16

EDWARD JAMES

Utopias and anti-utopias

It is sometimes said that the ability of the writer to imagine a better place in which to live died in the course of the twentieth century, extinguished by the horrors of total war, of genocide and of totalitarianism. The genre of utopia, created unwittingly by Sir Thomas More when he published *Utopia* in 1516, died when idealism perished, a victim to twentieth-century pessimism and cynicism. It is the contention of this chapter that utopia has not disappeared; it has merely mutated, within the field of sf, into something very different from the classic utopia.

Hoda M. Zaki, whose *Phoenix Renewed* (1988) is the only published monograph on sf utopias, was on the point of recognizing this, although she failed; as a political scientist, she was still looking in vain for the classic utopia. She concluded that 'the disappearance of utopian literature in the twentieth century is surprising' and 'an issue with serious implications for the entire body politics'. Her study was based on the nineteen novels which had won the Nebula Award between 1965 and 1982. Almost all these novels had utopian elements, she concluded, but none of them were actual utopias: although many of those novels offered critiques of the contemporary world, none of them offered the necessary coherent account of a superior and desirable alternative in the future. Modern sf thus had no utopias to offer, but only 'tantalizing fragments in the utopian tradition'.[1] However, one can use the same evidence to suggest something quite different: if almost all the novels had utopian elements, this is a demonstration of the profound way in which utopianism has permeated sf. These 'tantalizing fragments' are what help make sf not only an important part of the utopian genre, but a part which is moving that genre in very new directions.

We need to understand what science fiction is reacting against. In the numerous versions of the classic utopia in the centuries succeeding Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), we have a traveller, perhaps with a small number of companions, who lands on a remote island or undiscovered continent; in more recent versions this is another planet, or the future. He (it is almost

invariably 'he') is welcomed by the locals, who are usually eager to show off their society to him. Very soon he meets an older man, who will spend much of the rest of the book lecturing to him about the delights of this society. Sometimes the visitor will respond by pointing out the contrasts between the institutions of this ideal society and those of his own home; in most cases, however, readers will be left to pick these out themselves.

The framework of these ideal societies developed over the years. More's utopian society, not accidentally, is like a Benedictine monastery, although with both men and women and without the celibacy. All his utopians wear monastic habits, and eat and work together communally; all work for the common good; all watch each other closely for signs of disobedience. More was a Catholic; he believed that original sin had to be restrained by strict laws. By the later nineteenth century, however, most utopias offered varieties of socialism. For the followers of nineteenth-century utopianists such as Charles Fourier and Robert Owen, men were not inherently wicked; they were naturally good, and that goodness would show through once the distorting effects introduced by capitalism were removed.

Whether the utopia was Catholic, Protestant or socialist, however, its distinguishing characteristics were remarkably similar. Communal activities within small village-style communities were crucial. Most utopias eliminated money and private property, thus at one stroke removing greed, theft, jealousy and most causes of civil strife. Reason and good will would be sufficient to provide peace and harmony within the community; utopian writers were almost unanimous in eliminating the parasitic occupation of lawyer, and from the nineteenth century onwards it was common to regard priests as little better than lawyers: both groups claimed to bring reconciliation and peace, but in fact promoted disinformation, disharmony and self-interest. Authors offered ingenious ways to promote happiness and contentment in their utopias, by offering job satisfaction in various ways, and great freedom for the individual.

In the twentieth century, such utopian visions were attacked from two directions: by those who argue that in reality many such utopias would turn out to be 'dystopias', that is, oppressive societies, either because of the tyranny of the 'perfect' system over the will of the individual, or because of the difficulty of stopping individuals or elites from imposing authority over the majority, or, indeed, over minorities. Critics of utopia usually assume that the author is producing a risibly impractical blueprint for a future society rather than (in most cases) a trenchant critique of contemporary institutions in fictional form. But such criticism is made easier by associating utopianism with socialism and communism, and thus with the Soviet bloc; and most sf writers have concluded that capitalism, for all its flaws, offers more

freedom than totalitarianism. But even the naive capitalist utopias of early sf, where advanced technology brings happiness to all, can be shown as having their sinister side. In William Gibson's anti-utopian story 'The Gernsback Continuum' (1981) the protagonist experiences a vision of an alternate 1980s as envisaged in the pulp sf magazines of the 1930s, a world 'with all the sinister fruitiness of Hitler Youth propaganda', with its smug, white inhabitants. When he gets back to 'the human near-dystopia we live in', a newspaper-seller says, 'Hell of a world we live in, huh?...But it could be worse, huh?' and he replies, 'That's right. Or even worse, it could be perfect.'[2] The protagonist would have sympathised with the far-future narrator of Cordwainer Smith's 'Alpha Ralpha Boulevard' (1961), who writes of the first years of the Rediscovery of Man, when 'everywhere, men and women worked with a wild will to build a more imperfect world'.[3] If sf writers find self-styled utopias, they must destroy them, acting like one of Somtow Sucharitkul's Inquestors, rulers of a Galactic civilization whose main task is to destroy utopias. 'The breaking of joy is the beginning of wisdom' goes their Covenant. In 'The Thirteenth Utopia', Sucharitkul's first story, Inquestor Ton Davaryush destroys twelve flawed utopias, but then finds a society which, thanks to its symbiotic relationship with its sun, seems to be a genuine utopia: something he has been taught is impossible.[4]

The classic sf objections to utopia are expressed by Arthur C. Clarke in two of his most famous novels: *Childhood's End* (1953) and *The City and the Stars* (1956). In both he describes a classic utopia, and then shows it as fatally flawed. In the apocalyptic ending of *Childhood's End*, Earth is destroyed, along with most of its population, but the energy thus unleashed is used by the psychically gifted children of men to become pure Mind. In the course of the novel Clarke expounds one of the most detailed and attractive utopian futures to be found in the whole of the sf genre. But it is a dead end: there is boredom; there is 'the virtual end of creative art'.[5] The utopian end in the novel is not the creation of an ideal society on Earth, but humanity rising from its cradle on Earth, evolving into something else. In *The City and the Stars* the inhabitants of Diaspar ('Paradise') 'were, perhaps, as contented as any race the world had known, and after their fashion they were happy';[6] there is no disease, no crime, no poverty, no conflict, no material want, and the inhabitants have an almost magical ability to control their environment. Yet the protagonist Alvin, and Clarke, regard their existence as 'futile':[7] apparently because it is man's destiny to be curious and to learn more about (that is, dominate) the world around him. That this is possibly a culturally specific notion is not acknowledged: nor is it recognized that it does not necessarily suit the psychologies of the vast majority of those in Diaspar, who have been conditioned to accept their situation even more effectively

than Clarke and his contemporaries have been conditioned to accept theirs. Alvin breaks apart this 'utopia', by forcing it out of its isolation; the future, it is implied, will be in outward expansion and the winning of the stars: the true destiny of Mankind.

It is not just the idea of 'perfection' which the sf writer objects to: it is the feeling that the utopian writer is aiming for a largely static society. There may be a gentle progression towards even more perfect systems; but there is a denial of adventure, of risk-taking, of the expanding of spatial or technological horizons. 'Maybe we weren't made for Paradise', Captain Kirk muses at the end of 'This Side of Paradise', a *Star Trek* episode from 1967. 'Maybe we were meant to fight our way through . . . Maybe we can't stroll to the sound of the lute – we must march to the sound of drums.' It is not just that sf authors are wedded to change, but that utopia is rejected in favour of continued struggle and progress. In one sense the project of twentieth-century sf writers is antithetic to the classic utopia; but, as I shall argue, this in itself may be a form of utopianism, which we may call 'technological utopianism'.[8]

The other objection to the classic utopia as a form rests on purely literary grounds. Most classic utopias fall far short of the standards expected of a novelist. Characterization is often non-existent: the protagonists merely fulfil their necessary roles, as visitor-listener, as utopian-lecturer or as token female. Large amounts of the utopian 'novel' can be taken up with what sf writers have called 'info-dump', where one character painstakingly explains the details of his world. The plot development is perfunctory: once the visitor has arrived, he is shown or merely told about one aspect of the society after another. By definition, there is no conflict in utopia; for a writer in popular fiction, brought up to believe that conflict is the essence of a plot, this is a problem. An achieved utopia may offer no fictional excitement; but the perpetual and unending struggle for a better world offers plenty of plot opportunities.

On the one hand, sf writers are hostile towards utopia; on the other hand, we find the editor John W. Campbell writing to Eric Frank Russell that 'The one thing that science-fictioneers have in common is a genuine and deep desire to create a better world.'[9] There is no contradiction there. 'A better world' is not the same as 'an ideal world'. A better world could be achieved by 'science-fictioneers' mostly through education about science, but also through the presentation of alternate possibilities. Most of those alternate possibilities are about technological rather than political revolution: the construction of constitutions and political arrangements, the staple of classic utopia, have little appeal for most sf writers. There have been some exceptions, however, and I am going to look at three, from very

different generations: Eric Frank Russell, Mack Reynolds and Kim Stanley Robinson.

Russell was English, although he adopted the American idiom so well for his fiction, much of which was published in Campbell's *Astounding*, that many of his readers never realized it. Many of his stories dabbled with anarchist ideas, but perhaps his most typical was '. . . And Then There Were None', a novella published in *Astounding* in June 1951, and later incorporated into the fix-up *The Great Explosion* (1962).[10] Russell's anti-authoritarian imagination here envisages the clash between military bureaucrats, investigating lost Earth colony planets, and the Gands, whose political philosophy is derived from anarchism, via Tolstoy and Gandhi. Their attitude to authority is summed up in the acronym F. I. W. ('Freedom – I Won't'), and their society operates without leaders of any kind (which causes problems when the military command utter the familiar lines 'Take me to your leader'). As in the classic utopia, there is no private property, and no money. The economy operates by individuals exchanging services with each other; 'laying an ob' (obligation) on someone: A doing a service for B, so that B would have to kill the ob by doing a service for A. Cooperation between equals and the denial of anyone's right to hold authority over another are the two main principles of Gand society. They are horrified by the military mind: the wearing of uniforms and the taking of orders are both repulsive to them. But their society proves too much of an attraction to the ship's crew; they desert one by one, until the commanding officer himself gives in to the inevitable . . . and then there were none.

Russell's ventures into political exploration, always tinged with humour, were minor compared to the work of Mack Reynolds, once voted most popular sf writer by the readers of *Galaxy* and *If* magazines and probably the most prolific utopian writer of all time. Between 1972 and his death in 1983 he wrote over a dozen works which are self-conscious utopian novels, and numerous short stories connected with the same project. As a lifelong socialist, he was unusual among American sf writers, and one of his aims was to make Americans realize that socialism had once had a significant American following: *Looking Backward, From the Year 2000* (1973) and *Equality in the Year 2000* (1977) were both updates of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward, 2000–1887* (1888) and *Equality* (1897).

Bellamy's *Looking Backward* was undoubtedly the most influential of all American utopias: it not only became a best-seller, but inspired the creation of a political party. Its premise was very science-fictional: a wealthy Bostonian, Julian West, is mesmerized, and by a serious of implausible accidents is still alive in the year 2000, when he is discovered and awakened. Much of the novel consists of lectures by his guide, Dr Leete, about the wonders of Boston

in the last year of the twentieth century. It is a place of universal equality of income, where all work in the Industrial Army until a peaceful and prosperous retirement at the age of forty-five. Bellamy stresses efficiency: eating in communal dining rooms, and buying clothes in department stores, are efficient, as well as fostering feelings of community. The dangerous individualism of the nineteenth century is summed up by a painting of people walking out in the rain, each under their own umbrella; Bostonians in 2000 are all protected by awnings over the sidewalks.

Mack Reynolds gave Bellamy new currency, by setting him in a realistic future, at the end of the twentieth century or shortly afterwards. He kept many of Bellamy's ideas, notably the idea of universal equality of income; indeed, he 'used various of his passages all but verbatim'.[11] But in Reynolds's AD 2000 there can be no Industrial Army; indeed, the problem for Reynolds is how to cope with mass unemployment. Industrial efficiency and in particular the greater use of automation mean that only a small number of administrators and engineers are needed to provide food and manufactured goods enough for all. If all live in relative comfort on Guaranteed Annual Income (also known as Negative Income Tax), without having to work for a living, can people achieve happiness? This was a problem Reynolds explored again and again, from different angles, in other utopian novels which he set either in a near future America, such as *Commune 2000 AD* (1974), or else on space habitats, such as *Lagrange Five* (1979). Space habitats, in the real world of the early 1970s, were being boosted by some American space enthusiasts as the High Frontier, the next place for American expansion: the L5 Society, indeed, still promotes the possibilities of a habitat at one of the stable points in the Earth–Moon gravitational system named after the eighteenth-century mathematician Lagrange.[12]

It is interesting that Reynolds, despite his enthusiasm for Bellamy-style socialism and for the traditional utopia, nevertheless accepted some of the critique of utopia from his fellow sf writers. Once utopia had been achieved, what then? Utopia in the classic sense of the absence of want, injustice, inequality and conflict, will have its own problems. One is the excess of leisure in a post-industrial society: is there any way of dealing with that apart from some modern equivalent of bread and circuses? The modern equivalent might not be so different from the Roman imperial version, as Reynolds suggested in *Time Gladiator* (1966). The second problem would be that of preventing new undemocratic elites seeking power for themselves in utopia: this is something Reynolds discussed in *After Some Tomorrow* (1967), *Rolltown* (1976) and elsewhere. And thirdly there is the question of the necessity for progress and for goals. In *After Utopia* (1977), the

Dr Leete figure explains to Tracy Cogswell, the visitor from the past, that they have achieved everything any utopian could have wished for: 'Democracy in its most ultimate form. Abundance for all. The end of strife between nations, races and, for all practical purposes, between individuals.'[13] And the species is dying for lack of goals and direction. Cogswell decides to manufacture the idea of an alien threat, 'to unite the race, to put it back on the road to progress and expansion'.[14] It is a plot motif used by other sf writers, and used by Reynolds himself in novels such as *Galactic Medal of Honor* (1976) and *Space Visitor* (1977). But Reynolds also uses another standard sf device to break free from what is regarded as the stasis of utopia: pushing the frontiers out into the solar system and beyond. At the end of *Chaos in Lagrangia* (1984), the more ambitious and therefore discontented inhabitants of Reynolds's space habitat are planning to go to the stars in a generation ship – like the people in Heinlein's 'Universe' (1941), as a teenage sf fan in the book points out.

Reynolds's utopian novels were mostly written in the 1970s, coinciding with the appearance of a number of much more critically acclaimed sf utopias. The revival of sf utopias in the 1970s was largely a result of the re-emergence of feminism in the later 1960s, although the contribution of the Civil Rights movement, the New Left, the ecological movement, the anti-war protests of the early 1970s and the emerging gay and lesbian movements were all significant as well. When Tom Moylan discusses these novels in his book *Demand the Impossible* (1986), he concentrates on four: Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* (1974), Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* (1975), Samuel R. Delany's *Triton* (1976) (now republished as *Trouble on Triton*) and Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976). He calls these novels 'critical utopias': the authors were all aware of the dangers of presenting a utopian blueprint, and used their novels to criticize not only the society within which they wrote, but also the possible utopian alternatives. Moylan does not include Reynolds in his discussion, but perhaps he should have done: Reynolds's too were 'critical utopias', responding to some of the same concerns of the 1970s.

The four books discussed by Moylan have received more critical comment than any other modern utopian novels. Le Guin's novel is an exploration of the problems of constructing a genuinely anarchist society, through the struggles for intellectual freedom by Shevek, a theoretical physicist whose discoveries threaten to tear down the walls with which the utopians of Anarres protect their society. Russ's is a richly comic discussion of four different women, or the same woman as she might have been in four different societies; the all-female society of Whileaway, which shares numerous features

with classic utopias, is compared with three dystopias (one being our own 1970s). Delany's book, which, borrowing a term from Foucault, he calls 'an ambiguous heterotopia', is a bold attempt to show how a society which caters to all kinds of cultural and sexual desires might be possible, thus meeting head-on the standard criticism of utopia that it is uniform and unwelcoming of diversity. Piercy looks at the dystopic world of Connie, a poor Hispanic woman locked up in a mental hospital, and at her visions of (or possibly 'real' connection to) a future Massachusetts, where barriers between race, class and gender have been largely eliminated.

Some of the consciously utopian novels of the last three decades of the century arose out of single issues: concern for the environment in Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia* (1975), or concern for gender relations in Pamela Sargent's *The Shore of Women* (1986) and Sheri S. Tepper's *The Gate to Women's Country* (1988). A few writers have written more than one text which could be considered utopian, including the Scottish writers Iain M. Banks (the Culture novels) and Ken MacLeod (the Fall Revolution novels). But the best-known sf writer consciously to contribute to the genre is Kim Stanley Robinson. His *Pacific Edge* (1990) postulates the emergence by the mid twenty-first century of a utopian society based on utopian ideals which has grown out of environmental and other legislative reforms begun in our century, while his Mars trilogy, possibly the greatest achievement of American sf in the 1990s, always keeps the utopian possibilities of planetary colonization in mind. Throughout the three long novels there are debates about how to create a new society on Mars which will avoid the failures of Earth societies, and these culminate in *Blue Mars* (1996), which describes the creation of a utopian constitution for the newly terraformed planet.[15] As one might expect from a 1990s constitution, it includes not only a set of political arrangements, but also a list of human rights and of human obligations, and a list of the rights of the Martian landscape.

All these texts are recognizable utopias, even though they may be posing more questions than presenting solutions. But numerous other scenarios presented in sf present future utopias as a natural result of human progress. Clarke, who, as we have seen, decried the classic utopia back in the 1950s, in the 1990s presented us with a near-utopia in *3001: The Final Odyssey* (1997), in which many psychopathologies of the twentieth century (including religious belief) have been eliminated. Most of Clarke's novels from the 1970s onwards show his belief in the continuing state of social progress, alongside scientific progress and the expansion of humanity beyond its home planet.

The state of dynamism itself – the expansion of the human race along with the expansion of its horizons and potentials – is itself a potentially utopian state. But the sf writer's urge to change the nature of utopianism does not

stop there. The traditional utopia is about envisioning ways in which human society might be reorganized on earth. Its mechanisms are legislation, education or institutional changes, occasionally changes in technology or environmental management. But the sf writer has not been prepared to accept such a limited view of human development. Why should we not use technology to remove drudgery, and to provide all material needs? The medieval peasant's dream of Cockaigne where cooked birds fly into one's mouth and the streams flow with wine is, *mutatus mutandis*, the world of *Star Trek*'s Captain Picard, whose mug of Earl Grey materializes in front of him when he tells the computer what he wants. More recently, sf writers have suggested the utopian possibilities of nanotechnology (machines at the molecular level), which illustrate Clarke's dictum that 'any sufficiently advanced technology will be indistinguishable from magic': miniature machines can create, and cure, as if miraculously. The traditional utopia takes limited resources as a given; nowadays, in post-scarcity futures such as those of Iain M. Banks's Culture series, that need not be taken for granted. The traditional utopia takes the human condition as a given, and hopes to make the human fit into utopia by legislation and education; the modern form of utopia regards a more perfect society to be the result of evolution and technology.

There are more profound questions that the sf writer has asked, which never occurred to the utopian writers of a century earlier. Why should human physiology or psychology remain the same? Would what human beings recognize as utopia a millennium from now be recognizable as utopia for us at all? Greg Bear, in *Blood Music* (1984), called by its publicists 'the *Childhood's End* for the 1980s', ironically imagines 'utopia', the end of human conflict and the coming of perfect harmony and understanding, through the swallowing up of all humanity into one giant organism (created accidentally in the laboratory by a scientist nerd); Frederik Pohl in *Jem: The Making of a Utopia* (1979) imagines human colonists on another planet creating 'utopia' by losing, or changing, their humanity, joining in symbiosis with indigenous life-forms. Sheri S. Tepper, many of whose novels from the late 1980s onwards have described the victory of human freedom in the face of oppression, particularly patriarchal oppression, shows in *Raising the Stones* (1990) and *Sideshow* (1992) a utopian society arising from a symbiosis with a fungus which promotes human feelings of empathy, 'a communication net that lets you in on how the intelligences around you feel and what they think and know'. After decades of enquiry into the Great Question, the Ultimate Destiny of Man, they realize that this destiny is 'to stop being only man', and they joke that the new Great Question is going to be 'What shall we become now we are no longer Man?'[16]

There are numerous themes of modern sf which should probably be regarded as part of the utopian project. Back in the 1950s, for instance, there was serious scientific work on telepathy and other forms of ESP, most famously by J. B. Rhine at Duke University, and therefore speculation along these lines was justified as science and not fantasy. What kind of society might emerge if all thoughts were open to all and perfect harmony and understanding – the goal of utopian writers since More – could be achieved? Some questions are still with us. What could be achieved if medical and biological science made improvements to the human body: eliminating disease, or creating something approaching immortality? What about possible changes in the human body, to be brought about by cyborgization (the mingling of human and machine/computer)? When one imagines such changes, it is possible to think of just as many dystopian outcomes as utopian ones. Universal telepathy might bring mental harmony; it might bring political control and the end of privacy. Immortality might extend the human propensity for growth and development; it might bring boredom, mental instability or dangerous over-population.

The unasked but essential question in most utopian novels – 'what is the meaning of life?' or 'what is the destiny of man?' – is a question raised by almost no one these days apart from theologians and sf writers. It is the ultimate, unanswerable, question. After thinking about the question for six days and nights in Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), 'all the Celibates were catatonic, [and] the Zanies were dead'.[17] Science fiction writers, by asking such unanswerable questions, have extended the horizons of utopia, and helped to acclimatize it to a world in which the future has so many more possibilities and uncertainties than Sir Thomas More could ever have imagined.

NOTES

1. Hoda M. Zaki, *Phoenix Renewed* (Mercer Island, WA: Starmont, 1988), pp. 112, 113.
2. William Gibson, 'The Gernsback Continuum' (1981), cited from Gibson, *Burning Chrome* London: Grafton, 1988), pp. 47 and 50. I have put this story in its context among 'anti-utopias' in 'Even Worse, It Could Be Perfect' (see below, p. 283).
3. Cordwainer Smith, 'Alpha Ralpha Boulevard' (1961), in Smith, *The Rediscovery of Man* (London: Gollancz, 1988), pp. 283–314, at p. 284.
4. First published in *Analog* (April 1979), pp. 144–64, this story was incorporated into the first of four Inquestor novels, *Light on the Sound* (New York: Bantam, 1986).
5. Arthur C. Clarke, *Childhood's End* (1953) (London: Pan, 1956), p. 64.
6. Clarke, *The City and the Stars* (1956) (London: Corgi, 1957), p. 70.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

8. A term used by Segal in *Technological Utopianism in American Culture* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1985), a study of the optimistic reliance in the USA on technology for social improvement.

9. Letter of 30 November 1952: Eric Frank Russell archive, Science Fiction Foundation collection, University of Liverpool.

10. For a discussion of these stories, see my 'A "Double-Dyed Distilled Detractor"', *Anarchist Studies* 7 (1999), pp. 155–70.

11. Mack Reynolds, *Looking Backward, From the Year 2000* (New York: Ace, 1973), introduction, p. 4.

12. On the space station or habitat as a locale for utopia, see the index to Westfahl, *Islands in the Sky* (San Bernadino, CA: Borgo Press, 1996).

13. Reynolds, *After Utopia* (New York: Ace, 1977), pp. 53–5.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 250.

15. The constitution itself is printed, with some commentary, in Robinson, *The Martians* (London: Voyager, 1999), pp. 226–39.

16. Sheri S. Tepper, *Sideshow* (1992) (New York: Bantam, 1993), pp. 420, 478, 480.

17. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969) (London: Panther, 1973), p. 62.

Utopia. Utopian Fiction. Dystopia is the opposite of utopia (eu topos- a "good place", dis topos- a "bad place"), depicting fictional societies in which the living is bad and imperfect caused by human misery, poverty, tyranny and terrorism. Creators of dystopian fictions explore worst possible scenario, highlighting sense of fear in order to show that a perfect society is not possible. In dystopian fiction we can rarely find hope. Although they usually depict world set in near future, they write about things they feared of in the existing world of reality, showing their own concern about some socia Anti-Utopia and Dystopia: Antonis Balasopoulos Rethinking the Generic Field If anxiety over the delimitation of the object of study constitutes the universal symptom of every emerging disciplinary ﬁeld, the ﬁeld of 1 For a brief account of this emergence see Ruth Levitas, The Concept of Utopian Studies â€" codiﬁed as such in the mid 1970s1 â€" can be Utopia, Oxford: Peter Lang social transfor- See, indicatively, Barbara Goodwin 3 mation, or millenarian fantasies.3 It is not the purpose of this essay and Keith Taylor, The Politics of to address the interpretive problems and questions raised in such chart- Utopia: A Study in Theory and Prac- tice, Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009 (orig. ings of Utopian terrain. Term 'utopia' was brought into use by Sir Thomas More. He wrote a fictional account of what many would think was a perfect land. And that it wasn't a real one he underscored with its title: utopia literally means 'no place' in Greek. Since then, the term has been used to describe any kind of perfect land. Depending on who you ask, an anti-utopia is either the exact same thing as a dystopia, or it may also be a kind of failed utopia. In the latter sense, then, a dystopia would be a system that was designed to be bad, but an anti-utopia was supposed to be good but completely fails. It is probably worth mentioning, too, that since many different people have rather different ideas of 'perfect', one person's utopia sometimes seems like another person's dystopia and vice versa.