

THE
NOBEL
PRIZE

Utopias and Dystopias

NOBEL PRIZE LESSONS

Stories about the future and other worlds

- **Utopia:** depicts an ideal existence
- **Dystopia:** depicts a nightmarish or inhuman existence



Part 1: Utopias

Conceptions of the good life

- Paradise
- Plato's ideal state
- Cockaigne



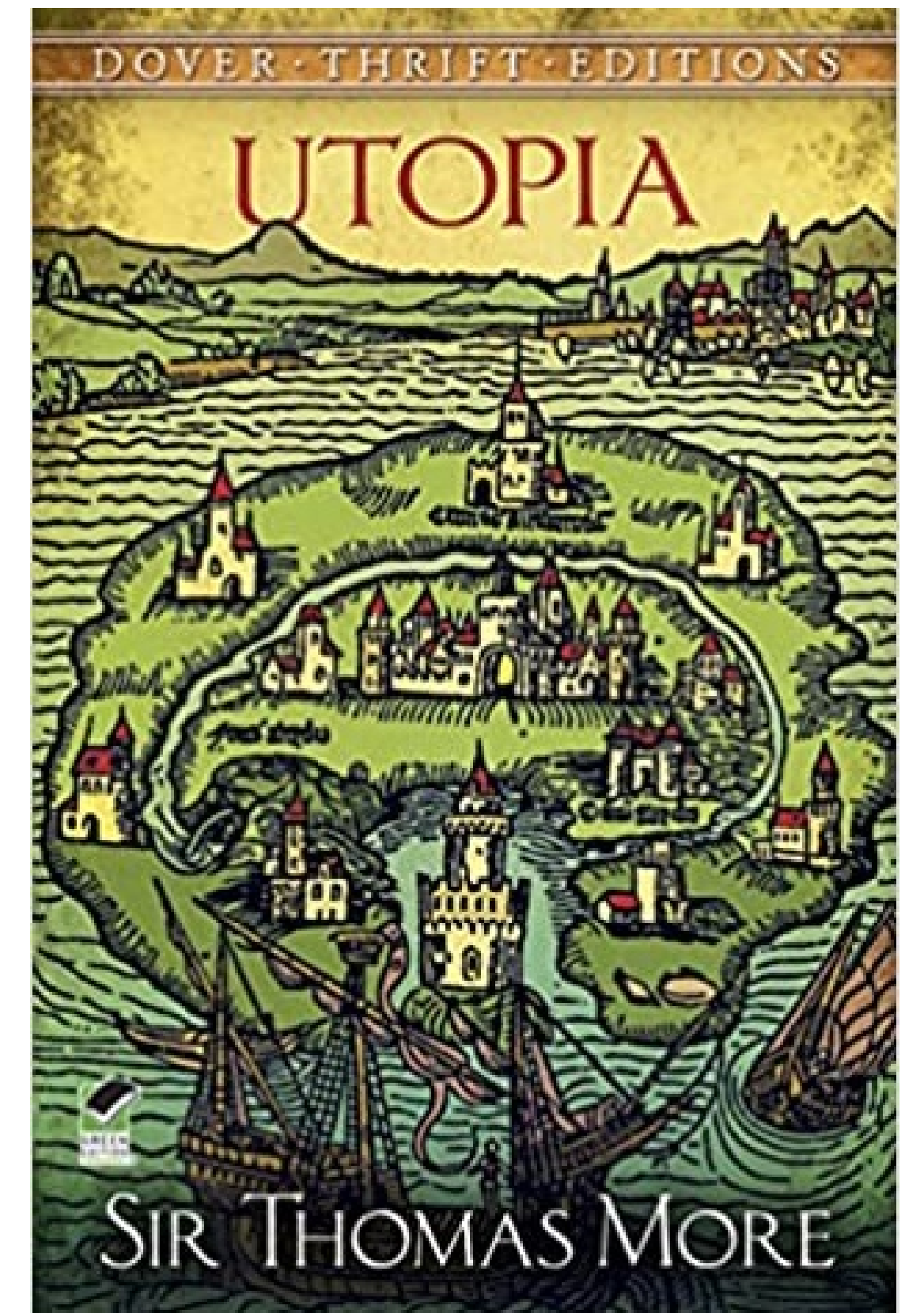
LEFT: HIERONYMUS BOSCH, "THE GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS", PANEL 1"(1503–1515). RIGHT: PIETER BRUEGEL THE ELDER, "THE LAND OF COCKAIGNE" (1567)

Utopia – the first literary utopia

Thomas More
(1478-1535):
utopian originator



HANS HOLBEIN, PORTRAIT OF THOMAS MORE (1527)



UTOPIA BY THOMAS MORE, DOVER PUBLICATIONS 2012

Utopia – the nowhere land

“ού” (no)
+
“topia” (place)
=
utopia



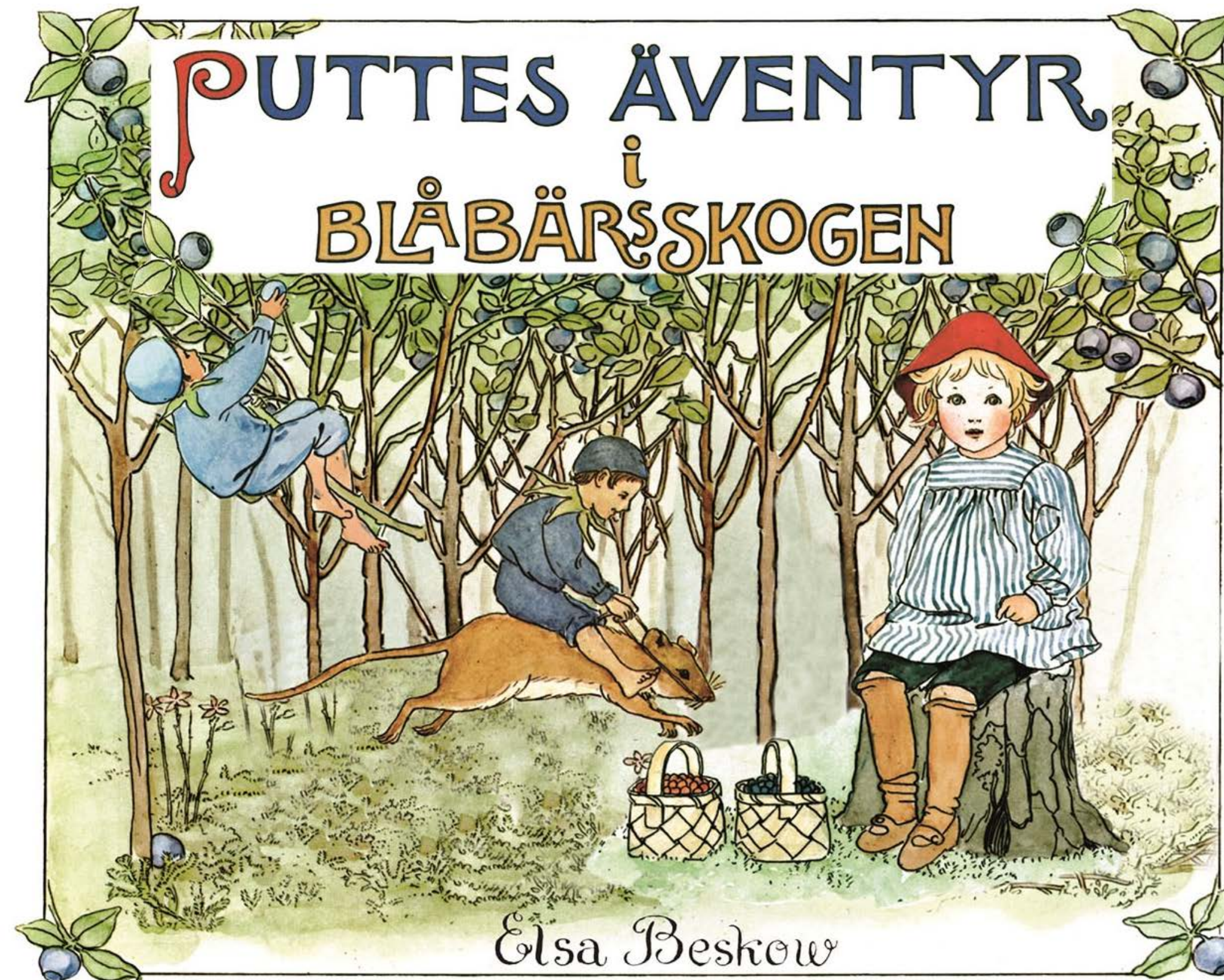
Characteristics of the utopia genre

The main character:

- gets lost
- ends up in an imaginary country
- gets shown around and is astounded

The reader:

- understands the difference between their own world and the utopia.



BOOK COVER OF *PETER IN BLUEBERRY LAND* BY ELSA BESKOW, HERE IN ORIGINAL VERSION IN SWEDISH: *PUTTES ÄVENTYR I BLÅBÄRSSKOGEN*



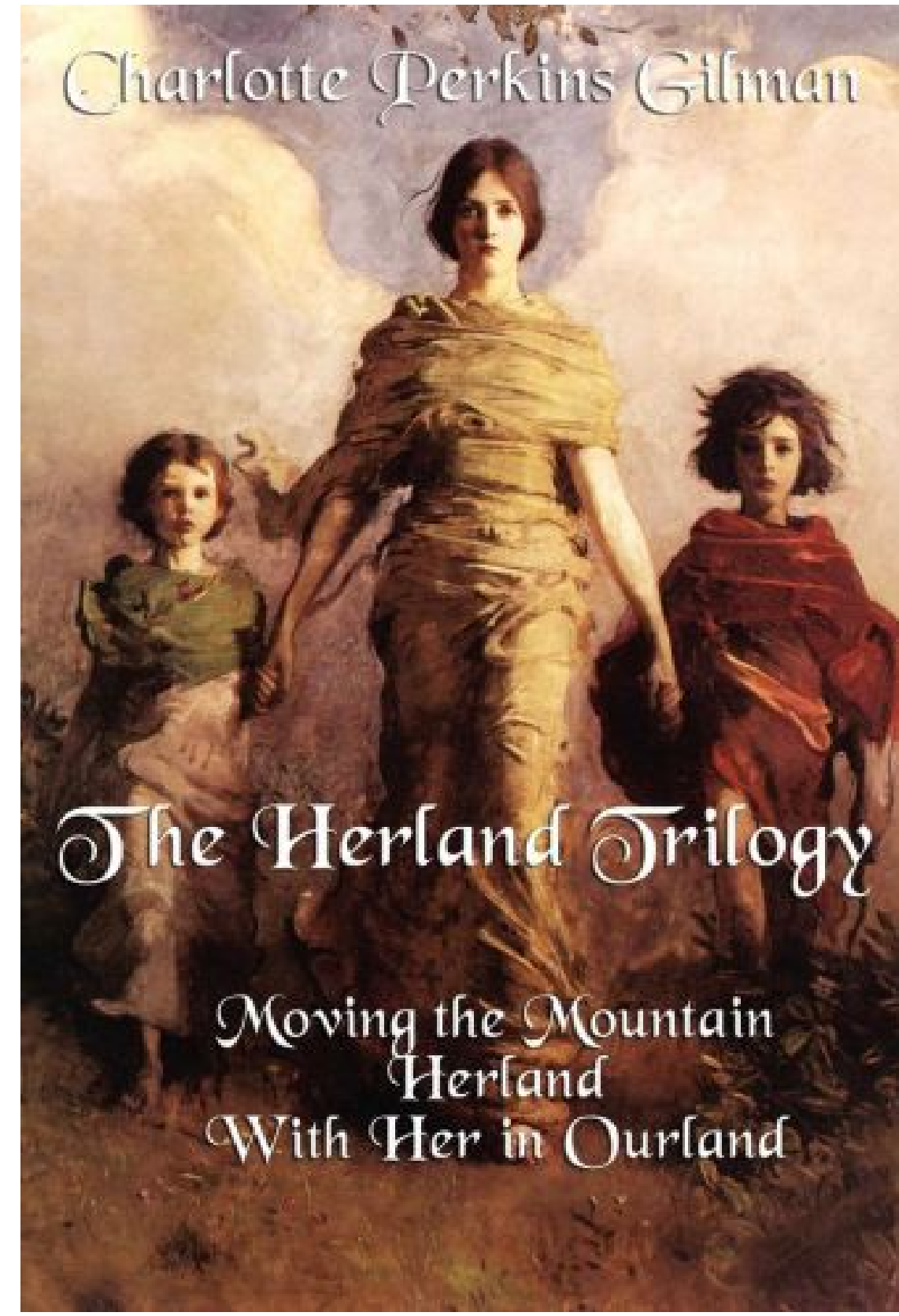
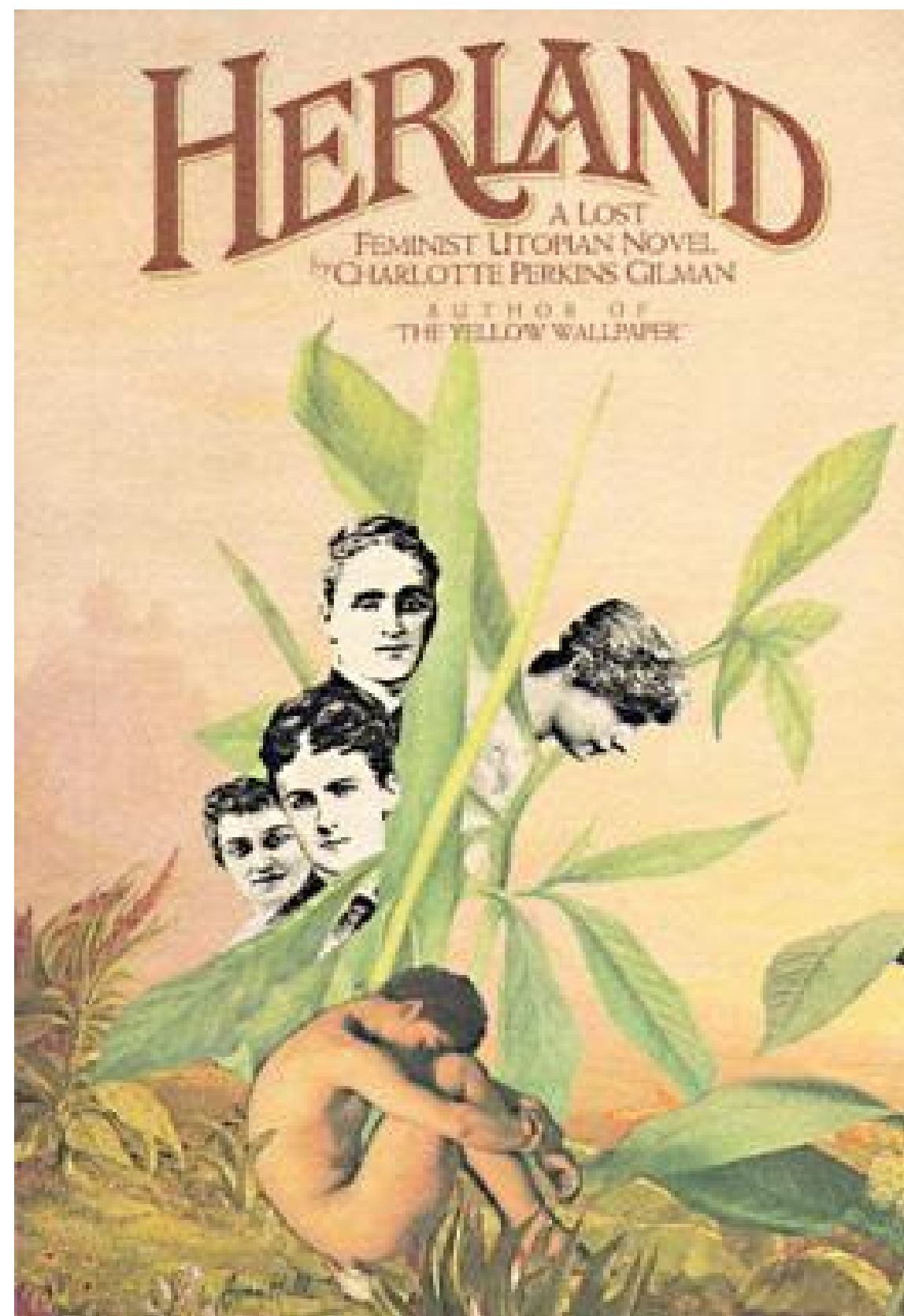
GULLIVER SURROUNDED BY LILLIPUTIANS. FROM JONATHAN SWIFTS *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS*, PART 1: A VOYAGE TO LILLIPUT

Herland – a feminist utopia

Charlotte
Perkins Gilman
(1860–1935)

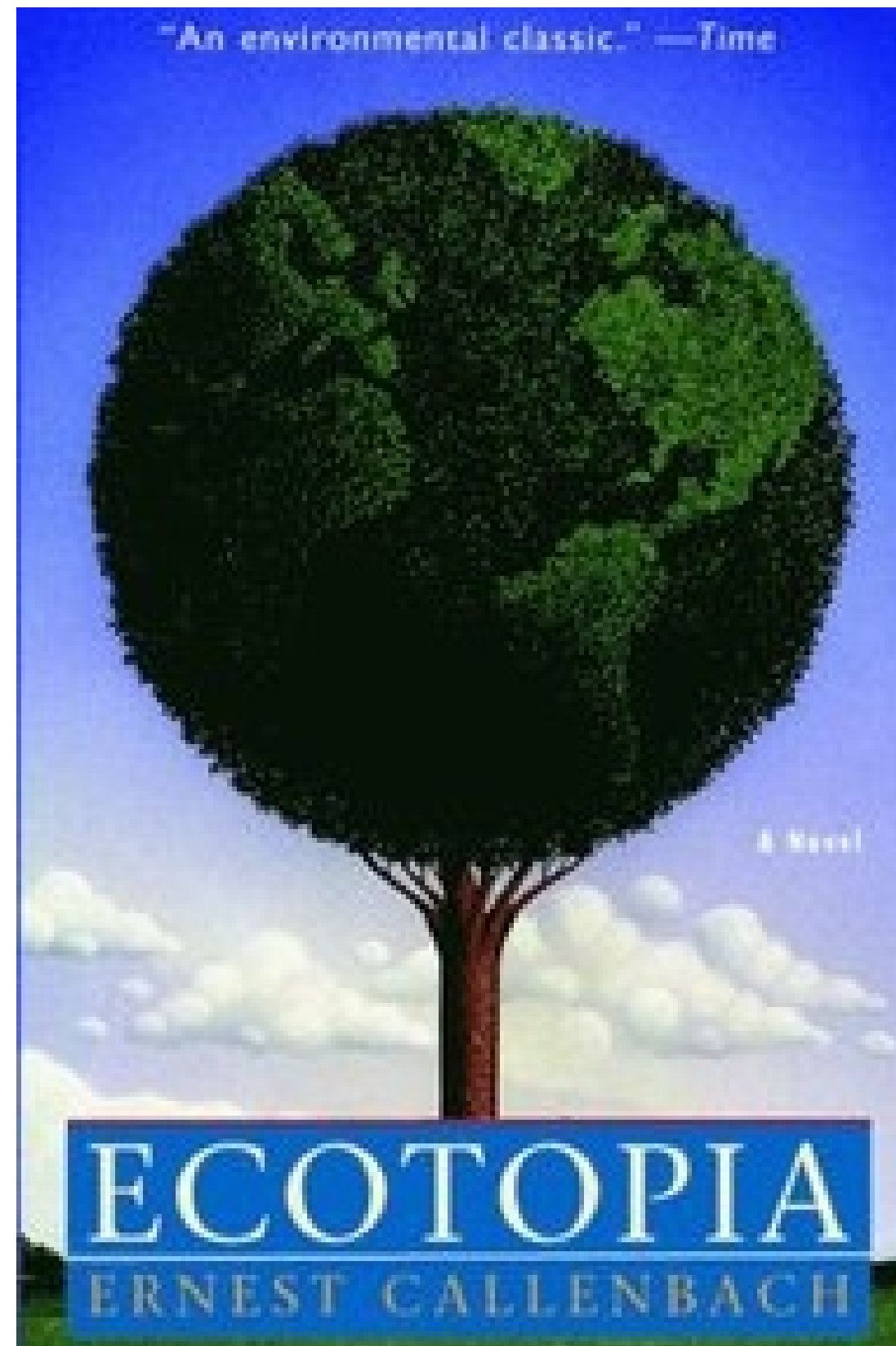


Discuss: What different conceptions about women are expressed?

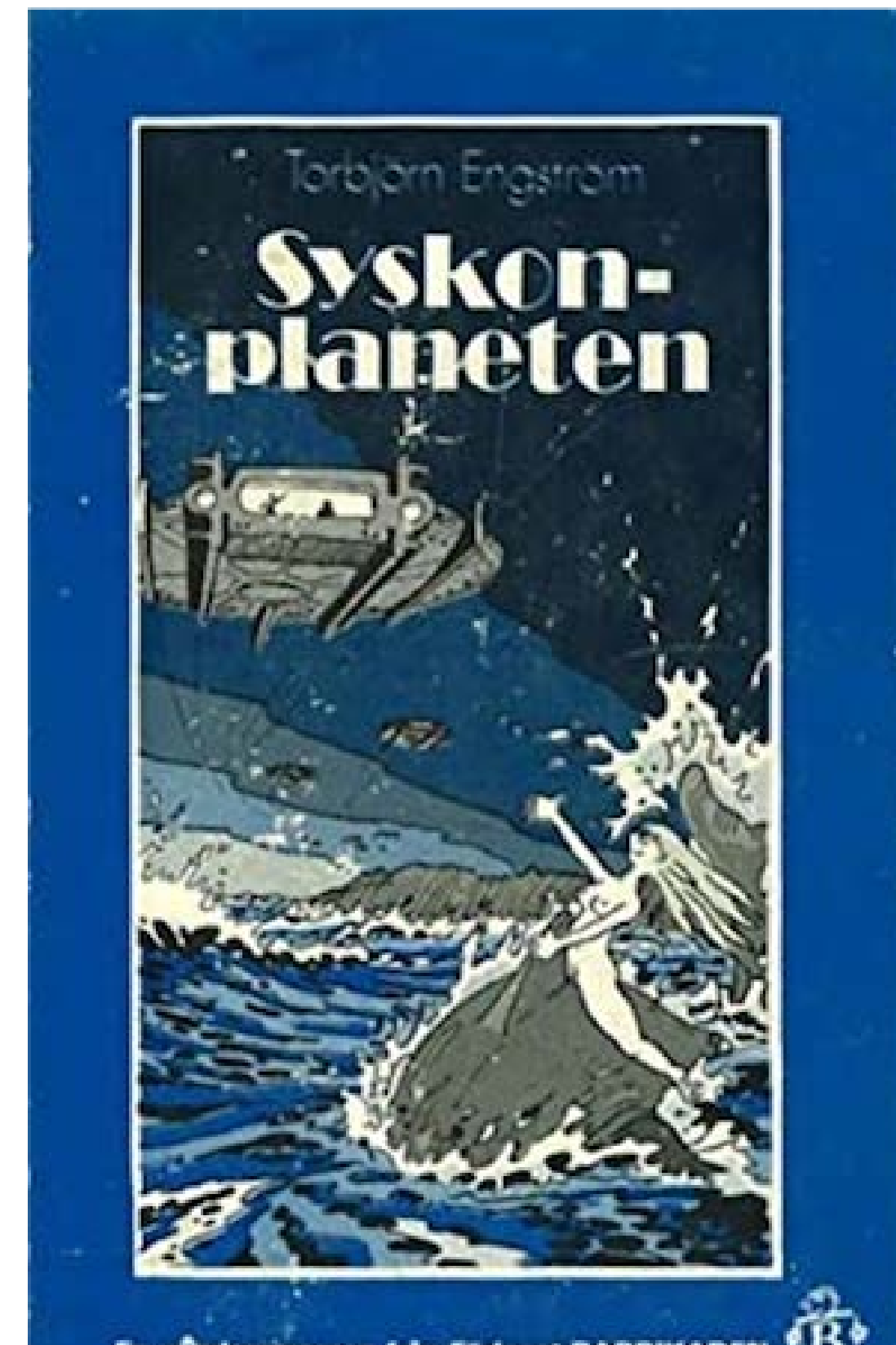


Modern utopias

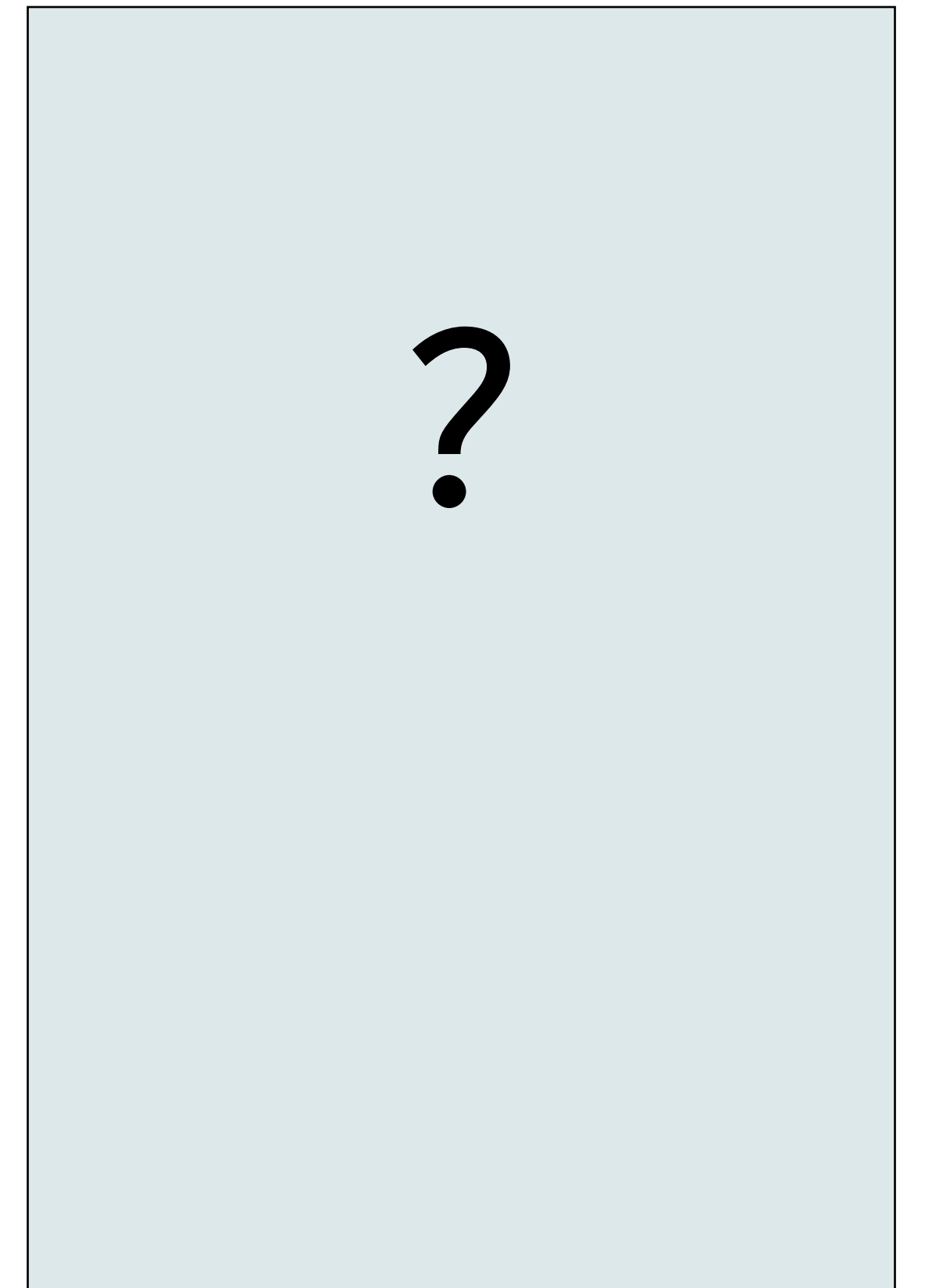
What would a utopia that was written today look like?



BOOK COVER OF ERNEST CALLENBACH'S *ECOTOPIA*, BANTAM BOOKS, 1975



TORBJÖRN ENGSTRÖM'S *SYSKONPLANETEN*, ALFABETA BOKFÖRLAG, 1985



Part 2: Dystopias

How utopia turned to dystopia

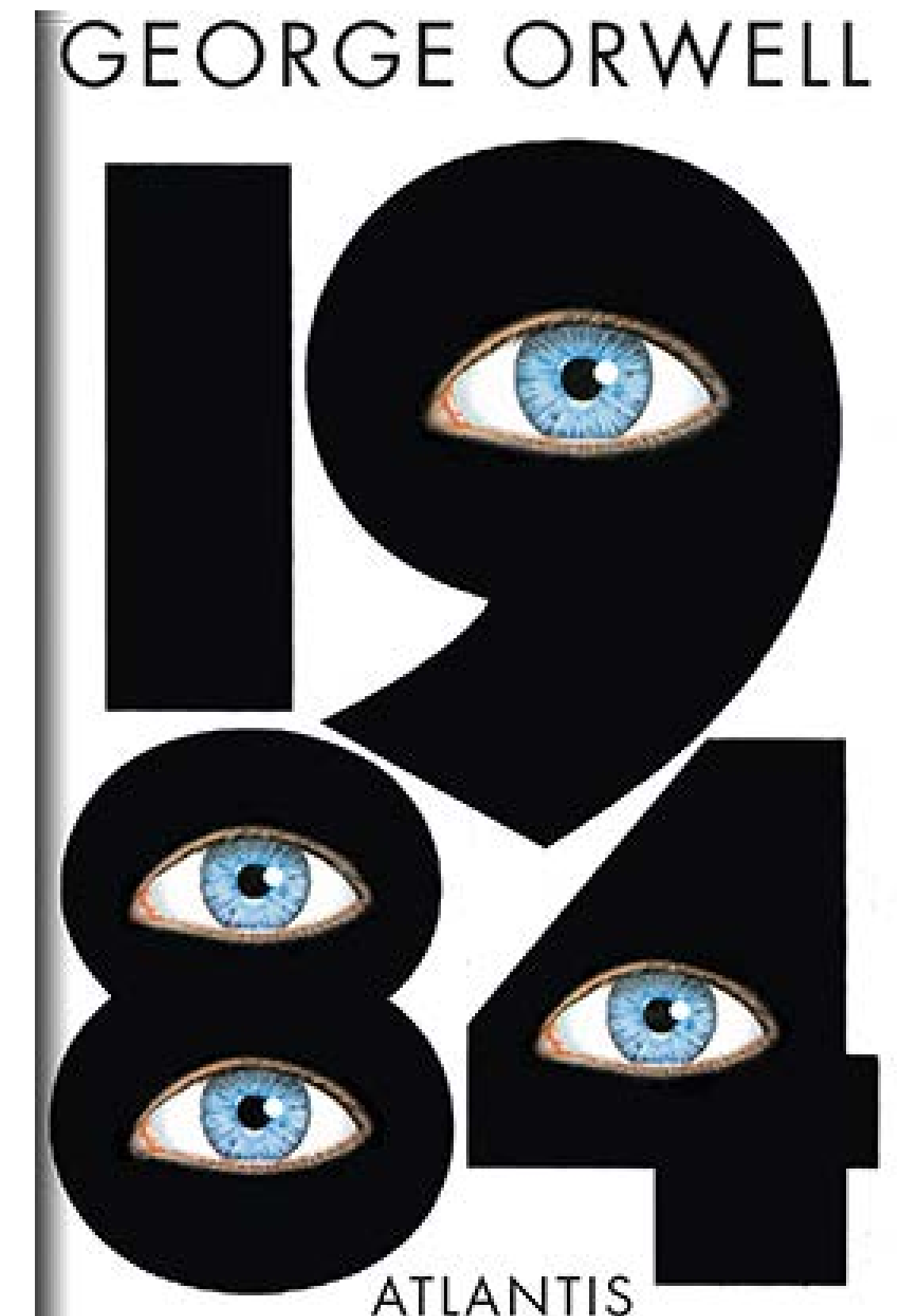
Visions of good are replaced by visions of evil.



HIERONYMUS BOSCH, "THE GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS" (1503-1515)

1984 – a dystopian vision of a total surveillance society

George Orwell
(1903-1950)

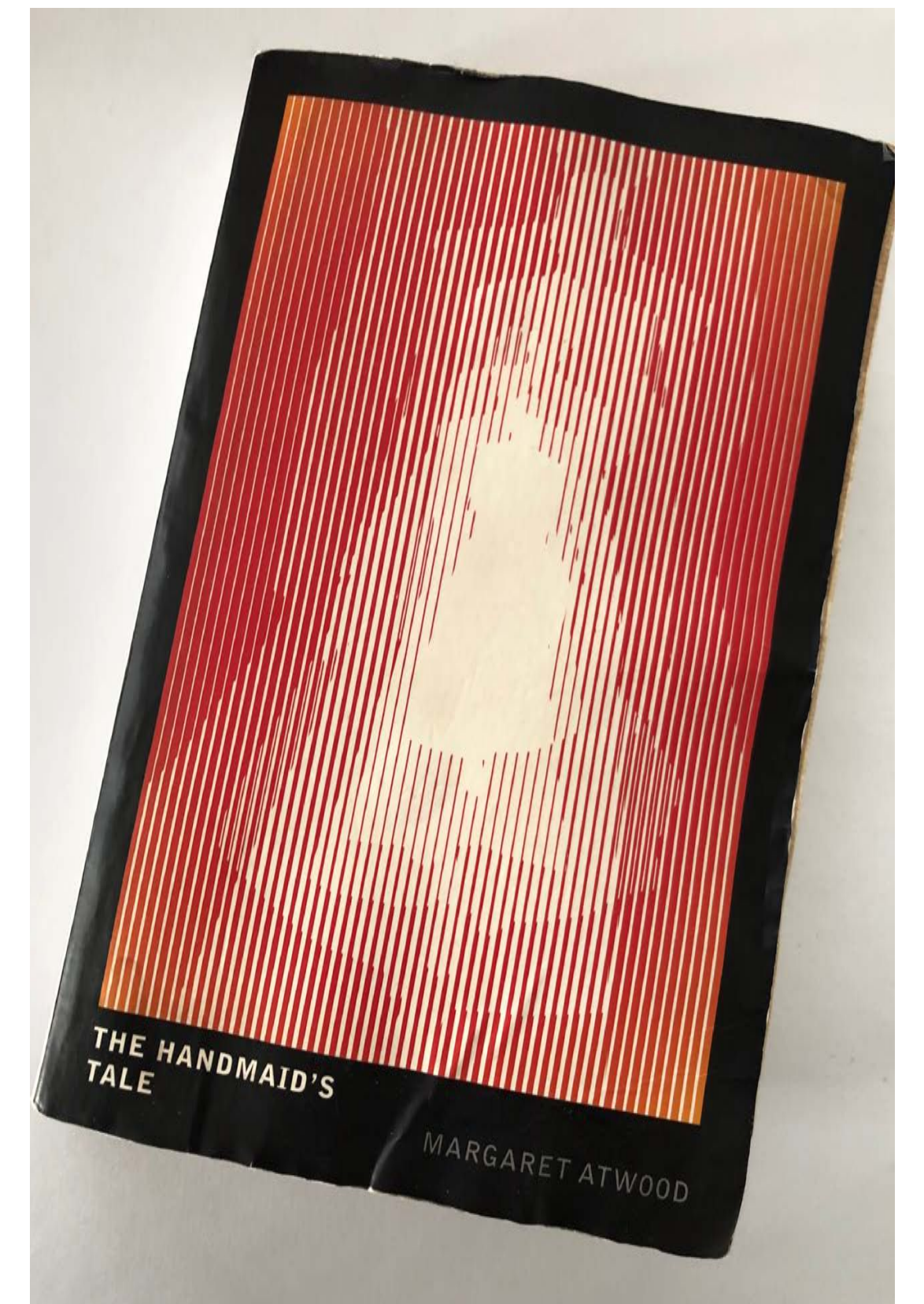


The Handmaid's Tale – a feminist dystopia

Margaret Atwood
(b. 1939)

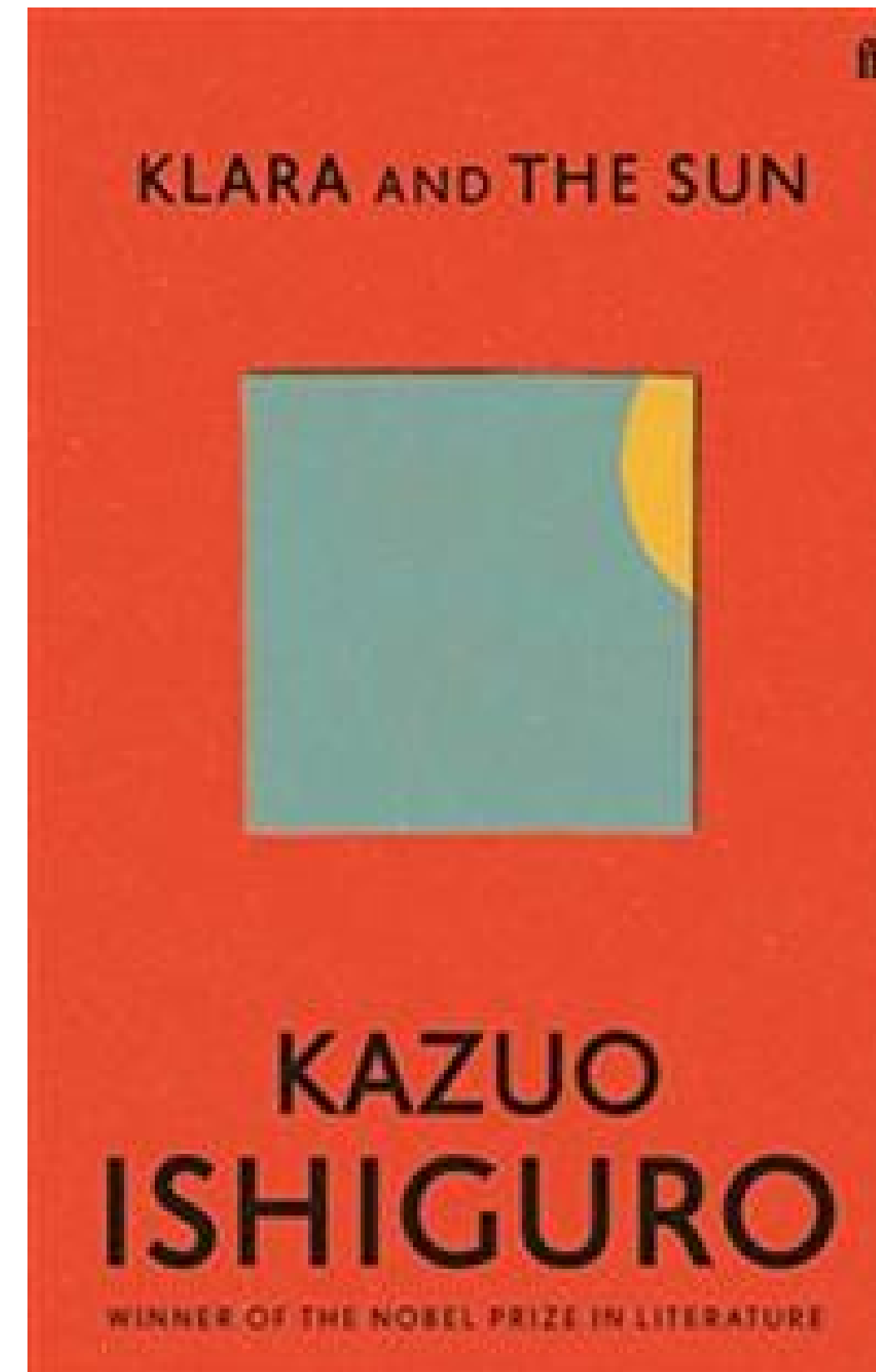


PHOTO: LARRY D. MOORE



Klara and the Sun – about a future of artificial intelligence

Kazuo Ishiguro
(b. 1954)



KAZUO ISHIGURO'S *KLARA AND THE SUN*, FABER FABER 2021



KAZUO ISHIGURO'S *NEVER LET ME GO*, FABER FABER 2010

Related genres – science fiction

The War of the Worlds by H.G. Wells (1866-1946)



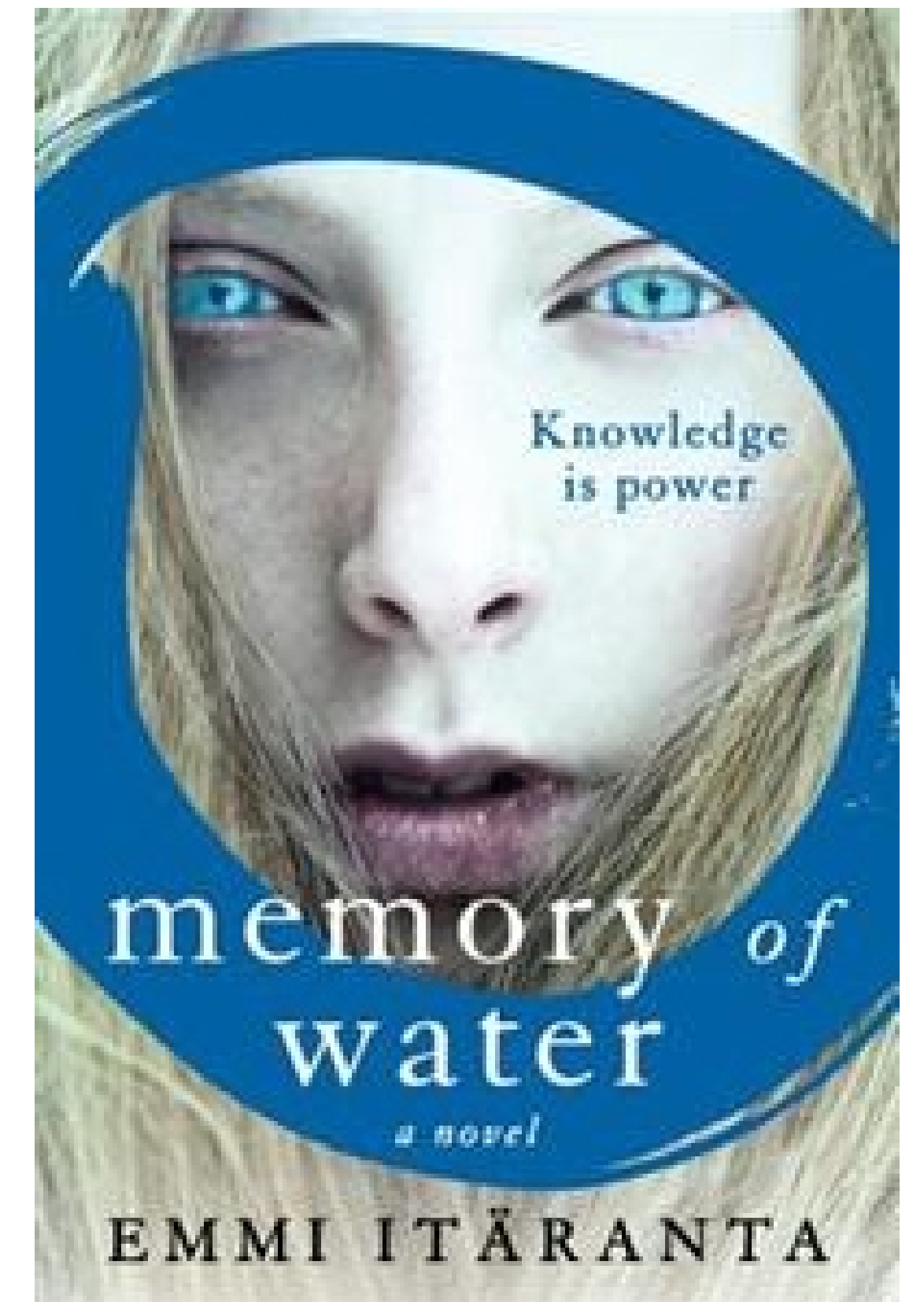
The WAR of the WORLDS
By H.G. Wells
Author of "Under the Knife," "The Time Machine," etc.



TITLE PAGE, 1927 AMAZING STORIES REPRINT, COVER ILLUSTRATION BY FRANK R. PAUL

Related genres – climate fiction

- *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins
- *Memory of Water* by Emmi Itäranta
- *The Threat, The Struggle and The Escape* by Mats Söderlund



Utopias and dystopias: summary

Stories about the future and other worlds.



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