
**The Utopian Function of Art
and Literature**

Selected Essays

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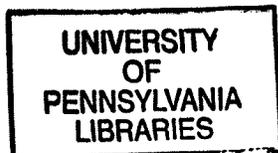
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**Something's Missing:
A Discussion between Ernst
Bloch and Theodor W. Adorno
on the Contradictions of
Utopian Longing**

Horst Krüger (moderator): Today the word 'utopia' does not have a good sound to it. It has been depreciated and is used primarily in a negative sense to mean "utopian." There is something anachronistic about our theme and our term as well.

Theodor W. Adorno: If I may be allowed to say something first, even though I may not be the correct person to begin, since my friend Ernst Bloch is the one mainly responsible for restoring honor to the word 'utopia' in his early work *The Spirit of Utopia (Geist der Utopie)*, I would like to remind us right away that numerous so-called utopian dreams—for example, television, the possibility of traveling to other planets, moving faster than sound—have been fulfilled. However, insofar as these dreams have been realized, they all operate as though the best thing about them had been forgotten—one is not happy about them. As they have been realized, the dreams themselves have assumed a peculiar character of sobriety, of the spirit of positivism, and beyond that, of boredom. What I mean by this is that it is not simply a matter of presupposing that what really is has limitations as opposed to that which has infinitely imaginable possibilities. Rather, I mean something concrete, namely, that one sees oneself almost always deceived: the fulfillment of the wishes takes something away from the substance of the wishes, as in the fairy tale where the farmer is granted three wishes, and, I believe, he wishes his wife to have a sausage on her nose and then must use the second wish to have the sausage removed from her nose. In other words, I mean that one can watch television today, look at things that are far away, but instead of the wish-image providing access to the erotic utopia, one sees in the

best of circumstances some kind of more or less pretty pop singer, who continues to deceive the spectator in regard to her prettiness insofar as she sings some kind of nonsense instead of showing it, and this song generally consists in bringing together "roses" with "moonlight" in harmony. Above and beyond this one could perhaps say in general that the fulfillment of utopia consists largely only in a repetition of the continually same 'today.' In other words, when it means for Wilhelm Busch "it's also beautiful somewhere else, and here I am at any rate," then this word begins to assume a horrifying meaning today in the realization of technological utopias, namely, that "and here I am at any rate" also takes possession of the "somewhere else," where the great Mister Pief*¹ with the great perspective has wished himself to be.

Krüger: Mr. Bloch, do you also believe that the depreciation of the term 'utopia' is connected to—how shall I put it?—'the perfection of the technological world?'

Ernst Bloch: Yes and no—it has something to do with it. The technological perfection is not so complete and stupendous as one thinks. It is limited only to a very select number of wish dreams. One could still add the very old wish to fly. If I recall correctly, Dehmel² wrote a poem concerning this in which he said, "And to be as free as the birds"—the wish is in there, too. In other words, there is a residue. There is a great deal that is not fulfilled and made banal through the fulfillment—regardless of the deeper viewpoint that each realization brings a melancholy of fulfillment with it. So, the fulfillment is not yet real or imaginable or postulatable without residue. But it is not only this that brings about the depreciation of utopia. Incidentally, I believe that this depreciation is very old—the slogan "That's merely utopian thinking" reduced as depreciation to "castle in the clouds," to "wishful thinking" without any possibility for completion, to imagining and dreaming things in a banal sense—this depreciation is very old, and it is not our epoch that has brought it about. I do not know for sure, but it may be that our epoch has brought with it an 'upgrading' of the utopian—only it is not called this anymore. It is called 'science fiction' in technology; it is called grist to one's mill in the theology, in which the "principle of hope" that I have

* Chapter notes, which are cited by superior Arabic numerals, appear at the chapter's end.

treated with great emphasis plays a role. It begins to play a role optatively with the "If only it were so," which overtakes the role of reality—something is really so and nothing else. All this is no longer called utopian; or if it is called utopian, it is associated with the old social utopias. But I believe that we live not very far from the topos of utopia, as far as the contents are concerned, and less far from utopia. At the very beginning Thomas More designated utopia as a place, an island in the distant South Seas. This designation underwent changes later so that it left space and entered time. Indeed, the utopians, especially those of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, transposed the wishland more into the future. In other words, there is a transformation of the topos from space into time. With Thomas More the wishland was still ready, on a distant island, but I am not there. On the other hand, when it is transposed into the future, not only am I not there, but utopia itself is also not with itself. This island does not even exist. But it is not something like nonsense or absolute fancy; rather it is not *yet* in the sense of a possibility; *that* it could be there if we could only do something for it. Not only if we travel there, but *in that* we travel there the island utopia arises out of the sea of the possible—utopia, but with new contents. I believe that in *this* sense utopia has not at all lost its validity in spite of the terrible banalization it has suffered and in spite of the task it has been assigned by a society—and here I would agree with my friend Adorno—that claims to be totally affluent and now already classless.

Adorno: Yes, I support very much what you have said, and I want to use the objection that you have implicitly raised to correct myself a little. It was not my intention to make technology and the sobriety that is allegedly connected to technology responsible for the strange shrinking of the utopian consciousness, but it appears that the matter concerns something much more: it refers to the opposition of specific technological accomplishments and innovations to the totality—in particular, to the social totality. Whatever utopia is, whatever can be imagined as utopia, this is the transformation of the totality. And the imagination of such a transformation of the totality is basically very different in all the so-called utopian accomplishments—which, incidentally, are all really like you say: very modest, very narrow. It seems to me that what people have lost subjectively in regard to consciousness is very simply the capability to imagine the totality as

something that could be completely different. That people are sworn to this world as it is and have this blocked consciousness vis-à-vis possibility, all this has a very deep cause, indeed, a cause that I would think is very much connected *exactly* to the proximity of utopia, with which you are concerned. My thesis about this would be that all humans deep down, whether they admit this or not, know that it would be possible or it could be different. Not only could they live without hunger and probably without anxiety, but they could also live as free human beings. At the same time, the social apparatus has hardened itself against people, and thus, whatever appears before their eyes all over the world as attainable possibility, as the evident possibility of fulfillment, presents itself to them as radically impossible. And when people universally say today what was once reserved only for philistines in more harmless times, "Oh, that's just utopian; oh, that's possible only in the land of Cockaigne. Basically that shouldn't be like that at all," then I would say that this is due to the situation compelling people to master the contradiction between the evident possibility of fulfillment and the just as evident impossibility of fulfillment only in *this* way, compelling them to identify themselves with this impossibility and to make this impossibility into their own affair. In other words, to use Freud, they "identify themselves with the aggressor" and say that *this should* not be, whereby they feel that it is precisely *this* that *should be*, but they are prevented from attaining it by a wicked spell cast over the world.

Krüger: Professor Bloch, I would like to ask the following question: What is actually the content of utopias? Is it happiness? Is it fulfillment? Is it—a word that has just come up in our discussion—simply freedom? What is actually hoped for?

Bloch: For a long time utopias appeared exclusively as social utopias: dreams of a better life. The title of Thomas More's book is *De optimo statu rei publicae deque nova insula Utopia*, or *On the Best Kind of State and the New Island Utopia*. The "optima res publica"—the best state—is set by Thomas More as a goal. In other words, there is a transformation of the world to the greatest possible realization of happiness, of social happiness. Nor is it the case that the utopias were without an "itinerary" or "time schedule." With regard to their content, utopias are dependent on social conditions. Thomas More, who lived during the period when British imperialism was beginning, during the Eli-

zabethan period, set liberal conditions for the feeling among his islanders. One hundred years later, during the time of Philip II and the Spanish domination of Italy, during the atmosphere of the Galileo Trial,³ Campanella conceived a countermodel to freedom in his Sun State. He said that all conditions could only be brought to order if the greatest possible order reigned, if everything is "patched up," as the extremely sensible and well-known expression puts it. But the goal of More and Campanella was always the realm of conscious dreaming, one that is more or less objectively founded or at least founded in the dream and not the completely senseless realm of daydreaming of a better life. In addition, the technological utopias made their first imprint in Campanella's work and then most clearly in Bacon's *Nova Atlantis*. His 'Templum Salomonis' is the anticipation of a completed Technical University, in which there are monstrous inventions, a complete program of inventions. Yet, there is still a much older level of utopias that we should not forget, that *we least of all* should not forget—the fairy tale. The fairy tale is not only filled with social utopia, in other words, with the utopia of the better life and justice, but it is also filled with technological utopia, most of all in the oriental fairy tales. In the fairy tale "The Magic Horse," from the *Arabian Nights*, there is even a lever that controls the up and down of the magic horse—this is a "helicopter." One can read the *Arabian Nights* in many places as a manual for inventions. Bacon addressed this and then set himself off from the fairy tale by saying that what *he* means, the real magic, relates to the oldest wish-images of the fairy tale as the deeds of Alexander relate to the deeds of King Arthur's Round Table. Thus, the content of the utopian changes according to the social situation. In the nineteenth century the connection to the society at that time can be seen clearly, most clearly in the works of Saint-Simon and Fourier, who was a great, exact, and sober analyst. He prophesied the coming of monopoly as early as 1808 in his book *Théorie des quatre mouvements*. In other words, in this case it is a negative utopia that is there, too. The content changes, but an invariant of the direction is there, psychologically expressed so to speak as longing, completely without consideration at all for the content—a longing that is the pervading and above all only honest quality of all human beings. Now, however, the questions and qualifications begin: What do I long for as optimal? Here one must "move out" of the "home base" (*Stammhaus*) of the utopias, namely the social utopias, on ac-

count of the totality, as you say, in order to see the *other* regions of utopia that do not have the name “technology.” There is architecture that was never built but that was designed, wish architecture of great style. There is theater architecture, which was cheaply set up with cardboard and did not cost much when money was lacking and technology was not far advanced. In the Baroque Age, most of all in the Viennese Baroque Theater, there were tremendous buildings that could never be inhabited because they were built out of cardboard and illusion, but they nevertheless made an appearance. There are the medical utopias, which contain nothing less than the elimination of death—a completely foolish remote goal. But then there is something sober, like the elimination and relief of pain. Now, that is in truth much easier and has been accomplished with the invention of anesthesia. The goal is not only the healing of sickness, but *this*, too, is to be achieved—that people are healthier after an operation than they were before. In other words, there is a reconstruction of the organism in exactly the same way as there is a reconstruction of the state. Above all there is, as I said at the beginning, the utopian in religion. This is indeed the divine realm, that which appears at the end, or that which announces, that which the Messiah, which Christ brings—distant wish-images, with tremendous content and great profundity, which appear here, so that, I believe, one must also look at the social utopias and at what resounds in them and is set in motion by these wish-images. However, these kinds of wish-images can be discussed individually according to the degree to which present conditions allow for their realization—in other words, in space, in the topos of an objective-real possibility. The possibility is not treated poorly as a ‘stepchild’ among the categories for nothing and also not clearly named—the possibility . . .

Adorno: . . . even Hegel treats this poorly.

Bloch: Yes, even Hegel treats this poorly. He had to treat it poorly on account of this old notion: There is nothing possible that is not real. If it were not real, it would not be possible. In other words, the possibility is absolutely a subjective-reflective category in Hegel’s writings.⁴

Adorno: That’s why it gets a “slap in the face.”

Bloch: And it gets a “slap in the face.” But when the ocean of possibility is much greater than our customary land of reality, which

one could thus name the present-at-hand (*Zurhandenheit*)⁵ without calling up associations—if I may beg your pardon . . .

Adorno: Please!

Bloch: . . . without placing stress on the “authenticity” (*Eigentlichkeit*),⁶ then we can see that the possibility has had a bad press. There is a very clear interest that has prevented the world from being changed into the possible, and it has been poorly treated and, as was mentioned, has been insufficiently brought into the philosophical range not to mention the insults it has received, which have run parallel to the insults directed at the utopian.

Adorno: Yes, and here I would like to return to the question posed by Mr. Krüger about the content of the utopian. I believe, Ernst, that you have unrolled a whole series of—how shall I put it—of very different types of utopian consciousness. That has a great deal to do with the topic because there is nothing like a single, fixable utopian content. When I talked about the “totality,” I did not at all limit my thinking to the system of human relations, but I thought more about the fact that *all* categories can change themselves according to their own constituency. Thus I would say that what is essential about the concept of utopia is that it does not consist of a certain, single selected category that changes itself and from which everything constitutes itself, for example, in that one assumes that the category of happiness alone is the key to utopia.

Krüger: . . . not even the category of freedom?

Adorno: Not *even* the category of freedom can be isolated. If it all depended on viewing the category of freedom *alone* as the key to utopia, then the content of idealism would really mean the same as utopia, for idealism seeks nothing else but the realization of freedom without actually including the realization of happiness in the process. It is thus within a context that *all these* categories appear and are connected. The category of happiness always has something wretched about it as isolated category and appears deceptive to the other categories. It would change itself just like, on the other hand, the category of freedom, too, which would then no longer be an end in itself and an end in itself of subjectivity (*Innerlichkeit*) but would have to fulfill itself.

To be sure, I believe—and it moved me very much, Ernst, that *you*

were the one who touched on this, for my own thinking has been circling around this point in recent times—that the question about the elimination of death is indeed the crucial point. This is the heart of the matter. It can be ascertained very easily; you only have to speak about the elimination of death some time with a so-called well-disposed person—I am borrowing this expression from Ulrich Sonnenmann, who coined and introduced it. Then you will get an *immediate* reaction, in the same way that a policeman would come right after you if you threw a stone at a police station. Yes, if death were eliminated, if people would no longer die, that would be the most terrible and most horrible thing. I would say that it is precisely this form of reaction that actually opposes the utopian consciousness most of the time. The identification with death is that which goes beyond the identification of people with the existing social conditions and in which they are extended.

Utopian consciousness means a consciousness for which the *possibility* that people no longer have to die does not have anything horrible about it, but is, on the contrary, *that* which one actually wants.

Moreover, it is very striking—you spoke about close-handedness (*Zurhandenheit*) before—it is very striking that Heidegger to a certain degree had already cast aspersion on the question about the *possibility* of an existence without death as a mere ontic question that concerns the end of existence (*Daseinsende*), and he was of the opinion that death, as it were, would retain its absolute, ontological, thus essential dignity only if death were ontically to disappear (that is, in the realm of the existing)—that this sanctification of death or making death an absolute in contemporary philosophy, which I at any rate regard as the absolute anti-utopia, is also the key category.

Thus I would say that there is no *single* category by which utopia allows itself to be named. But if one wants to see how this entire matter resolves itself, then this question is actually the most important.

Krüger: Mr. Bloch, would you accept what has been elaborated up to this point, that, to a certain degree, it is actually people's fear of death, a fear that they must die, that is the most profound and also the most legitimate root of their utopian thinking?

Bloch: Yes. The concern with death appears in two areas: in one instance, in medicine, where it is practical, empirical, or vocational,

so to speak; in the other, in religion. Christianity triumphed in the early centuries with the call, "I am the resurrection and the life!" It triumphed with the Sermon on the Mount and with eschatology. Indeed, death depicts the hardest counter-utopia. Nailing the coffin puts an end to all of our individual series of actions at the very least. In other words, it also depreciates the before.

And when now there is nothing else? There is a picture by Voltaire of despair—the total despair of a shipwrecked man who is swimming in the waves and struggling and squirming for his life when he receives the message that this ocean in which he finds himself does not have a shore but that death is completely in the now in which the shipwrecked man finds himself. That is why the striving of the swimmer will lead to nothing, for he will never land. It will always remain the same. To be sure, this strongest counter-utopia exists, and that must be said to make things more difficult. Otherwise, there would not be that Heideggerian 'creature' (*Wesen*) at all, if there were not something here in the reality that is unavoidable and has no history up till now and no change in the real process—thus, if this reality itself did not ward itself so extraordinarily from the test case.

And here we touch on the area of the feeling of freedom. It is related to the "dreams of the better life," which portray the social utopias, but it also distinguishes itself from them. In the social utopias, in particular, the best possible communal living conditions are determined either through freedom or through order. Here freedom is a variable or auxiliary for the best possible life. Freedom as feeling does not appear in utopia but in natural law, and to be sure, in the liberal natural law of the eighteenth century in connection with the upright gait, in connection with human dignity, which is only guaranteed by freedom. *William Tell* and the dramas of Alfieri are filled with great freedom figures, who stand independently and cry out, "In tyrannos!" Here one finds natural law, and it also lies within the realm of objective and real possibility, but it is not the same as social utopia. In other words, there are two utopian parts: the social utopias as constructions of a condition in which there are no laboring and burdened people; and natural law, in which there are no humiliated and insulted people. It is the second one that I attempted to depict in my book *Natural Law and Human Dignity*. Now there is also a third. However, it is not the miracle but death, which is faith's dearest child, and that is the best way to express it. Still, it is necessary to have a

miracle to remove death from view. This means, then, the resurrection of Christ, that is, faith, or "Who will save me from the jaws of death?" as stated in the Bible, in the New Testament. This is transcendental. This is something *we* cannot do. So we need the help of baptism, Christ's death, and resurrection. In the process the utopian is transcended in the choice of its possible means. And, nevertheless, it belongs to utopia.

Adorno: Yes, I believe that, too. Indeed, the matter here does not concern conceiving of the elimination of death as a scientific process in such a way that one crosses the threshold between organic and inorganic life through new discoveries. To be sure, I believe that without the notion of an unfettered life, freed from death, the idea of utopia, the idea of *the* utopia, *cannot* even be thought at all. On the other hand, there was something you alluded to about death that I would say was very correct. There is something profoundly contradictory in every utopia, namely, that it cannot be conceived at all without the elimination of death; this is inherent in the very thought. What I mean is the heaviness of death and everything that is connected to it. Wherever this is not included, where the threshold of death is not at the same time considered, there can actually be no utopia. And it seems to me that this has very heavy consequences for the theory of knowledge about utopia—if I may put it crassly: One may not cast a picture of utopia in a positive manner. Every attempt to describe or portray utopia in a simple way, i.e., it will be like this, would be an attempt to avoid the antinomy of death and to speak about the elimination of death as if death did not exist. That is perhaps the most profound reason, the metaphysical reason, why one can actually talk about utopia only in a negative way, as is demonstrated in great philosophical works by Hegel and, even more emphatically, Marx.

Bloch: "Negative" does not mean "in depreciation . . ."

Adorno: No, not "in the depreciation of utopia," but only in the determined negation of that which because that is the only form in which death is also included, for death is nothing other than the power of that which merely *is* just as, on the other hand, it is also the attempt to go beyond it. And this is why I believe—all this is now very tentative—the commandment not to "depict" utopia or the com-

mandment not to conceive certain utopias in detail as Hegel and Marx have . . .

Bloch: Hegel?

Adorno: Hegel did this insofar as he depreciated the world-reformer in principle and set the idea of the objective tendency in opposition—this is what Marx adopted directly from him—and the realization of the absolute. In other words, that which one could call utopia in Hegel's works, or which one *must* call utopia in his youth, originated right at this moment. What is meant there is the prohibition of casting a picture of utopia actually for the sake of utopia, and that has a deep connection to the commandment, "Thou shalt not make a graven image!" This was also the defense that was actually intended against the cheap utopia, the false utopia, *the* utopia that can be bought.

Bloch: I agree with you completely. This leads us back again to the first actual question, so to speak, and the actual state of affairs where utopia becomes diffused, in that I portray it as being (*seiend*) or in that I portray it as achieved even if this is only in installments. As installment of having been achieved is already *included* when I can portray it in a book. Here it has at least become real already and, as you said, "cast into a picture." One is thus deceived. It is diffused, and there is a reification of ephemeral or non-ephemeral tendencies, as if it were already more than being-in-tendency, as if the day were already there. Thus, the iconoclastic rebellion against such reification is now in this context completely correct. And displeasure must keep on its guard, for which death most certainly provides a continual motivation. Indeed, death is not "Now he must go," as the old Schopenhauer said; rather it disturbs one constantly so that one cannot be satisfied, no matter how great the satisfaction is and no matter how many economic miracles and welfare states there are. But *that* continues to exist, an 'it-should-not-be' of the utopian, of the longing for a 'coming-in-order' or an 'in general,' where freedom would be, where everything would be right or together in a much deeper sense, a more comprehensive sense than the social utopia portrays it. Such yearning is present, and there is—to come back to death—the human fear of death, which is entirely different from the animal fear of death. In other words, there is this fear of death that is actually cast into a picture and is based on rich experience that humans have had

and the feeling that multiple goals break down. For there is no such thing as utopia without multiple goals. In a non-teleological world there is no such thing. Mechanical materialism can have no utopia. Everything is present in it, mechanically present. Thus, the fact that there is such a sensitivity about an 'it-should-be' demonstrates that there is also utopia in this area where it has the most difficulty, and I believe, Teddy, that we are certainly in agreement here: the essential function of utopia is a critique of what is present. If we had not already gone beyond the barriers, we could not even perceive them as barriers.

Adorno: Yes, at any rate, utopia is essentially in the determined negation, in the determined negation of that which merely is, and by concretizing itself as something false, it always points at the same time to what should be.

Yesterday you quoted Spinoza in our discussion with the passage, "Verum index sui et falsi."⁷ I have varied this a little in the sense of the dialectical principle of the determined negation and have said, Falsum—the false thing—index sui et veri.⁸ That means that the true thing determines itself via the false thing, or via that which makes itself falsely known. And insofar as we are not allowed to cast the picture of utopia, insofar as we do not know what the correct thing would be, we know exactly, to be sure, what the false thing is.

That is actually the only form in which utopia is given to us at all. But what I mean to say here—and perhaps we should talk about this, Ernst—this matter also has a very confounding aspect, for something terrible happens due to the fact that we are forbidden to cast a picture. To be precise, among that which should be definite, one imagines it to begin with as less definite the more it is stated only as something negative. But then—and this is probably even more frightening—the commandment against a concrete expression of utopia tends to defame the utopian consciousness and to engulf it. What is really important, however, is the will *that* it is different. And it is most definitely true that the horror that we are experiencing today in the East is partly connected to the fact that, as a result of what Marx in his own time criticized about the French utopians and Owen, the idea of utopia has actually disappeared completely from the conception of socialism. Thereby the apparatus, the how, the means of a socialist society have taken precedence over any possible

content, for one is not allowed to say anything about the possible content. Thereby the theory of socialism that is decidedly hostile toward utopia now tends really to become a new ideology concerned with the domination of humankind. I believe I can remember the time when you had conflicts in Leipzig, when Ulbricht—I do not want to quote this because I am not sure that my memory is correct—made a statement against you at that time: Such a utopia cannot at all be realized. Now this was exactly a philistine phrase, i.e., that we do not *want* at all to realize it.

In contrast to all this, we should bear *one* thing in mind. If it is true that a life in freedom and happiness would be possible today, then this one thing would assume one of the theoretical forms of utopia for which I am certainly not duly qualified, and as far as I can see, neither are you. That is, neither of us can say what would be possible given the present standing of the forces of production—this can be said concretely, and this can be said without casting a picture of it, and this can be said without arbitrariness. If this is not said, if this picture cannot—I almost would like to say—appear within one's grasp, then one basically does not know at all what the actual reason for the totality is, why the entire apparatus has been set in motion. Excuse me if I have taken the unexpected role of the attorney for the positive, but I believe that, without this element, one could do nothing in a phenomenology of the utopian consciousness.

Krüger: Mr. Bloch, may I ask you once again: Would you accept what Mr. Adorno has said about the utopian element having entirely disappeared from the socialism that rules the eastern world today?

Bloch: With the amendment that it has *also* disappeared in the West and that similar tendencies exist that reproduce the unity of the epoch despite such great contrasts.

Adorno: *D'accord.*

Bloch: West and East are *d'accord*. They are sitting in the same unfortunate boat with regard to this point: nothing utopian should be allowed to exist. But now there is a difference between the commandment against casting a picture and the warning or command to postpone doing this. The mandate, or rather, the work principle, which was necessary for Marx, not to say much more about the utopian—this principle was only to be polemical some period of time,

short or long; it was directed against the abstract utopians, who were the forerunners, and who believed that one only had to speak to the conscience of rich people and they would begin to saw off the branch on which they were sitting. Marx objected to the over-estimation of the people's intellect, an over-estimation that was characteristic of the utopian socialists. In other words, interest played a role here as well as the Hegelian look (*Blick*) for concreteness. This was surely necessary as medicine against rampant speculative thinking, against the rampant speculative spirit of that time. Without it, *Das Kapital* (*Capital*) would probably never have been written and perhaps could not have been written.

The turn against utopia that has been conditioned by the times has certainly had terrible effects. Many of the terrible effects that have arisen are due to the fact that Marx cast much too little of a picture, for example, in literature, in art, in all possible matters of this kind. Only the name Balzac appears; otherwise there is mainly empty space instead of Marxist initiatives to reach a higher culture that would have been possible. I consider this a condition that can be explained historically and scientifically, and that at the moment when this historical-scientific situation no longer lies before us, when we no longer suffer from a superabundance of utopianism, it will become devoid of meaning. The consequences that arise from this have been terrible, for people in a completely different situation have simply regurgitated Marx's statements in a literal sense.

It is from the Marxist viewpoint definitely necessary to act like a detective and to trace and uncover what each case is about—without any kind of positivism. By doing this, one can set things aright, but one must not forget that other thing—the utopian. For the purpose of the exercise is not the technocratic . . .

Krüger: *What* would the purpose of the exercise be?

Bloch: We talked before about the totality on which everything depends. Why does one get up in the morning? How did such an especially striking situation arise already right in the middle of the nineteenth century enabling Wilhelm Raabe to write the following sentence?: When I get up in the morning, my daily prayer is, grant me today my illusion, my daily illusion. Due to the fact that illusions are necessary, have become necessary for life in a world completely devoid of a utopian conscience and utopian presentiment . . .

Adorno: The same motif also appears in Baudelaire's work where he glorified the lie in a very similar way, and yet, there are very few other parallels between Baudelaire and Raabe.

Bloch: There would not have been a French Revolution, as Marx stated, without the heroic illusions that natural law engendered. Of course, they did not become real, and what did become real of them, the free market of the bourgeoisie, is not at all that which was dreamed of, though wished for, hoped, demanded, as utopia. Thus now, if a world were to emerge that is hindered for apparent reasons, but that is entirely possible, one could say, it is astonishing that it is *not*—if such a world, in which hunger and immediate wants were eliminated, entirely in contrast to death, if this world would finally just “be allowed to breathe” and were set free, there would not only be platitudes that would come out at the end and gray prose and a complete lack of prospects and perspectives in regard to existence here and over there, but there would also be freedom from earning instead of freedom to earn, and this would provide some space for such richly prospective doubt and the decisive incentive toward utopia that is the meaning of Brecht's short sentence, “Something's missing.” This sentence, which is in *Mahagonny*, is one of the most profound sentences that Brecht ever wrote, and it is in two words. What is this “something”? If it is not allowed to be cast in a picture, then I shall portray it as in the process of being (*seiend*). But one should not be allowed to eliminate it as if it really did not exist so that one could say the following about it: “It's about the sausage.” Therefore, if all this is correct, I believe utopia cannot be removed from the world in spite of everything, and even the technological, which must definitely emerge and will be in the great realm of the utopian, will form only small sectors. That is a geometrical picture, which does not have any place here, but another picture can be found in the old peasant saying, there is no dance before the meal. People must first fill their stomachs, and then they can dance. That is a *conditio sine qua non* for being able to talk earnestly about the other without it being used for deception. Only when all the guests have sat down at the table can the Messiah, can Christ come. Thus, Marxism in its entirety, even when brought in in its most illuminating form and anticipated in its entire realization, is only a *condition* for a life in freedom, life in happiness, life in possible fulfillment, life with content.

Adorno: May I add a word? We have come strangely close to the ontological proof of God, Ernst . . .

Bloch: That surprises me!

Adorno: All of this comes from what you said when you used the phrase borrowed from Brecht—something's missing—a phrase that we actually cannot have if seeds or ferment of what this phrase denotes were not possible.

Actually I would think that unless there is no kind of trace of truth in the ontological proof of God, that is, unless the element of its reality is also already conveyed in the power of the concept itself, there could not only be no utopia but there could also not be any thinking.

Krüger: That is actually *the* concept I wanted to introduce to conclude our discussion. We already touched on it, Professor Adorno. We had already said that utopia refers to what is missing. So the question to pose at the end is, to what extent do human beings realize utopia? And actually here the word "hope" is due. Here we could use an explanation of what hope actually is and what it is not.

Bloch: In hope, the matter concerns perfection, and to that extent it concerns the ontological proof of God. But the most perfect creature is posited by Anselm as something fixed that includes the most real at the same time. Such a tenet is not defensible. But what is true is that each and every criticism of imperfection, incompleteness, intolerance, and impatience already without a doubt presupposes the conception of, and longing for, a possible perfection. Otherwise, there would not be any imperfection if there were not something in the process that should not be there—if imperfection did not go around in the process, in particular, as a critical element. One thing is certainly against it, and once we take care of some misunderstandings, we shall be in agreement here: hope is the opposite of security. It is the opposite of naive optimism. The category of danger is always within it. This hope is not confidence . . .

Krüger: Hope can be disappointed.

Bloch: Hope is not confidence. If it could not be disappointed, it would not be hope. That is part of it. Otherwise, it would be cast in a picture. It would let itself be bargained down. It would capitulate and say, that is what I had hoped for. Thus, hope is critical and can

be disappointed. However, hope still nails a flag on the mast, even in decline, in that the decline is not accepted, even when this decline is still very strong. Hope is not confidence. Hope is surrounded by dangers, and it is the consciousness of danger and at the same time the determined negation of that which continually makes the opposite of the hoped-for object possible.

Possibility is not hurray-patriotism. The opposite is also in the possible. The hindering element is also in the possible. The hindrance is implied in hope aside from the capacity to succeed. But I employ the word 'process,' which has many meanings—chemical, medical, legal, and religious. There would not be any process at all if there were not something that should not be so. In conclusion, I would like to quote a phrase, a very simple one, strangely enough from Oscar Wilde: "A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not even worth glancing at."

Notes

1. The great Mister Pief is a character in Wilhelm Busch's book *Plisch und Plum* (1882). Busch wrote the following poem about him: "Zugereist in diese Gegend/ Noch viel mehr als sehr vermögend/ In der Hand das Perspektiv/ Kam ein Mister namens Pief/ "Warum soll ich nicht beim Gehen"/ Sprach er, "in die Ferne sehen?/ Schön ist es anderswo/ Und hier bin ich sowieso." (Just arrived in this region/ Much more than very rich/ In his hand a telescope/ Came a mister by the name of Pief/ "Why shouldn't I look,"/ Said he, "into the distance as I walk?/ It's also beautiful somewhere else/ And here I am at any rate.")
2. Richard Dehmel (1863–1920) was an important precursor of expressionism in Germany.
3. The trials of Galileo took place in Rome in 1615/16 and 1633.
4. The subjective-reflective category denotes the reflection of a subject in contrast to a category (matter) that is present in the "object" in the reality itself.
5. *Zurhandenheit* (present-at-hand) is a term developed by Heidegger to describe the things with which people deal in their daily lives, for example, instruments.
6. Bloch is referring here to Adorno's book *The Jargon of Authenticity* (*Jargon der Eigentlichkeit*, 1964), in which he sharply criticized Heidegger's language and the ideology of existentialism.
7. The true is the sign of itself and the false.
8. The false is the sign of itself and the correct.