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# A DESIGN “FICTION”: (Part One) THE SOCIAL AND THE MARKET DESIGN POLICIES IN UTOPIA AND THE NEW ATLANTIS

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## Abstract

This paper is divided into two parts. In this first part I propose to re-contextualize some of the design policies of today in Utopian literature by the means of a fictional dialogue, in order to witness their genesis. In a sense, my fiction can be considered as a “reverse scenario”, especially when compared to other studies on Utopia, for example the study of Victor Margolin, (*The Struggle for Utopia*), which deals directly with Utopian elements used in design practice today. To illustrate my point I have chosen *Utopia* of Thomas More (1478-1535) and *The New Atlantis* of Francis Bacon (1561-1626). The fictional dialogue is constructed around the idea of three days of conversation between the protagonist of *Utopia* and the protagonist of *The New Atlantis*: i.e. Raphael Hythloday (a philosopher of Portuguese origin) and The Reverend Father (a scientific worker of “The House of Solomon”). For the sake of the scenario I symbolise the origins of *social design policies* within the arguments of Raphael, and the origins of the *market policies* are represented by the Reverend Father. In the second part of this paper I will try to present an idea of Utopian design, which is more in coherence with the design practice of today. To illustrate *this* point, I will consider the Utopian element in design not as a passage from an idealist discourse to practice, but as a crossing from one sphere or “universe of design” to another.

## Keywords

Fiction, Utopia, The New Atlantis, Utopian Design, Design Policies, Dialogue on Design

## INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEMATIC OF THE UTOPIAN DESIGN

In an essay called “The Experience of Products” which figures in his book “Politics of the Artificial”, Victor Margolin classifies consumers’ relations with design products — which he calls *product milieu* — into three categories:

“I have divided the product milieu into three separate but related spheres: civic and state projects, the market, and the sphere of independent design, which embraces those products that people make for themselves. Our experience with products is connected to each of these spheres”<sup>1</sup>.

In the following text I will try to show, through a fictional dialogue, how the First and Second Product Milieu, as conceptualized by Margolin, could have made their first appearances in the Utopian writings, and notably, in *Utopia* of Thomas More and *The New Atlantis* of Francis Bacon. In this fictional dialogue I will not refer to the third product milieu — the independent design — for the simple reason that the INDYS Design could not have taken place in the Utopian writings<sup>2</sup>.

In a sense, my fiction can be considered as a “reverse scenario”, if compared to another study of Margolin, which deals directly with utopian elements in design practice. In his book called “The Struggle for Utopia”, he shows how some talented and visionary artists had the “power to envision possibilities” inside the societies in which they evolved. According to Margolin, these “artistic-social avant-garde” had the ambition “to close the gap between discursive acts (ie Utopian discourse on Art)... and pragmatic ones, which involved participation in building a new society” (Margolin, 1998: p. 3). The three main avant-garde ideas that Margolin studies through the monographs of three different artists, Rodchenko, Lissitzky and Moholy-Nagy, do not have the same destiny when struggling, in order to penetrate into different social realities and institutions. They either meet resistance or adapt to their new social environments. Although they have not completely accomplished their utopian mission, Margolin remarks, “nevertheless (they) opened up new directions for the (future) artists proposing new models of social life. (Margolin, 1998, p.3)

So, whilst the preoccupation of Margolin is to understand how utopian ideas met with social realities, my problematic, in the first part of my paper, is on the contrary, how a design activity or a designed object’s use, well rooted in a *social reality*, can be transported back to a utopian universe. To be more precise, the differences of these two approaches are as follows:

1° *Margolin studies the crossing of ideas from Utopia to Social Reality*. Whereas I propose a “reverse scenario”: how can we re-context the design activity taking place in Social Reality back to the Utopian context, in order to witness its genesis.

2° *His study concerns mostly the design production*. My study takes into consideration not only the design production (or creation), but also the use of this production (i.e. the designed objects).

In the second part of this paper I will propose some of my own views on Utopian Design from the following perspective.

1° *“The Struggle for Utopia” proposes to study the crossing of ideas from a discursive or theoretical domain to a practical domain*. In other words, it is focused on the issues of *theoria* and *praxis* in design studies. Whereas in my study, this passage will be not from ideas to practice, but on the contrary I envisage a crossing from one sphere or “universe of design” to another.

2° In some circumstances, the couple *theoria* and *praxis* is conceptualised by Margolin as *Utopia* and *Ideology*. In this case he considers the practical aspect of ideas as *Ideology*. *Ideology* for him is the ideas that orient action: it is the “convictions” and the projects of the already mentioned artists, who wish to beautify the society in which they live. In my own study I will also take in consideration the distinction between *Utopia* and *Ideology*, but in a different sense. I will not focus on the “content” of ideological production, but rather its *expression* that will enter in my sphere of interest.

3° *How about the third product milieu mentioned by Margolin?* Finally, in the second part of this paper I will also try to show how the use of independent design can be influenced by the impact of some social movements and tendencies. In the same manner, I will explore how this same social impact can modify the relation between the objective (scientific) and tacit (or traditional) design skills of the designers.

## GENERAL VIEWS ABOUT UTOPIA AND THE NEW ATLANTIS

Before presenting the fictional dialogue, I will rapidly distinguish the most important characteristics of these two Utopian writings.

One of the most distinguished aspects of *Utopia* is its “rationality” concerning the social planning (planning of human organization in society), as well as urban planning. As for *The New Atlantis*, its views concerning the process of production are mainly focused on the idea of “experiments”<sup>3</sup>. Bacon uses the term “experiments” to mean many different things (A: 24). One of the experiments mentioned by him concerns the mechanical arts, to which we can associate engineering and design activities. This attitude of Bacon, concerning experimental production, cannot be confused with the point of view of naive empiricism. Originally, empiricism is a term that was taken from the observations of physicians, but in the writings of Bacon this general theory of perception is considered as interactive. Bacon doesn’t consider sensuous experience as passive. The Acquisition of knowledge (scientific as well as artisanal knowledge) is by observation, but also it has its active side, responding to what we have done initially. This complex activity which Bacon calls *minister et interpretes* reappear in the modern times in the writings of John Dewey as “doing-and-undergoing”: on this subject we can remember that for Dewey doing is experimentation, to look what the world (or a created *aesthetic* object) would look like, undergoing is learning, discovering something new from the nature or from the created object, an artistic work<sup>4</sup>.

We can also underline the two models of economical production in both writings. It is true that Thomas More seems rather defending the old guild handicraft system. Whereas Bacon is more in favour of trades<sup>5</sup>, which was announcing, at his time, the end of the merchant’s capital. However its complete perception was not evident to everyone in the late XVI<sup>th</sup> century.

The preference of Bacon for trade has multiple reasons. At the time when Bacon spoke about experimentation laboratories who could respond to his criteria of experimental science did not exist, so instead he had to address “factories and workshops”: places *par excellence* of trade and artificial productions<sup>6</sup>. In *The New Atlantis* he talks about “houses” which are a sort of idealized laboratories. As for their legacy, we can talk about a mixed model, since Bacon seems to influence the creation of The Royal Society (First European Scientific

Community) as well as the “Lunar Society”, a circle of artisan-workers which were very active in the XVIIth Century<sup>7</sup>. Trade also means business and commerce. Therefore, the scientific community that he imagines is not only based on the circulation of knowledge — amongst the science workers — but also on the circulation of commodities<sup>8</sup>.

Another important distinction is the opposition of collectivism and individualism<sup>9</sup>. We can depict this opposite tendency in the manners of producing, as well as in the manners of consumption. In *Utopia*, production is an affair of everyone (men as well as women), whereas in *The New Atlantis* production (through the application of scientific and crafts knowledge) is an elitist activity. We can be tempted to say that the book of Thomas More is more directly interested in how the productions are distributed and used. Whereas Bacon talks more about the experimental production, neglecting to mention how he sees their everyday usage. But this can only be a first impression. When we look more attentively, one of the ultimate ends of knowledge workers (especially the group called “Dowry-men or Benefactors”) of the “House of Solomon” is to promote “things of use and practice for man’s life, and knowledge”.

We can also notice that the use of everyday objects in these books corresponds to two different ethical criteria. *Utopia* is an *Eutopia*<sup>10</sup>, since its main purpose is to promote *happiness* to its citizens, whereas we can call *The New Atlantis* a Hedotopia (a *pleasure* society), because, what is proposed more than anything is a daily and a total aesthetic experience for all the citizens. One must bear in mind that this fulfilment-of-all-senses will be possible with the help of the marvellous inventions produced by the “House of Solomon” (see the fictional dialogue below on this). Furthermore, these two books give preference to two different founding myths on health. The founding myth of health in *Utopia* is *Hygieia*: conservation of health<sup>11</sup>. *The New Atlantis*’ aim seems to be more ambitious: not only it wishes to promote the “preservation of health”, but also it is well attached to another founding myth of health which is *Aesculapius* : because *The New Atlantis* takes into consideration “things beneficial for health and prolonging life”<sup>12</sup>.

In addition, we can encounter more reflections about design in *Utopia*, since an important part of More’s work is devoted to the issues of architecture and urbanization, which may seem to not be not the case for *The New Atlantis*. Before presenting my fiction, and to convince the reader of the importance of Bacon’s text for design thinking, I would like to specifically underline three of Bacons major ideas related to design. First of all, we see that in the Utopian world of Bacon, the inventors and designers are very welcome. On this Bacon writes:

“(As) 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”. (A: 24) (emphasis added).

We notice that “The House of Solomon” not only keeps the “patents”, the industrial proprieties (Bacon calls them *samples* ) as concrete pro-types, but also their “blueprints” (Bacon calls them *patterns*)., and we realise that some of the blueprints or designs of technical objects are brought from foreign countries. On this Bacon says: “We have twelve (members of the “House of Solomon”) that sail into foreign countries, under the names of other nations, (for our own we conceal); who bring us the books, and abstracts, and *patterns of experiments* of all other parts. These we call Merchants of Light”.(A: 24) These “experiments” are not all scientific in nature, since Bacon specifies some of them as “experiments of all mechanical arts”. The idea of Bacon on trademarks seems slightly in advance of the English patent law. *TNA* was written around 1623 whereas “The Statute of Monopolies” was not passed on before 1624. Also, the idea of preserving in a museum the statues of inventors may have influenced the creation of the “Enlightenment Gallery” of the British Museum, which opened in 2003. Furthermore, the relation of *The New Atlantis*

with design can be underlined by the importance that Francis Bacon gives to *artificialism or the artificial makings*. On this we can draw attention to one of the main aims of the “House of Solomon”: which is to produce artificial metals (A: 19), artificial wells and fountains (A: 20) artificial rains and rainbows (A:20 & A: 22), artificial rare stones, (A: 23) artificial echoes (A: 24). Although Bacon did not speak directly about design, his ideas about *artificialism* seem to remind us the premises of a well known contemporary theory of design: *The Sciences of the Artificial* by Herbert Simon.

Finally, the considerations of Bacon *vis-à-vis* the nature of knowledge used in the “House of Solomon” reminds us more or less of the status of knowledge in the design community today. The members of the “House of Solomon” do not always consider revealing their methods to the global society and even to the public authorities positively. Speaking from the point of view of modern design studies we can also reason that the members of the production of *The New Atlantis* use *tacit knowledge* (artisan knowledge, difficult to objectify) as well as *objective knowledge* (shareable knowledge in collective design activities). But also, since some of their knowledge should not be revealed, we encounter also *implicit knowledge* in *The New Atlantis* (see these types of knowledge in “The First Day’s Meeting”).

Now let me give now some tips on how I have imagined this fictional dialogue. Basically, it is constructed around the idea of three days of conversations between the protagonist of *Utopia* and the protagonist of *The New Atlantis*: i.e. Raphael Hythloday and The Reverend Father. For the sake of the scenario I symbolized the *social design policies* within the arguments of Raphael, and the *market policies* are represented by The Father (the wise man of the House of Solomon). But this symbolisation is purely formal. When we study thoroughly *Utopia* of Thomas More, we see the author is sometimes sceptical about the total rational society that he describes in *Utopia*. As for Bacon, although he can be considered as the champion of applied sciences, sometimes we see that he considers his thoughts as a contribution to the advancement of philosophy, rather than the promotion of scientific knowledge applied to industry, since he says: “I care little about the mechanical arts themselves: only about those things which they contribute to the equipment of philosophy”. (Bacon, Parasceve).

Therefore, my hyperbolic enthusiasm in the following story is only for the sake of illustrating the two different design policies — the social and the market policies — and it is not to mislead the reader about the profound philosophical positions of these two authors. All my dialogues are designed to be as close as possible to the original writings. They can be checked by the number of the page referred: U for *Utopia*, A for *The New Atlantis*. Some passages of the third day’s meeting are not taken from U and A. There I have introduced some additional ideas of Bacon from his other works. Since *The New Atlantis* is an unfinished book, I thought that these additions could give a better balance to his unfinished reflections in this book.

## THE STORY

“For neither we remembered to inquire of him (**Raphael**) , nor he to tell us, in what part of that new world Utopia is situated; which thing I had rather have spent no small sum of money than it should thus have escaped us. As well for that I am ashamed to be ignorant of what sea that Island standeth whereof I write so long a treatise; as also because there be with us certain men, and especially **one devout and godly man**, who is exceeding desirous to go unto Utopia”

— *An extract of a Letter of Thomas More written to Peter Giles (emphasis added)*  
*This letter appears in the four original editions of Utopia.*

When the ship of the Reverent Father of “The House of Solomon” of Bensalam (that’s how the inhabitants of *The New Atlantis* called themselves) was preparing to land on the green coasts of *Utopia*, a huge crowd started to gather at the port, among whom there was Raphael: a young seaman of Portuguese origin who had a long “beard”, spoke many languages and had an interest in philosophy (U: 10). The surname of Raphael was Hythloday, which means the one who does not like futile conversations. The reason for which The Father was visiting *Utopia* is that every twelve years some wise people of Bensalam used to travel abroad in order to gather new knowledge (A: 13) for the benefice of “The House of Solomon” and the people of Bensalam. The last time one of these boats came back to Bensalem, it had brought some books about Utopia. The Reverend Father, after having read these books wanted to visit himself *Utopia*, in order to investigate in more depth the Utopian culture and to collect more information about their world-view.

When The Father dismounted from his ship, he looked around him in order to find an interlocutor who would communicate with him. Raphael who spoke many languages understood well that this stranger was looking for someone like him, so he addressed him in Latin. After the language barrier was overcome and the rituals of welcoming finished, these two men started an intense conversation about the habits and customs of their mutual countries. That’s how Raphael and The Reverend Father met each other. A long day of passionate conversation was waiting for them...

## THE FIRST DAY’S MEETING

Utopia did not have any “House for foreigners” like in Bensalem where they could “accommodate” (A: 4) the Reverend Father. Also, since there were “no taverns, no alehouses” (U: 92), in this land Raphael took him directly to visit “Amaurot”.

**Raphael.** Dear Father if you accept, first we will go and visit the capital of Utopia, Amaurot. And this night I will invite you to stay in my place. It’s a modest log cabin situated on a hill facing the bay of Utopia.

**The Father.** All right, with pleasure.

**Raphael.** Beforehand this island that you are visiting was called Abraxa, but after the conquest of the hero Utopus, it was called Utopia” (U: 62). When The Father heard this he took out a piece of paper and started to note down what Raphael was saying. And when they arrived to Amaurote and started to visit its streets, the interlocutor of Raphael was very anxious to ask him his first question. It was about the knowledge and the imagination of the inhabitants of this country.

**The Father.** I have read that in your country: "After supper (you) spend an hour in some diversion, in summer in their gardens, and in winter in the halls where (you) eat, where (you) entertain each other either with music or discourse. (You) do not so much as know dice, or any such foolish and mischievous games. (You) have, however, two sorts of games not unlike our chess; one is between several numbers, in which one number, as it were, consumes another; the other resembles a battle between the virtues and the vices" (U: 77)(12). Is it really so?

**Raphael.** Yes Father it's true. In this country the games of hazard are not encouraged and we also want mathematics and ethics to serve the spirituals needs of the Utopians.

**The Father.** But I don't understand. Why do you use such knowledge only for pure imaginative activities, why don't you apply imagination in the production or the creation of everyday objects? I mean the "things of use and practice for man's life" (A: 24).

**Raphael.** But why should they do so? The inhabitants of Utopia are quite happy to use abstract knowledge for games and entertainment, for arts and manufacturing we use the old artisan methods. As you can see "the cloths of Utopians how little work is spent in them; while they are at labour they are clothed with leather and skins, cut carelessly about them, which will last seven years, and when they appear in public they put on an upper garment which hides the other; and these are all of one colour, and that is the natural colour of the wool. As they need less woollen cloth than is used anywhere else, so that which they make use of is much less costly; they use linen cloth more, but that is prepared with less labour, and they value cloth only" (U: 98)

**The Father.** Yes, I have realized that the clothes of Utopians are not very fashionable and are very simple. You were talking about the old methods, well, we too have workers in our country devoted to the same kind of tasks, "(they) collect the experiments of all mechanical arts; and also of liberal sciences; and also of practices which are not brought into arts. These we call Mystery-men (A: 24).

Since Raphael spoke very well Latin, he did not have any difficulty understanding what The Father meant by "Mystery-Men".

**Raphael.** You mean *ministerium*, which means artisan or craftsman<sup>13</sup>.

**The Father.** Yes that's right, but besides that, we also have our knowledge workers who are using more sophisticated methods in production, like the "axiomatic" methods (A: 24)

**Raphael.** But why bother with all these sophisticated methods! Production methods are not methods to which you can add or subtract something, they are ancestral methods. Also, we do not really care about the novelty of objects. What counts for us is labour. How can we work less, but have, nevertheless, sufficient products for consummation. On this island everybody is "employed in some useful labour... The magistrates (I mean the official authorities of Utopia) never engage the people in unnecessary labour, since the chief end of the constitution is to regulate labour by the necessities of the public, and to allow the people as much time as is necessary for the improvement of their minds, in which they think the happiness of life consists" (U: 81).

**The Father.** All right, I understand well, you don't need new methods of production, nor new products, but what about luxury objects? Are you not interested in using pearls and diamonds for your clothes?

When Raphael heard this he started to laugh for a long time.

**Raphael.** You said luxury (laugh). We do not waste our time on producing luxury objects, these objects are for the “children”. The people of Utopia when “they find pearls on their coasts, and diamonds and carbuncles on their rocks; they do not look after them, but, if they find them by chance, they polish them, and with them they adorn their children, who are delighted with them, and glory in them during their childhood; but when they grow to years, and see that none but children use such baubles” (U: 96-97).

Also the Utopians don’t have any time to be occupied by luxury. What do you expect, they “appoint six (hours) for work, three of which are before dinner and three after; they then sup, and at eight o’clock, counting from noon, go to bed and sleep eight hours: the rest of their time, besides that taken up in work, eating, and sleeping, is left to every man’s discretion; yet they are not to abuse that interval to luxury and idleness (U: 75-76).

**The Father.** Well it must be a boring life... preoccupied by the basic satisfaction of human needs. In Bensalem, we try to promote things that will give more pleasure to our countrymen, since we design new perfumes and tastes: “We have “perfume-houses; wherewith we join also practices of taste. We multiply smells, which may seem strange. We imitate smells, making all smells to breathe outs of other mixtures than those that give them. We make divers imitations of taste likewise, so that they will deceive any man’s taste. And in this house we contain also a confiture-house; where we make all sweet-meats, dry and moist; and divers pleasant wines, milks, broths, and sallets; in far greater variety than you (may) have (A: 23).

When Raphael heard this instead of reacting he said: Dear Father, talking about tastes, how about going to my place, where I can prepare for you a “modest” supper. And tomorrow morning I will take you around to show you more places in Utopia, especially our buildings.

## THE SECOND DAY’S MEETING

On the second day of their meeting Raphael and The Father woke up early and they went directly to a huge public place where Raphael started to show him some buildings of Utopia. While he was pointing to a very impressive one, Raphael turned suddenly to the Father and asked: “Dear Father, yesterday you talked very much about the everyday objects and the knowledge that you use for fabricating them. But you have hardly talked about the houses and the cities of Bensalem. What is so special about your houses”?

**The Father.** Well what we call “houses” is slightly different from yours, as they are mainly dedicated to experimentation. We believe that beyond the laboratories, we need big spaces for experimentation<sup>14</sup>. So in our houses we can experiment with artificial rains (A: 20) artificial rainbows, etc. (A: 22).

**Raphael.** What a strange idea on how to use houses!!! Over here we are much more interested in the organisation of cities. It is not false to say that the whole of Utopia is associated to the idea of human organisation and city planning.

**The Father.** Oh, How interesting!

**Raphael.** The ancients say that “the whole scheme of the town was designed at first by Utopus, but he left all that belonged to the ornament and improvement of it to be added by those that should come after him, that being too much for one man to bring to perfection. (The) records, that contain the history of (our) town and State, are preserved with an exact care, and run backwards seventeen hundred and sixty years. From these it appears that



(our) houses were at first low and mean, like cottages, made of any sort of timber, and were built with mud walls and thatched with straw...

... But now (our) houses are three stores high, the fronts of them are faced either with stone, plastering, or brick, and between the facings of their walls they throw in their rubbish. (Our) roofs are flat, and on them they lay a sort of plaster, which costs very little, and yet is so tempered that it is not apt to take fire, and yet resists the weather more than lead. (We) have great quantities of glass among them, with which (we) glaze their windows; (we) use also in their windows a thin linen cloth, that is so oiled or gummed that it both keeps out the wind and gives free admission to the light" (U: 70).

**The Father.** You also said that your national hero, Utopus, was interested in Urban planning...

**Raphael.** Indeed, "(this) town is compassed with a high and thick wall, in which there are many towers and forts; there is also a broad and deep dry ditch, set thick with thorns, cast round three sides of the town, and the river is instead of a ditch on the fourth side. The streets are very convenient for all carriage, and are well sheltered from the winds. (Our) buildings are good, and are so uniform that a whole side of a street looks like one house. The streets are twenty feet broad; there lie gardens behind all their houses. These are large, but enclosed with buildings, that on all hands face the streets, so that every house has both a door to the street and a back door to the garden. (Our) doors have all two leaves, which, as they are easily opened, so they shut of their own accord; and, there being no property among them, every man may freely enter into any house whatsoever. At every ten years' end (we) shift (our) houses by lots...

... (We) cultivate (our) gardens with great care, so that they have both vines, fruits, herbs, and flowers in them; and all is so well ordered and so finely kept that I never saw gardens anywhere that were both so fruitful and so beautiful as (ours). And this humour of ordering their gardens so well is not only kept up by the pleasure (we) find in it, but also by an emulation between the inhabitants of the several streets, who vie (I mean rival) with each other" (U: 69).

**The Father.** All this seems very interesting. But tell me where do the people trade, do they have a market place?

**Raphael.** Yes of course there is a market place. Well "Every city is divided into four equal parts, and in the middle of each there is a market-place. What is brought thither, and manufactured by the several families, is carried from thence to houses appointed for that purpose, in which all things of a sort are laid by themselves" (U: 84).

**The Father.** You have talked much about architecture and urbanisation. I guess you have also developed some important philosophy on this subject.

**Raphael.** It may not be a philosophical idea, but I can say that, we give much importance to maintenance. By the help of continuous reparations in Utopia, "things are so regulated that men very seldom build upon a new piece of ground and are not only very quick in repairing their houses, but show their foresight in preventing their decay, so that their buildings are preserved very long with but very little labour, and thus the builders, to whom that care belongs, are often without employment, except the hewing of timber and the squaring of stones, that the materials may be in readiness for raising a building very suddenly when there is any occasion for it" (U: 80).

**The Father.** If I understand well you have the same doctrine for architecture as for health... you are for maintenance and reparation, whereas us, we are more interested in "innovation" and in the transformation of things.

**Raphael.** I don't understand when you say innovation; can you tell more about it?

**The Father.** Well I'll explain this to you another time, maybe tomorrow.

After this conversation early in the afternoon, Raphael took back the The Father to his log cabin, and told him to make himself comfortable. He also pointed out that he would be back late in the evening. The Father after having eaten his cold supper, (prepared beforehand by his host), lied languidly on the couch, and whilst was staring at the waves of the bay, he fell asleep. His sleep was so deep that he did not even heard the double door flying open behind him by Raphael.

### THE LAST DAY'S MEETING

In the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> day Raphael woke up the Father by announcing him good news.

**Raphael.** Father, father!! When I left you yesterday afternoon I have spoken with the authorities. They will be quite happy to receive you officially so that you can see the places that we did not have time to visit together. Anyhow, it was about time that you meet the authorities of this Island. We could not continue any longer our meetings without informing them. Because, according to the laws of Utopia "if any man goes out of the city to which he belongs without leave... he is severely treated, he is punished as a fugitive" (U: 91). Although I have some privileges — because to be a professional seaman is always a privilege in this country — I preferred to talk to the authorities in order to accommodate you. Now tell me, yesterday you told me that you would explain to me more about what you called "innovation". Since today is the last day for our conversations, please enlighten me, by explaining what you mean by this word?

So on the last day of their meeting Raphael and The Father talked about more abstract subjects. After all, both of them were interested not only in everyday objects and architecture but also subjects related to philosophical thought.

**The Father.** The idea of innovation is much related to how to replace things that undergo a natural decay. You, yourself mentioned the importance of "repairing" the houses, and the "foresight in preventing their decay... (so that the) buildings are preserved very long with but very little labour". But replacing the old can still be slightly *innovating*. By this I mean "innovations would follow the example of time itself, which indeed innovateth greatly, but quietly, and by degrees scarce to be perceived; for, otherwise, whatsoever is new is unlooked for, and ever it mends some and pairs others" (Bacon, 1597, p. 146).

**Raphael.** So your idea of innovation seems to be very close to the idea of living creatures.

**The Father.** Exactly "as the births of living creatures at first are ill-shapen, so are all innovations, which are the births of time". (Bacon, 1597, p.145)

**Raphael.** Dear Father, when we first met, you asked me about the entertainment of the Utopians. And I remember that you were not very fond of how the Utopians used their imagination. I would like to know more about your philosophy of imagination.

**The Father.** When I first learned about Utopia, with the help of the books brought from here to Bensalam, I dreamt a lot about how the Utopians live, how they think, and how they resolve their everyday problems. From

a distance, it was wonderful to dream about Utopia and everything seemed so coherent and smooth to me in this Land. But, after landing here and meeting you I have realised that compared to Bensalem, *Utopia* has some contradictions, and I became more conscious of this.

**Raphael.** But tell me if you did not discover *Utopia* first in the books and if you did not dream about this land, what would be your ideas about imagination?

**The Father.** Well on this you had already a preview. During our first meeting I wanted to draw your attention to the negative aspect of the imaginary systems. We can call this the “Idols of the Marketplace”, because imagination can make us slaves of the words instead of moving towards the true nature of things on the market. So the human language, when it cuts its organic links with the realities and becomes autonomous contributes to the crystallization or the solidification of systems, instead of helping the mind to be operative, to be inventive, to be action-oriented, in order to be able to transform the nature with the method of artificiality<sup>15</sup>.

**Raphael.** But, if I understand you well, you hold this doctrine of imagination only when you are confronted with the real world, with real buildings, with real everyday objects, with real people. But when you imagine an idealistic universe from a distance, you cannot say that that very imagination, which has thrown you into a fantasy world of perfection, is necessarily a negative imagination.

**The Father.** Yes you are absolutely right. I will think more about this idea on imagination on my way back to Bensalem.

After this last conversation Raphael took back The Father to the port, where he entered in his ship and put on his pompous clothes: he was ready to be welcomed by the authorities of Utopia.

THE END

## Notes:

<sup>1</sup>  
See Victor MARGOLIN, "The Experience of Products" (2002), p. 44, Margolin first introduces this idea in his article Product Milieu and Social Action (1995).

<sup>2</sup>  
Although Utopia mentions that "every family makes their own clothes" (see Utopia: 74) this information cannot be taken as representative of independent design. The INDYS Design did not really make its full appearance before the XX<sup>th</sup> century. See Part Two of "A Design Fiction" on this.

<sup>3</sup>  
The views of BACON on experimentation were also confirmed by DESCARTES. On this he says, I have nothing to say about experimentation after what Bacon has written ("cela je n'ai rien après ce que Vêrulamius en a écrit") Lettre to Mersenne, 1630, See, LE DOEUFF & LLASERA (1983) p. 176.

<sup>4</sup>  
See these two books of DEWEY on the idea of "doing-undergoing": Democracy and Experience (1916) especially chapter XI and Art as Experience (1939), in The Philosophy of John Dewey (Two Volumes in One) ed. J.J. Mc DERMOTT.

<sup>5</sup>  
For experimental craft or the science of the artificial of Francis Bacon see W. E. HOUGHTON, "The History of Trades" (1957), p. 357.

<sup>6</sup>  
On the "Lunar Society" see BERNAL, (1973), p. 25.

<sup>7</sup>  
Sometimes BACON considers the acquisition and the circulation of knowledge as more important than the commerce of goods: "You see we maintain a trade not for gold, silver, or jewels; nor for silks; nor for spices; nor any other commodity of matter; but only for God's first creature, which was Light: to have light (I say) of the growth of all parts of the world" (A: 13).

<sup>8</sup>  
The historian and the author of "The Idea of Progress", BURY, writes the following about the political views of More and Bacon: "The organisation of More's Utopia is fixed initially once for all by the lawgiver Utopus. What measure of liberty Bacon would have granted to the people of his perfect state we cannot say; his work breaks off before he comes to describe their condition. But we receive the impression that the government he conceived was strictly paternal" (BURY, 1920) p. 33b.

<sup>9</sup>  
There exist already a pun about Utopia which is "Eutopia": A place of ideal well-being (Eudonomia from Greek).

<sup>10</sup>  
On preservation or maintenance of health MORE and BACON have the same idea. But Bacon goes a bit further because he wishes that medicine would prolong human life. Concerning

the views of More and Bacon on the preservation of life see U:116 and A: 20.

<sup>11</sup>  
In Greek mythology Aesculapius represents the god of medical arts. One of his daughters is called Hygieia, the goddess of health, cleanliness, and sanitation. But the idea of "prolongation of life" (and also the cure of the psychological deceases) is related to Asclepeion, a healing temple or a medical complex, founded near Bergama (in actual Turkey) in the IV<sup>th</sup> century BC.

<sup>12</sup>  
There is an allegoric poem from the IV<sup>th</sup> century which is called Pyschomachie. The theme of this poem, written by the Latin poet Prudence, is about the battle between virtues and vices. In the case of More it is, of course, not a literary "text" that Utopians read and contemplate, on the contrary it's a "game" that they play.

<sup>13</sup>  
On the interpretation of the term "Mystery Men" see LE DOEUFF (2000), p. 130 note 86.

<sup>14</sup>  
BACON sees experimentation already leaving the laboratories for larger areas, with The Manhattan Project, who has realised the fabrication of the atomic bomb, it is not the laboratories, it is not the "houses" of Bacon, but it is the whole planet which became the place for experimentation.

<sup>15</sup>  
Concerning the views of Bacon on imagination see T. OREL, "L'imaginaire et l'invention scientifique selon Francis Bacon" (1987).

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