Research, Methods and Analysis in

Social Sciences and Humanities 2025 - IV

Editors
Sevilay ÖZER
Pınar FEDAKAR



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PREFACE

This book aims to bring together contemporary research conducted in the fields of social sciences and humanities from an interdisciplinary perspective. Titled *Research, Methods and Analysis in Social Sciences and Humanities – IV*, this work brings together the theoretical approaches, methodological diversities, and original field studies of scholars from different disciplines within a shared intellectual framework.

Today, social phenomena emerge as multi-layered structures in which economic, cultural, historical, political, and technological dimensions intersect. For this reason, explanatory models based on single disciplines have become increasingly insufficient, and interdisciplinary approaches have gained growing importance in scholarly production. This book aims to make visible the interactions between the social sciences and the humanities, to establish a theoretical dialogue between these fields, and to address interdisciplinary transitions in an analytical manner. Accordingly, the volume brings together studies spanning a wide range of fields, including economics, public policy, management, history, literature, cultural studies, ecology, and digital transformation.

The chapters included in the book both preserve their own disciplinary frameworks and establish connections with one another within a holistic intellectual structure. In this way, the volume appeals not only to specialists in specific fields but also to researchers, graduate students, and scholars from diverse academic backgrounds who are interested in interdisciplinary approaches.

The book is structured into six main sections. The first section focuses on economic systems and fiscal policies. In this section, issues such as fiscal incentive practices, factors influencing investment decisions, the impact of defense expenditures on public finance, and the historical transformation of taxation policies are analyzed from a multidimensional perspective. The second section concentrates on management, organization, and decision-making processes, examining leadership approaches, organizational structures, the effects of digitalization on management, and the evaluation of health policies at a global level.

The third section is shaped around society, history, and cultural structures. The studies in this section focus on the preservation of cultural heritage, literary representations of historical narratives, and the social reflections of modernization processes. The fourth section is structured around literature,

thought, and cosmology, examining the relationship between nature, the universe, and humanity through literary texts, and discussing cosmology, metaphysics, and aesthetics from a critical perspective.

The fifth section focuses on ecology, visual culture, and digital transformation. In this part, the relationships between the natural environment and human activity, the digitalization of visual production, and data-driven approaches are explored. The sixth and final section centers on society, crisis, and global transformation. This section examines the social, economic, and demographic transformations that have emerged particularly in the post-pandemic period, addressing issues of migration, vulnerability, and adaptation processes.

Through this comprehensive structure, the book moves beyond being a collection of individual studies and instead offers an integrated scholarly contribution that encourages interdisciplinary thinking and advances contemporary academic debates.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all contributing authors who have enriched this volume with their original studies and scholarly perspectives. By embracing an interdisciplinary approach, each contributor has added significant value to this collective work and strengthened its academic depth.

We also extend our appreciation to all authors for their dedication, scholarly rigor, and collaborative spirit throughout the editorial process. Their commitment and academic sensitivity have played a crucial role in shaping this volume. We are equally grateful to everyone who contributed to the preparation and publication of this book.

It is our hope that this work will serve as a lasting and inspiring resource for researchers working in the fields of social sciences and humanities.

Editors
Prof. Dr. Sevilay Özer
Prof. Dr. Pınar Fedakar

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CHAPTER XI

MAPPING UTOPIA: TRADITIONS, VARIATIONS, AND CRITICAL DEBATES IN UTOPIAN LITERATURE

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1. Introduction

Utopia originates as a product of imagination, yet persists as a form of critique. From ancient myths of terrestrial paradises to the intricately constructed imaginary civilisations of contemporary literature, utopian thought has served as humanity's most enduring approach of transcending the present—an inquiry into the current state by envisioning what has yet to materialise. Prior to Thomas More's coining of the phrase in 1516, the desire to envision an improved society had already permeated intellectual discussions, theological ideologies, and literary creations. More's neologism simply encapsulated a phenomenon as ancient as human desire: the rejection of reality and the determination to envision alternative possibilities.

The conflict between the "no-place" and the "good place," inherent in the etymology of utopia, exposes the conceptual dilemma at the core of the tradition. Utopia serves as both an elusive ideal and a methodological instrument, a creative exploration and a pragmatic societal critique. The territory encompasses Plato's ideal city, Christine de Pizan's allegorical sanctuary for women, medieval interpretations of divine order, Enlightenment rational constructs, nineteenth-century social experiments, and the fragmented landscapes of modern dystopia.

Each of these kinds engages in what Sargent refers to as "social dreaming," a persistent human effort to redefine the limits of the feasible.

As the tradition evolved, utopia fragmented into other forms—eutopia, dystopia, critical utopia, anti-utopia, heterotopia, ecotopia—each revealing distinct aspects of human aspiration and apprehension. These derivative genres illustrate that utopia is not a static blueprint but a dynamic and contested domain influenced by historical disruptions, ideological disputes, and cultural changes. Bloch's concept of the Not-Yet-Conscious positions utopia as a sort of anticipatory awareness, a burgeoning impetus that maintains the horizon of possibility. Suvin's idea of cognitive estrangement positions utopia inside a literary framework that unsettles the familiar to uncover its concealed features. Levitas's interpretation of utopia as a method emphasises its function not as a goal but as an analytical practice—a rigorous approach to envisioning alternatives that challenge and surpass the current state.

This chapter delineates these traditions and conceptual transformations, charting utopia's evolution from idealised tales to intricate philosophical frameworks and from optimistic designs to cautionary dystopias. It examines how utopian literature mirrors the society that creates it, while concurrently questioning their assumptions, revealing their contradictions, and presenting reimagined ideals of communal existence. Primarily, it contends that utopia endures not because of its promise of perfection, but because it emphasises possibility. In a world perpetually altered by political turmoil, technological advancement, and environmental crisis, utopian thought persists as an essential imaginative force—one that rejects finality, resists complacency, and compels us to continually envision a superior future.

2. Historical and Conceptual Background

The term utopia was not introduced to the world until 1516. Thomas More, upon publishing his work *Utopia*, presented it to the world, marking the inception of discourse surrounding utopia. In an effort to identify and incorporate the requisite term into literature, "More resorted to two Greek words – *ouk* (that means not and was reduced to *u*) and *topos* (place), to which he added the suffix *ia*, indicating a place" (Vieira, 2010, p. 4). In light of his neologism, one may assert that the term utopia fundamentally embodies both an affirmation of the potential for an improved existence and a repudiation of the conceived order and society—at least during the period of its conception. While the most

straightforward definition of utopia is an imaginary place in which everything is perfect, More's purpose extended far beyond this notion. He sought to underscore the notion that an optimal society is attainable through multiple negotiations within the community, between the community and governmental institutions, as well as among those institutions themselves. Baker-Smith (2011) states, "More initially titled his book *Nusquama*, the Latin for 'nowhere'" (p. 143); nevertheless, he did not intend to suggest that the society on the fictional island is truly unattainable. Were More to have published his book under that title, and had he designated his fictional island Nusquama, he would, in effect, be negating the possibility of its actual existence (Vieira, 2010, p. 4). He depicted a notably commendable society, wherein all individuals thrived due to an improved social order in More's conception; however, it was undermined by More's neologism, as the society was fictitious and could only be attained through a catalyst for transformation within the societal and institutional frameworks. According to More, societies must envision an ideal social order to endeavour to actualise it, thus transcending the confines of utopia since it facilitates an understanding of what is essential for human fulfilment and promotes the expansion, enrichment, and elevation of aspirations beyond those prevalent in the ordinary present (Levitas, 2013, p. 4).

The history of art and literature encompasses numerous works that embody utopian impulses, addressing the malfunctions or dysfunctions present in contemporary societies. Accordingly, meticulous examination of Sargent's (1994) taxonomy is crucial for comprehending the evolution of utopianism and other emerging reflections:

Table 1

Taxonomy of Utopianism

Category	Type/Focus	Specific Forms & Examples
A. Myth	Traditional narratives reflecting primal desires for perfection.	Earthly paradise Fortunate isles Noble savages Arcadias Heaven/hell The millennium Prester John tales
B. Fiction	**Utopias:** Explicit works detailing ideal/non-ideal societies.	Eutopia (positive) Dystopia (negative) Satirical Anti-utopia Critical
	Cockaigne (land of plenty)	
	Speculative Fiction: Utilizes futuristic/magical elements.	Atlantis Science fiction Fantasy Tales of the future
	Internal/Psychological: Perfection sought within the mind.	Utopia of the mind (Daumal, Hesse)
	Narrative Styles: Specific literary traditions.	Imaginary/extraordinary voyages Uchronia (alternative history) Robinsonaden (isolation) Gulliveriana (satirical voyages) Fairy tales Romance Oriental tales
C. Non-fiction	**Political/Theoretical:** Ideal governance and societal structure.	Instructions to princes Political philosophy Utopian social theory
	Design/Planning: Ideal environments.	Ideal cities Urban planning Visionary architecture
	Artistic Expression: Ideal/ Utopian themes in media.	Film Painting Music

(Adapted from Sargent, 1994)

Sargent (1994) identifies two categories of utopian traditions: *body utopias*, which focus on sensual gratification, and *city utopias*, which emphasise human contrivance (p. 4). His initial classification of the utopian tradition encompasses utopian works that depict societies experiencing various pleasures without human intervention. On the basis of myths, Cockaigne and Arcadia serve as the initial instances of this tradition, representing "utopias (eutopias) that exist by nature rather than human contrivance and that provide a life of ease" (Sargent, 1982, p. 685). In essence, existence in these fictitious societies is remarkably comfortable, and humans engage in no extraordinary efforts to relish their contentment. Sargent's depiction of one manifestation of this tradition, the Cockaigne, is that people recline as fully prepared food is propelled into their mouths, while rivers of wine flow directly beside them. The depictions of food in all Cockaignes are abundant; sexual imagery is present but subdued until the twentieth century. There is an absence of labour, no apprehension of scarcity or peril, and no mortality or a tranquil demise. The golden ages, terrestrial paradises, and Noble Savages share this characteristic, with the further distinction that women experience painless childbirth (Sargent, 1982, p. 685). Cockaigne, as a representation of paradise on earth, was consistently repudiated by Christianity and its adherents, as the depictions in those works directly contradict the Christian doctrine that salvation is attained through diligent labour and that God's subjects must strive to merit His grace. Nonetheless, the importance of these works lies in the idea that dreaming has consistently occupied a prominent role in the annals of human history. While utopia and utopian literature cannot be confined to a singular notion such as dreaming, it is reasonable to assert that dreaming constitutes a fundamental element of utopian ideals. In other terms, the inclination for social dreaming predates the emergence of any utopian genre (Sargent, 1994, p. 11). The second tradition, the city utopia, closely resembles the first; however, it is considered more attainable due to the emphasis on physical and mental attributes, including human intervention and decision-making. Sargent (1982) puts forth that the sole thematic distinction between the two traditions is the inevitability of pain during childbirth.

While More popularised the term utopia within the literary genre, it cannot be asserted that he was the inaugural author to produce a utopian work or one that incorporates utopian elements. In this regard, situating utopia within a specific framework is highly beneficial, as the term encompasses not only a literary genre but also a concept that includes diverse functions, forms, and traditions. Plato's *Republic*, composed between 370 and 360 BC, and his *Laws*, written in 360 BC,

are seminal texts that embody utopian elements by integrating idealistic concepts and social aspirations to formulate an ideal state and establish a comprehensive legal framework that was absent at the time. An additional instance of early utopian literature is *The City of God*, authored by Augustine of Hippo between 413 and 426 AD. This work emphasises Christian theological principles, particularly the renunciation of earthly pleasures in favour of preparing for the afterlife, asserting that the dichotomy between The City of God and The City of Men will ultimately be resolved, with the latter being vanquished in the end. It is important to underscore that utopian literature is regarded as representations of experiences rather than depictions of ideas. Accordingly, for the orthodox realist novelist, the construction of a credible *world*, intricately detailed and historically coherent, typically serves as the framework within which imaginary characters and actions, the primary focus of interest, are examined. A minor adjustment is required to render the frame conceptual, with the primary focus of interest, while the characters and significant actions serve predominantly as embellishments and validations of the frame. This is a common occurrence in contemporary utopian literature and science fiction. The conventions of the realistic novel can imbue the fictional setting with remarkable pseudo-historical authenticity, making Orwell's London in 1984 appear as *real* as Dickens's London or Zola's Paris. We perceive it internally. The future unfolds before us in the ongoing present of the narrative past tense (Lodge, 1971, p. 230). While concepts and philosophical conclusions are crucial for the formation of an ideal society in utopian literature, experiential knowledge is paramount for constructing a credible depiction of an alternative society. Socrates was acutely cognisant of this concept. As Kumar (1999) posits, Socrates believes he is unable to furnish the account he seeks. He can provide the theoretical framework but not the actualised edifices of the ideal city. He asserts that he is not interested in the imaginative creations of poets. He addresses men of significance and worldly acumen, individuals who have traversed and observed the customs of the world's major cities, and those who have served as statesmen and administrators. These people possess pragmatic knowledge alongside philosophical insight. People like them, drawing from their tangible experiences, can infuse the ideal society with vivid specifics regarding its architecture and art, the quotidian existence of its populace, family dynamics, gender relations, political structures, and interactions with other nations (p. 23). Considering Socrates's methodology, one can assert that Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* represent a utopian pursuit of the ideal society, characterised by rigorous inquiry. In other words, Plato's works incorporate utopian elements; however,

they do not fundamentally constitute utopian literature. Kumar (1999) argues that Plato's *Republic* primarily represents the fundamental tenets of the ideal state rather than demonstrating those principles through tangible institutions and lifestyles (p. 39).

Kumar (1999) posits that utopian tradition and thought are absent outside the Western world (p. 33); however, utopianism and its ideals are not confined to a singular Western group. Abu Nasr Farabi, an Iranian philosopher and logician, authored *The Virtuous City* between 870 and 950 AD. The book comprises six sections and nineteen chapters addressing various topics, including cosmology, human physical and spiritual nature, and the organisation of human society (Bakhsh, 2013, p. 44). Farabi's treatise implies considerations regarding the manner in which individuals and consequently society ought to be structured. To accomplish this, he categorises societies into two types: *perfect* and *imperfect*. Furthermore, in alignment with utopian principles, collaboration among individuals is emphasised as the exclusive means of establishing an improved society. "In *The Virtuous City* he tries to clarify the controversial issue of the Islamic world and the legitimate heirs of the Prophet" (Bakhsh, 2013, p. 51). Farabi authored *The Virtuous City* as a critique of the Abbasid caliphate, which he deemed un-Islamic. He viewed it as a protest against the caliphs who, rather than adhering to the Prophet's teachings, asserted absolute authority and sought to amplify the imperial nature of the caliphate (Bakhsh, 2013, p. 52). This aligns with the concept that "[u]topias are political and economic documents intended as criticisms of their own time by proposing better alternatives" (Sargent, 1982, p. 687).

Works are not exclusively categorised as embodying utopian motives or themes; there are also utopian personas that represent the ideal individuals of society. An ancient instance of these characters is found in Aristophanes' play *Lysistrata*, composed in 411 BC. While it remains ambiguous whether Aristophanes intended to portray a formidable woman within the patriarchal confines of Greek society, one can assert that her depiction as a strong figure capable of asserting her sexual autonomy, alongside her exhortation for Greek and Spartan women to refrain from sexual intercourse with their partners represents an early manifestation of women's agency over their own bodies. This notion aligns with radical feminism, which advocates for women's unequivocal involvement in decisions regarding their sexual relationships and reproduction, positing that reproductive choices should solely reside with women, not men. Moreover, Lysistrata and her allies engage in concluding the

conflict between the Greeks and Spartans, thereby assuming roles in military and political matters. Consequently, the archetypal *utopian*[1] woman, possessing autonomy over her own body, was envisioned centuries ago, highlighting how an ostensibly unattainable concept has indeed materialised, albeit over the course of millennia. While it is evident that a non-existent time or place is crucial for designating something as utopian, it is apparent that Lysistrata did not serve as the normative reference for women of her era; rather, women during wartime were regarded as slaves or spoils of war. Consequently, it would be appropriate to classify the character as utopian, despite the work being a comedy.

As previously stated, utopian aspirations have consistently been part of human agendas. During the Medieval period, Christine de Pizan presented another instance of urban utopia in her 1405 work, *The Book of the City of Ladies*. She established an allegorical society composed exclusively of women. Each woman exemplifies the positive attributes of femininity, undoubtedly serving as a protest against the misogynistic perspectives of certain male writers of the era. Instead of perpetuating the follies and vices of women depicted by contemporary male authors, she established a realm characterised by the virtues of reason, rectitude, and justice which emerge for de Pizan as foundational elements in her endeavour to establish a city that provides sanctuary for women. In the subsequent discourse on these virtues, she chronicled women from antiquity alongside contemporary figures, employing biographical narratives to depict women as sagacious and virtuous (Hindman, 1984, p. 459). Despite the limited representation of feminist ideology, Pizan constructed her own utopia where women could attain honour in a fictional realm, contrasting sharply with the portrayals of women by male poets and writers of the Medieval Ages. The city she established epitomises cooperation and offers an improved environment for women. In her ideal city, humans are esteemed not for their noble lineage, but rather for their virtuous dispositions. In accordance with Aristotle's *Politics*, the diverse inhabitants of the city fulfil distinct roles that collectively enhance the common good and individual welfare, governed by a mixed regime comprising both a supreme leader and righteous citizens. Furthermore, in accordance with the early humanist convention, all city residents are defined by their noble status, which is determined not by lineage or bloodline, but by the extent of their virtue (Allen, 1997, p. 617). As such, Pizan depicts a city where the females are valued and can participate in governance, thereby advocating for an improved

1 This adjective is employed deliberately and ironically in this context, signifying *unrealisable*, to offer a contrasting perspective to scholars who interpret the term *utopian* as denoting concepts that are not achievable.

society for her peers. In light of this, it is important to reiterate that utopia has continuously existed despite the term being first employed by More in 1516. Sargent's classification of utopian conventions into two categories is essential in emphasising that More did not serve as the inaugural author to conceive his utopia.

Ernst Bloch, a German philosopher and author, significantly advanced utopian studies through his extensive work *The Principle of Hope*, initially published in 1959 and not translated into English until 1986. Bloch (1996) posits that the desire for an improved existence and a more hopeful future is fundamentally rooted in the innate impulse of hope. Longing, expectation, and hope require their interpretation; the emergence of the *In-Front-of-Us* necessitates a distinct concept, while the *Novum* calls for a definition of the *Front*. This is to ensure that the royal path through the mediated zone of prospect to the unavoidably *Intended* can be meticulously established and maintained without interruption. *Docta spes*, interpreted as comprehended hope, thus elucidates the notion of an axis in the world, a notion that will remain indelible. This principle has perpetually existed in the world, yet has been philosophically marginalised for an extended period. The absence of deliberate historical production, which lacks an informed trajectory towards a comprehensive goal, renders the notion of the utopian principle—defined positively, encompassing hope and its human-worthy content—fundamentally central in this context (Bloch, 1996, p. 7). In light of Bloch's argument regarding utopia, one can infer that utopia represents a yearning arising from humanity's anticipation of the fulfilment of their deficiencies. The instinct for hope, or the desire for it, is crucial for human survival. Bloch asserts the presence of a utopian drive, an anthropological constant that underlies humanity's inclination to yearn for and envision an alternative existence (Levitas, 2013, p. 5). The concept of an improved and more appealing existence is facilitated through future projections of alternative lives: the unimaginable is contemplated while the unquestioned is scrutinised. This ultimately emphasises that utopia necessitates a transition "from abstract to concrete" (Levitas, 2013, p. 6), thus encouraging progress, which "is the realisation of Utopias" (Wilde, 1915, p. 29), as it represents a dynamic process rather than a mere passive anticipation of impulsive desires. Moreover, utopia is not merely a dream to be savoured, but a vision to be actively sought. Consequently, one of the features of utopia is a transition from the purely fantastical to the authentically feasible. It represents a transition from the possible disjointed manifestation of desire to social wholeness, shifting from

speculation to practice and the political and social endeavour for an improved world (Levitas, 2013, p. 6).

The concept of future projection is referred to as *Not-Yet-Conscious* by Bloch. *Vor-Schein*, the German equivalent of the phrase, is further described as forward dawning. A comparatively tranquil *Unconscious* inclined towards its opposite, advancing rather than retreating. In the direction of an unprecedented emergence, one that has not previously attained consciousness, as opposed to a forgotten or memorable entity that has been relegated to the subconscious within a repressed or archaic manner (Bloch, 1996, p. 11). Through his concept of *Not-Yet-Conscious*, also known as anticipatory consciousness, Bloch firmly contrasts Freud's psychoanalytic approach, asserting that Freud perceives conscience as a repository of memories, encompassing all past practices, experiences, and perceptions, which pertains to *No-Longer-Conscious*. According to Bloch, consciousness is not exclusively tied to the past; but can also shed light on the impending future. Similar to More, Bloch's concept of *Not-Yet* operates in two dimensions: (a) as something that is imminent but has yet to be actualised; and (b) as a phenomenon that currently does not exist. Consequently, the *Not-Yet* concept encompasses both the potential for existence and non-existence, a notion also articulated by Bloch as *Not-Yet-Become*. The *Not-Yet* operates on both subjective and objective layers; the subjective level pertains to the *Not-Yet-Conscious*, considered inherently individual, while the objective level relates to the *Not-Yet-Become*, addressing the external world. Consequently, a reciprocal relationship exists between the *Not-Yet-Conscious* and *Not-Yet-Become*. The analysis of anticipatory consciousness should primarily aim to elucidate the subsequent reflections, which are representations of the desired, anticipated improved existence, both psychologically and materially (Bloch, 1996, p. 13). Forward Dawning and More's conception of utopia converge, as both advocate for the enhancement of living standards and social organisation through speculative foresight prior to any external interventions. Creating a portrait of the future, illustrating alternative lives and opportunities, and actualising them in reality constitute the themes of utopia and the utopianist. Utopian thought is inherently imaginative, originating from literature, where the literary imagination prioritises the visualisation of possibilities over the attainment of specific goals (Frye, 1965, p. 329).

Sargent (1994), too, believes that utopia and utopian thought originate from inherent human impulses for improvement in the current circumstances of people's lives. He regards utopianism as "a universal human phenomenon"

(Sargent, 1994, p. 3), thus transcending the confines of Western hegemony or Christian ideology, while highlighting its humanistic nature, unbound by race, faith, or any other associations in the pursuit of progress. Sargent (1994) speculates that when we experience hunger, we envision a satiated stomach. When experiencing sexual frustration, we envision sexual fulfilment. When we experience frustration with aspects of our society, we envision a society where those issues are rectified. Humans frequently dream despite being adequately nourished and sexually satisfied. We continue to dream, at least partially, because we are content and able to acknowledge that others are not, believing that they too deserve fulfilment. Utopianism fundamentally arises from humanity's inclination to dream, whether in slumber or in consciousness (pp. 3-4). It is important to recognise that what Sargent emphasises comprises fundamental necessities. He positions human impulses and nature at the core of utopianism, akin to Ernst Bloch's incorporation of hope within its essence. Despite the reluctance of many scholars and political figures towards utopianism for various reasons, which will be explored subsequently, the human inclination towards improvement—albeit not perfection—has consistently been a fundamental aspect of utopianism. Consequently, fantasy, prevalent in numerous utopian works, is responsible for conveying humanity's aspirations and desires. Moreover, fantasies never completely vanish – likely due to the fact that a certain level of fantasy is essential for human psychological well-being (Sargent, 1994, p. 4). There exists a connection between Sargent and Bloch: Sargent utilises the term *fantasy* to denote future vision, whereas Bloch employs *Vor-Schein* to emphasise that each figment or prospective improvement is predicated on the pretence of an unwelcome current circumstance that necessitates alteration in specific ways. Brinton (1965) posits that the utopian premise begins with the assertion, not exclusive to the utopian scholar, that conditions are unfavourable; subsequently, these conditions must significantly improve, potentially achieving perfection, in the near future; such improvement will not occur spontaneously through a natural evolution of the current state; rather, a deliberate plan must be formulated and implemented, in a sense, artificially (p. 348). In other words, human nature and innate impulses have consistently encompassed the fundamental aspects of utopianism. Issues that individuals have consistently lamented or aspired to for centuries have remained unchanged without human intervention, whether through individual or collective action. Human interaction has consistently existed between present circumstances and anticipated future outcomes. Nonetheless, a paradox in Brinton's interpretation of utopianism

pertains to how the term perfect is problematic, as utopias inherently lack a place for perfection. The attainment of perfection will signify the conclusion of utopia, thereby halting any form of improvement and advancement in the future. Sargent (1994) asserts that perfectionism has never been a trait of utopian narrative (p. 6); rather, the primary role of utopian literature is to serve as a distorting mirror, reflecting how favourable we could appear. Utopia justifiably disturbs individuals as it perpetually implies that our existence and societal structure are deficient, unfinished, and flawed (Sargent, 1994, p. 25). While it is reasonable to empathise with the notion that perfection is the ultimate goal, a distortion in individuals' comprehension of their current situations is significantly influential in catalysing efforts for future improvement. The greater the improvement attained, the higher the demand will rise, ultimately resulting in a perpetual cycle that fails to yield the perfection envisioned by people. Furthermore, Sargisson (2003) posits that perfectionism epitomises death: the cessation of advancement, improvement, progression, growth, and transformation; in essence, the demise of politics. To pursue perfection is to pursue demise (p. 37). As such, the basic definition of utopia, commonly described as an idealised location where perfection prevails according to *OALD*, requires immediate and substantial revision. The term *perfect* ought to be substituted with the phrase *better compared to existing circumstances*, as progress is inexorable when people continue to utilise forward-thinking and future projections alongside their aspirations for the variables previously stated. Sargent (2010) also contributes to this concept by arguing that the predominant strategy employed by critics of utopianism is to associate the utopian to the ideal. In English, *perfect* implies accomplished, fulfilled, and unalterable; however, nothing human is truly accomplished, fulfilled, or unalterable, rendering the concept of utopias either absurd or at least imprudent (p. 103). The future will ultimately transform into the historical record of a subsequent future. Sargent's distorting mirror image is crucial for shaping future communities, in addition to its utility in comprehending the historical evolution of societies. Utopianism has influenced communities, continues to do so presently, and will persist in effecting changes in the future given that it aligns with human instincts.

Another rationale for excluding terms such as perfect and perfectionism from the definition of utopianism is that a significant cohort of scholars posits that *perfectionism* or *the ideal state* can only be attained through violence. Consequently, utopianism is asserted to culminate in authoritarianism and the employment of violence and force upon humanity (Sargent, 1994, p. 9). If one

is unable to alter current monotony through activism, they may resort to active violent action against those in power along with people who actually do not share their beliefs, a common rationale among those who reject utopianism for various reasons. This concept has been presented by anti-utopianists as a means to erode the reliability of utopianism and diminish its significance through the creation of public opinion along with popular culture. Levitas (2013) puts forward that public discourse and political culture are fundamentally anti-utopian, depicting utopia as an unattainable pursuit of perfection with political ramifications that are nearly always totalitarian (p. 7). It is indeed feasible to validate the anti-utopianists' assertion that utopia represents an unattainable quest for flawless systems, human beings, or states, as utopias aim for improvement rather than flawlessness. Challenging the notion of perfection as the exclusive and paramount objective of utopianism should be the focus of utopian studies, as the most significant achievement of anti-utopians has been to redefine the term *utopian* to signify imaginative, delusional, and inaccessible (Sargent, 1994, p. 22). Sargent acknowledges that an opinion on the futility of utopianism has been constructed through tangible arguments by notable intellectuals such as Karl Popper, Friedrich von Hayek, and Norman Cohn, whose works include *The Open Society and its Enemies*, *The Road to Serfdom*, and *The Pursuit of the Millennium*. However, he strongly advocates for the exclusion of the term *perfect* when characterising the objectives of utopians, in order to challenge these powerful assertions by emphasising that advancement and enhancement through human endeavours underpin utopianism. Furthermore, Sargent (2010) expands on his discourse regarding perfectionism in utopian thought, asserting that few genuine utopias claim to achieve perfection. Neither Plato nor Marx, the utopian authors cited by Popper, claim to be addressing perfection. Plato devoted a significant portion of the *Republic* to asserting that his ideal state is destined to fail (p. 104). His *Republic* thus represents an ideal state, superior to the contemporary society in which Plato existed. Nevertheless, he was acutely aware that, with the passage of time, it would become impossible to discern the necessities and desires of humanity. Consequently, as previously articulated, as long as individuals continue to envision and aspire towards their aspirations, change is unavoidable. Utopias present visionary concepts intended for future recipients, potentially instigating tangible transformations (Vieira, 2010, p. 8). This is precisely why utopianism disregards perfectionism.

Another issue with utopia – indeed, the primary enigma – is the uncertainty surrounding its functions and themes. As previously stated, the primary focus

regarding the purposes of utopia is the enhancement of current conditions; however, the term *current* is pivotal, as each century possesses distinct and sometimes overlapping visions of the future. Sargent (1976) contends that this dilemma has been inadequately addressed by academic inquiry regarding utopia. A multitude of studies has been generated; however, they frequently suffer from inadequate definitional precision and a neglect of bibliographical issues. Consequently, inadequate scholarship has occasionally been legitimised by other researchers who have erroneously presumed the veracity of prior research (p. 275). The absence of definitional rigour has impeded the realisation of utopia, as scholars have predominantly concentrated on a limited selection of significant works. In doing so, they have examined the themes of those celebrated works to delineate the key aspects of utopia and utopianism, which has ultimately caused the function of utopia to deviate from its initially established trajectory. This has resulted in a neglect of the authentic characteristics of utopia as a genre, as other works, relegated to the periphery, have not been acknowledged in the establishment of the tradition's framework. To accurately characterise a literary genre or tradition, it is essential to shift focus from the *greats* and examine the predominant works that constitute the corpus in question (Sargent, 1976, p. 276). This scholarly approach to the genre has led to a focus on specific authors and their works, resulting in generalisations that ultimately undermine the legitimacy of the functions and themes. Sargent (1976) elucidates this argument, asserting that *everyone knows* positive utopias ceased to emerge in the twentieth century, supplanted by dystopias. That is inaccurate; at least one positive utopia has been published in English each year of this century, along with additional works in other languages. Moreover, *everyone knows* that utopias were produced in greater quantities during periods of economic depression. Utopian ideals have been generated prolifically; although correlations with economic downturns are sometimes evident, the nature of this association appears, at the very least, to be uncertain (p. 275). Utopian fiction has consistently occupied the attention of writers and researchers across centuries; however, the discourse surrounding utopia has diverged into various avenues, often hindered by overgeneralisations and inherent deficiencies. Moreover, Sargent's astute employment of the phrase *everyone knows* underscores the peril inherent in adhering to overstatements and generalised notions. Therefore, it is imperative to delineate the utopian function in relation to the primary emphasis of each century beginning with the genre's inception in the 16th century. Consequently, it is highly beneficial to delineate a chronological framework for the evolution and metamorphosis of utopian functions and themes by referring to Sargent (1976).

3. The Central Focus of Utopian Literature from the 16th to the 19th Century

a. The 16th Century

Authority and religion constitute the primary emphasis of utopia during this era. All people ought to adhere to the hierarchical Christian power structure to become integral parts of a stable society. Women, conversely, ought to be subordinate to both their religion and their husbands as spouses. Consequences for all who exhibit disobedience are unavoidable.

b. The 17th Century

The primary emphasis in the 16th century exhibits minimal alterations during this era, transitioning from punitive measures to their prevention via education. Despite the emergence of initial examples of sex-bending utopian literature, the notion of female subordination persists. The governmental system, grounded in Christian hierarchical administration, is beginning to be scrutinised, with initial indications of democratic assertions emerging in forms of limited democratic utopias.

c. The 18th Century

This era is characterised by a blend of established spiritual authority and its subsequent scrutiny through rational inquiry. Although reason is a primary focus of utopian narrative, it is not entirely acknowledged, leading to contentious debates regarding its benefits and drawbacks. Moreover, laws and solicitors are vehemently criticised for allegedly exploiting the populace of the era. This period also witnesses criticisms of the industrial revolution. Certain glimpses of utopian fiction advocate for a collaborative governance system involving the populace. This period marks the initial serious allegations against institutions, particularly for economic motives.

d. The 19th Century

This period encompasses three primary focal points. The primary emphasis is on the imperative creation of a new financial system that ensures equitable standards for all people. Consequently, there are also publications that critique the communist/socialist way of life. In addition, the issue of women's independence remains pertinent; women are portrayed as individuals in certain utopias. However, gender equity remains largely unaddressed, as it was not a topic of discussion until the twentieth century. Reason, religion, and the domains of technology and science are predominant during this era. Furthermore, as

a result of the assaults on communism, the initial instances of anti-utopian literature emerge.

4. The Fragmentation and Reconfiguration of Utopian Thought in the Modern Era

Sargent's timeline for utopian fiction concludes in the 19th century because, following Wells, the classification of writings as utopian has become highly contentious, making it challenging to determine their status as such. Despite a substantial decrease in utopian literature during the twentieth century, numerous examples of the genre emerged in the United States between the late 1960s and 1970s. Utopian works, grounded in conflicts such as feminist, environmental, and ecological issues, underwent a shift into dystopian writing post-1970s. Moreover, World War I and II may also be regarded as pivotal moments in the evolution of utopian narrative, as they were among the most devastating events in modern history, both physically and psychologically. Their analyses of literature were noted across various genres, primarily in dystopian writings of utopian literature. According to Vieira (2010), the twentieth century was primarily marked by humanity's disillusionment and disbelief regarding its own nature, particularly in light of the horrific actions taken during the two World Wars (p. 18). Following the catastrophic consequences of these two historical events, people began to scrutinise the concept of the utopian ideal as they lost their optimism for the future. Their loss of hope engendered the notion of absurdity in the pursuit of societal and humanitarian improvement, as they perceived humanity as isolated in an irrational world (Morris & Kross, 2009, p. xxxvi). Kumar (2010) elucidates the rationale behind the transition from eutopia to dystopia in the twentieth century and puts forth that it is, indeed, challenging to identify a eutopia in recent decades that has garnered significant attention from literary scholars or the general reading populace. Although dystopia employs numerous literary devices akin to those of eutopia, the reluctance to attempt the literary eutopia indicates a pronounced lack of faith in its efficacy, as well as a potential deficiency in the utopian imagination (pp. 549-550). The industrial revolution and technological advancements did not contribute to the progress of humanity during those eras. Conversely, they instigated wars resulting in countless casualties, ethnic cleansing epidemics, impoverishment, and similar consequences. The utopian imagination, as termed by Kumar, progressively decreased with advances in technology, yielding to dystopian notions and sentiments, characterised by despair and catastrophic visions.

It is essential to assert that the aforementioned historical transitions either instigated utopianism or were instigated by it. Jameson (2005) posits that the existence or emergence of utopia reflects the turmoil of the numerous *transitional periods* during which most utopias were created (p. 15), as significant social transformations are often accompanied by a political stasis, characterised by a deficiency in political will or resources to effectively shape and direct these alterations (Kumar, 2010, p. 551). Alongside Jameson's viewpoint regarding the emergence of utopian writings, it is also plausible to acknowledge that various forms of utopia arose as a result of those stages of transition. The evolution of utopia could be perceived as a compilation of instances marked by a distinct semantic rejuvenation of the terminology. The term utopia has frequently served as the basis for the creation of novel phrases (Vieira, 2010, p. 3). Originating as a lexical neologism by More, the term has served as a foundation for new coinages including eutopia, dystopia, anti-utopia, alotopia, euchronia, heterotopia, ecotopia, and hyperutopia (Vieira, 2010, p. 3), reflecting stages of transition and scholarly reactions to utopia. As the definition of utopia remains one of the most perplexing topics in academic discourse, these new terminologies have contributed to refining its meanings within specific parameters. Conversely, novel terminology has also prompted a re-evaluation of the contentious definitions surrounding utopia. Consequently, the cyclical ambiguity surrounding the concept of utopia has persisted along the history of utopianism, contributing to ongoing arguments regarding it.

Sargent (1975) posits that utopia serves as a comprehensive term encompassing all categories of utopian literature (p. 138). Consequently, due to the existence of diverse literary forms of utopia, emphasising specific literary terms is essential. Utopia, as a comprehensive term, has produced numerous derivatives including utopianism, eutopia (or positive utopia), dystopia (or negative utopia), utopian satire, anti-utopia (often erroneously equated with dystopia despite their distinctions), critical utopia, alotopia, euchronia, heterotopia, ecotopia, and hyperutopia. Sargent (1994) characterises the literary utopia as a fictitious society depicted in substantial detail, typically situated in a specific temporal and spatial context (p. 9). One can comprehend that his definition represents an exemplar of a tangible pillar shaped by the ramifications of utopianism, which Sargent (1994) refers to as social dreaming—encompassing the aspirations and fears related to how communities organise their existence, often envisioning a society fundamentally distinct from their current reality (p. 3). In other words, interpretations of utopia are derived from the interplay between the imaginary society and the elements of their utopian ideals. In

this instance, there is no explicit attribution of quality to the distinction that the radical society may possess, as the quality of the distinction delineates the nature of utopia; specifically, if the distinction is beneficial and sought after, it is termed eutopia; conversely, if it is a detrimental and unwelcome distinction, the work exemplifies dystopia. Eutopia is characterised as a non-existent society depicted in extensive detail, typically situated in a specific time and space, which the author intends for contemporary readers to perceive as significantly superior to their own society (Sargent, 1994, p. 9). Conversely, dystopia is defined as a non-existent society also described in extensive detail and usually located in a particular time and space, which the author aims for contemporary readers to regard as markedly inferior to their own society (Sargent, 1994, p. 9). Consequently, better and worse serve as the contents and outcomes of utopianism—referred to as social dreaming by Sargent—thereby categorising works as either eutopian or dystopian. In summary, the eutopia posits that if you conduct yourself in a specified manner, you will receive corresponding rewards. The dystopia, following the pattern of jeremiad, asserts that specific behaviours will result in corresponding punishments (Sargent, 1994, p. 8).

The distinction between utopia and eutopia merits examination, as the literary tradition has undergone numerous alterations, resulting in the emergence of new interpretations. Darko Suvin (1979), a distinguished professor whose research primarily centres on utopia and science fiction, failed to anticipate the forthcoming transformations the literary genre would undergo in subsequent years when he defined utopia as the verbal creation of a specific quasi-human social order where social and political organisations, norms, and interpersonal interactions are structured according to a superior norm than that of the author's society, this creation being founded on estrangement derived from an alternate historical hypothesis (p. 49). Alongside Sargent, Suvin also develops the notion that utopia is a construct, emerging from various hypotheses of individuals who experience profound alienation from their contemporary societies, thus providing new perspectives for an improved existence. Nonetheless, as utopia emerges as an umbrella term in subsequent periods, Suvin (2010) proposes a revision of his definition, emphasising that this modification is crucial for distinguishing between utopia and eutopia. Utopia will be characterised as the establishment of a specific community wherein sociopolitical structures, norms, and interpersonal interactions are structured according to a fundamentally distinct principle from that of the author's society. This establishment is predicated on estrangement stemming from an alternate historical hypothesis

and is initiated by displeased social classes seeking otherness and transformation, with its divergence assessed from their perspective or within the framework of their beliefs. All utopias encompass people who profoundly endure the current system and aspire to transform it fundamentally. Eutopia replaces *radically different* with *radically more perfect*, with perfection assessed according to that value system (p. 30). Consequently, given his emphasis on the terms *different* and *perfection*, it is crucial to underscore that, while *utopia* in contemporary discourse is a neutral term devoid of positive or negative connotations and merely signifies the necessity for change, *eutopia* is anticipated to denote an improvement in the current circumstances of individuals as perceived by its author. This stark distinction in perfection is evaluated from the perspective and within the value system of a displeased social class or amalgamation of classes, as interpreted by the author (Suvin, 2010, p. 384). It is now evident that eutopia, dystopia, and all other variations of literary utopia originate in the author's imagination. The contemporary reader may perceive a work of this genre as either eutopian or dystopian, contingent upon their perspective and evaluation of the text. A conservative reader who endorses totalitarianism may perceive Orwell's *1984* as a eutopian narrative, while an adversary might characterise the exact same piece as a representation of dystopia. Levitas (1990) contends that the classification of utopian literature hinges on its content, which captivates many individuals and prompts them to contemplate the viability of such a society, should it come to fruition. The diversity of content, however, renders it especially challenging to incorporate this into the definition of utopia. Content-based definitions are often evaluative and normative, delineating the characteristics of an ideal society rather than considering diverse perceptions of it (p. 4). The issue should be addressed by analysing the author's intent. It is a highly effective method for classifying writings as eutopian or dystopian. Nonetheless, intent is a complex issue that should be approached cautiously and solely for the specific purpose of assessing whether the work is to be categorised as eutopian, dystopian, etc. (Sargent, 1994, p. 13). This warning emphasises that certain works, despite containing numerous eutopian or dystopian elements, do not conform to the established definitions of either category. For example, while a work may contain multiple future projections regarding potential outcomes for the contemporary reader, it may not encompass an entire society. The author's intention is critically significant for delineating the category of the work.

Addressing the challenging matter of misconceptions regarding utopianism, it is essential to emphasise the distinctions among critical utopia, utopian satire,

and anti-utopia, as these three forms pertain to alternative focal points. Sargent (1994) characterises critical utopia as a meticulously detailed, non-existent society situated in a specific time and place, which the writer intends for contemporary readers to perceive as superior to their own society, yet fraught with challenging issues that the depicted community may or may not resolve, while also adopting a critical perspective on the utopian form (p. 9). A critical utopia critiques the utopian genre by highlighting the conflict between the actual society and the one represented in the text. Readers should recognise that every society, regardless of time or location, possesses its unique challenges. Moreover, a remedy to those issues may or may not be identified. Nonetheless, it is evident that critical utopia does not disregard the genre. Conversely, it seeks to illustrate to readers that utopias should not be dismissed, despite being labelled merely as fantasies, thus challenging concepts such as future projection and improvement. In light of this, critical utopia serves as the conduit between the current reality and future aspirations. The term critical utopia was introduced to literature by Tom Moylan (2014), who contends that a primary focus of critical utopia is the recognition of the constraints inherent in the utopian tradition; thus, these texts dismiss utopia as a blueprint while maintaining it as an aspiration. Moreover, the novels explore the dispute between the original world and the opposing utopian society, thereby articulating the procedure of social transformation more explicitly. The novels emphasise the persistent existence of the discrepancy and shortcomings within utopian society, thereby presenting more identifiable and dynamic possibilities (p. 10). In other words, unlike idealistic representations of utopia and contrasting with undesirable dystopian consequences, critical utopia serves as a framework for potential alternatives that the original community may or may not experience in the future, offering readers diverse viewpoints without definitive actions to pursue. The parity between the original community and the utopian narrative must remain intact, as the reader is anticipated to engage in independent critique to assess all variations. In summary, as Moylan (2014) posits, critical utopia depicts an alternative society, distinguishing itself from prior utopias by offering a more comprehensive and balanced portrayal of both the utopian realm and the original community it challenges as an unprecedented alternative (p. 43). In this manner, critical utopia, despite its deceptive portrayals, encompasses the most plausible inconsistencies, failures, and issues of the alternative society, alongside prospects for improvement, ultimately leaving readers with numerous questions. Despite Moylan's efforts to present this genre category as a transformation that preserves utopia as a literary form, it is reasonable to

assert that, alongside the fragmented representations of various iterations, the amalgamation of original and alternate societal narratives generates considerable ambiguities. Levitas (1990) addresses the issue, asserting that the obscurity of utopia is not only exploratory and open but also disenchanted and uncertain. The depiction of alternative futures, numerous possibilities, and disjointed temporal images signifies a deficiency in confidence regarding the attainment of a better world (p. 196). The ambiguous nature of critical utopia leaves readers perplexed regarding the connection between alternate and present societies. Furthermore, the ambiguity hinders decision-making, consequently impeding cognitive deliberation among the options. According to Sargent (1994), critical utopias have diminished in significance since Moylan's initial characterisation (p. 8). The proliferation of this literary utopia form was confined to roughly a decade during the 1960s and 1970s, coinciding with a surge in science fiction.

Utopian satire, a distinct tradition within literary utopia, invites extensive discourse as it encompasses critical analysis. Utopian satire does not seek to illustrate the potential for numerous future possibilities alongside the challenges and issues that may arise; rather, it endeavours to critique contemporary society. Sargent (1994) defines utopian satire as a meticulously detailed, fictional society situated in a specific time and place, which the author intends for contemporary readers to interpret as a critique of their own society (p. 9). Furthermore, utopian satire refers to works in which satire predominates over other components, lacking a clear dichotomy between good and bad (Sargent, 1994, p. 8). Consequently, it is infeasible to categorise texts as eutopian or dystopian, as the distinction between good and bad cannot be established. The emphasis is on satiric components rather than the depiction of potential future societies. By incorporating satirical components into utopia, authors critique contemporary society. Social rituals are observed externally, not to enhance their consistency but merely to reveal their inconsistency, hypocrisy, or lack of authenticity. This type of satire reflects society in a distorted yet consistent manner (Frye, 1965, p. 337). Moreover, utopian satire inherently possesses ambiguity, as the writer is not obligated to offer readers a dichotomy between contemporary society and a future society. Rather, s/he endeavours to prompt readers to interrogate their own situations. All utopian satire typically embodies a distinct aspiration for humour. The level of aspiration partially differentiates utopian satire from the more sombre iterations of negative utopia, or dystopia, produced in contemporary literature. Moreover, while the satirist highlights his own reality by means of an absurd alternative, his focus—and that of the reader—is predominantly on the actual

present world rather than on the alternative as a precursor to future realities (Aldridge, 1984, p. 6). Utopian satire closely resembles dystopia, as both aim to provoke self-awareness in the audience. The primary distinction between these two forms is that utopian satire pertains more closely to contemporary society and its inherent distortions, while dystopia highlights undesirable assumptions, thereby cautioning the reader about potential future disorders. Whereas the utopias of the Renaissance endeavoured to lend authenticity to their depictions of imaginary societies by situating them in remote, unfamiliar locales, satirical utopias explicitly placed these fictitious societies in realms that were inherently unattainable owing to scientific and biological constraints (Vieira, 2010, pp. 15-16). Consequently, in dystopian narratives, our primary focus is on the alternative structure characterised as a *possible impossible* future world (Suvin), while our attention to the current reality diminishes; conversely, this is reversed in utopian satire (Aldridge, 1984, p. 6). In light of this, *Gulliver's Travels*, authored by Jonathan Swift in 1726, serves as a prime example of utopian satire, as the focus of the work is not on the structures and forms of governance in the idealised and fictitious society. Conversely, the traveller's ostensibly ingenious – yet fundamentally myopic – strategies for survival in the rather absurd worlds he encounters are emphasised (Vieira, 2010, p. 16). A notable instance of this convention is *Erewhon*, authored by Samuel Butler in 1872. The work serves as a distorting satirical reflection of Victorian England, venerating machinery. Kumar (1987) articulates that the Erewhonians comprehend, in a manner seemingly elusive to the Victorians, that humanity is becoming progressively reliant on machines, ultimately rendering themselves subservient to them. While it is commendable to refer to this as mutual dependence, a symbiosis between humanity and technology, we must recognise which entity will progressively assume the role of the dominant partner. In the absence of machines, humanity would likely face physical and mental demise (p. 107). The satiric components and their subsequent impact on readers highlight that the critiques target contemporary societies rather than hypothetical future ideals. Consequently, the outcome is that the tangible world is prioritised, resulting in the forfeiture of the positive dynamics characteristic of utopia (Vieira, 2010, p. 16). Alongside the evolution of utopian conventions, it is essential to acknowledge that dystopia also emerges as a progeny of utopian satire; by transitioning from critiquing contemporary society to contemplating future realities, this tradition redefined its purpose and altered the tone of its admonition.

Anti-utopia represents a contentious variant within the literary tradition of utopia. The term has been contested due to its implication of dual meanings. Anti-utopia fundamentally critiques the idealistic and impractical aspirations of utopian thought. The utopian spirit was, in fact, the subject of ridicule; its sole purpose was to condemn the pointlessness and absurdity of utopian aspirations and the societal destruction they could provoke (Vieira, 2010, p. 16). Moreover, the secondary association of anti-utopia was perceived as synonymous with dystopia during the 1950s and 1960s. This, however, does not constitute the appropriate application of the term in contemporary usage. The anti-utopia genre serves as a form of critique within the same convention, yet it does not advocate for the potential apocalyptic outcomes that societies may encounter, as seen in numerous dystopian works; rather, it acts as a rebuttal to utopianism. In summary, if utopia embodies hope, and satirical utopia/utopian satire represents scepticism, then anti-utopia unequivocally signifies complete disbelief (Vieira, 2010, p. 16).

Sargent's (1994) description of the anti-utopian convention refers to a meticulously detailed non-existent society, typically situated in a specific time and place, which the author intends for contemporary readers to interpret as a critique of utopianism or a specific eutopia (p. 9). The anti-utopian critiques have proven remarkably effective, as the term utopian now carries a negative connotation regarding the realisation of aspirations due to its inherent abstractions. As previously stated, utopianism faced numerous severe criticisms from different researchers and authors, who argued that the tradition fostered dictatorship, vandalism, acts of violence, and socialism, among other issues; every attempt culminated in the grotesque reversal of its promise—democracy yielded despotism, science regressed into barbarism, and reason devolved into unreason (Kumar, 1987, p. 110). Karl Mannheim (1935) contends that the intangibility of utopian ideals can be characterised by the term *utopian*, which applies to any cognitive process driven not by the immediate influence of social realities but by concepts such as imagery, fantasies, visions, and ideas, which, in the broadest interpretation, are non-existent. From a sociological perspective, mental constructs can generally take two distinct forms: they are *ideological* if they obscure or stabilise the current social reality, and *utopian* if they motivate collective action aimed at transforming that reality to align with their aspirational goals, which exceed the present circumstances (p. 201). To Mannheim, utopia ostensibly serves as an escape from social realities. The ideological dimension of utopian thought poses a threat to the existing social structure, as it seeks

to undermine the latter while establishing what the collective consciousness desires. Mannheim posits that utopian thought poses a threat to the solidity of social structures, as it can incite upheavals among diverse collective groups. Nevertheless, in conjunction with Blochean concepts, it is unlikely to cultivate a superior society without visionary aspirations. Consequently, while Mannheim characterises the concept of utopia as unreal or inconceivable, each person actualises their *not-yet-real* ideals through the act of dreaming; in other words, they progressively materialise what is intangible to them. Nonetheless, anti-utopians assert that a meticulously designed society of this nature can only be sustained through the persistent application of law (Sargent, 1994, p. 24). Their ideas contest utopian thought by asserting that utopia seeks a flawless community and that reasoning cannot be integral to the utopian vision; nevertheless, utopia represents an endeavour to achieve improvement through intellectual pursuits. Moreover, there exist no flawless societies or impeccable individuals. Karl Popper's (1994) critique of the utopian tradition is remarkable, particularly in his exclusion of reasoning from utopian discourse. Disagreements among utopian engineers, in the lack of rational methodologies, will inevitably result in the application of power rather than reason, ultimately leading to violence. Any advancement in a specific direction occurs despite the chosen method, rather than as a result of it. The success may be attributed, for example, to the superiority of the leaders; however, it is imperative to remember that exceptional leaders cannot be cultivated through rational methods, but rather through chance (p. 151). To concede Popper's assertion regarding the absence of rationale in the success of utopias would be inappropriate, as decision-making is a fundamental characteristic of utopian ideology. Making decisions between the positive and negative outcomes without rational justification would be illogical. Currently, it is evident that the sociological knowledge required for extensive engineering is largely absent (Popper, 1994, p. 151); however, through rational discourse, which Popper argues is lacking in utopian ideation, it is feasible to establish the most viable social framework, which will ultimately be scrutinised in the future for potential enhancement towards a superior society. It is significant that anti-utopia played a pivotal role in formulating the dominant response to socialism and communism (Moylan, 2000, p. 131), as there was a period when socialism appeared poised to supplant formal religion, thereby providing the emotional impetus of utopia (Kumar, 1987, p. 421). Christianity has deemed utopianism heretical, as its teachings emphasise that salvation for humanity cannot occur before death, a concept presumably rooted in original sin (Sargent, 1994, p.

22). This opposition contributes to anti-utopian efforts for alternative futures; regardless of their grandeur, the alternatives presented in utopian ideals cannot remedy humanity's decline, as only death offers true salvation. Moreover, humans may attain perfection solely through death. This perspective aligns with the anti-utopian tradition, which critiques utopian ideals by endorsing Christian arguments against perfectibility, conservative resistance to radical reforms, and cynical assessments of human limitations (Kumar, 1987, p. 103).

5. Conclusion

The history of utopianism demonstrates a tradition that is significantly more complex than its common linkage to perfection or impossibility. From More's original neologism to modern theoretical developments, the concept of utopia has consistently transformed in its form, function, and purpose. This genealogy reveals not a static literary or philosophical category, but a fluid mode of thought rooted in humanity's enduring desire to envision alternatives. Utopian constructs—manifested as mythic paradises, urban utopias, political frameworks, feminist reinterpretations, or speculative forecasts—consistently mirror the tensions, aspirations, and anxieties of their respective historical contexts.

The chapter demonstrates that utopianism does not seek perfection; instead, it emphasises the importance of imagining improved circumstances compared to the present. The emergence of derivative forms—eutopia, dystopia, critical utopia, utopian satire, anti-utopia, heterotopia, ecotopia, among others—demonstrates the concept's flexibility and the depth of the discussions it has inspired. Each variation emerges not as a denial of utopia but as a reconfiguration of its potential, influenced by evolving political contexts, technological advancements, and cultural upheavals. The persistent resurgence of anti-utopian sentiments illustrates that contestation is fundamental to the vitality of utopia; the concept endures specifically because it incites resistance, reinterpretation, and reinvention.

Utopianism persists fundamentally due to its intrinsic connection to human cognition and aspiration. Bloch's anticipatory consciousness, Sargent's social dreaming, and enduring traditions of imaginative critique collectively underscore the notion that envisioning the *not-yet* is essential for cultural and social advancement. Utopianism, whether expressed through Swift's satirical distortions, Pizan's radical feminist alternatives, Plato's and Farabi's rigorous

philosophical models, or the cautionary futurisms of contemporary dystopia, provides a framework for transcending the constraints of the present.

Consequently, instead of being a fixed ideal or an uncritical aspiration, utopia functions as a methodological and imaginative instrument—a means of examining current circumstances and expressing potential futures. The forms will continue to evolve, as they have historically, yet the utopian impulse remains a vital human endeavour: to critique the present, to envision potential futures, and to maintain the space for imagining, debating, and pursuing alternatives.

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