Utopia and Utopianism in the Contemporary Chinese Context
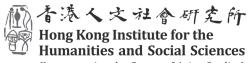
Texts, Ideas, Spaces

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Preface

David Der-wei Wang

Utopia and Utopianism in the Contemporary Chinese Context: Texts, Ideas, Spaces is a critical volume on the polemics of utopia vis-à-vis the changing reality of China and Sinophone communities. The volume is an independent project inspired by the international symposium on the same theme that took place at the University of Hong Kong in the spring of 2015. It comprises fourteen essays by an international ensemble of scholars from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the United States, and France; some of them attended the symposium and developed their presentations into full-length essays while others wrote specifically for the project. Together, these essays form a dialogical inquiry into three areas concerning utopian studies: political critiques, spatial imageries, and emancipatory projects.

The imagery of utopia, broadly defined as an idealist spatial construct vis-à-vis reality, was first introduced to China at the end of the nineteenth century. It found various manifestations in literary discourses, intellectual engagements, social institutions, cultural constructs, political manifestos, and, above all, revolutionary campaigns throughout the early decades of the modern age. While the tangled relations between utopia and reality have always invoked contestations, the "impulse" it generates, in Peter Zarrow's words, has compelled generations of modern Chinese to conceive of, invent, and even carry out a variety of alternative realities in reaction to the status quo. Whereas anarchists longed for a polity above any form of governance, humanists imagined a community thriving on compassion and aesthetics; whereas neo-Confucians called for the rule of the kingly way, Communists propagated a revolution to overhaul reality once and for all. Meanwhile, history witnesses some of the most bitter ironies of modern China: utopian projects could beget dystopian outcomes; the path to the dreamland could lead to the living hell.

The disintegration of socialist ideology, the devastations caused by the ultraliberal economy, and the threat of ecological and geopolitical disasters, explain the general disenchantment with and discredit of utopia today. It has become difficult to ignore the growing body of dystopian literature and arts published recently in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the rest of the Sinophone world. Undoubtedly, these spatial and temporal projections of dystopia carry dark allegories about history and the present, suggesting that they take an ironic view of the current harmonious dreams of a powerful state. However, at the same time their critical awareness can be drowned out by apocalyptic fatalism or cynicism. The end of utopia and the retreat from politics have become a new vulgate.

This volume acknowledges the dystopian trend worldwide since the end of the past century, but it proposes to reflect anew on the idea of utopia, analyzing how it has been debated, while at the same time emphasizing the persistence of utopianism and, particularly, its irreducible socially critical and politically imaginative function. For this purpose, three levels, text, thought, and society, are the volume's areas of discussion. The contributors examine how various genres, discourses, ways of expression, including literature, social sciences, and visuals arts, independently and in interaction, have framed the debate on utopias in the Chinese context, drawing on a large corpus that runs from the modern period up to the present day. The volume aims at historicizing and problematizing both the essential and contingent aspects of utopia, paying particular attention to the political commitment to utopianism and the possibilities it provides in terms of building social spaces.

The volume starts with a prologue by Professor Hsu Cho-yun. Through an overarching review of the political discourse in tradition China, Hsu sets the stage for the genesis of modern utopian thoughts and imaginaries in modern times. The main body of the volume is divided into four parts. Part I features three essays reflecting on the pros and cons of utopianisms appearing in different modern contexts. Ge Zhaoguang seeks to engage with the thought of *tianxia* (all under heaven), which has prevailed in premodern China and is making a postsocialist comeback thanks to the revival of political Confucianism. Peter Zarrow takes us to the early decades of modern China and reflects on the contested articulations of utopian thought, from Marxism to humanist meliorism. David Wang interrogates the optimistic inclination embedded in modern utopianisms, radical and conservative alike, and calls attention to a critical intervention through a framework of "dark consciousness."

Part II of the volume introduces select utopian provocations as demonstrated by Wang Jingwei, Xiong Shili, and Li Zehou, in the hopes of stimulating further discussion or debate. Xu Jilin takes up the case of Wang Jingwei, one of the most controversial figures in modern Chinese history, attributing Wang's unlikely cause of revolutionary martyrdom as treason to his early commitment to nihilism. Huang Kuan-Min guides us into the world of Confucian sage-kingship as envisaged by Xiong Shili and contemplates the implicit dialogue between New Confucianism and the Kantian paradigm of world peace. Hang Tu engages with two intertwined models of utopia, the anticipatory and the redemptive, using the case of Li Zehou, arguably the most popular philosopher in the new era (1980s).

The third part calls attention to the literary nature of utopianism by reviewing post-socialist fiction. All three contributors to this section argue that, at a time when utopianism seems to have run out of energy in the political sphere, narrative fiction manages nevertheless to invoke new possibilities. Yinde Zhang undertakes an analysis of the contemporary novelist Ge Fei's *Jiagnnan Trilogy*, which deals with revolutionary zeal and its distortion and eventual dissipation against Communist history. Zhang suggests that Ge Fei expresses his utopian vision negatively, thus revivifying the dialectic between despair and hope. Jianmei Liu traces out a different modern utopian genealogy in terms of the thought of Zhuangzi and detects its emancipatory vision and liberal thrust in works by writers such as Zhou Zuoren, Lin Yutang, and Gao Xiangjian. Finally, Shuang Xu turns her focus to the "utopian impulse" as shown in contemporary internet literature. Through time-travel literature, she describes how the new genre and

the interactive mode of reading and writing have given rise to the new utopian body, thereby transforming the way we imagine gender, nationhood, and history.

In the fourth part, we turn to Hong Kong as the site of conflict and conflation of contemporary utopian projects. This is a timely intervention given the rapidly changing politics of Hong Kong's present and future. Media and mediality constitute the major concern of the three essays in the section. Chien-hsin Tsai tackles Lu Xun's observation of Hong Kong as a "silent" space by identifying its soundscapes and finds in the cacophony on the island a sonorous vision of utopia. Carlos Rojas analyzes the renowned director Fruit Chan's film about Occupy Central in 2011–2012, *The Midnight After*. He points out the spectral motif that haunts not only the film but also the event, and reflects on the utopian and dystopian visions implied in Chan's cinematic "apocalypse now." Sebastian Veg, in contrast, takes a linguistic-cum-sociological approach to the slogans and manifestos being circulated in Occupy Central and argues for the imaginative and emancipatory power of language versus politics.

Last but not least, the volume features Chan Koon-chung's "Utopia, Dystopia, Heterotopia" as an epilogue. Chan is among the most articulate public intellectuals from Hong Kong. Inspired by Michel Foucault's concept of "heterotopia," he ventures to imagine a space that is neither utopian nor dystopian but that thrives on the phantasmagoric terrain of change and changeability. Heterotopia is as much a "nonspace" as it is a "supraspace," continuously acting out and being acted on by historical possibilities.

The volume is edited by David Der-wei Wang of Harvard University, together with Angela Ki Che Leung of the University of Hong Kong (HKU), and Yinde Zhang of University Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3. They were also the organizers of the symposium held at The University of Hong Kong on March 21–22, 2015. David Wang was appointed by HKU as Hung Leung Hau Ling Distinguished Fellow in Humanities from July 1, 2014, to December 31, 2015. Special thanks are due to the Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences of HKU, Hong Kong French Centre for Research on Contemporary China (CEFC), Hung Hings Ying & Leung Hau Ling Charitable Foundation, and Hong Kong University Press, and to Ms. Clara Ho of Hong Kong University Press and Mr. Tu Hang of Harvard University for editorial assistance. Most importantly, the editors would like to thank all symposium participants and volume contributors for making this project possible.

Prologue

The Formation and Evolution of the Concept of State in Chinese Culture

Cho-yun Hsu

The collective that we call the sovereign state has emerged numerous times in the course of human history around the world. This is certainly true in the case of China. Most of what we know about these states comes from historical sources, many of them quite legendary and certainly useful. Still, alternative sources exist that may yield new and exciting knowledge. It may even have the potential to radically change how we understand the concept of the state in Chinese history. Archaeological sources prove quite useful to this task, as Kwang-chih Chang showed so many years ago, particularly for early Chinese history. Let us, then, emphasize archeological findings over legendary sources in order to explore the development of the concept of state in ancient China.

The bone oracles in Shang archeology offer a good place to start. In the past century, archaeological sites have yielded to the world a large number of inscribed oracle bones. From these artifacts and other archeological findings exhumed at Shang sites, analysts have concluded that, by all appearances, the Shang kingdom was a conquest state. The repository of Shang artifacts discovered include what appears to be a large number of human sacrifices. These sacrifices include both workers who built the Shang mausoleums that make up many of the Shang excavation sites and soldiers who guarded the resting places of the dead kings buried in them. This phenomenon, archaeologists have determined, attests to the disregard that Shang rulers had for human life. The objects exhumed at other Shang excavation sites attest to the reach of state authority and the wealth the state gained from it. The large quantity of valuables unearthed there indicates the power of the Shang ruling class to collect massive amounts of resources from the areas under its control. A sizable number of remains lies distant from the location of the Shang capital, in places where strategic outposts for garrisoned troops once stood. These garrisons were built not only to protect frontiers but also for the purpose of controlling sources of wealth. To illustrate, oracle-bone inscriptions discovered at these sites record the long "inspection tours" that the king and his army took through the distant regions under his subjugation for the purpose of forcefully exacting tributes and gifts from the local peoples living adjacent to Shang garrisons.

The lengthy statements found on many bone inscriptions include many references to questions posed by Shang scribes, such as "Are there any particular spirits causing

troubles?" The term "spirits" here could indicate deceased ancestors, or it could denote spirits of some natural power. Nothing suggests the existence of any particular phenomenon such as the judgment of spiritual powers—that is, a transcendental authority beyond the human realm—upon human behavior.[1]

In the twelfth century BCE, the Shang kingdom was overthrown by the combined strength of lesser forces led by Zhou, a small tribal state on Shang's western border. After their triumph over the powerful Shang, the leaders of Zhou claimed that their victory resulted from the blessings of a mandate to rule the world that heaven (*tian*) had bestowed upon them; by the same reasoning, the Shang defeat proved that heaven had revoked it from the vanquished. This claim of the "Mandate of Heaven" constitutes the earliest documented instance of a new ruling elite laying claim to a transcendental value as a form of political propaganda to assert its political legitimacy.[2]

Surviving references to the Zhou dynasty in the *Book of Documents* (*Shangshu*) include several pieces of royal instruction to dynastic descendants as well as to royal subjects, admonishing them not to follow the Shang precedent of indulgence in drinking, maltreatment of people, and engagement in corruption. If they persisted, they warned, heaven would withdraw its mandate and bestow it upon a worthier candidate, as it had in the past.[3]

Indeed, the archeological data reveals, in a comparison of relics, that Shang utensils include a large number of bronze wine vessels such as cups and urns while Zhou utensils comprise very few. The same is true when it comes to evidence of human sacrifice: Zhou archeological sites have seldom yielded human sacrificial remains. In other words, the archeological evidence of these two cultures indeed verifies in some sense the Zhou claim to morally "better" behavior than their Shang predecessors.

In particular, two excavated Zhou bronze vessels yield some interesting information that pertains to this matter or morality. On a vessel called "Dafeng Gui" 大豐簋, cast during a very early part of Zhou dynastic history, inscribed text states that the Zhou victory over the Shang confirmed that heaven had given its mandate to the Zhou to establish a new dynasty. An inscription on a different vessel called "Hezun" 何尊, cast at about the same time the Zhou dynasts founded their eastern capital in former Shang territory, proclaims that the new royal capital was now established in the center of the known world. The inscribed phrase "hereby we settle here in the 'center land'" is the earliest extant reference in which the name Zhongguo—literally, the "central realm," or by logical extension, "kingdom"—appeared as the Chinese name for China, the Central Kingdom. The allusion to a "Heavenly Chamber" on the Hezun vessel likely refers to the highest peak on the old capital's surrounding central plain, which evidently featured the sacred place that earned it the place name Mount Heavenly Chamber. I assume that this name survives from that early date so as to indicate that this "center of the world" marks the sacred place where the God of heaven dwelled.

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1. For general information on the Shang history and archaeology, see Kwang-Chih Chang, *Shang Civilization* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980).
2. For general information on Zhou history, see Choyun Hsu and Katharine Linduff, *Western Chou Civilization* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988).
3. For examples, see the chapters "Wu yi" 無逸 [Against luxurious ease] and "Jiu gao" 酒誥 [Announcement on alcohol] in Kong Anguo 孔安國, *Zhou shu* 周書 [Book of Zhou], in *Shangshu zhengyi* 尚書正義 [The correct meaning of the Book of Documents], annotated by Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2007).

Chinese classical texts as early as the beginning of the seventh century BCE mention that the Zhou's founding sovereign, Xibo 西伯 (Lord of the West), was known for taking good care of elders. This claim was often related to stories that he recruited capable assistants who helped him to organize a benevolent state for the sake of the fulfilling the Heavenly Mandate.[4]

The Zhou kingdom was a feudal network of royal lineages. Many of the feudal states that belonged to this political arrangement were built by descendants or kinsmen stationed across a large expanse of territory, sharing the sovereignty of the royal house. Such a network cannot be called a monarchy; I should rather consider it a network of rulers. As time went by, the duality of lineages and networks of rule evolved so as to absorb and adapt to the local vassals of those lords who were stationed at various places.

During about 400 years of continuous rule, the royal domain of the Zhou repeatedly suffered from natural as well as human disasters. Severe earthquake and long-term climate change caused difficult environmental conditions. Additionally, large numbers of immigrants pressured by adverse weather patterns developing in Asia encroached upon the Zhou royal domain. All of these challenges caused the Zhou regime to face great difficulties in maintaining its sovereignty over its homeland.

By 770 BCE the last king of Zhou, You, had lost the capital. His son fled to the kingdom's eastern plain, which was a new territory where vassal states were established. As previously mentioned, the old Shang territory had been regarded as the center of the world. The refugee eastern royal court did not have enough strength to command authority over the established vassal states. Some two dozen of these vassal states began to compete for supremacy. The interstate wars this sparked—in addition to the expansionist campaigns of several states to seize lands beyond the Zhou domain—ensured a half millennium of continuous turmoil. Without its solid Zhou core, the old feudal network simply could not survive as a coherent political community. Social mobility allowed individuals to move up and down the hierarchy of power, the defeated in these struggles losing their status and the winners gaining power to control more resources. The accumulated effect of drastic social mobility finally caused the whole system to collapse. As a consequence, the entire feudal society simply disintegrated.[5]

With the change in political and social order came ideological change. The Spring and Autumn period (722–481 BCE) in Chinese history occurred during the Axial Age, identified by Karl Jaspers, during which emerged great thinkers who systematically defined transcendental values in the changing nature and ideal functions of social and political order. Laozi (老子 fl. ca. 571–471 BCE) and Confucius (孔子 550–479 BCE), the two most important Chinese thinkers of this age, laid down the ideals that would contribute to the discourse of governance in traditional China for thousands of years. Their political thought developed in the context of the great turmoil that defined China's Spring and Autumn era. People yearned to achieve a political and social order stable enough to at least improve an individual's chance of survival. In this climate, Laozi and Confucius each tried to determine what, in their estimation, would be the best form of community in which their society could live.

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4. See "Lilou, shang" 離婁上 [Lilou, part one] and "Jinxin, shang" 盡心上 [Jinxin, part one], in Jiao Xun 焦循, *Mengzi zhengyi* 孟子正義 [The correct meaning of Mencius] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962).
5. For general information on social and institutional changes during this period of Chinese history, see Choyun Hsu, *Ancient China in Transition* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1965).

Laozi based his efforts to redefine the complex political system in which he lived on the assertion that a society functions best in a state of anarchy. Ideally, he said, societies comprise numerous smaller communities that coexist so closely together that, in one village, the bark of a dog and the crow of a rooster could be heard by neighboring villages. Yet each community need not communicate with the other, in spite of their proximity. Laozi never specified whether these autonomous communities should include a governing body with a leader or some other kind of authority.[6] But he was adamant that the answer to the problem of his age, the political instability of internecine competition, would come from below, not from above.

In contrast, Confucius devised the concept of an ideal social order that envisions a community well administered by morally worthy elites who serve the state under the auspices of its benevolent monarch. At all levels of state, governing functionaries should be men of good character who cultivate self-discipline and self-reflection. Confucius instructed his disciples in the different categories of skills that he believed to be essential to proper administration: literacy, rhetoric, military skills, and a discipline that nurtures noble behaviors such as self-discipline, compassion, and respect for heaven. He thought that the last of these skill categories was the fundamental qualification for the administration of a state.

On two different occasions, Confucius demonstrated such preferences for cultivated skills to his disciples. For example, when he once asked his students what was their goal of learning, one student replied that he would like to be a commander who could pacify a sizable state, a second student claimed that he would like to be a good mayor who could bring education to his people, and a third student declared that he wanted to attain knowledge in order to effectively demonstrate to the people how to respect Great Nature. Confucius did not offer his approval to any of them. Then, a fourth student answered that he wanted to pay attention to the nurturing of internal character by staying in complete harmony with the cosmos. Confucius finally responded, "I agree with you."[7]

On another occasion, Confucius told his students that self-education begins with the cultivation of good character: understanding others as you understand yourself, exhibiting compassion and sincerity, and always behaving properly, so that the practitioner can live with others in a harmonious manner. Once mastered, however, what goal should such a self-cultivated person pursue? With that in mind, his students asked him, "What then to follow?" He said, "Take good care of the elders, help to nurture and educate the young ones, let grown people have a good chance to develop, and help the destitute, disabled, and disadvantaged." His students replied, "Then what?" He said, "Help those near you to live in security." The students repeated, "And then what?" To which he responded, "Help your people to live in security." "And then what?" "Help the people in the world to live in security." "And then what?" Confucius said, "Even the most important sage king in history could not reach *this* goal easily." His conceptualization of the ideal good state in which the people could live begins with self-cultivation; once achieved, it motivates efforts to help others live in peace. Confucius thus offers a

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6. See Laozi 老子, *Laozi Daodejing zhu* 老子道德經注 [Laozi's Classic on the Way, annotated] (Taipei: Yiwen yin shu guan, 1970), chapter 80.
7. "Xianjin pian" 先進篇 [Chapter on men of former times], in He Yan 何晏, *Lunyu jijue* 論語集解 [Collected explanations of the Analects] (Xinbei: Guangwen shuju, 1991), 24.

very proactive approach to the problem of creating good government, in contrast to Laozi's laissez-faire strategy.[8]

Indeed, the ideas of Laozi and Confucius developed in the late Spring and Autumn period, when society and politics on the Central Plain were still in great turmoil. Politically, the royal court of Zhou was nearly powerless in relation to its numerous nominally vassal states. Into the power vacuum ventured the stronger vassal states competing with each other for hegemony over all the others. During the five centuries this period lasted, there were a half a dozen or so rulers who expanded their power and earned recognition as interstate leaders.

The very first of these interstate leaders was the Duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 (r. 685–643 BCE), who ruled the state of Qi at the very eastern end of the Central Plain. Having survived a succession struggle to defeat his brothers for control of Qi, the duke reorganized the state into an autocratic government with the assistance of several very capable followers. He took the old feudal system and reorganized it into a hierarchy of administrative units under the direct governance of his court. He divided his entire state into twenty-one districts; he retained direct command over eleven of them and handed the governance of the remaining ten to two of his major lieutenants.

Duke Huan employed a very capable chancellor named Guan Zhong 管仲 (725–605 BCE), who had been raised in Qi as a war captive and who earned a reputation as an adult that eventually led him to the duke, where he rose to become one of his primary advisors and helpers. The duke enlisted the services of a number of assistants from a variety of backgrounds. To each he assigned a function that matched their aptitude and training. In other words, Duke Huan created a government of "specialists" rather than simply a state composed of highly ranked nobles. Doing so, the duke was able to streamline governance so as to effectively utilize resources and make his state the most powerful in the region. As a consequence, the state of Qi managed to create a stable order in the Zhou world by defending it internally and protecting it from foreign encroachment from either north or south.[9]

Confucius lived shortly after Duke Huan's death. He repeatedly expressed his admiration of the philosopher Guan Zhong, attributing to him the important accomplishment of protecting the "civilized world." In this way, he implicitly regarded the state reorganized by Duke Huan and Guan Zhong as a necessary replacement of the old Zhou feudal system, which he believed had grown antiquated. In other words, Confucius preferred the duke's autocratic state, which could serve the function of creating a certain state of peace in which people could live.[10]

Under Duke Huan's hegemony, the old feudal network of Zhou underwent a gradual change. Every subsequent hegemon made an effort to expand his territory in a similar fashion, by annexing neighboring states. Over the course of a three-century period of adjustment, the feudal system of states had evolved into a de facto multi-state community consisting of seven major powers (plus a few minor ones). By 471 BCE a succession of rulers in each of these seven powerful states proclaimed that their

8.   *Gong Ye Chang pian* 公冶長篇 [Chapter on Gongzhi Zhang], in *Lunyu jijue*, 26; *Xianwen pian* 憲問篇 [Chapter on Xian's questions], in He, *Lunyu jijue*, 42.

9.   For summary of the episode of Duke Huan and Guan Zhong, see Xu Yuanhao 徐元浩, "Qi yu" [Discourses on Qi], in Guoyu jijue 國語集解 [Collected explanations of the Discourse on States] (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1930).

10. *Xian wen* [Chapter on Xian's questions], in He, *Lunyu jijue*, 17.

3
The Panglossian Dream and Dark Consciousness

Modern Chinese Literature and Utopia

David Der-wei Wang

Modern Chinese literature was born with a call for utopia. In 1902, Liang Qichchao (梁啟超, 1873–1929) published *Xinzhongguo weilai ji* 新中國未來記 (The future of new China) in the newly founded fiction magazine *Xin xiaoshuo* 新小說 (New fiction). The novel opens with an overview of a prosperous China in 2062, sixty years after the novel's fictive publication date of 2002. As citizens of the Republic of Great China (Da Zhonghua minzhuguo 大中華民主國) celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of her founding, a revered scholar, Kong Hongdao 孔宏道, the seventy-second-generation descendant of Confucius, is invited to give a lecture at the Shanghai World Exposition on the way Chinese democracy has been implemented. His lecture draws a huge, enthusiastic audience, including hundreds and thousands from overseas.

If the grand opening of *The Future of New China* feels uncanny, perhaps it is because Liang's futuristic vision seems to have become reality in the new millennium. At a time when China is ascending to a role as a leading political and economic power world-wide, having hosted not only a World Exposition but also the Olympics and, more impressively, founded hundreds of Confucius Institutes in places as far from China as Pakistan and Rwanda, Liang Qichao's utopia may prove to have already been realized by socialist China. Indeed, as if taking up where Liang left off more than a century earlier, President Xi Jinping gave a speech on the "Chinese Dream" in 2013, in which he projected the future of new China as one thriving on "the way of socialism," "the spirit of nationalism," and "the force of ethnic solidarity."[1]

Although "utopia" has always been a suspect term in the lexicon of socialist China,[2] the Chinese Dream partakes of a strong utopian dimension insofar as it invokes an ideal

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1. For more interpretations of the Chinese Dream, see http://baike.baidu.com/subview/1817221/9342599.htm.
2. See Maurice Meisner's classic *Marxism, Maoism and Utopianism: Eight Essays* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982). Chinese Communist discourse deems utopianism an illusory search for dream without historical grounding. Communist revolution, by contrast, represents a project that is to be realized in accordance with a preordained timetable. Western Marxists from Ernst Bloch to Fredric Jameson tend to ascribe a positive value to utopia and treat revolution as a project leading toward the utopian goal. Nevertheless, whereas Bloch famously expands the utopian impulse to a perennial search for a desired way of living, demanding the power to imagine the "not yet," Jameson seeks a "cognitive mapping"

political and cultural vision. As a matter of fact, the Chinese Dream may represent the summation of a string of recent discourses about futuristic China. From *daguojueqi* 大國 崛起 (the great nation is rising) to *tianxia* 天下 (under the heaven), from "repoliticizing" China to *tongsantong* 通三統 (unification of three orthodoxies—Confucianism, Maoism, Dengism), we are witnessing a cornucopia of treatises and declarations that again aspire to forge a powerful Chinese polity through their visions. While these treatises are ordinarily not treated in literary terms, they nevertheless point to the rhetorical gesture and imaginary aptitude that inform the "structure of feeling" of a time. They share the fantastic mode of a "grand narrative," and it is this mode that brings us to rethink utopia and its literary manifestation in contemporary China.

Ironically enough, when turning to contemporary Chinese fiction per se, one finds few works that can be described as utopian in its traditional definition. Whereas Ge Fei's 格非 (b. 1964) *Wutuobang sanbuqu* 烏托邦三部曲 (Trilogy of utopia, 2007–2011) deals with China amid the ruins caused by preceding utopian projects, Han Song's 韓松 (b. 1965) *2066: Xixing manji* 2066 西行漫記 (2066: Red star over America, 2000) pictures a postapocalyptic scene of China and the world; whereas Chan Koon-chung's (b. 1952) 陳冠中 *Shengshi* 盛世 (The fat years, 2009) imagines a China immersed in the jubilant mood of amnesia, Ma Jian's (b. 1952) *Rouzhitu* 肉之土 (Beijing coma, 2010) envisions a China as monstrous and mystical as the world of *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Classic of mountains and seas). Dystopia and heterotopia permeate contemporary Chinese narrative literature. This fact leads one to look into the spectrum of utopian imaginary of our time and ask whether the utopian discourse as proffered by the political machine and select intellectuals, and the dystopian fiction that prevails in the literary sphere, represent the dialogical potential in Chinese reality or, more polemically, its disavowal.

This chapter analyzes the contested conditions of modern and contemporary Chinese utopia as a political treatise, a literary genre, and a social imaginary.[3] The first part takes a historical perspective from which to describe the rise of utopia in the late Qing era and ponders the contradictions and confluences of its narrative and intellectual paradigms. The second part introduces the two key concepts of this essay, "Panglossianism" and "dark consciousness." By Panglossianism, I refer to the Voltairean critique of the optimism that seeks to justify the history of both the past and future in terms of "all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds."[4] By dark

of utopia as a way of flouting the limits of the capitalist status quo. See, for example, Ernst Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, trans. Anthony Nassar (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000); for an introduction to Bloch's utopian theory, see Douglas Kellner, "Ernst Bloch, Utopia, and Ideology Critique," http://pages.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/essays/ernstblochutopiaideologycritique.pdf. Fredric Jameson, in *Archaeology of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (London: Verso, 2007), laments the eclipse of the utopian vision in the leftist revolutionary vein in the contemporary world. Granting his insightful critique of the negative utopian impulses and consequences as represented by global capitalism, he appears to fall short in critically examining the utopian ruins created by leftist revolutionary undertakings. Nor could he engage with the anomalous coexistence of both socialist and capitalist utopian projects, as is the case of contemporary China, and its dystopian consequences.

3. For a classic survey of utopia, see, Krishan Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-utopia in Modern Times* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1987). For a recent discussion of utopia as a revived imaginary in relation to the concept of globalization, see Robert Tally Jr., *Utopia in the Age of Globalization: Space, Representation, and the World-System* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013).

4. In the 1759 novel *Candide* by Voltaire, Dr. Pangloss is described as a caricature of optimism believing "all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds" despite the evidence that indicates otherwise. Stephen Gould and Richard Lewontin invoked the term "Panglossian Paradigm" to critique the evolutionary biologists who view all traits as atomized things that had been naturally selected and thus leave no

consciousness, I refer to Professor Chang Hao's 張灝 engagement with *youan yishi* 幽暗意識, an idea that deals with the polemics of crisis and contingency ingrained in Chinese thought. Neither, to be sure, should be reduced to a simple ideological stance.[5] The third part of this chapter turns to the scene of the new millennium, observing the dystopian and heterotopian inclinations in fictional practice as opposed to the utopian aspiration in political discourse.

The Republic of Great China versus the Civilized World

Utopia was introduced as a neologism, *wutuobang* 烏託邦, by Yan Fu 嚴復 (1854–1921) in his translation of Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*, *Tianyan lun* 天演論.[6] In his annotation, Yan Fu contemplates the relationship between rulership and national governance, and concludes that education and enlightenment are keys to the prosperity of a nation. In his treatment, Yan Fu downplays the fact that utopia is a fictitious construct, the valence of which lies in its imaginary projection of that which is unavailable in reality. Rather, he considers utopia a goal to be achieved by any nation committed to the dictum of the survival of the fittest. In other words, he equates utopia to a teleological project predicated on the Darwinian ethics he yearned for.[7]

The way Yan Fu broached utopia leads to a larger question regarding the instrumentality of literature at his time. That is, the "fictitiousness" of literature is regarded as intelligible only when it proves to be a manifestation of historical experience or expectation.[8] As such, fiction is said to serve as both the end and the means of transforming China. Echoing Yan Fu's and like-minded intellectuals' advocacy for reforming China by re-forming Chinese fiction, Liang Qichao made the famous statement in 1902: "To renovate the nation, one has to first renovate fiction. . . . Fiction has the incalculable

theoretical space to other causes. See "The Spandrels of San Marco and the Panglossian Paradigm: A Critique of the Adaptationist Programme," *Proceedings in the Royal Society of London Biological Science* 205 (1161): 581–98. I derive my understanding of Gould's theory from "The Pattern of Life's History," in John Brockman, ed., *The Third Culture* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 52–64.

5. Zhang Hao (Hao Chang), "Youan yishi yuminzhu chuantong" 幽暗意識與民主傳統 [Dark consciousness and the democratic tradition], in *Zhang Hao zixuanji* 張灝自選集 [Work of Zhao Hao; author's edition] (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002), 1–24.

6. Yan Fu 嚴復, trans. *Tianyan lun* 天演論 [Evolution and ethics by Thomas Huxley] (Taiwan: Shangwu yinshu guan, 2009), 33.
    See also James Paradis and George Williams, ed. *T. H. Huxley's Evolution and Ethics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989). Federico Masini, a pioneer of the study of loan words of the late Qing, suggests that Japanese tend to use "理想鄉" or the phonic translation "ユートピア" for *utopia* (*The Formation of Modern Chinese Lexicon and Its Evolution toward a National Language* [Berkeley: Journal of Chinese Linguistics Monograph Series, 1997], 138). The high tide of this translation is much later than the Meiji period when intellectuals associated the idea with the socialist movement. I thank Professor Uganda Kwan's assistance in identifying the source. For a recent genealogical study of the introduction of utopia to China, see Yan Jianfu 顏健富, *Cong shenti dao shijie: Wanqing xiaoshuo de xingainian ditu* 從身體到世界：晚清小說的新概念地圖 [From the body to the world: The new conceptual mapping of late Qing fiction] (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2014), chap. 4.

7. For a general discussion of the teleological moral agenda embedded in Yan Fu's rendition of evolution and ethics, see Benjamin Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yan Fu and the West* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1964), chap. 4.

8. Such an understanding of literature, of course, has its relevance to the classical understanding of the mutual implication between literature (*wen*) and the Way (*dao*). *Wenxue*, or literature, is as much a form of representation as it is a vehicle through which the way of the world is manifested.

power of transforming Chinese mind."[9] At some mysterious point of time, as Liang would have it, fiction and nation or, for our concern, utopia and history, become exchangeable notions.

The extant narrative of *The Future of New China* relates, via flashback, the interaction between Huang Keqiang 黄克強 and Li Qubing 李去病, the two protagonists of the novel. Provoked by the aftermath of the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895, both Huang and Li decide to go to England in pursuit of new thought, and they end up studying at Oxford University. When news about the aborted Hundred Days Reform reaches them, the two friends are faced with another crucial decision. Whereas Li considers the immediate and radical action of revolution, Huang cautions his friend against the consequences of futile violence and sacrifice. The two then part ways; Huang travels to Berlin to learn the latest theories in *Staatswissenschaft*, and Li heads for Paris to witness the outcome of the French Revolution. The two are reunited on their way home, and yet they still cannot solve their disagreement over how to renew China. *The Future of New China* comes to a sudden stop in chapter 5.

One has to acknowledge that many late Qing novels were aborted, a fact that epitomizes the volatile circumstances of reading and writing fiction in the late Qing era.[10] What makes *The Future of New China* special is that its unfinished form complicates its utopian scheme. Insofar as it promises to tell *how* the bright future will have been reached over a span of fifty years, the unfinished project of *The Future of New China* exposes a short circuit in its narrative and historiographical mechanism. If "future" serves as the motivation/destination of Liang's fiction as revolution, its realization indicates that a passage of time, along with the plot, will unfold and its implied hermeneutic goal will be revealed. As the novel stands now, China in the future has been reached in advance (through a flashback), followed nevertheless by an abortion of the history and narrative that would have filled the gap between now and then.

I have described elsewhere the narrative short circuit of Liang Qichao's novel in terms of the "future perfect" mood, which means a projection of a scene or episode expected or planned to happen before a time of reference in the future. In other words, the novel deals not with what *may* happen but what *will have* happened in the years to come.[11] I argue that Liang projects the grand prospect of the Republic of Great China with such fervor that he preempts the future and overfamiliarizes the unknown. When the remote future turns out to be preemptively familiar, or when the mystical apocalypse proves to be yesterday's news, Liang risks turning his futurist visions into "nostalgic" anticipation. His novel indicates not so much a discovery of a new temporal horizon as a wishful revival of the ancient dreams of China; his visit to the future follows a secret itinerary through the fantasies of the past.

After *The Future of New China*, quite a few works of late Qing fiction feature utopian visions. By all standards, Wu Jianren's 吳趼人 (1865–1910) *Xin Shitouji* 新石頭記 (The new story of the stone, 1908) stands out as the most fascinating. As its title suggests,

9. Liang Qichao 梁啟超, "Lun Xiaoshuo yu qunzhi zhiguanxi" 論小說與群治之關係 [On the relationship between fiction and ruling the people], in *Yinbingshi wenji dianjiao* 飲冰室文集點校 [Ice drinker studio collection of writings, annotated edition], vol. 2 (Kunming: Yunan jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001), 758–60.

10. Many things forced Liang to abandon the writing of the novel, including his changing political agenda. Ibid.

11. David Der-wei Wang, *Fin-de-Siècle Splendor: Repressed Modernities of Late Qing Fiction, 1849–1911* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 301–9.

the novel is intended as a sequel to Cao Xueqin's 曹雪芹 (1715–1763) magnum opus *Shitou ji* 石頭記 (The story of the stone; better known as *Honglou meng*, The dream of the red chamber, 1792). *The New Story of the Stone* is divided evenly into two parts. In the first part, Baoyu, or the Stone, returns to mundane society after centuries of life as an otherworldly recluse. His travel takes him to a *yeman shijie* 野蠻世界 (barbarous world), where he attempts to disseminate new thought, only to find himself hunted down as a heretic by the court. The second part begins with Baoyu barely escaping from jail and stumbling, by coincidence, into a mysterious country, the *wenming jingjie* 文明世界 (civilized world), a nation that is strong in military power, political structure, scientific advancement, educational institutions, and moral cultivation. While Baoyu is most impressed by its scientific and technological developments, his journey culminates in his visit to its venerable ruler, Dongfang Qiang 東方強 (literally, "Eastern strength"). Through Dongfang Qiang's description of the political system of the Civilized World, Wu Jianren lays out his own blueprint for utopia. With *ren* 仁 (benevolence) in mind, according to Dongfang Qiang, not only is a ruler able to improve the welfare of his own people; he will also extend compassion to people of other countries suffering from tyranny.

Fantastic episodes aside, Wu Jianren's civilized world possesses an ambitious conceptual framework, and to that effect it reminds us of Liang Qichao's Republic of Great China. Set side by side, they bring to the fore two of the most important visions of late Qing utopia. Both project a prosperous and powerful China that surpasses its Western counterparts in the material sense and enact a dialectic between Chinese modernity and a Confucian morality encapsulated in the concept of benevolence.

However, Liang Qichao's and Wu Jianren's utopian plans differ from each other when it comes to their chronotopical schemes and narratological methods. Liang Qichao launched *New Fiction* and engaged in creating *The Future of New China* as a result of his deliberation on the conditions of revolution. Until 1902, Liang had been a fervent lobbyist for a destructive action to overhaul China. But in *The Future of New China* he clearly leans toward Huang Keqiang's agenda, favoring a more moderate form of revolution toward a constitutional monarchy with a democratically elected parliament. Since the novel remains unfinished, we will never find out how Huang and Li put their agendas into practice. However, thanks to the opening of the narrative in 2062, we do know that Huang eventually succeeded in his undertaking and became the second president of the Republic of Great China.

Liang Qichao's vision of utopia is the consummation of a single, linear (but not necessarily evolutionary or revolutionary) development of time. This linear model, which has been so popular with Confucians and classicist Europeans, deprives a novelist like Liang of the freedom to imagine and justify various futures and revolutions. Moreover, as discussed above, although *The Future of New China* assumes the temporal structure of linear progression, it unfolds in the "future perfect" mood. As such, the "future" in Liang's novel appears as the magical moment that stands at the other end of history, in the absence of progressive momentum that leads towards the happening of the moment. As the completion of the prescribed timetable, the future is not a dynamic through which historical forces clash and crystallize into an unprecedented constellation but a mythical moment that transcends time.

Wu Jianren's *The New Story of Stone* presents a more complex temporal and narrative scheme with regard to the feasibility of utopia. After the model of Cao Xueqin's

7
Utopianism Is a Humanism

About Ge Fei's *Jiangnan Trilogy*

Yinde Zhang

One can no longer ignore the growing body of dystopian literature published recently in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the rest of the Sinophone world. Undeniably, these spatial and temporal projections carry dark allegories about history and the present day, taking an ironic view of the current harmonious dreams promoted by a powerful state. Their critical awareness, however, has often been misunderstood and perceived instead as the expression of an apocalyptic and fatalist vision, leading to frequent claims about the end of utopia.

Unmistakably, this general disenchantment is justified by the disintegration of Communist ideology, the devastation wrought by an ultraliberal economy, and the threat of ecological and geopolitical disasters. However, is the utopian dream really disappearing, and does this include utopianism that is not linked to any ideological dogma or blueprint but to the basic human yearning for a better society and life? Does the critique by anti-utopian literature of the instrumentalized utopia mean that utopia should nowadays be condemned as a monolith, or should we on the contrary reconsider it in its plurality and historicity, in particular by emphasizing the persistence of utopianism as a social and individual resistance to various forms of repression and alienation? Is it not necessary, in this sense, to redefine utopia less as a demagogic topolect and more as humanistic discourse? This chapter provides some answers to these questions by examining the *Jiangnan Trilogy*, published by Ge Fei between 2004 and 2011,[1] as this dystopian fiction calls for a resurgence of hope by introducing a displacement that

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1. Ge Fei's *Jiangnan sanbuqu* 江南三部曲 [Jiangnan trilogy] includes *Renmian taohua* 人面桃花 [Peach blossom beauty, 2004], *Shanhe rumeng* 山河入夢 [Landscapes in dream, 2007], and *Chunjin Jiangnan* 春盡江南 [End of spring in Jiangnan, 2011]. The three volumes were first published separately and then reissued together as a trilogy by the Shanghai wenyi chubanshe in 2012. Page numbers in this chapter refer to the first edition, vol. 1 (Chunfeng wenyi chubanshe, 2004), vol. 2 (Zuojia chubanshe, 2007), and vol. 3 (Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 2011). All translations are mine.

    The title of the first volume hints at a poem by Cui Hu (崔護 fl. 796), "Written in a Village South of the Capital":

        This very day last year, oh, at this very place
        A pretty face outshone the flowers of peach trees
        I do not know today where shines the pretty face
        Only the pretty flowers smile in vernal breeze

consists of moving utopia from a fallacious perfect society toward a human-centered place, in a historically determined way. Throughout three volumes spanning one hundred years of Chinese contemporary history, the novels call into question the perversity of modernity through a utopian village called Huajiashe, which successively gave rise to a revolution gone wrong, a totalitarian state, and a consumerist tyranny. This dystopian variation constitutes an allegorical frame of the "ideological" vision of a utopia, based, for instance, on myths of nation, progress, and prosperity. In parallel, the novel builds on a dichotomous structure where human utopia is opposed to any (anti) utopian topography, to the extent that the emancipation project underlies the narrative, in favor of social and individual values against political or mercantile powers and their destructive effects.

   This chapter investigates the way the *Jiangnan Trilogy* stages its utopia of the human,[2] which relies on ethics rather than ontological contributions to a misleading fairyland. A double approach, both thematic and chronological—Huajiashe's representation and its consecutive variant will come under close scrutiny—could apply to the study of this work, insofar as its utopian imagination of human beings is inscribed at the core of the historical and social crisis. If utopianism is humanism, as I would argue, it takes here a clearly contextualized shape, which requires that the strain between fictional construct and social discourse is taken in account; thereby, it opens up a multitude of meanings, including a network of interrogations and incoherence. Rather than identifying the human dimension of utopia as an alternative certainty against disastrous topicality, this chapter aims to point out the coexistence of hope and pessimism as the author's constant oscillation between doubts and quest corroborates this utopia's inherent ambivalence between negation and possibility, as defined by Adorno.[3]

(《提都城 南莊》：去年今日此門中，人面桃花相映紅。人面不知何處去，桃花依舊笑春風). Xu Yuan Zhong, trans., *Songs of the Immortals: An Anthology of Classical Chinese Poetry* (New York: Penguin Books in Association with New World Press, 1994), 70.

2.   We borrow the notion from Emmanuel Levinas: "In the presence of certain acts of resistance and martyrdom, daringly carried out in our world in the name of the pure human, the utopian human, against the efficacy of powers and powerful political entities, that ethics affirms its objective status, shows itself to be *Wirklichkeit*, efficient reality, and no longer lets itself be repressed among the powerless 'beautiful souls' or 'unhappy consciousnesses.' In any case, it would be, beyond the contribution of utopian socialism analyzed by Buber, the *credo* of his own philosophical anthropology in which the relation of the human to his neighbor is conceived of on the famous model of 'I and Thou,' distinct from the objectification and the domination that always triumphs in the eyes of the objective gaze. The 'I-Thou' model allows us to conceptualize a firm distinction between the society and the State, and to conceive a society without 'powers.'" Emmanuel Lévinas, "Utopia and Socialism," in *Alterity and Transcendence*, trans. Michael B. Smith (New York: Colombia University Press, 1999), 116–17. Cf. also, Catherine Chalier, *Lévinas: L'utopie de l'humain* [The utopia of the human] (Paris: Albin Michel, 1993).

3.   "Utopia is essentially in the determined negation, in the determined negation of it merely is, and by concretizing itself as something false, it always points at the same time to what should be." "Something's Missing: A Discussion between Ernest Bloch and Theodor W. Adorno on the Contradictions of Utopian Longing," in Ernst Bloch, *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays*, trans. Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklunburg (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 12. As pointed out by David Wang in the conclusion of his essay on the last volume of the trilogy, "It would not be impossible for the poet to write out a utopia from the waste land, at another turning point." 但在時間的另一個轉折點上詩人未嘗不可能寫出荒原裡的烏托邦 David Der-wer Wang, "Wutuobang li de huangyuan—Ge Fei Chunjin jiangnan" 烏托邦裡荒原—格非《春盡江南》[The waste land within the utopia: About Ge Fei's *End of Spring in Jiangnan*], *Dushu* 讀書 [Read] 7 (2013): 51. Jeffrey C. Kinkley delivers a different standpoint, by stressing the dystopian temporal cyclicalism that seems to feature Ge Fei's work: *Visions of Dystopia in China's New Historical Novels* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014) 110–17.

Desire and Historical Temporality

The first attempt to build the utopia of the human is reflected in a dehistoricizing writing, as attested by the initial volume, *Peach Blossom Beauty*. The author engages in a private narrative to transform history, for instance, the circumstances around the revolution of 1911, into intimate experiences undergone by the protagonist, Xiumi 秀米, who reaches puberty at the beginning of the story. This metaphorization of desire certainly expresses the author's intention to rid himself of the established genre of the "novel of the future," such as the one inaugurated by Liang Qichao in 1902, reappropriated by propaganda a century later as a prophetic literature, legitimating the renaissance of the nation. However, by emphasizing personal impulsive desire as a counterweight to the teleological utopia, the novel raises the question of how to avoid at the same time any risk of a-dialectic consciousness facing the historical temporality that is indispensable for any human experience as well as any perspective of possibilities.

The dehistoricized writing,[4] leaning toward a human-centered space, is grounded in a binary and oppositional spatial construction between a fulfilled utopian site and an oneiric heterotopia. At the very beginning of its existence, Huajiashe appears to be located on a remote island, like the earthly paradise, which seemed to be dominated by peace, equality, and abundance. Inspired both by the archetype of the peach blossom spring and the idea of the great unity, this fulfilled utopia hosts a retirement community as well as revolutionary activists, before proving in fact to be a den of bandits who commit frequent acts of violence and destruction. This dystopian representation is explained by the lust for power, which sparks a bloody rivalry between leaders ready to maintain their hierarchical relationship within the so-called egalitarian community. This cacotopia, which eventually autodestructs, is counterbalanced by another place, which is dreamlike, absent, and invisible, as it only exists in Xiumi's mind, through a kind of elsewhere of elsewhere that transcends the political project with intimate desires and impulsions.

Fascinated by the idea of great unity described by Zhang Jiyuan 張季元, the clandestine activist Xiumi was no doubt sustained by wishes close to some revolutionary proposals when she created the Autonomic Association of Puji and a school in town after her journey to Japan (165, 167), pushing her aspiration as far as an egalitarian society "providing people with the same quantity of smiles" (201). Nevertheless, these enterprises, which have been ephemeral, have little to do with any political project concerning future Chinese society. They instead obey personal ethics and affectivity which commit Xiumi to charitable work or allow her to retreat into her innermost feelings. Lacking a proper pedagogy, her school comes closer to a hospice created to receive the vagabonds or beggars to whom she feels connected. The moment that crystallizes her endeavors is that of distributing rice porridge one day during a severe famine (266), for the scene appears to obliterate for an instant suffering and inequality. Actually, this philanthropic stance dissimulates at times the secrets of the young protagonist in her love life. In this respect, Huajiashe is diverted from its revolutionary function—the clandestine place of fomenting the uprising—into a private signification. The site facilitates the revelation of desire as Xiumi's kidnapping allows her to experience freely

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4. It is worth noting the parody process used by Ge Fei, who gives in brackets biographical notices for some characters as guarantee of historical credibility while they are simulacra devices that dismantle historiographic discourse by strengthening fictional legitimacy.

her first loving emotion while discovering Zhang Jiyuan's private diary, in which the revolutionary martyr has confessed his veiled passion for the young girl. The site of detention becomes an area for reading that offers the pubescent heroine an unexpected sentimental education and emotional development.

Nevertheless, the author has no intention of writing a melodrama, as some studies assert in stressing the love story between Xiumi and Zhang Jiyuan, even suggesting an underlying Electra complex. The representation of desire, for the author, is in fact meant to explore more intensively the protagonist's psyche, as her tendency toward seclusion and impulsiveness translates a specific form of utopian consciousness that appears to be subject to schizophrenia and cut off from the dialectic.[5]

The dreamlike world that Xiumi builds and lives in is described as a reclusive and self-sufficient universe. Her favorite habitation is the closed pavilion where her father found shelter (160). She feels paradoxically free even as she finds herself incarcerated (231). The trope of retreat comes closer to a kind of autism, since she feigns aphasia while comparing the human heart to an isolated island (275).

Such autism results in a considerable spatialized effect on time. Xiumi's psychological temporality exhibits two important characteristics. On one hand it proves to be as regressive as the protagonist is, at the end of the novel, under the impression that a river runs back in time showing her self-image over twenty years old (276). The reverse movement joins the morbid flow, as the hallucinatory scene announces her own death, which happens when her vanishing father's smiling face looms up out of ice flowers. On the other hand, time reveals its repetitive and circular nature. Her ceaseless activity follows an impulsive and almost mechanical gesture that forbids her to stop acting. In her own words, she does one thing just to forget another (195); she is fascinated by what is impossible (235), without any axiological care, as though under magical influence (196). To a certain extent, her restless engagement refers to the revolution in its dynamic sense and as well as its cyclic movement. In fact, this regressive and repetitive temporality highlights a diverging and deteriorated time insofar as it triggers the rupture of historical time. The latter implies flow and duration, while the two temporalities are eliminated by the obsessive acts that neither lead to any future nor draw up to the becoming.

The author succeeds in dissociating her aspiration from any political effectiveness by staging Xiumi's "unrealistic" dreams. In parallel, in emphasizing her pathological "fixism"—Xiumi's obsession is perceived by her entourage as silly or foolish (痴), like her father's obsession—the author also suggests the limits of the utopian consciousness due to its excessive dehistoricizing tendency. When it annihilates the distance between desire and satisfaction, as the heroine seems subject to, it becomes badly a-dialectic since it tends to dismiss not only the totality of concrete historical situations but the very historical dimension of existence. Therefore, the major risk would be to fall into a "reified thought" by substituting quantitative time for qualitative time. That would paradoxically suffocate the possible in the name of doing the impossible.

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5.   Joseph Gabel, *Ideologies and the Corruption of Thought*, ed. Alan Sica (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1997), 61–70. See also, Raymond Ruyer, *L'utopie et les utopistes* (Paris: PUF, 1950).

Philia as Social Resistance

The second part of the trilogy turns to a very different optic in addressing the issue, as a salutary otherness has been introduced in the behavior of Tan Gongda 譚功達, Xiumi's son and head of the County Meicheng. Although he inherits a kind of foolish obsession from Xiumi, this dreamer differs from his mother in his capacity to develop a form of friendship and of "to be together," which proves to be a valuable social force against totalitarianism in the new era of socialism.

In a way analogous to the preceding volume, the second appearance of Huajiashe serves to crystallize the criticism of dystopia. However, the author stresses its renewed characteristics by denouncing both totalitarianism and instrumental rationality in terms of their complicity in establishing a dominating order. The utopian site is thus reborn as an idyllic popular commune, inhabited by slightly more than 1,600 brave souls, undoubtedly in reference to Charles Fourier's Phalanx.[6] Being a closed world, it tends toward totality and perfection through the institution of a "harmonious" community without division, symbolized by a carefully ordered architecture and a authoritarian administrative organization. Nevertheless, the perfection it invents through this form of totality and closure barely dissimulates the conspicuous lack of freedom for its inhabitants, who are all serious and wistful, as their lives are entirely controlled by a mystic and invisible personality, Party Secretary Guo Congnian, the Big Brother who makes transparent every house, gesture, and word. The allusion to the Orwellian universe is easily perceptible as Ge Fei resorts to symbols such as the number 101 to designate the bureau in charge of surveillance (276).[7]

Not content with the ostracism of such a police state, Ge Fei points out its underlying ideological logic by accusing instrumental rationality of being complicit in the totalitarian mechanism. The novel succeeds in showing this perverted version of modernity, generating a paradoxical process by which the emancipation project is reversed, becoming therefore its contrary,[8] for the whole popular commune suffers from tyrannical laws that come from the vicious parallel between mastery over the nature and domination of human beings.

The figuration of the protagonist illustrates the ambivalent status of Tan Gongda. As an idealist, he is at least both adept in navigating the system and victim of the very system relying on the communist and scientist credo. Captivated by the progress exemplified by the Soviet model, he has made himself a "project man" who never moves without a blueprint in his hand. This frantic administrator-engineer has plunged into numerous more or less feasible enterprises, which run from the construction of a dam to the exploration of gas energy, competing with the ancient and mythic hero Yu Gong 愚

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6.   "Il faut un peu forcer de nombre dans la phalange d'essai, l'élever à 1900 et 2000, y compris la cohorte salariée, parce qu'elle aura plus de difficultés à surmonter que celles qu'on fondera postérieurement et qu'on réduira d'abord à 1800 et ensuite à 1700: le nombre fixe étant 1620, qu'il faudra un peu excéder, surtout pendant les premières générations qui manqueront de vigueur." Charles Fourier, *Le nouveau monde industriel et sociétaire ou les séries passionnées* (Paris: Bossange Père, 1829) 119.

7.   In *1984*, the room 101 is the place where Winston Smith is eventually rendered submissive. See George Orwell, *1984* (Signet Classics, 1961), 232.

8.   T. W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

公[9] in his Promethean actions.[10] The benefits of these necessary modernization projects are not to be denigrated. The author's disapproval rather relates to the fact that Tan Gongda, full of confidence in progress, ignores the political consequences of utilitarian rationality, triggered by such an excessive belief in the infinite powers of reason, as it risks transposing onto the administration geometrical spirit and mathematical methods if it is deprived of values and finality.

Guo Congnian 郭從年, the secretary of the party and the legislator, is the personification of human domination via the scientific method. He applies a rational rigor to population control by banning any spontaneous desire or irrational impulse because of their unpredictability. The work he imposes on villagers becomes interiorized duty unless a punishment for brainwashing intervenes. His assiduous reading of *The Thousand and One Nights*, especially the recurrent image of the forbidden doors from the tale "The Man Who Never Laughed Again," makes explicit an integral logocentrism, which signifies the aberrant logic of alienation through mutual surveillance.

What preserves Tan Gongda's utopian desire from any alliance with power is fortunately another facet of his personality, a "sentimental" one, which conceals his deeply humanistic propensity. The blueprints he continues to draw carry in reality "antiscientific" marks, as they are covered with unreadable numbers, which prove to be less technical data than surprising clues about his affections for Yao Peipei 姚佩佩, his young secretary. His so-called daydreams, "foolishness," or confusing moments actually extract him from the danger of objectivation to redirect him toward human otherness and encounter. The dual posture resting on the displacement from the sphere of I/it to that of I/Thou[11] permits Tan Gongda to formulate his utopia of the human by forging a friendship with his neighbor in a starkly repressive context, for instance, with Yao Peipei, the pariah.

Under the cover of melodrama, Ge Fei describes their affective adventure with an antidictatorial aspect, as their mutual attachment involves a friendly solidarity that is transformed into stubborn resistance against political suppression. Yao Peipei is a marginalized young woman who suffers from a problematic familial origin because her father was accused of being "counterrevolutionary." She is excluded from the community like K of Kafka's *Castle*, about which Ge Fei wrote a brilliant essay.[12] This outcast status recalls a state engaged in creating a society composed only of "new men," by eliminating any impure element, as though the regime would ensure the extension of revolution's destruction to the social network. Tan Gongda recklessly opposes this discrimination process as witnessed by the care he takes of the newcomer, in spite of collective animosity. He first recognizes for the victim fundamental rights of existence, by providing her with a job and housing opportunities. His spontaneous and daring act draws up a community that runs out of any ideological a priori class prejudice or other identity prerequisite, in substance, a community founded on "whatever singularity."[13]

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9.   Mao Zedong cited in the speech he pronounced during the Seventh Congress of CPC, June 11, 1945, this legend, which will become, after 1949, the official allegory of socialist construction.

10. Cf. the credo expressed by the omnipresent slogan: "Man will triumph over nature" or "Man can conquer nature" [Ren ding sheng tian 人定勝天].

11. Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937).

12. Ge Fei, "Chengbao de xushi fenxi" 城堡的敘事分析 [Analysis of the narratives in the castle], in *Sairen de gesheng* 塞壬的歌聲 [The siren songs] (Shanghai, Wenyi chubanshe, 2001), 135–59.

13. Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community: Theory of Whatever Singularity*, trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

Ge Fei underscores the social dimension of this human-based utopia. The encounter and the friendship between Tan Gongda and Yao Peipei step toward the necessary coexistence that would be able to protect the "zoe," or the "bare life," of the people against any kind of exclusion, in favor of the "bios" form favorable to its inclusion. Their common struggle against the stigmata of class heredity reveals a horizontal "philia," antithetical to the vertical "People-one" imposed by the party-state. It revives what communism has occulted by the oblivion of its own invention: the existence of the common,[14] characterized by the necessity of being together and living together. Nevertheless, such a commonality defies the myth of the symbiotic community as it commands the division of the social. Tan Gondga's atavist "foolishness" and Yao Peipei's impermeable sensitivity prove their irreducible personality and strength, which confirm this part of otherness preserved from any political absorption into a paradoxical game of proximity/separation. This common world accompanied by differentiation sketches a kind of libertarian democracy, which claims the irrevocable retreat of the state in favor of the endless division of the social,[15] in other words, a "place of power vacuum," which is unlocalizable and definable only by social mobility and plurality. It is meaningful that from volume to volume the "Great Unity" dream seems to be fading to the advantage of the "Peach Blossom Spring" dream, which is no longer a synonym of harmonious totality but of a deliberate marginality and reluctant action. Far away from a constituted community it is an emerging one, inoperative and undetermined,[16] as the liberty that the unfortunate couple aspires to is as fugitive and enchanting as flowing water, shimmering light, or wildflowers.

The Utopian Man

The psychic and ethical aspect, previously underlined, is followed by the aesthetic preoccupations that appear to be salient in the last volume. The choice of an elegiac tone, served by the poet Duanwu 端午, Tan Gongda's son, "loser" and aesthete, tend to exhibit a fin-de-siècle pessimism facing the growing commodity society promising the consumerist paradise. However, within this negative utopia remains a glimmer of hope, as the "obsolete man" is intricately a "utopian man" who is capable of preserving individual integrity from this new form of alienation while resisting to the reclusive misanthropic impulse and answering the call for the "unavowable community."[17]

More than in the previous volumes, Huajiashe is given a diabolized frame for its third avatar, which is clearly designed as a dreadful universe, excluding any redemptive countermodel. In the mirror of devastating neoliberalism and of moral disintegration, Huajiashe is represented as a brothel and a "money-squandering den" (*xiaojin ku* 銷金窟) (75, 293–302). This "sweet and rich village" (*wenrou fugui xiang* 溫柔富貴鄉) is a worthy "Eden" (Yidi yuan 伊迪園) (76, 308), whose only virtue is summarized by Zhang Youde 張有德, its founder, in a laconic trisyllabic phrase: "the money comes in fast" (*lai qian kuai* 來錢快). It is not surprising that in a reconstituted Disneyland-like decorum,

14. Jean-Luc Nancy, *La communauté affrontée* (Paris: Galilée, 2001), 38.
15. Miguel Abensour, "Utopie et démocratie" [Utopia and democracy], *Raison présente* 121 (1997): 38–39.
16. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, trans. Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland, and Simona Sawhney (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).
17. Maurice Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community* [*Communauté inavouable*], trans. Pierre Joris (New York: Station Hill Press, 1988).

Legalistic and Utopian

Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement

Sebastian Veg

Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement famously drew its name from the improvised use of umbrellas as shields against police tear gas, fired in an attempt to clear the first group of protesters on September 28, 2014. The humble but handy umbrella became a symbol of resistance by ordinary people, using everyday tools, against an unaccountable government. The movement shared some characteristics with other recent mobilizations: it has been widely compared to the 1989 occupation of Tiananmen Square, Occupy Wall Street, and Taiwan's Sunflower Movement of spring 2014—but, as its participants point out, the twelve-week Umbrella Movement outlasted them all.

In fact, the similarities to Tiananmen—also initiated by Chinese student groups calling for more democracy—were superficial. The Umbrella Movement had a set of precisely formulated technical demands; it did not target the Central People's Government or engage in rhetoric about the future of the nation. The freer environment of Hong Kong offered the protesters a degree of media and institutional support unavailable (except arguably very briefly) to the Tiananmen students, while also putting constraints on the authorities' response. And, of course, the Umbrella Movement relied on social media and virtual networks unavailable in 1989. Comparisons with the 2011 Occupy Movement in the United States can point to a similar repertoire of actions, not least protest art and education; the libraries set up by Umbrella protesters in Admiralty and Mongkok recall the People's Library in Zuccotti Park. But the Hong Kong demands were unequivocally concerned with formal democracy and the rule of law, rather than global capitalism and the financial crisis.

The spring 2014 Sunflower Movement in Taiwan—students and others occupying the Legislative Yuan from March 18 to April 10 to protest the fast tracking through parliament of a service agreement between Taiwan and China—offers a closer analogy. Both occupations combined legalistic demands about procedure with deeper claims about identity and political representation, amid perceptions that the Beijing government was working hand-in-glove with local economic elites to thwart democratic outcomes; both resorted to novel forms of activism and cultural interventions. Yet the Umbrella Movement remains distinctive, in part because of Hong Kong's unique status

as a relatively free enclave within the People's Republic of China, under the Basic Law. How then should it be situated among the new protest movements?

Catalysts

The Umbrella Movement occurred in the course of a consultation process on constitutional reform to implement full universal suffrage, as promised by Hong Kong's Basic Law, adopted in 1990. In 1997, when Hong Kong become a special administrative region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China, its Basic Law stuck to the spirit of the colonial institutions: the former office of governor was replaced by a "chief executive," while the territory's Legislative Council (LegCo) retained its balance between seats elected in geographical constituencies and those representing functional constituencies (mainly business interests but some, like the education or medical sector, are also elected). However, the first-past-the-post system, which favored the democrats (who held a 60 percent majority in most districts and could have swept elected seats), was replaced with a fully proportional system, which gave the pan-democrats and the proestablishment parties a similar number of elected seats. Nevertheless, the Basic Law—drafted in the 1980s by PRC officials and representatives of the Hong Kong business elite—affirmed that "the ultimate aim is the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage, upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures" (Article 45). Similarly, the goal was direct election to all LegCo seats, though the Basic Law stipulated that neither would happen before 2007–2008. In the meantime, the chief executive would be chosen by an 800- or 1,200-strong Election Committee. The partial democratization of the LegCo, which was achieved in the very last years of colonial rule (after the Basic Law had been promulgated), continued to progress in the years after the handover but was frozen after 2004. After mass demonstrations against introducing national security legislation to Hong Kong in 2003 (as foreseen in Article 23 of the Basic Law), the Central Government also tightened control over the procedure to revise the Basic Law. However, in 2007 the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress ruled that universal suffrage would be introduced for the 2017 election of the chief executive, by amending Annex 1 of the Basic Law, though the details were left vague. After a 2010 compromise over LegCo reform, in which the Democratic Party negotiated directly with Beijing's representatives in Hong Kong, the Central Liaison Office, splitting the pan-democrat camp, many supporters of democracy became discouraged at their lack of bargaining power. After the demonstrations of 2003, and with the growing political activism of Hong Kong's civil society, marches and protests had come to be seen as routine and ineffectual expressions of discontent. These reasons led Hong Kong University (HKU) law professor Benny Tai to put forward the idea of civil disobedience as a new "lethal weapon" to increase pan-democrats' bargaining power in the upcoming round of constitutional reforms and to set out eight conditions for Occupy Central with Love and Peace (OCLP) to succeed.[1] Tai's ideas met with interest among younger people dissatisfied with the system and frustrated

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1. Benny Tai, "Gongmin kangming de zuida shashangli" [The greatest potency of civil disobedience], *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, January 16, 2013. https://www1.hkej.com/dailynews/article/id/654855/%E5%85% AC%E6%B0%91%E6%8A%97%E5%91%BD%E7%20%9A%84%E6%9C%80%E5%A4%A7%E6%AE%BA %E5%82%B7%E5%8A%9B%E6%AD%A6%E5%99%A8.

with the routinization of protest politics. Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience* began to appear in bookshops around town in 2013.

The constitutional process of amending the Basic Law involved the Hong Kong government "consulting" its citizens, from December 2013 to May 2014, with the chief executive, former surveyor C. Y. Leung, then reporting their views to the National People's Congress (NPC) in July. During the consultation process, a key demand put forward by Hong Kong's Alliance for True Democracy, including the twenty-seven pan-democratic LegCo members, was for "civil nominations" of chief executive candidates—which, if they had a sufficient number of signatures, would have to be accepted by the Nomination Committee. On August 31, 2014, the NPC Standing Committee pronounced its verdict: universal suffrage would be introduced for the chief executive election in 2017, but candidates would be vetted by a nominating committee formed "in accordance with" the current Election Committee, and each of the two or three candidates selected would need the votes of more than half the committee's members.

The catalyst for the Umbrella Movement was thus first and foremost constitutional and legalistic. OCLP had been widely criticized for its idealism, and the August decision seemed to confirm that the group's strategy was toothless. However, at this point the course of events completely changed, and, instead of a planned "Occupy" movement, what occurred was a bottom-up, "spontaneous" (*zifa*) Umbrella Movement. In the aftermath of the NPC ruling, the Hong Kong Federation of Students (HKFS), led by HKU sociology and comparative literature major Alex Chow, and Scholarism, the high school activist group led by seventeen-year-old Joshua Wong, sprang into action. They called for a week of class boycotts from September 22, culminating in a sit-in by high school students outside the LegCo building on Friday, September 26. That night, Wong and a group of fellow students broke into Civic Square, originally a public space in front of LegCo but recently cordoned off. When news spread that some of the students were being detained by the police and their homes searched, more people flocked to join the sit-ins.

On Saturday Benny Tai, acknowledging he could not lead the movement, joined the student protesters along with his OCLP colleagues Chan Kin-man, a sociology professor, and Chu Yiu-ming, a Baptist minister—the "Occupy trio"—and their supporters.[2] As police tried to move them along, demonstrators spilled onto the streets of the Admiralty District, halting traffic. This in turn triggered police overreaction, with repeated use of tear gas and pepper spray on Sunday, September 28. Protesters armed with umbrellas, goggles, and cling film regrouped as fast as they were dispersed. There was widespread public indignation at the police violence, and tens of thousands, perhaps 100,000 or more, flocked to Admiralty—a whole stretch of the eight-lane Harcourt Drive was occupied—and two further protest sites: the Causeway Bay shopping district and Nathan Road in Mongkok, a working-class and commercial area across Victoria Harbour. That night, the High Court ruled that the students detained on September 26 were to be released without charges on a *habeas corpus* writ.

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2. The OCLP Manifesto had previously called for an electoral system complying with international standards, free of any "unreasonable restriction" on the right to stand for election; democratic constitutional reform; and "deliberative democracy", in which groups of citizens would make informed policy recommendations. See OCLP, "Manifesto," March 26, 2013, https://oclphkenglish.wordpress.com/about-2/manifesto/.

Arc of Protest

The movement then unfolded in three acts. The initial stage was dominated by the students' strategy. On September 28, HKFS published a "Vow of Civil Disobedience" with a rousing call to arms—"Let's reclaim our Hong Kong! Fight your OWN battle for the place you love, where you belong! Hope rests with the people, change starts with struggle!"—and four demands: the opening of Civic Square, the resignation of the chief executive and his constitutional-reform team, the retraction of the NPC decision, and the adoption of "civil nomination."[3] Leung responded with a recorded video message, saying the students' demands were unconstitutional and could not be considered. The students set the deadline for talks at midnight on October 2, after which they planned to storm the Chief Executive's Offices. After last-minute mediation by the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and HKU vice chancellors, the government agreed to talks at 11:30 p.m. The next day, Mongkok protesters were attacked by anti-Occupy groups, accompanied by triad members. The police were now accused of inaction.

The first week was therefore decisive in several ways. The students did not directly target the Beijing government—on the contrary, they reaffirmed the importance of the Basic Law and "one country, two systems." Second, despite the absence of any conventional leadership structures, the protest sites were well supplied in water, food, protective equipment, and umbrellas and kept spotlessly clean by an army of volunteers running supply points and recycling garbage. The government, by contrast, seemed unprepared and indecisive, repeating its own slogans, refusing to acknowledge mistakes, and hiding behind operational decisions made by its police force, involuntarily caught up in a political conflict. The public mobilized on a massive scale to defend the rule of law. Beijing responded with rhetorical violence but in the end remained within the constitutional framework of the Basic Law, highlighting the limits within which the Central Government chooses to operate in Hong Kong.

The second phase of the movement, which lasted roughly from October 6 to 21, mainly revolved around the student-government dialogue. The Hong Kong government now developed a cogent strategy to deal with the movement, reportedly closely coordinated with Beijing and the Central Liaison Office.[4] It was a waiting game, taking minimum action while maximizing inconvenience to ordinary people's lives—for example, hundreds of schools were closed for a week—while flooding the news with dire warnings about the economic consequences for the city as a whole and "honest ordinary people trying to make a living" who had been "taken hostage by a small minority." When an Australian newspaper revealed that Leung had received a $7 million fee on the sale in 2011 of the real-estate company DTZ, part of it after taking

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3. Hong Kong Federation of Students, "To all Hong Kong Citizens: A Vow of Civil Disobedience," 28 September 2014. https://www.hkfs.org.hk/to-all-hong-kong-citizens-a-vow-of-civil-disobedience/

4. The *New York Times* reported on October 18 that senior Hong Kong leaders reported regularly to a coordination team set up in Bauhinia Villa, a mansion owned by the Central Liaison Office (the central government's representative) in Shenzhen; *Ming Pao* reported on November 14 that Zhang Dejiang, the member of the CCP Politburo Standing Committee responsible for handling Hong Kong affairs, had traveled several times to a place named Kirin Villa in Shenzhen to meet with leaders from the territory. See Keith Bradsher and Chris Buckley, "Hong Kong Leader Reaffirms Unbending Stance on Elections," *New York Times*, October 20, 2014. https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/18/world/asia/china-is-directing-response-to-hong-kong-protests.html; "Beijing xiaoxi: Zhongyang dui qingchang wu shijianbiao" [News from Beijing: Central Government has no timetable for clearance], *Ming Pao*, 14 November 2014. http://www.mingpaocanada.com/VAN/htm/News/20141114/HK-gaa2_r.htm.

office as chief executive, and declared no conflict of interest, the government unilaterally cancelled talks with the students, with no explanation. Speculation that the story had been spread by the central government to get rid of an ineffective chief executive faded when it became clear that Beijing was furious about the leak and was digging in its heels to prevent foreign media from influencing Hong Kong's politics. Talks resumed only under pressure, after police were caught on video beating up a social worker in a dark corner of the Admiralty site on October 15.

The television debate on October 21 was an important achievement for the students—and, in a sense, a high point of the movement. Five representatives of the HKFS, led by Alex Chow and his deputy, Lester Shum, eloquently debated the constitutional details of the NPC decision and the Basic Law framework, putting forward their demands in a calm, rational manner that was highly persuasive for prime-time TV viewers. In her final statement, the Hong Kong government's chief secretary, Carrie Lam, offered several promises that seemed to bend toward the students' demands: a second round of consultations, a pledge to set up a consultative platform for post-2017 reforms, and submission of a report on public opinion to the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council in Beijing. The monthly poll published the next day, though carried out earlier, confirmed the students' popularity: for the first time, supporters of Occupy represented a plurality of popular opinion in Hong Kong, with 38 percent in favor and 35 percent against. In a poll released on November 5, the HKFS was rated the most popular political organization in Hong Kong.[5]

The third and longest phase of the movement, lasting for almost two months, consisted of a protracted stalemate in which both sides demonstrated their lack of an exit strategy. During this period the huge tent city staged the most creative and utopian aspects of the occupation, with an outpouring of artistic work and new community practices: the eight-lane highway was covered in chalk drawings, yellow ribbons, Post-It note messages, and repurposed umbrellas; street signs were reworked—"Road to Democracy," "To Central Government and Triad Offices." During this period the official pan-democrat parties floated the idea of a group resignation of lawmakers, to provoke a quasi-referendum series of by-elections but was shot down because it could offer the government a loophole to push through its proposal. Student groups struggled to come up with a strategy that could increase pressure on the government to return to negotiations without compromising their principle of nonviolence. An uncoordinated attempt by a minority group to break into LegCo on November 19 was followed on November 30 by a last-ditch idea to storm the CE's office. Finally, several student leaders, including Joshua Wong, staged a hunger strike from December 1, to no avail. The OCLP trio also repeatedly announced its surrender to the police, and carried it out on December 3, without succeeding in convincing the students to retreat from the campsites.

The Hong Kong government finally settled on the use of civil court injunctions as a way to end the movement, without itself getting involved. On October 20 injunctions were granted to two plaintiffs in Mongkok, a bus company and a taxi drivers association,

5.   See Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Survey, Chinese University of Hong Kong, "Hong Kong Public Opinion & Political Development," Opinion Survey Second Round Survey Results, October 8–15, 2014, http://www.com.cuhk.edu.hk/ccpos/research/1410TaskForce_SurveyResult_141028b_English. pdf; and HKUPOP Rating of Top Ten Political Groups, October 20–23, 2014. http://www.com.cuhk.edu. hk/ccpos/research/1410TaskForce_SurveyResult_141028b_English.pdf.

to clear parts of Nathan Road, and to the operator of CITIC Tower in Admiralty, to clear exits to the building. *Ming Pao* later revealed that some of the plaintiffs were connected to Beijing "united front" organizations.[6] These injunctions were upheld by the courts, over objections that the same arguments could not apply to private property and to public space. Mongkok was cleared by bailiffs on November 25 and 26 and Admiralty on December 11, although the police, acting at the same time as the bailiffs, cleared the public space beyond the area covered in the injunctions. The Causeway Bay site was cleared on December 15 by the police alone.

The students avoided many pitfalls, sticking to nonviolent tactics and maintaining a productively festive atmosphere. They won a prime-time TV discussion, on equal footing with the government, and used it to lay bare the colonial inertia of Hong Kong's elites, the foundations of Beijing's parallel administration in Hong Kong, and its use of the Basic Law's technicalities to cover up hard political realities of the PRC system. They had begun to mobilize an apathetic, conservative society with deep reservations about confrontational social action. However, the leaders lacked an exit strategy and became increasingly isolated from the people in tents, hobnobbing with legislators and radio hosts. The government was successful in waiting out the movement and turning public opinion against it, though the impact on the economy was grossly exaggerated, with all sectors (tourism, retail) reporting strong growth during the fall months. But it has done nothing to address the deeper causes of the movement. Beijing has portrayed it as illegal and manipulated by foreign forces, painting its core demand as Hong Kong independence, the better to unite a social majority against it. But Beijing's main agenda remains domestic: the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was very efficient in nipping in the bud any expression of support for the Umbrella Movement within mainland China by arresting hundreds of ordinary sympathizers and by depicting it as an illegal secessionist group, which has curbed support for it among mainland liberal intellectuals.

Activists and Public Opinion

Who were the occupiers and how representative were they of Hong Kong society? The conventional wisdom is that the middle class, in particular the upper-middle class—professionals, lawyers, teachers, professors—are the strongest supporters of democratic reform in Hong Kong. The large working-class population has been basically disenfranchised under both the colonial and postcolonial systems (Chinese became an official language only in 1974). Speaking little English, it maintains close links with extended family members in Guangdong and is easily enrolled in clientelistic networks set up by pro-mainland groups. The super-rich elite, in contrast, having switched its loyalties from one external master to another, strongly supports Beijing and economic integration with the Mainland. What light do sociological surveys conducted during the movement throw on this picture?

A study conducted by Edmund Cheng and Samson Yuen during October 20–26 revealed that, while the movement was indeed dominated by young people—85 percent were under forty—students made up only 26 percent of occupiers, against 58 percent

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6.   "Fan Zhan tuanti gua dangzhengjun jigou zhaopai" [Anti-Occupy groups have party, state or army affiliations], *Ming Pao*, November 17, 2014, https://news.mingpao.com/pns/%e8%a6%81%e8%81%9e/ article/20141117/s00001/1416160958960.

who were white-collar workers or self-employed. Some 55 percent held a college or graduate degree, compared to 16 percent among the general population. Many of the occupiers identified themselves as lower-middle class, without opportunities for upward mobility, although only 3 percent (net) cited "obtaining better livelihood" as an important motivation for their participation in the movement, against 87 percent for "obtaining real universal suffrage."[7] Sociologically, they were principally young, highly educated members of the middle class, many young professionals taking part on a rotating basis, with a univocal focus on political, even technical, demands.

Observers stressed the differences between the three sites. Causeway Bay was seen as the most "academic," with a strong presence by scholars and frequent lectures. Admiralty was the most political, dominated by the HKFS and OCLP, its central stage situated under a multicolored canopy of recycled umbrella fabric, where student leaders harangued the crowds and the media every night; in the later stages of the movement the platform was opened to anyone who wanted to speak. Mongkok prided itself on being more "grassroots" and Cantonese speaking, an implicit critique of the middle-class, "reasonable" face displayed to the international press in Admiralty—an indication that there were working-class and older activists who also supported the movement. Mongkok had no central stage, and the hostile and complex environment—triads and minibus companies controlled by them, hostile shop owners, bewildered mainland tourists—led to internal rifts. Conflicts repeatedly broke out between a group of "radical" protesters concentrated around Argyle Street, at the northern end of the occupation zone, and dominated by antimainlander groups Civic Passion and People's Power, who favored military discipline and opposed concessions to China, and other groups whom they criticized as "leftist pricks" (*jo gau*). The guru of the nativist faction, Lingnan University lecturer Chin Wan, was outspoken in assailing Admiralty as too legalistic; by contrast he extolled traditional folklore in Mongkok, like the shrine to the Daoist deity Guandi, believed to be helpful in warding off both triads and police. In the south area of the occupation zone, toward Yaumatei, his supporters repeatedly attacked anarchists, who favored unconventional forms of protest like spontaneous "hot pots" or film screenings (Ann Hui's *Ordinary Heroes* was shown) and were seen as too liberal and sympathetic to Chinese immigrants.[8]

The Hong Kong population as a whole remained divided, as shown by a series of monthly polls conducted by CUHK. Of those polled in September, 31 percent supported the Occupy Movement; by the following month this number had risen to 38 percent before dropping to 34 percent in November. Those who did not support the movement numbered 46 percent in September, dropping to 36 percent in October before climbing again to 44 percent in November. The Umbrella Movement did not succeed in convincing the public at large that its methods were appropriate. According to the same CUHK poll, trust in both the Hong Kong and Beijing authorities steadily increased from September to December, especially among "middle voters," even though

7. See Edmund Cheng and Samson Yuen, "Hou yusan yundong: gaobie zhengzhi lenggan de niandai" [After the Umbrella Movement: Farewell to the age of political indifference], *Ming Pao*, November 29, 2014, http://news.mingpao.com/pns1411291417197542046. The net percentage represents the difference between those who rate each item as important and those who rate it as unimportant.
8. See a remarkable analysis of the "hotpot incident" on October 9: Holok Chen, "Hotpot, Gods and Leftist Pricks. Political Tensions in the Mong Kok Occupation," October 15, 2014, https://libcom.org/blog/mk-hotpot-tensions.

Coda
Utopia, Dystopia, and Heterotopia

Theoretical Cross-examinations on Ideal, Reality, and
Social Innovation

Chan Koonchung

This chapter was first published in a collection pondering social innovation in a nonutopian, nondystopian, and heterotopian world,[1] and I do not shy away from controversial ideas. It attempts a reinterpretation of Western theoretical terms in familiar and not-so-familiar Chinese. In other words, the word is displaced from its existing homestead to the underworld of thoughts. This effort is meant not only for defamiliarization but also for setting meanings and thoughts free from the established distribution of the sensible.

Destabilizing the distribution of the sensible and traversing fantasy, in addition to submitting old-fashioned social and political commentaries, could sometimes be very transgressive in the documented histories of China and the world. No rulers welcome commentaries except their own, and, particularly, they do not like those coming from people outside the bounds of the system, outside social code, and outside of social roles. In Plato's city-state, citizens who do not play their proper roles and, instead, make their voices known—publicly in writing—are punishable by expulsion. In his utopia, everybody assumes a single role—to each his or her own art—and the blame is put on whoever fails to conform to that role. Obviously, who gets to do what for a living is determined by birth or the ruler. To put it in modern terms, a student should become a good student, a laborer should do the job of a laborer, a farmer should work as a farmer, a foreign worker forever a foreign worker; to each his or her own line of work, with no chance of crossing over. In this worldview, every person engages in one craft (one way of making a living, one role, one profession, and one function), as if it were the one way of achieving lasting peace and social order. For readers who are knowledgeable about Chinese history, Plato's city-state may resemble today's household registration regime, the agricultural regime in Qin China, or the four castes in Han China. However, avid local activists in Hong Kong might recall how the government has long encouraged

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1. Michel Foucault uses the term "heterotopia" in numerous instances to discuss this notion of space. In particular, a lecture note entitled "Des espaces autres" [Of other spaces], published right before his death in 1984. Foucault's heterotopia refers to a "counter field" of struggle and of counter-hegemonic movement. For more information, one can browse heterotopiastudies.com. I am inspired by a 2011 essay (in Chinese) and a 2013 essay "Utopia, Dystopia, and Heterotopia: a Hong Kong Perspective," by David Der-wei Wang and borrow their essays' title for this chapter.

students to mind their own studies but not to be concerned with public affairs. Other episodes in the city also come to mind: the "functional-group" election committee that chose the first chief executive and the treatment of foreign domestic helpers as exceptional subresidents who are excluded continually from permanent residency. This so-called social order is designed to benefit the ruler or vested interests, simply by virtue of their sheer luck, because we are destined to be governed by this select group of people whose *techne* is governing. Plato could be said to have prepared an "alibi" for himself. As a self-appointed philosopher, his *techne* was writing and making commentary about other people and things. He could become the adviser of the polity and lamented that the city-state's affairs are trampled on by others' unwise comments. In this Platonic world, the subtle regime of distribution of the sensible to control our imaginary—the division of labor, the narrative delimitation, and the repression of gratuitous social commentary—sets the social stage. Needless to say, bottom-up social action will not be welcome. Furthermore, thinkers such as Jacques Rancière would say that any hierarchical order of government and repression—for Rancière, there is almost no hierarchical order that is not oppressive—is Platonic, since in Rancière's eyes, Plato is the grand master of retrograde thoughts.[2]

The distribution of the sensible manifests itself in narrative and experiential delimitation, in bodily domination (the household registration regime, forced migration, etc.), as well as in the surveillance "police" of our privacy (as unveiled by Edward Snowden) in order to maintain a noninclusive hierarchical order. As the new normative governmentality—PAnoptical surveillance, procedural operation, separation of classes, Network management, DAta tracking and mining, BIOpower, POLicing of privacy (referred to as PaNDa-BioPol hereafter)—allows omnipresent and asymmetrical control and discipline; the police-governed ruling order is no longer the exception but the norm. Under this regime of power, the creative collusion between capital and power is fostered, distributive justice is not served, the truth is usurped by national power, and the logic that sustains life on earth is not respected. Secularism, human rights, democracy, egalitarianism, internationalism, and social justice,[3] which were sought after by courageous pioneers and social visionaries, still remain the unfinished projects of modernity.[4] Good people lack confidence to do good, while evil finds its way to every corner on earth. Even a relatively decent society[5] seems to have no future, and it goes without saying that the Anthropocene,[6] which human beings have attempted so hard to transform, may not last long.

2. For the notion of "the distribution of the sensible," see Jacques Rancière's *The Philosopher and His Poor* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1983), and *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991)

3. See Etienne Balibar's *On Universalism: A Debate with Alain Badiou* (2007).

4. See Jürgen Habermas's *Modernity, an Unfinished Project* (1980).

5. The decent society is a model for the good society and was sought by many from Adam Smith to Karl Polanyi. In *The Law of Peoples*, John Rawls argues that the decent society could be a hierarchical society that affords *habeus corpus*, but no democracy or freedom. As long as the hierarchy is based on the principle of justice, it will gain legitimacy among the stakeholders. See John Rawls, *The Laws of Peoples* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

6. "Anthropocene" refers to the era when human beings began dominating the Earth's ecosystem. After life on earth and the natural environment coevolved in the geological eras, the human-centered era began around 2000 BC or even earlier. The advent of the Industrial Revolution only precipitated human's effects on the ecosystem.

The issue at hand is therefore not about representing the world; it is about how to change the world.

Are Changes Possible?

Perhaps Focauldians may wonder whether I am one of them or whether I am in the anti-Focauldian camp as represented by Jacques Rancière. Neither camp will be entirely satisfied with my vocabulary, evocative of liberalism (indeed, the terms mentioned earlier, namely, secularism, human rights, democracy, egalitarianism, internationalism, and social justice come from Etienne Balibar and have roots in the left wing), or my Habermasian consciousness (questions are reframed as unfinished business, but modernity is not, as some counter-Enlightenment thinkers put it, considered the problem itself. What I want to say is more complicated than "all or nothing" labels. As Marx analyzes the anatomy of capital, I think Foucault's interrogation of power and affirmation of micro-politics of resistance within the institution are inspirational in today's PaNDa-BioPol world. We are faced with several forms of "lure": first, we need to avoid Foucault's impossibility of emancipation, which may lead to melancholia. Second, we cannot depend on Jean Baudrillard's illusive simulacra, which frustrate us just as easily. Third, we should stay clear of contemporary fans of Plato, Alain Badiou, and the theoretical virtuoso Slavoj Žižek, who could be said to be chimerical communist theologians refusing to learn the not-so-distant lessons of the gulag. If social movement were a dish, then the following could be the seasonal ingredients. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's multitudes,[7] roughly translated into English as "crowds," could temporarily numb our senses. Jacques Rancière's abrupt turn, peppered with Žižek's transgressive "acts" may free our imaginations. Finally, we add Paolo Verni's European autonomist about-face. With these ingredients, we will be able to mobilize more people to take to the streets, fight, and engage in all forms of disobedience, such as civil disobedience (the fight for constitutionalism), community disobedience (the first form of communitarianism), ethnic disobedience (the second form of communitarianism), professional disobedience (the first form of the politics of common interest), disobedience by those whose interests have been affected (the second form of the politics of common interest), disobedience by trade groups (the first form of class politics), class disobedience (the second form of class politics), disobedience by marginalized or minority groups (the first form of identity politics), generational disobedience (the second form of identity politics), disobedience by multitudes (anarchism), disobedience for social progress (humanitarianism, equal rights, animal rights, environmentalism, internationalism, etc.), disobedience by a cross-section or multitudes (mass movement, united front, popular front). In short, these are disobediences by multiple, but sometimes overlapping, subjectivities. When politics à la Rancière has become an exception, acts of disobedience are typical, or normal acts in a state of urgency, holding the promise to break the rules of the game. Rancière underscores these breakthrough acts of disobedience and calls them genuine "politics" (and everything else, "police"), as they are the shares of the shareless, or in Žižek's term, they are "events," whose outcomes are greater than their causes.[8]

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7.   See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2005).
8.   See Slavoj Žižek's *Event: Philosophy in Transit* (New York: Penguin 2014).

Up to this point, liberal public intellectuals in the Chinese-speaking world (if they have not given up reading this essay) will ask, "Have we done the research on change?" Perhaps Rancière would not be motivated to answer this question, as, for the French thinker, there is only movement besides movement, and he does not trust any accumulative social achievement. Žižek would tease the liberals for asking the question but would not give an affirmative answer, as usual. The multitude and autonomist camp would advocate for collective autonomous organization (an anarchist, informal communism without borders). Nevertheless, will this kind of attitude or answer be approved by the motley multitudes? When you hear the crowds asking, "Do you hear the people sing?" do you conclude that the multitudes have already internalized some concrete values on ultimate choices of what is right and what is wrong for tomorrow? After a century of utopian wet dreams followed by dystopian nightmares, who can prevent the multitudes whose collective memory still lingers from asking the following question: What happens on the day following the revolution?

In two interviews that explore the current state and tradition of the Chinese left wing,[9] I lamented the fact that Chinese liberals seem not to have read anything outside their own liberal oeuvres. However, I attempt to remind the Chinese New Left that it must not overlook the relatively tangible social-democratic movements existing in China and around the world over the past century.[10] I also say that among the group of theorists associated with Louis Althusser, only Etienne Balibar is qualified to offer us useful insights. Balibar underscores the point that equality and freedom are complementary values and should continue to coexist, and, for this, he even created a portmanteau: *égaliberté* (equaliberty). He is willing to use words that are uninspiring and "uncool," such as "social welfare, equal rights, education, morality, and religious tolerance," and claims that after the subject, the citizen enters the stage. Citizens are inseparable from equality, freedom, and democracy. His inexorable investigations of the notions and categories of secularism, human rights, democracy, egalitarianism, internationalism, and social justice are profound[11] and have inspired me to think about China's (including Hong Kong's) issues in Beijing. Balibar also helps intellectuals and social activists from all backgrounds find a common discourse, an overlapping consensus, and collaboration nodes.[12] Although Balibar was branded by Badiou as a reformist, such an accusation shows that revolutionary rhetoric and high-profile regurgitation of communist ideology have no practical place in actual social movements.

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9.   The two Chinese-language interviews of Chan Koonchung are by Qi Ke (2014) and Zhou Lian (2014).

10. Prior to 1949, besides the Communists, the Chinese left wing included anarchism and social democracy, and the latter was popular among the intellectuals; for instance, Hu Shih ("liberal socialism") and Chinese social democrats such as Zhang Junmei (Carsun Chang) and Zhang Dongsun (Chang Tung-sun). In *Ill Fares the Land* (2012), Tony Judt states that social democracy "represents neither an ideal future nor an ideal past, it is better than anything else to hand." Jon Cruddas and Andrea Nahles summarize the democratic left wing's goal to build a "good society," a "more egalitarian economy," and a "secure, green, and fair future." For more on social democracy in Europe, see Berman Sheri's *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Henning Meyer and Jonathan Rutherford, eds., *The Future of European Social Democracy: Building the Good Society* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

11. See Etienne Balibar's *Equaliberty: Political Essays* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014); and "A racism without Races: an Interview with Etienne Balibar" by Clément Petitjean (2014); and "Citizen Balibar: an Interview with Etienne Balibar" by Nicolas Duvoux and Pascal Sévérac, translated by Michael C. Behrent (2012).

12. For instance, we can discuss with the Rawlsian left-wing liberal intellectuals in the Chinese-speaking world, see Chow Po-chung (2014), Sechin Yeong-Shyang Chien (2014), and I-Chung Chen (2014).

Granted, advocates of the multitudes and the autonomists do not want to use Thomas Hobbes's understanding of "the people." Rather, they insist on the plurality of the multitudes but never the uniformity of the people. For them, the term "people" gives rise to the oppressive sovereign state, including its government. For instance, la République française was formed by the French people; the Chinese "people" rose up, in 1949, as the People's Republic of China was founded; and, in other uncountable instances, state crimes were committed in the name of "the people." Baruch Spinoza's term the "multitudes" is the antonym of the people in a nation-state. However, the multitudes subjectively tend to cling to the image of "the people." Take the 2014 rally to stop a cross-straits service trade pact from passing the legislature in Taiwan, for example. The multitudes imagine a democracy within the existing institutions or system and merely challenge—rather than overturn—the existing legal-political apparatus and hierarchical order.

This leaves us with two understandings of the social movement's process and outcome. One is similar to what Chantal Mouffe calls the Left's alternative for radical democracy.[13] With the first assumption, the proletariat or multitudes are ultimately able to redeem themselves by bypassing the governmental mechanisms and the sovereign state, and create a "harmonious society" that resolves all social conflicts. The second assumption is that discord exists in all genuinely diverse societies, and clashes between different social forces are inevitable. Politics, in this view, is Gramscian struggle for leadership, and the battlefields are situated within and without the institutions, on the streets, in the assemblies, and in the political establishments, both in "spirit" and in material life. For this struggle, all classes and multitudes sometimes need to set up nodes or even organize a united front, in which the participants attempt to reach— albeit temporary or incremental—core values, overlapping consensuses, and goals. Even if this group does not call itself "the people" (or refer to collective consciousness, solidarity, looking out for one another, or concentricity), it should lead to an awareness of "us," vis-à-vis that of "them," as constructed in the process of the struggle. As a result, the final seizing of the leadership marks the moment the people triumphantly turn the opposition into the new political establishment. The people need not be democrats bringing about liberation, as they too could be fascists bringing about oppression.

As this logic goes, if Karl Marx could be viewed as one form of cognizance, and Max Weber as the second form of cognizance, then Hart and Negri, Virno, and the communist theologians belong to the first form, and Antonio Gramsci, Mouffe, Balibar, the social democrats, and even Isaiah Berlin all belong to the second form. Early utopian socialism and communism; the spontaneous, cooperative, and anarchist society as favored by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon; free market fundamentalism; and Confucian society are all manifestations of the first form. The first form of cognizance means the political realm will eventually cease to exist. The second form of cognizance brings us never-ending political strife, and antagonism between different social parties becomes the norm of our diverse community.

Mouffe (and Ernesto Laclau) endorses the second form and the attendant view of the Left, seeing society as diverse and dynamic. This type of agonist democracy is the

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13. See Chantal Mouffe's *Critique as Counter Hegemonic Intervention* (2008); and *The Democratic Paradox* (New York: Verso, 2000); see also Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (New York: Verso, 1985).

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