Introduction

The text ‘Mapping Utopia’ has the ‘utopian’ objective to become a comprehensive approach to the multifaceted concept and rich history of Utopia. It articulates the concerns, which philosophers and other theorists have put forward, and follows the tracks of urban planners and architects in their quest of the ideal city. It takes us to the unreal worlds, which authors and artists of all times invent, and penetrates into the laboratories of scientists and the worksites of technology experts. It tackles the reasoning and the acts of professional politicians, but also the political conduct of ordinary people. Yet, it is not solely informative; it primarily aspires to provide incentives as well as the space that is necessary for our own thoughts, our feelings and our reactions to the much talked and constantly present subject. All this in the form of an imaginary travel story that takes place in the late twenty-first century on the edge of the universe …
“A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and, seeing a better country, sets sail”.

Oscar Wilde

AN END - A BEGINNING

A fraction of a second, still. Then all will change. Achievements of a thousand-year long human endeavour will lose their former glory, even time will break in two fragments: before and after the mapping of the universe. The colossal undertaking of the ‘mission’ has been accomplished. All the data have been recorded. Back to little planet Earth, humans and machines hectically process them. Special envoys O, U, T, O, P, I and A, select delegates of the entire human population, are simply waiting for the message from the central processing unit: ‘Mission accomplished. Return to Earth’.

Yet … ‘new material has been tracked down – emergency sub-expedition: map Utopia’. The mind stumbles – Utopia is a figure of speech! Perhaps, even the most intelligent device is allowed to get it wrong. But what about the labyrinthine super network of systems, instruments and infrastructures and the innumerable masterminds linked to it? A hand enters again the last data. Just a fraction of a second. Then everything will change for good. ‘New material has been tracked down. Emergency sub-expedition: map Utopia; over’. Just a few fractions of a second ago all were different.

Warning. They will act independently to increase the statistical probability that the goal is promptly attained. Each one is equipped with state-of-the-art mapping instruments and the support, of course, of the entire super-network at their disposal, to the extent that these can be of any help in case of emergency. Prepare for battle. Farewell glances. Seven human hearts are beating in ultimate anguish. Next to it, the boldest of hopes stirs furtively: What if I make it? Dive into emptiness, into what the whole world was, not too long ago, utterly tamed by the human species. Mission in progress.
O UTOPIA THEN IS…

The beginning of wisdom is the definition of terms, that’s what the ancient Greeks used to say, so let’s start off with words. Utopia or Outopia in Greek = ou+topos (namely non+place), that which exists nowhere. Or nowhere in specific for it can be ubiquitous. O ponders on the ideal cities by various urban planners and others, abstract models ready to be implemented wherever that may come about. Yet, can there be architecture and urban planning outside the confines of a place? Besides, place is implicit of space as this relates to man. If Utopia exceeds place, could man run the risk of being discarded? O reflects upon the implemented utopias of the city that comply with high standards and yet fail to respond to the specific circumstances of a given place in given time. He recalls that time is seen as the fourth dimension. If the old, three-dimensional space does not exist in Utopia, then perhaps mapping concerns its history. This is pretty much known already.

The quest for the ideal society lies in the roots of human civilization – after all, man is a social being. In Plato’s groundbreaking work ‘The Republic’, a collective and yet meritocratic society is ruled, according to its philosopher-author, by the elite, philosopher-kings. Since then the ideal society stays usually ‘concealed’ someplace else, if not totally lost like Atlantis. Islands of heavenly beauty abound, but even when Utopia is not an island, crossing its borders with the rest of the world is forbidden or a privilege of the few.

As a text type and a term Utopia first appears in 1516 in the work of Thomas More who delineates the fictitious, yet ideal society which a traveler discovers in the secluded island of Utopia. People, there, are equal and share their possessions, but also conform to rules that eventually circumscribe their freedom. Nevertheless, for the author, it is Eutopia, a good place in comparison with the context of his own life, which he also portrays, but rather critically. Besides, in English both words are pronounced the same. Overtly or furtively Utopia has invariably begun by criticizing the here and now, it is a product of its time. It is no accident that the new text type emerges in the Age of Discovery, at the heart of the Renaissance, it mainly flourishes in the eighteenth century, the age of reason and the Enlightenment, but also in the first half of the nineteenth century, as gradually, a new way of living prevails, that of the industrial city …
The *New Atlantis* by Francis Bacon, the first technological utopia, paved the way. At its helm are members of the House of Wisdom – at the beginning of the seventeenth century, knowledge is power, just as much as the scientific and technological progress promise a blissful life. By the end of the eighteenth century Utopia departs from space and moves into time, the future, in particular - whether near or far - that is more accessible than the unknown territories. The distance that makes possible the critique of reality remains.

Utopia is certainly not a privilege of western thought. There are less eminent utopias in the Far East and the Islamic world. …He reflects on the Koran and instantly echoes the verse from the Gospel ‘…there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free’… Utopia is closely related to religion, to the reminiscence of an immaculate initial human state, the vision of the anticipated emancipation from all evils, the premonition of the end of the world. But, heaven is God’s gift, Utopia is a human achievement. Hell, on the other hand, is associated with Dystopia, a situation worse than the here and now, but rooted in this. It is the hopeless version of Utopia, often, its other side, the obscure face, which the unconditional observance of its canon unveils. Because Utopia is relative. Some people’s utopia or eutopia is some other’s dystopia, or it presupposes it. Has it not always been the Utopia of the individual, its creator? Utopia, by its nature, juggles with the frail balances between society and the individual, equality and freedom – can there be freedom without restrictions? –, diversity and organization, tradition and change… There are also collective utopias, time-honoured ideas from the Isles of the Blessed, to the aspiration of a life with a house and a car even.

Utopia too is an idea, in the way Plato defines ideas, as abstract, absolute exemplars of anything that is human. As a model of a society, a city or a life it relates to ideology. But, by contrast, it intends to improve and change the world instead of preserving it in its current form. A shelter of the weak at present, it can easily turn into ideology and status quo in the future while in the course of history is has been frequently used as an alibi by various ideologies unrelated to or even opposing the dream of a happy people’s society. After all, ideas and ideals change over time, whereas man, incomplete by nature, cannot attain perfection. This justifies the inception of Anti-utopia, the denial of Utopia in general or of a specific utopia that officially appears in the twentieth century. Besides, the transformation of Utopia into act has always entailed risks.
While in the second half of the twentieth and at the beginning of the twenty-first century Utopia is intensely questioned, at the same time … utopian studies flourish. Philosophy, sociology, history, political science, psychology, they all consider Utopia from different perspectives, they dispute over genuine and fake utopias, they come up with new interpretations, terms, places. Among them O would distinguish Heterotopia, the true place where each society ostracizes the exemptions of its ideal rule, anything that is different, the Otherness: asylums and prisons, exiles and ghettos… He would also isolate various alternative theoretical utopias, the dreams of all those who up until now had no voice: the ‘weaker sex’, the non-white, the non-westerners. And now, what is left of all that? A word of rarity with its unique meaning: the unattainable.

And yet, Utopia is not inevitably an over-ambitious goal, neither an unknown territory nor a distant time, and it is certainly not the stringent compliance with supreme laws. It may be a paradigm rather than a model, utopia under construction, partial, open to change. A general direction, not a one-way path. Continuing improvement, not rebellion. Neither the impossible nor the unlikely – Utopia as dynamics, as the ability of the seed to grow into plant, that, which does not exist yet. As a way of thinking, or else utopianism; as the right to dream, social fantasy that expands reasoning, creative critique with prudence and dream. Realistic utopia, realism even. It is the meaning that matters, not the word. Communication presumes that everybody know what they mean and agree upon a shared point of reference, some sort of coordinates. Can there be mapping without coordinates? O tried to determine the coordinates of Utopia and now he has to share them with the rest of the group. Then, he will embark on a personal project – to find out what his name was before he became O and before becoming the Other, a Muslim economic migrant from Africa to Europe at the outset of the twenty-first century. ‘Know thyself’ as Socrates proclaimed.
U TOPIA UNDER CONSTRUCTION

There is no way she can locate the celestial position. Nonetheless, the surface over which U hovers is reminiscent of the planet where she came from. Could this be an illusion? Even so, all around her, human settlements, cities mainly, sprawl. Cities from every place on earth, from every fragment of human history; condensed space and time. Cities of every size, function and character, prominent and unheard of. Cities at specific sites and site-specific cities, some of them brand new, some others spread already, embellished, regenerated. And those which float in a nebulous, indeterminate space, untraceable on the map, and yet familiar; are they cities-ideas, the ideal cities? Haunted, lifeless, or with any sign of their life turned into stone. Behold the cities in multiple copies, the ideas and their implementation side by side; but also clone-cities, divergent cities that emulate one another.

The hand instantaneously reproduces what the eye sees. Elevations, ground plans, sections, whatever it catches up on. Many drawings by U are inexplicably transfigured into the designs of their original creators, engineers, architects, urban planners… On the other hand, in the cities themselves, she indentifies the mark which others have left. Political leaders, sponsors, associates … After all, who designs Utopia? Even within the overcast cities she can discern the time and context of their conception. Her equipment carries out identifications, finishes off the designs, sketches the first maps. Every now and again the mind and the eye draw their attention to something different. Aren’t these pre-historic cities of the Near East among the first in human history? Was the city born as an idea first, I wonder? Some kind of order is evident in these ground plans. There, you see the proper orthogonal street layout. Could town planning and urban design invariably conceal the pursuit of some ideal? Ancient Greek city-states, colonies – the joy of urban planners – and their metropolises. Piraeus, Miletus, Thurii … share common ingredients: geometry and order, specially designated areas, public buildings and spaces, a perfect urban planning – the hallmark of Hippodamus. Is that not the ‘Heavenly’ Jerusalem next to the ‘earthy’ Babylon? Could these imaginary cities – either good or bad models – stem from existing ones? In the end, it is hard to tell the difference between reality and fantasy in the ideal city… How do the medieval monasteries fit into Utopia? Small, self-sufficient communities – ideal cities in miniature. The cities of the Renaissance! Ground plans inscribed in regular geometric shapes, squares, circles, ancient symbols of heavenly order and secular
harmony. Strongholds, guards and emblems of some authority. Starting off with the fortress towns, the square of reason and the circle of mysticism have been supplanted by the star-shaped configuration in many ideal cities of fantasy and in their existent prototypes. U draws unremittingly, the mapping progress moves on. How ideal are the magnificent cities of the European Baroque? Cities with the repetitive - like a chessboard – grid plan that fill the once ‘youthful’ America little by little?

In the end, few works of architecture and urban planning, which the elder ones used to name utopian or visionary actually live on in Utopia. Whims of imagination and ideas that did not occur, could not exist, or some were reluctant to make real? Also, daring experiments, real works, designed with abundant inspiration and innovative plans in their time. But how far away from reality can imagination fly? As for the neoclassical facet of Utopia, how could the principles of the return to the classical perfection not foster the ideal city? This is where the twentieth-century Utopia kicks off. Plans and names abound: contemporary or future cities, linear and radiant, stretching out, organic ones, which grow like living creatures do, functional ones, which aim at the best possible satisfaction of human needs. Behold, the garden-city, with all the goods of the countryside and the city harmoniously matched, its partially materialized versions and subsequent disfigurements. The utopia of radical decentralization and its opposite, the highly compressed ideal city, they too intend to take advantage of the positives and escape from the negatives of the industrial city. Behold the famous Unité d’Habitation in Marseille by Le Corbusier, the celebrated Brasilia, the new capital of Brazil, and other implemented proposals of modern architecture for a novel structure not only of space, but of human society too. This conviction that the arrangement of space alleviates the ordering of social life perhaps explains the flawed constructions U takes notice of here and there, works of the imagination of writers and non-expert others, authors of some ideal society.

The private dwellings, on the other hand, are rather archetypal units whose repetition will form up the patchwork of the ideal city. But what about the remaining isolated architectural projects and the fragments of cities? These might be pieces of some ideal city, trials of an architecture and urban design that is open to vision, to change, to the deepest human needs. Beware! Some scattered constructions belong to ‘diffused’ cities, spread out in space. Some time ago the ‘end of the cities’ in the form they had taken on for thousands of years seemed inevitable, or was in fact anticipated.
Now it is time for the cosmopolitan cities that cover the entire surface of the globe, floating and aerial cities – heaven is not necessarily on earth. And even though in the urban planning of the second half of the twentieth century they often proclaim the end of Utopia, most of their propositions can only be found there. Sometimes, they overdo it – revolution, irony or game. A memory shimmers deep down her mind: in her childhood she used to build up cities from coloured toy bricks. Odd mega-structures, which intend to tackle overpopulation and the planet’s environmental issue, reveal the progress of technology: cities prefabricated, assembled, others in transformation, with elements ‘built’ into countless combinations in some fixed framework, cities in motion, eco-cities, electronic ones, intelligent cities, which predict every single human need …

A little bit further. U copies impeccable cities, designed by intelligent machines, colonies in space, capsules of privacy - portable heavens … ideas mostly. She also copies materialized projects, more humble and humane, sometimes designed with the participation of their users. ‘Meta-utopian architecture’, ‘day by day urban planning’, ‘practopia’ … the word utopia here is taboo! Nonetheless, she keeps on drawing the map of Utopia. She goes past its contemporary parts for she is running out of time. Besides, she knows them well enough. Mission accomplished, as much as possible. It takes a lot of effort to complete the map, which for the time being is pretty much a draft still. Last inspection. A suspicion makes her shiver: from the mists of time, the more ‘perfect houses’ people build to shelter their ideas, the more likely it is that they will end up homeless themselves. The map will remain a sketch. And Utopia is only a draft for the present or the future. But what about the past? Maybe it is a starting point. U is planning to discover her past upon her return to Earth. She only has scarce memories, old though she may be.
They should be on their way back to Earth already, heroes of the greatest epic. How did they end up confined in the absolute emptiness of an extra last stop? Last stop in the adventurous homecoming of Odysseus is the island of Phaeacians. An ideal human society in a blessed land paves the way for his return to reality – behold Utopia! But he is faithful to Ithaca, even if until now it has only been an improbable dream – one more Utopia? Ithaca of Constantine P. Cavafy is surely one, the higher cause that even if it does not live up to the expectations of man it orientates one’s life and deeds. But, there are many Ithacas – is utopia relative? Is it an end or rather a way in which to think and act? How would T know what the poets mean? He is mindful of the ‘poetic license’ and that imagination is their necessary equipment. He knows that writers are like bizarre antennas that can read the future in the past and today. Searching deep down in their souls, they let through the sorrows and the hopes of humanity. They build new worlds out of ancient materials, words. Destroyer or builder, fugitive, moonstruck, prophet; a prophet is often utopian. Is there any chance that literature is the actual map of Utopia?

On this map, Praxagora and other Ecclesiaziusae (the Assemblywomen) make their own utopia real, and the Birds build the Cloudcuckooland – let Aristophanes be sarcastic, in this, with not just the historical context within which he creates, but, on the whole, with the pursuit of a perfect world by the ever imperfect people. There lie the ideal states and unblemished societies, but also their opposites, virgin islands, lands of milk and honey, mysterious planets, the edge of the fairy tale. From the Magical Land of Oz and the Wonderland to Oktana by Andreas Embiricos and the Invisible Cities by Italo Calvino – cities of craving, dream, memory. There wander Don Quixote, Gulliver, the heroes of Jules Verne, all sorts of travelers, fugitives, reformers, but also the victims of the reality of books, and there, the restless eye of Big Brother form 1984 by George Orwell watches everything. Realms of the ancient Greek comedy, of science fiction, political allegories, fairy tales and parables contain the harshest critique, the most anxious escape, the greatest revolution. On the map of Utopia words can be transfigured into instruments, weapons or even remedy and they will still be art. There come to life the dreams of a better world, which the bitter reality brings forth to rebel-poets, from Pablo Neruda to Yannis Ritsos and Bob Dylan. Very rarely do writers change the map of the corporeal world of course. It is
their art they struggle with for a lifetime: to conquer it and shape it, to reform it. With subtle fermentations or radical changes like those in modern literature: surrealism and free verse, anti-heroes, anti-novel … Continuous creation with the eyes of the soul always awake. Is that not the essence of Utopia? Action and contemplation, matter and spirit integrated, like man.

On the very same map lie also historical sites, earthly cities veiled with art and fantasy. Dublin of James Joyce and his *Ulysses*, Cavafy’s Alexandria, places of travel literature … Lands made up of words, yet more spirited than the real ones, for only art can envision the essence of a place. If this is Utopia, then T could spend the rest of his life exploring it. Some urgent mission is awaiting him though. Luckily, the books will help him go on mapping. As he moves away, he discerns other places beyond those of the invisible map. It is the city that will always pursue each writer, his land – there is always a land in Utopia after all. Suddenly, a crazy idea comes to mind: to write a grammar book of Utopia – why not? Conditionals, subjunctive, future tense, future perfect in fact, plural …
THE DREAM OF UTOPIA

Drawing the map of Utopia with eyes shut, just what was needed! Not even a single unexpected drowsiness situation can the system tackle. It is a wild dream, but if Utopia truly exists, why would P not confront it? Her eyelids weigh down. Before her stand machine-cities made of concrete, glass and asphalt with buildings rising up hastily to the sky and vehicles that go past whizzing in staggering speed. Futurism, the future that artists first envisaged at the beginning of the twentieth century – there, Utopia. Dream or nightmare?

These painted dreams are now replaced by other ideal cities, and also by ideal societies and ways of living that emerge from various ages for every single today or for a different tomorrow, sometimes beyond the confines of the city. Interiors, open-air spaces, perfect settings for every kind of subject. Isn’t the realm of painting on the whole a utopia? Two-dimensional buildings and landscapes, a non-realistic space, ancient and perennially favourable in folk art. Perspective, at times, so intensely delineated that space appears like it reaches out to the infinity.

She can just barely identify periods, artists, subjects. The garden of Eden, the mythical Arcadia, idyllic landscapes, ideal cities of the Renaissance, the great murals of Latin-American art - collective visions of a better world… Fleeting instances of nature and life in the cities at the end of the nineteenth century. Twentieth century. Reticent buildings, empty squares, streets deserted, dead-end. Collages of ingredients unconnected, worlds beyond reason. Spaces, objects, human figures from different perspectives, the world dissolved and rebuilt. Distorted figures that swing into emptiness, the recesses of the human psyche. The picture of the world fades, in the end, it only survives as an idea; space is abolished. Colours, shapes and lines are just what they are, like the notes of the music she is listening to right now. Is it atonal music? Iannis Xenakis, the system clarifies – the utopian urban planner? It all mingles, it all comes together.

The revolution of modern art is marching before her in so many variations that it no longer makes a revolution. She is pondering whether this also applies to modern architecture, when … art fills up space. Constructions, collections of objects, multimedia, interventions in nature, whole ‘environments’ … So is art Utopia after all? Utopia as the imitation of existent domains, as the transgression of the canon, as an alternative way of living … And if it forms a universal language, it is still utopia,
isn’t it? P suddenly realizes that she herself has also been infused into the work of art and with every move she makes she too becomes the creator of Utopia’s realm!
Before she gets to explore her new potential, she sinks into the swirl of the industrial megalopolis – the Metropolis by Fritz Lang. Or is it some gloomy city of tomorrow? She whirls among the virtual earthly landscapes, most of them ominous; she blasts off in space, beams in time, mainly into the future, even beyond her own time. She experiences over and over again the eternal anxiety of the end of the world, her senses piercing. The sigh of hope is rare. Space Odyssey, Gattaca, Matrix, Avatar … She gets lost into the world of the cinema that comments on today and maps the future, amongst mythical creatures, super-heroes, human monsters, extraterrestrials and revolted machines. Who are the bad guys and who are the good guys? Help!
She suddenly slowed down, images turning to comics – are these for young or grown-up kids? There, the story of an architect who lost his life in his effort to build a celestial city for the emperor. Now she lingers again amongst the moving images of an ideal society, a city, a life – are they movies or commercials, fake utopias of mass consumption? She cannot make the distinction, she is surrounded by paintings and other works of art that speak of the lures of some utopia howling or whispering furtively. Is propaganda art still art? Then nothing. Utopia has been exiled from art, the system remarks. Why is that?
She opens her eyes – has she been dreaming? P does not dream, she certainly does not daydream! Deep inside though she knows that she did map Utopia even for a short while, as old as man, as old as art. She also suspects she is keen on daydreaming. It is time to go back. It is time to learn how to dream, how to live her lost adolescence. Is it time then to learn how to fall in love? It is never too late.
I UTOPIAN EXPERIMENTS

He cannot see a thing; his equipment no longer responds. If Utopia does not exist, I is capable of making one up bigger and better than all the utopias of human history together. All it takes is borrow materials from those utopias, at least, which consist in theory interlaced with praxis, or those that comprise experiments of the creation of the ideal ordered human society; namely the political utopias. Utopia is a political issue. Maybe some wise men will also supply him with the material, philosophers and other theorists of all times – besides, political theory has been for centuries inseparable from philosophy: Plato with his ideal Republic and other works of his, Thomas More who also had a political career, with the first ever Utopia named as such, and those who still devise utopias hoping either to materialize them or inspire others to do so, and every so often they succeed. He will also come across utopias with a political dimension in literature and in art, even as political escapism – let alone when artists invent Utopia and therefore art entails its implementation, as in various forms of cooperative theatre or in the case of the Delphic Idea. As for the ideal cities and utopias of urban planning, could this be politics made up of different ingredients? There is direct involvement of politics and politicians especially when it comes to implementing urban planning schemes. At the end of the day, there is a close affinity between the city (polis) and politics. Nevertheless, I will borrow his basic ingredient from those utopias that deal with the surrounding social and political reality straight away: reform, revolution or even a run-away not from but towards society by creating alternative communities. He will borrow the dreams of the underprivileged of all places and times. He will use, for instance, the claims of the bourgeoisie and the working class of the nineteenth century, liberty–equality–fraternity, the heritage of the French Revolution, and more wealth for all. To common ownership and the rest of the theories, which the fathers of socialism articulated, he will add up the communities founded by them or by their followers and imitators. Next to what Carl Marx and Friedrich Engels call ‘utopian socialism’ he will place their own ‘scientific socialism’ despite the fact that they evade to portray their utopia, which later nursed the October Revolution. He will also obtain valuable components from the practical experiments of communism in the twentieth century, which verify the obstacles the trail to Utopia is scattered with and the distance that breaks political theory from practice in general. In any case, when
Utopia is transformed into a centralized, even oppressive system in order to fulfill its higher cause, its creators and supporters of all sorts are held responsible. Utopia’s defense from its very own guards is a chronic issue!

Special envoy I will build Utopia from unanswered questions, recurring dilemmas and their variable answers through time. Which way is Utopia? Is there a peaceful revolution? How is an ideal society organized? What are its boundaries and how is its longevity secured? Does it have a constitution and state laws? What are the rights and obligations of its members? What does democracy actually mean? Are all equal? What sort of power does the state have? Who is in charge if the state does not exist?

He will add up now obvious ideas and social gains that first emerged in some utopia: Plato’s gender equality, the cosmopolitan spirit of the Stoics … The seed takes long to sprout. He will not conceal of course the worthless materials, the poor workmanship and the blanks, but he will highlight the joints that connect every utopian proposition with its specified framework, its given place and time.

He will get hold of abundant material from utopias more collective, sometimes encapsulated in the figures of exceptional personalities: the fight for the end of colonization in Mahatma Gandhi, the movement against racial discrimination in Martin Luther King … He will forge Utopia with the peace and ecology movement and will construct it with flowers and slogans coming from the youth movements of the 1960s and 1970s: the May 1968 events, the Prague Spring, the hippies, the ‘all power to the imagination’, ‘beneath the paving stones, the beach’ and ‘bread-education-freedom’ slogans … He will supplement it with commodities and the deeds of human kindness day after day, with collective decisions, solidarity movements and utopian experiments and other forms of activism revived at the outset of the new century.

I will bestow a large part of Utopia upon critical utopias, ominous versions and satires of Utopia of the last centuries mainly - fortuitously, most of them are confined within political theory. He will certainly make way for ideas, communities and societies that, even though they may disregard it they actually rely on the spirit of Utopia and the demand for a harmonious social life that simultaneously respects the human traits. He will even include the prophesy of Utopia’s death, but not such theories and practices as consumerism that deceitfully deploy its name so as to serve extraneous purposes.

Rarely is politics Utopia, even though Utopia is political. This is precisely why he will set aside political agendas, states constitutions and the like.
As for the total eclipse of Utopia from human thought and action that is taking place now, a machine has revealed the truth: ‘Emergency sub-expedition. Map Utopia’. What has he actually achieved, words and promises only, very much like a politician? No, he devised an action plan. It is a proposition for which he assumes responsibility. But he is worried - the boundaries are blurred; the mapping of Utopia requires virtue and courage. In the end, Utopia is a question of training, of education. The utopians know that just like politicians do. Suddenly, for the first time in his life I has set himself a goal. He will no longer be a special envoy, he will become a teacher. At least he will try to.
As soon as the elusive dream came true the Central Unit turned capricious! Mapping Utopia, that is the x-factor! A is fully equipped: the super-network, the Central Unit – science and technology at her disposal. Aren’t knowledge and its applications the means to the construction of Utopia, either in theory or in practice, of a society that reaches out to the ideal of a better future? The x-factor seems a little less unknown. If she expands on her thought, the entire human history and civilization become Utopia, recurring small changes and greater revolutions that augment the faculty of the Homo sapiens by improving his life. Cyberspace - a literal utopia - virtual intelligence, eternal youth and the feat that has just been achieved …, the unfeasible is usually what the mind cannot yet grasp. In hard times, the human ingenuity often exceeds reason, it reformulates the problem in a different way, it rolls the dice over again. Man conceals a hoard of possibilities and the lunatic scientist is actually sane: the Earth moves, non-Euclidean geometries, the theory of relativity… Utopia also becomes a problem-solving method. But beware, science, technology and history are never definitive, let alone the x-factor! The intersection of the harmonious social symbiosis and the complete development of the personality of the individual is an uncertain realm. However, the various additions and shifts in the field of history entail changes comparable to that of Utopia. A perceives Utopia as an entity, while most individual utopias freeze in time into an unbroken present. Conversely, apart from being a mirror of the past and the present, Utopia sometimes becomes the magic sphere that ‘tells’ the future. It merely moves the present ahead into it, or by giving shape to vague desires, it activates the chemical reaction that will fulfill them. As long as man exists the problem remains unanswered, but someone might estimate wherein the x-factor of Utopia ranges each time. As for the facts, science and technology, apart from the form, they often influence the essence of Utopia. In New Atlantis, by Francis Bacon, in many literary utopias of the nineteenth century as well as in the affiliate science fiction the means becomes the end and the illusion of consistent progress prevails. Yet, science and technology equally cause problems whilst their solutions frequently prove insufficient. So, the x-factor may be negative and Utopia takes on a new form. So many critical utopias of the twentieth century quite right warn about the perils and side-effects even though
they sometimes exaggerate with their inauspicious accounts of the future. A also has to make allowance for the way in which many utopias, theoretical as well as practical ones, use knowledge and its application for the sake of their own self-preservation and perpetuation. Education as a form of brainwash, the programming of human thought and action, and a ruthless control and penalty system can easily transform the laboratory of social harmony experiments into an industry of forced happiness.

Is the question of Utopia in the hands of men, after all? How do they use science and technology? How do they build up Utopia? From a certain point, this is science too. Its theory, assumptions and rules with no absolute authority, requires constant appraisal and revision. The measure for its implementation, expressed in experiments that look into its presumptions and attempts to extend its theory, should be man. There she had more facts, thoughts, feelings, human values …

Enough with this game of the Central Unit. It is impossible to map Utopia accurately, but it is worth a try; the mere effort might entail the solution, after all – at least by Utopia’s method! It is a complex, unending life exercise that calls for cooperation and shared participation. Let others take action too. From now on, she will only play her own games, ever so seriously, like children do. As a matter of fact, special envoy A is a little child.
A NEW ENDING – A NEW DAWN

All set, special envoys in position. They avoid looking at each other – deep inside they each hope to have found an answer. Fire! They enter their findings one by one. **O, U, T, P, I, A**, the data is uploaded six times, they all wait with bated breath until the Central Processing Unit responds; cancellation. Data accepted. Emergency sub-expedition. Map Utopia, the device insists. Embarrassment – nobody did it! The super-network, the systems, they all keep silent.

Suddenly, someone says ‘I will try again’ and he uploads his data one more time. ‘We are behind you’ someone else says uploading his. ‘We are a team, aren’t we? ‘One team, different people’, add two others. It is someone else’s turn still ‘On a starship that hovers in space. We are Utopia!’ ‘We will try again’ the last simply says. **O+U+T+P+I+A**, they upload the data six times, no cancellation this time. They hold their breath; it is one and the same for all now. Mission accomplished, in part. Emergency sub-expedition: Map Utopia’ the machine reveals its prophecy.

Wait a minute, the second **O** is missing! No signal is coming from his network – what could have possibly happened to him? Time is running out. They try again to upload **O**’s material twice this time so that the name of the team can be filled in. After all, the letter is the same. In vain – the Central Unit repeats its last message. All they can do is to stand by and engage in the expedition – this can’t wait. They get to work. They scrutinize their materials one by one, they negotiate, they complete, they dream, they experiment, they draw the map of Utopia step by step. Little by little they realize that the universe stays infinite just like people believed in the past. Its match, the ever boundless Utopia is missing. And the second **O** is missing too. They are still waiting for him. They can even guess the message of the Central Unit when his input will be added, **O+U+T+O+P+I+A**: ‘Mission accomplished. Mapping Utopia in progress’; or something like that. Only then will they set off to their little planet. Only then will each one be able to work on his personal micro-utopia as well. Over.
O SOMETHING IS MISSING!

If you think that the second O is just another anonymous special envoy, you are deluding yourselves. It is you, all of you together and each and every one of you. It is your turn to try to map Utopia!

You can embark on new explorations or rely on the early attempts of the other envoys. Consciously or unconsciously each one considered Utopia from different perspectives: philosophy, urban planning, literature, art, politics, science and technology … You too can focus on specific aspects if you prefer. Draw the map, for instance, of Utopia ‘made in Greece’ that ranges from the Aixone project by Dimitris Pikionis … through to Ntenekedoupolis, or the utopia of everyday living, which lies in TV commercials, in games on the Internet, the graffiti … Work on your own or in groups, shape your views or communicate their diversity in whatever way and with whatever means suit you best. You can also indicate alternatives to Utopia or carry out your own experiments – what would an ideal city, order, family, friendship look like? So far, according to the readings Utopia is inexhaustible, not just because it takes on various forms and lies in the most unlikely places, but also because it changes in the way you do.

What Utopia signifies to you is your own business. A responsibility and a right altogether with no expiry date. After and beyond the emergency expedition, continue to ponder on and question, to dream and to build your own micro-utopia, but also one that is more collective - why not? You got it right, the expedition to draw the map of Utopia was only a beginning …
If you wish to explore Utopia in greater depth you may start with the following sources:

Vlastaras V. (ed.), *Utopia project archive 2006 -2010*, Ανωτάτη Σχολή Καλών Τεχνών, Athens 2011

Bloch E.-Adorno Th.-W., *Κάτι λείπει. Μια συζήτηση για τις αντιφάσεις της ουτοπικής επιθυμίας*, Έρασμος, Athens 2010


Foucault M., "Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias", *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité*, 5, 1984, 46-49

Calvino I., *Οι αόρατες πόλεις*, Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη, Athens 2004

Liakos A., *Αποκάλυψη, ουτοπία και ιστορία. Οι μεταμορφώσεις της ιστορικής συνείδησης*, Πόλις, Athens 2011


Mumford L., *Η ουτοπία, οι δαίμονες της ψυχής και η προοπτική του ανθρώπου*, Νησίδες, Athens 2011

Marcuse H.-Popper, K., *Επανάσταση ή μεταρρύθμιση*, Ηριδανός, Athens 2005
Bernieri M.L., Περιήγηση στην Ουτοπία, Νησίδες, Athens 1999

«Ουτοπίες», Ουτοπία, issue. 17, Σεπτ.-Οκτ.1995

Plato, Πολιτεία, Πόλις, Athens 2012


Segal H.P., Utopias: a brief history from ancient writings to virtual communities, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012


And if you wish to get updated on the progress of other explorers of Utopia make sure you keep up with the following:
Society for Utopian Studies: utopian-studies.org
Utopian Studies Society: http://www.utopianstudieseurope.org