layers to Canning’s examination. Such future research would fill a gap left open by this otherwise solid and insightful piece of scholarship.

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At the outset of his book Gregory Claeys notes the difficulty of offering a definition of utopianism that is both comprehensive enough to reflect the breadth of utopian thinking, and focused enough to avoid rendering the term meaningless. To reach a practical definition of utopia embracing ‘every aspiration to social improvement: proposals to contain sewage emissions or extend public transport’ is inappropriate, but neither is it sufficient to reduce utopianism to ‘a psychological impulse, dream, fantasy, projection, desire or wish, thought these may underpin its creation or discovery’ (11). Beneath the rubric ‘utopia’ then, there is a dizzying variety of schemes, projects and aspirations, encompassing:

Positive ideals of much-improved societies; their negative satirical opposites, sometimes called anti-utopias or dystopias; various myths of paradise, golden ages and ‘fortunate islands’, and portrayals of primitive peoples living in a natural state; Robinsonades or shipwrecks; imaginary voyages to the Moon and elsewhere in space; and planned constitutions, model towns and various... visions of improvement (12).

Such diversity is intimidating, particularly for a book framed as the exploration of ‘the history of an idea’, but Claeys’s Catholic
approach to the definition of utopianism has resulted in an engaging introductory work.

The fourteen substantive chapters range widely, from utopianism in the ‘Classical Age’ and Christianity, to attempts to realise the ideal society in the French and American revolutions, and the Gehennas of totalitarianism. The inclusion of these is in itself important, for as Searching for Utopia demonstrates utopianism has a practical, and sometimes unedifying, history. In the spirit of influential critics of the utopian mentality like Karl Popper, Claeys notes the calamitous impact that a belief in ‘perfectibility’ has had upon world history. The Terror gave this perception a ‘modern focal point’, and the idea that a preordained path to a brighter future, or that a few individuals had the capacity to discern the route to its achievement, sometimes legitimised great barbarity in its pursuit.

Yet, utopianism has a quainter history too, and the brief chapter on ‘utopia as community’ explores the importance of utopian thinking to communitarian political thought. Particularly prominent in the prehistory of the United States, the communitarian movement was revitalised in the mid-nineteenth century as the ideas of Robert Owen, Charles Fourier and Etienne Cabet were seized upon by ambitious devotees. Although history tended to repeat itself – first as farce, then as tragedy – as these communal experiments were gripped by infighting or beset by fire and failed harvests, Claeys demonstrates that the communal mentality did not die. The kibbutz movement in Israel and a ‘wave of communitarian experimentation’ in the 1960s hints at the surprising resilience of the communal ideal, an aspect of radical history that has tended to be overlooked (139).

Although Searching for Utopia correctly insists that utopianism is not a feature unique to the political left, the chapter exploring the intersecting traditions of socialism, communism and anarchism nevertheless highlights the rich history stemming from the
ideological products of the ‘second age of revolution’ (141). At the outset Marx and Engels’ distinction of scientific and utopian socialism is given short shrift, and Claeys reiterates his belief that utopianism is most adequately defined as the conviction ‘that a better ordered society can be imagined in which human failings are contained by a series of revisions to the law, the constitution, religion, social control, architecture… the environment, and so on’ (141). With its pronounced condemnation of the deleterious impact of modern capitalism, the variety of schemes that socialist reformers and revolutionaries proposed covers the whole gamut of this description. The communitarianism of Owen is mentioned, with its focus on cooperation and profit sharing; Fourier’s pioneering work on sexual liberation is highlighted, which was largely neglected until the 1960s, as is Henri Saint-Simon’s ambitions for a pan-European technocracy. Subsequently, more pronounced political positions emerged from this cauldron of ideas. Marx was attracted to Saint-Simon’s theory of a benign State, and was influenced by Owen’s comments on modern production. Anarchism too grew in this milieu, with its staunch opposition to the State and faith in small self-sufficient communities organised upon a federal pattern. In the works of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Mikhail Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin a ‘long-lasting and powerful vision… of alternate social organization’ was born (147).

Whilst much of the material in this book would probably be familiar to scholars of utopianism, its rich pictorial history is likely to be less well known. As to be expected from a Thames & Hudson title this book is beautifully illustrated, which is particular strong point. Less convincing is the rather cursory chapter on ‘Extra-European Visions of the Ideal Society’, which justifiably disputes the contention that ‘utopia… is a specifically Western tradition that rests in European classical thought and Judaeo-Christianity’ (45). Claeys is correct to deem this Eurocentrism problematic, but such an important question demands greater analysis, and looks
underdeveloped in the context of the book as a whole. Despite this, *Searching for Utopia* is a thoroughly enjoyable guide to the history of utopianism, which, to its great credit, adopts an impressively inclusive approach.

Ultimately, Claeys insists that although utopianism ‘has been pronounced dead and buried so often’, its history should not be lost. The ‘old ideal worlds can lend us hope, inspiration’, he writes, ‘but our ideal world must be very much our own creation’ (213). The book ends then with a call to reassess the history of utopianism with a view to emboldening its future, and in the context of ecological disaster, Claeys suggests that this is a pressing concern. ‘The historical retelling of the utopian tale… in this book is therefore only part of the story’, he proposes, ‘for utopia is interwoven with humanity’s fate at every level, and is as immediate and meaningful to our lives today as at any point in the past’ (212).

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Noel Malcolm’s edition of Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan* (1651) is one of the most anticipated critical editions in recent years. This is partly because, as Malcolm points out in the preface, not only has *Leviathan* ‘long been regarded… as one of the most important works of political philosophy written in the West’, but ‘there has been, hitherto, no adequate critical edition of it’ produced (xi). He points out that, although there are a number of editions of Hobbes’s first edition, there is no version that has presented ‘all the materials that they will need in order to study the entire development of the text’