a more than manageable task, while providing insightful analyses of often under analyzed texts by three important voices who made refusing expectations for assimilation their life's work. Ultimately, asking us to rethink our understanding of the construction of the texts of three monumental figures and the role of writing in forging connections between people otherwise thought distinct or disconnected, *Imperfect Solidarities* should prove instructive and enlightening for student-scholars working in the fields of utopian studies, as well as those in Africana or Black Studies, South Asian Studies, or postcolonial studies.

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Juan Pro Ruiz, Hugo García Fernández, and Emilio J. Gallardo Saborido. *Utopías Hispanas. Historia y Antología*.

Comares: Granada, 2022. 508 pp., paperback, 38€. ISBN 9788413694986.

*Reviewed by Miguel A. Ramiro Avilés, University of Alcalá*

If we take a look at the main generalist books on utopian or dystopian literature, we can note the absence of a body of works that would constitute a utopian literary tradition written in Spanish. In a quick review, we may note that Frank Manuel and Fritzie Manuel acknowledge in *Utopian Thought in the Western World* that "the absence of a sustained utopian tradition in Spain is peculiar, though free-floating utopian affect may have somehow attached itself to the figure of Don Quixote." To this comment they add that although "the manuscript of an Enlightenment utopia, *Descripción de la Sinapia península en la terra austral*, has recently been published," it does not alter their opinion that "Spain was relatively untouched by the Utopian main current until the penetration of Marxist and anarchist thought."[1] In the first edition of *Voyages Aux Pays de Nulle Parte*, Raymond Trousson only devoted a paragraph to indicate that there is a work—*Sinapia*—in which the influence of Thomas More and Tommaso Campanella can be found.[2] In the chapters of *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times* that Krishan Kumar devotes to utopian

thought in Europe and America during the nineteenth century, he does not include any reference to a work written in Spanish and only has generic references to the New World, Columbus, and Vasco de Quiroga.[3] Nor do we find references to dystopian literature written in Spanish in *Dystopia: A Natural History* by Gregory Claeys, whose notes focus on the Inquisition and George Orwell's participation in the Spanish Civil War.[4] Even Spanish authors such as Fernando Savater take for granted the non-existence of a utopian genre in Spain.[5]

*Utopías Hispanas. Historia y Antología* by Juan Pro, Hugo García, and Emilio J. Gallardo-Saborido, like José Luis Calvo before it,[6] belies this absence. If we leave aside specific studies on American utopia,[7] or American and Spanish libertarian utopias,[8] and the anthologies of Latin American and Spanish works of science fiction,[9] Pro, García, and Gallardo-Saborido systematically present a reconstruction of "the Utopian tradition of the Spanish-speaking people" in order to "insert it into the broader current of modern utopianism in Europe and America" (ix).[10] Their anthology resolves the paradoxical view that, on the one hand, stresses that the Spaniards are idealistic and quixotic beings but, on the other hand, emphasizes that they are poorly endowed for social speculation (x). As I have noted elsewhere,

> [The main reason why] *there is* no tradition of utopian thought is not that utopias have not been written, but rather that the phenomenon of utopian thought in Spain has not been studied in sufficient depth until now. Other countries, such as Portugal, in which the absence of a tradition of utopian thought was also clamorous, have gradually discovered this tradition of thought through the development of research project financed by public and private institutions that have allowed them to have the time and the material and human resources necessary to immerse themselves in the largest and oldest national and foreign libraries in order to find its traces.[11]

The "Histopia" research group led by Juan Pro has achieved this.

The book by Pro, García, and Gallardo-Saborido includes a sample of 129 texts with which they attempt to attest to "the vitality, richness and plurality of the Hispanic utopian tradition over the last five centuries" (xviii). We have, then, a work before us that is essential to the study of utopian thought. The book begins with an introduction that lays the theoretical and conceptual foundations for the research, which is developed over six chapters and an

epilogue, each with a brief introduction. The six chapters and the epilogue include the texts that make up the Hispanic utopian tradition from 1521, the year in which Alonso de Castrillo published *Tratado de la República*, to 2020, the year in which Belén Gopegui published *El mundo que fuimos*. We find one chapter that is dedicated to the Spanish monarchy between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries; another that is dedicated to Spanish and American utopias between 1808 and 1870; and due to the consolidation of national states after 1870, there are chapters devoted to Spanish utopias published between 1871 and 1939 and between 1940 and 2000 as well as Latin American utopias published between 1870 and 1940 and between 1940 and 2000. This anthology of texts allows us to affirm that Hispanic utopianism "was not a mirage of the Renaissance but constitutes an essential ingredient of Spanish and Latin American cultures" (xi).

They emphasize that Hispanic utopianism emerged, like European utopianism, at a time when national literatures did not exist, so that "Hispanic utopians of the Renaissance wrote in Latin and felt part of a pan-European intellectual community that aspired to unify and reform Western Christendom from its humanist ideas" (xi). In the Hispanic case, this pan-European cultural framework is combined "with a marked transatlantic and American dimension that gave it a certain singularity" (xi). Hispanic America would be a central element in this "tradition" of utopian thought, if it could be called that,[12] since it would be a determining factor "in shaping of Hispanic culture from the beginning of the 16th century . . . facilitating the circulation of ideas and people" (1). The subsequent gradual emergence of the concept of nation would give rise, at first, to the failed project of "forming a single nation with Hispanic territories on both sides of the Atlantic" and to the development of their own literary and cultural traditions in each of the "new national states that emerged from the decomposition of the Monarchy" (xi).

The point of union of the works included in this anthology is "their aspiration to improve the existing [society]," and this improvement includes both "dreams of Hispano-American unity" and those of "rapprochement or solidarity between the Hispano-American republics and the former metropolis" (xii). Utopias, as a product of modernity, are "an expression of its faith in the possibility of rationally finding ways of organizing social coexistence other than those inherited" (xiv). The material element that is characteristic of any utopia, whether it takes the form of an eutopia or a dystopia, thus comes into play: the determination of the optimal form of government. The nature of this material content, according to the authors, distinguishes two different

types of works: "utopias of elite order" and "popular utopias" (xv). The former, the preserve of the ruling classes, "sought, above all, to restore order to political, economic and social life, that is, to put a stop to social conflict and the consequent danger of violent rupture and reversal of hierarchies." Popular utopias, on the other hand, which mainly developed from the nineteenth century onward, "expressed hopes of liberty, equality, fraternity and well-being . . . they reflected the hopes for the future of the various political and social groups" (xv). This expression of faith "began to fall into crisis as the promises of modernity were not fulfilled" (xv–xvi), giving way to dystopia.

Pro, García, and Gallardo-Saborido argue that the current rise of dystopias may be due to the "mercantile logics of production and consumption of cultural products rather than a real change of attitude towards utopian hopes" (xvii). While utopias are too descriptive, tending toward immobility and causing boredom, dystopias, on the other hand, lend themselves more to narrative, conflict, adventure, and heroism. As Pro, García, and Gallardo-Saborido suggest, "This explains, perhaps, the preference of the public, especially the younger public, for this genre, and that of the cultural industry—cinema, television, video games—for this sinister sister of utopia" (xvii). I partly share this analysis because utopian thinking always has a critical function of the existing social, political, economic, and legal order, and a compensatory function in proposing some kind of reform either of the formal institutions for governing people and administering things, or of the human nature or the natural environment. Utopias do not attempt to describe extraordinary beings, impossible journeys, or implausible situations, but rather to reflect the problems and ills affecting society and, if necessary, to propose more or less feasible remedies.

Pro, García, and Gallardo-Saborido take a position in favor of a broad concept of utopia that understands it not only as a literary genre but also "as an impulse present in other spheres of human activity" (xix). Hence, their anthology features texts that are considered utopian but which, in their formal presentation, do not have a literary garb. This conceptual positioning does not align, in my opinion, with the authors' position that utopia is a product of modernity, which is why they begin their anthology with a text dated 1521, and why they present this text as the second utopia published in Europe (1). The reason why modernity and a broad concept of utopia do not fit together is because such a broad concept would force the selection of texts to begin prior to the work published by Thomas More in 1516. Yet Pro, García, and Gallardo-Saborido do not include any of the medieval texts in which

alternative worlds are deliberately imagined.[13] Some of these texts may have a millenarian component,[14] with their claims to restore the Kingdom of God on Earth by overthrowing "the outmoded power of those who reign against divine will."[15] As Jean Delumeau argues, "In Spain, too, there appeared characters who presented themselves as saviours, suddenly emerging from the shadows and claiming to have been born of illustrious parents. So, this country was in turn penetrated by eschatological currents, particularly Joachimist and Franciscan, which circulated throughout the West during the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries."[16]

The use of a broad concept of utopia allows us to recognize, as Alexandre Cioranescu stresses, that the word utopia, "in addition to being a book, has become a genre, a programme, a conception and a faith."[17] However, this does not mean that there should not be a criterion that allows us to identify works informed by utopian thought. Let us take as an example the inclusion in the anthology of the *Political Constitution of the Spanish Monarchy* of 1812, also known as the Constitution of Cádiz or *La Pepa*, and the *Political Constitution of the State of Bolivia* of 2009. Both legal documents, which proposed more and less successful reforms, have exercised real force. They have not been legislative projects that inhabit the space of *should be*, but they have transcended into *being*.[18] Can they still be considered utopian texts?

While Pro, García, and Gallardo-Saborido acknowledge the existence of the literary genre whose origin is in modernity, I think they do not overemphasize that "when Thomas More coined the word utopia in 1516, he invented more that a new word, he invented a new form,"[19] and thereby gave rise to the broad concept in a monogenous way.[20] A tension can be observed when Pro, García, and Gallardo-Saborido discuss whether the popular utopias of the sixteenth century were not properly utopias "because they do no propose an alternative ideal of organization or incite action of any kind to achieve them. . . . They were utopias of excess, of abundance, especially of food and drink, which involved the breaking of limits and the rejection of the authorities," or they were "utopias of the poor" because "they helped them [the poor] to overcome the privations, subjugation and hardship of daily life" (5). The main reason for this discussion is the fact that we are dealing with an "essentially contested concept," that is, a concept that is doctrinally disputed and whose proper use inevitably leads to an endless discussion about what the proper use should be.[21] These conceptual problems arise from the fragmentary character of the concept and its *open texture*, as not every element that is necessary for its consistent application is present.[22] A concept is essentially

contested when "its criteria of correct application are multiple, evaluative, and do not maintain a priority relationship with each other."[23]

When defining what utopia is, one must resort to certain salient characteristics that affect both its material content and its external form. In terms of material content, as already noted, utopias mainly reflect on the optimal form of government. Utopian thought makes value judgments when it determines the optimal form of government because it indicates how the government of people and the administration of things should or should not be articulated. Any work that wishes to be ascribed to utopian thought must, in the first place, be a reflection on the best form of government, regardless of the solution it provides, the feasibility of the project, or the results.

The external form, the literary genre, is where the authors of the anthology are less restrictive, allowing for a broad variety of texts to be included. I think that this makes it impossible for us to adequately differentiate utopian thought from other forms and manifestations of social and political theory. As Krishan Kumar points out, what differentiates utopian thought from these other forms of social and political theory is that it is a work of fiction.[24] In the works that make up utopian thought, there is no systematic exposition of general principles but rather an explanation of theory through demonstration. This is the novelty of utopian thought as opposed to traditional, expository forms of social and political theory. Such thinkers as Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau established, *inter alia*, a set of axioms about human nature and built on them to construct the optimal government. In their approach, the reader does not participate in the interpretation and can only accept or reject the proposal. Utopias, on the other hand, proceed in a different way, since fiction allows for the presence of doubt. While in these texts there is a central idea of an imagined society, this idea is transfigured by the presence of irony, doubt, and the interaction between writer and reader. Even if the idea is initially very clear, uncertainty takes hold of the reader at the end.[25] In this sense, Peter Stillman recognizes that in some imagined societies, conflicting values and principles are presented by different characters, which makes some utopias self-critical and generates uncertainty.[26]

The originality of utopian thought derives from the fact that it combines a material content focused on determining the optimal government with a literary form. The material content alone is not innovative; it is the union with a form in which the literary takes precedence that is novel in comparison to the traditional, expository presentation of political theory. Instead of an abstract exposition of principles, the proposal is presented in

literary garb. Raymond Trousson has called this "the artistic pretensions of the utopian,"[27] and Peter Kuon has stated that "whoever wishes to consider utopia as a textual manifestation of a literary genre is obliged to admit what I call *le primat du littéraire*."[28]

The conjunction of these two elements can be used as a criterion to describe which works are part of the utopian genre. As Alexandre Cioranescu points out, "in this way utopia as a literary genre is obliged to remain within the limits of a certain number of rules and scruples that predetermine its configuration."[29] The form is as significant as the subject matter; hence both the container and the content must be analyzed. As Bertrand de Jouvenel warns, one cannot be tempted to ignore descriptions and focus only on the institutional scheme,[30] because utopia is a *literary genre*, being "verbal artefacts before anything else."[31] Trousson adds that the utopian "will choose the novel as the form best suited to realize [their] purpose. Thus, utopia will often seem to be an avatar of the novel genre."[32]

This conceptual discussion notwithstanding, we can only congratulate ourselves for having such a complete anthology of texts that shows that the Hispanic world is no different from other European countries (United Kingdom, France, Italy), which have a more established and well-known tradition of utopian texts.

## Notes

The English edition of *Utopías Hispanas. Historia y Antología* is *Hispanic Utopias: A Historical Reader*, also by Hugo García, Juan Pro, and Emilio Gallardo, translated by David Frye, is published in the Peter Lang, Ralahine Utopian Studies Series.

1. Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979), 14–15. In order to understand the excerpted text, it should be borne in mind that *Sinapia*'s text was found in 1975 among the documents in the archive of Pedro Rodríguez, Count of Campomanes, who was President of the Council of Castile between 1786 and 1791 and planned, together with Pablo de Olavide, the repopulation of the Sierra Morena, restoring the traditional agrarian society of small peasants.

2. Raymond Trousson, *Voyages Aux Pays de Nulle Parte* (Bruxelles: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1979). In later editions it is possible to find more extensive references to utopian thought in Spain and Latin America.

3. Krishan Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 33–98.

4. Gregory Claeys, *Dystopia: A Natural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

5.   Fernando Savater, "F. Sinapia: Por qué y Cómo," in Fernando Savater, *Último Desembarco. Vente a Sinapia* (Madrid: Espasa, 1988), 79.

6.   José-Luis Calvo Carilla, *El sueño sostenible. Estudios sobre la utopía literaria en España* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2008). This book analyzes, in a more or less extensive way, the literary utopias of, among others, Diego Saavedra Fajardo, Tomás de Iriarte, Wenceslao Ayguals de Izco, Santiago Ramón y Cajal, Pío Baroja, José Martínez Ruiz (*Azorín*), Ramón Gómez de la Serna, Luis de Oteyza, Julio Bravo, Salvador de Madariaga, Ramón J. Sender, Carmen San Sebastián, Gonzalo Arias, Ramón Tamames, Xavier Benguerel, and Roberto Ruiz.

7.   Beatriz Fernández Herrero, *La utopía de América: Teoría. Leyes. Experimentos.* (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1992).

8.   Luis Gomez Tovar, Ramón Gutierrez, and Silvia A. Vazquez, *Las utopías libertarias americanas* (Madrid: Ediciones Tuero, 1991); Luis Gomez Tovar and Javier Paniagua, *Utopías libertarias españolas (siglos XIX–XX)* (Madrid: Ediciones Tuero, 1991). These two books contain texts by Pierre Quiroule, Juan Serrano y Oteiza, Ricardo Mella, Marian Burgués, Federico Urales, Antonio Ocaña, José Maceira, Alfonso Martínez Rizo, and Juan López.

9.   Andrea L. Bell and Yolanda Molina-Gavilàn, eds., *Cosmos Latinos: An Anthology of Science Fiction from Latin America and Spain* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003); Julián Diez and Fernando Ángel Moreno, *Historia y antología de la ciencia ficción española* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2014).

10.   All translations into English are by the author.

11.   Miguel Ángel Ramiro Avilés, "La España Civil, una utopía para el siglo XXI," in *Entre la Ética, la Política y el Derecho. Estudios en Homenaje al Profesor Gregorio Peces-Barba* (Madrid: Dykinson, 2008), 1097.

12.   J. C. Davis, *Utopia and the Ideal Society: A Study of the English Utopian Writing, 1516–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 3. The existence of a tradition depends on the authors who have cultivated utopian literature being self-conscious, reading each other systematically and conveying their ideas within a common and constantly evolving language.

13.   Karma Lochrie, "Provincializing Medieval Europe: Mandeville's Cosmopolitan Utopia," *PMLA* 124, no. 2 (2009): 592–99.

14.   Davis, *Utopia and the Ideal Society*, 31–36.

15.   Juan Aranzadi, *Milenarismo Vasco* (Madrid: Taurus, 2000), 208.

16.   Jean Delumeau, *Historia del Paraíso. Vol. 2: Mil años de felicidad* (Madrid: Taurus, 2005), 357–407. A chapter is devoted to Spanish millenarianism and another to eschatological hopes in Latin America.

17.   Alexandre Cioranescu, *L'Avenir du Passé. Utopie et Littérature* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), 11. He highlights five different meanings of the word utopia: (1) the title of Thomas More's work; (2) works that have analogies with that of the English writer, and all those that describe an imaginary country organized in a different way; (3) as a synonym for the impossible; (4) following Karl Mannheim's contribution, utopia designates any orientation that transcends reality and breaks the bonds of the existing order; (5) utopian

method, which consists of representing a fictitious state of affairs as actually being realized.

18.  Christian Courtis, "El mundo sin barreras como utopía. El modelo de sociedad proyectado por la Convención sobre los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad," in *Los derechos humanos: La utopía de los excluidos*, ed. Miguel Ángel Ramiro Avilés and Patricia Cuenca Gómez (Madrid: Dykinson, 2010), 63–92.

19.  Krishan Kumar, *Utopianism* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992), 33.

20.  Raymond Trousson, *Historia de la literatura utópica: Viajes a países inexistentes* (Barcelona: Península, 1995), 26–27.

21.  W. B. Gallie, "Essentially Contested Concepts," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 56 (1955): 168–69.

22.  Norman S. Care, "On Fixing Social Concepts," *Ethics* 84, no. 1 (1973): 17.

23.  John N. Gray, "On the Contestability of Social and Political Concepts," *Political Theory* 5, no. 3 (1977): 332.

24.  Kumar, *Utopianism*, 20.

25.  Krishan Kumar, "*News from Nowhere*: The Renewal of Utopia," *History of Political Thought* 14, no. 1 (1993): 140.

26.  Peter G. Stillman, "'Nothing is, but what is not': Utopia as Practical Political Philosophy," in *The Philosophy of Utopia*, ed. Barbara Goodwin (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 17.

27.  Trousson, *Historia de la Literatura Utópica*, 43.

28.  Peter Kuon, "Le primat du littéraire. Utopie et Méthodologie," in *Per una definizione dell'Utopia*, ed. Nadia Minerva (Ravena: Longo Editore, 1992), 41.

29.  Cioranescu, *L'Avenir du Passé*, 36.

30.  Bertrand de Jouvenel, "La utopía para propósitos prácticos," in *Utopías y pensamiento utópico*, ed. Frank E. Manuel (Madrid: Espasa, 1980), 270.

31.  Darko Suvin, "Defining the Literary Genre of Utopia: Some Historical Semantics, some Genology, a Proposal and a Plea," *Studies in the Literary Genre* 6, no. 2 (1973): 123.

32.  Trousson, *Historia de la Literatura Utópica*, 43.

Sherryl Vint. *Science Fiction.*

The MIT Press Essential Knowledge Series. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2021. 224 pp., paperback, $18.95. ISBN 9780262539999.

*Reviewed by Dan Hassler-Forest, Utrecht University*