the history of contemporary Chinese literature in the vernacular. Interestingly, apart from hinting at the heroic accomplishments of the Communist leaders in the last two lines, it emphasizes more in general the role of heroic models. Again it is voluntarism rather than historical-materialist determinism that is to realize the alluring Communist society. In fact, heroic voluntarism detracts from the role of the Party organization and addresses the masses directly, encouraging them to emulate the utopian model characters appointed, if not designed, by the Communist leaders. I will discuss the launching of model-soldiers and model-workers later in this chapter.

*The Chinese interpretation of socialist realism: Revolutionary realism
and revolutionary romanticism*

Like in the Soviet Union, writers in China were officially expected to write socialist-realist fiction, but in general the Chinese Party leadership followed the Russian literary doctrine only halfheartedly. I discussed the polemics between the Chinese and Russian cultural theorists in an earlier study (Fokkema 1965) and will not repeat the full story here. Suffice it to say that the Chinese interpretation of socialist realism gradually emphasized its romanticist aspect more and more. Coached by the Communist Party, writers developed a utopian vision of Communist society with considerable emphasis on the voluntarist commitment of individuals. From an artistic point of view, preconceived political ideas about the road to Communism, which the writers were supposed to glorify, were an obstacle to the free imagination. In fact, like in the Soviet Union, political supervision cut off the possibility of writing utopian fiction, except that of an approved socialist-realist brand, which preempted any other utopian experiments.

Like their Soviet Russian examples, Chinese novels dealt with the underground struggle of Communist revolutionaries, the civil war, and the reconstruction and various stages of collectivization in industry and agriculture. *Red Crag* (*Hong Yan*, 1961), very much a product of collective authorship but appearing under the names of Luo Guangbin and Yang Yiyan, is a partly autobiographical and partly documentary historical novel about the Communist revolution in Sichuan. Within two years, four million copies were sold, but this did not prevent Red Guards from persecuting Luo Guangbin to death in 1967 (Hong Zicheng 2007). Liu Qing's *The Builders* (*Chuangye shi*, 1961) is concerned with the establishment of mutual-aid teams and the cooperativization after the Land Reform of the early 1950s. In *Steelled and Tempered* (*Bai lian cheng gang*, 1957) Ai Wu writes about steel workers and imitates Ostrovsky, not only in the title of his novel but also in the theme of how to shape a heroic Communist character. The Chinese translation of Ostrovsky's *How the Steel Was Tempered* was extremely popular in China, just as other Chinese translations of Russian "red classics." When in 1999 a Chinese television team went to the Ukraine to shoot a film about the place where Pavel Korchagin had lived, the still existing popularity of this heroic character triggered a lively debate, partly based on nostalgia for a bygone revolutionary era; I shall return to that debate in chapter 17. The long sustained admiration for the red classics may surprise but is less astonishing if we think of the books' material availability, which

has consequences for their presence in the collective memory. We should not underestimate the importance of the fact that the red classics, as much as the traditional Chinese classics, are the books that are amply available in libraries and on the book shelves in the homes of intellectual families. The red classics remain an indelible point of reference and are often more readily quoted than Western sources or Western books in Chinese translation.

Socialist realism was a hybrid concept. As had been decided at the First Congress of the Union of Soviet Writers of 1934, it demanded “the truthful, historically concrete representation of reality in its revolutionary development.” At the same time, the truthfulness and historical concreteness of the artistic representation of reality must be combined “with the task of ideological remolding and education of the workers in the spirit of socialism” (Swayze 1962: 113). At the Second Soviet Writers Congress held in 1954 – Stalin had died one year before and the situation called for some sort of re-orientation – K. M. Simonov pointed to the contradiction between the criterion of truthfulness and the demands of ideological education. He found the call for ideological education misleading and superfluous. Could a truthful representation of reality in its revolutionary development fail to effect ideological education in the spirit of socialism? Simonov’s report appeared in Chinese translation in *People’s Literature* (*Renmin wenxue*) of 1955 and was approvingly quoted by Qin Zhaoyang, who also emphasized the truthfulness of literary writing at the cost of any explicit ideological education. It did not take long before Qin Zhaoyang was accused of being a rightist; and during the Cultural Revolution Simonov was branded a revisionist and renegade in China, whereas in the Soviet Union he was considered a typical middle-of-the-roader.

In fact, Mao Zedong seems to have never fully endorsed the concept of socialist realism. In the official Chinese edition of the *Yan’an Talks* in Mao’s *Selected Works*, the term “socialist realism” is mentioned once (Mao Zedong 1967: vol. 3, 87), but this was probably a later editorial emendation, since the older Chinese edition of 1943, translated by Bonnie McDougall, has “proletarian realism” instead and does not refer to socialist realism at all (Mao Zedong 1980: 76). Mao’s editors may have changed the text in a way that was friendlier to the Soviet authorities.

Few writers were fully content with adopting the ill-phrased Russian concept and many critics, either from the extreme left or among the more liberal-minded intellectuals, tried to find an alternative. The latter group launched the idea of “realism of the socialist epoch” or “realism, the broad way” but soon tasted defeat. On the other hand, the extreme left, evidently

supported by Mao Zedong, wished to erase the differences between elite and popular culture and hailed the poems by common peasants and factory workers as important contributions to a new Communist culture. Of course, the term socialist realism was ill-suited to describe their accomplishments, which expressed rather simple romantic views of a bright future. Another field where the concept of socialist realism did not apply was Chinese traditional literature – in particular, its poetry and drama – which has a much longer history than older Russian writings. It was felt that following Soviet Russian critical practice and pigeonholing Chinese literature as either socialist or critical realist was totally inadequate. Such slavish imitation was firmly rejected. In 1958 China consequently emancipated itself from Russian cultural tutelage by introducing the formula, allegedly coined by Mao Zedong, that literature should express “the combination of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism.” In politics a similar development occurred with the Great Leap Forward and the establishment of the People’s Communes, which also deviated from the Soviet Russian model. Writing in the very first issue of *Red Flag*, deputy director of the Propaganda Department of the Communist Party Zhou Yang extolled Qu Yuan (4th century BCE) and Li Taibo (8th century) as great romantic poets. He quotes Liu Xie (c. 500) as saying that a true poet “dips into the marvelous without losing the truth and appreciates the fanciful without sacrificing substance” (*Hongqi* 1958, no. 1: 36). Critical of Occidentalism, which to them included imitating the Russian tradition, the Chinese leaders wished to establish China’s own Marxist literary theory, one that allowed for romanticism as well as realism and called for immediate action to create a Communist society, first in words and then in reality. Literature and politics were combined in attempting to realize what in fact was and always remained a utopian goal.

Simultaneously with the introduction of the People’s Communes and the Great Leap Forward in agricultural and industrial production, a Great Leap Forward in literature and the arts was launched. Zhou Yang noticed that in the folk songs that were being produced in great quantity “the heroic determination of the working class and laboring people to transform the world and conquer nature is saliently expressed” (34). Literary production rose sharply. Within three months, from March through May 1958, Shanghai workers and peasants produced one million stories and other writings, and this trend was visible all over the country. These works often dealt with practical advice and included, for instance, street plays for the sanitation campaign, but many of them were an expression of the superhuman efforts

of the collective peasants and workers. The folk poetry which amateurs wrote under the supervision of the Party also celebrated the legendary deeds of the supreme leader Chairman Mao. The cult of Mao Zedong rose to unprecedented heights in 1958-59. The personality cult subsided when the crash production of homemade steel and the unwise agricultural planning in the People's Communes ended in total failure, to be restored again with equal vigor during the Cultural Revolution of 1966-76. That period, however, did not bring Communist utopia any nearer either, producing chaos instead. Throughout these years, the Party leadership around Mao Zedong continued to emphasize the emulation of model-heroes.

The model-soldiers and model-workers of the 1960s

The utopian impulse spent itself in the celebration and emulation of utopian behavior as personified by Zhang Side, Lei Feng, Ouyang Hai, Wang Jie, or Mai Xiande. From the early 1960s these model-soldiers and model-workers, selected by the Party, were molded into exemplary characters who were steeled by hardship and self-sacrifice and displayed an unsurpassed loyalty to the Party and Mao Zedong thought (Sheridan 1968). There were carefully orchestrated campaigns to study and learn from Zhang Side, Lei Feng, Ouyang Hai, and the other models of heroism. In the 1980s Wang Shuo would ridicule these campaigns in his fiction.

The commemoration of Zhang Side is the prime example of Maoist hero emulation. Mao Zedong immortalized Zhang in his short but important speech "Serve the People" (*Wei renmin fuwu*, 1944), which is one of the three "much read articles" (*lao san pian*) that in 1967 were printed in hundreds of millions of copies, a kind of Lilliputian edition of the famous *Little Red Book*. There are few Chinese who have never heard of Zhang Side. If anyone personifies the mythical worldview of Maoism, it is Zhang Side. However, the footnote to the commemoration speech published in the *Selected Works* of Mao Zedong gives only scanty information. Zhang was a soldier in the Guards Regiment of the Central Committee. He joined the revolution in 1933, took part in the Long March, and was wounded in service. On September 5, 1944, when burning charcoal in the mountains of Ansai in northern Shaanxi, he died in the flames of a kiln that suddenly collapsed. The reason why Zhang can be considered the prototype of all Maoist heroes is his unconditional commitment to the revolution, which finds its culmination in his heroic death. It is typical that he excels both in military af-

fairs and at the production front. In Zhang Side we recognize the utopia of the all-round guerrilla who is productive in labor and the worker who is prepared to fight.

The model-soldier Ouyang Hai is another utopian character. He was always attentive to the needs of others, kind to the weak, and fiercely combated the arrogance of the strong. After a life of conscientious service he died, like Zhang Side, in an accident. In pushing a horse loaded with ammunition from the rails to prevent derailment of a nearing train, he was hit by the engine and fatally wounded. Jin Jingmai (b. 1930) used his biography and heroic death as a plot in his novel *The Song of Ouyang Hai* (*Ouyang Hai zhi ge*, 1965), which reads like a medieval morality play and could be considered eutopian if the idealized representation of a single character would comprise enough substance for a eutopian novel. Since Thoreau's *Walden* has been called one man's utopia, why couldn't *The Song of Ouyang Hai* be considered a one-character utopia? However, this would stretch the argument too far and cause our corpus to expand indefinitely.

The political situation offered no room for writing utopian fiction that deviated from the directives of the Communist Party. Politics had entered the world of literary creation to the point of leaving no freedom to the imagination. Even in writing about the heroic life of Ouyang Hai, Jin Jingmai did not possess the necessary leeway and was forced to make changes in his text for political reasons. In the 1965 edition of the book, the author described the positive influence on Ouyang Hai of Liu Shaoqi's pamphlet *How to Be a Good Communist* (*Lun gongchan dangyuan di xiuyang*, 1962). In the English translation of the novel, which appeared in 1966 and was based on a revised Chinese text, the favorable reference to Liu Shaoqi – the President of the People's Republic who was persecuted during the Cultural Revolution and died in prison in 1969 – had been replaced by quotations from a speech by Mao Zedong. Also in real life Jin Jingmai was forced to change positions. He had dangerously close relations with the political leaders of the moment. In February 1966 he was praised by Chen Yi, the minister of foreign affairs who later was severely criticized, and by Tao Zhu, who in early 1967 was dismissed as director of the Propaganda Department of the Communist Party and died in prison two years later. However, Jin Jingmai later appeared to be a loyal follower of the Cultural Revolution group, and in May 1967 he became a member of a small committee for literature and art headed by Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, who in 1976 was to be exposed as a member of the Gang of Four and sentenced to imprisonment. Finally, in 1979 Jin had again managed to change his political alliances and unexpect-

edly emerged as the co-author, with Zhao Huan, of a play in which the Gang of Four was attacked, *Storm over the Fatherland* (*Shenzhou fenglei*) (Birch 1991).

During the Cultural Revolution and for many years more no writer could find the necessary independence for roaming freely in a utopian space. The utopian impulse had been preempted by the principles and practice of socialist realism rebaptized in China as the combination of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism, the Party-guided emulation of model-workers and model-soldiers, and the heroic behavior and political liberation represented in the so-called model theatrical plays (*yang ban xi*) supervised by Jiang Qing.

To write fiction was hazardous enough, but to begin a utopian novel – a genre bound to touch on sensitive political issues – in times when censorship and public opinion were completely unpredictable was tantamount to suicide. It was a warning to everyone that the former showpiece of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism, Zhao Shuli, who wrote about the class struggle in the rural areas of Shanxi province, was persecuted to death in September 1970 (Hong Zicheng 2007: 477). His coeval Zhou Libo, author of a widely read novel about land reform, *The Hurricane* (*Baofeng zhouyu*, 1949), who had always remained loyal to the policies of the Party and had won a Stalin Prize, was persecuted during the Cultural Revolution and officially rehabilitated only in 1978, a year before his death. Who would dare to write fiction anymore? Indeed very few novels, if any, were published during the first years of the Cultural Revolution. In his chronology of contemporary Chinese literature, Hong Zicheng (2007) makes no mention of any book of fiction having appeared in the years 1967–71. Checking the *People's Daily* and the Party journal *Red Flag* for that period I found no favorable comment on any modern or traditional novel or on any volume of poetry by a single poet – except that by Mao Zedong. Writing fiction in the 1960s was a dangerous thing to do at any rate, but writing utopian fiction without literally following the Party line of the moment appeared totally impossible. And even if Party directives were closely observed, there was a considerable chance that by the time of publication they would have been revised once again.

After the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 literary production recovered slowly from this nightmare. But it still took five more years for the Communist Party to more or less come to terms with this episode and squarely condemn Mao's role in the Cultural Revolution. A resolution adopted by the Central Committee on July 1, 1981, read:

The “cultural revolution,” which lasted from May 1966 to October 1976, was responsible for the most severe setback and the heaviest losses suffered by the Party, the state and the people since the founding of the People’s Republic. It was initiated and led by Comrade Mao Zedong. (Quoted in MacFarquhar 1991: 391)

It is true that other parts of this long resolution mitigated Mao’s disastrous role somewhat and served to explain that his leftist error in the Cultural Revolution was after all the error of a proletarian revolutionary and that his contributions to the Chinese revolution as a whole “far outweighed his mistakes” (392). Nevertheless, the message was clear: Mao’s dream of a quick road to Communism by way of inciting young revolutionaries to rebel even if that would cause anarchy and chaos was repudiated. The resolution demonstrated that abstract utopianism and practical politics were considered incompatible in China, as in other places.

Rediscovering the imagination

After the death of Mao Zedong, authors gradually resumed a style of writing that was not dictated by the Party in every respect. At first they felt the need to report rather directly on the persecution and horrors of the Cultural Revolution. Their work became known under the name “Scar literature” (*Shanghen wenxue*). At a later stage they allowed more fictionalization – more irony, more hyperbole, more metaphors – in these narratives. A similar development can be seen in the history of narratives about the Shoah or Holocaust, where eyewitness reports and autobiographical work were gradually supplemented and partly replaced by the writing of fiction (Ibsch 2004). Inevitably, a growing distance to the personal experience of persecution and torture created room for literary imagination.

Wang Anyi wrote a novella with the intriguing title *Utopian Poems* (*Wutuobang shipian*, 1991), which does not consist of poems but is a narrative and does not offer the description of a utopian society but emphasizes the nonrealistic connotation of the word “utopia.” In Wang Anyi’s perception, utopia means a dream, an invented world, a fiction. The combination of the words utopia and poem serves to explain her choice for a spiritual world, different from material reality. Partly inspired by the biblical story of the Creation, the text must be interpreted as a statement about her poetics rather than a sketch of a utopian society.

In the 1980s and 1990s Chinese writers rediscovered European and American authors and, in the ban of Occidentalism, they experimented with the international style of modernism and postmodernism (Wang Ning 1997). In his *Dictionary of Maqiao* (*Maqiao cidian*, 1996) Han Shaogong refers to traditional Chinese literature and philosophy, which would have been impossible during the Cultural Revolution, but also shows his indebtedness to the *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764) by Voltaire, with whom he shares a sophisticated skepticism. However, he is even closer to the Portuguese modernist author Fernando Pessoa, whose *Book of Restlessness* (*Livro do desassossego*, first published in 1982, almost fifty years after the author's death) Han translated. The connecting theme of the *Dictionary of Maqiao* is a refutation of the fetishism of language, including the fundamentalist quotation of political slogans irrespective of their context and applicability. For too long intellectuals as well as common people had been exposed to the false truth of ideological phrases. Han argues that words never coincide completely and perfectly with what they are referring to. Yet, he searches for a linguistic utopia where the use of words would be absolutely precise and perhaps also more rational, although he also knows that he would never arrive at the linguistic perfection he aims at. His metalinguistic criticism is a natural reaction to an overexposure to political clichés.

After the disaster of the Great Leap Forward, the People's Communes, and the Cultural Revolution, no writer in China dared to speak of a eutopian society. Admittedly, the revival of science fiction after the downfall of the Gang of Four opened a way to describing more prosperous and more harmonious communities, but these never equaled full-fledged social utopias (Wagner 1985). However, among Chinese writers abroad, the imagination had not been curtailed. This applies, for instance, to Gao Xingjian, the recipient of the 2000 Nobel Prize in Literature, who left China for France in 1987 and wrote the novel *Soul Mountain* (*Ling shan*, 1990), which describes the wanderings of a lonely character at the time of the Cultural Revolution. The novel has 81 chapters, just as the *Dao de jing* (*Classic of the Way and Virtue*), the Daoist text attributed to Lao Zi, which, as I argued earlier, is at odds with a straightforward utopianism pertaining to sociopolitical ideals. Under the influence of Daoism, Gao Xingjian is skeptical about utopian designs and yet searches for a condition of peace and sublimity. In the last chapter of his novel, Gao describes a mystical experience that suggests a eutopian perspective in a cold world where snow is falling. The protagonist is surprised by the tranquility of a heavenly peace, but does not know "where this realm of Heaven comes from The fact of the matter is

"I comprehend nothing. I understand nothing" (2000: 506). Here the awareness of eutopia has become individualized to a point where it cannot be communicated. Another exiled Chinese writer whose work pertains to our argument is Lin Yutang (1895-1976). After having moved to the United States in the 1930s, Lin wrote a full-fledged utopian novel in English, *The Unexpected Island* (1955). When in 1994 it was posthumously reissued in Chinese translation in the People's Republic, it sold very well and, as Hong Zicheng observes, Lin had, together with other authors of his generation, "an important influence on the direction of prose writing during the 1990s" (2007: 422). Lin Yutang embodies the curious case of a writer who was ostracized in the 1930s but reentered Chinese literary history sixty years later. I will discuss his cosmopolitan and syncretist utopia in a separate section below.

While I could not find any Post-Mao eutopian novel, the tendency toward sarcastic criticism, extreme pessimism, and a dystopian view of society appeared to be strong. Yan Lianke (b. 1958) ridiculed the sacred slogan of "Serve the people" by using it as the title of a highly erotic novel (*Wei renmin fuwu*, 2005); after a short version of the book had been published in a journal, the book was banned in China. *My Life as Emperor* (*Wode diwang shengya*, 1993) by Su Tong (b. 1963) offers an utterly pessimistic view of court life in an indefinite and distant past, with plotting, treason, black magic, poisoning, and other variants of killing. It could be called a historical dystopia if it had paid more attention to the social conditions of the main characters and had focused less exclusively on the personal ruminations of the one-time emperor. However, an evidently dystopian novel about contemporary China was written by Wang Shuo (b. 1958), often considered a cynical, angry young man. His *Please Don't Call Me Human* (*Qianwan bie ba wo dang ren*, 1989) will be analyzed in the last section of this chapter. Wang Shuo and Lin Yutang are antipodes in every respect. They belong to different generations, had a totally different education, and lived in completely different cultural environments: Wang Shuo displaying shameless cynicism versus Lin Yutang's polite erudition, a rotten dystopian society versus an aestheticized utopia. Indeed, no two modern Chinese writers are further apart, but both wrestle with questions about the conceivable transformation and ultimate meaning of life.

The Unexpected Island has all the appearances of a utopian novel. It begins with the arrival of a small aircraft on the unknown island of Thainos, somewhere in the southern Pacific. The pilot was killed – as in Hilton's *Lost Horizon* and Lao She's *Cat Country* – and the female passenger, who receives the name of Eurydice, is bound to stay in the idyllic environment, the habitat of a utopian community. A twenty-five-year-old American woman, she is the outsider; Laos, an elderly man of Greek descent but with a Chinese grandfather, being the guide. They have long discussions reminiscent of Platonic dialogues. She moves from one place on the island to another and becomes acquainted with various people and different aspects of life. When at last a ship arrives by which she could leave, she decides to stay.

Originally a contributor to the literary magazine *Yu si* (*Threads of Talk*, 1924-1931), which was edited by Zhou Zuoren and Lu Xun and stood for “uncompromising individualism” (Hsia 1961: 121), Lin Yutang later became the editor of several short-lived journals and developed into an aestheticizing traditionalist who tried to stand aloof from day-to-day politics. After having settled in the United States, he wrote a number of bestsellers popularizing Chinese wisdom. *The Unexpected Island* was published in English by Heinemann in 1955; a Chinese translation by Zhang Zhenyu was included under the title *Qi dao* as volume 7 in the Chinese edition of his collected works (1994). The condescending treatment of his essays and novels by literary historians is as remarkable as is his rehabilitation in the People's Republic by way of the publication of his collected works in the 1990s.

One may indeed criticize Lin Yutang's escapist turn to humor, irony and erudition, but C. T. Hsia judges that he “did more than any other writer of his time to alienate readers from Communism” (1961: 134). Lin was a conservative critic, but more gifted than many of his contemporaries. His intellectual qualities have been systematically underestimated. Lin's later fiction, including *The Unexpected Island*, was completely ignored by C. T. Hsia (1961) as well as by Bonnie McDougall and Kam Louie (1997).

Yet, within the framework of the history of utopian fiction, *The Unexpected Island* is an interesting specimen. Traditional Chinese thought about the way human beings should live converges with Western generic conventions of utopian fiction in this well-written syncretist novel, which Huxley's *Island* (1962) has much in common with, although Huxley nowhere shows any sign of having read the story of Thainos. The name Lin Yutang does

not occur in Huxley's published letters, nor did I see any review of *Island* suggesting a connection with Lin Yutang (Huxley 1969, Watt 1975).

The story is set in the year 2004, almost fifty years after the book's publication, which enables the author to predict third and fourth world wars between 1974 and 1998. The fear of a nuclear war and the general decline of Western civilization have persuaded a large group of Europeans to go on board of the s.s. *Arcadia* and to sail to an unknown peaceful island in the Pacific. Most of them are Greek, and others are Italian or Russian or of mixed descent. They bring their Greek and Italian habits and culinary preferences to the island, which is inhabited by a native people who are duly impressed with the fireworks and loud music displayed by the strangers, who manage to make the natives believe that they are gods to be worshipped. By predicting an eclipse of the moon the new arrivals establish their superiority and assure their welcome on the island. From 1974 the native villagers and the newly arrived live peacefully together. Although no gun was fired to conquer the island, it was invaded and subjugated to European rule. Writing in the early 1950s, Lin Yutang does not give much thought to the fact that his utopia is based on colonization, but several years later Huxley wisely avoided the construct of European superiority.

Eurydice is first being taken care of by Emma-Emma, an elderly American anthropologist highly interested in the behavior of the native population, some hundred people living in a village in the northern part of the island, many of whom now are employed by the European "colonists" – a word Lin Yutang does not avoid. Being mainly of Greek descent, the newcomers call themselves Irenikis, which must mean something like "peace-loving people." Emma-Emma is particularly curious about the crossbreeding of cultures and the "racial mingling between the Irenikis and the Thainians" (1955: 18).

Before landing on Thainos, Eurydice was working for the World Food and Health Division of an international association, surveying the Andes and the southern Pacific. She is worried by the rise of the world population and consequent food shortage: the population of Asia alone had grown to 1.9 billion. That is what Lin writes in 1955, whereas at present it must be far over 3 billion. During World War III the center of New York and Chicago had been completely destroyed. The power of the president of the United States had increased to dictatorial proportions and younger people embraced "a combination of Zsazsaism [probably a fictive variant of Dadaism] and Sartrism, a mixture of exaggerated sophistication and effete intellectualism, an assertion of the will to live and enjoy the day, whatever was happening in the world" (29).

It is against this background that Laos, the spiritual leader of the Irenikis, expounds his philosophy of simplification, or back to basics. Although different people want different things, they do not get away from the basic needs of “food, rest, work and love” (210). He rejects the idea that Thainos is a perfect society, but Eurydice suggests more than once that the community receiving her so hospitably is no less than a utopia.

Laos abhors any forced attempts to change human nature. He believes that Plato’s sketch of a utopian community was never meant to be put into practice and maintains that all socialist experiments have failed. Just as Lao She had made fun of the Marxian “everybody-ism,” Lin Yutang ridicules Marx’s belief in the possibility of a classless society:

A classless society united in brotherly love and devoted to the public good! Parent-child affection will be replaced by a higher kind of loyalty! Men will work for the love of the state, not for profit! That is where Marx went completely nutty. Any time man plays a trick on Nature, Nature plays a nasty trick in return, and exacts payment with double interest. (43)

The quoted fragment occurs also in the Chinese edition of 1994, although considerably mitigated because the sentence “That is where Marx went completely nutty” was deleted. Similarly, in a later passage where Laos argues that utopias are uncashed and uncashable checks, the sentence “Karl Marx knew that he did not have to deliver the goods – the classless society” (315) is suppressed in the Chinese translation. It shows where in the 1990s the borderline of Chinese censorship was supposed to run.

Although Lin Yutang castigates the despotic bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, he does not express himself on Communist practices in China. Writing six years after the founding of the People’s Republic this is rather surprising. Perhaps he believed that too much attention to current affairs would detract from his long-term intention to construe a life where human beings would live in harmony with Nature. Rousseau is mentioned in this context, but the word “Nature,” with a capital, refers also to a more mystical philosophy. Laos is said to have spent two years in a Zen Buddhist monastery. Quoting Zhuang Zi, he explains his aims as follows:

I want, first of all, a society where man can recover some of the individuality and independence he has lost. A simpler life. Why not? I want a grand, complete simplification of human life, to find out what man wants in this earthly life, that man may live in harmony with Nature. In the

words of the Chinese philosopher, Chuangtse, that man may live out the peaceful tenor of his life, fulfilling his nature: “The universe gives me this form, this toil in manhood, this repose in old age, this rest in death.” To appreciate this universal harmony, the beauty of this cycle, and let our nature be fulfilled in it. And secondly, a society where the excellences of his being can be brought out, where man may develop himself along the lines of his excellences in ease and in freedom. (116)

This ideal that man must “fulfill his nature” is close to the equally mystical aim of “actualization” or “being turned into full-blown human beings,” described by Huxley in *Island* (1971b: 209). However, the social significance of these words is not immediately clear.

In his social philosophy Laos follows Confucian ideals, insisting on “simplicity of administration and law-court proceedings” (1955: 203). He also defends filial piety and thinks in terms of simple social structures, not allowing for any sharp differentiation between social roles or specialized expertise. Laos’s doubts about industrialization resemble the position of William Morris (whose name is not mentioned), as appears from his critical observation that a man no longer makes shoes, but only a small part of many shoes. He suspects scientific progress, arguing that the aim of such progress is almost never defined. He turns against specialization in the sciences as well as in philosophy, considering the theory of knowledge an aberration and the history of philosophy a poor escape. Philosophy should study the question of how to live well, rather than indulge in abstractions. Zhuang Zi and Confucius are not the only sources of inspiration; Lin Yutang also follows Santayana, “the only philosopher who understood the connection between poetry, symbolism and religion” (309) and who defended mythology as expressing the union of poetry and belief. Here the ground of Lin Yutang’s utopia becomes slippery. It ducks out of rational analysis and critique.

Lin Yutang fails in self-criticism. His spokesman Laos, referring to Epicurus, confesses that he is not an ascetic. On the contrary, he says, “I wallow in the material comforts of life” (211). The detailed descriptions of delicate meals in luxurious surroundings in the company of an Italian countess or a Russian prince strike me as an expression of unadulterated hedonism. *The Unexpected Island* is the most culinary utopia I know of. The purpose of the “Institute of Comforters of Men’s Souls” appears to be to train a kind of geisha who reads Lucretius and Plutarch. The author takes great pains to explain that it is a thoroughly decent and useful institution for the educa-

tion of young women, who after three years know everything they need to know to please a man. These girls are much in demand and often marry before graduation. Whatever may happen inside the Institute, it is certainly a product of male imagination.

There are striking contradictions in Lin Yutang's concept of utopia. The Institute of Comforters of Men's Souls favors a liberal attitude in erotic matters, but the effect is not propitious, for during the one month of Eurydice's stay on the island there are two rapes and one murder motivated by jealousy. Another contradiction is that Laos believes that he can establish a stable and peaceful community on the basis of colonization, on land appropriated through cunning and guile. Finally, I see a paradox in the professed cultural relativism, which allows the natives to maintain their cruel ways of punishment and the ideal of syncretist universalism among the Irenikis.

The more general question affecting other utopias is whether human nature can be supposed to change. Laos's answer is in the negative. In his opinion, all utopias are uncashed and uncashable checks, remaining uncashable in any foreseeable future. There is no justification for this position. Indeed, as the history of modern China, the Soviet Union, or Germany teaches us, some utopias that were put into practice were counterproductive. However, others brought the eight-hour working day and the establishment of social insurance. The utopia of the European unification has banned armed conflict between the major European nations for more than half a century, has realized the free movement of people and goods across national borders, and has introduced a common currency that is capable of withstanding the vicissitudes of globalization.

However, apart from these rather specific objections, there is also a more philosophical consideration. Did human nature change over the last two thousand years? Perhaps not. But over the last twenty thousand years? Probably yes, because the priorities among the needs of human beings and their concomitant emotions have changed. For a large part of the world's population, starvation and violence are no immediate threats nowadays. The daily worry about what to eat tomorrow and how to defend one's possessions has become a thing of the past for a great number of people. At present people have physical and emotional priorities that are quite different from those of twenty thousand years ago. Perhaps we feel the urge to prevent others from becoming the victims of hunger, illness, and war, as may appear from the current activities of many international governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Does this mean that human nature has changed since twenty thousand years ago? If human nature can be de-

defined as a particular constellation of general needs and emotions, the answer should be affirmative.

There is a danger in the argument that man should live in harmony with nature. It invites acquiescence in adverse conditions, in the cruelty that is ubiquitous among animals and still occurs among humans. Laos argues against Prometheus, against mountain climbing, which he interprets as “conquering” a mountain. He forgets that he has sailed to the other side of the globe and colonized a beautiful island. Harmony with nature can make us blind to what happens beyond our limited horizon. Characteristically, the Irenikis are not allowed to listen to the radio and hear the international news.

On the other hand, environmentalists may welcome Laos’s idea that nature is the habitat of human beings. They will appreciate his attempts to make use of solar energy and to be economically self-sufficient. They may agree with the law aimed at checking population growth by increasing the taxes paid by parents who have more than three children. They will enjoy the simple life that is not in need of modern technology and causes no pollution. The Irenikis are not ambitious and so far have managed to live in peace with the native population. These aspects are certainly utopian, but it is a utopianism that is restricted to a small solipsistic island, which attempts to forget the old world by which it is ignored.

Wang Shuo’s political dystopia

While Lin Yutang wrote about a fictive ideal society on an isolated island, Wang Shuo stood in the middle of the political turmoil that shook his large country. In 1989, the year when students and workers in the Tiananmen Square demanded more democracy, Wang Shuo published two novels challenging the official ideological condition of China; both have been translated into English: *Playing for Thrills* (*Wande jiusi xintiao*) and *Please Don’t Call Me Human* (*Qianwan bie ba wo dang ren*). The latter text can be read as a fantastic dystopian novel and *Playing for Thrills* seems to prepare the ground for that dystopia by way of a more realistic, yet experimental and in some respects postmodernist narrative. It is realistic in the sense that it describes a group of young men who have just completed their military service and use their mustering-out pay to travel to southern China, have fun, and let their fantasies run wild. It reveals the psychology of the lost generation that was caught up in the Cultural Revolution and sent to the country-

side or enlisted in the army, if not jailed or detained in reform-through-labor camps. They have come to the conclusion that “after all our sacrifices over the years, we’ve earned the right to enjoy ourselves for a change” (Wang Shuo 1997: 320). One character, who has suffered untold oppression and subjugation, “yearned to make up for his deprivations tenfold” (292). Extreme oppression is believed to provide an excuse for excessive liberty.

The mysterious event of ten years previously that propels the story is gradually unraveled as in a whodunit, going from complete ignorance to well-founded suspicions through talks with a great number of people acquainted with Gao Yang, the man who was murdered in a remote area of Yunnan province. Up to chapter 23, narrated time brings us gradually back to the moment of the murder ten years ago, and from then on the story of the last two weeks before the murder is told in chronological order, beginning with “Day Thirteen” and ending with “Day One.” Wang Shuo’s play with the identity of the various characters who may change their names at will, the hardly distinguishable difference between dream and reality, and most of all the incredibility of a seemingly authentic narrative, call for a postmodernist interpretation of the novel.

The major suspect is Fang Yan, who is interrogated by the police and goes into hiding in search of a woman who can provide him with an alibi. The murderer, however, is someone else who belongs to the same gang of discharged youngsters who spend their days drinking, playing cards, sleeping with loose women, living on the profit of their petty crimes, making up stories, and talking about doing something really exciting. They consider selling a fake ruby, holding up people and robbing them, and even killing someone in their own group.

Wang Shuo describes a bunch of liars and when their fantasy runs wild you never know whether they mean it. The plan to kill someone in their own group – the selection of victim and murderer – is not taken seriously, except by one young man who claims the role of murderer and finally kills Gao Yang for no other reason than that it promises the excitement they are looking for. Gide’s *Lafcadio* killed without even that motivation. However, Wang Shuo remains at a great distance from Gide’s noncommittal modernism. A dozen years after the death of Mao Zedong he lives still in a totally politicized world. His characters speak the language of the Cultural Revolution and Mao Zedong thought, mainly to ridicule it. Perhaps the gratuitous murdering of Gao Yang can be interpreted as a metaphor for the senseless killing during the period of the Cultural Revolution.

In *Please Don't Call Me Human*, Wang Shuo goes one step further. Now the political system of the People's Republic of China is dissected in grotesque dystopian terms. The Australian sinologist Geremie Barmé argues that the novel is set in “a comic dystopia” (1999: 91). Wang is more radical, more absurd, and more fantastic than other writers in the 1980s and provides a convincing example of both implicit and explicit metalinguistic criticism, for instance, by exposing clichés through ostentatiously using them. He questions the ideas of international competition and historical truth, and ridicules the Chinese food culture that links rare dishes to classical maxims, which Zhang Yiwu (1994: 252) interprets as “a deconstruction of the national allegory.” Wang Shuo also criticizes the jargon of modern cultural theory, as appears in the characterizations of Tang Yuanbao, the novel's antihero, offered by a couple of boys who are asked to give their opinion without repeating anything someone else has said already – a request they obviously ignore. They describe Tang Yuanbao in terms of the following clichés:

“Angry young man.”

“Member of the lost generation.”

“Structure ... structure ... structural realist.”

“Postmodernist.” (Wang Shuo 2000: 133)

Please Don't Call Me Human relates and subverts the “grand narrative” of the making of a hero. The novel elaborates the Chinese metaphor of “losing face,” and describes an international competition in humiliation which aims to restore the glory of China. This paradox is certainly not the only one in this story about the training of a hero which in the end results into the destruction of a human being (Fokkema 2008).

The novel, set in 1988, opens with a meeting of the “Chinese and Foreign Free-Style Elimination Wrestling Competition Organizing Committee,” which restyles itself as the National Mobilization Committee, abbreviated as MobCom. The committee is proud of the fact that the new name does not reveal what precisely it is mobilizing for. In fact, MobCom is searching for a strong Chinese man who would be capable of defeating any foreign opponent in a wrestling competition. Zhao Hangyu, chairman of MobCom, looks for “Big Dream Boxer,” a man who appeared on a picture taken in 1901. On a mission to find this person, Bai Du and Liu Shunming (a woman and a man), who are engrossed in ideas about martial arts, accidentally encounter his son, Tang Yuanbao, a pedicab driver, with whom Liu

starts arguing the fare. In the quarrel Tang appears to be a skilful martial arts fighter, precisely the kind of person they have been looking for. The next morning they find Tang Yuanbao in the compound of his family, meet his mother, and to everyone's surprise also his a hundred-and-eleven-year-old father. Encouraged by his father, who is the former Boxer warrior they were looking for, now old but still in good condition, Tang Yuanbao accepts being recruited for the job of fighting against any strong foreigner. He is supposed to represent the entire Chinese race.

Bai Du is to head the team that will be in charge of Tang Yuanbao's training. However, first he must be subjected to a medical examination and a hilarious psychological interview, at the end of which he must swear loyalty to the "organization." His training involves a course in politics in a mental hospital, where the inmates discuss the question of why China must wage a campaign of class struggle. Later, it appears that they are all Trotskyites and followers of the Gang of Four. At the same time, Father Tang is interrogated by the police, who discover that in 1900 he invented the (historical) slogan "Support the Qing [dynasty], annihilate the foreigners," which is a reason for considering him to be a reactionary, a turncoat, and a traitor (Wang Shuo 2000: 86). As part of a program of general education and preparation for his future role, Yuanbao visits a Buddhist temple, undergoes a session of exorcism that almost kills him and lands him in hospital, and performs in a circus, but the chairman of MobCom is not content with Bai Du's supervision of the training program. She is replaced by Liu Shunming, who announces that he will Westernize Yuanbao from head to toe. He arranges a dinner party attended by fans of the United States, but the conversation is interlarded with expressions of sympathy for the Communist Party. Next, Yuanbao pays a visit to a bookshop, where he is treated as a celebrity and asked to play a role in advertising clips for TV, but his recommendation to buy books is edited by clever ICT technicians into advertising other products as well, from Coca-Cola and refrigerators to wine and cosmetics. After a failed attempt to teach Yuanbao a combination of ballet and martial arts, he is more successful in a war game which shows him climbing mountains and fording rivers, extinguishing fires, turning over tanks, and killing numerous opponents. He performs all this not virtually but in a reality that is shown on television. He is hailed as a talent with uniquely "Chinese characteristics," as a hero who practices Mao Zedong's adage that "struggle demands sacrifice," indeed, as a superhero who is to be emulated by every youngster in China. The chairman of MobCom proposes to launch a campaign to "study Yuanbao," just as there have been similar cam-

paigns in China's revolutionary past in the 1960s, such as the "study Lei Feng campaign" or the "study Ouyang Hai campaign." It should be noted that neither the name of Mao Zedong, nor that of Lei Feng or Ouyang Hai is mentioned in this context, but Chinese readers can easily recognize the clichés taken from political jargon and have no difficulty in appreciating the parody.

At the top of his fame Yuanbao becomes a threat to the authority of MobCom. Masses of young people come to see him in a huge demonstration of their admiration, but as a result of his popularity among the masses Yuanbao is arrested by the police for inciting unrest. At the same time Liu Shunming observes that Yuanbao should not get cocky. His self-confidence might detract from his willingness to obey the instructions of MobCom. A colleague reminds Liu that MobCom, which made Yuanbao into what he is now, should also be capable of breaking him. Things take a further sinister turn when the news arrives that the foreign opponent who once so easily defeated and humiliated Chinese wrestlers in international competitions has committed suicide. MobCom is suddenly left without an adversary and after some research must conclude to its disappointment that China has not been defeated in any other competitions among male athletes and thus has no immediate cause to seek revenge, whereupon Zhao Hangyu proposes to turn Yuanbao into a woman, an Amazon warrior, who could participate in women's competitions.

This is too much for Bai Du, who is still participating in the planning but now is forced to resign from her MobCom position. Liu Shunming supervises Yuanbao's castration, sex-change operation, and adjustment to feminine behavior. But things get out of hand in a mass meeting of feminists who become so frantic that they wish to kill every man, except Yuanbao, who declares that he has become a woman. Things also go wrong in the sense that Zhao Hangyu begins to have doubts and has a mental breakdown, which leads to his downfall and arrest. And after an unsuccessful performance by Yuanbao in his original neighborhood, his supervisors are harassed by the local residents led by Yuanbao's mother, who are guided by common sense and become extremely angry when they discover that their proud martial arts fighter has been neutered. Simultaneously, Father Tang is sentenced to life imprisonment on the charge of being responsible for the crushing of the glorious Boxer Rebellion, but neither Yuanbao, nor his mother are informed of this.

Not all hyperbole and grotesque developments have consequences in the novel. After a sarcastic parody of the personality cult of the "fat man"

and the imprisonment of the old Boxer warrior, the narrative switches in a final chapter to an international contest in the Sports Arena of Sapporo, Japan. Without a further mention of his sex change, Yuanbao steals the show by happily subjecting himself to all kinds of torture. In a final optional performance, he cuts his own skin and pulls it from his face. Yuanbao has earned a gold medal for China, but paradoxically has lost his own face. As a parody of the psychology of brainwashing, the novel offers a dystopian picture of Maoist China, of which the vestiges have not yet all been erased.

There are few stylistic devices that Wang Shuo does not resort to. He tries repetition, long sentences without punctuation, nonsensical reasoning, and puffing up political jargon into absurd proportions. The result is so hilarious that his references to the Cultural Revolution or the “fat man” are taken as politically harmless jokes, at least in more tolerant times. In 1996 the four volumes of his *Literary Writings* (*Wenji*) went out of favor and were removed from the bookshops. However, in 2005 a volume of research material on Wang Shuo was published in Tianjin, containing commentary by Wang Meng, Tao Dongfeng, and many others. It also has chapters by Wang Shuo himself, who among other things explains his admiration for Borges (Ge Hongbing and Zhu Lidong 2005: 69). Tao Dongfeng considers Wang Shuo a postmodernist and hits the mark when he writes that “the revolutionary significance of Wang Shuo’s fiction consists in the disruption and unfreezing of linguistic registers and the established linguistic system” (360). Wang Shuo remains controversial in China but is not silenced at all. A new Chinese edition of his *Literary Writings*, including *Please Don’t Call Me Human*, was published in 2004 in Kunming, Yunnan province, and was reprinted in 2005.

Wang Shuo’s devastating social critique, which received hardly any attention in Europe or North America, is on a par with the dystopias of Zamiatin, Huxley, or Perec. In China he is the unsurpassed master of metalinguistic criticism by way of grotesque, hyperbolic narration. Lin Yutang’s *The Unexpected Island* pales in comparison with the overwhelming force and bizarre imagination of *Please Don’t Call Me Human*. If Western readers find that Wang Shuo’s work suffers from extravagance and exaggeration, they should remember the enormous traumatic experience of the Cultural Revolution, which for unconvincing reasons is kept hidden behind the smoke screen of the unassailable reputation of Mao Zedong, whose lifelong contributions to the Communist revolution “far outweigh his mistakes.” The history of the Cultural Revolution must still be written. In China there was

never an explicit de-Maoization, and as long as that has not taken place and the Communist Party continues its silent dictatorship, writers will resort to dystopian satire. In any case, the utopia of making a revolution from a “poor and blank” position is no longer attractive. And other utopian ideals remain invisible in the all-out scramble for material wealth.

Utopias, Dystopias, and Their Hybrid Variants in Europe and America since World War I

The production of various forms of utopian fiction in twentieth-century Europe and America is enormous so only some of the major trends can be discussed here. Both positive and negative utopias appeared, but the latter attracted more attention: in response to the infelicitous, violent, and plainly criminal attempts to realize utopian projects, with well-known counter-productive results, some highly interesting dystopian novels were written.

Apart from the growth of dystopian fiction in reaction to unchecked technological and disastrous political developments, there is another factor that has radically changed the writing and reading of utopias. Increasing democracy and the introduction of universal electoral suffrage stimulated not only the political but also the cultural autonomy of individuals, who felt less and less bound to remain loyal to traditional beliefs and conventions. The reactions to social wrongs and to projects for correcting them were also individualized. The essentially Manichaean distinction between eutopia and dystopia was relativized, not only because, at least since Mandeville and Swift, awareness had grown that a eutopian society would never be realized on earth, but also because the judgment whether a particular text was to be considered eutopian or dystopian appeared to be linked to a critical reader's individual value system. It is not farfetched to suspect that the emphasis on the role of the reader in literary communication after World War II had been made possible by the gradual democratic emancipation of individuals in the first half of the century. As mentioned in the introduction, the judgment whether Plato's *Republic* represents a eutopia or a dystopia depends on the reader's personal affinity with the abolition of family life and the organization of regulated promiscuity and eugenics. Similarly, the credibility of the eutopian perspective in socialist-realist fiction depends on the reader's affinity with Communist ideology, just as there is some logic in the rejection of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or Zamyatin's *We* by Communist critics.

At a basic, textual level, however, most critics agree that some narratives are clearly dystopian and others eutopian, whereas in some others yet again the two generic modes appear in combination. In this chapter I shall first

discuss fiction that generally is considered dystopian, then turn to some well-known attempts to represent positive utopias, and finally comment on texts whose utopian purport remains ambiguous.

In view of the increased freedom of readers in interpreting fiction, writers became more circumspect in distinguishing eutopia and dystopia. At times they resorted to metanarrative considerations about whether a particular society has utopian or rather dystopian characteristics. Wells did so in his best work, Barnes did it jokingly in *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*, and Ursula Le Guin made the meta-utopian question a central issue in her fiction, notably in *The Dispossessed* (1974). Le Guin's science fiction is a typical hybrid, neither plainly eutopian nor dystopian, but an exploration of the differences between the two modes.

Aldous Huxley weakened the Manichaean distinction between eutopia and dystopia by introducing a third alternative in the 1946 foreword to his *Brave New World*. This can be read as self-criticism of *Brave New World*, but also as an indirect announcement of his eutopian novel *Island* of 1962. Huxley considers the most serious defect in *Brave New World* to be that the Savage must choose between “an insane life in Utopia, or the life of a primitive in an Indian village” (1971a: 7). Today, Huxley writes in 1946, he feels no wish to demonstrate that sanity is impossible. He is convinced now of the beneficial effects of education, a decentralist economics, a Kropotkinesque politics, and of a science and technology controlled by humans. He also sees a role for a religion that “would be the conscious and intelligent pursuit of man's Final End, the unitive knowledge of the immanent Tao or Logos” (8). This religious perspective, born out of the dubious wish to preordain all aspects of utopian life, reminds one of the sermon of Mr. Barton in Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, which refers to the return of man to God, “who is our home.” Barton proclaimed that “the way stretches far before us, but the end is lost in light” (Bellamy 1967: 285).

Jerome K. Jerome had ridiculed this religious twist in his caricatural story “The New Utopia” (1891), which describes a quasi-perfect socialist state in which the first-person narrator awakes after a thousand-year sleep under conditions similar to those in *Looking Backward*. Jerome's utopian state is based on strict equality and the abolition of family life. People must be equal in every respect, which means that exceptionally clever men are subjected to a surgical operation upon the brain, which brings them down to the average level. Of others, who are physically above the average size and strength, an arm or a leg may be amputated. This is being done because the majority has decided so and, as is explicitly mentioned, a minority has no

rights. There is no place for literature or the visual arts in this utopia because they make people think: “those that did not want to think naturally objected to this, and being in THE MAJORITY, objected” (Jerome 1988: 183). For similar reasons, sports and games have been abolished, for they cause competition, and competition leads to inequality. Since nobody works more than three hours a day, the narrator is curious what these people do during the rest of their time. It appears that they consider how happy they are now and think about the destiny of the human race. The narrator asks: “Don’t you ever get sick of the Destiny of Humanity?” (183). He also inquires whether they worship a God. The answer is that they do and they call him “THE MAJORITY” (184).

Although this criticism is grotesque, Huxley’s mystic contemplation of the Final End appears not much different from thinking about the Destiny of Humanity as derided by Jerome. However, Huxley may not have been aware of Jerome’s parody. He nowhere refers to it: the name of Jerome does not occur in the nearly thousand pages of Huxley’s *Letters* (1969), nor is it mentioned in any of the critical reviews reprinted in Watt (1975). While ignoring Jerome’s caustic observations on thinking about the Destiny of Humanity, Huxley did continue the religious perspective of *Looking Backward*.

*Technological and political anti-utopias: From Huxley and Orwell
to Borges and Perec, Bradbury and Atwood*

The anti-utopias of the twentieth century each have their specific focus. *Brave New World* (1932) is directed against the application of technology and psychopharmacology without sensible rational control. Many years later Huxley told an interviewer that the book had “started out as a parody of H. G. Wells’s *Men Like Gods*” (Hillegas 1967: 111), thus providing another instance of creative literature polemicizing against a predecessor. Orwell’s *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) were outspoken critiques of totalitarian regimes, notably that of the Soviet Union. Jorge Luis Borges, predecessor of postmodernism, and Georges Perec, member of the Oulipo group of French avant-garde writers, dissected the ideology of National Socialism, each in his own way. Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), an anti-utopian interpretation of a world without books, is aimed against the threat of totalitarianism in the United States. *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985) by Margaret Atwood describes the conservative suppression of feminist ideals and shows the dystopian consequences of an imagined

theocracy in North America. In this section these works will be subjected to a detailed analysis.

Brave New World is built on the idea of a consistent eugenics. The “Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre” selects embryos for different jobs according to their mental and physical powers, thus creating Alphas, Betas, Gammas, Deltas, and, at the lowest level, Epsilons, who by withholding oxygen in a crucial stage of their maturing are conditioned to have very little human intelligence. Further differentiation into the five castes is arranged after birth in infant nurseries. Huxley said that *Men Like Gods* spurred him to write *Brave New World*, but Wells described the differences between classes more clearly in the earlier *A Modern Utopia*, which assumes the existence of four castes: the Poietic or Samurai, the Kinetic, the Dull, and the Base. In *Brave New World* the members of the lower castes, who do menial work, have been mentally conditioned in such a way that they feel happy about their environment and the work they have to do. Souvestre had already described the eugenic conditioning of human beings nearly a century earlier in his dystopian *Le Monde tel qu’il sera* (see chapter 8) but, as far as I know, neither Huxley nor his critics were aware of this.

Huxley borrows Wells’s term “World State” and defines its motto as “Community, Identity, Stability” (1971a: 15). In the year 632 after Henry Ford, there are ten World Controllers, and the reader gets to know the Resident Controller for Western Europe, Mustapha Mond, more closely. He governs a region where centuries ago all museums were closed, the historical monuments were destroyed, and all books published before the year A.F. 150 (After Ford) were suppressed (50–51). Other characters are Lenina, the woman who knows what sex is but never had thought about love or marriage and John the Savage, for whom love comes first and sex is the secondary impulse. Their relationship has an inevitably tragic ending. John was raised in the Reservation, where American Indians and “half-breeds” are living and was brought to London by Bernard Marx, an alpha-plus psychologist who has his doubts about the ideology of community, identity, and stability as it is realized under the supervision of Mustapha Mond. Finally there is Helmholtz Watson, an alpha-plus lecturer at the College of Emotional Engineering and a writer. Bernard and Helmholtz shared “the knowledge that they were individuals” (62). In the end both Bernard and Helmholtz agree to be sent to an island where other dissidents also live. From the point of view of the World State this is meant to be a punishment, but Mustapha Mond says that it really is a reward, being sent to a place

where they will “meet the most interesting set of men and women to be found anywhere in the world” (178).

The dialogues in chapters 16 and 17, in which the principles of the New World are set against those of the Old World, are among the best passages in the novel and in the whole of Huxley’s oeuvre. Here the clash of cultures comes most clearly to the fore. Mustapha Mond opens the discussion by addressing the Savage with the words: “So you don’t much like civilization, Mr. Savage” (171). The Savage confirms Mond’s impression by flatly saying “No,” but he could also have said: “not this kind of civilization,” implying that the term had acquired a different meaning from what it originally meant. The word “civilization” as used by the Controller comes close to the Newspeak that Orwell developed in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The same applies to words like “freedom” or “obscenity.”

The New World of Mustapha Mond is characterized most strikingly, however, by his views on literature. In chapter 16 the Controller explains that there is no place in his New World for Shakespeare, neither for *Othello* or *King Lear*, nor for rewriting any of the tragedies:

... you can’t make tragedies without social instability. The world’s stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can’t get. They’re well off, they’re safe; they’re never ill; they’re not afraid of death; they’re blissfully ignorant of passion and old age; they’re plagued with no mothers or fathers; they’ve got no wives, or children, or loves to feel strongly about; they’re so conditioned that they practically can’t help behaving as they ought to behave. And if anything should go wrong, there’s [the drug] *soma*. (173)

These words are spoken in the presence of the Savage, who often talks in Shakespearean language, quoting from *Romeo and Juliet* in order to express his hopeless love for Lenina. Perhaps “hopeless” is not the right word. Lenina is only too eager to embrace him, undressing before his eyes and pressing herself against him, but this is precisely what has an adverse effect. The Savage wants to marry her, but Lenina, who does not know what marriage is, finds it a horrible prospect when it is explained to her. Like in Zamyatín’s *We*, in the New World everyone belongs to everyone else, and nobody ever has strong feelings about anyone in particular.

Rebecca West noticed in an early review that in chapters 16 and 17 of *Brave New World* Huxley rewrote the story of the Grand Inquisitor from *The Brothers Karamazov* (Watt 1975: 197–202). The episode also appears to

parallel the talk between the Benefactor and D-503 in *Wē*, which was also inspired by Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor. The Controller explains that not only art and science but also religion have been sacrificed in the process of finding universal happiness. "God isn't compatible with machinery and scientific medicine and universal happiness," he says (Huxley 1971a: 183). Religious sentiment has become superfluous. If men and women do not start doing things on their own, there is no reason whatsoever for anyone to bear anything that is seriously unpleasant. This is the secret of the New World: as long as people do not begin acting independently, the social order can be maintained and stability is guaranteed. The next question is: who is to supervise the social order, who is to ensure continuous stability? The Controller, of course.

Mustapha Mond confesses that at one point in his career he was engaged in pure science and deviated from the orthodox belief in the social order of the New World. His superiors checked this development and offered him the choice of being sent to an island or accepting the function of Controller. He chose the latter but now admits in a moment of weakness that he sometimes regrets the choice. For "happiness is a hard master – particularly other people's happiness. A much harder master, if one isn't conditioned to accept it unquestioningly, than truth" (178).

Mustapha Mond is not fully conditioned to do the job. He must provide conditions for the happiness of others but is not happy himself. This is indeed very much like Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor, who had taken the burden of freedom upon himself in order to allow the masses of believers to live in carefree happiness, permitting them to sin provided that they would confess in due time. In this view, the Roman Catholic Church obliges common believers to work and allows them to play and dance like children in their spare time. In return, these believers love the Church because it permits them to live with their wives or mistresses and to do what they want. The role of the Grand Inquisitor is strikingly similar to that of the World Controller: both are equally unhappy, and also equally tragic.

On its appearance in 1932, *Brave New World* created a storm of reaction, not all of them friendly. In Australia the novel was banned for four years on the grounds of obscenity (Watt 1975: 3). Rebecca West, however, counted it among the six most important books published since World War I. Joseph Needham judged that there is nothing in *Brave New World* that might not be regarded as "legitimate extrapolations from knowledge and power that we already have" (204). But H. G. Wells was predictably disappointed and criticized Huxley for having sketched such a pessimistic future

for a society based on scientific achievements, in effect defiling science (16). Having an aversion to any well-ordered world, Bertrand Russell concluded that “we do not value happiness as much as we sometimes think we do. We like adventure, self-determination, and power more than we like happiness” (211). However, who is Russell representing here? Who are the “we” he is talking about? Does this “we” apply to all humans, or only to the happy few who have access to power and can largely determine their own adventurous life, and who, moreover, may be rewarded with happy memories of their own achievements? As long as there still exists considerable inequality in education and wealth, many people will prefer happiness over self-determination and societies will remain susceptible to religious and political totalitarianism. It is unlikely that any utopian society can be sketched that satisfies the needs of all, disregarding individual emotional and intellectual differences.

Brave New World and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are often mentioned in one breath, but their authors are in many respects each other’s antipodes: Huxley focusing on the dangers of technological inventions; Orwell spelling out the details of political oppression. Huxley describing a faraway future; Orwell a nearby one. Huxley watching World War II at great distance from the military conflict, safe in California; Orwell participating in the Spanish Civil War and later working in London as political commentator for the BBC Eastern Service in support of the British war effort during World War II. In a letter to Orwell of October 1949, Huxley writes “how fine and how profoundly important” *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is, but in the same letter he finds it necessary to draw attention to his own preoccupation with animal magnetism and hypnotism (1969: 604); Orwell, however, does not share that interest and doubts the predictive value of *Brave New World*, arguing that “No society of that kind would last more than a couple of generations, because a ruling class which thought principally in terms of a ‘good time’ would soon lose its vitality” (Watt 1975: 333). There is more to say about *Brave New World* but I shall do that later, in connection with my discussion of Huxley’s *Island*.

Orwell wrote *Animal Farm* in the early 1940s, basing it on his first-hand knowledge of the manipulative politics engaged in by the Communists in Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War and on the history of Communist power in the Soviet Union. It is a fable about animals who resist being exploited and rebel against the autocratic rule of Mr. Jones. It is the pigs who take the lead in the revolution that seeks to bring about a “golden future time” (1971: 13). “Animalism” is the name of the ideology professing that

“all animals are equal” (12). Napoleon, a sturdy boar, represents Stalin; the more vivacious Snowball stands for Trotsky. The dystopian fable, which mirrors the political history of the Soviet Union rather closely, describes the betrayal of the original Communist ideals, the persecution of real and imagined enemies, and the distressful submissiveness of the masses, who are intimidated and terrorized. In the end, the ideology of animalism has changed and is summarized in the slogan: “All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others” (114). This paradoxical statement has become a household saying, even among people who have never read *Animal Farm*. It testifies to the popularity of the novel, which was a bestseller and earned the author both literary recognition and some badly needed income.

In his mid-forties, Orwell began writing *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in near total seclusion on the island of Jura off the coast of Scotland. Though suffering from tuberculosis, which would cause his death in January 1950, Orwell succeeded in completing a consistent novel that had an enormous impact. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is an extrapolation from the political situation under totalitarian regimes, such as in the Soviet Union or Nazi Germany. It remains close to the familiar reality of World War II in England and avoids the trappings of science fiction, with the exception of the installation in every household of a telescreen that works both as a receiver and an emitter of messages. Winston Smith, the main character, only vaguely remembers the days before Big Brother assumed dictatorial power, when Airstrip One was still called England or Britain.

The world is divided into three superstates, which combat each other in continually shifting alliances. In 1984 Oceania, which includes Airstrip One, is at war with Eurasia and in alliance with Eastasia. Previously, Oceania had been at war with Eastasia, but this fact has been erased from public memory. The authorities in power want the people to believe that Oceania has always been fighting Eurasia and have directed that history be rewritten accordingly. The reason for altering the historical records is that Big Brother must be considered to have always been infallibly right, never making a political mistake, never wavering, and never relativizing a current decision: war with Eurasia today means that Oceania has always been war with Eurasia.

Winston Smith, who works as a clerk at the Records Department of the Ministry of Truth, knows how the process of rewriting works and is instrumental in changing the records when his anonymous superiors request him to do so. If necessary, he will forget historical reality (as far as he can know

it) completely and invent facts or people at will. The creation of the heroic Comrade Ogilvy is a case in point. Winston makes up a character who at the age of three “had refused all toys except a drum, a sub-machine gun and a model helicopter” (Orwell 2000: 49). At eleven he had denounced his uncle to the Thought Police. He was a total abstainer and a nonsmoker, and had taken a vow of celibacy, believing that marriage would be incompatible with unconditional devotion to duty. These are only some of the heroic deeds and psychological qualities that Orwell spells out with uninhibited exaggeration. At twenty-three Comrade Ogilvy was killed in action by Eurasian jet planes. The heroic warrior invented by Winston is a parody of positive heroes in Soviet literature and politics and an anticipation of Maoist heroic models, such as Lei Feng and Ouyang Hai and their caricature Tang Yuanbao in Wang Shuo’s *Please Don’t Call Me Human*, written many years after *Nineteen Eighty-Four* had appeared. The strength of Orwell’s fiction lies in its close resemblance to totalitarian practices; its credibility is enhanced by what readers know of political propaganda, oppression, and persecution. The fate of Jin Jingmai’s novel *The Song of Ouyang Hai* (discussed in chapter 15) exemplifies the practice of rewriting for political reasons in China; the heavy editing of Ostrovsky’s *How the Steel Was Tempered* before it could be published and become a bestseller (chapter 14) is a Russian example of similar intervention by the Party. The political history of the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, and the People’s Republic of China provides numerous instances of rewriting official history by means of the manipulation of photographs, the distortion of records, and the erasure of political figures from public memory.

Throughout the novel Winston Smith struggles with the question of why the Party proceeds as it does. He knows everything about the technique of rewriting the past but does not understand *why* it is being done. When he is finally arrested, interrogated, and tortured by O’Brien, the agent provocateur whom he had mistakenly trusted, he learns the answer to that question. As in *We* and in *Brave New World*, the dialogue between interrogator and interrogatee recalls the story of the Grand Inquisitor: Winston assumes that the Party is guided by the idea that mankind must choose between freedom and happiness, and “that, for the great bulk of mankind, happiness was better” (275). But O’Brien says he is wrong and explains that

the Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness; only power, pure power. What pure power

means you will understand presently. We are different from all the oligarchies of the past, in that we know what we are doing. All the others, even those who resembled ourselves, were cowards and hypocrites. The German Nazis and the Russian Communists came very close to us in their methods, but they never had the courage to recognise their own motives. (275-276)

The Party is simply clinging to the power it has acquired and not thinking any longer – if it ever did – that its dictatorship is a temporary solution, necessary to bring about “a paradise where human beings would be free and equal” (276). To change the facts and rewrite history is simply a manifestation of power. This lack of any idealism seems to distinguish the ideology of Big Brother from Nazism and Communism but, in the reality of the extermination of the Jews or of the forced labor camps, life of the prisoners was also determined exclusively by the power of brute force. The practice of violent oppression and merciless annihilation was at a great distance from any ideological considerations.

Although an expert in rewriting the historical past, Winston’s “mistake” is that he knows he is lying. While Oceania is officially involved in a war with Eurasia, he remembers that some years earlier it was at war with Eastasia. And when later the alliances suddenly change, making Oceania join together with Eurasia, again, to fight Eastasia, and the clerks at the Records Department work long days to change all printed sources that mention the now obsolete war against Eurasia, Winston maintains a commonsense notion of reality and knows he is falsifying the records. O’Brien, however, teaches him that there is no such thing as an independent concept of reality. Reality is not what is remembered but what is in the records, and the records can be changed if the Party wishes to do so: “Reality is inside the skull,” O’Brien says. “You must get rid of those nineteenth-century ideas about the laws of Nature. We make the laws of Nature” (277). The Party decides what reality is; this is the core of the dystopia of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It is, in fact, also one of the main tenets of Marxism-Leninism – which must have inspired Orwell on this point.

There is a commonsense counterargument against the idea that language – ranging from philosophical definitions to political propaganda – tells us what reality is, namely the nonverbal physical experience of hunger that indicates hunger, or torture that is being perceived as torture, whatever the Party says or Newspeak may want us to believe. However, in the Party’s ideology common sense is “the heresy of heresies” (83). It is common

sense that causes Winston to write in his diary: “Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four” (84). This simple example of arithmetic, which also haunted Dostoevsky, plays a considerable role in the final dialogue between O’Brien and Winston. If the Party proclaims that two and two make five, you must believe it.

Newspeak, as explained in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, aims at a reform of language that will prevent individuals from thinking clearly and logically. It suppresses the subtle qualifications of words and incorporates value judgments that follow from the Party’s ideology into linguistic usage. For instance, the ministry that is continuously changing – i.e., falsifying – the records is called the Ministry of Truth; and Winston is being interrogated and tortured in a building surprisingly called the Ministry of Love. At the end of the novel Orwell has added a thirteen-page-long appendix explaining the principles of Newspeak.

It is nonverbal communication that offers an escape from the perverted logic of linguistic determinism inherent in Newspeak. The narrator employs the physical experience of erotic desire to break the spell of political terror shaped by a combination of Newspeak and brute force. Winston is taking a huge risk by responding positively when Julia lets him know that she loves him. Under the circumstances of the society in which they live – without any privacy and under constant supervision of telescreens which effectuate the idea of an ever-watching Big Brother – it is hazardous to have any private communication and to arrange an appointment, but the two lovers ignore the danger and manage to meet secretly for several weeks or even months. Among Party members, such as Winston and Julia, making love is an act of resistance. The proletarian masses, which form the vast majority of the population, are supposed to constitute no danger at all and are free from strict supervision. Party members, however, are considered to be capable of taking initiative and becoming a potential threat to the monopoly of Big Brother’s power. They are closely watched and must stick to the rules dictated by the Party.

Orwell is usually remembered as the author who convincingly represented terror and oppression. The notion “Big Brother is watching you” has become a widely known phrase even among people who have never heard of the author who invented it. However, Orwell succeeded in writing with equal conviction about the joy of erotic love. In lyrical terms he describes how in springtime Winston and Julia make love in a quiet clearing in the woods, while hearing the clear song of a thrush singing amid the lush vegetation. Again, as in Wells’s and Zamyatin’s stories, it is nature that fosters

the resistance against the regimented political life in the city. Julia has had many lovers and does not hide her promiscuity, which, perhaps surprisingly, is appreciated by Winston, who declares that he hates purity and goodness: "I don't want any virtue to exist anywhere. I want everyone to be corrupt to the bones" (132). Julia answers that she then is the woman to suit him, for she admits to being corrupt to the bones. Winston reflects that this is what he wanted to hear: "Not merely the love of one person, but the animal instinct, the simple undifferentiated desire: that was the force that would tear the Party to pieces" (132). The first meeting of the two lovers is described with such persuasion, on a par with the best passages in D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, that the Argentine publisher of the Spanish translation demanded cuts in the crucial part of this episode (recorded by Peter Davison in a note on the text [Orwell 2000: xxi]). The nonverbal experience of the "animal instinct" gradually develops into a more encompassing love, including care and tenderness, which feeds Winston's and Julia's hope that their close relationship may last. However, they are arrested when they are in their hideout in a room above an antique shop, which Winston had rented from a man who, as it turns out, is an informer working for the Thought Police.

The Party encourages a puritanical view of sex. Julia understands why, for if you are happy inside yourself and with a partner, there is no reason to become excited about Big Brother and the Three-Year Plans. The narrator summarizes the Party's view as follows:

It was not merely that the sex instinct created a world of its own which was outside the Party's control and which therefore had to be destroyed if possible. What was more important was that sexual privation induced hysteria, which was desirable because it could be transformed into war-fever and leader-worship. (139)

Orwell is right in pointing to the relation between the deprivation of erotic love and political hysteria; the observation, I would suggest, pertains also to religious hysteria. The Stalinist and Maoist political systems as well as Roman Catholic monastic life provide numerous examples of sexual continence in combination with ideological bigotry. The novel stipulates that in 1984 marriage has not yet been abolished, but couples are supposed not to experience any pleasure from the sexual act. All marriages between Party members must be approved by a committee, which will refuse permission if the candidates show any signs of physical attraction. Some organizations

go further and advocate artificial insemination and bringing up children in public institutions. That would open the possibility of prenatal selection. However, the novel does not explicitly refer to eugenics; nor does it raise the issue of euthanasia, perhaps because the widespread political persecution followed by death and the ensuing deletion from public memory called “vaporization” (21) leaves no space to consider that solution.

The economic conditions are not much discussed either. The abolition of private property has been effected with the result that property was concentrated in the hands of a small group of people: the Party owns everything, “because it controls everything, and disposes of the products as it thinks fit” (215).

All literature is in the process of being translated into Newspeak, and that takes time. The end result will have no place for tragedy. “Tragedy,” Winston perceives, belongs “to a time when there was still privacy, love and friendship” (32). Translated into Newspeak, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, and Byron will have been changed into something completely different, even “into something contradictory of what they used to be” (56). The rewriting of literary texts is subjected to the Party’s preconceived political principles.

Orwell was in many respects inspired by Zamyatin’s *We*, which George Steiner found “the subtler, more inventive fiction” (Meyers 1975: 372). Striking similarities are: the visual memory of previous times in the Ancient House and in the room above Mr. Charrington’s antique shop, the love affair and the betrayal of love, the arrest of the two lovers, and of course the writing of a diary by the main character. The latter activity is a problem in both novels. If it still seems acceptable that D-503 writes for unknown readers in outer space, the question of why Winston begins to record his highly dangerous, subversive thoughts is difficult to understand. In the earlier part of the novel it is suggested that he hopes that one day O’Brien, in whom he then still sees a potential ally, will read the diary. Perhaps the real explanation of Winston’s obstinacy can be found in another dystopian novel, Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*, where someone suggests that man “never gets so discouraged or disgusted that he gives up doing it all over again” (2008: 197), implying that human beings may do things against all odds, simply because they consider them important and worth doing.

Whereas Zamyatin, Platonov, Orwell, and Wang Shuo directed their criticism mainly at Communist regimes, others, such as Michel Tournier in *Le Roi des aulnes* (1970, *The Erl-King*) and the Austrian writer Christoph Ransmayr in *Morbus Kitabara* (1995), made Nazism their target. However,

a much earlier critique of National Socialism can be found in “Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius” (1940), a fantastic “fictional essay” by Jorge Luis Borges; in view of the purport of the story, Orbis Tertius, literally meaning Third World, has the connotation of the Third Reich. “Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius” has a postscript, allegedly dating from 1947, which in fact was published seven years earlier. Therefore, one of Borges’s biographers considered the story (including the postscript) a specimen of “utopian science fiction” (Monegal 1978: 333). It sketches the existence of a fake copy of the 56th volume of *The Anglo-American Cyclopaedia*, in which the imaginary country of Uqbar – “a utopia, a ‘no place’” (Block de Behar 2003: 38) – was described. Bioy Casares had seen the article about Uqbar and shows it to the first-person narrator of the story. Together they read the article and learn “that the literature of Uqbar was one of fantasy and that its epics and legends never referred to reality, but to the two imaginary regions of Mlejnás and Tlön” (Borges 1970: 29).

The story appears to make a second beginning with some memories about Herbert Ashe, who died of a ruptured aneurysm in September 1937. Just before his death he had received a mysterious package which contained the eleventh volume, from Hlaer to Jangr, of *A First Encyclopaedia of Tlön*, written in English. On the first page a blue oval was stamped with the inscription “Orbis Tertius.” The encyclopedia describes the history and culture of an unknown world. The enigmatic question is: who invented Tlön? Recalling Huxley, the narrator suggests that “this brave new world is the work of a secret society of astronomers, biologists, engineers, metaphysicians, poets, chemists, algebraists, moralists, painters, geometers ... directed by an obscure man of genius” (32). The language of Tlön, of which the story provides several details, is based on idealism, and its literature “abounds in ideal objects, which are convoked and dissolved in a moment, according to poetic needs” (33). As the people of Tlön “conceive the universe as a series of mental processes” (33), it is not surprising that psychology is considered the mother of all disciplines. The prevailing idealism invalidates scientific research and “the metaphysicians of Tlön do not seek for the truth or even verisimilitude, but rather for the astounding” (34). In effect, the story anticipates the modification and rewriting of the past elaborated in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In the imaginary culture of Tlön there is no place for common sense: this too reminds us of Orwell’s dystopia.

The so-called postscript discloses that in the seventeenth century a secret society was founded with the proclaimed aim of inventing a country. The efforts of several generations were not enough to realize that goal but,

instead of becoming more modest, the organization broadened its ambition and with the support of a millionaire decided to invent not a country but a planet, with the result that it began writing the encyclopedia of Tlön in forty volumes. With the assistance of some three hundred collaborators the plan succeeded and the last volume appeared in 1914.

Tlön was mentioned in the fake article on Uqbar and we may consider therefore the encyclopedia of Tlön to be based on an imaginative effort to the second degree. However, the plans of the secret society did not stop here: it wanted to write a more detailed edition of the encyclopedia, written in one of the languages of Tlön, about an illusory world provisionally called “Orbis Tertius” – a product of imagination to the third degree.

Borges’s story stipulates how certain elements of the world of Tlön have intruded into the real world, just as utopias always pertain to the world we live in. As an admirer of Swift and Wells, Borges does not object to manifestations of extreme imagination, nor does the narrator of the story; but the latter does object to the *systematism* of the methodical encyclopedia of Tlön. However, it is the representation of systematic order that makes the world of Tlön attractive in the eyes of most people and its ideas successful in the real world. The narrator draws the dystopian conclusion that other ideologies also owe their acceptance to their systematic appearance:

Ten years ago any symmetry with a semblance of order – dialectical materialism, anti-Semitism, Nazism – was sufficient to entrance the minds of men. How could one do other than submit to Tlön, to the minute and vast evidence of an orderly planet? (42)

The story affirms that the imagined world of Tlön has disintegrated our present condition: the past that we learned about in our school days has been rewritten and the language of Tlön will finally replace English, French, and Spanish.

References to National Socialism are not uncommon in Borges’s fiction. For instance, in “Utopia of a Tired Man” (“Utopía de un hombre que está cansado,” 1975) crematoria are mentioned, “invented by a philanthropist whose name, I think, was Adolf Hitler” (Borges 1979: 70). The paradoxical indication of Hitler as a philanthropist testifies to Borges’s linguistic skepticism, in particular his distrust of the stable meaning of words.

Borges abhors the overwhelming power of a systemic world order, which he shows can always be dissolved into paradoxes and contradictions. He described the fantastic world of Tlön in order to show its dangers,

which are inherent in other ideological systems as well. Instead of the deceptive regularities of a system, he favors the experience of a significant detail, as may be enjoyed unexpectedly, for instance, during the revision of an early Spanish translation of an essay by the seventeenth-century scholar and writer Sir Thomas Browne. As suggested in the concluding paragraph of the text, the search for personal satisfaction, even in seemingly unimportant work, prevails over acquiescence in the prearranged circumstances of a well-ordered utopia.

Georges Perec's criticism of National Socialism is more concrete than Borges's and his description of the dystopian island of *W* is also closer to the formal conventions of utopian fiction. In his novel *W ou le souvenir d'enfance* (1975, *W or the Memory of Childhood*) Perec juxtaposes the description of an obnoxious society situated on *W* with the personal history of the inventor of that fictional island. The autobiographical part describes the distressful experiences of the first-person narrator as a child during the years of German occupation in World War II and later as an adolescent in post-war France, experiences that are marked by the death of his father as a soldier in the summer of 1940, the deportation and death of his mother and other members of his Jewish family, and his own survival by hiding in a Catholic boarding school. It is a sad story, but it still offers a picture different from the inhuman life on the island of *W*. Gradually it appears that the dystopian story of *W*, printed in italics, is connected with the autobiographical history, printed in roman, of "Georges," named in chapter 6, who is the son of Icek Judko (or André) and Cyrla (or Cécile) Szulewicz (cf. Schulte Nordholt 2008).

In the European tradition both eutopias and dystopias focus on the social construction of society, with particular emphasis on the organization of the state or community. Usually the domains of work, leisure, family life, procreation, and criminality are successively reviewed. The description of social life in *W*, however, is limited to athletics, consisting largely of a ruthless chase disguised as a sport, which in fact is a struggle for life without any connotation of pleasure or relaxation. Another subject is mating and procreation on the basis of physical superiority. Perec thus exposes the values of National Socialism, which in Germany were celebrated by writers such as Edwin Erich Dwinger, whose novel *Die letzten Reiter* (1935, *The Last Riders*) conveys an atmosphere of military violence; it advocates a shot of irrationality and barbarism ("ein Schuss Barbarei") to counter the old ideals of rationalism and civilization (Loewy 1969: 48).

The island of *W* is rather small, only fourteen kilometers in length, but

with enough space for four villages, each inhabited by hundreds of athletes. It is situated near the southern tip of Patagonia and was colonized by white people of north European origin at the end of the nineteenth century. Before that time it was uninhabited, although its natural scenery appears rather pleasant and allows for growing corn, turnips, and sweet potatoes. It has been noticed that the geographic description of W has much in common with passages in chapter 11 of *L'Île mystérieuse* (1873, *The Mysterious Island*) by Jules Verne (Montfrans 1999).

Little is said about who is taking care of agricultural production in W. It is probably not the athletes; they constitute the major part of the male population, for all men either are, or have been, or aspire to become athletes. Women are much less numerous than men; the proportion of females to males being one to five. The women live strictly separate from the men. As a kind of supporting labor force they sew clothes, prepare meals, nurse small children, and become pregnant. There is no family life at all.

Boys and girls live together in children's homes until they are fourteen years old. When they reach the age of fifteen, the girls are locked up in the women's quarters and the boys go to the villages where they first are subjected to all kinds of humiliation and physical violence before finally being accepted as novices who one day may hope to reach the status of athlete. However, to be an athlete is no guarantee of an easy and carefree life, because the struggle for a better position never ends and having attained a particular position does not mean that one will be able to keep it. Even the athletes have no rights.

Three kinds of competitions are distinguished: the Olympiads, which are held once a year; the Spartakiads, which are held every three months; and the Atlantiads, which take place every month. Perc provides long and somewhat tedious descriptions of these competitions, the different kinds of sports played, the rules of the games (which can be changed without any advance notice), and the numbers of athletes involved. The Olympiads are held between the best athletes of the four villages: W, North W, West W, and North-West W – geographical names that do not possess an element of history or fantasy. In each village between 380 and 420 athletes, including the novices, are living, together with their supporting personnel, such as trainers, medical doctors, masseurs, hairdressers, and so on. They form an exclusively male community. The women, as well as the children and the elderly, are living somewhere else, in the so-called Fortress, which also houses the government that makes its decisions in great secrecy and complete anonymity.

There are twenty-two branches of sport, in which in each village 15 athletes compete for being admitted to the Olympiads, making a total of 1320 athletes. Only 3 athletes are selected from each village in each branch of sport, and the 12 others, evidently of inferior quality, must take part in the Spartakiads. Out of the 3 best athletes of a village only 2 may join the Atlantiads, which are of a rather different nature and which I will discuss below.

The whole society is at once completely regulated and subject to arbitrary deviations from the rules. However, one overriding rule remains: the struggle for life – which does not always imply that the fittest will survive, because just before each competition unexpected handicaps may be announced that make the outcome quite unpredictable. Life in W is violent, unforeseeable, and anonymous. The athletes have no names but are indicated by the initial of their village and a number. Among the athletes the habit has grown to give themselves nicknames, which are transferable to the novices who replace them at the end of their career. However, the central government looks askance at the use of these nicknames as they seem to subvert the policy of depersonalization. The only names that, according to the officials, truly count are the names the athletes earn by winning a competition, which are identical with the names of former famous sport heroes or historical figures.

The Atlantiad is the most cruel competition and at the same time essential for keeping the population at the required level, for it is a race for mating and as such a perverted demonstration of eugenics. Whereas men and women are living strictly separated, they can meet under specifically competitive conditions once every month during an Atlantiad. Usually around fifty women are allowed to participate in the race in the central stadium. They are conceded a head start of half a track length before they are being pursued by the hordes of athletes, who are much more numerous than they and therefore fight among themselves with all tricks they can think of even before the race has begun, trying to increase their chances to reach one of the women. Weapons, however, are forbidden, and in order to prevent their being carried secretly the administration has decided that all men, as well as the women, must be naked – as in the exercises suggested by Plato in the *Republic* (452b, 457a) – except for their track shoes, which are pointed and quite dangerous. In the days before an Atlantiad alliances of combatants are formed and several athletes are eliminated even before the start of the race. In the final stage the winners grab a random prey amid enthusiastic cheers of the public. The victors all receive the name of Casanova.

The society of *W* is built on the ideology of victory at any price. Its slogan is “*Fortius, altius, citius*” (stronger, higher, faster) – words that Perec borrowed from the French pedagogue Pierre de Coubertin, who helped reinvent the Olympic Games at the end of the nineteenth century (Montfrans 1999). Winners are celebrated and receive all kinds of remunerations, but only as long as they remain winners; whereas losers suffer humiliation, cruel treatment, and sometimes death by stoning. At times the struggle for life looks like a war of everyone against everyone, in which victory depends on chance.

The life of those who aspire to become athletes is strictly predetermined; boys can have no other intention than trying to become a successful athlete. They have no say whatsoever over their own future, which is dictated by the law of permanent competition. In a final analysis the text repeats: “That is it and it is all” (“*Il y a cela et c’est tout*” [Perec 1975: 191]). There is nothing behind that, or above or below that. Every day there are competitions, ending in victories and defeats. One must fight in order to live. There is no other choice. One cannot close one’s eyes and refuse to participate in the competitions; there is no refuge, and compassion or safety can be expected from no one. However, and this is a crucial passage in the novel, these people are still human beings and the elderly athletes, the almost senile veterans, still have not completely lost the belief that there must be something else:

that the sky can be clearer, the soup better, the Law less hard, ... that merit will be rewarded, ... that victory will be within reach and that it will be beautiful. (*que le ciel peut être plus bleu, la soupe meilleure, la Loi moins dure, ... que le mérite sera récompensé, ... que la victoire leur sourira et qu’elle sera belle.* [191])

It is here that the text describing life in *W* connects with the autobiography of the adolescent Perec and his references to life and death in a concentration camp. In fact, the intertextual relations between the two parts of the novel are expressed rather explicitly. Whoever has missed previous signals will certainly not overlook the shouts of the guards who order the athletes to leave the dormitory, yelling in German “*Raus! Raus!*” (“*Out! Out!*”), and “*Schnell! Schnell!*” (“*Quickly! Quickly!*”), commanding them to enter the stadium in perfect order (210). In the last italicized chapter the parallel between *W* and the Nazi concentration camps is even more obvious. It characterizes life in *W* as consisting of two worlds, that of the masters and that

of the slaves. The masters are inaccessible and the slaves destroy each other. Whoever manages to enter the Fortress – the seat of government – would find there, hidden in the basement, piles of gold teeth, wedding rings, pairs of spectacles, thousands of items of clothing, dusty documents, and pieces of cheap soap. This leaves little to the imagination. Finally, the very last chapter (in roman print) has a long quotation from David Rousset's book *L'Univers concentrationnaire*, which in few words summarizes the conditions of life in the camps.

At the end of the novel it is obvious that the two alternating stories are related. However, the first part of the italicized text, which tells the story of the deaf-mute boy Gaspard Winckler, also contains references to the autobiographical story in roman type. For instance, Gaspard's mother is called Caecilia, almost similar to Cécile, the name of the narrator's mother in the autobiographical narrative. Caecilia was shipwrecked; Cécile died in Auschwitz. The idea of the island of W has its origin in a childhood fantasy of Perec, as is made explicit in chapter 2. The novel suggests that Gaspard has survived the shipwreck and may have reached W, only to be subjected to the totalitarian regime that dominates the island.

The autobiographical story is a denial of the ideology of W. It shows defeat, loss, and hiding instead of victory at any price. The child in the autobiographical part finds refuge, compassion, and safety, different from the inhabitants of W. Where W is ruled by an anonymous central government that has ordered the people to bear numbers instead of names, the autobiographical text is explicit, even overexplicit, about the names of relatives and friends, the dates of birth and death, and the locations of where these people have lived. The individuality of the autobiography is the reverse of the collective savagery in W. Perec sets the precise description of historical fact against the abstract narrative of terror. This parallels the opposition in Borges's story of Tlön between significant detail and the abstraction of an uncompromising, merciless system. It also correlates with the conflict between individual desire and the false notion of collective bliss in the dystopian novels by Zamyatin and Orwell.

With Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* this selective survey of twentieth-century dystopias shifts to a North American setting. Ray Bradbury published his dystopian novel in 1953, when he was in his early thirties. It was a time when in the United States the slightest form of sympathy for Communism was considered an un-American activity and many believed that the Cold War would develop into a hot one. The persecution of leftist intellectuals threatened the democratic principle of freedom of speech. Bradbury made

freedom of thought and expression the main theme of his novel, which in a fantastic twist sketches a world upside-down: firemen igniting fires instead of extinguishing them, their fire-hoses filled with kerosene instead of water. As the story slowly unfolds, the reason for their destructive labor is explained. The firemen are supposed to destroy any book they find, to burn whole libraries as well as the home of everyone who is suspected of possessing books. As Captain Beatty of the fire brigade says, books are often offending a minority and therefore imperil our civilization:

Coloured people don't like *Little Black Sambo*. Burn it. White people don't feel good about *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Burn it. Someone's written a book on tobacco and cancer of the lungs? The cigarette people are weeping? Burn the book. (2008: 78)

The aim is serenity and peace: the people's wish to be happy prevails. Books say nothing that you can teach or believe, Beatty argues. If they are fiction, they are "about non-existent people, figments of imagination" (81). If they are nonfiction, the different arguments contradict each other. Philosophy or sociology are bound to make you unhappy. Like a Mustapha Mond, Beatty has personally experienced the melancholy caused by questions one cannot answer. He has read numerous books and can quote from all major English writers, but he prefers "solid entertainment" (81).

Fahrenheit 451 continues a theme in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by distinguishing between how things are done and why they are done. Clarisse, the girl who early in the novel talks to Montag, the dissident fireman and main character, has the habit of asking why-questions. She likes to leave the city and hike around in the forest, watching the birds and collecting butterflies. Her innocence and open mind affirm the dichotomy of the perverse city and the purity of nature, as in the dystopian stories by Wells, Zamyatin, and Orwell. Halfway through the novel Clarisse disappears. Beatty suggests that her family has been arrested and Clarisse is dead.

Montag has occasionally picked up a book from a bookshelf before starting to burn the rest of the collection and has hidden the books he thus saved in his home. This is an extremely dangerous act of defiance, to which his wife is opposed. The novel is set one or two generations after its year of publication and allows for scientific inventions such as the Mechanical Hound, which is capable of smelling and detecting books; it plays a role in identifying Montag as an enemy of the official anti-book policy. Montag assumes that Beatty suspects that he has lifted at least one book.

When Montag decides to return one of the books of his secret collection to Beatty in order to dispel the latter's suspicions, he takes time to look at the various titles he has, in effect considering a literary tradition that stretches from Thoreau, via Shakespeare, back to Plato. He is living in a country that has "started and won two atomic wars since 1960" (96) and now is enjoying comic books and three-dimensional sex-magazines; it is hated by the rest of the world, which is poor and starving. Montag wonders why his country is hated so much and hopes to find an answer in the books.

He remembers Faber, a retired professor of English, with whom he shares his doubts and worries. Faber provides Montag with an electronic device that works as a small telephone in his ear, through which he can overhear the conversation between Montag and Beatty and offer his advice. The professor considers Captain Beatty to belong "to the most dangerous enemy of truth and freedom, the solid unmoving cattle of the majority" (140). He finds an antidote to the tyranny of the majority in fiction and poetry, which record the truthful details of life. The term Faber uses, "telling detail" (108), reminds us of Borges's opposition to the overriding systematism of the encyclopedia of Tlön.

Montag's wife informs Beatty that her husband has collected books. Beatty and his team of firemen, including Montag, drive up to his home. Beatty orders Montag to set his house on fire, which he does, but in an act of ultimate defiance he also directs his flame-thrower at Beatty and his two other colleagues. Faber tells him how to flee to the other side of the river, where in the wilderness some intellectuals are living who have memorized important books, hoping to reproduce them if better times come. Montag manages to escape from the city and reaches the forest, where he meets several literary experts, former professors at famous universities, who are camping there. They inquire whether he is interested in Plato's *Republic* or Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. If so, he can talk to the men who have learned those texts by heart. Thoreau's *Walden* also is a source of inspiration to these people.

Meanwhile the war, which always was a threat at the background – like in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* – is brought to a conclusion by enemy aircraft releasing bombs on the cities of the country. This means the end of the anti-intellectual regime of terror. The city where Montag used to live goes up in flames and is destroyed. Together with his newly found friends he returns to it, hoping to be of use there.

In the afterword to the novel, Bradbury reveals that the burning of books in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, as well as the witch hunts in Salem,

Massachusetts, in 1680, provided him with the theme of his narrative. However, he was also motivated by the destruction of books *without* fire: “Because you don’t have to burn books, do you, if the world starts to fill up with non-readers, non-learners, non-knowers?” (225) Here the danger hinted at is the prevalence of a televised monoculture. Whichever was the main motive behind Bradbury’s fiction, I know of no other utopian novel that so emphatically established a link between reconsidering the world we live in and the reading of literature.

Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* describes a dystopia from a feminist perspective, in the sense that it shows how the modern achievements of women’s emancipation are annulled by a totalitarian government. After a coup d’état in the late twentieth century, in which the President of the United States was murdered and all members of Congress were killed, the army declared the state of emergency and established the Republic of Gilead, which adopted theocratic policies forbidding, among other things, women from working or having any possessions. The change was swift: one day their credit cards were made invalid and they no longer had access to their bank accounts. A world of relative freedom, allowing for extramarital relations and divorce, flirtations and abortion, came to an end and was replaced by moral guidelines based on a strict interpretation of the Bible, reducing women to instruments of procreation. The main epigraph of the novel recalls a passage in Genesis 30 saying that Rachel, who appeared to be infertile, suggested to her husband Jacob that he make her maid Bilhah pregnant and let her “bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her.” The story of Rachel and Jacob is reenacted in the novel: during the “Ceremony” a man indicated as the Commander is supposed to impregnate the handmaid in the presence of his barren wife. Since birthrates were plummeting in pre-Gilead times, the primary obligation of any household now is to beget children, if necessary with the help of a maid.

As in many fictional utopias, the transition from the rejected previous state of affairs to the eutopian or quasi-eutopian condition is problematic. Both the novel and the fictional postscript entitled “Historical Notes on *The Handmaid’s Tale*,” purportedly written two hundred years after the events of the story, go into details about the decline of American culture before the theocratic rule was established. The descending birthrates are merely a symptom of a great number of objectionable circumstances: the widespread AIDS epidemic; accidents, shutdowns, and incidents of sabotage affecting nuclear power plants; leakages from chemical and biological warfare stockpiles; the disposal of toxic waste; and the use of chemical insect-

ticides (1989: 386). The blame for shooting the President and the members of Congress is put on Islamic fanatics (225).

The narrator points to several political precedents that made the transition to the Republic of Gilead plausible. The theocracy of Gilead is compared to the one in Iran. The Romanian preoccupation with birthrates and the prohibition of abortion in the 1970s and 1980s under the Ceausescu regime is also mentioned. References to “surrogate mothers,” who in pre-Gilead times were paid for bearing a child, and the occurrence of polygamy among the Mormons in Utah provide a number of real-life examples to underscore the plausibility of the Gileadean restoration occurring in America and near to present times. If, moreover, the reader is aware of the influential presence of fundamentalist religious sects in the United States, the armed conflict between the Gileadean forces and the Baptists or the Quakers does not come as a surprise. The only thing that remains rather unbelievable is the machine-gunning of all the members of Congress and the suspension of the Constitution. However, excepting this aspect of the transition to the Republic of Gilead, the novel appears to tell a plausible story, in which the main characters appear to react like normal human beings.

It is a remarkable accomplishment of the author to present the protagonists as psychologically convincing men and women. Offred, the main character and first-person narrator, is clearly unhappy about the role of handmaid that was forced upon her. She has to wear a red uniform, with a long skirt and white “wings” that prevent her from looking sideways. In all respects she must display chastity and modesty. She is under constant supervision and, as with the characters in *Fahrenheit 451*, is not allowed to read books or magazines. The Newspeak that Atwood employs to characterize the irreversibility of the totalitarian regime and its power over individual citizens is inspired by Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; it is built on the principles of euphemism and abbreviation. Salvaging is the euphemistic term for death by hanging, Ceremony for a threesome copulation, Angels for soldiers, Eye for spy, and Particution for lynching. Atwood follows the principle of abbreviation in words like Compuphone, Compubank, Identipass. She is also indebted to Orwell in her use of words like Unwoman or Unbaby. This sort of Newspeak emphasizes the difference between insiders and outsiders, loyalists and enemies, believers and libertarians. The compulsory use of neologisms confirms the regime’s absolute power over the speech and thought of its subjects. The atmosphere of terror and suppression is enhanced by a narrative style of short, clipped sentences, which do not allow for qualification or a free flow of the imagination.

Within this framework of prohibition and compulsion, the main characters all have moments of defying the rules. Although the handmaid looks at her own fate from a woman's point of view and occasionally focuses on typically female experiences, the novel's concept of terror transcends gender distinctions and affects both male and female characters.

Offred remembers her private history in flashbacks: her love for Luke (her husband before the formation of the Republic) before and after the divorce from his first wife, her attachment to their daughter, their failed attempt to cross the border to Canada, and their arrest and separation. She was detained at a Rachel and Leah Reeducation Center and to her distress now serves as the handmaid of a high official, the Commander. The name "Of-fred" is a patronymic indicating that she has been assigned to Fred. It expresses a complete dependence on the man she belongs to.

When Offred is asked to do some shopping, she cannot go alone but must be accompanied by the handmaid of another household, Ofglen. It takes some time for her to discover – because anyone can be a spy and betray you – but finally it is clear that Ofglen is a dissident and a member of the Mayday resistance.

The Commander himself acts against the rules when he arranges private meetings with Offred without his wife being present. Initially, these meetings are devoted to playing Scrabble together, but they end up with a visit to a nightclub. This is of course not according to the prevailing theocratic ideology or his high position in the regime. The Commander, who probably was among the initiators of the theocratic government, believes himself to be above the law. His responsibility for the current state of affairs appears from a casual remark he makes during one of his conversations with Offred. Defending the idea of arranged marriages, the Commander believes that in this way women are better protected and more respected than in the days of their so-called emancipation, under which women frequently experienced divorce, solitude, and poverty. However, he also has his moments of doubt and asks: "What did we overlook?" Whereupon Offred answers: love, falling in love. Nevertheless, the Commander sticks to his opinion that arranged marriages work out just as well or even better.

The Commander's wife, Serena Joy, is afraid that her husband is sterile and will be incapable of making the handmaid pregnant. Therefore, she suggests to Offred that she pay a visit to Nick, a Guardian who serves as the Commander's driver. In fact, Offred visits him more than once, begins to like him, and in the end believes herself to be pregnant. It is not only Offred who follows an erotic impulse, but Serena Joy and Nick also act completely

against the rules; the latter even risking his life for an adulterous relationship. Although Offred suspects that Nick may be an Eye, he appears to be – perhaps simultaneously – a member of the Mayday resistance. In the end he arranges her escape (which looks as if she is being arrested).

Acting against the rules is the only way to mark your personality in a strictly organized dystopia. This psychological insight is the main theme of Atwood's novel. At a particular moment Offred even considers stealing something in order to justify her existence as an individual. In all the dystopias discussed in this chapter, the major characters try to disentangle themselves from the political or moral framework that determines their lives. Bernard Marx and Helmholtz Watson in *Brave New World*, Winston and Julia in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the character correcting a translation of Sir Thomas Browne in Borges's story about Tlön, Perec relating how he survived Nazi persecution in the autobiographical part of *W or the Memory of Childhood*, the defiant fireman in *Fahrenheit 451* – they all have not only political but also psychological reasons for their opposition, just as Offred and other characters in *The Handmaid's Tale*. This is why, in the long run, strictly regimented dystopian systems of government cannot be successful, with the exception of cases in which genetic manipulation or pharmacological brainwashing has been applied, such as in *Brave New World*, or when the normal functioning of the brain has been destroyed by radiation or electrical shocks, as in Zamyatin's *We* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Attempts at eutopian fiction: Skinner and Huxley

It cannot be denied that in Europe and America dystopian narratives attracted more attention and perhaps were also more numerous than the eutopian variant. However, if socialist-realist novels (see chapter 14) and writings purveying other political ideologies or sectarian beliefs are included in our definition of eutopian fiction, the picture looks different, and dystopian and eutopian texts may hold each other more or less in balance. There are more examples of eutopian fiction than we at first may be inclined to believe, but not all of them are interesting. Some valuable texts were discussed in earlier chapters: Hilton's very successful *Lost Horizon* (1933) and Hesse's *Das Glasperlenspiel* (1943, *The Glass Bead Game*), which became popular among followers of the Flower Power movement (see chapter 6), and the half-Chinese, half-Western *The Unexpected Island* (1955) by Lin Yutang (chapter 15). I shall not repeat my analysis of these works here; instead I

shall focus on two other well-known texts, *Walden Two* (1948) by B. F. Skinner and Aldous Huxley's *Island* (1962). These two novels are not flawless and the eutopian communities they portray are not entirely convincing, but they are serious attempts to design a nearly perfect world; at the same time they show how difficult it is to imagine a perfect society in modern times and in realistic circumstances.

Skinner, a professor of psychology at Harvard University, named his sketch of a eutopian community after Thoreau's *Walden*, which I briefly referred to in chapter 11. *Walden Two* is built on the idea of economic self-sufficiency, like *Walden*, but it differs from its pre-text in several respects. Skinner is primarily a social scientist with a favorable attitude toward modern technology, not a writer. Somewhat artificially he tried to make his book look like a novel, inscribing it into the literary tradition by way of intertextual links. One of the characters in *Walden Two*, Augustine Castle, a skeptical philosopher, had once given "a course in the Utopias, from Plato and More and Bacon's *New Atlantis* down to *Looking Backward* and even Shangri-La" (Skinner 1962: 14). Another character, Frazier, the man who shows a party of six guests around in the community of Walden Two, refers to Thoreau, Bellamy, *Brave New World*, William Morris's *News from Nowhere*, and Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*. In this way Skinner inserts his book in the genre of utopian fiction and exhibits it as literature, most clearly, of course, by echoing the title of Thoreau's work.

Thoreau's *Walden* is a compelling monologue, spoken by a man who wanted to be alone. In *Walden Two*, however, we learn about a eutopian community through endless and tedious dialogues, dominated by Frazier, who displays his wisdom as a final solution. Thoreau emphasizes that each person should live according to his own rules: "Love your life, poor as it is" (1971: 328); he rejects any proselytizing. Skinner's Frazier, however, is looking for new recruits and indeed succeeds in persuading three out of the party of six to join the community of Walden Two. Thoreau desires to speak out of bounds and does not shun exaggeration, while at the same time admitting that truth cannot adequately be caught in words. This linguistic skepticism is totally absent from *Walden Two*, where mastermind Frazier apparently knows exactly what the destiny of humanity is. The idea in *Walden Two* that through self-control individuals are able to design their own good conduct is a pretence only, for "the control always rests in the last analysis in the hands of society" (1962: 105). This is diametrically opposed to what Thoreau had in mind.

The more limited scope of *Walden Two* is determined by blind reliance

on the science of behavioral engineering, although Frazier cannot convincingly explain how it works. Closest to such explanation is the following discussion of the “reinforcement theory”:

If it's in our power to create any of the situations which a person likes or to remove any situation he doesn't like, we can control his behavior.

When he behaves as we want him to behave, we simply create a situation he likes, or remove one he doesn't like. As a result, the probability that he will behave that way again goes up, which is what we want. (259-260)

The process is built on psychological conditioning and is applied in moderate form in commerce, education, and religion, as Frazier indicates; to which one could add the rules and exemptions of taxation. However, the application of the theory as practiced in *Walden Two* is incapacitated by the question of *who* is going to supervise the process. Castle, for instance, accuses Frazier of being a fascist, a dictator. At the end, in chapter 33, Frazier compares himself to God. In any case, there is no room for democracy here.

As in any typically utopian novel the geographical setting of Frazier's experiment remains unknown. It is true, a mailing address is given: “Walden Two, R.D. 1, Canton,” but there are at least fifteen Cantons across the United States. It also fits the genre of the utopian novel that Frazier's solutions for the ills of society are rather extreme. He aims at a new conception of man, compatible with present scientific knowledge, and at a complete revision of culture. He relativizes the value of the family; for instance, children are educated by adults other than their parents – like in Gilman's *Herland* and Huxley's *Island*. In *Walden Two* there is no practice of free love, as in the negative utopia of *Brave New World*, but there is room for free affection. Frazier foresees that eventually experiments in selective breeding would be possible:

The hereditary connection will be minimized to the point of being forgotten. Long before that, it will be possible to breed through artificial insemination without altering the personal relation of husband and wife.

Our people will marry as they wish, but have children according to a genetic plan. (144)

The possibility of artificial insemination exists also in the narrated world of *Island*. A complete genetic plan was described earlier in *Brave New World*

and, more recently, in Houellebecq's *Les Particules élémentaires* (1998, *Atomised*).

However, erotic and sexual relations remain rather abstract in *Walden Two*. On the one hand, the community encourages early marriage, even of teenagers, who have children while they are still young so that the generations are separated by less than twenty years – which would have a dramatic effect on the growth of the world population, but that was apparently not of concern in the late 1940s. On the other hand, when Barbara, one of the guests, displays her charms and flirts with the bachelor Frazier, his reaction is clumsy and defensive, as if he had forgotten that such things might happen. In fact, in this novel of 300 pages I see no traces of lived affection or love, except at the end of chapter 33, when Frazier in his godlike pose confesses that he loves the people in the Walden Two community as if they are his children.

How is it possible to construct such a society, one without competition, without jealousy, and with plenty of leisure? I shall not go into the economic problem of self-reliance in a modern world, which is grossly underestimated by Skinner, who believes that four hours of work a day is enough to keep things going. But how is it possible to prevent competition and jealousy and, most importantly, boredom?

Competition and jealousy can be avoided, Frazier believes, by creating equal opportunities in education and work. A moral or ethical lapse – whether in explicit violation of the Walden Two code of conduct or not – needs treatment, not punishment. In this context he refers to Butler's *Erewhon*, which relates that Erewhonian criminals are treated as if they are ill. Frazier's plans do not go as far as that, but a lazy person is considered a patient and sent to the psychologist. It remains unclear how crime is dealt with in Walden Two.

It is difficult to convince the six visitors that boredom does not threaten the community. The attitude of the nearly thousand inhabitants of Walden Two is in general rather passive. They are governed by a small elite of experts who are selected by co-optation; the majority of the residents are supposed to be only too glad that they can leave any decisions about the organization of the community to them. Krishan Kumar rightly criticizes this point, arguing that handing over the possibility of intervention to any kind of elite is suicidal for a society (1987: 376–377). However, the community of Walden Two shows little interest in local or national government and no interest at all in international affairs. Their world is small indeed; nor does religion or philosophy open it up. Frazier maintains that religious faith has

become irrelevant, “when the fears which nourish it are allayed and the hopes fulfilled – here on earth” (1962: 199). Why should we hope for a better world in the hereafter if we like the present state of affairs?

The narrative style is explicitly realistic, filling the story with unnecessary details and leaving nothing to the imagination. The following description of a self-service breakfast appears rather superfluous:

We helped ourselves to scrambled eggs and bacon, and a cooked cereal of mixed grains – a special product of Walden Two which proved to be delicious. Small glasses of spiced sweet cider or grape juice stood on a nearby table. We found a place under the skylight of one of the modern rooms. Then I realized that we had forgotten coffee. (69)

And so all meals are treated: “We assembled for an early breakfast, leaving our work clothes in our rooms for a later change” (95); “We returned to the dining rooms by way of a kitchen door” (192); and “As we left the dining rooms after a simple Sunday-night supper ...” (280). Virginia Woolf once castigated such overexplicit realism that focuses on external conditions and I thought that her superb irony had put an end to it forever, but was mistaken.

In view of the fact that Skinner’s style in general is determined by clichés, the self-reflective commentary in chapter 36 comes as a pleasant surprise. Burris, the first-person narrator of the story, notes that he wanted to end his writing with the last lines of chapter 35 and that he discussed the matter with Frazier who, however, found that ending too vague and ambiguous. Frazier deplors that half a dozen different dénouements would be possible after chapter 35 and pleads instead for giving the reader “the whole story.” This is indeed more in line with the poetics of realistic completeness that characterizes the whole novel. Within this realistic framework the ending of chapter 35 is an exception: here a vision is expressed, a perspective on a new world in almost mystical phrases that are not Skinner’s. These words have been borrowed from Thoreau and are introduced as being quoted from *Walden*:

I do not say that John or Jonathan will realize all this; but such is the character of that morrow which mere lapse of time can never make to dawn. The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star. (Skinner 1962: 315; cf. Thoreau 1971: 333)

On his way home Burris had bought a copy of Thoreau's *Walden* and read the quoted lines "with feverish excitement," believing that their mysticism was rather un-Thoreauvian. But he is wrong: there are more such passages in Thoreau's narrative, though they may have escaped Burris's, and Frazier's, as well as Skinner's attention.

Frazier cannot stand ambiguity, nor irony for that matter. He wants to hear "the whole story": what was Walden Two really like? Burris gives in and ends his narration by telling about his return to the secluded world of Walden Two, where he hopes to play the clavichord, to read Trollope and Austen, and to have time for thinking and writing. I wonder whether many twenty-first-century readers will appreciate this ending tainted by provincialism. In fact, Thoreau's *Walden*, the pre-text written almost a century earlier, appears more modern and is sketching a more promising perspective than Skinner's novel. Thoreau wanted to "be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought" (1971: 321). He acknowledges his indebtedness to "the Orientals," which he had discovered in Emerson's library, and quotes from Persian and Arabian stories, from the Vedas, from Confucius and Mencius. He advises the reader to commune with Zoroaster or Jesus Christ but to ignore the Church and prefers wisdom over institutions, sublimity over morality. Here we see the deep chasm that separates *Walden* from *Walden Two*. Thoreau abhors any timid concepts of morality and loves "the wild not less than the good" (210). He is aware of the animal in us and refers to Mencius' words: "That in which men differ from brute beasts, ... is a thing very inconsiderable; the common herd lose it very soon; superior men preserve it carefully" (219). Elsewhere Thoreau confesses that he went to the woods because he wanted "to live deliberately" (90), to confront only the essential facts of life. And, if life proved to be mean, he would publish its meanness to the world and, if it were sublime, he would know it by experience and give a true account of it. He is against hastily concluding that it is the chief end of man to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Thoreau can be called a syncretist, a monist, or a pantheist. We may question which qualification fits him best, but should note at the same time that Skinner does not bother about those characterizations: he is not interested in religious questions.

The trust that Skinner showed to have in science and technology was radically criticized by the generation of '68, as appears from *The Making of a Counter Culture* (1970) by Theodore Roszak, an admirer and staunch defender of Herbert Marcuse. In a brief bibliographical note, Roszak mentions *Walden Two* as a fictional representation of "utopian social engineer-

ing” (295). But, somewhat surprisingly, he ignores Thoreau’s *Walden*, for which he probably would have had more sympathy. Roszak had a keen eye for the role of mysticism and Eastern traditions, notably Zen Buddhism and Daoism, in the counterculture of the 1960s. He marshals Daoism against technocratic government and quotes Zhuang Zi’s well-known maxim: “The wise man, when he must govern, knows how to do nothing” (267). In this context Roszak expresses a high opinion of Huxley’s *Island*, “where a non-violent culture elaborated out of Buddhism and psychedelic drugs prevails” (138). As Roszak argues, Huxley had suddenly seen the possibility of an eclectic religious revival beyond the decaying Christian era. This was exactly what the dissenting young were looking for: *Island* “is cluttered with brilliant communitarian ideas and insights, and ... has had great influence among its young readers” (300). There is no such praise for Skinner.

Indeed *Island* is a much more worthy successor to *Walden* than Skinner’s book. Huxley mentions *Walden* in a letter of 1916 and quotes Thoreau in 1960, two years before *Island* was published, in a letter to his son Matthew (Huxley 1969: 106, 899). He shares Thoreau’s interest in Eastern philosophy, but *Island* is not exclusively “oriental” in its solution for the ills of society; it also includes Western achievements, such as scientific research and technology as applied to agriculture, medicine, and education. And the mystical notion of being aware of the “here and now” that is emphatically present in *Island* can also be found in *Walden*. Thoreau phrased it variously: as wanting to live deliberately, arguing that “only that day dawns to which we are awake” (Thoreau 1971: 333), or claiming that “in eternity there is indeed something true and sublime. But all these times and places and occasions are now and here. God himself culminates in the present moment ...” (97). An important difference is that Huxley admitted the use of a hallucinatory drug in his story, whereas Thoreau sought revelation by drinking the pure water of Walden Pond.

Throughout his career as a writer, Huxley’s interests remained more or less the same: the critical analysis of abstract intellectualism as well as of mindless consumerism, erotic love, redemption from the transitoriness of life, the escape from individuality into mysticism. Some of these themes are echoes of modernist preoccupations, and so is his intellectual approach and preference for experimentation. Moreover, Huxley is mesmerized by the idea that humanity can and should be happier than it is now. After evoking possible technocratic horrors in *Brave New World* and addressing other pressing issues, such as overpopulation, democracy, and morality, in essays that were collected in various volumes, among them *Brave New World Revis-*

ited (1958), Huxley tried to capture an ideal society in his novel *Island* (1962). Fredric Jameson interpreted it as an “attempt to rectify the satiric *Brave New World* of 1932” (2005: 5). Similarly, I will argue that the eutopian *Island* is a rewriting of the negative *Brave New World* – a rewriting that, as suggested earlier in this chapter, was more or less announced already in 1946. Not only do the two novels share the generic characteristics of utopian fiction – i.e., the isolated setting, a focus on the organization of society, and a preoccupation with the destiny of humankind, all couched in a predominantly expository style – but the two texts also have specific themes in common. Did Huxley succeed in making the ideal society of *Island* a convincing counterpoint to *Brave New World*?

The people of Pala, an imaginary island close to Ceylon, nowadays Sri Lanka, have lived in relative isolation, have never been colonized, and have always been free of outside interference because of the absence of a natural harbor. Will Farnaby, whose sailing boat was wrecked in a storm, is found on the beach and becomes a witness exploring the island and its hospitable inhabitants. He is a journalist, with a side interest in the exploration for oil. Since he is injured, Farnaby is allowed to stay on the island for a month. This is exceptional because no other journalist had ever received permission to visit the island. Toward the end of the narrative he is completely engrossed in the Palanese way of life and has forgotten about journalism as well as his lucrative mediation in obtaining concessions for the extraction of oil.

The secret of this positive utopia is the awareness of the here and now (something that was also crucial in *Walden*), in contradistinction to the great but ever-receding aim that dominates most negative utopias. The word “awareness” and its connotations occur with unexpected frequency in this text, as they do in the great modernist fiction of the interwar period, but Huxley uses “awareness” in a different sense from the modernists, as it includes the mystical experience, a thing he was interested in from his early days. He attempts to sketch a society without contradictions, without conflicting interests, without strife or hopeless desire. One of the characters, a Palanese educator, has set himself the task to “educate children on the conceptual level without killing their capacity for intense non-verbal experience” and to “reconcile analysis with vision” (1971b: 210). The overall aim is to let boys and girls discover what in fact they are for, that is, “for being turned into full-blown human beings” (209).

Whereas in daily life reason and emotion are to be reconciled, in religion too such oppositions must be erased. The Palanese abhor Calvinism

and Roman Catholicism. They are Zen Buddhists with some syncretist admixtures. If they believe in God, it is the immanent God of Spinoza, whose name is mentioned twice. Dr. MacPhail, who has both Scottish and Palanese ancestors and was born in Pala, sees a quaint logical relation between child-beating and the later belief of the victims in a God who is the "Wholly Other" (120). Both Luther and Augustine were flogged in their childhood and therefore projected salvation in a transcendent abstraction. Among Buddhists and Hindus, Dr. MacPhail believes, education has always been nonviolent, which opened the way to believing in a God who is wholly immanent.

The Palanese also try to reconcile contradictions in other areas. They combine school and practical work, emphasize the unity of mind and body, and make erotic experience into a kind of yoga. From an Eastern point of view they wish to combine the best from the East and the West. Pala does not want to engage in large-scale research in physics and chemistry, and in any case it lacks the means for doing that. Instead, it concentrates on the sciences of life and mind and in this way hopes to set an example for other developing countries. The Palanese are strong in medicine, ecology, and education. Huxley writes learned but tedious chapters on "balance, give and take, no excesses" (219), which is the rule in nature and ought to be the rule among people. It goes without saying that Pala has no army.

Much of the Palanese philosophy makes sense but, like most theories about the destiny of humankind, it stretches its point, for instance, in the concept of time. An inescapable limitation of human beings is their temporal existence. The Palanese try to transcend this imperfection by means of hypnosis, mystical experience, and a drug: the moksha-medicine. In the last chapter of the novel Will Farnaby takes the mushroom-derived drug and experiences hallucinations that are first described in extremely laudatory terms, such as "luminous bliss" and "knowledgeless understanding," but that end in an awareness of incommunicable pains and infinite suffering, which destroys the favorable impression the use of the drug is supposed to make. It is one of the incongruities in the story. Of course, more in general one may question how the use of a drug, whose hallucinatory effects tend to isolate individuals from each other and from social reality, can be considered an asset to a utopian society. How moksha increases its users' awareness in daily life is not clarified in the text at all.

Will Farnaby is waked up from his at first pleasant, then terrifying moksha trance by Susila, a woman whom he now finds incredibly beautiful and for whom he feels a kind of unselfish, albeit not primarily erotic, love. He is

grateful for these moments of mutual understanding and quiet happiness. However, at the end of the story these interludes are suddenly interrupted by the sounds of gunfire. A loudspeaker announces the political takeover of the country by a military dictator from the neighboring island of Rendang: Colonel Dipa, a Muslim, whose program consists of modernization, economic progress, and oil – in short, of what currently would be called globalization.

Huxley's approach is all-inclusive, covering all aspects of social and mental life; the utopian world he describes is holistic, a world where all parts hang together. The small green booklet Farnaby reads, which summarizes the Palanese values, rejects any form of dualism. It admits that, without dualism, "there can hardly be good literature," but "with it, there most certainly can be no good life" (181). In the course of Pala's self-realization, literature was sacrificed. Its culture allows only for an aesthetics of identity, of recognition, harmony, and peace. As a consequence, there is no room for skeptical questions about the stability or self-evidence of linguistic reference and hardly a chance for irony. The rapture of superlatives describing Will's doped mystic experience calls for a critical reaction. The paradoxes to which the people of Pala resort and which remain unquestioned by the narrator, such as "knowledgeless understanding" or "each is both," are not much different from the self-contradictory statements "War is Peace" or "Ignorance is Strength" in Orwell's *Newspeak*. Of course, in *Island* the connotations of the paradoxes describing mystical union are meant to be positive, while the self-contradictory slogans in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* have a negative effect, detrimental to the faculty of clear thinking. Nevertheless, both Huxley's paradoxes and the contradictory phrases in *Newspeak* elude logical criticism. Mystical ecstasy, I believe, blocks communicative efficacy just as much as self-contradictory political slogans. In mysticism the speaker acknowledges the impossibility of communicating a spiritual experience; the user of Orwell's *Newspeak* deliberately wants to prevent rational understanding. In both cases the listener is deprived of the possibility of a critical response. The lack of irony and of linguistic skepticism in *Island* makes the novel depart from most modernist fiction.

Let us look more closely at the Palanese attitude toward literature. The narrator explains that the literary tradition in Pala was shallow, consisting of Buddhist and Hindu myths, religious sermons, and treatises on metaphysics. However, since the Palanese adopted English as a second language, they also obtained access to a vast literary tradition that provided them with "a background, a spiritual yardstick, a repertory of styles and techniques, an

inexhaustible source of inspiration” (136). In fact, we receive little proof of Palanese literary creativity spawned by the English tradition. The novel refers to a crucial play, *Oedipus in Pala*, which of course is a rewriting of a classical European text, not an English one. The play is being performed as a marionette show. It includes a boy and a girl from Pala who talk Jocasta out of her plan to hang herself and prevent Oedipus from putting out his eyes. The Pala version of the Greek tragedy has ironed out the hard edges of the myth and the result is quite acceptable to an audience that shares neither the concept of a personal God who can become furious, nor the idea of a unique biological mother; for Pala has a system of adoptive mothers who more or less belong to the extended family.

Several themes of *Island* reappeared in Marge Piercy’s *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976), which contains an imagined eutopia within the dystopian framework of a mental hospital. The story is told from a patient’s point of view and sketches an almost perfect society in the year 2137, which shares concepts of education, economy, war and peace with *Island*, is nonhierarchical and antitechnological, and has abolished the traditional idea of family life. Procreation is artificial but does not include genetic manipulation: one character argues that it would be wrong to breed human beings for some imagined uses (367). Piercy’s rewriting of Huxley’s worldview is representative of the widespread response to progressive ideals in the 1960s and 1970s.

Reviewers, however, were rather severe on *Island*. In comparison to *Brave New World*, they think more favorably of the literary qualities in the negative utopia. As Wayne Booth observes in 1962: “An attack is always more lively than a defense, sin is more interesting than virtue, the horrors of *Brave New World* are more vivid than the peace and joy of Pala, Huxley’s imaginary island” (Watt 1975: 452). However, this would make *all* dystopias more interesting than utopias and yet, as Booth admits, we cannot reject the positive utopia as a genre. On the contrary, the effort to portray a good society should be welcomed as a counterpart to descriptions of how things are bad now and will even be worse in the future. The affirmative utopia is an important intellectual challenge, which regrettably few writers of fiction have taken up. And if we are to judge the cogency of an affirmative utopia, we should compare it with other attempts to represent one, rather than with negative utopias or realist fiction. Booth follows his own suggestion and compares the two eutopias discussed in this chapter: he prefers *Island* to “the simple-minded utopia” of Skinner’s *Walden Two* (452).

Although the near-perfect community described in *Island* differs essen-

tially from the terrifying World State in *Brave New World*, an examination of the structure of the two narratives makes sense and, on close analysis, yields more similarities than one at first sight would expect. Indeed, *Island* is a rewriting that remains rather faithful to *Brave New World* on many points and deviates from it regarding few – admittedly crucial – issues.

Both novels are about “destiny control,” which in *Island* is mainly the result of autogenic training and in *Brave New World* is coordinated by the World Controllers, who manage the happiness of the world’s population through birth control, artificial insemination, eugenics, psychological conditioning, and an elaborate caste system. The difference is individual versus collective control, but both the positive and the negative utopia are based on the idea that there is a Final End. Huxley apparently believes that no utopia can be written without a theory about the destiny of humankind. In *Island* the Final End is self-determination or to become “full-blown human beings”; in *Brave New World* it is expressed in the World State’s motto: “Community, Identity, Stability,” of which stability is the overriding goal.

In both novels we find a clash of cultures that takes care of the narratological need for action. Pala is geographically isolated and yet threatened by outside forces such as Colonel Dipa and the oil companies, who act on principles strikingly different from the nonviolence advocated by Dr. MacPhail and Susila. The World State in *Brave New World* is projected into a faraway future, about six hundred years from now and thus chronologically distanced from present-day reality; yet it is threatened by old, potentially subversive ideas of free choice, independent thinking, and emotional attachment, expounded by Helmholtz Watson and embodied by the Savage, who by some whim of fate has been educated in an Indian reservation in New Mexico but is of British descent and returns to the New World. In the end the Savage is driven to commit suicide, whereas Helmholtz Watson and his friend Bernard Marx are banned to an island where, it is said, the most interesting men and women are living, who have been considered too self-consciously individual to fit into the totalitarian society of the World State; it is an island that evidently prefigures Pala.

Both *Brave New World* and *Island* describe a society in which happiness is an important but secondary goal. In *Island* consciousness about one’s own and others’ condition comes first. Similarly, in *Brave New World* the primary goal is stability, with happiness as a result. In both worlds drugs are used to appease and please, and to guarantee a sort of happiness when other means fail. In *Brave New World* policemen pump clouds of *soma* vapor into the air in order to suppress outbursts of discontent and resistance. *Soma*

makes you smile and embrace your opponent; it makes you feel good and happy. The drug is also distributed as a reward and can be taken if one feels the need for it. In the more pleasant world of *Island* it is exclusively an individual decision to take moksha.

In both novels sex is extensively discussed. The relation of sex with procreation is relativized in *Island* and completely cancelled in *Brave New World*. In *Island* there is still a family life of sorts, but women can choose to become pregnant by way of artificial insemination by someone else than their husbands: a famous artist or scholar for instance, in order to improve the quality of her progeny. And a couple may adopt children, just as children can choose adoptive parents. These customs subvert the traditional family. In *Brave New World* Huxley takes these matters much further: everyone is single and can have sex with anyone he or she likes. Not only is the link between sex and procreation severed, but also that between sex and love.

Science is attributed a primary role in both novels, but there are limitations to its scope. For utilitarian reasons the Palanese focus on the life sciences and so do the World Controllers in *Brave New World*. The restrictions on independent research are more obvious in the World State. "Every discovery in pure science is potentially subversive," says Mustapha Mond (176). Science is controlled in the name of happiness; however, truth, as well as beauty, can make you *unhappy*:

Our Ford [the God of *Brave New World*] himself did a great deal to shift the emphasis from truth and beauty to comfort and happiness. Mass production demanded the shift. Universal happiness keeps the wheels steadily turning; truth and beauty can't. (179)

Equilibrium is the final end in both *Brave New World* and *Island*, as it is in so many other utopias. In *Brave New World* it is achieved through a process of biological and psychological conditioning supervised by the Controller; in *Island* it is a result of individual psychological training assisted by a hypnotherapist. Neither novel has room for unconditional independence or deviant behavior. As far as *Brave New World* is concerned, this is what Huxley wanted to show; but in *Island* he had set himself a different goal. Here he had wanted to sketch an affirmative utopia, which would allow for individual consciousness and freedom. However, individual choice in Pala can really take only one direction, that of Dr. MacPhail's and Susila's philosophy and way of life. On this point the novel is inconsistent.

By sketching a eutopian society through a narrator who is mentally ill and plans to kill her doctors, Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* is an ambiguous project hesitating between eutopia and dystopia. Such narrative ambiguity can be found two years earlier in Le Guin's science fiction novel *The Dispossessed* (1974), which emphasized the relativity of any utopia by comparing two totally different worlds through the observation of an intelligent and sensitive character, the physicist Shevek.

Ursula Le Guin was well aware of the utopian tradition and is known to have read Morris's *News from Nowhere*, the anti-utopian fiction of H. G. Wells, Zamyatin's *We*, and Huxley's *Brave New World* (Le Guin 1979; Davis 2009). She described herself as "an inconsistent Taoist and a consistent un-Christian" (1979: 13), thus confirming the connection between secularization and utopian writing. In *The Dispossessed* she writes about two fictive planets, Urras and Anarres; the latter is inhabited by the Odonians, whose ancestors rebelled against the government of Urras generations ago and were allowed to settle on Anarres, which is marked by rather unfavorable geological and climatic conditions. Urras and Anarres belong to another solar system than Terra – our Earth – and it takes eleven years in a spaceship traveling nearly at light speed from Terra to Urras. However, the people living in Urras and Anarres look exactly like human beings and behave as such, both physically and mentally. Shevek is no exception.

Urras resembles our modern world in many respects. In the eyes of the Anarresti it is a despicable dystopia, organized according to hierarchical principles, a democracy only in name, a nation based on ownership and the power to defend it. Urras houses the Council of World Governments, but it nevertheless fights a war with rebels in Benbili. The Anarresti hate the idea that "life is a fight and the strongest wins" (Le Guin 2002: 182) and profess human solidarity and mutual aid. They practice a Kropotkinesque anarchism without national government, organized religion, private property, and money (Jaeckle 2009). Anarres is a libertarian society, with adolescents copulating with anyone they like until they get bored. It harbors no formal marriage or regulated family life, with the exception of cases in which a man and a woman deliberately wish to enter such a bond, as Shevek and his partner Takver do. Men and women are considered to be completely equal and will accept whatever job that is attributed to them by the Divlab, the administration of the division of labor. In theory they can refuse a particular posting but public opinion looks down on such refusals, even if

these are motivated by the wish of partners to stay together. Shevek and Takver thus live apart for four years when economic urgency requires their being posted at places at a great distance from each other. The idealism of the Anarresti does not flounder even under the threat of famine and economic hardship: they will not eat while others are starving and they share what they have.

Gradually it appears that the communal practice may differ from the theory of solidarity and mutual aid. The attribution of jobs suffers from bureaucracy and personal animosity. Shevek experiences the oppression of his ideas by a domineering elderly physicist who prevents publication of his work. However, he continues to elaborate his theory of the fundamental unity of sequency and simultaneity and hopes to find an interested audience among researchers in Urras. Relations between the rich capitalist world of Urras and the poor anarchist Anarres are tense and there is hardly any communication between the two planets and no exchange of visitors. Nevertheless, Shevek succeeds in breaking through the obstructing bureaucracy and political antagonism and travels by spaceship to Urras, where he is struck by the splendor and wealth of the cities, as well as by the big difference between the life of the haves and that of the have-nots. Shevek's agenda concerns both science and ethics. He wants to break down the walls that separate human beings living in different cultures or different economic conditions and wishes to share his physical theory with anyone who is interested. He resists the intention of the Urrasti to monopolize knowledge in order to use it in the competition with other worlds. Just as he has profited from the theory of relativity of the Terran Ainshtain (Einstein), Shevek wants to share his findings with the Terrans, the Hainish, the Urrasti, and other worlds in the known interstellar civilization. He hates the attempts of the Urrasti to "buy the truth" from him (2002: 284).

When he has stayed almost a year in Urras, Shevek gets involved in a large demonstration organized by the resistance against the oppressive government. The mass protest is violently suppressed and many people are killed. Shevek, however, manages to reach the Terran embassy to the Council of World Governments, where he is safe and from where he is transported back to Anarres, to be reunited with Takver and his children.

However, ignorant about Anarres, the Terran ambassador, a woman from Delhi, considers Urras a paradise, at least in comparison with Terra which, in her own words, seems to be a wasteland:

My world, my Earth, is a ruin. A planet spoiled by the human species. We multiplied and gobbled and fought until there was nothing left, and then we died. We controlled neither appetite nor violence; we did not adapt. We destroyed ourselves. But we destroyed the world first. There are no forests left on my Earth. The air is grey, the sky is grey, it is always hot. (286)

Shevek abhors the dystopian conditions in Urras, but he is aware also of the imperfection of Anarresti eutopia. Like the inquisitive narrator in Jerome's "New Utopia," he is critical of "the rule of the majority" and the oppressive effect of public opinion (295). He defends the idea of permanent revolution, a revolution that occurs in the individual mind: "If it is seen as having any end, it will never truly begin" (296). Odonianism is a promise of continuous evolution. The varying judgments on Urras and Anarres confirm the idea that the pragmatic meaning of eutopia and dystopia shifts with the knowledge and value system of the speaker.

Although writing about completely fictive worlds, Le Guin excels in presenting a convincing psychological analysis. The various Anarresti characters are recognizable human beings: Shevek, the open-minded solitary scientist who is curious about other cultures; Takver, the warmhearted woman who knows what love is and can express it through sex and who is a researcher as well as an artist; Sabul, the calculating egoist who is out to protect his own scientific theory and his position in the Institute of Physics. Of course, it is surprising to find these normal humans in another solar system. However, with their specific characteristics and limitations they manifest why the Odonian utopia is attractive, but not flawless. The individuality of human beings, motivated by the contradictory forces of altruism and possessiveness, prevents a eutopian solution that would claim to satisfy the needs and ideals of everyone.

In *The Dispossessed* utopianism is an idea rather than a (fictional) reality. The idea of a perfect society motivates the various characters, but they seem to know that it can never fully materialize. This is the ambiguity of the concept, not only in Le Guin's fiction, but also in other utopian narratives of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries; witness, for instance, the fiction of Calvino, Modiano, Le Clézio, or Houellebecq. In my discussion of Calvino's *Invisible Cities* (1972) in chapter 6, I referred to Kublai Khan's question of how to reach the attractive utopias of New Atlantis, the City of the Sun, or Icaria. Marco Polo answers that he would be content with a guiding idea, a hopeful perspective, lights in the fog. He might construct

the perfect city from separate fragments, aware that the end of the journey will never be reached. Similarly, continuing the dream of Hilton's *Lost Horizon* in *Dans le café de la jeunesse perdue* (2007), Modiano reduces utopia to an idea that crystallizes into a mystical experience – which eschews thoughts about social reality and ultimately leads to self-destruction. Utopia has become an ephemeral idea existing only in the individual's mind; the original social significance of the term has been lost.

The fiction of J. M. G. Le Clézio – born in France in 1940, a recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2008 – is ambiguous in other ways. Le Clézio is aware of the utopian aspect of his work, but he expressed it mainly in negative terms. His background (a French mother and an English father, both originating from Mauritius) and his own travels to countries in Africa and Latin America imbued Le Clézio with an empathic sensitivity to non-European cultures. His utopia is projected onto faraway places and an irretrievable past; it consists of dreams that never fully materialize. Yet the possibility of perfection transpires from a world that harbors nostalgia and from a narrative that relates dystopian rather than eutopian conditions. Such is my reading of Le Clézio's fiction, notably his novel *La Quarantaine* (1995).

Jacqueline Dutton sees a development from anti-utopia to utopia in the writings of Le Clézio (2003: 275), but it would be wrong to subject the interpretation of his fiction to a rigid scheme. He knows about the utopian tradition and has read Thomas More, H. G. Wells, and Aldous Huxley, but, as Dutton observes, his style is lyrical rather than didactic. The anti-Eurocentric purport of his fiction appears more important and more evident than the question of whether he succeeded in suggesting durable happiness.

The story of *La Quarantaine* has some formal characteristics of a utopia. It is, for instance, situated on an island that is difficult to reach and almost impossible to leave; in addition, the narrator refers to the cognate insular existence of Robinson Crusoe and Paul and Virginie. In the 1890s Jacques Archambau, his wife Suzanne, and Jacques's younger brother Léon, who live in France, plan to return to Mauritius, where the two brothers were born. Although he cannot be sure that the rich members of his family, owners of sugar cane plantations, will welcome him, Mauritius is a nostalgic dream to Jacques, which he obsessively pursues. However, on the journey home some fellow-passengers on board their ship have been infected with smallpox and everyone is put in quarantine on the island of Plate, or Flat Island, close to Mauritius. Here they have a hard time in a debilitating climate, with insufficient food and poor housing threatened by vermin. The

few Europeans settle at some distance from the village where the Indian coolies live. Julius V éran emphasizes the differences that separate the Europeans from the local population and the Indian immigrants, but Léon is curious about the Indian village and crosses the racial and cultural border separating the two communities when he falls in love with Suryavati. The utopia Léon finds is one of personal bliss. It is superior to Jacques's dream of Mauritius: when the latter finally arrives there, he is humiliated by the patriarch of the family, who has appropriated the motto of the colonial establishment: "Ordre, Force et Progr ès" (1995: 473). Utterly disappointed, Jacques and Suzanne decide to return to France.

If Léon's decision to stay with Suryavati has a utopian aspect, it consists of his emancipation from cultural and racial restrictions, a rejection of urban life and European conventions, and an ecological acceptance of what nature has to offer. Though in the end Léon and Suryavati also arrive at Mauritius, they have not left any traces there (with the exception of a daughter whose existence, however, is explicitly described as a product of the narrator's imagination): Léon remains the narrator's great-uncle who has disappeared. As a medical doctor in Paris, Jacques finally also discovers a way of life that denounces colonialism and economic slavery. Le Cl ézio's utopia is a perspective of crossing borders and of human rights, but the ambiguous world in which his characters live and must decide about their own future is mostly described in dystopian terms.

The ambiguity of Houellebecq's Possibility of an Island

Although critics are generally hesitant to consider Houellebecq a great writer, he certainly can present an argument. He is a master of seeing the essentials of human life and reducing them to a few abstract notions, formulas even, that cannot be refuted. All utopian fiction is to some extent reductionist; and it must be so because it aims to encompass all aspects of human and social life and offer writable solutions to overwhelmingly complex problems. However, Houellebecq seems more reductionist than most of his predecessors, more uninhibited in analyzing the human condition in terms of food, sex, and death, and more aware of the opportunities and dangers of new technological inventions. In *The Possibility of an Island* (*La Possibilité d'une île*, 2005) he offers an atheist philosophy, a love story, and science fiction. The book resumes several themes of his earlier work, notably *Atomised* (*Les Particules élémentaires*, 1998), *Lanzarote* (2000), and *Platform* (*Plate-*

forme, 2001). Indeed, being a reductionist, Houellebecq is bound to be repetitive as well.

The structure of *The Possibility of an Island* is rather complex in that it allows for three narrators: Daniel 24, Daniel 25, and Daniel 1; Daniel 24 and 25 have been cloned from the DNA of Daniel 1 and live about two thousand years – or 24 and 25 generations – later than their ancestor. The commentary by Daniel 24, which is inserted in the first part of the novel, is preceded by a short note on the electronic correspondence between Daniel 24 and Marie 22, who apparently is not happy with the continuous reincarnations of the new humans and expresses her discontent in short messages printed as poems, followed by a series of digital numbers. At a first reading, this prologue is not easy to interpret and the digital numbers add to the impression of willful artistry. Clearly, the book presents itself as literary fiction. This is further evidenced by numerous intertextual references, such as to Balzac, Céline, Coetzee, and Malraux. In addition, Houellebecq refers frequently to Schopenhauer, with whom he shares a focus on the notions of desire and suffering (Place-Verghnes 2007). In fact, *The Possibility of an Island* bridges the two domains of literature and philosophy, just like the stories of Voltaire. The affinity between Houellebecq and Voltaire appears in more than one respect: in some of his narratives Voltaire also resorts to science fiction and with their schematic plot structures both Houellebecq and Voltaire tax the credulity of the reader. Still, it appears an exaggeration and is in any case premature to judge, as Pierre Jourde does, that what Voltaire as a satirist accomplished for Western civilization of the eighteenth century Houellebecq achieved for humankind in our age (Jourde 2002: 231).

Daniel 1 is a cynical, highly successful stand-up comedian in Paris, who comments on twenty-first-century metropolitan culture, the adoration of youth, the importance of sexuality, the position of Arab immigrants, and the inevitability of ageing and death. He writes brief comic sketches that are a parody of the language spoken in popular conversation, without any literary pretension. In fact, their main aim is to shock, as appears from titles such as “We Prefer the Palestinian Orgy Sluts” (2006: 34; “On préfère les partouzeuses palestiniennes” [2005: 47]) or “Fuck the Bedouins” (2006: 121; “Nique les bédouins” [2005: 144]). The first-person narrative of Daniel 1 is incorporated in the first and second parts of the novel and is divided into chapters that alternate with the usually shorter commentary by Daniel 24 and, after his death, by Daniel 25. It can be read as a separate story that briefly mentions his first unhappy marriage, resulting in the birth of a son who later committed suicide, but it mainly describes his life with Is-

abelle, his second wife, and with the much younger Esther, who deserts him. When he meets Isabelle again after Esther has left him, he tells her that two women have been important to him: she, Isabelle, who did not love sex enough, and Esther, who did not love love enough. Isabelle responds that he apparently had bad luck and adds that in the end men are never satisfied with their wives. This pessimistic view, well-known from Houellebecq's other writings, dominates the novel, in spite of the few moments of erotic bliss that Daniel 1 experiences with Esther and on which the narrator enlarges with pornographic detail.

However, the theme that keeps the book together is the rise of a sect promising eternal life, like all major religions, but without the moral restrictions that religions usually impose on the faithful. The sect of the Elohim – the name echoes that of the Eloi in Wells's *Time Machine* (1895) – has one more advantage over the traditional religions: the belief in life after death is based on the plausible prospect that scientific experiments with the cloning of human beings will be successful within the foreseeable future. Everyone who allows a DNA sample to be taken and bequeaths all his or her possessions to the Church of Elohim can become a member of that Church. The enormous amount of money amassed by the Church in this way is used to support the research of a Canadian professor of neurology, Miskiewicz, usually referred to as Knowall – a rather inaccurate translation of “Savant” – who heads a modern laboratory where numerous assistants work on a program for cloning humans.

The sect believes in the prospect of “the new Jerusalem” and is led by a charismatic prophet surrounded by twelve beautiful young women. Daniel has received a personal invitation from the prophet to attend a conference of the sect on the island of Lanzarote, as he is considered a celebrity who might help to counter the negative press coverage that the sect is receiving. However, it takes time before Daniel is convinced that the resurrection of the dead by way of cloning will indeed work. As a proclaimed atheist, he also has no affinity with belief and believers. Moreover, on Lanzarote certain things happen that feed his suspicion. At one point he is invited to have dinner with the prophet, in the company of other leading figures of the sect and a few carefully selected other people, among them an Italian actor, Gianpaolo, and his girlfriend, Francesca. It does not take long before the prophet spots the beautiful Francesca and invites her to come over and sit next to him, an invitation which she eagerly accepts. They leave the dinner together soon, before all others. The next day Francesca remains close to the prophet, which infuriates Gianpaolo.

The next day the unforeseen happens: Gianpaolo manages to climb the steep cliff on which the prophet's living quarters are situated and kills the prophet. The murderer tries to flee but, in his attempt to climb the fence around the sect's encampment, he is electrocuted. The prominent leaders of the sect and the special guests, Daniel and Vincent (an artist), gather around the dead body of the prophet. Francesca, who has witnessed the killing and is in shock, is also present. Somebody suggests that the police should be notified, but this triggers a quarrel between two leading figures, Knowall, the professor of neurology, and Cop, the main organizer of the conference, who also commands the guards. Both know that calling in the police would mean a scandal and the end of the organization, but they disagree on what to do next. Knowall reminds his colleague that according to their belief death is not definitive. He possesses the genetic code of the prophet and could resurrect him as soon as the cloning works. Cop retorts angrily that he is not inclined to wait twenty years, whereupon Knowall answers that the Christians have already been waiting for two thousand years.

This is not the only dig at Christianity, for a moment later the father-son relation is discussed in a religious perspective, when Vincent offers a solution to the dilemma of what to do with the prophet's corpse by declaring that he is his son and could become his successor. Everyone is surprised, but they now see the resemblance with the prophet and accept the proposal. The rest is arranged in cold blood. The dead body of Gianpaolo is disposed of by being thrown off the high cliff. Francesca is killed by a lethal injection and her body follows that of her friend. The two corpses are smashed to pieces by the fall and no policeman would consider asking for an autopsy. They get rid of the prophet's body by letting it disappear into a nearby volcanic fissure. Vincent and Daniel, who do not want to be accessories to the murder of Francesca, are blackmailed and keep silent. Under these ominous circumstances the Elohim sect continues to exist. Six days later the loyal believers accept the resurrection of the prophet in the shape of his son, allegedly resulting from a scientific experiment directed by Knowall. Very soon the sect becomes more popular than the traditional religions.

The point of departure in this rather fantastic plot is the life of Daniel 1, who on the basis of his own sordid experiences passes judgment on human nature in general. His cynical attitude appears early in the novel when he comments on the suicide of his son:

I had never loved that child: he was as stupid as his mother, and as nasty as his father. His death was far from a catastrophe; you can live without such human beings. (2006: 19) (Je n'avais jamais aimé cet enfant: il était aussi bête que sa mère, et aussi méchant que son père. Sa disparition était loin d'être une catastrophe; des êtres humains de ce genre, on peut s'en passer. [2005: 29-30])

In his work as stand-up comedian Daniel expresses the belief that humans cannot be happy, are not made to be happy, and will only spread misery by making the existence of others equally unbearable as their own. Morality is dead and has been replaced by competition, innovation, and strength. At one point Daniel concludes that nothing counts but physical love. If erotic attraction fades away, it is immediately followed by the disappearance of tenderness. But he cherishes no illusions about physical love, which celebrates youth, beauty, and strength: “the criteria for physical love are exactly the same as those of Nazism” (2006: 59; “les critères de l’amour physique sont exactement les mêmes que ceux du nazisme” [2005: 74]). With similar emphasis on youth, competition, and brute force, Georges Perec had characterized Nazi ideology in *W or the Memory of Childhood*.

The dystopia of Western civilization consists of inflaming desire up to an unbearable level, while making its realization more and more impossible, Daniel 1 ruminates. The central position of physical love favors the young. As a result, the relation between the young and the elderly is one of hostility. The savages whom Daniel 25 encounters in the last part of the novel – the epilogue – indeed slaughter the elderly among them. The word “savages” reminds us of *Brave New World*, but their role in *The Possibility of an Island* is much less attractive than in Huxley’s fiction. They are no more than the residues of the worst tendencies of ordinary humankind.

Houellebecq describes three kinds of societies: contemporary metropolitan life dominated by egocentric sexual desire and a cult of youthful behavior; the future digital society of people who live in gated communities around the world and communicate electronically but never meet in reality; and, finally, the sordid world of the savages, the degenerate descendants of contemporary humanity. The digital world is Houellebecq’s utopia, but is it really perfect?

All members of the Church of Elohim write their life stories, which are studied by their cloned descendants in order to transcend them. Thus Daniel 1 records his experiences with Isabelle, Esther, and the Church, including the murder of the prophet; his later reincarnations are supposed to

comment on his narrative. Strangely enough, neither Daniel 24, nor his next reincarnation, Daniel 25, mentions the violent death of the prophet, which was covered up by means of ruse and guile and which puts the early history of the Church under a cloud. They never refer to the prophet nor to his son Vincent, who apparently belong to the digital society's prehistory; but they do speak of the Supreme Sister, who plays the role of a Big Brother, as in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The social organization of Houellebecq's utopia depends on moral instructions from the Supreme Sister, which appear on the screen of every new human.

The enclaves in which groups of new humans are living are well protected against intruders, but it is possible for anyone to leave. Some of the new humans have indeed deserted their gated community to never return. There are no children in the protected areas as the cloning system reproduces adults only. This is in line with a tendency that goes back to the early history of the Church and twentieth-century metropolitan society. All characters in the life story of Daniel 1 dislike or ignore children, of which Daniel's reaction to his son's suicide is the most cruel expression. The early members of the Church of Elohim are single or couples without children.

The Supreme Sister has taught the new humans an attitude of asceticism in every respect, including the abstinence of any kind of physical contact and social life, the abstinence of traditional food – which has been replaced by living on photosynthetic energy (as plants do), water, and some capsules containing the necessary minerals – and, perhaps most importantly, detachment from strong emotions. Desire has been replaced by a vague sentiment and both suffering and joy are experienced in very moderate terms only. At the end of his life Daniel 24 writes: “I will leave with no real regret an existence that brought me no real joy” (2006: 141-142; “Je quitterai sans vrai regret une existence qui ne m’apportait aucune joie effective” [2005: 168]). He knows that he has reached the state of mind that Buddhists of the Lesser Vehicle attempt to achieve. A moment later Daniel 24 is dead and the newborn Daniel 25 takes over the role of commentator in the second part of the novel.

Two dangers threaten the quiet, ethereal life of the latter-day Daniels: the life story of Daniel 1 with its explicit descriptions of erotic experiences and the presence of Fox, the dog of Daniel 1 and, after having been cloned many times into a new existence, also of Daniel 24 and 25. Daniel 24 acquiesces in the lack of physical contact with other new humans but admits that he would abhor living without Fox, without feeling the warmth of his small loving body. A recently cloned Fox connects the life of Daniel 24 and of

Daniel 25. The original Fox was with Isabelle and Daniel 1; the dog knows what love is and is utterly sad when it cannot find its mistress when she has committed suicide. All three narrators praise the love and loyalty of the dog, implicitly denying these qualities to human beings. Here Houellebecq was inspired by J. M. Coetzee's novel *Disgrace*, in which the position of a lonely, elderly man is sketched clinically and without a trace of mercy. That novel also stipulates a particular role for dogs, who possess a kind of trust and understanding that can even be seen in the eyes of sick and decrepit dogs. Houellebecq paid tribute to Coetzee, not only as the writer of human loneliness but also of the pet animal as the last refuge of love. Both Coetzee and Houellebecq show how far we have fallen if dogs are our last resort.

Apparently, Daniel 24 and Daniel 25 are supposed to loathe the extravagant eroticism of Daniel 1. They are reading his life story because they have been told to acquire knowledge about the old humans in order to learn from their negative example and transcend their mentality. However, although they do not understand the full dimension of sexual desire, they abstain from condemning his way of life and instead begin to wonder whether their own quiet existence is lacking something essential. Their thinking is influenced by similar doubts in Marie 22 and Marie 23. Marie 22 was introduced in the prologue as a new human sending alarming, unhappy messages to Daniel 24, thus warning the reader that the new cloned life may not be as perfect as one at first sight might expect. The last lines of the prologue, which announce the postponement of bliss into a future that never will be reached, contain a similar warning:

No one will be present at the birth of the Spirit, except for the Future Ones; but the Future Ones are not beings, in our sense of the word. Fear what I say. (2006: 7) (Nul ne sera contemporain de la naissance de l'Esprit, si ce n'est les Futurs; mais les Futurs ne sont pas des êtres, au sens où nous l'entendons. Craignez ma parole. [2005: 15])

After Marie 22 and Daniel 24 have died, their electronic correspondence is continued by Marie 23 and Daniel 25. One of the first things Daniel 25 is faced with is the death of his Fox. The same night a special courier service from the central city delivers an identical dog, which immediately shows the familiar affection for his owner, who in his commentary observes that through a dog we pay tribute to the possibility of love. A dog is a "machine for loving" (2006: 161; "machine à aimer" [2005: 191]).

Marie 23 lives in a compound in the middle of the ruins of Manhattan;

Daniel 25 in a gated community in Spain. They know that they are still incomplete, transitional beings who have been entrusted to prepare for a totally digital age. Daniel 25 understands from the life story of Daniel 1 that the true aims of the old humans were of a sexual nature, but he observes in his commentary that the new humans are not supposed to understand the importance of sexual desire. While reading more about his ancestor's life, Daniel 25 is bound to conclude that the sexual biochemistry of the new humans has remained almost identical with that of their predecessors. He notes that Marie 23 is intrigued by the way the savages live and, when she repeatedly returns to this theme, he is not indifferent to her intellectual excitement and emotional impatience. Finally Marie, having talked with Esther 31, a descendent of Daniel 1's mistress, decides to leave her post. She shows her naked body on the screen and writes that she wants to live more intensely, although she has no idea what to expect: "I don't know exactly what awaits me, ... but I know that I need to live more" (2006: 333; "Je ne sais pas exactement ce qui m'attend, ... mais je sais que j'ai besoin de vivre davantage" [2005: 384]).

Daniel 25 begins a revealing and decisive electronic correspondence with Esther 31. She knows about Marie's defection and also that she is heading for Lanzarote, formerly an island but now a peninsula, where savages live according to Marie or, according to Esther, new humans who have rejected the teachings of the Supreme Sister. Daniel 25 is convinced that neither Marie 22 nor Marie 23 knew anything that resembled desire; at most they knew a nostalgia for desire. Esther 31 discloses details about the last days of the original Daniel who, too, ended his life by committing suicide. He had phoned and mailed letters to the original Esther, had stalked her, and finally had written a euphoric letter suggesting that there was an island, Lanzarote, where people lived in happiness and love. The letter ended with a poem about that island of love, of which the last stanza ran as follows:

And love, where all is easy,
Where all is given in the instant;
There exists in the midst of time
The possibility of an island. (2006: 378)
(Et l'amour, où tout est facile,
Où tout est donné dans l'instant;
Il existe au milieu du temps
La possibilité d'une île. [2005: 433])

When Marie 23 read these lines, she believed that such an island still must exist and decided to leave New York in an attempt to reach it. The line about “the possibility of an island” triggered a utopian impulse. The same words are also the title of the novel.

However, the poem does not only motivate Marie 23 to leave the ruins of New York, it also persuades Daniel 25 to desert the safe haven of his community in Spain and the protection of the Supreme Sister. His attempt to reach Lanzarote is recorded in first-person narration in the third part – the final commentary and epilogue – of the novel.

On a certain day in June, Daniel 25 fills his backpack with capsules of mineral salt and walks out of the protected enclave in a south-west direction, accompanied by Fox and hoping to find Lanzarote, where perhaps new or old humans live. The world outside the protected area has been scourged by severe drought and nuclear warfare. The city of Madrid has been destroyed and deserted. Daniel 25 finds the house where Daniel 1 had a last and unhappy encounter with Esther at a large party of young people using ecstasy, coke, and other drugs to stimulate various modes of promiscuous sex. The house is now uninhabited and in a desolate condition: Madrid has turned into a Pompeii. He meets several groups of savages, who behave as their name indicates. They are cruel, they smell, and they kill his beloved dog Fox. Daniel 25 continues his adventurous journey and never considers returning to his equanimous life in the protected area. He cannot hope to meet Marie 23, but does not regret that an encounter may never take place. After walking for many days in a barren landscape without seeing any animals or plants, he finds a black metal tube that contains a message from Marie 23. It is not specifically addressed to him; in fact, it is not addressed to anyone in particular. It is simply an attempt to leave something behind, an expression of the human will to survive.

Marie 23 writes that, upon leaving her protected community, she had the disgusting experience of meeting several clans of savages. Nevertheless, she had been able to come this far on the white plain that once had been covered by the Atlantic Ocean. Apart from Marie’s letter, the tube also contains a page from Plato’s *Symposium*, in which Aristophanes proposes his explanation of erotic love and which is partly quoted in the text of the novel (2006: 416; 2005: 477-478); the quoted fragment can be found in Plato’s *Symposium* (1997: 192c-d). Since Zeus had decided to cut human beings into two, thereby creating man and woman, each half desires to find its other half in order to become one, never to be separated again. It is this concept of love in the *Symposium* that has intoxicated Western civilization and,

later, all of humanity, Daniel 25 argues. He notes that, during more than two millennia, human beings have not been capable of discarding the hopeless dream of finding their counterparts. The teachings of the Christian gospel had been of no avail and, in fact, confirmed that dream. The incurable longing for the union with one's "significant other" was found even in the latest life stories of the new humans. Daniel 25 concludes in his interior monologue that Marie 23 had been aware of a similar desire. He thinks of her and of her naked body, which he had seen on the screen, but he presumes that they will never meet and that he will never reach the goal he is heading for: the future is empty, he will die, but life was real.

The brief last sentence of the book – "Life was real" ("La vie était réelle") – is intriguing. The phrase can be interpreted as interior monologue recorded by the narrator and may be rewritten thus: Daniel believed that life is real. In his view, life is real because it is motivated by desire that finds its limit only in death. That truth is revealed to him when death approaches and is seen to be inescapable. If, however, death is relativized by the possibility of cloned resurrection and at the same time emotions are subdued by a Buddhist-like abstinence and self-denial, the experience of being alive becomes less intense, less real. By escaping from the protected life in their gated communities, Daniel 25 and Marie 23 demonstrate the failure of that solution at least in their lives. In *The Possibility of an Island* Houellebecq has most pointedly shown the dilemma between erotic attraction and self-denying abstinence; he offers no solution save the recognition that the dilemma itself is an inextricable part of life.

Is this a plausible story? We cannot deny that large parts of this world may become unfit for habitation because of climatic change, flooding or severe drought, earthquakes and nuclear pollution, and that total destruction will finally threaten the Earth because of the inescapable decline of our solar system. Neither can we deny that, with the prospect of extreme ecological deterioration, many people may turn to irrational beliefs. Moreover, as in the case of Isabelle and Daniel 1, it is not necessary to believe in supernatural powers in order to join a community of sectarian believers. The attraction of the social bond between believers is often stronger than any intellectual skepticism. Nor can we deny the threat of a split between the civilized and the uncivilized, the digital world and the clans of savages – a split that was foreseen by H. G. Wells in *The Time Machine* and can be observed in real life in the distance between the inhabitants of Rio's *favelas* and the Brazilian millionaire landowners, between the people combing Kolkata's garbage dumps and the managers of Tata Industries, between the homeless in modern metropolitan cities and the rich in the suburbs.

Less plausible are the narrator's opinions about natural procreation. By extrapolating the growing tendency of Europeans to remain childless and by positing the complete absence of children in the digital world, Houellebecq has probably overestimated the credulity of his readers.

The question remains of whether *The Possibility of an Island* must be considered a eutopian or, rather, a dystopian novel. Houellebecq is experimenting with characters who are disgusted by contemporary metropolitan society and search for a eutopian way of life in the Church of Elohim. However, some of them consider the eutopian dream boring. Instead of interesting and pleasant emotions they have found an absence of emotion. The isolated areas protected by the Supreme Sister were meant to be eutopian, but they failed in the sense that they could not satisfy the needs of all the new humans living there. Those who were curious about the world outside and decided to leave their protected living quarters found a challenging dystopia in a devastated countryside and destroyed cities populated by hideous clans of savages.

However, the majority of the people living in the protected areas do not find life dull, because they have learned not to seek sensations that diverge from the teachings of the Supreme Sister. These new humans are fundamentally different from their predecessors and may be regarded as having reached a kind of eutopia; but those who still think and feel for themselves, such as Daniel 25 and Marie 23, find that eutopia too restrictive. Again it appears that the value system of the speaker determines whether a particular society is considered eutopian or dystopian. It is of course not impossible to generalize about what most people like or dislike, but in general the decision to embrace or reject a particular way of life is an individual one. In my view, the world of Daniel 24 and Daniel 25, with its dichotomy between cloned people in gated communities and rude savages living in extremely primitive conditions, is a dystopia, but the egocentric and erotic hedonism of Daniel 1 and the fraudulent behavior of the Elohimites do not present an attractive alternative, either. If some sort of eutopia is to be found in Houellebecq's fiction, it has been reduced to an idea and is described, just as Le Clézio did, in negative terms only, save the moments of erotic rapture celebrated as paradise. This means that any final judgment on the utopian quality of Houellebecq's novel must be, of necessity, ambiguous.

Houellebecq confirmed that ambiguity in an interview: he knows that most readers consider him a pessimistic cynic, or at best a realist, but he called himself a romantic, hoping to write once an idyll (Moerland 2005).

In this chapter I discussed only a small part of the large output of modern utopian fiction in Europe and America in the twentieth century. I noticed that dystopian fiction, including works written by Huxley (*Brave New World*), Orwell, Perec, Bradbury, and Atwood, attracted more attention than the attempts to visualize and describe a perfect society, as in *Walden Two* and *Island*. Wayne Booth, for instance, appreciates the literary qualities of the negative utopias but finds the “peace and joy” in Pala rather insipid.

In the twentieth century a fundamental change occurred, in that the distinction between eutopia and dystopia was relativized. The growing cultural autonomy of individual readers often entails different judgments of the same texts. Apparently, the readers’ knowledge and value system determine to a large extent whether a text is considered dystopian or eutopian. Writers are aware of the readers’ emancipation from traditional beliefs and conventions and resort to metanarrative reflection in their work about their own position. In addition, in several instances they respond to the problematic separation of the eutopian and dystopian modes by combining the two within a single text, such as is seen in works by Le Guin and Piercy. Le Clézio and Houellebecq join the two modes in less obvious ways and thus reach a point where it is possible to question whether their perspective is predominantly utopian at all, or, more generally, just fictional: isn’t literary fiction always dealing with the “desire that finds its limit only in death”? (This quotation is the briefest possible summary of my interpretation of *The Possibility of an Island*.) However, it would be premature to infer that the genre of utopian fiction as a whole is dissolving into the larger domain of literary fiction: Le Clézio’s and Houellebecq’s narratives provide too little evidence to support such a conclusion.

Concluding Observations

As explained in the introductory chapter, my analysis of the major instances of utopian fiction has been guided by four hypotheses. Admittedly, their phrasing was vague to an extent that almost prevented their refutation. The first assumption, for instance, established a link between moments of cultural crisis and the rise of utopian fiction. It is of course possible to survey – more strictly than I have done – the rise and decline of utopian narratives in specific periods of time, but the notion of crisis remains a rather subjective and weak element in the observation that a cultural crisis would favor utopian fiction. By what criteria should we allow ourselves to speak of a cultural crisis?

However, there is some general agreement that in Europe the early sixteenth century constituted a moment of crisis and reorientation, caused by the rediscovery of classical antiquity (and its challenge to the monopoly of Christian culture), reports coming from the explorers of unknown continents, the Reformation (which split the Roman Catholic Church), and a revolution in the dissemination of knowledge resulting from the invention of printing. It was the time when Thomas More wrote his epoch-making *Utopia*. Similarly, there is agreement about the impact of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. The secular doctrine of historical progress and the principles of equality, toleration, and reason subverted the Judeo-Christian tradition. The severe resistance to these new ideas is symptomatic of the awareness of a cultural crisis, to which Condorcet reacted with his fundamental essay on the progress of the human mind and Mercier, Cabet, and Souvestre responded with their utopian and dystopian fiction. In China, the aggression of foreign powers, the Taiping Rebellion, and the attempts at political reform at the end of the nineteenth century and during the first decades of the twentieth century led undeniably to a sense of crisis. Political change and a cultural reorientation provided the grounds for an intensification of utopian thinking, both in the form of political programs and literary works.

The question must be asked whether at present, as several authors suggest, the world is in a similar philosophical and ideological crisis that calls

for eutopian and/or dystopian writing. How is it possible to substantiate Le Clézio's claim that the present time is propitious for a renaissance of utopian fiction (Dutton 2003: 32)? If there is a cultural crisis, its origin goes back to the First and Second World Wars and the ensuing demise of Western colonialism. Moreover, the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s signaled the beginning of a world with many centers and new dangers. In the absence of a dominant ideology and with the appearance of enormous social as well as geographical differences of material well-being giving rise to local and regional conflicts, today a sense of crisis has entered the public debate. Many writers in various parts of the world also notice fundamental *cultural* differences, partly resulting from the wide gap between secularized modernity and religious fundamentalism. Although Samuel Huntington's idea of a clash of civilizations, published first in *Foreign Affairs* and then as a book-length study with the title *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996), was severely criticized in Europe as well as in China, it can be considered symptomatic of what is on the mind of numerous intellectuals and politicians in the West.

If the present global condition is accepted as one of crisis, we are to expect an upsurge of utopian writing. As one among others, Houellebecq has rehabilitated and reshaped the traditional utopian novel, but this precedent has not triggered an abundant production of similar work as yet, perhaps because the function of eutopian as well as dystopian fiction has been partly preempted by other means of expression. The republic of letters has been reduced in scope, giving way to the intellectual efforts of social and natural scientists, who express the findings of their research not in fictional narratives but in the plain language of reports, such as *The Limits to Growth* by the Club of Rome (1972) or Al Gore's pessimistic study of the environment, *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006).

While these reports convey a rather dystopian vision of the future, many politicians have appropriated some of the eutopian themes originally dealt with in utopian fiction. Ever since politicians have been called on to justify their decisions, they have been in need of attractive programs promising change and improvement, asking technicians, economists, and statisticians to elaborate plans for the future. This is a practice of totalitarian governments as well as of democratic nations. Thus, part of the intellectual discussion about a perfect society or, more practically, about improving our present condition has shifted to politics and journalism. Though the literary field continues to write about the same issues, it rather produces stories of private dilemmas, fantastic ideas, wide vistas covering millennia, and psy-

chological and genetic experiments that, though interesting and pertinent, usually lack immediate relevance or practicability. There is no reason to deplore the new division of labor, for the reduction of the domain of belles lettres is the inevitable outcome of a gradual systemic differentiation and increasing specialization of the intellectual field since the European Renaissance, and in particular since the eighteenth century, when on the one hand it became impossible for a single individual to take in all the new findings in the sciences and the humanities and, on the other hand, researchers, scholars, critics, and writers grew vastly in number, so that each group of specialists could control their own means of organization and expression (Schmidt 1989). Systemic differentiation appears the logical result of a populous, modern, and complex world.

Though nowadays relatively few writers make the effort to conceptualize the conditions of a eutopian community, social scientists and politicians have been very active in offering their views of a happy future for all. If we include the latter efforts in our survey, the production of eutopian thought has never been as intensive as it is now and may in fact be related to the general sense of economic, environmental, and cultural crisis in present times. The ubiquitous launching of eutopian programs has also profited of course from technological progress in the communications industry.

The second hypothesis guiding my research maintains that utopian writing flourishes on the basis of secularization. As long as revealed religion holds out the promise of a happy life in the hereafter, at least for those believers who have lived in accordance with the instructions of their Church or religious community, the utopian impulse to establish a better life on earth is weakened. Dostoevsky's Orthodox-inspired critique of Chernyshevsky's and Fourier's utopianism confirm this hypothesis. The unspecific mystical sentiment in Huxley's and Bellamy's utopias, which has no basis in dogmatic belief, cannot be considered a valid counterexample. Kumar also emphasizes the secular basis of most utopias, but he assumes that utopian thinking could not develop without a religious substrate. In his argument, religion is narrowed down to the Jewish-Christian tradition. Hence, he concludes that "utopia is not universal" and that it appears only in societies "with the classical and Christian heritage," i.e., only in the West (1987: 19). Here Kumar conveniently overlooks that the perfect state imagined in Plato's *Republic* has no relation with the Christian tradition whatsoever. His referring to the classical heritage of utopian writing actually weakens his argument that the utopian imagination could develop only on the basis of the Jewish-Christian preoccupation with a lost paradise that should be re-

gained. Kumar restricted the genre of utopian fiction in fact to the model of More's *Utopia* and Campanella's *City of the Sun*.

I assume that the utopian impulse is universal and not restricted to Western culture. The desire for a better life and a just and peaceful society is not limited to cultures partaking in the Christian heritage. Wolfgang Bauer (1989) and Zhang Longxi (2002) have shown that there is a tradition of utopian writing in China. Utopias have been constructed in a non-Western cultural environment, though appearing in forms that deviate from the European model: each culture has invented its own prototypes. In China as well as in the West most utopian fiction has a secular character and is geared toward the organization of an ideal society on earth by human efforts and without any supernatural intervention.

The third hypothesis posited that technological progress and sociopolitical organization facilitated the practical realization of eutopian designs, whose adverse results called for an increase of dystopian writing. Many critics have observed that the twentieth century was the age of dystopian writing. Even if we have no statistical analysis of dystopian and eutopian texts produced during the last hundred years, we may safely conclude that works of dystopian fiction, such as those written by Zamyatin, Huxley, Orwell, Atwood, Lao She, and Wang Shuo, have been more impressive and have received more critical attention than the eutopias (*Island*, *Walden Two*, *The Unexpected Island*) or the socialist-realist or feminist attempts to sketch a perfect society. As we have seen, Huxley's *Island* was flawed by its reliance on drugs and Lin Yutang's *The Unexpected Island* suffered from attributing too much wisdom and power to Laos, the leading character. In practice, it appeared to be very difficult to construct a perfect society in fiction. In *Walden Two* Skinner tried to sail between the Scylla and Charybdis of overemphasizing either collective or individual happiness. Some critics believe he succeeded rather well, but what can we think of the weary reflections of Frazier, the mastermind of this near-perfect community, which come close to those of Mustapha Mond, the Controller in *Brave New World*, or of Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor? The initiators of a utopian community are usually doomed to become tragic figures: they have the satisfaction of creative initiative, believe that they are doing the right thing in making perfect arrangements that are to be enjoyed by others, but at times they also seem to realize that they have taken away from the people of their community the most precious thing: the freedom to shape their own life or simply to be left alone.

However, it was not the psychological dilemma of the inquisitors, con-

trollers, dictators, or initiators of utopian communities that checked the growth of eutopian fiction but the resistance of individuals, who in modern times increasingly realized that their own value system and social perspectives differed from that of others: no eutopian solution can satisfy everyone. As Dostoevsky asserted in *Notes from Underground*, human beings prefer being independent and unhappy over joining a collective happiness forced on them by others. In other words, any eutopia can become dystopian in the eyes of those who reject its precepts for a happy life. If, nevertheless, eutopian schemes were imposed on people with varying desires and expectations, their reaction was negative and they called for a dystopian exposure of quasi-eutopian designs. As Ronald Inglehart (1997) has shown on the basis of extensive sociological research, in the second half of the twentieth century the trend toward individual judgment and personal choice rises with the increase of knowledge and prosperity. In politics, this trend translates into demanding more democracy; in personal life, it results in greater demands for freedom in erotic and family relations. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, it seems, democracy and eros subvert any equalizing eutopian solution. This goes for Europe and America, but at some point in the near future may also apply to China.

Efficient political organization enabled governments to carry out plans that they believed could improve the well-being of the people, but that leveled out individual differences and were considered dystopian by large segments of the population. Thus, Zamyatin and Platonov reacted against the political system of the Soviet Union, Persec exposed Nazi practices, and Wang Shuo ridiculed the Maoist voluntarism that aimed to reshape the mental and physical condition of human beings but ended in disaster. Political totalitarianism prevented the development of any deviant eutopian designs and thus called for dystopian satire.

Apart from political dystopias, we may distinguish texts focusing on scientific, ecological, and genetic issues, sometimes in combination. *Brave New World* reacted against the unchecked domination of scientific technology, something on which H. G. Wells had placed all his hopes. In *The Dispossessed* Le Guin showed the danger of ecological disaster in democratic societies. Houellebecq described in *The Possibility of an Island* how Spain was struck by nuclear warfare and severe drought and two thousand years from now had partly turned into a desert; the retreating ocean made two of the main characters think of walking to Lanzarote and meeting there. The problematic relation between eros and utopia makes sexual love one of the most difficult topics writers of utopian fiction must cope with. The solu-

tions offered through history range from self-control in More's *Utopia* to dissolution of the family and – more or less regulated – free love in Plato, Campanella, and Zamyatin; and to genetic and postnatal conditioning in Souvestre and Huxley. An extreme solution is a society of females only, as in Gilman's *Herland*, which rather ignores the idea of erotic love and describes how procreation is effected by way of parthenogenesis. Another possibility is presented by Marge Piercy in *Woman on the Edge of Time*, narrating an imagined utopia of bisexual love in which the differences between males and females have almost been obliterated. The adverse effects of genetic manipulation, which Huxley dealt with in *Brave New World*, were again taken up by Houellebecq in *The Possibility of an Island*. Houellebecq suggests that, even after about twenty-five generations of cloning, Daniel 25 and Marie 23 still take an interest in each other that is reminiscent of erotic attraction.

Perhaps Houellebecq is right in postulating that the force of love cannot be overestimated. Although sexual attraction is an impulse that humans share with other animals, it has also taken typically human forms in developing several types of family building requiring regulations protecting the relation between man and woman as well as between parents and their offspring. The potential remuneration of finding an attractive partner of the other (or the same) sex seems to underlie much of the competition among human beings, whether in economics, politics, or the arts. The achievement of general recognition, power, and riches increases one's chances on the market of erotic liaisons and marriage. It is not farfetched to assume that the perspective of erotic love directly or indirectly is a crucial stimulus of all cultures and has impregnated many aspects of modern civilization. To deny this and propagate celibacy leads only to perversion and scandals, as some religious orders know only too well. Within the context of utopian studies, erotic desire must be considered a serious obstacle to the realization of collective bliss and its representation in utopian fiction.

The fourth hypothesis that guided my research focuses more directly on the different attitudes toward utopian thinking in China and the West. After having analyzed numerous utopian texts, I maintain that Chinese utopian fictions on the one hand, and European (later also American) utopian fictions on the other have developed in opposite directions. There are clearly important differences. Up to the late nineteenth century Chinese writers paid less attention to the administrative aspects of their utopias than their colleagues in the West. They focused rather on moral and philosophical issues, and they attempted to sketch a perfect society that they believed

to have existed in the past. This implied that they were not searching for an alternative to traditional Confucianism but rather looked for its original, supposedly pure form. The prototype of Chinese utopia –*Peach Blossom Spring* – is characteristically situated in central China and is clearly nostalgic. However, European and American writers were thinking up political constructions that deviated from the regimes under which they lived or which they knew from political history. The perfect society that they described was either geographically at a great distance or projected into the future, or, as in the case of Wells's *Men Like Gods*, in a parallel world. Ever since Mercier and Condorcet, Darwin and Marx, Western utopian fiction has focused on progress, whereas Chinese utopianists attempted to restore the ideal conditions of the past. In the West the Promethean attempt to experiment with scientific inventions was admired; in China the emphasis was on a conception of ethics that was part of a philosophy of nature that considered humankind as being one with its environment.

However, with the Reform Movement of the 1890s and through the efforts of Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and other intellectuals, notably also those active in the May Fourth Movement, things changed in China. Following Darwin and Marx, they appropriated the notion of progress. In competition with American pragmatism and Russian-oriented Marxism, the restoration of Confucianism had little chance. Chinese intellectuals searched for alternatives to the Imperial government and studied foreign administrative systems, which were admired and tentatively introduced. The confusing rivalry between different ideologies and the corruption among government circles called for anti-utopian satire rather than abstract eutopian idealization. Lao She's dystopian *Cat Country*, which was influenced by his knowledge of Swift, is an example of both Western inspiration and pertinent criticism of the governmental practices of his day.

An artificial utopianism was introduced in Chinese literature starting in 1949 in the guise of socialist realism or its Chinese variant, the combination of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism. I call it artificial because it was directed by the Communist Party and ran counter to the intuition of most writers and critics, had limited success, and lasted, with ups and downs, no more than about thirty years. It attempted to show the hopeful signs in Chinese society that supposedly could develop into full-fledged socialism and was built on the notion of historical progress. But the Russian recipe of a quasi-realistic description of future developments worked in China no better than in the Soviet Union.

However, progress remained the axiom of Chinese politics, notably in

economic development. In the 1980s Deng Xiaoping supported the capitalist notion of economic growth, even if this meant acting against the principles of the Communist Party and ignoring attempts at democratization such as those demanded by students and workers during the Tiananmen Square protests of June 1989. Deng Xiaoping and his successors followed a hard line in politics as well as economics, relying on the hierarchical structure of the Party, strengthening the Party elite by admitting prominent intellectuals and successful business men as members, and combating any budding criticism of its monolithic position. The price of this in effect corporatist political system is high: no use is made of private initiative if it contradicts Party policies; secret Party proceedings have covered up much of the existing corruption; inequality has increased (the fact that a large part of the population has no health insurance is one of the clearest symptoms of this); the one-sided emphasis on economic growth has led to neglect of the environment; and the absence of a free press keeps the Party leadership unaware of the precise measure and direction of popular discontent, with the result of unexpected outbursts of social and ethnic unrest. Wang Shuo's and Su Tong's anti-utopian fiction hinted at the cruelty of the regime, but so far their satires have had no political consequences. More direct expressions of dissent did not change the official government policy either: for instance, Charter 08 – a manifesto asking for democratic rights, originally signed by three hundred Chinese citizens and after a year endorsed by close to ten thousand others – was not interpreted by the authorities as an invitation to begin a dialogue on democratic reform. Instead Liu Xiaobo, a professor of literature and one of the charter's main initiators, was arrested and sentenced to eleven years imprisonment in December 2009. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010 but was prevented from accepting it in person. The treatment of Liu Xiaobo was in flagrant contradiction to the current official propaganda for a Confucian-inspired "harmonious society."

These hard-line politics are a legacy of the Communist past and, in their economic aspect, an imitation of unbridled capitalism. With minor exceptions, contemporary Chinese politics has little to do with the traditional Chinese philosophy of nature and the idea that humankind is or should be one with the environment. Of course, in the past Confucianism was in principle hierarchical and suppressive as well, but, since it lacked the modern technical means of communication and control, government in traditional China was never as effective as it is now. Contemporary China is a one-party state equipped with the most advanced means of control and suppression. It appropriated and combined elements of Soviet politics and unre-

strained Western capitalism, including the negative aspects of the two systems.

In the West, however, in the course of the twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries rampant capitalism has increasingly been checked by democratic means of surveillance. Governmental supervision of dubious financial transactions, heavy taxation, and other restrictions on extravagant incomes aim to prevent excesses of the system, such as the use of misleading information and plain swindle. It is primarily democracy and its legal institutions that are responsible for the attempt to combine private enterprise and the well-being of the people, including various forms of social security, notably in the Rhineland concept of economic policy. Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* (1957), intended to expound the eutopia of an unrestricted free market in which making money is regarded the apex of morality, was in recent years subjected to severe criticism and in fact read as a dystopian novel (Fortunati and Trousson 2000, Achterhuis 2010). Democracy has gradually given rise to a pluralist concept of culture, which enabled people to learn about other civilizations and their philosophies. Confucianism and Daoism have been studied in Europe since the seventeenth century, and the Enlightenment encouraged and continued this interest in Chinese and other oriental cultures. This openness to different ways of life and thinking undoubtedly strengthened the pluralist character of European and American societies. Roman Catholic and Protestant ecclesiastical doctrine lost its monopoly over defining the basic concepts of life, such as the notions of free will, providential determinism, ethics, or nature.

Recent environmental policies in the West have been partly inspired by the idea of the interdependence of human beings and their habitat, an idea close to the Daoist notion of the unity of nature and humankind, which favors resignation to the inevitable in the struggle for survival. It is of course impossible to gauge the precise influence of oriental philosophy on Western environmentalism, but the effect of popular translations from Chinese poetry by Hans Bethge, Arthur Waley, and others, the Confucianist and Daoist inspiration of Herman Hesse's fiction, as well as the interest in Indian philosophy and Japanese haiku, to mention merely some scattered examples, should not be underestimated. Western culture was "softened" by these oriental ways of thinking and made sensitive to the "limits to growth" caused by the unavoidable exhaustion of natural resources. In principle, it accepted a global responsibility for a balanced development. Practical initiatives in this respect came from European and American governments, not from China, although traditional Chinese culture had much affinity

with the ideas that lay at the basis of Western environmentalism.

This opposite development of China and the West is reflected in the writing of utopian fiction. In the West, besides dystopian fiction, several eutopian novels were written after World War II, such as Skinner's *Walden Two*, Huxley's *Island*, and Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* – the latter framed in a dystopian context. Lin Yutang's eutopian *The Unexpected Island*, combining the European and Chinese traditions, was first published in London and could also be mentioned here. However, in China writers such as Wang Shuo and Su Tong aired dystopian views of their political and cultural world. It is difficult to find any traces of eutopian fiction in China in the second half of the twentieth century, except within the artificial framework of Chinese socialist realism or in the technological utopias of science fiction. Europe and America adopted the "soft" view and produced eutopias, not only as literary narratives but also in the form of Marcuse's philosophy, the Flower Power movement, and nongovernmental medical and ecological organizations. China followed the hard line, which in recent decades gave rise to predominantly dystopian writing.

This is what I meant by an opposite development of utopian fiction in China and the West, each appropriating attitudes from the other culture that originally were considered alien: China adopting the notion of unrestricted economic progress, which in the West was mitigated and partly replaced by a search for recyclable resources and durability. The hard line of Chinese politics of the last three decades called for anti-utopian writing. The West, however, has been increasingly accepting democratic compromise and is willing to reconsider the tenets of social Darwinism and unbridled capitalism. Partly inspired by traditional oriental wisdom, it seems open to discovering new eutopias.

This crosswise development can be pursued up to the present moment, but no prediction can be made about the future. China may suddenly change its polity and rediscover the major values of its own past. And Europe and America may not be able to maintain their various social security systems and environmental policies. Perhaps the possible appearance of eutopian writing in China in the coming years should be considered a symptom of potential political change in the future. Similarly, the publication of more dystopian fiction about the situation in the West would indicate that Western governments fall short of their self-assumed global responsibility and are forfeiting their democratic reputation.

It cannot be denied that the cultural debate in China and in the West takes place in rather different contexts. In his perceptive chapter on China

in *Creating the "New Man": From Enlightenment Ideals to Socialist Realities* (2009), Cheng Yinghong highlights the sustained admiration for the "red classics" and, more specifically, the discussion in the Chinese media around the turn of the century concerning the significance of Pavel Korchagin, the heroic character in Ostrovsky's socialist-realist novel *How the Steel Was Tempered* (1934). As a typical symptom of the postcommunist Chinese society, some participants in the debate "ventured to compare Pavel Korchagin with Bill Gates and asked which one was more admirable and should be regarded as a model for today's Chinese youth" (2009: 36). However bizarre it may appear, the comparison between the fictional Soviet hero and the real-life American software giant attracted much public attention. But such a comparison can only be made if the historical context in which Korchagin and Gates lived is totally ignored and the accomplishments of both men are discussed merely in terms of success and influence. I am inclined to consider a debate avoiding historical and moral issues typical for contemporary cultural life in China, where it is still impossible to do independent historical research about the role of Communist state leaders and scholarly studies about the political history of the last half century are censored. The question of whether Korchagin, the Communist hero, or Gates, the icon of successful capitalism, represented the supreme model remained inconclusive. Both are venerated in a China that is determined by reminiscences of a Communist past and the ambition and energy of unrestricted capitalism.

One crucial question remains: does it make sense to think that utopian designs may help change human behavior? Skinner postulated that it is possible to study and change human behavior by scientific methods. In *Science and Human Behavior* (1953), advertised as having been written by the author of *Walden Two*, Skinner argues that in order to achieve any results in behavioral engineering it is essential to assume that man is not free: "the environment determines the individual even when he alters the environment" (1965: 448). His repetitive argument emphasizes that a change in environment will change human behavior. The idea of rigorous determinism still persists among psychological researchers and is embraced by Daniel 25 in *The Possibility of an Island*, who admits to being a machine and being fully aware of it (2006: 409; 2005: 469). Rigorous determinism seems to favor the social function of utopian designs, because a change in the sociocultural environment by means of a confrontation with utopian designs will produce a change in human behavior.

However, the idea of behavioral engineering based on determinism is incapacitated by a serious snag. Skinner's approach raises the embarrassing

question of who – which elite? – will direct the process of change. He is aware of the problem of control and the threat of dictatorship, but he does not offer a convincing solution. This is a blemish on his theory of behavioral engineering and its underlying determinism.

It is not necessary to postulate a rigorous determinism and to deny the potentiality of an individual's interference in order to see the effect of utopian designs. The never-ending debate on whether humans are free or not can be avoided. If free will does not exist, we may still assume that each human being has an *individual* will, a product of genetic and sociocultural conditions. A confrontation with utopian designs *may* produce a change in human behavior, not in some mechanical way but because humans will selectively respond to the stimuli they are confronted with: their genetically and socially determined psychobiological condition may resist a particular external stimulus. Moreover, we may assume that human beings, who appear to be capable of learning from experience, have a memory for more and less favorable past decisions that can be consulted when new decisions must be made. If individuals are invested with the capability of deciding on whether to respond to any external stimuli or rather to ignore them, we have a conception of humans that fits in with democratic rights and democratic government.

On the latter view, it makes sense to construct utopias and to make them as persuasive as possible. Without them, there will be no hope for the future, as Morris said in the epigraph of the introductory chapter. These utopias may not be accepted wholesale but, as Calvino suggested, they can at least serve as a guiding perspective, as lights in the fog. In a lecture he gave on June 29, 2010, in Amsterdam, Le Clézio joined Calvino in a similar modest proposition. Repeating the observation that this time is propitious for the writing of utopias, he emphasized the role of literature as transmitting memories of eutopian situations and suggesting the expectation of a blissful future, offering an opportunity for reflection and keeping readers aware of the possibility of other worlds or of a promising island. If utopia cannot be discovered anywhere else, it will be found in literature.

References

- Achterhuis, Hans. *De utopie van de vrije markt*. Rotterdam: Lemniscaat, 2010.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1986.
- Argens, Jean-Baptiste de Boyer, marquis d'. *Songes philosophiques, par l'auteur des Lettres juives*. Berlin: no publisher, 1746.
- Aristotle. *Poetics*, see Dorsch.
- Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale* [1985]. New York: Fawcett Crest, 1989.
- Bacon, Francis. *New Atlantis* [1627]. In *Bacon's Writings in English*. Ed. Brian Vickers. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996: 457-489.
- Barmé, Geremie R. *In the Red: On Contemporary Chinese Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Barnes, Julian. *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* [1989]. London: Picador, 1990.
- Bauer, Wolfgang. *China and the Search for Happiness: Recurring Themes in Four Thousand Years of Chinese Cultural History*. Trans. Michael Shaw. New York: Seabury Press, 1976. Translation of *China und die Hoffnung auf Glück*, 1974.
- Bauer, Wolfgang. *China und die Hoffnung auf Glück: Paradieste, Utopien, Idealvorstellungen in der Geistesgeschichte Chinas* [1974]. 2nd ed. Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1989.
- Bayle, Pierre. *Continuation des pensées diverses, écrites à un docteur de Sorbonne, à l'occasion de la comète qui parut au mois de Décembre 1680, ou réponse à plusieurs difficultez que Monsieur *** a proposées à l'auteur*. 2 vols. Rotterdam: Reinier Leers, 1705.
- Bayle, Pierre. *Témoin et conscience de son temps: Un choix d'articles du Dictionnaire historique et critique*. Ed. Antony McKenna. Paris: Champion, 2001.
- Bell, Daniel A., ed. *Confucian Political Ethics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008.
- Bellamy, Edward. *Looking Backward, 2000-1887* [1888]. Ed. John L. Thomas. Harvard University Press, 1967.
- Bellos, David. *Georges Perec: A Life in Words*. London: Harvill, and Boston: Godine, 1993.

- Berg, Willem van den, and Piet Couttenier. *Alles is taal geworden: Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse literatuur 1800-1900*. Amsterdam: Bakker, 2009.
- Berlin, Isaiah. "Fathers and Children." The Romanes Lecture 1970. In Turgenyev 1975: 7-61.
- Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Jacques Henri. *Études de la nature*. 3 vols [1784]. Mises en ordre et précédées de la vie de l'auteur par L. Aimé-Martin. Bruxelles: Auguste Wahlen, 1820. (= *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 2-4)
- Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Jacques Henri. *Paul et Virginie* [1788], avec des extraits du *Voyage à l'Île de France*. Ed. Jean Ehrard. Paris: Gallimard, 2004.
- Birch, Cyril. "Literature under Communism." In MacFarquhar and Fairbank 1991: 743-812.
- Birch, Cyril, and Donald Keene, eds. *Anthology of Chinese Literature, from Early Times to the Fourteenth Century*. New York: Grove Press, 1965.
- Block de Behar, Lisa. *Borges: The Passion of an Endless Quotation*. Trans. William Egginton. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003.
- Bluche, François. *Louis XIV*. Paris: Fayard, 1986.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. *The Book of Sand*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979. Translation of *El libro de arena*, 1975.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" [1940]. In *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings*, ed. Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby, preface by André Maurois, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970: 27-43.
- Bradbury, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451* [1953]. London: Harper Voyager, 2008.
- Brandt Corstius, J. C. "Herman Gorter en Henriëtte Roland Holst." In *Acht over Gorter*, ed. Garnt Stuiveling, Amsterdam: Querido, 1978: 253-279.
- Brecht, Bertolt. *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* [1940]. In *Stücke aus dem Exil*, vol. 3, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1957: 215-407.
- Brecht, Bertolt. *Schriften zur Literatur und Kunst*. 3 vols. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1967.
- Bulgakov, M. A. *Sobach'e serdtse*. In *Sobranie sochinenij v pyati tomakh*, vol. 2, Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1989: 119-208.
- Buruma, Ian, and Avishai Margalit. *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies*. New York: Penguin, 2004.
- Cabet, Étienne. *Travels in Icaria*. Trans. Leslie J. Roberts. Introduction by Robert Sutton. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003. Translation of *Voyage en Icarie*, 1842.
- Cabet, Étienne. *Voyage en Icarie: Roman philosophique et social*. 2nd ed. Paris: Mallet, 1842.
- Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*. Trans. William Weaver. New York: Harcourt, 1979. Translation of *Le città invisibili*, 1972.

- Campanella, Tommaso. *La cité du soleil: Texte latin de l'édition de Paris, 1637*. Trans. Roland Crahay. Brussels: Académie Royale de Belgique, 1993. Contains Latin text, French translation, and Italian text.
- Campanella, Tommaso. *La città del sole: Dialogo poetico / The City of the Sun: A Poetical Dialogue*. Trans. with introduction and notes by Daniel J. Donno. Bilingual edition. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981b.
- Campanella, Tommaso. *The City of the Sun*. Trans. A. M. Elliott and R. Millner. Introduction by A. L. Morton. London and West Nyack, NY: The Journeyman Press, 1981a. Translation of *La città del sole*, 1602.
- Campanella, Thomas. *The Defense of Galileo*. Trans. Grant McColley. Northampton, MA: Department of History of Smith College, 1937. Translation of *Apologia pro Galileo*, 1622. Reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1975.
- Campanella, Tommaso. *De zonnestad*. Trans. Paul van Heck. Baarn: Ambo, 1989. Dutch translation of *La città del sole*, 1602.
- Carrier, James G., ed. *Occidentalism: Images of the West*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.
- Chandler, Robert. "Introduction." In Platonov 2008: vii-lvii.
- Chen Xiaomei. "Occidentalism as a Counterdiscourse: 'He Shang' in Post-Mao China." *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1992): 686-712.
- Chen Xiaomei. *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counterdiscourse in Post-Mao China*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Cheng Yinghong. *Creating the "New Man": From Enlightenment Ideals to Socialist Realities*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009.
- Chernyshevsky, N. G. *Chto delat'?: Iz rasskazov o novykh lyudyakh* [1863]. Moscow: Izd. Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1966.
- Chernyshevsky, Nikolai. *What Is to Be Done?* Trans. Michael R. Katz. Annotated by William G. Wagner. Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1989. Translation of *Chto delat'?*, 1863.
- Chin Ching-mai, see Jin, Jingmai.
- Chow Tse-tsung. *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960.
- Chuang Tzu, see Zhuang Zi
- Church, Sally K. "The Ming Voyages and the Silk Road of the Sea." In *Proceedings of the Symposium "Global Trade before Globalization"*, Madrid: Fundación Cultura de Paz, 2007: 67-100.
- Clément, Murielle Lucie, and Sabine van Wesemael, eds. *Michel Houellebecq sous la loupe: Études réunies*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007.
- Coetzee, J. M. *Disgrace*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1999.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Biographia literaria* [1817]. Ed. J. Shawcross. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907.

- Condorcet. *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* [1795], *suivi de Fragment sur l'Atlantide*. Ed. Alain Pons. Paris: Flammarion, 1988.
- Confucius. *The Analects (Lun yü)*. Trans. with an introduction by D. C. Lau. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979.
- Considérant, Victor. *Description du phalanstère et considérations sociales sur l'architecture*. 2nd ed. Paris: Librairie Sociétaire et Librairie Phalanstérienne, 1848.
- Curtius, Ernst Robert. *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* [1948]. Trans. Williard R. Task. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Cyrano de Bergerac, Savinien de. *Oeuvres complètes*. Vol. 1: *L'Autre Monde ou les états et empires de la lune* [1657], *Les États et empires du soleil* [1662], *Fragment de physique*. Ed. Madeleine Alcover. Paris: Champoin, 2000.
- Damrosch, David. *What Is World Literature?* Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- Davis, Laurence. "Morris, Wilde, and Le Guin on Art, Work, and Utopia." *Utopian Studies* 20 (2009): 213-248.
- Debon, Günther. "Goethe erklärt in Heidelberg einen chinesischen Roman." In Debon and Hsia 1985: 51-62.
- Debon, Günther, and Adrian Hsia, eds. *Goethe und China – China und Goethe: Bericht des Heidelberger Symposions*. Bern: Peter Lang, 1985.
- Defoe, Daniel. *Robinson Crusoe* [1719]. Ed. with an introduction by John Richetti. London: Penguin, 2001.
- Demaria, Robert. "Introduction." In Swift 2003: ix-xxii.
- Dickson, Lovat. *H. G. Wells: His Turbulent Life and Times*. London: Macmillan, 1971.
- Dieterle, Bernard. "Wertherism and the Romantic *Weltanschauung*." In Gillespie et al. 2008: 22-40.
- Dorsch, T. S., trans. *Classical Literary Criticism*. Aristotle: *On the Art of Poetry*, Horace: *On the Art of Poetry*, Longinus: *On the Sublime*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965.
- Dostoevsky, F. M. *Besy* [1871-1872]. In Dostoevsky 2003-2006: vol. 5 (2005).
- Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Devils*. Trans. and ed. Michael R. Katz. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. Translation of *Besy*, 1871-72.
- Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Notes from Underground and The Double*. Trans. Ronald Wilks. Introduction by Robert Louis Jackson. London: Penguin, 2009. *Notes from Underground* is a translation of *Zapiski iz podpol'ya*, 1864.
- Dostoevsky, F. M. *Pis'ma*. Vol. 1 (1832-1867). Ed. A. S. Dolinin. Moscow and Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1928. Reprint, Düsseldorf: Brücken Verlag, and The Hague: Europe Printing, 1968.

- Dostoevsky, F. M. *Sobranie sochinenij v devyati tomakh*. 9 vols. Moscow: AST-Astrel', 2003-2006.
- Dostoevsky, F. M. *Zapiski iz podpol'ya* [1864]. In Dostoevsky 2003-2006: vol. 2 (2006), 610-699.
- Dreyer, Edward L. *Zheng He: China and the Oceans in the Early Ming Dynasty, 1405-1433*. New York: Pearson Longman, 2007.
- Dutton, Jacqueline. *Le Chercheur d'or et d'ailleurs: L'Utopie de J. M. G. Le Clézio*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003.
- Eckermann, Johann Peter. *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens*. In Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Gedenkausgabe der Werke, Briefe und Gespräche*, ed. Ernst Beutler, vol. 24, Zürich, 1949.
- Endt, Enno. *Herman Gorter Documentatie 1864-1897*. 2nd ed. Amsterdam: Van Oorschot, 1986.
- Engels, Friedrich. "Die Entwicklung des Sozialismus von der Utopie zur Wissenschaft" [1882]. In Marx and Engels 1966: vol. 1, 145-181.
- Engels, Friedrich. *Herrn Eugen Dübrings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft (Anti-Dübring)* [1878]. In Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels, *Gesamtausgabe (MEGA)*, vol. 27, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1988: 217-483.
- Erasmus, Desiderius. *Praise of Folly and Letter to Maarten van Dorp (1515)*. Trans. Betty Radice, with an introduction by A. H. T. Levi. London: Penguin. *Praise of Folly* is a translation of *Moriae encomium*, 1512.
- Etty, Elsbeth. *Liefde is heel het leven niet: Henriëtte Roland Holst 1869-1952*. Amsterdam: Balans, 1996.
- Fairbank, John K., Edwin O. Reischauer, and Albert M Craig. *East Asia: The Modern Transformation*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965.
- Faulkner, Peter, ed. *William Morris: The Critical Heritage*. London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973.
- Feng Youlan, see Fung Yu-lan.
- Fernández-Armesto, Felipe. *Amerigo: The Man Who Gave His Name to America*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2006.
- Feuerwerker, Albert, ed. *History in Communist China*. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1968.
- Figueira, Dorothy M. *Otherwise Occupied: Pedagogies of Alterity and the Brahminization of Theory*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008.
- Foigny, Gabriel de. *La Terre Australe connue* [1676]. Ed. Pierre Rozeaud. Paris: Société des Textes Français Modernes, 1990.
- Fokke Simonsz, Arend. *Het toekomstend jaar Drie Duizend: Eene mijmering*.

- Voorgelezen in en opgedraagen aan de Maatschappij der Verdiensten ter spreuke voerende Felix Meritis.* Amsterdam: Arend Fokke Simonsz, 1792.
- Fokkema, Douwe. "Chinese Literature under the Cultural Revolution." *Literature East & West* 13 (1969): 335-358.
- Fokkema, Douwe. "Chinese Postmodernist Fiction." *Modern Language Quarterly* 69 (2008): 141-165.
- Fokkema, D. W. *Literary Doctrine in China and Soviet Influence, 1956-1960*. Foreword by S. H. Chen. The Hague: Mouton, 1965.
- Fokkema, Douwe W. "Lu Xun: The Impact of Russian Literature." *Modern Chinese Literature in the May Fourth Era*. Ed. Merle Goldman. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977: 89-101.
- Fokkema, Douwe. "Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Notion of Discourse: Arguments for a New Cosmopolitanism." *Comparative Criticism: An Annual Journal* 18 (1996): 227-242. Partly reprinted in Fokkema and Ibsch 2000: 96-104.
- Fokkema, Douwe. "Suicide as a Metaphor of Free Will: Traces of Dostoevskii's Kirillov in Gide, Camus, and Coetzee." In *A World of Slavic Literatures: Essays in Comparative Slavic Studies in Honor of Edward Mozejko*, ed. Paul D. Morris, Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2002: 41-52.
- Fokkema, Douwe, and Elrud Ibsch. *Knowledge and Commitment: A Problem-Oriented Approach to Literary Studies*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins, 2000.
- Fokkema, Douwe, and Frans Grijzenhout, eds. *Accounting for the Past, 1650-2000*. Trans. Paul Vincent. Vol. 5 of *Dutch Culture in a European Perspective*. Assen: Van Gorcum, and Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Fortunati Vita, and Raymond Trousson. *Dictionary of Literary Utopias*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2000.
- Fourier, Charles. *Théorie de l'unité universelle*. Vol. 4. 2nd ed. Paris: Société pour la Propagation et pour la Réalisation de la Théorie de Fourier, 1841. [= *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 5]
- Fowler, Alastair. *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982.
- Fox, Christopher. *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Swift*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Frank, Joseph. *Dostoevsky*. 5 vols. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976-2002. Vol. 1: 1976, 2: 1983, 3: 1988, 4: 1995, 5: 2002.
- Fukuyama, Francis. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press, and London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992.

- Fung Yu-lan [Feng Youlan]. *A History of Chinese Philosophy*. Trans. Derk Bodde. 2 vols. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1952-1953.
- Gao Xingjian. *Soul Mountain*. Trans. Mabel Lee. New York: HarperCollins, 2000. Translation of *Ling shan*, 1990.
- Ge Hongbing and Zhu Lidong, eds. *Wang Shuo yanjiu ziliao (Research Material concerning Wang Shuo)*. Tianjin: Tianjin Renmin Chubanshe, 2005.
- Geest, Dirk de, and Hendrik van Gorp. "Literary Genres from a Systemic-Functionalist Perspective." *European Journal of English Studies* 3 (1999): 33-50.
- Gillespie, Gerald, Manfred Engel, and Bernard Dieterle, eds. *Romantic Prose Fiction*. Vol. 23 of *A Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2008.
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *Herland* [1915], *The Yellow Wall-Paper*, and *Selected Writings*. Ed. Denise D. Knight. London: Penguin, 1999.
- Glick, Wendell. *The Recognition of Henry David Thoreau: Selected Criticism since 1848*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969.
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang. *Gesamtausgabe*. 45 vols. Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1961-1963.
- Gorter, Herman. *Het imperialisme, de wereldoorlog en de sociaal-democratie* [1914]. 4th ed. Amsterdam: J. J. Bos, 1920.
- Gorter, Herman. *Verzamelde werken*. 8 vols. Bussum: Van Dishoeck, and Amsterdam: Querido, 1948-1952.
- Gorter, Herman. *De wereldrevolutie* [1918]. 3rd ed. Amsterdam: J. J. Bos, 1920.
- Goudsblom, Johan. *Nihilism and Culture*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980.
- Guillén, Claudio. *The Challenge of Comparative Literature*. Trans. Cola Franzen. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993. Translation of *Entre lo uno y lo diverso*, 1985.
- Haga, Toru. "New Village Movement: From Mushanokoji to Mao Zedong." In Inaga 2011: 5-12.
- Hall, Bishop Joseph. *Another World and Yet the Same*. Trans. and ed. John Millar Wands. New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1981. Translation of *Mundus alter et idem*, 1605.
- Harding, Walter. *A Thoreau Handbook*. New York: New York University Press, 1959.
- Hare, Richard. *Maxim Gorky: Romantic Realist and Conservative Revolutionary*. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- Harrison, Peter. "Religion" and *the Religions in the English Enlightenment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

- Headley, John M. *Tommaso Campanella and the Transformation of the World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Hesse, Hermann. *Das Glasperlenspiel: Versuch einer Lebensbeschreibung des Magister Ludi Josef Knecht samt Knechts hinterlassenen Schriften* [1943]. Frankfurt and Hamburg: Fischer, 1967.
- Hesse, Hermann. *The Glass Bead Game*. Trans. Richard and Clara Winston. London: Jonathan Cape, 1970. Translation of *Das Glasperlenspiel*, 1943.
- Hillegas, Mark R. *The Future as Nightmare: H. G. Wells and the Anti-Utopians*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967.
- Hilton, James. *Les Horizons perdus*. Trans. H el ene Godard. Paris: J'ai Lu, 1973. Translation of *Lost Horizon*, 1933.
- Hilton, James. *Lost Horizon* [1933]. New York: William Morrow, 1934.
- Hilton, James. *Xiangge lila*. Trans. Zheng Qiwu. Guangzhou: Guangdong Luyou, 1991. Translation of *Lost Horizon*, 1933.
- Hilton, James. *Xiaoshi de dipingxian*. Trans. Bai Yixin and Zhao Jingqiu. Kunming: Yunnan Daxue Chubanshe, 2007. Translation of *Lost Horizon*, 1933.
- Holberg, Ludvig. *The Journey of Niels Klim to the World Underground*. Introduced and edited by James I. McNelis, Jr. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973. Based on the first English translation (1742) of the Latin text: *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*, 1741.
- Holberg, Ludvig. *De onderaardse reis van Claas Klim* [1741]. Ed. Andr e Hanou. Leiden: Astrapa, 1995. Reprint of the Dutch translation of *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*, 1741.
- Hollis, Christopher. *A Study of George Orwell: The Man and His Works*. London: Hollis and Carter, 1956.
- Hong Zicheng. *A History of Contemporary Chinese Literature*. Trans. Michael M. Day. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007. Translation of *Zhongguo dangdai wenxueshi*, Beijing: Peking University Press, 1999.
- Houellebecq, Michel. *Les Particules  l ementaires* [1998]. Paris: J'ai Lu, 2000.
- Houellebecq, Michel. *Plateforme*. Paris: Flammarion, 2001.
- Houellebecq, Michel. *La Possibilit  d'une  le*. Paris: Fayard, 2005.
- Houellebecq, Michel. *The Possibility of an Island*. Trans. Gavin Bowd. London: Phoenix, 2006. Translation of *La Possibilit  d'une  le*, 2005.
- Hsia, Adrian, ed. *Deutsche Denker  ber China*. Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1985.
- Hsia, Adrian. *Hermann Hesse und China: Darstellung, Materialien und Interpretation*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974.
- Hsia, C. T. *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction, 1917-1957*. With an appendix on Taiwan by Tsi-an Hsia. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1961.
- Hsia, C. T. "The Scholar-Novelist and Chinese Culture: A Reappraisal of *Ching-bua Yuan*." In *Plaks* 1977: 266-305.

- Hsia, Tsi-an. "Aspects of the Power of Darkness in Lu Hsün." *The Gate of Darkness: Studies on the Leftist Literary Movement in China*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1968: 146-163.
- Hua Shiping. *Chinese Utopianism: A Comparative Study of Reformist Thought with Japan and Russia, 1898-1997*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, and Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009.
- Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World* [1932]. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971a.
- Huxley, Aldous. "Foreword" [1946]. In Huxley 1971a: 7-14.
- Huxley, Aldous. *Island* [1962]. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971b.
- Huxley, Aldous. *Letters*. Ed. Grover Smith. London: Chatto and Windus, 1969.
- Ibsch, Elrud. *Die Shoah erzählt: Zeugnis und Experiment in der Literatur*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2004.
- Idema, Wilt L., Wai-ye Li, and Ellen Widmer, eds. *Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature*. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Asia Center and Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Inaga, Shigemi, ed. *Artistic Vagabondage and New Utopian Projects: Selected Papers from the 19th Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association*, Seoul 2010. Seoul: Chung-Ang University, 2011.
- Inglehart, Ronald. *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Israel, Jonathan. *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man, 1670-1752*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Israel, Jonathan. *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Istoriya Russkoj Sovetskoj literatury*. 3 vols. Moscow: Izd. Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1958-1961. Compiled by the Gorky Institute of World Literature.
- Jaecle, Daniel P. "Embodied Anarchy in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*." *Utopian Studies* 20 (2009): 75-95.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*. London and New York: Verso, 2005.
- Jerome, Jerome K. "The New Utopia" [1891]. In Kern 1988: 171-185.
- Ji Junxiang. *The Orphan Zhao*. Ed. Zhang Minjie. Trans. Paul White. Beijing: New World Press, 2001.
- Jin Jingmai [Chin Ching-mai]. *The Song of Ouyang Hai*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1966. Translation of *Ouyang Hai zhi ge*, 1965.

- Jones, James F. *La Nouvelle Héloïse: Rousseau and Utopia*. Geneva: Droz, 1977.
- Jourde, Pierre. *La Littérature sans estomac*. Paris: L'Esprit des Péninsules, 2002.
- Kang Youwei. *Kang Nanhai xiansheng jiangxue ji (Lectures by Mr. Kang Nanhai)* [1896]. *Quanji (Collected Works)*, vol. 2. Ed. Jiang Yihua and Wu Genliang. Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe, 1990: 209-253.
- Kang Youwei. *Ta t'ung shu: The One-World Philosophy of K'ang Yu-wei* [1902]. Trans. Laurence G. Thompson. London: Allen and Unwin, 1958.
- Kao Yu-kung. "Lyric Vision in Chinese Narrative: A Reading of *Hung-lou meng* and *Ju-lin Wai-shih*." In *Plaks* 1977: 227-243.
- Katz, Michael R., and William G. Wagner. "Introduction." In Chernyshevsky 1989: 1-36.
- Kern, Gary, ed. *Zamyatin's We: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1988.
- Kinkley, Jeffrey C., ed. *After Mao: Chinese Literature and Society, 1978-1981*. Cambridge, MA, and London: The Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, and Harvard University Press, 1985.
- Kloek, Joost, and Wijnand Mijnhardt. *1800: Blueprints for a National Community*. With the collaboration of Eveline Koolhaas-Grosfeld. Trans. Beverley Jackson. Vol. 2 of *Dutch Culture in a European Perspective*. Assen: Van Gorcum, and Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Knight, Denise D. "Introduction." In *Gilman* 1999: ix-xxiv.
- Kumar, Krishan. *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987.
- Langerak, Thomas. "Andrej Platonov in de jaren twintig." In Andrej Platonov, *De stad Gradov*, trans. Jan Robert Braat, afterword by Thomas Langerak, Amsterdam: Pegasus, 1989: 123-140.
- Lao She. *Camel Xiangzi*. Trans. Shi Xiaoqing. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1981. Translation of *Luotuo Xiangzi*, 1936.
- Lao She. *Cat Country: A Satirical Novel*. Trans. William A. Lyell, Jr. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1970. Translation of *Mao cheng ji*, 1933.
- Lao She. *Lao niu po che (An Old Ox and a Broken-Down Cart)* [1937]. 3rd printing. Shanghai: Chengguang Wenyi Chubanshe, 1949.
- Lao She. *Mao cheng ji (City of Cats)* [1933]. Reprinted in *Xiaoshuo quanji (Collected Fiction)*. Vol. 3. Wuhan: Changjiang Wenyi Chubanshe, 1993: 1-162.
- Lao Tzu [Lao Zi]. *Tao te ching*. Trans. D. C. Lau. London: Penguin, 1963. Reprinted c. 2000.

- Lao Zi. *Dao de jing / The Book of Tao and Teh*. Trans. Gu Zhengkun. Beijing: Peking University Press, 1995. Chinese text with English translation.
- Larner, John. *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999.
- László, János, and Reinhold Viehoff. "Literarische Gattungen als kognitive Schemata." *SPIEL* 12 (1993): 230-251.
- Lau, D. C. "Introduction." In Confucius 1979: 9-55.
- Lau, D. C. "Introduction." In Mencius 1970: 7-46.
- Le Clézio, J.M. G. *La Quarantaine*. Paris: Gallimard, 1995.
- Le Guin, Ursula K. *The Dispossessed* [1974]. London: Gollancz, 2002.
- Le Guin, Ursula K. *The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Ed. and with an Introduction by Susan Wood. New York: Putnam, 1979.
- Lee, Desmond. "Translator's Introduction." In Plato 2003: xiii-lviii.
- Lee, Meredith. "Goethes Chinesisch-Deutsche Jahres- und Tageszeiten." In Debon and Hsia 1985: 37-50.
- Lenin, V. I. *Collected Works*. 45 vols. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House and Progress Publishers, and London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1960-1970. Translation of the 4th Russian edition.
- Lenin, V. I. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenij*. 5th ed., 55 vols. Moscow: Gos. Izd. Politicheskoy Literatury, 1958-1965.
- Levenson, Joseph R. *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate: A Trilogiy*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968.
- Li Ruzhen [Li Ju-chen]. *Flowers in the Mirror*. Trans. and ed. Lin Tai-yi. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965. Abridged translation of *Jing hua yuan*, 1828.
- Li Ruzhen. *Jing hua yuan (The Destinies of Flowers in the Mirror)* [1828]. 2 vols. Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe, 2006.
- Liagre Böhl, Herman de. *Herman Gorter 1864-1927*. 2nd ed. Amsterdam: Contact, 2000.
- Lin Yutang. *Quanji (Collected Works)*. Vol. 7: *Qi dao (The Unexpected Island)*. Trans. from the English by Zhang Zhenyu. Changchun: Dongbei Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 1994. Chinese translation of *The Unexpected Island*, 1955.
- Lin Yutang. *The Unexpected Island*. Melbourne, London, Toronto: Heinemann, 1955.
- Liu E. *De reizen van Oud Afval*. Trans. and introduction by Jan De Meijer. Amsterdam and Antwerp: Augustus, 2010. Translation of *Lao Can youji*, 1907.
- Liu E. *The Travels of Lao Ts'an*. Trans. Harold Shadick. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1952. Translation of *Lao Can youji*, 1907.

- Liu Xie [Liu Hsieh]. *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons: A Study of Thought and Pattern in Chinese Literature*. Trans. with an introduction and notes by Vincent Yu-chung Shih. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959. Translation of *Wenxin diaolong*, late 5th century.
- Locke, John. *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* [1689]. Ed. with an introduction by Peter H. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.
- Loewy, Ernst. *Literatur unterm Hakenkreuz: Das Dritte Reich und seine Dichtung. Eine Dokumentation*. Frankfurt and Hamburg: Fischer, 1969.
- Lu Xun [Lu Hsün]. "A Madman's Diary." In *Selected Stories*, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1954: 17-30. Translation of *Kuangren riji*, 1918.
- Lu Xun. *Quanji (Complete Works)*. 22 vols. Beijing: Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe, 1973.
- Lyotard, Jean-François. *La Condition postmoderne: Rapport sur le savoir*. Paris: Minuit, 1979.
- Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984. Translation of *La Condition postmoderne*, 1979.
- MacFarquhar, Roderick, and John K. Fairbank. *The Cambridge History of China*. Vol. 15: *The People's Republic*. Part 2: *Revolutions within the Chinese Revolution, 1966-1982*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- MacFarquhar, Roderick. "The Succession to Mao and the End of Maoism." In MacFarquhar and Fairbank 1991: 305-401.
- Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince, with related documents*. Trans. and ed. William J. Connell. Boston: Bedford and St. Martin's, 2005. Translation of *Il principe*, 1515.
- Mandeville, Bernard. *The Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices, Public Benefits* [1714, 1728]. Ed. Irwin Primer. New York: Capricorn, 1962.
- Mannheim, Karl. *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* [1936]. Preface by Louis Wirth. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966. Original German edition: *Ideologie und Utopie*, 1929.
- Mao Zedong [Mao Tse-tung]. *Nineteen Poems*. With notes by Chou Chen-fu and an appreciation by Tsang Keh-chia. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1958.
- Mao Zedong. *Selected Works*. 4 vols. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967.
- Mao Zedong. *Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art*. A translation of the 1943 text with commentary by Bonnie S. McDougall. Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1980.
- Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *Manifest der kommunistischen Partei* [1848]. In Marx and Engels 1966: vol. 3, 59-87.

- Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *Studienausgabe in 4 Bänden*. Ed. Iring Fetscher. Frankfurt: Fischer, 1966.
- Mathewson, Rufus W. *The Positive Hero in Russian Literature*. 2nd ed. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975.
- Mayhew, Bradley, Korina Miller, and Alex English. *South-West China* [1998]. 2nd ed. Melbourne: Lonely Planet Publications, 2002.
- McCabe, James. "Cyrano de Bergerac en Angleterre: Réception outre-manche de l'oeuvre et de la pensée de l'écrivain français." *Revue de littérature comparée* 71 (1997): 31-58.
- McDougall, Bonnie S., and Kam Louie. *The Literature of China in the Twentieth Century*. London: Hurst and Co., 1997.
- Mencius. *Mencius*. Trans. with an introduction by D. C. Lau. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970.
- Mercier, Louis Sébastien. *L'An deux mille quatre cent quarante, suivi de L'homme de fer* [1799]. Vol. I-III. Preface by Raymond Trousson. Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1979.
- Mercier, Louis-Sébastien. *L'An 2440: Rêve s'il en fut jamais* [1771]. Preface by Alain Pons. Paris: France Adel, 1977.
- Meyers, Jeffrey, ed. *George Orwell: The Critical Heritage*. London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975.
- Ming Feng-ying. "Baoyu in Wonderland: Technological Utopia in the Early Modern Chinese Science Fiction Novel." In Zhang Yingjin 1998: 152-172.
- Modiano, Patrick. *Dans le café de la jeunesse perdue*. Paris: Gallimard, 2007.
- Moerland, René. "Interview met Michel Houellebecq." *NRC Handelsblad*, September 23, 2005.
- Mommsen, Katharina. "Goethe und China in ihren Wechselbeziehungen." In Debon and Hsia 1985: 15-33.
- Monegal, Emir Rodriguez. *Jorge Luis Borges: A Literary Biography*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1978.
- Montesquieu. *Lettres persanes* [1721]. Ed. Gonzage Truc. Paris: Garnier, 1956.
- Montfrans, Maria A. E. van. *Georges Perec: La Contrainte du réel*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999.
- More, Thomas. *Utopia* [1516]. *Latin Text and English Translation*. Ed. George M. Logan, Robert M. Adams, and Clarence H. Miller. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- More, Thomas. *Utopia* [1516]. Trans. with an introduction by Paul Turner. London: Penguin, 2003.
- Morris, May. *William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist*. 2 vols. Oxford: Blackwell, 1936.

- Morris, William. *Chants for Socialists*. London: Socialist League Office, 1885.
- Morris, William. *The Collected Works*. With introductions by his daughter, May Morris. 24 vols. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1910-1915.
- Morris, William. *The Earthly Paradise*, a Poem [1868-1870]. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1903.
- Morris, William. "The End and the Means" [1886]. *William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist*. Ed. May Morris. 2 vols. Oxford: Blackwell, 1936: vol. 2, 420-434.
- Morris, William. *John Ball en andere vertalingen*. Preface by Henriëtte Roland Holst-Van der Schalk. Amsterdam: W. Versluys, 1898.
- Morris, William. *News from Nowhere; or, An Epoch of Rest: Being Some Chapters from a Utopian Romance* [1891]. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1913.
- Morris, William. *Nieuws uit Nergensoord*. Trans. Frank van der Goes. Amsterdam: S. J. van Looy, 1897. Dutch translation of *News from Nowhere*, 1891.
- Morris, William. *Poems by the Way* [1891]. Introduction by David Latham. Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1994. Reprint of the 1911 edition.
- Morris, William. "Review of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* [1889]." In May Morris 1936: vol. 2, 501-507. Reprinted from *The Commonweal*, June 22, 1889.
- Orwell, George. *Animal Farm* [1945]. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971.
- Orwell, George. *The Complete Works*. Ed. Peter Davison. 20 vols. London: Secker and Warburg, 1998.
- Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* [1949]. London: Penguin, 2000.
- Orwell, George. *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Foreword by Victor Gollancz. London: Gollancz, 1937.
- Orwell, George. "Wells, Hitler and the World State" [1941]. In Orwell 1998: vol. 12, 536-541.
- Paape, Gerrit. *De Bataafsche Republiek, zo als zij behoort te zijn, en zo als zij weezen kan: of revolutionaire droom in 1798: wegens toekomstige gebeurtenissen tot 1998* [1798]. Ed. Peter Altena en Mireille Oostindië. Nijmegen: Vantilt, 1998.
- Paape, Gerrit [J. A. Schasz, M.D.] *Reize door het Aapenland* [1788]. Ed. Peter Altena. Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2007.
- Parrinder, Patrick, ed. *H. G. Wells: The Critical Heritage*. London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972.
- Perec, Georges. *W or the Memory of Childhood*. Trans. David Bellos. London: Collins Harvill, and Boston: Godine, 1988. Translation of *W ou le souvenir d'enfance*, 1975.

- Perec, Georges. *Wou le souvenir d'enfance*. Paris: Denoël, 1975.
- Perkins, Charlotte, see Gilman.
- Piercy, Marge. *Woman on the Edge of Time* [1976]. London: The Women's Press, 1979.
- Pinot, Virgile. *La Chine et la formation de l'esprit philosophique en France (1640-1740)*. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geutner, 1932.
- Pisarev, D. I. "Bazarov" [1862]. *Izbrannyye proizvedeniya*. Leningrad: Izd. Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1968: 49-95.
- Place-Verghnes, Floriane. "Houellebecq / Schopenhauer: Souffrance et désir gigognes." In Clément and Van Wesemael 2007: 123-132.
- Plaks, Andrew H., ed. *Chinese Narrative: Critical and Theoretical Essays*. Foreword by Cyril Birch. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977.
- Plato. *Complete Works*. Ed. with introduction and notes by John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson. Indianapolis, IN, and Cambridge: Hackett, 1997.
- Plato. *The Republic* [c. 375 BC]. Trans. with an introduction by Desmond Lee. 2nd ed. London: Penguin, 2003.
- Platonov, Andrei. "The City of Gradov." Trans. Friederike Snyder. In Andrei Platonov, *Collected Works*, preface by Joseph Brodsky, trans. Thomas P. Whitney et al., Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978: 388-419. Translation of "Gorod Gradov," 1927.
- Platonov, Andrei. *The Foundation Pit / Kotlovan*. Trans. Thomas P. Whitney. Preface by Joseph Brodsky. Bilingual edition. Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1973.
- Platonov, Andrey. *Soul and Other Stories*. Trans. Robert and Elizabeth Chandler et al. Introduction by Robert Chandler and afterword by John Berger. New York: New York Review Books, 2008.
- Pollard, David, ed. *Translation and Creation: Readings of Western Literature in Early Modern China, 1840-1918*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins, 1998.
- Polo, Marco. *The Travels* [c. 1300]. Trans. with an introduction by Ronald Latham. London: Penguin, 1958.
- Popper, Karl R. *Auf der Suche nach einer besseren Welt: Vorträge und Aufsätze aus dreissig Jahren*. Munich and Zürich: Piper, 1984.
- Popper, Karl R. *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. Vol. 1: *The Spell of Plato* [1943]. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971.
- Rawson, C. J. *Gulliver and the Gentle Reader: Studies in Swift and Our Time*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973.
- Richetti, John. "Introduction." In Defoe 2001: ix-xxviii.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*. Ed. George H. Taylor. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.

- Rosemont, Henry. "Civil Society, Government, and Confucianism: A Commentary." In Bell 2008: 46-57.
- Roszak, Theodore. *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition*. London: Faber and Faber, 1970.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* [1755]. In Rousseau 1964: 109-194.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Du contrat social, ou principes du droit politique* [1762]. In Rousseau 1964: 347-470.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* [1761]. In Rousseau 1961: 5-745.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Oeuvres complètes*. Vol. 2: *La nouvelle Héloïse, théâtre, poésies, essais littéraires*. Ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond. Paris: Gallimard, 1961.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Oeuvres complètes*. Vol. 3: *Du contrat social: Écrits politiques*. Ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond. Paris: Gallimard, 1964.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism* [1978]. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991.
- Saraskina, Ludmila. *Besy: Roman-preduprezhdenie*. Moscow: Sovetskij Pisatel', 1990.
- Schmidt, Siegfried J. *Die Selbstorganisation des Sozialsystems Literatur im 18. Jahrhundert*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989.
- Schram, Stuart R. "Mao Tse-tung's Thought from 1949 to 1976." In MacFarquhar and Fairbank 1991: 1-104.
- Schulte Nordholt, Annelise. *Perec, Modiano, Raczymow: La Génération d'après et la mémoire de la Shoab*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2008.
- Schuyt, Kees. "Tolerance and Democracy." In Fokkema and Grijzenhout 2004: 113-140.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Complete Works*. Ed. Howard Staunton. Annotations and commentary by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Samuel Johnson, and others. Foreword by Solomon J. Schepps. New York: Gramercy Books, Random House Value Publishing, 1979. Reprint of *The Globe Illustrated Shakespeare*, ed. Howard Staunton, 1860.
- Shen Congwen. *Alisi Zhongguo youji (Alice's Travels in China)*. Shanghai: Xinyue Shudian, 1928. Reprinted in Shen Congwen, *Quanji (Complete Works)*, ed. Zhang Zhaohe, 17 vols., Taiyuan: Beiyue Wenyi Chubanshe, 2002: vol. 3, 143-270.
- Sheridan, Mary. "The Emulation of Heroes." *The China Quarterly* 33 (1968): 47-73.
- Sinding, Michael. "After Definitions: Genres, Categories, and Cognitive Science." *Genre* 35 (2002): 181-220.

- Skinner, B. F. *Science and Human Behavior* [1953]. New York: The Free Press, and London: Colliers-MacMillan, 1965.
- Skinner, B. F. *Walden Two* [1948]. New York: Macmillan, 1962.
- Smeeks, Hendrik. *Beschryvinge van het magtig Koningryk Krinke Kesmes* [1708]. Ed. P.J. Buijnsters. Zutphen: Thieme, 1975.
- Snow, Edgar. *Red Star over China* [1937]. Rev. ed. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973.
- Souvestre, Émile. *Le Monde tel qu'il sera*. Illustrated by M. M. Bertall, O. Pen-guilly et St-Germain [1846]. Paris: W. Coquebert, n.d.
- Spence, Jonathan D. *God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan*. New York and London: Norton, 1996.
- Striedter, Jurij. *Texte der russischen Formalisten*. Vol. 1. Munich: Fink, 1969.
- Sukhikh, Igor. *Knigi XX veka: Russkij kanon*. Moscow: Izd. Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 2001.
- Swayze, Harold. *Political Control of Literature in the USSR, 1946-1959*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962.
- Swift, Jonathan. *Gulliver's Travels* [1726]. Ed. with an introduction by Robert Demaria, Jr. London: Penguin, 2003.
- Tao Yuanming [Tao Qian]. "Peach Blossom Spring." Trans. Cyril Birch. In Birch and Keene 1965: 167-168. Translation of "Taohua yuan ji," c. 400.
- Tatlow, Antony. *Brechts chinesische Gedichte*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973.
- Thomas, John L. "Introduction." In Bellamy 1967: 1-88.
- Thompson, E. P. *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*. 2nd ed. London: Merlin Press, 1977.
- Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden* [1854]. Ed. J. Lyndon Shanley. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971.
- Titzmann, Michael. "Die Relation von Glauben und Wissen(schaft) in europäischen Utopien der Frühen Neuzeit." In *Semiotische Weltmodelle: Mediendiskurse in den Kulturwissenschaften*, ed. Hartmut Schröder and Ursula Bock, Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2010: 570-634.
- Trotsky, Leon. *Literature and Revolution*. Trans. Rose Strunsky. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960. Original Russian edition: Moscow, 1924.
- Turgenev, Ivan. *Fathers and Sons*. Trans. Rosemary Edmonds. With the Romanes Lecture "Fathers and Children" by Isaiah Berlin. London: Penguin, 1975. Translation of *Ottsy i deti*, 1861.
- Twitchett, Denis, and Michael Loewe, eds. *The Cambridge History of China*. Vol. 1: *The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 BC – AD 220*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

- Veiras [Vairasse], Denis. *Histoire des Sévarambes: Peuples qui habitent une partie du troisième continent, communément appelé la Terre Australe*. 2 vols. in 1. New edition. Amsterdam: Pierre Mortier, c. 1690.
- Vespucci, Amerigo. *The Four Voyages* [1507]. In Martin Waldseemüller, *Cosmographiae introductio ... insuper quattuor Americi Vespuccij navigationes*, St. Dié, 1507. Reprinted as Martin Waldseemüller, *Cosmographiae introductio*, trans. Joseph Fischer and Franz von Wieser, Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1966: 84-151.
- Voltaire. *Candide or Optimism*. Trans. John Butt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1947. Translation of *Candide ou l'optimisme*, 1759.
- Voltaire. *Candide ou l'optimisme* [1759]. In Voltaire 1979: 145-233.
- Voltaire. *Dictionnaire philosophique* [1764]. Preface by Étiemble. Text prepared by Raymond Naves. Notes by Julien Benda. Paris: Garnier, 1967.
- Voltaire. *Mélanges*. Preface by Emmanuel Berl. Text established and annotated by Jacques van den Heuvel. Paris: Gallimard, 1961.
- Voltaire. *La Princesse de Babylone* [1768]. In Voltaire 1979: 349-414.
- Voltaire. *Romans et contes*. Ed. Frédéric Deloffre and Jacques van den Heuvel. Paris: Gallimard, 1979.
- Voltaire. *Théâtre, contenant tous ses chefs-d'oeuvre dramatiques*. Paris: Garnier, 1923.
- Voltaire. *Zadig ou la destinée* [1747]. In Voltaire 1979: 55-123.
- Vossius, Isaac. *Variarum observationum liber*. London: Robert Scott, 1685.
- Wagner, Nicolas. "L'Utopie de *La nouvelle Héloïse*." In *Roman et lumières au XVIIIe siècle*, ed. Werner Krauss et al., Paris: Editions Sociales, 1970: 189-270.
- Wagner, Rudolf G. "Lobby Literature: The Archeology and Present Functions of Science Fiction in China." In Kinkley 1985: 16-62.
- Wang Anyi. *Wutuobang shipian (Utopian Poems)* [1991]. In Wang Anyi, *Xianggang de qing yu ai (Feeling and Love in Hong Kong)*, Beijing: Zuoja Chubanshe, 1996: 257-304.
- Wang, David Der-wei. *The Monster That Is History: History, Violence, and Fictional Writing in Twentieth-Century China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Wang Ning. "The Reception of Postmodernism in China: The Case of Avant-Garde Fiction." In *International Postmodernism: Theory and Literary Practice*, ed. Hans Bertens and Douwe Fokkema, Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins, 1997: 499-510.
- Wang Shuo. *Playing for Thrills: A Mystery*. Trans. Howard Goldblatt. New York: William Morrow, 1997. Translation of *Wande jiusbi xintiao*, 1989.

- Wang Shuo. *Please Don't Call Me Human*. Trans. Howard Goldblatt. Harpenden, Herts.: No Exit Press, 2000. Translation of *Qianwan bie ba wo dang ren*, 1989.
- Wang Shuo. *Qianwan bie ba wo dang ren (Please Don't Call Me Human)* [1989]. Kunming: Yunnan Renmin Chubanshe, 2005.
- Wang Xiaoming. "From Petitions to Fiction: Visions of the Future Propagated in Early Modern China." In Pollard 1998: 43-55.
- Watt, Donald, ed. *Aldous Huxley: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975.
- Weiss, Timothy. *Translating Orients: Between Ideology and Utopia*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.
- Wells, H. G. *Experiment in Autobiography: Discoveries and Conclusions of a Very Ordinary Brain (since 1866)*. 2 vols. London: Faber and Faber, 1934a.
- Wells, H. G. *The Island of Doctor Moreau* [1896]. Ed. Patrick Parrinder. Introduction by Margaret Atwood. Notes by Steven McLean. London: Penguin Classics, 2005.
- Wells, H. G., *Men Like Gods* [1923]. London and Glasgow: Collins, n.d.
- Wells, H. G. *A Modern Utopia* [1905]. Introduction by Mark R. Hillegas. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967.
- Wells, H. G. *The Sleeper Awakes*. Ed. Patrick Parrinder. Notes by Andy Sawyer. London: Penguin Classics, 2005. Original title: *When the Sleeper Wakes*, 1899.
- Wells, H. G. *Stalin-Wells Talk: The Verbatim Record and a Discussion by G. Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, J. M. Keynes, Ernst Toller and Others*. London: New Statesman and Nation, 1934b.
- Wetter, Gustav A. *Dialectical Materialism: A Historical and Systematic Survey of Philosophy in the Soviet Union*. Trans. Peter Heath. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958. Translation of *Der dialektische Materialismus*, 1952.
- White, Thomas I. "Pride and the Public Good: Thomas More's Use of Plato in *Utopia*." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 20 (1982): 329-354.
- Widmer, Ellen. "Between Worlds: Huang Zhouxing's Imaginary Garden." In Idema et al. 2006: 249-281.
- Widmer, Ellen. *The Margins of Utopia: Shui-hu hou-chuan and the Literature of Ming Loyatism*. Cambridge, MA, and London: The Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, and Harvard University Press, 1987.
- Williams, Harold. *Dean Swift's Library: With a Facsimile of the Original Sale Catalogue and Some Account of the Two Manuscript Lists of His Books*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932.
- Williams, Kathleen, ed. *Swift: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970.

- Wolff, Betje. *Holland in het jaar 2440* [1777], gevolgd door *Briefover Holbach en Mercier*. Ed. G. W. Huygens. Brussels: Manteau, 1978.
- Xia Yuanqi, and Tian Jianzhong. *Taobua yuan dao you*. (*A Guide to the Land of Peach Blossoms*). Changsha: Hunan Chubanshe, 1993.
- Yü Ying-shih. "Han Foreign Relations." In Twitchett and Loewe 1986: 405–21.
- Zamyatin, Yevgeny. *Essays by a Soviet Heretic*. Ed. and trans. Mirra Ginsburg. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1970.
- Zamyatin, Yevgeny. "Gerbert Uëlls." *Epokha* 1922. Reprint, Letchworth, Herts.: Prideaux Press, 1978.
- Zamyatin, Yevgeny. *My* [1921]. In *Izbrannye proizvedeniya*, Moscow: Sovetskaya Rossiya, 1990: 15–155.
- Zamyatin, Yevgeny. *My* [1921]. New York: Inter-Language Literary Associates, 1967.
- Zamyatin, Yevgeny. *Wè*. Trans. with an introduction by Clarence Brown. New York: Penguin, 1993. Translation of *My*, 1921.
- Zhang Longxi. *Allegoresis: Reading Canonical Literature East and West*. Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2005.
- Zhang Longxi. "Marco Polo, Chinese Cultural Identity, and an Alternative Model of East-West Encounter." LEWI Working Paper Series, no. 20. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Baptist University, 2004.
- Zhang Longxi. "The Utopian Vision, East and West." *Utopian Studies* 4.1 (2002): 1–20.
- Zhang Yingjin, ed. *China in a Polycentric World: Essays in Chinese Comparative Literature*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Zhang Yiwu. "Postmodernism and Chinese Novels of the Nineties." Trans. Michael Berry. *Boundary 2*, 24 (1994): 247–259.
- Zhuang Zi [Chuang Tzu]. *The Complete Works*. Trans. Burton Watson. New York: Columbia University Press, 1968.
- Zhuang Zi [Chuang Tzu]. *De volledige geschriften: Het grote klassieke boek van het taoïsme*. Trans. Kristofer Schipper. Amsterdam and Antwerp: Augustus, 2007.
- Zürcher, Erik. "'In the Beginning': 17th-Century Chinese Reactions to Christian Creationism." In *Time and Space in Chinese Culture*, ed. Huang Chun-chieh and Erik Zürcher, Leiden: Brill, 1995: 132–166.

Subject Index

- abortion 38, 45
absurd, absurdism 309-311, 314, 316, 319
Aden 109, 135
aesthetic 230, 233, 237, 239
Africa 184, 386
agriculture 37, 115, 304, 313, 324, 361, 376
Algeria 87
Amazons 28, 141, 188, 261, 342
America, American 16, 58, 195, 256, 262, 263, 343, 368, 370, 409
American Civil War (1861-1865) 255
Amsterdam 139
anarchism 44, 178, 244, 253, 256, 383
anarchist 226, 237, 239, 384
anarchy 45, 96, 293, 295, 330
ancestors, worship of 24
Anglo-Chinese War (1839-1842) 195, 275
Anglo-French war on China (1856-1860) 275
Anhui province 273
animals 44, 80, 89, 109, 112, 286, 304, 314, 319, 338, 351, 375; all animals are equal 253; animal instinct 356
Anti-Rightist campaign 321
anti-utopian 297, 301; *see also* dystopian
Arabia, Arabian 96, 103, 109, 141, 184, 375
aristocracy 43, 297
art, the arts 46, 200, 236, 239, 244, 248, 264, 305, 312, 321, 326, 347, 350
Asia, Asian 140, 149, 184
Assyrians 127
Astrakhan 213
astrology, astrological 49, 51, 52, 54, 55, 88, 186
astronomy 39, 55
atheism 17, 43, 140, 145, 212, 229
atheist 22, 42, 117, 124, 146, 212, 226, 387, 389
Athens 44, 84, 166
Atlantis 58, 83-85, 91, 112, 127
Auschwitz 364
Australia 62, 139, 260
Austrian 102, 357
awareness of the here and now 376, 377
Babylon 139
Babylonia 103, 110, 112, 113
Baetica 112
Bangkok 157
Bazarovism 226, 227
Bedouins 388
behavioral engineering 409; *see also* social engineering
Beijing 149, 185, 275, 276, 281, 286
benevolence (*ren*) 169, 173, 178, 180, 187, 192, 282
Berlin 100
Bible, biblical 69, 111, 148, 234, 256, 261, 274, 330, 367
Big Brother 352, 354, 355, 392
birth control 269, 381
bliss, *see* happiness
Bolshevism, Bolshevik 20, 30, 251, 284
Boston 257
Boxer Rebellion 342
Boxer warrior 341, 343
Brahmans 137
brainwashing 370
Brazilian 16, 31
Britain 274
Buddha 137
Buddhism 124, 153, 172, 183, 192, 279, 280, 376
Buddhist 65, 159, 190, 274, 293, 335, 341, 378, 379, 392, 396
Buenos Aires 104, 106
burning of books 365, 366
Calicut 33, 184
California 266
Calvinism 124, 377
Cambaluc, Khanbalik 135, 149

- Canada, Canadian 369, 389
 Canary Islands 83
 cannibalism 66, 282, 283
 canon 301
 Cape of Good Hope 62
 capital punishment 32, 53
 capitalism 25, 208, 247, 249, 299, 322, 406-409
 capitalist 238, 250, 258, 259, 265, 290, 299, 317, 384, 406
 carnivalesque effect 32
 Carthage 112
 Cathay 136
 cave, caverne 181, 182
 Cayenne 105
 celibacy 116, 154, 293, 353, 404
 censorship 32, 33, 46, 47, 50, 69, 127, 129, 130, 197, 200, 212, 213, 222, 283, 314, 329, 335
 Ceylon 33, 50, 135, 377
 Chang'an 191
 Changsha 284
 chaos 67
 Chicago 334
 Chiemsee 292
 chiliastic 15, 28, 29; *see also* millenarianism
 China, Chinese 23, 100, 110, 135, 139-141, 148-149, 193, 256, 295, 312, 321, 333; as a continental civilization 23, 184; Chinese Communist Party 284, 322, 324, 326, 328, 329, 341, 405; founding of the Chinese Communist Party 284; merits of Mao Zedong for the Chinese revolution 330
 Christian 40, 42, 57, 60, 73, 129, 148, 159, 172, 204, 222, 258, 262, 268, 269, 272-274, 308, 376, 383, 390, 396, 399
 Christianity 15, 17, 57, 111, 124, 137, 140, 143, 273, 280, 307, 390
 Church of England 69
 Cirey-en-Champagne 100
 Clarens 114, 116, 117, 120
 class struggle, conflict, war 171, 196, 207, 208, 245, 247, 258, 262, 275, 278, 283, 284, 289, 290, 299, 312, 313, 320, 329, 341
 classical antiquity 40, 61, 68, 399
 classless society 321, 335
 cloned, cloning 15, 269, 388, 389, 391-393, 396-397, 404
 collective happiness, bliss 27, 38, 48, 203, 220, 255, 261, 270, 293, 308, 364, 404
 collectivization 312, 313, 318, 319, 324
 colonial 86, 123, 129, 132, 271, 272, 334, 338, 387
 colonialism 37, 70, 199, 334, 337, 387, 400
 Columbia University 281
 Comintern 251, 252
 commerce, commercial 111, 120, 144, 185, 187, 205, 236, 239, 260
 common (communal) dining halls 38, 47, 260, 279
 common (communal) property 43, 51, 53, 84, 200, 201
 communal dwellings 34
 communal education 54
 communal way of life 42, 43, 84, 195, 201, 202, 204, 274
 communism 202, 208, 237, 238, 265, 284, 293, 295, 317, 320, 322, 324, 330, 354
 communist 29, 203, 219, 223, 233, 236, 239, 243, 251, 259, 289, 295, 299, 314, 317, 323, 324, 345, 406, 409
 Communist Party 178, 283, 284, 293, 297, 298, 300, 312, 313, 321, 344, 406
 communitarianism 201, 202; communitarian experiments 255
 community art 233, 244
 community of husbands and wives 51, 53, 292
 Compostela 65
 Confucian 23, 101, 150, 154, 166, 180, 181, 183, 186, 189-192, 272-274, 276, 277, 280, 282, 322, 336
 Confucianism 19, 22, 24, 110, 118, 124, 137, 140, 145-147, 152, 153, 173, 177, 178, 180, 183, 185, 192, 193, 195, 276, 279, 280, 282, 287, 405-407
 Constantinople 104, 139
 conventions 31; generic 333; literary 15; social 71, 165
 corporatist 260, 295, 406
 cosmopolitanism 113, 299, 332
 Crete 88
 crime, criminality 32, 97, 147, 158, 198, 306
 crisis 16, 18, 25, 28, 275; cultural crisis and the rise of utopian fiction 16-18, 195, 272, 399-401
 Crystal Palace 217, 221, 222, 305, 317; in Hall's *Another World* 65
 cultural relativism 72, 86, 144, 148, 337
 Cultural Revolution 20, 128, 178, 272,

- 283, 286, 322, 325, 327-331, 338, 339, 343
cyclical experience of time 23
- Dadaism 334
Dao 187, 346
Daoism 19, 152, 172, 178, 179, 183, 185, 192, 193, 195, 280, 376, 407
Daoist 27, 153, 154, 177, 178, 181, 182, 185, 189, 190, 192, 274, 331, 383, 407;
 Daoist elements in Mao's policies 322
death penalty 32, 53
Declaration of Independence (1776) 263
Deism, deist 118, 124, 131, 149
Delft 62
democracy 43, 44, 48, 67, 70, 95, 201, 233, 250, 284, 338, 345, 372, 376, 383, 403, 407
democratic 67, 161, 292, 400, 403, 406-408, 410; democratic rights 158
destiny of humanity 161, 162, 218, 262, 280, 346, 347, 371, 381, 382
determinism 102, 216, 220, 407, 409, 410
dialectical materialism 359
dictator, dictatorship 284, 297, 302, 344, 354, 372, 410; dictatorship of the proletariat 43, 251
discovery of America 34
drugs 159, 162, 349, 376, 378, 381, 382
Dutch Batavian Republic 130
dystopia 16, 20, 78, 96, 138, 226, 229, 231, 264, 338, 346, 354, 367
dystopian 47, 66, 69, 88, 93, 203, 204, 230, 232, 281, 286, 287, 289, 290, 301, 315, 320, 332, 359, 360, 364, 370; *see also* utopia
- ecology, ecological 378, 387, 396, 403
economic 25, 263
economic materialism 25, 29
Eden 34, 88, 196
Edict of Nantes 146
education, educational 37, 52, 53, 77, 79, 132, 145, 168, 198, 199, 205, 258, 266-268, 276, 285, 294-296, 298, 346, 373, 376-378
Egypt 103, 108, 109, 129
Eldorado 105-107
Elohim 390-392, 397
Eloi 289, 389
Élysée 115, 116, 133, 196
emancipation of women 141, 213, 217, 369
empirical 95, 141, 242
England, English 100, 111, 128, 139, 156, 196, 207, 239, 285, 295, 299, 302, 352, 359, 386
Enlightenment 17, 22, 30, 62, 72, 95, 135, 140-142, 145, 195, 229, 399, 407
environment, environmental 25, 29, 338, 400, 406-409
epistemology 172
epistolary 113
equality 18, 44, 68, 111, 132, 142, 151, 199, 201, 233, 249, 261, 263, 273, 279, 346, 399; equality between men and women 36, 183, 260, 265, 270, 273, 383
eros 242, 249, 261, 270, 403
erotic 68, 114, 117, 158, 221, 235, 237, 242, 290, 332, 337, 355, 356, 369, 373, 376, 378, 389, 392, 395-397, 403, 404
essay 26, 31, 131, 196, 276, 291
eternal life 27, 269, 389
ethical 16, 19, 43, 146, 230, 257, 259, 262, 265, 278, 293
ethics 39, 145, 172, 292, 305, 384, 405, 407
eugenic 54, 76, 77, 198, 348
eugenics 16, 21, 27, 45, 48, 171, 292, 294, 296, 304, 345, 348, 357, 362, 381
Eurocentrism 129, 291, 386
Europe, European 22, 30, 100, 101, 107, 120, 123, 127, 140, 141, 149, 172, 199, 221, 226, 228, 260, 262, 265, 334, 337, 343, 361, 370, 387
euthanasia 16, 27, 41, 280, 357
eutopia 18, 34, 70, 78, 80, 85, 89, 90, 106, 114, 138, 149, 187, 196, 259, 380, 397; ambiguous utopias 383-398; distinction between eutopia and dystopia is relativized 20, 21, 345, 385, 398
eutopian 18, 47, 71, 72, 91, 95, 97, 98, 110, 115, 116, 175, 192, 204, 220, 257, 259, 294, 397, 400, 401
evolution 25, 133, 257, 258, 262, 269, 270, 276, 290, 292, 294, 296, 297
evolution theory 278
- Fabian Society 297
fairy tale 15, 26, 108
family 33, 51, 58, 169, 171, 270, 279, 404
family life 45, 77, 301, 345, 346, 361, 380, 382, 383
Fascism, fascist 283, 289, 298, 299, 372
feminist 68, 189, 207, 266, 342, 347, 367

- Ferney 100
 finality, *see* destiny of humanity
 Flower Power movement 154, 370, 408
 Formalism 303
 France, French 95, 100, 104, 121, 122, 127, 129, 133, 144, 162, 196, 207, 274, 285, 299, 331, 359, 360, 386, 387
 free will 102, 216, 218, 221, 226, 230, 409, 410; *see also* individual will
 freedom 199, 201, 206, 220, 229, 231, 249, 260, 264, 295, 306, 353, 355, 382, 402, 403; freedom of conscience 143; of discussion 141; of expression 100; of movement 39, 43, 292; of speech 44, 364; of thought 111, 293, 365
 French Revolution 18, 20, 95, 100, 119, 125, 195, 233, 278, 399
 Fujian province 273
 fundamentalism 29, 123, 331, 368, 400
 futuristic fiction 278
 futurological 133; futurological novel 130

 Gang of Four 341
 Ganges, river 109
 gardens 81, 88, 115, 183; Garden of Eden 120; Garden of the Hesperides 83; "Chaque citoyen cultivoit son jardin" 127
 genetic 230, 372, 380, 403, 404, 410; genetic manipulation 370, 404
 Geneva 100, 114
 genre, generic 16, 24, 28, 31, 46, 69, 165, 166, 333, 371, 372, 377, 398
 gentleman 166-168, 170, 173, 185, 187, 188, 197
 Germanic 234, 240
 Germany, German 111, 207, 224, 245, 251, 258, 281, 282, 337, 360
 giants 34, 73, 78, 89, 185, 188
 global responsibility 407, 408
 globalization 25, 33, 204, 205, 291, 337
 gold 35, 39, 63, 84, 106, 182, 259
 Golden Age 71, 87, 206, 221
 Golgotha 257
 Grand Inquisitor 303, 308, 349, 350, 353, 402
 Great Leap Forward 38, 326, 331
 Greece, Greek 26, 40, 45, 46, 57, 84, 88, 108, 119, 128, 129, 142, 200, 233, 234, 333, 334
 griffin 136
 grotesque 69, 77, 79, 80, 309, 340, 342, 343, 347
 guardians 45, 84, 126, 145, 154, 167, 169, 171, 293, 303
 Guomindang (KMT) 284, 286

 Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) 175
 Hangzhou 136, 274
 happiness 19, 21, 27, 85, 104, 176, 180, 220, 247, 248, 264, 274, 296, 309, 317, 350, 351, 353, 381, 382, 393; happiness, collective or individual 402
 harmony 170, 171, 182, 237, 243, 293, 295, 379; harmony with nature 335, 338
 healthy 46, 127
 Hebrew 111
 Hebrew 57, 142
 hedonism 40, 336, 397
 hereafter, afterlife, afterworld 22, 99, 116, 117, 123, 167, 222, 374, 401
 heresy 42, 308, 354
 hero 197, 223-225, 323, 340, 341
 heroic 21, 221, 222, 310, 323, 324, 326-328, 353
 heroism 216, 312
 Hindu myths 379
 Hinduism 137
 historical materialism 18, 25, 208, 216, 312, 323
 historiography 27, 127
 holism, holistic 172, 193, 239, 379
 Holland, Dutch 100, 111, 139, 142, 239, 241, 267
 Honolulu 157
 human nature 29, 71, 80, 128, 173, 208, 220, 260, 320, 335, 337, 390
 human rights 37, 90, 131, 133, 292, 387
 humanitarianism 30, 36
 Hundred Flowers policy 186, 321
 hyperbole 63, 185, 282, 330, 342, 343

 Icelandic 233, 234
 idyll 15, 26, 31, 88, 97, 120, 123, 397
 idyllic 106, 114, 174, 175, 181, 217, 333
 Île de France 118, 119
 imagination 26, 181, 195, 217, 234, 291, 293, 303, 308, 311, 324, 328, 330, 331, 343, 365, 368, 374
 immortal 99, 182, 187, 189, 191, 280
 immortality 28, 92, 152
 Imperial China 92, 143
 imperialism 250, 296
 impressionism 242
 India, Indian 100, 101, 108, 110, 135, 137, 152, 184, 387, 407

- individual happiness 27, 30, 37, 38, 43,
 203, 255
 individual will 410
 inductivism 56
 industrialization 256, 290, 336
 industry 257, 258, 298, 304, 312, 324
 inequality 16, 132, 176, 267, 347, 351,
 406
 Inquisition 49, 104, 112, 128, 308
 interior monologue 26, 309, 396
 International Criminal Court 294
 International Monetary Fund 294
 intertextual 16, 68, 114, 228, 309, 363,
 371, 388
 intolerance 17, 100, 110, 144
 Irish 83
 Islam 101, 124, 280
 Islamic 95, 99, 127, 368
 island 15, 25, 34, 58, 83-86, 88, 90-92,
 114, 116, 140, 183, 185, 189, 348, 350,
 371, 376, 377, 380, 386, 394, 395, 410
 island of Martinique 118
 island prisons 292
 Italy, Italian 142, 334

 Japan, Japanese 25, 92, 140, 272, 275,
 282, 295, 407
 Jesuit 22; Jesuit missionaries 110, 148
 jewels 188
 Jews, Jewish 112, 137, 172, 354, 360
 Jiangxi province 273
 Juan-Fernández 116
junzi 171
 justice 142

 Karakorum 135
 Khanbalik 135, 149
 Kinsai 136
 Korchagin 312, 409
 Korea 275
 Kropotkinesque 383
 Kunlun Mountains 186
 Kunming 343

 Lake Aral 118
 Lamaist monastery 156
 land reform 273, 275, 324, 329
 language 53, 57, 74, 196, 267, 279, 355
 Lanzarote 91, 389, 394, 395, 403
 Last Judgment 22, 40, 47, 167
 Latin 50, 57, 130, 142, 200, 207
 Latin America 104, 386
 leader-worship 356; *see also* personality
 cult

 Liaodong peninsula 275
 liberalism 272, 283, 284, 287
 Libya 84
 life after death 171; *see also* hereafter
 Lilliput 73, 78-81, 101
 linguistic skepticism 359, 371, 379
 linguistic utopia 331
 literary imagination 330
 literary topoi 34
 literature 46, 158, 261, 270, 293, 305,
 321, 326, 347, 349, 357, 367, 371, 379,
 410
 logic 39
 London 285
 long life 27
 longevity 27, 60, 90, 156, 160, 180, 280
 Lübeck 139
 Lutheranism 124
 lying, to lie 45, 80

 Madagascar 118, 119
 Madrid 395
 Manchuria 27
 Mao Zedong thought, Maoism 271, 272,
 327, 339, 356
 marriage 16, 27, 41, 45, 183, 349, 356,
 369, 373, 383, 404
 Marxism 90, 100, 171, 197, 202, 209,
 217, 238, 242-244, 246, 249, 258, 262,
 272, 278, 284, 286, 287, 289, 312, 405
 Marxism-Leninism 202, 223, 320, 354
 materialism 17, 43, 46, 211, 212, 216,
 220-222, 224, 226, 236
 materialist determinism 212, 214, 222
 Mauritius 118, 386
 May Fourth Movement 176, 265, 272,
 283, 405
 Mecca 141
 Mediterranean Sea 23, 86, 92
 melancholy 113, 116, 121, 317
 metalinguistic 331, 340, 343
 metanarrative 398
 meta-utopian 90, 346
 Mexico 260
 Milan 88
 millenarianism 17, 18, 49, 89, 255, 322
 Ming dynasty (1368-1644) 183, 184
 model-heroes 327
 model-soldier Ouyang Hai 328
 modernism 290, 331, 339376, 377, 379
moksha (drug) 378, 382
 money 31, 35, 63, 106, 115, 120, 126,
 137, 191, 197, 198, 205, 259, 295, 383,
 407

- Mongol 137, 184
 monopoly capitalism 33
 morality, moral 16, 26, 71, 80, 119, 129,
 132, 146, 173, 225, 231, 375, 376, 391,
 407, 409
 Moscow 111, 227, 252
 multiculturalism 29, 53
 music 228, 239-241, 245, 246, 248, 260,
 266, 305
 Muslim 98, 142, 272, 379
 mystic(al) 153, 161, 162, 178, 180, 255,
 261, 280, 311, 331, 335, 347, 376-379,
 386, 401
 mysticism 25, 154, 189, 375, 376
 myth 85, 167, 240, 261, 380
 mythical 84, 108, 110, 112, 170, 182, 327
 mythology 92, 136, 186, 197, 233, 234,
 240, 336

 Nanjing 273, 274
 Naples 86, 88
 narrative devices 28
 National People's Congress 295
 National Socialism 29, 128, 283, 347,
 359, 360
 nationalization 258, 262, 264
 natural religion 147
 naturalism 242, 243
 nature, natural 24, 54, 60, 80, 113, 115,
 152, 178, 195, 216, 220, 241, 242, 245,
 247, 248, 255, 296, 315, 320, 326, 335,
 354, 355, 365, 378, 387, 405, 406
 Nauvoo, Illinois 203
 navigation 58
 Nazi Germany 352, 353, 366
 Nazism 20, 47, 100, 354, 357, 359, 391
 Nestorian Christians 137, 159
 New Jerusalem 195, 196, 255, 274
 New York 266, 334
 Newcastle-on-Tyne 302
 Newspeak 349, 354, 355, 357, 368, 379
 nihilism 211, 212, 223, 224, 226-232
 nongovernmental organizations 337
 nonverbal communication and linguistic
 determinism 355
 nonverbal experience 356, 377
 Nordic 234, 242
 nostalgia 23, 27, 84, 91, 173, 274, 310,
 322, 324, 386, 394, 405

 Occidentalism 271, 272, 274, 276, 277,
 281, 285, 326
 October Revolution 20, 239, 251, 253,
 297, 302, 303, 310, 315, 316

 Olympic Games 363
 Orient 146, 155
 oriental 375, 376, 407, 408
 Orientalism 135, 271
 Orthodox (Russian) 212, 222, 223, 227,
 229, 231, 306
 overpopulation 16

 Pacific Ocean 114
 Palestinian 112, 388
 pantheism, pantheist 152, 243, 247, 269,
 375
 Papacy 65
 paradise 70, 83, 99, 156, 189, 229, 234,
 242, 279, 308, 354, 384, 397, 401
 paradisiacal 92, 109, 190
 Parathalassia 65
 Paris 112, 281, 303
 Paris Commune 245
 parliamentary democracy 29, 280
 parthenogenesis 268, 269
 Patagonia 256, 361
 peace 149, 237, 251, 266, 276, 279, 281,
 293, 331, 365, 379
 peaceful 334, 337, 402
 pearls 182
 Peking University 281
 Penglai 92, 186, 187, 189, 191
 People's Communes 280, 322, 326, 327,
 331
 People's Republic of China 21, 295, 330,
 332, 333, 340, 353
 Persia, Persian 95, 141, 184, 375
 personality cult 197, 327, 342, 356
 Pescadores 275
 phalanstère, phalanstery 196, 202, 217,
 317
 Philippines, the 140
 philosopher-ruler 45, 51, 85, 86, 169
 Phoenicia 112
 phoenix 110
 picaresque 104
 piecemeal social engineering 29, 47
 pigs 351
 Pillars of Hercules 58
 pollution 396
 polygamy 72, 268, 368
 populist 43
 Port-Louis 120, 122
 Portugal, Portuguese 331
 positive character 225
 positive hero 215, 218, 312
 postmodernism 331, 347

postmodernist 338-340, 343
 Potsdam 100
 pragmatism 283, 405
 predestination 102
 premarital inspection 63, 140
 pride 80, 120, 225, 261
 privacy 43, 115, 188, 203, 292, 304, 355, 357
 private property 33, 38, 42, 43, 45, 47, 51, 84, 87, 126, 154, 171, 182, 197, 198, 201, 237, 273, 279, 318, 357, 383
 private vices 97
 procreation 54, 268, 269, 292, 360, 380, 382, 397, 404
 profit motive 33, 51
 progress 18, 25, 89, 124, 130, 205, 275, 289, 296, 300, 323, 399, 405, 408
 proletariat 320
 Proletkult 310, 319
 Prometheus, Promethean 338, 405
 prostitutes 66
 Protestant 17, 42, 117, 273, 407
 prototype of Chinese utopian fiction 91
 prototype of European utopian fiction 24
 prototypes of the genre of utopian fiction 165
 Providence 42, 103, 121, 131
 providential determinism 102, 407
 Prussia 147
 psychological 230, 264, 309, 370, 373, 381, 382, 385, 409
 psychology 338, 358, 371
 public dining halls 260; *see also* common dining halls

 Qin dynasty (221-206 BCE) 175, 181, 184
 Qing or Manchu dynasty (1644-1911) 153, 192, 272, 274, 275, 281, 341
 Qingdao 281
 Quran 99, 141

 race, racial 20, 334, 341
 racism 291
 rational 172, 221, 229, 269
 rational egoism 223
 rationalism 195, 360
 rationality 71, 74, 80, 133, 147, 148, 204, 211, 220, 311, 314
 realism, realist 122, 216, 282, 312, 325, 326, 338, 374, 397
 reality 175, 176, 202, 312, 325, 326, 330, 339, 341, 352, 354, 358, 381, 386, 396

 reason 18, 26, 73, 76, 80, 111-113, 117, 204, 220, 228, 229, 231, 309, 311, 399
 red classics 324, 409
 Red Guards 286, 324
 Reform Movement 272, 275-277, 284, 405
 Reformation 17, 56, 399
 reformism 239, 249, 250, 284
 refuge 86
 regularities in history 131
 religion 17, 80, 97, 106, 137, 145, 168, 171, 213, 228, 229, 236, 247, 261, 266, 268, 269, 336, 346, 350, 383; *see also* revealed religion
 Religion of Solidarity 258
 religious 41, 119, 142, 167, 212, 222, 273, 280, 296, 306, 390
 religious orders 65, 116
 Renaissance 17, 37, 401
 Republic of the Seven United Provinces 127
 Republican China 25
 revealed religion 95, 111, 124, 168, 172, 200, 204, 222
 revolution 95, 208, 213, 216, 218, 229, 238, 243, 247, 249, 262, 307, 311, 322, 385
 revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism 329, 405
 rewriting 68, 352-354, 358, 377, 381
 rewriting of a classical European text 380
 rewriting literary texts 357
 rewriting official history 353
 Rhode Island 266
 righteousness (*yi*) 169, 178, 180, 282
 rites, rituals 24, 168-170, 187, 241
 Robinsonade 144
 Roman Catholic 17, 22, 38, 55, 64, 65, 96, 111, 121, 123, 148, 293, 350, 356, 399, 407
 Roman Catholicism 56, 124, 378
 Roman Empire 119, 127
 romantic 113, 204, 213, 224, 239, 242, 255, 311, 313, 326, 397
 romanticism 195, 233, 282, 324, 326
 rukh, ruc 65, 136
 Russia, Russian 102, 111, 114, 118, 211, 226, 228, 239, 263, 282, 284, 297, 298, 300, 302, 303, 324, 326, 334, 354

 Samurai 300
 San Francisco 139
 satire 26, 31, 72, 89, 90, 96, 185, 187

- Savage 349, 381
 savages 395-397
 science, sciences 49, 217, 220, 221, 224,
 228, 276, 294, 346, 350, 375, 384
 science fiction 191, 277, 303, 311, 315,
 346, 358, 383, 387, 388
 scientific 17, 55, 74, 125, 131, 133, 196,
 213, 230, 271, 277, 289, 292, 300, 314,
 351, 365, 390
 scientific progress 75, 336
 scientific socialism 208, 209
 Scythia 68, 108, 111
 Sea of Marmora 107
 secular, secularization 17, 19, 95, 100,
 117, 124, 168, 180, 200, 215, 269, 383,
 400, 401
 secularism provides a fertile soil for utopi-
 an thinking 19, 168, 242, 401
 self-interest 98; as a pardonable vice 72
 self-reflection 236
 self-sufficient 88, 115, 338, 371
 sensory perception 56
 sentiment(s) 30, 113, 117, 124, 132
 separation of church and state 49, 142
 Sevilla 112
 sex 114, 191, 348, 356
 sexual 40, 41, 267, 301, 306, 394
 sexual act, pleasure from the 356
 sexual relations 16, 27, 34, 53, 171, 373
 Shang or Yin dynasty (16th-11th cen-
 turies BCE) 170, 173, 176
 Shanghai 274, 286
 Shangri-La 156, 169, 280, 371
 Shanxi province 273
 Siberia 213, 219, 226
 Sichuan province 135, 273
 significant detail 360, 364, 366
 Sino-French War (1884-1885) 275
 Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) 275
 Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) 285
 skeptical 104, 113
 skepticism 17
 slavery, slaves 38, 41, 67, 86, 87, 99, 120,
 122, 123, 176, 207, 209, 256, 364, 268,
 293, 387
 social engineering 375
 socialism 176, 195, 196, 212, 219, 226,
 228, 233, 236-239, 244, 249, 253, 262,
 263, 284, 293, 297, 299, 325, 335, 405
 socialist realism 20, 46, 310-312, 324-
 326, 329, 345, 370, 405, 408, 409
 socialist utopianism 253
 sociopolitical 67, 126, 294, 402
soma (drug) 381
 Song dynasty (960-1279) 136
 Sorbonne 22
 South America 127, 260
 Southern Continent 61, 65, 139
 soviet 197, 231, 251, 252, 301, 406
 Soviet hero 409
 Soviet Union 20, 43, 202, 253, 297, 302,
 324, 326, 335, 337, 351-353, 366, 405
 space 22-24
 Spain, Spanish 57, 59, 112, 127, 139, 140,
 359, 394, 395
 Sparta 32, 44, 45
 Spinozism 145, 147, 243
 Sri Lanka 184, 377
 St. Petersburg 218, 219, 224, 302
 Stalinism 231, 356
 sublime 125, 126, 152, 255, 331, 375,
 376
 Sumatra 135
 Suzhou 274
 Switzerland, Swiss 113, 114
 symbolist 282
 syncretist 53, 56, 333, 337, 375, 378
 Syria 103
 Taiping Rebellion 272, 274, 277, 279
 Taiwan 275
 Tang dynasty (618-907) 182, 185, 186,
 190-192
tangatse (drug) 159
 Tao, *see* Dao
 Taprobana 50, 60, 84
 Tartar 136, 138, 149
 Taylorism 304, 307
 technological 198, 200, 201, 203, 205,
 217, 221, 256, 260, 268, 274-277, 279,
 289, 294, 302, 338, 346, 347, 351, 371,
 375, 376, 380, 387, 401-403
 teleological 274
 Terra Australis, *see* Australia
 terror 43, 98, 99, 149, 231, 355, 368, 369
 theocracy 49, 124, 367, 348, 368, 369
 thought control 197
 thought experiment 48
Tian an men 281
 Tianjin 343
 Tibet, Tibetan 156-158, 162
 time 22-24, 378
 Tinian, island in the Pacific 114, 116
 Tlön, imagined world of 359
 to lie 45, 80
 tolerance 111
 toleration 18, 41, 49, 69, 100, 111, 113,
 144, 399

- topoi 35
 totalitarianism 46, 61, 115, 129, 197, 200,
 220, 223, 253, 299, 302, 347, 351-353,
 364, 367, 368, 381, 400, 403
 trade 87, 132, 185, 197, 205, 272, 375
 tragedies, tragic 46, 380, 402
 transcendentalism 255, 258
 Treaty of Shimonoseki 275
 trias politica 98
 Trojan War 108
 Trotskyism 307, 341
 Troy 261
 tsarist censorship 212, 213
 Tunis 86
 Turkey, Turkish 104, 137, 141
 Tyre 112
 Tyrrhenian Sea 84

 unhealthy literature 47
 unicorn 108, 111, 136
 United Kingdom 249, 295
 United Nations 294
 United States 218, 255-258, 260, 262,
 267, 281, 298, 332-334, 341, 364, 367,
 368, 372
 universal happiness 350
 universal harmony 336
 universal language 74
 universal suffrage 279, 297
 upside-down world, *see* world upside-
 down
 Utah 368
 utopia 21, 113, 115, 139, 163, 209, 217,
 266, 380; utopia and democracy 161;
 utopia and eros 161; *see also* eutopia
 utopian 15, 28, 100, 196, 202, 211, 247
 utopian impulse 149, 156, 327, 395, 401,
 402
 utopian socialism 207, 208, 212, 214,
 219, 228, 229

 Venice 104, 135, 184
 Vietnam 184
 virtue 85, 96, 97, 99, 149, 150, 158, 166,
 180, 193, 282
 virtuous 88, 116, 117, 155, 156, 188
 virtuous atheism 22, 146, 229
 voluntarism 21, 216, 217, 321, 323, 324,
 403
 voyages 34, 83

 warfare 32, 395
 well-field 174-177, 221
 workers' councils 302

 world literature 151
 world state 279, 289, 291, 292, 294, 348,
 381
 World State without revolution 299
 World Trade Organization 294
 world upside-down 28, 99, 285, 365
 World War I 245, 249, 250, 281, 350
 World War II 47, 289, 296, 345, 351,
 352, 360, 40

 Xia dynasty (21st-16th centuries BCE)
 170, 176

 Yahoo 139
 Yan'an 283
 Yangtze River 136
 Yin, *see* Shang dynasty
 Yuan or Mongolian dynasty (1279-1368)
 149
 Yunnan province 135, 339, 343
 Zhejiang province 273
 Zhongdian 161
 Zhou dynasty (11th century-255 BCE)
 169, 170, 176, 181, 190

Index of Names

- Abélard (Petrus Abaelardus) 116
Achterhuis, Hans 407
Adami, Tobias 56
Aeschylus 246
Ai Wu 324
Alembert, Jean le Rond d' 132
Alexander the Great 127
Alexander II, tsar of Russia 226
Anacreon 128
Andreyev, Leonid Nikolayevich 282
Anne of Austria, queen of England 55
Aquinas, Thomas 50
Archilochus 28
Argens, Jean-Baptiste de Boyer, marquis d' 89
Ariosto, Ludovico 108
Aristophanes 28, 40, 41, 128, 207, 395
Aristotle 40, 46, 51, 52, 63, 64, 75
Artsybashev, Mikhail Petrovich 282
Atwood, Margaret 61, 347, 368, 398, 402
Augustine, bishop of Hippo 378
Austen, Jane 375
- Bacon, Francis 17, 49, 56
Bai Juyi 155
Bakunin, Mikhail Aleksandrovich 226
Balzac, Honoré de 388
Barmé, Geremie R. 340
Barnes, Julian 47, 346
Bartholomew, apostle 57
Bauer, Wolfgang 92, 153, 177, 182, 273-275, 402
Bayle, Pierre 22, 146, 229
Bebel, August 237, 245
Beecher Stowe, Harriet Elizabeth 211, 218
Bellamy, Edward 38
Bennett, Arnold 290
Berdyyayev, Nikolai Aleksandrovich 212, 231
Berenice 138
Berg, Willem van den 240
Berlin, Isaiah 225
- Bernard, Claude 214
Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Jacques Henri 68, 117-120, 122, 123
Bethge, Hans 407
Birch, Cyril 181, 329
Bismarck, prince Otto Eduard Leopold von 278
Blatchford, Richard 239
Block de Behar, Lisa 358
Bluche, François 55
Bogdanov, A.A., *pseudonym of Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Malinovsky* 310
Bonaparte, Joseph 123
Bonaparte, Napoleon 123, 278, 352
Booth, Wayne C. 380, 398
Borges, Jorge Luis 347, 358
Bossuet, Jacques-Bénigne 129
Boulainvilliers, Henri de, comte Saint Saire 124, 130
Boyle, John, 5th earl of Orrery 73
Bradbury, Ray Douglas 290, 347, 364, 366, 398
Brandt Corstius, Johannes Christiaan 244
Brecht, Bertolt 150, 154-156, 310
Brendan, saint 83
Brodsky, Joseph (Iosif Aleksandrovich) 316
Browne, Thomas 360, 370
Buber, Martin 153
Büchner, Ludwig 224
Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) 137, 305
Budyonny, general Semyon Mikhailovich 318
Buijnsters, P.J. 141, 144
Bulgakov, Mikhail Afanasyevich 20, 286, 301, 311, 314-316
Burden, Jane 237
Buruma, Ian 271
Busleiden, Jerome 32
Butler, Samuel 290, 371, 373
Byron, George Gordon, lord 357

- Cabet, Étienne 193, 196-204, 206, 208, 211, 219, 228, 230, 255, 291, 310, 399
- Caesar, Gaius Iulius 53
- Calvino, Italo 138, 139, 385, 410
- Campanella, Tommaso 17, 49-56, 59, 60, 76-78, 89, 126, 193, 291, 292, 404
- Camus, Albert 231
- Carlyle, Thomas 236
- Carrier, James G. 271
- Casanova, Giovanni Giacomo 362
- Casares, Adolfo Bioy 358
- Catharine the Great 111
- Catullus (Gaius Valerius Catullus) 128
- Caus, Salomon de 60
- Céline, Louis Ferdinand, *pseudonym of* Ferdinand Destouches 388
- Chandler, Robert 317
- Chang, S.C., *see* Zhang Shizhao
- Charles V, king of Spain 32
- Châtelet, Gabrielle-Émilie, marquise du 100
- Chaucer, Geoffrey 357
- Chekhov, Anton Pavlovich 301
- Chen Chen 183
- Chen Duxiu 281, 284
- Chen Xiaomei 271, 272
- Chen Yi 328
- Cheng, king, nephew of the Duke of Zhou 170
- Cheng Yinghong 409
- Chernyshevsky, Nikolai Gavrilovich 211-214, 216, 217, 223-226, 228, 229, 233, 310, 322
- Chin Ching-mai, *see* Jin Jingmai
- Chin Shih Huang, *see* Qin shi huangdi
- Chopin, Frédéric François 157, 160
- Chow Tse-tsung 265, 283, 295
- Chuang Tzu, *see* Zhuang Zi
- Church, Sally K. 184
- Churchill, Winston Leonard Spencer 295, 296
- Ci Xi, empress dowager 274
- Cnoop Koopmans, Wies 243
- Coetsee, John Maxwell 388, 393
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor 15
- Columbus (Cristóbal Colón) 16, 34, 5083, 278, 375
- Condorcet, Jean-Antoine-Nicolas de Caritat, marquis de 18, 130-133, 195, 201, 399, 405
- Confucius (Kong Zi) 15, 24, 129, 142-144, 146, 147, 155, 166-174, 180, 182, 190, 273, 276, 310, 336, 375
- Conrad, Joseph, *pseudonym of* Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski 294
- Considérant, Victor 212, 217, 228
- Coubertin, Pierre de Frédy, baron de 363
- Couplet, Philippe 146
- Couttenier, Piet 240
- Csicsery-Ronay, Istvan 309
- Curtius, Ernst Robert 28
- Cyrano de Bergerac, Savinien de 76, 77, 89
- Damrosch, David 151
- Dante, Alighieri 34, 68, 246
- Darwin, Charles 25, 270, 278, 291, 292, 405
- Davis, Laurence 383
- Davison, Peter 356
- Debon, Günther 150
- Deloffre, Frédéric 112
- Demaria, Robert 73
- Demosthenes 128
- Deng Xiaoping 406
- Descartes, René 132, 141
- Desfontaines, Pierre François Guyot 81
- Dewey, John 263-265, 281, 283
- Deyssel, Lodewijk van, *pseudonym of* Karel Joan Lodewijk Alberdingk Thijm 246
- Dickens, Charles John Huffam 261
- Dickson, Lovat 298
- Diderot, Denis 147
- Dido 112, 235
- Dieterle, Bernard 113
- Diodorus of Sicily 63, 68
- Dobrolyubov, Nikolai Aleksandrovich 212
- Donno, Daniel J. 50
- Dostoevsky, Fyodor Mikhailovich 104, 211, 212, 217, 219-224, 226-231, 303, 309, 310, 355, 403
- Drebbel, Cornelis 60
- Dreyer, Edward L. 184
- Dutton, Jacqueline 386, 400
- Dwinger, Edwin Erich 360
- Eckermann, Johann Peter 151, 152
- Ehrard, Jean 119, 120
- Eikhenbaum, Boris Mikhailovich 303
- Einstein, Albert 89, 295, 384
- Elliott, A.M. 50
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo 255, 269, 270
- Endt, Enno 242

- Engels, Friedrich 18, 122, 196, 200, 202, 203, 207-209, 216, 217, 236, 237, 244, 249, 315, 321
 Epicurus 336
 Erasmus, Desiderius 32, 41, 63, 65, 66
 Euripides 40, 123, 128
- Fadeyev, Aleksandr Aleksandrovich 301
 Fairbank, John King 273-275
 Fan Wenlan 275
 Faulkner, Peter 234, 237-239
 Fedorov, *see* Fyodorov
 Feng Youlan (Fung Yu-lan) 167, 276, 278, 279
 Fernández-Armesto, Felipe 34, 35
 Feuerbach, Ludwig 212, 213
 Feuerwerker, Albert 275
 Figueira, Dorothy M. 271
 First Qin emperor (Qin shi huangdi) 92
 Foigny, Gabriel de 139, 140
 Fokke Simonsz, Arend 130
 Fontenelle, Bernard Le Bouvier de 124, 130, 142
 Ford, Henry 348
 Fortunati, Vita 16, 32, 89, 263, 302, 316, 407
 Fourier, Charles 18, 195, 201, 203, 205, 206, 208, 211, 212, 229, 230, 278
 Fowler, Alastair 166
 Fox, Christopher 73
 Frank, Joseph 211, 212, 219-224, 226, 229-231
 Frederick the Great, king of Prussia 100, 101
 Freud, Sigmund 68, 195
 Fukuyama, Francis 29
 Fung Yu-lan, *see* Feng Youlan
 Fyodorov, Nikolai 301, 309
- Gagnebin, Bernard 116
 Galilei, Galileo 50
 Gao Xingjian 331, 339
 Garshin, Vsevolod Mikhailovich 282
 Gates, Bill (William Henry) 409
 Ge Hongbing 343
 Geest, Dirk de 166
 Genghis Khan 149, 150, 323
 Gide, André 261
 Gilles, Peter 31
 Gillespie, Gerald 141
 Gilman, Charlotte, *see* Perkins
 Gilman, George 266, 267, 269, 270
 Gladkov, Fyodor Vasilyevich 301
- Goes, Frank van der 244
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von 12, 150-152, 155, 195, 217, 271, 310
 Gogol, Nikolai Vasilyevich 215, 282
 Gore, Al (Albert Arnold) 400
 Gorky, Maxim, *pseudonym of* Aleksei Maksimovich Peshkov 298, 301, 303, 313
 Gorp, Hendrik van 166
 Gorter, Herman 91, 223, 234, 238-246, 248-253, 291, 297, 300
 Goudsblom, Johan 224
 Gracián y Morales, Baltasar 144
 Guan Shu, elder brother of the Duke of Zhou 173
 Guangxu, emperor of China 277, 281
 Guillén, Claudio 166
 Guo Moro 176, 322
- Haga, Toru 284
 Hall, Joseph 28, 61-68, 72, 89, 90, 139, 188
 Halsema, J.D.F. (Dick) van 242
 Han Shaogong 331
 Han Wudi, emperor of China 92
 Hardie, Keir 239
 Hare, Richard 313
 Harrington, James 201
 Harrison, Peter 22, 124
 Hartsoeker, Nicolaas 101
 Hawthorne, Nathaniel 261
 Headley, John M. 53, 55, 56
 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich 236
 Hellegouarc'h, Jacqueline 112
 Héloïse 116
 Henry VIII, king of England 31
 Herodotus 40, 63, 128
 Hesiod (Hesiodus) 68, 154
 Hesse, Hermann 150, 152-154, 271
 Hillegas, Mark Robert 290, 294, 295, 347
 Hilton, James 60, 156-158, 161, 271, 280
 Hitler, Adolf 300, 359
 Holberg, Ludvig 89, 90, 193
 Hollis, Christopher 301
 Homer 40, 46, 68, 119, 123, 127, 128, 246
 Hong Xiuquan 273, 274, 300
 Hong Zicheng 286, 324, 329, 332
 Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus) 119, 140
 Houellebecq, Michel 15-16, 26, 90, 91, 290, 385, 387, 388, 391, 393, 396-398, 400, 403, 404

- Hsia, Adrian 150, 152, 153
 Hsia, C.T. 333
 Hsia, T.A. 283
 Hu Shi 176, 272, 281, 283, 284
 Hua Shiping 24, 280
 Huang Zhouxing 183
 Hume, David 29, 30
 Huntington, Samuel Phillips 400
 Huygens, Christiaan 132
 Huxley, Aldous 16, 25-27, 61, 88, 90,
 157, 205, 207, 264, 271, 289, 290, 301,
 309, 310, 333, 334, 336, 343, 346-351,
 358, 370-372, 376-383, 386, 391, 398,
 401, 402, 404, 408
 Huxley, Matthew 376
 Huxley, Thomas Henry 290
- Ibsch, Elrud 330
 Inglehart, Ronald 403
 Isayeva, Marya Dmitriyevna 219
 Israel, Jonathan 17, 22, 98, 102, 124, 146,
 147
- Jaeckle, Daniel P. 383
 James, Henry 294
 James I, king of England 56
 Jameson, Fredric 377
 Jerome, Jerome Klapka 346, 347
 Jesus Christ 42, 53, 57, 143, 201, 227,
 274, 375
 Ji Junxiang 149
 Jiang Qing 328, 329
 Jin Jingmai 328, 353
 Johnson, Lionel 238
 Jones, James F. 115, 351
 Jourde, Pierre 388
 Joyce, James Augustine 290
- Kahle, Ludwig Martin 102
 Kam Louie 333
 Kang Youwei 13, 25, 176, 272, 275-280,
 284, 300, 323, 405
 Kang Yuzhi 182, 192
 Kao Yu-kung 181
 Kant, Immanuel 167
 Katz, Michael R. 211-213
 Kautsky, Karl Johann 237, 243, 249, 250,
 315
 Kawabata, Yasunari 317
 Keats, John 235, 240
 Kern, Gary 303, 309-311
 Keynes, John Maynard 298
 Kloek, Joost 130
- Knight, Denise D. 265, 266
 Knight, William 62
 Kong Zi, *see* Confucius
 Kropotkin, Peter (Pyotr Alekseyevich)
 236, 239
 Kublai Khan, emperor of China 135,
 136, 138, 149, 385
 Kumar, Krishan 19, 255, 258, 263, 373,
 401, 402
- La Fontaine, Jean de 69
 Lafargue, Laura 237
 Langerak, Thomas 320
 Lao She, *pseudonym of* Shu Qingchun 5,
 16, 21, 93, 285, 286, 310, 333, 335,
 402, 405
 Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) 153, 154, 177-179,
 192, 331
 Larner, John 136
 Laski, Harold Joseph 295
 László, János 166
 Lau, D.C. 167, 168, 170, 173, 177
 Lawrence, David Herbert 356
 Le Clézio, Jean-Marie Gustave 13, 383,
 385, 386, 397, 398, 410
 Le Guin, Ursula Kroeber 13, 303, 346,
 383, 385, 398, 403
 Lee, Desmond 44
 Lee, Meredith 151
 Leeuwenhoek, Anthonie (Antoni) van
 141
 Lei Feng 327, 342, 353
 Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm 22, 104,
 145, 147, 310
 Lenin, V.I., *pseudonym of* Vladimir Ilyich
 Ulyanov 203, 250-252, 284, 298, 302,
 304, 318, 319, 322
 Levenson, Joseph Richmond 175, 176,
 276
 Lewis, Kathleen 310
 Li Ruzhen 28, 92, 185-187, 192, 195
 Li Taibo (Li Bo) 153, 155, 326
 Liagre Böhl, Herman de 246, 251, 252
 Liang Qichao 176, 276, 277, 405
 Lin Tai-yi 185
 Lin Yutang 16, 90, 332-336, 338, 370
 Liu E 183
 Liu Qing 324
 Liu Shaoqi 328
 Liu Xiaobo 406
 Liu Xie 166, 326
 Locke, John 69, 74, 100, 131, 132
 Loewe, Michael 23, 92

- Loewy, Ernst 360
 Logan, George M. 31
 Looy, Jacobus van 246
 Louis XIII, king of France 50, 55
 Louis XIV, king of France 55, 144
 Louis XVI, king of France 125
 Louis XVIII, king of France 18
 Lovell, A. 76
 Lu Dingyi 321
 Lu Xun, *pseudonym of Zhou Shuren* 5,
 277, 281, 283, 310, 312, 333
 Lucian (Lucianus) 40, 64, 65
 Lucretius (Titus Lucretius Carus) 128,
 336
 Lucullus (Lucius Licinius Lucullus) 119
 Lunacharsky, Anatoly Vasilyevich 310
 Luo Binwang 186, 191
 Luo Guangbin 324
 Luther, Martin 132, 276, 378
 Luxemburg, Rosa 250
 Lyell, William A. 285
 Lyotard, Jean-François 29

 MacFarquhar, Roderick 330
 Machiavelli, Niccolò 32
 Mahomet, *see* Muhammad
 Mai Xiande 327
 Malebranche, Nicolas de 129
 Malraux, André 388
 Malthus, Thomas Robert 215, 292
 Mandeville, Bernard 17, 69-73, 89, 90,
 95, 129
 Mandeville, John 34, 63, 64, 188
 Mann, Thomas 290
 Mannheim, Karl 26, 28-30
 Mao Zedong 25, 178, 186, 217, 272, 283,
 284, 310, 321-323, 325-330, 339, 342,
 343
 Marana, Giovanni Paolo 144
 Marcuse, Herbert 375
 Margalit, Avishai 271
 Marx, Karl 18, 25, 90, 132, 196, 200, 202,
 203, 207, 208, 212, 216, 217, 236, 243-
 245, 249, 262, 278, 297, 315, 321, 335,
 405
 Mathewson, Rufus W. 214, 312, 313
 Mayhew, Bradley 162
 McCabe, James 162, 223
 McDougall, Bonnie S. 325, 333
 Mencius (Meng Zi) 166, 172-176, 179,
 180, 279, 375
 Mercier, Louis-Sébastien 18, 89, 124-
 131, 133, 193, 200, 261, 293, 399, 405

 Meyers, Jeffrey 357
 Mijnhardt, Wijnand 130
 Mill, John Stuart 215
 Millner, R. 50
 Milton, John 128, 357
 Ming Feng-ying 183, 184, 277
 Mo Di 172
 Modiano, Patrick 162, 385, 386
 Moerland, René 397
 Moltke, Helmuth Karl Bernhard, Graf
 von 258
 Mommsen, Katharina 152
 Monegal, Emir Rodriguez 358
 Montaigne, Michel Equem, seigneur de
 24, 129
 Montesquieu, Charles de 17, 24, 26, 27,
 95-100, 147
 Montfrans, Maria Antoinette Elisabeth
 van 361, 363
 More, Thomas 15-17, 21, 24, 26, 27, 31-
 43, 45-51, 56, 57, 63, 65, 69, 71, 72, 78,
 83, 86, 87, 89, 97, 106, 158, 165, 166,
 169, 182, 193, 197, 199, 201, 203, 237,
 238, 259, 279, 291, 322, 371, 386, 399,
 402, 404
 Morris, May 235-238, 244
 Morris, William 15, 91, 233-235, 244,
 263, 264, 336
 Moses 53, 146
 Muhammad 53
 Münster, Sebastian 63, 64

 Nabokov, Vladimir Vladimirovich 301
 Napoleon, *see* Bonaparte
 Nechayev, Sergei Gennadiyevich 211,
 226, 231
 Needham, Noel Joseph Terence Mont-
 gomery 315
 Nekrasov, Nikolai Alekseyevich 223
 Newton, Isaac 75, 100, 132
 Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm 172, 241

 Olivier, Sydney 294
 Orwell, George, *pseudonym of Eric Blair*
 13, 20, 61, 264, 286, 289, 290, 296,
 300, 301, 309, 347, 349, 351-357, 364,
 365, 368, 398, 402
 Ostrovsky, Nikolai Alekseyevich 301,
 324
 Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso) 65
 Owen, Robert 18, 201, 203, 205, 208,
 239
 Ouyang Hai 327, 328, 342, 353

- Paape, Gerrit, *alias* J.A. Schasz M.D. 89, 130
 Parrinder, Patrick 294, 297, 298
 Pater, Walter 234
 Paul III, pope 66
 Penthesileia 138
 Perec, Georges 13, 21, 45, 93, 343, 347, 360, 361, 363, 364, 370, 391, 398, 403
 Perkins Gilman, Charlotte Anna 12, 90, 265, 266
 Pessoa, Fernando 331
 Petrarch (Francesco Petrarca) 34, 68
 Petrashevsky, Mikhail Vasilyevich Butashevich- 219
 Petronius (Petronius Arbiter) 128
 Philip II, king of Spain 127
 Piercy, Marge 398, 404
 Pinot, Virgile 146
 Pisarev, Dmitry Ivanovich 211, 223-226, 228
 Pius XII, pope 153
 Place-Verghnes, Floriane 388
 Plato 5, 15, 16, 27, 31-34, 36-41, 43-48, 51, 53, 54, 58, 59, 67, 72, 76-79, 83-85, 88, 91, 119, 125, 128, 147, 154, 158, 167, 171, 198, 201, 229, 278, 279, 291, 292, 309, 362, 366, 371, 404
 Platonov, Andrei, *pseudonym of* Andrei Platonovich Klimentov 20, 301, 311, 316, 317, 319, 320, 357, 403
 Pliny the Elder (Gaius Plinius Secundus) 34, 64
 Plutarch 40, 63, 128, 336
 Polo, Marco 22, 34, 135-138, 150, 159, 184, 385
 Polo, Maffeo 135
 Polo, Niccolò 135
 Pons, Alain 131
 Pope, Alexander 74
 Popper, Karl Raimund 30, 44, 45, 47, 48, 172
 Praxiteles 108
 Proust, Marcel 290
 Pu Songling 153
 Pushkin, Aleksandr Sergeyeovich 224, 305, 309
 Pygmalion 112, 235
 Pyrrhus of Epirus 53
 Pythagoras 119

 Qianlong, emperor of China 148
 Qin shi huangdi, *see* First Qin emperor
 Qin Zhaoyang 325

 Qu Yuan 326

 Rabelais, François 74, 80, 101
 Radek, Karl 253
 Rameau, Jean Philippe 158
 Rand, Ayn, *pseudonym of* Alisa Zinovyevna Rozenbaum 407
 Ransmayr, Christoph 357
 Ravesteyn, Willem van 251
 Rawley, William 56
 Rawson, C.J. 80
 Réaumur, René-Antoine Ferchault de 101
 Ricardo, David 215
 Richardson, Samuel 128
 Richelieu, Armand Jean du Plessis, cardinal 50, 55
 Richetti, John 86
 Ricoeur, Paul 5, 26, 27, 30, 195
 Robespierre, Maximilien de 125, 130
 Robinson, Ralph 237
 Roland Holst-Van der Schalk, Henriëtte Goverdine Anna 244, 246, 249
 Roland Holst, Richard Nicolas 244, 249
 Roosevelt, Franklin Delano 298
 Roosevelt, Theodore 298
 Rosemont, Henri 168
 Rossetti, Dante Gabriel 237
 Roszak, Theodore 375, 376
 Rousseau, Jean-Jacques 5, 16, 113-116, 118, 129, 149, 195, 197, 199, 201, 206, 217, 222, 229, 310, 335
 Rousset, David 364
 Ruskin, John 236
 Russell, Bertrand Arthur William 283, 351
 Rustichello of Pisa 136, 138

 Said, Edward W. 135
 Saint-Simon, Claude-Henri, comte de 18, 195, 200, 201, 203, 205, 208, 211, 228
 Sand, George, *pseudonym of* Aurore Dupin 223, 228
 Santayana, George 336
 Sappho 128
 Saraskina, Ludmila 231
 Scaliger, J.C. 63
 Scaliger, J.J. 65
 Schasz, J.A., *see* Gerrit Paape
 Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von 167
 Schmidt, Siegfried J. 401

- Schopenhauer, Arthur 338
 Schram, Stuart R. 321, 322
 Schröder, Karl 252
 Schulte Nordholt, Annelise 360
 Schuyt, C.J.M. (Kees) 146
 Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd earl of 71
 Shakespeare, William 16, 87, 128, 246, 261, 349, 357, 366
 Shaw, George Bernard 239, 298-300
 Shelley, Percy Bysshe 246, 313
 Shen Congwen 183, 284
 Sheridan, Mary 327
 Shklovsky, Viktor Borisovich 303
 Sholokhov, Mikhail Aleksandrovich 301
 Simonov, Konstantin Mikhailovich 325
 Sinding, Michael 166
 Skinner, Burrhus Frederick 5, 370, 373-376, 402, 409
 Skryabin, Alexander 305
 Smeeks, Hendrik 57, 140, 142-146
 Smith, Adam 132, 201, 215
 Snow, Edgar 284
 Socrates 44, 45, 119, 166, 167, 171, 172, 278
 Sokratova, Olga 213
 Solon 83, 84
 Sophocles 40, 128
 Souvestre, Émile 61, 203-207, 209, 302, 310, 348, 399, 404
 Spence, Jonathan D. 273
 Spinoza, Baruch de 69, 143, 147, 243, 378
 Stalin, Joseph, *pseudonym of* Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili 212, 283, 298-300, 303, 325, 329, 352
 Steiner, George 357
 Stetson, Charles 266
 Striedter, Jurij 303
 Su Tong 21, 61, 332, 406, 408
 Sukhikh, Igor 301
 Sun Yat-sen 25, 281, 284, 287
 Sung Taizu (Tai Tsu), first emperor of the Song dynasty 323
 Suslova, Apollinaria Prokofyevna 219
 Swammerdam, Jan 101
 Swayze, Harold 311, 325
 Swedenborg, Emanuel 205
 Swift, Jonathan 5, 16, 17, 27, 72-81, 89, 90, 95, 101, 156, 196, 230, 286, 310, 345, 359, 367, 405
 Tacitus (Cornelius Tacitus) 128
 Tan Sitong 176, 277
 Tang Taizong (Tai Tsung), emperor of China 323
 Tang Zhongzong, emperor of China 186
 Tao Dongfeng 7, 343
 Tao Yuanming (Tao Qian) 6, 24, 91, 92, 165, 166, 180-182
 Tao Zhu 328
 Tatlow, Antony 155
 Taylor, Frederick Winslow 304
 Temple, William 22, 145
 Thackeray, William Makepeace 215
 Thomas, John L. 256, 258, 264
 Thompson, Edward Palmer 236, 237, 244
 Thompson, Laurence G. 278
 Thoreau, Henri David 5, 255, 256, 366, 371, 374-376
 Thucydides 40
 Tian Jianzhong 183
 Titzmann, Michael 142
 Toller, Ernst 298
 Tolstoy, Aleksei Nikolayevich 311
 Tolstoy, Lev (Leo) Nikolayevich 284
 Tournier, Michel 357
 Trollope, Anthony 375
 Trotsky, Leon, *pseudonym of* Lev Davidovich Bronstein 252, 352
 Trousson, Raymond 16, 32, 89, 124, 129, 263, 302, 316, 407
 Turgenev, Ivan Sergeevich 212, 223-225, 227
 Turgot, Anne Robert Jacques, baron de l'Aune 130
 Turner, Paul 42, 43
 Twitchett, Denis 23, 92
 Tynyanov, Yury Nikolayevich 302, 303
 Tyssot de Patot, Simon 142
 Umansky, Konstantin Aleksandrovich 298
 Urban VIII, pope 50, 55
 Vaillant, Édouard 245
 Vairasse, Denis, *see* Veiras
 Veiras, Denis 139, 140
 Verdi, Giuseppe 213
 Verne, Jules 361
 Vespucci, Amerigo 34-36, 39, 50, 83, 106
 Vespucci, Giorgio Antonio 34
 Vickers, Brian 56, 60
 Viehoff, Reinhold 166
 Vinogradov, Viktor Vladimirovich 303

- Virgil (Publius Vergilius Maro) 68, 119
 Voltaire, *pseudonym of* François-Marie
 Arouet 17, 22, 80, 81, 90, 95, 100-105,
 107-113, 117, 118, 124, 125, 131, 132,
 143, 147-150, 191, 271, 310, 331, 388
 Vossius, Isaac 6, 22, 145
- Wagner, Nicolas 117, 211-213, 277, 331
 Wagner, Rudolf G. 277
 Waley, Arthur 407
 Walker, Francis A. 263
 Wands, John Millar 63
 Wang Anshi 182, 192
 Wang Anyi 330
 Wang, David Der-wei 183
 Wang Jie 327
 Wang Meng 343
 Wang Ning 7, 331
 Wang Shuo 5, 6, 61, 327, 332, 338-341,
 343, 353, 357, 402, 403, 406, 408
 Watt, Donald 334, 347, 349-351, 380
 Weaver, James Baird, general 263
 Webb, Beatrice and Sydney 297
 Weiss, Timothy 271
 Wells, Herbert George 5, 16, 26, 27, 157,
 264, 289-302, 309, 310, 346, 350, 359,
 365, 383, 386, 396, 403
 Wen, king, father of King Wu 174, 182,
 183
 West, Rebecca, *pseudonym of* Cicily Is-
 abel Fairfield 349, 350
 Wetter, Gustav A. 202
 White, Thomas I. 47
 Whitney, Thomas P. 316
 Widmer, Ellen 183
 Wieland, Christoph Martin 201
 Wilhelm, Richard 153
 Wolff, Christian 147
 Wolff-Bekker, Elizabeth (Betje) 130
 Woolf, Virginia 290, 374
 Wu, king, founder of the Zhou dynasty
 170, 173
- Wu Woyao 277
 Wu Zetian, empress of China 186, 190
- Xenophon 119
 Xia Jingqu 183
 Xia Yuanqi 183
 Xianfeng, emperor of China 274
 Xu Fu 92
 Xu Jingye 186, 191
 Xun Zi 173
- Yan Lianke 332
 Yang Yiyan 324
 Yongzheng, emperor of China 110, 148
 Yü Ying-shih 92
 Yuan Shikai 281
- Zamyatin, Yevgeny Ivanovich 20, 61,
 289, 290, 297, 298, 301-303, 305, 306,
 309-311, 343, 357, 364, 365, 402-404
 Zenobia, queen of Palmyra 138
 Zhang Longxi 5, 19, 23, 136, 138, 168,
 181, 182, 185, 402
 Zhang Shizhao 295
 Zhang Side 327, 328
 Zhang Yiwu 340
 Zhang Zhenyu 333
 Zhao Huan 329
 Zhao Shuli 329
 Zhou, Duke of 170, 173
 Zhou Enlai 286
 Zhou Libo 329
 Zhou Yang 326
 Zhou Zuoren 333
 Zhu Lidong 343
 Zhuang Zi 5, 16, 153, 154, 179, 180, 310,
 335, 336, 376
 Zola, Emile 242
 Zoroaster 375
 Zürcher, Erik 22, 148