URSULA K. LE GUIN: THE UTOPIAS AND DYSTOPIAS OF THE DISPOSSESSED AND ALWAYS COMING COME

By

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Abstract

The thesis deals with the utopian and dystopian aspects of Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* and *Always Coming Home*. To provide a basis for comparison with the endeavours of previous utopists, the first part is devoted to a historical account of literary utopias, and to an examination of the signposts of the genre. This history is restricted to practical blueprints for the ideal commonwealth and excludes creations of pure fantasy.

In tracing utopian development from Plato to Wells, the influence of historical events and the mainstreams of thought, such as Renaissance humanism, the Reformation, the rising importance of science, the discovery of new lands, the Enlightenment, Locke's Theory of Perfectability, Bentham's utilitarianism, the Industrial Revolution, socialism, the French Revolution, Darwinism, and the conflict between capital and labour is demonstrated. It is also shown how the long-range results of the Russian Revolution and the two world wars shattered all utopian visions, leading to the emergence of the dystopia, and how the author reversed this negative trend in the second part of the twentieth century.

In a study of forms of utopian presentation, the claim is made that *The Dispossessed* features the first utopia that qualifies as a novel: not only does the author break with the genre's tradition of subordinating the characters to the proposal, she also creates the conflict necessary for
novellistic structure by juxtaposing her positive societies with negative ones.

In part two, the utopias and dystopias of both books are examined, and their features compared to previous endeavours in the genre. The observation is made that although the author favours anarchism as a political theory, she is more deeply committed to the Chinese philosophy of Taoism, seeing in its ideals the only way to a harmonious and just existence for all. In order to prove her point, Le Guin renders her utopias less than perfect, placing one society into an inhospitable environment and showing the other as suffering from genetic damage; this suggests that the ideal life does not rest in societal organization or beneficent surroundings, but in the minds of the inhabitants: this frame of mind—if not inherent in a culture—can be achieved by living in accordance with the tao.

Lastly, an effort is made to determine the anthropological models upon which utopian proposals are constructed. The theory is put forth that all non-governed, egalitarian utopias represent a return to the societal arrangements of early man, when his communities were still small and decentralized, and before occupational specialization began to set in; that all democratic forms of government are taken from the Greek examples, that More's *Utopia* might well have been modelled on the Athenian clans of the pre-Cleisthenes era, and that the Kesh society of *Always Coming Home* is based exclusively on the kinship systems of the Pueblo Indians of the American Southwest.
# Table of Contents

Abstract.................................................................ii

**PART ONE:**

A Survey of Utopian Literature

Introduction..........................................................1
Plato and the Renaissance..........................................8
The Age of Enlightenment and
the Nineteenth Century............................................22
The Twentieth Century and the Dystopian Reaction............35

**PART TWO:**

The Utopias and Dystopias of
The Dispossessed and Always Coming Home

The Dispossessed....................................................52
Always Coming Home...............................................87
Conclusion............................................................122
Bibliography..........................................................129
Introduction

To find the better place, the better life, is one of the primal drives of man. Together with curiosity, it forms the basis for his progress in almost all fields of endeavour. Dissatisfaction with existing conditions creates the wish for an improved alternative; reactions range from passive escapism to active realization—from the simple day-dreams of single individuals to the great infectious passions that fired the social revolutions. Utopian fantasies are rooted in myth and folklore: most cultures have some version of a Golden Age, an Isle of the Blessed, an Eden, a Land of Cockaigne, a Schlaraffenland, a Shangri-La. They are never-lands where harmony and beauty reign, immortality and equality are achieved, strife and labour cease, where all foods grow on trees, and the rivers flow with milk and wine. They have been passed on in oral tradition, and are threaded through literature from Hesiod to science fiction.

But there are realistic utopias as well—blueprints to ideal societies which are theoretically attainable, and which suggest concrete means by which the wrongs of existing, corrupt societies could be righted. They are models of the ideal environment, maintained by conscious human effort, contemporaneous with an imperfect world but outside the flux of its history. They are born finished, like Athena, at the apex of perfection: any change would mar them. To avoid contamination of their ideal communities, utopists have usually located them in more or less inaccessible places—islands, or secluded valleys, even on other planets: it is only by accident, or perhaps by some incredible journey, that a traveller discovers them, is told of the
social and political improvements that set the inhabitants' world apart from his, and is given the opportunity to view the happy results.

Ever since Thomas More coined the name for his projected commonwealth combining the Greek terms eu-topos (good place) and ou-topos (no place) to effectively determine its nature, utopias have contributed to prepare the ground for change, and many of the ideas that mark the partisan utopias of the nineteenth century sprang at least partly from the seeds planted by the great communist utopias of Plato and the Renaissance. Yet as a whole, they are non-activist projections, literary extrapolations of intellectuals who were aware of the sufferings and social injustices of their times, but did not intend their works as an active call to the barricades, at least not before the French Revolution. If some of them triggered a rather astounding active response, as, for instance, Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, or Hertzka's *Freeland*, the communities founded on the authors' models seldom proceeded past the planning stage, and almost none survived. The longest-lived were religious in origin and practice, like the Amana Society, or the Shakers', or the Oneida Community which eventually turned into the joint-stock company manufacturing the well-known silverplate.

Utopists fashioned their perfect societies according to the needs of their times, yet many had the ability to envision the future beyond. They also realized that it was impossible to gain without losing, and that sacrifices must be made to achieve justice for all: most utopians have to give up their privacy and suppress the desire for personal freedom in exchange for an otherwise ideal and well-ordered existence for all. Some utopists felt this existence could be realized by education, and by the wise
and benevolent leadership of a ruler, or a ruling body or class; some indulged in hopes of supernatural intervention, and the proponents of eugenic breeding would change humans biologically to render the individual better suited to the common goal.

Some were prophets whose predictions have already come true, from More's chicken incubator, and Bacon's research laboratories, to the welfare state. Although the stage of technology and ideology of their respective periods naturally limited their visions, inventiveness carried many far beyond those limits. What unites all practicable utopias is the fact that their creators were optimists who believed that man would be compassionate enough to willingly surrender some of his rights for the benefit of others. In this regard, utopias are like a chain of hope stretched across the span of human history, bridging long gaps of cynicism, and longer periods of belief that there is no hope on this earth and none can be expected. This chain reaches from the zenith of Greek civilization to the twentieth century where it seems to break, or, better said, to disintegrate into bitterness and gloom. The dreams of the nineteenth century have all gone sour: the proletarian revolution resulted in a totalitarian state; two world wars, genocide, and the discovery of nuclear fission appeared to indicate that there was no hope for man, that the race seemed bound for ultimate self-destruction. Literature forecast Armageddon. The utopian vision was largely replaced with its negative counterpart, the dystopia.

Still, a few continued the tradition: after portraying a future world in which often projected improvements, like genetic engineering, had reached their final and horrifying culmination, Aldous Huxley produced a genuine
utopia, Island. B. F. Skinner created Walden Two, a model community under the guidance of psychologists.

However, utopian conditions are no longer the cure-all for whatever ails mankind, and their negative aspects are no longer ignored but examined. In Arthur C. Clarke's utopian community of New Athens (Childhood's End), true creativity declines, art deteriorates to the pseudo-art of the amateur. Without strife, man regresses; without needs, goals and suffering, he becomes shallow. Change is the essence of life: a static utopia, no matter how well-conceived and realized, is bound to become subject to decay; weak spots will appear in its fabric; if not reinforced, it will begin to tear. However ideal his environment may be, man will be forever imperfect, and no conditioning can "perfect" him for long. He is by nature restless; whatever he is given, will never seem enough, and whatever is taken from him, will always seem too much. Easily bored, he forever seeks diversity and novelty, new worlds to conquer or explore. The concept of heaven is desirable for the spirit but not for mortal man; it lacks the spice, the danger, the dark side residing in all of us.

Although she is well aware of the shadow side of man, and although she is among the pragmatists who realize that ideal societies are easier to create than to maintain, Ursula K. Le Guin has contributed two fully developed utopias to the genre: the Odonian colony of Anarres in The Dispossessed and the Valley of the Kesh in Always Coming Home.

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Lewis Mumford distinguishes between two types of literary utopias: creations of pure fantasy and the "utopias of reconstruction". Although
the latter may still be coloured by primitive desires and wishes, "these desires and wishes have come to reckon with the world in which they seek realization." It envisions "a reconstituted environment which is better adapted to the nature and aims of the human beings who dwell within it than the actual one," containing "a new set of habits, a fresh scale of values, a different net of relationships and institutions, and possibly . . . an alteration of the physical and mental characteristics of the people chosen . . ." (21-22).

If a general definition can reduce all "practical" ideal societies of all ages to a common denominator, then Le Guin's utopias should be seen and evaluated as the product of a long succession of similar endeavours. During its evolution, utopian thought passed through numerous phases due to changing philosophical and socio-political attitudes, or responded to scientific inventions. In the form of rejection or approval, most preceding plans influenced the succeeding; each important blueprint stimulated imitations or refutations, but major changes in concepts were usually caused by highly influential external developments or events—such as the Protestant Reformation, Renaissance humanism, the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, Darwinism, the World Wars, and nuclear science. The modern age widened the utopist's scope: while Plato had to find only a solution to prevent the decline of Athenian society, Le Guin needed to deal with global problems affecting all of humanity and, at the same time, sift out all previous proposals already proven unfeasable.

Utopias presented as dialogues, travelogues, "eyewitness" reports, or treatises, underwent no major transformation in form until the nineteenth
century, perhaps due to the fact that with improved general education the utopist could hope that his ideas would reach a much larger audience than his predecessors', an audience that preferred his proposals in a more palatable, narrative form. Although the invention of the printing press had permitted a wider distribution of written material from 1450 onward, centuries passed before books became accessible to other classes than the wealthy and educated. It remains a matter of conjecture how many of the socialist proposals were actually read by the people on whose behalf they had been written.

Even in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the traditional role of the traveller who discovers the ideal commonwealth remained largely unchanged. If a story line was added, it was very simple, usually in the form of a romance. Perfection and stability do not lend themselves well to any kind of plot: the only conflict arising from journeys to the future, or to another planet, or a subterranean domain, is that those journeys usually come to an end, and that most visitors have to return to their own flawed world. Generally, the utopian is less of an individual than the representative of his society, illustrating the author's ideas and little more.

Proceeding from the premise that good times and good people do not make good novels, the fact that the reversed utopias of the twentieth century, the dystopias, were the first books on the subject meeting this standard of distinction, is not surprising. Although they are still focussed on the political and societal conditions seen through the eyes of the protagonist, he now becomes a character, a person, and his sufferings at
the hands of villains provide the tension and drama necessary for a more sophisticated literary construction. It seemed that the good life could produce nothing approaching it.

Le Guin solves this problem in several ways: she introduces conflict by juxtaposing her utopias with active dystopias instead of remembered or described ones, by integrating time flow and action, and by confronting her protagonists with problems to cope with and with choices to make. Those choices are complicated by the fact that the contrasting societies are either less than perfect (or safe) on the one hand, or, in the case of *The Dispossessed*, less than totally negative on the other. This suggests that perfection can at best be approached, not attained, but that even an imperfect utopia is preferable to none at all.

The following chapters are devoted to the evolution of utopian plans—what models they are based on, what innovations they propose, what changes occur, and what factors initiate those changes. Against this background, Le Guin's utopias will be tested as to content, form, ideas, models, characterization, similarities with and contrasts to subsequent ideal societies, and the extent to which her work is influenced by her belief in the Chinese philosophy of Taoism as well as her knowledge of cultural anthropology to which she was exposed through her father Alfred Kroeber. A final conclusion will attempt to determine how successfully *The Dispossessed* and *Always Coming Home* cope with their utopian and dystopian aspects, and if Le Guin's novels represent a new realistic direction in which utopian fiction ought to progress.

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Plato and the Renaissance

If one believes that Plato's Dialogues constitute the foundation of Western thought, then the fact that the model of the Republic seems to underlie almost every successive utopia can be well understood.

Plato's proposed state sprang, like most of its descendants, from the need of his day. Athens had been defeated in a long war with Sparta over control over the Peloponnese; fearing that Athenians had become too self-indulgent, he felt that it was time to return to sterner values, or permanently lose Athens' leading position in Greece.

The Republic is a small city state of only a few thousand inhabitants. The society is stratified into three classes, ruled by philosophers "who will take the city and the characters of men, as they might a tablet, and first wipe it clean . . . no easy task" (736). They are qualified for their positions by virtue of the wisdom which they have achieved through natural predisposition and lengthy education. "Philosophy, then, the love of wisdom, is impossible for the multitude" (730).

The Guardians, too, have been rigorously trained and educated, but have not reached the final perception of the metaphysical Good. Their virtue is valour; they form the body of warriors, public officials and police, an elite that stands authoritatively above labourers, artisans and tradesmen.
All classes have a common living standard which lies half-way between wealth and poverty, "since the one brings luxury, idleness, and innovation, and the other illiberality and the evil of bad workmanship . . ." (663). Each individual carries out the function for which he is innately predisposed, ensuring personal happiness which reflects on the happiness of the community.

Life should be simple, and in tune with nature. This lifestyle is shared by all classes, but it is justice that welds them into a solid unit. With the welfare of the state being the utmost consideration, all elements which might disturb its harmony and smooth operation—be they inherent in man or rooted in his institutions—must be suppressed or removed. The appetites as well as the emotions must be ruled by reason.

All property is shared; the family unit is abolished, since it might create interests in direct opposition to the interests of the state. The Guardians live in common barracks, eat in public halls, and are not permitted to own anything of value. "Then will not lawsuits and accusations against one another vanish . . . from among them, because they have nothing in private possession but their bodies, but all else in common? So that we can count on their being free from the dissensions that arise among men from the possession of property, children, and kin" (703).

Women of the Guardian class cannot even call their bodies a private possession. Although women are equal with men, receive the same education, participate in the same exercises in the gymnasium and the same military training, they "shall all be common to all these men . . . none shall cohabit with any privately, and . . . the children shall be common . . .
[so] that no parent shall know its own offspring nor any child its parent" (696).

Plato also proposes eugenic breeding: "The best men must cohabit with the best women in as many cases as possible and the worst with the worst in the fewest, and . . . the offspring of the one must be reared and that of the other not, if the flock is to be as perfect as possible" (698-99). The desirable offspring will be raised in public creches, while the undesirable infants—in the established Greek fashion of the age—will be "exposed". This practice includes infants born by women who conceived outside the ideal child-bearing age from between twenty to forty years. Likewise, men should not father children after the age of fifty-five. Such measures, Plato felt, would steadily improve the quality of human material, while disposal of the less than perfect would take care of the problem of overpopulation. Similarly, severely deformed or insane individuals ought to be treated as dead wood stifling the growth of the healthy tree of the Republic. To keep the number of inhabitants on a steady level was one of the means of making certain that the city state remained self-sufficient; to keep life frugal and allow no luxury production to increase the number of tradesmen was another. The land surrounding the city had to feed its populace adequately. Since even utopian societies cannot always exist in a total vacuum, any enlargement of agricultural lands represented an infringement on the lands of neighbors, and would, Plato knew, invariably lead to war. Unlike later communist states, the aim of the Republic was survival, not conquest.
During the Middle Ages, no serious secular utopia we are aware of was produced. Miriam Eliav-Felden suggests that "utopias could not be written as long as the existing structure of society was considered to be divinely ordained," and that human beings felt they had no business to interfere with the will of God. "Second, utopias became possible only when the contemptus mundi was rejected," and when the dominant belief in the constant degeneration of humanity since the Fall no longer prevailed. "These basic changes in the analysis of the human condition could occur only when there came into existence a generation of lay intellectuals who were not fettered by the concepts of theology" (5-6).

Inspired by new self-confidence, and stimulated by the discovery of strange lands, the Renaissance spawned a great many utopias, of which Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) was the first and most eminent. However, More was also disturbed by the disruption of the medieval order, by a newly emerging capitalist society taking possession of rural lands: in Utopia, he restored the balance between town and country he saw in danger of being destroyed.

Most historians agree that Plato based the *Republic* (ca. 380-370 BC) on the model of Sparta, that More based *Utopia* on the *Republic* (and, to a lesser degree, on the Christian monasticism of the past,) and that the rest of the Renaissance utopists drew on both major sources. Although this is certainly true in many respects, the structure of More's society bears a much stronger resemblance to that of archaic Athens as it existed after the Mycenaean period up to the end of the sixth century BC. As the early Greek families, organized into clans and phratries, were the basis of political organization, so is the extended and hierarchically structured family the
primary unit of More's society. This theory is somewhat strengthened by the fact that More calls his officials phylarchs, a title given to Greek leaders of the same "golden" pre-Cleisthenes era. Although the resemblance may be no more than a resemblance, it seems still stronger than with Plato's elitist state where the majority of citizens has no voice in political matters at all.

Plato's cold rationality is tempered by More's more humane attitude: although the Utopians' property, too, is held in common, and slavery is, as in the Republic, still tolerated ('needed' would be more accurate,) the Utopians show compassion toward the sick, the old and infirm, the physically and mentally handicapped, and provide them with the best of care. No stigma is attached to the incurably ill committing suicide, or submitting to euthanasia.

The households consist of ten to sixteen members over the age of fourteen. If there is a surplus of children, they are freely adopted out to other families. Although much emphasis is placed on education, work, healthy recreation, cleanliness and physical exercise, the mores are conventional: no premarital sex is allowed and adultery, if committed twice, is punished by death. The only concession More makes to eugenic breeding is that the bride must be eighteen years of age (as opposed to twelve in More's England,) and that the betrothed see each other naked so that no blemishes or deformities can be concealed. Marriages last for the partners' lifetimes, although in cases of severe mismatches, a divorce can be granted.

More's commonwealth is larger than the average utopia, occupying an island 200 miles long and wide. The economy is based on agriculture, and
all city residents have to spend a certain amount of time on the farms and help working the land. (This idea of diversified labour is picked up 400 years later by Kropotkin, and, through Kropotkin, by Le Guin.)

Government is carried out by elected officials. Once yearly, every thirty families choose one officer or phylarch; together, they choose a prince out of four presented by the people. Unless he is suspected of tyranny, the prince's office lasts for his lifetime.

Amaurote, the seat of the counsel house, is a garden city with a plentiful supply of fresh water, wide streets, "gorgeous" (and almost fire-proof) houses, many featuring glassed-in windows—still an expensive rarity in More's age. Since nothing belongs to anyone privately, no door is ever locked; every ten years people change houses by lot.

Eliav-Feldon points out that the choice of site and layout as well as the size of the utopian town in the Renaissance does not solely spring from a sense of aesthetics. Public health in crowded cities was a major problem. Rivers were polluted, refuse and offal were thrown into narrow unpaved alleys, water supply was inadequate and unsafe. In the slums, hovels of wood, clay and straw infested with vermin and rats were breeding grounds of epidemics; the fire hazard was incredibly high, and the food sold in the market places was often tainted (33-35). Perhaps it was with those conditions in mind that More divided the city into four parts, grouping similar trades together, and putting the slaughter houses outside the city wall.

The phylarchs see to it that no one is idle in Utopia. The average workday is short, not exceeding six hours. The supervising officers, the
old and weak, and some especially promising students are exempted. When work is done, people gather in large public halls for meals, listen to lectures, or engage in other wholesome recreational activities.

Daily markets cater to the convenience of city dwellers. Each patriarch takes from the storehouses whatever his family needs "and carries it away with him without money, without exchange, without any security" (92). If areas are short of goods, other regions will subsidize them from their surplus. Such surplus is also used for export to other countries. Charitably, one seventh of those exported goods are given to the poor of the country with which trade is conducted, and the rest sold at reasonable prices.

Travel within Utopia is discouraged: if a man wishes to leave the city he must obtain a passport from the prince; while underway, he has to work for his keep. If a traveller is caught without a passport, he is severely punished, and if he repeats the transgression, he is condemned to bondage.

The problem of who was to do the most demeaning tasks was a severe one for all utopists, one which could not be satisfactorily solved until the advent of the machine age. Slavery, in Greek and Roman times, was an established and essential fact that did not weigh on anyone's conscience. For the Christian More it was not quite as easy. On the one hand, he felt that none of his free Utopians should be forced to slaughter animals or dispose of waste (although road work and repairs to buildings were done jointly by citizens,) and, on the other, he saw the injustice of utilizing prisoners-of-war, including their children, in the custom of classical times. He solved the dilemma by punishing some lawbreakers more severely.
than their crimes warranted, as, for instance, travellers without papers, or one-time adulterers. Other sources were criminals from neighboring countries who had been convicted to death, or poor foreigners who preferred bondage in Utopia to a life spent in squalor.

As in Plato's Republic, the laws are simple, and few are needed where all goods are free for the taking. Needless to say, no interpretation or representation by lawyers (who are banned from all utopias) is required.

Another blot on the shining regalia of the State is the reality of war. Utopia has neighbors with whom it conducts commerce and maintains diplomatic relations. More tells us that although "they detest and abhor war or battle as a thing very beastly" (139), men and women practise in the discipline of war. But they would fight only in the defense of their own country, or to assist their friends in repelling invaders or eliminating tyrants. To rid themselves of unwanted elements, the Utopians send their worst citizens into battle, never their best.

To remove but another cause of human dissension, Utopia offers complete religious freedom. Although the wisest believe in a Christian God, no one is made to follow suit. On the contrary: those who dispute too passionately, or use force in persuading others of their creed, are punished for disturbing the peace.

E. H. Harbison states that the themes of all subsequent and pre-Marxian socialist appeals are present in More's Utopia in their classic form, such as "the optimistic faith in human nature, the overweening emphasis upon environment and proper education, the nostalgia for lost innocence and integrity, and the exaggerated uniformitarianism (from clothes to equal
apportionment of children among families) which is the measure of every utopian's revulsion against rugged individualism" (qtd. in Enc. Brit. 22: 821).

Since space permits no more than a passing glance at even the most pertinent of Renaissance utopias, a summary of their common features seems in order. Money and personal property are usually abolished; there is always some system of control keeping a watchful eye on the inhabitants, to make certain that the community or communities operate as designed, and that no deviation detracts from their perfection; pure anarchy is unknown.

With life expectancy almost half of ours, all utopists provide conditions which promote longevity. They place great emphasis on healthy surroundings, cleanliness, exercise, and a simple but nourishing diet, at times worked out by physicians. No one goes hungry in utopia, but no one overeats, either. In the absence of refrigeration, meat and staples are inspected as to quality, and meals in the common kitchens are always fresh.

The clothing is functional, unadorned, and as uniform as possible. One exception are Bacon's gaudy satins and brocades which have no place in communities where vanity is a fault and where all causes of envy and jealousy have been painstakingly removed.

To improve the race and avoid the perpetuation of hereditary diseases, eugenic breeding is practised in most utopias, from the mildest suggestions to the most radical impositions: in Campanella's The City of the Sun all matings are arranged by the state, and personal preferences are ignored. Only the healthiest are allowed to procreate, and opposite types are chosen to produce an ideal average; "the couple would be told what to eat before
and what to think and pray during the act in order to produce a perfect child" (Eliav-Felden 45).

Education is the responsibility of the state, and so is medical care. Children seldom reside with their parents, or not for long. Since women are usually given equality with men, they must be relieved of household and child care duties to live up to their full potential in serving the community.

Travel abroad is forbidden: with epidemics still ravaging the countries, carriers of infectious diseases were a fearsome reality. The only exception we hear of are Bacon's spies.

Art does not exist for its own sake in utopia. Self-expression reeks of self-assertion to utopists, and most consider it a corrupting element. Plato knew why he banned the poet from his Republic: he wanted no one to rouse the emotions with glorifications of the past, or to engage in underhanded social criticism. Unless they help to reinforce the utopian ideals, or serve educational purposes, creative talents are largely channelled into the production of harmless handicrafts. No actors are allowed in Christianopolis, and its creator's only concession to the arts is a small picture gallery. One artform that is tolerated even by Plato is music. The Utopians' communal meals are brightened by dinner music, and many practise it during leisure hours.

Almost a century after the appearance of Utopia, Tommaso Campanella, a Dominican monk who spent thirty years in the prisons of the Inquisition, published La Citta del Sole (1602), the most radical utopian creation of the
Renaissance. It proposes complete community of property and wives for all Solarians. The family is abolished. Women have total equality, and exercise naked with men. Due to highly sanitary conditions and state-controlled breeding guided by astrology, life expectancy has vastly increased.

Campanella's society has no slaves. The younger people serve the older, and the hardest and most odious work is regarded as the most ennobling. A natural religion that has surpassed Christianity replaces all creeds, and the hope exists that a universal monarchy will eventually unite all mankind.

The novelty of this utopian projection, however, lies not in its extremism, but in the area of science and invention. While More's educational curriculum still featured long-approved subjects taught on the basis of classical theories, now chemistry, physics, anatomy, botany take precedence over grammar, rhetoric and the Greek tragedies. This radical shift in educational ideals is perhaps the clearest development in the Renaissance utopias. The educational thought of Campanella, Andreae, and Bacon, directly and indirectly, influenced Comenius and his followers, inspired the radicals among the English Puritans in the 1640s; [and] introduced a new persona to the utopian literature that of the Scientist who unravels the mysteries of the universe and attains power to control human destiny. (Eliav-Felden 70-71)

Although the time had not yet come when utopists could fully envision
the impact science would have on future generations, their dreams drift far ahead into coming centuries: the Solarians have wind-driven vehicles, boats which require neither sails nor rowing, and have learned to fly.

Johann Valentin Andreae continued the new trend. In the city of Christianopolis (1619) education in science, too, is of major importance. Teaching methods are progressive, and make extensive use of visual aids, instruments and laboratories.

In all other areas, Christianopolis strikes us as much milder than its contemporary models, more palatable, displaying more tolerance and a much deeper understanding of the human psyche. It is the most modern-sounding of all Renaissance utopias, and several of its features have come to pass.

No one interferes if two people wish to marry, providing that the groom has reached the age of twenty-four, and the bride eighteen. More's extended clan has shrunk to the nuclear family, consisting only of a married couple and their offspring. Husband and wife share the housework—although men are not made to sew or wash clothes. The families are provided with fully furnished houses which even feature private bathrooms. Children are raised at home until they are six years old and are taken over by the public school system. However, the parents may visit them at any time.

Christianopolis is ruled by a triumvirate of a minister, a judge, and a pedagogue who stand for the virtues of Conscience, Understanding, and Truth. The basic unit of society, however, is not the family, but the guild. The guilds are communistic and self-controlled. Industrial improvement is based on scientific research; individual inventiveness is encouraged. There are
no slaves because people do not shy away from any type of work. Crime is rare, but if it occurs, it is treated with leniency and understanding.

Although he drew from More, Andreae's society bears little resemblance to Plato's. The presumption that he tried to recapture the attitude of early Christian communities where equality was based on tolerance and brotherly love does not seem far-fetched.

The importance of Francis Bacon's fragmentary *New Atlantis* (1627) in the chain of utopian development lies in the description of Solomon's House, which foreshadows the great scientific foundations of future centuries, and inspired the founding of the Royal Society.

One problem Bacon is aware of surfaces in *The Dispossessed* also: it is the problem of the scientist who wishes (or has to) remain in seclusion, yet needs to know about the progress science has made in other cultures. Bacon solves the problem by sending forth secret agents who gather the needed information in foreign countries.

Gerber points out that the seeds for the concept of "Man, the Master" are planted in *New Atlantis*, although they could not fully germinate until Darwin's evolutionary theory gave it a firmer foundation:

More's attitude is tempered by reason; one should alleviate conditions as much as possible. . . . But Heaven is more important, and man is not proud in *Utopia*; in fact pride is considered the most evil vice. . . . The typically modern Proud Man is found for the first time in Bacon's *New Atlantis*. A religious foundation is laid at the beginning, but is almost completely forgotten later.
on. . . . While in Utopia the priest is the only person who is magnificently dressed, in New Atlantis the member of Solomon's House proceeds in splendour and triumph, which gives occasion to an orgy of elaborate description of the riches surrounding Man, the Master. . . . [who is] shaping his destiny quite independently, although encouraged by the proven possibility of progress. The creed of 'scientific humanism' may also be called the creed of utopian humanism because of its long, far-reaching vista. (7-9)

With the emerging emphasis on the importance of the individual and the potential of science, man's life on earth gained an significance it did not have for many centuries.

* * *
The Age of Enlightenment and the Nineteenth Century

While the liberating effect of humanism had been a impelling force in utopian speculation, and while the revolutionary influence of the Renaissance and the Reformation had generated ideas concerned with social reform, the consolidation of national states, says Berneri, made their voicing impossible. Although the utopian writers of the Enlightenment presented their schemes under the cover of fantastic romances, "they had to protect themselves against prosecution by printing their books abroad or giving them a false imprint" (176).

Defoe's Robinson Crusoe (1719) inspired an influx of travel tales and literature portraying ideal families or small model communities. Full-fledged utopian societies were camouflaged as non-European and transplanted to exotic places:

If the purely mythical "noble savages" described by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Bernardin St. Pierre peopled many utopias of the eighteenth century, others tried to discover "genuine savages" in countries untouched by civilisation. . . . We find also that while utopias had tried to represent a society where complete equality was the rule, many of them are now concerned with building a free society. The inhabitants of Diderot's Tahiti, for example, do not know either government or laws. Utopias had provided sufficient food and clothing, comfortable houses and a good education, but in exchange they had demanded the complete submission of the individual to the state and its laws; they now sought above all
these things freedom from laws and governments. (Berneri 177)

With the French Revolution, the utopist's aim underwent a fundamental change. Utopias were no longer written to "present standards of excellence merely; they now are incentives to action. The natural goodness of man, asserted by so many writers of the late eighteenth century, had to be given expression in social and political reality" (Garret 9).

In 1789, hopes ran high that a new age of social justice was dawning. People had freed themselves of tyranny, and machines would free them of hard labour. Reason would be the guide to utopia: no rational man could oppose a reasonable plan if everything still standing between him and Reason could be removed. The doctrine of human perfectability—claiming that man's nature is solely the product of his environment—threw a new light on utopian speculation.

William Godwin was among those who believed that human character is shaped by external factors, and that man was constantly improving, both morally and intellectually: a beneficent social organization would render him both rational and altruistic, especially if his personal judgement were permitted to be the highest authority in determining his action.

Although Godwin's views differed slightly from Bentham's and Mill's, he was also a utilitarian, and aimed to provide the greatest good for the greatest number of people. The answer, he felt, lay in an absence of government. Although the term "anarchism" was not to be coined until fifty years later by Proudhon, Godwin accumulated the anarchistic ideas of Zeno, Rabelais, Fenelon, and others, into a comprehensive theory: his treatise Enquiry Concerning Political Justice was published in 1793.
Reforms were badly needed. Industrialism had destroyed the old social order; agricultural land was dwindling through expropriation by big landowners, forcing the peasants into the city factories where working conditions were deplorable, wages were inadequate, and security was absent.

Godwin proposed small, semi-autonomous, voluntary federations resembling the old villages. Although he felt that men should be equal, it was not in keeping with the concept of liberty to enforce equality or deprive anyone of his possessions. The individual should be given the chance, through the exercise of reason, to dispose of them of his own accord.

Godwin did not believe that societies or individuals could be improved by force. "Punishment inevitably excites in the sufferer, or ought to excite, a sense of injustice" (95). The only way to change people or social wrongs was by education or peaceful protests. Within the communes, Godwin felt, public opinion would check all anti-social acts as being offences against reason. As an economic basis for his ideal society, he proposed independent home industry in which the manufacturer was also the distributor.

Godwin had a long-lived influence on many who shared his concerns, among them Romantic poets liked Shelley, Wordsworth, and Coleridge. His communes spawned countless other schemes featuring similar arrangements, and numerous attempts were made to realize some of them in practice. Coleridge and Southey conceived the idea of a Pantisocracy, a small nucleus of perfection on the banks of the Susquehanna, away from hopelessly corrupt
Europe. Two hours of daily work would take care of clearing the wilderness; the remaining time would be spent pleasurably in intellectual pursuit.

In the 1840s, more than fifty cooperative communities were founded, but most of those schemes collapsed before they got properly off the ground, mainly for lack of funding. The ones that did succeed, like the Brook Farm near Boston, did not exist for long. Hawthorne, who had joined it for a few months, kept its memory alive in The Blithedale Romance. From the letters he wrote during his stay, it is clear that the farm work was minimized in planning those communities, and that in the proposed schedule of an equal mixture of physical labour and intellectual pastime the latter was usually spent in exhausted sleep.

The most prominent figures in the development of utopian colonies were Robert Owen, Charles Fourier, Claude Henri Saint-Simon, and Theodor Hertzka. Owen, Fourier, and Saint-Simon were called "the fathers of socialism", and their influence on nineteenth-century utopias was profound. However, socialism stood for a centralized government and intensive industrialization, and of the three "fathers" only Saint-Simon supported the new industrial regime.

Owen's A New View of Society (1813-14) expressed his belief that society could be remade from a plan. To test his theories, Owen initiated extensive reforms in his cotton-spinning mills at New Lanark in Scotland, providing model housing, schools, and improved working conditions for his employees. When his profits did not drop but began to increase, he considered it to be the proof that people were indeed shaped by the environment, and that all social ills could be cured by education.
Since he could find no support for an experimental colony in England, Owen acquired a property in Harmony, Indiana. New Harmony opened in 1825; it featured the first kindergarten, the first trade school, the first free library, and the first community-supported public school in America. Although it foundered after two years, mainly due to lack of skilled workmen and factionalism, it remained a model for future generations to follow (Enc. Brit. 22: 824).

"The heart of Fourier's theories was the idea . . . [that] man could, by rational study, determine the perfect social balance of human arrangement. Social harmony could be achieved by matching individuals of complementary passions in a social unit that Fourier called a phalanx" (Enc. Brit. 22: 824). Charles Fourier did not believe in the community of goods, nor in equality. He favoured the abolition of wages, aiming to replace them with dividends according to the deserts and investment of the shareholders, a measure foreshadowing the mutualism of Proudhon. All phalanxes were to be small, self-supporting, and self-governing; soon, he hoped, the globe would be covered with loosely connected phalansteries. Although a Transcendentalist community at first, in 1845 Brook Farm was reorganized as a phalanx. Between 1841 and 1859, about twenty-eight phalanxes were founded, but none survived for long.

The common possession of land was the basis for Theodor Hertzka's Freeland: a Social Anticipation (1889). Hertzka, an Austrian economist, proposed a socialistic community in which the individual's freedom was fully preserved, especially in regard to enterprise. Although all capital was to remain the property of the state, each person would be able to obtain land,
machinery and funding for industrial or agricultural ventures. The old and disabled would be the responsibility of the state; wages would be paid in accordance with the work performed, and net profit sharing would be enjoyed by the members of a company. Personal effects, houses and gardens were to remain the property of the individual. Hertzka's book had a tremendous impact. Freeland societies sprang up on two continents, and an attempt was made to found a colony in Africa, but it remained unsuccessful.

If they feature equality and communal possession of land and goods, all those proposals represent a return to the egalitarian or semi-egalitarian societies of early man when he first changed from a migratory to a sedentary lifestyle, and when his communities were still too small to allow either specialization or stratification; most resources, at this point in time, were still pooled.

In one form or another, this model underlies all non-governed utopias. In replacing the ancient technology with an advanced technology, utopists combine the ideals of solidarity, interdependence, and diversification with eased labour and the benefits of a modern age.

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While the effects of industrialism and capitalism on the working population had been the major preoccupation of utopists up to the second half of the nineteenth century, by the end of the 1850s utopian imagination received a new impetus to which it responded with enthusiasm or doubts, and with a new narrative style.

In 1859 Darwin published Origin of the Species, following it with The Descent of Man in 1871. The first work of utopian fiction to reflect the
theory of evolution was Bulwer-Lytton's *The Coming Race*, published in 1871. It bears no resemblance to the socialist programs of the age, and would have been sneered at by any self-respecting reformer. Although closely related to the old utopian tradition, the narration is more modern, and the framework of the traveller happening upon the ideal world is extended into a simple adventure story.

Unlike many who associated evolution with a bright future for Man, the Master, Bulwer-Lytton did not react as positively as, for instance, Wells. In several ways, *The Coming Race* is a forerunner to the dystopias of the twentieth century, and contains strong elements of science fiction: although of human ancestry, the superior "aliens" have evolved too far beyond man's stage of development to feel any kinship with him. To the Vril-ya, the protagonist is like Cro-Magnon man, if he were to appear in our age, an object of scientific interest and no more. They treat him with detached politeness, but he has no place among them.

Their powers, which reside in a force called "vril", give them complete control over the environment, as well as supremacy over less powerful races also residing in their subterranean domain. When "vril" was attained, both governments and wars became a thing of the past. Equality is total. Property and money, although not abolished, confer no social status.

The Vril-ya are beautiful, serene, controlled—but their society has flaws. Children must do the work machines and androids cannot do—an unlikely detail Lytton picked up from Fourier who felt that in letting children do the dirty work their destructive instincts and "love of dirt" would be put to good use (Berner 220). In the Darwinian belief of survival
of the fittest, the Vril-ya do not hesitate to eliminate inferior races. They are unfeeling and utterly ruthless in their logic, like machines. Their society has become fixed, having reached perfection; although science flourishes, the arts have become sterile. This, the author says, is what evolution combined with the doctrine of perfectability, the exercise of reason, and the triumph of science would lead to. "Bulwer-Lytton has deliberately gathered together the cherished proposals of social and political Utopists," says Garret, "and concluded that in a Utopia, especially one dominated by science, life would be intolerable . . . that their way of life would smother civilization" (32).

Samuel Butler was less concerned with the results of human evolution than with the more rapid evolution of technology. Erewhon presents a mirror image of earth, but its people have, in several instances, reversed values. Illness, for instance, is considered a crime, while real crime is compassionately treated as an illness. The model of early man's society is made even more authentic: the inhabitants smashed their machines when a scientist proved that they would eventually replace man. "There is no security," says the Erewhonian, "against the ultimate development of mechanical consciousness." It took man millions of years to evolve and gain consciousness; if machines which develop much more rapidly underwent the same evolutionary process, what would they become in twenty million years? "Are we not ourselves creating our successors in the supremacy of the earth?" (141-49)

That man's servant might eventually turn into his master was the theme of many a pessimistic portrayal of future societies.
The two most important signposts of utopian fiction in the late nineteenth century took evolution into account but showed more concern with the ever-increasing friction between industry and labour on two continents. Although the utopists' solutions differ fundamentally from one another, both had a resounding impact on their era. While Edward Bellamy sugar-coats his proposal with a Victorian-style romance, William Morris only uses the frame of the time traveller, but otherwise dispenses with any sort of plot. While Bellamy envisions the future as a fully industrialized America run with military precision, William Morris dreams, like More, of a return to the medieval English village. In both utopias socialism has been the means of ending monopolies and powerful syndicates, strikes and lockouts—"the last Bourgeois Paradise on earth is fast changing into a Purgatorio," said Engels in 1886— but while in one equality is enforced by a disguised totalitarianism, in the other it has come about naturally.

Bellamy was not associated with any proletarian movement, but the conflict between capital and labour had reached such dimensions it affected everyone. Since he was a stout believer in industrialism, he used a socialist state based on reason as the political foundation for Looking Backward (1888).

Like Rip Van Winkle, a Bostonian falls asleep in the 1890s and awakens in the year 2000. He finds that all labour problems have disappeared. After a peaceful revolution, the nation has absorbed all private corporations and consolidated all capital. Each citizen is an employee of the state. There are no more armed forces, only a vast industrial army which each person must serve to the best of his or her abilities.
The state regulates the life of everyone. Each person must go through the public school system, including university. At the age of twenty-one, he is conscripted into a work force which does the most disagreeable jobs that need to be done. After three years, he may choose any occupation announced to be open by the government and may spend six years in training. At thirty, he must offer his services to the state to be placed where he is most needed. After fifteen years, the citizen's debt to society is paid. Life, for the Bostonian of 2000, begins at forty-five: now he is finally free to enjoy himself and let the younger generation do the work.

There is no wage system. Each citizen is allotted an equal amount to spend as he pleases. No money changes hands; everyone is issued a credit card with a yearly limit of 4000 dollars—a prophetic forecast indeed. Goods are displayed in national shops; public restaurants offer the finest foods, even private dining rooms, if one is willing to pay for it.

The government is headed by the President of the United States, who is also the commander-in-chief of the industrial army. He, like everyone else who has risen to the upper echelon of the state, had to begin as recruit and come up through the ranks. He is elected by the "retired" people—meaning, that no one below forty-five is permitted to vote. There is also a class of managers who enjoy certain privileges, and a vast bureaucracy regulating labour placement and administering production and distribution of goods.

Police and judges are still needed, but there are no courts or juries. If anyone opposes the state or refuses to work, he loses all rights, including his credit card. Bellamy assures us that people are too happy to turn to crime; if they do, they are treated rather than being punished.
Bellamy forecast an authoritarian state, in which the individual has some freedom as long as he cooperates fully with its methods of control. It has all the flaws, says Mumford, of a nation in a state of war, where no one can escape its institutions—yet the author only materialized what most Marxists advocated: social equality through industrialism. Still, Bellamy's enthusiasm is fresh and sincere, even if much of his faith, viewed with the skepticism of another century's experience, seems naive.

In Morris's *News From Nowhere* (1890), socialism is of a different brand, producing a relaxed, engaging utopia where people's lives are their own, and where they can do pretty well as they please. Theirs is the comradeship, the neighborliness of the pioneers who depend on one another for help and who turn mutual projects, like barn raising, or harvesting, into festively merry occasions. Fear, exploitation, and poverty are long forgotten. The utopians' prominent feature is a joyful passion for life and their lovely world that carries the stamp of conviction. True, not all unhappiness can be avoided, but whatever grief has been caused by want, injustice, traditional institutions, or public criticism has been removed.

The time traveller awakens in an England that is again beautiful, its people in harmony with nature. Sprawling industry, ugly Victorian buildings and bridges, and the pretentious mansions of the wealthy are gone. The countryside is green and uncluttered, dotted with small villages; England has become "a garden, where nothing is wasted and nothing is spoilt, with the necessary dwellings, sheds, and workshops scattered up and down the country, all trim and neat and pretty" (90). The air is clean, the Thames
is unpolluted. The people are not only beautiful, but healthy, robust, and surprisingly long-lived. The man from the past is received with courtesy and child-like enthusiasm, and treated with generosity. The book is permeated with laughter and warmth, music, sunshine and bright colours; it all seems very real, lingering on like a nostalgic memory: Morris's flight to a better future is a return to the charm and simplicity of the past.

Garret claims that *News From Nowhere* owes much to the Gothic Revival, but more to the writings of John Ruskin who "had denounced industrialism because it destroyed the creative impulses of the worker; he had stressed the dignity of manual labour; he had denounced Victorian architecture . . . attacked capitalism and organized his Guild of St. George to show how, in little agricultural communities, the good life could be lived" (38).

In Morris's utopia, the good life came after a violent struggle, no longer remembered by anyone but historians. It resulted in a classless society of people who are totally equal, who have no servants, no governing body, no monetary system, and no bureaucracy. The Houses of Parliament have become a place to store manure, because the rule of the majority decides all matters. There is no private property: everyone takes what he needs.

The concept of work has changed. Once identical with drudgery, it has become a pastime identical with pleasure. The utopians have reached this point "by the absence of artificial coercion, and the freedom for every man to do what he can do best" (115), and by the pride each man places in the quality of his work. Machines from the past are still in use, performing the irksome tasks, but no new ones are built or invented. Great emphasis is placed on handicrafts, which combine "the utmost refinement of workmanship"
with the "freedom of fancy and imagination" (220). The colourful fourteenth-century costumes of the utopians are ornamented with embroidery, their dining halls are tastefully decorated, their dishes and pottery handmade. There is no reward for work well done; the reward lies in the accomplishment itself, and in the approval and admiration of one's neighbor.

There are households, but people can live where or with whom they please. Families are only held together by mutual affection, and everyone is free to come or go. Children are permitted to enjoy their childhood and are not pressured into absorbing knowledge they may never need. However, if their desire for learning is genuine, they are provided with every opportunity to acquire it.

If married couples do not get along or find a more suitable partner, they simply part. There is no stigma attached to adultery, to common-law marriages, to children born out of wedlock. There are no crimes of sexual passion which sprang from the idea "of woman being the property of man," an idea which vanished "with private property, as well as certain follies about the 'ruin' of women for following their natural desires . . . " (102).

There is no need for law, civil or criminal. With no one exerting control over another, with possessions, envy and frustration removed, with freedom of speech and movement, only a sick mind could turn to crime, and such a person must be treated with compassion. If a man slays another in rivalry, no punishment will whitewash him. He is advised to go away, even across the sea, or live in isolation and remorse until he has atoned for his deed.

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page 34
Twentieth-Century Utopias and the Dystopian Reaction

When Bellamy's followers founded societies to turn his blueprints into steel-and-concrete reality, conservatives reacted with counter proposals, denouncing his theories. Arthur Vinton wrote *Looking Further Backward*; Konrad Wilbrandt produced *Mr. East's Experiences in Mr. Bellamy's World*, and Richard C. Michaelis *Looking Forward*, examining questions such as the loss of personal freedom and lessened efficiency in socialist systems. After the turn of the century, the concern that the welfare state might draw no line between the deserving and the undeserving, would kill incentive and relieve men of responsibility, was expressed by a number of more eminent authors, among them Evelyn Waugh, with "Love Among the Ruins", and Ayn Rand, whose "nightmare is a world in which the incompetents exploit the conscience of their betters and impose a society tailored to their own mediocrity" (Walsh 74-81).

There was also the increasing fear that the advancing machine technology might reach a point where it would no longer serve but rule man. Although Butler had already suggested this possibility in *Erewhon*, and William Morris had brought technical invention to a standstill in *News From Nowhere*, (other anti-machine worlds are W. H. Hudson's *A Crystal Age*, and William Dean Howells' *A Traveller in Altruria*,) "the real onslaught . . . arrived with the post-1900 reaction against the dominant positivism of earlier generations and their faith in machines as instruments of progress. Wells, the arch-positivist, was the chief object of attack." By emphasizing science "as the means to achieve and preserve utopia", and by giving it "a
social and even, in *Men Like Gods*, a socialist goal, he bore the brunt of anti-utopian thunder" (Loubere 152).

H. G. Wells was as optimistic about the advancing technology as he was about scientific progress. Father of science fiction and most influential of scientific utopian writers, he believed that the evolution of man and the steady improvement of society would go hand in hand. As he says at the beginning of *A Modern Utopia* (1905), the "Utopias men planned before Darwin . . . were all perfect and static States. . . . But the Modern Utopia must be not static but kinetic, must shape not as a permanent state but as a hopeful stage, leading to a long ascent of stages" (5). However, it would be unrealistic to expect that a few hundred years of evolution would improve man so drastically that he could dispense with all governmental control. Were we free to have our untrammelled desire, I suppose we should follow Morris to his Nowhere, we should change the nature of man and the nature of things together; we should make the whole race wise, tolerant, noble, perfect—wave our hands to a splendid anarchy . . . in a world as good in its essential nature, as ripe and sunny, as the world before the Fall. (7).

There is control in Wells's Modern Utopia, but people have retained as much individual freedom as members of any society can expect. Only "spendthrift liberties that waste liberty" (32) are taken away; man's security, his freedom to choose where to live and where to work, the right to privacy, to "a corner definitely his", to own property, to dress and eat according to his own taste, make up for it.

The Modern Utopia is located on a planet identical to Earth, "out beyond Sirius", and its history ist the same, but at some point in the past
it has taken a turn in a more positive direction: although still not perfect, Utopia's social organization is vastly superior to that of Earth. Machines perform all menial tasks, even replace chambermaids in hotels. "All that machinery has to offer has been accepted and humanized: there is a cleanliness, an absence of squalor and confusion, in this world community, which indicates that utopia has not been purchased by evasion" (Mumford 185). A network of monorails and other advanced forms of transportation make it possible for everyone to travel as extensively as he wishes, or take jobs on any part of the globe.

Utopian economy is based on the model of Hertzka who also tried to strike a balance between socialism and capitalism. The state owns all the land, which it leases out to private companies or individuals, and all mineral and energy resources. Utilities are "internationalized", but there is plenty of room for private enterprise. The monetary system is not based on the gold standard, but on units of energy. Private capital can be bequested to children, but the State imposes heavy inheritance taxes on larger-than-average legacies. Most people work for their livelihood, but if they can afford not to, no one will object. "Work as a moral obligation is the morality of slaves, and so long as no one is overworked, there is no need to worry because so few are underworked" (154). The unemployed are sent to regions short of labour, or are put to work on special projects.

Every person has to register with the authorities, and must advise them of moves and changes in marital status. There is no "compulsory pairing", only general "limiting conditions": if they wish to produce a child, a couple must be solvent, above a certain age, free of transmissible diseases
and innocent of non-expiated crimes. Each woman receives a certain sum upon the birth of a child; consecutive payments assure her and her offspring's independence. If a child is not well cared for, the allowance is discontinued.

For the purposes of political organization people are classified by temperament: the four main classes are the Poietic, the Kinetic, the Dull and the Base. Since the same education is provided to all citizens, people drift toward those classes of their own accord. The Poietic and Kinetic are the valuable human material, distinguishable only by the degree of imagination they possess; the Dull are the stupid, the Base the criminals and drunkards. Since there is no death penalty or jails, the incorrigible are sent to remote islands, separated by sex to prevent propagation.

The ruling class, the samurai, are almost identical with Plato's Guardians. Any intelligent adult, after the age of twenty-five, can become a samurai, if he is willing to live a strict life of moral discipline, regimentation of dress and conduct. Samurai cannot engage in commerce, must not smoke or drink, or keep servants, or marry out of their own class. Needless to say, all top positions are in the hands of this elite.

If one believes in quality differentiation among men, the Wellsian world is orderly and just, a vision of competence. The price he pays for his ideal society, says Mumford, is smaller than Bellamy was willing to pay: This modern utopia brings together, compares, and criticizes important points that all the other utopias have raised; and it does all this with a deftness and a turn of humor that speaks for Mr. Wells at his best. Above all, A Modern Utopia strikes a new
note, the note of reality, the note of the daily world from which we endeavor in vain to escape. More or less, all the other utopias assume that a change has come over the population . . . that the mean sensual man has been converted and is ready to flap his wings and sing Halleluja! There is a minimum of those assumptions in *A Modern Utopia*. (189)

But Wells also demonstrates the long-range effects of evolution: if man's flaws were still a factor to be reckoned with in *A Modern Utopia*, in *Men Like Gods* (1923) he has, after three millenia of evolution, education and eugenic purification, become a member of a super-race. Now he needs no laws, no government to function desirably. Everyone has the same rights and duties, and private property has disappeared.

There is no sexual inhibition, no clothing. Language has been replaced with thought transmission. Technology is advanced but unobtrusive. Nature has been subdued and changed to serve man. Certain species of pests, parasites and bacteria have been eliminated, together with some undesirable wild beasts; disease is a thing of the past. There are no rules of any sort because all the rules the Utopians need have been internalized in childhood.

Sex is regarded as natural and beautiful. There are no marriages, no "undissoluble couples". Unions are formed and ended, either by consent, or because lovers' occupations often take them to different places—-one problem that surfaces in *The Dispossessed*. Consequently, women bear children only after due thought and preparation.

Children are brought up on large estates by nurses and teachers, and are financially independent: at birth, the state supplies each child with a
sum sufficient to educate and maintain him up to the age of twenty-five, when he is expected to choose an occupation and look after himself.

Although the "classical" tradition comes to an end with Wells, three more utopian efforts should at least be mentioned. One is Olaf Stapledon's *Last and First Men* (1930), in which evolutional utopianism reaches its peak. Another is *Walden Two* (1948): B. F. Skinner, a professor of the Harvard Psychology Department, presents a community presided over by a panel of behaviouralists trying to condition men into acquiring positive traits. The third greatly surprised Huxley readers: thirty years after the horrors of *Brave New World*, he published a genuine utopia, *Island*. Walsh describes the novel as basically Buddhist, "though much aware of modern science and its possibilities, and its goal is that of the 'Higher Utilitarianism, in which the Greatest Happiness principle would be secondary to the Final End principle' ('the unitive knowledge of the imminent Tao or Logos')" (137).

* "If utopia is social planning that produces good results, dystopia is most often social planning that backfires and slides into nightmare whatever its original intent may have been" (137), says Walsh, and it would be hard to prove him wrong. Most dystopias, however, do not give much of a history, except that a war, or a great revolution, overturned whatever system existed before.

The aim of the dystopist, certainly, is to warn of utopian features, or of human desires which, realized and carried to their extreme, could produce disastrous and sometimes irreversible results. This is what it might turn out to be, they say. Beware. What looks like the perfect solution to
present problems may turn out to be a hell of the worst sort.

Those hells have a number of common denominators. In a study of recurrent themes in a variety of dystopian literature, Walsh finds, for instance, that the break between Man and Nature is widened; the old tendency of utopia to surround itself with tidy farms and gardens, accelerated by Wells who eliminates the more bothersome species, is carried even further, amounting, in many cases, to total alienation. Man's primal drives are undesirable because they distract him from the common goal, and are either suppressed, restricted to procreation, or turned into an easily accessible commodity. If marriage is permitted, the state most often chooses the mate and looks after the upbringing of the children. By downgrading the human body and depriving man of his traditional roles, the rulers weaken the sense of the individual ego, making it more likely "that the average man will merge his own frail identity with the social whole" (Walsh 138-43).

Depersonalization becomes absolute. In Zamyatin's We, for instance, citizens become numbers, parts of a machinery who have to dress, think and act alike so they can be freely interchanged. To be as efficient and as dependable as a machine is the noblest because the most useful goal to aspire to. Man's very right of existence depends on how effective a part of the machinery he is; once he wears out, he becomes superfluous; and if he dares to disturb its smooth operation, he has forfeited every right of existence.

Atheism is rare in dystopia, although God is usually substituted by The State, The Common Purpose, or the deified leader—Big Brother in Nineteen
Eighty-Four, "Our Ford" in Brave New World, the Benefactor in We.

Man's rebellion against losing his personal identity is usually fired by outmoded emotions like romantic love, or lust, or any of the basic drives dystopia denies its members for the good of society—as, for instance, the desire for motherhood: 0-90 in We insists on having a baby although she does not meet the required physical norm and faces execution for her "crime".

Dystopia has several cures for man's independent notions, ranging from a mild form of administering drugs—like soma in Brave New World—to genetic tampering, pre- and post-natal conditioning, to more severe methods of brain-washing, and physical and mental torture. In We wholesale lobotomy is the final ingenious solution, making for universal mindless happiness, and the ultimate triumph of the One State, a measure that seems almost humane compared to the systematic, long-term shattering of body and mind the Thought Police practises in Nineteen Eighty-Four.

However, most dystopists leave a ray of hope for the future of mankind, and some stubborn individualists who prefer the flawed, hazardous pre-utopian way of living to the standardized bliss of their society, get away. In the darkest dystopias, like Nineteen Eighty-Four, no one gets away: evil reigns absolute, and is so firmly entrenched that no human being caught in its sphere of influence stands a chance against it. Its total power rests not in physical brutality alone, but in a more fearful instrument developed in the twentieth century: the application of psychology as a mind-controlling and mind-destroying force.

Of the four dystopias to be briefly viewed, two present totalitarianism in its most corrupt form, while the third satirizes two utopian features--
general happiness and eugenic breeding—showing the first obtained at any cost, and the second carried to the extreme. The fourth dystopia joins Erewhon's concern regarding the possible dominance of machines over their creators. Modern psychology plays a major role in all of them.

What happens when man stops using his physical and mental capacities and becomes too dependent on his own technology is the subject of E. M. Forster's story *The Machine Stops* (1928). Here, fear of untamed nature has become so great, humanity has established itself underground. Each person lives alone; physical contact is considered so vulgar that social exchange is conducted through television screens. All needs are taken care of by The Machine: it regulates people's lives and sustains them, and has done so, flawlessly, for many generations; a perpetuum mobile and symbol of perfection, it has achieved super-human status. When The Machine begins to fail and finally stops, the fear of returning to the surface of the globe is too great for people to seek the obvious way out. In panic, they die—all but a few who have been banished from the subterranean world and exiled in the fearful wilderness above.

In Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* happiness is guaranteed because all factors which might interfere with it have been neatly eliminated. Love, marriage, and parenthood are part of an odious past. Ectogenesis in state hatcheries has replaced equally odious pregnancies and births. Sex is totally free and encouraged by the state, as long as it does not develop into more permanent relationships. Dissatisfaction with one's occupation and station in life is prevented before "decanting": only some embryos
destined to form the top crust are allowed to develop normally, while the rest are deprived of oxygen in varying degrees, thus creating several lower classes whose capacities range from mere simpleness to more drastic mental retardation. Sleep-conditioning reinforces the children's pride in belonging to a particular class. Huxley forecasts cloning by enabling his scientists to divide a human egg into numerous parts and producing great numbers of identical infants.

The citizens of this Brave New World lead a carefree life: to keep the economy healthy and all hands occupied, everyone must consume as much as possible; work is geared to each person's capabilities, and leisure time is devoted to pleasure, games, "feelies" and promiscuity. To take care of the occasional boredom or depression, rations of soma—a drug "with all the advantages of Christianity and alcohol" and none of their drawbacks—are issued on a regular basis. Soma keeps everyone's happiness at a steady level, and helps the dying to die happily while watching television.

The Controllers, who see to it that happiness prevails, seem generally civilized, benevolent and understanding. Individuality has not been killed by force, but lulled to death. The only threat to the state resides with the intellectual elite, the Alphas, who might think too independently and begin to question the values of their Brave New World. If one or the other Alpha cannot be swayed by reason, he is sent off to some pleasant island, to be unhappy with other malcontents.

Most prefer not to think too much. Living only for pleasure, they have become two-dimensional, like paper dolls, sub-human, healthy and beautiful shells with no content. Utopia, Huxley is saying, always extracts a price;
and the price is, in most cases, far too high. Utopia is the greener grass on the other side of the fence, distanced just far enough so no one can see the weeds until the fence is climbed—an observation that corresponds with Oscar Wilde's famous quotation that humanity forever sails to the shores of some utopia, and when it gets there, sails on. Twentieth-century man, who has seen age-old dreams realized and then turned into nightmares, has become cynical and cautious: the desire for utopia has become mingled with the fear of utopia achieved, and the even greater fear that sailing-on might be impossible.

More than others, Yevgeny Zamyatin experienced the betrayal of this dream. He was persecuted twice, first under the Tsarist regime for being active in the revolutionary movement, and later by the forces he helped put into power. We appeared in New York in 1924, translated from Russian, but was never published in the Soviet Union. George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four came out twenty-five years later, yet both books, despite their differences in style and form, are very similar. Not only are they identical in the subject matter—total power corrupts totally—but the story lines are similar as well; both are written with forceful and frightening conviction.

We takes place a thousand years hence, while Nineteen Eighty-Four portrays a future only a quarter of a century ahead. Both feature police states of the worst imaginable kind, employing a vast apparatus to supervise its citizens and to ferret out dissatisfied elements before they can join with others. Both political systems have leaders who cover their
ruthlessness with a mixture of indomitability and patriarchal benevolence. Both protagonists are led toward rebellion by an illegal love affair and are finally brutalized into submission and disintegration of self.

In the One State of Zamyatin's *We*, totalitarianism has reached its ultimate form, and dehumanization its highest peak: man has the status of a bee in a beehive. The globe is covered with glittering cities, surrounded by high walls to confine people to a relatively small space; everyone has been made to believe that the wilderness outside is hideous, disorderly, and full of dangers; no one is allowed beyond the Green Wall.

Citizens live by the Tables of Hourly Commandments, working, eating, and sleeping to the sound of a bell. To ensure that those periods are observed, people are housed in glass buildings and are not allowed to lower their blinds, except when engaging in sexual activities for which a ticket must be obtained. By law "every number has the right of availability, as a sexual number, to any other number." All conversations are monitored by the Guardians; television cameras and microphones are placed everywhere, even in the streets. The "I" has been replaced by the "We". Since a cell in a living organism can have no autonomy, non-freedom has become an ideal. "The only means of delivering man from crimes is to deliver him from liberty" (63).

D-503, co-builder of the spaceship Integral which will carry the message of the One State to far-off civilizations is a model citizen until a rebel woman draws him into an underground movement planning to seize the Integral. She becomes an obsession he cannot resist. When the plot is discovered, he is given the usual "third degree" and finally betrays the
conspirators. His life, however, is spared: after he has undergone an operation removing "fancy" from his brain, he achieves permanent happiness and tranquillity, and can watch calmly how the rebels, including the woman he loves, are suffocated by slowly extracting the air from the glass bell in which they have been placed.

The third dystopia achieving wide popularity is George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949). Here, the sharp emotional upward and downward curves of the first-person narrative are replaced with a slower exposition which nonetheless reaches a climax as intense as We, probably even more horrifying. The picture of the moustached leader (so much like Stalin), with the caption "Big Brother is watching you!" glares from every wall. Although the structure and practices of the police state are almost identical with Zamyatin's, its evils seem deeper, more perverted, more insane.

The story takes place in London, the capital of Oceania, a country hermetically sealed off from its neighbors, and forever at war with one or the other. The Party is all-powerful; supervision is absolute. History has been doctored up to allow no standard of comparison, records are falsified to prove non-existent inventions and achievements.

Being constantly at war, Oceania is not the gleaming, antiseptic world of We. It is a dingy, dirty, vermin- and rat-infested world that smells of boiled cabbage and soot, inhabited by unattractive people who are short on consumer goods and have to work long hours. Meals in the public cafeterias are barely edible. "Victory Gin"—liquor of the poorest quality—takes the
place of soma. Music and literature are produced by the state.

Sex is discouraged because it creates a world outside the Party's control. There is a Junior Anti-Sex League, and neurologists are busy trying to eliminate the orgasm. When Winston, the protagonist, and the girl he is in love with have found a private place in the woods, their embrace was "a battle, the climax a victory. It was a blow struck against the Party. It was a political act" (104).

Procreation, on the other hand, is a duty to the State. The family remains intact, and has become an extension of the Thought Police. Children are trained to spy on their parents and report any suspicious word or move. All relationships are tainted with fear.

Winston hates the Party and everything connected with it. When he confides in one of the Inner Party members who, he believes, belongs to a secret counter movement, the trap is sprung and he is caught. But the Party wants no martyrs who go unrepentant to their executions. Before he is eliminated, the traitor must relearn, he must be convinced of his "crime". After enduring the long, painful process in which his body and his spirit, and finally, his mind are systematically broken, Winston, who once wrote in his journal, "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four," at last reaches a point where he actually believes it when his torturer tells him that it makes five. "Do you begin to see, then, what kind of world we are creating?" he asks Winston. "It is the exact opposite of the stupid hedonistic Utopias that the old reformers imagined. . . . The old civilizations claimed that they were founded on love or justice. Ours is founded upon hatred. . . . If you want a picture of the future, imagine a
boot stamping on a human face—for ever" (215).

When his degradation and deterioration are complete, when he has renounced all he has believed in, Winston is set free to vegetate, to drink Victory Gin and hope for the bullet which, he knows, will come eventually. It will come when he is forgotten by everyone, when he is just a useless drunkard stumbling down a street. In this dystopia, man is not allowed to die in dignity; he is not even allowed to know that he has died for a cause.

* 

This completes the brief survey of secular utopias based on practical considerations. Seen from a purely political point of view, the fact emerges that the overall direction of utopian thought proceeds from the communist state to the communistic anarchy. After the property-sharing, class-structured and supervised society of the Republic, Renaissance humanism and the Protestant Reformation inspire schemes also featuring common possession of land and property, as well as governmental control. The French Revolution and the destructive impact of the Industrial Revolution on established social order give rise to various suggestions concerning social reform; socialist proposals are divided between non-governed, decentralized, non-industrialized communities, and a strong, central government combined with intensive industrialization, but without capitalism. Democratic systems in various forms are also suggested, and some utopists try to strike a balance between socialism and capitalism. After the Russian Revolution, and the disillusionment caused by the integration of socialist communism into a totalitarian state, anarchy becomes a desirable utopian objective.
Since Le Guin's contributions to the genre are based not only on research but also on personal beliefs and anthropological models, the models of other utopists warrant another glance. However innovative or modern some of the later utopias may appear, and how much of an answer to the problems of a specific age, it must be kept in mind that none of the proposed political arrangements are new, and that most originated in prehistoric or early historic times.

There are only two fundamental types of societal structure, the egalitarian and the stratified, and only two basic forms of administrative control, the autocratic and the democratic. The mores, attitudes, beliefs, definition of ethics, and so on, change with the development of cultures, or merely fluctuate. Some primitivisms like superstition, for instance, are never completely overcome: having landed on the moon does not prevent man from believing in luck, or astrology, or from shuddering at black cats crossing his path. His behavioural range and level of outlook are restricted by his biological and psychological limitations; progress does not change profoundly what Jung calls the collective unconscious.

Political history is a chain of reactions to reactions: whenever any form of societal arrangement reaches an unbearable extreme, man tries to revert to the opposite extreme, until the opposite, too, becomes undesirable or oppressive. The more top-heavy stratification grows, the more attractive equality appears. The same holds true for the reverse: the wealthier and more specialized a society becomes, the higher its living standard rises, demanding, in turn, a more complex administration.

Anarchism, as previously claimed, represents a return to the simple
living arrangements of early man who depended on nature and was in harmony with it. However, the more extensively modern elements in the form of technology are added to this anthropological model, the farther it moves away from its ideally balanced state. A person's appreciation of and attitude towards water are not the same when he has to hike to a stream to fetch it, or when he turns on a tap. The varying attitudes of the utopians in Always Coming Home and in The Dispossessed toward nature are a good example.

The more moderate forms of utopian governments are usually taken from the archaic and classical Greek models, from whatever period seemed the most stable and workable to the utopist. Like Le Guin's Hainish, the Greeks were the great experimenters in all forms of governmental organizations, while the rest of the civilized world was ruled by godkings, emperors, or self-appointed tyrants.

Ancient totalitarian states, made more horrible by the tools of a modern age, are reflected in dystopias like We and Nineteen Eighty-Four. Although based on more recent examples—the Soviet Union, for one—Bolshevik or fascist regimes, too, merely repeat the old Greek oligarchies.

Futuristic extrapolations visualizing man as the final (or almost final) product of evolution draw heavily from mythological sources. Man, having risen above himself, is no longer himself: he controls all natural forces, he can fly without aircraft, he can communicate by thought, he wields the powers of semi-divine beings. He has become one. Anthropological models no longer apply.

* * *
Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, subtitled "An Ambiguous Utopia", appeared in 1974, and was honoured with Nebula, Jupiter, and Hugo Awards. It is a work of greater length than the author's earlier books, consisting of ca. 134,000 words as compared to *The Left Hand of Darkness* with ca. 99,000. Structured to emphasize the contrast between two worlds, the alternate chapters of *The Dispossessed* form two separate narrative strands: all even-numbered chapters are devoted to Anarres, and all odd-numbered to Urras.

Since they deal with different stages of the protagonist's life, the two parts are not contemporaneous; the fact that they are initially decades apart but move steadily closer together corresponds with Shevek's progress toward the perfection of his Temporal Simultaneity Theory. They touch in the opening chapter and converge in the last: one strand begins with his departure from Anarres, while the other ends with his decision to undertake this journey—a decision immediately followed by the finale of his return. The parallel movements of Shevek's childhood, youth, and early manhood on Anarres and of his experiences on Urras are paralleled in content: both show his initial enthusiasm turning slowly, and in varying ways and degrees, into disillusionment.

*The Dispossessed* is a novel of impressive ambition and scope. Not only does it present two societies and describe two different planets, it also deals in depth with the protagonist's development as a man, as a scientist, and as an Odonian; it incorporates a wealth of ideas and ideals concerning the quality of life, and offers a new concept of utopia. It is
radical, courageous, and written with great conviction. But "perhaps its finest achievement is its toughmindedness, the willingness to pose difficult questions, accept the impossibility or failure of solutions, and still, with hope, seek answers" (Wood in Clareson 174).

The Anarresti Utopia

The society of Anarres is based on Odonianism, which conforms, in its major features, to the concepts of anarchism as we have seen them realized in *News From Nowhere*: central government is replaced by autonomous communities; property is held in common; laws and law-enforcing agencies are abolished; order and economic stability are maintained by mutual agreement among equal members of society, because free man, anarchists believe, is basically good and responds positively to a beneficent environment—the basic presumption upon which Godwininan theory is constructed.

"Anarchism, as prefigured in early Taoist thought . . . is the most idealistic, and to me the most interesting of all political theories" (WTQ 260), says Le Guin, but admits that she knew next to nothing about utopia. "It took me years of reading and pondering and muddling, and much assistance from Engels, Marx, Godwin, Goldman, Goodman, and above all Shelley and Kropotkin, before I could begin to see where he [Shevek] came from, and could see the landscape about him—and yes, it was a prison camp, but what a difference!" (LN 102).

The connection between Taoism and anarchism lies in the area of self-determination: in the thought of Lao Tzu, organizations and institutions
"interfere with a man's responsibility to himself . . . [and] the more any outside authority interferes with a man's use of life and the less the man uses it according to his own instinct and conscience, the worse for the man and the worse for society. The only authority is 'the way of life' itself" (Bynner 14). Government should govern by noninterference. "A leader is best / When people barely know that he exists" (Bynner 35).

Numerous critiques have been written on *The Dispossessed*, examining it from various viewpoints. The novel has been studied from the utopian or political perspective, or tested for Taoist content, but seldom have the two aspects been combined or given equal consideration, an omission sometimes leading to erroneous conclusions. The author's work cannot be fully judged or comprehended unless one keeps in mind that although Le Guin favours anarchism as a political theory, she is more deeply committed to the teachings of Lao Tzu, and wherever the two ideologies disagree, she will unerringly follow the latter. In "A Response to the Le Guin Issue"—an entire issue of *Science Fiction Studies* devoted to the author—she complains about the superficial knowledge of some of her critics: "The central image/idea of Taoism is an important thing to be clear about, certainly not because it's a central theme in my work. It's a central theme, period" (73-75: 157).

Since Taoism stands for non-violence, only the non-violent proponents of anarchism are of interest to the author. Mikhail Bakunin, one of the most outstanding anarchist leaders, is not mentioned among the figures who helped her to understand the theory. Representing the militant element—its "bomb-in-the-pocket" faction—he is directly opposed to Lao Tzu's ideal
of peace and passivity.

In his essay "Unbuilding Walls: Human Nature and the Nature of Evolutionary and Political Theory in The Dispossessed", Smith has proven that Le Guin's anarchism is almost solely Kropotkinian, a fact she readily admits. Kropotkin is closest to the Taoist concept of what a man should be: a peace-loving scholar who deepened the concept of anarchism by giving much thought to the ethics of an egalitarian society and the psychological needs of its members, he was also an idealist who quietly suffered for his beliefs but never betrayed them. In My Disillusionment in Russia, Emma Goldman describes Kropotkin as a withdrawn and modest man.

Proceeding from Le Guin's own statement that his Mutual Aid: a Factor of Evolution influenced her most profoundly because it proved "that cooperation is at least as important as aggression, and perhaps the more basic survival mechanism" (qtd. in Olander 79), Smith refers to the rift that developed in the interpretation of Darwin's theory: while T. H. Huxley emphasized the fundamental law of survival of the fittest, concluding that all human progress was a result of struggle for existence, Kropotkin claimed, based on his own observations, that the most highly evolved animals and humans seemed to be those which had developed the most sophisticated mechanisms for mutual aid. Although he did not "underrate the part which the self-assertion of the individual has played in the evolution of mankind," mutual aid has given men "the possibility of working out those institutions which have enabled mankind to survive in its hard struggle against Nature, and to progress, notwithstanding all the vicissitudes of its history" (MA xvi). However, this commitment to one's
species does not stem from love for one's neighbors, but from an instinct developed in the course of evolution. "It is the conscience . . . of human solidarity" (MA xiii). Kropotkin wanted to see a society endowed with moral principles which had risen above the concept of revenge or reward, "principles superior to mere equivalence, equity, or justice, and more conducive to happiness. A man is appealed to be guided in his acts, not merely by love, which is always personal, or at the best tribal, but by the perception of his oneness with each human being" (MA 300).

The idea of a genetic bond that transcends love is expressed by Shevek in his speech to the demonstrators in Nio Esseia: "It is our suffering that brings us together. It is not love. . . . The bond that binds us is beyond choice" (241). In describing the Anarresti society, he states, "We have no law but the single principle of mutual aid between individuals" (241).

The dystopian Ioti side with Huxley's interpretation of Darwinism: "The law of evolution is that the strongest survives!" says Vea (177). The physicist Atro voices the same opinion: "The law of existence is struggle—competition—elimination of the weak—a ruthless war for survival" (115).

Kropotkin condemned the division of labour which destroys man's spirit and inventiveness, proposing that intellectuals should also engage in manual work, and industrial workers in farm labour. "A reorganised society . . . must find the best means of combining agriculture with manufacture—the work in the field with a decentralised industry" (FFW 26-27). Similar views are expounded by Paul Goodman, another of Le Guin's sources, in his book People or Personnel.
Le Guin realizes diversity of labour on Anarres by introducing the tenthday—one day in ten set aside for communal tasks—thus combining the utopian problem of "Who does the most disagreeable work?" with the humanitarian concern of Kropotkin. When Shevek is asked by the Ioti physicist Oiie why people do not rebel against such jobs, he answers, "If you work at a mechanical loom mostly, every tenthday it's pleasant to go outside and lay a pipe or plow a field, with a different group of people" (121). The outstanding physicist Gvarab always spends her tenthday janitoring (130).

Anarres, as Smith suggests, is a realization of Kropotkin's dream: a society analogous with a unified natural organism where each member represents a cell contributing to the growth and health of the whole.

Mutual aid is the foundation on which the settlement of Anarres is built; it could not exist without it. The planet is arid; its thin atmosphere results in extreme temperatures. Although its oceans team with marine life and the fertile strips along the seashore grow grains and fruit trees, the better part of Anarres supports no other life forms but tough flowerless plants. Once the planet was covered with holum trees, but a prehistorical cooling trend killed the trees and high winds blew away the humus, leaving a desert of dust. No land animals evolved. "Man fitted himself with care and risk into this narrow ecology. If he fished, but not too greedily, and if he cultivated, using mainly organic wastes for fertilizer, he could fit in" (150).

The inhabitants, Odonian insurgents from the mother planet of Urras,
did not come to Anarres entirely of their own accord. It was offered to them by the Council of World Governments "before they fatally undermined the authority of law and national sovereignty on Urras" (77). The new colony was based on the teachings of Odo, leader and draftsman of their ideal society, who did not live to see it realized.

Odo was aware that the pitfalls of a ready-made society was an eventual stiffening into rigour, a misinterpretation of values, or their slow deterioration. Those dangers could be only reduced by connecting the autonomous settlements with communication networks, so that none would be cut off and develop in an independent direction. All communities should be equal in importance, if not in size, and each should contribute something vital to all. There should be no controlling centre, no capital, "no establishment for the self-perpetuating machinery of bureaucracy and the dominance drive of individuals seeking to become captains, bosses, chiefs of state" (77). She also wanted the revolution to be an ongoing process; like any living organism, society should grow, should forever renew itself.

However, Odo's blueprint was designed for a more bountiful world. With large areas of Anarres unsuitable for cultivation, the settlements had to be separated by vast distances, and none were self-supporting. The plan had to be adapted to existing conditions: The computers that coordinated the administration of things, the division of labor, and the distribution of goods, and the central federatives of most of the work syndicates, were in Abbenay, right from the start. And from the start the Settlers were aware that that unavoidable centralization was a lasting threat, to be
countered by lasting vigilance. (78)

Anarres does not qualify as a **bona fide** utopia: nature, which usually aids utopians, is not on their side. Whether they like it or not, the Anarresti have to make the best of it: their planet is an exile, a prison colony, "cut off from the other worlds and other men, in quarantine" (2), and the only contact with the mother world are the ships of the Trade Agreement which exchange mineral ore for fossil fuels, machine and electronic parts.

Secondly, and in contrast to most other utopias, Anarres does not exist outside time. Although it exists outside our time, in our future history (according to Watson, around AD 2300 [SFS 1973-75: 230]), it follows the time flow of the Le Guin cosmos where it occupies, temporally speaking, a primary position: Shevek's Simultaneity Theory provides the basis for the ansible which leads to the foundation of the League of Worlds, the Ekumen, fifty years later. The ancestors of the Anarresti lived on Urras for over eight millenia; the colony has already survived for 150 years, and we see it evolve for a better part of Shevek's lifetime.

The shallow utopian romance is replaced by the novel. *The Dispossessed* is a strong literary creation, and whatever minor flaws it may have are outweighed by the overall achievement. The fictional characters inhabiting the traditional utopia do not resemble real people; since their behaviour must convince the reader of their satisfaction with the ideal state or whatever replaces it, they are given their token ups and downs, but are generally merry, enjoying life in their idealized surroundings. Not so Le
Guin's. Her characters lead normal human lives; they have their share of trials, doubts, and suffering, their triumphs and defeats; they love and hate, they have flaws and virtues. Their problems are both personal and collective. Their utopia is not a stable constant, but vulnerable to threat and decay. A creation of mutual effort, its maintenance requires an even greater effort.

The traditional figurehead who discovers the better place by accident is absent. He is replaced, as many critics note, by the hero of the monomyth who follows the circular pattern of Separation—Initiation—Return, symbolized in the book by the Green Circle of Life, and by the inscription on Odo's grave stone: "True voyage is return" (68); both symbols correspond to the circle of the tao: "Man rounding the way of earth, / Earth rounding the way of heaven, / Heaven rounding the way of life / Till the circle is full" (Bynner 43).

The realization that Anarres has no future if it continues to deny its past, prompts Shevek to set out on his quest to attempt his people's reintegration with the human race. The "call to adventure" is represented by the dream of the wall. The threshold he must cross is symbolized by the wall surrounding the spaceport. After he has entered the unknown, he sets out upon a path of trials and temptations necessary to test his character; the boon he is ultimately granted is self-knowledge and removal of doubts. Although the norm of the monomyth requires "that the hero shall now begin the labor of bringing the runes of wisdom . . . back into the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand worlds" (Campbell 193), Shevek
returns as he has left, with empty hands. As Anarres has cut itself off from the past, Urras is cutting itself off from the future. "We cannot come to you," he tells the Terran ambassador. "You do not believe in change, in chance, in evolution. You would destroy us rather than admit our reality. ... We can only wait for you to come to us" (281).

Although he has been unsuccessful as a mediator, Shevek does not return in defeat. The book ends on a hopeful note: the Hainish—Le Guin's altruists and peace-makers—will not fail the man whose work makes the Ekumen possible. They will either open the universe to include Anarres, or assist him in renewing the revolution and restoring Odo's dream of a better world.

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The author has worked out Odo's plan and its realization on Anarres in great detail, and has made it so credible that negative criticisms, like Delany's and Moylan's, seem unjust. Although there are some omissions in the portrayal of Urras which, as Susan Wood notes, "is much less convincing than Anarres" and "cannot present an effective challenge to test Anarres" (174), utopia and the utopians are sound. Since Le Guin makes such a convincing case for anarchy in action, its workings bear a closer look.

Anarres is administered by the Production and Distribution Coordination, a computerized system covering the planet. To prevent the PDC from becoming a hierarchical power structure, people who wish to work in this organization are selected by lot, and their term must not exceed four years. Any person who feels that it is run incompetently, can call a criticism meeting in his or her Syndicate. Syndicate as well as PDC
meetings are informal and not subject to any procedure. "The process, compared to a well managed executive conference, was a slab of raw beef compared to a wiring diagram. Raw beef, however, functions better than a wiring diagram would, in its place—inside a living animal" (283). The PDC is also the principal user of radio, telephone and the mails. It handles long-distance communication, long-distance travel and shipping. Personal letters are sent unsealed: Anarresti have nothing to hide. No one writes or calls unnecessarily; it "smacks of privatism" and entails additional work for others.

There is no wage or monetary system. As in Morris's anarchy, work is done for the pleasure and fulfillment it brings. (In Pravic, a language created by the first settlers, the word for "work" and "play" is the same.) Each person trains for a chosen occupation and is permitted to pursue it, unless some labour shortage requires him in another. If an Anarresti seeks work, he consults the Division of Labour office, which informs him what jobs are available in his field and where. Any posting can be refused: the individual is morally responsible only to himself.

"The main supports of crime are idleness, law and authority," says Kropotkin. "No more laws! No more judges! Liberty, equality, and practical human sympathy are the only effectual barriers we can oppose to the anti-social instincts of certain among us" (King 275). Anarres needs no laws or judicial apparatus. "To make a thief, make an owner," says Odo in The Social Organism, "to create crime, create laws" (112). "Rid of legalized profiteering / People would have no thieves to fear," says Lao Tzu (Bynner 37 ). Plato expresses the same thought in the Republic: the
lack of property eliminates crimes against property.

When asked on Urras what kept his people from killing each other, Shevek replies in the Godwinian vein: "Would you murder me, ordinarily? And if you felt like it, would a law against it stop you? Coercion is the least efficient means of obtaining order" (120). Severe antisocial acts like rape or murder are dealt with by the community, as in Godwin's anarchy, or in Morris's, and the guilty will hastily apply for therapy in an asylum to escape the wrath of his fellows. The only asylum mentioned in The Dispossessed is located on an island, making Le Guin a follower of Huxley and Wells who also send their misfits to geographically isolated places. The thought of considering crime an illness that ought to be treated with leniency, appears in most of the later utopias, like Erewhon, Looking Backward, and News from Nowhere.

The communal possession of all goods is total on Anarres, down to the most trivial items. When Shevek and Takver meet after their long separation, and she asks what happened to their orange blanket which has a special sentimental value for her, Shevek answers, "What a propertarian! I left it" (261). Only papers and keepsakes remain in a person's possession, but nothing of functional value.

Asceticism is a way of life. During the night, no artificial lighting is provided, no heat is furnished when the outside temperature rises above fifty-five degrees Fahrenheit. "They weren't really short of power; but the principle of organic economy was too essential to the functioning of the society not to effect ethics and aesthetics profoundly" (79-80). The
dwellings are furnished with the barest necessities and have no kitchens: people eat in refectories which keep a list of regular attendants to calculate the amount of food to be cooked.

The Anarestiti are conditioned from childhood not to be a burden to anyone. Most young people "felt that it was shameful to be ill. . . . They felt illness to be a crime, if an involuntary one. To yield to the criminal impulse, to pander to it by taking pain relievers, was immoral" (96). This paradoxical reversal of illness being a crime, while crime is considered an illness, recalls Erewhon, although in The Dispossessed we are given a logical explanation: people are trained to use prophylactic measures to avoid disease; to become ill is considered a result of not having used them effectively.

All goods are stored in depositories and are free for the taking, but it is morally wrong to take more than what one absolutely needs. Few people have more than one set of clothing. Yet there is some leeway for small luxuries, especially in the outlying districts. Although no alcohol is produced on Anarres, some distill their own from fermented holum root. While excessive jewelry is considered in bad taste in Abbenay, country folk bedeck themselves unabashedly. "Most districts had a professional jeweler . . . as well as the craft shops, where you could make to suit your own taste with the modest materials offered . . . " (260).

The Anarestiti live in communal domiciles, with rooms of four to ten beds, except bonded couples who can ask for a double room. Single rooms for sexual activity on a less permanent basis are freely available, but beyond that privacy is not functional. "It was excess, waste. The economy of
Anarres would not support the building, maintenance, heating, lighting of individual houses and apartments" (79-80). Consequently, Shevek feels very uncomfortable when he is given a single room at the Central Institute of Sciences in Abbenay, because all through his childhood having to sleep in solitude had meant being in disgrace.

The beliefs of Odonianism are impressed upon the young as early as possible. Even babies must share everything, must realize that nothing belongs to them; no one must "egoize". The possessive pronoun is abolished. By the time Anarresti have grown into adults, the values of their society are deeply rooted in their psyches.

The learning centres are geared to prepare the future working population for the various demands of their world, but art instruction is not neglected: as in most utopias, no distinction is made between fine art and crafts, and art's practical value is emphasized. Although the theatre has a prominent place in Anarresti culture, it is apparent from the samples provided that it serves a largely didactic purpose.

Art for art's sake is suspect; from a superficial point of view, the independent artist who proceeds in a self-chosen direction does not return to society what this society expects him to return: in other words, he does not earn his keep. The anarchist ideal of unrestricted personal freedom of pursuit is diametrically opposed to the utilitarian demands of communities concerned with imminent matters of survival: cultural or abstract scientific experiment is not high on the list of priorities. Consequently, the colony fails the outstanding creative artist, as well as the exceptional intellect who soon outgrows the limited facilities it has to
offer. There is not—and there never has been—room for the genius in utopia, and the Anarresti utopia can afford him even less. It is too much at the mercy of external circumstances to display the foresight and generosity of wealthier and more secure societies. "It may be possible to contend that a beneficent social order does not require a beneficent natural scene," says Bierman. "But the special case of Shevek makes clear that the nurture of genius—scientific progress—requires the materials and opportunity for intercourse that come only from a supported community of science, from the leisure of plenty. There is a very real ambiguity in calling a place where genius cannot flourish a utopia" (SFS 73-75: 280).

The Women of Anarres

Since all the ideal societies examined in previous chapters were created by men, it seems of particular interest to see how a woman envisions the role of her own sex in utopia—even in one only as perfect as conditions and some interior deterioration permit.

That women have absolute equality with men is not surprising, because they have enjoyed this status in every utopia, governed or not, for nearly 3000 years. On Anarres it is total, a conviction ingrained from infancy.

Consequently, women are neither excepted nor exempted from any type of labour, making up in staying power, as Shevek states, what they lack in physical strength. The first woman we meet is foreman of a defense crew at the spaceport who remains remarkably self-contained facing an angry mob. In the intellectual sector, women have a slight edge over men: Shevek's parents are both engineers, but it is his mother who was called to the
Central Institute of Engineering where she had "great work" to do. The director of the Learning Centre, a man, expels Shevek from his group for bringing up Zeno's paradox, calling it egoizing. Mitis, a woman and Shevek's teacher at the Regional Institute, recognizes his abilities and sees to it that he has the chance to develop them in Abbenay. Sabul's reputation as a physicist is built on expropriations from other minds, while his colleague Gvarab "saw a much larger universe than most people were capable of seeing" (87). She is the only Anarresti who works in the advanced field of Temporal Simultaneity, and her ideas—which Sabul calls trash—are the basis from which Shevek proceeds. When she dies, Shevek knows that her life was wasted; her work was too far beyond anyone's understanding to be appreciated.

There are positive and negative types among both sexes. Desar the mathematician is lazy and hoards things in his room he has no use for. Bunub slyly tries to gain advantages she is not entitled to. Her eternal grumbling infuriates Shevek. "She had a mind both insidious and invidious, which could find the bad in anything and take it straight to her bosom. . . . The entire social organism was dedicated to the persecution of Bunub" (209).

Although we are not granted the same insight into any woman's psyche as we are into Shevek's, we can deduce much from their attitudes and actions. Generally speaking, they are comradely and independent, products of their upbringing and environment. Some are sketched as frankly promiscuous (Beshun, Bunub), some prefer to be faithful to one man (Gimar, Takver). They have neither the means nor the wish to enhance their
femininity. In contrast to the perfumed Urrasti women, they "smell strongly and agreeably of sweat" (38). And, as it is with women who have to work too hard in a harsh climate, they age faster than their pampered sister of the Ioti middle class. When Shevek returns after the drought, Takver's "skin no longer had the fine taut surface of youth, and her hair, pulled back neatly, was dull. Shevek saw clearly that Takver had lost her young grace, and looked a plain, tired woman near the middle of her life" (254). She is then about thirty years old.

Although the equality of the sexes on Anarres seems total to the unbiased reader, some are still not convinced that the author has really achieved it. Complaints have been voiced by critics and feminist readers that although Le Guin emphasizes sex and gender emancipation, she does not follow it up in her narrative. By using a male protagonist, male pronouns, and by restricting her female characters to supporting roles, she conforms to the rules of the male-dominated publishing game. Against this accusation may be held that restrictions are restrictions no matter who imposes them. As his or her own free agent, an author is the foremost authority on deciding if a male or a female protagonist is best suited for the part; artistic considerations must come first. If the criticism of feminist readers becomes as dictatorial as the male-dominated publishing game, it challenges one of the very freedoms it advocates.

Here is what Le Guin has to say on the subject: in her introduction to *The Planet of Exile*, she relates how she is constantly asked why she always writes about men, something she is hard pressed to answer. In the
case of The Planet of Exile, one reason may be that it was written "before the re-awakening of feminism from its thirty-year paralysis" (LN 130). She was "unselfconscious, without sense of obligation . . . contently conventional." Somehow, the men in her novels always take over. Why does one let them? she asks. Is it because of literary tradition, or "because, as Virginia Woolf pointed out, English prose is unsuited to the description of feminine being and doing, unless one to some extent remakes it from scratch" (131)? Her ultimate answer is that she thinks of men or women predominantly as people; that her characters are "often not exactly, or not totally, either a man or a woman . . . Indeed both sex and gender seem to be used mainly to define the meaning of 'person', or of 'self'. Once, as I began to be awakened, I closed the relationship into one person, an androgyne. But more often it appears conventionally and overtly, as a couple. Both in one: or two making a whole. Yin does not occur without yang, nor yang without yin" (133).

Le Guin demonstrates the insignificance of sex at the birth of Sadik. After the midwife has delivered the baby, has put things in order, has washed and dressed Sadik and left, and after both parents have admired the child for a while, Takver finally asks, "What is it?" Shevek investigates, and answers, "It's a girl."

As Le Guin views male and female elements as opposites complementing one another, so are action and non-action part of a whole, and neither is more important or more valuable than the other. Moylan's claim that Takver is reduced to the role of the good woman behind the great man who is off saving the world is but one example of how a critic—in order to prove a
point—will view a novel from a one-sided position only. Le Guin does not reduce Takver by giving her this role: she is the yin to Shevek's yang, the passive complementing the active, the dark complementing the light, the water-and-earth half to his sun-and-air half. To symbolize their respective roles, Le Guin drew Takver as dark-haired, with eyes "like deep, black, fine ash, very soft", while Shevek's shock of hair is dun-coloured, and his eyes are "wide and light". Necessity drives him to action, while his partner continues her life true to the Taoist ideal "the way to do is to be":

Without stirring abroad
One can know the whole world;
Without looking out of the window
One can see the way of heaven.
The further one goes
The less one knows.
Therefore the sage knows without having to stir,
Identifies without having to see,
Accomplishes without having to act. (Lau 108)

Takver is a very sound character, very human, very engaging. She walks one way, never straying from it, and, as far as we know, never in doubt of it. She comes from an isolated community, and had to work at a mill when she was eight years old. At fifteen, she had been in charge of coordinating the work schedules of four hundred farming plots. She studied marine biology "because it's so complex, a real web".

But it by no means sufficed her. Most of what went on in
Takver's mind and spirit had little to do with fish genetics. Her concern with landscapes and living creatures was passionate. This concern, feebly called "love of nature", seemed to be something much broader than love. There are souls, he [Shevek] thought, whose umbilicus has never been cut. They never got weaned from the universe. They do not understand death as an enemy; they look forward to rotting and turning into humus. It was strange to see Takver take a leaf into her hand, or even a rock. She became an extension of it, it of her. (149-50)

Her oneness with the microcosm shows her as living in accordance with "the way":

Be utterly humble
And you shall hold to the foundation of peace.
Be at one with all these living things which, having arisen and flourished,
Return to the quiet whence they came,
Like a healthy growth of vegetation
Falling back upon the root. . . . (Bynner 34)

* 

Among the influences that helped shape Anarres, Le Guin mentions Emma Goldman, one of the earliest active feminists and most prominent female anarchists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Her ideas concerning relationships between men and women bear a striking resemblance to the concepts of love and sexuality on Anarres.

In her essay "Marriage and Love" (Anarchism and Other Essays) Goldman
compares marriage with other oppressive institutions of capitalism and State. Marriage, she claims, is derived from the concept of private property which gives woman security but also condemns her to lifelong degrading dependency. "It incapacitates her for life's struggle . . . paralyses her imagination, and then imposes its gracious protection, which is in reality a snare, a travesty on human character" (241). A champion of "free love", Goldman claimed that sexual expression is as vital as food and air, and publicly condemned the double standard existing for men and women. While suffragists hoped to eliminate the double standard by bringing men under the same rigid rules, Emma Goldman strove to eliminate them altogether.

To achieve the vote was not enough: "Woman's . . . independence must come from and through herself. First by asserting herself as a personality, and not as a sex commodity. Second, by refusing the right to anyone over her body . . . by refusing to be a servant to God, the State, society, the husband, the family . . . Only that, and not the ballot, will set woman free" (Shulman, 166). As a midwife, she had seen so much misery caused by unwanted children, she gave public lectures on birth control. Every woman, she felt, should have the right to remain childless; if she wanted children she ought to be able to have them without marrying, and if she chose a lover instead of a husband, she should not be condemned for it. Although Goldman's propositions do not seem radical in our day, they were considered an outrage in hers. As predicted, suffrage solved none of women's problems; it was not until the 1960s that feminists renewed the battle for women's rights and introduced the "New Morality" of our age.
Proceeding from Goldman's thoughts, Le Guin gave the Anarresti unlimited freedom in this area: sex on Anarres is completely open, a natural drive that may be satisfied with anyone willing to cooperate. Sexual exploration is encouraged in children, and expected in adolescents. Shevek has numerous encounters, both heterosexual and homosexual, before he forms a partnership with Takver. The subject is discussed without inhibition or hesitation, and the question "Do you wish to copulate?" is as natural as "Should we take a walk?"

The removal of tension arising from sexual taboos goes all the way back to the Republic, and is an almost standard feature of radical utopias: it has been satirized by Huxley in Brave New World, and idealized by Wells in Men Like Gods, to name but two. In an anarchist society, it is doubly important that no person "belong" to any other person. Still, some feel that women are propertarian by nature: "No woman can really be an Odonian," a man tells Shevek in a truck depot. "Their only relationship to a man is having. . . . What a man wants is freedom. What a woman wants is property. . . . It's the kids, having babies. Makes 'em propertarians" (42-43). Takver admits to a similar ethical aberration due to her pregnancy.

Being a woman, however, and in agreement with Goldman's opinion that love is important in an intimate relationship, Le Guin does not divorce sexuality from love, as does Campanella or Plato. She distinguishes between casual sexuality which may or may not be accompanied by affection, and the total commitment between two people, whether they are of the opposite sex or not. Odo herself was happily married, and made provisions
for couples who wish to practise monogamy. "Partnership was a voluntarily constituted federation like any other. So long as it worked, it worked, and if it didn't work it stopped being. . . . It had no sanction but that of private conscience. . . . [Odo] came to see the promise, the pledge, the idea of fidelity, as essential in the complexity of freedom" (197).

Many Odonians feel that fidelity has no place in sexual life. Although they realize that Odo may not have understood individuals to whom experiment and diversity is the essence of sexual pleasure, "she provided better for the promiscuous than for those who tried long-term partnership. No law, no limit, no penalty, no punishment, no disapproval applied to any sexual practice of any kind" (198).

Partnership, on the other hand, is undertaken at the couple's own risk. Both realize that labour postings may separate them at any time. The claim of the community on each person has priority, "whereas conjugality was a personal matter, a choice that could be made only within the larger choice" (198). However, separation often strenghtens the bond. Shevek's feelings for Takver remain unchanged during the four years of their separation, and their reunion produces some of the most moving sentiment in the novel:

They had suffered . . . but it had not occurred to either of them to escape the suffering by denying the commitment. . . . The search for pleasure is . . . a locked room, a cell. . . . Outside the locked room is the landscape of time, in which the spirit may, with luck and courage, construct the fragile, makeshift, improbable roads and cities of fidelity, a landscape inhabitable by human beings. It is not until an act occurs within the
landscape of the past and the future that it is a human act. Loyalty, which asserts the continuity of past and future, binding time into a whole, is the root of human strength; there is no good to be done without it. (268–69)

Bearing children is no major interruption in a woman's occupational life. Infants stay with the mother until they are weaned, then move into the learning centre dormitories—another common feature of most progressive utopias constructed by men. Le Guin treats the subject from the woman's point of view: although the cramped living arrangements on Anarres do not permit children to stay with their parents, they still need their love and support. "Those first years are when the individual contact is essential," she says, through Rulag. "The psychologists have proved it conclusively. Full socialization can be developed only from that affectional beginning" (99).

When Takver is posted to an experimental station during the drought and manages to keep Sadik by nursing her until she is three years old, she meets with severe social disapproval: "They said I was propertarian about the child and not contributing full strength to the social effort in the crisis. . . . None of them understood about being lonely" (256). After keeping her for another year, Takver finally realizes that it would be unfair to the little girl to set her apart by refusing to let her live with other children.

The common utopian measure of breaking the bond between small children and their parents—advocated by several theorists from Plato to Wells—has been realized in some modern countries, and not with very happy results.
Le Guin demonstrates the ambiguity of this measure and the consequences of too casual a maternal attitude by giving Shevek emotional scars left by his own mother. He was put into a nursery at the age of two, when Rulag accepted a posting to the Central Institute although it could offer no position for Shevek's father. Shevek cannot forgive her that she not only left them behind, but simply faded from their lives. When Rulag visits her son twenty years later, he rebuffs her belated offer of friendship. While Takver's "strong common sense was obscured by maternal ambitions and anxieties" (261), Rulag freely admits that she was never parental, that her profession always came first with her. The hostility with which she ultimately opposes the propositions of the Syndicate of Initiative formed by Bedap and her son makes Bedap suspect that she maintains a front to hide her remorse. "She knows he's the soul of the group, and she hates us because of him," he says to Takver. "Why? Guilt? Has the Odonian society gone so rotten we're motivated by guilt? . . . Only in her, it's all gone hard, rock-hard—dead" (293).

The author's position on the subject seems clear: it is not necessary for families to be constantly together to enjoy a fruitful and beneficent relationship. It does not harm children to be objected to other influences, as long as those influences are balanced by the primal bond of love and belonging. To gain self-confidence and to feel secure, each child needs someone who does not consider it as one among many, but who cherishes it as a unique and special individual. In the name of personal freedom of choice, Le Guin leaves it to Rulag to honour her maternal obligations or not, but by portraying her as a hard and bitter woman she demonstrates that it is
unnatural for a mother to forsake her child: whatever changes utopists propose, they should not tamper with that most fundamental of all relationships.

It is very much to Le Guin's credit that she did not draw the women of Anarres as hardened fanatics whose feelings atrophied in a harsh existence; that she left them little weaknesses, small vanities, some endearing qualities; that she does not believe that passivity is negative, but often analogous to patience, endurance and steadfastness; that she seems to suggest that feminism, no matter how important and laudable, must beware that women do not lose more of themselves than they gain for themselves.

The Ioti Dystopia: Gradations of Negativity

In calling The Dispossessed "an ambiguous utopia", Le Guin invited the critical community to examine what this ambiguity consisted of, and several of its members have explored the subject in depth, as Theall, for instance, or Bierman, or Brennan and Downs. Similarly, the symbol of The Wall—the most prominent symbol in the book—has not escaped scholarly attention: it appears in nearly every evaluation of the novel. Smith, who claims that the wall imagery is drawn from Kropotkin, traces it from the first page to the last.

The low wall around the spaceport is its only material manifestation on Anarres, yet intangibly it has risen high enough to prevent Shevek and others like him from developing to their fullest. The real wall confining the limits of their exile as well as the metaphorical wall of perpetuated hatred of the mother world deprives the Anarresti society of fructifying
contact with other societies, forcing it in a direction of mental stasis. The lack of insects to fertilize the imported fruit trees is analogous to the lack of stimulus, of opposition, resulting in an incest of thought, in sterility, and finally, in deterioration. Just as the trees cannot grow without roots, so must Anarres draw from its pre-Settlement past to gain the wider perspective with which to view and shape its future.

Higher-than-average intelligence is a disturbing element among mediocre minds. Even in the learning centre, Shevek is admonished for being different, a difference interpreted as an attempt to put himself into the foreground. Only his friends Tirin and Bedap display an early capacity for independent thinking: after watching a 150-year-old propaganda film demonstrating the class differences on Urras, Tirin wonders how valid such outdated evidence can be.

When Sabul calls him to Abbenay, Shevek stumbles upon the first evidence of Utopia's decay: food and accommodation at the Central Institute are better, work postings can be avoided. Sabul is in contact with Urrasti scientists, letters and books are exchanged; Shevek, who is made to learn Iotic so he can profit from their work, is supposed to keep quite about it. He suspects that Sabul wants "to keep the new Urrasti physics private—to own it, as a property, a source of power over his colleagues on Anarres" (89). The only way to publish his first book is to share the credit with Sabul as co-author. Although Shevek knows he has sold himself for profit, he needs the Urrasti's ideas, their criticism, their collaboration to proceed, and Sabul controls the only channel to the
mother world.

When Shevek's work takes on a more daring, unorthodox direction, Sabul refuses to send it to Urras, calling it "intellectual excrement". Shevek complains to the Physics Federation, but no one understands his need for working with the ideological enemy; why not share his work with his own people instead? But when he offers to teach a course on the subject, he is told that there is no demand.

Bewildered by the power play, the covert hostility, he still does not admit to himself what his friend Bedap sees very clearly: the values of their society are deteriorating. Sabul has gained power over Shevek by playing on "the innate cowardice of the average human mind. Public opinion! That's the power structure he's part of, and knows how to use. The unadmitted inadmissible government that rules the Odonian society by stifling the individual mind" (134). The PDC has become an archistic bureaucracy; solidarity has turned into obedience. Criticism, the sacred right of every Odonian, has become risky: Tirin has written and produced a satirical play which was totally misunderstood and declared anti-Odonian. After being publicly chastised, he was posted to road gangs, eventually ending up in an asylum, a psychologically broken man.

The composer Salas, too, was never given a posting in anything but unskilled labour. His compositions are too new, too abstract, not in the publicly approved style. "The complexity, the vitality, the freedom of invention and initiative that was the center of the Odonian ideal, we've thrown it all away," says Bedap. "We've gone right back to barbarism" (142).
Shevek does not fare much better. His Principles of Simultaneity are labelled an "egoistic divagation from . . . [the] solidarity of principle [which] can result only in sterile spinning of impractical hypotheses without social organic utility" (191-2). During the five-year drought, Shevek feels the heavy hand of the PDC several times. When he returns from an emergency posting, he finds himself ousted from the Institute.

Theoretically, Shevek could do whatever he likes, but in reality this is no longer possible. People are ashamed to refuse a posting, because "the social conscience completely dominates the individual conscience, instead of striking a balance with it. We don't cooperate—we obey . . . We fear our neighbor's opinion more than we respect our own freedom of choice" (265).

Shevek feels it is time to rebel. His work in physics is his most valuable contribution to the social organism. A healthy society would let him exercise his "cellular function", but their society has become corrupt: it demands a type of compromise directly opposed to its basic ideals. But when he and Bedap form the Syndicate of Initiative and openly defy the hierarchy of the PDC, public opinion turns against them, against Takver, even against young Sadik. When Shevek leaves for Urras, he leaves as a traitor who narrowly escapes being stoned to death. Having crossed the final barrier on his world, it seems to reach after him to prevent his departure to the very last.

Le Guin's utopia is a solid structure. The deterioration of personal freedom and the ascent of bureaucracy may have been a process long in
coming, but it has not reached unsurmountable dimensions after nearly two centuries of existence. We are under the impression that a good work crew of determined Odonians could take down the walls, or dynamite them, and perhaps that will happen when Shevek returns.

That the walls are more formidable on Urras does not become immediately apparent. To Shevek, the Ioti dystopia presents somewhat of a surprise: instead of glittering with one-sided prosperity, it glows. Coming from an underprivileged country where deprivation is a way of life, he is overwhelmed by the grace and dignified elegance of a 9000-year-old civilization, by the beauty and harmony of the landscape. An effective ecological control has prevented degeneration of the environment: few cars are privately owned, and all natural resources are carefully husbanded.

The scientific community receives him with warmth and enthusiasm. Finally, he is among his equals. "It was a revelation, a liberation . . . they talked, and new worlds were born of their talking" (58). He lives in a state of continuous wonder: his quarters at the university, the animals, trees, and lawns are a revelation. When he sees the model factories, expertly-run farms and housing developments, the well-fed and well-dressed people working on those farms and in those factories, he cannot help wondering if he has been told the the truth about Urras being "a festering mass of inequity, iniquity, and waste", and if man's "spontaneous creative energy" is indeed the only incentive to work. "The lure and compulsion of profit was evidently a much more effective replacement of the natural initiative than he had been led to to believe" (66).

Shevek grows to love Urras, but this love, combined with doubts
regarding the authenticity of what he has been taught, make him vaguely uneasy, and subconsciously he is looking for the worm in the rose. Although the possibility that he is only shown what he is supposed to see (similar to tours foreign visitors were given in China and East-European countries,) does not immediately occur to him, the fact that he never has the chance to speak to those prosperous-looking workers and farmers makes him dimly suspicious; even the ruin of Odo's prison takes on an aspect of ominousness.

Through Shevek, we see ourselves with the eyes of a native of a Third World country: to him, luxuries are "excrement", plenty is excess, frivolity decadence. Shevek sees the Ioti society mostly in contrast to his own society: equality of men and women on Anarres is juxtaposed to inequality, morality to immorality, mutual aid to struggle for supremacy. Yet he also sees the progress his people cannot hope to achieve, the research facilities they will never be able to afford, and the way his students—although most of them are concerned with the concrete aspects of science—are provided for so they can dedicate themselves entirely to their studies.

Shevek never adapts to the Ioti way of life. Although he conducts himself well with men, conscious of being the unappointed ambassador of his people, his trust is child-like, and it takes a Thuvian agent to make him fully realize that an ulterior (and probably not entirely unreasonable) motive lies behind the generous treatment and hospitality he receives from the Ioti.

In his dealings with women he remains almost painfully naive.
Although he diligently studies A-Io's history and sociology, he never really absorbs, let alone adjusts to the ground rules of Ioti social behaviour, even after a prolonged stay. The reason he enjoys his weekend at Oiie's house is because his colleague's wife is not only a "reticent, rather timid" woman, she is also a mother: Sewa and the children remind him of home.

But he is totally out of his element when it comes to playfully aggressive females like Vea. When she expects him to pay for their meal and cabfare, he wonders if she could be a prostitute; used to the straight-forward sex on Anarres, he is, as Delany notes, totally unable to distinguish between the exotic, the erotic, the sensual and the sexual; he takes for invitation what is an idle cat-and-mouse game to a spoiled and bored woman; he is incapable of seeing through verbal banter, or statements made solely for shock value. When Shevek asks her if Ioti women are content being inferior to men, one wishes he had put the question to Sewa instead and had made further inquiries. It would have been interesting to know if the women of this old civilization had never made any efforts at emancipation. If not, why not? If so, were they crushed, suppressed? Are they satisfied with a life that seems somewhat Victorian on one hand and hedonistic on the other? We do not see enough of them to form a clear impression.

At last Shevek discovers that A-Io is seriously flawed, that the higher strata of society live in comfort at the expense of the lower. The conditions he sees in the slums of Old Town make him realize that his suspicions were justified. "This was the Urras he had learned about in
school on Anarres. This was the world from which his ancestors had fled. This was the human suffering in which the ideals of his society were rooted, the ground from which they sprang" (228-29).

After actively participating in a mass demonstration which is dispersed by gunfire from police helicopters, Shevek finds refuge in the Terran embassy. Thoroughly disillusioned, he feels that none of the advantages he has enjoyed can justify the misery of so many. Urras is hell, he tells the Terran ambassador Keng. A beautiful package containing "a black cellar full of dust, and a dead man" (278). The ambassador does not agree. Compared to ravaged Earth, it is paradise:

The government here is not despotic. The rich are very rich indeed, but the poor are not so very poor. They are neither enslaved nor starving. . . . I know it's full of evils . . . injustice, greed, folly, waste. But it is also full of good, of beauty, vitality, achievement. It is what a world should be! It is alive, tremendously alive—alive, despite all its evils, with hope" (275-79).

Reality has many faces, depending on the angle from which it is viewed. "Truth," says Genly Ai, the emissary of the Ekumen in The Left Hand of Darkness, "is a matter of the imagination" (LHD 1). Every person is a product of his upbringing and environment. If Shevek were not so faithfully Odonian, if his experiences were not so limited, he would see that at least some of the evil in A-Io is balanced by good, and that hope exists that time will eventually even out the extremes. If ecological control has been achieved—a remarkable accomplishment in a free-enterprise
society—there is hope that the attitude of the affluent toward the needy might change, or that something or someone will change it for them.

At this point, Shevek does not believe it. His faith is reaffirmed, he knows what he must do. He lacks the power to change Urras, but he can try to restore Anarres. Although as a scientist he will not be able to work as effectively, "the ideas in my head aren't the only ones important to me," he tells Keng. "My society is also an idea. I was made by it. . . . And though I was very stupid I saw at last that by pursuing the one, the physics, I am betraying the other" (277).

The Ioti dystopia, then, is not wholly dystopian. If utopia and dystopia are analogous to paradise and hell, and considered to be positioned at the extreme ends of the spectrum, the societies occupying the space between those polarities can only be negative or positive by degrees. A-Io lacks the depth of corruption from which there is no return as in Nineteen Eighty-Four or in We. It lacks the torture chambers, the brainwashing, the total suppression of all classes by a small select group or single individual. (The only person suggesting such a sinister background is the Thuvian agent Chifoilisk who has been ordered to get hold of Shevek's theory before A-Io does. When he fails, he is duly recalled to be chastised, as Pae intimated, by the Thuvian equivalent of the Kremlin.)

Although the opinions aired by some of its members are despicable, the Ioti middle class is not evil—only arrogantly self-assured, snobbish, egotistical, and class-conscious. At least some are: as all people in all countries (and presumably on all worlds) they vary in their qualities and
behaviour, and opposed to the opulent but meaningless parties of Vea is the orderly, modest, and delightful household of Sewa. Ioti society mirrors, and is most likely supposed to mirror, North American urban society, where higher and lower strata have almost no personal contact and know little about each other except what they learn, not always correctly, through the media. Shevek learns nothing from Efor the servant until he finally meets Efor the man.

On Anarres, ethics must replace aesthetics. Although it has no class distinctions, it can at best maintain a moderate but equal living standard and not much more. A-Io bases its progress and prosperity, its love of beauty and luxury on exploitation of the working classes. Little can be done to improve conditions on Anarres, unless it receives outside help. But there could be more social justice in A-Io if the walls of prejudice, greed, ambition and thoughtless callousness were at least partly removed. "Those who would take over the earth / And shape it to their will / Never, I notice, succeed," says Lao Tzu (Bynner 47). Time, he suggests, has a way of dealing with them all.

With her passion for balance and completeness, Le Guin may have viewed the two planets from a much wider scope: not as contrasting entities where one is the proving ground of the other, but as parts complementing one another, parts of a whole which could ideally, if not practicably, cancel out each other's flaws.

* * *
Always Coming Home, published eleven years after *The Dispossessed*, contains three interrelating elements pertinent to its interpretation: the utopian, the anthropological, and the Taoist. Although Lao Tzu's thought appears in all of Le Guin's books, it is stronger in some than in others: while certainly not absent in *The Dispossessed*, in *Always Coming Home* it predominates in the sense that it is inherent in the Kesh culture; the fact that it is also inherent in the Pueblo culture which provided the model for the Valley people may have been one of the reasons Le Guin chose it for the purpose. The similarities between the fictional and the non-fictional societies will be examined at a later point.

To clarify the connection between the utopian and the Taoist elements, a few words on Taoist concepts may be in order. In "A First Note" the author states that translation from an as yet non-existent language is difficult, but that the past can be just as obscure as the future. As an example she gives the *Tao Te Ching* which has been translated numerous times, yet no one will ever know what the original was like.

Not only do most translations from ancient texts vary in form, but meanings are sometimes misinterpreted, or given a personal slant by one or the other translator. The same applies to the *Tao Te Ching*; confusion arises, claims Prof. D. C. Lau, from the fact that 'tao' is not always referred to as 'the way', but is also called 'One', or 'Nothing'. "The myriad creatures in the world are born from Something, / and Something from Nothing" (49).
Not all translators are aware that 'tao' has two meanings: one is the tao that is an entity, and which is responsible for creating as well as supporting the universe. It is "forever nameless", because language is totally inadequate to describe it. Even 'tao' is only a term used for want of something better (Lau 16). "As a thing the way is / shadowy, indistinct. / Shadowy and indistinct, / Yet within it is an image; / Shadowy and indistinct, / Yet within it is a substance. / Dim and dark, / Yet within it is an essence. / This essence is quite genuine / And within it is something that can be tested" (49).

The other tao is the abstract principle to be followed. "Turning back is how the way moves; / Weakness is the means the way employs" (88).

The central idea, says Lau, is that "in life, whether in its ethical or political aspect, we should model ourselves on the tao. The supreme goal for the common man as well as for the ruler is survival, and the means to this goal is simply to hold fast to the submissive" (41). The submissive and the weak always win over the hard and the strong because they do not contend. If one never contends, one cannot suffer defeat. For those who have never tried to survive in a country torn by war, this may seem a cowardly attitude—but Lao Tzu lived in the time of the Warring States, where hordes of soldiers (much like the Condors) devastated the countryside; for the common man, survival was a prime issue. "To hold fast to the submissive is called strength" (119).

Man's innate desire for success and wealth must be countered by the lessons of "knowing contentment" and "knowing when to stop". "The ideal state of the Taoist is one in which the people are innocent of knowledge
and free from desire . . . [because] it is through knowledge new objects of desire are devised" (Lau 35).

Witter Bynner points out the more familiar ideas of Taoism that are of relevance to the modern reader. Lao Tzu's ideal, he says, was not vacant inaction, but "creative quietism". Although action can be emptier than inaction, he was not "a believer in abstention from deed. He knew that a man can be a doer without being an actor and by no means banned being of use when he said that 'the way to do is to be'" (7).

Lao Tzu left no strict laws for man's behaviour: his conduct, he felt, should depend on his instinct and conscience, upon his inner accord with the conscience of the universe. No ceremonies, no dogma could help him find a connection he had to establish for himself. As concerned the origin and meaning of life, no explanation could be absolute. "Existence is beyond the power of words / To define, / Terms may be used / but none of them absolute. . . . From wonder into wonder / Existence opens" (Bynner 1).

How close Le Guin's Valley society approaches those ideals is another of the novel's aspects to be discussed in this chapter.

* 

Always Coming Home is an ethnographers' field study, a record of all facets of a certain culture: its way of life, its societetal structure, its economy, ecology, customs, arts and folklore, cycle of ritual ceremonies, beliefs, ethics, myths, and values.

There is only one difference—the Kesh culture is neither extinct nor contemporary. It does not yet exist, except as a model, and will not exist for a few hundred or a few thousand years. Inspired by a certain landscape
in Northern California, Pandora, Le Guin's persona, is transported ahead in time. Her experience could be a dream, or a vision, or a journey of the mind.

Although the book is called a novel, it breaks with the novel's traditional structure, consisting mainly of an anthology of Kesh stories, histories, poetry, plays and songs. Maps, charts, and ethnographic observations are inserted, describing kinship patterns, burial practices, ritual dances, relationships with the physical and the metaphysical, and more. At intervals of about fifty pages, Pandora, the visitor from the past, appears, either contemplating nature, or addressing the reader, or "worrying about what she is doing". On page 147, Le Guin's choice of the name from Greek mythology becomes clear: Pandora, although berating herself for fictionally destroying a good part of the human race with the gifts of the gods, could do no less in order to grant it a new beginning. Although she is afraid to hope that hope is left behind, she is grateful that the basket is emptied of horrors.

"The Back of the Book" contains additional information about domestic animals, Kesh music, clothing, food (even recipes), reports on medical and sexual practices, and more. Le Guin is the conscientious observer who overlooks none of its aspects in researching a culture: no detail is too minute not to count. The glossary even gives a dictionary of the Kesh language, and the hardcover edition of the book includes a tape of Kesh music and songs.

Plot and characters for the reader to identify with are furnished in the form of an autobiography. Although Stone Telling's story is, in a book
of 523 pages, only 102 pages long and is interrupted twice by other material, it gives the novel direction, creates conflict and suspense, and ties it into a whole.

The first part describes the childhood of North Owl, as Stone Telling is then called, and her home in Sinshan, where she lives with her mother Willow and her grandmother Valiant. Her memories present us with the first picture of life in the Valley—a simple, modest, unrushed life in close contact with nature; there is much warmth, affection, laughter, and good humour; small joys and events are important.

Later, we find out more about the Kesh. We are told that their society is based upon a matrilineal kinship system structured into clans; a closely knit society, it looks after all its members: land is allotted, food and resources are shared. All men and women of the Valley enjoy total freedom and equality. They are united by a culture uniquely theirs, an animistic culture which sees man not as superior to other creatures but just as one link in the chain of being. This humility and reverence for the world around them expresses itself in an elaborate pattern of rituals, a yearly round of festivities celebrating and communicating with nature which unites, with few exceptions, all age groups.

Although her family is poor—meaning that her mother and grandmother cannot contribute as much as they consume—North Owl leads a happy, carefree life; her only regret is that her father is a stranger, a "no-House" man who does not belong to any of the five Valley clans, and that the other children call her "half-person". Terter Abhao is a Dayao, a commander of the Condor soldiers who carry on endless "wars" with the
various peoples surrounding their city of Sai. Years ago, when he came through the Valley, he met and married Willow. North Owl does not remember her father, but she knows that her mother still waits for him.

North Owl is nine years old when he finally returns. While his troops winter in the Valley, he moves back into their house, and at last they live as a family. But when spring comes, he and his soldiers must leave again, and Willow, refusing to endure another separation, decides to end the marriage.

In part two, North Owl grows into an adolescent. Although she has become involved in the ritual life of the Valley, has been initiated into Lodges and joined societies, she is not happy. The presence of the Condor army has infected some of the Kesh men who try to imitate them, among them a half-cousin she has become very fond of. The elements of a strange culture, so alien to the Kesh, poison their relationship: "I blamed the Warrior Lodge for taking him away from me, and indeed they did, but his House or his household might well have done the same" (183). She knows they would not approve of her, being a "half-houseless woman". So when Terter Abhao returns once more, the unhappy outcome of her first love is one of the reasons that make her decide to accompany him to Sai to live with her Condor family.

Leaving her utopian world, North Owl, now called Ayatyu (Woman Born Above Others), rides straight into a dystopian hell. Used to a free egalitarian society, she finds the Dayao society sharply stratified. Unacquainted with any tyrannical God or gods, she discovers the impact such an entity can have upon a people: above the pyramidal hierarchy topped by
their ruler, The Condor, hovers the immortal, omnipotent person of One. "One is not the universe, he made it, and gives it orders. Things are not part of him nor is he part of them, so you must not praise things, but only One" (200). This negation of nature stands in sharp contrast to the animism of the Kesh: One disdains his creation and will eventually eliminate it—with the exception of the True Condors whose reward for obedience is future unification with the divine.

The Dayao god relates his orders through the Condor; being a reflection of One, he has semi-divine status. Closest to him are the One-Warriors, a caste of soldier-priests who represent an elevated segment of the Dayao aristocracy, the True Condors. The commoners, called tyon, are still considered people, but below them no one else is classified as human: women, foreigners and animals are grouped together as hontik (slaves or animals) whose only justification for existence lies in the service they provide for the upper classes. Although the daughters of the Condor families occupy a lowly position being women, they stand above tyon and hontik.

Compared to the easy-going, yet respectful affiliations of the Valley people, among the Dayao "every relationship was a battle" (348). With each stratum of society anxious to preserve its status, and people within each class occupying higher and lower positions, people seldom relate to one another as equals. Even the True Condor families are graded: the closer they are in birth to The Condor, the more power they wield, and the more prestigious their households are.

There is no sharing of resources as among the Kesh clans. "Because
the Condor household kept without giving, their furnishings are numerous and complicated. Dayao count wealth as what they had, what they kept" (340). Possession of any kind is important. Everyone, from the top down, belongs to someone else, or at least has to account to someone. A woman is the property of her family; after a marriage is arranged for her, she becomes the property of her husband. Since the Dayao are polygamous, she must share him with another woman: the first wife is used for bearing as many children as possible, while the second is kept for pleasure. No woman can terminate a marriage; infidelity is punished by death.

No one is free; the lack of individual freedom expresses itself in the harshness toward those who have even less. In the chain of command, each link expects unquestioning obedience, reacting violently if it is not immediately forthcoming. In contrast to the Kesh who have no laws, "they never decide things together, never discuss, or argue or yield and agree. Everything was done because there was a law to do it . . . or an order. . . . And if something went wrong the people who obeyed the order got blamed; and the blame was physical punishment" (348).

Like the Kesh, the Condors live in the extended family, but instead of the grandmother the oldest male is head of the household. The Terter house in Sai resembles a stronghold, being walled, sunk partly into the ground, and windowless. The women are kept in the innermost part. They seldom leave their home, living "under siege all their lives" (195). On the rare occasions when they are allowed on the street, they must be accompanied and veiled, and "knock their heads" to any superior male. They are not permitted to participate in religious ceremonies or enter the places of
worship. "It was not men there, but women, who told me that women have no souls" (200).

In contrast to the Kesh who teach children how to read as soon as they can speak and walk, the privilege of literacy is confined to The Condor and his warrior-priests. "The Dayao will blind the eye or cut off the hand of a woman or a farmer who writes a single word" (192). It spells added power for The Condor and more dependence on the part of those below him.

Once they were nomads from "north of the Omorn Sea and before that on the Plains of Grass. A hundred years or more ago they obeyed one of their Condors who had a vision and said that One had commanded them to build a city and dwell in it" (196). In trusting the prophetic vision of an individual more than their common sense, the Dayao changed their lifestyle from nomadic to sedentary. Because "a finger of light" pointed toward it, they settled in a barren caldera that cannot provide subsistence; what they need, they must take by force. After building Sai, "they began to lose their souls . . . maybe their health as a people was in being nomads, movers-on" (196).

Although the armies devastate the countryside, killing men and children, raping the women, and confiscating crops and livestock, Ayatyu sees the Dayao more as the victims of their faith and a succession of religious madmen than as villains. The Condor, she feels, is the only evil person: totally isolated, he suspects everyone, and fears for himself even from his son and heir, finally using a minor disagreement as an excuse to get rid of him: with him die his wives, children and slaves.

In part three, Ayatyu is married off as second wife to a son of
another Condor family, and eventually bears a child. By "commands of One", the war efforts are stepped up, but lucky for the Kesh and their neighbors, the conquests of the Dayao are checked by several factors: their armies, for one thing, are not large enough to cover the sparsely populated regions around them and keep them occupied. Considering themselves a chosen elite, they make no allies, only enemies and slaves. Their range of operation is curtailed by a lack of transportation and communication, as well as the natural barriers of the landscape. Although they are reputedly excellent engineers, they never get around to building the roads and bridges which would allow them to move fast when the need arises.

But the most serious drawback to military success lies in the single command of an egomaniac who has no contact with reality. The Condor never leaves his palace; for information, he must rely on the computer—which only he is allowed to use—and on advisors who can easily fall into disfavour when their opinions do not coincide with his own. He takes any doubts as to the capabilities of his armies as a personal affront, a sort of blasphemy. Thus the Terters fall into disfavour when they contest his arbitrary plans, making room for the Retforoks, Ayatyu's husband's family. Since their recommendation—the construction of a tank—proves to be a waste of effort when the heavy vehicle falls into a volcanic vent, they, too, are soon replaced by someone else.

Arrogantly, The Condor seeks no cooperation, repudiates his generals' experience. He builds aircraft without calculating the amount of fuel they will consume, or wondering where it will come from. Still, no one dares to contest him. There is a sardonic humour in an army marching for a whole
year to fetch enough fuel to keep one bomber in the air—and that only for a short time—but the Condors have no sense of humour: they are "without clowns or clowning, without reversal or turning, straight, single, terrible" (201).

Food is becoming scarce because it is used to produce fuel for their aircraft. When the peasants fight back by blowing up the storage tanks, and the miners by killing their Condor guards, the retributions are bloody. But the executions in front of the palace are only the expressions of rage and frustration of a megalomaniac tyrant and merely serve to speed the inevitable. The Condor regime is dying. "It was themselves they ate" (194).

In an effort to survive, Ayatyu endured for years, but the responsibility for her small daughter changes her outlook: she must get away, she has to make her way back to the Valley. At last her father helps her to escape, certainly at great danger to himself. Abhao is a sympathetic figure, representing the tragic side of a people who move toward self-destruction as adamantly and unerringly as lemmings toward the sea. He remained loyal to Willow, taking no other wife; but although he has fallen into disgrace, he is just as loyal to The Condor, and his personal tragedy is rooted in the conflict between those loyalties. When his daughter sees him for the last time, he is hiding in his home "so as to remain forgotten by The Condor and the One-Warriors, who where executing people called enemies of the Condor every day now. . . . He looked old, being very pale and entirely bald, and stooped in his bearing. . . . He looked sick, but when he looked at Ekwerkwe his smile was from the Valley,
it seemed to me" (354). They know they will not see one another again.

So Ayatyu returns to her mother's people where she finally finds peace and contentment as Woman Coming Home. When she is old, she becomes Stone Telling, settled comfortably like a rock among her family, and telling her story.

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During Ayatyu's travels it becomes apparent that the countryside is conspicuously empty. There is an explanation for the sparsely populated Pacific rim, the lack of roads and bridges: as Anarres is utopian despite an inhospitable climate, the Valley of the Kesh is utopian despite a catastrophic past. In "Pandora No Longer Worrying", Le Guin pays credit to the Geomancer who helped her sink "half of California" (504), making us assume that the stress caused by the moving plates along the San Andreas fault has finally resulted in the long-predicted major earthquakes which "left most of what we now know as the Great Valley of California a shallow sea or salt-marsh, and brought the Gulf of California on up into Arizona and Nevada" (159).

Although most critics take it for granted that a nuclear holocaust caused "permanent desolation of vast regions through release of radioactive and poisonous substances, and permanent genetic impairment from which they [the Kesh] suffered most directly in the form of sterility, still birth and congenital disease" (159), it seems more likely that this is the result of "toxic or radioactive wastes . . . widespread in soil and water, and leaching out uncontrollably from the very highly contaminated areas" (476). The poem "From the People of the Houses of Earth in the Valley to the Other
People Who Were on Earth Before Them" speaks of an "ending when the words were forgotten" (a break-down in communication), "when the fires burned out," and "when the walls fell down," which could point toward the firestorms caused by atomic explosions. However, major earthquakes would not only cause fires in highly populated areas (as in the 1906 San Francisco disaster), but would also activate the "Ring of Fire", the volcanoes along the subduction zone of the Pacific coast. There is repeated mention of such eruptions in many of the stories—and indeed, the Valley must be located not too far south of the Mount Shasta area.

Recovery was slow, but eventually the forest fires burnt out, vegetation renewed itself, and the animals came back. Although the better part of the population drowned together with the great cities of California, a network of human cultures survived, "which in their great number, and endless diversity, manufactured and traded more or less actively, but never centralised their industry" (380).

Stories still exist recalling high-density housing of the people who had "their heads on backwards", where heavy traffic caused equally heavy pollution, and where the food was poisoned with chemicals. "Big Man and Little Man" depicts the Christian myth of the origin of Man in Valley terms: first God created him with his head on backwards, and when he saw the result of his commands—that man should multiply and use the resources of the earth as he pleases—"he had nothing more to do with anything. When he was gone there was some room left" (158)—"living room", as Le Guin calls it. (148).

However, civilization as we know it has not been totally destroyed:
the scientific and technological accomplishments of the Industrial Age have been preserved by the City of Mind, an underground complex of computers storing all data regarding the earth and its lifeforms. The predictions of Erewhon have come true: machines have become independent of man. They are self-repairing and self-creating, maintaining their own robot crews which mine the contaminated areas, or the moon, or other planets. Similar installations exist throughout the solar system, in satellites, or in deep-space probes.

Human communities all over the world have access to the knowledge of the memory banks through computer terminals called Exchanges. "The Memory of the City of Mind was incalculably vast. . . . for the goal of the Mind was to become a total mental model or replica of the Universe" (151). Their Exchange provides the Kesh with any requested data, lifting them above technological primitivism. They have electricity and a train, even though it is pulled by mules and runs on wooden rails. But, as in News From Nowhere, the Kesh draw on the technology of the past only as much as they need to and develop none of their own. Why data alone is insufficient to recreate it, Le Guin explains in connection with the Dayao's pitiful endeavours to build machines of war: "It is the absence of the worldwide technological web, the 'technological ecosystem' of the Industrial Age, and on a planet almost depleted of many of the fossil fuels and other materials from which the Industrial Age made itself" (379). Even in the Valley, to construct anything as basic as a flashlight battery is not an easy matter.

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The Kesh society is ideal, if not necessarily for Westerners. As most
critics recognize, Le Guin based her second utopia not on any political ideology, but on the culture of the North-American Indian.

However, the Kesh are not dominated by a hierarchy of powerful chiefs. Their communities are largely autonomous, self-administrating, and among the five clans spread across the Valley, not one plays a leading role. In its structure, world view, economy, and metaphysical beliefs, the Kesh society bears a striking resemblance to the Pueblo Indian tribes of the Southwest, a field Le Guin's father specialized in, and with which she was probably familiar from an early age.

Assuming that the author would have wished to capture the culture in its purest form, perhaps the model was taken from a time before it underwent some diffusion by Mexican and European elements; and although "pueblo social structure has remained virtually intact because the Indians have been able to retain their basic ethical and moral concepts" (Haviland 402), the integration of Western elements, especially Catholicism, was inevitable; now Indian and Christian ceremonies exist side by side.

Le Guin's archeology of the future, then, is based on a rediscovery of the past. The Kesh are modelled after the descendants of the Anasazi, the "Ancient Ones", who endured to become the Pueblo Indians who inhabit New Mexico and Arizona today. Closely bound to the plateau region of the American Southwest where average elevation is 6,500 feet, they would have been safe from at least some of Le Guin's major catastrophes.

In many areas, anthropological and Taoist elements mix: although the hinged spiral, the heyiya-if, symbol of the Kesh culture and visual representation of its structure, resembles (and was certainly meant to
resemble) the yin-yang symbol of Chinese cosmology, a similar motif exists in Pueblo craft, both in pottery and basketry. The Whirlwind design also features a left and right arm which meet in a blank centre, or curves, dividing dark and light areas. The "running spiral" is a close associate, often identical to Le Guin's hinged spiral, but repetitive.

The subterranean heyimas match the kivas of the Hopi, or Zuni, or any of the six Pueblo tribes. Each clan or moiety has its own kiva—a direct descendant of the Anasazi pithouse—which serves a purpose similar to the Kesh heyimas. Le Guin defines them as a "center of worship, instruction, training, and study, a meetinghouse, a political forum, a workshop, a library, archive, and museum, a clearinghouse . . . and the principal center of economic control and management for the community, both internally and in regard to trade with other Kesh towns or outside the Valley" (48).

Similarly, the kivas, the communal and ceremonial chambers of the Pueblos, are "often inadequately described as a combination church and clubhouse. . . . As the center of ceremonial life in the pueblo, they were sacred places," used "for religious activities, [but] also . . . for social interaction and for weaving." As the heyimas in Wakwaha are great underground complexes, so "the great kiva . . . in Chako Canyon measures sixty-four feet in diameter and includes a series of antechambers and other peripheral rooms" (Noble 28-29). Both structures are entered through a hole in the roof. Le Guin's heyimas are pentagonal with four-sided roofs to symbolize the Five Houses of Earth and the Four Sky Houses, while Pueblo kivas are usually round or rectangular (as, for instance, the Great Kiva at
Aztec Ruins). Adaptation to a different climate, to a region where timber
is abundant would account for the author's changes in architecture: the
flat mud-brick roof of the kiva is replaced by a pyramidal wooden one,
and the pueblo by individual dwellings, although even those accommodate as
many as five households in one building and tend to be sprawling with
additions.

As in the Nine Towns of the Valley, the extended family is the basic
unit of the Southwest Indian society. "The foundation of Zuni society is
the family," says Kroeber, in *Zuni Kin and Clan:

Life centers about the house. The clan is above all a ceremonial
institution. . . . The house belongs to the women born of the
family. There they come into the world, pass their lives, and
within the walls they die. . . . So generation succeeds
generation, the slow stream of mothers and daughters forming a
current that carried with it husbands, sons, and grandsons. . . .
The house is basic in Zuni life. Attached to her ownership of it
is the Zuni woman's position in her world. Upon her permanent
occupancy of the house rests the matrilineal custom of the tribe.
. . . The clan is maternal, totemically named, and terms of
relationship are applied to all members of it. (47-48)

Lacking the residential unity of lineages, clans depend on symbols or
totems to unite the members and provide a ready means of identity.
Totemism is a set of "customs and beliefs by which there is set up a
special system of relations between the society and the plants, animals,
and other natural objects that are important in the social life" (Haviland
While the Kesh Houses are called Red and Yellow Adobe, Blue Clay, Serpentine, and Obsidian, the Hopi and Zuni clans bear such totemic names as Red Stone, Oak, Willow, Cottonwood, and Deer. Like the Valley people, individual Indians change their names in accordance with the stages of their lives and experiences.

Although rigid, Kesh incest laws are on par with those of Pueblo clans or moieties. Marriages last only as long as both partners find it congenial; either is free to terminate the relationship. North Owl's grandfather left High Porch House to live with his relatives in Chumo; when he returns years later, Valiant takes him back because she feels that he is needed in the household. North Owl admits that she "would have danced on the rooftops to see him go, but a child cannot tell her grandmother to put her grandfather's things out on the landing" (176). Willow is triumphant when her husband returns, but when he leaves for the second time, she puts his belongings out on the porch to demonstrate that the marriage is over.

The identical custom exists among the Zuni: "Divorce is an easy matter for the woman; all she had to do was to set the man's personal belongings outside the door and that was the end of the matter" (Hill 161).

An equal parallelism exists both in behaviour and value systems of the cultures. In a study of the Santa Clara Pueblo, Hill notes that "industry was considered one of the most esteemed personal characteristics. . . . Courtesy in dealing with others in face-to-face situations was a highly considered personal quality" (148). Kroeber, too, praises the Pueblos' reserve and amiability, a combination that constitutes politeness; if it is
returned in kind, even a stranger will be treated as if he were one of the tribe (ZKC.47). The remarkable courtesy and patience the Kesh display toward the Condors (and initially even toward the Pig People), is behaviour of the same brand.

Confidence in the established order, together with the ideal of cooperation, is ingrained in both the Kesh and Pueblo children who must learn early that all possessions are shared. In adult life, this pattern of cooperation includes the moiety or village.

Verification of this value is apparent in the data pertaining to the family, community work, religious participation, and the care of the aged and indigents. What is involved here is a unanimity so important . . . that it extends beyond the usual meaning of cooperation. This unanimity embraces ideas and beliefs as expressed in ceremonies. . . . generosity was an obligation expected of all village members. (Hill 142)

The belief of the Valley people that the person who gives away is rich and the one who keeps poor appears to originate from the same source:

The accumulation of economic surplusses, or hoarding, was foreign to the cultural ideology. . . . Only through the distribution of goods could one of the factors leading to an enhanced status be achieved. . . . Generosity would elevate a man. . . . The ultimate manifestations of generosity in terms of personal service included placing the general welfare of the community or larger group above that of the individual. In the ideal person, it resulted in the development of an attitude of selflessness,
and in extensive participation in various civic enterprises, both secular and religious. (Hill 142)

Both Valley and Pueblo cultures are animistic—meaning that they see themselves as being an integral part of nature rather than superior to it. Ford defines Pueblo ecology as "the interrelationships between living organisms and their biotic and physical environments. . . . a human society is a biological population that interacts with other populations: plant, human, and nonhuman animals. Ecology, then, is dynamic and processual" (1).

The Kesh habit of referring to animals as people, their practice of speaking to rocks and springs, the apologies to animals about to be killed, to flowers about to be broken, compare to Ruth Underhill's observations while researching pueblo crafts. Each village, she reports, has its own clay pit where women go to collect clay for their pottery. "While digging, she spoke to the earth, asking permission, and perhaps leaving an offering, for pueblo people feel that clay and rocks, like animals and plants, have their own feelings, and that man must live on kindly terms with them" (79).

The Lodges and Arts are in charge of all sectors of activity and knowledge in the Valley, and each person usually joins several, regardless of House affiliation. Similarly, "membership in all fraternities is shared, and nearly equally, by members of all [Zuni] clans" says Kroeber, who felt that the survival of pueblo culture owes much to this general integration of people's lifestyles:

Four or five different planes of systematization crosscut each other and thus preserve for the whole society an integrity that would speedily be lost if the planes merged and thereby inclined
to encourage segregation and fission. The clans, the fraternities, the priesthhoods, the kivas... are all dividing agencies. ... by countering each other, they cause... an almost marvelous complexity, but can never break the national entity apart. (ZKC 183)

As in the Valley, moieties or clans are in charge of the yearly round of festivals. The Winter Solstice ceremony is the most important. It is a time of extremes—violence, status and role reversals, and license—while the equinoxes are times when the ideals of moderation, order, and the combining of opposites are given full symbolic reign. The antics of the Clowns reflect these differing concerns (Ortiz 157). Although the major celebrations of the Valley people follow the same temporal cycle, Le Guin reserves extreme behaviour for the Wine and Moon Dances. The Clowns, however, are a part of all her wakwa.

When North Owl tends her seedlings during the Twenty-One-Days before the Sun Dance, she is terribly frightened of the stuttering White Clowns, "horrific figure[s], masked and cloaked in white, nine or ten feet tall, who singly or in groups stalked children in the woods and fields and even in the streets and ways of the towns" (464). The Blood Clowns of the Valley emit a turkey gobble and use reversal words during the Wine Dance. On the third day of the World Dance, "green clowns appeared and performed tricks and juggleries" (459). They use "reversal-words", meaning that "in Clown impromptus language was deliberately dislocated for subversive effect" (42).

Pueblo Indians, too, have several Clown societies. "Ritual clowns
turn the world topsy-turvy . . . they reverse, invert and transpose the normal meaning (structure of 'reality') of culture and society" (Hieb 164-65). They frequently "employed inverted speech, 'talked backward', i.e. said the opposite of what they were told or asked to do" (Hill 294). Clowns have the right to berate and lampoon the public at large and are exempt from any restraint when appearing in public.

They acted as a stabilizing and conservative influence upon both old and young. Much of their humor was based on fact; as a result, few adults cared deliberately to flout social or religious convention, when they knew that such acts would ultimately be commented upon and ridiculed in public. The effectiveness of clowns in molding the behaviour of the younger members of the community resulted from the fear they engendered. With parental cooperation, the clowns were established as realistic "bogies". (Hill 295)

In appearance and function, the Putsato Clowns resemble the White Clowns: their bodies and faces are painted white, the hair brought to a point on top of the head. North Owl is terrified of such beings lurking in the shadows.

Not counting the Clown societies, the Pueblos have nearly as many Lodges and societies as the Kesh, and there are many parallelisms in their functions; however, Le Guin's making the various arts and trades, like glass-making, potting, wood-working, wine-making, smithing, and so on, the responsibility of certain Houses, is an refinement non-existent in the pueblos.
As previously stated, the Lodges and societies can be joined by anyone, regardless of clan affiliation; in the Valley, they are also sponsored by different Houses and serve a certain distinct purpose. Le Guin lifts the Kesh above many superstitions connected with those societies which, to an extent, still persist in Pueblo beliefs today. While Pueblo Bear Societies, for example, serve the same purpose as the Doctors' Lodge of the Kesh, their major preoccupation is with the prevention and relief of diseases and misfortunes associated with sorcery, although they are "considered capable of curing any type of illness or injury, regardless of its cause" (Hill 318). Cures are held in the kivas as well as in the homes, and are always connected with singing and ritual, comparable to the "bringing-in" ceremony of the Kesh.

Only in one area superstition persists among some of the Valley people: the Miller's art (working with mills, turbines, electric power sources) is suspect, since it deals with invisible forces belonging to the Houses of the Sky. Consequently, the Millers have no House of the living responsible for them. In "Dangerous People", Kamedan tells the healer Duhe that people are biased against his occupation. "They don't care about my work, it's Miller's work. I'm not respectable, they don't trust me." The people's prejudice extends to his young son: "The child, he's a Miller's child. And only a boy, anyway" (328).

The Valley society is a closed society; it is isolated by the fact that the surrounding peoples do not speak the same language and are not part of the kinship system: practically no mixing takes place. In Stone
Telling's memory only one outsider was accepted in the Valley and taken in by one of the clans. An Obsidian girl from Tachas Touchas who wanted to "come inland" with a Condor man and sought consent from her clan, was advised against it. Willow did not ask for advice from her House, but Terter Abhao was not received in the heyimas and her daughter carried the stigma of half-person. Stone Telling explains that her father could not have been accepted because he would have had to start learning, like a child, and he would "not have borne it, since he believed he knew all he needed to know" (30).

A similar resentment toward foreign influences exists among the Pueblos. Although they treat the outsider politely, "whatever intellectual solutions the Pueblos have formulated for the problem of evil cannot fully reconcile the presence of strangers in cosmic (tribal) space." Instead, they "set careful limits to the boundaries of their world and order everything within it" (Ortiz 142-54).

Another parallelism can be found in the time and space perceptions of the cultures. The Kesh, we hear, have no distinct past. Whatever happened before they inhabited the Valley, is referred to as "the time outside", or "when they lived outside the world." Pandora feels that "the gap, the leap, break, flip, that reversal from in to out, from out to in" (153) is the hinge between civilization as we know it and their own. While the machines proceed in a linear mode, the Valley dweller "spatialises time; it is not an arrow, nor a river, but a house, the house he lives in" (171-72). Ortiz describes a similar time concept among the Pueblos:

None . . . has abstract terms for space and time; space is only
meaningful as the distance between two points, and time cannot be
understood apart from the forces and changes in nature which give
it relevance and meaning. It is precisely when time becomes cut
up into arbitrarily abstract units (weeks, hours, minutes,
seconds) that tribal peoples lose all similarity in their time-
reckoning with those of Western peoples. (137)

History and origin are unimportant:

All of the pueblos can be characterized as ahistorical . . . even
in their myths, [they] are not at all concerned about the first
beginnings or origins of all things, just with their emergence. .
. . Sometimes space and time are merged into a resolution of the
cosmos. . . . Within this general metaphysical order, the human
life cycle might be portrayed metaphorically as a slowly
revolving cylinder [gyre?] on which are imprinted the
generations. Thus to die in a pueblo is not to become dead but
to return to the only real life there is; one 'changes houses'
and rejoins the ancestors, but one can come back later. (143-45)

As a Westerner, Pandora grows exasperated when she finds that the Kesh
have no recorded history. "'You aren't Man and you don't live in Time,' I
say bitterly. 'You live in the Dream Time.'

'Always,' says the Archivist of Wakwaha. 'Right through Civilisation,
we have lived in the Dream Time'" (172).

Their culture was not part of white man's civilization, was never
permitted to be. Having lived in a peripheral world, they bear no guilt
for its failure, but also could do nothing to change the course leading to

page 111
its ultimate destruction.

The Na Valley provides an adequate but not an abundant subsistence. "The dirt of the Valley is . . . not a rich, open-minded, amenable soil, but poor, opinionated, cranky dirt." The only grain the clay produces is corn, but it can grow all sorts of vegetables "if you work hard enough, and dig when it's like wet cement and water when it's like dry cement" (51). The Kesh depend on a diversified economy of herding, hunting-gathering (although hunting is mainly left to children,) horticulture, and mixed farming, an economy comparable with present-day pueblos. Water in both cultures is used "mindfully, carefully".

North Owl and her family were allotted some wild olive trees and a small plot of land to plant potatoes, corn, and vegetables, but they could not produce enough to feed themselves and were forced to take much more from the storehouses than they could give (7). When her husband returns, Willow thinks that "with the man's hands to work they could do more gardening, and make more, and so perhaps do more giving than taking of things and food, which is a great pleasure, and live respected, without any shame" (29). Her daughter, after coming home from Sai, decides to be "rich": she would produce enough to be able to give to others. "Even that first year that I was home, I made a dance cloak to give to our heyimas" (369).

As in most kinship systems similar to the Kesh, a generalized reciprocity replaces a formal medium of exchange where neither the value of what is given nor time of repayment is specified (Haviland 273). Although
the Pueblos do not have storehouses where people can go and help themselves, anyone will give to his neighbor what he needs, and during all celebrations and dances food in generous amounts is provided for participants and audience. Clan hospitality is a matter of honour. Similarly, wherever the Kesh travel in the Valley, they find heyimas of their House to make them welcome.

In trading goods with other peoples who are not part of the kinship system—like the Cotton People—fairness is insisted upon. The members of the Finders Lodge do not display the same leniency toward strangers as they would toward their own people. Nor do the Pueblos: "Relative value is calculated, and sharp trading is more the rule when compared to the reciprocal nature of the exchanges within the group" (Haviland 283).

The Kesh emphasis on handicraft which finds expression in the finely woven and richly decorated vests and other ceremonial garments used for the wakwa is as much in keeping with utopian tradition as it is with pueblo culture. Kesh embroidery, pottery, and weaving are typical native crafts. Self-expression in art is encouraged in the Valley, yet the products of such endeavours are contributions to the clan and belong to all members. Literary creations in the form of poetry, novels, and stories are given to the heyimas as gifts: the authors remain anonymous.

In recreating the tales and poems of the Kesh Le Guin closely approaches the style and tone of Indian originals, as demonstrated in the following Zuni prayer:

Send forth your massed clouds to stay with us,
Stretch out your watery hands,
Let us embrace!
To Itiwana you will come
With all your people,
Hiding behind your watery shield
With all your people;
With your fine rain caressing the earth,
With your heavy rain caressing the earth,
(Come to us!)
Raise the sound of your thunders! . . . (Tyler 169)

Coyote, the trickster, who shows up in many Kesh stories, is just as popular among the Pueblo Indians; personified as a female, Coyote often enjoys a semi-divine status. (Out of a collection of thirty-three Pueblo folk-stories compiled by C. F. Lummis, Coyote is the leading figure in six, and appears as a character in another nine.)

Although drama, music and dance are secular and religious expressions in both cultures, the author gives the Kesh an education unequalled in most modern societies: as mentioned previously, children learn to read as soon as they can speak and walk, and schooling in the heyimas begins at five. Consequently, some dedicate themselves to intellectual pursuit: Gather's field, for instance, is architecture. "His interest is . . . almost abstract, a fascination with the formal significance and occurrence of certain architectural elements and proportions" (169). Scholars reside in every heyimas.
Sexual freedom which plays such an important role in many utopias, is somewhat more controlled in *Always Coming Home*. Although children are free to experiment, adolescents remain celibate (Living on the Coast) until they are old enough to take a partner (Coming Inland). Prejudice against early parenthood is very strong, "as strong as their prejudice against bearing/siring more than two children" (488). As in the Anarres society, no person "belongs" to any other person. Promiscuous behaviour is confined to the Moon Dance where it is conducted in public.

In the pueblos, a more traditional attitude towards sexuality persists. Most displays of eroticism and scatological humour are the privilege of the Clowns, and represent a reversal of established customs. Sexual abstinence, on the other hand, plays a prominent part in many rituals and initiations.

As in most egalitarian societies, the common value system maintains social order among the Pueblo tribes. Fundamental cultural guidelines as well as positive and negative sanctions encourage the individual to conform to the norms. Fear of ridicule and disapproval of neighbors is a powerful deterrent.

The same type of control exists among the Kesh. A teenage boy who fathers a child, for instance, is treated with such contempt it might drive him to exile or suicide. A body of cautionary stories illustrates the dire consequences of transgression: in "The Miller" and in "Lost" the unforgivable sin committed is incest. "Old Women Hating" demonstrates the results of non-cooperation between two households sharing the same dwelling. "Junco" portrays a man who insists on knowing what no mortal can
know; a Kesh form of hubris, it leads to prolonged suffering until the individual is humbled. "The Keeper" of the costumes and sacred paraphernalia used in the wakwa and of gifts given to the heyimas not only betrayed a trust, but also claimed objects for herself that were meant for using and sharing: symbolically, they turn to dust.

The round of ritual dances unite the Kesh. Although Le Guin hesitates to call them religious rites, the wakwa constitute a dealing with the spiritual aspects of the Kesh world view and their relationship with the cosmos, and are dubbed "religion" by most anthropologists. Although the Valley people have no God or gods, their material world is surrounded or adjoined by the domain of supernatural beings. Excepting the visionary who may glance beyond, their space is visually limited, and the sun, moon, and stars confine its boundaries; the sublunar space is peopled by the spirits of the natural phenomena, the wilderness, and the dead and unborn who exist apart yet near enough to touch on occasions the world of the living. In the Valley, the domain of spirits begins on the "hunting side"; similarly, the Pueblos "place the kachinas [spirits] just at or just outside their world when thinking of them as occupying horizontal space" (Ortiz 154).

"Pueblo religion serves to place each individual in the net of ceremonial obligations which is a model for ordinary economic obligations requiring unlimited sharing" (Harvey 210). The same holds true for the Kesh. In common participation and beliefs lies common strength. Willow, for instance, sets herself apart not only by marrying a no-House man, but also by refusing to communicate with anyone when she realizes that she has
made a mistake. She joins the Lamb Society which engages in rites such as animal sacrifice, rites that are alien to the Kesh culture. She reverses the cycle of life by reassuming her childhood name. "To go back to a first name is to go against the earth" (173). When her daughter returns, she has stopped going to the heyimas or dancing the great dances. She has become as much a hermit as the people who go to live in the forest; she has cut herself off from her own people: "Her souls had shrunk away and unmade themselves" (365).

How life-giving the relationships with others of one's culture are is manifested in the tale "At the Springs of Orlu". Although the relationship with nature is just as important, man, while alive, can make excursions into the Houses of the Sky, in spiritual journeys, or in visions, but he cannot dwell there permanently. The story "The Visionary" gives a magnificent account of the Houses of Death, Dream, Wilderness, and Eternity, but also points out the dangers of such revelations to the frail human mind.

The ceremonies of the Sun at the winter solstice unite all natural with all supernatural elements:

All Beings of both Earth and Sky, of all planes of being, met and danced the Sun together. . . . The dead and the unborn were to be invited . . . the people of the rainbow, the images of dream and vision, all wild creatures, the waves of the sea, the sun, and all the other stars. . . . So earthly mortal, human dancers invited that part of their own being which was before and would be after their earthly life: their soul, or their souls . . . and the
self that is beyond the self. (463)

One could make contact with the supernatural through dream or trance, or through intellectual and physical discipline—but the practices of drug-taking, fasting, and self-mutilation were avoided by most Valley people.

In the Pueblo world, the cosmos is sacred space, and inexhaustible. While Le Guin divides the Earth and the Sky into fives and fours,

the southern Tiwa seem to emphasize modes of classification by threes, perhaps on the model of the three cosmic levels, and by fives, probably on the model of the four directions plus the middle. . . . All things are defined and represented by reference to a center . . . the general Pueblo conception of causality is that everything—animate and inanimate—counts and everything has its place in the cosmos. All things are thought to have two aspects, essence and matter [as in "deer" and "deerness"]. Thus everything in the cosmos is believed to be knowable and, being knowable, controllable. Effective control comes only from letter-perfect attention to detail and correct performance, thus the Pueblos emphasis on formulas, ritual, and repetition revealed in ritual drama. Among human beings the primary causal factors are mental and psychological states . . . because within the relentlessly inter-connected universal whole the part can affect the whole. . . . (Ortiz 142-43)

As empty places are left for "visiting" cachinas in Pueblo ceremonies, so do the Kesh leave spaces "between each earth person and the next . . . for a Four-House person to dance. So also the songs leave a silence after
every line sung for the other voices to sing, whether we hear them or not; and the drums beat only every second note" (467). The dances of both cultures are calendrically arranged and serve the same purpose—to reaffirm rapport with the earth and the universe, and to assure the cooperation of natural and supernatural forces.

* 

Although the similarities between the fictional society of the Kesh and the non-fictional society of the Pueblos are too plentiful to be coincidental, for Le Guin, the anthropological model was only a basis to proceed from. Starting with a clean slate, an empty landscape, she tried to demonstrate how the indigenous culture, if it were permitted to develop undisturbed, could create a utopia. Not a utopia based on plenty, nor on perfect conditions, but on the beliefs, ethics, common sense, and way of life of a people.

"' . . . this isn't utopia, aunt!'" says the archivist of Wakwaha-na.

"'The hell it ain't,'" says Pandora (316).

Proceeding from the old culture, still undiffused by Western domination, Le Guin made the Valley more ideal by granting it an evolution which eliminated primitivisms through education, but an education that places as much emphasis on the cultural heritage as on general knowledge. The Kesh women have achieved an equality that does not exist in the pueblo, at least as far as participation in religious ceremonies is concerned. The old traditions are strengthened by unification; all tribal differences of custom have been removed. The clans have become responsible for the various categories of endeavour necessitated by a moderately advanced
technology. The yearly round of dances and celebrations has undergone a reorganization, meanings—perhaps partly lost in the pueblos—have been recaptured: the end result is a rich culture in its purest and most homogenous form.

The Na Valley is utopian in the sense that it is relatively isolated; its population lives in an egalitarian, ungoverned society predominantly concerned with the well-being of all members. All resources are pooled and shared, and each person contributes as much as he is able to, be it in the form of food, or goods, or services. Population growth is checked by restricting a couple's offspring to two. Contentment is rooted in accomplishment, in belonging to a closely knit kinship system, in personal freedom, in contribution and participation, and in adherence to Valley beliefs and customs. To keep the culture pure, foreigners are generally repelled. There are no laws: public opinion keeps order.

The Kesh are Taoist in the sense that each individual is permitted to live according to his or her conscience. Advice is given, but no pressure is exerted as far as personal decisions are concerned. Although it is a goal desired by everyone, each must find his own way in establishing an inner rapport with the macrocosm. Spiritual excursions like "Walking in the Track of the Lion" help children to find it early.

The Kesh have no desire to acquire possessions. "Owning is owing, having is hoarding," is one of their sayings. "To conquer is to be careless," is another. "Carefulness is holding oneself and one's acts in appropriate relation and proportion to the many other beings and intentions" (313). They are not ambitious at the expense of others. They
live and let live, enjoying life without expecting more from it than it can give. They are thoughtful, considerate, and caring, without being interfering. They are good people who live in harmony with themselves, with nature, and with the universe. They are a balanced, harmonious whole.

They are basically non-aggressive. Since survival is their main concern, they deal with aggressors passively. Negative influences are waited out. When the Condor soldiers find admirers in some of the Valley men who try to imitate them by founding the Warriors Lodge, the Kesh tolerate them, just as they tolerate the presence of the Condors. What could be a major threat to their existence, is treated with little overt concern, as if they knew that the enemy would finally defeat itself. Time is always on their side: with the collapse of the Condor regime, the Warrior Lodge and the Lamb Society collapse also. There is no impatience. Impatience is characteristic of peoples who are eager to see conflicts resolved within their lifetimes; but where the self is submerged in the pattern of society, and society in the greater pattern of all being, past and future, endings are not absolute but merely transitions to new beginnings.

As the soft yield of water cleaves obstinate stone,
So to yield with life solves the insoluble:
To yield, I have learned, is to come back again.
But this unworded lesson,
This easy example,
Is lost upon men. (Bynner 43)
Conclusion

In reviving a tradition that seemed to have come to an end with Wells, and in reversing a pessimistic trend that shocked man with a distorted mirror image of himself but could offer no solutions, Le Guin shows the way to a new, realistic utopian literature and reassures us by granting humanity a future. In presenting her ideas in a form acceptable to our age, she is able to reach a wide public: although *Always Coming Home* is a book to be studied rather than to be read in one sitting and may not enjoy the general appeal of *The Dispossessed*, the author's reputation will convince her readers to give it the extra time and effort it deserves.

Le Guin retained many traditional features in her utopias, such as total or relative isolation, equality of inhabitants, resource-sharing, and sexual freedom. Her political and societal arrangements, however, coincide with previous plans only where decentralization, self-government, and the absence of law and law enforcement are also the norm. In contrast to the tradition, Le Guin's ideal societies function despite less-than-ideal conditions—suggesting that utopia is a state of the mind rather than of circumstance. Both the people of Anarres and of the Valley differ from other utopians by having to battle adversity—an inhospitable climate in one case, and a degenerated environment in the other. Both societies are imperiled; their continuation as utopias is made ambiguous by internal deterioration to be reversed or external threats to be overcome. The reader is not merely presented with the ready-made product operating flawlessly, but witnesses a procession of events. Utopia
is not a ou-topos, a "no-place": it is surrounded by other countries, and moves with and within time.

While the Anarres colony is founded on the concepts of Godwin and Kropotkin, which, in turn, are based on the egalitarian societies of early man, the Kesh clans are modelled after the kinship systems of the Pueblo Indians. While Le Guin's anarchy resembles nineteenth-century socialist proposals, like Owen's, and is, in many ways, closely related to News From Nowhere, a utopian society based wholly on an existing Indian culture is unprecedented in the genre.

The differences existing between Le Guin's utopian societies are caused partly by their locations, and partly by the differing mentalities of the inhabitants. Although many characteristics coincide, the social organization is not the same: while the extended family is the basic unit of the Kesh clans, on Anarres the concept of kinship as an obligation has been replaced by an obligation toward all members of the colony.

Both utopias are projected far into the future. While Anarres, being totally cut off from other societies, is marred by negative internal developments which threaten the basic ideals upon which its continued success depends, the Kesh Valley, being only semi-isolated, is threatened by outside aggression, and, to a minor degree, by infiltration of elements foreign to its culture.

In The Dispossessed, the only way to deal with corruption is by action; the malignancy has to be removed before it consumes the living organism of society. Taoist thought, as far as the whole population is concerned, is not as readily applicable on Anarres as in the Kesh utopia,
but it is inherent in some individuals and shows in their attitudes toward life. Although it seems to be strongest in Takver, Shevek, too, is a reluctant activist and only opposes the established order when he feels that it is his responsibility as an Odonian; personal issues are secondary to the greater principle involved. Representing yin and yang, Shevek and Takver complement one another: while Takver is in harmony with the microcosm, Shevek seeks to discover "the foundations of the universe. Together, they form a whole: much of Shevek's behaviour on Urras may stem from an incompleteness away from his partner; it is one of the (unspoken) reasons why he must return.

In *Always Coming Home*, the situation existing in the times of Lao Tzu is duplicated: the peaceful country folk are threatened by hordes of conquistadors who could easily eliminate or enslave them. The Kesh respond according to Lao Tzu's recommendations: in order to survive, they remain passive, yielding to the stronger. Their wisdom lies in waiting out a system they recognize as being self-destructive.

The relationships between the two utopias and their opposing dystopias also vary: the social injustices of class-conscious Urras prompted the Odonians to exchange a naturally beautiful world for a barren moon where survival requires hard physical labour and provides no other comfort than total equality can provide. The resources and facilities Anarres is able to offer the individual are limited, and personal freedom of movement and pursuit is an ideal that cannot be as fully realized as, for instance, sexual freedom.

A-Io, on the other hand, is not entirely dystopian: although the lower
classes are exploited and live under conditions reminiscent of the Industrial Revolution, scientific research, invention, industrial progress, and (we may guess) free artistic expression are nurtured, and the genius finds the support he cannot find on Anarres. It is clear that the two worlds combined could create a true utopia—but Le Guin is too realistic to display any hope in this direction.

The Valley society has a relaxed harmony the Odonians lack; the pressure, demands, and somewhat hectic intensity of Anarres are absent. While Anarres exists and persists, and suffers from its exiled position, the Valley seems totally self-contained in every respect. If the Kesh were the only people left on this earth, their lives would not be much different; they would make do without cotton or electricity, as their ancestors before them. Although it is humming with lively activity, the Valley has an Arcadian air of timelessness, of repose, of just being. Its main utopian features lie in the richness of the Kesh culture, which unites their world with every other world, and their lives with every other life; they lie in knowing and maintaining a place among all that exists, in each person following his good instincts and letting others follow theirs, in living according to "the way", modestly, simply considerately, helpfully, and cheerfully. This is, the author seems to say, what creates a true paradise: one that will outlast every opposition, every interference, because it is not bound to any landscape or time period, but resides in the hearts and minds of its people.

In contrast to this, the Dayao regime is wholly negative, without redeeming qualities. Since it is Le Guin's first genuine dystopia, and
portrayed almost as powerfully as the ideal life in the Valley, it deserves a second glance.

In Heinlein's future history *The Past Through Tomorrow*, a dictator who calls himself the "Prophet Incarnate" holds most of North America in an iron grip. He rules from a fortified sanctuary in "New Jerusalem", guarded by Westpoint-trained "Angels of the Lord", and attended by an order of consecrated "Virgins", who must do their "spiritual duty" by serving the needs of the "holy" man. It is a satirically humorous picture of what might ensue if a highly ambitious and insincere evangelist gained enough political power to replace the status quo. But like most totalitarian states, the Prophet's regime has a dark side: behind the hymn-singing and miracles performed on television stands the Grand Inquisitor whose methods in detecting and interrogating heretics rival the methods of the Thought Police in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

The ruler of a theocracy has an added advantage: his decisions cannot be questioned because he claims to receive his instructions directly from a higher authority. To oppose him is to oppose God. The greater part of a thoroughly conditioned population will think twice before crossing such a vastly superior force.

To cement positions of power by playing on man's fears of the supernatural is an old political device utilized by the Pharaohs five thousand years ago, and capitalized on by nearly every culture throughout history in one form or another. The semi-divine or heaven-sent leader who professes to have a direct line to his immortal master and merely carries out his commands is not easy to expose or depose—not even in our age. The
figures of Rasputin, or James Jones, or the Ayatollah Khomeini demonstrate the frightening dimensions of such power; misused, it represents the ultimate in corruption.

It shows an admirable insight on the part of Le Guin that of all the dystopian forms of government she could have chosen she selected this one. Realizing the spiritual poverty of our materialistic age, the psychological need of many to worship collectively, the isolation of some segments of society causing heightened receptiveness to persuasive rhetoric and charisma, she juxtaposes the simply life in harmony with nature, where everyone is part of the whole, to the life that denies nature, and where a small, self-chosen elite claims to be the whole.

Hell is deepest where a people consider themselves so superior to others they deny them human status: it led to the holocausts of Auschwitz and Belsen, and similar massacres throughout history, wherever conquerors assessed the conquered as subhuman, be it on account of colour, or culture, or for being stout non-believers in the One True Faith—whatever faith this happened to be. Set against the atrocities committed in the name of religions, nations, rulers, or political doctrines, the simple life centered on survival and continuity is as close to paradise as human beings are able to come.

Its realization, says Le Guin, or at least its approximation is not as unattainable as it seems. All it would take is some common sense, commonly exercised, a serious evaluation of what counts in life and what does not, and the ability to think independently of the many who make it their business to do our thinking for us. If everyone of us followed "the way",

page 127
which "is to the world as the River and the Sea are to rivulets and streams" (Lau 91), we would agree with Lao Tzu that "[o]wning is the entanglement / Wanting is the bewilderment, / Taking is the presentiment", and that "[o]nly he who contains content / Remains content" (Bynner 64).

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page 128
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