

UTOPIA, PROMISED LANDS, IMMIGRATION AND EXILE

Behind every Utopia there is always a territory, but a territory that “is not here”, a territory removed from immediate reality in space or in time. In time, when the Utopia invokes the past of an Age of Gold or a Paradise Lost “*illo tempore*,” but also when there is a gamble with the hope of a better world to be organized in the future. These are “ideal times” or “longed-for times,” past or future of which philosophers, writers or political men speak.

However, there is also a distance in space. Utopia exists in “another place,” far from here. These are “ideal spaces” or “longed-for spaces” that may exist contemporarily with our world but are Utopias because they are isolated or accessible with difficulty. This geographical distance that separates us from Utopia has been, since the Utopias of Thomas More and Campanella, one of the guarantees of its existence. They are islands, a word etymologically derived from “isolated”, or *vice versa*, separated from immediate reality by a stormy sea.

The territory of the Utopia that “is not here” supposes then

Translated by Jeanne Ferguson.

Utopia, Promised Lands, Immigration and Exile

the courage to create “another world,” as it should be in the future, as we imagine it in the past or that we presume exists in “another place.” A determined construction of a counter-image of our immediate reality is necessary for this representation in time and space. That “other world,” since it is Utopian, must be “critical” of this world, must correct it and impose modifications on the injustices of its structure.

In criticizing the existing order and proposing “another,” Utopia is revolutionary when it is projected toward the future, conservative when it invokes the past and apparently ahistorical when it refers to another world that exists in “another place” from which we are separated only by the difficulty of the voyage. This other world deceptively appears as a “non-social” Utopia, alien to all historical causality and ignoring the laws of development and social change to which it would be submitted if the attempt were made to implant it here and now.

However, the division between temporal Utopias and spatial Utopias does not necessarily suppose that the first are always “social” and the second “formal.” The history of Utopias has oscillated between both¹ and is filled with examples of social projects in practice, thanks to which they were translated into space. For example, the European Utopias of “Fourierist” socialism in the 19th century, realized in the United States; the projects of Owen and Considerant, the transferral of ideas from one continent to another which underlie the rich line of thought and American Utopian practice, from New Harmony, Icaria, La Reunion, Red Bank, the *Walden* of Thoreau to the “hippie communes” of the 60’s.

With other variants, a similar process was affirmed in Latin America, from the Christian Utopia of the Franciscans and Jesuits during the Spanish colonial period to present-day anarchist communities in Argentina, Peru and Uruguay. There is in this series an often-recorded example: the “Cecilia” commune in Brazil. What could not be possible in Italy, “dominated by

¹ Pierluigi Giordani, *Il futuro dell'utopia*, Bologna, 1973: a study of spatial Utopias, especially urban, which maintains that there is no point today in speaking of Utopias located “nowhere.” He dwells upon the social nature of the contemporary urban Utopia and analyzes the content and preoccupation of many apparently formal Utopias from the Renaissance to our day through a permanent confrontation between a “real city” and an “ideal city.”

thieves, bourgeois, the king and the pope,” was realized in an “island of anarchy surrounded by Brazil.”² Joyfully, the “liberating song,” *La Colonia Cecilia*, proclaimed, “I am leaving you, Italy, land of thieves, with my companions I am going into exile...”³

In other cases, social changes within a country were also accompanied by real movements in space. Let us use again the example of Brazil. The poor peasant of the northeast views with exaggerated hope the El Dorado of São Paulo. Dispossessed of his native homestead he thinks that by the mere fact of crossing a desert he will leave behind his misery and hunger. The theme of revolution is bound to the theme of traveling, as Jorge Amado wrote in his novel, *Los caminos del hambre*. The constants of the expulsion from Paradise, of the Exodus, of the search for the Promised Land, are converted into the problematic of an authentic social Utopia.

In any case, formal or social, Utopia is always dual. Utopia as such conceives and represents a “counter-image:” the “other” that is, was or will be possible always presupposes a separation in time and space. As Fred Polak points out, this dualism is also the indispensable condition for any eschatology. A temporal time and an atemporal time; a cosmic space and a Kingdom of God. Differently from eschatology, however, in Utopia “separation is always imminent in the world; the other time is conceived as existing *in* historical time, the other space as existing *in* geographical space.”⁴

However, no matter how difficult the voyage seems, the Utopia that “already exists” in “another place” has had an enormous attraction for man. It has always been easier to conceive of a voyage, a form of escapism, than to assume the risks or confront the impossibility of radically changing the customs and institutions in the place where one lives. Immigration is a form of escapism—sometimes the only one—from a predetermined destiny, and access to the hoped-for Utopia, without passing through the painful and arduous task of demolishing the existing one.

² Jean-Louis Camolli, *La Cecilia*, dossier of a film, Paris, Daniel Co., 1976, p. 9.

³ *Idem*, anarchist song: “*Ti lascio Italia, terra di ladri, Coi miei compagni vado in esilio, E tutti uniti a lavorare, E formerem la colonia social...*”

⁴ Fred Polak, *The Image of the Future*, Leyden/New York, 1961, Vol. I, p. 446.

THE DIFFICULT RUPTURE WITH A NATIVE ENVIRONMENT

It is not an exaggeration to say that all men, even the most sedentary, are potential immigrants. "Each man secretly harbors the dream or the Utopia of a promised land, of a place where, without obstacles, he may be what he is or what he thinks he is, develop his personal and cultural identity without pressure," wrote Salim Abou.⁵ This yearning to establish a "spatial distance" between his routine and daily place of residence and that of a new life appears as a natural longing in any man who wants to break the historical circumstance that determines or condemns him.

Intention is not enough. At the origin of all immigrations there is an energetic and difficult action. It is not easy to escape "the limits of a minor existence whose lines have been previously traced"⁶ or to leave the "stratum of crystallized society to which one belongs"⁷ to go to an unknown territory where it is possible to live in a secularized form of earthly paradise. It has often been said that man can only know happiness in "the place where he is not,"⁸ and the phrase, "No one is a prophet in his own country" has become a popular saying, but the true origin of almost all migrations is an unhappiness that comes from oppression.

"When there is a great scarcity there is a great abundance of desires," says Ernst Bloch to explain why man wants to "build a heaven on earth."⁹ Sometimes this oppression is one that exists in the "home town" where it is derived from a rigid family tradition, a tyrannical political system or a dogmatic religion. Was it by chance that Campanella conceived his *Città del sole* in the misery-ridden region of Calabria where he was born and where, in accord with the millenary tradition in which he

⁵ Salim Abou, "Mythe et réalité dans l'émigration," Paris, UNESCO, *Cultures*, Vol. VI, No. 2, 1980, p. 83.

⁶ Naim Kattan, *L'immigrant de langue française et son intégration à la vie canadienne*, Quebec, CIRB, Laval University.

⁷ Arturo Jauretche, *La Sociedad de medio pelo argentina*, Buenos Aires, 1974, p. 158.

⁸ Ernst Bloch, "Aportaciones a la historia de los orígenes del Tercer Reich," in *Utopia*, anthology edited by Arnhelm Neusüss, Barcelona, Barral Editores, 1970, p. 108.

⁹ *Idem*, p. 109.

believed, he had to initiate in 1600 the era led by a *Novus Dux* capable of inspiring superior sentiments in mankind?

It is thus understandable that when a situation becomes oppressive, there occurs an idealization of a far-off territory where “everything is possible.” Utopia is the hope of escaping from the present, not because of a limitless confidence in the future but because of the “voyage” that will permit the access to that promised land, permeable, where a new reality may be forged “here and now” according to the wishes of the immigrant.

Of course, the decision to immigrate requires great courage. “There is nothing more extraordinary than the decision to immigrate,” wrote John Kennedy, he himself the grandson of immigrants, “nothing more extraordinary than this accumulation of feelings and reflections that leads a family to say farewell to the community in which its roots have been for centuries, to break the old ties, to leave familiar landscapes and launch itself on perilous seas toward an unknown land.”¹⁰ To give himself such courage, the immigrant has an exaggerated hope in the land to which he has immigrated, as if his faith could help him to convince himself of the rightness of his decision. “We are going to the land of the future,” to “a real promised land,” have declared many immigrants before leaving for Canada, the United States, Argentina or Brazil, a disproportionate hope that sprung at times from a religious root, as in the Biblical immigration of the Hebrews or the more recent one to Israel and even in the colonization of the United States.¹¹

A spatial Utopia sustains itself in a territory that is always idealized because of its distance or because of the limited information about it. It could be the great capital city for the peasant subjected to a system of agrarian feudal exploitation, “the city lights” that have been the occasion for vast migratory movements within practically all countries, or it may be the far-off land from which arrive echos of those who have succeeded.

¹⁰ John F. Kennedy, *A Nation of Immigrants*, New York, Harper and Rowe, 1964, p. 4.

¹¹ Mircea Eliade, *La nostalgie des origines*, Paris, Gallimard, 1971. Eliade maintains the eschatological sign of the process of colonization of the New World. See also Charles L. Sanford, *The Quest for Paradise*, Urbana, 1961; and George H. Williams, *Wilderness and Paradise in Christian Thought*, New York, 1962. These authors analyze the religious sentiment in this progressive march from East to West, begun “in the Sinai Desert.”

Utopia, Promised Lands, Immigration and Exile

This vision of the “happy place” that “is not here” has become heightened in recent decades, beginning with the crisis of the cities that characterizes the urban scene of industrial and post-industrial societies, where the tension between man and his environment has arrived at the point of rupture. Spatial Utopia has always persisted in the urbanistic and architectural aspect, to the point of creating “physical-spatial Utopias” such as may be found in Latin America and in the United States. It suffices to recall the *hospitales-pueblo* of Vasco de Quiroga in Mexico, the Jesuit missions in Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil and the “communes” of the United States.¹²

THE MYTHIFIED PROMISED LAND

The mythification of the promised land is, in many cases, ingenuous. American immigrants sang of “the big rock candy mountains” where “nobody has to change his socks” and where there is a “lake of whiskey” to float on in a canoe. More simply, we can imagine those lands of plenty such as Cockaigne, Lubberland and others that peopled the fervid imaginations of the hungry peasants of medieval Europe, so splendidly painted by Peter Bruegel.

Publicity has taken advantage of these feelings. To seduce possible immigrants to the American West the press of the time published announcements pointing out the virtues of lands occupied by the Navajos: “The climate is so healthy that you can prepare a man’s grave only if he has been shot.” This American land was “the” Utopia, where there were no “aristocrats” and people “did not have to work very hard to have everything they wanted.”¹³ But as shown in a recent film, *Heaven’s Gate*, behind the publicity that drew poor European

¹² David Riesman, “Some Observations on Community Plans and Utopia,” *The Yale Law Journal*, Vol. 57, Dec. 1947, No. 2. Riesman studies Utopian thought in America and emphasizes the social function accomplished by progressive architects such as Charles Ascher, Catherine Bauer and Lewis Mumford, author of *The Story of Utopia*, London, 1923. Bibliography on Utopian architecture is enormous. It suffices to remember that almost all the Utopian novels of More include abundant urbanistic details, and all the social projects of “Utopian Socialism” are largely based on a functional architecture.

¹³ Colin Ward, *Utopia*, U.K., Penguin Education Book, 1974, p. 10.

peasants by means of a deceptive dream of a promised land “within arm’s reach” was hidden the crude reality of exploitation and misery. The immigrant sadly discovered that he would live no better on this land than the Navajo he had dispossessed. For other peasants, Polish, this time established in Paraná, publicity took on the aspect of a miracle: the Virgin Mary had dissipated the mists and converted the Argentine “Mesopotamia” into a fertile paradise destined for these “good Catholics.”¹⁴

Before going further, we must make clear the difference between immigrants and conquerors. The first seek Utopia in space, fleeing, usually, from realities that compel them to abandon their homeland, their possessions and their titles; the second bring with them the flag of their country of origin to plant it on someone else’s territory. The imperial (imperialist) design of the conqueror has nothing to do with the humble station, misery or search for other horizons of the simple immigrant. In the same way, we may speak of the massive transportation of slaves from Africa or the traffic in manual labor from the Orient that characterized a large part of the population of Latin America and the Caribbean from the 16th century until about the middle of the 19th century.

Limited to a strict concept of immigration, it is interesting to remember that between 1824 and 1924, 52,000,000 people left Europe, of whom 93% went to America (72% to the United States and 21% to Latin America) and the remaining 7% went to Australia. Of the 11,000,000 who came to Latin America, more than 50% was absorbed by a single country—Argentina; 36% by Brazil, 5% by Uruguay, the remaining 9% being spread through the other countries of the hemisphere.¹⁵ Simple or ingenuously motivated, the function of Utopia in the period is particularly significant for the then brand-new states of America. Due to it, societies were consolidated, especially in the United States, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and, more recently, Venezuela.

The migrations were composed of “the most defenseless, most exploitable and poorest social groups,” including, according to

¹⁴ Quoted by Salim Abou, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

¹⁵ Magnus Morner, “La inmigración desde mediados del Siglo XIX: una nueva América Latina,” *Cultures*, Paris UNESCO, 1978, Vol. 5, No. 3, p. 60.

Utopia, Promised Lands, Immigration and Exile

UNESCO, all those who “immigrated for political reasons.”¹⁶ However, some supplementary distinctions must be made between immigrants and exiles. The immigrant, for the time being, moves more or less freely, to a promised land he has chosen on the map of spatial Utopia; the exile has no other alternative than to “seek asylum” in a country that will receive him to save himself from persecution, prison or death. One looks forward with hope to a precise future; the other flees from a past in which “his social Utopia” has been destroyed. The attitude of both will be different when they land in the country that receives them; promised land and new home for the immigrant, provisional refuge and asylum for the exile.

THE CONSECRATION OF THE NEW TERRITORY

To live in the world it is necessary to “establish” it, wrote Mircea Eliade,¹⁷ which means that every man tends to construct his “sacred” space, the center from which he will elaborate his own individual geography to the measure of his life experience. By establishing himself on a territory, the immigrant hopes to “consecrate” it, organize it as his environment and live fully in the new space. Of course, every immigrant, when landing in the “new world,” perceives that what was promised has already been given to “others” and that the society into which he wants to integrate, however permeable and open it may be, always seems to exclude him. The world he has arrived in is populated by the “other,” someone who lived there before he landed.

He finds a different language, different laws, different customs, a different culture, a different climate, other dimensions, other inhabitants. This character of “otherness” marks a first and inevitable deception: “the new world” is older than it seems.¹⁸

¹⁶ Definition adopted by UNESCO after a consultation by experts on “cultural contributions by immigrants to Latin America and the Caribbean from the beginnings of the 19th century,” held in Panama, Nov. 19-23, 1979: UNESCO CC-79/Conf. 619/7.

¹⁷ Mircea Eliade, *Lo sagrado y lo profano*, Madrid, Ed. Guadarrama, 1973, p. 25.

¹⁸ Of great interest are the works by Curt Nimuendaju, Alfred Métraux and Mircea Eliade on the migratory movements of the Tupí-Guaraníes in Brazil in

This tension created by a cultural encounter has marked all immigrations in the history of mankind, that of those who “stole” the living space of the native Indians of America as well as the Porto Ricans fighting for their own “territory” on the West Side in New York and the Algerian workers in the 20th *arrondissement* of Paris.

In this first cultural encounter, Utopia tends to appear hostile. The immigrant may feel that Utopia is being converted into chaos. Because he does not know or understand the “new order” to which he has acceded, the sought-after paradise may be momentarily an inferno. At this stage of confrontation with reality and the dissolution of the original Utopian plan, the problematic of the immigrant is similar to that of the exile. Both feel an unresolved antagonism between the images of the promised land and the lost paradise.

What can be done, then, when the Utopia was originally impossible and is still not possible “here and now?” In the inventory of attitudes and disappointments that follow the first cultural confrontation we find a large part of the “catalog” of repeated Utopias throughout history in various forms but with identical “intentions.”¹⁹ However, such are the germs of future Utopian projects, of new *topos* of the imagination forged from “the refusal of what is not wanted.”²⁰

The society that receives the immigrant or the exile may be open or closed, with or without economic possibilities, with ideologies in favor of immigration or indifferent or xenophobic. For his part, the voluntary immigrant or the man forced into exile may arrive alone, with his family or with an unrelated group

search of a “Paradise Lost,” a search that apparently began before the arrival of the Portuguese and that only now has become of tragic urgency.

¹⁹ Arnhelm Neusüss, *Utopie*, Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1968. The work defines the concept of the “Utopian intention” as common to all the images that Utopia elaborates for the future, however different the content of the formulations are. The Utopian intention is confirmed with greater precision in the negation of what is no longer wanted than in the positive determination of what is proposed. Using this concept of “Utopian intention” Neusüss is able to combine into a single social critique such diverse ideas as have been manifested throughout the history of Utopia.

²⁰ *Idem*, p. 25. “The struggle against Utopia is based not so much on the ideas for the better future it may bring but on the criticism all these images make of the existing reality. Thus, the Utopian is reflected more clearly where it is fought: in the controversy over what it claims to signify.”

Utopia, Promised Lands, Immigration and Exile

of his same ethnic, religious or political origin. He may be the first of a group or may arrive in a country where his like already exists as an ethnic, political or religious minority, more or less integrated into the country. From the interaction of all these factors arise the various possible behaviors that will go from assimilation to acculturation, in a gamut of attitudes that are not always determined by the desire of the immigrant or the exile.

The most radical attitude is that of “assimilation,” understood as “the negative process by which an individual adopts the cultural models of the receiving society, and represses earlier ones, but adopts them merely as a formal imitation.”²¹ Here are included cases of depersonalization and deculturation, expressed in the change of name, in the denial of origin, a pathetic situation ridiculed in the film *Bread and Chocolate*: an Italian immigrant to Switzerland bleaches his hair, pretends to read newspapers in German (which he does not understand) and frequents local bars as a “native.”

On the contrary, the processes of adaptation, integration and acculturation are considered positive. Adaptation is only a concept of ecological scope and refers to the adjustment to a new geographical environment, to the “habitat” in which one finds oneself. The immigrant who adapts as a rule defensively divides his world into two zones, well defined by Salim Abou: “He entrusts his primary (emotional) relationships to the family circle and his ethnic group; with the community that receives him he maintains only secondary, commercial relationships. Beginning with this division, he is content to adopt the modes of conduct required by public life in the new country and keeps intact the hereditary ways of thinking and feeling of his original culture. What he seeks in the family or ethnic group are solid emotional supports that enable him to confront without excessive grief the conflictive process provoked by the urgent necessity of learning a cultural code in a climate of pronounced emotional pressure.”²²

It is at this moment that is verified the strength of the “spiritual patrimony” formed by traditions and customs of groups of immigrants or exiles; ways of thinking, language, religions and

²¹ The definition accepted at the meeting of UNESCO cited in Note 16.

²² Salim Abou, *op. cit.*

ideas that are injected, in order to survive, in a strange land.²³ Privileged places emerge from the past: the native landscape, the scene of a first love, the parental hearth, the conditions of life in a bygone age, become idealized into a strong nostalgia. The schema of a “lost paradise” tends to be substituted for the non-existent “promised land.”

THE PAINFUL NEUTRALIZATION OF DISAPPOINTMENTS

When the immigrant finds that the hoped-for promised land does not exist as he has been told or as his excessive hopes imagined it, he tends to reproduce in the new land an idealized image of “his” old country, somewhat like a paradise lost. The schema goes beyond the ghetto founded by some immigrants. This is the moment in which are baptized the new “founded” localities having the names of those left behind but preceded with an auspicious “new:” New Hamburg, New Granada, New York or, simply, Barcelona, Valencia. Ethnic neighborhoods spring up in the great cities with Chinese, Jews, Italians, Arabs, Africans or Japanese grouping themselves into a Little Italy, numerous Chinatowns and Medinas.

In this “new” replica of the lost paradise are mingled ambiguous sentiments: the renunciation of that from which one has fled, the idealization through nostalgia of that which one believes irretrievably lost. For this reason localities arise with evocative Utopian names: Puerto Alegre, Valparaiso, Jardín América, Florida, Antilles, Brazil, Perú, Puerto Edén, California (Mountain of Paradise in Persian—*Karri-farn*), in an effort to effect with a name the necessary “objectivation” of Utopia.

For the exile, the experience may be even more difficult. Generally, the exile already has in his past a frustrated project of a social Utopia that is painful for him to renounce. More than the immigrant, he tends to find refuge in a cultural and political ghetto. His memory appears immobilized in the time of the defeat of the Utopian project and the rupture with his place of origin. From this come the *Casas* of Spain in Uruguay, Argentina,

²³ The Catholic Church has played an important part in this spiritual patrimony, beginning with the *Pastoralis Migratorum Cura* of 1969 (Motu proprio, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, August 15, 1969).

Utopia, Promised Lands, Immigration and Exile

Chile, in the European capitals that have received in the last few years waves of exiles from Latin America. All, in one way or another, trying to save “something” from the original project and refusing to accept the passing of time and the change of country. The new space is hostile because it is different and has been imposed; the new time is provisional because very soon everything will change in the native country and “the original Utopia will be possible.”

Differently from the immigrant, the exile refuses to elaborate new projects in the land that has received him, because he keeps alive the hope that “things will change,” that “it cannot go on this way.” For forty long years did not the Spanish exile believe in the “imminent” fall of Franco? Does not the exile from Chile divine the end of Pinochet’s dictatorship when he reads a short dispatch from a news agency in the corner of a page of a periodical printed in a language that is not his own? The adaptation to the new environment is reduced to a minimum of survival and, even though it is progressive, the exile will never recognize it. “As soon as I can, I am leaving this country,” he says, without realizing that he is putting down roots in the new country and from a simple adaptation he is passing to integration.

Integration is the second level of what we call the “positive processes” of immigration and exile and assumes a true insertion into the structures of the new society. However, this integration—as Pierre George has written—“passes through the neutralization of deceptions,”²⁴ a neutralization that is much more painful for the exile.

The immigrant is more motivated to make the journey to the promised land and more disposed to be seduced by the customs of the country in which he arrives, to the point of being disposed to change his nationality, if necessary.²⁵

To neutralize disappointments, to integrate, requires many concessions, even the sacrifice of the original Utopian conception, since even if there is integration, and when it is successful, immigrants and exiles never feel totally accepted and recognized. Behind every gesture they will discover the reflection of their condition as

²⁴ Pierre George, *Les migrations internationales*, Paris, PUF, 1976, p. 11.

²⁵ This is the definition Pierre George gives of an immigrant, much more restrictive than the one accepted by UNESCO.

“foreigners.” Their accents and their customs provoke positive or negative reactions, according to the type of society, open or closed, in which they live. They will always know that certain circles or levels of decision will be denied them because of their accent, race or “different” origin.

This maladjustment appears in a sort of inferiority complex or in one of marginalization for many immigrants, especially those coming from countries called “developing” and living in the presumed “developed societies.” In these cases, the immigrant is not aware that he is importing cultural values that contribute to the enrichment of the new society. At the same time, however, this inferiority complex does not inevitably lead him to learn the language and customs of the new country. The balance between the tradition of origin maintained in the new country and the integration into some factors that are considered positive is difficult to maintain. It is even more difficult to imagine an immigrant from an ethnic or cultural group approaching other migrant groups coming from different horizons and cultures.²⁶ The contact between different minority communities, even if they have the same problems, is generally minimum and in many cases conflicting. It suffices to recall the battles between ethnic neighborhoods and communities of immigrants in cities like London or New York. A true integration would require a progressive and rich interdependence between races and cultures.

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE ORIGINAL UTOPIA

For the most part, the overcoming of these difficulties occurs through the children that the immigrant and the exile give to the country that has received them:

“Se viene de padre de Valencia y de madre de Canarias, y se siente correr por las venas la sangre enardecida de Tamanao y Paramaconi y se ve como propia la que vertieron por

²⁶ *La Documentación Católica*, No. 1816, Oct. 18, 1981. In his recent letter concerning the respect for the cultural identity of immigrants, Cardinal Casaroli dwells on the importance of this behavior of the immigrant in relation to the society in which he lives and to other groups of immigrants.

Utopia, Promised Lands, Immigration and Exile

las breñas del cerro del Calvario, pecho a pecho con los gonzalos de férrea armadura, los desnudos y heroicos caracas.”²⁷

Without going to this passionate extreme, it is obvious that the child of the immigrant who was not born in the land of Utopia “naturally” feels integrated into his new country.

Of course, this integration does not come about without certain difficulties. Growing up, the immigrant’s child feels that the “foreigner” is his own family; the language of his parents and many of their customs are “foreign.” His affirmation in the society into which he was born requires a negation of part of the family culture, a negation that is not always conscious or absolute. Family discussions, a certain “humiliation” in comparing the “maladjustments” of his parents to their environment characterize the adolescence of many children of immigrants or exiles. The migratory movement in geographical space that the parents accomplished continues in the mental space of their children.

This negation and this defiance last no longer than the time required for self-affirmation and the recognition sought in the adopted country. It is not a rupture, only a metamorphosis. Very soon, a secret solidarity is established between the child’s life and the remote land of his ancestors. It is not a question of a love for a country he does not know but of a certain “idealization of origin.” Once liberated from the aspects of the paternal culture that he feels as an impediment to his total integration he establishes a relationship of equality with the world and his origins. Utopia is converted into space. It is not here—in the New World—it is “there” in a Castilian village, on the shore of the sea in Galilee or Ireland, between mountains in an Italian valley, in a hamlet perfumed by apple trees in southern Poland.

Often, due to sanctified objects (yellowed photographs of distant landscapes, pictures, souvenirs, letters, books, and so on) the children reconstruct the “lost Golden Age” of their parents and establish “a mystic experience of autochthonism,” as Eliade says. This new Utopia may be translated into a “pilgrimage” to the origins. It is the descendants of Italians or Irish

²⁷ José Martí, *Autores americanos aborígenes*, in *Obras completas*, Havana, Vol. VIII, pp. 336-37.

who visit the villages of their ancestors; it is the “Indians” who arrive at lost villages in Aragon or Estremadura, with a heart full of “nostalgia” for a past they have not known. They are the reverse of the medal and the repetition of an inescapable schema of Utopia: happiness is found where “one is not.”

CULTURAL MIXTURE AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY

Immigration and exile must not be viewed in the light of the lost Utopia in the land of origin or in the promised land but in the light of a much more modest result, much better known and palpable: acculturation, the true interaction between cultures in contact.

What some see as a total rupture is no more than a form of metamorphosis; what is believed to be lost by a cultural identity of origins may be the enrichment *for* the new society or *by* the new society, an alternative of cultural pluralism, of mixture and diversification that is always positive and, above all, dynamic. As Roger Bastide wrote, it is “acculturation that transforms closed societies into open societies; the encounter of civilizations, the mixtures and interpretations are factors of progress, and sickness, when there is sickness, is only the reverse of the social or cultural dynamic.”²⁸

A variant of this process is found in the case of those political exiles who, after having been “integrated” into the society where they found asylum, return to their countries of origin with a global vision of the national problematic, due to the “distance” in which they have lived. As Felipe Herrera recalled,²⁹ we only need to think of the positive experience of many European exiles who became heroes of American independence: Andrés Bello, Miranda, Bolívar, O’Higgins, and of the exile in South America of men such as Sarmiento, Bartolomé Mitre, Alberti, Gabriel Ocampo and José Gervasio Artigas.

The theme of the return to the country of origin is presented

²⁸ Roger Bastide, *Le rêve, la transe et la folie*, Paris, 1972, p. 231.

²⁹ *Presencia de Bello en la integración cultural latino-americana*, conference by Felipe Herrera given at UNESCO on Oct. 21, 1981 on the occasion of the celebration of the bicentennial of the birth of Andrés Bello.

Utopia, Promised Lands, Immigration and Exile

in other cases in terms of impotence or surrender. The dispute is already established now between the Latin-American exiles in Europe. Recently, the bulletin *Comunidad* published in Stockholm opened the discussion on the theme of "return," saying: "In exile—with the reserves for adapting to an environment, that in the final analysis is hostile or inadequate, already exhausted—to return is the expression of the desires of many who see their dreams fading without resistance to new currents. Thus disillusion and desire join in a longing for a return to native soil, to personal and known ways. A return to the security of the homeland." A return that also assumes a "return in ideology." Of course, what is proposed at the end of this article and what is most important is a "return to a significant participation, here and there, in the concreteness of our collective social destiny. For the always-available compromises, for revolutionary values, we must continue groping, preparing and experimenting."³⁰

In conclusion, this final reflection links up with the beginning of this essay. The frustrations and deceptions of immigrants and exiles are not a reason to abandon new, possible Utopias. Only with the permanent presence of the "Utopian intention" will the dynamics and the dialectics between myth and reality continue. How many children of Spanish exiles in America are today Latin-American exiles in Europe? How many children of these children search for, or are obliged to search for, new Utopias in the future? Immigration and exile have made up the history of mankind; immigration and exile will continue making, with luck, the history of Utopia.

Fernando Ainsa
(Paris)

³⁰ Bulletin *Comunidad*, No. 26, Stockholm, 1981.