

2. The Utopian Dream of Order: More and his Successors

Reference has already been made to the emergence of a distinctive pattern of utopian narrative during the Renaissance, and to its relation to some of the other available narrative models of the period. Before exploring its later transformations, however, it would be helpful to examine its distinguishing features in more detail. As has already been argued, utopian fiction reflects not just the ideological climate of its day, not just the influence of available literary models, but also the writer's own awareness of and response to a specifically utopian literary tradition. This being so, an examination of the earliest exemplars of this tradition, of the works which in so many ways set the agenda for subsequent utopian fiction, may be seen as an essential prerequisite for an understanding of the radical changes in both ideology and narrative structure which such fiction has undergone in the past hundred years.

The obvious starting point for such an examination, of course, is More's *Utopia*: the work from which the genre itself takes its name. Yet to examine it in isolation presents some equally obvious problems. While, as Morson observes, the whole notion of genre presupposes shared assumptions on the part of both author and reader as to its nature and ruling conventions, it follows that:

... the exemplars of a genre occupy a unique status. For a genre's first works cannot have been designed to be read in the tradition of previous works, nor can they have been designed to be interpreted according to the conventions of a generic tradition that began only with them ... works become exemplars only through the unforeseen creation of later works and the unanticipated emergence of a common hermeneutic approach to the entire class. History makes the exemplar; and tradition, insofar as it directs readers to take the exemplar *as a member of the genre* that it fathers, changes its semiotic nature: the original text is, in effect, re-created by its own progeny. [pp.74–5]

Subsequent utopian fictions, in other words, by their common pursuit of some, but not all of the possibilities adumbrated by More, have served to establish a generic model with which the exemplar—*Utopia*—is only partially congruent. *Utopia*, in short, unlike its successors, is by no means

only a work of utopian fiction—witness the volume and diversity of critical commentary to which it has given rise, much of it devoted to the question of just what *kind* of work it is. It is only when examined in the context of subsequent works—of its utopian ‘progeny’—that its distinctive generic characteristics become clear. By way of establishing those aspects of More’s fiction that are specific to the traditional utopian narrative model, rather than peculiar to *Utopia* alone, the present discussion will therefore also focus on two of the most influential utopias of the later Renaissance: Campanella’s *The City of the Sun* (1623), and Bacon’s *The New Atlantis* (1627).

The Historical Context of *Utopia*

Utopia itself was first published in 1516, but it is clear that what one might term the utopian impulse—the urge to dream or speculate about a more perfect social order—was hardly something new. Theories as to the nature of an ideal state go back to the time of Plato and beyond, while the basic human yearning for a better world, whether expressed in nostalgia for a lost Eden or vanished Golden Age, or in dreams of a heavenly afterlife, seems practically coterminous with civilization itself. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that in More’s hands the *expression* of this impulse takes on a new and distinctive form. *Utopia* is neither a manifestation of nostalgia for the past nor a millennial dream. It is not an abstract, theoretical discussion of the mechanisms of an ideal state, after the fashion of Plato’s *Republic*, and still less is it a pastoral fantasy, whether of the temperate bliss of Arcadia, or the riotous overindulgence of the land of Cockaigne. What More offers is not a blueprint, but the portrait of a more perfect society in operation, and one which has been created by the unaided use of human reason. And it is this last which is perhaps the main source of *Utopia*’s lasting appeal, the reason why ‘utopia’ has passed into the language as word signifying a fundamental cultural concept—the fact that More’s fiction depicts the real possibility of humanity taking control of its own destiny and, in doing so, creating a world that—above all—*makes sense*.

This is not to say that in Utopia’s more perfect society individual human beings have become wholly rational: it is accepted that irrational and instinctual impulses will persist; however, such impulses are channelled and controlled by a social order that is, at all levels, rationally explicable. (Even its rituals and customs are, as Frye observes, susceptible to rational explanation.)¹ *Utopia* portrays a society that is *fundamentally* orderly, part of its appeal lying in the fact that there is an explanation for everything. Unlike More’s own world, with its frequent lapses into chaos and anarchy which could only be made sense of by recourse to such essentially irrational concepts as the inscrutable workings of Divine Providence, Utopia could

be explained (and justified) in terms of reason alone. As a social construct, Utopia was simpler, more orderly, more elegant, and perhaps for that very reason more aesthetically appealing than any existing social system—in much the same way that the Copernican model of the universe was more appealing, in its orderly simplicity, than the old Ptolemaic version, with its untidy jumble of planetary epicycles. Nor was the appeal of that simplicity lessened by More's shrewd decision to preface his purportedly eyewitness' description of utopian society by a vivid portrait of some of the real-life alternatives to the rule of reason: the first book of *Utopia* depicts a world full of ignorant lawyers, foolish priests, grasping landowners, and power-mad monarchs—a satiric *tour de force* which inevitably prompts, on the reader's part, a sympathetic predisposition toward the discourse that follows.

A number of questions remain, however: what, for instance, prompts the emergence of this vision of human and social possibilities at this *particular* moment in time? And, having emerged, why should it then be so eagerly seized upon as a model for so many reworkings of the theme (many of which would doubtless have horrified the author of the original version)? Clearly, no discussion of the nature and appeal of *Utopia* can be divorced from a consideration of the historical and intellectual context within which it was composed—and while one can scarcely hope, given the present study's terms of reference, to do anything like justice to the appalling complexity of the conflicting beliefs and ideologies underlying Renaissance thought, it might be helpful to point to some of the more significant connections between *Utopia* and the social and intellectual milieu within which More was writing.

Considering when it was written, one of *Utopia*'s most striking features is—at least at first sight—the unusual degree of what might be termed cultural relativism it displays. In More's fiction, the society of his own day is judged and found wanting, not in the light of absolute and divinely ordained moral standards, but rather in comparison to specific (if hypothetical) instances of other human societies doing things differently—and *better*. Far from exhibiting a xenophobic preference for the English (or even European) way of doing things, More appears to look to his imaginary foreign societies (Achorians, Macarians, Utopians) for examples from which his own society might profitably learn. And this apparent willingness to judge society by alternative *human* standards may be seen as, at least in part, the product of a quite literal widening of horizons—both geographical and intellectual. In intellectual terms, More was both beneficiary and proponent of the resurgence of interest in classical Greek learning—a phenomenon which, while prompted by renewed access to the wisdom of the past, rapidly came to offer a challenge to many of the received

intellectual assumptions of the present. The influence of Plato, in particular, proved a powerful stimulus to new ways of looking at the world, reinforcing as it did the sense that contemporary society had much to learn from the example of a past civilization whose intellectual accomplishments and modes of political organization were at least as sophisticated as those sixteenth century Europe. The revival of interest in Greek learning, in other words, inspired More with the sense of there being alternative models of social organization which, even if impractical in terms of the political realities of his own day, certainly bore thinking about.

The expansion of intellectual horizons, however, might equally be seen as representing a shift in society's temporal perspectives: the opening of a new window on the past, together with the accompanying sense of another time as not only different, but also having value, opens the way to an awareness that the present is by no means immutable, that change inspired by the example of past human achievement is not only possible, but even desirable. And this potential challenge to human acceptance of the world's existing order is of course reinforced by the simultaneous expansion of geographical horizons—to which More was equally responsive. Writing in the immediate aftermath of the discovery of the New World, and in the dawn of a new era of exploration, More could not help but respond imaginatively to the fact that different forms of social organization were not merely a feature of the past, but actually existed in the world of his own day. Admittedly, the information available concerning the actual *nature* of such different societies was scanty at best at the time he was writing, but this scarcely mattered: what was important was not so much the details, as the *possibility*—as may be seen from the way in which More seizes on a throwaway remark in one of Amerigo Vespucci's letters regarding the indigenous South Americans' contempt for riches, and extrapolates from this an entire society based on the absence of private property. The expansion of geographical horizons provided a physical space into which the more perfect society could be projected, not merely as an abstract formulation, but as a concrete fictional portrayal, presented in the words of someone who claimed actually to have been there, and seen it with his own eyes.

All of which suggests—and rightly so—that More was someone who responded eagerly to new thinking, to new ideas and possibilities: in both its vigorous attack on the shortcomings of the existing order, and its lively exploration of radical alternatives, *Utopia* is a work clearly reflective of the age of transition in which it was written. Yet it would be wrong to see More, as some critics have done, as therefore progressive. While he was very much a man of his time, that time was characterized by an extraordinary ferment of ideas, quite as many of which were backward-

looking as progressive. Indeed, even some of the most apparently radical ideas and attitudes prove, on closer inspection, to possess startlingly retrogressive implications. Thus, for example, while More's was a period when Western society was on the threshold of an era of far-reaching religious reform (a process in which More himself was shortly to become embroiled, and not on the 'progressive' side), an examination of the writings of the would-be reformers themselves suggests that it is doubtful whether their intention was to take religion in a new direction. Rather, it would seem that what is now termed the Reformation was initially conceived of in terms of the recovery of lost purity, of a return to principles and values which had been obscured by latter-day corruption—as a restoration, rather than a revolution.

The revival of interest in Greek learning, likewise, was seen in More's time in a somewhat different light. Where, to the modern eye, its most important aspect might seem to be the stimulus which it gave to new discovery, or the challenge which Platonic philosophy represented to the longstanding primacy of Aristotelianism, at the time the emphasis was rather different. When, for instance, in the early 1460s, Cosimo de' Medici ordered Marcilio Ficino to begin translating the Greek manuscripts which his agents had been busy collecting following the fall of Byzantium, he instructed him to begin, not with the works of Plato (manuscripts of which he possessed), but with the *Corpus Hermeticum*, a collection of mystical and magical writings dating from between AD 100 and 300, but thought at the time to be the work of Hermes Trismegistus, a sage supposed to have been a near contemporary of Moses.² And while hermetic philosophy, to the modern eye, might appear to be largely mumbo-jumbo, based on a catastrophic misdating (which caused passing references to Christianity to be interpreted as evidence of astonishing prophetic wisdom), it proved at the time to be enormously influential—as influential in its way as the work of Plato. When Copernicus produced his revolutionary heliocentric hypothesis, he appealed to the authority of Trismegistus for support; and when Giordano Bruno defended the Copernican hypothesis at the University of Oxford, he did so primarily because he saw heliocentricity as consistent with and supportive of the greater truths of hermetic philosophy.³ While there is little evidence that More had much sympathy for hermetic thought, he was none the less a great admirer of Pico della Mirandola, whose biography he had earlier translated into English. It was doubtless Pico's exemplary piety and immense learning that chiefly commended him to More, but at the same time he can hardly have been unaware that Pico was also a magician, steeped in hermetic and Cabalist lore. Paradoxically, therefore, some of the most apparently progressive ideas of the Renaissance had their roots in dreams of a magical

transformation of the world—dreams which had as their goal, not progress, but the restoration of an order, a harmony, an innocence that had once existed, but had long since been lost.

Even the scientific and geographical discoveries of the period were by no means immune to interpretations which saw them less as signs of progress than as fulfilments of biblical prophecy, indicative of the imminence of the second coming. Charles Webster's study of science in Puritan England, *The Great Instauration*, reveals that much of the scientific investigation during the first part of the seventeenth century was prompted by the belief that it formed part of the essential preparation for the recovery of wisdom which would accompany the millennium (as prophesied in Daniel 12, 4).⁴ Even Bacon, so often hailed as one of the most important pioneers of 'modern' science, appears to have believed that scientific discovery could help repair the damage done by the Fall of Adam:

For man by the fall fell at the same time from his state of innocence and dominion over creation. Both of these losses however can even in this life be in some part repaired; the former by religion and faith, the latter by arts and sciences. [p.387]

Columbus, likewise, while his search for a new trade route to Asia was clearly motivated in part by pragmatic commercial considerations, claimed that the real purpose of the enterprise was to raise funds for the liberation of Jerusalem,⁵ and even appears to have seriously believed he had discovered the location of the earthly paradise in the course of his voyages.⁶

Viewed in the light of such grandiose visions of humanity bringing—or restoring—harmony to the world through its own efforts, More's *Utopia* might be seen, in fact, as characterized by a certain modesty, inasmuch as it proposes a harmony which is primarily merely *social* in character. Later writers, however, such as Campanella and Bacon, clearly had more ambitious designs in mind: designs in which social harmony would be integrated into a larger cosmic pattern—yet even then, a pattern which human enterprise might well be able to influence.

Against such a background, the ambiguity which has been pointed to as a central characteristic of utopian fiction seems less surprising. Emerging from a context where the possibility of religious, scientific, and social transformation seemed increasingly real, but where the direction it might take was less than clear, any attempt to envisage a complete alternative society could scarcely avoid some degree of ambiguity. In the case of *Utopia*, however, the ambivalence is compounded by the complex and sometimes contradictory character of the author himself—which is also reflected in both the nature, and the presentation of the alternative society he proposes. As might be expected of a writer who has been both canonized by the

Roman Catholic church and hailed by Nikita Khrushchev as an honoured precursor of Soviet Communism (Gilson, p.24), his vision of an ideal commonwealth is one which, even by utopian standards, is particularly ambiguous in its implications

The element of paradox in *Utopia* has, of course, frequently been commented on. It is the work of a devout Christian, yet one which portrays a non-Christian society as being in most respects far superior to those of Christian Europe. It proposes as desirable a degree of religious toleration unusual for its time, yet comes from the pen of a man who, in his public capacity, soon proved a fierce and intolerant persecutor of heretics. In the first book, there is a debate concerning the utility of the wise man involving himself in government, in which Hythloday argues forcibly that it is impossible to do so without sacrificing one's principles; yet while, in the book, Hythloday gets much the better of the argument, More himself went on to enter the public service—and later to die over his refusal to compromise over a question of principle. Nor do the paradoxes end there, for while the issues the work raises could scarcely be more serious (in the last instance, quite literally involving matters of life and death), *Utopia* is at the same time disconcertingly full of elements—puns, wordplay, ironies—suggestive of an intent which is anything *but* serious. More's often ludicrous choice of names for people and places, together with some of his comments, both in the work itself, and in subsequent correspondence, seem explicitly designed to undercut the impact of the radical ideas it contains—as, for example, when Hythloday's lengthy description of Utopian society is immediately followed by the narrator's *caveat*:

... it seemed to me that not a few of the customs and laws he had described as existing among the Utopians were quite absurd. Their methods of waging war, their religious ceremonies, and their social customs were some of these, but my chief objection was to the basis of their whole system, that is, their communal living and their moneyless economy. [p.91]

What is 'quite absurd', in other words, is the entire society!

Not all of More's readers, of course, can be said to have got the joke—least of all, perhaps, the modern critic who seriously argued that *Utopia* was in fact an actual description of the society of the Incas.⁷ But such spectacular misinterpretations only serve to underline the extent to which the boundaries between fiction and nonfiction become blurred in utopian narrative. While More was clearly concerned to *avoid* such misunderstandings, deliberately writing in Latin for a select group of friends and acquaintances, all of whom could confidently be expected to recognize the scholarly humour, and enjoy the speculative freedom of its often radical

suggestions without mistaking them for a practical programme of action, perhaps the greatest paradox of all is that such a work, although designed for a limited audience, should have gone on to achieve a degree of recognition and influence far beyond anything its author could have intended—or indeed, desired.

The Narrative of *Utopia*

Written at the dawn of an age of exploration, *Utopia* takes as its starting point the *Voyages* of Amerigo Vespucci: purportedly factual accounts (although ones, interestingly enough, whose authenticity has often been disputed).⁸ Raphael Hythloday, the visitor to Utopia, is supposed to have accompanied Vespucci on his alleged fourth voyage, and to have been one of those left behind in a fort on the coast of Brazil—from which he then set out to engage in further exploration. Hythloday's account of his travels is presented, in effect, as an extension of what More believed to have been a real voyage of discovery, its form modelled on that of travel narratives which lay claim to some degree of plausibility and authenticity.

In form, then, *Utopia* takes as its model a narrative of travel and discovery—it is a fiction which begins by describing an actual voyage, and goes on to imagine a further one. Nevertheless, the details provided concerning the latter are curiously sparse. From their starting point on the coast of Brazil, we are told, Hythloday and five companions 'travelled through many countries ... At last, by strange good fortune, he got, via Ceylon, to Calcutta, where by good luck he found some Portuguese ships; and so, beyond anyone's expectation, he returned to his own country' (p.7). Where the regular travel narrative (and Vespucci's is no exception) is customarily full of concrete details concerning distances travelled, and the time taken to cover them, *Utopia* is conspicuously vague in its treatment of both time and space. As Robert Adams remarks, in a footnote to the passage cited above: 'More covers in a prepositional phrase the distance from Eastern Brazil to Ceylon, a distance of about fifteen thousand miles. Somewhere in there is Utopia' (p.7 n.).⁹ Yet while this is tantalizingly imprecise, the text does provide us elsewhere with some oddly suggestive details.

Utopia is located, as are the ideal commonwealths of Campanella and Bacon, in the southern hemisphere, to speak in literal geographical terms—but also in the 'south land', that quasi-mythical locale which was the half serious goal even of real-life explorers of the New World: both Columbus, as we have seen, and later Ponce de Leon had dreams of locating, not just the Indies, but the Earthly Paradise itself.¹⁰ Remote from, and also (as it would be visually represented) *below* the known world, Utopia is only

reached after an arduous journey through an equatorial region described as 'desolate and squalid, grim and uncultivated, inhabited by wild beasts, serpents, and also by men no less wild and dangerous than the beasts themselves' (*Utopia*, p.8). Beyond this region, however, the conditions grow milder: 'The heat was less fierce, the earth greener, men and even beasts less savage' (p.8). There are increasing signs of civilization: ships, primitive at first, but later just as sophisticated as those of Europe. Hythloday and his companions encounter 'towns and cities ... commonwealths that were both populous and not badly governed' (p.7). Nearer still to Utopia are nations—the Achorians and Macarians—whose societies, while not perfect, are both cited as examples from which European civilization might well profit. Finally, there is Utopia itself: remote from the known world, separated by an almost impassable barrier, yet at the same time able to diffuse its influence over a wide area. The closer the approach to the ideal, the more its influence (in the best Platonic tradition) becomes apparent, affecting not only humanity, but even nature—even the beasts grow tamer.

The *precise* location of Utopia, however, is never revealed. As its name suggests, it is both (enticingly) the good place and (infuriatingly) no place: desirable, yet unattainable. Its location is the one piece of information conspicuously absent from an account which Hythloday's listeners beg him to make as thorough and exhaustive as possible:

'Do not try to be brief, but explain in order everything relating to their land, their rivers, towns, people, manors, institutions, laws—everything, in short, that you think we would like to know. And you can take it for granted that we want to know everything that we don't know yet.' [p.33]

Yet while Hythloday does respond, in Book Two, with a comprehensive account of utopian society, this very comprehensiveness serves, paradoxically, to highlight the narrative's omissions—to draw attention, as Macherey puts it, to 'what [the work] does not say' (p.87). Given his audience's expressed desire to know 'everything' (a desire, moreover, which Hythloday agrees to satisfy), the omission of the elementary fact of Utopia's whereabouts seems all the more glaring. Indeed, in a subsequent letter to Peter Giles, More even makes joking reference to this:

... it didn't occur to us to ask, nor to him to say, in what area of the New World Utopia is to be found. I wouldn't have missed hearing about this for a sizable sum of money, for I'm quite ashamed not to know even the name of the ocean where this island lies about which I've written so much. [p.111]¹¹

Giles, in his turn, takes up the running joke in a subsequent letter to Jerome Busleyden:

Raphael did not try in any way to suppress that information, but he mentioned it only briefly and in passing, as if saving it for another occasion. And then an unlucky accident caused both of us to miss what he said. For while Raphael was speaking of it, one of More's servants came in to whisper something in his ear; and though I was listening, for that very reason, more intently than ever, one of the company, who I suppose had caught cold on shipboard, coughed so loudly that some of Raphael's words escaped me. [p.114]

Humour, obviously, can have a wide range of functions—but there is surely something suggestive about this *kind* of humour, which depends for its effect on a tantalizing refusal to reveal information, both drawing attention to, yet refusing to disclose a secret. The commonest use of such humour, of course, is in the service of sexual innuendo, where a pose of innocence is combined with the implication of knowingness to create a complicity between speaker and audience: at the literal level, the statement can be taken at its (innocent) face value, yet both speaker and audience understand its true significance—to which, however, neither can allude overtly without the risk of disturbing the delicate balance on which the humour of dealing with the taboo depends. This is not to say, of course, that the humour which More and his circle deploy is *identical* in character: *Utopia* is scarcely a work of sexual innuendo; nevertheless, there would seem to be at least some element of the taboo involved in its humour. *Utopia* can be thought about, but is physically unattainable; the pretence of its existence is sustained by a knowing complicity between author and audience; and the secrecy surrounding it is maintained by barrier of an essentially *defensive* humour—the kind designed to forestall awkward questions.

What, then, is there about *Utopia* that might involve an element of the taboo, representing unconscious or unavowable desires? Eric Rabkin suggests that part of the appeal of utopian fiction lies in its indulgence of 'our atavistic desire for a special kind of orderliness, the simple, calm orderliness found in childhood, a bliss ignorant of sex and ignorant of the full knowledge of personal autonomy' (Rabkin, 1983, p.10). Yet while this gives some sense of the regressive element inherent in much utopian fantasy, a mere yearning for the simplicity of childhood is hardly sufficient to account for the degree of evasiveness encountered here. More to the point, surely, is the frequently drawn parallel between the actual geography of *Utopia* and the womb. Formerly a peninsula, we are told, *Utopia* was transformed into an island at the behest of King Utopus, whose

first act on coming to power was to sever the link with the mainland by decreeing the excavation of a fifteen-mile-wide channel. By doing so, in Angelika Bammer's view, 'King Utopus symbolically births his own utopia by cutting off the umbilical cord that had joined it to the mainland' (p.14). Yet this is surely to miss the point, since what is suggested by the geographical details that More *does* supply is not so much the birth process, as a *return* to the womb. What King Utopus's prodigious feat of engineering in fact accomplishes is the creation of an island shaped like a crescent whose horns nearly meet, enclosing a large, placid bay, which can only be entered (and even then with difficulty) by way of a narrow channel:

What with shallows on one side, and rocks on the other, the entrance into the bay is very dangerous. Near the middle of the channel, there is one rock that rises above the water, and so presents no dangers in itself; on top of it a tower has been built, and there a garrison is kept. Since the other rocks lie under water, they are very dangerous to navigation. The channels are known only to the Utopians, so hardly any strangers enter the bay without one of their pilots ... [p.34]

If More's evasiveness concerning Utopia's actual location may be seen as suggestive, then the compensatory wealth of physical detail provided in the description of its appearance is still more so—particularly when taken in conjunction with his account of the nature of Utopian society.

The analogy between human visions of an ideal world and the mother's womb is by no means a new one: long before Freud—indeed, as early as the first century AD—the Gnostic heretic, Simon Magus, proposed that the Garden of Eden had no literal, physical existence, but was merely an allegory of the womb, where the individual was innocent, happy, idle, and plentifully supplied with food.¹² And this same ideal persists through any number of fantasized paradises, from Eden, the land of Cockaigne (where geese fly ready-roasted through the air, crying 'Geese, al hot, al hot!'), down to contemporary television advertisements for Caribbean holidays. As Frank and Fritzie Manuel suggest:

The human fetus is an island, and in their island utopias men have often expressed a longing for the protective fluid that once surrounded them. The maternal symbols of most Elysian, golden-age, and paradisaical utopias are compelling and need not be laboured. The enclosed gardens, islands, valleys have reappeared with constancy through the ages. There is free feeding, security, peace, plenitude, and no rivalry. [p.76]

While it may fairly be objected that the ideal commonwealth depicted

in *Utopia* is neither Elysian, paradisaical, nor golden-age, it nevertheless shares many of their distinctive features. Where *Utopia* differs is not so much in the *character* of the dream it represents, as in the fact that it seeks to put that dream on a more rational, plausible footing. If food is not free, there is at any rate a sufficiency: 'their working hours are ample to provide not only enough but more than enough of the necessities and even the conveniences of life' (p.42). And while work is still necessary, to the average Tudor artisan or agricultural labourer, the Utopian six-hour day would surely have seemed, if not paradisaical, then the next best thing to it. There is peace, maintained by the ruthless efficiency with which the otherwise pacific Utopians wage war on aggressors. And there is security, provided by an ordered social hierarchy, clearly defined laws and customs, and the strict routine that governs day-to-day living. It is, as has often been remarked, a highly institutionalized society, and one strongly influenced by the ideals of monasticism—yet it also goes a long way toward providing, albeit in a more temperate fashion, many of the essential features of the fantasized paradise.

Paradise, however, like the womb, offers something more: a freedom from guilt, the promise—or is it the memory?—of an innocence lost by the Fall. And here, at least at first sight, Utopia might seem to diverge from the pattern of the paradisaical fantasy. For there *is* evil in Utopia: its citizens have to be controlled—educated to do right, restrained from doing wrong. The effects of Original Sin are only mitigated, not abolished by its institutions, and while the legal system seems in most respects milder and more civilized than that of Tudor England, some of its provisions are, to say the least, Draconian—witness the Utopian penalty of death for a second conviction of adultery. Yet even here there is evidence that Utopia represents a rationalized version of the underlying Edenic dream. While guilt cannot be eradicated altogether—any more than can hunger, the need to work, or the possibility of war—it can, like them, be minimized. Utopian religion, unlike Christianity, lays little stress on humanity's fallen nature; the legal system places, at least by the standards of the time, less emphasis on punishment, more on rehabilitation; and there are, quite simply, far fewer opportunities to do anything one might feel guilty *about*. The absence of money and private property frees the Utopians from greed and covetousness, and there are few chances of indulging in any of the usual social vices:

... there is no chance to loaf or kill time, nor pretext for evading work; no taverns, or alehouses, or brothels; no chances for corruption; no hiding places; no spots for secret meetings. But because they live in the full view of all, they are bound to be either

working at their usual trades, or enjoying their leisure in a respectable way. [p.49]

As Utopia's provisions concerning adultery would seem to indicate, human sexual instincts remain a problem—yet even here every attempt is made to strip sexuality of its mystery and aura of forbidden delight. The notorious provision of opportunities for potential marital partners to view one another naked before finalizing their vows may be seen as a step (however naïve) in this direction. But the Utopian obsession with living life entirely in the open clearly has another function: in a world where everything is known, the causes of fear and anxiety are minimized. Indeed, while *Utopia* depicts a world radically different from that of its author, one of its most striking aspects is the extent to which the element of novelty is downplayed. Not only are there few opportunities to do anything wrong, there are scarcely any opportunities to do anything *new*. While travel is permitted within Utopia (although only with an official license: the penalty for unlicensed travel is enslavement for a second offence!), there seems little point in it, given that all their cities are 'exactly alike' (p.36). In Hythloday's words, they are 'identical in language, customs, institutions, and laws. So far as the location permits, all of them are built on the same plan, and have the same appearance' (p.35). Everything in Utopia is familiar; everything in Utopia makes sense: there are no surprises. While there are elements of the carnivalesque inversion of customary values which Bakhtin sees as a central element in the Renaissance utopia¹³ (the use of gold for chamberpots and convicts' chains; the mockery of the Anemolian ambassadors, while their servants are treated with respect), these remain subordinate, in More's scheme of things, to the emphasis on official hierarchical order. What Utopia offers its citizens, above all, is security. Albeit in a rational form, it might be argued, Utopian society offers many of the same attractions as does the fantasized paradise: so far as is humanly possible, the Utopians attempt to rectify the negative consequences of birth, of belonging to a human society, rather than dwelling in the Garden of Eden.

The risk of such an interpretation, of course, as with all attempts to psychologize desires for, or attempts to imagine social reform, is that of reductionism: the desire for the radically new is all too readily decoded as mere nostalgia. Nevertheless, to argue that there are powerful, and in many respects regressive unconscious drives underlying the utopian vision is not necessarily to reduce it to a compensatory fantasy of returning to the past, in the face of one's inability to deal with the present. As Bloch suggests, an acceptance of the *existence* of such drives does not imply automatic acceptance of the Freudian goal of securing the individual's adjustment to

the norms of society (which are themselves historically contingent)—still less commit one to a Jungian pursuit of primeval archetypes. To suggest that humans are profoundly influenced at an unconscious level by the experience of prenatal security, or by the trauma of birth is not necessarily to argue that such experience is not subsequently socially mediated.¹⁴ In addition, even granted that utopian visions have at their roots a regressive fantasy, this does not necessarily render them reactionary *per se*. Whatever the roots of the desire for a better world, the real issue is the use made of that desire. Indeed, history is full of examples of the past, however fantasized or mythical, being used to legitimate radical political action in the present: witness, for example, Gerrard Winstanley's utopian appeal to the historically quite unfounded, but nevertheless enabling vision of a formerly egalitarian English society that had fallen from grace as the result of the imposition of the 'Norman Yoke'. As Miguel de Unamuno argues: '[e]veryone who fights for any ideal whatever, although his ideal may seem to lie in the past, is driving the world on to the future' (p.321). Utopian fantasy *to the extent that* it is merely compensatory, may be reactionary in tendency; *to the extent that* it uses the gap between the joys of even a mythologised past and the inadequacies of the present as a starting point for the imagining of new alternatives, it contains radical potential.

However, this is not to say that the underlying presence of such regressive elements is entirely unproblematic, either—as becomes apparent when one examines some of the parallels with the discovery narratives on which *Utopia* is partly modelled. As numerous commentators have pointed out, a striking feature of such narratives is the consistency with which the territory of desire is also conceived of as female.¹⁵ For Columbus, as we have seen, the enterprise of discovery was inextricably bound up with fantasies of regaining the paradise of which utopia offers a rationalized version. In his account of his third voyage, indeed, he advanced the singular theory that the earth, far from being spherical, was in fact pear-shaped, or else like a round ball on which there was a protuberance resembling a woman's nipple (Jane, Vol. 2, pp.30–1). This theory, in addition to accounting for apparent anomalies in his observations of the pole star, which he regarded as proof that he was sailing uphill (pp.30–1), led him to believe that he had actually located the earthly paradise—situated on top of the nipple-like summit of the world, somewhere upriver from the mouth of the Orinoco (which he took to be one of the life-giving streams issuing from paradise itself). Paradoxically, however, it was this dream, along with the no less regressive fantasy of recapturing Jerusalem—formerly held to be the geographical centre of the world—that informed Columbus's discovery of an altogether new world. Nevertheless, as Annette

Kolodny points out, the recurrent gendering of the land as female in narratives of discovery has a range of implications:

Implicit in the metaphor of the land-as-woman was both the regressive pull of maternal containment *and* the seductive invitation to sexual assertion: if the Mother demands passivity, and threatens regression, the Virgin apparently invites sexual assertion and awaits impregnation. [p.67]

While Columbus sees the newly discovered territories as the site of a paradise conceived of in maternal terms, a very different relationship with the land is implied by Sir Walter Raleigh's celebrated claim that 'Guiana is a countrey that hath yet her maydenhead' (p.347)—not to mention the contention of his lieutenant, Laurence Keymis, that 'whole shires of fruitfull grounds, lying now waste for want of people, do prostitute themselves unto us, like a faire and beautifull woman, in the pride and floure of desired yeeres' (p.391).¹⁶ Along with what Marcuse describes as the fantasy of 'the land as woman, the total female principle of gratification—enclosing the individual in an environment of receptivity, repose, and painless and integral satisfaction' (*Eros and Civilization*, pp.246–7)¹⁷ often goes the desire to assert masculine dominance over that domain. While the project of exploration, although informed in part by regressive fantasies, makes possible the discovery of the genuinely new, it also opens the way for the exercise of traditional modes of domination.

Seen in this light, the parallels between *Utopia* and the discovery narratives to which it owes part of its inspiration become more, rather than less troubling. For while the underlying symbolism of Utopia—its shape and location, its peace, fertility, and security—may well be maternal in character, indicative of deep-seated and barely acknowledged subconscious yearnings, it is, as Bammer points out, 'not a world in which women are empowered. On the contrary, male hegemony is reinscribed as normative' (p.14). For all the maternal attributes of the underlying utopian dream, the social superstructure erected on these foundations is, by contrast, distinctively patriarchal.

This, of course, it might be argued, is hardly surprising: Tudor society, after, was likewise highly patriarchal—and to this extent More might be seen as simply reflecting the social realities of his own era. Yet while this is certainly true, it leaves a number of questions unanswered. If More's own society was patriarchal, it was also a society in which a money economy, the institution of private property, and Christian belief were equally fundamental. Given the extremely radical social transformation which *Utopia* proposes, it is surely not without significance that there are aspects of the author's own society which he chooses to leave unchanged.

Indeed, it might be argued that More (and he is not alone in this: the same might be said of Campanella and Bacon) does not *simply* reflect the realities of his own world when he envisages utopian society as patriarchal; rather, this is an element which he chooses to reinforce. Utopia is a society in which patriarchy is, one might say, raised to a higher power.¹⁸

In discussions of Utopian society, much attention has been given to the political organization of its upper echelons—its hierarchy of syphogrants, tranibors, and so forth. Yet this often serves to obscure (as do the frequent references to the influence on More of mediaeval monasticism) the fact that, as J.H. Hexter observes, the fundamental organizational unit of Utopian society is the patriarchal family (pp.40–5). The family provides the basic unit of agricultural production; it is the family heads who elect the syphogrants who constitute the lowest tier of government; and it is the family which instils into Utopian citizens the habit of obedience to authority on which the stability of society as a whole depends. ‘Husbands chastise their wives,’ we are told, ‘and parents their children, unless the offense is so serious that public punishment seems to be in the public interest’ (p.67). In addition, we learn that:

Each city ... consists of households, the households consisting generally of blood-relations. When the women grow up and are married, they move into their husbands’ households. On the other hand, male children and after them grandchildren remain in the family, and are subject to the oldest parent, unless his [*sic*] mind has started to fail, in which case, the next oldest takes his place ... Wives are subject to their husbands, children to their parents, and generally the younger to the elders. [pp.44–5]

In themselves, such provisions are not far removed from the realities of family life in Tudor England—although the monthly ritual where ‘wives kneel before their husbands ... to confess their various failures and negligences, and beg forgiveness for their offenses’ (p.86) is surely less than typical. Nevertheless, there is a difference. What is striking is that *Utopia* makes explicit aspects of social organization that would more commonly be taken for granted: the patriarchal family, in other words, is represented as being *just as* fundamental to the workings of Utopian society as any of the sweeping changes that are evident; its maintenance is *as* crucial as the abolition of money and private property, or as the radically different laws, customs, and rituals which are described in such detail. In *Utopia*, as in any portrait of a more perfect society, it is not merely what changes that is important: equally significant is what remains the same. And it is here that we encounter one of the essential contradictions inherent in the traditional utopia: the fact that, although suffused by a yearning for the security of

the maternal womb, it sets out to achieve that security by the imposition of a distinctively masculine order. This is manifested not only in the forms of social organization which utopian narrative depicts, but also at the deeper level of symbol: in the description of Utopia's geography already cited, for example, one may see the erasure of the feminine by the masculine enacted in such telling details as the superimposition of the potently phallic tower full of armed men upon the harmless clitoral rock which rises in the entrance to Utopia's womb-like bay. Equally, in the decisive act of authority with which the male King Utopus establishes Utopia, severing it from the mainland, one may see a further rewriting of the primal myth. While, as we have seen, some critics view this action as analogous to the severing of the umbilical cord, its implications are actually more ambiguous. Where the cord linking mother and child is severed *after* the birth process, here the analogous action is a *prelude* to the womb's creation: the direction of time, in effect, is reversed, as if the hidden intent of the utopian fantasy were to reach back beyond the birth process, beyond the fall into independent conscious life, and start over again—only with the male firmly in control. If the earthly paradise constitutes an allegory of the womb, the utopian dream—at least as first formulated—is rather one of recreating its security by distinctively male means.

The articulation of such a dream at this particular point in time, of course, can hardly be seen as purely coincidental. The ambiguity of direction evident in the utopian dream is scarcely an isolated phenomenon: even the process of discovery which revealed the existence of the New World was, as we have seen, similarly informed by dreams of the recovery of a lost paradise. And the utopian vision, which seeks to recover a lost harmony by the creation of a new order, may likewise be seen as looking both forward and backward at the same time. Yet the parallels do not end there. If, in geographical terms, the process of discovery (the disclosure of the new) was informed by a dream of recovery (the regaining of what had been lost), what followed was an entirely different project: that of *colonization*—the superimposition of the existing upon the new. As Christina Thürmer-Rohr points out, while Bloch sees Columbus as exemplifying utopian desire in his search for a lost paradise

... he does not mention that such a quest for paradise always initiated male campaigns of conquest and domination. The paradises of western men—and of their wives, mostly sent for later—are their colonies, large and small. Bloch describes them not as the sites of robbery, of oppression, of presumption, of rape and murder, but rather as 'geographic utopias', earthly paradises, since heavenly paradise had proved unattainable. [p.23]

Which in its turn poses the uncomfortable question as to how far one of the goals of the utopian dream is not also, in a sense, the colonization of *terra incognita*.

In the case of More's *Utopia*, of course, it might be argued that nothing could be further removed from the colonialist enterprise than his depiction of an indigenous (albeit hypothetical) New World civilization as in almost every respect superior to that of Europe. In representing such a society as a model, not merely of wisdom and good government, but of tolerance, even—or rather, especially—in matters of religion, More would appear to evince an outlook radically at odds with that informing the process of conquest and colonization with which discovery soon becomes inextricably linked, whereby the indigene is commonly demonized as prelude either to forcible conversion or extermination. As has already been suggested, such apparent openness to the example of other societies would seem to indicate a degree of cultural relativism unusual for the time. Nevertheless, as Stephen Greenblatt argues, such essentially *theoretical* tolerance is ultimately a meaningless abstraction:

... the customs of those at a vast distance in space or time or of imaginary beings may be admired or despised, but such responses are independent of tolerance. They are, in effect, the attitudinal equivalent of the act of categorizing: one may decide that other peoples scarcely merit the name of human beings or that they are models of virtue. In neither case do significant life choices, entailing political decisions with historical consequences, have to be made. A metaphoric embrace of the other is no doubt wonderful, but what is its exigency in the real world? What is to keep it from vanishing into thin air? [pp.45–6]

Indeed, the gap between the degree of religious toleration proposed in More's utopian vision and his own practice as a fierce and intolerant persecutor of heretics would seem to bear this out. Yet while the perceived contradiction between More's actions and the apparent implications of the text has attracted voluminous critical comment, of perhaps greater relevance to the present discussion is another, somewhat less obvious contradiction.

As has already been observed, *Utopia* (in common with the overwhelming majority of subsequent utopian narratives) provides an abundance of specific detail concerning the actual workings of a more perfect society, yet remains tantalizingly vague concerning the processes whereby it came into being. What we *are* offered, however, is in essence a fiction of conquest. Formerly a nation of 'rude and uncouth inhabitants' (p.35), the land of Abraxa is conquered by King Utopus, who, having

subdued the indigenous population, promptly puts his subjects to work excavating a fifteen-mile-wide channel through the isthmus formerly linking them to the mainland. Having renamed the resultant island after himself, he then proceeds to raise his subjects 'to such a high level of culture and humanity that they now excel in that regard almost every other people' (p.35). Where King Utopus came from, however, and where he acquired his ideals of civic harmony are left as obscure as the actual geographic location of Utopia. In any event, what follows the establishment of the utopian state is a process strikingly similar to that of colonization. While the Utopians, we are told, never fight except in self-defence, or to help 'various of their neighbours to throw off the yoke of tyranny' (p.69), one side-effect of their conspicuous virtue is that their neighbours have 'made a practice of asking for Utopians to rule over them' (p.69).¹⁹ Utopian administrators are sent out, in consequence, to serve either one or five year terms, after which 'others are sent in their place' (p.69)—for all the world like colonial governors.

What emerges, in effect, is less an imaginative response to the example of the other, than to the possibilities inherent in the *space* opened up by the voyages of discovery—a space wherein the values of the Old World could be reconfigured. Where an indigenous population exists, its function is to be moulded in the image of a King Utopus; neighbouring races are portrayed either as enemies to be destroyed, or else as eager to be governed by the superior wisdom of the Utopians. Like the native Americans described by Peter Martyr as 'rased or vnpaynted tables ...apte to receaue what formes soo euer are fyrst drawne thereon by the hande of the paynter' (quoted in Greenblatt, p.95), the indigenous population serves effectively as *tabula rasa*—a blank page on which the patterns of what Michel de Certeau characterizes as 'Western desire' (p.xxv) can be inscribed. As coined by More, the term 'utopia' is, as we have seen, deliberately ambiguous: both *eu-topos*, the good place, and *ou-topos*, no place—an ideal impossible of attainment. Yet in the actual context of More's narrative, it becomes something rather different—the name imposed by a conquering king, remaking the world in his own image. The parallels with Columbus, renaming Guanahani 'San Salvador', or Raleigh, rechristening Wingandaco 'Virginia' at the behest of Queen Elizabeth,²⁰ are hard to escape.

Utopias of the Later Renaissance

That these are characteristics of utopian narrative in general, rather than merely features peculiar to More's *Utopia*, becomes apparent when one turns to the work of his successors. Published just over a century later, neither Campanella's *The City of the Sun* nor Bacon's *The New Atlantis* exhibit

the narrative complexity or, indeed, possess the narrative fascination of their predecessor: Campanella's work, written in prison, shows signs of having been composed in haste, ending abruptly with its narrator breaking off his account as he rushes to catch his ship; while Bacon's is no more than a fragment,²¹ which leaves many features of his utopian society unclear. Yet while the complex interaction between reality and imagined alternative which emerges from the juxtaposition of Hythlodæ's narration with the dialogue which prefaces it is lacking, both *The City of the Sun* and *The New Atlantis* share much of *Utopia*'s pervasive ambiguity. At the same time, however, perhaps by virtue of their greater narrative straightforwardness, they serve to give focus and emphasis to certain elements which the complex ironies of More's fiction tend to obscure.

Campanella, *The City of the Sun*

Campanella, especially, shares with More an ideological ambiguity which is likewise reflected in the conflicting responses of his readers. Although at times an advocate of papal supremacy, not only in religious, but also secular matters, Campanella has also been conscripted, along with More, into the Communist pantheon of honoured precursors of socialism²²—and, as in More's case, there has been no lack of critics anxious to defend him from so terrible a slur. Bernardino Bonansea argues that, like More, Campanella was simply attempting to portray in his ideal society the virtue possible to natural man—to show the best that could be achieved by reason alone—which should in no way detract from his being seen as a good Catholic (p.265). Nevertheless, to present Campanella in this light is problematic, to say the least. Unlike More, who died a martyr for the Catholic faith, Campanella was very nearly martyred by the Catholic church, spending over thirty years in the prisons of the Inquisition, undergoing torture on several occasions, and only avoiding execution by feigning insanity. His thinking is described by D.P. Walker as 'drenched in hermetic ideas' (p.234), and while he did, in the later years of his life, find favour with the papacy, this in itself can scarcely be taken as evidence of Catholic orthodoxy, given that one of his chief services to the Holy See was to perform ceremonies of astral magic with Pope Urban VIII in order to protect him from the ill-effects of an eclipse.²³ Clearly Campanella presents almost as many problems to the Catholic apologist as he does to the socialist in search of forerunners of Marx.

One important respect in which Campanella does differ from More, however, is in his introduction of what is to become an increasingly central preoccupation in utopian fiction: scientific and technological discoveries become for the first time integral to the creation of a more perfect society.

Like the inhabitants of Bacon's Bensalem, Campanella's Solarians have made extraordinary advances in the fields of medicine and astronomy, and have even discovered the art of flying. Prescient though this may seem, however, the actual *role* of such discoveries is once again by no means unambiguously forward looking. The Solarians' expertise in astronomy, for example, is used primarily in the service of the practice of astrology, which in turn plays a large role both in Solarian medicine and—as will be seen—eugenics. While clearly important, science remains subordinate, in Campanella's scheme of things, to religion and astral magic. Thus the 'progressive' elements in *The City of the Sun* remain part of a larger order which is anything but modern. As with *Utopia*, the orientation of Campanella's ideal commonwealth remains ambiguous, seeming to look both forwards and backwards simultaneously.

No such ambiguity, however, surrounds the question of Campanella's intent. Whereas More seemed concerned to ensure that his often radical speculations were seen as just that—speculations, rather than proposals to be acted upon—in Campanella's case there can be little doubt that *The City of the Sun* expressed what he saw as an ideal toward which practical progress could be made. If More's vision of a better society may be compared to the contemporary theory of Copernicus, insofar as both remained at the relatively unalarming level of hypothesis, Campanella may be seen as comparable to his contemporary, Galileo, in his activation of the hypothesis' radical implications. Thus, while the composition of *Utopia* in Latin was designed to restrict it to an audience sufficiently educated (and ideologically reliable) to take its speculations in the sense they were meant (More was unwilling to have it translated into English), Campanella translated his work from the vernacular *into* Latin precisely because his admirers felt this would secure it a wider audience. While *The City of the Sun* depicts what may now seem an unrealizable ideal, it is one whose premises are wholly consistent with the political activism which got its author into trouble with the Inquisition in the first place. If there are doubts as to the *direction* in which Campanella wanted society to move, he clearly had no problems with the subversive implications of utopian speculation. As his actions testify, he was only too eager to offer a challenge to established authority.

Perhaps for this reason, we find none of the irony, the wordplay, the somewhat defensive humour with which More seeks to undercut the radical implications of his narrative. Nor, indeed, is there any of the rather coy mystification surrounding the location of the more perfect society—which is not to say, however, that Campanella is much more informative. In response to an initial question from a Knight Hospitaller, Campanella's Genoese mariner responds:

I have already told you how I sailed around the world and came to Taprobana, where I was forced to put ashore, how I hid in a forest to escape the fury of the natives, and how I came out onto a great plain just below the equator. [p.27]

Which is all we learn about how utopia is reached: the narrator has already gone into the details, and does not propose to discuss the matter further. Within less than half a page, he is embarked instead on a detailed description of the city itself. What Campanella provides, in other words, is another *form* of evasion: while elsewhere the mariner is only too happy to respond to the knight's eager inquiries ('Tell me more, I beg you, tell me more' (p.29)) with detailed and explicit accounts of the most minute aspects of Solarian life, his reticence here—his uncharacteristic brevity—is all the more striking. Nor are we told much more concerning the origins of Campanella's utopia: all we learn of its foundation is that its inhabitants are 'a people from India, many of them being philosophers, who fled before the depredations of the Tartars and other plunderers and tyrants, and they resolved to live in a philosophic community' (pp.37–9). Yet, scanty though these details are, one significant parallel between the process of *creating* a utopian society and that of *reaching* it does emerge. Both processes take place after exposure to the unbridled hostile impulses of man in his 'natural' state: the Solarians flee from the savage Tartars and 'other plunderers', while the mariner hides from the 'fury of the natives'. Both find refuge within the circular walls of the City of the Sun: as is the case with *Utopia*, one of its most essential features is the security it provides.

What follows is the depiction of an order whose comprehensiveness surpasses even that of More. Campanella himself was obsessed by order and correspondence (he even believed that seven bumps on his head corresponded to the seven planets), and this passion is reflected in almost every aspect of his imagined society. The city, we learn, is built in a series of concentric circles, seven in number, each named after one of the seven planets, and each girdled by a formidable wall. Since it is built on a hill, each circle is higher than the one which encloses it, and at the summit, within the innermost circle, stands the vast temple of the Sun. This design serves a number of purposes, the most obvious being that of defence:

It is constructed in such a way that if the first circuit were taken by assault, more effort would be required to take the second, likewise again the third, and so forth, so that seven assaults would be need to conquer it all. But in my opinion not even the first assault would be successful, so thick is the wall ... [pp.27–9]

Like *Utopia*, the City of the Sun is impregnable. Yet this is only one function of its design: as well as protection, the walls also provide education—their

surfaces, apart from those of the outermost, are adorned with paintings illustrating every aspect of knowledge. The City, in fact, forms a kind of encyclopaedia: on the outer walls of the temple are depicted the stars in order; on the inner wall of the first circuit all the mathematical figures; and so outward to the exterior of the sixth circuit, on which appear pictures of great men—'founders of laws and of sciences and inventors of weapons' (p.37). Living in such an environment, Solarian children 'without effort, merely while playing ... come to know all the sciences pictorially before they [are] ten years old' (p.37).

Most important of all, however, the symmetry and harmony of the city's design is clearly intended to reflect the broader harmony of the universe. With its seven circuits, named after the planets, centred on the Temple of the Sun, the city itself constitutes a microcosm; while within the temple the process repeats itself on a smaller scale, with the stars depicted on the vault of its dome and seven lamps burning to represent the planets. The purpose of Solarian architecture, in other words, is not only defensive and educational, but also religious.

Given this preoccupation with celestial design, it comes as little surprise to discover that Solarian religion is inextricably bound up with astrology. Their Priest-Ruler, called interchangeably either Sun or Metaphysic, is invariably a man of great learning, and heads a body of priests who, when not engaged in affairs of state, divide their time between prayer and astrology:

Twenty-four priests are stationed high in the temple to sing certain psalms in praise of God in the morning and evening, at midnight and noon. Their task is to gaze at the stars and, using astrolabes, note all their movements and the effects these produce. In this manner, they learn what changes have taken place or are likely to take place in every country. They establish the hour in which conception should take place, the day on which sowing and harvesting should be done, and in general, serve as mediators between God and man. [p.103]

Both prayer and astrology are presented as basically similar in purpose, merely constituting different aspects of the priestly task—which is to keep the human microcosm attuned to the harmonies of the universe. Even the city's political organization has a religious dimension: the chief officials, we learn, are all priests as well—and it is clear from their preoccupation with astrology that the task of securing social harmony is, once again, merely part of the larger enterprise of integrating the human with the celestial order. By the institution of an elaborate system of social control, the Solarians seek to re-establish an unalienated union between the individual and the natural world which may be seen as echoing the organic

prenatal connection between mother and foetus, where the rhythms of the foetus are synchronous with those of its surrounding environment. It is an archetypal utopian dream.

Nevertheless, just as in More's *Utopia*, the emphasis of the social order which Campanella outlines remains resolutely masculine. This is to some extent prefigured in the city's actual design, its womb-like geography being overlaid by the exclusively male symbolism of the pictures that adorn the walls: in the outermost circle of illustrations, for example, the portraits of legislators, scientists, and inventors of weapons are supplemented by images of 'Moses, Osiris, Jupiter, Mercury, Muhammad ... Jesus Christ and the twelve Apostles ... Caesar, Alexander, Pyrrhus, and all the Romans' (p.37). Yet in marked contrast to More, for whom the fundamental instrument of patriarchal authority is the family, Campanella's social order is constructed on radically different principles. In the *City of the Sun*, the family is quite simply abolished—on the grounds that its existence is detrimental to the individual's commitment to the community:

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

In this, Campanella is clearly influenced—and to a far greater extent than More—by the ideals of monasticism; yet at the same time he articulates, and in an extreme form, what is to become an increasingly prominent trend in utopian writing: the tendency to do away with all institutions that might mediate between the individual and the monolithic state. It is striking, in fact, how seldom utopias allow for the existence of intermediate groups or organizations—associations, unions, guilds, clubs, political parties—that have any degree of independence of the state. In abolishing the family as well, Campanella merely goes farther than most.

But if the family in More's *Utopia* is the chief mechanism for the maintenance of patriarchal authority, its absence in *The City of the Sun* by no means signifies that Campanella's emphasis is any less patriarchal. What does emerge, however, is a striking contradiction between the theory and practice of his utopian state. At first sight, it would appear that the quasi-monastic social organization of the Solarians serves significantly to diminish sexual inequality: 'both sexes are trained in all pursuits' (p.41), we are told—including warfare—while later it is explicitly stated that men and women do the same work, 'whether of a mental or mechanical nature'

(p.49). Yet while, by seventeenth century standards, this would seem to represent a revolutionary extension of women's freedom, once Campanella goes into more detail some telling gaps between theory and practice become apparent: all the priests and officials are male, to begin with; while the contention that men and women do the same work is subsequently qualified to the point of outright contradiction. 'One distinction is observed' (p.49), we are told:

... that is that such tasks as involve hard work or a good deal of walking, like plowing, sowing, harvesting, sheep herding, are performed by the men. Threshing, grape gathering, cheese making, milking, tending to the kitchen gardens, and other light duties [*servizi facili*], on the other hand, are usually assigned to women. These include weaving, sewing, barbering, pharmacy, every kind of clothes making, but exclude the work of the blacksmith or the arms maker. If a woman has skill in painting she is not forbidden to pursue it. Music, except for the playing of trumpets and drums, is reserved to women and children, since they give the most pleasure by it. Women also prepare food and lay the tables ... [p.49]

Compared to the society of Campanella's day, this still offers *some* modest extension of women's sphere of activities, but the 'one distinction' referred to does rather more than simply modify the initial assertion. The radical promise of sexual equality proves to be merely an abstraction, translating in practical terms into what is tantamount to a reinscription of the existing order.

Nor do the notorious sexual provisions of Campanella's utopia offer women much by way of liberation. Solarian women may not be obliged to confess their failings to their husbands on bended knee, but they are no less subject to the will of the State, in the eyes of which they appear to be little more than a sexual resource, to be disposed of as its officials see fit:

No female ever submits to a male until she is nineteen years of age, nor does any male seek to have children until he is twenty-one or, if he is pale and delicate, even older. Before that age some of them are permitted to have intercourse with barren or pregnant women so as to avoid illicit usages. [p.53]

Such women are provided by the 'matrons and seniors in charge of procreation', who first consult with a doctor as to the advisability of the proceeding. The provisions regarding procreational sex are even more specific:

Since both males and females, in the manner of the ancient Greeks,

are completely naked when they engage in wrestling exercises, their teachers may readily distinguish those who are able to have intercourse from those who are not and can determine whose sexual organs may best be matched with whose. Consequently, every third night, after they have all bathed, the young people are paired off for intercourse. Tall handsome girls are not matched with any but tall brave men, while fat girls are matched with thin men and thin girls with fat ones, so as to avoid extremes in their offspring. On the appointed evening, the boys and girls prepare their beds and go to bed where the matron and senior direct them. Nor may they have intercourse until they have completely digested their food and have said their prayers ... They sleep in neighbouring cells until they are to have intercourse. At the proper time, the matron goes around and opens the cell doors. The exact time when this must be done is determined by the Astrologer and the Physician ... [p.55]

It must be conceded that men do not appear to have much choice in the matter either, but elsewhere it becomes clear where the balance of power lies. While men are free to copulate with sterile or pregnant women (or ones of 'scant worth' (p.57)), sterile women are barred from a range of privileges, 'to discourage any woman from making herself sterile in order to become a wanton' (p.59). These customs Campanella refers to as 'community of women' (p.65); Solarians, we are told, 'share their women with respect to both obedience and the bed' (p.67). Women are just as subordinate to the male-dominated State in Campanella's utopia as they are to their husbands in More's; their theoretical equality is repeatedly undercut by details revealing that underlying assumptions as to their inferiority remain unchanged.

It may be tempting to write off the sexual provisions of *The City of the Sun* as merely the heated imaginings of a Dominican monk. Indeed, Thomas Halliday's frequently reprinted 1885 translation omits them altogether—an expurgation which one editor rather airily refers to as 'one or two omissions of detail which can well be spared.'²⁴ Nevertheless, they may be seen as representing yet another attempt to restore human innocence by freeing sexuality from guilt—in this case by employing astrological means to bring human instinctual drives into harmony with the divine order of the universe. At the same time, however, Campanella's emphasis on selective breeding as integral to the creation of a more perfect society introduces what is to become a recurrent theme in utopian fiction. In many later utopias, in particular those of Bellamy and Wells, the aim is to transform not merely the social institutions which govern humanity, but also the raw human material itself. If human unpredictability and imperfection prove an obstacle to the establishment of a rational, ordered

society, then the answer is very simple: humans themselves must be altered, usually by means of some form of eugenic control. It is a view which, as we shall see, has alarming implications.

In the City of the Sun, however, the transformation of humanity is not yet complete; while Campanella is somewhat equivocal concerning the doctrine of the Fall, his Solarians are still sufficiently imperfect to need laws and legal penalties to deter them from wrongdoing. Like More's, Campanella's legal provisions are, by the standards of the time, relatively humane—yet there are also (again as in More's case) some odd exceptions. Indeed, in several places the account we are given of Solarian law is actually contradictory. Although we are told at first that 'theft, murder, rape, incest, adultery' are unknown among them (p.41), we later learn that homicide is punishable by death—as are offences involving 'injury to the freedom of the public, or to God, or to the highest officials' (p.99). We are, however, assured that 'only a person found guilty of one of these crimes is punished with death' (p.99). So far, so enlightened, it would seem—except that in the course of the discussion of sexuality two further capital offences emerge. Repeated sodomy, it appears, is also punishable by death, as is the wearing by women of cosmetics, high heels, or gowns that cover the heels!

Even by the standards of the sumptuary laws of the period, this last is quite extraordinarily Draconian—yet when the two offences are considered side by side, it becomes apparent that they do have something in common. Both might be seen as 'unnatural' insofar as they involve—at least to the innocent utopian eye—an element of deception. A recurrent feature in utopias is their emphasis, not simply on order, but on an order that is absolutely clear, wholly explicable. Confusion and uncertainty threaten the very foundations of utopian order: hence perhaps the insistence that everything should be open, easily knowable, not liable to errors of interpretation. As we have seen, there is in utopian narrative a tendency to try to determine *every* detail, an unwillingness to leave *anything* to chance. In such a context, a woman wearing make-up, disguising her 'real' appearance, or a sodomite, engaging in sexual conduct other than that conventionally expected of a 'real' man, both require an effort of interpretation not normally expected of the utopian citizen. In a society where everything is transparent, they represent enigmas which require deciphering. Yet even so, the extremity of the penalty, the disparity between offence and punishment, particularly in the context of a legal code otherwise lenient by the standards of the time, prompts further questions. Just who, or what is so threatened by sodomy, or by a woman's use of cosmetics? Whose interests are being safeguarded? The answer in both cases would seem to be—men. While in Campanella's day sodomy did not necessarily specifically imply homosexual conduct, the sodomite

represented at least a potential threat to a stable male sexual identity, in that sodomy could transform the recipient into a passive sexual victim. Likewise, a woman's use of make-up, with its connotations of sexual display, could be seen as suggesting a degree of predatory sexual aggression again threatening to male sexual dominance. While 'normal' male sexual drives are catered to by the provision of women 'so as to avoid illicit usages' (p.53), conduct which threatens the norm is punishable by death. For all the radical character of Campanella's challenge to the sexual institutions of his day, the emphasis of his alternatives remains distinctively masculine.

Nor is this all: as in More's *Utopia*, the fantasy of masculine dominance extends beyond the boundaries of the utopian state itself. While, like More, Campanella is capable of imagining a more perfect society *located* somewhere other than in Europe, it is once again a social structure to be imposed on the indigenous inhabitants in their own interest. Indeed, it would appear from the Genoese mariner's account of his first encounter with the *natives* of the region (from whose 'fury' he has to flee), that Campanella's conception of the indigene owes much to the demonizing accounts of the inhabitants of the Americas found in so many discovery narratives—accounts, of course, which are then used to legitimate the process of colonization, conversion, or even extermination. In the case of Campanella's utopia, however, there seems to be an inherent contradiction between the representation of the local inhabitants as savages, and what we are subsequently told concerning the City of the Sun's relations with its neighbours. The Solarians, it turns out, are constantly at war (although once again, always in self-defence), and, due largely to their sophisticated military skills, invariably win. Conquered cities and their inhabitants, we are told

...immediately change over to the system of communal ownership of all goods. They receive Solarian officials and a garrison from the City of the Sun and proceed to model their institutions after those of that city, which is henceforth their guide. [p.77]

Given this pattern of constant warfare, uninterrupted military success, and the subsequent imposition of the utopian system on conquered territory, it becomes hard to understand how there can be any furious natives left to escape from.

One further contradiction remains to be explored. As has already been remarked, Campanella differs from More in his emphasis on the importance of scientific discovery as integral to the creation of a more perfect society. Besides discovering the art of flying, the Solarians have invented 'vessels that move without wind or oar' (p.87), a device which allows them to listen to the music of the spheres, and 'a secret, marvellous

art by which they can renew their bodies painlessly every seven years' (p.93), which, along with their healthy diet and habits, has led to an average lifespan of roughly a hundred and seventy.²⁵ Marvellous as these may seem, however, it is clear that Campanella sees them as plausible possibilities, given the advances in knowledge the world of his own day had already seen. The Genoese mariner boasts that the previous hundred years 'has produced more history ... than the whole world did in the preceding four thousand' (p.121),²⁶ citing the invention of the compass, the printing press, and the arquebus. Yet such apparent enthusiasm for change and innovation is difficult to reconcile with the static ideal which the City of the Sun embodies. Indeed, it is hard to see *how* new knowledge and its implications can actually be incorporated into a structure already complete and perfect. While the startling inventions of the Solarians may be partly attributable to the excellence of their educational system—'without effort, merely while playing, their children come to know all the sciences pictorially before they are ten years old' (p.37)—its central feature, the illustration of all human knowledge on the city walls, has problematic implications. As Judah Bierman points out, 'there is no place for exploring new knowledge; in effect, knowledge is fully known, codified and exhibited' ('Science and Society', p.495). The City of the Sun is not just the title of a book: it is a book, written on stone, rather than paper—and like a book's, its contents are finite, fixed and immutable. To extend the city to make space for the depiction of new knowledge would be to violate the archaic principles of harmony and correspondence which are fundamental to its very existence. While the Genoese mariner acknowledges the dynamic principle of new discovery, which has produced more history in a hundred years than did the previous four thousand, the City of the Sun is an embodiment of the end of history: already perfect, its order is immune to change. If there is a dynamic element, it consists rather in the Solarians' colonialist project of imposing that order on its neighbours.

Bacon, *The New Atlantis*

A similar tension is evident in Bacon's *The New Atlantis*, where the dynamic implications of scientific discovery are again hard to reconcile with the static character of a society portrayed as already perfected.²⁷ While the role of such discovery is still more important (the celebrated account of the wonders of Salomon's House comprises roughly one third of the text), a marked ambivalence with regard to its function and *direction* is likewise evident. Ambivalence, indeed, has been seen by several commentators as an essential aspect of Bacon's thinking. J.C. Davis, for example, describes him as:

[A] scientific modernist consigning all past philosophy to oblivion yet unable to shake off the mental habits of the scholastic, the jargon of the alchemist and magician; the analyst of the imperfections of the human mind, carefully planning the retrieval of its dominion over nature ... pessimistic and optimistic, conservative and radical, timid and bold ... [p.106]

While science and scientific research are clearly crucial to Bacon's vision of a utopian society, the traditional view of Bacon as perhaps the first truly 'modern' scientist is somewhat misleading, ignoring as it does the complexity and ambiguity of Bacon's thought. As Frances Yates observes:

Bacon's view of the future of science was not that of progress in a straight line. His 'great instauration' of science was directed towards a return to the state of Adam before the Fall, a state of pure and sinless contact with nature and knowledge of her powers. [*Rosicrucian*, p.119]

Thus, while *The New Atlantis* contains an extensive catalogue of scientific discoveries, they are presented in a context which is anything *but* suggestive of a modern scientific outlook. The scientists of the House of Salomon, like Campanella's Solarians, have developed the art of flying and the means of prolonging human life—as well as inventing the submarine, a form of perpetual motion machine, and what sounds like a kind of telephone, which 'convey[s] sounds in trunks and pipes, in strange lines and distances' (p.730). Yet, as in *The City of the Sun*, these startling innovations are hard to reconcile with some of the other details of the text. In describing the history of Bensalem, for instance, the governor of the Strangers' House where the narrator and his companions are lodged indicates that Bensalem has done little more than *preserve* a level of civilization that was formally global, rather than progressing beyond it. With reference to navigation, for example, he declares:

'You shall understand (that which perhaps you will scarce think credible) that about three thousand years ago, or somewhat more, the navigation of the world, (especially for remote voyages), was greater than at this day. Do not think with yourselves that I know not how much it is increased with you within these six-score years: I know it well: and yet I say greater then than now ...' [p.718]

Given such a starting point, however, it seems curious that so little appears to have changed since. As Davis remarks, it is remarkable that the nineteen hundred years of uninterrupted research following the foundation of Salomon's House should have produced so *few* technological innovations, or indeed so little social impact. Like the discoveries of the Solarians, the

research of Bacon's scientists appears to have few practical applications; rather, the main goal of scientific research would seem to be the restoration of a harmonious union between humanity and nature, which will only be achieved when the latter is fully known.

To further complicate the issue, *The New Atlantis*, for all its emphasis on science, is one of the few utopias in which the supernatural plays an essential role. While astrology and astral magic are integral to the workings of Campanella's ideal society, it is clear that these are seen as having a rational basis; whereas in Bacon's case one of the fundamental characteristics of his society—its Christianity—is portrayed as the product of a full-blown miracle. Given that neither the Catholic saint, More, nor the Dominican monk, Campanella, found it necessary to make Christianity the religion of their utopian societies, the fact that Bacon *did* is in itself not without interest²⁸—but what is particularly interesting is the nature of the narrative mechanism which he devises to account for it. In sheerly narrative terms, it must be said that the miracle is considerably in excess of requirements: indeed, if mere plausibility were the only consideration (and the desire for plausibility is surely at the root of the relentless specificity of details which characterizes so much utopian fiction, Bacon's included) then the navigational prowess of the Bensalemites would surely have sufficed to account for their coming into contact with the revealed truths of the Christian religion. Bacon, however, resorts to a miracle—what Bloch terms 'the blasting apart of the accustomed status quo' (*Principle of Hope*, p.1304)—and doing so he opens a space for a freer play of the imagination than the constraints of utopian fiction (which is designed to persuade its audience that a specific alternative is workable) normally afford. What he proceeds to imagine, given the limitless possibilities of the miraculous, is revealing.

The miracle, we are told, coincided with Christ's ascension—at which time there appeared off the coast of Bensalem an enormous pillar of light, 'not sharp, but in the form of a column or cylinder, rising from the sea a great way up towards heaven' (p.716), the whole surmounted by a cross even 'brighter and more resplendent than the body of the pillar' (p.716). What then follows is surely one of the oddest scenes in utopian literature. Numerous concerned citizens put to sea to investigate the apparition, but find themselves unable to get any closer than some sixty yards away. One boat, however, contains a scientist of the House of Salomon, who prostrates himself before the pillar, and then, raising himself to his knees, utters the following prayer:

'Lord God of heaven and earth, thou hast vouchsafed of thy grace to those of our order, to know thy works of creation, and the secrets of

them; and to discern (as far as appertaineth to the generations of men) between divine miracles, works of nature, works of art, and impostures and illusions of all sorts. I do here acknowledge and testify before this people, that the thing which we now see before our eyes is thy Finger and a true miracle ...' [pp.716–17]

What is presented, in other words, is the spectacle of a trained scientist solemnly affirming a miracle to be miraculous. Having thus acknowledged the phallic pillar's divine origin, the scientist is allowed to proceed past the invisible barrier, at which the pillar promptly explodes into "a firmament of many stars' (p.717), which then vanish, leaving behind only a 'small ark or chest of cedar', which opens to reveal what proves to be the seed of Christianity: 'all the canonical books of the Old and New Testament' (p.717), even including the ones that had not yet been written—which at the time of the ascension must have been rather a lot. All of which goes to explain why Bensalem, unlike Utopia or the City of the Sun, is a Christian community; extending the analogy between utopia and the womb, Bacon's account depicts a process of impregnation by the word of God as the result of what reads remarkably like a symbolic representation of the male orgasm.

In most other respects, for all its fragmentary character, *The New Atlantis* conforms to the pattern already evident in *Utopia* and *The City of the Sun*. Bensalem is likewise remote, southerly in location, and unknown to the rest of the world—an isolation decreed some nineteen hundred years before by King Solamona, in the belief that contact with the outside world could only harm a society that 'might be a thousand ways altered to the worse, but scarce any one way to the better' (p.720). Lost, sick and starving, the narrator and his companions reach the coast of Bensalem, there to find many of the characteristic features of the womb-like paradisaical utopia. Entering a safe harbour, their initial attempt at landing is repulsed by the threatening presence of men waving batons, phallic symbols which, as in *Utopia*, bar entry to the safe haven beyond. Once it emerges that they are Christian, however, they are permitted to land, and are given food and lodging, free of charge, in the Strangers' House. A period of quarantine then ensues, during which their sick (who constitute precisely one third of the ship's company) are provided with appropriate diet and medicine, and make so rapid a recovery that they 'thought themselves cast into some divine pool of healing, they mended so kindly and so fast' (p.715).

Reduced to a state of total dependence, the travellers remain passive and submissive throughout, appreciative of the 'gracious and parent-like usage' (715) they receive, and often prostrating themselves at the feet and kissing the robes of the various authority figures they encounter. When they are finally sufficiently recovered to be allowed to explore their

surroundings—within the strict limits laid down by their hosts—they discover a world that is, once again, stable, prosperous, happy, and at peace. And while, compared to More and Campanella, Bacon provides relatively few details of the social organization of his ideal commonwealth, it is clearly characterized by, if possible, an even greater degree of purity and moral rectitude on the part of its inhabitants: ‘there is not under the heavens so chaste a nation as this of Bensalem; nor so free from all pollution or foulness. It is the virgin of the world ...’ (p.724). Despite a few passing indications that individual conduct may occasionally require correction, it would appear that Bacon’s society is, again, one in which innocence has in large measure been recovered.

Yet it is also a society in which the maternal security it provides is the product of an order if possible still more exclusively male-dominated than those of Utopia or the City of the Sun. While the brevity of *The New Atlantis* precludes more than a brief glimpse of its workings, one feature that is described in what seems almost redundant detail is the so-called ‘Feast of the Family’, a ceremony held to honour ‘any man that shall live to see thirty persons descended of his body alive together, and all above three years old’ (p.722). This feast, which is paid for by the state, follows two days of consultations during which the father of the family (called the *tirsan*) settles any outstanding family disputes, and offers advice or assistance to such members of the family who seem in need of it. He then chooses one of his sons to live with him, who is thereafter called ‘the Son of the Vine’, and the feast ensues, after which prayers are offered to the patriarchs, Adam, Noah, and Abraham. The *tirsan* is served exclusively by his male children, while ‘the women only stand about him, leaning against the wall’ (p.723), and the ceremony concludes with the *tirsan* giving his blessing. There is, however, one notable absentee:

... if there be a mother, from whose body the whole lineage is descended, there is a travers placed in a loft above on the right hand of the chair, with a privy door, and a carved window of glass, leaded with gold and blue; where she sitteth, but is not seen. [p.723]

It would be hard to imagine a more explicit image of the displacement of the female by the male, with the mother reduced to peering down, unseen, as the power of the father is celebrated; yet it is an image very much in keeping with the emphasis of the work as a whole—elsewhere, although women presumably do exist, they remain invisible. In such a context, it is perhaps unsurprising that among the discoveries made by the scientists of the House of Salomon is a method of artificially creating life. Not only are women invisible in Bacon’s utopia, the technology exists to render them superfluous.

The Utopian Narrative Paradigm

A range of features, then, begin to emerge as characteristic of the utopian narrative model. As has been seen, the ideological ferment of the Renaissance finds a reflection in a series of distinctive ambiguities. In all three of the works so far examined, the *direction* of the utopian impulse remains unclear: the question of whether utopia embodies the desire to create a genuinely new order, or to recover one that has been lost is in each case difficult to resolve. And while the utopian vision is of a society radically different from that of the writer, it nevertheless excludes any consideration of the process of *change*. Not only are the utopian societies of More, Campanella, and Bacon fundamentally static, leaving little or no room for alteration (unless for the worse), the process whereby they came into being is passed over or evaded. More's Utopia is simply decreed; Campanella's is apparently the fruit of a collective resolution; while Bacon's was apparently already in existence when King Solamona instituted a policy of isolation designed to preserve it in its perfection. The emphasis of the Renaissance utopian narrative is on stasis rather than process, security rather than change. And while the *nature* of that security may be seen as distinctively maternal, it is in each case sustained by the imposition of an explicitly patriarchal order. Although utopias may sweep away such fundamental existing institutions as private property, money, or the Christian religion, they rely as heavily on the maintenance of patriarchy for their distinctive character as on the abolition or transformation of other aspects of society. In this regard, there are also clear parallels with the contemporaneous discovery narratives, in whose language a similar fantasy of masculine dominance over territory gendered as female is likewise inscribed, and in which the opening up of the new is only the prelude to the superimposition of existing hierarchies and modes of domination. In both *Utopia* and *The City of the Sun* it is significant that, albeit with the best of apparent intentions, one of the major projects of the utopian state is the colonization of its neighbours.

Lastly, while utopia proposes an order which appears on the surface distinctively rational, although one which at the same time reproduces significant aspects of existing society, this apparent reasonableness should not be allowed to disguise its essentially fantastic character. As Bloch remarks, the apparent modesty of some aspects of the utopian dream conceals 'a basic utopia ... which is much too fantastic to manifest itself ... openly' (*Principle of Hope*, p.751). Underlying the concrete, even mundane detail of utopian systems for the production and distribution of food, underlying More's six hour and Campanella's four hour working day, is the old paradisaical dream of free feeding and idleness; while the common

utopian preoccupation with hygiene, diet, and improved medical techniques conceals an aspiration still more grandiose. Beyond the Solarian life span of between one hundred and two hundred years lies the ultimate dream of eternal life.

In narrative terms, the tensions and contradictions inherent in the *content* of the utopian dream also manifest themselves at the formal level. As has been suggested, the peculiarly static character of the utopian vision gives rise to a distinctive chronotope, in which plenitude in space seems designed to compensate for the virtual erasure of time. While both More and Bacon indicate time-frames presumably intended to enhance the reader's sense of utopia's permanence (1760 years have elapsed since the foundation of Utopia, 1900 since the reign of Solamona), the fact that nothing of any significance appears to have happened *during* that time strips it of any real meaning. Time, no matter how extensive, is empty of content; whereas the *space* of utopia is full. Within the confines of the City of the Sun *all* human knowledge is encoded, while the House of Salomon has achieved a similar exhaustive mastery of the secrets of nature. The very architecture of utopia, whether More's or Campanella's, is designed to create an environment in which everything (and everyone) is *known*. Yet this fullness is lacking in any dynamic quality: it remains, as Wells puts it, static rather than kinetic. The description of utopian geography, while it possesses a concreteness that the account of utopian history so signally lacks, has the quality of a tableau—a space frozen in time. Utopian narrative consists primarily of a single process: that of unveiling the tableau to the non-utopian audience. And it is here that one may see the emerging utopian narrative model as in a sense more restrictive than its first exemplar. Where More does provide some sense of narrative *interaction* between utopia and his own world, both in the vigorous debate which occupies the first book, and in the complex dialectic between the actual account of utopia and the narrative which frames it, this element is far less evident in the work of his successors. In the fictions of Campanella and Bacon, the tension between Hythloday's unequivocal enthusiasm for Utopia and the scepticism of the narrator disappears. Campanella's Knight Hospitaller eagerly interrogates the Genoese mariner, but accepts all he is told with uncritical wonder; while the narrator of *The New Atlantis* provides a more passive, but equally sympathetic audience for the authoritative discourse of the utopians. While in More's case there *is* a sense of genuine dialogue, of an interaction between conflicting viewpoints, the work of his successors serves largely to foreclose such exchanges. The complicating irony of *Utopia* almost entirely disappears, giving way to a more straightforwardly didactic intent. Even where the form of the dialogue is preserved, albeit in vestigial form, it only serves to highlight the extent to

which, as Bakhtin puts it, 'the content ...assume[s] a monologic character that contradict[s] the form shaping idea of the genre' (*Problems*, p.110). Dialogue becomes merely 'a simple means for expounding ready-made ideas' (p.110). With the passage of time, then, the purpose of utopian narrative become clearer: its function is primarily to persuade.

Such didactic intent is, of course, quite in keeping with the norms of Renaissance narrative practice; it is only later, with the rise of the novel, and the emergence of interpretative conventions rooted in the growing influence of representational realism, that finding a fictional vehicle for such overt didacticism becomes more problematic. Thus, while the most obvious challenge facing later writers of utopian fiction is that of conceiving more desirable sociopolitical alternatives in a context where innovation and growth, rather than stasis, have become evidently the norm, the problem of how such alternatives are to be represented becomes a more pressing one. Moving forward to the modern era, it becomes clear that, despite the ingenuity which writers such as Bellamy and Wells bring to bear on both the ideological and narrative problems involved in the production of literary utopias, the influence of the traditional, and essentially static utopian model is by no means easy to escape. In examining the very different narrative strategies which they adopt, it becomes necessary, once again, to ask not only what changes with the passage of time, but what remains the same.

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