

This is a preprint of an article submitted for consideration in the Journal of Political Ideologies 2007 Vol 12 (3) copyright Taylor & Francis; Journal of Political Ideologies is available online at: http://pdfserve.informaworld.com/19587_731197604_783056165.pdf

Title: 'Religious Fundamentalism and Utopianism in the 21st Century'

Author:

Dr LUCY SARGISSON

**School of Politics and International Relations,
University of Nottingham,
Nottingham,
NG7 2RD, UK**

Abstract

Why is it so difficult to respond to religious fundamentalism from within a liberal paradigm? This paper explores a core problem within religious fundamentalism, stemming from its relationship to the phenomenon of utopianism. This is a complex relationship, which occurs on several different levels, including the content of fundamentalist visions (religious fundamentalisms contain utopian visions of the good life), and its structural paradigm (utopianism and fundamentalism both stem from discontent with the now, challenge cornerstones of their contemporaneous world, and desire radically different alternatives). Of greatest concern is an attachment to perfection, which permits a malign form of utopianism to propel religious actors into a politics of 'divinely sanctioned' violence.

Introduction

Since 11 September 2001, successive cohorts of students taking my course, 'Political Utopianism', have been raising the same question.¹ Once they assimilate the idea that utopias are not 'just' about wishful thinking and unrealistic optimism, they begin to notice utopianism in (previously) unexpected places, like ideologies, social experiments, and various forms of belief systems. Sooner or later, somebody says, 'What about Al Qaeda: are they utopian?' And somebody else says 'What about George Bush?' Thoughtful silence ensues before someone says, slightly shocked, 'So is the post 9-11 world really all about a clash of utopias?'

This paper seeks to explore the relationship between religious fundamentalism and utopianism and suggests both negative and positive responses to my students' questions. The 'post 9-11 world' cannot be said to be 'really about' a clash of utopias because, like other interpretations that read the world in terms of a binary clash—of ideologies, of East versus West, or Islam versus Christianity—this is simplistic, over-generalised, inaccurate and misleading. However, this view does have some purchase, because a certain form of utopianism can be said to inform some religious fundamentalisms, to devastating effect. This paper seeks to reveal and explore this relationship.²

Utopianism and fundamentalism

September 11, 2001: a day the world changed. One of the changes, a minor one, admittedly, when compared with the bewildering, devastating and catastrophic outcomes of that day (examples might include tens of thousands of people dead, homes, towns and cities destroyed, regimes changed, civil war, and American and British troops dying by the hundreds in strange lands for an increasingly reviled cause) was a revival of a certain form of utopianism. The politics and ideology of liberal-democratic nation states seemed inadequate to the 'new' world situation, and a 'new' (actually ancient) politics of viscerality, emotion and physical force emerged to take its place. For complex reasons (including a desire to protect the individual from the state), liberal ideology separates the personal from the political, and the private from the public.³ In this account, 'politics' is located in the public sphere, and consists of reasoned debate, the exercise of rational capacities and a certain transcendence of the personal, the partial, and the emotional.⁴

Private individuals come together as citizens in the public sphere to deliberate, discuss and decide upon matters of common concern. However, certain areas of life, such as religious belief and practice, remain a matter of private conscience in which the state has very limited legitimate jurisdiction.⁵ Key terms that emerge from this view of the world include individual rights (for example, to believe, achieve, develop and trade), freedom, and a certain egalitarianism (which involves merit and respect). This is a powerful view of politics with deep roots in a number of locations, including the practices of ancient Greece, the philosophy of the Enlightenment, and an economics of trade. It is profoundly familiar. One problem of the post 9-11 world is the difficulty of responding within this paradigm to the events of 11 September 2001. The perpetrators of these events had done something terrible and extraordinary, using the lives of 'innocent' (uninvolved) civilians as living weapons of mass murder, and creating a spectacle out of murder. The response was immediately cast (by George Bush) in terms of war, but war with whom? The perpetrators did not represent a state. Whom to fight? How to fight an invisible enemy? Normal rules of engagement, such as the Geneva Convention, it emerges, will not apply. Reasoned discussion, tolerance and respect, it seems, are no longer appropriate. And so, another response has been triggered, another ideology has been unleashed. This response draws on ancient and visceral beliefs, hatred and anger. It articulates a vociferous and powerful voice that draws on the zealous religious right, vested interests of capital, and neo-conservative ideology, to produce a politics of shock, awe, war, hatred and fear.

This paper is concerned to explore something that forms part of the backdrop to the events on this grand stage. Beneath the actions, I suggest, lies another problem, un-noticed and un-remarked, but nonetheless significant because it impacts on how beliefs are organised and acted upon. This concerns the curious—and profoundly dysfunctional—relationship between utopianism and fundamentalism. Like all dysfunctional relationships, this one reveals and nourishes the worst, most destructive and most damaging aspects of the parties concerned. Fundamentalism and utopianism are, I suggest, closely related and this paper explores three key aspects of this relationship, which are of deepening complexity and significance. The most apparent connection occurs at the most superficial level: religious fundamentalisms contain utopias. The second layer of relationship occurs at a structural level: there are certain structural similarities between utopian thought and religious fundamentalism. I refer to them as pertaining to a shared paradigm. And finally, there is one particular feature that some forms of religious fundamentalism share with a certain kind of utopianism. This is an affection for perfection. These combine to sustain a profoundly dysfunctional relationship. The perfectionist tendencies of some fundamentalisms and the perfectionist tendencies of some utopian thought feed one another to dangerous effect. Some fundamentalist groups try to realise their vision of perfection and this has (intellectually and politically) lethal outcomes.

A note on approach

In this paper, I draw on debates and scholarship within the field of utopian studies to interpret the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism. Because utopianism and fundamentalism are contested terms, I begin by clarifying key terms and building working definitions, before moving on to explore the relationship between them. Discussions in this paper are empirically informed and examples are offered to illustrate my findings, but limitations of space render these necessarily brief, and my analysis is primarily structural.

Utopianism and fundamentalism are both complex and contested concepts. There is no consensus regarding definition within the scholarship of either field, partly because of the trans-disciplinary nature of these subjects and partly because of disagreements over epistemology, interpretation, and ideology. The study of utopianism occurs, for example, in such fields as literary studies, political science and theory, philosophy, and sociology, while the study of religious fundamentalism includes theology, religious studies, sociology, philosophy and

politics. It is hardly surprising then, that conceptual clarity should be elusive. My two working definitions draw on consensus in the scholarship (where it exists) whilst noting conflict and nuance.

Utopianism

In this paper, the terms, 'utopia', 'utopianism' and 'utopian' are employed in quite specific ways. Whereas non-specialists might use the terms as synonymous with 'impossible', 'overly idealistic', 'fanciful', or 'unrealistic',⁶ utopists use 'utopia' to refer to a vision of a better world, 'utopian' to signify a desire for a better world, and 'utopianism' to evoke the propensity for what Lyman Tower Sargent calls 'social dreaming'.⁷ This phenomenon is observable across all cultures, and expresses a sense of discontent with the here and now, and the desire for a better world. Whilst the phenomenon predates the publication of Thomas More's *Utopia* in 1516,⁸ the concept, with all of its paradoxes and ambiguities, was given shape by him. Current usage of the term derives from More, who created a phonetic pun by combining 'ou' (the negating 'non', 'no', or 'not'), 'eu' (good), and 'topos' (place).⁹ This article uses the term 'utopianism' in a way that reflects the essential ambiguity of More's neologism (utopia is a good place that is no-place). 'Utopianism' will be used as an umbrella term to refer to a collective impulse towards a better place, and a human tendency to want something better.¹⁰ It stems always from discontent with the now. Sargent describes it as 'the dreams and nightmares that concern the ways in which groups of people arrange their lives'.¹¹ Utopias are expressions of this process. They articulate what Ruth Levitas calls a desire for a better way of being.¹² Utopianism is all about dissatisfaction and desire: dissatisfaction with the now and desire for something better. Within the analytic category of utopia are 'eutopias'—visions of the good life, and 'dystopias'—social nightmares, or worlds gone badly wrong. Utopianism produces both.

This will be the working definition utilised here: utopianism is a phenomenon of social dreaming in which visions for a better tomorrow stem from discontent with the now. Utopias are articulations of this desire for a better life and can be dystopic or eutopic. Thus far, we are on relatively safe terrain. However, beyond this point there exists little consensus and it is useful to note some of the key points of contention as they will be pertinent later. Technical and expert definitions of utopia tend, as Levitas notes, to be couched in terms of form, content or function.¹³ For some, utopias are always fictions.¹⁴ For others, they contain certain features which mark them out from other forms of ideal society, social project, or political theory.¹⁵ Others privilege the effects that utopia has on the world.¹⁶ This paper adheres to a function-based definition that makes some reference to content. Form is not, for me, a significant defining feature of utopianism,¹⁷ and definitions that rely on content are problematic.¹⁸ Briefly, utopias are about transgression, estrangement, subversion, articulating radical views and the desire for a better world. Utopias criticise their own worlds from an imaginary and critical distance. They are profoundly transgressive and they challenge the status quo. They can inspire action and thought. Some oppose ideologies associated with existing social formations,¹⁹ and some transform both/either the way that we think about the world²⁰ or the way that we act within it. Utopias, then, function as catalysts for change, points of inspiration, and vehicles for political critique. Ruth Levitas argues that they also educate desire.²¹ To summarise: utopias are often expressions of an estranged perspective, they express dissatisfaction with the political present, and they are creative, gesturing towards alternative ways of living and being, showing us that a better tomorrow is at least conceivable. They are subversive and can stimulate us to question our values and socio-political arrangements. And utopianism can have a transformative function.

Religious fundamentalism

Just as conventional usage of 'utopian' is derogatory, so it is commonplace to find 'fundamentalism' being used interchangeably with 'fanaticism', 'extremism' and, all too often, associated with 'foreigners', 'outsiders' or fearsome Others. Since 9/11,

of course, the phenomenon is popularly associated with Islam. However, scholarship shows that religious fundamentalism originated in early 20th-century Christianity. The word 'fundamentalism' comes from the title of a leaflet published by Milton and Lyman Stewart, who sought to defend the beliefs of American Protestantism against the perceived threats of modernity. The leaflet, *The Fundamentals: A Testimony of Truth*, established a name for the phenomenon that is now perceived to exist worldwide.

Scholars of fundamentalism commonly identify a core of key characteristics that denote a fundamentalist group.²² While this method is common, there is some debate over what these characteristics are. For example, Martyn Percy tells us that fundamentalism has five core features: backward-looking legitimisation for present forms of ministry and belief, opposition to trends in modernist society, a set of core beliefs, cross-denominationalism, and finally, an impact on the material world.²³ This is similar to, and yet different from, Almond, Siran and Appley's definition, which identifies nine core features. Some of these are related to beliefs: reactivity against marginalization, selectivity, moral manicheism, absolutism and inerrancy, millenarianism and messianism. Others are organisational: an elect membership, sharp group boundaries, authoritarian structures, and stipulated behavioural codes.²⁴ From works like these, we can extrapolate a working definition which distinguishes fundamentalist groups from other religious groups. Marty and Appleby point out that groups like the Amish are commonly misidentified as fundamentalist. They ask us to imagine a family of Amish, dressed in black, riding along on a horse-drawn cart, living together with other Amish families within a semi-enclosed community.²⁵ Their clothes, separatist lifestyle, and codes of behaviour all mark them out as different from the wider population and this earns them the label 'fundamentalist'. However, this group is not technically a fundamentalist one. The same authors ask us to imagine a white, middle class American family driving home from church in their new car, listening to music on the radio. This family belongs to the Southern Baptist Church of the United States of America, which is a fundamentalist religious group. The key that helps us to unravel all of the lies in the group's attitudes to its core beliefs. All of the scholarship in this field points towards this. The key factor in identifying fundamentalism is this core—the fundamentals, which are perceived to be in danger.

These groups seek to protect, preserve and re-establish the core of their belief system, which they believe to be under threat. This core is found in a pure and inerrant sacred text (usually this is a written text but sometimes it consists of a collection of stories or utterances by/about a sacred person or divinity. Sinhalese Buddhists, Tamil Hindus, and Sikhs in the Punjab, rely on the latter, while most Judaic, Muslim and Christian fundamentalists rely on the former).²⁶ The text, then, articulates the fundamentals which require protection. Preservation of this fundamental message requires that theological dispute within the group is minimal and this necessitates strong doctrinal discipline. Certain beliefs and practices must not be challenged and this is the source of fundamentalist dogmatism. The need for clarity and a single doctrinal voice also accounts for strong internal hierarchy and codes of appropriate behaviour within fundamentalist groups, and for their emphasis on the needs of the group over those of the individual.

Fundamentalist groups come in many forms. Some live together in intentional communities, dedicated to the furtherance of their mission, observing together daily religious practice. These communities exist within enclosed physical spaces, like the American Christian Group, The Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord, or open ones, like the Ultra-Orthodox Jewish Charedi community in London. Other groups, like the Southern Baptist Church, do not live together at all. Fundamentalist groups exist in all major world religions and in some 'alternative' spiritual traditions. This said, we should note that the deployment of the term 'fundamentalism' to refer to traditions outside Protestantism is contested. Some regard this as conceptually imperialistic, colonising the space of religious extremism with a western model. Empirical evidence does however appear to

indicate the world-wide occurrence of this phenomenon in modernity. There are identifiable groups of people within all world religions who believe that the purity of their message is under threat. This message is, they feel, a universal truth, infallible and divine. It needs to be protected and preserved and this requires strong discipline.

Three aspects of the relationship

Fundamentalism and utopianism are, I suggest, closely related and I propose to explore three key aspects of this relationship. As suggested above, religious fundamentalisms contain utopias, there are certain structural similarities between utopian thought and religious fundamentalism, and finally, some forms of utopianism and fundamentalism are perfectionist.

(i) *Fundamentalisms contain utopias.* The first and most apparent level of analysis, then, occurs at the level of content: religious fundamentalism contains utopias—visions of a better world, inspired by discontent with the present one. It is tempting to draw out pictures of the utopias within each religious tradition and at first glance this may appear useful for analytic purposes. For example, many Islamic groups, such as Al Qaeda, dream of establishing a this-worldly Khilafa or Islamic state, where rules and principles of government, economy and society stem directly from the Qur'an and Sharia law. Many Christian groups anticipate the coming of God's Kingdom on Earth. Many Jewish groups await the coming of the Messiah. Whilst this approach is interesting, it actually has limited explanatory or analytic value. It leads us to seek common dominators, shared beliefs across traditions and this generates over-simplifications. Whilst we may be able to identify broad similarities in the utopias within a religious tradition—such as the Islamic Khilafa, or Christian Kingdom of God, we should resist the temptation to generalise. The utopias of each fundamentalist group are different and differences occur within, as well as across, world religions.

Within Judaism, for example, there are differences between the goals of the Gush Emunim, who anticipate the coming of the Messiah to Israel and seek therefore to expel impure (Islamic) elements from what they perceive to be their divinely ordained land, and the goals of Neturei Karta, who oppose the existence of the state of Israel. Gush Emunim was founded in 1973 on the belief that Israel had been divinely granted to the Jews. The area given by God to his Chosen People included what are now called the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights, and the group thus seeks to expand the Jewish State. Neturei Karta began in 1938 with a group of Orthodox Jews in Israel who opposed Zionism in favour of what they perceive to be an unadulterated Judaism. Both are worldwide organisations and believe themselves to be following the real word of the Torah.²⁷ Both believe that Israel will be the home of the coming of the Messiah but Neturei Karta view the pre-emptive establishment of a Jewish state as ungodly. Different again are the more inward-focused Ultra-Orthodox Charedi Communities, found for instance in London. These groups seek primarily to be left alone to observe their religious practices. Intra- and inter-faith differences are important here. I propose to discuss specific groups from different religions, and I will suggest that whilst the content (i.e. beliefs, practices, aims, criticisms of the secular world and other groups) differs, there are certain paradigmatic similarities that are politically significant. For analytic purposes, then, we need to know about more than just the visions or goals of these groups. Utopianism runs deep within these organisations and looking just at their 'utopias' merely scratches the surface of this. The goals are important but to understand them properly we need to understand the processes through which these have been generated. It is necessary to get beneath the skin of these groups and observe how their utopias are formed. This can be attempted through an examination of the shape of fundamentalist thinking, whence we can observe structural connections to utopian thought. Paradigmatically, I suggest, fundamentalism and utopianism are similar. They stem from a combination of critique and construction. They protest and rebuild. They are profoundly oppositional and reactive in origin. The utopia, the vision of a better tomorrow, is

drawn from criticism of today.

(ii) *Structural similarities*. Utopian thought historically combines discontent with the now with the desire for a better way of being.²⁸ If we go back to More's Utopia, for example, we find a critique of the nature of and relationships governing property ownership. We also find him addressing concerns such as the role of the king's counsel, the relationship between church and state, and humanist debates about the relationship between morality and expediency. From criticism, then, comes eutopia. All utopias share this pattern. For example, Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backwards* offers a socialist critique of 19th-century America. William Morris's *News from Nowhere* articulates (amongst other things) a critique of Bellamy's socialism. Utopias commonly identify the ills of today and gesture towards a better tomorrow.

This process can be observed to drive and inform some fundamentalist activity and discourse as well. In particular, fundamentalism stems from protest (witness its Protestant roots). It identifies external threats to the core of its belief system. These threats might come from science, materialism, secularism, or other aspects of modernity.²⁹ They might be actually or potentially eroding the heart of a tradition. Fundamentalism is profoundly reactive.³⁰ But it is never only reactive. Fundamentalist groups seek also to revive, re-imagine or conserve an existing tradition. This forms part of their route to a better tomorrow. Most forms of religious fundamentalism, then, can be said to be utopian in this sense. This is often a utopianism that looks backwards, a utopianism of a Golden Age, which fundamentalists seek to revive, invent and/or realise in the now.

In the available speeches and videotapes of Osama bin Laden, for example, we can observe an interplay of criticism and creativity. His jihad stems from a critical view of Western values and also a critique of 'corrupt' Muslim practices and regimes. In particular, he articulates anger about the presence of American troops and civilians on sacred land in Saudi Arabia. Al Qaeda claims that Western values have a corrosive effect on righteous living, leading to corrupt behaviour and the erosion of the true path of Islam. Bin Laden adds to this the idea that the actions of successive American governments are expansionist, violent and couched in a veil of corrupt liberal discourse. For him, the presence of Americans in Saudi Arabia is a blasphemous occupation of sacred space. Although the troops were invited, this invitation was, he believed, immoral, issued by the Saudi ruling family, the House of al-Saud, whom he regards as apostates from the true path of Islam. America's real motivations, he says, are acquisitive: '[America] wants to occupy our countries, steal our resources, impose on us agents to rule us . . . and wants us to agree to all these. If we refuse to do so, it will say, "You are terrorists"'.³¹ This concern with Saudi Arabia forms part of Al Qaeda's criticisms of America as the agent of modernity and its concerns about the politics of land, resources, economy, nationhood, identity, power and legitimacy. Bin Laden's answer, his utopian vision, is the creation of a Khilafa or Islamic state, governed by adherence to the Qur'an and Sharia law. In recruitment videos, he speaks compellingly of building a Khilafa like the old Ottoman Empire, across the Middle East and Northern and Eastern Africa. His route to this eutopia combines armed resistance and the radical re-formation of Sunni Islam into a shape better resembling its original and true form. Rigorous Qur'anic observance is the path to a better world, combined with political activity which is extrapolated from this core of beliefs and practices.

An interplay of critique and alternative, discontent and desire, are apparent in all utopias. And, historically, utopian visions of a better life have been widely considered seditious, or subversive.³² Utopias have always challenged the social and conceptual cornerstones of their present. As suggested above, Thomas More satirised privately owned property in 1516, and in 1888 Edward Bellamy attacked industrialisation and capitalism. Others challenge different targets. Thus, feminist utopians challenge gender inequality and sometimes the notion of gender itself.³³

Public and private conventions, structures and infrastructures have always been the target of utopian critique, which brooks no sacred cows. To an extent then, the utopianism which lies inside fundamentalism is part of a much broader tradition of classical utopian thinking that sets out to challenge the parameters of the hereand-now. This articulation of utopianism is particularly challenging to liberal ideology. What is it, then, that makes fundamentalist utopianism so potent, dangerous, and so difficult to negotiate in today's world?.

(iii) *Perfectionism*. The key, I suggest, lies in the particular kind of utopianism that drives religious fundamentalism. This is a utopianism of perfection, which is quite literally irresistible when situated in a religious context. This is complex and I propose to explore it through a consideration of two key aspects of fundamentalism: a belief in universal truth and infallibility, and a collective quest for purity.

Universal truth and infallibility

All forms of religious fundamentalism believe themselves to have identified a religious truth which is universal across time and space. Theirs, in other words, is the way, the path, the truth. The source of this truth is a text, both sacred and inerrant. It is a pure and perfect source, containing the revealed word of the divine. It simply cannot be wrong and so all fundamentalist groups insist upon doctrinal orthodoxy. Herein lies a paradox because different and competing groups often claim the same core text as their infallible source, drawing from it very different visions of the good life.

For example, the Bible is the inerrant source for many different groups, across and within different world religions. Within Christianity, fundamentalist groups include such diverse organisations as The Southern Baptist Convention of the United States (SBC), Pentecostals, including African Pentecostals, and The Churches of Christ. The SBC is the largest Christian fundamentalist group, which claims a number of former US Presidents as members (including Jimmy Carter and George Bush Snr). The SBC is socially conservative, boosted by the Moral Majority movement in the late 1970s, following a series of liberal Supreme Court decisions such as *Brown Vs Board of Education* (1954), the outlawing of school prayers (1962 and 1963), and *Roe Vs Wade* (1973). High profile leaders like Jerry Falwell addressed mass services calling for a restoration of old values, respect for the Bible, and a return of Godliness to government, combining social conservatism with religious dogma. Their ultimate utopia anticipates the arrival of God's Kingdom on Earth.

African Pentecostals have achieved infamy in Britain, after the death of the child Victoria Climbié.³⁴ One such group is the Pentecostal Church of the French Christian Community Bethel (London). Drawing strongly on the Old Testament, this church combines African spiritualism with Christian Pentecostalism and is a formidable force for social control. Like the Southern Baptists, they pursue a utopia in the afterlife through righteous activity in the present, but their route towards it is very different, including exorcism ('Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live' (Exodus 22: 18)) and ecstatic worship. The Churches of Christ is a nondenominational Restorationist Christian organisation, committed to following the Bible, which they consider the 'Word of God', and restoring Christ's 'original' Church. Less populist than the SBC, this group is often described as a cult and places a strong emphasis on discipline, including strict dress and behavioural codes, austere rules for the form of worship, and of course, Biblical interpretation. This is a growing international movement with churches throughout North America and Britain. The contemporary Churches of Christ movement is particularly active on University campuses and employs aggressive tactics of proselytism and recruitment.

These are three very different organisations. All are Christian, socially conservative and share paradigmatic similarities, but their messages and routes to utopia are very different. Different again is the American intentional community,

The Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord. Intentional communities, also known as 'utopian communities',³⁵ 'communes', and 'alternative communities',³⁶ are groups of people who live and sometimes work together in an attempt to realise a collective vision of a better way of life. These include religious communities, secular urban and rural communes, co-housing schemes, eco-villages and some housing co-operatives.³⁷ The Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord existed from 1971 until approximately 1985 and was a Christian survivalist group, based on the Arkansas/Missouri border.³⁸ In 1982, they described themselves like this: 'We are a group of hard-working, dedicated Christians, whose purpose is to build an Ark for god's people during the coming tribulations on earth'.³⁹ Their statement 'What We Believe' opens in classic fundamentalist terms: 'We believe the Holy Bible to be the inspired word of God, written down for us for our admonition, correction, instruction, doctrinal standard, and example. It is to be believed and followed as a Holy document'.⁴⁰

So far, the group sounds similar to those discussed above—doctrinally rigid and grounded in the Bible. Further into the statement, however, we find that:

4. We believe the white race is the Israel race of God and is the superior race on this earth. . . .
8. We believe the commonly-called Jews of today are not God's chosen people, but are, in fact, an antichrist race, whose purpose is to destroy God's people and Christianity, through its Talmudic teachings, forced inter-racial mixings and perversions.⁴¹

The 'Ark' was to be racially 'pure' and the 224 acres of the Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord comprised a separatist space, where the righteous (white, 'Scandinavian–Germanic–Teutonic–British–American people', who are 'lost sheep of Israel'),⁴² awaited salvation.

These groups share the same divinely revealed source and yet their aims and beliefs are very different. This is because each doctrine draws on an interpretation of the sacred text. This raises questions about the relationship between the group's utopia and the sacred text. Which is prior, ontologically, politically, and/or temporally? Recall that utopias tell us about people's fears and desires. They tell us what is thought to be wrong with the world as it is now, and how it might be better. The accepted version of text offers a legitimising source for this and is offered as a literal translation of the divine truth. The relationship between text and utopia is complex and shifting. The text is held to be sacred and infallible and so of course it tells us the truth and shows us the way to righteousness and salvation. However, leaders interpret this, and complex manipulations and interpretations occur which justify the group's utopian vision and actions.

Members believe their group's interpretation to be the truth. Herein lies a key political problem with fundamentalist movements of any kind which has also been identified, albeit mistakenly, as the key problem with utopianism. With regard to fundamentalism, the problem is relatively straightforward: if modern politics is about making binding decisions in a plural world, or negotiating differences, or devising ways in which the world's many people can peaceably co-exist, then fundamentalisms are anathema to politics. A key defining feature of fundamentalism is its belief in its own absolute rightness (and indeed, righteousness). This means that core issues are simply not available for discussion, negotiation, or compromise. The most that politics can hope to achieve under such circumstances is a collective agreement to disagree. It is not that religions per se are anathema to politics. Even an expansionist state based on a proselytising religion can negotiate difference, and Medieval Islam was part of such a world for a time, as Muslim expansionism combined with toleration (and taxation) of different faith groups. However, this world was not led by fundamentalists and the problem lies in the fundamentalist paradigm.⁴³

To understand the problems associated with utopianism, universality, truth, and

infallibility, it is necessary to visit the terrain of anti-utopianism.⁴⁴ Utopianism has long been associated with inflexibility, illiberalism and an affinity for authoritarianism. The idea that utopian thinking is dangerous has an ancient pedigree, but has particular resonance in classical and modern conservative political thought. Edmund Burke set the scene for this when, surveying the effects of the French Revolution, he articulated a political philosophy that warned against the unintended outcomes of radical change.⁴⁵ Recurrent themes of anti-utopian thinking are a preference for tradition over reason, continuity over change, and conservatism over radicalism.

The baton was famously picked up three centuries later by Karl Popper who, like his forbear, surveyed with horror the effects of wide-scale social experimentation.⁴⁶ Popper looked backwards at Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia when writing his singularly influential anti-utopian critique, *The Open Society and its Enemies*. Taking the works of Marx and Plato as his cues, he argued that utopianism could only, and would always, lead to totalitarianism. He believed that utopian projects were inevitably repressive. Nobody, he thought, could accurately predict another person's happiness. The unintended consequences of our actions are unknown and it would be better to leave things alone. For a utopian vision really to be legitimate, it would need to meet with universal consent, an impossible condition. These objections ground his assertion that utopianism produces totalitarianism. The realisation of one person's utopia will always, he argued, constitute an imposition, suppressing dissent and pluralism.

Scholars of utopia take issue with Popper on a number of counts, not least regarding the adequacy of his discussion of his two case studies—Plato and Marx—and much of his argument has been discredited.⁴⁷ Popper deploys an important assumption that is relevant to the current discussion, namely, that a defining feature of utopianism is a quest for perfection, based on totalising truth claims. However, not all utopias are grounded in such claims and not all are perfectionist. Utopias, I suggest (along with others, such as Lyman Sargent, Ruth Levitas, and Tom Moylan) are not definable by these characteristics. It is true that some utopias are perfectionist: Bellamy's *Looking Backwards* is an example from the canon, and Sally Miller Gearhart's *The Wanderground* is a feminist utopia with perfectionist tendencies. But this does not apply to the genre as a whole and should not be taken to represent utopianism. Utopias are about something more important, more complex and more radical than offering visions of a universally perfect world. Utopias engage in contemporaneous debates. They have hermeneutic value, offering insights into their author's world, revealing weaknesses or topics of controversy. And they challenge the cornerstones that support our worlds, gesture towards alternatives, and, through the mechanism of estrangement, they create new conceptual spaces in which to imagine the world anew.⁴⁸ To summarise: my argument is that utopianism cannot be defined as a quest for perfection, but that there are nonetheless perfectionist tendencies in some utopian thought, and these can be dangerous.

Thomas More's *Utopia*, is a good example of these complexities. It would be inaccurate to describe More's imaginary world as a straightforward quest for perfection. The status and meaning of this work have been extensively debated by scholars. Some view the whole work as an elaborate joke, others see it as a critical device; some believe it to be perfectionist, but most, regardless of their own conclusions, note its ambiguity and paradoxes.⁴⁹ The world of *Utopia* was certainly better than More's contemporary society, at least in the eyes of its imaginary protagonist, Raphael Hythloday. (Better, he tells us to be a slave in utopia than a free man elsewhere.)⁵⁰ But it was flawed, internally undermined and problematised by More's puns and neologisms. It is tempting (retuning again for a moment to my students) to view *Utopia* using a contemporary lens, and condemn it as straightforwardly authoritarian, repressive of individual freedom and thus (my students often say) imperfect. Of course, this is anachronistic, but it raises an interesting point and another paradox. More's imagined world does have

authoritarian tendencies. It is also remarkably tolerant. Its laws and rules, for example, emanate from one source: good King Utopus. Unauthorised travel is punishable (on second offence, by enslavement), and (to prevent conspiracy) it is considered a capital offence 'to take counsel on matters of common interest outside of the senate or the popular assembly'.⁵¹ It also contains high levels of toleration: regarding, for example, religious belief. Wise Utopus, on arriving at the island, had observed that religious dissent caused internal unrest:

From the very beginning, therefore, . . . he especially ordained that it should be lawful for every man to follow the religion of his choice, that each might strive to bring others over to his own, provided he quietly and modestly supported his own by reasons nor bitterly demolished all others if his persuasions were not successful nor used any violence and refrained from abuse.⁵²

Divorce is possible by consent but 'Violators of the conjugal tie are punished by the strictest form of slavery'⁵³ (and by death for a second offence). The aim of all of these punitive laws is the maintenance of the good life created by Utopus for his people. It is hard not to interpret this as benign authoritarianism. Given that this kind of authoritarianism can be an outcome of a flawed vision of the good life, what, we might wonder, might arise from a utopian paradigm committed to perfection? This would tolerate no dissent or change, for perfection is a static state.

As the French Revolution terrified Edmund Burke, so Stalin's Russia and Hitler's Germany frightened Popper. Hitler's Germany was founded, at least in part, on a utopian vision of an Aryan race, pure, noble, and magnificent—a perfect people. Lyman Tower Sargent makes the important distinction between two versions of perfection: one that concerns perfect people, and the other that desires perfect societies.⁵⁴ Both are untenable, but for different reasons.⁵⁵ Eutopias that rely on human perfection inevitably fail because they are undermined by beliefs about original sin, human imperfection and flaws. Sargent identifies ancient (Aristophanes 4th-century BC *Women in Parliament*) and modern (Samuel Johnson's 18th-century *The Prince of Abissinia*) examples of this tendency. Visions of a perfect society are politically challenging and tend to materialise (imaginatively or actually) as dystopias. This is because perfection is unchanging and the maintenance of a perfect static condition requires large apparatuses of social control. The problem, then, is less that Hitler was a utopian, and more to do with the paradigm of his utopianism—its shape, boundaries and nature. Simply put, this utopianism sought a perfect, pure and uncontaminated world for a chosen few.

This helps us to see how utopianism and fundamentalism might fatally combine. With religious fundamentalism, these traits are intensified by the belief that the utopian vision has divine origin and sanction. This form of utopianism leads to aggressive evangelism and coercive proselytising, and its followers, certain of their righteousness, are willing to impose their vision onto the world. It is dogmatic—after all, if this really is the 'right' path, the 'true' vision, then dissent is heresy. In order to explore this further, we need to turn to the key second aspect of the relationship between fundamentalism and utopianism, which is collective action.

Collective quest for purity. The emphasis on the preservation of a sacred text or path leads to preoccupations with purity and truth and a desire to avoid corruption. This is the second key feature of fundamentalism and it concerns the moment when ideas become actions as people collectively attempt to realise their eutopia. The content of this varies, of course, but all seek 'the' pure and perfect conclusion to their struggles.

Sometimes, this eutopia is future-oriented or other-worldly and sometimes it is close to the here and now. As an example of the former, we can refer back to the community of The Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord. This

group anticipated surviving God's next purge of the Earth.⁵⁶ A eutopia, in which members would receive heavenly and earthly reward, lay in the future (after Armageddon) but actions in the present were nonetheless significant. For the Covenantors, the present was preparatory and utopia could be realised only in a 'pure' space, free from contaminating influences (i.e. the 'wrong kind' of people), in which followers lived 'virtuous' lives, awaiting divine judgement. For other groups, preparation involves physical struggle, such as holy war or the expulsion of unwanted elements from sacred lands.

The American group, Aryan Nations, for example, encourages its members to 'act now' in order to purge and purify physical space. Like the Christian groups cited above, Aryan Nations describes its beliefs thus: 'WE BELIEVE the Bible is the true Word of God written for and about a specific people . . .'.⁵⁷ And, like the Covenantors' document, it continues:

[WE BELIEVE . . .] The Bible is the history of the White Race, and the children of Yahweh placed here through the seedline of Adam. WE BELIEVE the Jew is the adversary of our race and God, as is attested to by all secular history as well as the word of God in scripture . . . 58

Describing its members as 'national socialists'⁵⁹ this group seeks to create a pure society which does not currently exist anywhere on Earth. For Aryan Nations, 'the Jew' is the primary Other: Jews are economically and politically dominant, and Jewish ethics undermine all that is good. The group's homepage opens with an extract from Issue 17 of The National Socialist Newsletter:

It is time for plain, honest speaking; it is time to write the truth, regardless of the consequences. We Aryans must now take part in the war which other races have, both knowingly and unknowingly, fought for us, and which they are already fighting. The truth is that the invasion of the Aryan fatherlands, our Aryan homelands, is a racial declaration of war on the Aryan races. They have invaded our territory. They are expanding at our expense.⁶⁰

Prescribed actions are violent. Visitors to the site are encouraged to reclaim ancient territories, fight the enemy ('Asian gangs' . . . 'our Zionist enemies') and to purify the land. Aryan superiority (in the blood and heart) will overcome. We are told of the need to protect racial health and purity, the fatherland and Aryan honour. The author of the homepage refers us (lest we require further inspiration) to the 'suffering' and work of Rudolf Hess.

A collective quest for purity often takes the form of a purge of both/either the external world and/or the self. Jihad, for example, involves both internal and external struggles for purity.⁶¹ Often the purge is territorial and the clearance of ancient lands in the name of purity is a recurrent motif of fundamentalist collective action. Examples can be found in Israel, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia. Gush Emunim has been trying to expel Palestinians from the sacred West Bank of the river Jordan (which they know as Samaria) since the 1970s. Palestinian resistance includes the actions of suicide bombers, who believe that their deaths will serve a double purpose. Firstly, they contribute to the purge of ancient lands and secondly, martyrdom sends the soul straight to Paradise.⁶²

Separatism often forms part of a quest for purity. This requires the creation of isolated spaces. These can be physical, as is the case with enclosed intentional communities, or symbolic, through membership rites, induction processes, and pledges to secrecy. Boundaries are protected in the name of purity and decontamination. They also help the group to establish and maintain new (desired) patterns of behaviour and a certain amount of isolation is necessary for any project pursuing a utopian vision of the good life.

Boundary control protects social systems against dangerous outsiders. It includes not only the screening of people but also of information, since information is a potent determinant of behaviour. If a community is to maintain a system of shared beliefs markedly at variance with that of the surrounding culture, members, must sometimes be rigidly isolated from consensual information from the general society that would unsettle this belief system.⁶³

However, the scholarship in this field, and indeed my own fieldwork in intentional communities,⁶⁴ points to the major problem arising from communal isolationism—a distortion of perspective. Historically, the experiences of intentional communities like The People's Temple of Jonestown in Guyana, have indicated the dangers of one aspect of isolationism, which is alienation. Cut off from the mediating norms and values of the wider community, members are vulnerable to manipulation. Outsiders appear to be enemies, and their difference from the in-group appears to be a manifestation of evil.

It is, however, widely acknowledged that most people's definition of reality—and their judgements of what is right and wrong, or good and evil, can be particularly vulnerable to suggestion, influence, and in some cases, manipulation, when they are cut off from alternative sources of information.⁶⁵

Fundamentalist emphases on purity generate a context in which alienation from the Other (ignorance and contempt of their value system, beliefs and practices) combines with isolation within a fervent and dogmatic in-group. This creates a perfect context for the dehumanisation of the Other.

Separatism yields a further problem and this is the disinclination towards participation in political processes. As Marty and Appleby explain, '[i]nvolvement with earthly processes and politics would only lead to the defeat of the fundamentalist, for the earthly world is given over to Satan'.⁶⁶ Again, fundamentalism emerges as antithetical to liberal politics. Fundamentalist practices like demonising the Other, establishing firm boundaries around and bonds within the group, proselytising their interpretation of sacred texts, expelling impure elements from sacred land, and otherwise working towards the realisation of their goal, all occur as a consequence of the perfectionist nature of their utopia and a belief in the totality of the group's critique. In other words, this stems from the dual belief that only their message is the true one and only their utopia is the perfect one.

Conclusion

I have suggested that fundamentalism contains utopias, that fundamentalism and utopianism share certain significant structural features (both stem from critique and imagine a better tomorrow), and finally that religious fundamentalism is driven by a dangerous perfectionist impulse. This embraces beliefs about the absolute rightness and righteousness of its own message and vision. Actions pursued in the name of eutopia have the ultimate legitimacy of divine sanction.

Perfection and perfectionism are deeply problematic for utopian thinking. They are recurrent motifs of most anti-utopian thought, leading to charges of excessive idealism, authoritarianism and totalitarianism (as with Popper). Their role and status are also debated and contested within the field of utopian studies. Some scholars, like Vincent Geoghegan, celebrate perfection, saying that it gives utopias aspects of awe, wonder, and aspiration.⁶⁷ In this view, perfection contributes to utopia's radical otherness. Others disagree, being wary of the strong disciplinary role that perfectionism can play. In previous work, I have joined the ranks of the latter, suggesting that perfectionism cannot be taken as a defining feature of utopia,⁶⁸ and that utopias which are marked by perfectionism are in some way dangerous.⁶⁹ This view builds on the work of scholars like H.G. Wells,⁷⁰ Tom Moylan⁷¹ and Lyman Tower Sargent.⁷² Their positions stem from empirical and normative judgements about perfection. Empirically, I have claimed, it is inaccurate to define utopianism as perfectionist. Fictional utopias are not all static and lived utopias cannot be. Normatively, I have suggested, perfection is not

desirable—and this claim is based on beliefs about human nature and imperfectibility⁷³ as well as a commitment to pluralism and a desire to avoid unnecessary closure. The realisation of a perfect eutopia would necessarily suppress difference, and this makes an uncomfortable starting point for a utopian project in the 21st century.

To some extent, then, I have suggested in this paper that religious fundamentalism is informed by a malign kind of utopianism. Here, I have associated perfectionism with the legitimisation of violence towards the Other and the repression of dissent. Perfection is a complex concept, utilised in a range of fields including theology, philosophy and architecture and this paper only scratches its surface. In some contexts, perfection means to be 'absolutely right or accurate', in others, 'unchangeable, fixed and immutable'. All senses, I have suggested, are problematic in political terms. Some (such as task-based) forms of perfectionism encourage social stasis, others lead the authors of utopias to seek to preserve their vision against radical future change. Some theories of moral perfectionism create an in-group with special access to the truth, others lead to such notions as perfect obedience. These are all politically and intellectually dangerous, as is illustrated by the notion of the utopian function identified by Ruth Levitas. Utopias, she tells us, 'educate desire'.⁷⁴ In religious fundamentalist groups, the discontent felt by people (some young Muslims for example) is nurtured (by reading websites or literature like the journal *Jihad*, or through 'religious' instruction) into a coherent picture of eutopia. The desire for something better begins to take a definite shape. The alienated individual can become part of a larger whole, his/her life can take on some meaning, s/he acquires a coherent narrative that makes sense of the world and, moreover, can act and may even one day be gloried by her/his God. To some extent, this is wonderful, empowering and exciting and it is certainly powerful. Indeed, this is one of the main impulses that utopianism and fundamentalism share. Individual desires for a more meaningful life, for a change in the moral fabric, and for a better life, are tutored to become part of a larger collective orthodox and divinely sanctioned desire. But this process can have tragic personal effects and generates a dangerous political paradigm.

I have used the term perfectionism in a broad sense, to denote completeness (finality, a static and finished condition) and infallibility, (of truth, message, messenger and/or doctrine or vision). It informs fundamentalism and a dangerous form of utopianism. This perspective brooks no alternative, permitting religious leaders to proclaim their vision as the only righteous one, rooted in an inerrant and divinely sanctioned text. Their path towards utopia may thus legitimately involve violence towards a despised Other in the name of purity, purge and the authoritarianism of people who know that they are right. A pattern of thinking that insists on access to a unitary and infallible truth and righteousness will always, and can only, inform a utopianism that will be authoritarian, oppressive, and dogmatic. Utopianism can be a dangerous motivator. Founded in deep and sometimes popular discontent with the present and seeking a better tomorrow, it can take us into dystopic worlds in which Otherness, difference and dissent are demonised and only the 'true believers' have access to the truth. Like all dystopias, this is an extrapolation of tendencies in our present and should serve as a warning. Perfection is not for this world.

Notes and References

1. This paper is dedicated to these students, in acknowledgement of the value of curiosity.
2. Thanks are due to Lyman Tower Sargent and to the journal's anonymous reviewers, for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.
3. For a useful selection of key texts from this tradition, see M. Festenstein and M. Kenny, *Political Ideologies: A Reader and Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
4. See, for example, J. Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960).
5. See, for example, J. Locke, 'An essay on toleration', in M. Goldie (Ed), *Locke, Political Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), and J.S. Mill, *On Liberty* (London: Everyman, 1910).
6. See, for example, the entry for utopia in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*: '1) An imaginary or hypothetical place or state of things considered to be perfect; a) a condition of ideal (esp. social) perfection.

- b) An imaginary distant region or country. 2. An impossibly ideal scheme, esp. for social improvement.' And 'utopian: '1. Pertaining to, or characteristic of, a Utopia; advocating or constituting an ideally perfect state; impossibility ideal, visionary, idealistic. 2. Having no known location, existing nowhere.' (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 3534. Meanings 1b (for 'utopia') and 2 (for 'utopian') are comparatively rare in vernacular usage.
7. L.T. Sargent, 'Three faces of utopianism revisited', *Utopian Studies*, 5 (1), 1994, pp. 1–37. For examples of the terms being used in these ways, see other key texts in the field, including: R. Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia* (Hemel Hempstead: Philip Allan, 1990); J.C. Davis, *Utopia and the Ideal Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); B. Goodwin and K. Taylor, *The Politics of Utopia: A Study in Theory and Practice* (London: Hutchinson, 1982); and T. Moylan, *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination* (New York and London: Methuen, 1986).
8. See G. Claeys and L.T. Sargent, *The Utopia Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 1999).
9. T. More 'Utopia', in E. Surtz and J. Hexter (Eds), *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More Vol. 4* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965), p. 185.
10. Sargent, op. cit., Ref. 7.
11. Sargent, *ibid.*, p. 3.
12. Levitas, op. cit., Ref. 7.
13. Levitas, *ibid.*
14. See D. Suvin 'On the poetics of the science fiction genre', *College English*, 34 (3), 1972, p. 375; D. Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 49. See also D. Suvin 'Defining the literary genre of utopia: Some historical semantics, some genealogy, a proposal, and a plea', *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 6 (2), 1973, pp. 121–145, and K. Kumar, *Utopia and Anti Utopia in Modern Times* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987).
15. See, for example, Davis, op. cit., Ref. 7, and Goodwin and Taylor, op. cit., Ref. 6.
16. See, for example, Moylan, op. cit., Ref. 7, and T. Moylan, *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia* (Oxford: Westview Press, 2000), and L. Sargisson, *Utopian Bodies and the Politics of Transgression* (London: Routledge, 2000).
17. Drawing on the work of Ernst Bloch, I suggest that utopianism is expressed in many forms (Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986)). For Bloch, utopianism is an impulse towards the better life, and his three volume *Principle of Hope* includes discussions of daydreams, wishful thinking and more familiar socio-political utopian projects. Bloch does not say that utopianism is everywhere, but he suggests that it can be found in fictional accounts of a better world, social and political theory, lived experiments, works of art, music, medicine and architecture. Some utopias are conceptual or abstract and some take a concrete form. Discontented with the now and desiring a better tomorrow, utopias imagine better worlds and different ways of being and this is expressed in many different ways.
18. Firstly, this scholarship is context-specific—set in time—and these definitions universalise the phenomenon, to unnecessarily exclusive effect. For example, I have written elsewhere about how conventional contentbased definitions exclude many women's utopias from the genre (L. Sargisson, *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism* (London: Routledge, 1996)). Secondly, content-based definitions tend to mis-identify the core contents of a utopia. For example, many assume that utopias are finite and perfectible and offer blueprints for the ideal polity (See J.C. Davis, op. cit., Ref. 7). Much scholarship on More's *Utopia* and other canonical texts suggests that they do not offer straightforward blueprints for the perfect society (see, for example, L.T. Sargent, 'What is a utopia?' *Morus: Utopia e renascimento*, 2, 2005). *Utopia* operates more subtly than this. It is the good place and the no place. Social arrangements in the land of *Utopia* are not perfect and are undermined even from within by the puns and internal jokes in the text.
19. K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (London: Routledge 1991 [1936]).
20. Moylan, op. cit. Ref. 7 and Moylan, op. cit., Ref. 16.
21. Levitas, op. cit. Ref. 7.
22. See, for example, M.E. Marty and R.S. Appleby (Eds), *Fundamentalisms Observed: the Fundamentalism Project Vol 1*. (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1991), and M.E. Marty and R.S. Appleby (Eds), *Fundamentalisms Comprehended: The Fundamentalism Project Vol. 5* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1995), M. Ruthven, *Fundamentalism: The Search for Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), and L. Caplan, *Studies in Religious Fundamentalism* (Albany, NY: State of New York University Press, 1987).
23. M. Percy, *Words, Wonders and Power: Understanding Contemporary Christian Fundamentalism and Revivalism* (London: S.P.C.K., 1996).
24. G.A. Almond, E. Siran and R.S. Appleby, 'Fundamentalism: Genus and species', in Marty and Appleby (Eds), op. cit., Ref. 22, pp. 402–459.
25. See M.E. Marty and R.S. Appleby, *The Glory and the Power: The Fundamentalist Challenge to the Modern World* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1992).
26. There are some important exceptions here. Breslov Jewish groups, for example, pay particular attention to the teachings of Rebbe Nachman in addition to the core texts of their tradition. They believe this to be the best route to traditional practices. Nachman offers what he calls a 'new way' to the 'old way of our ancestors'. See <http://www.breslov.org>.
27. 'The Talmud . . . teaches that Jews should not use human force to bring about the establishment of a Jewish state before the coming of the universally accepted Moshiach (Messiah from the House of David). Furthermore, it states we are forbidden to rebel against the house of nations and that we should remain loyal citizens. And we shall not attempt to leave the exile which G-d sent us into ahead of time' (Neturei Karta: <http://www.nkusa.org/aboutus>, 24 June 2005).
28. Levitas, op. cit., Ref. 7.
29. S. Bruce, *Fundamentalism* (Cambridge: Polity, 2006).
30. Marty and Appleby op. cit., Ref. 22.
31. O. bin Laden, CNN interview, 10 May 1997, cited in P.L. Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama Bin Laden* (London: Phoenix, 2002) p. 21.
32. Kumar, op. cit., Ref. 14.
33. See, for example, S. McKee Charnas's trilogy, *Walk to the End of the World*, *Motherlines*, and *The Furies*

- (London: Women's Press, 1989, 1994), and J. Russ, *The Female Man* (London: The Women's Press, 1985).
34. She was tortured and killed by her guardians in London who claimed to believe she was possessed by the devil.
 35. R.M. Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes, Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972).
 36. See Sargent, *op. cit.*, Ref. 7.
 37. See D. Hardy, *Utopian England: Community Experiments 1900–1945* (London: E&FN Spon, 2000) and L. Sargisson and L.T. Sargent, *Living in Utopia: New Zealand's Intentional Communities* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).
 38. L.T. Sargent, *Extremism in America: A Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), p. 327.
 39. *Covenant, Sword and Arm of the Lord, 'Who We Are'*, *Zarephath-Horeb: CSA Journal*, 7, 1982; reproduced in Sargent, *ibid.*, p. 327.
 40. Sargent, *ibid.*, pp. 329–330.
 41. Sargent, *ibid.*, p. 330.
 42. Point 13, 'What we believe', in Sargent, *ibid.*, p. 330.
 43. It should be noted that some fundamentalist groups do participate in 'pluralist' politics, even if they believe this to be an imperfect forum. An interesting example is the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. This organisation is unusual because it works within (as well as outside) existing political institutions. Some 150 members of this organisation stood in the Egyptian elections of 2005 (as independent candidates). The Brotherhood was outlawed in 1954 (following the attempted assassination of Gamal Abdel Nasser, who became President in 1956) and it officially renounced violence in 1970. Members stand as independent candidates because the organisation cannot legally comprise a political party, but in 2005 candidates publicly cited their allegiance to the Brotherhood (on election posters) for the first time. The group won 88 (of 444) seats and currently comprises the largest single opposition bloc in the Egyptian parliament. See <http://english.aljazeera.net>.
 44. For discussions of the tradition of anti-utopianism, see Goodwin and Taylor, *op. cit.*, Ref. 7, pp. 92–118, and G. Kateb, *Utopia and its Enemies* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972).
 45. E. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1987 [1790]).
 46. K. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).
 47. See, for example, R. Levinson, *In Defence of Plato* (Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1953).
 48. For more on this, see Sargisson, *op. cit.*, Ref. 18.
 49. See, for example, A.L. Morton, *The English Utopia* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1952) and G.M. Logan and Robert Adams (Eds), *Thomas More's Utopia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).
 50. See More *op. cit.*, Ref. 9, p. 185.
 51. More, *ibid.*, p. 125.
 52. More, *ibid.*, p. 221.
 53. More, *ibid.*, p. 191.
 54. Sargent, *op. cit.*, Ref. 18.
 55. John Passmore's classic text *The Perfection of Man* (London: Duckworth, 1970) set the parameters for debate on this topic by distinguishing between different theories of human perfection. Some stem from the perfection of tasks and some are founded on an ideal of moral perfection.
 56. They also anticipated surviving communist invasion and prepared for this by accumulating a large cache of arms.
 57. Butler, 'This is aryan nations', reproduced in Sargent, *op. cit.*, Ref. 38, p. 147.
 58. Sargent, *ibid.*, p. 147.
 59. <http://www.aryan-nations.org>
 60. *Ibid.*
 61. See D. Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005) and B.B. Lawrence, *Shattering the myth: Islam Beyond Violence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).
 62. Qur'anic approval is often cited for this: 'Never think that those who were slain in the cause of God are dead. They are alive and well provided for by the Lord' (The Qur'an verse 3: p. 169).
 63. M. Galanter, *Cults, Faith, Healing and Coercion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 105.
 64. See, for example, Sargisson and Sargent, *op. cit.*, Ref. 37.
 65. E. Barker, *New Religious Movements: A Practical Introduction* (London: HMSO, 1989), p. 81.
 66. Marty and Appleby *op. cit.*, Ref. 22, p. 39.
 67. V. Geoghegan, 'Political theory—utopia—post-secularism', in R. Baccolini, and T. Moylan (Eds), *Utopia and Method* (London: Philip Allen, 2006).
 68. Sargisson, *op. cit.*, Ref. 16.
 69. Sargisson and Sargent, *op. cit.*, Ref. 37.
 70. H.G. Wells, *A Modern Utopia* (London: Orion, 1998 [1905]).
 71. Moylan, *op. cit.* Ref. 7, and Moylan, *op. cit.*, Ref. 16.
 72. See, for example, Sargent, *op. cit.*, Ref. 7.
 73. See Wells, *op. cit.*, Ref. 70.
 74. Levitas, *op. cit.*, Ref. 7.