

Utopianism Outside Literary Utopias

Mohammad Raja Al-Direeni

Department of English
Kuwait University

Abstract.

Literary utopias form only one mode of utopian self-expression. Other modes of utopian self-expression have always existed before and beside literary utopias. This paper attempts to draw attention to and to highlight some of these other modes of utopian self-expression.

These other modes can be divided into two groups. In the first group utopianism reflects an outlook which considers man a helpless victim of nature, of fate, and of a God-ordained system of life. Here utopianism takes the form of myth-making (the golden age, the Earthly Paradise, Eden, the Millennium, apocalypses), Saturnalian practices, divination, or pastoral poetry.

In the second group utopianism is inspired by an outlook which sees man as quite capable of and responsible for planning and initiating a happy human existence on earth. Literary utopias belong to this group. But before and beside literary utopias, utopianism has often inscribed itself in historical concrete realities such as the Catholic Church, monastic communities, some historical peaceful experiments at creating utopian communities, anarchic movements, or even in such revolutions as the French Revolution of 1789 or the Communist Revolution of the twentieth century.

The paper concludes by comparing and contrasting literary utopias on the one hand and the other modes of utopian self-expression on the other.

The cup is half full. The cup is half empty. Both statements are correct, but neither gives the whole truth about the condition of the cup in relation to the liquid. The first statement reflects a complacent temper which sees only the positive side of things, whereas the second statement echoes a critical temper which has an eye only for the negative and faulty aspects of life.

Complacency begets peace of mind and satisfaction with the current order of existence and breeds an attitude of resistance to change. Uninterrupted, complacency usually leads to stagnation and slow unperceived corruption. A critical temper, on the other hand, begets dissatisfaction with the existing order and gives rise to a breed of rebellious malcontents and dreamers who feel called upon to reform the world and to reshape it in the direction of more fullness and less emptiness. If these wild dreamers and malcontents are not strongly bridled they might wreak havoc and spread chaos, anarchy and destruction.

The driving force that kindles critical tempers has been identified as "utopianism". The term "utopianism" is relatively new. It is derived from the word "utopia", first coined in the year 1516 by Thomas More. "Utopia" is a Greek word that means "no place". It has the same sound as "eutopia", another Greek word which means "happy place". Most critics and commentators believe that Thomas More probably intended the word "utopia" to convey the idea that the fully happy place exists nowhere except in the minds of men.

It is not our purpose here to define, evaluate or judge utopianism. The term is extremely controversial. Supporters and detractors seem never to agree as to its substance, importance, or value. Friends applaud it as a blessing whereas enemies condemn it as a curse. The former conceive of it as a mechanism that causes the human race to evolve forward and upward towards perfection. The latter see it as a satanic impulse to continuously disturb the divine order of existence and to mislead God's creatures away from the road of righteousness. Bergson calls it **élan vital**; G. B. Shaw names it the "Life force"; Thomas Molnar considers it the "Perennial Heresy"; to Shelley it is the "pining for what is not"; others equate it with the "blue flower motif" of the Romantics. To Mannheim it is a mechanism that keeps the dialectical process of change and becoming alive and active. To C.S. Lewis it is **sensucht** or Joy, one of God's instruments to entice man away from the mortal pleasures of this

world to the everlasting joys of the world of spirit.⁽¹⁾

Nevertheless, there are some essential elements in utopianism that raise no disagreement. It seems unanimously agreed that utopianism means, among other things, a tendency or an impulse to see only the negative, unpleasant or evil aspects of life. On the individual level this impulse begets discontent and psychological tension. On the societal level it creates social unrest and a condition of imbalance. Naturally, individuals or societies plagued with this disquieting condition develop a forceful desire to regain a healthy balance and an urgent need for self-expression. How they go about achieving these aims depends on a variety of factors. One of the decisive factors is the nature of the dominant orientations and assumptions concerning the possibility or impossibility of change, of removing unpleasantness, of eradicating evil, of annihilating the sources of negation.

Literary utopias form only one mode of self-expression for utopianism, and this mode is quite young in comparison with the utopian temper which is as old as human consciousness. The oldest literary utopias in the West are those of Aristophanes (448? - 380? B.C.) and Plato (437? - 347 B.C.). But before and beside literary utopias, the utopian impulse has always had access to other modes of self-expression.

Literary utopias have in the last two centuries been receiving considerable attention from various quarters,⁽²⁾ including politicians, scientists, sociologists, psychologists, historians, legislators, economists, theologians, and of course, men of letters. But the other modes of utopian self-expression have been relatively ignored. It is the aim of this paper to draw attention to this fact and to highlight some comparatively neglected modes of utopian self-expression.

Myth-Making.

In the early stages of human history men felt quite helpless before nature. They thought of nature as their sole adversary and invented primitive means and practiced a variety of ritualistic measures to avoid its wrath and secure its help. They created various myths related to the natural phenomena which have some bearing on human life. For almost every natural phenomenon men invented a god or a goddess and ascribed to him or her the power of

controlling it. In Greek mythology, for example, Zeus is the chief of the gods and the god of thunder, Poseidon the god of the sea, Hades (or Pluto) the god of death, Apollo the god of the sun, Cupid the god of love, Athene the goddess of wisdom, Aphrodite the goddess of beauty, etc.⁽³⁾ Greek and other mythologies helped, among other things, to explain the origin and meaning of the universe and to determine man's place, position, role and fate in relation to it. Men believed that their lives are ruled by the will of fate and affected by the whims of gods. Men therefore filled the face of the earth with temples dedicated to the worship and propitiation of those gods and with oracles which were supposed to give divine advice. In short, the mental and physical behaviour of men was prompted, guided and directed by their fears of nature and of nature's gods and by their hopes to propitiate those gods and to win their good will.⁽⁴⁾

The Golden Age.

In such conditions when man believed himself to be the victim of nature rather than its master, and in such climate of thought when man was the prey of despairing fears rather than an owner of hopes, humanity made little progress. The mental and physical activities of men aimed at mere survival. The voice of utopianism at this state was faint and hardly audible. It therefore resorted to myth-making. People envisioned some faint pictures of a miraculous and magical **paradise** located in the very remote past or in unapproachable places. They invented the myth of the Golden Age. Says Marinelli (1971: 15) :

The human creature's universal remembrance of a better time finds its chief expression in the myth of the golden age. Hesiod, Virgil, Ovid, Juvenal and Seneca record it fully and in different ways in the classical period; Boethius,... Dante and Chaucer in the Middle Ages employ it as a metaphor for the age of innocence in Eden; and a host of poets give it renewed life in the Renaissance.

The first known description of the Golden Age, at least for the West, is that of Hesiod, a Greek didactic poet who lived in the eighth century B.C. and was dissatisfied with the conditions of human life (Hertzler, 1965:99). According to Hesiod (1959:31-32):

In the beginning, the Immortals

Who have their homes on Olympus
Created the golden generation of mortal people.
These lived in Kronos' time, when he was the King in
heaven.
They lived as if they were gods
their hearts free from all sorrow,
by themselves, and without hard work or pain;
no miserable
Old age came their way; their hands, their feet,
did not alter,
They took their pleasure in festivals
and lived without troubles.
When they died, it was as if they fell asleep.
All goods
Were theirs. The fruitful grainland
yielded its harvest to them
of its own accord. ...

The various versions of the myth of the Golden Age agree on a number of points. They locate this age at the beginning of human life on earth. They claim that when the earth was ruled by Saturn (Kronos), men knew no pain or weariness, no poverty or misery, no class distinctions or class conflicts, no masters or slaves. Men enjoyed miraculous abundance and magical plenty. In short they were happy and contented. They knew not the idea of change, nor did they ask for change. Most of the various versions of the myth agree also that this happy age has been irretrievably lost because the world has been irreversibly declining from the golden, to the silver, to the bronze, and finally to the iron age (Armstrong, 1968: 6).

Saturnalia.

But if the Golden Age was generally believed to be irretrievably lost, glimpses of it could be temporarily grasped in such annual ritualistic festivals as the Saturnalia. These Saturnalian holidays had different names at different places in Europe — the Cronia (from Kronos) in Greece, the Saturnalia (from Saturn) and Kalenda in Rome, the Feast of Fools in France and the Lord of Misrule in England (Morton, (1968: 29-31)

In classical times the Saturnalian holiday was an annual feast commemorating the reign of Kronos (Saturn). In essence it was a re-enactment of the Golden Age — a return to the time when all men were equal and happy, and the good things of life were held in common. "Through the alchemy of ritual the age of iron was temporarily transmuted into gold" (Elliot, 1970:11). The activities of the

holiday dramatised two themes, release and reversal: release from all social inhibitions and taboos, and reversal of values, norms and social roles. During the holiday, time was cancelled and authority abolished. Men could eat and drink and fornicate their fill. Absolute license was allowed. Slaves could mock and laugh at their masters; they could say aloud what they would never dare to say at ordinary times. For a short time each year the whole society was turned upside down and topsy-turvydom ruled supreme (Morton, 1968: 29-31).

Earthly Paradise.

The paradise of the Golden Age was often believed to be still in existence and that it is located in some distant, often unapproachable place on earth. This belief gave rise to the myth of Earthly Paradise which was given different names in different countries. Celtic mythology, for example, gave it the name of Pomona or the Island of Apples and placed it in the West. The Greeks called it the Islands of the Sun, and a description of this paradise is given by Iambulus who situated it in "the Islands of the Sun in the Indian Ocean" (Negley and Patrick, 1960: 235)-Richard Gerber (1955: 364) claims that

... The Earthly Paradise was a real myth; it was conceived to be something quite different from the ordinary world and yet part of this world. Sometimes it was an island beyond the seas, sometimes a land situated underground, sometimes a country in the mountains; but wherever it was supposed to be, it was believed to be actually there and was traceable on medieval maps. Men went in search of it: imaginary travellers like Mandeville wrote about it.... Even explorers like Columbus firmly believed in it.

Morton (1968: 16) calls this paradise "the Utopia of the folk".

The Utopia of the folk has many names and disguises. It is the English Cokaygne and the French Coquaigne. It is Pomona and Hy Brasil, Venusberg and the Country of the Young. It is Lubberland and Schlarafenland, Poor Man's Heaven and the Rock Candy Mountains. ... It reaches back into myth, it colours romance, there is hardly a corner in Europe in which it does not appear. It would be idle, therefore, to look for its origin in any single place or period. ...

Eden And The Millennium.

The Christian world replaced such pagan myths of a golden age or of an earthly paradise by the myth of Eden, a paradise which existed before the Fall, and by the myth of a paradise in heaven. But there are some basic differences between the myth of the Golden Age and the myth of Eden.⁽⁵⁾ The Golden Age was believed to be lost slowly and gradually, through a long process of degeneration from the golden, to the silver, to the bronze and finally to the iron age. The loss of Eden, on the other hand, was the result of the Fall, of a single action of disobedience. The degeneration that brought the golden age to an end was attributed to the whole human race, while the fall was attributed to a single individual. To many pagans the myth of the Golden Age was cyclical (Marinelli, 1971:16). It was believed that the golden age may re-appear when the process of decline has reached its end; some deity, especially the sun-king Apollo, would interfere and raise humanity out of the baseness of the iron age and into the felicity and innocence of the golden age.

There is abundant evidence that in many circles, where the religion of the stars had blended with aspirations after a juster society, the sun was looked upon... as the dispenser of justice, the guarantor of fair play, the redressor of grievances. In the third century B.C., the sun had become the centre of the millennial aspirations of the dispossessed among mankind. It was believed that at recurrent periods the sun-king would descend from heaven to earth to reestablish justice and make all men participators in a happiness without alloy (Morton, 1968: 25-26).

Christianity promises no such general and repeated renewal. The Edens that can be recreated are those of the individual soul, the paradise within, or the paradise after death, or that of the Millennium that would be established only once at the Second Coming of Christ. But this millennial paradise will see the end of the human career on earth, for it will be directly followed by doomsday.

Apocalypses.

Closely connected with these pagan beliefs and Christian millennial expectations are the Jewish and Christian apocalyptic works. Hertzler (1965: 50) claims that

A study of social utopias would be incomplete without

some allusion to the writings of the Apocalyptists, since among them we find clear-cut utopias. ... Apocalyptists are generally thought to be a class of almost entirely unknown Jewish and Christian writers whose works appeared between 210 B.C. and 1300 A.D.

These apocalypses, like the Millennium, talk of deliverance through miracle. They describe an evil order of existence that would be destroyed either by a supernatural Messiah or by a direct action of God and replaced by a heavenly, happy, just and peaceful order of existence.

But these apocalyptic expectations or events were not entirely limited to Christian or Jewish writers. They existed among other peoples as well. In Greek literature, for example, there are many instances of apocalyptic visitations of divine wrath on wicked humanity. The wrath often takes the form of a plague or a flood or some public disaster, and this sign of divine anger is not withdrawn until some social or moral cleansing and far-reaching change is performed. The destruction of Troy, the city that sheltered and protected adulterers and violators of the law of hospitality, is one such example. The blinding, dethroning and exile of Oedipus is another.

The apocalyptists were visionaries who believed that righteousness and justice will in the end be rewarded by victory. Their writings gave hope and comfort to the righteous and the just who endured persecution and oppression and remained loyal to the law of God. But the ideal future these writings depict could only be achieved after awful catastrophes are visited on the wicked and the unholy. Emphasis in such writings is more on the horrible fate that would be visited on the evil rather than on the happy fate of the blessed (Hertzler, 1965: 50-66).

It is worth noticing here that utopianism involves two complementary processes. The first is a process of destroying and eradicating evil. The utopian joy here consists mainly in envisioning evil routed, uprooted and annihilated. This vengeful utopian vision focuses on evil and its agents being defeated, destroyed and wiped off the face of the earth. It may be called utopianism of negation, and apocalyptic writings are examples of it. These apocalypses focus more on deliverance from evil than on construction of good. The other process is one of construction or rather reconstruction. Utopianism here is positive. It focuses attention more on the pleasant

aspects of the desired future order of existence than on the unpleasant details of the hateful current order of existence. Negative utopianism seems to be motivated by fear, despair, or a scandalised and outraged moral sense, whereas positive utopianism stems from self-confidence and ambitious hope. Utopianism however is never either only negative or only positive. It is usually a mixture of negation and affirmation, a mixture in which both elements are mostly disproportioned and rarely balanced.

Divination.

Millenarian and apocalyptic writings are, as far as time is concerned, indeterminate predictions. They express men's utopian desire to have right prevail and to see good triumph over evil. The time of this happy event is usually left indefinite. What matters here is the belief that such a triumph is bound to take place.

Frequently, utopianism takes the form of a desire to reveal the course of events in the imminent future. This articulates the utopian dream that man can possibly design and control his future according to his desire, or that man may at least avert future misfortunes if they are revealed beforehand. This has led to the rise of divination.

Predicting the future does not always have the tense moral tone of the apocalyptists. Men everywhere are anxious to know as much as they can of their future or the future of their families, tribes or countries. Most Greek kings and leaders kept and honoured seers or soothsayers in their courts. The Roman leaders kept augurs in theirs. We know of some famous seers in Greece, such as Lampos in Periclean Athens, Calchas "the wisest soothsayer among the Greeks at Troy", and Tiresias of Thebes. Oracles of Apollo, especially the Oracle of Delphi, gave advice to all who consulted them on the future course of action that should be followed (Armstrong, 1968: 3-5). In Rome the augurs and the book of the Sibyl played a similar role. Armstrong (1968: 5) tells us that

Clues to the course of action to be adopted by the state were provided by the book of the Sibyl. This was a collection of rhymes attributed to a wise woman of Cumae, and was believed to have been purchased by King Tarquin. Meticulously preserved, they were invariably consulted... before any political move was made. ... Destroyed by fire in 83 B.C., the Sibylline books were reconstituted after the Senate had

sent special envoys to places possessing Sibylline writings to produce a more authoritative edition. This was then deposited in the vaults of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, becoming such a buttress of the established order that conspirators like Lentulus had to manufacture others to confute them. Such 'false' oracles... had such a wide circulation that Augustus destroyed nearly two thousand volumes of them in 12 B.C. The original official books he had re-copied and deposited in his new temple of the Palatine Apollo. Later, a similar inspection and re-editing was ordered by Tiberius.

This short account of the history of the Sibylline books indicates how anxious people were to reveal the future. Similar eagerness is still seen even in our day. People's interest in almanacs, in the utterances of magazine and newspaper horoscopes, in weather forecasts and in the prophesies of astrologers, betrays a deep-rooted eagerness to reveal the future, a vain hope that this foreknowledge of the future may enable us to control and shape future events, and a presumption inherent in man that he could forestall fate and shape his own destiny according to his own wishes.

Pastoral Poetry.

In addition to myths, Saturnalian festivals, millennial and apocalyptic writings and arts of divination, utopianism found expression in Pastoral poetry which usually describes a longing for a lost world of simplicity, felicity and innocence. Its themes are similar to those of the golden age myth. The innocence theme is found in yearnings for the childhood of the individual as well as the childhood of the human race. It is an innocence based on simple and shameless pleasures, on ignorance of evil and of guilt. The simplicity theme is dramatised by withdrawal from the complexity of civilized life in courts and towns to the simplicity of rural life in the country. Pastoral poetry portrays the longings of tired city-dwellers and disgusted court-sojourners for things they cannot hope to find in their active life; things as peace, tranquility, contentment, virtuous idleness, philosophic contemplation and simple recreation. Says Marinelli (1971: 9),

The great characteristic of pastoral poetry is that it is

written when an ideal or at least a more innocent world is felt to be lost. ... Essentially the art of the pastoral is the art of the backward glance, and Arcadia... the product of wistful and melancholy longing. The pastoral poet reverses the process (and "the progress") of history.

Both utopian literature and pastoral poetry are the result of a deeply-rooted instinct to complain of the present and to find an escape in a happy past or in a redeeming future. But utopias usually look forward to the future whereas pastoral poetry seeks Arcadian visions in the past. Utopias in general seek to re-organize the society of town whereas pastoral poetry seeks a withdrawal from town.

.... Ultimately ... the dominant idea of pastoral is a search for simplicity away from a complexity represented.... by (a town) from which the refuge is in a rural retreat to Arcadia; or from (adulthood), from which the refuge is in the visions of childhood (Marinelli, 1971: 11)

The Great Change In Outlook On Life.

With the development and widening of commerce, the increase in travel and sea-faring and the rise of conquest, kingdoms and empires, many men developed self-confidence and were no longer worried about mere survival. They became assured of their ability to survive and to surmount natural hardships, but they began to discover new sources and factors of human misery and insecurity. They were experiencing what K.R. Popper calls the "shock of the birth of civilization" which resulted in the breakdown of tribal, closed, and organically self-sufficient societies, and in the replacement of such societies by open, mercantile, competitive and individualistic ones (Popper, 1974: Vol 1; 1 and 175).

The birth of civilization meant also the rise of the big city — a colourful and disproportionate assortment of tribes and tongues, and a strange mixture of wealth and poverty, of luxuries and miseries. Here the citizens are mostly uprooted individuals — native masters and foreign slaves, mercenary soldiers and alien artisans, greedy merchants and heartless fortune-hunters. Here too the closed society and all its bad and good qualities are replaced by the open society and all its goods and evil qualities. Social warmth is replaced by social coldness, solidarity by rivalry, uniformity by diver-

sity, blood relations by business relations, humane morality by profit morality, heroic self-sacrifice for others by heartless sacrifice of others for self, other-directed interests by self-directed concerns.

Finally the principle of equal sharing in the burdens and fruits of life is abandoned for a new formula of unequal distribution: the hardships of citizenship become the lot of the unfortunate many, the slaves, labourers, peasants and artisans, whereas the fruits become the privilege of the powerful few, the masters, the merchants and the industrialists.

At this juncture, it begins to dawn on men's minds that nature is not their sole adversary, that there are, beside nature, other and more potent sources of human discomfort and misery, and that many of these sources are man-made rather than God-ordained.

In the big centres of civilization where such momentous developments take place, intellectuals begin seriously to think of inventing ways or devising means to identify and control the newly discovered sources of human suffering. Such an intellectual venture has, ever since Plato, been producing utopian and anti-utopian literary works and important historical events. Leaders of thought have never stopped producing practical and well-reasoned visions and blue-prints of a perfect or a happy society. These visions and blue-prints have, in their turn, never ceased prodding and prompting leaders of action to turn the literary utopias or anti-utopias into concrete historical realities.

Utopianism In Concrete Historical Realities.

It is not our concern here to trace or discuss the historical concretizations of utopian or anti-utopian ideals. Suffice it to point to some such historical examples.

The Catholic Church is considered by some historians of utopia as an embodiment of the perfect state (Hertzler, 1965: 84-99). In the Middle Ages it was a good example of a theocracy. As in most classical utopias, although the perfect state is a utopian ideal, once it is realized it becomes anti-utopian in its behaviour and spirit. Such was the case with the Catholic Church. Once it became an established living reality it opposed any essential change in its structure, attitudes and philosophy. When change became an urgent need

and the desire for change spread far and wide and became too evident to be ignored and too strong to be quietly suppressed, the Catholic Church invented a notorious machinery for detecting symptoms of heresy, unorthodoxy or non-conformity. The Inquisition became the Church's ruthless tool for detecting and persecuting anyone who favoured change.

Monastic communities are also considered embodiments of utopian dreams (Welsh, 1962:90).⁽⁶⁾ Although the Church and the monastic communities preached that mutability and change are characteristics of the physical world outside themselves, they attempted to thwart that principle of mutability inside themselves and to lock change out of their holy edifices. They tried to fortify themselves behind solid walls of inhibitions and taboos, and requested absolute conformity within these walls.

Beside the Church and the monastic communities, many short-lived attempts have been made to translate utopian ideals into living historical realities. Such attempts can be seen in the anarchic movements throughout history.⁽⁷⁾ The millenarian revolutions in medieval Europe are clear examples.⁽⁸⁾ The English Revolution between 1640 and 1688, the French Revolution in the eighteenth century, the Communist Revolution in Russia and the Fascist revolutions in Europe in the present century are often cited as utopian revolutions.

But beside these bloody and violent revolutions there were peaceful attempts to establish utopian communities in America and in Europe, especially in the nineteenth century.⁽⁹⁾

All the above-mentioned utopian institutions (i.e. the Church and monastic communities), revolutions, and peaceful attempts to create and maintain utopian communities are reflections of a belief that men can influence the course of events and contribute to the shaping and making of history. This belief has become the telling principle of utopian and anti-utopian thought and the dominant theme of utopian or anti-utopian literature. People holding this belief no longer need to escape to myths of a golden age or to myths of unattainable earthly paradises. The new-found confidence in the power of humanity to impose its will on history and on nature has changed the temporal location of paradise from the past to the future and has reduced the dependence of utopian self-expression on myth, ritual, miracle or fantastic escapism. Utopianism has, for the most part, changed its temper and its instruments of self-

expression. It has shifted, as Herbert Marcuse(1962: 127-143) asserts, from fantasy and the pleasure principle to reason and the reality principle. It has begun to build its claims more on reason and realistic scientific knowledge than on fantasy and escapist wishful thinking.

This does not mean that the wishful, vengeful or escapist forms of self-expression — myths, Saturnalia, millenarian or apocalyptic writings, arts of divination, folk utopias and pastoral literature — have become obsolete and completely outdated. The climate of thought which produces them is still alive and active. It is a climate that has foundations of despair and helplessness, that fails to recognise and understand the real forces that make and shape the course of history, that believes man is incapable of creating or finding collective happiness, that explains away the mysteries and miseries of life in terms of myth, fate and divine will, and that finally seeks refuge from suffering and pain in myth-making, in millennial expectations or in escapist wishful thinking.

The fact of the matter is that we live in what Dennis Gabor (1972:23) calls a "non-contemporary world" where "millions are born every year who will never have a full meal in all their lives" while "in other parts of the world millions are living who will never enjoy a hearty meal for fear of putting on weight".Gabor (1972:24) also claims that "in technology" and in other fields of culture "our non-contemporary world ranges from up to date right back to the Bronze Age". And apparently there is no reason to quarrel with his conclusion that, after all, it seems practically not possible to make the peoples of the whole world equally and uniformly civilized (Gabor 1972: 36).

Hence, it is not unexpected that utopianism would still resort to diverse forms of self-expression other than literary utopias, such as the forms surveyed herein.

This being the case, it would not be inappropriate to conclude this paper with a comparison and contrast between literary utopias on the one hand and the other forms of utopian self-expression on the other. Such a conclusion would hopefully perform a triple function. First, it would shed more light on the nature of the change in substance and direction that has taken place in man's outlook on life. Second, it would be a reminder of the basic characteristics of literary utopias. Third and most important, it would focus and cry-

stallize our concept of the other forms of utopian self-expression.

First and foremost among the differences between myths and literary utopias is difference in the quality of the imagination that produces each. The myths are produced by a fantastic imagination that knows no limitation and recognizes no discipline, one that invents freely and pays no heed to the rules of art, logic, probability or reason. It follows the lead of repressed wishes and frustrated desires. Thus in the **Land of Cokaygne**,

There are rivers broad and fine
Of oil, milk, honey and of wine;
(Morton, 1968:280)

Yet this wonder add to it —
that geese fly roasted on the spit
crying out, 'Geese, all hot, all hot!'
(Morton, 1968: 282)

In the folk utopia called **A Tramp's Utopia: The Big Rock Candy Mountains**,

All the cops have wooden legs,
And the hens lay soft-boiled eggs,
There's a lake of stew and of whisky too,
You can paddle all around'em in a big canoe.

In this mythical folk utopia "... they sleep all day" and "they hung the Turk that invented work" (Berner, 1971: 318-319).

Literary utopias, on the other hand, are produced by a highly disciplined imagination. It is what Richard Gerber' (1955:4) calls "conscious fictitiousness" or "fictive activity". This is an imagination disciplined by the dictates of reason and regulated by the rules and principles of art. Therefore, literary utopias admit no improbable or miraculous events. All happenings and achievements are probable, reasonable and realistic. Whatever luxury, comfort or peace these utopias offer must be the result of natural causes and human planning and energy. Everything here is so convincingly reasoned out that the improbable seems probable and the fictitious seems factual and real.

Another difference is that the golden age or Eden were once believed to be actual realities that had been lost. The earthly paradise was also believed to exist in some place which is difficult to reach. The pagans believed it existed in the West. Despite Church denial of and opposition to this myth, it continued to appeal to the public mind (Morton, 1968:18). Seafarers tried to discover it and intellectuals found it inspiring. Atlantis, for example, was believed

to have been an earthly paradise. Plato described it in his **Critias**, and Bacon used it as a setting for his **New Atlantis**. Says Desmond Lee,

.... The idea of a lost world or continent is an invitation to let the imagination run riot, and the number of books on the subject runs well into four figures (it has been estimated at 5,000). The first and perhaps the best known of the more recent series is Ignatius Donnelly's **Ante-dulvian World**, published in America in 1882. It supposes there to have been... a lost continent where the Atlantic now is, and to it and to its inhabitants attributes the origin of almost everything (Plato, 1971: 154).

Literary utopias, on the other hand, start from the implicit assumption that what they describe is not, nor was, actual and that it is a hypothesis that may come true if the principles and conditions of its existence are realised. Protestations of the truth of the descriptions in literary utopias are not meant to be taken literally. The geographical setting of utopian societies in literary utopias is intentionally made ambiguous and vague. Before the surface of the earth was fully discovered and mapped, this misifying technique was successfully used. After that, literary utopias had to transfer their utopian communities to some undiscoverable place (i.e. to some planet or to some place underground, or to dreamland) or to some distant time, sometimes in the past, but mostly in the future.

A third difference is that the earthly paradise myth appeals to the minds and hearts of the oppressed and the persecuted. It does not matter much to such people whether the earthly paradise is fact or fiction. The written accounts of the earthly paradise do not even try to substantiate or achieve verisimilitude. They are mostly anonymous, fragmentary and uneven in style. We do not find in them the unity of tone, the coherence, the uninterrupted flow of ideas, the even style, the sophisticated polish and the logical development which characterise the literary utopias and reveal their individual authorship. But the literary utopias are addressed not to common, poor, illiterate and miserable people, but rather to the men and women who can and do read, to people with enough sophistication, leisure, seriousness and education to distinguish fantastic literature of miracle and magic from the sober literature of reason and logic. Literary utopias are addressed to readers who know the myth, the fable, the epic, the romance and the play, and

assign each of these and other genres its due place in their hierarchy of values and priorities. In other words, literary utopias have to conform to rules of composition and of reasoning and to consider the literary vogues and tastes of their time before they can hope to win an audience. To the literate classes, fantastic accounts of an earthly paradise are objects of ridicule and contempt. They are alluded to "as something too childish or too disgusting to be worthy of serious attention" (Morton, 1968: 32).

The fourth difference is that happiness in the accounts of earthly paradise is shamelessly materialistic. Its basic constituents are plenty, physical pleasures, absolute idleness and absence of drudgery and of all kinds of inhibitions. Even the annoying aspects of nature are miraculously banished. For here are no cold winters, no damaging storms, no gloomy clouds, no floods, no diseases, no old age. Here the climate is always perfect, sunny, warm and comfortable. Here is pleasant fellowship and flawless peace. Here are no enemies, no conflicts and no wars. But all this comes about miraculously and magically. Man has no hand in creating or maintaining this paradise. His role in it is just to enjoy it.

In literary utopias happiness is man-made. It is a formula that man invents to strike a balance between man on one side and his social, political, economic and natural environments on the other. Happiness here is earned, not accepted as a present. It is paid for by incessant though pleasant toil, by fruitful labour, by careful planning and by discreet management. It is the happiness of success, of confidence and of achievement. It is a spiritual happiness accompanied by a reasonable degree of material comfort. Divine beneficence or interference has no hand here.

Finally, since happiness in earthly paradises is effortless, the need for government is not felt, and consequently no mention of government is made. In literary utopias, on the other hand, government is a focal element. The anonymous authors of earthly paradise entertain no hope of ameliorating the human condition. They, therefore, make no serious attempt at solving social problems and curing human ills. Instead, they simply ignore the problems and the ills, and, in the manner of fantasists and of children make-believe, escape to playful dreams and sweet but useless fantasies where things are got merely for the desiring. Authors of literary utopias are no such pessimistic escapists. They scorn the idea of escape to a lake of whisky and stew which can be crossed by a canoe. Instead,

they look the human dilemma squarely in the face, subject it to careful study and prescribe practical solutions. Since to them human happiness is a human responsibility, it follows that a human government is essential to the conquering of nature, to the co-ordinating of efforts and to the conducting of the human enterprise towards the desired end.

Footnotes

1. For a comprehensive variety of definitions and evaluations of "utopianism" See: Joyce O. Hertzler, **The History of Utopian Thought** (1965); George Kateb, **Utopia and Its Enemies** (1963); Karl Mannheim, **Ideology and Utopia** (1966); Herbert Marcuse, **Eros and Civilization** (1962); Thomas Molnar, **Utopia, The Perennial Heresy** (1972); K.R. Popper, **The Open Society and Its Enemies**. (1974); Chad Welsh, **From Utopia to Nightmare** (1962).

See also Mohamad Raja Ad-Direeni, "Introduction" in **Evolution in Modern Utopianism and Anti-Utopianism** (a Ph. D. dissertation, Cairo, Ain Shams University, 1977), pp. 1-78.
2. See, for example:
W.H.C. Armytage, **Yesterdays Tomorrows** (1968);
Marie-Louise Berneri, **Journey Through Utopia** (1971);
Robert C. Elliott, **The Shape of Utopia** (1970)
Richard Gerber, **Utopian Fantasy** (1955);
Frank E. Manuel (ed.), **Utopias and Utopian Thought** (1971);
A.L. Morton, **The English Utopia** (1968).
3. See, Edith Hamilton, **Mythology, Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes** (New York: Mentor Books, 1969); also, Samuel N. Kramer (ed.), **Mythologies of the Ancient World** (New York: Anchor Books, 1961).
4. See Arthur O. Lovejoy, et. al., (eds.), **Documentary History of Primitivism** (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1953); also, Julian Huxley, "Religion As An Objective Problem" in **Man in the Modern World** (London: Chatto & Windus, 1950).
5. For more information on the myth of Eden see, Joseph Ellis Duncan, **Milton's Earthly Paradise: A Historical Study of Eden** (Minneapolis. University of Minnesota Press, 1972).
6. See also, Northrop Frye, "Varieties of Literary Utopias" in **Utopias and Utopian Thought**, ed. by Frank E. Manuel (London: A Condor Book, Sovenir Press, 1971), pp. 36-37.
7. See, Giovanni Baldelli, **Social Anarchism** (London: Penguin Books, 1972).
8. See, Norman Cohn, **The Pursuit of the Millennium** (London: Paladin, 1972).
9. See, Harry W. Laddler, **Social Economic Movements** (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960).

Bibliography

- Ad-Direeni, Mohamad Raja A.R. **Evolution in Modern Utopianism and Anti-Utopianism: A Study of William Olaf Stapledon**. A Ph. D. Dissertation. Cairo: Ain Shams University, 1977.
- Armstrong W.H.G. **Yesterdays Tomorrows: A Historical Survey of Future Societies**. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968.
- Baldelli, Giovanne. **Social Anarchism**. London: Penguin Books, 1972.
- Berner, Marie-Louise. **Journey Through Utopia**. New York: Schocken Books, 1971.
- Cohn, Norman. **The Pursuit of the Millennium**. London: Paladin, 1972.
- Duncan, Joseph Ellis. **Milton's Earthly Paradise: A Historical Study of Eden**. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1972.
- Elliot, Robert C. **The Shape of Utopia: Studies in a Literary Genre**. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.
- Frye, Northrop. "Varieties of Literary Utopias" in **Utopias and Utopian Thought**, ed. by Frank E. Manuel (London: A Condor Book, Souvenir Press, 1971).
- Gabor, Dennis. **Inventing the Future**. London: Penguin, 1972.
- Gerber, Richard. **Utopian Fantasy: A Study of English Utopian Fiction since the End of the Nineteenth Century**. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955.
- Hamilton, Edith. **Mythology, Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes**. New York: Mentor Books, 1969.
- Hertzler, Joyce Oramel. **The History of Utopian Thought**. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1965.
- Hesiod. "Works and Days" in **Hesiod**, trans. by Richmond Latimore. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959.
- Huxley, Julian. "Religion As An Objective Problem" in **Man in the Modern World**. London: Chatto & Windus, 1950.
- Kateb, George. **Utopia And Its Enemies**. New York: The Free Press of Glenco, Collier-Macmillan, 1963.
- Kramer, Samuel N. **Mythologies of the Ancient World**. New York: Anchor Books, 1961.
- Laddler, Harry W. **Social Economic Movements; A Historical and Comparative Survey of Socialism, Communism, Co-operation, Utopianism, and Other Systems of Reform and Reconstruction**. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1960.

- Lovejoy, Arthur O., et. al. (eds.) **A Documentary History of Primitivism**. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1953.
- Mannheim, Karl. **Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction To The Sociology of Knowledge**. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1966.
- Manuel, Frank E. (ed.) **Utopias and Utopian Thought**. London: A Condor Book, Souvenir Press, 1971.
- Marcuse, Herbert. **Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry Into Freud**. New York: Vintage Books, 1962.
- Marinelli, Peter V. **Pastoral (The Critical Idiom No. 15)**. London: Methuen & Co. Limited, 1971.
- Monlar, Thomas. **Utopia, The Perennial Heresy**. London: Tom Stacey, 1972.
- Morton, A.L. **The English Utopia**. Berlin: The Seven Seas Publisher, 1968.
- Negley, Glenn, and J. Max Patrick (eds.) **The Quest For Utopia**. New York: Garden City, 1960.
- Plato. **Timaeus And Critias** (trans. by Desmond Lee). London: Penguin Books, 1971.
- Popper, K.R. **The Open Society and Its Enemies**. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974.
- Welsh, Chad. **From Utopia to Nightmare**. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1962.