

UTOPIAN AND APOCALYPTIC THOUGHT

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In his timely Heathwood article on the the dialectic of utopia, Michael Ott stresses the importance of Ernst Bloch's and T.W. Adorno's 1964 discussion of utopian thought.¹ I follow Ott in relating my observations to this exchange.

My paper opens with a prefatory point. This point is political: in the second decade of the twenty-first century, considerations of *space* and *time* have moved to the centre of radical thought. For Occupy-style politics, “occupations” are spaces liberated (however temporarily) from neoliberal control. In Latin American autonomist struggle, a vital move has been the establishment of 'territories' where the writ of capitalism no longer runs.² Throughout the world, questions about prefiguration (and thus time) have become politically urgent.³

How should radical thought address questions of time and space? No doubt, an indefinitely large range of approaches may be adopted. In the present paper, I explore one in particular: I propose that questions about time and space are, respectively, central to apocalyptic and utopian thinking. Looked at from the standpoint of the history of thought, and adopting a broad perspective, current revolutionary thinking stands at the point where “apocalyptic” and “utopian” lines of thought intersect. If these surmises are valid, Ott's paper on the dialectic of utopia is timely indeed.

In the discussion which follows, I comment first of all on utopia and apocalypse as *images*. Then I relate my discussion to Bloch's and Adorno's exchange. At this point, I

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- 1 M. Ott 'Something's Missing: A Study of the Dialectic of Utopia in the Theories of Theodor W. Adorno and Ernst Bloch' Heathwood Institute and Press (www.heathwoodpress.com) 2 December 2013; see Bloch's and Adorno's 'Something's Missing: A Discussion between Ernst Bloch and Theodor W. Adorno on the Contradictions of Utopian Longing' in E. Bloch *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature* (Cambridge, Ma.: MIT Press 1944) pp. 1-17.
 - 2 R. Zibechi *Territories in Resistance* (Oakland: AK Press 2012); see. M. Sitrin *Everyday Revolutions* (London and New York: Zed Books 2012) pp. 173-6.
 - 3 See, for discussion, A. Wilding, R. Gunn, R.C. Smith, C. Fuchs and M. Ott 'Occupy and Prefiguration – A Roundtable Discussion' Heathwood Institute and Press (www.heathwoodpress.com) 10 November 2014.

have prepared the way for what I see as my central interest – namely, a contrast between *apocalyptic time* and *utopian space*.⁴ Having set out this contrast verbally, I summarise it (with some trepidation) in the form of a diagram. The paper continues by commenting on how, historically and politically, the utopia/apocalypse distinction may be seen. My aim in addressing political issues is to raise questions.

1. *Utopian and apocalyptic images*

In his path-breaking *Pirate Utopias*, Peter Lamborn Wilson [Hakim Bey] declares that he is concerned with a history of 'images'.⁵ Although Lamborn Wilson, in his explanation of 'images', refers to 'beliefs and ideas' (ibid.), we should – so I suggest – be clear that images and concepts are not one and the same. Images are *what we intuit* – the primary forms of intuition being *space* and *time*. To imagine something (to think in terms of images) is to picture an object that has – or may have – spatial or temporal existence. Concepts, by contrast, are *what we comprehend*. To conceptualise is not only to operate in picture-thinking terms.

Once this distinction (or some version of it) has been drawn, we may, I propose, endorse Lamborn Wilson's claim that utopian thought deals in terms of 'images'. We may, indeed, carry his line of thought a stage further and declare that not only utopian but apocalyptic thought is picture-based. As I have suggested, apocalyptic thought takes the notion of time as its point of departure whereas utopian thought is a meditation on space. At this stage in my discussion, I should enter a qualification: although *apocalypse concerns time* and although *utopia concerns space*, apocalyptic and utopian thought are frequently present together. Histories of what is sometimes termed “ideal-society literature” make it abundantly clear that, in one and the same writer, utopian and apocalyptic motifs may exist.

And, to my qualification, I should add a caveat: my treatment of utopian and apocalyptic images is drastically incomplete. A full treatment would acknowledge that images of spatial and temporal existence have *aesthetic* status. A history of utopian and/or apocalyptic thought must, in part, be a history of aesthetics. Here, I touch on aesthetic questions only in passing. I refer to, but do not discuss in detail, images – paintings, engravings, maps, plans and illustrations – which ideal-society literature contains.⁶

4 In employing the terms 'apocalyptic time' and 'utopian discussion', I am drawing upon R. Gunn "'The Only Real Phoenix": Notes on Utopia and Apocalypse' *Edinburgh Review* No. 71 (November 1985).

5 P. Lamborn Wilson *Pirate Utopias: Moorish Corsaires and European Renegades* (New York: Automedia 2003) p. 19 (emphasis in the original).

6 For a striking selection of such plans, illustrations, etc., see H. Rosenau *The Ideal City: Its Architectural Evolution in Europe* (London: Methuen 1983). The category of ideal-society literature is, to be sure, broader than the ideal cities tradition.

2. Bloch and Adorno

For Bloch and Adorno, what is 'missing' in present-day theory is a utopian perspective. If a utopian perspective is present, theory acquires a critical (as distinct from a conformist) edge. The question which is at issue in their 1964 discussion is the form that such a perspective must take. For both theorists, what is valuable is the element of *thinking beyond socially-received categories* that a utopian perspective contains. This said, there is a difference in what Adorno and Bloch claim.

This difference is difficult to pin down because it is one of emphasis. In their 1964 exchange, it is Adorno who refers to Hegel's and Marx's refusal 'to “depict” utopia' and who (in this connection) cites the Biblical commandment: “Thou shalt not make a graven image!”⁷ It is, however, Bloch who – with his early *Spirit of Utopia* in mind – is most commonly identified with what Jacoby terms 'iconoclastic utopianism'.⁸ Where then lies the difference? My suggestion is that, if questions of emphasis are introduced, Bloch and Adorno are very different theorists. Adorno, let us agree, takes the notion of a ban on images seriously. In his works, images are introduced sparingly. By contrast, Bloch's writings (not least the massive and inspiring *Principle of Hope*) present what is in effect a gallery of utopian pictures. By utopian pictures, I understand pictures of utopia and utopias that, frequently, take an image-related form. A comparison between Bloch and Adorno raises the question: how strict should a ban on utopian images be?

An attempt to answer this question must focus on iconoclasm's rationale. If the rationale is religious, a strict ban may (I suggest) make conceptual sense: *images*, as we have seen, present objects as having spatial and temporal existence – whereas, for major religious traditions, what is godly exists in a non-spatial and non-temporal sense. If, by contrast, the rationale is secular the case for a ban is less clear-cut. The most that can be said is that, in an alienated society, 'we cannot determine what is good'.⁹ So to say, we are *so* alienated that we cannot picture the ideal. Our difficulty in formulating such a picture is intensified if, as Jacoby suggests, we live in 'an image-obsessed society':¹⁰ if images surround us, *images* of ideality become lost in the crowd. How should we respond to such a situation? I confess that I am unsure. However, I offer the following thought: in a situation of deep alienation, consciousness is not so much starved of awareness as shot through by perspectives of conflicting, incompatible, sorts. If this is so, an intellectual toolkit containing concepts *and* images seems needful. Perspectives need to be juxtaposed and contradictions thrown into relief.

7 'Discussion' in *Utopian Function* pp. 10-11. The significance of the commandment is discussed by Ott. See also R. Jacoby *Picture Imperfect: Utopia Thought in an Anti-Utopian Age* (New York: Columbia University Press 2005) p. xv, 34-6, 113-4, 127-8.

8 Ibid. pp. xv, 34, 99, 164.

9 The words are those of Max Horkheimer, as quoted in R.C. Smith 'Promissory notes of a better world' Heathwood Institute and Press (www.heathwoodpress.com) 7 September 2014.

10 *Picture Imperfect* p. xvi.

Turning to Bloch more specifically, I offer a general observation. It is that the “picture gallery” aspect of his writings is essential to his theoretical position. Because humans widely produce images of social transcendence, 'hope' (rather than empty 'longing') has a justification.

With this general observation in mind, I outline two ways in which, I suggest, Bloch's position may be questioned. My first reservation concerns 'hope' as Bloch sees it. In the *Principle of Hope* there are, to be sure, dark passages¹¹ but discussion as a whole is in a major rather than a minor key. A first-time reader of the *Principle of Hope* forms the impression of a work guided by triumphalism. It is as though Bloch omits the dimension of hope which Marcuse (quoting from Benjamin) emphasises: 'It is only for the sake of those without hope that hope is given to us'.¹² Whether this impression of triumphalism is justified is, let us concede, uncertain. In his exchange with Adorno, Bloch declares that 'hope is not confidence' and continues: hope 'nails a flag on the mast, even in decline...Hope is surrounded by dangers'.¹³ The dark tones of this and other passages are, however, qualifications of a still-mainly-optimistic position. So to say, not merely this or that form of hope but hope *per se* – hope as a unitary impulse or passion or principle – exists in a major and triumphal key. If the just-quoted passages become *more than* qualifications, then, according to the argument that Bloch presents, 'longing' (rather than 'hope') usurps a central place.

From 'hope', I turn to 'utopia'. My reservation on this score is that, just as Bloch assumes a unitary hope-principle, he underestimates division in the ideal-society field. It is true that, in discussion with Adorno, a distinction between *utopias of space* and *utopias of time* is drawn¹⁴ – as is a distinction between social and merely 'technological' utopias.¹⁵ It is likewise true that Bloch contrasts 'social utopias' (where 'there are no labouring and burdened people') with thought in the natural law tradition (which, we are told, turns on the idea of dignity).¹⁶ My response to such passages is that, despite their acknowledgement of diversity, they count as *qualifications of* – or, to continue the musical metaphor, *variations upon* – a still-unitary theme. If a discussion of ideality is to culminate in a single vision,¹⁷ the account which it offers

11 For example, E. Bloch *The Principle of Hope* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1986) pp. 934-6.

12 H. Marcuse *One Dimensional Man* (London: Sphere Books 1968) p. 201. See, for discussion along these lines, R. Gunn 'Ernst Bloch's *The Principle of Hope*' *Edinburgh Review* No. 76 (February 1987).

13 'Discussion' pp. 16-7.

14 *Ibid.* p. 3.

15 *Ibid.* p. 5.

16 *Ibid.* p. 9; see also E. Bloch *Natural Law and Human Dignity* (Cambridge, Ma.: MIT Press 1986) p. xxix.

17 The vision to which Bloch refers is that of 'homeland [*Heimat*]' (*Principle of Hope* p. 1367). It is true that Bloch's notion of *Heimat* is unspecific – and that this lack of specificity and detail is intentional. (To this extent, Bloch remains faithful to the notion of a “ban on images”.) However, Bloch's term has a determinate meaning: a dream of *Heimat* is a dream emancipated from childish fears. To dream of *Heimat* is to dream in an “adult” and non-alienated (rather than “childish” and ghost-ridden) way. At the opposite extreme from a dream of *Heimat* is a dream of the uncanny – and it is impossible not to compare the end of the *Principle of Hope* with Freud's famous essay: see 'The “Uncanny” [*Das Unheimliche*]' in S. Freud *Art and Literature* (London: Penguin Books 1985) pp. 335-76. Are dreams characteristically reassuring (and “homely”) or characteristically unsettling (and “uncanny”)? My inclination is to side with Freud on the issue. And the literature on ideal societies contains more dark and troubling themes than, perhaps, Bloch wishes to admit.

must remain on-track. Regarding natural law: whilst *dignity* is, indeed, of concern to natural law theorists, so too is *property*. Writers on natural law such as Grotius and Pufendorf and Locke can be seen as twisting dignity into a “possessive individualist” mould. Regarding utopia: a reader who makes his or her first acquaintance with ideal-society literature is (I submit) struck – a better word might be “overwhelmed” – by the diversity and variety that this literature contains. Like any collection of human dreams, images of ideal societies may be nightmarish or exultant or absorbingly interesting or banal. They may be finely balanced constructions which, however, stem from Dionysian passion. Or they may be informal sketches beneath which a rage for order is concealed. A cogent account of ideal societies is an account that resists completion. If utopian thinking involves 'venturing beyond',¹⁸ the line of thought which it involves sometimes – not always, but all-too-frequently – bends back upon itself. My overall criticism of Bloch is that he overestimates the unity (and the unidirectionality) of his subject matter. His argument to the effect that hope is central to the world tends to blur patterns of thinking that are best held distinct.

In the remainder of my paper, I sketch a view which, I claim, does justice to the diversity of ideal-society thought. The view is one which allows banality and darkness, together with prefiguration and inspiration, to appear in equal focus. In addition, it is a view which highlights the significance of time and space.

Before outlining my suggestion, two notes are in order. The first concerns the nature of my discussion. In what follows, I do not discuss ideal-society thought comprehensively – or in the historical detail that the subject-matter deserves. My comments are admittedly schematic. The box diagram which, in section 6, I present as a summation is best glanced at quickly and then then, like an instrument that has served its purpose, discarded.

My second note concerns terminology. Until this point, my paper has, broadly, followed a conventional usage: I have treated the terms “utopian thought” and “ideal-society thought” as co-extensive in their meaning. According to this usage, a history of ideal-society thought and a history of utopian thought are one and the same. In what follows, I break with the tradition of seeing “utopian” as a generic term. I distinguish two species of ideal-society thought, namely *utopian* and *apocalyptic*. The distinction that I draw between utopian and apocalyptic thinking becomes, I hope, clear as my discussion proceeds. The suggestion underlying my discussion is that *apocalyptic thought involves a specific conception of time* whereas *utopian thought involves a specific conception of space*. In sections 3 and 4, I comment on apocalyptic time and utopian space in turn.

3. *The time of apocalypse*

¹⁸ *Principle of Hope* p. 4.

Etymologically, 'apocalypse' means revelation or discover. In Ancient Greek mythology, Calypso is the goddess of veils and apo-calypso signifies unveiling. The Book of Revelation (or Apocalypse) with which the Christian New Testament ends sets out events which are seen as associated with the appearing (or manifestation) of God. Although the events which the Book of Revelation lists include armageddon, or universal war,¹⁹ the notions of *apocalypse* and *armageddon* are conceptually distinct. If the notions are elided, as currently tends to be the case, the specific character of apocalyptic thinking becomes difficult (if not impossible) to see.

As my reference to the Christian New Testament makes clear, the idea of apocalypse has a lengthy history. Arguably, it makes its first appearance in the Book of Daniel (circa 170 BCE) where King Nebuchadnezzar dreams of a body with a golden head, a silver breast and a belly and thighs of brass; the legs are of iron, and the feet are 'part of iron and part of clay' (Daniel 2:32-3). Daniel reveals the dream's meaning: the golden head is that of Nebuchadnezzar himself, and the segments of the body are successive kingdoms or eras.²⁰ From the Dark Ages through to, at least, the early modern period, apocalyptic thinking was frequent²¹ – and at this point the diversity of apocalyptic thought may be stressed. McGinn notes that, although 'almost every apocalyptic text can be related to some time of crisis',²² responses to the crisis concerned may take different forms. Some apocalypses have culminated in the rule of a Last World Emperor or universal monarch. Others have, in antinomian fashion, envisaged a world where poverty is abolished, communism (or commonising) prevails and human actions are emancipated from judgements of sin. Some have stressed the complexity of the history whose pattern has, at last, been revealed²³ whereas others have focused on the much-to-be-desired culminating condition. An example of the latter is the antinomian Ranter movement of the seventeenth-century English Civil War: for Abiezer Coppe, 'it's the last daies'²⁴ and, for this reason, swearing – as long as it is 'swearing i'th light, gloriously' – and free love and communism are admissible.²⁵ William Blake's art and poetry in a continuation of the seventeenth-century antinomian tradition.²⁶

19 Strictly, Armageddon is the place where the last battle between godly and anti-christian forces is fought (Revelation 16:16). Here, however, I leave the widespread equation of armageddon with universal war to stand.

20 The Book of Daniel is not the first written work to distinguish between eras: Hesiod's *Works and Days* (circa 700 BCE) lists golden, silver, bronze and (following an epoch of heroes) iron ages. What is lacking in Hesiod's temporal scheme is the theme of inspiration, or revelation – although, of course, Hesiod's own inspiration is implicit.

21 See, for anthologies, B. Mc.Ginn *Visions of the End* (New York: Columbia University Press 1979); also his *Apocalyptic Spirituality* (London: SPCK 1980).

22 *Apocalyptic Spirituality* p. 8.

23 The best-known example of such a history is Joachim's scheme of three overlapping ages: see, for elaboration, M. Reeves *Joachim of Fiore* (London: SPCK 1976) ch. 1.

24 Coppe 'A Second Fiery Flying Roule' in N. Smith *A Collection of Ranter Writings from the 17th Century* (London: Junction Books 1983) p. 110. See, similarly, 'A Fiery Flying Roll': 'Never was there such a time since the world stood, as now is' (*Collection* p. 92).

25 *Ibid.* pp. 92, 107, 109-10, 113. On antinomianism in the seventeenth-century English Civil War, for classic discussion, A.L. Morton *The World of the Ranters* (London: Lawrence and Wishart 1970) and C. Hill *The World Turned Upside Down* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1975).

26 See E.P. Thompson *Witness against the Beast: William Blake and the Moral Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1993).

From the above thumbnail sketch of the apocalyptic tradition, what general points can be gathered? I have suggested that *apocalypse* is *revelation*: in apocalyptic thinking, what is revealed? And how is the revelation seen?

My suggestion is that *what* is revealed is meaning. More specifically, what is revealed is the meaning (or meanings) of history. So to say, apocalypse reveals the story that history tells. This story may be single-themed or it may be loosely-textured and diverse. It may be a story with just one narrative line, or one where a number of narratives are compounded together. What about the process of revelation itself? How should what may be termed the *act of revelation* be viewed? Before suggesting an answer to this question, I add a further terminological point. Although the term 'apocalypse' means revelation, *an* apocalypse has come to signify the *event in and through which* revelation takes place. So to say, the term has shifted its meaning from a merely "theoretical" to a "practical" (or "theoretical-and-practical") register. It is in the light of this shift that I suggest an answer to the question: how should apocalyptic revelation be understood?

Evidently, the question can be approached in a number of fashions. Here, I suggest an answer which sheds light on how the apocalyptic tradition may be seen. I propose that, for apocalyptic thinking, the revelation takes place in history; so to say, it has historical status. At a specific point in history, which may (as McGinn suggests) be a point of 'crisis', there occurs *an apocalypse* – understanding, by this term, an event in and through history's meaning is made plain. My suggestion is that, in apocalyptic thinking, history reflects upon itself.²⁷

At what sort of point in history does this revelation occur? Other than referring in general to 'crisis', an answer to this question is difficult to give. For the Book of Daniel, as we have seen, a sequence of kingdoms extend into the future; the present, when Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream, is not history's final era. For most writers in the apocalyptic tradition, however, it is at the *end* of history that meaning is revealed. The event in and through which history's meaning emerges – in a word, the *apocalypse* – is the event which ends history, or launches the final era of history, or brings history to its close. With the *revelation of history's meaning*, the narrative (however loosely textured and choice-dependent) reaches its culmination. As it were, apocalyptic thinking follows the pattern of a detective novel: for much of the book, events are mysterious – whereas, in the final chapter, the detective presents an account which makes meanings clear. As for mystery stories, so for apocalypse. When, for example, Coppe declares that 'it's the last daies', the 'daies' which he has in mind are ones of enlightenment and lucidity.²⁸

To this set of reflections on apocalypse, I add a further question: must apocalypses be

²⁷ At this stage in my discussion, I note a point which I hope is obvious: not all forms of apocalyptic thinking reflect on history in equally valid terms. Those which count as valid are, I suggest, those where *practical reflexivity* – see R. Gunn 'Practical Reflexivity in Marx' *Common Sense* No. 1 (May 1987) – is present.

²⁸ Should we conclude from this comparison that *detective stories* are a form in which apocalyptic thinking continues? I am inclined to answer this question affirmatively – but do not attempt to argue for my answer here.

religious? My thumbnail sketch suggests that religion must be present: from the Book of Daniel onwards, until the early modern period, writing about apocalypse has had a theistic cast. This said, however, the pattern of thought which I have indicated, and which I regard as essential to apocalyptic thinking, may *or may not* be deployed in a religious sense. If the meaning or meanings which apocalypse reveal may *or may not* involve reference to God, an atheist or secular apocalypse is not a contradiction in terms. Once we agree that ideas of apocalypse need not be theistic, we are in a position (so I suggest) to make sense of apocalypse's later history.

In apocalyptic thinking's more recent history, Hegel and Marx are (I propose) the pivotal figures. In both writers, apocalyptic motifs (as I have presented them) are present. In Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, history (understood as a history of contradicted recognition) culminates in the French Revolution – in and through which mutual recognition appears. On the basis of mutual recognition, 'scientific [*wissenschaftlich*]' knowledge is possible – including the scientific knowledge which the *Phenomenology* offers. In sum, the French Revolution is (for the *Phenomenology*) the “apocalypse” through which history's meaning is seen.²⁹ For Marx, similarly, communism is 'the riddle of history solved' and 'knows itself to be this solution':³⁰ through communist revolution, history becomes conscious of itself. When, in the sentence which follows, Marx claims that the 'entire movement of history' is communism's 'act of genesis',³¹ he is underlying a central apocalyptic conviction. It is that history *whose meaning apocalypse reveals* is the history *within which* – or, more precisely, *at the end of which* – apocalypse stands. In the Marxist tradition, Bloch and Adorno (together with other exponents of Frankfurt School critical theory) continue not merely a Left Hegelian but a Left Apocalypse tradition.

What else may we say (at a general level) about thought which I have deemed “apocalyptic”?³² I have left to the last the most important observation: the motif of apocalypse turns on considerations of *time*. More specifically, it turns on

29 My sentences on the *Phenomenology* summarise an interpretation which, here, I ask a reader to take on trust. For background, see R. Gunn 'Hegel on Theory and Practice' *Felsefe Gazetesi* (www.felsefegazetesi.com) 19 August 2013 – together with other papers on Hegel which may be accessed at <http://www.richard-gunn.com>.

30 K. Marx and F. Engels *Collected Works* (London: Lawrence and Wishart 1975-) Vol. 3, p. 297. When, in the 'Theses on Feuerbach', Marx states that mysteries find their solution 'in human practice' and 'in the comprehension of this practice' (*Collected Works* Vol. 5, p. 5), he is expressing the same apocalyptic idea.

31 *Collected Works* Vol. 3, p. 297.

32 This open-ended question affords me the opportunity to say what, in my view, apocalypse *is not*. I have commented that it is not necessarily religious. In the same spirit, I protest that apocalypse, which reveals meaning, does not necessarily reveal Meaning (with a capital “M” or in a metaphysical sense). My comments on loosely-textured and diverse narratives are intended to warn against construing “apocalypse” in this stereotypical fashion. If history is revealed as having a single meaning, this is because it *happens to have* such a meaning – and not because it *must* have such a meaning in a predestined sense. In the same spirit, likewise, I protest that apocalypse does not necessarily regard history as a teleological process – in the sense of being a process which fulfills God's (or a Grand Totaliser's) intentions. If history *culminates* in a moment of apocalyptic self-reflection, or in a “last days” scenario, it does so because history's narratives have, *de facto*, reached completion. It does *not* do so, or does *not necessarily* do so, because a Grand Totaliser's aims have been achieved. Since, in the preceding paragraph, I have introduced a distinction between “Left Apocalyptic” and (by implication) “Right Apocalyptic” thinking, I carry my general comments a stage further. Whereas Right Apocalypse characteristically becomes entangled in metaphysical meaning and a “teleological” view of history, Left Apocalypse – the apocalypse of Hegel and Marx and Bloch – shakes itself free from such mystifications.

considerations about time which is 'linear' (as distinct from cyclical).³³ Discussion becomes intriguing when we ask: what sort of linearity does apocalyptic thought involve?

At this point in my discussion, it is helpful to introduce a distinction between “structured” and “unstructured” conceptions of time. I start with the latter: by time which is “unstructured”, I understand time which is empty and homogeneous and which, in a phrase, all instants count as the same. Unstructured time is clock time (all seconds or minutes or hours are equivalent to one another) and the time in which natural scientific predictions are made. To be sure, many different things can and do happen in unstructured time – but the term 'in' is significant: unstructured time is pictured as an empty gap or continuum within which qualitatively distinct events take place. The terms *unstructured time* and *quantitative time* are interchangeable.

By time which is “structured”, I understand time which derives its rhythm from the flow of events. If time is, itself, structured by events which occur, and by actions which are performed, instants are not equivalent and notions of homogeneity and emptiness become inapplicable. In the same way as unstructured time is quantitative, structured time is qualitative. Structured time is not the time of clock faces or scientific predictions but the time of narratives involving expectations and disappointments, and dramas which are turning-points in an individual's (or a society's) development. If unstructured time is *time in*, so (we may say) structured time is *time as*.³⁴

My proposal is that the *time of apocalypse* is structured time. When Hegel, in the *Phenomenology*, characterises time as 'the existing concept [*daseiende Begriff*]' (in contradistinction to time as an 'abstract lifeless unity'), and when he relates time to what is 'self-moving',³⁵ he does more than characterise time in structured terms. He refers to a fundamental feature of apocalyptic thought. When, similarly, Walter Benjamin refers to historical time not as 'homogeneous' and 'empty' but as 'filled by the now-time [*Jetztzeit*]',³⁶ he points to the conception of time that the apocalyptic tradition employs. Hegel and Benjamin write as apocalyptic thinkers. When we glance back at earlier apocalyptic thinkers, variations on the same structured conception of time prevail. The book of Daniel models historical eras on qualitatively distinct segments of a human body – head of gold, legs of iron, etc. For medieval and early modern theorists, history was drawn between unredeemed and redeemed history – redeemed history lasting for a thousand years or, as it may be, the

33 See J.L. Russell 'Time in Christian Thought' in J.T. Fraser, ed., *The Voices of Time* (London: Allen Lane 1969). For the purposes of my discussion, it is important to note that not *only* Christian thought may have a 'linear' character.

34 In my comments on “structured” and “unstructured” time, I have not attempted to be original: on the contrary, I+ have drawn upon a range of very different writers. See, for example, Kojève's distinction between time 'engendered in the Future' (or time structured by human projects) and time which moved 'from the Past toward the Future, by way of the Present' (or time *in which*): A. Kojève *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* (New York: Basic Books 1969) p. 134. See, likewise, E.P. Thompson 'Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism' in his *Customs in Common* (London: Penguin Books 1993) and its telling distinction between *passing* and *spending* time.

35 G.W.F. Hegel *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1977) p. 27.

36 W. Benjamin *Illuminations* (London: Collins/Fontana 1973) p. 263.

'last daies'. It is true that the best-known apocalypticist of all, Joachim of Fiore, develops a system of three ages that are numerically distinct: each age in its fullness lasts for 42 generations.³⁷ This focus on numbers may seem, at first, to imply the 'abstract' and unstructured conception of time which Hegel associates with mathematical cognition;³⁸ however, Joachim's numbers are (in numerological fashion) saturated with "qualitative" significance. Moreover, the system stipulates a major historical turning point when, two generations after Joachim's time of writing, the Age of Spirit comes into fruition. Throughout its history, apocalyptic thinking and structured temporality are linked.

4. *The space of utopia*

The term 'utopia', coined by Thomas More, involves a pun: whereas *utopia*, in Greek, signifies 'no place', *eutopia* signifies 'good place'. In a short poem at the start of More's *Utopia* (1516), the pun is made explicit.³⁹ Utopia is, in More's usage, the no-place which is the highly valued place. It is, we may say in a half-serious fashion, the tacit reference of the adage "There's no place like home".

Although More's *Utopia* was published early in the sixteenth century, a cluster of works that became canonical for the utopian genre – Thomaso Campanella's *City of the Sun*, Johann Valentin Andreae's *Christianopolis* and Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* – date from approximately a hundred years later. The *City of the Sun* (written in 1602 and published in 1623) describes a city with seven concentric concentric circles and temple at its centre; amongst the inhabitants, 'all things are in common, but the distribution of them is in the hands of officials'.⁴⁰ (In More's *Utopia*, similarly, communism obtains.) In *Christianopolis* (1619), a reader is told of a fortress city: it is square in plan and, within its walls, there are four, concentrically-arranged squares of buildings. A temple-*cum*-college is at its centre. In *Christianopolis*, commerce and money have no place.⁴¹ Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1626) stands a little to the side of the utopian texts here mentioned: although it seems to be an unfinished work, enough is said to make it clear that communism is not recommended. Further, Bacon does not share More's and Campanella's and Andreae's interest in the mapping or, so to say, physical geography of the community which he describes. Where Bacon stands close to Campanella and Andreae, however, is in the role which he ascribes to knowledge, especially natural-scientific knowledge: an account of Salomon's House (in effect, a well-appointed scientific research institute) is central to Bacon's text.

In More's and Campanella's and Andreae's and Bacon's texts, what themes should we

37 See note 23, above. In the Appendix of my paper, I reproduce a diagram where I attempt – following Reeves's discussion – to reproduce Joachim's three-stages system.

38 *Phenomenology* loc. cit.

39 T. More *Utopia* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1965) p. 27; see also translator's note 7 on p. 133.

40 T. Campanella *The City of the Sun* (London: Journeyman Press 1981) p. 21.

41 'Christianopolis' in F.E. Held *Johann Valentin Andreae's Christianopolis: An Ideal State of the Seventeenth Century* (Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois 1914) pp. 152, 161.

emphasise? Each of the four works describes a fictitious place where a purportedly ideal society exists. The places are islands, or located on islands; the exception is New Atlantis, which may be either an island or a continent. The island (or continent) is reached through seafaring and – again, Bacon is the exception – the trauma of shipwreck. What else may be said about themes which are common to the texts? I have suggested that the theme of *knowledge* is important for Campanella and Andreae and Bacon whereas the theme of what I have referred to as *physical geography* is present in More and Campanella and Andreae. It is, I suggest, when we ask how *knowledge* and *physical geography* are combined that we come upon what is distinctive to the utopian genre.

In the *City of the Sun*, knowledge and town-planning are co-extensive: on the walls of the city's concentric circles, the totality of scientific wisdom is depicted.⁴² To walk through the city, from outermost (defensive) wall to central temple, is to pass through the sciences themselves. Education in the city makes use of the illustrations.⁴³ In Andreae's *Christianopolis*, there are (to be sure) no wall paintings⁴⁴ but a visitor discovers that, at the physical centre of the community, there is a quadrangle and tower that houses a centre of academic research. Regarding Bacon's *New Atlantis*, the importance of Salomon's House has already been stressed.⁴⁵ If knowledge is a central theme in texts from the utopian tradition, concern an interest in what I have termed physical geography is still more plain to see. Once again, Bacon is a counter-instance. More, however, opens his description by telling us that 'the island [of Utopia] is broadest at the middle'.⁴⁶ A few lines later he continues: 'you can picture the island as a sort of crescent, with its tips divided by a strait approximately eleven miles wide'.⁴⁷ Campanella and Andreae are still more precise about their ideal communities' physical shape.⁴⁸ In the "ideal cities" tradition – which, we may note in passing, by no means waits for the publication of *Utopia* to get under way – the same concern with physical shape is present: to cite just one example, Filarete's plan of his envisaged Sforzinda (1457-64) is, although sparing in detail, aesthetically pleasing to a high degree.⁴⁹ Later in time, Jeremy Bentham's design for a 'Panopticon' or ideal

42 *City* pp. 18-20.

43 *Ibid.* p. 23.

44 See, however, 'Christianopolis' pp. 200, 202.

45 In Salomon's House, Bacon tells us, numerous wonders are contained – not least 'divers curious clocks, and other like motions of return, and some perpetual motions'. There are also 'houses of deceits of the senses' where 'all manner of feats of juggling, false apparitions, impostures and illusions, and their fallacies' are displayed. See F. Bacon *Advancement of Learning and The New Atlantis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1906) pp. 272-3. When we recollect that, for Bacon, 'by far the greatest hindrance and aberration of the human understanding proceeds from the dullness, incompetency, and deceptions of the senses' ('Idols of the Mind' in F. Bacon *The Essays*, London: Penguin Books 1985, Appendix p. 280), a conclusion suggests itself: Bacon pictures the New Atlantans as humans who have found an answer to sceptical philosophy's challenge.

46 More *Utopia* p. 69.

47 *Loc. cit.*

48 Strikingly, architectural historians have shown an interest in Campanella's and Andreae's work. See, for example, P. Abercrombie 'Ideal Cities No. 1: *Christianopolis*' *Town Planning Review* Vol. 8 (1920); T. Morrisson 'The Architecture of Andreae's *Christianopolis* and Campanella's *City of the Sun*' (<http://www.griffith.edu.au>) in A. Brown and A. Leach, eds., *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand: 30, Open* (Gold Coast, Qld.: SAHANZ 2013) Vol. 1.

49 See Rosenau *Ideal City* p. 47 (Figure 28).

prison (1787)⁵⁰ mirrored utopian planning but did so in a sinister or, so to say, dystopian fashion. In Bentham's Panopticon, it may be noted, the themes of knowledge and physical planning flow together: sight-lines are so arranged that prisoners have to do as they are told *in case* they are observed. For Bentham no less than for Campanella and Andreae, physical space *just is* social space.

Following the above remarks a stage further is difficult unless some more general points are introduced. In my opening comments, I suggested that, just as *time* is central to apocalypse, so *space* is central to utopian thinking. What I have said about More and Campanella and Andreae reinforce (together with my comment on Bentham) this general observation. What I have said about the place of physical planning in utopian descriptions demonstrates that space is a key theme. Can we say more? In section 4, we said that, in apocalyptic thinking, a *specific conception of time* is involved. Apocalyptic thinking involves not merely time in general but time which is structured. Can we say that, in utopian descriptions, a *specific conception of space* is employed? I suggest that we can. Just as *apocalyptic thinking turns on a structured conception of time*, so *utopian thinking turns on an unstructured conception of space*. Notions of *structured time* and *unstructured space* find a ready home in, respectively, apocalyptic and utopian thinking.

In my discussion of apocalypse, I outlined briefly how, I considered, a distinction between structured and unstructured time may be seen. In order to make my comments on utopia intelligible, something similar must be attempted where space is concerned. This task is the easier because a distinction between structured and unstructured *space* runs parallel, so I propose, to a distinction between structured and unstructured conceptions of *time*.

By space which is “structured”, then, I understand space which derives its pattern from actions and interactions and recognition between individuals. Space which is structured in this fashion is non-homogeneous: not all points in such space are qualitatively the same. By structured space, I mean what Lefebvre calls 'concrete' space – which defines as 'the space of habiting: gestures and paths, bodies and memory, symbols and meanings...and so forth'.⁵¹ I mean what Sartre terms 'hodological space' – which he understands as 'furrowed with paths and highways', and which is 'the *location* of tools'.⁵² How (a reader may ask) should we picture this *structuring* or *furrowing*? A clue is given by Kojève, when he speaks of a time

50 J. Bentham 'Panopticon; or, The Inspection-house' in his *Works* (Edinburgh 1843) Vol. IV; *The Panopticon Writings* (London: Verso 1995). Famously, Bentham's Panopticon is discussed in M. Foucault *Discipline and Punish* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1979) pp. 195-228. For a discussion of prison architecture which anticipates a number of Foucauldian themes, see T.A. Markus 'Pattern of the Law' *Architectural Review* Vol. 116 (July-September 1954); also his later 'Buildings for the Sad, the Bad and the Mad in Urban Scotland 1780-1830' in T.A. Markus, ed., *Order in Space and Society* (Edinburgh: Mainstream 1982).

51 H. Lefebvre *The Urban Revolution* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2003) p. 182.

52 J.-P. Sartre *Being and Nothingness* (London: Methuen 1957) p. 322. In Greek, we may note, 'odos' means way or road or street. The notion of 'hodological space' derives from K. Lewin: see his *The Conceptual Representation and the Measurement of Psychological Forces* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press 1938) [reprinted by Martino Publishing 2013].

'engendered in the Future'.⁵³ Such a conception of time reflects (we may say) the open-ended and future-oriented character of projects.⁵⁴ In a parallel fashion, a *space of projects* regards proximity and remoteness in ways which a map reference fails to make clear.

By space which is “unstructured”, I understand empty and homogeneous space. All points in such a space are identical, and proximity and remoteness have merely a quantitative sense. Points in unstructured space may be identified through map coordinates. By unstructured space, I understand what Lefebvre terms 'abstract' space – which is, as he points out, the space of 'geometry'.⁵⁵ Unstructured space is what Harvey terms 'absolute' space:

This ['absolute' space] is the space of Newton and Descartes and it is usually represented as a pre-existing and immovable grid amenable to standardized measurement and open to calculation. Geometrically it is the space of Euclid...⁵⁶

Above, I have suggested that unstructured time is time in which events occur. Here, I suggest that the phrase “space *in which*” summarises the idea of space in its unstructured meaning.⁵⁷

Turning now to utopia, I note that utopian thought characteristically understands space in an unstructured sense. *Why*, it may be asked, does utopian thought understand spatiality in this manner? I do not have an answer to this question. It can, however, scarcely be an accident that the utopian texts which I have described as canonical and came into being roughly at the same time as Galileo's “New Science” – where notions of calculation and predictability prevailed. If, further, we follow Harvey in viewing 'absolute' space as 'the space of private property and other bounded territorial designations',⁵⁸ another difficult-to-ignore circumstance may be noted: although More and Campanella and Andreae favour versions of communism, the texts which have concerned us are products of capitalism's early years. Do these points

53 See note 34, above.

54 Here, I use the term 'projects' from Sartre: a 'project' throws itself ahead of itself, and derives its meaning from what it will (or will not) achieve. To borrow Bloch's terminology, a project opens on to what is not-yet

55 *Urban Revolution* loc. cit.

56 D. Harvey 'Space as a Key Word' in his *Spaces of Global Capitalism* (London: Verso 2006) p. 121. Here, I do not follow in detail Harvey's three-term distinction between space which is 'absolute', space which is 'relative' and space which is 'relational' (ibid. pp. 121-6). This said, Harvey's three-term distinction and my own less ambitious two-term distinction are attempts to cover the same conceptual ground. In the same way as unstructured space is what Harvey terms 'absolute', so structured space as I have pictured it is 'relational' in Harvey's sense: a reference to human projects – one's own projects and other individuals' projects – is essential if structured space is to be understood.

57 To these remarks, a note of clarification may be added: although I have described unstructured space as 'empty', I do not mean to employ that, in such space, nothing happens. On the contrary, *in* space – in *unstructured* space – all manner of things happen. Unstructured space is (like unstructured time) an empty *container*. What remains 'empty' is the notion of space or time *per se*.

58 'Space as a Key Word' loc. cit.

account for the prevalence of an unstructured conception of space in utopian thinking? The points may, I suggest, be regarded as avenues of study. What is certain is that, for whatever reason, utopian thought relies on an unstructured – in Lefebvre's and Harvey's sense, a *geometrical* – view of space.

At first, it may seem as though a structured conception of space was present. In the 1516 and 1518 editions of More's *Utopia*, maps of the ideal island serve as frontispieces to the text.⁵⁹ In these maps, inlets and promontories in the Utopian coastline suggest that a conception of structured space – so to say, a space of embarking or disembarking – is involved. A reader who knows nothing of *Utopia* beyond the maps which illustrate it may be forgiven for thinking of More's island as an *arcadia* – even an Island of Cythera⁶⁰ – where space obtains in a structured sense. Once the reader turns to More's description, however, a different impression is formed. We have quoted already More's description of Utopia's shape – a crescent whose tips almost touch – and the same passage indicates how, using 'a pair of compasses', this shape may be formed.⁶¹ Brian Goodey and, above all, Louis Marin have brought to light the geometrical thinking which crucial parts of More's *Utopia* contain.⁶² In Campanella's *City of the Sun*, fascination with geometrical space is still more evident. Not only is the circular city a perfect shape; it is sited on the equator and has 'four gates which face the cardinal points of the compass'.⁶³ City planning and astronomical geometry combine.⁶⁴ Andreae's Christianopolis, which is square in shape, includes a mathematical laboratory where astronomical diagrams and 'figures of geometry' are displayed.⁶⁵ Even Bacon's *New Atlantis*, which lacks an interest in physical planning and where scientific knowledge has a “technological” rather than a “Platonic” character, explains (in the words of a senior official): 'We have also a mathematical-house, where are represented all instruments, as well of geometry as astronomy, exquisitely made'.⁶⁶ If, for a moment, we turn from utopias to Renaissance memory systems,⁶⁷ we become aware of kindred themes. In the early modern period,

59 Reproductions of these maps are widely available. For comment on them, see B.R. Goodey 'Mapping “Utopia”: A Comment on the Geography of Sir Thomas More' *Geographical Review* Vol. LX, No. 1 (1970) p. 21.

60 My reference is to Jean-Antoine Watteau's 'Embarkation for Cythera' painted in 1717. In mythology, Cythera is the birthplace of Venus and the idea of embarkation for Cythera (or embarkation from Cythera) hints at the delights of picnicking and a day of erotic bliss.

61 *Utopia* p. 69; see notes 45 and 46, above.

62 Goodey 'Mapping “Utopia”' pp. 24-9; L. Marin *Utopics: Spatial Play* (New Jersey: Humanities Press 1984) pp. 50-3, 116-27, 141 (Figures 7, 11-15, 21).

63 *City of the Sun* p. 15.

64 Since the city as described is on the equator, it follows that (disregarding the progression of the earth's axis) the sun is directly overhead at noon. As it happens, similarly “solar” ideas guide the layout of Bowmore – a planned township constructed in 1768 in Islay, Scotland. There, the town forms a “grid” rather than being “radially” planned. However, the town's church, which is circular, is placed on the community's southern edge: the result is that, looking up the main street at noon, the sun is directly above the church. A visit to Bowmore on a clear day is sufficient to establish the beauty and dramatic power of geometric plans.

65 'Christianopolis' pp. 204-5. See, similarly, *City of the Sun* p. 18: 'On the inside of the first circle of the city are all the mathematical figures – more than were recorded by Euclid and Archimedes – and their meanings.'

66 *Advancement of Learning and The New Atlantis* p. 272.

67 See, for example, Giulio Camillo's 'Memory Theatre' (1544) as illustrated in F.A. Yates *The Art of Memory* (London: Ark Paperbacks 1984) pp. 144-5 [inserted figure]. Camillo's notion is that, in a diagram consisting of a perfect semi-circle, all human knowledge may be given a geometrically perfect place. Owing to their perfect, “Platonic” geometry, Renaissance memory systems presented by Yates and utopias resemble one another strongly.

for whatever reason, the notions of knowledge and perfection and unstructured (geometrical) space cluster closely and all-but-inseparably together.

5. *Utopia and apocalypse: a summary*

In the preceding sections of my paper, I have sketched apocalyptic and utopian motifs in ideal-society thinking. A distinction between apocalypse and utopia goes, I suggest, some way at least towards acknowledging the variety that ideal-society thinking contains. My distinction, which highlights the conceptions of time and space employed in apocalyptic and utopian thinking,⁶⁸ may be summarised in diagrammatic form:

	Time	Space
Structured	Apocalypse	
Unstructured		Utopia

The diagram is (let me emphasise) highly schematic. Owing to its schematic character, it is (let me acknowledge) potentially misleading. I pause to note difficulties and confusions which may arise.

First, I note that the layout of a diagram – any diagram – presupposes what I have termed unstructured space. Insofar as it does this, it views the structured/unstructured distinction from the standpoint of one of the distinguished terms.⁶⁹ So to say, a diagram (like a Renaissance memory system or Bentham's Panopticon) views knowledge in a utopian perspective.

68 J.C. Davis (*Utopia and the Ideal Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1981, ch. 1) draws a distinction between 'Cockayne', 'Arcadia', 'Perfect Moral Commonwealth', 'Millennium' and 'Utopia' as forms of ideal-society thought. I agree with Davis that distinctions within the field of ideal-society thought are helpful. I disagree, however, with the criterion for drawing distinctions that *Utopia and the Ideal Society* employs. For Davis, forms of ideal-society thought differ according to their view of how (and whether) resource allocation is decided. In my own discussion, by contrast, a distinction between apocalypse and utopia turns on considerations of time and space.

69 Harvey, when maps Lefebvre's conception of space on to his own, notes a similar difficulty: 'It may properly be objected that I am here restricting possibilities because a matrix mode of representation is self-confined to an absolute space' ('Space as a Key Word' p. 133).

Second, it is to be observed that diversity is played down in a matrix-style presentation. Distinctions *between* terms (here, 'apocalypse' and 'utopia') are drawn, whereas distinctions *within* terms go unacknowledged.⁷⁰ Below, a distinction within apocalyptic thinking – between what I shall term “Right Apocalypse” and “Left Apocalypse” – will be important for my discussion.⁷¹

Third, questions which may be unhelpful arise from the diagram as it stands. Might unfilled spaces in the diagram be filled? Might, for example, 'Arcadia' be written in the box reserved for structured space? (My answer: perhaps – but I return to the notion of structured space later.) What might be written in the box reserved for unstructured time? (My answer: I have not the least idea.) Does the box diagram or matrix cover all forms that ideal-society thinking may take? (My answer: I am uncertain what to say.) I remind a reader that the diagram illustrates a hopefully-interesting specific view.

A final point is worth addressing in greater detail. Just as the diagram draws attention away from differences *within* specific terms, so it presents differences *between* terms in an unhelpfully harsh (or “either-or”) way. In saying this, I do not mean to imply that the distinction drawn between apocalyptic and utopia thinking is unclear. What I wish to acknowledge is that apocalyptic and utopian may co-exist (whether coherently or incoherently) in the mind of an individual ideal-society theorist. Joachim, for example, offers not merely an apocalyptic three-stages conception of history; his *Figurae* include an outline plan of an ideal – in effect, a utopian – monastery.⁷² Citizens in Campanella's utopian City of the Sun await – in an apocalyptic fashion – 'the renewal of the world or, perhaps, its end'.⁷³ In Andreae's case, the position is more complex and requires attention to biographical detail. Although *Christianopolis* is (as I have suggested) paradigmatically a utopian text, Andreae is also by repute author of the Rosicrucian manifestos⁷⁴ – which have a more apocalyptic framework. Christian Rosenkruetz's tomb has just been opened, the manifestos report, and from it shone 'another sun'⁷⁵ which by which enlightenment and truth may be seen. European intellectuals are invited to contact the openers of the tomb 'discreetly and Christian-like',⁷⁶ in exchange for which enlightenment will be shared. The apocalyptic (in my meaning of the term) character of the manifestos is evident from their focus on a specific historical event – namely, the opening – and

70 Hegel points to this weakness when – perhaps with Jena market in mind – he refers to the 'pigeon-holing' process of the understanding and to the 'rows of closed and labelled boxes in a grocer's stall' (*Phenomenology* pp. 31-2). His point – which I mention but do not, here, unpack – is that a 'pigeon-holing' process (or system of 'boxes') operates in terms of abstract universality. A label on a box abstracts from differences between items that the box contains.

71 This distinction was drawn when, in section 4, I contrasted rule with a Last World Emperor or universal monarch with the non-rule of antinomian anarchy. In note 32, above, the terms “Left Apocalypse” and “Right Apocalypse” were employed. The diagram in the present section does not make the significance of this distinction evident.

72 M. Reeves and B. Hirsch-Reich *The Figurae of Joachim of Fiore* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1972) Plate 31.

73 *City of the Sun* p. 55.

74 Translations of the manifestos – *Fama Fraternitas* (1614) and *Confessio Fraternitatis* (1615) – appear as an Appendix to F.A. Yates *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London: Ark Paperbacks 1986) pp. 238-60.

75 *Ibid.* p. 246.

76 *Ibid.* p. 245.

their emphasis on revelation. Was Andreae the author? According to recent scholarship, the manifestos were the result of 'composite' authorship – one of the authors being Andreae – with the aim, in the manifestos an *Christianopolis* alike, of founding an Lutheran brotherhood.⁷⁷ However the question of authorship is decided, we may note that Rosicrucianism produced a striking, if eclectic, solution to the question of how history (or time) and utopia (of space) may be considered together: a print of 1618 depicts a solid-looking tower which has, however, wings on its roof and which moves on wheels.⁷⁸ Since the brotherhood whom intellectuals were invited to contact had no settled existence, the symbolism of wings and wheels was apt.

Rounding off my comments on apocalypse's and utopia's coexistence, a last example may be given. Although Bacon is most famous as a proponent of science, apocalyptic themes may be discovered in his work. As we have seen, New Atlantis is reached by sea-voyaging – and, for Bacon, voyaging connotes history's final days.⁷⁹ The enlightenment which voyaging brings has an apocalyptic status. Once again, utopian (or geography-based) and apocalyptic (or history-based) themes are co-present.

6. *Utopia and apocalypse: historical issues*

A diagram presents ideas in a frozen and schematic fashion. The present section approaches the apocalypse/utopia distinction in a less static and more historical way.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which is to say in the early-modern period, apocalyptic patterns of thought were widespread. The patterns concerned might have, at the centre, notions of empire or monarchy. Alternatively, they might emphasise socially radical themes. At the time of the Peasant War (1524-25) and the Anabaptist movement, notions of apocalypse and radicalism were strongly linked.⁸⁰ For over a hundred years, panic inspired by Anabaptism and radical apocalypse was felt in Europe's religious and secular élites.

It is, I suggest, against the background of this panic that utopian thinking is to be viewed. More's *Utopia* is, to be sure, a pre-Peasant War – indeed, a pre-Reformation – text. But More's own assessment of it came to be overshadowed by élitist fears. In Jacoby's words: 'The world changed after More wrote *Utopia*. Lutheranism,

77 D.R. Dickson 'Johann Valentin Andreae's Utopian Brotherhoods' *Renaissance Quarterly* Vol. 49, No. 4 (1996) pp. 760-802.

78 Yates *Rosicrucian Enlightenment* Frontispiece and pp. 94-5.

79 This connotation is made evident by J. Henry in his *Knowledge Is Power: How Magic, the Government and an Apocalyptic Vision inspired Francis Bacon to create Modern Science* (Cambridge: Icon Books 2002/3) pp. 19-23. For Henry, the crucial link is a passage from the Book of Daniel (12:4): 'many shall run [or go] to and fro, and knowledge will be increased'. As *Knowledge Is Power* points out, this passage (interpreted in an apocalyptic sense) appears – together with images of voyaging – on the title page of Bacon's *Great Instauration* (1620).

80 Thus Thomas Müntzer in his *Sermon to the Princes* (1524) in M.G. Baylor, ed., *The Radical Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1991) p. 24: 'the spirit of God now reveals to many elected pious people that a momentous, invincible, future reformation is necessary and must be brought about'. The 'future reformation' is designed to end the age of 'iron' (Daniel 2:33) which Müntzer identifies with the present time.

Anabaptism and the peasant wars swept through Europe. The utopianism that once seemed innocuous now struck him as dangerous speculation'.⁸¹ Does an attitude of this sort explain why *Utopia* found few sixteenth-century imitators? Was it felt that a utopian piece of writing (however 'innocuous') would further apocalypse's cause? Perhaps. Anxiety concerning radical apocalypse may have affected the production (or non-production) of utopian texts.

When we turn to the seventeenth century, we encounter a different picture. In the writings of Campanella and Andreae and Bacon, early-modern utopianism finds its voice. Not only is relative silence broken, but distinctively utopian ideas are given a central place: whereas the illustrations in More's *Utopia* hint at an arcadian island,⁸² and scholarship is needed to emphasise the work's geometric concerns,⁸³ Campanella and Andreae organise their texts around geometric planning – and, hence, unstructured space. It is as though, in the seventeenth century's opening decades, a newly-found confidence has entered utopian theory. What accounts for this? Has radical apocalypse ceased to inspire panic? Or has utopian thinking come to see itself as an *alternative to* – more than this, a *method of opposing* – apocalyptic ideas? I suggest that the latter is the case.

Some years ago, when I explored the same questions, I referred to 'utopia' as a 'police action'.⁸⁴ This expression encapsulates the idea which I wish to convey. In the sixteenth century, utopia saw itself as standing in apocalypse's shadow: to the extent that utopian thinking succeeded, it could only build apocalypse's strength. In the seventeenth century, by contrast, utopia emerged from subordination: it came to see itself as an independent form of ideal-society thought. It became aware that it might lead thought in a non-apocalyptic direction. Utopia might still the panic that radical apocalypse unleashed.

To these admittedly-general reflections, an objection may be raised. If utopia is (metaphorically) a police action against apocalyptic unrest, the notions of apocalypse and utopia stand opposed. How can this be, if – as emphasised earlier⁸⁵ – Campanella and Andreae and Bacon employ apocalyptic ideas? My reply is that the significance of this employment is unclear. It *may* be the case that, for the writers concerned, apocalypse and utopia are non-antagonistically related. The writers may, however, have assumed that radical apocalypse was ineffective. Or they may have been confident in their utopianism – so confident as to invoke apocalyptic ideas, but (in doing so) keep apocalypse in its place. From the range of possibilities, I conclude that the objection fails.

My proposal is that, in the early-modern period, utopia served to lessen establishment

81 *Picture Imperfect* p. 48. Jacoby continues: "The past centuries have not seen anything more monstrous than the Anabaptists," wrote More in 1528' (ibid. pp. 48-9).

82 See text at note 60.

83 See note 62.

84 Gunn "'The Only Real Phoenix'" p. 96.

85 In section 5.

fears. Utopia redirected ideal-society thinking, placing crystalline beauty where there was radical unrest. One way of highlighting the utopia/apocalypse contrast is to link each view to a model of social change.

For “Left” or “radical” apocalypse, against which (so I suggest) utopianism took aim, change is linked to popular struggle. It is linked, that is, to grassroots social movements and to politics of a fluid and unincorporated sort. For utopian thinking, change is piecemeal and takes place in an élitist fashion. It is striking that, when Andreae's imaginary traveller leaves Christianopolis, a senior official addresses him as follows: 'Do you remain ours, we pray, here and elsewhere'.⁸⁶ Christianopolis exists, Andreae is implying, in the mind of the departing traveller – or in the mind of the reader who is closing Andreae's book. What the reader or traveller *takes away* from Christianopolis is an idea. Those who are influenced by the idea form a brotherhood – which may be visible or invisible. Recent scholarship has stressed the importance of *brotherhoods* in Andreae's life and writing.⁸⁷ In effect, Andreae proposes reform by a suitably-educated élite. Is the notion of such reform unique to Andreae? Or does Andreae put forward a generic utopian view? If the latter is the case, we gain a sense of utopia's police action proceeds. From a utopian standpoint, change is top-down and élite-led. It radiates downwards, and presupposes a framework with a hierarchical form. If such a view is endorsed, radical apocalypse is silenced. A non-élitist view of history is ruled out of play.

7. From history to politics

I have suggested that, in the early-modern centuries, a battle between utopia and apocalypse took place. To this suggestion, I add another: in the battle, utopia won. We live in utopia. Our lifeworld is saturated by utopian assumptions. I offer three examples:⁸⁸

(i) In the present-day lifeworld, social space is homogeneous: a world of markets is one where equivalence prevails. A form of exchange which presupposes equivalence requires a space where all points are the same. Commodification and imperialism extend the boundaries of unstructured space.

86 'Christianopolis' p. 279.

87 Dickenson 'Johann Valentin Andreae'. For Dickinson, the notion of a truly Christian (and truly Lutheran) brotherhood gives unity to Andreae's work. Rosicrucianism was but one call for such a brotherhood – a call which Andreae abandoned when Rosicrucianism and 'vulgar alchemy' became associated in the public eye (ibid. p. 798). Although this specific call was abandoned, however, the notion of a truly Christian brotherhood remained inspirational. Andreae 'continued his utopian projects with many friends who had a hand in hatching the Rosicrucian fable' (ibid.) – and gave a focus to this group in the *Christianopolis* of 1619.

88 This list of examples is open-ended: I am tempted to add a note on *enclosures* as a combination of points (ii) and (iii). The early-modern enclosure movement has been widely discussed, although generally from an economic standpoint. The effect of enclosures on the lifeworld has received less attention – although T. Devine *The Transformation of Rural Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald 1999) is an exception. Devine discusses the *sort of boundaries* that enclosure involved. My suggestion is that, when seen in “lifeworld” terms, enclosure's paradigmatic significance – it's significant for *property as a whole* – becomes apparent.

(ii) On a neoliberal planet, urbanisation⁸⁹ and the realisation of surplus value support one another. Utopian planning – geometric planning – and the accumulation of capital go hand in hand. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, radial buildings and rectilinear cities inspired wonder. Today, they are commonplace.

(iii) The concept of property dovetails with utopian thinking. In a property-based world, individuals own this or that amount of space. This space – or 'area'⁹⁰, or 'sphere'⁹¹ – defines who and what they are. The space is unstructured: within it, what the individual pictures as his or her 'rights' – ultimately, rights of property – are evenly spread. Individuality is seen in abstractly universal terms.⁹²

Can utopia's victory over apocalypse – over Left Apocalypse – be reversed?⁹³ Can the elements of utopia which fill our lifeworld be excised? They can be excised, I propose, only if notions of *structured space* and *structured time* come into their own. Does recent struggle, which turns on the notions of *occupations* or (to employ Zibechi's term) *territories in resistance*, hold out this promise? I do not return a clear-cut answer to this question. In place of an answer, I suggest ways in which, for Occupy-style struggle, space and time are contested themes.

I end this short section on a terminological note. Before turning to Occupy-style politics, I address a difficulty which may have occurred to a reader. How do I understand the term 'structure'? Elsewhere in papers published on Heathwood, I have (with Adrian Wilding) employed the term 'structure' in a condemnatory sense: when social structures prevail, mutual recognition – and thereby emancipation – is

89 Here, I understand 'urbanization' in Lefebvre's and Harvey's sense: see Lefebvre *Urban Revolution* and D. Harvey *Rebel Cities* (London: Verso 2012) ch. 1. Thus understood, urbanisation is world-wide and by no means restricted to clusters of buildings. A massive field which supplies rape seed for cities is an instance of urban sprawl.

90 I. Berlin *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1969) pp. 122-3, 126, 129.

91 J.G. Fichte *Foundations of Natural Right* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000) p. 48.

92 I borrow the term 'abstract universality' from Hegel's *Logic*. A universal is 'abstract' (so I suggest) when it covers a range of otherwise-different particulars alike: the universal *abstracts from* these differences. One way of picturing an abstract universal is to see it as covering, or presiding over, an extent of *abstract* (or *abstracted-from*) space. (The boundaries of the space are determined by the universal concerned. The universal "student" covers the space of all students. The universal "lecturer" covers the space of all lecturers. And so on.) For the present-day lifeworld, an individual presides over – ultimately, owns – a collection of rights. If the logic of abstract universality is applied to social existence, the result is that *society* and a group of 'isolated monads' (Marx and Engels *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 162) are the same. Abstractly universal conceptions of the *individual* and of *society* feed off one another. Here, I stress that abstract universality entails unstructured space.

93 In the present paper, I do not attempt to chart the stages of the apocalypse/utopia battle. Hence my comments on utopia's 'victory' have an unfinished ring. However, a vital event in the battle must be the seventeenth-century English Civil War, which saw 'the breakdown of church courts and the censorship' (Hill *World Turned Upside Down* p. 23). Into the gap created by the breakdown rushed a host of radically apocalyptic outlooks, amongst them antinomian anarchism and theologies of free grace. John Saltmarsh, writing in 1646, exemplifies the latter position: 'Let there be liberty of the press for printing, to those who are not allowed pulpits for preaching. Let light come in at the window which cannot come in at the door... Let there be free debates and open conferences and communication...' (Saltmarsh in A.S.P. Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty*, London: J.M. Dent 1992, p. 181). It is difficult not to see Saltmarshian 'communication' as Hegelian mutual recognition *in nuce* – and it is with Hegel and, following Hegel, Marx that radical apocalypse (or Left Apocalypse) regains its voice. Civil War apocalypse and Hegelian-Marxian apocalypse confront different situations, however. The radicalism of the Civil War years represented the final flourish of early modern Left Apocalypse before the shutters of utopian order came down. By contrast, the notion of mutual recognition in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and in Marx is a promissory note on a future still to be.

undermined.⁹⁴ In the present paper, however, 'structure' has a commendatory meaning: alienation comes into play when social time and space have an unstructured character. Is there an incoherence here? Have my views changed?

My reply is that there is no incoherence – and my views remain unchanged. Both earlier Heathwood papers and the present essay favour action, and interaction, that is free. Such action and interaction is not *structured* by institutions; however, it *structures* – actively structures – the world. It structures time, in that it projects a 'primacy of the Future':⁹⁵ self-determining being reaches ahead of itself. It structures space, in that patterns of interaction establish distance. That is to say: structured space and structured time are *space and time which action structures*. My claim is not that *space and time structure freedom* but that *freedom structures social time and social space*. My further claim is that Left Apocalypse orients itself towards a world where *structuration by freedom* obtains.

8. *Utopia, apocalypse and revolutionary struggle*

Above, I have suggested that current revolutionary thinking stands at the point where the ideas of utopian and apocalyptic thinking intersect. An occupation – or, to use Zibechi's phrase, a territory in resistance – is a place in space. It is a space which, like a utopian island, exists in a less-than-ideal world. But also an occupation is an event in time: more than this, it is an event or a process through which history comes to be aware. Occupation belongs in the Left Apocalyptic tradition.

It is the case, then, that occupation unites apocalypse and utopia. However, this unity has complex and contradictory features. Our discussion sheds light on the contradictions entailed.

Let us (drawing on our discussion) examine occupation more precisely. I have compared an occupation to a utopian island – but this is inexact. A utopia is a crystalline structure of homogeneous space; what surrounds it is a world disorder prevails. An occupation is a nexus of structured existence; what surrounds it is homogeneity. Occupiers gaze across a police line to see skyscrapers and geometrically planned urban space. Does this reversal of perspectives suffice, if the notion of occupation is to be seen clearly? I suggest more is needed – and that the image of occupiers and the police line is stereotypical.

The “more” which is needed is detail on what occupiers do. If an occupation is an area or, to employ a Fichtean term, a 'sphere', this is not of the occupiers' choosing. The police line is a *police* line and not an occupiers' line. What matters to the

94 See, for example, R. Gunn and A. Wilding 'Occupy as Mutual Recognition' Heathwood Institute and Press (www.heathwoodpress.com) 12 November 2013.

95 Kojève *Introduction* p. 134.

occupiers is the action, and interaction, which goes forward in the occupied space. What goes forward is, in Harvey's words, the conversion of 'public space' into 'a political commons – a place for open discussion and debate'.⁹⁶ This debate is (or is intended to be) mutually recognitive. The space of an occupation is, to borrow Sartre's expression, 'furrowed' and structured by recognition's to-and-fro play. Through occupiers' interactions, 'hodological' space is created. Nor is this all: mutual recognition has, for the occupiers, a prefigurative significance. Occupation is not merely an instance of mutual recognition: it is mutual recognition that throws itself ahead of itself. Prefiguration (we may note) presupposes structured temporality. Our conclusion must be that, once occupiers' interactions become our focus, spatial and temporal issues spring to life.

In what follows, I concentrate on space and time as themes. Notions of space and time are at the centre of the contradictions through which occupation lives.

One way of sensing a contradiction's dynamic is to contrast opposing outcomes. If utopia's victory is definitive then, I suggest, two things occur. One is that social space and time become unstructured. The other is that categories of *space* are extended across society *per se*. Marx has the second of these developments in mind when he writes of the 'annihilation of space with time':⁹⁷ his meaning is that, with improved techniques of trade,⁹⁸ exchange approaches simultaneity. (Digressing for a moment, I pause at the term 'annihilation': does Marx envisage a wholly reified world where time has literally *become* space – or is his usage metaphorical? It seems to me that surprisingly little turns on how this question is answered. The difference between a wholly homogeneous tract of space and a wholly homogeneous tract of time is minimal – and the 'annihilation' takes place only when homogeneity exists.)

What happens when Left Apocalypse succeeds? Once again, two things – two opposed things – take place. One is that social space and time become structured – and free interaction flourishes. The other is that Left Apocalypse, which is premised on ideas of structured time, explores notions of structured space. This exploration is not, I hasten to explain, an 'annihilation': it is a learning process. It is, in fact, an aspect of the learning process that free interaction involves. We may note that, in this learning process, no reduction of space to time (or of time to space) occurs. At most, the line which divides space and time becomes indistinct – as when we say “You can see your future!” or “This exists, but is not-yet!” Perhaps phrases that strike us as metaphorical hint at experiential possibilities.

My characterisation of opposing outcomes highlights the contradiction through which an occupation moves. Capital seeks to impose homogeneity and planning whereas Left Apocalypse explores new forms of structured space. I end my paper by asking:

96 *Rebel Cities* p. 161.

97 K. Marx *Grundrisse* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1973) pp. 524, 539.

98 Compare the ships with sails on the title page of Bacon's *Great Instauration* – referred to in note 79, above – with present-day electronic dealing.

what forms might this exploration take? And what turns on such an exploration?

I ask these questions without returning systematic answers. It seems to me that, although aesthetic issues fall outwith this paper, such an exploration must involve visual – indeed, broadly sensory – forms. Already, we habitually speak of a “discordant” colour-combination, a “smooth” sound and a “jagged” thought: such expressions, which are metaphorical, hint at a 'common sense'⁹⁹ which may flourish, and be extended, in an emancipated world.

The question of what turns on exploration may be approached more directly. On the one hand, an exploration of space in its structured meaning feeds into ideas of a humane and mutually recognitive life. On the other hand, there may be more immediate benefits. If Occupy-style politics charted fresh recognitive 'furrows' in space, a route may be found beyond the image of the police line. Stated differently, Occupation-style politics might go forward whether or not a physically-bounded occupation exists. Is occupation *without an occupation* conceivable? The question is to be approached with caution. It is true that forays into enemy territory can the more confident if there exists an occupation as, so to say, a home. However, as we have noted, interactive patterns are, for occupiers, what is important; the existence of the police is a secondary affair. If this latter line of thought is followed, a picture emerges. It is that of recognitive pathways reaching into the city itself. If occupation may be *everywhere* and *nowhere in particular*, a cityscape may remodel itself in mutually recognitive terms.

My paper has attempted to re-draw the map of ideal-society reflection. It has denied what may be termed the unity of such reflection, and put a bifurcation in its place. It claims that ideal-society thought may be utopian – or it may be apocalyptic. (Other possibilities are not excluded, but utopia and apocalypse are considered here.) 'Utopian' thought and 'ideal-society' thought are not, I suggest, co-extensive terms: instead, utopia is a species and ideal society the genus. My reason for focusing on utopia and apocalypse is twofold. First, the utopia/apocalypse distinction is historically important; a good deal of European thought displays utopian and/or apocalyptic traits. Second, a discussion of utopia and apocalypse brings politically important issues into view.

⁹⁹ On the philosophy of 'common sense' – which may mean (i) a sense *common to all the five senses* and/or (ii) a sense *shared within* (and hence *common to*) a social group – see R. Gunn 'Common Sense – A Presentation' (June 2013) available at <http://www.richard-gunn.com>. How are senses (i) and (ii) related? Marx suggests that it is *through group interaction* - that is, through sense (ii) – that sense (i) comes into being. In Marx's words: a human being's sensuousness 'first exists...through the *other man*' (*Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 304). It is when emancipation (mutually recognition) exists that the senses totalise in a coherent way.

Throughout my paper, discussion has moved in the half-world between concepts and representations. In section 1, I have agreed with Peter Lamborn Wilson that a history of ideal societies is a history of 'images'. I should like to return this theme here.

First, I should like to remove a confusion (or a seeming confusion) in what I have claimed. If 'images' are fundamental to utopian and apocalyptic thinking – indeed, to *all* ideal-society thinking – how do Bloch and Adorno fit into my conceptual scheme? My suggestion is that they are major twentieth-century exponents of the Left Apocalyptic tradition. But is the matter as straightforward as this suggestion implies? In section 2, I have reported that Bloch and Adorno are troubled by “pictures”: they feel the force of the commandment “Thou shalt not make a graven image!” If ideal-society thinking deals in images, does their thought fall outside ideal-society thinking? Can my suggestion that they are Left Apocalypticists be sustained?

My reply is that the suggestion can be upheld. For Bloch, there is no fundamental difficulty: as I argue in section 2, Bloch's writings – especially the *Principle of Hope* – have a “picture gallery” aspect. Adorno is more complex: in his work, the ban on images has greater depth. It is, I propose, to Adorno that Jacoby's phrase 'iconoclastic utopian' most plausibly applies. However, it is not clear to me that images play no role in Adorno's work. In almost everything that Adorno writes there is, I suggest, a temporal dimension and an orientation towards (almost a prefiguration of) the future. The future is one where emancipation may be achieved – and truth redeemed. If this is so, Adorno belongs in the Left Apocalyptic tradition. It is true that, in what Jacoby refers to as an 'image-obsessed society', Adorno takes iconoclasm seriously: but *taking seriously* and *outright imposition* are different things.

My second and final point is of a general nature. It is that utopia and apocalypse employ images in different ways. For utopia, images are beautiful pictures – pictures that become diagrams as homogeneity is approached. For apocalypse, images resemble music that has a temporal development and which may achieve the sonority of speech. An account of utopia and apocalypse explores *employing images* as a form that conceptual engagement takes.

APPENDIX

(See note 37, above)

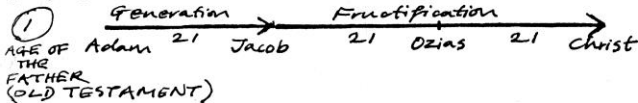
What follows is an attempt, following Marjorie Reeves' *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future* (London: SPCK 1973) ch. 1, to outline in some detail Joachim's notion of three historical ages. In literature on ideal societies, Joachim's notion tends to be referred to in an impressionistic fashion. However, as my sketch indicates, his ideas were precise.

JOACHIM OF FIORE (1135-1202)

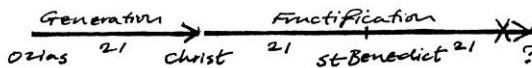
3 stages of history

3 persons of the Trinity. (cf. Marjorie Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future*, p. 9. See also p. 14 for a list of the ways in which Joachim distinguishes the 3 stages.)

SCHEME OF '3's':-

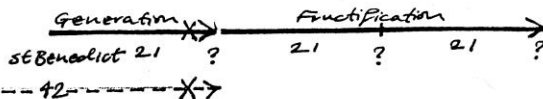


② AGE OF THE SON (NEW TESTAMENT)

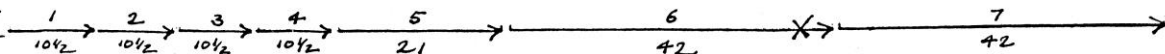


(Spiritualis Intellectus)

③ AGE OF THE SPIRIT



SCHEME P '7's':-



(Note: the numbers below the lines - '21', etc - refer to generations. Joachim assumes about 30 years per generation.)

'X' marks Joachim's own place on the line of time. He considered that there were 2 generations - nos. 41 & 42 - still to go before the Age of the Spirit came into its fullness; he refused to say how long these 2 generations would last but after his death his followers, evidently adding 30+30 to 1200, dated the apoclypse 1260AD.

Note difference of his historical scheme (given above) from his diagram of the unity of the Trinity: -

