

Utopia and Utopias: a Study on a Literary Genre in Antiquity

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Utopia (from the Greek οὐ-τόπος, *no-where*) is a word coined by Thomas More, which describes an ideal commonwealth that he believed to be impossible to exist, at least in his own time. Since this is a fairly modern word, it has acquired, over its five hundred years of existence, different nuances of meaning that should be made clear. We mean the word itself, because the concept, as well as its representation in literary *praxis*, is more than two thousand years old, as shall be seen.

I. There can hardly be two more ambiguous words than utopia and utopian in any given modern language. The range of meanings acquired by these two terms defies any attempt at a definition.¹ The word utopia is frequently employed with a pejorative connotation, being regarded as an alluring political or social ideal, yet wholly impracticable, because it is inadequate to facts, man's nature, or life conditions. In a general sense, utopia is also used to describe any fantasy deemed to be absurd and contrary to nature, like a dream or a chimera. Furthermore, utopia is an intrinsically dialectic entity. It has a positive side, which corresponds to a perfect society, and a negative one, which identifies itself with a closed and totalitarian universe.² Nowadays all dictionaries, giving in to common usage, describe utopia as 'a government scheme for social or political improvement which would bring about happiness to all citizens if it were feasible;' utopian as something 'illusory,' 'imaginary,' 'idealistic' and an utopian man as a 'visionary.' In sharp contrast to this concession to common usage, utopia repre-

¹ See *inter alios*, Negley and Patrick 1952, 2–9; Negley 1977, xi–xiii; Manuel and Manuel 1979, 2–10 and Alexander and Gill 1984, xii–xiii.

² Elliot 1970, 85–101 analyzes the pejorative meaning or sense of the word utopia. See esp. 90 for the association of utopia with totalitarianism.

sents in fact one of the noblest human ideals, which is worth fighting for and attaining, a beneficial and freeing principle conducive to happiness, representing man's old and everlasting aspiration to a better world, the conjecturing about its possible nature, and the passing on of that intellectual experience to other men in the hope that this ideal might somehow become true.

Utopia is a literary genre (or rather, more precisely, a sub-genre),³ with fiction as its preferred mode of artistic presentation. But alongside the utopian genre there is also a utopian mode,⁴ known as utopianism. Whereas the utopian genre is constructive and objective and aims to create a certain type of society, the utopian mode is confined to utopian aspiration and to the mere allusion to ideal elements. Utopianism can then be defined as a tendency to utopia and therefore as an aspiration to happiness. We can characterize utopia as a crystallization of the utopian spirit or utopianism.

The ancient Greek novel is a fertile ground for utopianism, in the sense that the universe it depicts partly supersedes reality and consequently appears to be an ideal almost impossible to attain. The utopian component becomes apparent through the use of some recurrent features or topics, such as the characters' idealized beauty, the unflinching defense of chastity, the attempt at spiritual self-improvement (evident especially in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*), and the customary happy ending. Nevertheless, the genre also displays utopian features, in the sense that it crystallizes the utopian spirit or utopianism. This crystallization takes shape through the achievement of a perfect and paradigmatic society as, for example, the one described in the last part of Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*, considered by some authors, as we shall see, as the model for a political utopia.⁵

³ For an interpretation of the utopia as a literary genre, see Ricoeur 1980, 51 and 1986, 269.

⁴ On utopian mode, see Ruyer 1950, 9ff.

⁵ In most cases, political utopias are merely ideal structures or, at least, ideal formulations of the political and social order of an imagined or mythical state. This primary and necessary discrimination eliminates from utopian literature all speculation regarding any kind of systematic research on legal or institutional procedures. Consequently, we can consider utopias as expressions of political philosophy and theory, for sure, but we should not designate them as political philosophy or political theory; see Negley and Patrick 1952, 3–4.

In the next pages we will be dealing with utopia, since our aim in this study is a literary one. We intend to analyze the two fictional texts which, since Rohde, are traditionally considered utopian; Euhemerus' and Iambulus' accounts as described by Diodorus Siculus,⁶ as well as the description of Meroe in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*, and ascertain to what extent they fit into the general normative presuppositions that define utopia's literary model.

II. Utopia takes an enormous range of configurations.⁷ As a social and political alternative to the society of the writer's own time, utopia is obviously affected by innumerable determining aspects: the prevailing historical circumstances at the time and place of its creation; the writer's social status; psychological factors – all of which, in turn, give rise to a vast and complex assortment of social structures within the utopian universe. But, in spite of all its diversity, there is one aspect prone to less variation – at least as far as literary utopias are concerned – and that is what Elliot⁸ calls 'the prescriptive pattern of the genre.' This pattern can be defined as the narrative framework which accounts for how the narrator or main character embarks on a voyage, lands alone in a strange, idealized country, makes contact with the inhabitants, learns about the customs and institutions of that society and obtains the opportunity to witness its perfection and high status.⁹

According to Negley and Patrick¹⁰ there are three characteristics that distinguish utopia from other forms of literature:

⁶ We refer to these texts as 'utopian tales' rather than 'novels,' according to the parameters we have established for the definition of the genre 'ancient novel.' See Futre Pinheiro 2005, 9–32.

⁷ For an enumeration of the different shapes utopia and its variables assume, see Ferns 1999, 9.

⁸ Elliot 1970, 108.

⁹ Despite utopia usually being seen in Plato and Thomas More's tradition as a 'State novel' (that is, a narrative mainly aimed at describing the political system and the social and cultural structure of an ideal perfect state), the texts giving an account of a better world may take in features from other literary genres, intercepting and adopting elements from many different sources. Thus, the fictional conventions of utopia (the journey into and out of utopia, which can be dressed up in love stories, strange adventures, and complications of various kinds), are equally to be found in other literary genres, such as travel narratives and the ancient Greek novel; in the latter, the ideal state is often depicted as having existed in remote times (e.g. Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe* and Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*).

¹⁰ Negley and Patrick 1952, 3.

1. It is fictional.
2. It describes a particular state or community.
3. Its theme is the political structure of that fictional state or community.

Literary utopia is a form of sublimation, a recreation of the real world. Therefore, it is an intellectual, a cultural and an elitist phenomenon. It distinguishes itself as a genre that provides a mythical description of the ideal city.

Negley and Patrick made a valuable and pioneering contribution to the definition of utopia when they considered it from a political angle. These two scholars have stressed the fictional aspect of utopia which, in their view, describes a specific social stage and mainly aims at revealing the political constitution of an imaginary country. The study done by Negley and Patrick conveys the idea that the literary utopia has got basically a political aim, namely that of divulging a certain type of society.¹¹ It is Mucchielli, in the sixties, who will bring up the association of utopia with myth, describing utopia as the myth of the ideal city.¹² After Mucchielli's study it has become quite common to regard utopia as an ideal society, a perfect world and a place of fulfillment of human aspirations.

¹¹ Negley and Patrick 1952, 5–7 establish two main classifications of utopias in respect to the literary form they assume: the speculative or constructive utopia and the satire. By contrast with the speculative utopia, which takes a positive view of the ideal of society, the perspective of the satirist is a negative one, since 'he seeks to show by contrast how far existing conditions and their development are from satisfactory ideals and "values"' (7). Irony, or even parody, pervades the fictional atmosphere of utopias of the latter type. Sometimes it is difficult to establish a sharp distinction between the constructive and the satirical aspect, once this distinction may break down in a single work. These two groups suggest another distinction in the form, which utopias can assume: namely, the progressive or retrogressive perspective. Fantasy and satire often take the retrogressive form: that is, 'they look backward to a former condition of society which was more nearly ideal in character than the existing form which is the subject of attack' (6). Furthermore, they also have a decentralizing nature, whereas the values that the progressive utopist proposes as ideal 'are supposed to result from an increased centralization of the political structure' (7). Along the same line of thought, one finds Mumford's categories – utopias of escape and of reconstruction. The utopia of escape functions, in his words, as a 'substitute for the external world,' whereas in the utopia of reconstruction 'the facts of the everyday world are brought together and assorted and sifted, and a new sort of reality is projected back again upon the external world' (in Porter and Lukermann 1976, 200).

¹² Mucchielli 1960. Ruyer (1950, esp. 4–6) was the first to stress the differences between myth and utopia.

III. The most renowned utopian account of Hellenistic literature is undoubtedly the lost text by Euhemerus of Messene, a writer of the late fourth and early third century B.C., which is summarized by Diodorus Siculus.¹³ He chose to shape his account as a travel tale, which became a well-known genre in the auspicious wake of Alexander's conquests. But Euhemerus' account also included the description of the main island (Panchaea, the Sacred Island) and its inhabitants' way of living, a description that is justly considered to be a milestone in the history of utopian thought, and is regarded by some as its first literary production.¹⁴

The most important city of Panchaea, Panara, stood out for its prosperity (εὐδαιμονία). It also had a system of its own, different from the rest of the island: it had its own laws, there was no king. The inhabitants were αὐτόνομοι and ἀβασίλευτοι.¹⁵ Every year they elected three chief magistrates. These men rendered judgment in all matters, but had no authority over capital crimes. Real power was in the hands of the priests, who were entrusted with the solving of the most serious matters and who, therefore, wielded a strong influence on state affairs.

The Sacred Isle produced frankincense in such abundance that it would be enough to supply all temples throughout the entire inhabited world; myrrh was cropped twice a year, in spring and in summer. Panara's inhabitants were Zeus' supplicants and his temple was to be found not far from the city. This was a greatly admired temple for its antiquity, magnificence, and ex-

¹³ Cf. *Bibliotheca Historica* 5,41–46 and 6,1,2. Euhemerus' account was translated and adapted into Latin by Ennius (239–169 B.C.), and in the fourth century A.D. Lactantius had gotten hold of the original version or, more probably, of the now lost Ennius' Latin translation. The text followed is that of Jacoby's collection of fragments of Euhemerus (*FGrHist*63). The most recent edition of Euhemerus' 'reliquiae' is that of Winiarczyk 1991. The English version of Diodorus' text is from Oldfather 1939, 211–227 and 331–337.

¹⁴ Euhemerus described his visit to the island in an adventure story called *The Sacred Inscription* (Ἱερὰ Ἀναγραφή), focusing on the religion of the inhabitants and, in particular, on the gold stele in Zeus' temple, where Uranus', Cronus', and Zeus' deeds were inscribed. The stele displayed a curious theory that later came to be known as 'Euhemerism.' According to this theory, the ancient gods had originally been fair and benevolent monarchs who later were deified by their subjects due to their good deeds to mankind (*FGrHist*63, combining T 4 c ebd.9, 17 from Aethios Plac. 1, 7 1 p.297, 13 Diels with D. S. 6,1 in Euseb.P E 2, 2, p.59 B). Brown 1946 undertook a re-examination of the Euhemeristic tradition and its influence on later writers. On 'Euhemerism' see also Vallauri 1956, 19 and ff., Thraede 1966 and Graf 1993.

¹⁵ F 3 from D. S. 5,42,6.

ceptional location. The laden fruit trees generously provided the natives with delicious and abundant food. The fauna was made up of all sorts of animals.¹⁶ Sheep's wool was exquisitely soft and the soil was rich in metals such as gold, silver, copper, tin, and iron.¹⁷ Land was equally divided among all islanders. There was hardly any private property. A common fund where all crops and goods were kept provided for everybody's needs. Personal belongings consisted of a house and garden. All the rest belonged to the community and was divided in equal shares among all. All the products and the revenues were taken over by the priests, who portioned out to each man his share with justice. But, and within certain limits, the reward was proportional to the quality of services rendered and the responsibility involved. As such, and despite the farm produce being at the disposal of the community, the first ten farmers to obtain better productivity out of their lands received a special reward as a way of encouraging others. This community system of sharing out assets and profits implies sharing economic and social responsibilities too. It can also be seen as an utopian wish on the part of Euhemerus to eradicate some social vices like jealousy and greed and prevent the social imbalance created by them. No reference is made to money in this society. Although it is said the soldiers receive some kind of payment,¹⁸ we can only assume that payment would be in kind.

Panchaea is involved in some trade exchanges with the outer world. Yet, oddly enough, no reference is made to imports, and exports of its mineral resources are strictly forbidden. Any change coming from the outside world would jeopardize the internal stability and integrity of that (almost) perfect society.

The island of Panchaea was rationally planned and well thought out as its political and social organization reveals. Society was divided into three classes:

1. Priests and artisans

¹⁶ D. S. 5,45,1.

¹⁷ This utopian depiction of Nature symbolizes a return to the historical roots of myth. Panchaea's description is clearly reminiscent of Homer's Phaeacia, a faithful portrait of an ideal, peaceful and wealthy community living in perfect harmony (*Od.* 7,112 ff.). Furthermore, they echo Plato's Atlantis (*Critias* 106A–121C), where there was also a Sacred Isle which, just like Panchaea, was linked to the cult of the Sun, had aromatic plants, fruits and metals in profusion, had its own temple of considerable size and was ruled by kings with no power over the life and death of their subjects (*Critias* 114ff.).

¹⁸ F 3 from D. S. 5,46,1.

2. Landowners and farmers
3. Soldiers and herdsman

There is no reference to any kind of special economic or social privileges towards most members from these classes. There was, however, one exception: '...all the products and the revenues are taken over by the priests, who portion out with justice to each man his share, and to the priests alone is given two-fold.'¹⁹ Besides, they by far excelled the rest in luxury and in every other refinement and elegance of their manner of life. But, and apparently to make up for those privileges, they were not allowed out of the hallowed land, and in case they disobeyed this rule, whoever met one of them was authorized to slay him. It is not entirely clear what set the three classes apart. Yet it seemed that everyone had a specific function: the soldiers' function was to protect all the other inhabitants in the face of danger; herdsman raised the cattle that were offered in sacrifice to the gods. The farmers' job was to look after the crops, which would be used to feed the population. There were no slaves in this community and no clear-cut distinction was made between 'citizens' and 'non-citizens.' All islanders were called 'Suppliants of Zeus of the Three Tribes,' (Triphylius), religion being the unifying bond of the whole society.

Panchaea is associated with the sun,²⁰ a fact which lends itself to some considerations. It is common knowledge that the cult of the sun and its astral symbolism are typical of stoic philosophy. The use of this religious paraphernalia was taken from Babylonian astrology, as Ferguson has pointed out.²¹ Thus Euhemerus claims that Zeus came from Babylon to Panchaea²² and that the name of the sacred stream was 'Water of the Sun.'²³ Ideas such as those of fair apportioning, equality between the sexes, collectivism and communistic sharing are quite often associated with the Sun and its symbolism within the Babylonian astrological system.²⁴

¹⁹ D. S. 5,45,5. Oldfather 1939, 223.

²⁰ See Bidez 1932, 249–257 and Baldry 1959.

²¹ Ferguson 1975, 106.

²² F 2,9 from D.S. 6,1 in Euseb. *PE* 2,2, p. 60 D.

²³ 5,43,3. According to Pliny (*HN* 10,2), the 'City of the Sun' stood near Panchaea, one of the most important cities was named Asterusia (a toponym linked to the cult of the stars) and the sacred mountain was called 'Throne of Uranus' or 'Heaven's Throne.' This information comes from Ferguson 1975, 106.

²⁴ As Bidez 1932, 275–276 has pointed out. The idea of a Sun State is a recurring theme in classical thought. Alexander ascribed to himself the cognomen of 'Alexander Helios.'

In Diodorus' version of Euhemerus' narrative, there are also vestiges of idealized narratives of an ethnographic nature, which describe peoples from remote areas of the world belonging to a great extent to the field of mythical geography. This type of narrative became popular in the Hellenistic period through some authors' accounts such as Hecateus of Abdera (on Egypt) or Megasthenes (on India). The taste for Eastern customs, especially those coming from Egypt, is made apparent in several ways: in the special attention given to the temple's old inscriptions, written in 'letters which the Egyptians call sacred,'²⁵ in the influence wielded by the ideal model of the Egyptian society spread by the Ptolemaic propaganda of the time; and in the new religious demands which established the monarch's deification as one of their guiding principles. The ideal models which, since the fifth century B.C., Greek philosophers and scholars had devised in the search for a perfect society that would replace the decaying polis must have also influenced Euhemerus' account.²⁶

Diodorus Siculus also incorporated a summary of the other famous utopian narrative written in antiquity in his world history (2,55–60). It is an abridged version of what would have been the autobiographical account of a mysterious Iambulus:²⁷ when the protagonist was heading for Arabia on his round of the spices road, he was kidnapped by some robbers and later captured by a group of Ethiopians who decided to use him and another of his companions as scapegoats to purify their country. This ancestral custom, which was six-hundred years old, consisted in dropping the prisoners at high sea on a boat big enough for two men, laden with provisions for six months, and ordering them to sail south till they found a blessed island, inhabited by a friendly people who would welcome them and give them a happy life.

²⁵ F 3 from D.S. 5,46,5–8.

²⁶ See below, note 48.

²⁷ We cannot, however, clearly make out at what time he lived. His name looks Syrian and the only existing chronological clues are a *terminus ante quem*, which is given by Diodorus' account, dating from mid first century B.C., and a possible *terminus post quem*, which is the account of India by Megasthenes, who served as a Seleucid ambassador in the Indian court in early third century B.C. (c. 290 B.C.). See Ferguson 1975, 126 and Gómez Espelosín, Pérez Largacha, and Vallejo Girvés 1994, 270. We can easily assume that Iambulus' story contains some elements coming from a genuine sailing experience and that Iambulus himself was a merchant in real life that traveled extensively and met many people with whom he shared many memorable adventures.

At the end of four months and after many hardships, they managed to get to the island. They were warmly welcomed by the natives who shared with them all the goods which their country afforded.

These natives lived on the equator, where days and nights had exactly the same length; at noon the sun was always at the zenith and therefore it did not cast any shadow on objects.²⁸ Their community was based on kinship and the groups did not exceed four hundred kinsmen. They had a carefree life because the land would provide them with all the food they needed due to the fertile soil and mild climate. There were plenty of hot and cold springs all over the island which, like the ones on Panchaea, had medicinal properties.

The island's inhabitants were cultured and gave attention to every branch of learning, but displayed a decided preference for astrology. They could live to the age of 150 years without ever suffering from any disease. Anyone among them who had become crippled or suffered from any physical infirmity or anyone who turned 150 was forced to voluntarily commit euthanasia, in obedience to an ancestral law. They would lie down on a plant of a peculiar nature which brought about a painless and imperceptible death (D. S. 2,57,5). Leadership was entrusted to the oldest member within each group who would act as a kind of king. When he reached the end of his days (150 years as established by law) he would be succeeded by the second oldest member of his community (58,6–7).

The sea around the island had strong currents and tides, but its water was not salty. At night the sky displayed different stars from the ones in our latitude. The archipelago was made up of seven equidistant islands all governed by the same laws and customs (58,7).

The islanders led a simple life. They worshipped the sky, the sun and the heavenly bodies. Fruit trees, olive trees and vineyards grew in profusion all over the island. Huge snakes were also used as food and their meat was exceedingly sweet. Clothes were made of a very soft material (probably cotton), which was extracted from a certain reed and then gathered and mingled with crushed sea-shells to produce a purple color (59,4).

All the details of their diet followed a prescribed arrangement and tasks such as fishing or craftwork and all those activities concerned with the welfare of the community were shared by all, with the exception of those who had reached old age. During festivals, they sang hymns in honor of the gods

²⁸ See also Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* 9,22,4.

and especially in honor of the Sun, after whom the islands and the islanders were named (The Islands and Children of the Sun).

Iambulus describes a fabulous country featuring all the typical elements of this kind of narrative: isolation due to its remote latitude; the inhabitants' physical and anatomical characteristics;²⁹ different animal species which frequently defy verisimilitude;³⁰ nature's fertility and generosity (56,7–57,2); a perfect social organization which ensured the preservation of law and order (57,1 and 58,6–58,7); a mild climate, which made it possible for fruit and cereals to be grown all year round; and the idyllic landscape.

Nevertheless, we are not presented with an idyllic picture, like the myth of the Golden Age or the Isles of the Blest. Apparent perfection is not without flaws, such as the existence of disease or the presence of death, even though it was a natural, painless death. On the other hand, this ideal society was based on eugenics that got rid of the weak at birth and that, according to provisions of the law, stipulated the preservation of the species and the self-termination of the diseased (57,5). Social harmony was achieved at the expense of certain repressive attitudes, such as the destruction of mothers' innate love for their children.³¹ Further proof of this frail system was foreigners' non-incorporation and rejection, as can be seen by the banning of Iambulus and his companion who, after being submitted to a kind of initiation ceremony, were not accepted by this 'community of wise men,'³² apparently due to the fact that they did not attain the degree of perfection required from them.

²⁹ The natives were of a very different race from the common mortals. They were physically all alike, very tall and with very flexible bones so that they could bend down and easily straighten up again. They were so strong that once they grabbed something or someone nobody could make them let go of whatever or whoever they were holding. They were hairless except for the head, eyebrows, eyelashes and chin. They were exceptionally beautiful. They had some striking anatomical features, such as the auditory canals which were wider than usual and could be shut by means of a sort of valves. Another very extraordinary feature was their tongue, which was divided into two parts, enabling them not only to utter all kind of sounds, including the singing of birds, but also to simultaneously hold a conversation with two different people (56,5–7).

³⁰ For example, a sort of round-shape turtle, whose blood had miraculous properties, because it would automatically glue onto place human limbs that had been severed from their body (58,2–58,5).

³¹ Marriage was abolished and children were separated from their mother at birth and raised in common, to avoid any kind of rivalry (58,1).

³² Ferguson 1975, 128.

The society depicted was far from being an earthly paradise where the population could fully enjoy what nature generously offered them or spend their days in delightful idleness. The citizens' way of life was rigorously pre-determined and the tasks deemed necessary for their survival were alternately shared among them (2,59,5–59,6). Ascetic behavior and an obsession for harmony reveal how the philosophical cynic and stoic ideas of the time could have influenced Iambulus' work.³³

Iambulus' account must also have been influenced by previous utopian narratives, especially by Euhemerus' *Sacred Inscription*. There was a long-standing tradition within Greek thought of the search for a perfect social organization which would do away with human nature's flaws. It is very likely that Euhemerus might have taken those utopian models into account when devising his story which, even though subject to controversy, is said to have been tinged with parody,³⁴ as it depicted such a perfect world but one whose perfection was achieved at a very high human cost, as the protagonist himself could experience.³⁵

As far as we can tell from Diodorus' summary of the contents of the two works, we can say that both texts match to perfection the literary utopia and its *topoi*.³⁶ In fact, rationalism is the main feature of all utopias. Any utopian society is organized in a rational and predictable way, being regulated by a superstructure of directives controlling all political, economic and social processes. Life's detailed planning and the imposition of strict discipline are

³³ Cf. Bidez 1932, 284ff., Baldassarri 1973, Ferguson 1975, 127–128, Bertelli 1982, 562–563 and Winston 1976, 224.

³⁴ As Gómez Espelosín 1994, 272 has pointed out.

³⁵ Iambulus' account has been labeled in many different ways. Schwarz 1982, 18 mentions what he calls the '*Iambulus-complex*' and Ehlers 1985 provides a review of the attempts made by different authors to classify Iambulus' account. In Pöhlmann's 1925, vol.2, 293–324 opinion, Iambulus' narrative is the first political romance known to us and represents the high-water mark of the Greek literary utopia. In turn, Ehlers 1985 believes that Iambulus' story is a journey account which describes a community village in Ceylon, whereas Kuch 1989, 60 thinks that it puts forward social utopian ideals which are meant as criticism and an alternative proposal to the reality of his time. There are still other scholars who are of the opinion that the societies described by Iambulus (and Euhemerus too) were based on notions of an ideal political constitution made up to offer a viable alternative to the existing monarchies of their own age or even an ideological justification of such forms of government (Holzberg 2003, 623 n. 8), whereas some others (e.g. Dihle 1984, Schwarz 1982 and Holzberg 1995, 13) believe that Iambulus' main goal was to narrate lively the adventures he met with during a wholly imaginary journey.

³⁶ For an analysis of utopia's *topoi*, see esp. Ruyer 1950, 40 ff.

essential for human existence to become standardized. The perfect fulfillment of this ideal reveals itself through people's clothes (everybody dresses in the same way), architecture, language itself (which consists in a simple and functional system of characters) and in the general consensus concerning moral values. In political terms, the society is hierarchically organized and run by an elite that maintains public order. Order is equally kept by means of education which plays a major role in the utopian society. From an economic standpoint, the banning of private property and money are the most important aspects to retain. Leisure activities are also collective and planned by the State's apparatus. Utopian societies are rarely anarchist. Nothing is left to chance in these societies, everything is controlled by superior instances so as to make sure nothing unpredictable and uncertain happens which would upset order and stability, the supporting basis of the ideal state. This bureaucratic state is law-abiding. The Law pre-establishes the social and economic division of citizens, who enjoy total equality of rights and duties. A society based upon these terms tends to overlook man's spiritual side, linked to imagination and reverie, which might endanger the stability or even the survival of the totalitarian state.³⁷ The utopian society sometimes does not hesitate to resort to violence in order to preserve the New World or the New Man. Due to all these circumstances, there is a need to set the ideal society on a remote island or in an inaccessible place, because utopias have got to be more or less forbidden cities or islands, impervious to outside contamination. The utopian autarchy is maintained thanks to total isolation from the rest of the world.

The imaginary societies depicted by both Euhemerus and Iambulus are set up on remote islands. In fact, the archipelago described by the latter is to be found at such a latitude that the star system there is completely different from the one displayed in our skies. The Sun-Islands are circular in shape (a symbol of perfection), utopia's favorite geometrical pattern.³⁸ The obsession for symmetrical patterns and the predilection for certain figures is obvious, for instance, in Iambulus' seven islands (a very symbolic number), all the same in size and at about equal distances from one another,³⁹ and in Euhe-

³⁷ Plato bans poets from *Politeia* on account of their subversive role. See *Rep.* 377a–e; 379d–380c; 389c–d; 389a–d; 392a–b; 595a–c; 598d; 600e–601c; 605a–607b.

³⁸ See, for example, Plato's Atlantis and Hecataeus' temple of Apollo on the island of the Hyperboreans.

³⁹ D. S. 2,58,7. See also e.g. Plato's *Republic* and Atlantis' capital, More's *Utopia* or Campanella's *The City of the Sun*.

merus' tripartite class system or in the reference to the three islands which deserve to be recorded by history.⁴⁰ Other stock ideas of utopists occur in both texts, such as: the highly centralized institutional organization, the abolition of private property, planning and strict task division, and the stress on education, collectivism and communism.⁴¹ In Euhemerus' account, both men and women wore jewels (earrings, necklaces and bracelets) as well as the same kind of shoes, which is a sign of equality between the sexes.

It is undeniable that there is a considerable difference between Euhemerus' and Iambulus' accounts: Euhemerus' communism is less repressive and authoritarian than that of Iambulus; yet the latter the *topos* of the travel narrative is interspersed with adventures and *mirabilia*.⁴²

Many scholars have stressed Heliodorus' utopian propensity,⁴³ or, at least, its idealized and religious atmosphere.⁴⁴ Meroe can be interpreted, in

⁴⁰ Jacoby, *FGrHist*63 F 3 from D. S. 5,41,4.

⁴¹ Euhemerus and Iambulus' accounts are connected with the reality of their time in many different ways. In Euhemerus' case, we should not discard the thesis that it may have been intended as a more or less disguised satire of certain customs of the political regime of those times, namely of the Ptolemaic monarchy, for instance, the deification and cult worship of contemporary rulers (Cf. Holzberg 2003, 625 and n. 18). This thesis is reinforced if we take into account Callimachus' critical references (*Iamb.*, Fr. 191 Pfeiffer) who, as we know, was a kind of 'Ptolemaic propaganda agent.' On the other hand, there are some authors who suggest that there is a definite relationship between Aristonicus' social program and the Hellenistic utopian literature, especially Iambulus. On Aristonicus' uprising and his social program, see Ferguson 1975, 126–127 and 138–145 and Winston 1976, 224 (226–227) for a more comprehensive bibliography.

⁴² Whatever their individual aims might have been, both Euhemerus and Iambulus depicted an ideal form of human coexistence. So, bearing in mind that, on the one hand, there are striking thematic similarities between them: both share the same peculiar élan into fantasy and an identical passion for what might be called the 'geometrical spirit' (expression taken from Winston 1976, 225); on the other hand, there is a growing tendency to widen and blur modal or genre limits; we will call them *constructive fantasies*. By *constructive fantasy* we mean a combination of the two varieties of utopias mentioned (see above, note 11): utopias of escape (or retrogressive) and utopias of reconstruction (or progressive). See also Kytzler's distinction between *descriptive* Utopie and *Konstruktiven* Utopie (Kytzler 1988, 14–15). *Constructive fantasy* shares the features of μῦθος and λόγος, of φῶσις and νόμος (see Kytzler 1988, 11), of fantasy and reason. According to Clay and Purvis 1999, 2 Euhemerus' Panchaea and Iambulus' Islands of the Sun fall under the heading of 'utopias of discovery.'

⁴³ Cf. esp. Szepessy 1957. *Aethiopia*'s translations are taken from Morgan 1989.

⁴⁴ Cf. Wolff 1912, 112; Kérényi 1927; Schwartz 1943; Altheim 1948–1950; Weinreich 1950; Merkelbach 1962; Kövendi 1966, 136–197; Perry 1967, 107; Reardon 1971, 387; Futre Pinheiro 1991 and 1993.

some way, as a model for a political utopia.⁴⁵ In my view, the description of Ethiopia and its capital Meroe⁴⁶ results from the symbiosis of μῦθος with λόγος. Utopia as μῦθος is usually seen as an ideal society,⁴⁷ a perfect world and a place where all human aspirations come true. As λόγος, it presupposes a rational planning of a certain type of government and, therefore, the existence of a political and religious constitution.⁴⁸ The choice of Ethiopia symbolizes the so-called nostalgia for origins, as this is the place where the heroine (Chariclea) returns her native country, and the place where the two protagonists attain plenitude and are religiously consecrated.

In Meroe we find all the main features of an idealized country: its extraordinary fertility, which makes her produce gigantic trees and cereal crops which grow profusely and at an astonishing pace (10,5,2); the reeds growing in the rivers, which are so thick that riverboats are in fact no more than a reed split down in the middle (10,4,6); the abundance, variety and proportions of its fauna (10,5,2); its immense wealth in metals and precious stones: the prisoners' handcuffs are made of gold (9,1,5) and there are allusions to a feud with Egypt on account of the exploitation of emerald mines which Ethiopia claims to own (2,32,2 and 8,1,3); its prosperous trade (4,16,6), and, on top of all those blessings from Mother Nature, they still have the great privilege of being the cradle of the Nile (9,22,7).

⁴⁵ See above, note 5.

⁴⁶ Helioid. 10,5.

⁴⁷ See above Part II. The first phase in ancient utopian thought is mythical; with the exception of Plato and his myth of Atlantis, the mythical development of Greek utopia takes place, mostly, before the sixth century B.C. and reappears in the Hellenistic period, with a few different characteristics. The first Greek utopia is Homer's description of Scheria. In Hesiod we find the first account of an ideal community remote in time and his description of *The Golden Age* (*Op.* 109–120) is the first 'heaven on earth' in Greek mythology (Clay and Purvis 1999, 3). Pindar also mentions the Hyperboreans (*Pythian* 10,30–44), another of Homer's idealized peoples (on Hyperboreans, see Macurdy 1916; Casson 1920; Biancucci 1973; Dion 1976; Romm 1989; Clay and Purvis 1999).

⁴⁸ From the sixth to the first half of the fifth century B.C., the sophistic theory (ἡ πολιτικὴ τέχνη) gave, for the first time, a logical form to man's yearning for a better life. The sophists, just as Plato and Aristotle will do later, conceive the perfect world as an ideal city-state, as the best governed and structured of all city-states. The beginning of the fourth century B.C. is marked by the Platonic utopia (*The Republic*), the most finished and renowned utopia under the sign of λόγος. For a general survey of utopia in Antiquity, see Finley 1967; Gianni 1967; Braunert 1969; Mossé 1969; Flashar 1974; Aalders 1975; Müller 1975; Giangrande 1976 and 1976/1977; Müller 1977; Kytzler 1973; Bertelli 1982; Dawson 1992.

Already with Homer the ‘blameless’ Ethiopians (*Il.* 5,423) had been exalted and in the *Odyssey* they are described as long-lived (*Od.* 1,23–24 and 83–84). Heliodorus deliberately chose to conform to the particular view that the Greek tradition holds about the peoples coming from the remote parts of the world, endowing them with qualities such as wisdom, virtue, beauty, intelligence and piety. These are qualities that are also found in Herodotus, in Pseudo-Scylax, in Diodorus Siculus, and in Pseudo-Callisthenes.

The idealized ruler of this fictitious community is called Hydaspes. Hydaspes combines a kind and lenient nature with his capacities of military leadership, put to the test especially in the battle against the Persians led by Oroondates, satrap of Egypt (10,14–21). Therefore, he assents to the supplications of the Syene people who, on account of Ethiopian major construction works, were surrounded by the Nile waters and risked drowning due to the collapsing of the town walls (9,3–5). So, after showing his capacity to destroy his enemies utterly, in his hour of triumph he is naturally inclined to take piety on suppliants as to avoid the wrath of the gods (9,6,2). This means that strength is no longer the criterion of leadership and that other qualities, such as clemency and generosity, have become the main features of a good leader.

This idea is a *leitmotif* in the characterization of Hydaspes, who can afford himself the luxury of being indulgent and generous. Therefore, he decided to spare Oroondates’ life, using the argument that ‘it is right that we should overcome our enemies with the sword while yet they stand and with kindness when they fallen’ (9,21,1). So the people rejoices ‘not so much at the victory as at the safe return of Hydaspes, whose righteousness, combined with his civility and graciousness towards his subjects, had instilled an almost filial devotion in his people’s hearts’ (10,3,3).

Another quality of the sovereign is moderation: after the victory on Oroondates, he resists the human temptation of taking advantage of his conqueror status to extend his boundaries indefinitely (9,26,2). Oroondates himself praises Hydaspes’ excellence, saying that he does not consider that he is breaking any law in making obeisance to the man who has more respect for law than all mankind. (9,27,2). For all these reasons, Hydaspes is worshipped by his subjects as a savior and a god (9,22,7).

In Ethiopia, which, according to Hydaspes, deserves the epithet of μήτηρ...θεῶν (9,22,7), a very peculiar custom (ἔθος) was in force: human sacrifices that were always performed to celebrate victories over foreign

foes, the victims being supplied from the prisoners captured (10,7,2). Thus, when Theagenes and Chariclea are caught, they are kept under guard to become an offering to the gods of the homeland, during the victory sacrifices, as the first fruits of the war (9,1,4).⁴⁹

At the end of the novel, human sacrifices are banned by Sisimithres, the president of the college of the Gymnosophists, who becomes the interpreter of the gods' will (10,39). In this way, one more step is taken, maybe the last one, towards the purification of customs and, therefore, towards spiritual elevation, which is the threshold of the just and egalitarian society devised by Heliodorus.

However, and as it has already been mentioned, in the *Aethiopica* we can trace an element of reflection on a par with the component of aspiration. This element of reflection implies a certain kind of social and political organization. *Aethiopia* is a monarchy, whose model is obviously inspired in the fictitious community of Phaeacia and in his idealized ruler, Alcinous; the monarchy is not arbitrary and absolute, however. It is benevolent and paternalistic. It depends mostly on the intellectual and spiritual qualities of its leader. Force is only used when it is absolutely necessary, as in the case of the war against the Persians. Hydaspes exercises his temporal power with the support of such a vast army that the mere sight of it makes resistance inconceivable (9,1,2). However, what makes this army so invincible is not so much the large amount of men or the huge diversity of its elements, but the men's dexterity, their wise maneuvering in the battlefield and the intelligent tactics used (9,16,2ff.), which contrast with the Persians' obsolete war machine.

Very much like the other utopias, Meroe has a judicial system where doctrine is non-existent, but where custom plays a major role.⁵⁰ If the citizens' behavior is not under the rule of law, it is at any rate dictated by custom, convention and rite.⁵¹ Law and order are kept by the citizens' compliance with a series of rules sustained by the free consent of the governed, who treat Hydaspes as their father (9,17,2).

⁴⁹ See also 9,25,2–25,5; 9,26,1 and 10,4,5.

⁵⁰ One of the main features of the utopian state is precisely the non-existence of laws which is made up for by the many regulations and rites. Utopia is indeed very ritualistic. On this subject, see Ferreira da Cunha 1996, 281ff.

⁵¹ See, for instance, the human sacrifices which are sanctioned by law (νόμος) and by custom (ἔθος) of Ethiopia and ensured by rite: *Aethiopica* 9,1,4; 10,4; 10,7,6–7,7; 10,9,7; 10,16,5–16,7; 10,17,1–17,2; 10,20,1 and 10,21,2.

The wise men, the Gymnosophists,⁵² form a council that the king consults on matters of policy. Despite the hereditary status of the monarchy, an incipient democracy is represented by the voice of the people who can influence the king's decisions (10,17ff.); Hydaspes does not act without consulting that council of wise men. The president of the college of the Gymnosophists, Sisimithres, speaks freely in rebuttal of him, in clear disapproval of human sacrifices, which in his eyes are barbarian practices that may not please the divinity. The traditional opposition φύσις-νόμος becomes null with the resolution of this conflict which conciliates seemingly opposing principles (human nature and the law) and which symbolically stands for the true message of the *Aethiopica*: the reconciliation of different peoples and races in an inter and multicultural dialogue.

Besides being a spiritual leader, Hydaspes is also the highest authority from a religious point of view. The Sun, the Moon and Dionysus are the ancestral deities of Ethiopia. By law and tradition, the King was Priest of the Sun and the Queen Priestess of the Moon. It was up to the former to preside over the religious ceremonies to be performed in thanksgiving for the victory against the Persians. Likewise, at the end of the novel, Theagenes and Chariclea are ordained priest and priestess of the Sun and the Moon, respectively. Many scholars have studied the solar theology of the *Aethiopica*.⁵³ Nevertheless, and regardless of its religious or political meaning, the cult of the Sun God fits perfectly into the utopian universe, as seen above in Diodorus' summary of Euhemerus and Iambulus' accounts.

In the *Aethiopica*, Ethiopia is pictured by contrast with the Persian reality. Heliodorus' novel reflects a conflict that opposes the Egyptian elite to the Persians invaders.⁵⁴ Thyamis, an Egyptian priest, son of Calasiris, who becomes the leader of a group of robbers, represents a new social order that favors the oppressed. He shows us that utopia can serve as propaganda, as a political, social or religious program to a group of men who fight in order to subvert the *status quo*. In these cases, utopia is not only a vision or a mere speculation; it can become the flag of a revolution and a transforming agent of reality.

⁵² On the Gymnosophists, see Phil. *Vit. Apol.* 6; on the fame they enjoyed in the third century, cf. Bowersock 1969, 101ff.; on their meaning in Heliodorus' novel, see Lonis 1992, 235.

⁵³ See Rohde 1914, 464ff; Merkelbach 1962, 283ff.

⁵⁴ See Futre Pinheiro 1989, 28ff.

We can, thus, conclude that in this description of Meroe's prestigious kingdom, Heliodorus closely followed the tradition of the Hellenistic composers of ideal commonwealths,⁵⁵ having very likely drawn inspiration from Euhemerus and Iambulus' accounts. Despite the fact that Diodorus' abridged version of Euhemerus' account,⁵⁶ which was most probably partly re-written and added to, does not enable us to fully evaluate his intentions or reconstruct the original account, it seems clear that, like Meroe in the *Aethiopica*, it was a detailed description of an imaginary country, interspersed with elements from the Greek tradition, such as the *topos* of the Isles of the Blest. This is attested by some of the idyllic landscapes described along the story, such as the plain where Zeus Triphylus' temple was located or the indelible mark of the gods' presence on the island's monuments.

Nevertheless, Euhemerus went further than Heliodorus in fashioning his political and social system, despite the concepts of *πόλις* and *πολιτεία* (citizenship) being part of his utopia.⁵⁷ Indeed, in this idealized society, there is no social antagonism or distinction opposing citizens and non-citizens or free citizens and slaves. There is no reference to slavery or non-citizenship. Citizens' rights and individual freedom are a prerogative of all the inhabitants of the utopian state. There is no private property aside a house and garden, as above referred, and the means of production have been socialized. The traditional production model adopted in antiquity, based on private property and slavery, has no place here. In order to fully develop his progressive theory, Euhemerus went as far as reproducing certain aspects of the Homeric reality: according to Diodorus' text, Panchoa's inhabitants were warlike and owned chariots in battle after the ancient manner (*ἀρχαϊκῶς*,

⁵⁵ Diogenes of Sinope (c. 400–c. 325 B.C.) is said to have written a *Republic*, where he defends a return to the natural life and an ideal non-attachment to earthly goods, in agreement with a political philosophy generally known as a communistic utopia. Diogenes is known for approving of discipline of the body and mind and for disliking either autocratic or democratic power (cf. Baldry 1956, 13). On the other hand, Zeno (335–263 B.C.), the founder of Stoicism, also devised an ideal commonwealth, an anarchistic utopia, *The Republic*, which described a society with sexual freedom and no hierarchy or class distinction, where the whole of nature was in perfect harmony and bound by love. The novelty of Zeno's theory consisted in combining Greek moral with eastern mysticism. Furthermore, religion in his *Republic* was not the conventional Greek religion. Zeno favored instead the universal gods, the sun, the moon and the stars. In fact, the idea of a Sun State is a recurring theme in classical thought. Alexander ascribed to himself the cognomen of Alexander Helios, the Sun-King.

⁵⁶ Kytzler 1988, 11 calls it the first 'European State Novel' ('Staatsroman Europas').

⁵⁷ See Jacoby, *FGrHist*63 F 3 from D. S. 5,45,3.

5,45,3); and the gift of honor (γέρας, 5,45,4), awarded for meritorious work is equally reminiscent of Homer. Also in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*, the gigantic works, which translate an already advanced state of military engineering and that Hydaspes undertook with the aim of destroying the town of Syene (9,3), claim a huge human and material investment. The emerald mines richness justifies the use of drastic means such as the campaign to take possession of the city of Philae (8,1,1), the tight and complete siege of Syene (9,1,1) and the battle against the powerful Persian army (9,14ff).

Nevertheless, Euhemerus as well as Heliodorus did not just make up a wholly ideal state. Euhemerus includes some elements in his utopian account that considerably taint the ideal status of his society and which reflect some of the circumstances of the historical reality of the time.⁵⁸ A part of the country is continuously troubled by bandits waiting for the right moment to get hold of unwary farmers' crops. The soldiers' only job is precisely to protect the natives from this scourge, since nowhere in Diodorus' text do we hear of any expansionist claim, unlike that of the people of Atlantis or *Machimos'* inhabitants as described by Theopompus.

As far as Heliodorus' novel is concerned, the ancient sources⁵⁹ refer to the military campaigns under the Roman rule. These sources mention the existence of Ethiopian incursions into Philae, Syene, and Elephantine, as well as expeditions commanded by Cornelius Gallus and Petronius, that had led to the repression of insurrections and to the destruction of Napata (the former capital of Meroe's kingdom).⁶⁰

However, despite the indisputable reference to the social, political, and religious reality of his time, Euhemerus and Heliodorus managed to keep their utopian states free from historical contingencies or from too close a connection with real life. For instance, and as Kuch points out,⁶¹ manual or productive work was despised by mainstream ideology of the time, whereas in Panchaea it plays a very important role, as can be seen through the farmers and herdsmen's jobs and through the fact that artists and artisans belonged to the highest class, which was also that of priests. The statute of this class, albeit a privileged one but also deprived of its fundamental rights as

⁵⁸ See Vallauri 1956, 5–6 and Gómez Espelosín, Pérez Largacha and Vallejo Girvés 1994, 265–266.

⁵⁹ Strabo 17,1,49; 17,2,54; Dio Cassius 54,5; Plin. *HN* 6,181–182.

⁶⁰ See Futre Pinheiro 1989, 37–42, esp. 40–41.

⁶¹ Kuch 1989, 57.

has been shown, does not agree with the freedom priests seemed to enjoy both in Egypt and in the Seleucid empire. On the contrary, in Heliodorus, Egypt's strength and apparent stability is revealed through the importance accorded to the sacerdotal class. Heliodorus also portrays an imaginary Ethiopian empire which did not exist at the time the Persians ruled over Egypt. He was not concerned with depicting a certain historical reality. However, in this reality transfigured by the power of his imagination one can undoubtedly recognize traces of the society of that time.⁶²

Ecumenism is clearly apparent in the association Heliodorus symbolically makes between Ethiopia and Greece, represented by Meroe and Delphi, the two symmetrical poles between which the plot unfolds. In this way, and like Euhemerus, Heliodorus seems to want to make his contribution to the dialogue of cultures.⁶³ Also in Euhemerus, peoples of many different races (Scythians, Indians, and Oceanites) co-exist peacefully and symbolize Alexander's greatest feat: to bring together under one rule all known peoples, to unite different races, and to bring about potential equality among all men.⁶⁴

There are also obvious affinities between Iambulus and Heliodorus: first, the unusual physical and psychological traits of some of the inhabitants of these imaginary countries: men's height and their exceptional strength, which is represented in the *Aethiopica* by the giant Meroebus (10,23,4); the humanity of the people who are willing to give up the bloody ritual of human sacrifices for the sake of a softening of violent customs (10,17), and especially their great piety revealed through their devotion to Helios, Selene and Dionysius (10,2,2; 10,4,7).

As mentioned before, Iambulus' voyage to the Island of the Sun takes place under the sign of the sacred,⁶⁵ in a striking resemblance to what happens in Heliodorus' Meroe. Iambulus and his companion were captured by a group of Ethiopians so that they might effect the purification of the land. These themes, which bring together men's model religious behavior (respect for rules and customs and for the practice of the rituals) and the consequent divine grace, envisage the pursuit of an ideal humanity as an act of faith which will lead to a lasting period of peace and happiness. Unlike Helio-

⁶² See Futre Pinheiro 1989, 41.

⁶³ On this subject see Lonis 1992, 235–238.

⁶⁴ As Hadas 1959, 3 has pointed out this was the greatest achievement of the Hellenistic period.

⁶⁵ See Baldassarri 1973, 305–307.

dorus, whose novel ends in apotheosis, Iambulus and his companion remained among this people for seven years and then were banned for not adapting to the prevailing customs and having acquired bad habits.⁶⁶ By offering us a clear picture of a society in certain aspects diametrically opposed to that of real life, Euhemerus, Iambulus, and Heliodorus, despite their differences, are imbued with the spirit of constructive fantasy,⁶⁷ providing us with a highly organized system of a social and political ideal.

At this point we can wonder: what purposes do the creation of utopian societies serve? What effects do they have on the reader? Does utopian fiction have a strictly practical and didactic purpose, aimed at making the reader aware of a given social and political order? Or, on the contrary, does it want to go further and, just as suggested by Ernst Bloch,⁶⁸ does it aim at stirring up hope in people's minds, does it want to make readers wish for and believe in new possibilities?⁶⁹ Utopian alternatives can work as a springboard used to introduce radical social change or merely as a kind of safety valve to reinforce the status quo, because they turn attention away from reality, projecting it into the unreal world of fantasy.

All utopias come into existence at a time of crisis or political and social change.⁷⁰ The utopian society creates an image of social order, which superimposes itself on the experience of real life, like a mirage of the fulfillment of an ideal. In this mental exercise, not everything is new. Utopia is usually the result of the combination of traditional and innovative elements.

One of the most elementary utopian devices is turning reality upside down. It is probably in this perspective that the relationship between sexes in the Greek novel should be seen. This would be a way to explain the dissonances, often incomprehensible, between situations where feminine suprem-

⁶⁶ After having sailed for four months they shipwrecked on Indian shores and Iambulus' companion died. As for Iambulus, he was led by the natives into the city of Palibothra (Pataliputra) on the Ganges and brought to the presence of their king who was a philhellene and devoted to meditation and learning. And at length, upon receiving from the king a safe-conduct, Iambulus managed to travel across the whole country as well as Persia, arriving safe and sound to Greece. He then decided to render an account of his adventures he thought deserved to be written down. Perhaps the most useful analysis of the geographical and historical meaning of the Iambulus' excerpts is Schwarz 1982.

⁶⁷ See above, note 42.

⁶⁸ Bloch 1986.

⁶⁹ Ferns 1999, ix-x put these questions forward.

⁷⁰ For Arnold Toynbee 'utopia was a symptom of the descending stage of the civilization cycle' (in Manuel and Manuel 1979, 11).

acy is clear, on the one hand, and those where women are treated as mere objects or pawns in a game whose rules they do not know, on the other. The first type of situation is but a mere exercise of the imagination.

Very few utopians have in fact managed to sway reality. Usually the influence of utopia is more subtle; sometimes utopians achieve their aims in an indirect way, by depicting the real world's imperfection and inadequacy as opposed to the ideal world's perfection.

'Underlying every utopia is the thought either of the road to perfection or of the return to grace.'⁷¹ The essence of utopia is the essence of human nature, which is made up of contrasts. Utopian literature is also illustrative of that duality. Whether we call it *μῦθος* and *λόγος*, *φύσις* and *νόμος*, imagination and reason, reverie and dream and reality, we will always be facing two sides of the same coin. The texts we have just analyzed clearly show how this duality can contribute to the enrichment of the human being, to the way he envisages the outside world. Even though it may not have a direct impact on the real world, utopian literature always leaves in it an indelible trace as the tail of a comet.

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⁷¹ Porter and Lukermann 1976, 199.

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