OBSAH / CONTENTS

The location of utopia

PÉTER HAJDU – RÓBERT GÁFRIK

Thomas More's coinage "utopia", as it is well known, literally means no-place, which might seem to imply that spatial aspects cannot be important in utopian writing. However, in some utopias the location definitely has cultural significance, and the very isolation of most imaginary utopian communities, as well as the global/local divide one can usefully apply in the categorization of utopias, draw attention to spatiality. Thomas More put his utopia in the South Atlantic, but the imaginary geography of the island does not seem to have any importance for social construction, since More's Utopia does not seem to have anything South American. However, King Utopus's founding gesture already included the modification of the spatial structure when he made a peninsula into an island.

The geographical and temporal orientation of European and non-European utopias seem to be different in many aspects which carry a politico-cultural significance. The articles in the current thematic issue of WORLD LITERATURE STUDIES approach the problem of the location of utopia from a variety of theoretical angles. The joint studies by Yiping Wang/Ping Zhu and Xiangchun Meng/Lirong Zhang, as well as that of Libor Marek focus on the cultural environment in which the utopias they analyse were written and investigate the influence of that location (China or different places inside China, and Moravia, respectively) on the content of political reasoning. Their results suggest that some special traits of the locality get inscribed in the imagined better society. Utopians usually imagine a perfect society elsewhere than in the context of their own culture, or even as extended to the globe or beyond. Several analyses in this volume, however, prove that the national and cultural (even religious) determination remains still discernible. These results, on the one hand, testify to the attention paid to the issues of nationalism, colonialism, or religious imperialism in utopia studies (as in the joint paper by Seval Şahin/Didem Ardalı Büyükarman and in the papers by Péter Hajdu and Sándor Hites); on the other hand, an interplay between the culture of origin and the local/cultural otherness of the imagined elsewhere allows for an imagological approach to utopias, as proposed in the articles by Johannes D. Kaminski and Péter Hajdu.

Leaving Gaia behind: The ethics of space migration in Cixin Liu's and Neal Stephenson's science fiction

JOHANNES D. KAMINSKI

DOI: https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2021.13.2.1

Until recently, the imperialist gesture of the "land-grab" dominated the vast literary corpus of space exploration fiction.* Here, conquered extraterrestrial territories provided new livelihoods, imitating the ambitions of European and American colonial masters of the 19th and 20th centuries. There is an obvious continuity between the conquest of exotic islands and interplanetary missions, between adaptation to foreign climates and life in air-locked habitats, and between encounters with indigenous populations and alien life forms. Such narratives reiterate the trope of the "quest" and culminate in the return to one's fatherland – either physically or, at least, through acquired information that is transmitted back to Earth. Recent examples of space exploration fiction, however, focus on terminal one-way journeys, in which the point of departure disappears. Once the surface of planet Earth becomes uninhabitable, space migration no longer represents colonial expansion, but turns into a matter of survival, forcing humankind to depart from its native habitat to avoid extinction. These scenarios appear in the Chinese author Cixin Liu's trilogy *Remembrance of Earth's Past* (地球往事*, Diqiu wangshi*), which includes *The Three-Body Problem* (三体, *San Ti*, 2008; Eng. trans. 2014), *The Dark Forest* (黑暗森林, *Hei'an senlin*, 2008; Eng. trans. 2015) and *Death's End* (死神永生, *Sishen yongsheng*, 2010; Eng. trans. 2016), as well as in *Seveneves* (2015), written by the American author Neal Stephenson. Exploring the possibility of moving human life into space stations, they put into question the earth-bound condition of biological life. Such radical habitat change, it turns out, is possible, though accompanied by a transformation of human ethics. Since the purpose of science fiction "is not to predict the future [...] but to describe reality, the present world" (1979, 165), as Ursula K. LeGuin posited, Stephenson's and Liu's texts can be taken for chilling explorations of the world of the Anthropocene. Can humanist values survive amid the challenge of living on a dying planet? Or will a new ethics arise from the ashes of consumer capitalism?

This article will first address the imaginary of space migration fiction from a cultural studies perspective. Since I draw upon both Chinese and American texts, I ask if the utilitarian view of nature is primarily a product of the Judeo-Christian tradition, and argue that the implied ethics are informed by modern pragmatic philoso-

* This paper is based on a guest lecture held at the Institute of World Literature, Slovak Academy of Sciences, on February 5, 2020.

phy. Liu's and Stephenson's tableaus of humanity's future, where the survival of our species can only be afforded by drastic decisions, suggest the following questions: how does the future inscribe itself in behavioral codes? What anthropology is put forward? In what way are such scenarios a description of our present?

From a critical perspective, both authors are usually placed in the camp of techno-optimism. Since their popular works are shaped by and in turn inform contemporary ideas on the future of humanity, it is imperative to look behind the shiny chromium façades of space stations for their ideological contraband. Thus far, the political implications of Liu's fiction were regarded as secondary to his innovative storytelling (Li 2015, 537; Thieret 2015; Gilbey 2015, 159), yet his visions of humanity's dire future deserve more scholarly scrutiny. In public statements, both authors have asserted their frustration with present society's unwillingness to boldly pursue technological innovation. Dismissing our current skepticism towards modernism's faith in progress, Stephenson asserted: "The imperative to develop new technologies [is] the only way for the human race to escape from its current predicaments" (2014, xvii). In the same vein, Cixin Liu has insisted on the necessity of technological progress: "Probably, the solution is not to save Earth. It's too late. But if we hold back research, our fate will be sealed"[1] (Yang 2018, 3; trans. J.K.). Although Liu's statement clearly has the natural sciences in mind, literary criticism may also contribute its fair share and accompany both authors' space enthusiasm with a running commentary.

THE UTOPIA OF SPACE MIGRATION

The heyday of US-American techno-optimism commenced after World War II, lasted until the Space Shuttle *Challenger* disaster in 1986 and was sealed by the end of the Cold War, when the space race narrative no longer appeared relevant. According to a genre timeline frequently invoked by science-fiction scholars, the second half of the 20th century saw masculinist techno-optimism replaced by a perspective that put the genre's conservative notions of civilization, society and gender into question (Broderick 2003; Roberts 2006; Vint 2021). Postwar science fiction is commonly identified with the "Big Three": Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke and Robert A. Heinlein. In such early examples, space acts not only as a realm that expands known territory, but represents a playground for the glory of humankind. With New Wave science fiction, a more critical type of novels started to show what awaits humanity in the vastness of space: human neuroses, the realization of humanity's limited intelligence and Le Guin's reminder that science fiction portrays the present instead of an anticipated future. While this historiographic timeline certainly lacks nuance and hardly does justice to the sophistication especially of Clarke's work, the two poles – techno-optimism and skepticism – can be seen as opposing ends on a scale, which help to identify tendencies rather than essential differences. Applied to this scale of measurement, Liu's and Stephenson's texts are hybrids. They inherit the technocratic optimism of postwar science fiction, but also draw the melancholic idea of humankind going extinct.

Today, the can-do optimism of the 1950s and 1960s may have faded, but has been reignited by the budding space rivalry between the United States of Ameri-

ca and the People's Republic of China. The potential resurgence of the Cold War is not the only concern here. Confronted with drastic changes of the biosphere, space offers a convenient outlet for escapist fantasies. Startup millionaires and thought leaders tweet about cislunar colonies hosting up to 80,000 or even a trillion people (Musk 2012; Powell 2019). Stephen Hawking, the late British astrophysicist, speaking at a tech-summit in Beijing, argued that humanity must either leave Earth or go extinct (Rueckert 2017). While such visions can be downplayed as reiterations of postwar reveries, it is increasingly difficult to ignore the hidden message contained in such colorful statements. Ecological concerns are sacrificed for a supposedly higher goal; instead, exit strategies promise a land of golden opportunities and adventure. The renaissance of the Space Age imaginary comes at a time when we are facing rising global temperatures, acidification of waterways, accelerating habitat destruction and increased risk of extreme weather and food production shocks. Despite medical evidence of the medical risks of life in space (Longnecker, Manning, and Worth 2004, 17–27; Hill and Olson 2008), the idea of leaving our depleted environment appears politically more desirable than saving it. Such visionary plans derive their authority from a grand pretension. Claiming to concern themselves with long-term solutions for the benefit of humankind, they dismiss humanist ethics as a relic of the past.

Liu's and Stephenson's works dramatize this authoritative gesture through narrated time. Liu's trilogy, for example, puts forward a *longue durée* perspective on the existential threat of an alien attack in the future. The main narrative of the trilogy spans 500 years, when humanity prepares for the arrival of the Trisolarians, an alien civilization in need of a new habitable planet. In the American novel, narrated time stretches even further with a plot covering 5,000 years. As the Moon fractures into billions of asteroids, mankind has two years to migrate into the orbit before the lunar asteroids transform the planetary surface into an uninhabitable hellscape. Now castaways in space, the surviving population evolves and finally returns to the surface once temperatures have cooled. The book ends with a modified homo sapiens geo-engineering the atmosphere and returning to a radically geo-engineered environment back on Earth.

While both texts place no immediate attention on environmental concerns, their scenarios inevitably build on the macroscopic time horizon of the long-term effects of human interference with the biosphere. Individual biographies, the kernel of realist fiction, no longer suffice to tell the story; instead, multiple generations become part of a macro-narrative. Such transgenerational stories illustrate the catastrophic times that lie ahead of us. Humanity's existential predicament, however, is not a dead end; instead, both narratives marry the melancholic imagination of the apocalypse with a firm belief in technological salvation. Their complicated portraits of life beyond the planet synthesize a new anthropology of the Anthropocene.

THE UTILITARIAN IMAGINARY

Although the Anthropocene represents an era that comprehensively affects human life, its beginning is usually tied to the world system created by European empires, bourgeois capitalism and today's neo-liberalism. Multiple inception dates have

been proposed: 1610, to emphasize the great impact of colonialism, global trade and coal on the biosphere (Lewis and Maslin 2015); 1784, to address the steam engine's role in large-scale industrialization (Crutzen and Stoermer 2000); and 1964, the year that counted the highest radiocarbon signal arising from nuclear tests, to highlight this technology's destructive power (Zalasiewicz, Waters, and Barnosky et al. 2015). Consequently, the inventions and cognitive frameworks of "Western" culture, conceived as a composite of European and North American philosophy, aesthetics and social practices, are regarded as the intellectual superstructure that helped create today's unhealthy relationship between human ambition and the finite resources of the planet.

Chinese scholars have met the Western-centric focus of Anthropocene definitions with both doubt and affirmation. Liu Dongsheng, a Chinese geologist, has challenged its modern genesis and claimed that mankind has been shaping the biosphere since the transition from hunter-gatherer to sedentism. Liu's "deep Anthropocene" reaches back 10,000 years and emphasizes the destructive tendency shared by all civilizations (2004, 369). In contrast, other Chinese scholars have affirmed the Western origin of the lifestyles that have led to the present predicament, emphasizing the moral superiority of traditional Chinese philosophy. The argument is that the principle of the harmony between nature and humans is embedded in foundational texts of Chinese antiquity, such as *The Book of the Way* (道德經, *Dao De Jing*, 6th c. BCE) (Wang 2018). Furthermore, Chinese holism is said to be immune against the binary world view of humans standing against nonhuman nature (Tang 2015; Tu 2001; Wei 2018). Such comprehensive statements overlap considerably with Western ecocentric thought, which has entered the mainstream of academic discourse in the humanities. This singular focus on the Anthropocene's Western origins, however, turns a blind eye on the utilitarian view of nature, as evinced by ancient Chinese texts other than *The Book of the Way*. From a historiographical perspective, "actual practices of the Chinese have hardly lived up to the ideal expressed in their traditions" (Snyder 2006, 100). As a result, Chinese history indeed features large-scale deforestation and other environmental catastrophes which also led to the extinction of the Chinese elephant around 1000 CE (128). In the 20th century, this utilitarian approach seamlessly integrated with socialist thought which further emphasizes the primacy of mind over matter. Mao Zedong's utopian idealism relentlessly pressed ahead with the conquest of nature and saw the transformation of the Mongolian grasslands into agricultural land (Shapiro 2001).

While the "shallow Anthropocene" approach allows for the thought-game that one must only abolish modern civilization for a return to a harmonious state, the "deep Anthropocene" concept stresses irreversibility. According to this logic, the utilitarian view of nature is ingrained in human civilizations, not just in the West, but also in early civilizations. In this light, accounts of indigenous populations living in harmony with nature, as observed in the Brazilian rainforest (Danowski and Viveiros de Castro 2016), are exceptions – or only made possible in low-density habitats. Once large populations occupy a stretch of land, the result are dramatic stand-offs between nature and men, a trope that features prominently in many mythological and histo-

riographical accounts of early cultures. Such representations of catastrophic events have shaped notions of human-nature relationship and continue to serve as model scenarios. Arguably, the science-fiction texts discussed in the present article form part of a series that start with accounts of the Great Deluge, a seemingly universal event in the past (Frazer 1916). With the survival of mankind threatened by a natural disaster, narratives connect effects to causes, thus indicate the place of human agency in the creation. In this respect, the Chinese account puts forward a point of view that appears more congenial to our Promethean Age than the corresponding Biblical passage.

In the Old Testament, the great flood marks a watershed on the cosmic level (Blecher 2017, 129). The scripture places great importance on the natural disaster's correct interpretation as a punishment sent by an angry God. After taking notice of mankind's irreformable wickedness, God resolves to wipe his creation off the face of the earth. Only Noah's family is issued a warning and provided with the ark's building plan (Genesis 6:5–17). In Bible exegesis, the vessel was never understood as an engineering feat, but as an allegory of God's relationship with man.[2] A similar interpretation of the deluge as divinely imposed punishment is put forward in the Quran (Neuwirth 2019, 385–386). In the end, God's magnanimity, condensed in the symbol of the rainbow, affords humanity a new start.

In Chinese historiography, Mencius' canonical account of the Great Flood, written in the 3rd century BCE,[3] contrasts significantly with the Biblical narrative. In opposition to rivalling Confucian thinkers, who shared some of Christianity's bleak anthropology, his basic assumption is that human nature is good and can be continually improved by self-cultivation. Mencius also applies this self-determined attitude to man's role in the universe. In his account of the deluge, nature is supposed to be manipulated by man: "In the time of [Shun], the water, flowing out of their channels, inundated the Middle Kingdom. Snakes and dragons occupied it, and the people had no place where they could settle themselves. In the low grounds they made nests for themselves, and in the high grounds they made caves" (Mencius 1891, 92). As people are displaced from their homes, the flood event appears to modern readers as a challenge in logistics and engineering rather than divine punishment. The account continues:

> Shun employed Yu to reduce the waters to order. Yu dug open their obstructed channels, and conducted them to the sea. He drove away the snakes and dragons, and forced them into the grassy marshes. On this, the waters pursued their course through the country, even the waters of the [Jiang], the [Huai], the Han, and the Yellow [Rivers], and the dangers and obstructions which they had occasioned were removed. The birds and beasts which had injured the people also disappeared, and after this men found the plains available for them, and occupied them (93).

Yu's engineering skills tackle the deadly flood so human life can flourish again. In catastrophic times, Mencius does not require the population to be God-fearing; instead, rulers must demonstrate their ability to create order. Humans must not co-exist alongside snakes and dragons, but shall live in terraformed landscapes. Mencius' account is strikingly secular and technocratic. The ruler's task is to transform nature into culture. Indeed, this passage indicates that the complicated dichot-

omy nature/culture is not unique to the Judeo-Christian tradition, but is also rooted in the Chinese one. While only the former positions the divine outside creation, the latter's cosmos still allows for the utilitarian, even hedonistic imposition of human needs on the non-human environment (Arie 2017, 90). Since the environment lacks prestabilized harmony, it is man's call to embrace his position as a transformer of the natural world.

Indeed, this proactive stance towards nature is not limited to Mencius, but extends into the ecological impact state actors had on natural environments through to the large-scale natural destruction observed in China in the 20th and 21st centuries. Although King Yu would not have been impressed with the side effects, he would have applauded the ambition to create a human-centered biosphere. Mencius's account does not merely serve as template for the Chinese context, but forms a fitting blueprint for humankind's departure from its native planet. In comparison, Genesis illustrates a rather archaic perspective on human agency. Even if mankind was meant, in the Biblical formulation, to "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28), extending this already drastic control to include inanimate matter represents an infringement upon God's prerogatives.

ABANDONING THE PLANET

Literary science fiction excels at dealing with humanity in crisis. Once the planet's surface becomes uninhabitable, there are two options. First, to go underground, a trope that features prominently in subterranean fiction (Fitting 2004), and second, space migration. During the Second Industrial Revolution, fiction became growingly interested in incorporating scientific ideas into such narratives, as evidenced by Jules Verne's *From the Earth to the Moon* (*De la Terre à la Lune*, 1865) and Edward Everett Hale's *The Brick Moon* (1869). After a slight delay, Chinese authors started to pen their own visions of space travel. In Huangjiang Diaosou's *Tale of Moon Colonists* (月球之民地小說, *Yueqiu zhimindi xiaoshuo*, 1904–1905), human explorers encounter, to their great shock, a superior civilization on the Moon.

Despite the boom of techno-optimistic science fiction in America, the beginning of the Cold War also inaugurated, owing to the nuclear threat, a postapocalyptic imaginary of planetary destruction (Hammond 2006; Williams 2011). For example, Ray Bradbury's short-story collection *The Martian Chronicles* (1950) follows the fate of humans stranded on Mars after a nuclear war devastated Earth, who are cut off from home and start adapting to life on the Red Planet. In the same year, Robert A. Heinlein published *Farmer in the Sky* (1950). Here, Earth, overcrowded and plagued by famine, is happily abandoned by space colonists who are heading to Ganymede, one of Jupiter's moons. In contrast, optimism prevailed in Chinese science fiction of the time. As the world of letters became increasingly dominated by politics, there existed little tolerance for pessimistic scenarios. Wenguang Zheng's short story of 1957, "Builders of Mars" (火星建設者, "Huoxing jianshezhe"), tells of the interstellar success story of socialism as Martian colonization begins. However, Cixin Liu's prose brought an unprecedented pessimism to science fiction. In contrast

to the sanguine *Star Trek* universe, where different alien civilizations engage in largely peaceful political collaboration, Liu's trilogy portrays the universe as a Darwinian battleground. Humanity does not act as a bringer of civilization, but faces destruction by mightier beings. In contrast to classics such as H.G. Wells's *War of the Worlds* (1898), mankind is not saved by earthly pathogens that turn out deadly for the invaders; instead, the attack reveals our fundamental incapability to perform large-scale rescue operations.

In Liu's trilogy, the basic assumption is that every highly developed intelligence would rather destroy lesser ones than allowing them to develop into future rivals. Luo Ji, one of the protagonists, explains this principle as follows:

> The universe is a dark forest. Every civilization is an armed hunter stalking through the trees like a ghost, gently pushing aside branches that block the path and trying to tread without sound. Even breathing is done with care. The hunter has to be careful, because everywhere in the forest are stealthy hunters like him. If he finds other life [...] there's only one thing he can do: open fire and eliminate them. [...] This is the picture of cosmic civilization (2015, 484).

Extermination is also what the Trisolarians have in mind for Earth. They intend to wipe out the human population to create space for their own people. Thrilled by this prospect, a small segment of the population, the Earth Trisolaris Organization, even embraces the advent of the Trisolarians. Led by Mike Evans, an American environmentalist, their argument is that Earth's annexation by a more intelligent species is preferable to keeping humans in power. Meanwhile, the rest of humanity, led by the United Nations, starts working on saving mankind from extinction. Given the four-hundred years needed for the Trisolarians' journey from Alpha Centauri to the Solar System, there is plenty of time to explore different solutions. In face of the alien civilization's technological superiority, state leaders initially agree to strive for the stars: "a [...] realistic goal would be to construct starships to enable a small portion of the human race to flee to outer space, thereby avoiding the total extinction of human civilization" (39). The plan is that all developed nations will funnel their resources into building the necessary technology, including a space elevator and nuclear fusion propulsion. Yet the "Human Escape Plan" is quickly abandoned – for reasons that will be discussed in the next section.

Other plans include the construction of a defensive space fleet, a rather hopeless endeavor, and the appointment of four "Wallfacers", that is, strategists with access to unlimited budgets, who are not accountable to anyone. Luo Ji, an inconspicuous academic, becomes one of them and discovers the "dark forest" principle: if one hunter is about to attack another one, it becomes strategically desirable to involve a third hunter. The idea is that humans can broadcast the coordinates of Earth into the universe, thereby exposing themselves to a preventive strike by a third civilization. This would wipe out not only humanity but also the prospective colony of the Trisolarians, who try to block the broadcast into space. Luo Ji succeeds in bypassing their shield, which leads to a short-term triumph: the Trisolarians turn away from Earth. However, the imminent destruction is only postponed, and humanity retreats into large-scale space cities behind Jupiter – only to be wiped out regardless. This melan-

cholic end is somewhat balanced by a narrative trick that allows the book to cover the remaining time until the Big Crush, the end of the universe itself, set eighteen million years in the future. Two remaining humans can escape into a "pocket universe", from where they can inhabit a space outside time.

In Stephenson's *Seveneves*, the UN is tasked with an analogous endeavor, yet must act much faster. After an unknown projectile pierces the Moon, space migration must be accomplished within two years only; by then, the broken satellite will break into ever smaller fragments with exponential increase. Dissolved into myriad meteors, the satellite's fragments will eventually engulf the planet in a sea of fire. As the remaining people on Earth await the deadly impacts, 1,500 people are already stationed in the orbit. Subsequently, the total population of the space station shrinks to sixteen people, and, after another incident, to seven women. In order to ensure the survival of humanity, the entire concept of progeny is overhauled. Using parthenogenesis, a form of reproduction known from insects, worms and reptiles, the seven women recombine their own DNA-strains and start producing non-identical clones of themselves. At this point, the novel makes a bold leap. In the year 7000 CE, the offspring of the eponymous seven Eves have installed themselves on a ringworld, an interconnected belt that revolves around Earth. By now, all fragments of the Moon have crashed into the surface and left the environment ready for large-scape terraforming operations. A hospitable environment is created through advanced forms of geo-engineering. Our species, after having undergone radical change itself, descends from space to step on old, yet unfamiliar ground.

The notion of a thoroughly transformed, man-made biosphere forms part of a series that begins with King Yu rather than Noah. While the latter could rely on God's grace, Shun had to take the right decisions, including the recruitment of Yu, the engineer. But while the ancient Chinese text praises the creation of artificial environments to host human life, Mencius' report does not mention the changes within the populations itself. In the Space Age, however, such manipulations are exacerbated by biopolitical fantasies.

"OBLIQUE" ETHICS

The fundamental idea of space migration is the creation of a global state of emergency which provides new legitimacy for biopolitical measures. According to Giorgio Agamben, this kind of situation allows for a convenient suspension of the rule of law, granting political leaders the power to decide who should live and who should be left to die (2002, 130). While a tyrant is rarely asked to justify the rationale of such decisions, Liu's and Stephenson's texts put forward scenarios in which decisions are presented as careful trade-offs between losses and gains. The idea of ensuring the survival of selected individuals at the expense of others stands at the heart of pragmatic ethics, a line of inquiry that has a penchant for dramatic thought-games.

In Stephenson's *Seveneves*, a managerial elite approaches decision-making in a rather postdemocratic fashion. There is no plebiscite on how to proceed; instead, the masses are nudged into accepting the inevitable. In a worldwide broadcast, a geneticist explains the procedure:

> We ask every village, town, city, and district to perform a Casting of the Lots and to choose two young persons, a boy and a girl, as candidates for training and inclusion in the crew of the Cloud Ark. [...] Our objective is to preserve, as best we can, the genetic and the cultural diversity of the human race. [...] The boys and the girls so chosen [...] will be gathered together in a network of camps and campuses, where they will be trained for the mission they are to undertake (2015, 58).

The wording, as an informed listener in the book knows, is highly euphemistic: "It would get competitive. Perhaps brutally so" (58–59). In the meantime, the world population resigns itself into accepting its doom. Those who feel depressed about the situation can take euthanasia pills that are handed out by the governments – free of charge (290). Overall, the rescue project enjoys wide support: "Oh, there had been some outbreaks of civil disorder, but for the most part people were taking it surprisingly calmly" (196). In Stephenson's novel, a new ethics will not be forged on Earth, where a sense of collective sacrifice prevails, but in space.

In Liu's first instalment of the trilogy, state leaders face a dilemma. Although the "Human Escape Plan", involving the construction of large-scale generation ships, is most promising for the preservation of mankind's existence, the plan is unworkable. The preferential treatment of a future elite – taking advantage of a century, possibly centuries, of economic sacrifice – would risk major social unrest, perhaps a world war. A supporter of the Trisolarian invasion ponders: "Who goes and who remains involves basic human values, values which in the past promoted progress in human society, but which, in the face of ultimate disaster, are a trap. Right now, the majority of humanity has not realized how deep this trap is. [...] No human can escape this trap" (2015, 44). With some delay, state leaders also become cognizant of mankind's impasse situation and declare this plan illegal. Four-hundred years later, after humanity's retreat into Jupiter's shadow, there is renewed interest in the Escape Plan, this time in connection with lightspeed travel. But once again, this route is seen as incompatible with human rights, and its charismatic proponent is put to death (2016, 460). As the trilogy ends with the comprehensive destruction of the Solar System, it turns out that space migration was the only realistic hope that humanity ever had. Only two renegade spaceships escape into the darkness of space and eventually find new habitats.

While Stephenson demonstrates successful space migration and Liu its fateful cancellation due to humanist concerns, both authors are united in their positive assessments of an escape plan, including the preferential treatment of selected individuals. Human rights, they argue, are incompatible with the dawn of the Space Age. In view of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly of the UN in 1948, this plan includes a direct violation of the right of self-determination (Article 1) and the inherent right to life (Article 6). Arguably, the Universal Declaration is an inadequate frame of reference; after all, it was not intended for the cataclysmic scenarios envisioned by both authors, but to promote peace among nation states after two world wars. To fill this gap, both authors put forward an alternative approach, one that seamlessly connects to the worst-case scenarios imagined in pragmatic ethics. Both authors' advocacy for a space elite can be seen as a dra-

matic exploration of the doctrine of the double effect, as brought to prominence by Philippa Foot's discussion of collateral damage. Accordingly, "it is sometimes permissible to bring about by oblique intention what one may not directly intend" (2002, 24). Foot's point of reference is the "trolley problem". The driver of a runaway trolley has two options: either to follow the straight track and steer the vehicle into a group of five – or to divert the trolley to the sidetrack, killing one person only. Since the driver faces a conflict of negative duties, Foot prefers him to choose the smaller damage. Arguably, Stephenson and Liu also stage scenarios of oblique intention, as the formation of a space elite is a question of letting the remaining population die, a scenario deemed preferable to universal death. In short, in a situation where everyone is bound for death, the principal question is not *who* survives, but *whether* someone survives at all.

In the past, such survivalist ethics were already applied to pressing global issues. In view of overpopulation and migration, the American ecologist Garrett Hardin recommended to withhold food aid from populations that experience emergency situations; after all, such support undermines local efforts of population control (1974, 564). Today, Hardin's proposals are classified as the ideological products of ethno-nationalism with genocidal undercurrents. As if intended to showcase the positive choice for human life that is judged as superior to others, Liu's third tome illustrates the awkward choices involved in such rescue operations. With three remaining seats available in their spacecraft, one crew member despairs, wondering to herself: "There are billions of people on the Earth. [...] How am I supposed to pick?" Facing a group of children, she is unable to act. Her hard-boiled colleague, however, steps in and improvises an oral exam: "Everyone, listen up. I'm going to ask three questions. Whoever gives the right answers first gets to come with us" (2016, 391). In a way, this procedure recalls *gaokao*, the life-determining university exam procedures in China. But instead of determining a person's chance of becoming a blue- or white-collar worker, it means the difference between life and death.

Applying Foot's and Hardin's pragmatism to Liu's scenario shows that the good intention of sticking to basic human values becomes irrelevant in emergency situations. Alongside Friedrich Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals* (*Zur Genealogie der Moral*, 1887), they argue that ethical codes do not represent timeless values, but result from concrete historical circumstances. In times of crisis, sticking with the moral constraints of another age is not only impractical, but misses the entire point of behavioral codes. The present examples of Space Age fiction would agree. The pragmatic effect of humanist virtue is nil: neither would the Trisolarian threat go away if humanity demonstrated noble behavior, nor would the Moon realign into a spherical satellite if nobody entered the orbit. The staggering passivity of Stephenson's world population is possibly rooted in this realization: no matter which route the trolley takes, one will be hit either way.

SPACE ETHICS

In contrast to Victorian literature, e.g. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), space migration fiction entertains a relaxed attitude towards the realignment of be-

havioral standards. In Liu's trilogy, such transformations are observed on board the spaceships *Gravity* and *Blue Origin*; in Stephenson's novel, hell breaks out after the orbiting survivors witness the destruction of the planetary surface.

After 200 years have passed since the Trisolarians communicated their plans, the first interstellar battleships are ready. As they are attacked by an invincible remote-controlled alien object, several commanders seize the moment and leap into the unknown. They become mutinous, defy orders to return to Earth and break off contact. From this moment on, they face a new enemy, each other. Since resources are limited, the most promising way of long-term survival implies the siege of other escaped ships. During the standoff between two vessels, one captain tries to justify his decision: "'The birth of a new civilization is the formation of a new morality.' He removed the first safety lock of the H-bomb warheads. 'When they look back in the future on everything we've done, it may seem entirely normal'" (2015, 456). Unfortunately, the other ship's captain pre-empts his decision and pulls the trigger earlier.

Escaping into space, we learn, is not just a physical process, where one moves along new coordinates, but it also implies a moral transformation. Human morality as we know it developed on a lush planet that could, in theory, feed six billion people. In space, however, this morality breaks down. Groups of survivors can only exist at the expense of others, whose energy sources must be exploited and whose protein is needed for sustenance. The mutineers take to eating defenseless colleagues who lie in a state of hibernation. Eventually, one of the cannibal-carrying space ships is caught. Back on Earth, their captain is put on trial and defends himself with an anthropological argument:

> Life reached an evolutionary milestone when it climbed onto land from the ocean, but those first fish that climbed onto land ceased to be fish. Similarly, when humans truly enter space and are freed from the Earth, they cease to be human. [...] When you think about heading into outer space without looking back, please reconsider. The cost you must pay is far greater than you could imagine (2016, 116).

The trope of cannibalism epitomizes the new morality that awaits us in space. Hanging on to old regimes of morality, like not harming others and not using other humans as food sources, becomes an obstacle for survival.

It is difficult to tell apart the new morality, as asserted by the captain, from the "natural state of men", which Thomas Hobbes defined as "mere war, and that not simply, but a war of all men against all men" (1949, 29). Does the ultimate goal of mankind, the conquest of space, entail its return to a state that civilization that is "deprived of all that pleasure and beauty of life, which peace and society are wont to bring with them" (30)? In Liu's text, this devolutional perspective on space travel is entertained by a group of people who prefer to abandon technological advancement altogether. Their argument is that "once humanity headed for space, it would inevitably regress socially. Space was like a distorting mirror that magnified the dark side of humanity to the maximum" (2016, 409). The Space Age sees the advent of irritating patterns of behavior that can be interpreted as a return to plain barbarism or, without moral judgement, as ethical renewal. Both narratives stress the inevitability of this transformation lest humanity should go extinct. Here, the trolley problem is modified though

factoring in the driver's existential needs. The question is not how many deaths he will take into account, one or five, but what he intends to do with the corpses. Will he take advantage of this free meal or will he remain hungry?

Cannibalism is also a pertinent trope in Stephenson's *Seveneves*. Once in orbit, the space population gets embroiled in the first interstellar civil war. After divisions between two factions deepen, one group intends to leave for Mars, a plan at odds with scientific advice. As expected, the pioneers quickly discover that their food sources dwindle, so they turn to protein sourced from other humans. As the two warring parties resume contact, the commander of the space station wonders:

> "What have you been eating?"
> Aida snapped her head around, as if surprised by the question, and looked quizzically into the camera. "Each other. Dead people, I mean."
> There was a long silence during which [they] all exchanged looks. The terrible thing was that they had considered doing the same thing, many times. Every freeze-dried corpse that they jettisoned was a big collection of protein and nutrients that, from a certain point of view, could seem mouthwatering.
> Seeming to read their minds, Aida went on: "And you?"
> "You mean, have we resorted to eating dead people? No," Doop said (520).

After further battle, the final survivors move the space station into an asteroid's cavity. Here, they set up a colony from which, 5,000 years later, the planet will be repopulated, and from this moment onwards, there are no further instances of cannibalism.

As the ultimate emblem of an inverted world order, the perception of cannibalism used to divide the human population into those who observe restraint and those who regress into savagery. In Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), the first thing that the protagonist teaches Friday is the godlessness of this practice. In pragmatic ethics, this distinction is levelled out. Foot is surprisingly forgiving with regard to emergency cannibalism, giving the case of a shipwreck whose only survivors are two sailors and one cabin boy, in which eventually, the former two kill and eat the latter. According to Foot, this case is similar to the trolley problem:

> Here again there is no conflict of interests so far as the decision to act is concerned; only in deciding whom to save. Once again it would be reasonable to act, though one would respect someone who held back from the appalling action either because he preferred to perish rather than do such a thing or because he held on past the limits of reasonable hope (2002, 31–32).

In Foot's analysis, non-cannibalism is merely respectable rather than an indication of ethical standards. New circumstances legitimize radical behavioral change. The faint pangs of survivor's guilt may arise occasionally, but are dismissed as reminders of an obsolete value system.

CONCLUSION

The technocratic imaginary, as expressed in Liu's and Stephenson's novels, transcends cultural binaries. Liu is not particularly influenced by Chinese antiquity, nor Stephenson by the Christian heritage. Instead, both build on a utilitarian imaginary that commences with Mencius' account of King Yu's waterworks and only

reaches its most extreme form under the global capitalism forged by Western powers. In the 20th century, Mao's conquest of nature builds on Western materialism and Chinese utilitarian thought in equal parts. In comparison, the Judeo-Christian myth of the Great Deluge appears largely irrelevant today, for it fails to emphasize the transformative power of human agency on the planet. For Noah's family, the flood represents a test in faith rather than a challenge for their engineering skills.

Liu's and Stephenson's striking tableaux of humanity's future build on this utilitarian approach. The sudden transformation of the Earth's satellite into a bringer of doom and the long-term annunciation of humanity's extinction at the hands of a superior civilization are eerie scenarios that address fundamental anxieties of the present, notably the potentially drastic impact of climate change on human livelihoods from a *longue durée* perspective. As opposed to humanity's indecisive reactions to climate change, these gigantic threat scenarios are different, for they trigger global states of emergency where the rule of law is replaced by biopolitical choices. In the Space Age, we learn, humanist values no longer apply, and there exists no position of righteousness, like Noah's. Once it is too late to save Earth, humanity faces an overhaul of its value system, possibly also a renewed Hobbesian "war of all men against all men". Basic human needs, such as nutrition, are not solved by ultra-hygienic technology, like the "Replicator" in the *Star Trek* universe, but lead to cannibalism. Together with parthenogenesis, the comprehensive transplantation of life into space and planetary geoengineering, such speculative ideas have one message: when faced with adversity, humans can survive anything – but at a sufficiently high cost. As social norms collapse and the struggle of survival begins, humanity cancels its subscription to the previous foundation of transcultural universalism, the anthropology put forward by the Universal Declaration. Skeptics may argue that this altered version of ourselves is hardly worth preserving. In a world where eating human protein is "reasonable" and its rejection merely "respectable", humanity's transformation into a space caste does not honor the glorious future invoked in postwar science fiction, but heralds the rise of the Morlocks, the cannibalistic offspring of mankind, as imagined in Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895).

Applying the ethical primitivism of these novels to present concerns about the future reveals a paradox. Although it remains technically impossible to conceive of humanity's migration into space, we already brace ourselves for the drastic transformation of our value systems. As global temperatures rise, extreme weather events become more frequent and food production shocks probable, we may witness this transformation – not after our ascension into space, but here on Earth already. In this light, Liu's and Stephenson's sinister space stations could be read as metaphors for the biopolitics of the near future where Philippa Foot's neat scenarios give way to Garrett Hardin's quasi-genocidal thought-games. In Liu's and Stephenson's global states of emergency, the only way forward is to overcome squeamish commitment to individual rights. To ecocentric thinkers, the erratic agency of Gaia serves as a call to transform the present world order into a more sustainable form of cohabiting with non-human agents. To trolley drivers, however, it may appear like a welcome opportunity to cleanse the tracks of superfluous pedestrians.

NOTES

[1] The interview was published in German. The original passage reads: "Die Lösung wird womöglich nicht darin bestehen, die Erde zu retten. Wenn wir aber die Forschung aufhalten, ist unser Schicksal besiegelt."

[2] According to Augustine, one of the Church fathers, the ark is an allegory of Jesus Christ. The ark's door, for example, represents the wound in Christ's side (2002, 683).

[3] Mencius' flood account is just one among many. The fullest early recounting of the story appears in the *Book of Documents* (書經, *Shujing*), one of the Five Confucian classics. In contrast to Mencius, however, this flood narrative is somewhat sketchy (Lewis 2006, 29–30).

LITERATURE

Agamben, Giorgio. 2002. *Homo sacer: Die souveräne Macht und das nackte Leben*. Trans. by Hubert Thüring. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Arie, Daisuke. 2017. "Confucianism." In *The Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Utilitarianism*, ed. by James E. Crimmins, 90–91. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Augustine. 2002. *The City of God Against the Pagans*. Ed. by Robert W. Dyson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Blecher, Adi. 2017. "Noah's Curse: Punishment and Paradox." *Journal for Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Law* 23: 123–135.

Broderick, Damien. 2003. "New Wave and Backwash: 1960–1980." In *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. by Edward James and Farah Mendleson, 48–64. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521816262.004.

Crutzen, Paul J., and Eugene F. Stoermer. 2000. "The 'Anthropocene'." *Global Change Newsletter (IGBP)* 41: 17–18.

Danowski, Déborah, and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro. 2016. *The Ends of the World*. Trans. by Rodrigo Guimaraes Nunes. Cambridge: Polity.

Fitting, Peter. 2004. *Subterranean Worlds: A Critical Anthology.* Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Foot, Philippa. 2002. "The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of the Double Effect." In *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy*, Philippa Foot, 20–32. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/0199252866.003.0002.

Frazer, James George. 1916. "Ancient Stories of a Great Flood." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 46, July–December: 231–283. DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/2843393.

Gilbey, John. 2015. "After the Cataclysm." *Nature* 521 (7551): 159. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1038/521159a.

Hammond, Andrew, ed. 2006. *Cold War Literature: Writing the Global Conflict.* London: Routledge.

Hardin, Garrett. 1974. "Living on a Lifeboat." *BioScience* 24, 10: 561–568.

Hill, Joseph A., and Eric N. Olson. 2008. "Cardiac Plasticity." *The New England Journal of Medicine* 358, 13: 1370–1380. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMra072139.

Hobbes, Thomas. 1949. *De Cive: Or the Citizen*. Ed. by Stirling P. Lamprecht. New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). 2018. "Global Warming of 1.5°C: An IPCC Special Report." Accessed July 1, 2020. https://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15_spm_final.pdf.

Israel, Jonathan. 2011. *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights, 1750–1790*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Keel, Hee-Sung. 2007. *Meister Eckhart: An Asian Perspective*. Leuven: Peeters Publishers.

Latour, Bruno. 2018. *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime*. Trans. by Catherine Porter. Cambridge: Polity.

LeGuin, Ursula K. 1979. "Introduction to The Left Hand of Darkness." In *The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction*, 2nd edition, 155–159. New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Lewis, Mark Edward. 2006. *Flood Myths of Early China.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
Lewis, Simon L., and Mark A. Maslin. 2015. "Defining the Anthropocene." *Nature* 519 (7542): 171–180. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1038/nature14258.
Li, Hua. 2015. "The Political Imagination in Liu Cixin's Critical Utopia: 'China 2185'." *Science Fiction Studies* 42, 3: 519–540. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5621/sciefictstud.42.3.0519.
Liu, Cixin. 2015. *The Dark Forest*. Trans. by Joel Martinsen. London: Head of Zeus.
Liu, Cixin. 2016. *Death's End*. Trans. by Ken Liu. London: Head of Zeus.
Liu, Dongsheng. 2004. "Kaizhan 'Renleishi' Huanjing Yanjiu" [Beginning of Anthropocene Research]. *Quaternary Science* 24, 4: 369–378. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3321/j.issn:1001-7410.2004.04.001.
Longnecker, David E., Frederick J. Manning, and Melvin H. Worth. 2004. *Review of NASA's Longitudinal Study of Astronaut Health*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
Mencius. 1891. *Works*. Trans. by James Legge. New York, NY: John B. Alden.
Musk, Elon. 2012. Twitter Post. November 27. Accessed July 1, 2020. https://twitter.com/elonmusk/status/273483420468932608.
Neuwirth, Angelika. 2019. *The Qur'an and Late Antiquity: A Shared Heritage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199928958.001.0001.
Powell, Corey S. 2019. "Jeff Bezos Foresees a Trillion People Living in Millions of Space Colonies. Here's What He's Doing to Get the Ball Rolling." *NBC* May 15. Accessed July 1, 2020. https://www.nbcnews.com/mach/science/jeff-bezos-foresees-trillion-people-living-millions-space-colonies-here-ncna1006036.
Roberts, Adam. 2006. *The History of Science Fiction*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230554658.
Rueckert, Phineas. 2017. "Earth Will Become 'Sizzling Ball of Fire' in 600 Years: Stephen Hawking." *Global Citizen*. Accessed July 1, 2020. https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/stephen-hawking-earth-sizzling-ball-of-fire/.
Shapiro, Judith. 2001. *Mao's War Against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511512063.
Snyder, Samuel. 2006. "Chinese Traditions and Ecology: Survey Article." *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology* 10, 1: 100–134. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1163/156853506776114465.
Stengers, Isabelle. 2015. *In Catastrophic Times: Resisting the Coming Barbarism*. Trans. by Andrew Goffey. London: Open Humanities Press.
Stephenson, Neal. 2014. "Preface: Innovation Starvation." In *Hieroglyph: Stories and Visions for a Better Future*, ed. by Ed Finn and Kathryn Cramer, xiii–xx. New York, NY: William Morrow.
Stephenson, Neal. 2015. *Seveneves.* London: Borough Press.
Tang, Yijie. 2015. *Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, Christianity and Chinese Culture.* Berlin, Springer. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-45533-3.
Thieret, Adrian. 2015. "Society and Utopia in Liu Cixin." *China Perspectives* 1: 33–39. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4000/chinaperspectives.6643.
Tu, Weiming. 2001. "The Ecological Turn in New Confucian Humanism: Implications for China and the World." *Daedalus* 130, 4: 243–264.
Vint, Sherryl. 2021. *Science Fiction*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
Wang, Jinghui. 2018. "Re-interpreting 'Dao De Jing' from an Ecological Perspective." *Comparative Literature Studies* 55, 4: 812–823. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5325/complitstudies.55.4.0812.
Wei, Qingqi. 2018. "Toward a Holistic Ecofeminism: A Chinese Perspective." *Comparative Literature Studies* 55, 4: 773–786. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5325/complitstudies.55.4.0773.
Williams, Paul. 2011. *Race, Ethnicity and Nuclear War: Representations of Nuclear Weapons and Post-Apocalyptic Worlds*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt5vjdcf.
Yang, Xifan. 2018. "Ein Literaturheft Cixin Liu: Wir müssen schnellstmöglich technologische Wunder vollbringen." *Zeit-Magazin* 42, October 10. Accessed July 1, 2020. https://www.zeit.de/zeit-magazin/2018/42/science-fiction-autor-liu-cixin-china/seite-3.
Zalasiewicz, Jan, Colin N. Waters, Anthony D. Barnosky et al. 2015. "Colonization of the Americas, 'Little Ice Age' Climate, and Bomb-Produced Carbon: Their Role in Defining the Anthropocene." *The Anthropocene Review* 2, 2: 117–127. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/2053019615587056.

Leaving Gaia behind: The ethics of space migration in Cixin Liu's and Neal Stephenson's science fiction

Science fiction. Ethics. Anthropocene. Cannibalism. Cixin Liu. Neal Stephenson.

In Cixin Liu's trilogy *Remembrance of Earth's Past* (2008–2010) and Neal Stephenson's *Seveneves* (2015), the surface of planet Earth becomes uninhabitable amid global states of emergency, and central governments devise radical plans to ensure the survival of the human species. In contrast to the Old Testament, where human emancipation from nature is punished, Chinese antiquity's narratives of large-scale engineering projects are surprisingly compatible with the modern mindset which regards nature in utilitarian terms. Contemporary science fiction does not simply inherit this techno-optimistic stance, but fleshes out possible futures that are shaped by biopolitical decisions. In Stephenson's and Liu's prose, the proposed escape plans only benefit small segments of the population. While such procedure is incompatible with human rights, which emphasize the value of the individual over the collective, contemporary pragmatic ethics interprets such behavior as rational. Applied to more tangible scenarios, such as our increasingly depleted livelihoods on Earth, both texts document our somewhat diminished expectations regarding the future. In a world where eating human protein is "reasonable" and its rejection merely "respectable", the preservation of humankind in space sets in motion a return to Hobbes's "natural state of man".

Johannes D. Kaminski, PhD
Institute of World Literature
Slovak Academy of Sciences
Dúbravská cesta 9
841 04 Bratislava
Slovak Republic
jdkam@posteo.de
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9357-1149

Shanghai and the Chinese utopia in the early 20th century as presented in "The New Story of the Stone"

YIPING WANG – PING ZHU

DOI: https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2021.13.2.2

The novel *The New Story of the Stone* (新石头记, *Xinshitouji* [1908] 2016) by Wu Jianren (1866–1910) is one of the most representative utopian works of the late Qing dynasty (1840–1912) at which time China saw unprecedented fundamental social changes. After 1840, China underwent violent internal and external political, economic and military upheavals, and the late Qing government went through a series of major crises and reforms: the two Opium Wars (1840, 1856), the signing of the Treaty of Nanking (1842), the Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864), the Westernization Movement (1861), the Sino-French War (1883–1885), the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895, the Hundred Days' Reform of 1898, the Boxer Movement (1900), and many more. Eventually, in 1912, the Qing Dynasty collapsed as the last Chinese dynasty and the Republic of China came into being, ushering in a new era in China. In this period, "the Chinese intellectual framework seemed suddenly inadequate and incompatible with modern global politics" (Isaacson 2017, 9), and the Chinese intelligentsia had to look to the outside and the future for further and wider explorations. *The New Story of the Stone* came out first in a series in *The Southern Gazette* (南方报, *Nanfang bao*) in 1905 and was published in a single volume in 1908, rightfully serving as a reflection of the radical changes of a period that linked the past as well as the future.

In the midst of prolonged domestic trouble, foreign invasions, and grave social crises, the Chinese intelligentsia "recognized the importance of fiction for its social function. [They] wrote novels to comment on social affairs, and advocated reform and revolution"[1] (Ah 2009, 1). The late Qing dynasty saw a boom in fiction. Statistics shows that, from 1901 to 1911, 529 novels were written in the modern vernacular Chinese or *baihua*, of which no less than 50 envisioned a utopian world (Zhou 2012, 67). *The New Story of the Stone* is widely regarded as "one of the most telling utopian specimens of its time" (Andolfatto 2021, 136). Chuanming Geng (2008) has classified utopias into three types: distant vision, middle vision and close-up vision. The pursuit of the distant type addresses issues like the universal principles for social progress or the ultimate ideal forms of society that human beings can possibly achieve. The middle type mainly, in the form of literature, presents the competitions between specific thoughts, concepts and cultural propositions of a certain era. The close-up type embodies an instinctive response to the national peril. It is more emotionally

agitating than rational, and normally tinged with ethnocentrism and nationalism. He also argues that *The New Story of the Stone* is a utopia of distant vision that expresses ultimate concerns of humanity (180–187). However, this paper argues that although *The New Story of the Stone* shows the transcendental hue of an ideal society, it undoubtedly contains a great deal of the author's observations about his time, country and city, and these are the foundation of the author's construction of that ideal state.

ILLUSION AND MIRROR IMAGE: A DOUBLE UTOPIA

The title and the protagonist of *The New Story of the Stone* are derived from the 18th century (mid-Qing dynasty) masterpiece, Cao Xueqin's *The Story of the Stone* (石头记, *Shitouji*), more famously known as *Dream of the Red Chamber* (红楼梦, *Hongloumeng* [1791] 2008; Eng. trans. 1892). *The Story of the Stone*, as the pinnacle of Chinese classical fiction, depicted the stories of several aristocratic families. In the story, the protagonist, the young nobleman Jia Baoyu, is the incarnation of a stone left unused by Nüwa, the goddess who restores the vault of heaven in Chinese mythology. *The New Story of the Stone*, as a sequel to *The Story of the Stone*, is set in the late Qing dynasty. The novel opens with the explicit remark that it is already the 26th year of Emperor Guangxu's Reign, or 1901 (actually 1900). At this time, as China's traditional agrarian society disintegrated and modern cities emerged, China was changing from seeing itself as the center of the world to viewing the world as composed of individual nations (Wang 2012, 39). Under the impact of the West, China had to accept the international system that originated in Western Europe and spread all over the world, and used international laws to emphasize its status as a sovereign state (Wang 2003, 37).

In the context of these changes, the novel borrows the identity of Jia Baoyu from *The Story of the Stone*, but the character's personality and the world he observes are now essentially different from the mid-Qing period. The new Baoyu represents the aspirations and hopes of an era of social changes in early 20th-century China, as he moves from his aversion to a career in a bureaucratic government in *The Story of the Stone* to his ambition to "mend heaven" and to "secure the nation and fix the country" in the new story. So the novel begins with the "birth of a new man" who cares about the future of the nation. In a sense, the protagonist is similar to Voltaire's Candide or Goethe's Faust, who travels and explores the world in response to the age of Enlightenment.

Unlike the novels that plainly explain political ideas in the form of utopian literature in the late Qing dynasty, such as *The Future of New China* (新中国未来记, *Xinzhongguo weilaiji*, 1902) by the modern politician and thinker Liang Qichao, *The New Story of the Stone* shows the author's literary technique of building an appealing utopia. Particularly noteworthy is the novel's elaborate multiple symmetrical/asymmetrical structure. Baoyu originally cultivated himself at Qinggengfeng, the Greensickness Peak of the Barren Mountain, but now, he bumps into the prosperous world after "many generations have passed" (Wu 2016, 2). The manner by which Baoyu enters modern China is vaguely explained, but the time and place

at which he enters are clearly indicated. This is notably influenced by Edward Bellamy's utopian novel *Looking Backward: 2000–1887* (1888), which was introduced and widespread in China at the time and in which the protagonist, after a hundred years' slumber, wakes up in Boston in the year 2000 to see a better world. Similarly, Baoyu, begins his new journey in 20th-century Nanjing, and then visits the major Chinese cities like Shanghai, Beijing and Wuhan, hence seeing a "new world".

The New Story of the Stone contains 40 chapters. The first 20 chapters show the Chinese society of the time through Baoyu's travels, mostly in Shanghai, where there is increasing communication and trade with the West. The portrayal of Shanghai reflects the popular aspirations of many Chinese statesmen and scholars at the time for "Chinese learning as the essence and Western learning for application", while at the same time complying with the actual development of Shanghai. The novelty of the "new world" for the protagonist is twofold. On the one hand, Baoyu, who comes from more than a hundred years ago, is awed by the advanced new objects, industries and organizations of the future society, and experiences the wonderful functions of new creations such as matches, electric lamps, phonographs, telegraphs, trains and steamboats. On the other hand, as the "future world" is indistinguishable from the Western civilization, he also encounters Western investment and technology which had been rejected by the Chinese for a long period. Baoyu observes the rise of foreign-funded industries in Shanghai. After 1842, Shanghai was forced to open as a port of entry for foreign trade under the terms of the unequal Treaty of Nanking, and quickly developed into China's most important foreign trade center. The value of Shanghai foreign trade had increased from 74 million to 155 million HkTl (the customs tael which represented 38.40 grams of pure silver) between 1861 and 1894, and it doubled again between 1895 and 1911 (Bergère 2009, 51). From 1895 to 1911, out of the 91 enterprises that the foreigners opened in China, 41 were located in Shanghai (Zhang 2008, 11). In the mid to late 19th century, there were a number of large foreign firms in the British Concession in Shanghai, such as Jardine and Matheson Company and the Dent Company, and within a few years, the line of foreign hong (the buildings needed for commercial activities) extended right along the curve of the Huangpu River (Bergère 2009, 34). Meanwhile, after the late 19th century, some of the world's leading industrial technologies were even first applied in Shanghai (Zhang 2008, 45). Shanghai was the base of the Westernization Movement in China. For example, Li Hongzhang, a minister of the late Qing dynasty and an important leader of the Westernization Movement, supported the establishment of industrial enterprises in Shanghai, such as the Jiangnan Arsenal and the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company. The author Wu Jianren was born in Guangdong Province and went to Shanghai in 1883 to make a living and stayed there for a long time (Wang 2019, 17). He worked for a long period as a scribe and draughtsman for the Jiangnan Arsenal, the largest armament and shipbuilding enterprise founded in modern China. The novel shows, through the curious eyes of Baoyu, the novelty of matches, tea stoves, telegraphs, modern ships, and even the insurance industry, which had been introduced to China since the late 19th century. It could be argued that, because of the author's special background, his work gives Baoyu, more than most Chinese of the time, a fuller and

more direct exposure to the new artefacts and technologies created by Western industrial civilization.

It is clear that the author does not intend to deny the advantages of Western material civilization and technology. In the novel, Baoyu's first reaction to the modern equipment and techniques is not to be repellent. Instead he asks: "Why don't we learn to do it ourselves?", "If they can do it, why can't we?" (Wu 2016, 25, 34) Such a stance is largely consistent with the pursuits of the Westernization Movement. In an instance of the novel, when Baoyu visits a Chinese gun factory, he hears the anecdote of Li Hongzhang naming the guns made in the factory "successive quick grabs" (53). It appears that Baoyu has discarded the arrogance of an ancient civilization, and is not self-alienated from modern technology. Rather, he is enthusiastic to understand Western civilization and institutions.

Accordingly, when the novel depicts the Boxer Movement, it is explicitly critical of this extreme xenophobia and radical nationalism. Baoyu is strongly opposed to his relative Xue Pan's joining the Movement. In the novel, Baoyu is almost killed by Wang Wei'er, a member of the Boxer and a gangster. Baoyu's comments on Wang Wei'er indicates his view of the Boxer Movement: "Evil and treacherous, heartless and shameless. [...] It seems that the Boxers are all like that. But how could the man in power actually trust them and use them?" (89) Also, the novel emphasizes a stunning fact for the Chinese at the time, "I have thought China is one country, all of the foreign others is another one. [...] Now I understand that there are many of them!" (81) That is to say, the traditional idea of China as unique "heavenly kingdom" was collapsing and people began to recognize a global world in which many nations co-exist and are closely interconnected, and to accept equal relations among all races and nations instead of the hierarchical "heavenly kingdom" as the center of the world. They came to understand the meaning of "nation" as a representation of rights, thus developing a modern nationalism that was different from the traditional national thought (Wang 2003, 183).

In the end of the novel, the Peace Conference of All Nations is held by China, with an aim "to seek peace for all mankind [...]. Every race such as the red, the black and the brown should be treated as equals. [...] Eliminating hegemony and practicing pacifism" (Wu 2016, 229). Based on this philosophy, the ideal world imagined by *The Story of the Stone* differs from the pre-modern dreams such as Tao Yuanming's isolated paradise "Peach Blossom Land" and Thomas More's *Utopia*. Wu's utopia shares more similarity with H.G. Wells's *Modern Utopia*. When the Chinese open their eyes to see the world, the utopia they envisage is no longer based on small, closed communities, but is (obliged to be) grounded in the new situation of interconnectedness between the many nations of the modern world.

However, the equation that "civilization and progress equals foreign (Western European) culture" causes Baoyu's resistance to the possibility of a colonized future China and thus creates a tension in the novel. The author deliberately reduces Baoyu's appreciation of the people and objects of this semi-colonized "brave new world". For example, when Xue Pan, who "adapts smoothly to the changed circumstances" and enjoys his new lifestyle as a "consumer" (Huters 2005, 158), plays a re-

cord on a phonograph, Baoyu does not show the slightest appreciation, but remarks: "It doesn't sound like a human voice or an animal voice. It's just annoying. It's tasteless to have spent money on this for fun" (Wu 2016, 23). Baoyu is not a techno-conservative. Perhaps the reason for this is that, being in a Chinese city at the forefront of communication with Western civilization, he is intimidated by the full penetration of advanced artefacts into everyday life made possible by modern Western technology. After a visit to a foreign firm in Shanghai, he laments that "out of ten shops, nine sell foreign goods. Our Chinese businesses are gone" (25). Baoyu's comments on certain Western consumer goods may represent the traditional Chinese idea of "fancy tricks", in which elaborate objects are seen as a waste of resources. But more importantly, in his mind, there is a blend of modern technological products, foreign firms, compradors and a highly westernized (colonized) modern city. Thus, the Chinese urban landscape, which combines the advanced technology, international trade and commerce transactions, and the ruler's pandering to foreigners, indicates the backwardness of China and unequal international interactions. This cannot be accepted by the author as the ideal society for China. Therefore, although the novel gives its protagonist a glimpse of a brave new future world, a virtual utopia, it constantly undermines the legitimacy of that society as an ideal state.

How, then, does *The New Story of the Stone* confront an attractive but problematic "new world" such as Shanghai? This essay argues that the novel wisely adopts what might be called a "mirroring" approach to the construction of a utopia. This mode of creation can be seen, first of all, in the selection of the few major characters in the novel. In Shanghai, for example, Baoyu meets the foreign firm's comprador, Bai Yaolian (homophonic to "shameless" in Chinese). A comprador is the Chinese partner of a foreign merchant, an intermediary in international trading. The novel portrays Bai Yaolian as a fraud who denies Chinese culture, flatters foreigners, and cheats his friends. In contrast, the novel portrays Wu Bohui (homophonic to "Know-all" in Chinese), an instant friend of Baoyu as very knowledgeable about Western culture and modern things. He leads Baoyu on a tour in Shanghai, encourages him to learn English, and eventually saves him from imprisonment. In the novel, Wu Bohui is the one character who really tries to learn and digest the Western culture, as opposed to Bai Yaolian, who totally rejects Chinese traditions and flatters the foreigners. The author uses a "distorted mirror image" of these two characters: the comprador Bai Yaolian is a negative image that clings with Shanghai, but right next to him is a positive figure, Wu Bohui, whose background and position are similar in every way, but a far more righteous and honest person than the former.

The author also uses this "mirroring" approach to build his utopia, where the same type of people, things, or objects, such as A and B are created. A and B share many similar qualities, but one is clearly superior to the other, and the two form a distorted mirror relationship in contrast. It is the basic technique used in the novel to create a utopia. In the next 20 chapters, the novel designs a much better Civilized World than the westernized Shanghai. In other words, the novel creates an ideal nation based on the illusory utopian Shanghai. That is, outside of the Shanghai Utopia, it constructs a distorted mirror world which corresponds to Shanghai in every re-

spect. The perfect mirror world is the real utopia. As the novel deliberately mentions, the protagonist carries a "mirror" into modern Chinese society and, after looking deep into the false wonderland, discovers a mirror world that is a true utopia.

THE CIVILIZED WORLD: UTOPIAN IDEAS AND UTOPIAN GEOGRAPHY

Like John the Savage in the classic anti-utopian novel *Brave New World* (1932), who finally sees the loss of natural humanity in advanced technology, in the first 20 chapters of *The New Story of the Stone*, Baoyu, during his travels in Shanghai, Beijing and other cities, gradually recognizes that China in 1900 is a false brave new world. At the end of the 20th chapter, Baoyu is tragically imprisoned and almost murdered for criticizing the views of the Wuchang School superintendent, and realizes that this is a "barbarous country". Baoyu suddenly remembers where he has come from – the Greensickness Peak, a purely fictional and symbolic home. Although Baoyu's travels in *The New Story of the Stone* have no connection to the Greensickness Peak, his recollections at this point play a key role in threading the whole story. In the first chapter, the protagonist leaves the Greensickness Peak to travel to modern China in an attempt to fulfill his ambition to "mend heaven". But up to the end of the 20th chapter he not only failed to mend heaven, but almost got killed. This failure of himself shows that the seemingly civilized Shanghai is a utopian illusion. It is only after reminiscing about the Greensickness Peak that Baoyu sets out again, in the 21st chapter, and finally sees a truly civilized country. Throughout the whole story, the false utopia and the true utopia are evenly divided into two symmetrical parts, with the Greensickness Peak as the dividing line, forming mirror images of each other, though not identical.

In the latter 20 chapters of the novel, Baoyu is invited by Xue Pan to go to the north in search of the Liberty Village and inadvertently enters the Civilized World. This world is an ideal society with prosperous science and technology and well-developed institutions, and is composed of five main regions: the East, the South, the West, the North, and the Central. As Nathaniel Isaacson puts it, the novel is a strikingly comprehensive version of the failings of the late Qing state, and of utopian yearnings with Confucian characteristics (2017, 62). The hallmarks that define the Central region of the Civilized World are the Chinese characters Li (ritual), Yue (music), Wen (culture) and Zhang (order), all of which are highly-regarded qualities in Chinese Confucian society. Baoyu's host in this realm is called Lao Shaonian (Old Youth). Lao Shaonian is the mouthpiece for the author himself. The novel then discusses via Lao Shaonian the question of the political system in the Civilized World, which was a major issue at the time concerning the future of China. As for constitutionalism that China was facing at this time, the author wrote a number of short satirical stories such as "Celebrating Constitutionalism" (庆祝立宪, "Qingzhu lixian", 1906), "Preparing for Constitutionalism" (预备立宪, "Yubei lixian", 1906) and "Long Live Constitutionalism"(立宪万岁, "Lixian wansui", 1907). He does not oppose constitutionalism, but is critical of the pseudo-constitutionalism by the characters of all parties who just change a political title to satisfy their own selfish desires (Ah 2009, 82). The Civilized

World considers the republican form of government to be the most barbaric. This is perhaps because the author sees party politics and parliamentary politics the same as the much-criticized "clique strife" in the Chinese political tradition. He argues that "numerous parties contradict each other and the government is just like a masterless ghost which only satisfies the wishes of whichever party that flourishes" (Wu 2016, 143). The author seeks an inner "non-self-satisfying" mind as a means of motivating the development of individuals and society. As for the reasons for the introduction of a monarchical system of government, Lao Shaonian emphasizes "moral education" for all, arguing that "if moral education is universal, constitutional government can be abolished" (144). He believes all that is needed is to advocate "[the monarch] loving what his people love and hating what his people hate" as stated in traditional *The Great Learning* (大学, *Daxue*, about the 5th c. BCE) (Wu 2016, 144), the classical Confucian text concerning individual moral cultivation and social ideals. Therefore, the author can be reasonably viewed as a representative of "cultural conformism" and "enlightened conservatism" in a period of social transformation in China (Geng 2008, 183–184).

However, the novel's rhetoric about the concept of "Dao" (the Way, or more exactly the Way of Confucius) for an ideal state reveals a contradiction between the author's ideology and his actual vision. In the novel, Baoyu points out that some so-called new phrases such as "reform" were already found in ancient Chinese classics. For instance, in *The Book of Songs* (诗经, *Shijing*, about the 6th c. BCE) there is the expression "Although Zhou was an old state, the divine mandate it bore was to reform" (Wu 2016, 98). Wu Jianren not only indicates the legitimacy of reform, but also puts a nation's traditions as the basis for the development of an ideal state. However, while the novel explains the superiority of the traditional Chinese social ideals, the author is also clearly aware that the inescapable theme of the time is to learn from the West to reform China. In other words, on the one hand, the author lacks a deep understanding of and trust in Western constitutional democracy and hopes that the Civilized World will preserve the spirit of traditional Chinese virtues; on the other hand, he finds that a modern civilized state has to assimilate other cultures such as Western political institutions, technologies, concepts of equality, etc. This contradiction leads to some obvious flaws in the design of the Civilized World, such as the parallelism between the monarchy and the actual constitutional democracy. In the novel, although the Civilized World is a system of monarchy, Lao Shaonian makes it clear that, for any countries, before they reach "civilization" (utopia), a constitutional system is better than dictatorship. "With dictatorship, the only government is high above and exerts pressure on the inferiors, and local officials cannot be good ones even if they want to be" (Wu 2016, 144–145).

The Civilized World is supposedly based on the "Way of Confucius", but it has to borrow the experience of Western technological and institutional civilization. Therefore, it is not a utopian system actually instituted on the basis of the traditional Chinese virtues. "No matter how much he emphasizes the underpinning role of quintessence of the Chinese culture, [...] his ideal state is inscribed everywhere with the obvious marks of modernization or westernization, i.e. democra-

cy and science" (Chen and Wang 2013, 26). Of course, the author is not ignorant of the glaring problem. Instead, he employs an interesting strategy: after proposing the ideas of the Civilized World, he then evades the dilemma in a roundabout way. This is mainly reflected in the choice of utopian locations and in Baoyu's travels after he enters the Civilized World. The novel first devotes several chapters to the basic program of the Civilized World – its social philosophy, and so on, but does not continue to elaborate on the many aforementioned philosophies. Rather, it begins to depict the Civilized World in the form of a Vernean adventurous sci-fi fantasy. From the 26th to the 33rd chapters, Baoyu's observations and experiences are completely transformed as the novel embarks on a lengthy series of exotic adventures that take up nearly a quarter of the novel's total length.

The selection of the geographic space in which the protagonists have their adventures is also interesting: instead of China, or the major European countries of the modern world in the author's mind, the novel depicts places like the African savannah and the undersea world, which were unfamiliar to the Chinese at the time. Baoyu and Lao Shaonian take a flying vehicle for hunting and encounter the hard-to-catch roc, and then arrive in the vast desert, where they, through a world map, compass and stargazing, come to realize it is Africa. The novel details the thrilling journey of chasing and capturing the roc and putting it in the museum in the Civilized World. Then this is followed by an underwater roam in a hunting vessel, which can travel 12,000 miles in one day and night. Baoyu and the others then embark on an underwater journey around the globe. Like the heroes of Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (*Vingt mille lieues sous les mers: Tour du monde sous-marin*, 1869; Eng. trans. 1872), Baoyu witnesses underwater wonders such as a seahorse biting and killing a giant squid, encounters attacks by many large sea loaches, and mermen attacking sailors on a hunting boat. He even sees the legendary fish Tiao (鯈), catches sea minks at the South Pole, acquires large pieces of corals, and then goes through a submarine tunnel in Australia.

This section of the novel clearly embodies the feature of some late Qing novels – what David Der-wei Wang calls "science fantasy". The bulk of these writings arise as a consequence of the introduction of Western science fiction, but the genre recapitulates many features characteristic of traditional Chinese fantastic and mythical stories (1997, 253). Compared with the utopian novels, or even the other parts of *The New Story of the Stone*, these adventures are much closer to early 20th-century sci-fi adventures than to the utopian ideas introduced in the preceding pages, and are therefore considered by many critics to be rather odd. Admittedly, the second part of the novel begins with a discussion of the abstract ideas on which the perfect society is based, and then elaborates on the adventures in the wonderland. However, apart from being a means to intrigue readers, there is an important reason for this insertion. That is, since it is far removed from the everyday life of the general public and the normal conventions of utopian fiction, it effectively avoids the need to concretely envisage everyday economic systems, cultural mores, family patterns, children's education, and so on, after stating the idea of a utopian society. Thus, while it does "touch upon the major issue of how traditional culture participates in the con-

struction of modernity" (Geng 2008, 185), on the whole, in almost half the length of the narration about the utopia, the novel abandons the specific design of political details and commonly-seen characters in utopia, leading the protagonists to temporarily disengage from the perfect society while travelling across continents and around the globe to the untouched wildernesses. By doing so, it avoids the great difficulty of reconciling the ancient and the modern, East and West, idea and practice in a utopia. The novel shows the foundation and frame of a utopia, but fails to give careful scrutiny of the possible contradictions at the deeper level, leaving the unattended major issues like whether the advanced technologies that sustain the utopia can survive in the system of absolute monarchy.

SHANGHAI: A QUASI-UTOPIA

As mentioned earlier, *The New Story of the Stone* is a depiction of highly imaginative geographical places, such as the underwater world. But when it comes to the Civilized World, it is not difficult for the reader to notice the features of the particular time and place. The Civilized World can well be a twisted mirror image of Shanghai. The realization of the Civilized World corresponds with a critique of Shanghai. This can be seen from the fact that Baoyu constantly looks back at Shanghai and compares it with the Civilized World as he travels through it. It is hardly possible to understand the Civilized World without taking Shanghai as the original image.

China was reduced to a semi-colony after the 1850s. Port cities like Shanghai relevant to global trade were incorporated into the European colonial project. They show a kind of colonial modernity which is the hybrid offspring of the encounter between margin and periphery in the context of imperial expansion (Isaacson 2017, 17, 20). With foreign concessions as "state within a state" enclaves, Shanghai had a strong colonial overtone. The number of Westerners in Shanghai increased from a few hundred in the mid-19th century to around 15,000 in 1910 (Bergère 2009, 85). The British, Indian, Japanese, French, American and other expatriates in Shanghai controlled the concessions and largely defined the overall social features of Shanghai. In the late 19th century, while the literati and officialdom in Beijing and elsewhere were still ashamed to socialize with the foreigners and opposed to learning foreign languages, there was already a quiet boom in the learning of foreign languages in Shanghai, and wealthy and official families there were allowing their children to receive a Western education (Zhang 2008, 15). *The New Story of the Stone* also mentions Baoyu's efforts to learn English in Shanghai. It can be argued that many of Shanghai's modern technologies, management styles and political ideas were imported from abroad, and the development of Shanghai as a modern metropolis bore a deep Western imprint (Zhang 2008, 25). At the beginning of the novel, Xue Pan tells Baoyu, who is new to Shanghai, "Shanghai is different from other places for four things, namely, carriage rides, park walks, listening to Chinese operas and visits to brothels, no fifth thing" (Wu 2016, 21–22). It is clear that such entertainment and social activities as horse-drawn carriage running and (Western-style) park strolling has a distinctly Western flavor. "In this foreign Shanghai, painstakingly modeled on the image of the capitals of Europe, residents

tried to re-create the amusements and way of their own class in their native societies" (Bergère 2009, 93). Clearly, in this novel, Shanghai is a uniquely modern Chinese city with a westernized undercurrent.

The author's mouthpiece Lao Shaonian points out that the foreign colonialists with great military power intimidated, beat and kicked the weak China, although claiming to be civilized. As the historian Marie-Claire Bergère puts it, the foreigners were regarded as models from whom the Chinese borrowed production techniques and economic, social and political systems. However, the acculturation that accompanied such borrowing was rendered the more humiliating by the arrogance of the foreigners and the privileges they enjoyed. "[I]n Shanghai, the customary xenophobia took the form of a modern nationalism that aimed to take up the Western challenge on its own terms: it aspired to economic modernization, material prosperity, and social progress" (2009, 5). Therefore, the author of *The New Story of the Stone* significantly transforms Shanghai's urban landscape into a utopia which is more advanced and magnificent than the westernized Shanghai. For example, in the Civilized World, Baoyu sees artefacts similar to those seen in Shanghai, such as gramophones and electric lights, but they are much more user-friendly. Baoyu also compares the clocks and watches in Shanghai with their improved counterparts in the Civilized World. When Baoyu sees both local products and Western goods in the trading market of the Civilized World, he reflects about feeling overwhelmed by the goods in the foreign shops in Shanghai; but now, after seeing the elegant products of the Civilized World, he finds the foreign goods unbearably vulgar. In another example, Baoyu visits Winterview Park in the Civilized World and compares it to the famous western-styled fashion center in Shanghai, Chang-Su-Ho Garden, which he finds less tasteful than Winterview Park. The novel uses a number of utopian scenarios to belittle and satirize Shanghai of that time. This critical function is common in utopian literature. Meanwhile, this belittling is also cathartic in nature, relieving the author's dissatisfaction with the inequalities he has seen in Shanghai in the process of learning from the outside world and transforming themselves.

Undeniably, the novel associates Shanghai with "civilization", because the Civilized World is actually based on the real-life Shanghai. From the core of the Civilized World radiates the light of Shanghai. There are already many sprouts of the author's ideal "civilization" in Shanghai: the first time Baoyu enters Shanghai, he sees modern industries such as yarn factories, clothing factories, and waterworks. The novel also describes in detail Baoyu's visits to a boiler factory, an iron factory, a gun factory, western-styled houses and parks. It also describes his reading of the new-styled newspapers and magazines, the discussions on gender issues and school education in Shanghai. Obviously, the images of advanced hospitals, factories, museums, naval academies, women's schools, and trading markets in the Civilized World do not derive from the traditions of ancient Chinese civilization, but from the many promising new things the author sees in his long experience of life in Shanghai. For example, Shanghai is home to the earliest museum founded by foreigners in China, the Siccawei Museum, which was founded in 1868 by French Jesuit missionary and zoologist Pierre Marie Heude.

Since the opening of Shanghai as a port, it has attracted a large number of landed gentry and cultural elites from the southern part of the country, as well as merchants and compradors from Guangdong and Fujian provinces. The author, Wu Jianren, from a declined family of officials in Guangdong province, though had started as a petty clerk, still belonged to an educated group of social and cultural elites. As for these groups, the upheavals brought about by the opening of Shanghai allowed them to find a measure of agreement regarding the idea that change was necessary, as they all intended to make the most of the economic conditions and to assume unprecedented political and social responsibilities (Bergère 2009, 104). It was the observation of China's modernization process and its challenges in the "experimental site" of Shanghai that made people aware of the need for change, and this attracted groups such as Wu's to make serious observations and think deeply about the society of the time. These groups often met and talked in restaurants and teahouses. *The New Story of the Stone*, for example, mentions Baoyu and Xue Pan's visit to a restaurant in Shanghai and the pungent smell of soot they experienced, which leads to the main concern of the novel – the issue of "civilization" and "barbarism". Baoyu says that he has heard people in Shanghai talk about "civilization and barbarism". They also say that of all the places in China, Shanghai is the most civilized (Wu 2016, 48). Baoyu mentions that Shanghai is "civilized", but in the meantime, suggests, with the symbolic smell, the "smoky" Shanghai is not a perfect place. However, against the backdrop of the collapse of the Qing Dynasty and the need for significant changes, the path of Shanghai's development remained an important source of ideas for Chinese intellectuals at the turn of the century as they explored the way forward. Shanghai flourished from commerce, the capital and technological resources from home and abroad, and was the most important economic center in modern China, as well as an important base for China to absorb various Western scientific, political, economic and cultural ideas. Although Shanghai was not a utopia, the Civilized World was still an imaginative renovation based on the so-called "barbarous and filthy" Shanghai of that time.

In the 12th chapter of *The New Story of the Stone*, the focus of the novel briefly shifts to Beijing. The local ruffian Wang Wei'er, who kills the parishioner Yang Shizi (a homonym for "foreign power") in revenge, befriends Xue Pan by chance while in exile in Shanghai. On his return to Beijing, Wang Wei'er joins the Boxer Rebellion and invites Xue Pan to join him. Baoyu then goes to the capital. In other chapters, the author satirizes the absurdity of the Boxer Rebellion and the lethargy of the officials, with the former claiming to be heavenly soldiers invulnerable to swords and spears. This is followed by the Gengzi Incident, a major historical event that saw the siege of the embassies and consulates and the flight of the imperial family to Shanxi province. It is easy to see that the cities in focus correspond to specific events and corresponding imagery, particularly Shanghai and Beijing, representatives of southern and northern Chinese cities respectively. Although the events mentioned in the novel are based on historical facts, the specific descriptions suggest the author's inclinations. In the 17th chapter, Baoyu, who has undergone historical upheavals and personal hardships, returns to Shanghai from Beijing and listens to a public lecture

on state affairs with Wu Bohui in Chang-Su-Ho Garden. Here, when Baoyu talks to Bohui about the foolishness of the Boxers and the decrepitude and incompetence of the Qing court that he saw in Beijing, Bohui states that "the capital [...] is conservative and closed. Shanghai can be called open [...]" (93). In fact, the reformation areas depicted in the novel are southern cities: Nanjing, Shanghai and Wuchang (though the author's intention is to criticize the reformers), while the major northern cities like Tianjin and Beijing are either mere brief transitional localities or are associated with people and events that the author disparages, for example, the Boxer Rebellion and Wang Wei'er. This juxtaposition of north and south may come from the author's inclination to portray the southern cities he is familiar with and reveals the fact that many of the major reforms in China in modern times began in the various southern port cities. This also reinforces a binary of the "reform-conservatism" stereotype of the South and the North roughly divided by the Yangtze River.

At the end of the novel, the false utopia (Shanghai) and the real utopia (the Civilized World) are merged in the protagonist's dream. In the final chapter of the novel, Baoyu dreams a dream in the Civilized World: he returns from the Civilized World to Shanghai. He learns that by this time China has had a new governmental system improved with evolutions rather than radical revolutions. The constitution that China had acquired on its visits to foreign countries absorbed the strength of the systems abroad, combined them with its own characteristics and opened up new horizons. Shanghai had taken back the extraterritoriality, developed its industry and enjoyed economic prosperity. "Shopping malls were opened in downtown and Nanshi, all the way to the Jiangnan Arsenal. Shops in Wusong are full of people, and conference halls were built in Pudong" (Wu 2016, 228). In the World Exposition held in Shanghai, "Countries were given places and they changed their venues to display various goods. Provinces of China also built their own venues, and there was a great deal of excitement and an inexhaustible amount of strange and exotically-manufactured goods" (228). This dream of the author came true 100 years later, in 2010, when Shanghai hosted the World Exposition, a showcase of national power. After waking up from his dream, Baoyu leaves the Civilized World, and his avatar, the Stone falls into the mountains, where Lao Shaonian discovers *The New Story of the Stone* engraved on it and passes it on to future generations.

In short, *The New Story of the Stone* explores, in the form of utopian fiction, the major conceptual and institutional issues of Chinese society at the time, such as "civilization/barbarism", "constitutionalism", and "reform/revolution". The allusion to reality reveals the author's utopian impulse and fervent imagination at a critical time of national transformation. Although this utopian imagination is somewhat abstract, it is undoubtedly based on concrete urban archetypes, such as the quasi-utopian Shanghai. As Theodore Huters' comment on Wu Jianren's other novel *Bizarre Happenings Eyewitnessed over Two Decades* (二十年目睹之怪现状, *Ershinian Mudu zhi guaixianzhuang*, 1906; Eng. trans. 1975) in which Shanghai is also the thematic foci, Wu Jianren "had voiced a sense of how the new urban space of Shanghai had come to represent the modern transformations that were taking place rapidly in China by the late Qing" (2005, 153). The utopia in the novel represents an integrated

expression of both social criticism and social ideals. With its emphasis on the abstract ideas of utopia, its territorial fictionalization and its real geographical locations, the novel creates a unique utopia that the Chinese society could best hope to conceive of at the beginning of the 20th century, and by this utopia the novel arrives at the learning from the Western civilization and the imaginative transcendence of it at the same time.

NOTES

[1] All translations from the Chinese are by the present authors unless otherwise noted.

LITERATURE

Ah, Ying. 2009. *Wanqing xiaoshuoshi* [A History of the Late Qing Fiction]. Nanjing: Jiangsu Literature and Art Publishing House.

Andolfatto, Lorenzo. 2021. "Utopia/Wutuobang as a Travelling Marker of Time." *The Historical Journal* 1, 64: 121–138.

Bergère, Marie-Claire. 2009. *Shanghai: China's Gateway to Modernity*. Trans. by Janet Lloyd. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Cao, Xueqin. [1791] 2008. *Hongloumeng* [Dream of the Red Chamber]. Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House.

Chen, Wenxin, and Tongzhou Wang. 2013. "Xinshitouji yu qingmo minchu de wenhua bianqian" [The New Story of the Stone and the Culture Transformation in Late Qing and Early Republic of China]. *Journal of Shanxi University* 2, 36: 22–26.

Geng, Chuanming. 2008. "Qingmo minchu wutuobang wenxue zonglun" [A Review of Utopian Literature in the Late Qing and Early Republican Period]. *Chinese Social Sciences* 4, 172: 176–190.

Huters, Theodore. 2005. *Bringing the World Home: Appropriating the West in Late Qing and Early Republican China*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.

Isaacson, Nathaniel. 2017. *Celestial Empire: The Emergence of Chinese Science Fiction*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Wang, David Der-wei. 1997. *Fin-de-siècle Splendor: Repressed Modernities of Late Qing Fiction, 1849–1911*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Wang, Dun. 2012. "Cong Wanqing xiaoshuo xinshitouji diyihui kan shikong biaoshu de xiandai chonggou" [A Modern Reconstruction of Spatio-Temporal Representation from the First Chapter of the Late Qing Novel *The New Story of the Stone*]. *Journal of Sun Yat-sen University* (Social Science Edition) 3, 52: 38–43.

Wang, Ermin. 2003. *Zhongguo xiandai sixiangshi* [A History of Thought of Modern China]. Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press.

Wang, Junnian. 2019. "The Annals of Wu Jianren." In *Wujianren yanjiu ziliao huibian* [A Compilation of Research Materials on Wu Jianren], ed. by Pei Xiuwei, 3–65. Harbin: Northern Literature and Arts Publishing House.

Wu, Jianren. [1908] 2016. *Xinshitouji* [The New Story of the Stone]. Hohhot: Inner Mongolia People's Publishing House.

Zhang, Zhongli, ed. 2008. *Jindai shanghai chengshi yanjiu (1840–1949)* [Urban Studies of Modern Shanghai (1840–1949)]. Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing House.

Zhou, Liyan. 2012. *Wuyou zhiyi: minguo shiqi de wutuobang xiangxiang* [The Significance of Utopia: Utopian Imagination in the Republican Period of China]. Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press.

Shanghai and the Chinese utopia in the early 20th century as presented in "The New Story of the Stone"

Utopia. Shanghai. Late Qing dynasty. "The New Story of the Stone." Wu Jianren.

The novel *The New Story of the Stone* (新石头记, *Xinshitouji* [1908] 2016), by Wu Jianren, is one of the most representative Chinese utopian works of the late Qing dynasty, or the early 20th-century. The novel is evenly divided into two parts. The first 20 chapters probe into the political and social conditions of late Qing China through the depictions of the protagonist's travels to cities such as Shanghai, Wuhan and Beijing where the relations with the West had been established. The last 20 chapters, which are antithetical to the first part, depict a utopia – the Civilized World. There is a twisted mirror-image relationship between Shanghai and the Civilized World. The Civilized World alludes to civilized Shanghai with advanced hospitals, factories, museums, schools for women, trading markets and so on. Based on the image of Shanghai, the highly westernized and modernized Chinese metropolis, the author works out this "genuine civilized country" in the hope of competing with the "false civilized Western country". Therefore, by making the geographic location of "the Civilized World" both fictional and real, the author finds his way to imagining a unique Chinese utopia which might surpass the Western civilization in the late Qing China.

Prof. Dr. Yiping Wang
College of Literature and Journalism
Jiangan Campus
Sichuan University
Chuanda Road, Chengdu
Sichuan Province, 610207
China
yipingwang@scu.edu.cn
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7961-9049

Prof. Dr. Ping Zhu
School of Foreign Languages and Literature
Suzhou University of Science and Technology
99 Xuefu Road, Suzhou
Jiangsu Province, 215009
China
zhuping@mail.usts.edu.cn

Chinese utopia: Its evolution, poetic anchorage and modern transformation

XIANGCHUN MENG – LIRONG ZHANG

DOI: https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2021.13.2.3

Since its coinage by Thomas More in 1516, utopia has gradually become an important concept in modern critical discourse. The idea of utopia as an "image of a future and better world" (Bauman 1976, 17) is derived from humans' instinctual longing for a better life in a better world. Despite claims about the displacement of utopia in the age of globalization (Tally 2013, vii), the end of utopia (Marcuse 2014, 249), or the rustiness of the idea of mass utopia (Buck-Morss 2000, x), utopia as an imagined entity and a critical concept, method, perspective, or pursuit, has great value because "to be human means always and everywhere to be more than this" (Jacobsen and Tester 2012, 2), and it is an "integral element of the critical attitude" (Bauman 1976, 15). Alluding to the hopeless uncertainty of life, Bloch states: "We live without knowing what for. We die without knowing where to" (2000, 175). However, utopia provides hope and humans feel "the necessity of hope in Dystopian times" (Moylan 2020, 164). Utopia can shape a common societal, emotional, cultural, and political vision. It is indispensable for the sustenance of civilization. Much has been said about the Chinese utopian tradition, but some fundamental questions remain unanswered: How has Chinese utopia evolved? What underpins Chinese utopia and why? And how does textual experience shift transform utopia into political vision and practice? Based on a diachronic review of China's major utopias, this paper is an attempt to answer these questions.

THE EVOLUTION OF CHINESE UTOPIA

"The idea of a perfect society is rooted deeply in Chinese history and culture" (Guo 2003, 197), and the Chinese utopian tradition still remains active. Chinese utopia has evolved from reactive poetic retreat to active political remolding, or from "escape" to "reconstruction" in Lewis Mumford's terms (1962, 15). In terms of temporal orientation, it has developed from pastness to futurity; in terms of spatial orientation, it has moved from "nowhere" to "somewhere" and then to "hereness".

Much of ancient Chinese literature, such as *The Book of Poetry* (诗经, *Shijing*) and *The Book of Rites* (礼记, *Liji*), contains utopian aspects, as do most of China's major philosophies including Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. The major forms of Chinese utopia include "the Land of Bliss" (乐土, *letu*) as in *The Book of Poetry*, the Taoist "small country with few inhabitants" (小国寡民, *xiaoguo guamin*),

the Confucian "Great Unity" (大同, *datong*), Tao Yuanming's (365–427) "Peach Blossom Spring" (桃花源, *taohuayuan*), and Kang Youwei's (1858–1927) "World of Great Unity" (大同世界, *datong shijie*). Kang's utopia marks a series of shifts. Before Kang, the Taiping Rebellion leader Hong Xiuquan's "Christian version" (Guo 2003, 198) of utopia named "Heavenly Kingdom" (太平天国, *taiping tianguo*) emerged and quickly perished. After Kang, there appeared the "liberal-socialist version" (Guo 2003, 201) of utopia spearheaded by the nationalist revolution leader Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925) and Mao's "communist version" (202). Guo's view of Hong's utopia as a "Christian version" seems to be simplistic considering that Hong's Christian ideas were only possible on the basis of Confucianism – Hong himself being a Confucian scholar who failed the imperial examination more than ten times. "Under the influence of Confucianism, traditional Chinese society is one that is free of any religious dominance. In general, the Chinese cultural tradition is characterized by its secularism" (Zhang 2008, 9)[1]. In China, no mass utopia has ever been conceived solely on the basis of religion.

In the sense of an "ideal world", the first landmark utopia in Chinese literature was created by Lao Tzu, the originator of Taoism, who describes "a small country with few inhabitants". He writes:

> Given a small country with few inhabitants, [...] there might still be weapons of war but no one would drill with them. He could bring it about that the people should have no use for any form of writing save knotted ropes, should be contented with their food, pleased with their clothing, satisfied with their homes, should take pleasure in their rustic tasks. The next place might be so near at hand that one could hear the cocks crowing in it, the dogs barking; but the people would grow old and die without ever having been there (1997, 169).

Due to its semantic indeterminacy and lack of time markers, this text can be interpreted in many ways. However, it reveals a strong longing for a regressive rather than progressive society where virtues are valued over the affluence and order. It is earth-rooted, anarchist, and situated "nowhere". It is reactive and poetic.

The Confucian Analects also presents an ideal society governed by virtues. Like the Taoist utopia, the Confucian utopia is also "nowhere" though it is not completely detached from the real world. It attempts to create out of the real world a utopia of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, loyalty, reciprocity, filial piety, and rites. The Confucian transcendental secularity has contributed to the establishment of Confucianism as a state philosophy and of Confucian utopia as the prototype for modern Chinese political ideal.

The Book of Poetry, China's first general collection of poems arguably compiled by Confucius, presents a utopia as the flipside of the real world. Its minimalistic evocation of an "nowhere" utopia in the anonymous poem "Large Rats" (硕鼠, *Shuoshu*) is realized by the alternate mention of the "land of bliss", "happy state" (乐国, *leguo*) and "happy borders" (乐郊, *lejiao*). The utopia of *letu*, *leguo* and *lejiao* is also reactive and poetic.

The Book of Rites, compiled by Dai Sheng of the Western Han dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE) describes a highly influential pre-More utopia as follows:

> When the Great Way was practiced, All-under-Heaven was public-spirited (天下为公, *tian xia wei gong*). They chose men of worth and ability [for public office]; they practiced good faith and cultivated good will. Therefore, people did not single out only their parents to love, nor did they single out only their children for care. They saw to it that the aged were provided for until the end, that the able-bodied had employment, and that the young were brought up well. [...] This was known as the period of the Great Unity (Nylan 2001, 196).

This is a Confucian ideal-based meritocratic utopia of Great Unity. It is still oriented toward the past, essentially nowhere, and literally a "paradise lost". It conveys retreat, endorsed by poetic justice, to primitive communism.

The best-known Chinese poetic utopia is *The Peach Blossom Spring* created by Tao Yuanming of the Eastern Jin dynasty (317–420). Disappointed in his political career, Tao resigned and returned to the farming land. In his preface to the poem of *The Peach Blossom Spring*, he describes a beautiful, detached world of bliss. The narrative goes that a fisherman sailed up a river and chanced on a peach grove in full blossom. When he reached the river's source, he found a small grotto, squeezed through the narrow entrance and finally discovered a utopia, where people lived in perfect harmony with nature. The people there told the fisherman that their ancestors escaped to this place during the chaotic Qin dynasty and they had lived there ever since with no contact with the outside. After bidding farewell, the fisherman came out and reported this to the magistrate. The magistrate and his followers tried in vain to find the way back. Later, after a noble-minded gentleman died of an illness before going to search for the apparently inaccessible utopia, no further attempt was made. This utopia is isolated, regressive, anarchist and poetic. It is the peak of Chinese poetic utopias. It marks an important shift from a "nowhere" utopia to a "somewhere" utopia and from past-orientation to temporal synchronicity with the current world. A utopia of spatial isolation and temporal synchronicity like this can be tentatively termed a "parallel utopia".

The first mature post-More political Chinese utopia was constructed by Kang Youwei, the major voice for the 1898 "Wuxu Reform". His prescriptions for the enfeebled China included learning from the West, the implementation of democracy, and the development of science and technology. Kang invented a theory of social evolution, advocating that human society will develop from disorder to "small tranquility" (小康, *xiaokang*) and ultimately to "Great Unity". In his masterpiece *Book of Great Unity* (大同书, *Datong Shu*, 1956), Kang calls on people to pursue freedom, equality, and philanthropy to create an unselfish, communal society. His ten volumes, *To Dissolve Racial Boundaries to Unify Humanity* (去种界同人类, *Qu Zhongjie Tong Renlei*, 1956) and *To Abandon Private Ownership for Communism* (去产界公生业, *Qu Chanjie Gong Sheng Ye,* 1956) included, constitute Kang's utopian design of social structure, the ways of production, living, values, institutions, etc. Kang's utopia is a collage of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Darwinist social evolution. Kang briefly mentions his ideological indebtedness to Confucianism, and his absorption of Buddhism is clearly shown in his skillful use of Buddhist notions such as the suffering of all sentient beings and a world of supreme bliss. Kang's Taoist ideal is reflected in his emphasis on the cultivation of the body and mind and on peace and

tranquility. His idea of social development resonates with Darwin's theory of evolution. The discursive and ideological hybridity in Kang's utopia indicates that China was reshaped by traditional culture and Western thought. Kang's utopia is China's first forward-looking political utopia, marking a fundamental shift from pastness to futurity, from reactive poetic retreat to active political remolding. From 1900 to 1919, Chinese utopian literature greatly flourished "not only as a response to the severe setbacks encountered by China in modern times, but also, to an even greater extent, out of the desire of the Chinese to pass beyond tradition and search for a 'new continent' of human civilization" (Geng 2008, 176). This utopian upsurge has shown a strong tendency of active political remolding in a literary way, while Sun Yat-sen's and Mao's utopias are aimed at directly remolding the country politically.

In modern China, the Chinese utopian tradition has merged somewhat with Western traditions and thus Chinese utopia ever since has become a "glocalized utopia" (Kumar 2010, 561). This synthesis has laid a solid foundation for China's reinvention of a modern national political ideal in the post-Mao era.

THE POETIC ANCHORAGE OF CHINESE UTOPIA

Chinese utopia has strong poetic anchorage. To a large degree, utopia is poetry, and vice versa, which is shaped by the philosophy of the Heaven-Earth-man unity.

In the Chinese tradition, utopia was conceived in the same way as poetic realms are. For the Chinese, poetry and utopia are essentially the same functionally. Each poem creates its own textual experience in the form of textual reality. Due to its imagism, suggestiveness, and transcendence over the actual reality, each textual reality can be a personal utopia, but only the most appealing personal utopia can become a mass utopia.

The poetic anchorage of Chinese utopia is determined by the Chinese perception of the Heaven-Earth-man unity which is at the core of traditional Chinese thought. The unity contains at least three inter-connected dimensions, namely, space, man's relationship with Heaven and Earth, and man's self-perception.

Heaven (*tian*) was viewed as the infinite space and the highest divine force with the power to punish and reward, and it was the personification of justice and reason. For the Chinese, if Heaven is awe-inspiring, Earth is lovable. The cult of Earth, which started in the Neolithic era, was associated with fertility and earth itself. The Chinese reverence for Heaven and Earth developed along a naturalistic path and ultimately led to a half-instinctual and half-acquired love of earth. "For we are of the earth, earth-born and earthbound. [...] [A] sentiment for this Mother Earth, the feeling of true affection and attachment, one must have for this temporary abode of body and spirit, if we are to have a sense of spiritual harmony" (Lin 1998, 24). The farming society is the prototype of all Chinese utopias even in the industrial or post-industrial era. Neither in More's *Utopia* nor Plato's *Republic* can we find as strong an attachment to Earth. As the most intelligent of creatures, man is still subject to the grace and wrath of Heaven and Earth. In traditional Chinese thought, man is "small" in big nature as shown in Chinese landscape paintings where man is either non-existent or as a mere decoration to the landscape. The idea of a smaller self or no self at all

makes it possible for man to view things through the lens of things, thus burring the boundary between the aesthetic subject and the aesthetic object. This blurred boundary and strong earth attachment combined promote the idealization and poeticization of nature. Such nature attachment explains why urban utopias hardly exist in Chinese literature and why *shanshui* (山水, mountains and rivers) and *tianyuan* (田园, fields and homesteads) were so significant that they became distinct poetic genres. The notion of the Heaven-Earth-man unity has taken roots in the Chinese consciousness with a meaning exemplifying harmony, beauty, and poetic dwelling. This unity creates greater "meaning potential" and therefore tends to generate the poetic. For Chinese, the poetic is the aesthetic basis of the utopian, and the utopian is the transformation of the poetic.

The Heaven-Earth-man unity tends to generate the poetic because the blurred boundaries tend to generate *yijing* (意境, mood-idea-image). *Yijing* is the artistically or aesthetically evoked or generated realm or textual aesthetic experience of mood-idea-image. In the Chinese tradition, *yijing* constitutes the supposedly most fundamental basis for poetry. It is about the scene beyond the scene and the image beyond the image; it is in the mind's eye, not in sight. Its generation looks simple: the text creates some texperience, and then this texperience is transformed into *yijing* by subjective agency under the influence of the Heaven-Earth-man unity. However, its mechanism is complex: the creation of *yijing* depends on the trinity of the heart (emotion), the mind (idea, thought), and the scene (things out there). This trinity is again, determined by the Heaven-Earth-man unity because factors that generate this trinity, such as the interaction between the real and the unreal, the space of semantic indeterminacy, imagistic thinking, the highly poetic tenor of traditional Chinese culture, and the highly evocative, suggestive, pictograph-based Chinese characters, are unexceptionally shaped by that unity. *Yijing* is both a means and a result of aesthetic perception. As a means, it makes poetry possible, and therefore makes utopia possible; as a result, it is texperience, an evoked or constructed mental realm. Therefore, our view of "poetry as utopia" can be further refined as "*yijing* as utopia".

Tao Yuanming's utopia fully exemplifies the poetic anchorage of the Chinese utopian tradition. His utopia possesses almost all the elements that generate *yijing* and therefore enchant the Chinese mind. It has beautiful landscape, political detachment, idealized *tianyuan*, equality, undisturbed tranquility, peace, naturalness, timelessness, anarchism, freedom, and more fundamentally, the Heaven-Earth-man unity. Tao's writing has greatly fortified the poetic anchorage of Chinese utopia. Regarding Tao's cultural significance, Lu Shuyuan states that "[a]s Tao lived to the rhythm of Nature, he was bestowed with maximum freedom, thus becoming a fundamentally beautiful though simple epitome of human existence, and of dwelling poetically on the earth" (2017, 2). Due to the strong "Peach Blossom Complex" (Meng 2005, 44), almost all the following Chinese utopias before Kang Youwei are either variations of or footnotes to Tao's utopia.

In short, without poetic anchorage, Chinese utopia can hardly be possible. Poetic anchorage functions as the aesthetic underpinning for Chinese utopia. Chinese uto-

pia is not only the aesthetic object, but also the result of aesthetic perception. Even political utopias in China are poetic. This tendency of aestheticization makes political utopias not only more acceptable, but also more appreciable.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF CHINESE UTOPIA

Utopia is not something fixed; it is "a process of becoming that is constantly reformulated" (Boer and Li 2015, 320). In the modern context, Chinese utopia is often absorbed into political discourse and transformed into national political vision, policies and practice, all through the mechanism of what we term texperience shift.

Texperience shift, or the transfer and transformation of a textual experience, occurs in many forms. One's texperience in appreciating, say, an original Chinese poem, tends to be carried over to one's subsequent reading of its translation. However, this type of texperience shift is not the focus here. Our focus is how texperience helps to reconstruct reality. Derived from the actual reality, the textual reality, which is essentially texperience, can conversely reshape the perceived actual reality. In other words, texperience and reality can be mutually transformative. The primary form of texperience shift is that pre-understanding or preconception influences subsequent perception. For instance, ordinary apricot blossoms are no longer ordinary because of their generous idealization and poeticization in previous writings. In this case, texperience affects the perception of the reality. Another form is the elevation of some "lower" reality into "higher" texperience, as can be seen from the Chinese tendency to idealize nature. The third and most important form is the "realization" of texperience in the real world. Accordingly, Chinese utopia, built on utopian texperience, is often transformed into a cultural or spiritual icon; it helps to transform the mundane world into a utopia, and is often converted into or realized as real-world political vision, guidelines, policies, and social practice.

Of the first case, the "Peach Blossom Spring" is a good example. The texperience of *The Peach Blossom Spring* is unavoidably carried over to the reading of subsequent utopias. More importantly, due to its multiple significances and societal relevance, the "Peach Blossom Spring" is repeatedly resurrected as something of immediate hereness and nowness and serves both commercial and ecological purposes. Commercially, it is converted into an enchanting, marketable icon. Many neighborhoods in China are named "Peach Blossom Spring" because the name itself can evoke utopian texperience and that texperience will reshape people's perception of the neighborhood. *The Peach Blossom Spring* and its later variations also serve ecological purposes. Their related utopian texperience, when transferred to the perception of the real world, helps to curb the impulse to purse development in mere economic terms by making the real world dystopian.

In the second case, the mundane world is often elevated into a utopia. Due to the Heaven-Earth-man unity again, Chinese men of letters, especially ancient poets, are obsessed with the expression or representation of nature. In their writings, nature is refined, poeticized, idealized, and idolized. For instance, Jiangnan, a region in the south of the Yangtze River, is elevated in Chinese literature into a land of poetic enchantment, and Suzhou and Hangzhou into paradises on earth as they are popu-

larly called. The utopian conversion of a countryside hometown is another example. Given China's cultural and emotional roots in rural areas, homesickness for many with an acquired identity of "urban dwellers" is a kind of poeticized sentiment that evokes two hometowns: the utopianized hometown where they spiritually dwell and the real hometown where they physically inhabited. A reading of Xu Qinggen's two collections of poetry, *Voice from a Utopian Village* (2016) and *Sonnets of a Utopian Village* (2020) would reveal this. In an even more interesting case, a single poetic line can help to transform an ordinary place into an extraordinary utopia. The Chinese poet Hai Zi (1964–1989) wrote a poem containing this line: "I want to have a house by the sea, with myriad spring blossoms in glee" (2007, 45). Herein, the earth, the sea, the dwelling, vernal verdure, seclusion, peace, rejoicing and heavenly bliss, where all perfect beings exist in a perfect state of being, speak so effectively to the Chinese consciousness that it immediately creates an ethereal utopia out of a tangible, mundane place due to the reciprocal empathetic unity between the self and the elements.

In terms of the conversion of utopia into real-world political vision and social practice, China may be the keenest practitioner. At the personal level, utopia is usually achieved as utopian substitutes. This type of transformation means the "privatization of hope" (Thompson 2013, 1). The Chinese are so capable of utopian texperience shift that they have acquired numerous utopian substitutes such as *shanshui, tianyuan* and classical gardens. *Shanshui* is nature per se, *tianyuan* is about homestead and farming in nature, and classical gardens are nature reproduced and refined (Wang 2012, 105). Paintings and poetry of *shanshui* and *tianyuan*, which artistically and poetically recaptures *shanshui* and *tianyuan* per se, are also a kind of utopia realized. At the national level, traditional utopian discourse such as "Great Unity" and "harmony" is absorbed in modern political discourse. Utopia, ideology and national political vision in China are usually interwoven. In a sense, modern China's political discourse is politicized poetics, and its practice is poeticized or utopianized politics. What's more, Chinese literature has the rare quality of transcendence, which endows it with a vital force that never fades away despite dynastic shifts. "Such personality of transcendence must be ascribable to the utopian spirit of the class of scholars [...] and it is a driver of ancient Chinese scholarship and the living soul of ancient literary thought" (Li 2018, 2). This spirit of transcendence has greatly facilitated the conversion of mere texperience into the will of all. Howard P. Segal argues that "[g]enuine utopias frequently seek not to escape from the real world but to make the real world better" (2012, 7). What the Chinese choose to do is to make a utopia out of this world by realizing their utopian texperience. In addition, Confucian "Great Unity" has gained sufficient relevance in modern China because, for one thing, it has inspired modern China's blueprint utopias like Kang Youwei's *World of Great Unity*, and, for another, it transcends both the reality of its own time and that of the modern era. "Memory and utopia represent two different positions of the subject, one oriented towards the past, the other towards the future, both converging in their strong grounding in the present" (Passerini 2014, 8). Transcendental as it is, a utopia can have synchronicity with and relevance to reality if it engages with the present, and therefore can be "realized" some way.

The transformations of Chinese utopia contribute to a better way of existence. "The ultimate goal of human life is Utopia" (Jameson 1971, 173). For some, "utopianism is evoked today like an amputee reaching for a phantom limb: there is no 'there' there" (Flaxman 2006, 209). For the Chinese, however, utopia is there and can be here and now as our discussion has demonstrated. The Chinese anthropologist Xiaotong Fei believes that "[o]nly with the relentless pursuit and exploration of the living now, can this ultimate 'beautiful society' (美好社会, *meihao shehui*) emerge on this earth" (2014, 266). For him, a possible way is this: "Appreciate your own beauty and that of others'. If beauty is held in common, there will ultimately be Great Unity under Heaven" (美美与共, 天下大同, *Meimei yugong, tiaxia datong*, 297).

CONCLUSION

Utopia is both a choice and a necessity for human civilization because it brings hope and vision that generate both the will and the way. China has a strong and active utopian tradition. The major Chinese utopias include, chronologically, "the Land of Bliss" evoked in *The Book of Poetry*, the "small country with few inhabitants" presented by the Taoist founder Lao Tzu in his *Tao Te Ching*, the Confucian "Great Unity", the "Peach Blossom Spring" constructed by Tao Yuanming of the Eastern Jin dynasty, which serves as the quintessential epitome of poetic dwelling, Kang Youwei's "World of Great Unity" collectively shaped by a collage of thoughts. Chinese utopia has evolved from reactive poetic retreat to active political remolding, from pastness to futurity, and from "nowhere" to "somewhere" and then to hereness. It has strong poetic anchorage because the poetic is the basis for the utopian and the philosophy of the Heaven-Earth-man unity heavily defines the Chinese mind. For the Chinese, to a large extent, utopia is poetry, and vice versa. Chinese utopia is half about poetics and half about politics. Through the mechanism of texperience shift, Chinese utopia helps to transform the mundane world into a utopia of sorts. It is often transformed into a useable cultural or spiritual icon, or national political vison, policies, blueprints and concrete social practice. A good knowledge of Chinese utopia, especially its evolution, poetic underpinning, and modern transformation, can lead to a better understanding of China's utopian tradition, the entanglement between poetics and politics with utopia as the link, and China's poetic-utopian-political vision and practice.

NOTES

[1] All translations from the Chinese are by the present authors unless otherwise noted.

LITERATURE

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1976. *Socialism: The Active Utopia*. London: Ruskin House.

Bloch, Ernst. 2000. *The Spirit of Utopia*. Trans. by Anthony A. Nassar. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Boer, Roland, and Zhixiong Li. 2015. "Interpreting Socialism and Capitalism in China. A Dialectic of Utopia and Dystopia." *Utopian Studies* 26, 2: 309–323. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5325/utopianstudies.26.2.0309.

Buck-Morss, Susan. 2000. *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Fei, Xiaotong. 2014. *Zhongguo Wenhua De Chongjian* [The Reconstruction of Chinese Culture]. Shanghai: East China Normal University Press.

Flaxman, Gregory. 2006. "The Future of Utopia." *Symplokē* 14, 1–2: 197–215.

Geng, Chuanming. 2008. "Qingmo minchu wutuobang wenxue zonglun" [A Review of Utopian Literature in the Late Qing and Early Republican Period]. *Chinese Social Sciences* 4: 176–190.

Guo, Baogang. 2003. "Utopias of Reconstruction: Chinese Utopianism from Hong Xiuquan to Mao Zedong." *The Journal of Comparative Asian Development* 2, 2: 197–209. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/15339114.2003.9678381.

Hai Zi. 2007. *Hai Zi De Shi* [Poetry of Hai Zi]. Ed. by Zhou Yi. Beijing: China Bookstore.

Jacobsen, Michael Hviid, and Keith Tester, eds. 2012. *Utopia: Social Theory and the Future*. Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing.

Jameson, Fredric. 1971. *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Kumar, Krishan. 2010. "The Ends of Utopia." *New Literary History* 41, 3: 549–569.

Lao Tzu. 1997. *Tao Te Ching*. Trans. by Arthur Waley. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

Li, Chunqing. 2018. *Wutuobang yu Shi: Zongguo Gudai Shiren Wenhua yu Wenxue Jiazhiguan* [Utopia and Poetry: Ancient Chinese Scholar Culture and Literary Values]. Beijing: Beijing Normal University Press.

Lin, Yutang. 1998. *The Importance of Living*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

Lu, Shuyuan. 2017. *The Ecological Era and Classical Chinese Naturalism: A Case Study of Tao Yuanming*. Trans. by Meng Xiangchun. Singapore: Springer. DOI: http://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-1784-1.

Marcuse, Herbert. 2014. *Marxism, Revolution and Utopia: Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse, Volume Six*. Ed. by Douglas Kellner and Clayton Pierce. Oxon and New York, NY: Routledge.

Meng, Erdong. 2005. "Zhongguo Wenxue Zhong De Wutuobang Lixiang" [The Utopian Ideal of Chinese Literature]. *Journal of Peking University* 42, 1: 41–50.

Moylan, Tom. 2020. "The Necessity of Hope in Dystopian Times: A Critical Reflection." *Utopian Studies* 31, 1: 164–193. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5325/utopianstudies.31.1.0164.

Mumford, Lewis. 1962. *The Story of Utopias*. New York: The Viking Press.

Nylan, Michael. 2001. *The Five "Confucian" Classics*. New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press.

Passerini, Luisa. 2014. *Memory and Utopia: The Primacy of Inter-Subjectivity*. London and New York, NY: Routledge.

Segal, Howard P. 2012. *Utopias: A Brief History from Ancient Writings to Virtual Communities*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Tally, Robert T. Jr. 2013. *Utopia in the Age of Globalization: Space, Representation and the World-System*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230391901.

Thompson, Peter. 2013. "Introduction: The Privatization of Hope and the Crisis of Negation." In *The Privatization of Hope: Ernst Bloch and the Future of Utopia*, eds. by Peter Thompson and Slavoj Žižek, 1–20. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press.

Wang, Shoufu. 2012. "'Benyu Ziran, Gaoyu Ziran' Yu Zhongguo Shanshui Yuanlin Zaojing" ["On and above Nature" and Chinese Garden Landscaping]. *Chinese Horticulture Abstracts* 27, 11: 105–106.

Zhang, Longxi. 2008. "Wutuobang: Shisu Linian Yu Zhongguo Chuantong" [Utopia: Secularism and the Chinese Tradition]. *Shangdong Social Sciences* 157, 9: 5–13.

Chinese utopia: Its evolution, poetic anchorage and modern transformation

Chinese Utopia. Evolution. Poetic anchorage. Texperience shift. Transformation.

The major forms of Chinese utopia include "the Land of Bliss", the Taoist "small country with few inhabitants", the Confucian "Great Unity", Tao Yuanming's "Peach Blossom Spring", Kang Youwei's "World of Great Unity" and its modern variations. Chinese utopia has evolved from reactive poetic retreat to active political remolding. It has developed from pastness to nowness in terms of temporal orientation, and from "nowhere" to "somewhere" and then to hereness in terms of spatial orientation. Chinese utopia has strong poetic anchorage, which is determined by the Heaven-Earth-man unity. Through the mechanism of texperience shift, Chinese utopia in the modern context is often transformed into a usable cultural or spiritual icon, or national political vision, policies, blueprints and concrete social practice. A comprehensive insight into the Chinese utopian tradition helps to understand the utopian-poetic-political entanglement in China.

Prof. Meng Xiangchun, Ph.D.
School of Foreign Languages
Soochow University
1, Shizi Street
Suzhou 215006
Jiangsu province
China
mxc_512@aliyun.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0654-3781

Zhang Lirong, Lecturer
School of Foreign Languages
Soochow University
1, Shizi Street
Suzhou 215006
Jiangsu province
China
Lirong1220@hotmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7316-4415

The Islamist version of utopia: The politics of redesigning space

SEVAL ŞAHİN – DİDEM ARDALI BÜYÜKARMAN

DOI: https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2021.13.2.4

Even though it is a no-place by its very nature, a utopia locates a society as an imagined ideal in a specific setting. As Fatima Vieira notes in "The Concept of Utopia", "Utopists depart from the observation of the society they live in, note down the aspects that need to be changed and imagine a place where those problems have been solved. Quite often, the imagined society is the opposite of the real one, a kind of inverted image of it" (2010, 8). In that sense while utopias might imagine a better way of living in a different place, in an ideal society, maybe even under the reestablished sovereignty of an ancient self-narrative, its hope of realizing such ideals is anchored in a relatable place even if it might be, and often is, a stretch in the form of a metaphor. This article examines two Islamist novels in Turkish, Ali Nar's *The Space Farmers* (*Uzay Çiftçileri*, 1988) and Ayşe Şasa's *The Novel of the Monkeys* (*Şebek Romanı*, 2004), in order to explore how the religious ideologies of the novelists become manifest in their utilization of spatial settings as utopian inverted images of reality. In their utopian imaginary, these two novels propose "the Christian West" as being responsible for the corruption of the world as place and promote its improvement through a transformative wave that will emerge in Turkey and move towards Europe. In such an ideological picture, the spatial settings are loaded with heavily symbolic meanings and emerge as allegories of clashing civilizations. Previous scholars such as Christian Szyska (1995) and Erol Gökşen (2015) have discussed these works within the framework of utopias and dystopias, although Szyska's discussion is limited to Nar's novel and Gökçen does not focus on the concept of place in his study. In their pursuit of utopian places as inverted images of reality and ideological supremacy, the novelists not only denounce the secular Turkey established in 1923 but also tell their desired stories of the rebirth of Islamist power. The ways in which they tell these stories, however, are deeply fraught with ideological problems. Neither of their utopias are just Islamist, i.e. proponents of the spiritual merits, the social practices, and the cultural values of Islam. Instead, they both promote a radical version of it and fervently advocate its supremacy over other belief systems (Toumi 2011, 126–132).[1] They establish their ideological position clearly by setting their utopic worlds against the West in zealous antagonism and imagine a world in which their form of radical Islam rules.

The genre of utopia appeared in Turkish literature from the 19th century onward in the form of dreams whereby intellectuals such as Namık Kemal and Ziya Paşa ex-

plored their thoughts on a better world by means of a dream. For instance, in Namık Kemal's *Dream* (*Rüya*, 1872), the utopia is a world in which milk flows from the taps in the morning and all the roads run on a rail system. In Ziya Paşa's identically-titled *Dream* (*Rüya*, 1868), on the other hand, the character/narrator enters a pool in London, meets the Ottoman Sultan of the time, Abdülaziz, and convinces him that the state of the country is not good. In such utopian dreams, the characters often suddenly find themselves in some other place than they were previously, or they just appear in a world that no one knows about, or they ascend to the sky.

The relationship between utopias and politics continued with the foundation of the modern Turkish Republic in 1923. Paralleling the period's drive to establish a nation-state, writers such as Halide Edip and Yakup Kadri penned their versions of utopia in lieu with that political model. While Halide Edip, in her novel *The New Turan* (*Yeni Turan*, 1912), designed a world ruled by the Turks, Yakup Kadri, in his *Ankara* (1934) portrays the new capital of the young Republic as a highly developed place; all citizens wholeheartedly embrace the new values, and following the revolution of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the country is so advanced that it competes with the West.

As can be seen in this brief introduction, the genre of utopia in Turkish literature is intimately related with the political and it is driven not only to criticize the status quo but also to propose a new and better order that is relevant to the ideological perspective in question. This new order might propose the reformation of an old one or the fixing of the present one. Such a stance had a vital impact on the reformulation of places, as spatial settings bear both political references and the broader implications of utopian narratives.

Following the coup of September 12, 1980, there has been a marked increase in the rise of Islamist literature in Turkey and writers such as Şule Yüksel Şenler and Minyeli Abdullah explored the rediscovery of Islam by those who previously embraced the modernized and secular lifestyle. In these kinds of works, characters who never received a religious education or who turned faithless are depicted as being transformed with the re-introduction of religion into their lives. These characters begin to practice their religion and perceive the world around them in a different light. Such narratives with their religious messages diversified in the 1990s in terms of their forms and styles, and in the 2000s, the different forms and styles were replaced by different writing modes. In her novels *Schrödinger's Cat: Nightmare* (*Schrödinger'in Kedisi: Kâbus*, 1999), and *Dream* (*Rüya,* 2001), one of the leading conservative authors, Alev Alatlı, criticizes the new world order and proposes a dystopia of Turkish society having lost its native values through modernization. Mukadder Gemici and Handan Acar Yıldız also use utopia in their stories, but instead of utilizing it to depict loss of values, they combine it with narratives of the end of the world to re-imagine a metaphoric new world.

Although Ayşe Şasa and Ali Nar were born in the same year (1941) and died only one year apart (in 2014 and 2015, respectively), they came from notably different social backgrounds. Şasa grew up in Istanbul and graduated from the prestigious Arnavutköy American Girls' College (Robert College). After being treated for a mental illness in 1973, she was diagnosed with schizophrenia and maintained a reclu-

sive life for years. In 1981, she was introduced to Islamic mysticism through İbnü'l Arabi's *The Ringstones of Wisdom* (also translated as *The Bezels of Wisdom; Fusüsu'l-Hikem*) and announced that she was cured of her psychological problems with the help of these readings. Nar came from the provincial city of Kars in northeast Turkey, graduated from the Istanbul Advanced Islam Institute, and taught at various religious vocational high schools. He published his prose and poetry in periodicals, including *Hakses*, *Millî Gazete, Yeni Devir*, *Pınar*, *Mavera*, *Yeni Sanat*, *Sedir*, *Çınar*, *Tohum*, *İslam*, *Millî Gençlik* and *Düşünce*, and founded the Turkish branch of the World Islamic Literature Federation.

Given the intrinsic presence of ideological undertones in imagining a new world order and seen from a literary historical perspective, Ayşe Şasa and Ali Nar can be said to be following a tradition in their versions of Turkish utopian literature. Unlike their 19th-century Ottoman predecessors, they do not employ the dream format but opt for a rather more direct critique of the society created by the Republic. Yet, their criticism of the Republican inclination towards the West at the expense of losing the native lifestyle is still very much ideologically in line with them. Both writers are particularly critical of the abolition of the caliphate, which ended the global Islamic leadership of the Ottoman Sultan in 1924, as a part of the Republican drive towards secularization. Accordingly, they establish their utopian narratives through religious references and against the Western civilization. Consequently, the two novels are full of references to Islam and Christianity, as well as the narratives shared by both. Their Islamist utopias present their spatial settings in two specific forms: by pitching the West as an element for comparison and by founding these comparisons on monotheistic religious references. At a semantic level, both novels are based on a set of simplistic binary oppositions: East/West, Secular/Islamist, old order/new order, Christian/Muslim, past/present, corrupted place/idealized place and the like.

THE WEST AGAINST THE WEST

The connections between the chosen spatial settings of the novels and the ideologies of the novelists are too blatantly symbolic to ignore, which renders their political positions lacking in subtlety and refinement. In both works, the world of utopia is constructed upon an opposition against the West whereby the supremacy of the Islamist nation shines bright. In *The Space Farmers*, a Turkistan Islamic Republic is established after a legendary triumph in space conquest. In *The Novel of the Monkeys*, Vienna, a city that was in reality besieged by the Ottomans twice without success (in 1529 and 1683) and stopped the Ottoman advancement in Europe, is preferred as the setting for the corruption of civilization. The (probably unintended) irony in the choices aside, in both cases the idea of conquest emerges as being central to the utopias.

As announced on its cover, *The Space Farmers* was published as a "utopian space" novel in 1988. While its temporal setting is unclear, spatially it begins in a village in the eastern Turkish region of Malatya. Then a flashback to the 21st century reveals the space wars between two superpowers on Earth, named the West and the North. Their story is rounded up with how these two cruel superpowers weakened each oth-

er through the wars and destroyed one another by means of the nuclear headquarters they built in space. The "enslaved" Earth nations in the East, particularly the Middle East, are thus freed from their chains and they finally manage to unite. The Palestine issue is resolved and the Jews who are wandering despondently in the desert have gone under the protective wings of the compassionate Islamist nation. The civil wars in the East are long forgotten, the Soviet Bloc states are gone, and the Turkistan Islamic Republic is founded. The European countries outside Islam, that is the Western world as defined by the writer, are being forced to surrender to the Islamist world with the pressure of the migrant workers arriving from the East.

Similarly, Ayşe Şasa's utopia is also set in the future and built upon the opposition between Western civilization and the Muslim world. *The Novel of the Monkeys* is set in the Vienna of 2075. Chaos, viruses and mental illness reign in the city and in such a climate of fear, everything is controlled by an authority. As in the early utopias of the Ottoman era, from the very beginning of the novel, material comforts, such as having access to all the delights, all the geographies and all the knowledge of the world with the push of a button, stand out as representations of Western modernity. The protagonist of the novel, Amadeus, lives in his modest civil servant's apartment on the 13th floor of a skyscraper and like the other residents in his buildings can live comfortably without ever going out of the building. So, Amadeus never leaves his home in the three months of the novel's narrated time and merely listens to the strange noises coming from outside his window.

Şasa builds her utopia on the strength of the recognizable yet alien spatial setting, the city of Vienna, the heart of European cosmopolitan culture and art:

> The growling of orangutans that resound at the Pavlov Square... Police sirens that can be heard in short intervals... Especially the monkey-cry alarms of those in orange overalls... The chaos that rocks the bright Vienna morning... In its old name Vienna, in its new name XB21 has been being shaken up with new provocations for a while ([2004] 2019, 11).[2]

Three types of designated residents live in this utopian city, formerly known as Vienna but now called XB21: "the Monkeys", "the MDs" (that is, the mentally defective), and "the Humans". Monkeys believe that human beings have descended from monkeys, the MDs are immigrants, and the humans believe that they are created by God. In addition to these, there is another separate group called the "schizoids" who are suspected of not using their anti-depressants properly by "the universal police state", or who challenge their use.

The Space Farmers is built around the space journey of Hasan II, who is chosen by the World Islamist Federation Space Conquest Council as a representative of his race to live in space. Space Farmers, the name used for astronauts in the novel, do not feel the need to land on the Moon, because it is already polluted and corrupted by the West, and thus, is no longer a viable place. The Westerners are wearing space masks and living in tunnels like moles on the Moon and they are haphazardly disposing of their dead on its surface. As a result, the surface of the moon is filled with human skeletons. Their disposal of the dead as such is analogous to their position in the more advanced human civilization on Earth, now represented by the Islamist world: "If it goes on like this,

the fools on the Moon would die off. [...] The World has changed. The Islamist World does not admit back to the Earth those whom the Westerners handpicked to send off to the Moon" (Nar [1988] 2015, 120–121). The reference to the foolishness of the Westerners living on the Moon is a reference by proxy to the foolishness of the Turkish secular statesmen who looked up to those Western fools.

The novel flashes back to 1969, the year in which the USA landed the first man on the Moon, to contrast the present state of the men on the Moon with its greenhouse-like tunnels in which humans lead plant-like lives. By 2040, births on the Moon have stopped and those who were already born have become wrinkly dwarves who are half a meter tall at the most and live maximum until the age of 30. Their demise as such is a result of the bloodsucking Western superpower's godless civilization (120). If it were not for the destruction of the Western civilization in 2008 and the taking over of the Islamist Federation, that so-called civilization would have destroyed the Earth as well, just like the Moon. The destruction of the Moon is not just physical; it is also a moral corruption. This idea of moral corruption is established through highly problematic racial profiles in the story as the West's godlessness on the Moon is presented through its population of American and Russian Jews. The Moon is now an unholy place:

> Because first of all, most of those on the Moon are American and Russian Jews. Secondly, they definitely carry the space disease. [...] Their foods are different, their languages, behaviors, tastes different... In a manner of speaking, they've become "fake space men" or "Moon savages"... Making the mistake of bringing them over to the ground would be like buying a trouble like the plague (121).

Instead, Refref II, the spacecraft that transports the Space Farmers, only films these somewhat mutated Moon Savages from a distance and transmits these broadcasts to Earth. The World Islamist Space Center decides to leave these mutated, monstrous Moon dwellers, who shall eat their dead, on the Moon until they become extinct.

What determines the meaning of place is the presence of those who interact with it as they transform the physical space into a place. In fact, the word for place in Turkish, *mekân* comes from the Arabic *kevn*, meaning both to exist and the place where something exists. When Hasan II discovers a solar system similar to the one his Earth belongs, he names it Solar II System and the planet he lands E.II, meaning the second Earth. This Earth II is an idealized prototype of the original Earth. Just like reflections in a mirror, these two planets are identical to each other. Hasan II designs this new Earth exactly like the original one he has left behind, in terms of geographical and religious regulations. He also continues to practice his faith precisely the way he used to. As such, he transforms this new world into his old world and maintains its values and structures in this new one. For instance, he fulfills the old ritual of Muslims' turning toward the sacred Kaaba on Earth to practice their prayers (*namaz*) wherever they may be by acting as if there is a Kaaba in this new world as well. As this new place is transformed into a version of the original Earth, its spatial categories and routines are also reproduced, and so it is Islamized. Seen in the context of the Turkish term *mekân*, Hasan II from *The Space Farmers* both exists in the new world that he has discovered and transforms that new world into a Muslim space under the guidance

of the Quran. In *The Novel of the Monkeys*, however, salvation takes place in Capricorn Valley (Oğlak Çukuru), "in the mountainous area between the nightmare city and the region of immigrants that surrounds it, the place in a liminal space high up in a plateau", "calico curtains... A Muslim home adorned with colorful hand-woven carpets" (Şasa 2019, 89–61). In contrast to the grand vision of Ali Nar and his forceful transformation that reaches the skies, Şasa's version of Islamist salvation emphasizes a plain proposal of modesty and submission. The difference in their representations reveals their different versions of Islamism, in the case of the former a supremacist fundamentalism and in the latter a spiritual mysticism.

In *The Space Farmers*, when Hasan II returns to Earth from his successful space mission, he participates in a friendly football game between the "Islamist Front Federation" and the "Western Club", the mixed team of the Christian states. An American player in the Western Club, which looks like a Crusades Army, tries to kill Hasan II. This incident launches another war on Earth and the Center for Islam Federation shoots a missile to America and destroys the Statue of Liberty, known as "the Hatted Head" (Nar 2015, 182). With the destruction of the Statue of Liberty, the Islamist world sends a message to the Christian West: "The goal of the Islamist world is to bring you to your heels. Submit to Islam and be civilized. Otherwise, sooner or later we will stomp you out. Because civilization is superior morality" (182). The Islamist salvation, that is, the idea of jihad, and the destruction of the Western civilization interestingly foreshadows the attacks of September 11, 2001. In a matching parallel, in *The Novel of the Monkeys*, there is a Global Monkey Monument in the middle of the city. This monument is "a monkey that sits on a throne, holding a crystal globe in its hand, placed on an 8-meter gilded, cylindrical pedestal" (Şasa 2019, 63) and is presented to the reader as the symbol of "denial and forgetting".

Moreover, that the crown on the head of the Statue of Liberty in *The Space Farmers* is referred to as a hat establishes a parallel with the novelist's criticism of secular Turkey. One of the key cultural reforms following the declaration of the Republic was the passing of the Hat Law in 1925. The reformation of public clothing aimed at changing the daily practices of the Ottoman era directly and forced the people to wear Western-style clothing, resulting in much discontent among the traditionalist population. A similar critical reaction to the Republican reformations in civic life can be seen in *The Novel of the Monkeys* as well. Re-Re the Schizoid is one of those who try to spread Islam secretly in Capricorn Valley and is deemed "schizoid" by the state. However, Re-Re changes his name to Ruşen, which is a name of Persian origin and means enlightened. This depiction poses a critique of another key change following the foundation of the Republic, that is, the law regarding surnames. This law was passed in 1934, whereby everyone was required to pick a surname to replace their nicknames. The Surname Law is yet another move towards the establishment of a clear distance between the Republic and religion.

In *The Space Farmers* the Islamist Republic founded in the Far East, in the Philippines is not forgotten either. This Republic has gained power in Far East Asia and taken Japan, the equivalent of the West in Asia, under its control. As a predominantly Buddhist country, Japan is being punished separately from the Abrahamic religions

in this fashion, because triumph, or more precisely, salvation is only possible through a monotheistic religion like Islam. In the novel, the utopia of Islamist unity is achieved from 2008 onward and powerful intercontinental Islamist economic unions have been built through collective headquarters. With the conquest of space, the distance from the Christians will grow and the strong light of Islam will be sovereign.

At the end of the novel, Ali Nar takes us for a walk around Istanbul in 2048. The city is rebuilt and transformed into a totally different place from what it is like in 2021. It is re-designed in the images of the Tulip Era (1718–1730) of the early Ottoman modernity and the period of its conquest by Mehmed II (the Conqueror) in 1453. It is a city of large squares and wide boulevards with places of prayer in their midst: "There were large squares, green spaces and wide boulevards, wide enough for planes to take off and land. [...] The things that stood out the most were places for *namaz* in the middle of the big parks" (Nar 2015, 185). In 2008, during the war of the superpowers, the entire city had been destroyed due to the alliance of the period's politicians with the West. In a divine miracle, only the mosques remained intact, while the representatives of secularism, such as schools and apartments were flattened to the ground. In the redesigned Istanbul, none of the Western symbols from before 2008 exists. The novelist re-designs the entire place as a place of worship with "the central platform of the park, the symbol of God Almighty, a huge dome" (185).

Bülent Somay argues that considering utopia as merely a literary genre would leave our perspective wanting. He writes, "utopian fiction lies at the midpoint of a triangle whose corners are philosophy, politics and literature" (2010, 33). From a political perspective, the two novels share the belief that Western civilization and the science that it produced are a threat against the order of the world. As a response to that threat, they utilize the genre of utopia in the image of their own ideological ideals, namely, a radical Islamism (in the case of Nar) and a mystic spirituality (in the case of Şasa).

REFERENCES TO THE ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS

In both novels, religious motifs and references from the Bible and the Quran are used alongside each other. In *The Space Farmers*, the prophets – as they are referred to in Islam – portrayed in the Torah, Bible, and Quran, particularly Christ (*İsa* in Turkish, as in Arabic), are mentioned. The choice of Christ often emphasizes what came after him as the true faith, that is, Islam. The most important mission of the space journey is for space to be cleansed of infidels. The principle purpose of the Islamist Federation in this respect is to prepare the world in an Islamic fashion for Christ's return as the Messiah. In the novel, we see that Christ is embraced as a prophet as pronounced in the Quran, and since the path of all prophets is Islam, naturally so is that of Christ as one. Ali Nar quotes the surah of Al-Imran to establish this link:

> And he called the Christian World back to Islam. He mentioned that the descent of Christ is nigh and said "Come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah" (2015, 156).

The journey to the unknown is a very common motif since the pioneer of the genre of utopia, Thomas More. The location of utopias somewhere between reality and fiction is associated with the starting place of utopia's traveller being a real place and this person's visitation of an imagined one and returning home (Vieira 2010, 8). Before his space journey, Hasan II is trained by the religious scholar Mullah Hamit. It is a spiritual training for the preparation of the body for the space journey and is linked to *miraj*, which is both a spiritual and a bodily journey meaning to ascend. It has a very significant place in Turkish Islam and refers to Prophet Muhammad's ascension to the heavenly spheres. Moreover, the spacecraft's name Refref in Arabic is also significant since it is the vehicle that will elevate the Prophet to the heavens during Ascension (Taşpınar 2007, 534). The speed of light that is achieved in space is called Speed of Alborak after the name of the horse that will carry the Prophet again during ascension. These renamings by the novelist display his Islamization of the scientific advancements invented by the West and a key component of his exhibition of Islamic power and sovereignty.

In *The Novel of the Monkeys* a character called Maniac Archimedes, who is suspected of dissent by the universal police, experiences an internal *miraj*. Şasa depicts him "ascending in his orange monkey outfit and with the tiny bells jingling at the tip of his tail. He was someone who has managed, to an extraordinary extent, to transcend the contrast between his outer appearance and inner world" (2019, 77). This human in ascension lives in his "cave that smells of grass, earth and incense". The humans who live in the caves in the novel are linked symbolically to Prophet Mohammad in reference to the visitation of Gabriel when he was in the cave to be informed of his divine duty as the prophet. The utopian place is thus divided in two: Vienna, where Monkeys who do not believe in Islam live, and the cave and its surroundings outside the city, where Muslims live. The choice of place being in the heart of Europe instead of Anatolia is linked with the novelist's desire to locate and connect the Monkeys with Europe as a form of criticism and in response to Republican Turkey's turning toward the West for innovations. Those who do not believe in Islam are both Monkeys and mentally ill, and their living spaces constantly reinforce their illness. In the zoo, humans who are defined as Monkeys live in cages, like animals.

In *The Space Farmers*, all the space research is done under the guidance of the Quran. Verses from the Quran are used as epigraphs at the beginning of the chapters. The true goal of this "Islamist utopia" is to prove the guiding force of Quran not only on Earth but also in space. In this context, the novelist's choice of Space Farmers to refer to the astronauts is rather telling in understanding the relationship he establishes with the Quran as well as Christianity. In the Al-Fath surah of Quran it says that Prophet Muhammad, like a farmer, sows the seeds of Islam in clean earth, that is, in clean hearts and talented minds. Initially sown in the minds of a few people, Islam grows like an avalanche and gains strength in a short time:

> This is their description in the Torah. And their parable in the Gospel is that of a seed that sprouts its "tiny" branches, making it strong. Then it becomes thick, standing firmly on its stem, to the delight of the planters – in this way Allah makes the believers a source of dismay for the disbelievers. To those of them who believe and do good, Allah has promised forgiveness and a great reward (Al-Fath 48:29).[3]

In some readings of the Quran this section is linked to the parable in the Gospel of Matthew 13:3–8, "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path. [...] Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear" (Karaman et al., 2020, 82–83).[4] In Ali Nar's novel, that is science fiction, the Space Farmers will sow the seeds of Islam in space and make it grow. In Şasa's *The Novel of the Monkeys*, however, people dream of "Turbaned beings in loose gold embroidered caftans descend from the skies and appear in the world, spread in groups to the four quarters; the nightmare city comes under the control of these beings" (2019, 92).

While the apparent mission of the space program is to discover new planets, the Space Farmers have a top secret mission as well. As soon as Refref II takes off, this mission is presented to the space farmers on board. Each passenger carries a capsule of in vitro fertilization, alongside the plant seeds and animal cells, in order for them to breed and multiply in "the Land of the Lights", that is, the worlds they will discover in space: "You can think of Refref II as a Noah's Ark. The substance of the whole world is with you. If the entire life on Earth was destroyed, it can be rebuilt on your return. Of course, God willing" (Nar 2015, 98). In an analogous fashion, *The Novel of the Monkeys* also has the theme of rebirth based on its idealized redesigning of space. The cave outside the city represents a form of rebirth against the madness and the chaos of Vienna. Upon the loss of minds and corruption of souls among the Monkey people, it will be the Islamist faith and the Quran that will be the salvation of the people between sanity and insanity. Therefore, those who believe in Islam, live in their caves outside the city, use herbs for healing instead of medication and lead a secret albeit healthy and peaceful life outside the "modern" life of the city.

Both novelists position Islam and modernity in opposition in their desire to establish new world orders and state systems. The state should be run under the Quranic Law (Sharia) just as it was in Ottoman times. Edward Said discusses the literature in the Muslim world along these lines:

> Thus, since the central text [Koran] is in Arabic, and since, unlike the Gospels or even the Torah, it is given as unitary and complete, textual traditions are essentially supportive, not restorative. All texts are secondary to the Koran, which is inimitable. [...] The Prophet is he who has completed a world-view; thus the word *heresy* [emphasizing by E.S.] in Arabic is synonymous with the verb "to innovate" or "to begin". Islam views the world as a plenum, capable of neither diminishment nor amplification. Consequently, stories like those in *The Arabian Nights* are ornamental, variations on the world, not completions of it; neither are they lessons, structures, extensions, or totalities designed to illustrate either the author's prowess in representation, the education of a character, or ways in which the world can be viewed and changed (1975, 199–181).

As can be seen in this definition, in *The Novel of the Monkeys*, life as defined in the Quran is already a utopia, which is epitomized in the metaphor of the cave as the place where Prophet Mohammed received the word of God and the verses from the Quran for the first time. The cave, just like the mother's womb, will be where the Islamist state will grow. This transformation is presented through the idea of "healing"

in the novel, finding the path to wellness: "It was almost as if the healing had started first in his heart and then was reflected in his mind, and eventually took over his entire being" (Şasa 2019, 92). Here healing is related to mental health, those who heal will no longer be insane. In *The Novel of the Monkeys*, society outside the Islamist model is associated with madness whereas life according to the Quran with peace. As such, the cave as a space of utopia is a highly political symbol. It represents both darkness and light and bears a double-layered meaning. It is dark because it bears the traces of the new order to come, but it is light because an Islamist state will come out of it.

REVERSALS

In both *The Space Farmers* and *The Novel of the Monkeys* the regime established in the utopian places in accordance with Islam and Quran is fueled by an anti-Western perspective and demolishes Western symbols. Ayşe Şasa already declares the conquest of Vienna by Islam through her depiction of it as belonging to Islam. In Ali Nar's novel, the West is depicted as being "old and sick" (2015, 37) yet still maintaining some of its technical advantages. Even if they are unable to find cures for illnesses, they are competing to make the old young again and they are searching for a cure against death. The phrase "the sick man of Europe" as first used by the Western powers against the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 19th century and it was quickly embraced by the whole of Europe. In the 21st century as depicted in the novel, the "sick man" refers to the Western world, meaning the West is facing its decline in the same way the Ottoman Empire was two hundred years ago. Ayşe Şasa's choice of Vienna as the utopian place in her novel is thus highly symbolic in terms of this shift of power.

The representation of the West as "the old and sick man" in Ali Nar's novel is matched by the portrayal of the Monkeys in Ayşe Şasa's work. Westerners are the Monkeys because they believe in Darwin's theory that humans descended from monkeys, against the "truth" that God has created the humans. The Monkeys are unable to see the "truth" as such. Nar's reversed "sick man" allusion in his presentation of Islam as a force to reckon with is also paralleled by Şasa's depictions of "human-made" cyborgs, alongside mentally ill people who disturb the social order. Moreover, similar to the utilization of the "sick man" idea in the novels, other symbols of the West are reversed in both works. The cave image in *The Novel of the Monkeys* is a good example of such reversal. From Plato's cave allegory to Freud's womb metaphor, it combines the meanings of various births and re-births in a way that reverses their Western foundations. In the novel, the cave is located outside of Vienna, separate from its so-called civilization because those civilized people who live in Vienna are mentally ill. This reversal of meanings in regards to utopian locations is invested in irony against a Western romanticism via its connections to Freud and the foundations of his psychoanalytic theory. Through such uses of space, religion and utopia are put against one another to construct their unique albeit ideologically fraught utopian vision. The jarring contrast between the believers who live outside the city and in peace with nature and the Monkeys who live in the city not daring to venture out maintains the novel's strongly anti-Western perspective. In contrast to the darkness in the cave, Amadeus's flat is brightly lit. However, from a spiritual perspective it is darker than the cave,

because the latter is illuminated by the hearts and the inspiration of its residents not by some man-made lighting system. In that sense, the utopian location of the cave is linked to the choice of Vienna and its outskirts to further reinforce the established reversals: it is Freud's Vienna against the cave of Islam, Freud's unconscious versus the spiritual inspiration from the word of God. For the former, theirs is a state of madness, for the latter, it is a sign of healing.

As such, the cave is not just a metaphor but also a challenge to the tradition of Western utopian writing. Despite its tabula rasa appearance, the cave is scripted with many layers of God's word and inspiration, it is the presence of Islam, against the futile promises of heaven on Earth in utopian writing. The use of illustrations on every page also speaks for such a difference. Utopia presents what can be visualized; however, the cave prevents depiction. Utopia is a genre shaped by the human mind, but faith transcends the mind, for the mind is incapable of comprehending the divine.

CONCLUSION

Both *The Space Farmers* and *The Novel of the Monkeys* utilize the utopian space as a device to return to the "essence". The novelists propose that modern life is defined by Western values and those Western values distance Muslim societies from their "essence". This kind of conservative thinking has prevailed in Turkey since the late 19th century. The literary intellectuals of Ottoman modernization in that period, such as Namık Kemal and Ahmet Mithat and those in the early Republican era, such as Peyami Safa and Yakup Kadri, particularly emphasize how the Western lifestyle should not be allowed to corrupt native values (Mardin 2006, 135–163). As such, the ideas that both novelists present in their works parallel these earlier attitudes and their utopian places become strong political elements. In *The Space Farmers*, Ali Nar calls his fictitious country the Turkistan Islamic Republic and constructs an Islamo-Fascist world. The reactionary and militarist discourse that dominates the entire novel reveals hate speech against Jews, Christians, and Westerners and it declares a crusade against not only the modern Turkey established in 1923 but also against all Western countries. The writer in a way takes his revenge on the country's secular transformation through Istanbul's Taksim Square. In a symbolism that is even more meaningful today (after the Gezi Protests of 2013),[5] in the novel the Square is cleansed of all the Western influences after 2008, including the Atatürk Cultural Centre that used to hold the main state stages for theatre, opera and ballet.

In both novels, technology plays a great part in the representations of utopian spaces. In *The Novel of the Monkeys*, technology represents all that is bad in the Western civilization, whereas in *The Space Farmers*, it is under the control of Islam but is cleansed of everything that is "superstitious". While the cave symbolizes the birth of Islam in *The Novel of the Monkeys* and thus becomes the home of the spiritual world promised by faith, bearing political significance, in *The Space Farmers* the utopian place only becomes home with the presence of Muslims and their symbols. In Şasa's novel, the Muslims long for the "old home" once ruled by Islam. Seen in terms of the relationship between the utopian place and religion, she constructs it far away from the city, civilization, chaos and nightmare. For Ali Nar, on the other hand, any place

and space become Islamized under the guidance of the Quran. Everything that Muslims create in accordance with the Quran represents that which is good and beautiful. Believers of other faiths, particularly the Jews, are pushed out to other planets, imprisoned in dystopian places in a universe ruled by Islam. Utopian places can be created only by those who defend Islam and they thus represent the good in them.

The representation of technology as chaos in the novels is also a criticism of the secular state that was established in 1923, the Turkish Republic that left out Islam. The old country as the land of the Muslims was turned into hell and the new life of the new state brought them closer to the West. Such proximity transformed the country into a dystopian land, a homeland invaded by the Jews and the Christians where Muslim way of living is not practiced anymore. By bringing the lifestyle dictated by Islam, all the so-called modern lies and illusions will be discarded and the homeland will become a utopian land once again. From such a perspective, reducing the West merely to its technological advancements renders a rejection of the Republican regime in Turkey possible. The utopian place constructed through technology is posed as the opposite of what Islam recommends. This opposition proposes the search for utopia not in what exists or imagined but beyond what can be imagined, in the Islamist faith and in the practices following the Quran. As such, the utopian place becomes a political element and a symbol for the success of jihad in all aspects of life.

NOTES

[1] For an outline of the distinction between Islam as a belief system and Islamism as a radical ideology, see Toumi 2011.

[2] All translations from Turkish are by the present authors.

[3] From Mustafa Khattab's translation of the Quran, *The Clear Quran*. Available at https://theclearquran.org.

[4] For the English translation of Karaman's quote, the New International Version of the Bible is used. Available at https://www.biblestudytools.com/niv/.

[5] The Gezi Park demonstrations took place in Istanbul between May 25 – June 15, 2013 as part of a campaign against the redevelopment of the Taksim area (symbolized by the planned destruction of the park's trees, one of the last remaining green spaces in the city center) and later spread nationwide. See Yigit Turan 2017.

LITERATURE

Gökşen, Erol. 2015. "Uzay Çiftçileri ve Şebek Romanı'nda Ütopya ile Distopyanın Tezahürü." In *Edebiyatın izinde Fantastik ve Bilimkurgu*, ed. by Seval Şahin, Banu Öztürk, and Didem A. Büyükarman, 188–194. Istanbul: Bağlam Publishing.

Karaman, Hayreddin, Mustafa Çağrıcı, İbrahim Kâfi Dönmez, and Sadrettin Gümüş, eds. 2020. *Kuran Yolu Tefsiri*. Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Publishing.

Khattab, Mustafa. 2016. *The Clear Quran.* Lombard: Furqaan Institute of Quaranic Education.

Mardin, Şerif. 2006. *Religion, Society, and Modernity in Turkey.* New York, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Nar, Ali. [1988] 2015. *Uzay Çiftçileri*. 2nd ed. Istanbul: Elif Publishing.

Said, Edward. 1975. *Beginnings.* New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
Şasa, Ayşe. [2004] 2019. *Şebek Romanı*. 5th ed. Istanbul: Timaş Publishing.
Somay, Bülent. 2010. *The View from the Masthead: Journey Through Dystopia Towards an Open-Ended Utopia.* Istanbul: Bilgi University Press.
Szyska, Christian. 1995. "On Utopian Writing in Nasserist Prison and Laicist Turkey." *Die Welt des Islams* (New Series) 35, 1: 95–125.
Taşpınar, İsmail. 2007. "Refref." In *Islam Ansiklopedisi*, 534–535. Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Publishing.
Toumi, Alek Baylee. 2011. "Literature and Power: Muslims Vs. Islamists." *Religion & Literature* 43, 1: 126–132.
Vieira, Fatima. 2010. "The Concept of Utopia." In *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, ed. by Gregory Clayes, 3–27. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Yigit Turan, Burcu. 2017. "Occupy Gezi Park: In Search of a Public Space, Democracy and Alternative City Making." In *City Unsilenced: Urban Resistance and Public Space in the Age of Shrinking Democracy*, ed. by Jeffrey Hou, and Sabine Knierbein, 83–93. New York, NY: Routledge.

The Islamist version of utopia: The politics of redesigning space

Islam. Utopia. Place/Space. Ali Nar. Ayşe Şasa. Western civilization.

This article examines utopian novels by two Islamist Turkish writers: Ali Nar's *The Space Farmers* (*Uzay Çiftçileri*, 1988) and Ayşe Şasa's *The Novel of the Monkeys* (*Şebek Romanı*, 2004), which were celebrated among Islamist circles upon their publication. In these two novels, the corruption and pollution of place/space is blamed upon the "Christian" Western civilization. They depict how the desired regime change will begin in Turkey and expand towards Europe and then to the rest of the world, through the portrayal of oppositional places as utopian/dystopian spaces. The article discusses the ways in which space/place is ideologically redesigned in the Islamist imagination as a political symbol and analyze how these popular Islamist writers present the world and the space for their utopian vision of Islamist supremacy.

Prof. Dr. Seval Şahin
Department of Turkish Language and Literature
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University
Cumhuriyet Mah. Silahşör Cad. No. 71
Bomonti-Şişli, Istanbul
Turkey
sevals@gmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1548-6763

Assoc. Prof. Didem Ardalı Büyükarman
Department of Turkish Language and Literature
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Yildiz Technical University
34210 Davutpaşa, Esenler, Istanbul
Turkey
dbuyuk@yildiz.edu.tr
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4440-2012

Mór Jókai's Asian utopia(s)

PÉTER HAJDU

DOI: https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2021.13.2.5

In his *Novel of the Century to Come* (*A jövő század regénye*, 1872–1874), Mór Jókai (1825–1904) created a genuine utopian novel that formulated an optimistic view about a future of humankind in which technical development, scientific enlightenment, and cooperative politics would result in general well-being. Although he imagined this bright future as embracing the entire globe, some features of the novel offer an opportunity for an east-west comparison of imagology. The global utopia develops from two small-scale utopias, and their relative location seems important. One is in Europe, the other in Asia. The narration presents the embedded Asian utopia from two perspectives, one of which is Chinese. This embedded utopia shows how a 19th-century European writer imagines a classical Chinese utopia; and the juxtaposition of a European utopia with an Asian one from Chinese perspective and a Western perspective solicits comparison. The very complex structure gives the impression that the novel experiments with the possibilities of various utopian traditions. What stands out as the common features of the small utopian communities in Europe and in Asia and the big global utopia to be reached at the end of the novel are the basic values of hard work, cooperation, and the non-violent organization of social and political life. The small communities seem to realize such values out of necessity, since otherwise they cannot survive in their respective environment, but the novel suggest that the same values are adaptable globally too. It is probably the latter belief that makes the novel utopian.

Jókai was a great romancer, whose books were tremendously successful in his lifetime not only in Hungary, but also in Germany, Poland, Russia, and England. Twenty-one of his novels were translated into English, and six of them were published in at least ten editions.[1] *The Novel of the Century to Come* in contrast, was less successful: it was translated only to German. The translation, originally made for the German reading public in Hungary, and published in serialized form in the newspaper *Pester Lloyd* in Budapest, appeared almost simultaneously with the novel's original serialized publication. The Hungarian text was published in the newspaper *A Hon* (The Homeland) between November 3, 1872 and February 11, 1874, and the *Pester Lloyd* started the German version on January 2, 1873. This version was published once in book format in Pressburg (Bratislava) and Leipzig. *The Novel of the Century to Come* does not belong to the core of the Hungarian canon of Jókai's works, but

it was well-known and widely read until 1945,[2] and undeniably had fundamental impact on utopian literature. Pál Privigyey's 1887 novel entitled *Hungary is not in the Past but in the Future*, is a much shorter, simplistic remake of Jókai's endeavor (2002). In 1895 Zsolt Beöthy published a booklet entitled *The Novel of the Century to Come*, and Miklós Bessenyei's novel from 1905, *In Half a Century* imagined Hungary's European hegemony due to a monopoly of airplanes, which obviously utilizes Jókai's plot, and in 1914 Ferenc Herczeg wrote "The Short Story of the Century to Come" (for the overview of this tradition, see Veres 2013). Mihály Babits started his 1933 dystopia *Pilot Elza* with a reference to the subtitle of the first part of Jókai's novel "Perpetual Fight": "It happened in the 40th year of the perpetual fight" (1982, 463). *The Novel of the Century to Come* was not published between 1945–1981 (and in 1981 only in a critical edition designed for professional readers, not a wider readership) obviously because of its anti-Russian tendency, and because incautious readers could confuse the Russian nihilist revolution in Jókai's fiction with real-world communism. *The Novel of the Century to Come* is problematic for readers today due to its obvious misogynist and racist tendencies. Its boasting nationalism probably made it unmarketable abroad even at the time of its publication. The thin plot, the long descriptions and the naïve quasi-scientific speculations about the future technical inventions make for difficult reading. An African-American character plays a very important role in the plot; in the end he becomes the traitor (which is the most despised sin) and as a punishment or a kind of mercy he is sent to Africa "to civilize his people" (Jókai 1981, 2, 269), with which formulation the novel simply endorses every colonial discourse. The most violent criminals are sent to a region in Central Africa unpopulated by human beings although some hairless monkeys live there – where they can act out their murderous instincts by killing beasts, and thus create "a mighty new nation" (2, 283–284): hardly a concept of environmental justice. The narrator calls women "the half of the human race that has a weak neurotic system" (2, 63), and the maxim "don't entrust your secret to a woman or a stranger" (1, 278) is demonstrated by the protagonist's wife, who spoils the fate of a whole nation by simply forgetting to deliver a message of crucial importance (1, 280–284). She is pregnant when she is sent to the capital with the message, and she gives birth to the child earlier than expected; once she becomes a mother, she stops caring about anything but domestic affairs, and even later she is unable to remember she had a mission on which the fate of millions of people depended. Jókai makes her husband blame himself for the failure and adore her for her sublime motherhood in a highly rhetorical free indirect discourse; the implied author obviously opposes any public involvement of any woman and wants to see them confined to the sphere of the nursery and the kitchen. The counterexample, which proves the same moral, is Alexandra, the anarchist leader, then empress, of Russia, who plays the role of the super-villain in the story.

Despite the problematic features mentioned above, *The Novel of the Century to Come* deserves critical attention due to several unique features. It is a classical liberal utopia, which narrates how Dávid Tatrangi, a simple Hungarian fellow, in the time span from 1950 to 2000 develops the perfect global society, based first and foremost on world peace, but also on general wellbeing, scientific development

and the enlightenment of the masses. This achievement mostly depends on his personal intellectual and moral capacities, but his Hungarianness is also important. The novel makes every possible attempt to flatter the Hungarian reading public, which makes it unsurprising that it sold so poorly abroad. In the first pages they learn that in 100 years Budapest will be the principal capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Habsburgs have become so Hungarianized that the current king has the typical Hungarian first name of Árpád, and even the pope has moved from Rome to Hungary. It also gradually becomes clear that Hungarian women are the most beautiful in the world, just as Hungarian men are the bravest, smartest and most honest. Zsolt Czigányik thought the contrast between the current state of affairs and the imagined bright future is so harsh that Jókai could not be serious, and "the fantasy becomes so ridiculous that it can hardly be interpreted in any other way than as an ironic satire of the contemporary political situation" (2015, 16). In fact, there is no reason why a depressing present would exclude fantasizing about a future glory. That kind of fantasy might function as solace to the currently depressed national community but this reassurance also adulates the readership by supposing the potentials of the greatness to come are already there waiting for actualization. In the years Jókai was writing the novel he was a member of the Parliament.[3] It is true that those years he was in opposition, but not "an ardent supporter of Hungarian independence [who] could not accept Habsburg rule", as Czigányik put it (16). He was member of the moderate opposition party Left Center, which accepted the Compromise, but wanted to achieve separate army and finance. During his political career Jókai never joined any committed independence party.[4] Therefore, the dream that the dualist monarchy was still going to exist in 100 years, with the Hungarian half gaining in weight and importance, harmonizes with Jókai's political standpoint.[5] The vision of a future Hungary might be exaggerated and difficult to believe, but this general characteristic of the genre does not necessarily make it a satire.

At the end of Volume I, the protagonist establishes the city state Otthon (Home) on the islands of the Danube Delta, and through a monopoly on airplanes (Tatrangi's invention) he can both enforce world peace and produce a huge profit. This small-scale state is a mixture of nationalist and capitalist utopia. The citizens, at least at the beginning, are exclusively Hungarians; they are share-holders of the state-enterprise, and a triumvirate of three managers runs the whole business: Mr. Severus, the African-American billionaire businessman, General Dárday, a Hungarian soldier-gentleman, and Tatrangi, the idealist superman, who is both an inventor and a political genius, and represents a harmonic mixture of idealism, nationalism, and pacifism. This state works as a business company, which assures the citizen's loyalty and responsible behavior through justly sharing its remarkable profits. Tensions between employees and owners appear under the pressure of the Russian war-threat. Russian agitators successfully make the foreign migrant workers, who are not share-holders yet, rebel, which rebellion is suppressed by force (without casualties, to be sure).[6]

However, Tatrangi discovers another, even more utopian Hungarian state in Central Asia, which is called Kin-Tseu. The name appears to be a German transcrip-

tion of a Chinese name, and the text actually states that the area has different names in different languages: in Chinese it is Kin-Tseu,[7] in Tibetan Pamir, and in Mongolian Ladakh (2, 132). It goes without saying that it is futile to try to find this imaginary, utopian country on the map. Pamir is a mountain in inner Asia, Ladakh is a federal state in North-India, also called Indian Tibet. At one point the narrative indicates that Kin-Tseu is 38 degrees east from the Danube Delta (2, 132), which situates it somewhere like Samarkand in Uzbekistan. The country is also said to be inaccessible among the Himalayas, the Kunlun, and the Khokonoor mountains (2, 136). Tibet is indeed situated between the Himalayas and the Kunlun Mountains, and the fact that both the Yangtze and the Yellow rivers[8] flow from there also seems to point in that direction (2, 133); however, it is explicitly stated that Kin-Tseu is near Tibet, so it is not identical with it.[9] Already in his lifetime Jókai was celebrated for his creative imagination, although the careful analysis of his library and notebooks suggests that instead of inventing things he mostly found them in books (Fried 2003, 14). In her editorial commentary of the novel, Zsuzsa D. Zöldhelyi writes: "Humboldt mentions the Kunlun Mountain by the Kuku-Nor – Jókai probably meant that" (2, 452). Jókai possessed a copy of Alexander von Humboldt's *Ansichten der Natur mit wissenschaftlichen Erläuterungen* (1859), as well as his *Kosmos* (1845), the fourth volume of which contains abundant material about China. Jókai took many details about China from Johann Christoph Wagner's *Das mächtige Kayser-Reich Sina und die asiatische Tartarey* (1687), especially the most absurd curiosities. These books can be found in the Petőfi Literary Museum, Budapest, where a significant part of Jókai's library (about 1,000 volumes) is stored.[10] He did not need a wild imagination to come up with the fantasy that an animal called "Hoang-Cio-Ja" exists in China, which is a fish in winter, but a bird in summer,[11] or the idea of flying turtles in Henan province, because he found them ready in Wagner's book (Jókai 1981, 2, 134; Wagner 1687, 131, 126–127). Jókai obviously did not mean the Kunlun Mountain by the Khokonoor, since the Kunlun is another one of the three mountains surrounding Kin-Tseu. He probably took the inspiration for the name Kin-Tseu also from Humboldt's *Ansichten*, where a city named Kiung-Tscheu is mentioned (Zöldhelyi in Jókai 1, 601; probably Jingzhou in Hubei province). He took the name of a city and made it the name of a country, slightly modified the spelling, then explained that the Chinese name of the secret country is actually a Hungarian expression, "kincs ő", meaning "she is a treasure" (2, 155). This is how the inhabitants call their beloved country.

The novel as a whole is utopic, since it narrates how a harmonious society will develop in the future; this mostly happens in Volume II, in which the small-scale utopia of Otthon is expanded to the entire globe. This structure means that Kin-Tseu as another small-scale utopia parallels Otthon in Volume II. Douwe Fokkema has described the general, albeit not entirely true difference of setting between European and Chinese utopias: while in the Western world utopia tends to be an island, in China it is a valley among the mountains accessible only through the narrow passage of a cavern (2011, 91–92). He saw in this opposition the consequence of the maritime and continental nature, respectively, of those cultures. Inside *The Novel of the Century to Come* Jókai perfectly recreates this general opposition: Europeans create the island

utopia Otthon, while the Asians have their mountain valley utopia Kin-Tseu. This situation raises the possibility that Jókai might have been more knowledgeable about the Chinese utopian tradition than one would expect. Given that in 1890 he wrote a kind of fairytale with a Chinese setting that shows striking similarities to *The Story of Peach Blossom Spring* (*Taohua yuan ji*) by Tao Yuanming,[12] which is generally regarded as the origin of Chinese utopian writing, it is possible that he was intentionally playing with the contrast of the two major utopian traditions.[13] *The Novel of the Century to Come* actually contains two alternative Kin-Tseu utopias. The novel as a whole tells the story of the future world's transition into a global utopia, but Kin-Tseu, the land closed among high mountains in Central Asia has always been a utopia. However, the land is described from two different viewpoints: the first belongs to the Chinese, and is the restricted viewpoint of the uninformed; the other belongs to the omniscient narrator, and is therefore, by default, a Western viewpoint. For the former, the narrator "quotes" written sources, then simply relates how things really are. One can therefore say that a false written utopia is confronted with a true lived one. The notions of true and false, written and lived must, of course, be understood inside the written fictional world. Even if the country is inaccessible, the Chinese have some vague knowledge of it, since it is "on the edge of China". When Severus, as a reversed black Iago, tricks Tatrangi's wife, Rozáli, into jealousy by speaking about Tatrangi's frequent air trips to Kin-Tseu, she finds some Chinese sources about the land and manages to have them translated by a female Sinologist. The text on Kin-Tseu is said to be part of a Chinese historical collection, which actually exists; the Kin-Tseu report therefore is presented to Rozáli as containing adventurously transmitted ancient wisdom, which the narrator will only later prove to be completely fake. Jókai refers to the 19th-century collection *Siku Quanshu* (in his spelling She-Khu-sti-shu), which contains the "Szan-hoang-pen-ki" by "the most famous Chinese historian" "Sze-ma-tsiang", and even differentiates between its reliable parts "Sze-ki", which are already accessible in several European translations, and the other unreliable sections (2, 122–123). These data are correct. Sima Qian (Jókai's Sze-ma-tsiang, c. 145–c. 86 BCE) was a great historian in the 1st century BCE, and his only genuine work is entitled *Shiji* (i.e. Sze-ki), while *San huang ben ji* (Szan-hoang-pen-ki) is a collection of later additions edited by Sima Zhen (c. 679–c. 732). To all these reliable bibliographical and prosopographical data Jókai makes a fictional addition. He creates a story in which Sima Qian discovers some jasper tablets with secret and forbidden ancient knowledge[14] in a palace, and publishes their content under the title "ju-pan", which may be the Hungarian transcription of 玉板 (*yu ban* in pinyin), jade boards that officials in ancient China used as carriers of writing and reports. Jókai used his remarkable knowledge of the Chinese historical tradition to convince his readers that the fictional source about Kin-Tseu also exists.

Despite the great apparatus created to make us believe that such a book may exist, Jókai immediately undermines its credibility: "Sima Qian is the most reliable Chinese historian, who when lying does it on the basis of the most authentic sources" (2, 123). He also emphasizes that both European and Chinese philologists see a difference between Sima Qian's historical works (the *Shiji*) and romantic tales. The description

of Kin-Tseu belongs to the latter category – it is a pity that the woman who translates it for Rozáli does not read the secondary literature, and therefore fails to inform her of the unreliable nature of the source (2, 124).[15] The summary of the Chinese source, however, is not really informative. The narrator only relates that the whole text was translated for Rozáli, but he does not quote the translation, and only delivers a one-page summary (2, 124). The main point is that "The men are ugly and their body is bad; however, the ladies are even more beautiful." Jókai alienates the description of the female beauty through a sophisticated narrative technique: he does not speak about the object of Sima Qian's description directly, but about Sima Qian's description itself. Rather than representing the historical source as a transparent medium, he focuses on the medialization of the information, and lets the readers imagine whatever their ignited fantasy can make up:

> Sima Qian describes the beauties of Kin-Tseu ladies with sensual enthusiasm, giving all the details and missing nothing; that is a country full of so beautiful women that cannot be found in the whole celestial empire (2, 124).

The reader might assume here that Rozáli would be furious to read that the country her husband furtively frequents is famous for beautiful women. But this is not enough. Kin-Tseu worships the deity in the form of a handsome young man, which, of course, cannot be found on the spot. They believe in a mythical eagle that selects a handsome man somewhere in the neighboring areas and delivers him through the air. This narrative seems to solicit readers to imagine themselves in Tatrangi's position, being the only handsome man in the land of beautiful women, who happens to come from the sky as their god is believed to do.

Then one more paragraph provides some information about Kin-Tseu's (as it is implied, sexual) habits:

> Kin-Tseu is ruled by women: men are slaves, animal-like labor; women are the young god's army, court, clergy, and all young, beautiful and keen. From this constellation Sima Qian's fantasy created colorful stories with the liberty that only the Chinese muse allows, whose garden does not know anything about – a fig tree (2, 124).

It is not impossible that Jókai's success was due, at least partially, to his breaking some sexual taboos of the period's Hungarian highbrow literature,[16] although it was a very cautious, shy way of doing so. In *The Novel of the Century to Come*, he hints at the possibility of a pornotopia, a kind of utopia which centers around uninhibited sex with women, who, as Rozáli summarizes what she has learned from the Chinese source, "are more beautiful and more prone to love than European women" (2, 125). It is true that this pornotopia is designed for one person only (the only one who can fly there), which makes it similar to the orientalizing fantasies of the harem, but interestingly enough this orientalizing fantasy is attributed to the Chinese, fantasizing about a country west of them. At the same time, it is also a colonizer's fantasy about the (sexualized) resources of a country, which the locals do not know how to use; the land is waiting for the colonizer to develop her potential.[17] The colonizing discourse in pornography or the pornographic discourse of colonization has been described as somatopia by Darby Lewes (1996).[18] These beautiful women prone

to love need an alien man they can worship as their god. However, this colonizing, pornographic fantasy is attributed to the Chinese, and it turns out to be completely wrong. When the omniscient narrator describes Kin-Tseu as it is, readers will learn the real Kin-Tseu is not even remotely similar to what the Chinese imagine.

The falseness of the Chinese knowledge of Kin-Tseu was foreshadowed by the preliminary geographic description of the mountainous area of Inner Asia, in which a page-long list of miracles informs the readers of what the Chinese think is there (2, 134). Jókai, who carefully collected strange stories from various books, once published a short article in his humorous weekly *Üstökös* (Comet) entitled "Chinese Curiosities" ("Chinai furcsaságok") with all the strange phenomena he found in Wagner's above mentioned book and elsewhere (1863). Many of them reappear in the list of strange phenomena the Chinese tradition attributes to Kin-Tseu's inaccessible mountainous area, such as the previously mentioned yellow bird-fish and flying turtles. Strangely enough Jókai calls the latter "the flying turtles of Henan", i.e., a province in Central China although they are supposed to live in the western mountains. Quasi-geographical locations are attached to most of the miracles, and they are seldom identifiable with real places in China. Theoretically they should not be at all, since those places are said to be outside China as Jókai presents it. Since it is probable that Jókai's readers could hardly differentiate between real and imaginary Chinese geography, the reason might be that he simply did not care, and used the Chinese toponyms he liked. The catalogue of obviously impossible things that the Chinese believe exist in Kin-Tseu already gives readers an impression how unreliable Chinese knowledge is. (We should remember that not much later we are to learn that this is the knowledge the fictional Ming dynasty Sema Qian found on secret jasper tablets and did not include in his serious writing; it is ancient "knowledge" that a reliable historian faithfully records among fairy tales.) However, even this catalogue ends with the erotic phantasy of the Sichuan baboons "that in the woods peek at the women for whom they feel human desire (a horrible hybrid, if they succeeded)". Both here, and in a poem Jókai published in the above-mentioned humorous periodical, he emphasizes that the baboons' love is hopeless. His source, Wagner's book, was not so sure about that, since it reads "they intercept women on their way to exercise their animal lusts with them".[19] Not bothered by the contradiction that the Sichuan baboons also live in the inaccessible highland instead of Sichuan, Jókai uses this item as an *argumentum a fortiori* to make readers imagine the beauty of Kin-Tseu women. They are so beautiful that even monkeys cannot resist them. If the baboons behave like this, imagine the human beings. Then he entails the information that several hundred years ago Chinese emperors payed as much as for pearls or gold to get women from there and always kept 300 of them around. An earthquake closed off all these miracles, of which the women are the most miraculous. As it seems, the Chinese love to fantasize about a Western wonderland, and their fantasies are highly erotized.

After this introduction it is not so surprising that the Chinese pseudo-historical source about Kin-Tseu is a pornotopia. Not a word of it is true, and Tatrangi, although he is a handsome young man coming from the sky, does not behave either as the

god of the Kin-Tseu women, or a colonizer of that nation. He admires their ancient social organization and teaches them the new inventions of the outside world from the last seven centuries. Jókai does not write a sexually explicit text; he only states that Chinese literature is sexually explicit, and lets his readers fantasize about the very explicit Chinese report of the pornotopia, as he reports of Rozáli's jealous fantasizing. The narrative then goes on to tell the real story of Tatrangi's journey to Kin-Tseu and deliver the omniscient narrator's true report of the country. The Chinese fantasy of the land of extremely beautiful and extremely available but also dominant women is thus proven false. Kin-Tseu is in reality the utopian community of a cooperative and peaceful nation, which unsurprisingly happens to be Hungarian. According to Jókai's mythical-historical story of origin, the Hungarians, when they were still leading a nomadic lifestyle in the Asian steppes, had two fractions, the war-party and the peace-party, and they decided to part. The fierce warriors went to the west and conquered the Carpathian Basin. The peaceful ones stayed where they were until in the 13th century they had to face the danger of Genghis Khan's expansion. Since they did not like the idea of any confrontation, especially not with an overwhelmingly superior enemy, they found a recess among the mountains, and since then they have lived in Kin-Tseu, an area to which later earthquakes have completely blocked every entrance.

This utopian community preserves some features of the mythical (or rather scholarly construed) ancient Hungarians, although one important feature, the glorious warlike character is explicitly missing. The old mythical features, however, are in perfect harmony with Jókai's 19th-century liberal values: democracy and religious tolerance. In Kin-Tseu all citizens are equal, all leaders are elected, and the selection has nothing to do with any religious beliefs. They have no institutionalized religion; although they have some pantheistic beliefs, worshipping the natural forces like water, air and fire, they may or may not attend any ritual as they feel (2, 149). Such ideas about the social organization and religious beliefs of early Hungarians were well-known in 19th-century historiography of culture. We should remember that the warlike Hungarians that went to the west, according to the 19th-century narratives, lost their equality-based social system and their tolerant nature-worship. Tatrangi, with his pacifism that follows from his Sabbatarian religion, becomes a perfect intermediary between the two Hungarian nations.

Other features result from the special circumstances of the mountain-locked country. The population grew massively in 700 years due to the lack of wars and epidemics. Since they are isolated, they cannot (even if they wished to) go out to fight other nations, which cannot attack them either. And since their community is based in first place on their peaceful nature, they do not have civil wars. It is also their isolation that protects them from diseases (2, 150), which as Susan Sontag (1977) reminds us, are usually seen as foreign threats. Since the population is growing but the available area to produce food is limited, they necessarily base their society on intensive use of the resources by the hard work of every citizen (2, 151). The frugal lifestyle and the absence of any alcoholic beverage also may be consequences of the limitations of food supply (2, 150; 2, 159).

All the above features together may be regarded as ingredients of an ecotopia, a vision of sustainable community life. Other features, however, contradict this. The area has oil too, and Kin-Tseu people use bamboo pipes to bring it to their houses for cooking and heating (2, 152), but of course we cannot expect a writer in 1874 to foresee the dangers of fossil fuels. Kin-Tseu is represented as a country in which the inhabitants have successfully adapted to the limited natural resources for 700 years, controlling population growth without violent measures and developing sustainable technologies both of food production and protection from floods. Their alliance with Tatrangi and the Otthon-Hungarians can be seen as the globalization of the model they developed for small countries. For Tatrangi, peaceful, non-violent politics is also of basic importance. Although Otthon's power is based on superior military technology (namely a monopoly on airplanes), he uses it not to conquer the world but to force all the nations to stop wars and invest their energies in peaceful development. The use of oil as Kin-Tseu's source of energy can be regarded as surprisingly appropriate foretelling of 20th-century developments, or as major failure in the concept of sustainability on the global scale. When the novel switches to describe the creation of the global utopia, the aspect of limited resources disappears. From a present-day ecocritical viewpoint, it is quite obvious the Earth's natural resources are also limited and their uninhibited exploitation can result in catastrophe. Kin-Tseu as a small-scale model may show how it can work, but the whole narrative fails to consequently apply that model to a full-scale utopia.

Although the lack of wars and pestilence guarantees population growth, Jókai mentions two factors that act against it, namely the Kin-Tseu people's severe morals and their faithful family life (2, 150). In utopias the special organization or regulation of reproduction, sex and maybe family life is an almost obligatory topic, which is hardly a surprise. If you imagine a perfect society, you have to say something about this particular area of human life, which in literature appears as the most frequent source of destructive energy, threatening the harmony in any community. As we saw, the fictitious Chinese utopia of Kin-Tseu was said to describe the sexual habits of the population in much detail, and a very free, libertarian, promiscuous sexuality was implied, driven by female desire. In the "real" Kin-Tseu description, Jókai does not say anything more about the topic, so by default we suppose they have exclusive monogamous, patriarchal families, but they do it better than 19th-century Europeans. However, the detail that this family life acts against population growth makes one wonder: is there any reason to suppose that marital faithfulness results in fewer children? We should take into consideration Jókai's personal Protestant background. It is a well-known fact that the fertility rate of mainstream Protestant communities is rather low, since they regard fertility as a matter of individual choice, in contrast, for example, to the pronatalist Catholic doctrine (Lehrer 1996). Even if the people of Kin-Tseu are not Christian and practice a rather free nature worship, at the family level they seem to live a Protestant utopia.[20] Not only their strict marital morals suggest this, but also their ethos of hard work. Their closed environment does not allow them to develop an expansive economy or exploit the area in an unsustainable way and forces them to intensify production while restricting consumption. Their life-

style one might therefore characterize with diligence, discipline, and frugality, exactly the categories with which Max Weber described the Protestant ethics (1904). The fact that they have no alcoholic drink at all (2, 159) might also be a hint in that general direction.

In *The Novel of the Century to Come* Jókai experimented with different kinds of utopia and the peaceful cooperation, the reasonable investment of the human race's energies in development is the common denominator of those he represented as possibly viable. In the two small-scale utopias, the national (Hungarian) coherence seems of basic importance. Although Kin-Tseu is first presented from a Chinese viewpoint as a pornotopia, the omniscient narrator soon refutes that as an oriental fantasy ascribed to the influence of Chinese literary traditions. What the narrator approves instead is a frugal utopia, which shows affinity to the Protestant morality, and also traits of a sustainable ecotopia. Even if the Kin-Tseu Hungarians are preserving the old Asian-Hungarian religion and social equity, they have created something similar to the European ideal. However, the second Kin-Tseu utopia (that of the omniscient narrator as contrasted to that of the Chinese) is also a *mise en abyme* for the whole novel, since it is actually based on the pacifist nature of the population. Dávid Tatrangi does not use his monopoly on the aircraft to conquer the world, but to force all the nations of the globe to stop warring and cooperate peacefully, which results in astronomic growth of human well-being. The small-scale pacifist utopia is embedded in a global one.

NOTES

[1] For his success in the English market see Kádár 1991; for his failure in France see Kádár 1995, 164–202. Translations from the Hungarian are by the present author unless otherwise noted.

[2] Actually, the republication of the novel stopped with the 1928 edition. It is possible that the experience of World War I made it difficult for the readers to take the fiction of world peace achieved by advanced military technology so seriously.

[3] To be precise, he was member of the House of Commons between 1867–1896, and the House of Lords afterwards.

[4] In 1867, when the Resolution Party was split into two, Jókai did not join the Far Left party, which aimed at independence, but the Left Center; and in 1875, when the Left Center merged with the Deák Party to create the Liberal Party, which was to govern dualist Hungary for 30 years, he stayed with Kálmán Tisza, while those who did not created the Principled Left Center in 1873, a part of which merged with the 1848 Party in 1874 to establish the 1848 Independence Party, while another part established its own Independence Party. Jókai never joined any of the various formations of independence parties.

[5] Curiously enough, Czigányik characterizes the intolerable political situation with the following "fact": "Ironically, maybe he is also protesting contemporary reality: emperor Francis Joseph, who was simultaneously the king of Hungary, did not speak Hungarian" (2015, 16). Actually, Francis Joseph spoke Hungarian fluently and already as a young boy was able to write good compositions in Hungarian as homework.

[6] Czigányik rightly emphasizes that "[t]he structure of society is described by Jókai in Marxist terms of patterns of exploitation, with the authorities – as it is to be expected of an exploiting class – constantly considering the use of coercive forces." However, the structure of the society is more complex than the dichotomy implied in Czigányik's spatial methaphor in the expression "the harmony of the

new state is threatened from below" (2015, 19). The rebellious elements are those who do not have full citizenship in Otthon, and decided not to apply for owner status in the collective entreprise. Their willingness to follow hostile propaganda seems to imply moral inferiority (the symptoms of which are illoyalty and mobility). Only the good immigrants want and can join the Hungarian owner-worker class in Otthon. For a more illuminating analysis of the Otthon economy see Hites 2021 (article in this volume).

[7] The 19th century had no generally established rules to transcribe Chinese words into Hungarian. Since most of the sources Hungarians used were in German (and some in French) the transcription was mostly assimilated to the German habits, although they were not strictly regulated either. Therefore, to identify Jókai's Chinese words with real referents is a challenging task. In this article I quote literally what Jókai wrote, unless the identification, like in the case of well-known geographical denominations, is evident.

[8] For both names Jókai used transcriptions; "Jan-Tse-Kiang" for Yangtze is easily decipherable, while the "Huang Ho" (Huang He), which means "yellow river" might cause some difficulties.

[9] The third mountain which borders Kin-Tseu has the name of China's biggest lake, the Qinghai Lake, also known as Kuku-Nor. We will never know how the name of a real lake became the name of a mountain.

[10] Csorba 2006, p. 62, items 233, 234, and p. 146, item 900.

[11] Wagner's German transcription is "Huangcioya", which is similar to a mythical creature of the Chinese tradition called Huang que yu (yellow birdfish), the summer-fish-winter-bird animal in the South Sea.

[12] "A leaotungi emberkék", i.e. The small people of Leaotung. In 1890 it appeared in a newspaper, and later it was published in Jókai's various fairytale and short story collections.

[13] The Danube delta islands of Otthon are not only contrasted to the Chinese topos of the enclosed valley but also to Jókai's other utopias. Both the mise-en-abyme North Pole utopia in *Black Diamonds* (Jókai 1964, 1, 202–224) and his late novel *Where Money Is Not God* (1904) place the perfectly idyllic community on islands.

[14] Why is this knowledge forbidden? Jókai describes an anti-intelligentsia movement in China, in which books written during the previous dynasty were burned and hundreds of scholars were executed to prevent them from writing the destroyed books again. This sounds similar to what happened during the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE); see Twitchett and Loewe 1986, 69–72. However, Jókai attributed the movement to the Ming period (1368–1644; 2, 122). If it is not a simple mistake (which is highly possible, given the uncertainties of transcription), he might have wanted to use the name of a better-known dynasty or to adjust the book burning to the chronology of Kin-Tseu's foundation, which he posited in the 13th century. The historical Sima Qian does not fit in the chronology, but if Jókai's fictional Sima Qian lived in the Ming period, he does. Jókai names a "Hue" dynasty as preceding the Mings. This name does not sound very similar to any real dynasty, but it may be identified with the Yuan dynasty, which makes the chronology correct.

[15] Although Jókai emphasizes that there are female academics in the future society, they appear to be segregated; there is an academy for women, and this only event when a female scholar is involved in the plot seems to imply that women can hardly compete with men in academia. The woman Rozáli hires can find the relevant written source, and she can translate it, but she fails to discover the context and therefore she is incapable of critical interpretation. A historian who presents unreliable material as if it was a reliable source, because they fail to read the secondary literature, is obviously a bad scholar. Women do not appear as inventors when the novel describes the innumerable innovations of the imaginary 20th century, and the only female academic makes a major mistake. The women's academy therefore does not seem to be a serious institution. This is one of the many signs of the novel's misogynist tendency.

[16] Cf. Tamás 1993; Szilasi 2000, 198–199. For the frequency of erotic and pornographic contents in popular genres overwhelming evidence has been collected in Császtvay 2009. Géza Csáth (1887–1919), the young short story writer, made this remark in 1906: "Jókai sometimes had terribly perverted ideas" (Szajbély 2014, 128).

[17] The assumption is described by Robert M. Adams as follows: "the natives don't know what to do with the land that Providence has unfairly bestowed upon them, and superior races are therefore entitled to take over" (More 1992, 41).

[18] See also Lewes 1993. For the relationship of utopia and sex in general, see Tower Sargent and Sargisson 2014.

[19] "Sie sind über den massen auf die Weiber verliebet ja greiffen dieselbe zu weilen auf dem Wege an ihre viehische Lüste mit ihnen zu büssen" (Wagner 1687, 127).

[20] One might see a similarity to the ideas of Thomas Malthus, who in his 1798 book *An Essay on the Principle of Population* explained that the increase in food production can never catch up with population growth, and notably suggested population control by sexual self-restraint.

LITERATURE

Babits, Mihály. 1982. *A gólyakalifa. Kártyavár. Timár Virgil fia. Elza pilóta*. Budapest: Szépirodalmi.

Császtvay, Tünde. 2009. *Éjjeli lepkevadászat*. Budapest: Osiris.

Csorba, E. Csilla, ed. 2006. "Egy ember, akit még eddig nem ismertünk." A Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum Jókai-gyűjteményének katalógusa. Budapest: Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum.

Czigányik, Zsolt. 2015. "From the Bright Future of the Nation to the Dark Future of Mankind: Jókai and Karinthy in Hungarian Utopian Tradition." *Hungarian Cultural Studies* 8: 12–23. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5195/ahea.2015.213.

Fokkema, Douwe. 2011. *Perfect Worlds: Utopian Fiction in China and the West*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Fried, István. 2003. *Öreg Jókai nem vén Jókai*. Budapest: Ister.

Hites, Sándor. 2021. "National Internationalism in Late 19th-century Utopias by Mór Jókai, Edward Bellamy, and William Morris." *World Literature Studies* 13, 2: 69–80.

Humboldt, Alexander von. 1845. *Kosmos*: *Entwurf einer physischen Weltbeschreibung*. Vol. 1–5. Stuttgart and Tübingen: J.G. Cotta.

Humboldt, Alexander von. 1859. *Ansichten der Natur mit wissenschaftlichen Erläuterungen*. Vol. 1–2. Stuttgart and Augsburg: J.G. Cotta.

Jókai, Mór. 1863. "Chinai furcsaságok." *Üstökös* 6, 23: 179.

Jókai, Mór. 1964. *Fekete gyémántok*. Vol. 1–2. Ed. by József Nacsády. Budapest: Akadémiai.

Jókai, Mór. 1981. *A jövő század regénye (1872–1874)*. Vol. 1–2. Ed. by Zsuzsa D. Zöldhelyi. Budapest: Akadémiai.

Kádár, Judit. 1991. "Jókai regényei angolul." *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 95: 505–542.

Kádár, Judit. 1995. "Műfaj és jelentés metamorfózisa Jókai műveinek tizenkilencedik századi angol és francia fordításaiban." Kandidátusi értekezés, Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia. Accessed July 1, 2021. http://real-d.mtak.hu/1309/1/MTA_KIK_Kt_D_18256_Kadar.pdf.

Lehrer, Evelyn L. 1996. "Religion as a Determinant of Marital Fertility." *Journal of Population Economics* 9, 2: 173-196.

Lewes, Darby. 1993. "Nudes from Nowhere: Pornography, Empire, and Utopia." *Utopian Studies* 4, 2: 66–73.

Lewes, Darby. 1996. "Utopian Sexual Landscapes: An Annotated Checklist of British Somatopias." *Utopian Studies* 7, 2: 167–195.

Malthus, Thomas. 1798. *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. London: J. Johnson.

More, Thomas. 1992. *Utopia*. Ed. by Robert M. Adams. New York, NY: Norton.

Privigyey, Pál. 2002. "Magyarország nem volt, hanem lesz." In *XIX. századi magyar fantasztikus regények*, ed. by Eszter Tarjányi, 100–203. Piliscsaba: PPKE.

Sontag, Susan. 1977. *Illness as Metaphor*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Szajbély, Mihály. 2014. "Lám megmondtam: perverzió. Csáth-olvasásnyomok Jókai Dekameronjában." *Tiszatáj* 68, 5: 127–141.

Szilasi, László. 2000. *A selyemgubó és a "bonczoló kés"*. Budapest and Szeged: Osiris and Pompeji.

Tamás, Gáspár Miklós. 1993. "Az erotikus eszmény." *Magyar Narancs* 5, 51–52: 40–41.

Tower Sargent, Lyman, and Lucy Sargisson. 2014. "Sex in Utopia: Eutopian and Dystopian Sexual Relations." *Utopian Studies* 25, 2: 299–320.
Twitchett, Denis, and Michael Loewe. 1986. *The Cambridge History of China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Veres, Miklós: 2013. "A képzelet derült játéka. A dualizmus válságjelenségei az utópisztikus és tudományos-fantasztikus irodalomban." *Holmi*, January. Accessed July 1, 2021. https://www.holmi.org/2013/01/veres-miklos-a-kepzelet-derult-jatekai-a-dualizmus-valsagjelensegei-az-utopisztikus-es-tudomanyos-fantasztikus-irodalomban.
Wagner, Johann Christoph. 1687. *Das mächtige Kayser-Reich Sina und die asiatische Tartarey.* Augsburg: Koppmayer.
Weber, Max. 1904. *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*. Vol. 1–2. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr.

Mór Jókai's Asian utopia(s)

Nationalism. 19th-century literature. East-West comparison. Pornotopia. Ecotopia.

The paper analyzes Mór Jókai's *The Novel of the Century to Come* from the viewpoint of the local aspects of cultural embeddedness of the complex and competing utopian discourses. The whole novel describes a future in which, after difficult struggles, a globally united and perfect society is created. However, two different small-scale utopias are also described; one of them (Otthon) is located in Europe and shows traits of the national-capitalist dream; the other (Kin-Tseu) is imagined to be in Central Asia and presented first from the perspective of Chinese historical sources, in a form similar to a colonialist pornotopia. Then an omniscient narrator proves that the Chinese image of Kin-Tseu is false, and presents it as it "really" is. This latter utopia solicits an ecocritical reading, since its basic problem, i.e. the sustainability of a growing population in a closed environment, is crucial for current ecocriticism. The experimentation with various (including Western and Eastern) utopian traditions functions as a unique poetic feature in Jókai's novel.

Péter Hajdu, CSc
School of Foreign Languages
Shenzhen University
No. 3688 Nanhai Road
Nanshan District
Shenzhen City
China
pethajdu@gmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3623-1578

National internationalism in late 19th-century utopias by Mór Jókai, Edward Bellamy, and William Morris

SÁNDOR HITES

DOI: https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2021.13.2.6

Intuitively, we expect utopias to offer salvation for the social, economic or political ills of the whole of humanity, and they usually appear to do so.* Such was the case in the 19th century, which was the great era of modern utopianism, as well as the age of nationalism. Accordingly, many of its formative utopian narratives made their proposals for the reorganization of human communities in a peculiar double bind: while they intended to replace the layout of the nation-state, they remained captive to its conceptual framework.

Arguably, this dynamic was rooted in the early modern origins of the genre. As Phillip E. Wegner has pointed out, Thomas More's *Utopia* "reterritorialized" late feudal culture (in Deleuze and Guattari's well-known formulation) by inaugurating a "spatialized kind of political, social and cultural formation". Cut off artificially from the mainland, More's island (an idealized England) transforms "frontier" into "border" in a "disjunctive act of territorial inclusion as well as exclusion". This "new kind of spatiality" entails a "new kind of cultural identity" in which the sense of belonging stems from "the common habitation" of a territory, rather than religious allegiance or dynastic loyalty. This image of a community being congruent with the geographical space it occupies adumbrates the subsequent spatial practices of the modern nation-state, that is, the premise that the nation and its location should coincide. This connection between the "imaginary communities" of utopias and the "imagined communities" of nations, Wegner concludes, remains vivid throughout modernity, even if in the form of "estranging critique" (2002, 25–26, 49–60). Indeed, a great deal of the conflicts encoded in modern nationalism occurred precisely because of the inevitable *incongruence* of national communities and their state; as much as utopian spatial practice was imagined as national, the nationalistic politics of space has remained profoundly utopian.

This article will trace this dynamic in three novels by examining how the universalistic or internationalist tendencies in the utopian thought of the late 19th century were shaped, explicitly or tacitly, by the national or imperialistic imagination. Two of these works, Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward 2000–1887* (1888) and William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890), are firmly set in the core canon of utopian nar-

* The paper was written with the support of the "A 19. századi magyar irodalom politikai gazdaságtana" Lendület Research Program and is part of a wider project that looks at the economic ideas underlying 19th-century utopianism.

ratives. The third, my chief concern here, *The Novel of the Century to Come* (*A jövő század regénye*, 1872–1874) written by Mór Jókai (1825–1904), arguably the most important Hungarian novelist of his age, is much less known outside its national canon. Compared to the formidable transnational impact of *Looking Backward* and *News from Nowhere,* manifesting early on in a great number of translations and, in Bellamy's case, a vast number of sales, Jókai's novel had a limited, albeit not fully negligible, international presence. As with most of Jókai's other works – including his biggest international success, *The Gipsy Baron* (*A cigánybáró*, 1885), which served as the inspiration for Strauss's operetta *Der Zigeunerbaron – The Novel of the Century to Come* was immediately translated into German (Jókai 1878). It appeared in two consecutive editions, one for the sizeable German-speaking audience in Hungary, the other directly for the German market (on Jókai's German reception, see Ujvári 2011). Although some of Jókai's novels were also successful among Victorian-era English readers (see Magyar 1958), *Century to Come* never appeared in English.

Jókai's long and prolific career unfolded under the spell of Romantic nationalism, particularly the inspiration of such French Romantics as Eugène Sue, Alexandre Dumas père and Victor Hugo. His typical narrative formula placed exaggerated, larger-than-life characters into melodramatic plots, which he applied to various themes, most memorably historical parables celebrating early 19th-century Hungarian nation-builders or offering consolation for the failed revolution of 1848. From the late 1860s, Jókai became infatuated with industrial and technological progress and produced several novels, occasionally with themes and devices borrowed from Jules Verne, whose heroes utilized futuristic inventions in their nation-building missions (cf. Hárs 2019). One of these was *The Novel of the Century to Come*, an extremely long and eccentric book, even by its author's standards. Although generic hybridity is typical of utopian narratives, by attempting to encompass the full range of stock utopian themes Jókai's novel ends up with a nearly cacophonic mixture (on Jókai's utopianism in the context of Hungarian utopian traditions, see Czigányik 2015). Combining urbanistic utopia with "future history" and science fiction, mixing the sensationalist genres of *Zukunftskrieg* and financial fiction with the narrative devices of the adventure novel, *Century to Come* offers an eminent example of what Darko Suvin has called the "panoramic sweep" of utopian imagination (2010, 31–32): It engages with aspects of geography, demography, anthropology, history, religion, ethics, economics, politics, social and ethnic conflicts, warfare, technology, industry, ecology, astronomy, and cosmology.

Like other representatives of the transnational surge of utopian narratives after 1870, Jókai was inspired by two events: on the one hand, the Franco-Prussian War of 1871 and the Commune, on the other, the Panic of 1873 and the ensuing Long Depression. The former gave rise to a wave of "future-war fiction" (Clarke 1966), most memorably George T. Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a Volunteer* (1871), whose innumerable imitations fed on British anxieties of a German or French invasion. Jókai's scenes of futuristic warfare reflect his fears, central to the Hungarian political imagination at the time, of a Pan-Slavic alliance under Russian leadership, fueled by still-recent memories of 1849, when the tsarist army helped the Habsburgs

to suppress the Hungarians; in *Century to Come* it is a "nihilistic" Russian empire, run by a group of anarchists, that invades a now peacefully united Austria-Hungary. With its intricate commercial and financial subplots, Jókai's novel also resonated with the "widespread perception" underlying the many works "permeated with anticipatory or utopian consciousness" between 1870 and 1900 that "capitalist society had arrived at some sort of historical turning point" (Beaumont 2005, 3). This perception, however, figured differently in different socio-economic environments: while American and British authors (including Bellamy and Morris) responded to the recurrent crises of mature industrial societies, Jókai reflected on the vicissitudes of the capitalist *Gründerzeit* in East Central Europe in general and in the Kingdom of Hungary in particular.

In *Century to Come*, the themes of warfare and finance are linked by the central motif of the novel, a miraculous technological invention. The electric airplane – designed by an autodidact Hungarian engineer, Dávid Tatrangi, exploiting a formerly unknown material, "ichor", only available in his native Transylvanian mountains – revolutionizes both military confrontations and commercial relations. In Enlightenment thought, international trade had been associated both with the harmonious co-existence of nations (unified by their mutual needs and interests) and with self-destructive rivalries in a competitive and, as a tendency, imperialistic economic globalization (cf. Hont 2005; Kapossy, Nakhimovsky, and Whatmore 2017). Jókai plays out this controversial tradition, most directly, Kant's attempt to resolve the inherent conflicts of commercial sociability from a cosmopolitan perspective, by dividing his novel into two parts, "perpetual fight" and "perpetual peace". The invention of the airplane connects these phases in a dialectical pattern: escalating warfare to its ultimate destructive force, aviation eventually becomes the guardian of peace – driving commercial exchange to its ultimate extensity and intensity, it helps to unite nations by *enforcing* harmony and prosperity on them. Arguably, due to his authoritative notion of "mankind", Kant's cosmopolitan utopia of a world confederation of trading nations had its own nationalistic, Eurocentric and imperialistic moments (Biti 2016, 99–118). Jókai's vision of global harmony is also informed by a nationalistically defined internationalism, that is, a benevolent Hungarian military and commercial supremacy.[1]

A grotesque, and all the more typical, fantasy by the representative of a "minor nation" from the semi-peripheries of world politics and world economy. Yet one that resonates with the celebrated internationalisms of Bellamy and Morris inasmuch as these, I will argue, also derive from tacitly nationalistic or imperialistic imageries.

RELOCATING THE NATION

The utopian transformation of society relies on acts of *relocation* for Bellamy, Morris and Jókai alike. Bellamy's dream vision concentrates on urban centers, emblematically his futuristic Boston. Morris, in turn, disentangles human life from the city and relocates it in the countryside. In *News from Nowhere*, cities are either annihilated or deurbanized; Manchester, as we learn, "has now disappeared" (Morris 1995, 116), London is once again a place where rural lifestyles, architecture and vegetation prevail. Morris makes it central to his critique of *Looking Backward* that

Bellamy "has no idea beyond existence in a great city" and degrades "the village" to be "mere servants of the great centers of civilization" (Morris 1889). Bellamy's and Morris's respective visions of a new social order correspond to these vectors of relocation (and both novels re-inscribe eliminated social inequalities into the hierarchy of locations). As opposed to the bureaucratized and centralized top-down state-socialism proposed in *Looking Backward*, in *News from Nowhere* the nation-state disintegrates into a loose network of communes. In spite of its collectivism, Bellamy's overcentralized world ends up in an even more atomized social design, comprised of nuclear families living in isolation and avoiding social encounters (Auerbach 1994, 29), while in Morris's ecological communism, autonomous households are interconnected by gestures of hospitality.

Although proclaiming social harmony, both novels are conspicuously saturated with images of war. For Bellamy, the reorganization of the state and the national economy rests on the peaceful militarism of the "industrial army". In Morris, it is not only political transformation that takes place in violent forms, revolution and civil war, but the subsequent reorganization of society is also described in tropes of aggression: "People flocked into the country villages, and, so to say, flung themselves upon the free land like a wild beast upon the prey" (1995, 74). The relocation of the population is carried out as a military campaign: As much as cities are reconquered for rural life, the movement in the opposite direction also takes the form of an "invasion", one in which "the town invaded the country". Society becomes fully re-ruralized when former town-dwellers adopt the peaceful lifestyle of the countryside, yet this process again unfolds in the style of militaristic expansion: "the invaders, like warlike invaders of early days, yielded to the influence of their surroundings, and became country people" (74). Jókai's narrative is also structured along multiple acts of relocation, spatial and temporal, geographical and historical. *Century to Come* begins with the utopian cityscape of 1950s Budapest, now the capital of a Hungary-dominated Austria-Hungary headed by a Hungaricized Habsburg dynasty which has abandoned Vienna for this new seat of power, the last stronghold of royalist sentiments in the empire. (Here Jókai plays out the ultimate political fantasy of post-1867 Hungarian politics, that of achieving hegemony within the dual monarchy.) At the beginning of the second part of the novel, that is, on the threshold of the transition from "perpetual struggle" to "perpetual peace", another city is raised through an even more profound act of relocation, that is, an exodus amounting to the second founding of the nation. After the great war in the first part of the novel, the remnants of the Hungarian army – de facto victorious over the invading Russian forces, but outmaneuvered diplomatically – are resettled in an uncultivated strip of land in the Danube Delta, purchased from the Russian state. Under the leadership of the inventor Tatrangi, this self-exiled community establishes a city-state designed along the stereotypical utopian blueprints of urbanistic planning, social engineering, and economic rationality.

This new country called Otthon (Home) hosts a thoroughly commercialized community. Transforming the Hungarian air force into a cargo fleet, they launch a commercial enterprise which, by virtue of their technological monopoly, comes

to dominate global trade, "amassing wares from all parts of the world" in their "gigantic warehouses" (Jókai 1981a, 507).[2] Formally, the new state is organized as a joint-stock company, with citizens as shareholders in a collective commercial enterprise: "We shall become a state that trades [...] a giant commercial firm. A shareholders' state, with an executive board at the top, which speculates and, based on its balance sheet, distributes dividends from the net profit and allocates reserve capital" (510).

In the design of Otthon, Jókai literalizes the trope that Bourdieu has called the "most fully developed form" of "utopian capitalism", that is, the myth of the "stockholder democracy" (Bourdieu 2005, 226). With the image that belonging to the community coincides with the collective ownership of a nation-scale company, congruent with the state itself, Jókai also anticipates Bellamy's scheme of reorganizing "the nation" into "one great business corporation in which all other corporation were absorbed" (Bellamy 2007, 33). It is also worth noting that while in *Looking Backward* the new structure of industrial society takes after the hierarchical model of the military, Jókai's utopian community grows out of a former army as it turns into a commercial republic thriving on world trade. Unlike, however, Bellamy's (and Morris's) vision, where the community is reorganized within the confines of its previous geographical location, Jókai's Otthon needs to carve out a space for itself in an unused and seemingly valueless land. The outskirts of this swamp are inhabited by "uncivilized" locals; we do not learn much about them after the new city has been built. With this, Jókai plays out "the myth of the empty land", widely employed in 19th-century colonialist imagination to conceal the founding violence of colonializing space (cf. McClintock 1995, 17). On the one hand, then, Otthon is tied up with a geographical space – and the novel explicitly associates its setting with former commercial republics built on water such as Holland and Venice – but its real location is the air, a sphere that it conquers for global commerce. As opposed to its geographical insularity, its hegemonization of the sky with its now commercial air fleet provides the new state with an all-encompassing, global reach.

Formed as a joint-stock company, citizenship in Otthon should be, by definition, limitless. Jókai's utopian city does have this cosmopolitan feature, yet it still remains an appendix to the motherland: it is mainly populated by subsequent waves of immigrants from Hungary. Not only is Hungarian the predominant language of Otthon, its commercial supremacy turns it into a global language. Because the air fleet of Otthon "carries most swiftly reliable news from all corners of the world" (Jókai 1981b, 21), everyone needs to learn Hungarian if they want to be able to read their newspapers and stay informed. Otthon also remains bound to Hungary by the relentless loyalty of Tatrangi (now the head of the executive board) to the sovereign. Although the center of power has shifted from Austria to Hungary, the novel nonetheless suggests that the rise of Otthon retrospectively compensates for the trade posts that Austria lost in the 18th century, traditionally blamed for the fact that the empire had been excluded from the main currents of world trade and commercial wealth in Western Europe. With this gesture, Jókai integrates this essentially Hungarian enterprise into the whole of Habsburg imperial history.

The other aspect of historicizing this utopian "home" is more decidedly national. The relocation of the best of the nation into a commercial outpost – geographically remote and conceptually utopian – performs a "second Conquest" (the first refers to the arrival of the Hungarian tribes from the Asian steppes to the Carpathian basin in the late 9th century). And this "second Conquest" takes place not only in a spatial but also in a temporal sense. Wandering through the Far East in his airplane, Tatrangi happens to discover the lost Hungarian aboriginal tribe (the myth of which was and has remained a permanent obsession of the Hungarian historical consciousness), living in their own secluded yet highly advanced utopian community in the Himalayas. (For an analysis of this mise-en-abyme utopia-within-utopia in the novel, see Hajdu's article in this issue.) Tatrangi transports them on his air fleet over to the new state, thereby uniting the prehistorical ancestry of the nation with its futuristic offspring. Otthon, an idealized fatherland in exile, thus becomes the place where the *Ur-Space* of the nation can be discovered and reconnected with, reunifying the nation both geographically and historically.

The fantasy that Hungarian prehistory sheds its mythical mist and reenters world history does not merely solve a riddle of national historiography but has universal relevance. It is with the help of the lost tribe that Tatrangi's air fleet can defeat the Russians for the second time and usher in the era of "perpetual peace". That is, mankind can only be unified after the unity of the Hungarian nation and the continuity of its history have been restored (Szilágyi 2008). For what makes Otthon destined for the task of imposing universal peace and prosperity is that, as Jókai underlines, Hungary is the only nation that is at home in Europe as well as in Asia. The commercial republic of Otthon can carry out its mission to "form a center connecting the commerce of Europe and Asia and expand its network over all the continents of the world and all their islands" (Jókai 1981a, 501) by utilizing the event of world-historical significance in which "the two brother-nations, once split apart, now reunited again [...] grow into an ore colossus, with one leg set in the center of Europe, the other in that of Asia" (Jókai 1981b, 160). Thus, the Hungarian commercial *republic* turns into a Hungarian commercial *empire*, overarching East and West, imposing its benevolent dominance on the world and even more, a cosmic harmony: The novel ends with a Fourieresque vision in which the gravitational force of a comet passing by the Earth's atmosphere straightens the globe's tilted axis, and, rebounding from the Sun, just as Tatrangi has predicted in his astronomical calculations, introduces a new planet into the solar system.

NATIONALISMS AND IMPERIALISMS

With his grandiose vision conflating historical mythology and modern commercialism, Jókai manages to reconcile the historicist notion of nationhood with the felt cosmopolitanism and anti-historicity of capitalism, and to fuse the (alleged) rationality of utilitarian values with the heroism of romantic nationalism.

Such aspirations are seemingly alien to Bellamy or Morris. First of all, the patterns of temporality they foreground in their work are different: while Jókai futurizes historical memory by infusing its national myths into commercial and technological cap-

italism, Bellamy's industrial society is forged by the "theoretical rejection" of memory, Morris's by the revival of a markedly pre-capitalist past (Geoghegan 1992). Nevertheless, Bellamy and Morris were no less enmeshed in controversial negotiations between universalistic and national perspectives. This is even so concerning their respective efforts of de-historicization and historicization: the cult of novelty in *Looking Backward* universalizes the myth of America's blank past; the communistic medievalism of *Nowhere* marks a return to a national Anglo-Saxon past. Thus, whether encoded in its future (Bellamy), in its past (Morris), or in the mythological fusion of the two (Jókai), all three authors claim transnational relevance for their respective nations.

The term "Nationalism" in *Looking Backward* signals the communal propertization and concentration of resources and means of production and distribution. By choosing a word that had the connotations of isolationism and autarky rather than international collaboration, Bellamy wanted to distance his ideas from those of European socialists (Matarese 1989, 44–45). Still, he envisioned a global social and economic transformation in which, not unlike in Jókai's fantasy, his own nation would take the lead and other nations would follow suit: "[T]he great nations of Europe as well as Australia, Mexico, and parts of South America, are now organized industrially like the United States, which was the pioneer of the evolution" (Bellamy 2007, 82). In his first draft of the novel, Bellamy recalled, "the United States was supposed to be merely an administrative province of the great World Nation", directed from the city of Berne (Bellamy 1889). By opting to replace this scheme with that of American leadership, Bellamy chose to universalize what he preferred to see as genuinely American features. It might be argued that this "messianic nationalism" is counterbalanced by "the book's insistent internationalist message" which came to resonate widely in transatlantic socialist circles (Guarneri 2008, 147–151, 166–168). Yet it is precisely the way in which *Looking Backward* outlines transnational cooperation that is saturated by the sense of supremacy: "An international council regulates the mutual intercourse and commerce of the members of the union and their joint policy toward the more backward races, which are gradually being educated up to civilized institutions" (Bellamy 2007, 82).

Although it is centralized state-socialism that he upholds as a paradigm to be imitated globally, Bellamy's scheme of social evolution follows the same logic which, in Bourdieu's view, came to propel the 20th century globalization of market liberalism: both universalize "the historical particularities of a particular social tradition – that of American society" by postulating this tradition and its "civic and ethical" ideals "as an inevitable destiny" and "the end-point of a natural evolution" which "promises political emancipation for the peoples of all countries" (Bourdieu 2005, 226). Bellamy's cooperative socialism and the American ideology of market democracy also coincide insofar as both collapse into consumerism. The expectation of the values of a "post-national US nationalism" to spread globally is predicated on a form of cosmopolitanism that takes its model from Roman imperialism (cf. Arendt 2017, 165–171; Biti 2016, 171–173). And as it has been demonstrated, the American utopian imagination, including Bellamy's, did inform American foreign policy in the 20th century (Matarese 2001).

In *News from Nowhere*, Morris markedly distances himself from any sense of nationalism, treating nationalistic ideas, or the very concept of nation, with nothing but scorn. Pacifying appeals to the "'common mother', the English Nation" during the period of the civil war are revoked as characteristically reactionary gestures (Morris 1995, 126). In Morris's view, "modern nationalities" were "artificial devices for the commercial war", and a post-capitalist world would entail their dissolution insofar as they functioned solely by and for the purpose of capital accumulation: "When profits can no more be made there will be no necessity for holding together masses of men to draw together the greatest proportion of profit to their locality, or to the real or imaginary union of persons and corporations which is now called a nation" (cited in Holland 2017, 196–197).

The concept that nations are locations of capital plays a more positive role, in fact a constitutive one, in *Century to Come*. While Morris's new England is a society which has "long ago dropped the pretension to be the market of the world" (1995, 70), Jókai's ideal state aspires precisely to become the "market of the world" thereby fulfilling its world-historical mission. As a trading post outsourced from the "mother nation", Otthon is raised on the vast profits it makes in global trade. More precisely, it is created for the purpose of making profit because only by adding commercial wealth to its military might (and intellectual and technological superiority) can it reach the position from which it can efficiently pacify the world. The task is not to "destroy commercialism" as in Morris (1995, 135) but to transform it into a benevolent world-unifying force.

In proposing this, Jókai was clearly inspired, however indirectly, by the British free trade movement (that is, the doctrines of Richard Cobden and the Manchester industrialists) and its slogans of international peace, cooperation and social justice secured by laissez-faire commercial exchange (Trentmann 1998). Under the reign of Otthon's commercial air fleet, we learn, "systems of protective tariffs and customs zones collapse" as they become untenable and meaningless (Jókai 1981b, 29). But as Tatrangi insists, unhindered trade can only exert its benign influence if in its dominance of "intermediating between continents" Otthon does not turn into a black hole of capital, but "lets the profits of international commerce spread across the world" (14). That is, the credo of free trade can only be realized by an uncontested force which at the same time has the ethical conviction to understand the stakes of this mission. Unlike Bellamy and Morris, what Jókai offers is not a socio-economic alternative to global capitalism but a moral reform of its existing structures. International commerce may turn into an agency of peace and prosperity if this process is installed and supervised from the position of ultimate power *and* humanism. This mission cannot be entrusted to the logic of history or the self-regulation of the market but remains the competence of an individual, the inventor, pilot and head of state Tatrangi, who, in addition to his superhuman qualities, remains an essentially national hero.

In the British free trade movement and its proclaimed anti-imperialism – from the perspective of the aggressive foreign policy with which it proved reconcilable, merely another form of imperialism (Semmel 1970) – Morris saw an instance of "false internationalism" which aligned itself with the "international character of capital", seek-

ing profit "wherever it can be best found" (Holland 2017, 185, 189–190). Morris's ideal of a socialist internationalism rested on the brotherhood of men with no national affiliation. Nonetheless, *News from Nowhere* is conspicuously reticent about political, social and economic structures beyond Britain as Morris "limits his description [of the effects of the revolution] to the confines of a single nation-state" (Crump 1990, 68). When Guest asks Old Hammond whether other parts of the world have undergone the same social transformation, and, if so, whether life has not become dull without the competition of nations, he is offered the enigmatic advice to "cross the water and see" (Morris 1995, 88). Showing little concern toward wider regions of the world in the utopian future, Morris seems to have adopted Bellamy's restricted focus and also seems to have replicated his bias for national exceptionalism. For Bellamy, it is the collective wisdom of American society that makes a rational choice of self-reform which then spreads across the globe. For Morris, it is the British labor movement and its revolution that installs the new social system, to be followed elsewhere (as he hints, in continental Europe, though not in North America). As much as it is the English civil war that brings "the world" to "its second birth" (135), it is again an immanent tendency in national social history that is endowed with world-historical or universal relevance.

Furthermore, it also remains ambivalent how the new, communistic Britain would relate to its former colonies or to regions of the world that are still open to be colonized. As Owen Holland's illuminating analysis has shown, in spite of Morris's "internationalist and anti-imperialist political rhetoric", *News from Nowhere* does not rule out the possibility of colonial engagements in a future socialist society (Holland 2017, 23, 227–237). As Old Hammond remarks, "[we] have helped to populate other countries [...] where we wanted and were called for" (Morris 1995, 76), "[t]hose lands which were once the colonies of Great Britain [...] and especially America [...] are now and will be for a long while a great resource to us" (101). This suggests that while Britain as a nation-state is superseded, the structure of colonial exploitation (and the positions of center and periphery, "us" and "them", hardly reconcilable with the image of a decentered socialist internationalism) would persist. In fact, Morris had already insisted on "fertilising the waste places of the earth" in his 1887 article 'Emigration and Colonisation' where he also stressed that "the Roman idea of leading a colony is right and good", and "the society of the future" would continue "to send out some band of its best and hardiest people to socialise some hitherto neglected spot of earth for the service of man" (cited in Holland 2017, 230–231).

THE ENDURING LEGACY OF "PATRIOTIC COSMOPOLITANISM"

Jókai's commercial utopia redeeming the world in a *Pax Hungarica* reflects national anxieties and aspirations which are typical of the political fantasies cherished in the semi-periphery. His nationally informed or biased internationalism, however, points to a deeper, underlying pattern that also determines, as we saw in the case of Bellamy and Morris, the utopian imagination of "core nations".

This pattern, I would suggest in conclusion, might be traced back to the legacy of enlightened cosmopolitanism. Prior to the rise of modern nationalism, a "universally normative concept of culture" could remain *weltbürgerlich* even if it was "iden-

tified with the culture of a certain ethnolinguistic people" (Cheah 1998, 25–26). This sense of patriotic cosmopolitanism, in which patriotism is taken as the highest form of cosmopolitanism, can be witnessed in the political philosophy of Johann Gottlieb Fichte. If human *Bildung* reaches an advanced stage in one nation, and this nation happens to be one's own, then why not wish to expand it all over to others – Fichte asks in his 1806–1807 dialogue "Der Patriotismus und sein Gegenteil". As he expounds, given their exceptional aptitude for science and philosophy Germans are entitled to the world historical mission of spearheading the progress of reason in all mankind. Accordingly, only Germans may legitimately wish to impose their findings on all humanity. Or, in other words, "only Germans can be patriots" and "embrace humanity" in the same gesture; other patriotisms, as a rule, are "selfish, narrow-minded, and hostile to the rest of the human race" (Fichte 1971, 233–234).

I would by no means suggest that the Fichtean reconciliation of universalism and patriotism had a direct influence on the authors discussed in this article. What I do suggest though is that a similar pattern tacitly informed their negotiations of national and international perspectives. However paradoxical it may sound to us, it was surely not paradoxical to Fichte, and, apparently, its self-contradictions proved resolvable, consciously or subconsciously, for Jókai, Bellamy and Morris as well.

NOTES

[1] The idea that the advancement of aviation would enforce states to abandon warfare harks back to Benjamin Franklin's contemplations about air balloons in the 1780s. A similar concept of securing peace by dominating the air resurfaced in H.G. Wells's 1933 *The Shape of Things to Come* and its vision of an Anglophone "Air Dictatorship" (cf. Kapossy, Nakhimovsky, and Whatmore 2017, 7–8). Jókai's scheme is nearly identical with Wells's, except that for him it is the Hungarian domination of the air that ushers in the era of global peace. On Jókai's involvement in the international peace movement of the late 19th century, see Kovács 2016.

[2] This and all subsequent translations from the Hungarian (unless otherwise noted) are by the present author.

LITERATURE

Arendt, Hannah. 2017. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York, NY: Penguin Classics.

Auerbach, Jonathan. 1994. "'The Nation Organized': Utopian Impotence in Edward Bellamy's 'Looking Backward'." *American Literary History* 6, 1: 24–47. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/alh/6.1.24.

Beaumont, Matthew. 2005. *Utopia Ltd.: Ideologies of Social Dreaming in England 1870–1900*. Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill.

Bellamy, Edward. [1888] 2007. *Looking Backward 2000–1887*, ed. by Matthew Beaumont. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bellamy, Edward. 1889. "How I Came to Write 'Looking Backward'." The *Nationalist*, May 1889. Accessed May 1, 2021. https://www.depauw.edu/sfs/documents/bellamy.htm.

Biti, Vladimir. 2016. *Tracing Global Democracy: Literature, Theory, and the Politics of Trauma*. Berlin and Boston, MA: de Gruyter. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110457643.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2005. *The Social Structures of the Economy*. Trans. by Chris Turner. Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Cheah, Pheng. 1998. "Introduction Part II: The Cosmopolitical – Today." In *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*, ed. by Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, 20–41. Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press.

Clarke, Ignatius F. 1966. *Voices Prophesying War: Future Wars 1763–1984*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Crump, John. 1990. "How the Change Came: 'News from Nowhere' and Revolution." In *William Morris & News from Nowhere: A Vision for Our Time*, ed. by Stephen Coleman and Paddy O'Sullivan, 57–73. Hartland, MI: Green Books.

Czigányik, Zsolt. 2015. "From the Bright Future of the Nation to the Dark Future of Mankind: Jókai and Karinthy in Hungarian Utopian Tradition." *Hungarian Cultural Studies* 8: 12–23. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5195/ahea.2015.213.

Fichte, Johann Gottlieb. 1971. "Der Patriotismus und sein Gegenteil." In *Fichtes Werke, Band XI. Vermischte Schriften aus dem Nachlaß*, ed. by Immanuel Hermann Fichte, 221–274. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co.

Geoghegan, Vincent. 1992. "The Utopian Past: Memory and History in Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward and William Morris's News from Nowhere." *Utopian Studies* 3, 2: 75–90.

Guarneri, Carl J. 2008. "An American Utopia and Its Global Audiences: Transnational Perspectives on Looking Backward." *Utopian Studies* 19, 2: 147–187.

Hajdu, Péter. 2021. "Mór Jókai's Asian Utopia(s)." *World Literature Studies* 13, 2: 56–68.

Hárs, Endre. 2019. "Literarische Sumpflandschaften. Technischer Fortschritt und Naturgestaltung bei Mór Jókai (1825–1904)." *Hungarian Studies* 33, 1: 115–134. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1556/044.2019.33.1.8.

Holland, Owen. 2017. *William Morris's Utopianism: Propaganda, Politics and Prefiguration*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-59602-0.

Hont, Istvan. 2005. *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective*. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press.

Jókai, Maurus. 1878. *Der Roman des künftigen Jahrhunderts. In acht Büchern*. Vol. 1–2. Preßburg and Leipzig: Carl Stampfel.

Jókai, Mór. 1981a. *A jövő század regénye (1872–1874)*. Vol. 1, ed. by Zsuzsa D. Zöldhelyi. Budapest: Akadémiai.

Jókai, Mór. 1981b. *A jövő század regénye (1872–1874)*. Vol. 2, ed. by Zsuzsa D. Zöldhelyi. Budapest: Akadémiai.

Kapossy, Béla, Isaac Nakhimovsky, and Richard Whatmore. 2017. "Introduction: Power, Prosperity, and Peace in Enlightenment Thought." In *Commerce and Peace in the Enlightenment*, ed. by Béla Kapossy, Isaac Nakhimovsky, and Richard Whatmore, 1–19. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108241410.001.

Kapossy, Béla, Isaac Nakhimovsky, and Richard Whatmore, eds. 2017. *Commerce and Peace in the Enlightenment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108241410.

Kovács, Henriett. 2016. "Zwei Zukunftsbilder des ewigen Friedens in Österreich-Ungarn. Bertha von Suttner und das utopische Maschinenalter – Mór Jókai und der satirische Roman des künftigen Jahrhunderts." In *Literarischer Pazifismus und pazifistische Literatur. Bertha von Suttner zum 100. Todestag*, ed. by Johann Georg Lughofer and Stéphane Pesnel, 147–162. Würzburg: Verlag Königshausen & Neumann.

Magyar, Francis. 1958. "Jókai's Reception in England and America." *American Slavic and East European Review* 17, 3: 332–345.

Matarese, Susan M. 1989. "Foreign Policy and the American Self Image: Looking Back at Looking Backward." *American Transcendental Quarterly* 3, 1: 45–54.

Matarese, Susan M. 2001. *American Foreign Policy and the Utopian Imagination*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.

McClintock, Anne. 1995. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. London: Routledge.

Morris, William. 1889. "Looking Backward." Transcribed by Ted Crawford. *Commonweal* 5, 180: 194–195. Accessed May 1, 2021. https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1889/commonweal/06-bellamy.htm.

Morris, William. [1890] 1995. *News from Nowhere, or an Epoch of Rest: Being Some Chapters from a Utopian Romance*. Ed. by Krishan Kumar. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Semmel, Bernard. 1970. *The Rise of Free Trade Imperialism: Classical Political Economy, the Empire of Free Trade and Imperialism 1750–1850*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Suvin, Darko. 2010. "Defining the Literary Genre of Utopia: Some Historical Semantics, Some Genology, a Proposal, and a Plea (1973)." In *Defined by A Hollow. Essays On Utopia, Science Fiction and Political Epistemology*, Darko Suvin, 17–48. Bern: Peter Lang.
Szilágyi, Márton. 2008. "Habsburg-Utopie und Habsburg-Mythos am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts, Maurus Jókai, Der Roman des künftigen Jahrhunderts." In *Kulturtransfer und Kulturelle Identität: Budapest und Wien zwischen Historismus und Avantgarde*, ed. by Károly Csúry, Zoltán Fónagy, and Volker Munz, 197–206. Szeged and Vienna: Szegedi Egyetemi Kiadó and Praesens Verlag.
Trentmann, Frank. 1998. "Political Culture and Political Economy: Interest, Ideology and Free Trade." *Review of International Political Economy* 5, 2: 217–250.
Ujvári, Hedvig. 2011. *Kulturtransfer in Kakanien. Zur Jókai-Rezeption in der deutschsprachigen Presse Ungarns (1867–1882)*. Berlin: Weidler Buchverlag.
Wegner, Phillip E. 2002. *Imaginary Communities: Utopia, the Nation, and the Spatial Histories of Modernity*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, CA, and London: University of California Press.

National internationalism in late 19th-century utopias by Mór Jókai, Edward Bellamy, and William Morris

Nation-building. Capitalism. Relocation. Literary pacifism. Commerce. Imperialism. Mór Jókai. Edward Bellamy. William Morris.

The paper looks at two major representatives of fin-de-siècle utopian fiction, Edward Bellamy's 1888 *Looking Backward 2000–1887*, William Morris's 1890 *News from Nowhere*, and an earlier work by the Hungarian novelist Mór Jókai, *The Novel of the Century to Come* (*A jövő század regénye*, 1872–1874). I examine their various strategies regarding the spatial and historical aspects of utopian transformation as well as their respective positions toward the relation of commerce and community. On the whole, I suggest that the pattern of nationally informed or biased internationalism that seems to underlie all three novels might be traced back to the enlightened concept of patriotic cosmopolitanism.

Sándor Hites
Research Center for the Humanities
Institute of Literary Studies
11–13 Ménesi út.
1118 Budapest
Hungary
hites.sandor@abtk.hu

Three undiscovered utopias in German-language literature from the Czech periphery: Moravian Wallachia and Zlín

LIBOR MAREK

DOI: https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2021.13.2.7

If we distill the concept of utopia simply to the human dream of a better society, we can easily come to the realization that utopian thinking is as old as humanity itself, especially viewed through the lens of political and cultural history. The symbolic beginning of utopia and a foreshadowing of things to come can perhaps be seen at the moment of the loss of biblical paradise as well as in man's age-old desire to end great narratives with the subjective equilibrium of a happy ending. This is largely logical, but utopia also entails a kind of dreaming along with a hidden desire to recreate the world, or at least the state of the human mind. We find the imprint of utopian thinking not only in social theories (hence the "heaven on earth" of communism) or in social practice (for example, the legendary social experiments of Robert Owen, 1771–1858), but also in poetic form, that is, in a wide variety of literary texts.

It is difficult to imagine a study on literary utopia that does not reference the Latin work of the humanist Thomas More (1478–1535) *On the Best State of a Republic and on the New Island of Utopia* (*De optimo rei publicae statu deque nova insula Utopia*; Eng. trans. 1995), published in 1516. This satirical fiction imprinted a specific form on the phenomenon of utopia as a specific literary genre, including the name itself. It is appropriate in any consideration of utopia to keep in mind that the original notion of a community of people with an alternative approach to ethics and metaphysics which forms the basis of a new organization of society and economy was first introduced in More's foundational Plague Utopia. Although the work was conceived 500 years ago in widely different circumstances, More's "new island" which arose out of the Black Death remains extremely useful for mapping the path that utopia has taken over the centuries, through countless variations by authors who have emphasized distinct aspects of More's concept and taken it into uncharted territory.

The paradigm of utopia has undergone many changes since the time of Thomas More, with the textual responses providing an unprecedented number of often conflicting interpretations. This is due in part to the fact that literary utopia already suffers in its essence from one significant imperfection, namely the uncertain limits of its own fictionality and the tendency towards documentary, an aspect that its interpreters must also deal with in some way. The more convincing and informative is the tale of dream islands, enlightened communities or harmonious times, the more difficult it is for the author to maintain the necessary degree of fictionality expected from a literary text.

In other words, getting caught up in too many abstruse details at the expense of telling a good story can lead the text toward the monotonous documentation of an abstract wonderland or a cold critical description of the ills of contemporary society.

FROM CENTER TO PERIPHERY – TRACES OF UTOPIA IN GERMAN-LANGUAGE LITERATURE

The authors of the analyzed texts dealt with all this knowingly and, at times, seemingly inadvertently. The goal in this article is to show the diversity of utopian forms and utopian thinking, particularly in the 20th century, based on works by selected authors of German literature from the margins. I deliberately avoid foregrounding the designation of literary utopia, as these authors treated utopian ideas as connected to fiction quite arbitrarily. Furthermore, it is necessary to take into account the fact that the texts explored below were created in the conditions of the literary periphery, both in terms of geography, i.e. the birthplace of the authors and where their works were created (in regions of Moravia versus Vienna or Paris), as well as contemporary reception, the scope and nature of which can be described as marginal at best. Nevertheless, even the limited response to such works on initial publication does not diminish their cultural-historical significance, nor does it reduce at all the potentially valuable possibilities of their contextualization, quite the contrary.

In his study of the history of utopia, Thomas Schölderle (2017) discusses the development of the genre in the European context following More's tour de force as well as several German utopian texts that can be considered paradigmatic, as alluded to above. Among these texts we find, for example, the *Prague Manifesto* (*Prager Manifest*, 1521), a utopian contextualization of the revolutionary chiliastic teachings of the disciple of Martin Luther and fellow reformer Thomas Müntzer (1489–1525). The German theologian and writer Johannes Valentinus Andreae (1586–1654) also contributed to the development of the genre with his Protestant utopia *Description of the Republic of Christianopolis* (*Reipublicae Christianopolitanae descriptio*, 1619). A classic literary example of German utopia is Johann Gottfried Schnabel's four-part Robinsonade-based novel *The Miraculous Fate of Several Sailors, Particularly of Albert Julius, a Native of Saxony* (*Wunderliche Fata einiger See-Fahrer, absonderlich Alberti Julii, eines gebohrnen Sachsens*, 1731), best known in an 1828 abridged version by Ludwig Tieck as *Palisades Island* (*Insel Felsenburg*, 1731; Eng. trans. 2017).

Nevertheless, while German literature provides a number of remarkable utopian texts, the representation of utopian thinking is highly differentiated among them. This is confirmed, for instance, by results of my research since 2016 specifically focused on German-language literature from Moravian Wallachia, with the first results published in 2018 (Marek 2018a; 2018b). It should be emphasized that this is not primarily local or even ethnographically colored literature nor are the works exclusively focused on the region itself. These are texts by German-speaking authors who originated from this Czech, or rather Moravian, region or worked here in the period 1848–1948, particularly in the last decades of the existence of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and who in varying degrees thematized this region in many of their works. These are marginal authors who generally tried to adapt to contemporary literary

trends (from realism through naturalism and modernity to the New Objectivity) and at the same time sought to establish themselves in the metropolises of the German-speaking world, especially in Vienna and Berlin.[1]

Moravian Wallachia must therefore be understood, despite its peripheral character, as a multicultural, not as a monocultural or ethnographic entity (cf. Brouček and Jeřábek 2007, 1 100), in which Czech and German culture coexisted alongside Jewish culture, a diversity which was naturally reflected in the literature. This finding alone is beneficial, especially with regard to the limited amount of research into German literature from the region. The variegation of and often liminality among cultures of the region allows for the postulation of the literary-historical construct of Wallachian literature in German as a separate object of research, from which further, more specific investigations can be derived. It is worth noting not only the topographical, but also the cultural and spiritual grounding of this literature, which is relevant in general to the Central European space, both including and beyond the historical experience of *Mitteleuropa*, and not only exclusively to the Austrian or German (or German-language) environment.

The subject of the analysis is therefore three sets of texts representing German literature from Wallachia which contain elements of utopia or at least traces of the utopian thought of the authors: the dramatic cycle *City of People: A Tragedy in Four Parts with a Cultic Prologue and Epilogue* (*Die Stadt der Menschen: Tragödie in vier Teilen mit einem kultischen Vor- und Nachspiel*, 1913–1917) by philosopher, visionary and mystic Susanne Schmida (1894–1981)[2], the novel *The Imperial City* (*Die Kaiserstadt*, 1923) by Austrian diplomat and journalist Paul Zifferer (1879–1929), as well as a fictional text, Walter Seidl's "The City of the Future" ("Die Stadt des Kommenden", 1936), reflecting the industrial and social experiments of the world-renowned shoe manufacturer and businessman Tomáš Baťa conducted in (but certainly not only in) the Moravian city of Zlín.

SUSANNE SCHMIDA'S *CITY OF PEOPLE*: BETWEEN THE DEMON OF POWER AND RADICAL SPIRITUALITY

The now largely unknown writer Susanne Schmida placed the utopia in her dramatic cycle *City of People: A Tragedy in Four Parts with a Cultic Prologue and Epilogue* into an abstract apocalyptic landscape, which subsequently transforms into a technical dystopia. The series of works was created between 1913 and 1917 (Schmida 1964, 18), with the first play titled *The Hopeless* (*Die Rettungslosen*, written [but unpublished] in 1913 and 1914), the second drama *Urtig the Builder* (*Urtig der Bauherr*, 1915), the third installment *The Bleeding City* (*Die blutende Stadt*, 1916), while the fourth part from 1917 remains lost. No part of the cycle has ever been staged, probably due to its peculiarity, one might say even a kind of illegibility, as she admits in her own autobiography (Schmida 1964, 18). A similar fate befell other works included in the literary estate of Susanne Schmida (1964, 1967, 1913–1917). In addition to dramas, poetry, memoirs, poetic fragments, ritual and esoteric texts, one can find reflective texts, treatises, lectures, notes, excerpts, dance matinees, correspondence, texts on spiritual and physical exercises and dance, formal documents, as well as organizational and official

communications. Schmida's philosophical and poetological treatises received a much warmer reception in terms of literary publication, such as her pivotal philosophical work *Perspectives of Being* (*Perspektiven des Seins*), originally released in 1968, with additional volumes published in 1970, 1973 and 1976.

In *City of People*, numerous compositional elements fall outside the literary tradition, with the main anomaly concerning form. In contrast to most literary utopias, this work has a dramatic character, which in this case seems to be an advantage, as this form conforms to the expressionist style and serves the generally high intensity of the ecstatic elements within the work. The dramatic form also contributes to the discursive nature of utopia, which is not uncommon in literary history (e.g. dialogues in plague writings). The only explicitly epic element is the almost naturalistically extensive stage and director's notes to guide production and performance.

As Schmida notes, the story takes place "in a fictional present time"[3] (Schmida 1964, 18) and can be summarized very briefly as follows: the former builder and urban planner Urtig spends his days in mystical and spiritual practice as a monk in a place with a touch of the distant past in a cloister in the monastic republic of Athos. He will not be released from the timeless monastery until he has completed a special messianic mission far away. After being chosen in a ritual conducted by the abbot of the hermitage that reveals the will of the god of time, he travels through space and time into a geographically indeterminate and highly abstract space within the world of ordinary people. Here, as a charismatic leader, he will lead a city of savage and depraved human beings who have survived natural disasters and war. Death is ubiquitous in this place and moral principles have collapsed. The people attribute almost demonic abilities to Urtig, gradually coming to believe in his saving visions and joining with him, with Urtig even marrying Jona, the daughter of the blind watchmaker Anton Hilger. In the eschatological atmosphere of a collapsed civilization, Urtig organizes an unprecedented exodus. He will lead a confused and hostile people to a new country in which he will create an alternative to the old civilization, with a new, futuristically conceived city at its center. The only specific geographical allusion in the work is to southern Italy, where one of the characters, Hilda, dies during the exodus. In the new center of power, everything is fully subordinated to Urtig's visions of technology and construction, the essence of which is set to be a complete spiritual renewal of life. All the machinations, however, gradually lead to the enslavement of people and eventually result in a tragedy in Urtig's personal life. Despite the ingenious organization and progressive urban arrangements, 17 years after the exodus it turns out that the city is inherently inhumane and the people within it have become mere victims of Urtig's experiments, with individual freedom and dignity deteriorating the most. Individuals are slowly transformed into mere instruments of work production, which the regime disposes of as worthless objects after they are no longer of use, i.e. when they die. Death is a mass phenomenon in this patriarchal society, with women and children in particular perishing in huge numbers. There are no celebrations or holidays. As the symbol of the City of People, a grandiose tower is erected which, in line with its pompous monumentality and semblance to the Tower of Babel, is in danger of collapsing. Fear is spreading

throughout the city; for some reason the inhabitants are dying en masse, and no one can understand or determine why. Urtig's city is finally completed after many tribulations, but the atmosphere within it is anxious and strained, with social unrest beginning to resonate. A revolt erupts against the generation of founders, during which the city is engulfed in flames; this grows into a huge conflagration, with mass orgies erupting in the midst of the inferno. Nevertheless, the clique of fanatical supporters of Urtig continue to suppress the population and compel their obedience. Urtig's son Froher flees with Jona to the opposition camp, where she and Froher will eventually fall victim to the turmoil. Froher was never to know that Jona was actually his mother, as her position in the hierarchy is regimented solely as the wife of Urtig in the mythical role of matriarch of the city, not as an individual mother with her own family. At the end of the third work in the series, *Dedication of the Temple* (*Die Weihe des Tempels*), Urtig survives all the protests, although one can only speculate about his fate in the fourth, undiscovered drama. However, even without this continuation of the story, it is evident that Urtig's mission was successful, at least viewed in a timeless perspective. In the epilogue of *Dedication*, after his return from the world of people Urtig is elected the new abbot in the grand hall of the monastery in Athos.

As the name of the work suggests, the scene of utopia is the eponymous City of People, the dominant symbol of which becomes as the years pass the phenomenal tower of the local temple. In addition to the symbolic significance of the tower itself, however, the toil exerted in its construction as well as other urban planning aspects of this utopia also play an important role. As Urtig was originally an architect and builder, he increasingly becomes a social engineer. The pride associated with the temple tower (and the imaginary link between the City of People and the spiritual world of the Athos monastery), serves several functions in terms of textual immanence. Above all, the imagery communicated in the tower contributes to the aesthetic coherence of the work through figurative expression (Kuon 1986, 4), in addition to the way the structure is described, using highly poetic language and stylization in the form of ancient tragedy, including the use of commentary from a Greek chorus. The tower represents a recurrent image connecting the timeless framework of the prologue and the epilogue (in which the primary task of the monk Urtig is to complete the construction of the temple in Athos) with its earthly historical counterpart the City of People. The metaphysical subtext implicit in this symbolic figure is unmistakable. Even a utopian community must live *sub specie aeternitatis*, thus the tower points to a higher, spiritual world from which the human world is derived and to which in some form all individuals return. On a secular level, however, here lies one of the greatest paradoxes of the work: the perfect geometry of building forms embodies the absolute, good and eternity, but at the same time it functions as a demonstration of Urtig's temporal power. This contradiction fundamentally shapes the intricately constructed character of Urtig, the ambivalent nature of which develops through his journey from unworldly monk to all-too-worldly tyrant.

A biographical approach to the text can help to clarify this antinomy. A likely reason Schmida approached the genre of utopia is her affinity for the most eccentrically diverse thought and spiritual experiments. At the same time and more uni-

versally, however, it cannot be overlooked that in its conception utopia becomes a parody of the technological development of civilization, which in the early 20th century often bordered on absurdity and the grotesque. Often including challenging elements of parody (16), utopia by its very nature is not meant to be appealing and does not call for imitation or adherence. As Susanne Schmida performs utopia, it is unique and absolute, only designated for the chosen few. Does this approach correspond to Susanne Schmida's critical view of the development of technology and the industrialization of a deformed civilization in the early 20th century? Apparently yes, or at least we can say that the author's thinking and work fit into this logical pattern. Schmida speaks, somewhat awkwardly, as a critic of the technical world and as a spiritual revivalist. This voice can be heard in a period generally perceived as a turning point or crisis for European civilization (the cycle was created in 1913–1917). Seen in retrospect, Schmida's poetic vision captured the essence of the disastrous development of civilization, while also showing a possible way out. I would even say that the poetic vision of *City of People* foreshadows some of the practices Susanne Schmida would begin 20 years later in her civic and spiritual life. Together with Hilda Hager (1888–1952), one of her lovers, in 1934 she founded the Society for New Life Forms, a spiritually-oriented community as a center for meditation, yoga, expressive dance, gymnastics and rhetoric which later became the Dr. Susanne Schmida Institute, still in operation today. Based on Hindu and Buddhist spirituality, Schmida and her devotees practiced cult rituals accompanied by meditation and dance under the mantle of the institute. These ventures led the chosen individuals to an enclosed spiritual space, a utopian island located within an ordinary house on Lehárgasse 1 in central Vienna, surrounded by a sea of urban pragmatism in the 1930s Austrian Ständestaat. The cult of Susanne Schmida, as well as its institutionalized form the Schmida Institute, survive to this day. The ritual texts preserved in the author's literary estate testify to her tenacious effort to bring about the spiritual transformation of the chosen individuals, as this extract from one of the documents shows:

> IV. I connect you and us into one. The power flowing through our community will strengthen and elevate us. For if 2 or 3 or 6 or 12 are together in the same rhythm, a higher self brings itself into being. What is more, we surround all beings and life forms with immeasurable love and infinite mercy.
>
> V. Standing and taking a position of prayer:
> Oh my will, the averter of all despair,
> My redeemer!
> Yes, something invulnerable abounds in me, something indestructible...
> [...]
>
> IX. Admission to the circle:
> I enter a circle whose center is formless; within this circle comes once for each of us an hour which assumes an image of eternity[4] (Schmida 1967).

The names of the characters can also provide insights into the work. Urtig is not a very common name in German-speaking areas; one possible explanation of its

significance is a connection with the German prefix *ur-* (which might be rendered in English as *pre-* or *ante-*), i.e. something old, primitive or original. There are also a number of spoken names based on the appellative semantics of the root of the word: the worker Willibald Trost (consolation) or the strikebreaker Peter Fälscher (forger). A specific role is played by Urtig's son Froher (cheerful, joyful) and his girlfriend Freua (derived from *sich freuen* – rejoice or be pleased). Paradoxically, both of these young people die a violent death, although (or precisely because) they bring a humane dimension to the powerfully sinister and technically dark atmosphere of the City of People.

But what exactly characterizes the city as the foundation of literary utopia as portrayed by Susanne Schmida? First of all, this urban planning project is identified with the emptiness of the values of modern civilization as embodied in Urtig's megalomaniacal plans:

> To the left is a plain, green, fertile, interwoven with railways and streets. Around the village, fields. The city is newly built, the houses are tall, with large windows, surrounded by gardens, of white or reddish stone with domes and towers. Copper roofs. The space is uniformly arranged according to a great architectural idea. A street paved in white, rails, fountains, viaducts, etc. The overall impression is of a fairytale city, a feeling made all the more stronger by the fact that it remains completely uninhabited. Heaven knows no bounds[5] (Schmida 1916, 1–2).

It is certainly reasonable to ask the extent to which this is really a utopia, that is, a constructive counter-image (Schölderle 2017, 7), or simply the vision of an ideal community setting which might exist in reality (22). To address the distinction between these two descriptions, it is necessary to illuminate the form, content and function of this particular utopia. To begin with, this is a spatial utopia with synchronous features but without geographical localization, even without the specific geographical features of a fictional world. Further, Schmida imprinted a procedural character on this utopia: the inhabitants of the city are also its builders, which after more than 18 struggle-filled years of building is the cause of all the conflicts in the narrative. The basic characteristic elements of this world are its isolation and insularity. No mention is made of contacts with other civilizations, even of their potential existence. The economic system of the city is not described at all, a fact which is certainly related to its radical mission in the spiritual sphere, not the earthly realm. Clearly, close ties can be observed between people, communal solidarity, the power of a fateful connection as well as the growth of family and community structures. The City of People is not static; it shows a high degree of dynamism, in fact even revolutionary potential.

In accordance with the notions of utopia is also the motive of wandering and travelers (in space and time). The scene in which the monk initiating Urtig into the tasks associated with his mission in the world holds a hammer and a sickle on his chest is somewhat provocative and almost prophetic (Schmida 1913–1914a, 16). Certainly this is not a foreshadowing of a communist utopia, as communism was not yet associated with this symbolism at the time the drama cycle was created. The objects can be conceived as religious symbols, i.e. a hammer as an encrypted cross and a sickle

as a crescent, which would not be an unusual combination of Western and Eastern conceptions of faith in the syncretic belief systems that Schmida was inclined to. These images may also signify the received gender binary, with the hammer as a masculine symbol of strength and the sickle as feminine intuition. The City of People offers both utilitarian and symbolic buildings, including houses for workers, but also a dome by the sculptor Arndt which artistically sanctifies the otherwise dehumanized Urtig Tower. Apropos of the artist's revulsion, he curses the City of People as Urtig's project: "To build such a work is a crime, a crime, I must shout out!"[6] (Schmida 1915, 42)

City of People does not provide much space for fleshing out the abstract notions and presuppositions on which the utopian concept is based, nor does it describe a physical utopian space, i.e. everyday life in the promised city (Kuon 1986, 4). The text is not a plan for the realization of a perfect society through material or utilitarian means. Rather, the play cycle creates opportunities to put forth esoteric impressions regarding the religious legitimacy of truth and knowledge which are not directly communicable through language, but must be revealed and felt (Schmida 1913–1914b, 10). The work calls for interpretation in the spirit of *sensus moralis* and *sensus allegoricus*. For the humans reading this series of dramas (or watching a production), it represents an escape from a corrupt world into a world of the morally pure, which will soon prove to be no less morally dubious. For Urtig, the journey is a transition from a morally pure world into the moral quagmire of power and corporeality, and back again. An allegorical reading can bring forth Schmida's vision of a divine land based on a polytheistic-pantheistic devotion to a number of god figures, including Urtig and the monks in an Athos monastery.

Time as a subject of poetic playfulness is an unmistakable trope that forms the framework of the entire dramatic cycle. Urtig travels from the spiritually tuned timelessness of the monastery to an expressionistically abstract, apocalyptic landscape, then moves into a constructivistically conceived urban space populated by technical surrogates of the spirit. It is thus an embodiment of the paradox of modern man – caught between spirit and matter. All this takes place within one life cycle beginning and ending in the world of supra mundi (the monastery in Athos) based on prestabilized harmony, proceeding through the hell of civilization (the original city and the City of People), finally reaching redemption in the afterlife (the return to the monastery). In her utopia, as in her spiritual practice, Schmida expresses hope for the spiritual revival of the world. This wish, however, is not so simple.

Indeed all the evidence points to the broad oscillation of the City of People between utopia and dystopia, largely due to the internal (i.e. power-political), not external (i.e. in this case, metaphysical) conditions of its development. Darko Suvin defines utopia as "[a] construction of a particular community where socio-political institutions, norms, and relationships between people are organized according to a radically different principle than in the author's community" (2003, 188). The driving force of utopia is therefore a certain deficit latently running through society along

with the effort to eliminate this deficit. Elena Zeißler, however, points to the significant dominance of dystopia in the 20th century (2008, 9) in narratives largely intended to serve as a warning against certain trajectories in society and to show what might occur if the momentum along these tracks continues unabated. The City of People is indeed transformed into a self-sustaining entity in which the freedom of the individual is suspended, as evidenced by the symbolism of the tower as well as other tropes. The space can be profiled politically as a strongly patriarchal state based on the principle of unitary leadership in which Urtig is something of an enlightened monarch with constructivist leanings, surrounded by a scientific-technical and artistic elite and pursuing a strongly restrictive policy. Nevertheless, the cautionary and deterrent function of dystopia is largely absent. Surprisingly, the processes glorifying the city continue, paradoxically, even after the tragic death of Froher and Freua. Nevertheless, since the real conclusion of the story in fact remains hidden due to the fourth part of the cycle remaining lost, the above conclusion must be seen as partial, and therefore relative.

So what is the dystopia based on in *City of People*? In this context, Hiltrud Gnüg describes dystopia as a set of erroneous laws that run counter to human happiness (1999, 9), yet still maintain a certain appeal (18). For ordinary people, the City of People has ceased to be the Promised Land to which Urtig leads them from a place of scarcity and hardship. The voluntariness and enthusiasm typical of utopia are replaced by injustice and tyranny under the baton of official power. Urtig's system is highly directorial. The past has been either manipulated or deleted completely. The only permissible identity of the inhabitants is tied to belonging to the city. Interestingly, no national feeling is expressed in this identity, as all belief has been reduced to the deification of technology, all family relationships the subject of the system's power experiments. In the third part of the cycle, however, Schmida introduces a possible escape from the tyrannical power structure in the figure of Urtig's son Froher, who represents an enlightened elite. The soulful Froher instigates a rebellion against the whole system, but necessarily ends tragically as a victim. Still, this tragic ending is not the main thrust of the text, nor is it meant to be engaging or melodramatic. Paradoxically, dystopia does not serve to extrapolate events to the future or to warn us, but rather shows irrational nooks and crannies of human nature through inevitable stages in the development of both the individual and society.

Viewed through the prism of literary history, Urtig's story seems to draw on the Faust myth of the fall of man, the desire for knowledge and creation, love, unusual experiences, the contradiction between ideal and reality, the necessary pact with evil and guilt, falling into the abyss and, ultimately, about the salvation of man. The foundation is therefore essentially Christian, yet good and evil can be separated globally only in the supporting characters. Both good and evil, a type of utopia and dystopia, are wholly embedded with the maximum possible degree of universality solely within the character of Urtig. These themes and ideas give *City of People* the potency of a timeless work, one perhaps even more relevant for today than at the time of its authorship.

PAUL ZIFFERER'S *THE IMPERIAL CITY*: UTOPIA AS THE RESURRECTION OF A STOLEN PAST

Topoi of utopian literature are also evident in the novel *The Imperial City* (*Die Kaiserstadt*, 1923) by Paul Zifferer (1879–1929), an Austrian diplomat and journalist who, like Susanne Schmida, hailed from the Moravian town of Bystřice pod Hostýnem. Comparatively little-read today, Zifferer's work falls into largely unexplored chapters of German literary history. Perhaps because of his official position as an envoy, today Zifferer's name and work are slightly more well-known in the English-speaking world than is that of Schmida, who remained throughout her long life largely within the esoteric peripheries of (literary) society. In 1983, Hilde Burger published Zifferer's correspondence with Hugo von Hofmannsthal from 1910–1928 (Burger 1983). The letters collected here embrace many intriguing themes, and upon careful examination a potentially fruitful possible direction for future research into Zifferer's work can be delineated: analyses in the context of aesthetic modernity. As is also clear from this correspondence, Zifferer sought to make a name for himself within the Jung Wien circle of writers.

Paul Zifferer came from a wealthy Jewish family that gradually settled in Bystřice pod Hostýnem over the period of 1718–1778. Throughout the mid-19th and well into the early 20th century, the Zifferer house was the center of German cultural life in the region (Doláková and Hosák 1980, 221). After completing his studies in law and philosophy in Vienna and Paris, Zifferer worked as a journalist until in 1919, when he was appointed by the Austrian government as the press and cultural attaché in Paris. Zifferer translated French literature, particularly works by Gustave Flaubert, into German. His own work encompasses prose, poetry and, to a lesser extent, drama, with his most extensive works including three novels: *The Strange Woman* (*Die fremde Frau*, 1916), *The Imperial City* (*Die Kaiserstadt*, 1923) and *The Leap into the Uncertain* (*Der Sprung ins Ungewisse*, 1927), all of which show an affinity for Viennese modernism. After serving in Paris for ten years, Paul Zifferer died on February 14, 1929 in Vienna.

In the novel *The Imperial City*, Zifferer describes the painful integration of the individual into the social system against the background of a crisis among political and social elites. In this prose sketch, Zifferer managed to break free from the naturalism that had marked his previous novel *The Strange Woman*, moving slightly toward an expressionist approach. This difference in Zifferer's style, as in the case with the expressionism of Susanne Schmida, is not marked by a vehement exaltation or foreboding, but rather by a subtle visionary elegance. At the heart of the action is the typical "good man" of expressionism, an individual lost within a tangle of individual and collective, the personal and the social, regional and global problems. The language of the novel is simple, factual and surprisingly non-expressive. The causality of events is quite loose, with frequently changing perspectives in the way social incidents are depicted. The reader may find this style challenging, even at times confusing, but for Zifferer the mediation of this confusion is precisely the point. The reader is faced with an extensive and diffuse social novel which deals with how the thinking and actions of individuals change at a time when, after hun-

dreds of years of existence, the nation in which they live begins to turn to the past. A by-product of these historical processes is also the emergence of disparate utopian ideas, which seem to represent a kind of surrogate for the declining state. It also follows from the above-mentioned correspondence between Zifferer and Hofmannsthal that it was precisely this novel that became the main point of disagreement between the two authors, even arguably disrupting permanently their long term close relationship. Although Zifferer continued to show his admiration for Hofmannsthal for years, expressing artistic sympathies for Hofmannsthal's work, in a letter dated December 29, 1923 Zifferer expressed deep displeasure with Hofmannsthal's harsh critique of *The Imperial City*: "Your negative assessment of my book, more specifically, your disapproval has caused me more pain than I can convey, deeper than I would like to express"[7] (Burger 1983, 160).

The story of the novel begins in 1916 in Vienna and closes at the end of World War I. The main protagonist Dr. Toni Muhr is a melancholic intellectual, scientist, chemist and technical manager of an ammunition factory belonging to the Ratlein brothers. Muhr returns from the turmoil of war at the symbolic moment when Emperor Franz Joseph I is being buried, and with him the old Austria-Hungary. Thus something approaching the end of time has come: not only is the long reign of the old monarch ending (1848–1916), but in a way an entire world is collapsing. Seen from the point of view of the chemist Muhr, chaos is ensuing in which various attractive and repulsive forces are being manifested. A separate chapter tells the story of the women who strongly influence Muhr. Though these characters are portrayed as almost demonic in nature, Muhr expects both women to aid in his efforts to preserve both the past and his morals. The central woman in his life is the unsophisticated girl Lauretta, who serves as Muhr's femme fatale. Princess Lubecka, a mediator of political contacts, is also prominent in the plot. Muhr has no idea that Lauretta is in fact being exploited by Muhr's employers the Ratlein brothers, outspoken businessmen and representatives of predatory capitalism. Lauretta is enlisted to influence Muhr so that he does not expose the unfair practices of the company. From Princess Lubecka, Muhr is promised easier access to political elites to help him combat the fraud and immoral plans of the Ratlein brothers. Lubecka, however, only intends to use Muhr as a young lover. The characteristics of both relationships show to a considerable degree alienation, expediency and the reduction of relationships to bodily love. An explosion occurs in the Ratlein factory which claims many victims, with the resulting fire emerging as a symbolic expression of the end of the ages as well as a foreshadowing of the social unrest that will soon break out in the company. Muhr proves to be an excellent manager and organizer of the rescue work, after which a new stage begins in his life. He forgoes all his messianic thoughts and devotes himself to his family – Lauretta and his daughter Christiane. After the death of the seriously ill Lauretta, Muhr takes over the administration of the company. Suddenly he is part of a hierarchy, contemplating future success, wealth and a career after the war. As with Schmida's Urtig, Muhr's journey can be associated with the Faustian myth of the desire for knowledge and the necessary covenant with evil, but in this case, unlike Urtig, without a hint of salvation.

While in this complex story, Toni Muhr is finally overcome and overrun by the ethos of success, one important stage in his development which cannot be overlooked. Zifferer sows the seeds of an alternative living and existential space in the chaos of the collapsing system, accomplishing this not only with regard to the expressionist obsession with the urban landscape. This transformed *materia prima* that cannot rid itself of ambivalence is embodied in the city of Vienna itself. As an imperial city, Vienna remains a symbol of *force majeure*. At the same time, Zifferer portrays the city as a site of the disintegration of traditional values and institutions, e.g. marriage, as well as a place of cheap erotic seduction, the decline of human communication and the rule of money; the danger is that Vienna, and by proxy the contemporary world, is coming to be ruled by a decadent aristocracy and amoral corporations through debased mass culture and advertising filtered through an arrogant, deceptive media.

Seen thusly, Zifferer's latent critique of civilization itself is considerably close to the critical view of the modern world presented by Susanne Schmida in *City of People*. However, while Schmida finds a solution in the radical spiritualization of the world, Zifferer desperately tries to preserve the maximum from the idealized past in this new future, thus coming closer to the political and ethical ideas of the Viennese modernists (Hofmannsthal 1980, 24). To this end, Vienna, but not the whole of Austria, is postulated as an identificatory and meaningful entity, as "many who identified with Vienna and belonged to this city in their own way did not even want to hear about the rest of Austria"[8] (Zifferer 1923, 146). The streets and alleys of Zifferer's Vienna teem with figures from various regions of the monarchy. The city is felt as an extract of a dying multinational entity which remains for now a place where it is still possible for all people from around the world to come together. This dreamy look into the past offers a Kafkaesque world of mythical characters. One of the symbols of this utopia is Dr. Hengel, a strange man who oscillates between an infernal device and a Christ-like figure who brings forth messianic messages as well as a chiliastic dimension to this utopia:

> Suddenly he was here. No one saw him coming, and now he was standing in the doorway [...]. [...] His Christ-grieved face was tilted to one side, his eyelids closed; when he opened them, the crowd was moved by his faraway stare. And then Dr. Hengel began to speak. He had no firm plan; it was as if from many sides at once his speech burst out in fits and starts channeled towards an invisible center; there was no intention in it. [...] "Woe to him who sins against the spirit! We are all guilty; we have lived in a house of cards, and now it is collapsing. So at last, seize your new rights! You cannot do this without a fight, you cannot do it without raised fists. You must want life, or you have already fallen forever into death"[9] (317–319).

In regard to contexts such as this, Zygmunt Bauman speaks of retrotopia, i.e. a reflection of a lost or stolen but in no way dead past (2018, 13). As with classical utopias, a clear link exists between utopian plans and a real (or realistically-described) territory (17). As More places his narrative in the New World, Zifferer cites Vienna as a metropolis which represents the decomposing Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Along this trajectory of disintegration, an unavoidable tendency towards nostalgia emanates, with the past continuously looming in the background. A connection can

be made here with the revolutionary change of territorial organization after World War I in Central Europe, especially with regard to the disintegration of the Habsburg monarchy (18). Zifferer's appointment as literary attaché in 1919 placed him in Paris just as diplomatic relations were being reestablished between Austria and France. The period and the novel represent the transferal of constructs of the past into the present, more precisely a utopian rescue and reconstruction of the imperial past of the multinational Austrian monarchy after its collapse in 1918 along with a general resurrection of Austrian thought on a spiritual basis, albeit with clear traces of colonial discourse. At the same time, the reader can observe through Muhr the transformation of utopia from external realities into the interior of man (Kuon 1986, 270).

WALTER SEIDL: ZLÍN AS THE CITY OF THE FUTURE

Our third text brings us to the Moravian city of Zlín and German-language literature reflecting this topos. In German fictional texts of the first decades of the 20th century, Zlín often appears as a putative utopia with real-life social elements realized in a model city of modernity based on the results of the industrial and managerial experiments of Tomáš Baťa. These utopian texts represent attempts to portray the collective identity of Baťa's employees, including Germans, as a unique community enveloped within the empowering aura of work. The paradox of history is that in terms of real sociopolitical conditions this utopia came to be perverted into the germ of a totalitarian system within a few decades of its establishment.

In the 1920s, a process of massive industrialization can be observed in Eastern Moravia which had no equivalent in the First Czechoslovak Republic. This phenomenon is well-represented in the Moravian city of Zlín. Germans had been almost non-existent in Zlín, a village with four and a half thousand inhabitants in 1920, when Vladimír Nekuda states only eight citizens of German nationality were living there (1995, 666). This changed during the 1920s and 1930s in connection with the emergence of a specific intercultural atmosphere created by the world-famous shoe empire Baťa. By 1930 over three hundred Germans were residing in Zlín out of an overall population which had increased to twenty thousand inhabitants (Baťa, 1936–1938).

By far the most successful Czechoslovak industrialist of the interwar period, Zlín shoemaker and builder Tomáš Baťa (1876–1932) carried out in the region a unique and ambitious project consisting not only of industrialization, but also urbanization, internationalization and acculturation. Through this project, Zlín became the embodiment of the paradox of modernity in Wallachia (Nerdinger 2009). Tomáš Baťa and his half-brother Jan Antonín Baťa (1898–1965), who took over management of the concern after the death of Tomáš in 1932, realized their common vision of utopia in "the unity of (industrial) production with respect to work and city life"[10] (Pribersky 2011, 117). This extraordinary venture had tremendous effects on the socio-political and economic conditions of life in Zlín, with its goal right from the outset the establishment of a modern and technically oriented society based on the rational principles of automation, internationalization, growth and profit.

The Baťa system provided comprehensive care in all areas of life for each individual employee, including employment, housing, education, cultural and leisure activi-

ties as well as medical care. The project embodied a eugenic approach to man. The individual man or woman was to be shaped to become one with a mass of like-minded fellow travelers. All would share in the same spirit and any individual identity would be flattened out. The role of man was to serve as a cog in a perfectly functioning machine. Despite the rhetoric of worker equality, however, this system also generated elites, who came to see themselves as an example of the fulfillment of the American dream of self-improvement. The harmony between rationality and nature, between standardization and diversity, can still be seen in the architecture of Zlín, the buildings of which generally encompass a geometrically-severe functionalist division of space (Vercelloni 1994).

The center of literary and journalistic events was the publishing company Tisk Zlín (Zlín Press), which published a wide range of newspapers and magazines. Notable personalities of not only Czech but also German nationality were gathered in this publishing house, including Josef Vaňhara and Anton Cekota, who worked with the German members of the editorial team Bruno Wolf, Benno Stefan and Karl Klaudy. All traces of the German members of the staff disappeared from Zlín as World War II approached or in its immediate aftermath. Bruno Wolf, an Imperial German who also worked for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, fled to Western Europe in November 1939. Benno Stefan left for Austria after the Munich Agreement was signed in 1938. After the war the Prague German Karl Klaudy, a poet and translator, was lynched and nearly killed in Zlín due to his sympathies with the Nazi regime and was subsequently expelled from Czechoslovakia, following which he resided in Vienna.

The textual basis for German Zlín utopia is the text by Walter Seidl "The City of the Future" ("Die Stadt des Kommenden", 1936). "The City of the Future" is a chapter taken from the autobiographical novel by the Prague German writer Walter Seidl *The Mountain of the Lovers: Experiences of a Young German* (*Der Berg der Liebenden: Erlebnisse eines jungen Deutschen*), first published in 1936. The main protagonist of the novel, Hermann Kessler, lives at first in an ethnically homogeneous community, then in a heterogeneous environment in which he feels the non-German environment as hostile. The national conflict between Czechs and Germans in the new Czechoslovak Republic after the disintegration of Austria-Hungary has raised deep concerns in him. After a study stay in Grenoble, Hermann returns to Czechoslovakia and remains for a while in the shoemaking metropolis of Zlín. The whole text is infused with the metaphor of the journey (a journey into modern times, a journey to modern architecture and the modern way of living). Kessler is first captivated by the special rhythm of this city, the utopian perfection of the Baťa system and its organization of work and life. Seidl shows the connection between the individual and the production process, but not wholly uncritically:

> The ground Hermann walked upon trembled with the pulse of the feverishly quickened blood circulating through the machine city. As if enchanted, he listened to the incredibly evocative noises of the buzzing, thumping, rumbling, screaming of the workshops and – the silence of the people who worked in them. Muffled from inside the buildings, here and there a barely audible but nerve-racking cry escaped – the groan of a prehistoric creature transmogrified into an animal-machine[11] (1936, 361).

Seidl's fiction is a direct witness to the apotheosis of modernity. The text recalls contemporary accounts of how the provincial city was being transformed into a modern metropolis with the core values of profit, economy, coherence, efficiency, and pragmatism. The young generation is also brought up and educated in this spirit of technical materiality. Soon, however, Kessler becomes intimidated by this cultivated collective identity and retreats back to his sense of individualism, clinging tightly to it. The reader thus observes the tension between the glorification of and skepticism towards the Baťa system, an ambivalence which can also be considered a prime manifestation of modernity and modern man. In comparison with his previous experience of ethnic intolerance, the international flair of the city of Zlín exerts a positive effect on Hermann. With the presence of so many foreigners, national and cultural differences seem to have been overcome. The figure of Hermann Kessler is thus a kind of corrective element in the entire utopian system of perfect unity and harmony of the workers in Baťa's Zlín. At the same time, the character embodies a rapprochement between Germans and Czechs.

Seidl puts forward both a factual as well as analytical view of the political and social reality of the Zlín utopia and devotes particular attention to certain contrasts, e.g. on the one hand, a progressive, even Americanizing, technical civilization, on the other, the rudiments of rural, even pastoral, life. Kessler even toys with the idea of becoming a participant in this perfectly organized mass, but in the end he finds it ridiculous in many ways, so he persists in his life of freedom and disorganization.

CONCLUSION

In all three texts, more precisely the sets of texts, traces of utopian thinking along with the incorporation of the urban landscape model are clearly evident, albeit in diverse ways. The dramatic cycle *City of People* by Susanne Schmida offers a prototype of an abstract futuristic city as an arena for the radical spiritualization of the world. In his novel *The Imperial City*, Paul Zifferer utopically reconstructs the past of the Austrian monarchy after its collapse in 1918, transferring its remnants to the present in an effort to save it. Walter Seidl's "The City of the Future" captures a realized social utopia against the background of the industrial expansion of Zlín as a place of mechanically formed collective identity.

NOTES

[1] Here is a representative list of authors from Moravian Wallachia who worked in the region or thematized Wallachia in their works: Paul Zifferer (1879–1929), Susanne Schmida (1894–1981), Ida Waldek (1880–1942), Heinrich Herbatschek (1877–1956), Ludwig Kurowski (1866–1912), Karl-Wilhelm Gawalowski (1861–1945), August Benesch (1829–1911), Marianne Bohrmann (1849–1916), Rudolf Hirsch (1816–1872), Johann Karl Ratzer (1802–1863), Karl Klaudy (1906–?), Georg Simanitsch (1836–?).

[2] The author used variants of her first and last name in different stages of her life: e.g. Susanne Schmida (the form used in this article), Susanna Schmida-Wöllersdorfer (Wöllersdorfer was the maiden name of the author's mother) or Susanne Schmida-Brod (Brod being the surname of her husband Viktor).

[3] "in einer phantasierten Gegenwart"; all translations from the German are by the present author unless otherwise noted.

[4] "IV. Ich verbinde euch und uns zu einer Einheit. Der Strom der durch unsere Kette flutenden Kraft wird uns alle stärken und erhöhen. Denn wenn 2 oder 3 oder 6 oder 12 im gleichen Rhythmus beisammen sind, bildet sich von selbst ein höheres Ich. Darüber hinaus umgeben wir alle Wesen und alle Formen des Lebens mit unbegrenzter Liebe und grenzenloser Barmherzigkeit.
V. Stehend mit der Gebetsgeste:
O mein Wille, Wende aller Not,
Meine Notwendigkeit!
Ja, ein Unverwundbares ist in mir, ein Unbegrabbares...
[...]
IX. Aufnahme in den Kreis:
Ich trete ein in den Kreis, dessen Mitte gestaltlos ist, und in dem für jeden von uns einmal die Stunde kommt, in der er selbst zum Bildnis des Ewigen wird."
This and all subsequent translations from the German (unless otherwise noted) are by the present author.

[5] "Von rechts zu ist das Land flach, grün, fruchtbar, von Eisenbahnen und Strassen durchgezogen. Im Umkreis ferne Dörfer, Felder. Die Stadt ist neuerbaut, die Häuser sind hoch, grossfenstrig, von Gärten umgeben, aus weissem oder rötlichem Stein, mit Kuppeln und Türmen. Die Dächer aus Kupfer. Die Anlage einheitlich nach einer grossen architektonischen Idee. Die Strassen mit weissen Fliesen gepflastert, Schienen, Brunnen, Viadukte etc. Das Ganze macht irgendwie den Eindruck einer Märchenstadt, welcher Eindruck dadurch vertieft wird, dass sie noch vollkommen unbewohnt ist. Der Himmel ist unbegrenzt."

[6] "Ein solches Werk zu baun, ist Frevel, schrei ich."

[7] "Ihr Urteil über mein Buch oder besser Ihr Nicht-Urteil hat mir einen Schmerz verursacht, größer als ich sagen kann, tiefer als ich aussprechen möchte."

[8] "Von Österreich wollten viele nichts wissen, die sich doch zu Wien bekannten und der Stadt anhingen, jeder in seiner Art."

[9] "Mit einem Male war er da. Man hatte ihn nicht kommen sehen, doch nun stand er im Türrahmen, [...]. [...] Sein abgehärmtes Christusgesicht lag schief zur Seite geneigt, die Lider waren geschlossen; als sie sich auftaten, ging ein fremder Blick über die Menge. Und so begann Dr. Hengel zu sprechen. Er hatte keinen festen Plan, von vielen Seiten zugleich strebte seine gehetzte und stoßweise Rede einem unsichtbaren Mittelpunkte zu; keine Absicht war in ihr. [...] 'Wehe dem Sünder wider den Geist! Mitschuldig sind wir alle, in einem Kartenaus haben wir gelebt, nun stürzt es zusammen. So holt euch doch endlich euer neues Recht! Ohne Kampf geht es nicht, ohne Aufrecken der Fäuste geht es nicht. Ihr müßt das Leben wollen, sonst seid ihr für ewig dem Tode verfallen'."

[10] "Einheit von (industrieller) Produktion bzw. Arbeit und urbanem Leben"

[11] "Der Boden, über den Hermann hinschritt, zitterte unter den Pulsschlägen des fiebrig beschleunigten Blutkreislaufs der Maschinenstadt. Gebannt mußte er auf ein unheimlich suggestives Geräusch lauschen, zu dem sich das Surren, Stampfen, Tosen, Kreischen der Werkstätten und – das Schweigen der dort arbeitenden Menschen verbanden. Dumpf drang es aus den Gebäuden, dann und wann übertönt von einem nervenbeklemmenden Aufheulen – dem Ächzen eines zum Maschinentier der Zukunft gewandelten Urwelttiers."

LITERATURE

Baťa, Tomáš. 1936–1938. Fond E69 – Baťa. Státní okresní archiv Zlín [District Archive Zlín].

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2018. *Retrotopia*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.

Brouček, Stanislav, and Richard Jeřábek. 2007. *Lidová kultura: Národopisná encyklopedie Čech, Moravy a Slezska*. Prague: Mladá Fronta.

Burger, Hilde, ed. 1983. *Hugo von Hofmannsthal: Paul Zifferer: Briefwechsel*. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Staatsdruckerei.
Doláková, Marie, and Ladislav Hosák. 1980. *Dějiny města Bystřice pod Hostýnem.* Bystřice pod Hostýnem: Městský národní výbor v Bystřici pod Hostýnem.
Gnüg, Hiltrud. 1999. *Utopie und utopischer Roman*. Stuttgart: Reclam.
Hofmannsthal, Hugo von. 1980. "Das Schrifttum als geistiger Raum der Nation." In *Gesammelte Werke in zehn Einzelbänden: Reden und Aufsätze III*, 24–41. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag.
Hohendahl, Peter Uwe. 1982. "Die gebildete Gemeinschaft: Stifters 'Nachsommer' als Utopie der ästhetischen Erziehung." In *Utopieforschung: Interdisziplinäre Studien zur neuzeitlichen Utopie*, ed. by Wilhelm Voßkamp, 333–356. Stuttgart: Metzler.
Kuon, Peter. 1986. *Utopischer Entwurf und fiktionale Vermittlung: Studien zum Gattungswandel der literarischen Utopie.* Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag.
Marek, Libor. 2018a. *Bilder und Stimmen des anderen deutschen Ostens: Eine kritische Edition der Werke deutscher Autoren aus der Mährischen Walachei.* Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně.
Marek, Libor. 2018b. *Zwischen Marginalität und Zentralität: Deutsche Literatur und Kultur aus der Mährischen Walachei 1848–1948.* Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně.
More, Thomas. 1995. *Utopia*. Ed. by George M. Logan, Robert M. Adams, and Clarence H. Miller. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Nekuda, Vladimír. 1995. *Zlínsko.* Brno: Muzejní a vlastivědná společnost.
Nerdinger, Winfried, ed. 2009. *Zlín – Modellstadt der Moderne.* Berlin: Jovis.
Pribersky, Andreas. 2011. "Die Planstadt als Politische Utopie im 20. Jahrhundert zwischen Kapitalismus und Sozialismus." In *Stadt als Erfahrungsraum der Politik: Beiträge zur kulturellen Konstruktion urbaner Politik*, ed. by Wilhelm Hofmann, 117–141. Munich: LIT.
Schmida, Susanne. 1913–1917. *Nachlass Susanne Schmida – Viktor Brod: Die Stadt der Menschen: Tragödie in vier Teilen mit einem kultischen Vor- und Nachspiel* (*Das Urteil*: 1913–1914a, *Die Rettungslosen:* 1913–1914b, *Urtig der Bauherr*: 1915, *Die blutende Stadt*: 1916, *Die Weihe des Tempels*: 1917) [Manuscript, typescript and carbon copy]. Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Archivbox 7.
Schmida, Susanne. 1964. *Nachlass Susanne Schmida – Viktor Brod: Die Spuren: Autobiographische Erinnerungen von Viktor und Susanne begonnen Ende des Jahres 1964, d. h. nach dem vollendeten 70. Lebensjahr* [Carbon copy and typescript copy]. Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Archivbox 7.
Schmida, Susanne. 1967. *Nachlass Susanne Schmida – Viktor Brod: Ritual der Einweihung* [Typoskript]. Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Archivbox 2.
Schmida, Susanne. 1968. *Perspektiven des Seins: I. Band: Systematik: Die vier Aspekte der Erkenntnis.* Munich and Basel: Ernst Reinhardt.
Schmida, Susanne. 1970. *Perspektiven des Seins: II. Band: Mikrokosmos: Die Kategorien der Psychologie.* Munich and Basel: Ernst Reinhardt.
Schmida, Susanne. 1973. *Perspektiven des Seins: III. Band: Selbstinnewerdung: Strukturen des Selbstbewußtseins.* Munich and Basel: Ernst Reinhardt.
Schmida, Susanne. 1976. *Perspektiven des Seins: IV. Band: Makrokosmos: Die fünf Aspekte des Universalen.* Munich and Basel: Ernst Reinhardt.
Schnabel, Johann Gottfried. 2017. *Palisades Island.* Trans. by John W. van Cleve. Mellen: Lewiston and Lampeter.
Schölderle, Thomas. 2017. *Geschichte der Utopie*. Vienna, Köln, and Weimar: Böhlau Verlag.
Seidl, Walter. 1936. *Der Berg der Liebenden: Erlebnisse eines jungen Deutschen.* Leipzig and Mährisch Ostrau: Julius Kittls Nachfolger.
Suvin, Darko. 1998. "Utopianism from Orientation to Agency: What Are We Intellectuals under Post-Fordism to Do?" *Utopian Studies* 9, 2: 162–190.
Suvin, Darko. 2003. "Theses on Dystopia 2001." In *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination*, ed. by Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan, 187–201. London: Routledge.
Vercelloni, Virgilio. 1994. *Europäische Stadtutopien: Ein historischer Atlas.* Munich: Diederichs.
Zeißler, Elena. 2008. *Dunkle Welten: Die Dystopie auf dem Weg ins 21. Jahrhundert*. Marburg: Tectum.
Zifferer, Paul. 1923. *Die Kaiserstadt: Roman.* Berlin: Fischer.

Three undiscovered utopias in German-language literature from the Czech periphery: Moravian Wallachia and Zlín

Utopia. Dystopia. Susanne Schmida. Paul Zifferer. Walter Seidl. Zlín. Moravian Wallachia. Moravian-German Literature.

This study examines three literary utopias from the margins of German literature, namely German-language literature from Eastern Moravia. The works chosen for analysis are the dramatic cycle *The City of People* (*Die Stadt der Menschen*) by Moravian-born Austrian writer and visionary Susanne Schmida (1894–1981), the novel *The Imperial City* (*Die Kaiserstadt*) by the Austrian writer and diplomat Paul Zifferer (1879–1929), and the text "The City of the Future" ("Die Stadt des Kommenden") by the German-speaking Czechoslovak author Walter Seidl. In all the texts examined, the model of urban landscape is used as the location of utopia: the prototype of an abstract futuristic city (Schmida), Vienna as an exemplar of political utopia (Zifferer), and Zlín as a fully realized social utopia (Seidl). These three sites show a complementary gradation in the sense of the (potential) realization of utopian ideas, i.e. the belief that, put simply, "it was once good" (Zifferer), "it is good" (Seidl), and "it will be good" (Schmida).

Mgr. Libor Marek, Ph.D.
Faculty of Humanities
Tomas Bata University in Zlín
Štefánikova 5670
760 01 Zlín
Czech Republic
marek@utb.cz
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2964-3766

NORBERT BACHLEITNER – ACHIM HÖLTER – JOHN A. McCARTHY (eds.): Taking Stock – Twenty-Five Years of Comparative Literary Research

Leiden – Boston: Brill Rodopi, 2020. 558 pp. ISBN 978-90-40828-9
DOI: https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2021.13.2.8

The 200th volume of the *Internationale Forschungen zur Allgemeinen und Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft* series not only celebrates the 25-year-long history of this well-known book series of "research on general and comparative literature", but also attempts to encapsulate – if not map out – the most notable trends in the discipline. The book offers a collection of disparate case studies by established and up-and-coming scholars who adopt metacritical, self-reflective takes on the methodologies they employ in line with the view of comparative literature presented in the introduction as a discipline which "contributes to a sense of being at home in a world that is heterogeneous and fractured, rather than affirming a monolithic canon marked by territory and homogeneity" (1). This mode of "being at home in [the] world" supposedly distances itself from pretentious European cosmopolitanism with imperial assumptions (inherited from the Enlightenment and Romanticism) or the arbitrary canon of World Literature generated by the publishing industry of the Global North. All in all, the studies collected in the volume attempt to make room for different, not necessarily neatly convergent traditions and voices from territorial and historical margins, and I must begin by stating that this has been achieved. The result is very varied, yet engaging and high-quality academic prose which at times is quite complex and demanding due to the ever-present tendency toward (trans-) disciplinary self-reflection, a tendency probably required by the editors.

The book consists of 19 texts organized into five parts. Part one, titled "Comparative and World Literature", features a mostly theoretical study by John A. McCarthy that can be read as an extension of the rather short and formulaic introduction. The author tackles the issues of identity and the significance of comparative literature. Given the appeals to heterogeneity voiced in the introduction, his proposition, rooted in the principle of our shared *humanitas*, seems refreshingly straightforward: "[T]he notion of being at home in the world requires the text to have literary value already, one imparted to it by its very first reader: the author" (28). Other texts in the first part of the book include Norbert Bachleitner's study on the ambivalent reception of Voltaire in 18th-century Vienna from the view of book history and reception studies, and a historical case study of literary contacts and transfer of ideas on the basis of the extensive library of Ludwig Tieck (by Achim Hölter and Paul Ferstl).

The second part of the book is titled "Literature and History (of Ideas)" and covers both general and particular topics on how literature influenced – and was influenced by – intellectual life and culture. This section features Ottmar Ette's reflections on the historical development of self-esteem within the realm of conviviality (i.e. the need for living together) as a function of an inclusive sense of self. Carl Niekerk analyzes two peculiarly transnational theatrical works (one by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, the other by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart) as cases of the mobility of cultural material. By doing so, he also addresses fundamental issues of transdisciplinarity of comparative literature, which, to him, is natural and needed, since literature and art "can serve

as a platform to think about our society and as one of the few places in our information-saturated universe today where knowledge is synthesized and not just distributed" (182). Barbara Korte compares two early 20th-century boys' periodicals (one British and one German) and the roles they played in promoting pro-war attitudes by the images and grand narratives they propagated. The last text in this part is Juliane Werner's chapter tracing how Vladimir Nabokov, who is well known to have detested psychoanalysis, reacted to and portrayed Freud and his intellectual grip on 1950s America.

Although part three is entitled "Women and Gender Studies", the themes of femininity, gender, and/or their reflection do not necessarily play a central role in all of the chapters. Stephanie M. Hilger looks into an early medical text which testifies to how epistemologically unstable the emerging medical profession was in the 18th century. Her reading also enables her to shed light on the anxieties of the era concerning sexuality, its exploration, and "colonization". Sandra Vlasta looks into two travelogues (by Fanny Lewald and George Sand) and explores how this genre contributed to the foundation of national identities by discussing the presumed Other and thereby foregrounding the traveling self. Another contribution by Agnes C. Mueller looks at how the literary image of the Yiddish Mama developed from negative to positive and, in the meantime, lost its Jewish connotations. Dobrota Pucherová uses postcolonial reading (represented mainly by the concept of colonialism) as a tool for understanding the complexities of postsocialist Slovak literature and its role in re-evaluating cultural memory. By describing Slovak culture as an example of "trauma culture", she arrives at a new definition of postsocialism, which she basically views as an epistemological and existential condition "marked by long-lasting traces of dependence, but also hybridity, displacement, and liminality as result of its historical instability of borders" (309).

The studies collected in part four, "Aesthetics and Textual Analysis", cover topics which overlap with literary theory, and they also markedly focus on the discipline's conceptual framework. Werner Wolf discusses the nature of aesthetic illusion against the backdrop of literary and reader-response studies and specifically looks at how this phenomenon worked in ancient literature. Annette Simonis looks at human fascination with animal otherness in the context of 20th-century poetry (namely in the works of Guillaume Apollinaire, Ted Hughes, and Durs Grünhein). The genre of autofiction is discussed by Stefan Kutzenberger, who not only provides references to the most recent and notable studies on the topic but also brings to the fore another aspect of the genre (namely the involuntary use of real people as literary characters). Gianna Zocco ends this section with a look at how the intertextual bohemian world of Berlin in the novel *Black Deutschland* contrasts with the stark and disappointing experience its gay protagonist faces when actually living there.

The fifth part of the book, "Translation and Tradition", expands the understanding of translation toward adaptation and even beyond, toward other intertextual relations between texts that could be said to involve rewriting. Daniel Syrovy discusses the trope of referring to a fictional source text (by any means a broader category than pseudotranslation) in Western literature from the Middle Ages until Cervantes and discovers a rich web of metanarrative devices which translate into one another and form a web of textual (and cultural) history of the (chivalric) romance genre. Christoph Schmitt-Maaß provides an interesting analysis of a collection of 17th-century crime stories by a Catholic bishop that were translated/adapted by a Lutheran translator, in view of the theological disputes and literary tastes of the era. Manfred Pfister's comparison of three German adaptations of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* shows not only how these differ from the source text but also how they respond to the pertinent issues of their day. Russell West-Pavlov compares the Indian-Kenyan-Canadian M.G. Vassanji's *The Book*

of Secrets with Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, viewing the former novel not only in relation to its prototext, but mainly as a product of a new, postcolonial literary history of the Global South with its unique matrix of textual and cultural values.

The volume *Taking Stock* offers a valuable overview of current trends in comparative literature, which I follow due to my own research and background in translation studies (a discipline which itself emerged partly from this field). Since this book is very broad in scope, nearly any scholar of literature and cultural history will find some topics, approaches, concepts, and references of interest. Given that the collected texts are for the most part, case studies, they can be viewed as heuristic examples as well.

However, the title of the book can be seen as its primary drawback. What the individual studies bring to the fore in terms of range and novelty of topics and approaches, the book lacks in conception. The phrase "taking stock" implies the need to catalog and describe what has been done; one takes stock to think and move on. Yet the introduction to the volume is very brief and its declaration that "[v]iewed conjointly, the essays seek to expose enduring deep structures of Comparative Literature" (3) seems self-servingly vague. What it needs instead is a deeper, extensive introduction that would help readers (some of whom might not be experts in comparative literature) understand the development of the discipline over the last 25 years. If one is to assume that the reader will understand the position of the book in the system of the discipline only by virtue of its being part of an established and well-known series, this does great disservice to an otherwise well-edited collection and goes against the spirit of openness and transdisciplinarity epitomized by its authors.

IGOR TYŠŠ
Institute of World Literature SAS
Slovak Republic
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3172-9369

ÁGNES GYÖRKE – IMOLA BÜLGÖZDI (eds.): Geographies of Affect in Contemporary Literature and Visual Culture: Central Europe and the West

Leiden – Boston: Brill Rodopi, 2021. 241 pp. ISBN 978-90-04-44088-3

DOI: https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2021.13.2.9

Even though the concepts of affect and translocality have recently been a popular field of study in the Western context, the inclusion of the frequently-overlooked region of Central and Eastern Europe into the discourse had long been overdue. In addition to being an important step in the recognition of the region's intellectual composition, *Geographies of Affect in Contemporary Literature and Visual Culture: Central Europe and the West* edited by Ágnes Györke and Imola Bülgözdi, introduces a refreshing contemporary look at the affects of social changes regarding spatial features in literary and visual media. It highlights the intersection of affect theory and translocality, since the chapters emphasize both the impact of an environment on the process of identity formation and the reverse effects of emotional experiences reconstructing the space. While affect theory provides the authors with the opportunity to explore the senses of regional belonging and estrangement as the indicators of environmental impact, the adoption of the term translocality enables the contributors to foreground "localities and subjectivities *within* the context of global flows" (4). Moreover, the volume pays particular attention to gender in making localities accessible globally without jeopardizing the specific cultural heritage of the region.

Geographies of Affect is a collaborative effort with 13 scholars from various European countries, whose editors accentuate the

importance of rethinking the significance of Central and Eastern Europe in the process of illuminating the gravity of the region in the history of Western legacy and overall intellectual global circulation. The volume claims to have the objective of "investigating the production of space in post-1945 translocal culture in a comparative theoretical framework exploring the ways representations of space and emotion intersect in works of literature and film" (2). The editors further elaborate their aim by saying that "focusing on the emotional landscapes of cities and regions in the English-speaking world as well as in Central and Eastern Europe, the volume intends to open a productive intercultural exchange between the region and global urban studies" (3). The result is a sound attempt at investigating the legitimacy of the binary understanding between the center and the periphery of Europe to reconceptualize the Central and Eastern region's translocal culture by spotlighting the locale within a larger global context. Throughout the chapters, affect remains a significant concept that draws attention to the senses of belonging and alienation while simultaneously generating a place of resistance for the localities against national programming and transnational flows.

The volume is divided into five sections, each composed of thematically related chapters. The first part begins with Pieter Vermeulen's chapter on the impersonal affect of translocal narratives that investigate how personal affect can help reach a better understanding of a transpersonal community. By showcasing the mobile nature of the chosen contemporary literary texts, Vermeulen emphasizes literature's ability to physically and emotionally "move" and affect readers while demonstrating the ways in which translocality reveals the intricacies of "intranational" and "inter-regional" urban settings. The following chapter by Miklós Takács explores the unique case of the Hungarian Holocaust survivor Eva Fahidi's theater performance in *Sea Lavender* that hauntingly blends the experiences of survivor/actor and the spectator in terms of powerful affect. Synthesizing testimonials with dancing, the author claims that Eva Fahidi battles her traumatic experience on stage by transforming the feelings of shame, violence and vulnerability into euphoric emotions. The chapter is definitely exceptional in its exploration of trauma depicted in theater in the context of positive affect which is quite uncommon. This first section ends with Katalin Pálinkás's discussion of the concepts of historicity and collectivity in Lisa Robertson's novels, set against a rapidly changing translocal urban space. Through archival research combined with social practices personal to Robertson, Pálinkás traces the description of a multilayered city's present from the historical lens of a poetic flânerie. These three introductory chapters are important in demonstrating the power of narratives in exceeding personal emotion, especially trauma, to reach a transpersonal affective community and set the tone for the upcoming sections.

The second section examines the existence of male, female and queer identities in urban spaces through cinematic affective analysis. It begins with György Kalmár's analysis of the concept of "retreat" in selected contemporary Hungarian films in terms of a fragmented identity resulting from spatial displacement experienced by Eastern Europeans after the fall of communism. By focusing on the non-gender-normative male protagonists who are disillusioned by their former dreams of a modernized urban West, the chapter questions the need for a return to the homeland of traditionally masculine culture in order to build a sense of authenticity and a grounded identity. Following Kalmár's exploration of disintegrated male identity is Zsolt Győri's chapter on various female experiences in the socialist spaces of communal living with examples from late communist Hungarian cinema. Drawing attention to the gendered affective experiences of communal blocs, the author claims the role of "architectural patriarchy" in hindering the gender equality through ensuring female subordination to a paternal-

istic regime. The final chapter of the second part, by Fanni Feldmann, focuses on the affective qualities of queer spaces overviewing their inception and utilization in the contemporary Hungarian cinema, underlining the difference between mainstream films and queer productions. Contrasting the strong homophobic undercurrents of mainstream cinema that tends to prioritize the bodily aspects of queer identification, especially by centralizing affective qualities of shame in queer urban spaces, Feldmann provides an insightful vision into queer historiographic documentaries with their stance of activism seeking to establish safe spaces that foreground a sense of security and belonging. Through drawing attention to the spatial and affective feature of the term "safe space" that is generally used in queer discourse, the author underlines the connotation of the word, meaning both a non-violent and an emotionally supportive home of subculture. In its approach towards gendered identity in late and post-communist urban settings, the section provides fresh perspectives regarding emotional effect of borders that blend public with the private in East and Central Europe.

As the standout section of the volume, the third part begins with Imola Bülgözdi's rich analysis of Toni Morrison's *Jazz* (1992) in terms of its depiction of rural Southern African-American migrants' affective response of fascination to New York's Harlem as a result of a translocal journey. Emphasizing the highly different urban experience of black migrants from that of middle-class white city dwellers and the complex relationship of an individual and a place, Bülgözdi affirms the double-sidedness of Morrison's depiction of urban experience that reveals the ways in which the past lurks into reconstructed identities of immigrants which renders the chapter a great investigation of translocal geographies. The following chapter by Márta Kőrösi takes an equally enlightening approach to Marjane Satrapi's prolific graphic novel *Persepolis* (2000) by employing the thematically and formally relevant notion of "border thinking", which enables the exploration of multiple geographical and cultural spaces with a historical "double critique". By situating the novel in the larger discourse of comic genre with special attention given to icons and gutters, the author Kőrösi is able to showcase the suitability of the medium to Satrapi's autobiographical topic of border subjectivity and translocality. This section is certainly striking in its unique analysis of borders, both physical and abstract, in the chosen migrant narratives with particular attention given to the utilization of different media in the narrative such as music and illustration, and how in both cases the affective outcome of the process of migration leads to a reconstruction of a subjectivity in translocal terms.

The initial chapter of the fourth section by Anna Kérchy analyzes the spatial and narrational disorientation in Lewis Carroll's Wonderland and its loose adaptation by China Miéville, *Un Lun Dun* (2007). Throughout the chapter, the author presents how Alice's adventures, both in Carroll's original and Miéville's adaptation, question and reinterpret the concept of space in terms of affective psychogeography. Foregrounding "the girlish curiosity" of the protagonist in investigating the concept of space in terms of affective psychogeography, Kérchy claims psychoanalytical, lingophilosophical, ideological and even environmentalist assumptions in Alice's random mobility that help blur the border between the self and the space. In the second chapter of the section, Jennifer Leetsch analyzes how the central romance in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Americanah* (2013) helps emphasize the ability of metropolitan spaces to affectively suggest both concepts of belonging and alienation, especially to migrants. By presenting the unsettled affective relationship between the two migrant protagonists, the chapter provides a contemporary glance at the ways in which migrant narratives reshape the boundaries of transnational writing while simultaneously drawing attention to the close bond between love and space. Both chapters of the section are illuminating transgression and

the reconstruction of affective urban landscapes from an alternative lens of gendered and racialized depictions that question the more commonly portrayed white and masculine urban experience.

The fifth and final section of the volume, focusing on crime and the city, begins with Tamás Bényei's analysis of Patrick Neate's utilization of the noir structure in his hard-boiled thriller *City of Tiny Lights* (2005) to outline the complexities of the multi-ethnic urban space of post-9/11 cities, in which the affect of fear is replaced by that of terror. Bényei's approach to the unconventional crime narrative with a Black British private eye reveals the deconstruction of hard-boiled discourse's stability in urban spaces, the key words being rootlessness, and multiculturality, lack of control. In the final chapter of the volume, the author Brigitta Hudácskó questions the borders of classic crime narratives in a Hungarian context through a novel with a female Hungarian detective, underlining the reasons behind the genre's absence in the Hungarian canon despite the genre's conveniently reproducible structure and cultural obstacles emerging in the process of transfer. The interesting aspect of the chapter is the exploration of how a classic detective story can be installed in a location with a crime history that tends to deviate from the expectations of the genre norms. This final section with chapters centering on crime narratives present unconventional versions of the noir genre that question the prescribed figure of the detective to reject traditional investigative methods for a more affective approach and the validity of local urban crimes in a contemporary global scene.

In conclusion, the volume presents a refreshing survey of affect theory in relation to translocality through the analysis of several contemporary literary and cinematic productions of Central Europe and the West. One thing to note is that though the introduction of the book suggests a tighter focus on relocating Central and Eastern Europe on the global and cultural scene of the 21st century, most of the chapters focus on works or authors from Western Europe or the USA. Furthermore, the limited attention given to Central and Eastern Europe in the volume is mostly reserved for Hungary as a case study for the overall region, since most contributors of the volume are of Hungarian origin. However, the emphasis on this country results in an uneven representation of the region which does not seem to align with the volume's intention. Nevertheless, the originality of each chapter creates an engaging and rich perspective that contributes greatly to the discourse and will captivate readers interested in representations of affective spaces both in literature and visual media.

RANA YÜRÜKER
Yeditepe University
Turkey
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6696-6612

CSONGOR LŐRINCZ – PÉTER L. VARGA (eds.): Herausforderung der Literatur: Péter Esterházy [The Challenge of Literature: Péter Esterházy]
Berlin: de Gruyter, 2021. 447 pp. ISBN 978-3-1106-1722-1
DOI: https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110618082

ANDRÁS KÁNYÁDI (ed.): Péter Esterházy et le postmodernisme [Péter Esterházy and Postmodernism]
Paris: Éditions PETRA, 2020. 228 pp. ISBN 978-2-84743-276-3
DOI: https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2021.13.2.10

According to the introduction by Csongor Lőrincz in *The Challenge of Literature* (*Herausforderung der Literatur;* in the following referred to as *HL*), one of the core characteristics of Péter Esterházy's literature is to point to the expression of the unachievable, and to be explicitly kept open. Moreover, the last sentence from *Simple Story Comma One Hundred Pages – the Mark-Version* (*Egyszerű történet vessző száz oldal – a Márk-változat*) "Nincs vége, ez a befejezés" ["There's no end, that's the ending"], was the title quote of a scholarly volume about Esterházy's literature published in Hungarian in 2019, after his death. The important text of reference here is Esterházy's voluminous book *Introduction to Literature* (*Bevezetés a szépirodalomba*) published in 1986. In András Kányádi's introduction to *Péter Esterházy and Postmodernism* (*Péter Esterházy et le postmodernisme*; in the following referred to as *PM*) that same book bears a similarly comprehensive importance in the author's earlier œuvre, "redefining the concept of literature itself", and what is more, bringing about a "turn in literature [...] by his pen" (10–11). Furthermore Kányádi's volume raises and critically discusses the question of Esterházy being a postmodern author, a description which has been applied to him in the simplistic perspectives of feuilletonistic texts in order to "handle" his work and his writing, and only to make it fit the technical framing of the journalistic style. Esterházy himself has cleverly, yet frankly outplayed this (knowing very well how as a skillful football player!): "Amúgy ősi, futballista családból származom" ["Anyway, I come from an ancient football player family"]. It might thus be of importance that both collections include studies on Esterházy's football writings: Péter Fodor in *HL* about *Voyage to the End of the Penalty Area* (*Utazás a tizenhatos mélyére,* 2006) and Piotr Bilos in *PM* on the football metaphors in *Not Art* (*Semmi művészet,* 2008; Eng. trans. 2010).

The year 2016, when Esterházy passed away on July 14, shortly after his friend Imre Kertész had died on March 31 at whose funeral Esterházy had spoken – "Silence, restlessness, passion – these could be the big Kertész-words [...]; out of them we learn something new about the world. I could start again: about us, about our country, about the world, about God" – can be seen as a year profoundly marked by these losses in the literary sphere – explicitly not only in Hungary. Looking upon Esterházy József P. Kőrössi has expressed this "shock" of his death asking in perplexed fright, "Hová is?"["Where to now?"] (*A megrendülés segédigei. EP 1950–2016* [Auxiliaries of the Shock. EP 1950–2016] Budapest: Norán Libro 2016, 7).

The confusing moment of Esterházy's death as well, at least latently, (re)shaped the point of reference, the perspectives and interpretatory and analytical approaches to Esterházy's literary work, yet to his legacy in both the volumes edited by András Kányádi in French and by Csongor Lőrincz and Péter L. Varga containing articles in German and in English.

Both books pay much attention to the translations of Esterházy's literature into German and into French – only two of the about thirty languages Esterházy can

be read in – the German-speaking world being in a slightly more comfortable position having a choice of about 25 Esterházy titles compared to about 12 in French. (In the bibliography in *PM* 14 titles are mentioned, because *Le Journal du pancréas* [Pancreas Diary] and *La Version de cape et d'épée. Histoire simple virgule cent pages* [Simple Story Comma One Hundred Pages – The Duel Version] are forthcoming at Gallimard.) Thus in both volumes some articles focus on the translatedness and (un)translatability of Esterházy's works. Moreover, these translation studies or essays are written by Esterházy's translators, thus offering a detailed insight into their "workshops". Agnès Járfás from 1990 onwards literally became *the* translator of Esterházy into French. Looking at different examples, her contribution discusses the problem of how to translate the quotations the author included in a quite large number in his books. She also mentions the exchange of thoughts and solutions with Esterházy which whets the appetite for more such intriguing analyses of the Esterházyian co-work on language. Zsuzsanna Gahse's "Der Sprachspieler" in *HL* may be seen as a further response to this interest. Having started translating Esterházy in the 1980s (eight books translated), when, as she says, he was rather "popular among insiders" (31), she also had to solve the problem of rewritten quotations, incorporated in the texts, and also frequently communicated with the author about the translations of his texts. Heike Flemming (translator of three of Esterházy's books since 2013) adds an appealing essayistic account of the "happiness of translating Esterházy" (36), in which she highlights his vivid awareness of the inbetweenness of two languages.

However the status of translation is crucial for philological approaches to Esterházy's works from contexts outside Hungary – as these two volumes demonstrate, transmitting a very profound, well informed, and widely documented specialist discourse of a high scholarly level that mirrors comparable works in Hungary and has the following foci partly conversing with each other. In *PM* Judit Görözdi convincingly shows the Central-European poetics of *The Book of Hrabal* (*Hrabal könyve,* 1990; Eng. trans. 1994). Tibor Gintli's account in *PM* of the anecdotal narration of *Production Novel* (*Termelési regény*, 1979) corresponds with the great importance of that book, as demonstrated in detail in *HL* through the studies by Csongor Lőrincz (providing a comprehensive analysis of silence in Esterházy's texts), Péter Szirák, Gábor Palkó, Tibor Bónus (the only contributor appearing in both volumes), and Ernő Kulcsár Szabó. *Introduction to Literature* is mentioned in several studies (widely contextualized in Esterházy's work by Kulcsár Szabó), some of them concentrating on parts of the book having been published separately: László Bengi on *Indirect* (*Függő*, 1981) in *HL*; Jean-Pierre Liotard-Vogt and Éva Sziklai on the historical context(s) of *A Little Hungarian Pornography* (*Kis magyar pornográfia*, 1984; Eng. trans. 1995). Danijela Lugarić provides a challenging comparison between Danilo Kiš and Esterházy in which she also probes the concept of world literature. The articles by Ágnes Balajthy (*HL*) and Henri de Montety (*PM*) both focus on the image of the Danube in Esterházy's work. In *HL* Hajnalka Halász provides a comparative reading of Kosztolányi's and Esterházy's *Esti* (2010). *Celestial Harmonies* (*Harmonia Caelestis*, 2000; Eng. trans. 2004) and *Revised Edition* (*Javított kiadás*, 2002) are analyzed in detail in studies by Csongor Lőrincz and Gábor Tamás Molnár in *HL* and by Zoltán Z. Varga, Paul-Victor Desarbres, Jean-François Laplénie, Anna Keszeg, András Kányádi, Jean-Léon Muller, and Dorottya Szávai in *PM*. In *HL* Ágnes Hansági traces Esterházy's critical understanding of traditional codes, while Péter L. Varga develops the (silent) importance of language for Esterházy's perception of Central Europe. Györgyi Földes analyzes the corporeality of *A Woman* (*Egy nő*) in *PM* where Anne-Rachel Hermetet also gives an account of how Esterházy has been perceived

in the French press. Finally, the important late prose works (translated into both languages) in *HL* are the subjects of studies by Gábor Tolcsvai Nagy, Róbert Smid and Mária Bartal and of the contributions by Tibor Bónus and Sándor Kálai in *PM*.

Both these collections contribute to (re)initiating and establishing a discourse about Esterházy's aesthetics, his poetics and literature, his subjects, his cunning anecdotalism, in brief: about his works outside Hungary; these two volumes also lead to invite and to include scholars from other philologies or from comparative literature – that (in the West) very much needs to be "refreshed" and enlivened by Esterházy's and many more writers' (women writers', too!) works from East Central European literatures – because they assemble prominent voices and essential scholarship on Esterházy and point the way ahead. Well-chosen different approaches thus highlight poetical, narratological, and comparative perspectives, both volumes showing the indispensable and sustainable importance of Esterházy's writing.

Both books examine almost the complete works of Esterházy, or at least aim at giving such a critical, yet comprehensive overview. Offering such high ranking discourses about the aesthetical, poetical and thematical importance and of the literary impact of the author's works, both volumes present freshly challenging approaches to Esterházy by connecting his texts with region-specific, literary-theoretical, world literary and cultural questions.

STEPHAN KRAUSE
Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture
of Eastern Europe
Germany

KATARÍNA BEŠKOVÁ: Súčasná egyptská literatúra: Dystópia, cenzúra a Arabská jar [Contemporary Egyptian Literature: Dystopia, Censorship and the Arab Spring]

Bratislava: Veda, vydavateľstvo SAV, 2020. 256 pp. ISBN 978-80-224-1829-4

DOI: https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2021.13.2.11

Recent years have seen a marked interest in the works of contemporary Egyptian writers, as readers both inside and outside of academia have awaited the literary interpretation of the events of the Arab Spring to emerge, following the much-needed period of reflection and processing that allowed the writers to impart their lived experience, express their views and render their testimonies by weaving literary narratives of *their* revolution.

It is within this framework that the monograph entitled *Contemporary Egyptian Literature: Dystopia, Censorship and the Arab Spring* came into being to bridge the gap in Slovak and Czech scholarship on the topic as well as to move the understanding of modern Arabic literature more into the present moment. This monograph, written in Slovak, is also a continuation of earlier scholarship on the topic as it draws on research conducted by Stephan Guth, Teresa Pepe, Samia Mehrez, Richard Jacquemond or Benjamin Koerber, among others.

The book under review focuses on the works of both men and women authors of the so-called "Tahrir Generation", a term used by the author and inspired by Ayman El-Desouky's "the 2011 Generation" and modelled after the iconic square. "Tahrir Generation" denotes the group of predominantly young and emerging authors whose lives were "affected by the economic, political, social and cultural specificities of Ḥusnī Mubārak's regime" and who have shared the hopes and disillusionment of the revolution of January 2011 (24). Katarína Bešková views Tahrir as a unique *chronotope* in the Bakhtinian sense (echoed also in one

of the books she discusses, Dunyā Kamāl's *Cigarette Number Seven,* Eng. trans. 2018). Therefore her choice of the name is indeed well-suited for writers who shared the on-site experience of Tahrir as the seminal moment in Egypt's unfolding social, cultural and political memory. The book explores the intersections between the literary output and the socio-cultural and political forces at play at the time, with an emphasis on the interpretive analysis of the works within the context of the revolutionary events of the Arab Spring.

The monograph is divided into five analytical chapters accompanied by an anthology of literary works discussed earlier in the book. Bešková effectively weaves in the work of a number of literary and social theorists as well as scholars specializing in modern Arab literature, however, she does so in a way that supports and elucidates her readings, without weighing down the book.

The introductory chapter, entitled "Literature as the Reflection of the Socio-Political Reality", provides an overview of the predecessors of contemporary Egyptian literature and explores how the social, political and literary realms intersect, oftentimes "writing" one another. The parameters of Bešková's investigation focus for the most part on literature's relationship to politics, which also implies the question of the im/possibility of apolitical, "pure" literature (26). The chapter also touches upon the role of the writer in the Arab society, highlighting the dialectical relation between literary expression and politics in the Arab world which could be traced back to poetry of the pre-Islamic era. Likewise, Bešková sees the pre-Islamic poet, *shāʿir*, as analogous to the modern-day writer or novelist and points out the etymology of the root *shʿr* whose original meaning was "to know [intuitively] or be sensitive to things [that are] fine as a hair" (18). While modern Arab politics profoundly influenced literary expression, it has also been reimagined and reshaped by it. Bešková thus describes the (social) role of the writer in Egypt as "that who first responds to social and cultural change while trying to assert their positive influence through their literary activity" (19) and later discusses the blended role of a writer-educator in the era of *adab* literature, as well as that of socially engaged authors at the height of *iltizām* ("commitment"), maintaining that throughout the different periods in Arab literary history, the role of the writer was not only reflective but also transformative.

The second chapter, "At the Threshold of the Revolution", portrays the economic, social and political circumstances prior to the 25th of January revolution, emphasizing the role of Egyptian youth in the events leading up to January 25 and discussing the often overrated role of the new media on the course of the revolutionary processes then underway.

Egyptian youth, including several emerging authors discussed throughout the book, is also the main focus of the following chapter, entitled "Tahrir Generation". Describing the pent-up feelings of frustration combined with external and internal alienation among the younger generation, it explores the legacy of transgenerational trauma that informs the ruptured relationships and ongoing tensions between generations as reflected in the works of Yāsmīn ar-Rashīdī, Aḥmad al-ʿĀyidī, Dunyā Kamāl, ʿAlāʾ al-Aswānī or Yūsuf Rakhā, among others. Bešková also devotes some attention to the depiction of the iconic Tahrir Square in the literary works discussed in this chapter.

The practices and mechanisms of the censorship discussed in chapter four round off the themes explored in the preceding chapters by pointing out the intricacies and social sensibilities surrounding literary endeavors in Egypt. Of particular importance is the discussion of how censorship informs the literary creation at its inception as well as during the creative process, leading to innovation on various levels of literary creation (the rise of new genres being only one facet of such innovation) on one hand and self-censorship on the other. Here Bešková examines the works of Aḥmad Nājī, Majdī ash-Shāfiʿī and ʿAlāʾ al-Aswānī, all of them having faced

the trial for their writing, although the official grounds for their accusations differed.

Since all three writers were subjected to a form of ex post facto censorship and faced allegations that were rather arbitrary in nature, the rest of the chapter puts the issues surrounding the censorship in Egypt into wider perspective by shedding light on some more complex mechanisms and practices as well as acquainting the reader with the historical context. In this well-researched chapter, Bešková elaborates on the religious-social principle of *ḥisba,* rooted in long-established Islamic thought requiring of all Muslims that they should be "calling to good, and bidding to honour, and forbidding dishonour" (The Qurʾan 3:104, A.J. Arberry's translation). She also explores other enabling mechanisms of censorship such as social conservativism and the issues of literality versus literariness. In a subchapter entitled "Paradoxes of Censorship", Bešková discusses the double-edged sword of censoring practices, turning her attention to the counter effect that lies in drawing the reader's attention to the very things it tries to conceal as well as putting the very authors it tries to ban or censor into the regional, and frequently also international, spotlight (106).

The effect of censorship on harnessing the creative potential of literature finds its expression in creating and establishing new meanings as well as in the rise of new genres, to which the author turns her focus in the following chapter entitled "Dystopia". It is worth noting, however, that although the discussion of the creative potential of censorship on the rise of new genres at the end of the preceding chapter flows seamlessly into the analysis of dystopian fiction in Egyptian literature, it does not imply a causal relationship between the two. Nor can we trace, as Bešková concurs with Nāʾil aṭ-Ṭūkhī, a direct connection between the revolutionary events of 2011 and the proliferation of dark, dystopian narratives or literary portrayals of the post-apocalyptic world that followed in their wake (116). At the same time, her arguments about the countereffects of censorship practices, the role of the writers in present-day society or the question of political impetus behind the rise of dystopian fiction in Egypt may provoke some necessary debates within the field.

The anthology that forms the second part of the book offers a selection of works that illustrate the issues and topics discussed earlier in the book. It contains excerpts of eight works by various authors, written before, during or after the events of 2011, yet all of them reflecting "the social, political, cultural or economic backdrop to this seminal moment" (27). The anthology presents a welcome contribution to the body of works of Arabic literature available in Slovak and Czech translation, where modern works by Arab authors have been rather underrepresented. Bešková's translations are of high artistic merit which will ensure the book an appreciative readership beyond those who reach for it out of scholarly interest.

DANUŠA ČIŽMÍKOVÁ
Masaryk University
Czech Republic
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1020-6849

VLADIMÍR PAPOUŠEK A KOL.: Pokušení neviditelného. Myšlení moderny [The Temptation of the Invisible: The Thinking of Modernism]
Praha: Filip Tomáš – Akropolis, 2019. 503 s. ISBN 978-80-7470-263-1

DOI: https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2021.13.2.12

Autorský kolektív pod vedením Vladimíra Papouška začal výskum neviditeľného reflexiou počiatočnej fázy novoveku, ktorá je avizovaná najmä talianskou renesanciou. Charakter tohto obdobia sa v dôsledku posilnenia postavenia prírodných vied profiluje na pozadí radikálnych premien v dovtedajších konceptoch poznávania skutočnosti, ktorých limity určovali hranice metafyziky. Karteziánsky racionalizmus postupne nahlodával relatívnu stabilitu vtedajšieho sveta usporiadaného podľa stredovekého kresťanského univerzalizmu. Božskú autoritu nahrádzal človek, a to na základe jeho schopnosti nahliadať do doposiaľ neviditeľnej sféry organického aj anorganického sveta. Túžba po uchopení neviditeľného stála aj v základoch novej koncepcie modernistického myslenia, ktoré už vo svojich počiatkoch predznamenáva paradigmu obdobia fin de siècle. Masívny vedecko-technický pokrok konca 19. storočia a prvej polovice 20. storočia však zároveň vedie ku „krízovým stavom" moderny a ich intervencie do umeleckej tvorby, za ktorou stojí človek podliehajúci pokušeniu neviditeľného.

Kolektívna monografia *Pokušení neviditelného. Myšlení moderny* zachytáva transformácie a prípadné kolapsy myslenia moderny najmä cez identifikáciu tých miest, na ktorých sa viera vo vedecké usporiadanie skutočnosti dostáva do konfliktu s vierou v jedinečnosť človeka, ako aj s jeho slobodou. Slovami Vladimíra Papouška, „[a]bsolutní svoboda myšlení a tvoření, kterou si od modernismu slibovali, se často mění ve svěrací kazajku povinnosti a poslušnosti" (10 – 11). Po Papouškovom úvodnom slove autor pokračuje vstupom do krízy modernistických popisov sveta, a to na základe kritického prístupu k antropocentrickej koncepcii Martina Heideggera a dobového diskurzu – prehlbujúceho sa rozporu medzi prírodnými a humanitnými vedami utvárajúcimi nové, často radikálne obrazy sveta s noetickými ambíciami. Modernistické naratívne projekcie však vznikajú ako výpovede o postavení človeka intenzívne zasahovaného realitou, ktorá v dôsledku objavenia nových skutočností (napr. zakriveného priestoru či paradoxov času) prestáva byť lineárna. Táto situácia nabáda k opätovnému hľadaniu rovnováhy, k ambícii obnoviť univerzálny výklad sveta, kde sa naplno uplatňuje ľudská imaginácia. Papoušek tak do myslenia moderny implementuje francúzsky surrealizmus, existencializmus a psychoanalýzu ako spôsoby videnia sveta a človeka v ňom, ktoré aktívne narábajú s metaforikou a naratívom, sústredenými okolo dominantnej antropocentrickej konštanty, ktorou je práve ľudská bytosť. Papoušek pokračuje reflexiou medzivojnových avantgárd (dadaizmu, konštruktivizmu, poetizmu, futurizmu, artificializmu atď.) v štúdii „Infračervená a ultrafialová: Příběh jedné víry a jedné teorie" na základe prístupov teoretika Karla Teigeho, podľa ktorého ultrafialové spektrum predstavuje „jiný vstup do neviditelného světa, do skutečnosti, která je reálná, ale zároveň zůstává skrytá bez nové konstrukční aktivity subjektu" (216 – 217). Autor zároveň otvára problematiku obojstranných presahov estetiky a spoločenského diania, resp. politických ideí. V predstave moderného nezastaviteľného pohybu smerom k lepšej a dokonalejšej budúcnosti sa postupne začínajú objavovať trhliny, a to jednak v rovine slovníka, ktorý stráca svoju konštrukčnú stabilitu, ale aj v nepoužiteľnosti nových paradigiem v reálnom živote a konfrontácii ideálu so skutočnosťou. Papoušek v štúdii „Drolící se monolity, zakřivené horizonty a hledání no-

vého slovníku: Pochybnosti o moderně od čtyřicátých let dvacátého století" zachytáva práve posun od modernistických monolitov a ideálnych projekcií k reflexii porúch a odchýlok, a to cez osobnosti Bohuslava Brouka, Václava Navrátila, Jindřicha Chalupeckého či Milady Součkovej.

V kontexte prvej polovice 20. storočia s neviditeľným bezprostredne súvisí oblasť nevypovedateľného, nevysloviteľného, teda toho, čo nie je možné uchopiť prostredníctvom slov a reči. Vedomie devalvácie a vyprázdnenosti slova napokon stojí aj na začiatku epochálnej krízy umenia a kultúry nového storočia. Kríza moderny je tak zároveň aj krízou jazyka, čo však značí zrod estetických inovácií ranej avantgardy a novotvarov, ktorých obsah zostáva skrytý. Kaleidoskopickému triešteniu starého sveta na fragmenty cez optiku modernej poézie, ktorej reflexia osciluje medzi hermeneutikou a fenomenológiou, sa v druhej štúdii venuje Josef Vojvodík.

David Skalický, autor štúdie „Myšlení o literatuře mezi uměním a vědou", zachytáva pojmové pole pražskej štrukturalistickej estetiky s cieľom priblížiť jeden zo spôsobov odborného myslenia o literatúre, ktorý dominuje práve v období implementovania pojmu moderna do systému českých literárnovedných pojmov. Skalický vytvára metodologický prierez českou literárnou kritikou cez úvahy J. Karáska, F. X. Šaldu, A. Nováka či K. Čapka o metódach a spôsoboch uvažovania o literatúre, ktorých cieľom je objektívne vedecké poznanie s dôrazom na štruktúru textu a jeho estetickú kompozíciu.

Myslenie o literatúre je v štúdii Ondřeja Pešeka konkretizované na uvažovanie o jazyku ako súčasti moderného českého jazykovedného diskurzu v dobovom kontexte moderny s ohľadom na limity jednotlivých metodologických modelov. Vychádzajúc z kvalitatívnej revolúcie v jazykovedných prístupoch prvej polovice 20. storočia sa autor štúdie zameriava predovšetkým na dejiny (jazykovedného) myslenia, ktoré sa odvíjajú od spôsobov lingvistických analýz korpusu textov produkujúcich význam a smerujú až ku kvantitatívnym a kvalitatívnym textovým analýzam na základe využitia komputačných nástrojov (napr. program QUITA alebo TXM).

Od možností počítačom asistovaných analýz sa svojou štúdiou výrazne odkláňa Veronika Čejková, a to situovaním fantázie ako základného prostriedku poznania na miesta, kde skutočnosť nemožno vyjadriť slovami. Roky 1917 – 1925 sú pre rozvoj českej fantastiky, idúcej za hranice formy a výrazu, zlomovým obdobím. Nové tendencie vo výtvarnom aj literárnom umení sa odvíjajú od mimetického vzťahu medzi fantáziou a skutočnosťou a smerujú k vytvoreniu novej, doposiaľ skrytej skutočnosti. Autorka tak približuje líniu magického realizmu a naň nadväzujúce aktivity Devětsilu, fantastickú prózu českej avantgardy a tzv. novej moderny na základe modifikácie *mimesis* na tvorivú *poiesis*.

Umelecká obrazotvornosť, ktorá v avantgarde mnohokrát prekračuje hranice ľudského vedomia, podľa Marie Langerovej vzniká ruka v ruke s hľadaním hraníc slobody človeka a s prieskumom časovosti jeho existencie. Už samotný názov autorkinej štúdie „Obraz a svoboda" naznačuje proces experimentálneho odhaľovania nevedomia cez jeho prítomnosť v umeleckom diele, obzvlášť v surrealizme. V modernom umení 20. storočia sa čoraz intenzívnejšie prejavuje spätosť s psychoanalýzou Sigmunda Freuda či filozofiou Henriho Bergsona, čo otvára možnosť nových obrazových reprezentácií založených na vyjadrení dynamiky, pohybu, ako aj na zdôraznení anachronických momentov nepodliehajúcich cenzúre. Langerová pokračuje štúdiou „Obraz a skutečnost", v ktorej približuje deformujúcu silu obrazu ako súčasti jazykového vyjadrenia (napr. v tvorbe Richarda Weinera), a tak smeruje k odhaľovaniu zmyslu moderného umenia ako mentálneho obrazu.

Michal Bauer od surrealizmu prechádza k reflexii domácej diskusie o slobode umenia v socialistickom realizme v českom kultúrnom prostredí druhej polovice 30. rokov 20. storočia. Politicko-ideologická intervencia do umeleckej tvorby opätovne otvára otázky

o možnostiach a limitoch sebarealizácie a zároveň produkuje rôzne prístupy k snahám o estetizáciu ideológie. Autor v predmetnej štúdii napokon zdôrazňuje, že na miestach, kde sa ideologické konštrukty sveta stávajú neudržateľnými, opäť vystupuje umelecká tvorba ako autentický tvorivý proces.

Rozsiahla monografia je ukončená uchopením moderny v časovom horizonte rokov 1895 – 1947 s dôrazom na reflexiu premien dobového myslenia cez domáce a zahraničné impulzy, čím autorský kolektív edične nadviazal na metódu pozorovania literárnych dejín cez pole literárneho a kultúrneho diania uplatnenú v trojzväzkových *Dějinách nové moderny* (Papoušek a kol. 2010, 2014, 2017).

ZUZANA KOPECKÁ
Ústav svetovej literatúry SAV
Slovenská republika