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Art as a specific field of human activities is characterised by its ability to disengage from reality and to create fictional situations and locations, and possible worlds. The creation of a new world can become an aim in itself, but more often it is only a by-product of that which is created – the story that is being narrated unavoidably needs a space for its activities and a location, in which these activities occur.

Introductions to the plots and beginnings of the stories, fairy-tales and novels can offer good examples. I am not aiming at an exhaustive overview of the material here, only to list some characteristic features:

- At the very beginning, the plot is put into an indefinite ‘other’ time and location. The typical examples are the beginnings of fairy-tales ‘Once upon a time...’, ‘A long time ago there was...’, the main characteristics of which are that the plot has not been positioned in the time and space of the reader/listener, but at the same time the chronotope of the story has still not been specified.
- The avoidance of a concrete time and location of the scene: for example, the story begins with the insight into the inner world and the state of mind of the character, but it is not clearly distinguished from the chronotope of the narrator. Such an introduction into the plot, however, requires some kind of specification of the character.
- Emphasis has been laid on the specification of the scene, which may be laid either in a fictional or a real space, ranging from a detailed description to single words creating a minimum location. The difference between these two is, naturally, not clear-cut; a fictional space may be based on a real place, experienced by the narrator, who has given it a fictional name. In most cases, such a

beginning refers to a temporal proximity of the narration and the narrated plot.

- Main attention has been focussed on the flow of time – the time of the plot has been specified ('In early spring...'), often it has been related with the time of narration ('Last week...'). Such sketching of the world of the work requires a certain distance between the story and the narrator.
- Both the time and the place of the plot are introduced. Just like in the previous cases, both of these may be more or less related with the world of the narrator, and they may be presented in a detailed or a more general way ('Early on a spring morning, a certain old gentleman was walking in the park of the town of N.'¹) Compared with the first point, the chronotope is more clearly specified here. We can also recall here the first sentence of the manuscript written by the office clerk Joseph Grand in Albert Camus's *Pest* as a symbolic act representing the creation, the work and an act.

The illusory potential of art can clearly be seen when reality happens, for some reason, to be unpleasant, and the way of escaping from it through fiction seems to be at least a partial solution. The illusory world can only exist in a person's consciousness, but very often it is mediated by art in the form of music, books, films or pictures (some chrestomatic examples could be the motif of the island of Cythera, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, or the frame narratives of *1001 Nights*.) The inclination to escapism and the ability to offer illusory protection against harsh reality does not, naturally, characterise only high art; mass culture often fills this task even more successfully. We could mention still another aspect – engaging with the arts, or any intellectual pastime can be both the means and the aim of disengaging from reality. The shaping of such ideal took place mostly during the periods of the Enlightenment and Romanticism. We can mention the societies, circles and brotherhoods of intellectuals – the artists and writers, who disengaged themselves from social life, such as the Barbizon School, the Nazarenes; and the Island of Lesbos, a villa, a summer home or a camp of young scientists as the sites not only of intellectual activities, but also a monastery.

The repetition of the motif of the island as a place of escape in both the direct and indirect sense is also characteristic of the phenomenon.

These three aspects: art as the creator of fictional worlds; art as an aid in escaping reality; and creative work as the aim of disengaging from reality are very

¹ M. H e i n s a a r, *Vanameeste näppaja*. [*Snatcher of Old Men*.] Tallinn: Tuum, 2001, p 9.

often intertwined and indistinguishable. Therefore, I shall draw them together into the expression *Art as a Retreat, as a Refuge*.

In a word, this is one of the main, but by no means obligatory functions of artistic creation, which has only seldom been highly valued by the artists themselves, as well as by the observers from outside art circles. An essential relation with the autonomy of art or with the concept of *l'art pour l'art* is obvious, but the stress is laid somewhere else – detachment from real life is not a case, but an objective. In this way, the function of a refuge can be seen as one of the possible extremes of art's autonomy. This is opposed by seeking the social function and the clear mission of art in society.

1.

The ability of art to create non-existent worlds seems, at least at the first glance, to relate closely to another *non-place* – Utopia,² but only at the first glance.

Classical utopias as the representatives of ideal model societies developed by a singular author have characteristically been very cautious of the creative arts, or even denied them.

The dream of an ideal state and the desire for a better world can be considered to be among the most pervading ideas in the history of human thought. Its earliest layers have been intertwined with mythology and religion. The development of classical utopias and their relations with other fabricated ideal worlds can be schematically represented on three levels.

I. Preliminary stories

(a) Irrational (mythological or religious) ideal places.

The ideality of these places was based upon the exceptionality of the inhabitants of their communities (the gods or other chosen, noble spirits; the different

² The word *utopia* is a witty wordplay of the coiner of the term Thomas More, which allows the word to be interpreted in two senses. 1. *ou* 'non' + *topos* 'place', 'a non-place, a place that does not exist, nowhere'; 2. *eu* 'good, beautiful' + *topos*, 'a good, beautiful place' (he refers to it in the poem *Utopia* at the end of the book: '...but really / Eutopia is my name: a land of happiness.' The popularity of *Utopia* soon gave a broader general meaning to the title, which is, together with its different derivatives, in active use even now. The habitual usage tends to coincide with the second meaning, having acquired the connotation of 'impossibility' (utopian ideas, utopist) from the first one.

(human) beings of the past or the future): golden era (*aetas aurea*), Olympus, Garden of Eden, the City of God – *civitas Dei*, etc.

This level is characterised by the fact that the ideal place cannot be reached by common mortals. A clear distinction has been made between this world and the other – the world of the common mortals and that of the divine. These two are divided by a boundary that cannot be crossed, or it can be crossed only once, and most often, irreversibly, under extreme conditions. Death can be a means of such a crossing; in this case the boundary is often depicted as a river or as a journey, from which it is impossible to return. In Genesis, the first human beings cross the border of the Garden of Eden in an opposite direction, but again, such a crossing is possible only once.

One of the subplots or sub-lines can be also the apocalypse, the stories about the destruction of the world, the so-called apocalyptic utopia, in which it is possible to achieve a new and better world through all-embracing and purging destruction.

(b) Second, we can add the Ancient treatments of society to this level. Foremost, we can mention Plato's dialogues *The Republic* and *The Laws*, as well as *Timaeus* and *Crito*, which use the models of utopia-like states as examples, and Aristotle's *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*.

II. Classical utopias

(a) Rational utopias – literature with a social background, striving for a relatively fixed aim. The general aim of such works is to depict the society of a fictional country, which is preferred to those existing in reality, and which is used to represent the social ideal of the author. In this case we mostly deal with a so-called ready-made ideal society, and less attention is paid to its creation and development. Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) is considered to be the first work of the classic genre of utopia, although similar ideas had been expressed by some earlier authors. The rational utopias are usually inhabited by common mortals; the boundary of an ideal society can be crossed, although with some difficulties. Separation from the rest of the world is mostly spatial. Generally, the classic utopian states are located in places that can be reached with difficulty, or in some geographical locations which have not yet been discovered; the favourite motif of such works is an unknown island.

(b) As a parallel phenomenon, we can add the worlds of literary fantasy, created

in the Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and the Modern times. They can have a common aim with rational utopias, namely – criticism of the contemporary society.

(c) We could add still one more related line of development: the architecture of the Renaissance, in which the creation of an ideal living place – a city as an organic whole – rises to the foreground (the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem is profaned; see, e.g. Eaton 2000). Most of the Utopias are also located in an urbane environment; More's 54 cities have all been built according to the same well-functioning plan.

III. Late utopias

(a) On this level, the divergence of literary and more pragmatic social utopias can be more clearly seen. In the practical life, the hope for a paradise on earth and for an ideal state can be connected with the colonisation of America; the New World seemed to offer a promising new beginning. As a new idea, a belief that an ideal society is not possible in a small and closed system is added to previous concepts (although an opposing idea of creating isolated communities still persists). This new idea is defined by Herbert George Wells in his *A Modern Utopia*, in which he writes that 'the whole planet is needed for a modern utopia' (Wells 1967: 21).

Consequently, the boundary between the real and the ideal can be crossed by certain changes in society – these can be either a revolution, changing the whole order of society, or the retreat of a small group of people to form a community. Utopian society becomes, thus, the goal of historical development, and its expected result; it cannot be found somewhere in an unknown rural locality in our contemporary time (see also Schaer 2000: 6–7). In any case, utopian development is characterised either by apocalyptic destruction of the old and the establishing of a new society as a 'clean slate' (see, e.g., Lotman 1999: 332), or, in a milder way, by settlement in some (so far) uninhabited territory (at least seemingly uninhabited, since the native peoples were often disregarded).

(b) The later science fiction shows some inclinations towards utopia. Here, the retreat is usually either temporal (the future society), or spatial and temporal (other planets). The earlier geographical separation disappears with the progress of geographical discoveries.

Temporal withdrawal can also be found in the mythological predecessors of

the utopias, but in that case, it was aimed at the past, at an ideal time, which had existed long ago, a golden age, etc. Some elements of the idealisation of the past continue in the modern cult of the Ancient time, and in the love of ruins that characterised Romanticism.

A new tendency in reality and in literature, related to utopian literature and developing in parallel with it, is escapism, the withdrawal from society and the idealisation of such a withdrawal. An island again proves to be the most suitable scene, (cf. with the Robinsonade, born in the 18th century, where the island becomes a characteristic of the genre). The villa of the Renaissance period, the retreat to the woods (e.g. Impivaara in Aleksis Kivi's *Seven Brothers*) and to the sea, to Arcadia, and also to the garden (as if to recall the much quoted final sentence of Voltaire's *Candide* 'but let us cultivate our garden', because the garden offered the only alternative 'on the earth' to the utopian Eldorado) all carry the same function. Travelling is one form of withdrawal; in such cases, it is the relation familiar-strange that forms the isolating border.

As dystopia is the inseparable 'wrong side' of utopia; so forced separation – through a school, cloister, prison, army – is to escapism. A new quality of an opposite sign – spiritual freedom – often grows out of forced isolation, and in such a way, forced isolation can serve the same purpose as escapism, although in a more severe tonality. The same can be seen in the relation dystopia–utopia. Dystopia is aimed at the analysis of society, too, and through the 'wrong side', a positive programme is often revealed – e.g., liberal democracy, in which personal freedoms are honoured.

Classic utopias are characterised by attempts to present a complete and exhaustive model of society, therefore, they have, whether they like it or not, to take a stand with respect to the works of creative art.

As it is characteristic of utopian literature, Thomas More pays much attention to architecture in his *Utopia* – he describes cities, dwellings and powerful temples. Both the architecture and the clothing of people are strictly unified; crafts and the art of building are highly developed, but they are not innovative and creative. The subject of the works of the Greek poets is raised, but philosophy, logic and mathematics seem to occupy a more important role. Less is known about other genres of art: we learn that the depiction of God was not allowed, but the causes of this prohibition were rather the existence of different religions on the island, and attempts to arrive at consensus and keep the peace (More

1885: 159). The depiction of humans was not prohibited and statues of worthy citizens were erected at the market place (More 1885: 134). Of other arts, more attention is paid to both secular music, listened to during supper and at leisure (More 1885: 98, 107, 122), and sacred music, occupying an important part in worship. It is interesting to note that the music of Utopians differs from the contemporary music of Raphael Hythlodæus or 'our' music: '...all their music, both vocal and instrumental, is adapted to imitate and express the passions, and is so happily suited to every occasion, that whether the subject of the hymn be cheerful or formed to soothe or trouble the mind, or to express grief or remorse, the music takes the impression of whatever is represented, affects and kindles the passions, and works the sentiments deep into the hearts of the hearers.' (More 1885: 161.)

Thus, since other ways of representation have lost their importance in Utopia, the mimetic function fully falls on music.

Neither can we find direct reference to literature and art as human occupations in Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627). Again, much attention is paid to public buildings, among which the pride of the island – Salomon's House, containing examples of all kinds of achievements in the arts and sciences – occupies the foremost place: 'For our ordinances and rites we have two very long and fair galleries. In one of these we place patterns and samples of all manner of the more rare and excellent inventions; in the other we place the statues of all principal inventors.' (Bacon 1885: 212.) Science has an essential and ruling position on the island, some kinds of artistic activities are also described, and books are mentioned as the sources of knowledge, but all this seems to be of utilitarian character. And again, the most important genre of art seems to be music – both the hymns devoted to gods, and the exceptional skills of using sounds to imitate all kinds of things (Bacon 1885: 209). We can see that here, too, music seems to assume, either consciously or not, the functions of other arts.

James Harrington's *The Commonwealth of Oceana* (1656) is of less narrative character, when compared to other utopias of the time, and no attention has been paid to the position of art in society. Still, when examining the budget of the state, we can find a line allotting considerable sums to the construction of the city, to parks, sculptures and other similar features. Two theatres and four poets also received financial support from the state budget (Harrington 1998).

Among the classic utopias, Tommaso Campanella has clearly devoted much more space to the creative arts in his *The City of the Sun* (1602, Campanella

1885), mentioning painting, sculpture, poetry, music and architecture among highly appreciated spheres of activities. In *The City of the Sun*, these arts are under the directorship of Wisdom and together with Science, they are treated as equal means of perceiving the world.

The art of building and city planning were on a high level in the City of the Sun too, but believably that the most interesting parts of the book are those containing the colourful examples of pictorial arts – the descriptions of murals. These paintings answered to a clear social subscription – they were study aids for people gaining education. Knowledge was represented pictorially in the City of the Sun, or in the form of a public museum. Again, art was utilitarian and the artists served the state.

Relatively little attention is paid to art in the later socialist utopias. The Marxist and Leninist classics also lacked a clear-cut aesthetic conception.

The best known and the most discussed subject is, undoubtedly, Plato's views on art in his description of an ideal state. In the beginning of the 10th book of the *Republic*, Plato mentions a prohibition against the practice of mimetic poetry (e.g. tragedy), and the notion of the mimetic nature of art is explained through the example of the painting as a multiple and ignorant mimesis, which cannot, therefore, even get close to the real essence and existence of things. The tragedy is an imitation, just like art is, and therefore, it cannot be used in the perception of truth (*Republic*, 595a–597e). Among the arts, only ecstatic hymns to the gods and the rulers were approved, and music, which partly also embodied epics (*Republic*, 376e–377a), had an important role in education. From a comparison of mimetic poetry and the art of painting many interpreters have deduced the existence of a prohibition against the practice of the latter. Still, the direct prohibition is spelled out nowhere in the *Republic*, and we can assume that utilitarian pictorial depiction of, for instance, heroes and gods, had its role in the Republic of Plato as well. In Plato's interpretations of aesthetics, poetry becomes a kind of a metonym for art. Against such a background it is easy to overlook a favourable attitude towards, for instance, music. The main reason for such abandonment of mimetic literature was the predefined ability of art to create illusory places. It is the denial of poetic art that admits to its role in influencing the human soul.

Many discussions have been held on the inconsistency of this point of view. Plato's own excellent writing skills and his ideas, expressed in his other dialogues

(e.g., *Symposium*, *Crito*, *Gorgias*, *Ion*, *Cratylus*) reflect his sharp sense of art. A changed and much more moderate attitude toward the arts can be found in the later, unfinished dialogue about the statehood, the *Laws*, in which the ways of representation, which are subjected to firm canons, and are, therefore, characteristic to a closed type of culture, are clearly preferred (*Laws*, 656d–656e).

But an important fact is that the same inconsistency is characteristic of utopias. Utopias use the ability of art to create non-existent fictional worlds as the means of founding utopian states. At the same time, we can find a certain element of self-destruction here – when art becomes a means of creating utopia, it unavoidably becomes utilitarian, and maybe it even signs its own death warrant. The role of art in a utopian view of society is either strictly ideological, or it may simply be banished to the background.

2.

Just the ability of art to create its own chronotope, and consequently, to give up real time and place, makes art unsuitable and even dangerous for a rational ideal state. It is characteristic that the issue of the function of art and the need to prove its existence has arisen namely in totalitarian and religious societies, which are subjected to one and the only idea. The right of art to exist has mostly been questioned in such societies.

Against the background of this conclusion we should examine Socialist Realism – one of the most influential totalitarian aesthetic programs of the 20th century.

Socialist Realism reached Estonia as a ready-made product in 1940, and since its final definition in 1934 the inner development of this canon has been minimal. The aesthetic conception of Socialist Realism can be expressed in three or four sentences; it has been easy to master and to swallow, just like the majority of Leninist and Stalinist dogmas.

Already from the first introduction of Socialist Realism, its main focus has been on only one point; other, e.g. formal and stylistic requirements of the dogma were presented in a much milder form and allowed the artists, considering their various backgrounds, more time to learn and adapt to them. This point was the connection with the contemporary time, i.e. keeping within a concrete and recognisable place and real time. Contemporaneity had to be expressed through the contents of the work, through the plot. Art was not allowed to be separate

from the rest of society, to ‘mind its own business’, let alone to create its own independent chronotope.

This requirement was directly aimed against the function of art – art as a refuge – which has been taken as the point of departure for this article. While this function is characterised by art’s striving to be free of a concrete place in space and time (to be above space and time, to be eternal), Socialist Realism undoubtedly emphasised just the opposite. The place, and above all, the time had to be recognisable and concrete.

This requirement existed, naturally, already in the first canonised document of Socialist Realism – the statutes of the Writers’ Union of the SSSR, founded in 1934, which stated that Socialist Realism requires of the writer the ‘truthful representation of historical and concrete reality in their revolutionary development’ and it ‘must be connected with the task of ideological reshaping and re-educating of the working people in the spirit of socialism’.³ The same wording was included in the statutes of all artists’ unions as a compulsory objective of the whole Soviet culture.

In Estonia, this requirement for place and time was most completely worded by Johannes Semper in 1945, noticeably exceeding the already established dogma by his maybe too far-reaching and clear explanation: ‘Further, we must make a note of the fact that, compared with the previous era, time has penetrated Estonian Soviet art, if we can put it this way. The art of the previous era wanted to stay outside the concrete time, indeed, sometimes even outside the concrete space. Such retreat from time is alien to Soviet art. Just temporally concrete events and persons are what interest the Soviet artist more than nameless events or nameless persons or places.’ (Semper 1945.)

It is obvious that the requirement of staying within a certain time was important, considering the objectives of Socialist Realism; to confirm it, we could read the notes of the artist Yuri Sobolev about himself and Ülo Sooster from a much later time: ‘We had problems with time and space. We were both looking for a lost time. [---] The discontinuity of discreet nature of time was also a source of one of our *spatial* problems: we were living in an isolated, curiously indeterminate space. [---] Normally we were in a third place: on a fictitious island in a virtual space in another country. We were yearning to find our organic

³ *Первый всесоюзный съезд советских писателей 1934. Стенографический отчет.* Москва: Государственное издательство ‘Художественная литература’, 1934, p. 716.

place in time, removing ourselves from the one that was occurring around us.' (Sobolev 1996: 12, 14.)

In the case of Socialist Realism, it seems that the requirement for keeping within the contemporary time can easily be overthrown by arguing that the artists never depicted the real contemporary time. Thus, a work of art that would ideally match the canon would, rather, be an example of the function of a refuge, representing an escape from the still disturbing reality into a fictional idyll of Socialism. But the requirement for contemporality was dialectical in a Marxist way; it was explained by saying that the contemporary time was, actually, also the future, that the contemporary time had to be positive and that Socialist Realism did not depict the shortcomings of the present, but turned its attention to the typical, meaning the future. Otherwise, it could not fulfil its educational function. In such a way, Socialist Realism does, indeed, create a chronotope that differs from its contemporary time. But the requirement for temporality still stands. Its main and only aim is to rule out the appearance of freely flowing illusions; the world of a work of art can be born only according to certain fixed rules. The issue was made even more difficult by the fact that, differently from other societies of regulated culture, here the rules were, in principle, never explained. The real contemporality or aim of art was attainable only through an inner vision, through spiritual and religious oneness with the party, or more exactly, with Stalin's will, which could happen only through total, ecstatic love. Such mystical ritual has been thoroughly described. In Estonia, this has been skilfully demonstrated by Jaan Undusk, using the example of Juhan Smuul (Undusk 1998); the same subject has been treated in a widely known and much discussed book *Total art of Stalinism (Gesamtkunstwerk Stalin)* by Boris Groys (Groys 1988).

Groys proceeded from the idea that, differing from the earlier chaotically developed societies, the post-revolutionary Russia aimed at creating a beautiful new world. In such a way the creators of this world, the rulers of the party, became artists of a kind, who exercised their art upon the whole world.

But Groys moves still farther, arguing that the Stalinist creation of a new world – the building of Socialism – was, actually, the triumph of an avant-garde art project. Groys calls it the aesthetical and political revolution of Stalin. The

connecting link with the avant-garde was created by LEF-group⁴, whose principle was to give up art and start shaping the whole of the new society. The avant-garde aesthetic became politicised, and the counter reaction to it was the aesthetisation of party politics.

This brilliant train of thought still contains several arguable points, two of which are more important than the others. First, without any explanation, Groys calls both the creation of the Socialist state and Socialist Realism a Stalinist art project. Both of these seemed to have been the continuations of one and the same idea of the avant-garde. But Socialist Realism was only one aspect of society, and as such, was intrinsically full of conflicts.

I have mentioned above that the aesthetic of Socialist Realism can be defined in a couple of sentences. But these sentences are really full of brilliant simplicity, both in what they vocalise and in what they silently establish. Since the canon of Socialist Realism was one and the same for all genres of art, there is no need to separate these genres. Dialectic requirements expect of the work of art that its realism should truthfully reflect the concrete and individualised contemporary time, and at the same time, also reflect the typical features of the future. Both the perception of reality on the similar basis with science and the education of the builders of Socialism are expected. The contents of the work had to be in the spirit of the party and they could have been featured in a national form. Such requirements create, together with the repressive apparatus of the state, a truly paranoid situation and an unsolvable task worthy of the Sphinx. The dialectics of possible mistakes was especially inventive: on the one hand, there was the danger of lapsing into formalism (the individualising and contemporary features were missing), or, on the other hand, of lapsing into naturalism (the typical was missing); there were the dangers of being cosmopolitan or bourgeois and nationalistic – in a word, in such a situation it was impossible to avoid mistakes.

The artists make two mistakes at the same time. On the one hand, they mechanically translate the previous formalist approach, where the theme was marginal and the spatial and colour-specific solutions were the priorities, into the socialist subjects. On the other hand, the vulgarising and soulless naturalism, used only to describe the title of the work in an artistic form, poses another danger to the artists who have been trained along the methods of formalism. (Eesti kunsti... 1945.)

And:

⁴ 'Left Front of the Arts'

Only one step separates formalism from naturalism. As a rule, the elements of formalism intertwine with naturalism. These two essentially extreme styles find a major common point – their art is indifferent towards life and the artist is indifferent towards the content of his work... (Tamm 1946.)

Using such dialectics of content and form, a wonderful self-destroying mechanism was established for art and literature, and probably, for music too. If we wonder, where such development would have proceeded under slightly different historical conditions (e.g. Stalin's death ten years later), we could suppose that literature and art would have entirely perished. New works of art would have been replaced by colour reproductions (the spreading of which was repeatedly demanded), and only a couple of canonical poet laureates would have been sufficient. In literature, this destructive potential worked very effectively, and in prose, the aim had almost been achieved in 1950–1953. Again, poetry was the most preferred genre and it is quite easy to see its relations with Plato's hymns to the gods, Christian songs of praise, etc. In similarity with Plato's *Republic*, all the rest was simply excluded, not by direct orders, but by a much more efficiently working mechanism. And they were excluded under the cynical dialectics and the slogan manifesting the flourishing of arts (this is where I think that Groys is mistaken, having believed that the slogan reflects reality). The only arts that would have persisted were architecture and film, maybe also theatre, but all other professional arts would have been replaced by amateur activities – by a gang of unprofessional copyists. The Stalinist art project was, thus, not iconoclastic, but self-destructing.

Another questionable point in Boris Groys's train of thought is his connecting of the creation of the new Socialist society with the avant-garde's claims of creating a new world. If, according to Groys, Stalin was the inheritor of LEF's art project, surely we should first determine whether LEF's project really was an art project?

This question arises because of the earlier utopias, as well as because of the totalitarian or religious closed societies that have really existed. The position of art is amazingly similar in such societies. Just as in such societies it is sensed that art is dangerous to the regime; in a milder form such a perception is expressed by discussions on the art's functions (social, educational) that justify its existence, the more severe form includes the normative regulation of art or, in extreme, iconoclasm. Such experience does not give an excuse for seeing Stalinist art only

as an unfinished project of modernism (although Groys draws a parallel to Nazi art as well), but it really connects one ambition of modernism with revolutionary Marxism.

When art actually starts to change society, it is either an illusion, or it has ceased to be art. The difference, although a very slight one, is undoubtedly there. There is also the wish to create illusions, not to deal with the real life, to pretend, knowing that it is not real.

In the same way, it is possible to distinguish between the utopia of modernism and the utopia, which is really carried into life – the latter is unavoidably destructive to art; art can be an auxiliary (like literature in writing down the utopia), but it cannot carry it into life. In the first case, the ambition to change society is still *just as*, just as real, illusory. When this *just as* has been overcome, art in its direct sense disappears, it becomes a utilitarian activity, and this is exactly what happened to LEF.

At the same time, we cannot discard Groys's claim that Stalinism is also an aesthetic project. This aestheticism is conditioned by the persistence of the category of beauty: the subjecting of nature to man to make the world more beautiful. This relation is especially confirmed by magnificent city plans, but also by endless parks, avenues of fruit trees and drainage systems in marshes. In such a system, art is unnecessary indeed, or if it was necessary, then only in the form of the Platonist ecstatic experience of unconscious communion with the godly element, or in the form of purely utilitarian pictorial culture. Such a notion is similar to several early Christian aesthetic notions, which totally accepted the perfect and godly beauty, but held art as imperfect and apart from real beauty. Beauty and art are held apart in modernism, too, but on a different basis, in the belief that beauty is imperfect and lacks prestige.

Here is the key to the solving of Groys's contradiction – Stalinism is, naturally, an aesthetic project, but it has ceased being art. Modernism, the predecessor of Stalinism, had already separated art from beauty, and Stalinism did it once again in its own totalitarian and religious way, but under an opposite sign.

3.

When in most utopias art is either totally banished or made utilitarian (images created for educational purpose, the statues of gods or statesmen, or some other similar functions), the position of architecture and city construction is clearly

contrasted to this. Almost all creators of utopias have described utopian cities, especially, the stately buildings; in most cases, buildings are unified but functional, and the writer (or protagonist) finds them beautiful and technologically perfect. Against this background we can see the development of a different trend – the architectural way of thinking emerging in the Renaissance, where stress is laid on the creating of an ideal living space, an ideal city as an organic unity. ‘The majority of utopian societies are imagined as residing in urban environments, the cities themselves indicating humankind’s domination of the forces of nature...’ (Eaton 2000: 119.) But when the structure and the model of society occupied the primary position in utopian literature, then the literature of the ideal city focussed upon the city itself (Eaton 2000: 121). The organic unity of the state and the city proceeded from the polis of Ancient Greece. The Renaissance gave an impulse to the flourishing of ideal cities and utopias, and the idea that the city and society can be intellectually planned became prevalent only then. The majority of ideal cities were designed according to a rational and geometrical plan.

Thus, at least from the beginning of Renaissance up to the present day, we can see that architectural and social utopias are related to each other, and besides an island, also a city becomes a central topos, chosen already by Plato for the location of his ideal states. I am not going to speculate about the figurative similarity of the city and the island; the main associations are based on the boundaries and historical closure of the city (the city wall of the Middle Ages). But even the utopias located on islands often contain polises.

A fictional island is naturally the favourite location of classic utopias. Thomas More’s *Utopia* near South America used to be a peninsula, which King Utopus had had cut off from the mainland with a canal (1516), the *New Atlantis* (1627) of Francis Bacon was located on the island of Bensalem, James Harrington’s *Oceana* (1656) had been built on the island of Oceana and Johann Valentin Andrae’s *Christianopolis* (1619) on the island of Capharsalama.

The island and the city find a unique organic unity in Tommaso Campanella’s *The City of the Sun* (1637), and its description renders the idea of an island: ‘The greater part of the city is built upon a high hill, which rises from an extensive plain, but several of its circles extend for some distance beyond the base of the hill, which is of such a size that the diameter of the city is upward of two miles, so that its circumference becomes about seven.’ (Campanella 1882: 217.)

The image of an island is seconded by the circle-based plan of the earlier utopian cities: a market square, surrounded by temples is located in the centre of the model city of Plato's *Law*s (*Law*s, 778c); the concentric walls of the City of the Sun are, naturally, especially characteristic of the image. Vitruvius in his *De architectura* – the only completely preserved treatment of architecture of the Ancient time – also recommended a radial scheme, because of weather conditions (winds) and other considerations (Bk. I, Ch. 5–6).

The contour of an archetypal island also is quite similar to a circle, since the circle is undoubtedly one of the most effective images for visualising closedness. Besides the circle, the square appears as a successful ground plan (see also Gervereau 2000: 357–361). The capital of More's Utopia, the city of Amaurotum, is of almost a square contour (More 1885: 92), and surrounded by a high and thick wall.

The island is one of the most clearly defined surface forms. Similarly to other core notions of a natural language, this word bears a heavy figurative burden, but we can clearly distinguish such characteristic features as 'seclusion' and 'confinement'. An island as a scene of action creates a kind of a conflict or a paradox – at the same time, it is closed and obstructing to traffic, and unclosed and open to winds – offering a conflict of freedom and restrictions. The sea can unite (smugglers, refugees leaving by boats) as well as separate (if you have no boat, or cannot navigate).

The island is, thus, well suited to characterise the ambivalence and convertibility of closed–open spatial relations: 'Some doubly-closed space, such as a hideout under the floor or above the ceiling, a ship's cabin or a coal bunker, can be the only place that permits the state of psychical openness...' (Kalda 2000: 331.) Compared with other closed spaces – rooms, buildings, small towns and others – the island has a specific meaning. If a scene is set on an island, a powerful chain of connotations will be evoked. The island can be unattainable and a symbol of longing; as a scene, it can make a mess of or create a new order in the interpersonal relations of the characters who have gone there.

One of the most interesting questions concerning the culture and its conditionally specified parts is the problem of openness–closedness. Specification and categorisation, no matter how conventional they are, require, and also condition, a certain closedness. The figures of the spheres of art and literary circles mostly interconnect with each other and are aware of the problems of their own realms.

Other issues may be of interest only depending on personal interest, inclinations and position.

The identity of 'border cases' (or 'border figures') – artists who are also writers, architects who write short stories or paint, the representatives of academic spheres, who write metatexts, but also write poetry – is often either shaky or with a clear dominant. The life and activities of those, who locate straight upon such borders, who do not strictly belong to either of these realms, is undoubtedly more difficult, but at the same time, they may act as Lotmanesque translation mechanisms.

Hypothetically we may suppose that the more closed is the type of culture, the less does it contain such border cases and border figures. The comparison of the events following the breakdown of the Soviet regime in the 1990s with the deep Soviet period supports such supposition (see, e.g. Sarapik 2001: 295–299). Already the system of the professional unions of creative persons of that time guaranteed the closedness of these realms; belonging to one of these unions cemented the person's creative identity.

Proceeding from the statement that absolutely closed systems are not possible, the island still offers one of the most characteristic and closest equivalents to a closed system. Naturally, the conclusions drawn above depend on the distance between the island and other inhabited areas, as well as on its size (Robinson's island versus England, the island of Ruhnu versus the island of Saaremaa). In a semiotic sense, the island functions as a semiconductor of a kind, openness can be one-directional, spiritual and informational freedom can exist due to the closedness of the island, for example, due to its detachment from the mainland (cf. the unique role of the islanders throughout Estonian history). In the case of utopian islands, the one-directional openness can be a conscious and vital decision. The classical utopias are characterised by the aspect that their inhabitants were well informed about the problems of the outer world, but they kept themselves apart from it. (For example, the government of scientists of the state described by Francis Bacon sent out two ships full of ambassadors every 12 years, who had to become familiar with the inventions, production, arts and sciences of the outer world and bring back books, instruments, patterns, etc.) The island is a metaphorical example of both the closed system and the refuge, and can well be used as an equivalent of several cultural phenomena of a totalitarian system.

4.

Now we can turn back to the differences between utopia and the function of art as a refuge or a retreat. They both create illusory places, and the main difference here is the flow of time. The time of the work of art flows differently from that of reality, and in a somewhat distorted way; it may stop entirely, let alone the possible achronies of the fictional world. The time of the classic utopia is linear like real time, lacking the activities, which could help to sense its flow. Continuous real time also needs some discrete points and events, and these features form the basis for the formation of narrative time. Therefore, the clear direction of the linearity of utopian time gets lost – the development and process disappear and time becomes cyclical and repetitive, just like mythical time. Days, years, births and deaths may alternate, but no significant change occurs. Although it may seem that time flows as it usually does, it is still a condition, or at least, a diachronic cross-section of society. It is not possible to improve much upon the already attained ideal.

Both the utopian and the written, linear and changeless time are characterised by a unique paradox – the unity of the normal time and the written time. Utopia is a society without time, more specifically, there are no events that would fix the flow of time. There is a certain similarity between utopia and uchrony (see also Touraine 2000: 20, 25).

A mythical, but also a utopian ideal is expressed by the concept of everlasting present time. But a specifying feature of such a present is that it does not overlap with our present, i.e. the reader's present. This everlasting present is located in some other time; it is something that is not happening now – these are the things that the paradigm of a normal language can only express by negation. Some exceptions can be found in children's language; for example, there are certain four-year-old twins, who categorise all events that do not occur 'now' under two different expressions. The girl uses the word 'the day after tomorrow', the boy – 'yesterday morning' – for them, it is not important whether the event has occurred in the past or is occurring in the present. Such perpetuity and unchangeability is characteristic not only of mythical worldview – undoubtedly it is also a much broader principle that can be applied to all kinds of ideals.

We should also recall Mikhail Bakhtin's chronotope of idyll, which is characterised by the ties the characters form with their location (home), and with the similarity of the time of the idyll with the time of folklore. Idyll develops in its

own small spatially limited world, its ties with the outer world are not important. The plot of the idyll corresponds to this: 'According to the rule, idyll does not acknowledge characters, who are alien to its world.' (Bahtin 1987: 161.)

The utopian society is based on the stability of the created model society and also on the fear of its disappearance – therefore it is usually secluded from the rest of the world. Utopia does not aim at the activities, which could distort the habitual flow of time. This is characteristic only of dystopias and literary utopias, the objective of which is wider than the presentation of social models. A catalyst, an overbalancing element alien to the society, which unleashes potential events and also points out the weaknesses of the fictitious ideal is especially characteristic to antiutopias. For example, in his *Brave New World* Aldous Huxley changes the flow of normal time by finding and bringing to society a savage and Linda – the beings that grow old. In Karl Ristikivi's *Island of Miracles* (*Imede saar*, 1964), the role of such disturbing element is filled by the prince's ship.

This is a kind of a paradox – utopian society, idyll and paradise are conditions, but they are characterised by unavoidable quasi-stability, the potential destruction or fear of such destruction. On the other hand, this can be connected with any fear of destruction here and now (fear of the invasion of barbarians or of World War III). Human thinking is eternally balancing between two extremes – the dreams of a better world and the fears that the existing world may get worse.

This statement could be overthrown by a truth as natural as this – humans are continuously striving for something better, for some imaginary final goal. Yuri Lotman has put it in the following way: 'Human behaviour always has some meaning to it. This means that human activities require the existence of some goal. But the notion of a goal unavoidably contains the idea that an event has a certain ending. The striving of human beings to attribute the idea and goal to the activities and events requires the breaking of uninterrupted reality into some conditional segments.' (Lotman 2001: 181.)

Lotman's writings on cultural typology from his earlier, structuralist period are characteristically based on a relatively distinct difference between the cyclical (mythical) and the linear (modern), which is connected with other binary oppositions.

The gradual withdrawal of Lotman's later writings from the distinct oppositions and closed (model) systems, (he has clearly stated this in his article 'On Semiosphere', 1984), inevitably leads to the confession that the cyclical and the

linear are, rather, the continuously effective impulses that influence the general development of culture, than the actually existing realisations: 'The essential duality of human culture is related to its innermost core – to the fact that the linear directedness and cyclical repeatedness are conflictually connected with each other. [...] In reality, they are constantly changing places. Both the cyclical and the dynamical processes are equally real.' (Lotman 1999: 163.)

The utopian (idyllic) yearning for a condition, the fear of losing the existing and the human striving for the better can be related to a similar duality.

I have now defined the two preconditions required for utopia – it is limited and it is a condition, or in other words, it lacks development and also the perceptible flow of time. Both of these claims are disputable. I could point out two well-known and significantly different views. First, Karl Mannheim's differentiation between ideology and utopia, and second, Frederic Jameson's definition of utopia as a boundary phenomenon between modernism and postmodernism.

Karl Mannheim (*Ideologie und Utopie*, 1929 – Mannheim 1970), whose goal is to find a clear distinction between ideology and utopia, treats the latter as a continuous spiritual striving, a dynamical force aimed at the breaking of the stationary state of the current ideology. Utopia is the expression of the ideas of the lower classes, having the function of social criticism. But in the case of such distinction, ideology would be stationary, and utopian thinking would be related to progress and change. For all that, utopia itself is not progress, but an objective of the progress that does not exist in reality. Utopian thinking can thus be examined as the constant alternation of conditions, as a discrete sequence and again we have to face its quasi-stability.

The second questionable point can be deduced from Fredric Jameson's treatment of utopia. Utopia as a condition, and the idea of modern progress as the striving to achieve this condition, as described above, clearly corresponds to, e.g. the differentiation between the cyclic nature and linearity of culture, much analysed by Yuri Lotman, and by self-analysis, and at the same time, it corresponds to their inherent relationship. Jameson, seemingly proceeding from the same principle, opposes the modernist and postmodernist models of society to each other. One of the basic ideas for Jameson's differentiation between modernism and postmodernism concerns the implications that modernist thinking is directed to temporality (including the idea of progress and the importance of memory), and postmodernist thinking deals with the spatial matters. 'A certain

spatial turn has often seemed to offer one of the more productive ways of distinguishing postmodernism from modernism proper, whose experience of temporality – existential time, along with deep memory – it is henceforth conventional to see as a dominant of the high modern.’ (Jameson 1991: 154). The great spatial projects of modernism have rather been connected with mnemonic unity than with the discontinuity of spatial experience. According to Jameson, the main characteristics of postmodern treatment of space are the fading of boundaries, synchronism and omnipresence of action, and a certain cognisable unity. Contrary to that, modern space – the city or a construction are undivided, limited and clear-cut, and Jameson relates them rather to temporal characteristics, such as reminiscences and memory.

Utopia, which is a rather vague, but much used concept for Jameson, has been defined as ‘...spatial matter that might be thought to know a potential change in fortunes in so spatialized a culture as the postmodern; but if this last is as dehistoricized and dehistoricizing as I sometimes claim here, the synaptic chain that might lead the Utopian impulse to expression becomes harder to localize.’ (Jameson 1991: XVI.)

Consequently, although Jameson treats utopias as border phenomena between modernism and postmodernism, which became especially popular in the 1960s, we can still see an inconsistency of a kind here. Jameson admits the spatiality of utopia, but he does not touch upon its temporality or limitedness. For him, utopia is rather an impulse, a further development of Mannheim’s ideas than a social model. Utopian thought is thus arresting the temporality of modernism. While adding the indisputable spatial limitedness of utopia to it, we should also add, according to Jameson’s logic, time and memory.

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Kokkuvõte

Artikli lähtehüpoteesiks on üks kunsti (selle laiemas tähenduses) võimalikke funktsioone: võime irduda tegelikkusest, luua fiktsionaalseid olukordi ja paiku. See võib olla eesmärgiks omaette, kuid enamasti on see lihtsalt üks kunstiteose paratamatu aspekt – luua esitatavate sündmuste toimumiskoht ja -aeg. Seda funktsiooni käsitletakse kahes taustsüsteemis. Esimeseks on klassikaline utopiakirjandus, mille loodud ühiskondi iseloomustab üldjuhul kunstiloomingule omistatav teisejärguline roll. Teiseks on sotsrealismi kaanon, mille põhipostulaadid – nõue püsida konkreetses ajas ja kohas – olid suunatud otseselt pelgupaiga-funktsiooni vastu.

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