

UTOPIA, CRISIS, JUSTICE
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CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

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Session 36, Sun. 18.30-20.00 Rm A112 (Chair: Nicole Pohl)

“Fings ain’t wot they used t’be”: Utopia and the Backward Glance in the Postwar British Stage Musical

Utopia’s home in the arts is in prose fiction, where, starting with More’s *Utopia* (1516), and continuing in a tradition of classic utopian fiction, a visitor from a world similar to the reader’s own is guided around a perfect society by a utopian host. However, although the novel is the conventional form for outlining utopia’s political, social and economic structures and practices, this very process of describing utopia is simultaneously a weakness in the genre. Utopia is the ‘good place’ that is at once ‘no place’. It is beyond our descriptive capabilities because it depends upon an entirely new social formation and utterly transformed subjectivities. When utopia is depicted in narrative, the narrative often fails to capture utopia’s otherness, remaining caught within the ideological parameters of the descriptive narrative form.

Although often overlooked as utopian modes, drama, performance, music and song are forms that might be considered as circumventing the regulations of prose fiction. The abstract and non-representational nature of music, and of some aspects of performance, makes them effective modes for articulating utopian desire and expressing a utopian sensibility. Connections between theatre and utopia continue because theatre-going is a collective, ritualistic experience, where spectators are interpellated en masse and spectators’ identities are subject to transformation. The theatre also meets Foucault’s idea of heterotopia, a site located between utopian and real spaces, and which is reflective of a multiplicity of other spaces, acting as a counter-site, or inversion of ‘normal’ space.

In this paper, I consider musical theatre as a utopian mode, focusing particularly on the examples of Dorothy Reynolds and Julian Slade’s 1953 musical *Salad Days* and Lionel Bart’s 1960 show *Oliver! Salad Days* and *Oliver!* use both utopian and nostalgic modes and I examine the extent to which these modes challenge ideological boundaries or function as delimitations of utopian desire. I also consider the degree to which these musicals utilize nostalgia as yearning for a mythical past or as mourning for lost opportunities.

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Session 37, Sun. 16.30-18.00, Rm A011 (Chair: Hans Ulrich Seeber)

“From historical mythology to political philosophy”: Utopian Thought in Gerrard Winstanley and the Diggers

The aim of this paper is to examine the intricate relationship between history and utopia in the social and political thought of Gerrard Winstanley and the Diggers, concentrating in particular on Winstanley’s interpretation of the Norman Conquest and how that contributed to the radical social and political theories that gave rise to the Diggers’ attempts to reclaim the commons during the revolution in mid-seventeenth century England. As has long been argued, Winstanley provides a radical interpretation of the Norman Yoke theory by presenting the Norman Conquest as a violent break from the past, that imposed the yoke of “kingly power” and an intolerable set of social and economic conditions in the country. Indeed, Winstanley appears

to provide a largely idealized construction of England's pre-Conquest past that may be associated with his interpretation of the narrative of the creation and his belief in an ideal, prelapsarian state of humanity where the spirit of "universal love and righteousness" ruled and "the earth was a common treasury". As will be pointed out in this paper, far from expressing a naive desire for the restoration of a long-lost paradise, Winstanley's recasting of the past provides the basis for a challenging consideration of issues such as natural rights and the law, but also, quite importantly, a fascinating critique of violence that is intricately interconnected with the philosophy and praxis of the digging experiments launched in Surrey from 1649 to 1650. Turning attention to the development of Winstanley's thought after the ultimate failure of these experiments and the Digger movement at large, this paper finally considers how these ideas contributed to the construction of Winstanley's utopian vision for an ideal commonwealth in *The Law of Freedom in a Platform* (1652) – a text that has been said to mark Winstanley's transition from millenarian expectation to utopian thinking.

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Session 3, Sat. 11.00-12.30, Rm A011 (Chair: Evi Haggipavlu)

Utopia, Empire and the End of the World: James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009)

The aim of this paper is threefold. Firstly, *Avatar* will be examined in light of the social-political crisis in which it was written, namely the American-led invasion of Iraq at the start of the 21st century. The film subsequently comes across as a highly-charged response to US foreign policy and stands in good stead with a tradition of other anti-colonial SF/utopian critiques of empire. Secondly, this paper argues that while the film's plot is an all-too-obvious metaphor for the history of European-indigenous colonial contact, the 'utopian' depiction of the Na'vi (Pandora's native species), remains highly problematic from a postcolonial perspective. Instead, *Avatar* seems to re-imagine a 'pigmentopia', exposing the extent and depth of imperial cultural resonances to which even Cameron, the explicit anti-imperialist, falls victim. Last but not least, our Conclusion addresses the ways by which the film has been used for political ends by peoples throughout the world to gain international attention for their particular domestic plights. "Utopia, Empire and the End of the World" thus demonstrates how utopia can mobilize politics and popular culture. It also suggests the need to radically rethink traditional definitions and theories of empire. Indeed, *Avatar's* focus on the relationship between empire and big business is a timely reminder of the need to start refocusing upon the phenomenon of empire, especially the fact that empires do not have to be always state led.

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Session 35, Sun. 16.30-18.00, Rm A107 (Chair: Timothy Miller)

The Ecovillage Movement in Estonia

Intentional communities have been founded in centuries in hope to realise better life - to realise utopia. Eco-villages can be interpreted as contemporary utopias that try to find solutions to the problems in the society – e.g. environmental risks, loneliness and technocracy. Even though the eco-villages are local, in contemporary globalised world they are organised and on the level of ideology have become translocal and intercultural. Recent decades have witnessed an increase in the number of global movements related to environmental issues. The eco-village movement is one with utopian and grand ideas; its ideology emphasizes communality, environmental awareness, and spirituality with belief that eco-village is the solution for saving the world.

This paper describes the diffusion of the world view and practices of Global Ecovillage Movement, focusing on the eco-village movement in Estonia. The aim of this paper is to explain how the global ideology is adopted in parallel to strengthening of the movement in Estonia. Global Eco-village Ideology, partly with utopian ideas, is a new "language" which was first adopted by the "cultural vanguard"

and spread later on. Global ideology became meaningful for the local community with localised ideas together with everyday practice of specific lifestyles choices.

The empirical part of the paper is based on open-ended interviews and participant observation conducted in Estonia in 2008-2009.

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Session 20, Sat. 14.30-16.00, Rm A010 (Roundtable on Postcolonial Utopianism, Chair: Lyman Tower Sargent)

Session 26, Sun. 11.00-12.30, Rm A008 (Chair: Lyman Tower Sargent)

Utopianism in Post-Colonial Literatures: The Utility of Hope

This paper examines the proliferation of utopian discourse in post-colonial writing. Despite the nationalist utopias of pre-independence literature this hope now takes a form that ignores, or repudiates, the concept of nation inherited from the colonial state. The word ‘nation’ itself is absent as post-colonial writers conceive a hope that takes various shapes: geographical, historical, cultural, racial – shapes that may, I believe, constitute an emerging genre of post-colonial utopianism. The different manifestations of this genre are nearly always at least an implicit critique of state oppression of one kind or another and in this respect look for a vision of ‘home’ very different from the idea of the nation that once generated political hope. I will survey the forms of utopian writing that have emerged in Africa, the Caribbean, India, the borderlands of America, the Pacific and Indigenous peoples, to consider the cultural utility of hope, to ask what political purpose utopian thinking may serve.

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Session 19, Sat. 14.30-16.00, Rm A007 (Chair: Kalpana Seshadri)

Session 46, Mon. 11.30-13.00 Rm A107 (Roundtable on Dystopia, Chair: Tom Moylan)

Crisis, Justice, Messianism: On Walter Benjamin’s “Critique of Violence”

This paper addresses one of Walter Benjamin’s most dense and important early essays, “Zur Kritik der Gewalt” (1921), in light of the notions of crisis, justice, and utopia. In my argument, “crisis” is a central hermeneutic category for Benjamin’s essay since it designates the political and economic turbulence of the first phase of the Weimar Republic, in which the text was born, and to which it clearly constitutes a response; secondly, “crisis” is vital to the thought of the essay’s two most important interlocutors, namely the anarcho-syndicalist Georges Sorel and the conservative and future National Socialist jurist and political theorist Carl Schmitt; third, “crisis” seems to me to inform the very form of Benjamin’s query of conventional conceptions of legality and legitimacy, since this is an essay which proceeds by setting up a series of binary oppositions (means and ends, natural and positive law, sanctioned and unsanctioned force, natural and legal ends, active and passive conduct, law-making and law-preserving violence, pure and violent means, political strike and proletarian general strike, mythic and divine violence, retribution and expiation, power and justice), only to problematize and effectively superannuate each of them. In this respect, I argue, Benjamin’s method is neither properly dialectical nor quite deconstructive, for it neither involves the sublation of each opposition by its succeeding one, nor amounts simply to conceptual drift and aporia. It consists, rather, in a singular attempt to do justice to justice, itself conceived as singular, incalculable and impossible to codify in terms of generalizable or standardizable notions. The fundamental thrust of the “Critique” is thus its refusal to substantialize the “pure means” of proletarian violence, to treat it as yet another incarnation of a “law.”

As for utopia, while Benjamin certainly seems to follow in the path of Sorel’s own pronounced anti-

utopianism—and hence to identify “utopia” with “program” and with “law-making violence”—this does not prevent him from a messianic orientation to “the world to come”, nor from envisioning “a new historical epoch” in which the cycle of lawmaking and law-preserving violence will have been broken. Such an insight, I conclude, is akin less to either Sorel or Schmitt and more, however surprisingly, to Lenin’s own speculations on the “withering away” of the state and the end of violence in his own almost contemporary *The State and Revolution* (1917).

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Session 32, Sun. 14.30-16.00, Rm A007 (Chair: Marios Vasileiou)

The Eastside Island Utopia Project: Fictionalising Nomadic Utopia

In late 2010 I began to write a work of fiction describing the emergence of a utopian community on the ‘Eastside Island’: a large tract of derelict land in my home city of Nottingham. Inspired by anarchist, Open Marxist and poststructuralist political thought and Luca Frei’s novel *the so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg*, I sought to describe a nonhierarchical community which would offer a fictive representation of the concept of ‘nomadic utopianism’ that I am developing in my PhD thesis, as well as offering a ‘utopian’ vision in response to the crises perpetuated by public spending cuts in Nottingham.

I soon became concerned by the power I had as an author, however. How could I accurately represent the desires of the people I imagined living in the community when the experiences of these fictive characters would be well beyond my own? What other ideas was I missing out on by being the sole creative force behind this utopia? For these reasons, I decided to make the utopia a collaborative project. I opened up the text for modification by anyone and am preparing a series of events for different spaces throughout Nottingham (schools, galleries, universities, the Eastside Island site itself) where I will encourage the audience to collectively contribute to the utopia. I am also hoping the project will generate ‘cultural artefacts’ from the imagined community: works of music, recipes, jewellery and so forth.

This paper will offer a reflection on the process, touching on its theoretical, literary and practical inspirations as well as detailing successes and failures and tracing links to issues central to contemporary utopian studies. It will also form a part of the process itself, with those in attendance encouraged to help the utopia develop.

For more information on the project, please see:

<http://eastsideislandutopia.wordpress.com>

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Session 8, Sat. 14.30-16.00, Rm A008 (Chair: Gregory Claeys)

Session 45, Mon. 9.30-11.00, Rm A010 (Presentation of the New Society for Utopian Studies website)

Institutionalizing Happiness: Utopia, Policy, and Subjective Well-Being

Can the human being be designed and controlled, from uterus to grave, “for its own good”? And would this version of super-utilitarianism bring real happiness?

(Foreword to *Brave New World*, xiv)

This paper explores the crisis facing the utopian impulse in light of the newly emerging field of Happiness Studies, which has grown out of Positive Psychology’s research assessing individual happiness through scientific investigations into subjective well-being. This movement has inspired widespread attempts to use measurements of subjective well-being as the basis for rational planning and policy implementation (such as Bhutan’s “Gross National Happiness” [<http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com>] and Britain’s “Happiness Index” initiative [<http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2010/nov/14/happiness-index-britain-national->

mood]).

Happiness, once considered the musing of philosophers or utopians is now undergoing quantitative, objective analysis in fields such as Economics, Business, Law, Policy, Education, Neuroscience, and Evolutionary Psychology. These developments raise significant questions for Utopian Studies: Does the intense focus on individual contentment along with the mandate to embrace and accept the “present” moment locate contemporary versions of happiness outside of traditional utopian desiring (often viewed as both collective and future-oriented)? What is the status of “hope,” the all-important driving desire of a radically different future, of Bloch’s *novum*, the “not-yet,” in these frameworks [consider the attempt of Seligman, a leading Positive Psychologist, to “bring[s] hope into the laboratory, where scientists can dissect it in order to understand how it works” (92)]? In taking on questions such as these, this paper both sketches an overview of the current state of the field of Happiness Studies and concludes with a call to action for Utopian scholars – who have always been preoccupied with the “education of desire” – to create not a politics of happiness but a *pedagogy* of happiness, one that encourages not prescription, but possibility.

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Session 24, Sun. 16.30-18.00, Rm A010 (Chair: Pere Gallardo-Torrano)

Session 46, Mon. 11.30-13.00 Rm A107 (Roundtable on Dystopia, Chair: Tom Moylan)

In a smaller figure: the case for metonymic utopias?

The paper explores the possibility of introducing the idea of metonymic utopia to conceptualize the borderline phenomenon often discussed in utopian studies, though usually without explicit theoretical justification. This borderline phenomenon encompasses, among others, some, though by no means all, robinsonades, as well as texts depicting ideal estates such as *Millennium Hall*. When read literally, none of such texts, despite various kinds and degrees of similarities to utopias, fulfills the elementary requirements of even the most comprehensive definition of the utopian mode. Their conceptualization as metonymic utopias would legitimize their inclusion in the utopian genre and provide grounds for comparison with “standard” utopias.

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Session 3, Sat. 11.00-12.30, Rm A011 (Chair: Evi Haggipavlu)

How to Flee to Better Worlds: Disjunction Techniques in Filmic Utopias

The main objective of the proposed paper will be to analyse various narrative and filmic techniques of dystopian disjunction. One of indispensable components of filmic dystopias are conceptualizations and/or visualizations of better, happier worlds, that are located beyond the artistic world (i.e. in the world of the spectator) and/or beyond the dystopian horizon of the fictional world (i.e. outside the dystopian chronotopos, yet within the presented world). Of the two locations, in accordance with Lyman Tower Sargent’s definition of dystopia, the former seems obligatory, whereas the latter optional. The necessary disjunction and heterogeneity of the projected worlds to be compared makes it possible for a reader/spectator to pass a value judgement, without which dystopia could not be recognized as such. It will be argued that the techniques of dystopian disjunction, which are responsible for multiplying worlds to be compared, do not operate only on/beyond the peripheries of the dystopian state, for they reach into the dystopia itself dissecting it into various realized or implicit heterotopoi. Unlike the tendency to equivalence and homogeneity displayed by utopian states, dystopian states both allow for and cannot altogether eliminate counteraction and officially unlawful breach of their rules. The analysis of dystopian and utopian dimensions of heterotopoi encountered in the dystopia, including their legal aspects and a sense of (in)justice produced by their (potential)

implementation, will be based on several selected dystopian films representing different trends in contemporary dystopian cinema.

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Session 28, Sun. 11.00-12.30, Rm A011 (Chair: Arnold Farr)

Lifing Utopia: Strategies and Projects

While theories of utopian possibility are often formulated on a grand scale, the real site of social transformation is in the shifts that individuals are able to make in everyday practice. From this perspective, the work – and play – of individuals, groups, and communities within institutions can be investigated as the setting for encountering utopian possibilities. Moreover, opening space for new experiences of participation, power, authority, community, voice and individuality within these settings becomes the means for encouraging these transformative possibilities. Presenters in this panel will suggest how such openings emerge and can be encouraged in order to nurture new social relations and individual selfhood in the everyday practice of late industrial society.

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Session 10, Sun. 11.00-12.30, Rm A007 (Chair: Christopher Yorke)

A ‘Realistic Utopia’ Methodology

Today’s world is experiencing a multitude of potentially catastrophic environmental crises. Instead of new policies within the same policy framework, fundamental change of our socio-political institutions will be necessary to enable the evolution of long-advocated new lifestyles.

The radicalness of the required change demands a look into utopian directions, for ‘Utopia’ is the method *par excellence* for disrupting the taken-for-granted nature of existing norms and institutions and inspiring change that goes beyond the restraints that these seem to set. However, utopias are often alarmingly authoritarian, a problem that might result from the common lack of any theory of transition to bridge existing reality and utopian futures.

This paper introduces a methodology of ‘realistic utopias’ in political theory. The aim is to inspire radical change beyond the currently thinkable, yet with a vision of utopia as itself a process rather than an end-state in the form of one supposedly ‘perfect’ society. The task of a realistic utopia is to analyse existing malign structures and on this basis envision processes of change as well as principles of a better society, but to thereby engage with today’s people and institutions and look for starting points and accessible way stations within existing reality.

To develop this vision of ‘realistic utopias’ further into a methodology includes a foray into the ontological and epistemological presuppositions behind ‘realistic utopian’ visions, a discussion of previous realistic utopias, and a reflection on how contemporary theories of justice and of rationality may inform the nature of the ‘meta-principles’ that make up the realistic utopian framework of norms. On this basis, a ‘realistic utopia’ methodology will be proposed, and some examples of possible applications outlined.

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Session 17, Sat 14.30-16.00, Rm A107 (Chair: Maria Margaroni)

Human crisis and the identity-based utopian hypothesis in the post- human novels of Octavia Butler

Octavia Butler's famous dismissal of the inspiring power of utopian thought – “we're not going to have a perfect society until we get a few perfect humans, and that seems unlikely” – takes utopia to be a blueprint for a better world, dependent on the perfectibility of the humans that imagine and implement them. If that is the sense given to the concept of Utopia, Octavia Butler's science fiction post-apocalyptic narratives could not be more distanced from any traditional projection of a place that is simultaneously nowhere (utopia) and good place (eutopia).

But that is not the only possible reading of the concept of Utopia, as Tom Moylan stresses when he proposes the term “critical utopias” to describe texts that “reject utopia as a blueprint, while preserving it as a dream”. To consider the utopian possibilities of Butler's creative imagination it might be considered that while her sense of impending and inevitable crisis is grounded in a deep ontological and even metaphysical despair about the nature of the human species and its biological limitations, it is not without hope, even if that hope is post-human.

Using the insights of performativity theory, this paper will argue that Butler is open to a reading that centers on the utopian possibilities of her creation of Others. It will propose that there is an identity-based utopian hypothesis in her “post-human novels” that offer a landscape of mutual dependence between species, and question the absolute borders between them, centering the analyses of that dynamic in the *Xenogenesis* series, interrogating the frames of the inter-species cosmopolitan utopian paradigm it proposes.

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Session 4, Sat. 11.00-12.30, Rm A008 (Chair: Christos Hadjichristos)

Rising from the ashes: a tale of two cities

After a great natural disaster, such as an earthquake or a tsunami, the immediate response is to concentrate on the most pressing matters of providing food and shelter for the people affected, in the hope of minimizing its devastating effects. However, historically, such natural disasters have been seen as providing opportunities to redesign these desolate urban landscapes according to concepts of the ideal city – independently of whether, or how fully, in practice those concepts have been adhered to. In this paper I evoke two major urban disasters which, though different in origin and magnitude, caused terrible havoc: the great fire of London of 1666 and the Lisbon earthquake of 1755. I will examine the plans and methods of reconstruction for these two political and financial centers, outlining the different political and cultural perspectives adopted for tackling such phenomenal destruction. With these two examples of urban reconstruction as case studies, I will discuss how catastrophic events can motivate the utopian imagination and create disparate visions of ideal cities.

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Session 14, Sat. 11.00-12.30, Rm A010 (Chair: Laurence Davis)

Utopia and Social Movements: The Case of Solidarity Economy in Brazil

Crises in capitalism are frequent and severe, with increasingly deleterious consequences encompassing social, economic, environmental, cultural and civilizatory dimensions. In this context, social movements represent a strategy of resistance and creation of alternatives to this system or to certain aspects of it, empowering people who hope for a better future. We hypothesize that social movements are expressions of utopian projects, even though this is not a valued aspect in those experiences. Thus, we undertake an investigation into a particular social movement –solidarity economy– and its relation to utopias. An heirress of utopian socialism, solidarity economy resurfaced in Brazil in the 1980s as a response to the employment

and income crisis, and was shaped as an anti-capitalist proposition. Therefore, its goal is not limited to mitigating the effects generated by the hegemonic system crises; rather, solidarity economy aims to stand as an antagonistic alternative, combining a critical stance on the present time with a propositional approach towards a better society. Hence, we intend to analyse to what extent has solidarity economy constituted a space of construction or pursuit of a social utopia for workers participating in the movement. In order to develop this study, we drew on the theoretical framework of Ernst Bloch and the testimonials of 22 workers in solidarity economy gathered through semi-structured interviews. With this, we seek to contribute to the studies that reveal the utopian potential of social movements, and run counter to the advocates of the "demise of utopias".

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Session 31, Sun. 13.40-16.00, Rm A107 (Chair: Stella Achilleos)

Towards a Post-1989 Presentist Shakespeare

My paper calls for a utopian post-1989 understanding of Shakespeare in order to reinstate an essential dimension to a critical tradition (primarily new historicism, cultural materialism, and postcolonialism) that has read the bard through a backward-looking, distinctly Western-Eurocentric lens that is simultaneously deeply sceptical as well as yearningly nostalgic and mythopoetic about what one for the sake of contrast might call the moment of 1968. Crucially, none of these deeply politically-engaged strands of criticism has appreciated the moment of 1989 as a paradigm shift. Western European and American Shakespeare scholarship has failed entirely to reflect on how post-1989 political and aesthetic paradigms alter how we read Shakespeare, presumably because its political concerns are overwhelmingly pre-1989, outdated, literally on the wrong side of history.

I address the politically pre-1989 orthodoxy over the *The Tempest* as my main example, as the play is the Shakespearean text that speaks best to our own time and prejudices insofar as it is the one text we rehearse for ourselves—though seldom with much respect for its textual or even contextual integrity. I am indebted to Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes' *Presentist Shakespeares* (2006) but am equally inspired by Ricardo Castells (1995) as I contend that without the heritage from 1989 well in mind, as a mediating lens, we cannot fully apprise issues of aesthetic form, text, and the social, political and interpretative matrices that form some of the “presentist” co-texts through which we understand Shakespeare today.

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Session 2, Sun. 18.30-20.00, Rm A112 (Chair: Stella Achilleos)

Critical Judgments from Utopian Thought Associated with *Walden*

In 1845 Henry David Thoreau built a cabin near the shores of Walden Pond, where he lived for two years and wrote about his experience; a work which was later called *Walden*. One hundred years later, in the summer of 1945, behaviorist B. F. Skinner began writing his utopian novel, which he entitled *Walden Two*. *Walden* is a non-fiction work that clearly illustrates the beauty and ingenuity of living in nature, as well as the feasibility of conservation. *Walden Two* is a persuasive novel aimed at showing that a properly implemented effective science of behavior is a panacea able to engender utopia. It is not obvious why Skinner chose to name his utopian novel after the work of Thoreau until one observes that both works place great emphasis on personal freedom and proper knowledge and interaction with the environment. Although society was not in crisis during the inception of either work both works provide critical judgment on their social, economic, and political arrangements by providing an alternative arrangement more attentive to the influences of the environment. The utopian ideas developed in *Walden Two* share the implicit reflection on freedom and on understanding the environment in which one lives, that is documented in Thoreau's venture at Walden Pond.

This paper aims to make the judgments shared in both works more salient and to show how conservation and behavioral science, in the context of the two works, can guide utopian thought.

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Session 14, Sat. 11.00-12.30, Rm A010 (Chair: Laurence Davis)

Social Movements and the Practical-political Value of Utopian Thinking: The Anti-capitalist Movement and the International Climate Action Movement

In *Archaeologies of the Future*, Fredric Jameson stresses the practical-political value of Utopian thinking. Because it was easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism, Utopia was all the more attractive and urgent: 'this increasing inability to imagine a different future enhances rather than diminishes the appeal and also the function of Utopia' (p.232). Jameson's comments are pertinent for understanding the anti-capitalist movement; they are useful, too, for analyzing the other great anti-hegemonic social movement of our time, the international climate movement. This paper explores the utopianism of the anti-capitalist movement by examination of its rhetoric and the euphoric responses to its potential expressed by its participants. The practical-political value of utopianism is then investigated by considering this movement's impact: until 9/11 re-stabilized the capitalist world order, a reform movement developed within institutions such as the World Bank, in response to the challenge of anti-capitalist utopianism. The history of social movement activity suggests that reforms are indeed achieved when a social movement demands revolution, a different future. There are lessons here for the climate movement. Demanding the different future of a safe climate economy is more likely to result in governments enacting mitigation measures. However, for the first time in the history of social movements, reforms might be valueless. Given the danger of 'tipping points' triggering catastrophic runaway climate change, the climate movement, unlike previous social movements, might need to achieve its Utopian program to win anything worthwhile, confirming the practical-political value of Utopian thinking.

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Session 47, Mon. 11.30-13.00, Rm A010 (Chair: Stella Achilleos)

Ironic Utopias in Israeli and Palestinian Filmmaking

'One of the crucial antinomies of art today is that it wants to be and must be squarely Utopian, as social reality increasingly impedes Utopia, while at the same time it should not be Utopian so as not to be found guilty of administering comfort and illusion', wrote Theodor Adorno forty years ago. Till the late 1990s both Israeli and Palestinian films tended to ignore this antinomy: the Israeli *Hill 24 Doesn't Answer* (1955) ends its account of the 1948 victory over the Arabs by juxtaposing shots of flourishing Jewish towns and villages with shots of the Judean desert and a promising title 'The Beginning'. Mustafa Abu Ali's *La Lil Halissilmi (No to a Peaceful Solution)*, 1968) ends with a voice-over promise of a return to Palestine through a revolutionary effort of the Palestinian people in the spirit of the title of the film. The deadly mix of overt patriotism and dependence on political organizations (which sponsored the films in the case of Palestinians) or on state funds (in Israel) were at the core of the one-dimensionality of the majority of film productions till the late 20th Century.

The sudden eruption of outstanding Palestinian and Israeli filmmaking which has gained international attention is a very recent phenomenon. Films like the Palestinian *Divine Intervention* (2002) by Elia Suleiman, *Paradise Now* (2006) by Hanni Abu-Assad and the Israeli *The Band's Visit* (2008) by Eran Kolirin, *Ajame* (2009) by Scandar Copti and Yaron Shani indicate changes in both Jewish and Arab societies and a transition from 'cinema-as-folklore' to 'cinema-as-art' (to use terms W.H. Auden applied to music). While the former never came to a conscious realization of its true nature and was only capable of

reproducing reality as determined by ideological clichés, the latter is self-reflexive, critical of its society and open to novelty. The Utopias of earlier films were unequivocal and simplistic. In recent works they are presented with irony and skepticism which in no way deny their necessity. This paper will attempt to present, analyze and discuss the ambivalences and ironies some of the recent filmic Utopias and of their refusal to disappear from the screen.

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Session 20, Sat. 14.30-16.00, Rm A010 (Roundtable on Postcolonial Utopianism, Chair: Lyman Tower Sargent)

Session 26, Sun. 11.00-12.30, Rm A008 (Chair: Lyman Tower Sargent)

Utopias and Dystopias in Latin America: A Feminist Perception

Carlos Fuentes posits that America is a construct created as the utopian dream of the European imaginary. By the time the continent had been actually geographically un-covered, the European mind had already bequeathed upon the New World a magical-mythical status, where utopias flourished fueled by the yearning of the European colonizers to create a “New World” better than the one they had left behind. When speaking about Latin American utopias, however one must distinguish between what the philosopher Yohanka del Rio claims are utopias for Latin America and utopias of Latin America. The first take root in the “imported” millenary dreams brought to America in 1492 by the conquistadores where the unexplored continent becomes what Fuentes calls the “interpretative recourse of an invention, a space for the experiment, belated and truncated by time of the Western civilization”. The second are particularly relevant to this essay. The Utopias of Latin America are defined by del Rio as Latin America’s social and political thought determined by the consciousness of the Latin Americans and formulated to suit the needs of its citizens.

In this second type of utopian thought, Latin American authors and political thinkers try to re-create a new ideal reality to accommodate the political and social needs of their countrymen. A distinctive trait in this category, del Río continues, is the tight relationship between the social and political context and the utopia itself. As examples, one may cite the Bolivarian dream of a united Latin America, the “indigenistas” movements of Chiapas, Tupac Amaru’s uprising and Sandino’s “Movimiento campesino” as well as both the Mexican and Sandinista revolutions.

For this essay, I will discuss the construction of “feminist” utopias and dystopias that is, the perspective of three major Latin American women writers on the subject. For that purpose, I will examine Gioconda Belli’s *Waslala* and *El Pais de las Mujeres*, Angeles Mastretta’s *Mal de Amores* and Nelida Piñón’s *The Republic of Dreams*. In addition to having strong female characters constructing their idealized world, these utopias are different from others because of the emphasis placed on what some would term a “female perspective” where the priorities become forgotten social needs such as good child-care, stewardship of the land and healthy social relationships. What I consider unique, however, about this female perspectives is the sense of humor (not irony) associated with the way they see the world and how to fix or rather un-fix matters. Rather than actively trying to explore possible utopias, these women live ones never losing site of the fact that, in reality, they are living in their imagination and that things always change at their peril and with consequences unforeseen until several generations after the fact.

As Belli posits in *El Pais de las mujeres*, without testosterone, the world becomes rather easier to run. It may, however, become rather boring.

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Session 33, Sun. 14.30-16.00, Rm A112 (Chair: Ludmila Gruszewska Blaim)

Dystopian Vision and Surreal Imagination in Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*

Compared to Utopia, which is used pejoratively in reference to an unrealistic ideal world which is almost impossible to achieve, dystopia, showing strikingly the crisis of Utopia, reveals the conditions of life which are miserable and characterized by fear, suffering, and adversity when people confront the terror of an unknown future. Owing to the human race's lacking confidence for their present situation, Utopia and dystopia's issues become more prevalent than before, letting people conceive a new vision to escape from where they live and satirize the actual state around them. The concept of dystopia bears a similarity to science fiction, which frequently explains the possible scenarios hardly happening in our daily life at the present time but may exist in the future, and deals with the issues through elaborating or expanding on themes that lie beneath the surface of contemporary concerns—face the apocalyptic warning of the end of the world.

Under Kazuo Ishiguro's interpretation, *Never Let Me Go* brings about the extensive discussion about uncertainty in the future world, which is filled with the human beings generated by the invention of bioengineering. With the need of apparatuses for transplantation, the cloned people are popularly created in the environment where everything is altered beyond recognition by genetic engineering. The cloned mankind is reconstructed—they are more viable and vibrant than “original” human beings. The human beings' free will is neglected, and their identity is blurred on account of that the cloned ones are not seen as real humans. Yet, in *Never Let Me Go*, the author explores the inevitable development of love and affections among the main characters—Kathy, Tommy and Ruth, even though Madame is affected and touched by the spontaneous feeling of Kathy's instinct of maternal love. However, do the cloned creatures, no matter whether they are human beings or animals, have the same internal emotion and habitual behavior like the biological ones, even though they lack the ability to procreate? With the support of the perspective of dystopia in science fiction, the answer may be yes. How dystopian vision and surreal imagination are represented in *Never Let Me Go*, and how they affect people's thinking would challenge the concept of ideal creation in Utopia and expose the injustice and crisis under its social system.

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Session 12, Sat. 11.00-12.30, Rm A112 (Chair: Jacqueline Dutton)

Estidama and the Quest for the Sustainable Society: A Middle Eastern Utopia

Following the sustainability trend that is investing global politics, the emirate of Abu Dhabi, despite being one of the world's largest oil exporters, has recently become active in the field of sustainable development. At the base of Abu Dhabi's self-constructed 'green-energy giant' narrative is Estidama: a radical program for social change aiming for new forms of governance and community development in balance with nature. Estidama's vision of ideal societies and new master-planned urban developments recalls forms and patterns of traditional Western utopianism where the quest for the 'good' society is usually followed by that for the 'good' city. If, on the one hand, Estidama aims to be the theoretical framework of the sustainable society, on the other hand, Masdar City, a new eco-city under construction in Abu Dhabi's desert, aims to be the reification of Estidama. However, the historical and geographical background of Abu Dhabi positions, in some respects, Estidama far from Western utopianism. First, the dream for social change does not come from outside the government but from the government itself. It is an absolute monarchic power, the sheikdom, that tries to change society from within, not a revolutionary outside force. Second, given the official support received from the government, Estidama's utopian vision is strictly connected to practical economical and political issues. There is a precise plan to make the dream real, hence the massive role of private companies and corporations in attracting capital and transforming it into a new urban development: Masdar City. Acknowledging the particularities of Abu Dhabi's utopianism, this paper aims to analyze Estidama's dream of a new sustainable society, examine the motives for its development, and outline and evaluate the process by means of which this Middle-Eastern utopia seeks reification with the construction of a new city.

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Session 47, Mon. 11.30-13.00, Rm A010 (Chair: Stella Achilleos)

Utopia, Heterotopia and the “Spectacular Terror”: Reading the Holocaust with / against Foucault

In his lecture ‘Des Espaces Autres’ (‘Of Other Spaces’), Michel Foucault put forward the notion that, amongst the mutually-defined and ultimately competing sites which set the contemporary apart from preceding situations, some ‘have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect’. These sites which ‘contradict all the other sites’ he divides into two main categories: *utopias*, which are ‘fundamentally unreal spaces’, and *heterotopias*, ‘real places – places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted’.

I intend to borrow certain selected aspects of Foucault’s critical rationale to point out ways in which his remarks on utopias and heterotopias can be illuminating for the study of depictions of the Holocaust, and in what ways the latter prove that it is necessary to refine or adapt Foucault’s remarks.

This paper will consider representations of the Holocaust in several media, mostly prose narrative fiction and film. It will focus in particular on the ways in which depictions of the Holocaust involve a sense of moral duplicity, both as regards the experiences portrayed and the ambiguous status of the literary / filmic artefact in relation to its audience. It will also focus on aspects of formal doubleness in the construction of the works themselves, such as the clash between a character’s or a narrator’s deliberately limited awareness of reality and the reader’s / viewer’s fuller understanding of the implications of the subject matter; and on the role of propaganda and false consciousness.

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Session 14, Sat. 11.00-12.30, Rm A010 (Chair: Laurence Davis)

Session 43, Sun. 18.30-20.00, Rm A107 (Roundtable on Beyond the Ideology of Crisis and Cuts, Chair: Fátima Vieira)

Utopia and Social Movements

To date, the now well-established scholarly field of utopian studies has focused primarily on three broad varieties of utopianism: literary utopias, utopian social thought, and communal experiments. By comparison, the study of the relationship between utopia and historical and contemporary grassroots social movements has been relatively neglected. There is, in particular, a pressing need for inter-disciplinary research that successfully combines philosophical and historical analysis of the concept of utopia with an empirical understanding of social movement processes. In this paper I attempt to lay some methodological foundations for such research by analysing the relationship between utopia, history, and politics in a way very different from how it has traditionally been conceived by defenders and critics alike. My argument is that whereas both have tended to conceive of utopia primarily as a transcendent and fixed “ought” opposed to the “is” of political reality and the “was” of social history, it may also be understood as an empirically grounded, dynamic, and open-ended feature of the “real world” of history and politics representing the hopes and dreams of those consigned to its margins. I contend, moreover, that this latter interpretation of utopia is the one best suited to contemporary, radical democratic grassroots social movements seeking to reclaim control over the conditions of their existence from capitalist, market-driven globalisation.

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Session 1, Sat. 11.00-12.30, Rm A007 (Chair: Jorge Bastos da Silva)

***México de afuera* in Northern Missouri: The Creation of a Utopian *Porfiriato* Society in America's Heartland**

This essay examines the ideology of a utopian *México de afuera* in the novel *La patria perdida* by Teodoro Torres. Torres, who fled Mexico after the onset of the Mexican Revolution, found a job as lead editor of *La Prensa*, the successful Spanish-language newspaper owned by Ignacio Lozano. Living in San Antonio during the 1910s, Torres became familiar with the ideology of *México de afuera* before returning to Mexico. His novel, which begins in northern Missouri, follows the return of Luis Alfaro to his homeland only to discover that he feels more at home, more in Mexico, on his farm north of Kansas City. When studying the work and the life of Torres, the plot of this novel becomes problematic. A man who lived in the United States for nine years before returning to Mexico, Torres certainly had the insight to provide psychological and emotional analyses of the immigrants and the understanding to write about the thoughts and feelings that many had experienced upon their return to the homeland. Yet, why does Torres, who had returned to Mexico and done well for himself for over a decade before he penned this novel, invent an immigrant utopia on a farm in Missouri? It is not a question that is easily answered, but after examining Torres's life, the basic tenets of *México de afuera* and the novel itself, a conclusion can be reached. Torres idolized *Porfiriato* society and Luis Alfaro's farm is an idealized version of fin-de-siècle Mexico.

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Session 21, Sat. 14.30-16.00, Rm A011 (Chair: James Block)

Right to Say: Interrogations About the Restorative Justice Proposal

Starting from the need of finding alternatives to the current justice system, this paper seeks to give voice to one proposal that is gaining strength in the global legal scenario: Restorative Justice. Therefore, this paper explores the proposal of Restorative Justice, by promoting a critical analysis of authors from psychoanalysis (freudian-lacanian) and philosophy (with F. Ost and J. Derrida), mostly. Through Restorative Justice it is possible to question the power of the word movement, a characteristic that promotes the tension between psychoanalysis and law. Besides that, the issue of "Law" and "laws", of "performativity" of the acts of speech, the position of the judge, the experience of meeting and the function of utopias are the main biases that make up this analysis. More focused on the possibility of announcing questions about this proposal so new in the Brazilian context that to find satisfactory answers, this article remains on hold several conclusions, but takes the finding of important utopian function of the Restorative Justice.

This is a practice already widespread in many countries, which is giving voice to the parties involved in the lawsuit, questioning the state monopoly of criminal justice, the dogmatic use of the positive criminal law, proposing a broader concept of crime and its consequences with a focus on restoration. We propose a more informal ritual, where victim and offender are brought into dialogue mediated and from their testimonies see any possibility of restoration of the consequences of the infraction. In Brazil, three pilot projects are being developed and tested, revealing quite successful: in Porto Alegre - within the child justice in Sao Caetano do Sul -, schools, and in Brasília - facing adult offenders, working with minor crimes and misdemeanors criminal offensive potential. The bill provides for the use of Restorative Justice in Brazil is still in legal process, so the experiences are as yet incipient and summarize the trials and pilot projects for discussion and academic research.

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Session 33, Sun. 14.30-16.00, Rm A112 (Chair: Ludmiła Gruszevska Blaim)

The Body: A Good Place for Utopia?

The dream of a transparent body, perfectly knowable and malleable, accompanies Western societies since the birth of Anatomy. Throughout the 20th Century, with the development of increasingly sophisticated medical imaging, this dream has come (almost) true, entrenching a deep alliance with another old dream, that of a body with no place, no decay, no death: a utopian body.

This private Utopia seems to fit Post-modernity perfectly. Given the ontological insecurity that characterizes Post-modernity the “self” looks for protection in the most basic and intimate of all shelters: the body. In an article published in 2002, Chrysanthou gives a convincingly account of this condition. He dubs this form of utopia *Somatopia* and puts it in relation with the fall of the great social utopias and with the growing medicalization of life, made possible by the development of information technologies that produce an allegedly transparent body.

I will elaborate on the idea of *Somatopia*. More exactly, I will elaborate on the notion of transparency and on its relation with the utopian body, discussing the role of images as seminal link between body and utopia (a topic that Chrysanthou treats only tangentially). To do this I will refer to the striking description of “utopian body” given by Foucault in a radio broadcast of 1966. Subsequently I will draw on Belting’s anthropology of images, based on the triad image-medium-body, using it as a conceptual frame for thinking another triad: body-image-utopia. Finally I will show a case in which body, image and utopia clash and *Somatopia* explodes in all its contradictions: the performances of the Australian artist Stelarc.

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Session 20, Sat. 14.30-16.00, Rm A010 (Roundtable on Postcolonial Utopianism, Chair: Lyman Tower Sargent)

Session 27, Sun. 14.30-16.00, Rm A008 (Chair: Lyman Tower Sargent)

Flipping the script on Africa’s Future: *In the United States of Africa* by Abdourahman A. Waberi

Postcolonial utopian literature is an emerging field of scholarship focusing on utopian and dystopian writing by people who have been affected by the imperial process. The tendency towards dystopian projections has been prevalent in certain cultures (Australian, South African), and the notion that the “empire writes back” encourages a reactive, defensive stance that necessarily criticizes the effects of imperial encounters.

This paradigm exists in Francophone postcolonial writing, including seminal works like Ahmadou Kourouma’s *The Suns of Independence* (1968) and Ousmane Sembène’s *The Last of the Empire* (1981). However, there is another stream of postcolonial utopian thinking that has obviously influenced Abdourahman A. Waberi in his 2006 novel, *In the United States of Africa*.

The technique of reversal, inverting the accepted prism through which the world is viewed, is the strategy favoured by Waberi. It is characteristic of both utopian fiction – especially eighteenth century examples such as Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* and Voltaire’s *Candide* – and African American abolitionist discourses, such as those pronounced by David Walker and Reverend Henry Highland Garnet on Africa as a “land of light” with the “brightest of futures”, whereas Europe was a “land of darkness”. Jean Renoir’s obscure 1927 short film *Charleston Parade* also prefigures Waberi’s novel, depicting a futuristic world in which Africa is the centre of enlightenment and Europe is a post-apocalyptic wasteland of primitivism.

This paper will examine how the alternative reality of the United States of Africa in Waberi’s novel succeeds in providing a challenging yet humorous satire of the current world order that places Africa well below Europe and North America on the scale of political and economic development. The sustained and detailed descriptions of the history and achievements of the United States of Africa and the protagonist’s various voyages through Africa and the degraded slums of Paris demonstrate how discourses shaped by power are perpetuated and how art, literature and love may reduce the racial, religious and regional divides

of the world.

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Session 38, Mon. 11.30-13.00, Rm A011 (Chair: Lorna Davidson)

The Meaning of History?

After so many ‘grand narratives’ with utopian happy ends that turned out to be nightmares, we have become wary of combining utopian ideals with views on world history as a whole. Moreover, speaking of ‘the meaning of history’ has become out of date in the philosophy of history. This does not mean, however, that the question of the meaning of history has become irrelevant. On the contrary, opinions on the relation of ideals of justice to actual political reality, always – implicitly or explicitly – contain ideas about history as such.

This is a statement that I want to draw from the Czech phenomenologist Jan Patočka’s *Heretic Essays on the Philosophy of History*. In the third essay, with the title ‘Does History have a Meaning?’, Patočka asserts that opinions on the meaning of actual occurrences are always related to a view of absolute meaning, how vague or uncertain that point of view may be. In Patočka’s philosophy of history – which he connects with what he calls ‘the care of the soul’ – it is essential that the question of the meaning of history remains unanswered and open, without being dismissed as a question.

In my paper I will show how this philosophy of history, together with other ideas of Patočka’s phenomenology, can be made fruitful for a philosophical discussion of the question how crisis, utopia – as well as dystopia – and justice can be linked to history.

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Session 21, Sat. 14.30-16.00, Rm A011 (Chair: James Block)

Recognizing (Im)Possibilities: The Rise and Fall of Utopian Impulses From A Marcusean Perspective

In this paper I will invoke Herbert Marcuse’s form of dialectical thinking in the examination of the rise and fall of utopian impulses. In advanced industrial societies there is a constant tension between the quest for greater freedom and the social mechanisms that prohibit the increase of freedom. Hence, societies are structured dialectically insofar as they maintain themselves by promising a good life for their citizens while at the same time prohibiting the actual development of the good life for all citizens for the sake of the perpetual flourishing of the dominant group in society. However, oppressed groups still harbor a utopian impulse that from time to time is expressed in social action or revolt of some sort.

The kind of emancipated, non-repressed society that these revolts seek to bring about seem to never become fully actualized. Instead, what often develop are new forms of oppression and domination. Granted, at times and in certain places some progress is made. However, utopian visions are often disappointed and eventually wane. In this paper I will focus on two of Marcuse’s works that are helpful in addressing the rise and fall of utopian visions. His *Essay on Liberation* is helpful in examining the utopian impulse and how it may come to fruition while his essay “The Affirmative Character of Culture” helps to understand ways in which the utopian impulse undergoes erasure.

As a dialectical thinker, Marcuse was able to recognize the possibilities for qualitative social change in a given society while at the same time recognizing the social mechanisms that prohibited social change. I will draw from Marcuse’s insights to address some contemporary problems. With revolts taking place in Egypt, Libya, and in small pockets in the USA Marcuse’s form of critical theory can be very useful.

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Session 17, Sat. 14.30-16.00, Rm A107 (Chair: Maria Margaroni)

No Alternative? Atwood, Winterson and the Present Future Crisis

Dystopias proliferate in times of crisis, providing a fictional response to and dramatization of the main fears and anxieties in a given society. The present *Zeitgeist* is uncontroversially steeped in a mood of crisis, which in many ways has become reflected in the critical juncture at which Utopian thinking finds itself, with an overwhelming predominance of dystopian and apocalyptic rhetoric.

In his recent and provocative book *Living in the End Times* (2010) Slavoj Žižek makes the case that globalized capitalism is approaching an apocalyptic end. According to Žižek there are three distinct forms of apocalypticism operating in the West today: Christian fundamentalist, techno-digital-post-human and New Age. Žižek further identifies four main menaces threatening the world, which he then correlates with the four horsemen of the Apocalypse: the relentless pressure on ecosystems, the economic crisis, biotechnological revolution and increasing social hierarchies and exclusion.

My purpose in this paper is to analyse three recent dystopias, whose main thematic concerns are precisely those singled out by Žižek: Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003) and *The Year of the Flood* (2009) and Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* (2007). All three envisage future worlds wrecked by exacerbated versions of current day capitalism and biogenetic disasters. Indeed, these post-apocalyptic dystopias can be seen as thought experiments, extrapolating onto a not too distant future what our world might be like if stringent measures are not taken to protect the environment, avoid economic collapse and monitor potentially nefarious biotechnological developments. The aporia facing us, recounted, dramatized and even corroborated in Atwood and Winterson's novels, is that even though extreme capitalism has the potential to destroy societies and bring about ecocide there is a widespread sense that, as Mark Fisher puts it, "not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible even to *imagine* a coherent alternative to it" (*Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*).

This paper will examine the multi-layered impasse and pervasive sense of impending crisis mediated by the fictional world and cautionary tone of Atwood and Winterson's dystopias, utilising the lens of recent theoretical work dealing with the future of the human in a world in which discordant discourses and practices are intrinsic to its very function.

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Session 47, Mon. 11.30-13.00, Rm A010 (Chair: Stella Achilleos)

***The Professor in Erin* (1918): A Gaelic nostalgic utopia in times of war and political crisis**

Forgotten by Anglo-Irish literary scholarship, the curious and in many ways unique novel *The Professor of Erin*, published in 1918 by Gill in Dublin, is a key text within the Irish tradition of literary utopias. Charlotte Elizabeth McManus' novel imagines an Ireland after a different outcome of the battle of Kinsale in 1602 which firmly established British rule, where a profoundly Gaelic culture has been allowed to develop unimpeded. The story is constructed around the rather convoluted mystery of a stolen book and the novel can as such be assigned to the genre of crime fiction, with the issues of law and justice crucial for the plot. The political structures of this imagined wholly Gaelic and Gaelic-speaking land will be analysed. True to established utopian literary practice this Gaelic wonderland is visited by an outsider who marvels at the way things are done in Ireland. Significantly, the visiting foreigner, the Professor of the book's title, is a German scholar of Celtic from Berlin. Even though the author is anxious to state in her foreword that the novel was written "some years before the war", this fact places the book into the particular set of violent and turbulent political circumstances that prevailed in Ireland in the dying days of World War I, after the (initially) unsuccessful Easter Rising of 1916 and the (intercepted) German arms shipment in its support. The book is in fact not the only Irish utopian text with a German dimension from the war years. Professor Schliemann's antagonist is a Jewish-American businessman, adding further material to a political reading of the novel.

Written by a female author, the gendered nature of this utopian vision will also be analysed. Very possibly one of the last attempts to imagine a Gaelic Ireland in pre-independence days, its vision will lastly be held against the cultural, political, economic and technological practices the Free State initiated only three years after the book appeared.

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Session 35, Sun. 16.30-18.00, Rm A107 (Chair: Timothy Miller)

Christiania as a Freespace in an Age of *Empire*: A Phenomenological Approach to Exploring the Meaning of Utopia in Contemporary Political Struggle

Based on fieldwork carried out in Christiania in Copenhagen, I will explore how this self-proclaimed Freetown emerges as a utopian project that engages contemporary institutions and systems of global capitalism, or *Empire* as Hardt & Negri have called it. The origins of the financial crisis and the environmental crisis can be found in the current political and economic systems and power configurations of neoliberalism. Christiania, as a utopian project, seeks to establish an alternative order to that of neoliberalism. Utilizing a phenomenological approach I will aim to show how utopia comes into being through the emergence of (bio)political subjects that are engaged in and with physical spaces. Utopian political action, I believe, can be expressed through the arrangements of everyday life. By presenting a picture of a group of young men and women in Christiania I hope to illustrate how everyday activities and inhabited space are central to the emergence of political subjects. Yet the intimacies of everyday life seek to overflow the confines of the near and the mundane, and manifest themselves as emerging alternatives to neoliberal global systems and power configurations. Drawing on both Foucault and de Certeau I wish to show how the politics of utopia seek to overcome the power of *Empire* through the conscious ordering of everyday life.

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Session 7, Sat. 11.00-12-30, Rm A107 (Chair : Yannis Stavrakakis)

Achieve the Revolution, Overcome the Crisis, Fulfill the Golden age of Humanity: Aspects of Saint-Simon's Utopian Thought

We often think that social crisis comes to light as the disturbance of social order, that is to say, the world as we know it. According to this acknowledgement the revolutionary fact, reversing or attempting to reverse social order, can be seen as a part or even as the cause of a crisis. However, the above opinion and Saint-Simon's beliefs don't reach an agreement. Saint-Simon, having taken part in both the American and the French Revolution, avoids equating revolution with crisis. As far as he is concerned the latter has been more the result of an incomplete revolution, rather than a harmful symptom of any radical effort to establish another world. As a result this means that the ending of the crisis requires the justification of the social powers' demands, which from 1789 up to the Restoration struggled for the establishment of a new industrial world. If the world before the Revolution based on "power" and "prejudice", now it tends to rely on "creative work" and knowledge. If the Ancient Regime inspired *competition* and *conflict* among people and nations, the new one favors *co-operation of producers on equal basis and in terms of a mutual pursuit of the common transnational interest*. If, once, the distinction between those *who govern* and those *who are being governed* revealed the state of a corrupted society, the negation of this distinction brings forward a new era within which all people relate to one another by *fraternal bonds of friendship*. Taking another path away from both the anti-revolutionary thought and the liberals, Saint-Simon, reminds us that *the golden age of humanity is still ahead of us*, while at the same time, he proclaims that the excess of the crisis requires the *fulfillment of the ideals of the Revolution*, which still remains incomplete.

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fourikosk@gmail.com**Session 11, Sat. 14.30-16.00, Rm A010 (Chair: Antonis Balasopoulos)****Utopia and Marxism in the Context of Dystopian Capitalist Crisis**

This paper is positioned to critically examine the relation between the work of Marx - Engels and utopian tradition. It is especially positioned to analyze Marx and Engels's critique to what they called "utopian socialism" and "little Icarus" but also to inquire into common elements that exist in utopian tradition and their work.

More specifically this paper will try to investigate common routes that relate the content of the utopian socialists' and Marx – Engels's work according to their conclusions about theoretical tradition of the Enlightenment and its effects in social and political life of capitalist society but also according to their disagreements that are mainly based –from Marx and Engels's aspect– on the founding of scientific socialism. It will also try to argue that in such a "relationship" beside the differences and the "anti-utopian" criticism, Marxism and socialism still contain an element that could be characterized as a utopian one. A utopian element that -in order to put it in a more provocative way- makes possible for the researchers to even consider Marxism and scientific socialism as a type of utopia. A utopia of "temporal process" as Harvey describes it or an "open ended utopia" as Paden sketches it out.

Finally the main point of this paper is to prove the importance -especially now in the era of crisis- of such an approach concerning open discussions and controversies, inside Marxism's notion, with reference to the aims of development and "re-establishment" of Marxism and Socialism's theoretical achievements. A systematical examination of Marx and Engels's relationship to the utopian socialists and to utopian thought more generally could help clarify and refine their critique of bourgeois society and their views as to its possible alternatives today.

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justynagalant@gmail.com**Session 30, Sun. 11.00-12.30, Rm A107 (Chair: Jim Arnold)*****Gas-s-s-s! Or: It Became Necessary to Destroy the World in Order to Save It. Aggregate signification in Roger Corman's utopian Menippea.***

The paper shows how the multi-perspectivism of the genre of Menippean satire reflects and enhances the psychedelic collage of the Hippie New World. While the distanced manner of presentation and the episodic construction typical of the genre facilitate the mode of cynical detachment visible in the film, the features of philosophical reflection and utopian consideration which also characterize Menippea convey the omnipresent utopian spirit of *Gas-s-s-s*. In effect, the film comes across as a Bakhtinian carnivalesque construction lauding complete freedom as much as it exposes grotesque exaggerations of the contemporary modern-era 'humours' and the social mechanisms which the search for a utopia necessarily calls forth.

In a world where everyone over 25 is dead, the rebellious young without the antagonistic older generation to criticise and challenge, find themselves internally divided as they look to the past in an attempt to re-create themselves in the new reality. In the process, the *chronos* of the linear past is set against the *kairos* of the one-off chance for a Hippie utopia as criss-crossing semiotic structures of various ideologies and approaches to life thrive, compete and merge.

The central group of travellers and all the young 'sole heirs to the earth' recklessly and playfully multiply, distort, convert and undermine the alleged stability of meaning of the late grown-up world. In effect, the post-apocalyptic, chaotic and subdivided universe of the film can be considered in terms of semiotic crisis of representation, revealing how the new reality enforces experimentation with signs and their meaning.

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Session 40, Mon. 11.30-13.00, Rm A007 (Chair: Pavla Vesela)

Future Ideologies in the Past, Present Ideologies in the Future: Karel Čapek's *R.U.R.* Revisited

Karel Čapek's play *R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots)* was premiered at the National Theatre in Prague on January 25th, 1921. On October 9th, 1922 it was performed at the Garrick Theater in New York. One year later the English edition was published. The play was enormously successful both in Europe and the United States. Because the plot included some humanoid characters called "robots", *R.U.R.* has become a landmark in the history of Science Fiction. It is difficult to find encyclopedias (SF or mainstream) which do not mention this play and Čapek as responsible for the coinage of the term *robot*. However, outside the field of Computer Science and Robotics, the play is practically unknown. Curiously enough, the original relevance of the plot revolved around political ideologies at an external level, but also tackled profound ontological questions such as the nature and limits of sentient life.

The main purpose of this presentation is to discuss the ideological validity of *R.U.R.* ninety years after its first performance. However, it will also consider the play as a critique of humankind's inability to find socio-political alternatives to past and present crises.

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Session 23, Sat. 16.30-18.00, Rm A007 (Chair: Maria Aline Ferreira)

Are We In Heaven Or In Hell? Utopia/Dystopia and Crisis in Stanislaw Lem's *Eden*

In Stanislaw Lem's novel *Eden* complex philosophical issues take on a form of a scenario in which a scientific expedition crashes on a planet whose subsequent exploration results in the discovery of a strange and fascinating, yet obscure and incomprehensible alien world. This seemingly self-regulating technologically advanced civilisation that for a long time remains an unsolvable puzzle to the newcomers from the Earth in the end proves to be ruled by manipulation and information control from its secretive government/ruler.

Paradoxically, however, the crisis which the readers witness does not occur among the inhabitants of this 'brave new world', whose function in the narrative is broadly reduced to the object of human cognition. Therefore, the paper will focus on presenting and analyzing the sources, the substance and the consequences of crisis which resulted from the contact with the alien world of the representatives of humanity. It will discuss various aspects of crisis which manifest themselves in the book on a number of planes and levels, mainly cognitive/epistemological, axiological/ethical and political. Special attention will also be paid to the problem of the impotence of scientific expert knowledge in the face of the unknown and elusive reality of the planet. Moreover, it will address an interesting and currently topical question of whether it is just and relevant to apply the categories and values from one world/civilization to a different one and whether the negative outcome of the evaluation justifies any kind of intervention on the part of the outsiders in order to bring 'law and order'.

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Session 7, Sat. 11.00-12-30, Rm A107 (Chair : Yannis Stavrakakis)

The Crisis of Utopia? The Curious Relationship between French Post-war Philosophy and the Legacy

of the Enlightenment.

French philosophy after the Second World War is often defined as highly critical, even dismissive of the Enlightenment project, which was considered a utopian attempt to improve both man and society through the application of reason, education and political power. Enlightenment utopian thinking had become linked to precisely these horrors, creating an impulse for the dystopian critique of reason and power that resonated strongly with French philosophers like Michel Foucault, Derrida and Deleuze. This dystopian impulse became the backbone of postmodern philosophy, which claimed to be a final and comprehensive casting away of modern, Enlightenment inspired ideals and their philosophical underpinnings.

Postmodernism seemed to be the final philosophy of the west, announcing the decadence of the west and the death of utopia.

However, in the past ten years, French intellectuals have returned to cosmopolitanism and other Enlightenment values in what may be termed a spectacular reversal of postmodernism, rehabilitating both the legacy of the Enlightenment in general and the legitimacy of its utopian ideals. The reopening of an intellectual space for utopia that has followed raises the question of how this reversal could take place, and what this means for the relationship between postmodernism and utopian thought. This paper argues that the critique and rejection of Enlightenment utopianism reveals an interesting 'complicity of opposites': the postmodern critique of utopia was carried out in the name of utopian ideals, and was therefore unable to fulfill its programme of transcending the legacy of the Enlightenment.

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Session 11, Sat. 14.30-16.00, Rm A010 (Chair: Antonis Balasopoulos)

Utopia between Economy and Politics – An Interpretation of Greek Social Struggles in the Post – Crisis Era in terms of Jameson’s Recent Work

This paper aims to examine Fredric Jameson’s recent work in order to tackle the big questions that the current political and social conjuncture raises in Greece. The paper suggests that the Greek waves of social unrest in the post – crisis period have reached a turning point, which will either take the form of an explosion of political imagination among the mass movements or face the danger of the interiorization of defeat. This dilemma arises from the dual experience of the empirical present: the gap between a new sense of collectivity emerging in the field of social and political struggles and the personal suffering from the rapid deterioration of working and living conditions. This duality opens the field for all the varieties of Utopian/Anti – utopian/Dystopian aspects of the contemporary debate.

The main reference to Jameson’s work is his last book, *Representing Capital*, a commentary on Volume I of Marx’s *Capital*, in which Jameson draws some important conclusions about both Marxism and his own previous work on Utopias. The opposition between Utopian models or projects and the Utopian impulse is re-identified in terms of the essentially political nature of Utopian texts and revolutionary practice, on one hand, and the profoundly economic character of the Utopian impulse, on the other. The latter is then the moment of communism, as the unimaginable fulfillment of a radical alternative that cannot even be dreamt.

Such an approach, along with critical aspects, such as Peter Thomas’s proposed dialectical interaction of politics and economy is then being engaged with the situation in Greece, the problem of radical political programs here-and-now and especially the passage from a “partial” demand to the full-fledged “utopian leap”. The initial dilemma is finally re – interpreted, in terms of Jameson’s Utopia/Anti – utopia dialectical view, as the challenge of developing from the “anxiety about the loss of the past” to an “anxiety about losing the future”.

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Session 34, Sun. 16.30-18.00, Rm A008 (Chair: Evi Haggipavlu)

The Mentality of Failure: The Artistic Crisis in Art of the 20th Century as a Strategy or Iconographical Treasure

Around 1800 there was a general idea of the original genius that was intended never to fail. Poets and artists were expressing a particular idea of Utopia. They developed in their work models and visions for a future perfect society. However, parallel to this avantgarde vision there emerged a fear of failure. Margot and Rudolf Witkower's 1963 book 'Born under Saturn' is about artists who toiled until their madness with their mission, and who were, at the same time, always conscious of their failing. The Witkowers' history of this saturnalian mentality ends with the French Revolution, and it is about time that this period is expanded into the 20th century. Artists such as Alberto Giacometti, Antonin Artaud, Dieter Roth, Robert Motherwell, Bruce Nauman, Bas Jan Ader and Ben d'Armagnac deserve closer consideration. Expansion is also necessary to be able to present the history from 1828 onwards, in which the utopian belief triggered a turning of mentality that had its influence into the 20th century. Habitus, pretention and persuasion changed dramatically. In my paper the biographical fear of failing will not be sketched, but I will present a structure of three ways of artistic failure as a particular theme in art of the 20th century against a background of Utopian ideas: 1. an artistic strategy as such. 2. as a subject of creating art. 3. as iconographical motives of healing the spectator, whereby the idea of Utopia seems to return.

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Session 25, Sat. 16.30-18.00, Rm A107 (Roundtable on Nathaniel Coleman, Chair: Tom Moylan)

Session 5, Sun. 16.30-18.00, Rm A007 (Chair: Nader Vossoughian)

(Un)author(ised) Micro-utopias and their Spatiotemporal Context

In De Certeau's model as described in 'The Practice of Everyday Life', architecture could be seen as using 'strategies' in order to create 'places'. Unable to significantly change the space thus produced, the users of these 'places' use 'tactics' which take advantage of opportunities offered in the temporal dimension to create their own, consequently ephemeral 'micro-utopias'. This paper looks at a simple path on the sand along the Limassol coast in Cyprus, the most minimal or basic of architectural proposals, and examines how its various users take advantage of its characteristics and its context, in order to 'make do'. Acts involving two or more persons inevitably have a social dimension while some of the phenomena flirt with the unethical or the illegal. The user is allowed to take infinitesimally small steps which break down any strong sense of agency, consequently diluting any strong sense of responsibility before the act itself. It is observed that the equilibrium of this multilayered system depends on slight yet significant syntactical or configurational shifts offered by the setup itself, a setup which will serve as the model for the textual presentation of the paper itself.

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Session 6, Mon. 11.30-13.00, Rm A008 (Chair: Marios Vasileiou)

Monuments and Utopias: In Search of their Descendants

The monument is frequently seen as a discrete and contained entity, the task of which may have been, or still is, to serve a much larger or grander purpose, namely a past, present or future vision of utopia. It could thus be seen as a unique or rare aspect of utopia since it has a real physical presence in space and in a specific

context. And while the creation of monuments, which according to Lefebvre express or generate consensus, as well as the creation of utopias as grand narratives, are by many seen as outdated acts, one can hardly conclude or argue that they are extinct. This paper focuses on the monument and examines the way it may have mutated into unexpected forms or moved into new planes and locations. We discuss the nature of the monument using specific examples and highlighting the importance of its location. Thus, rather than concentrating on the discrete objectivity of the monument, the scope is widened to include its configurational position within the syntax of the spatial urban fabric. The discussion then moves to other ‘fabrics’ or fields in which the monument’s descendants could now be located. In other words, rather than focusing on assumed and potentially outdated notions of what the monument is, the study first attempts to understand the places where it may be found and then visits them in order to get to know it as well.

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Session 22, Sat. 14.30-16.00, Rm A112 (Chair: José Eduardo Reis)

That World According to Andrei Tarkovsky

In this paper I argue that Andrei Tarkovsky’s films are a response to a crisis--understood here in terms of a *distance* that manifests itself on two seemingly different yet essentially interrelated levels, the cinematic level—as distance between the audience and the work of art-- and the existential/spiritual level—as distance between humans and their world. On the one hand Tarkovsky with his time filled images, assertively takes a stand against a method of film-making (promoted by “the montage of collisions” school of thought based on the directives of a socialist realist aesthetic) that turns, in his mind, “thought into a despot” widening thus the gap between the audience and the work, while at the same time following another Russian tradition of thought (especially Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy), he questions the “spiritual” crisis of our times which he translates as the loss of faith or *interest* in our world. Using Tarkovsky’s own theory on cinema, existentialism, and Martin Heidegger’s thoughts on art, my aim here is to examine the nature of the crisis Tarkovsky addresses and the response he gives to that crisis through his films. Through a close reading of his “science-fiction” films *Solaris* and *Stalker*, I am showing that Tarkovsky’s poetic cinema by upsetting genre expectations—his response to the cinematic component of the crisis-- transcends at the same time compartmentalized/calculative thinking—his response to the “spiritual” crisis—thus giving rise to a differential, strange, un-homing yet very earth-bound world full of time in which *Dasein* finds her/his home.

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Session 39, Sun. 18.30-20.00, Rm A008 (Chair: Artur Blaim)

Crisis of Existence: Utopia in Czech Literature

If Ondřej Neff, the current uncontested star of Czech science fiction and author of the first history of Czech science fiction is correct, the first crisis of Czech literary utopias is their virtual nonexistence: he identifies only one novel as utopian, Karel Blažek’s *Nejlepší století*. This paper revises this notion shared by J. Czaplińska and D. Hodrová by studying select Czech literary responses to moments of crisis be they impersonal industrialization (K. Čapek’s *R.U.R.*), socialist conformity (I. Kmínek’s *Utopie, nejlepší verze*), or the proliferation of personal freedoms and technology after the fall of communism (V. Podracký’s *Poslední člověk* and J. Škvorecký’s *Pulchra*) from the beginning of the 20th to the early 21st century. By considering the positive, negative and anti-utopian it shall be shown that one may indeed recognize a Czech utopian tradition continuing to the present day that is more than mere critical reflections on a particular society, but rather a part of timeless anthropological utopian speculation and literary intertextuality.

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ojh23@cam.ac.uk,Blog: <http://march26tahrir.wordpress.com/2011/03/23/why-traffic-20/>**Session 37, Sun. 16.30-18.00, Rm A011 (Chair: Hans Ulrich Seeber)****‘From the Place Vendôme to Trafalgar Square: William Morris’s Proleptic Memory’**

Utopia is concerned with the transfiguration of space – the lived, the familiar, the known, and the reified. Yoking together the Greek words *ou* and *topos*, any classical utopian text contains an unavoidable dimension of spatiality. But the frequently noted pun in the word’s prefix can obscure the significance of the suffix: utopia is a good and a non-existent *place*. In this paper, I examine how two particular topoi consecrated to the celebration of imperialism – namely, the Place Vendôme in Paris and Trafalgar Square in London – were differently transfigured in divergent examples of utopian praxis. My conjecture is that the Parisian communards’ spectacular demolition of the Vendôme Column in May 1871 is an unrecognised influence on William Morris’s re-visioning of Trafalgar Square in *News from Nowhere* (1890). The communard example, which was widely reported in the British bourgeois press at the time, furnished Morris with a means to think the prospects for similar action in his own national context as he moved towards a more coherently anti-imperialist politics in the 1880s. The symbolic cache of the national monument, as well as the impression of timelessness and national continuity which the monumental aesthetic inculcates, was directly confronted in the radical action of the communards and in Morris’s speculative utopian transfiguration. Morris’s utopian intervention involved re-imagining the potential usages of public space – picking a site of imposing, neo-classical coldness, with a buried history of class struggle stratified in its past, and speculatively transforming it into a space of growth, fertility and abundance.

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calfonso@madrid.uned.es**Session 18, Sat. 16.30-18.00, Rm A011 (Chair: Stephanos Stephanides)****Nuclear Crisis in 20th Century Utopias**

Shiva is a major Hindu deity, being both the Destroyer and Transformer, for destruction brings transformation. Following this idea, in utopian works crisis triggers change and societies veer towards eutopias or dystopias. If destruction must take place before transformation, the greatest crisis, the greatest destruction, a nuclear devastation, is going to be the starting point for the reinvention on humanity in a large number of utopias. In some of these utopias nuclear radiation provokes physical alterations in humans, in others, infertility, and in most, the scarce survivors group together and their new societies degenerate into authoritarian systems, usually patriarchal (e.g. *The Handmaid’s Tale* by Margaret Atwood) though we can also find matriarchal regimes (e.g. *The Gate to Women’s Country* by Sheri S. Tepper). The great number of utopias that deal with this topic such as *Walk to the End of the World* (1974) by Suzy McKee Charnas, *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976) by Marge Piercy, *Leviathan’s Deep* (1979) by Jayge Carr, *The Demeter Flower* (1980) by Rochelle Singer, *Conscience Place* (1984) by Joyce Thompson and *The Shore of Women* (1986) by Pamela Sargent, show the preoccupation of writers with the future of the world.

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litmbj@hum.au.dk**Session 31, Sun. 13.40-16.00, Rm A107 (Chair: Stella Achilleos)****Utopian Displacements of Revolution in Henry Neville and Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur**

The early modern world gave rise to both revolution as a sociopolitical phenomenon and to utopia as a literary form. The revolutions of early modernity were contradictory phenomena which could display both

tremendous radicalism and conservative restraint.

Even though both ‘revolution’ and ‘utopia’ can be seen as phenomena emerging from the cracks and fissures within early modern societies, the two are not necessarily naturally aligned. Revolutions are not (only) utopian, and Utopias are not (necessarily) revolutionary. But there is still enough common ground to make it relevant to investigate the relations between the two. Furthermore, it can be argued that utopia may point to some of the contradictory dimensions of the sociopolitical revolution, just as the revolution confronts utopia with its own ambiguities. Also, this may provide us with a glimpse of the contradictory developments which created the modern world of capitalism, the nation-state, and globalization.

I propose to discuss these questions by way of a parallel reading of Henry Neville’s *Isle of Pines* (1668) and Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur’s *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782). The two texts respond to respectively the English Revolution and the American Revolution. And in both examples the utopia of the text reaches beyond the political revolution, but in radically different ways. The republican Neville wrote his utopian text as a response to the Restoration of the monarchy. Crèvecoeur, on the other hand, produced an ambiguous utopian text which both conveys republican ideals and reacts against the consequences of the American Revolution.

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Session 11, Sat. 14.30-16.00, Rm A010

Marxism: A Certain Road to Utopia? (Chair: Antonis Balasopoulos)

In this paper I will discuss Marx’s and Engels’ critique of utopian socialists. At first, I will focus on an interesting theoretical displacement: Whereas in *German Ideology* Marx and Engels give philosophical support to utopian socialism and its representatives, in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* and mainly in Engels’ *Utopian Socialism and Scientific Socialism*, the tone is different. Not only do they offer a thorough critique of utopian socialism, but they also present this critique as a way to substantiate their insistence on the scientific character of historical materialism.

Consequently, the reference to scientific socialism exemplifies both the intended break with utopian socialism and the theoretical status of Marxism as science. Nevertheless, I will develop the claim that the concept of scientific socialism simultaneously has a significant political use in Marx’s and Engels’ writings, while also reproducing elements of historicism and teleology in the body of Marxism. In this context, I will shortly refer to the main readings of Marx’s and Engels’ critique to the utopian socialists, in order to further substantiate my thesis concerning the repercussions of this critique upon the development of Marxism.

Finally, I will try to put forward my own version of a Marxist critique of utopian socialists. Without rejecting Marx’s and Engels’ critique and theoretical assumptions, I will try to incorporate them into a new frame that would defend the utopian element that, in my view, every potential theory and politics of communist emancipation -including Marxism- carries along.

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Session 1, Sat. 11.00-12.30, Rm A007 (Chair: Jorge Bastos da Silva)

El Dorado Then and Now: Authority and Utopia in Literature and Film

Utopian literature since its beginnings reflects on authority as it manifests in politics, social and cultural structures. Plato’s *The Republic* is a philosophical reflection on the perfect polis, and the exclusion of the poets from it is issued on the grounds of the search for the best education for rulers and guardians. Yet, at the end of his dialogue Plato recurs to a myth in order to make patent his belief in the ruling of the polis by the philosopher. Authority and utopian art are in constant dialog, weather because the latter unearths the terrible face of authority both in public and intimate domains or because it disputes territories of the real vis à vis the

different authorities that zealously hold reality under control—politics, science, religion, philosophy, etc. As though this was not enough, the sheer aesthetic privilege of autonomy, as proposed and defended by the Avant-Garde, brings about a problem of authority, which is all the more poignant in the case of utopian art: Who runs the imagery of this world away from it? Who leads the travels towards the impossible? Who builds the political and social unconscious of societies as the other of the real?

Through the case of Lope de Aguirre and his search for El Dorado I address the problem of authority and art in my paper “El Dorado Then and Now: Authority and Utopia in Literature and Film.” One of the many victims of El Dorado was Aguirre, the infamous Basque conqueror of Peru, who in the early sixteenth century, together with 250 of his compatriots crossed the Latin American continent following the Amazon River, in search for legendary treasures and so much more: power and sovereignty. Through two modern artistic representations inspired in this character’s fatal ruling and chimeric voyage - the novel *Tirano Banderas* (Spain, 1926), by Valle-Inclán, and the movie *Aguirre, The Wrath of God* (Germany, 1972), by Werner Herzog - I trace the path of a figure of authority, as it haunts the way modernity tells stories of historical madness and rage. The core of my quest is defined by the following questions: how does utopia turn into dystopia and what is the role of authority in this transformation. The answers to these questions will give way to a reflection regarding authority and art.

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Session 40, Mon. 11.30-13.00, Rm A007 (Chair: Pavla Vesela)

Frankenstein’s Monsters in a Perfect World: Identity Crisis in *Layer Cake* by Andrzej Wajda

A TV short *Layer Cake* made by the distinguished Polish director Andrzej Wajda was produced in 1968 from the script written by Stanisław Lem. Following the writing style of the latter, the film is a mixture of comedy and sci-fi which under the absurd surface asks profound philosophical questions. The world presented in *Layer Cake*, with its impressive advancement in transplantation and medicine, seems utopian, yet with surprising consequences: following numerous transplantations, the characters become nothing but Frankenstein’s monsters, patchwork-men made of several people’s bodies. The resulting complications involve both their legal status (e.g. their marital status, fatherhood, claims, estate) which becomes unclear, and more profoundly, their identity, which can no longer be defined as the traditionally accepted agreement of the body with the person. Thus, Wajda’s film on the one hand captures prophetically the legal crisis generated by the progress of medicine, and on the other takes this opportunity to ask a fundamental question about the location of identity.

Thus presented, the plot of the film makes it a forerunner of such dystopian texts as e.g. *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro or *Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood. The present paper argues that Wajda’s film, on the one hand, runs ahead of its time showing both new themes, problems and new forms for dystopian narratives, and on the other hand, doing so, it seeks new forms to ask very old questions.

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Session 10, Sun. 11.00-12.30, Rm A007 (Chair: Christopher Yorke)

Human Rights as Utopian Ideals

Despite the existence of many international legal documents and regulations, human rights are still widely violated by governments. In that sense, human rights remain to be utopian ideals for societies reflecting hopes for a better world. Human rights represent a universal hope and utopia for human kind and a large number of individuals fight for realization of this utopian dream. While arguing that human rights are utopian ideals I refer to the theory of Otfried Höffe who claims that human rights should be analyzed in

relation to an anthropological perspective. In that sense, I treat human rights as the rights of the highest moral order, as ethical rights and I claim that they are universal pre-state rights. However, unlike Höffe, who claims that the realization of universal human rights is possible, I argue that such universal unity of human kind is impossible under current conditions. In order to argue for such impossibility I claim that today, human rights are associated with civil rights and liberties of citizens which vary according to states. They do not serve as universal ethical norms for human kind. In that sense, a system of universal unity of humankind remains to be an impossible utopia.

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Session 41, Sun. 18.30-20.00, Rm A010 (Chair: Teresa Botelho)

Communication as a utopian venture: the case of two parallel discourses in Poland after the airplane disaster in 2010

Traditional views of linguistic communication (whereby communicating resembles packing a commodity and sending it to a recipient who subsequently unpacks the parcel and recovers its contents, i.e. the so called conduit metaphor discussed well over thirty years ago by Reddy) has long been considered unrealistic, if not altogether utopian. The views of communication which dominate today (e.g. relevance based approach) attribute a much greater role to knowledge inherent in the minds of the addressees of utterances. Events of 2010 which unfolded in Poland in the aftermath of the tragic air crash in Smolensk (Russia) with its toll of 96 casualties, including the president of Poland, Lech Kaczyński, his wife and some of the top military and civilian officials of the country, have more than adequately demonstrated that public communication develops along more complex lines than it could have been anticipated. Poland has witnessed the painful unraveling of two parallel discourses whose very nature seemed to preclude any potential communication between the warring factions.

This state of affairs was presented in a nutshell in a relation of a Polish diplomat present at the scene, whose moment by moment reconstruction of the swift flow of events is juxtaposed with ideologically rooted, stereotypical and often highly emotional reactions of politicians freshly arriving at the site of the disaster from Poland. A basically syntagmatic, matter-of-fact (though certainly not unemotional) discourse is confronted here by a discourse which is largely paradigmatically oriented (i.e. a discourse rooted in historical, cultural and ideological stereotypes from the Polish past). Somewhat simplifying, the first of these is reminiscent of the discourse of professional historians (with some reservations for occasional ideological bias), while the second edges towards the discourse of literature. Immediately after the disaster some journalists and intellectuals floated opinions to the effect that the trauma, in which both the antagonistic factions of Poles and the Russians participated in varying degrees, could paradoxically open a reconciliation between Poland and Russia and, perhaps even more significantly, between the antagonistic factions in Poland. These sentiments proved to be unfounded. Real communication between the two alien strands of discourse in Poland was simply utopian.

One might speculate that this was inevitable since ideologically and historically motivated paradigms which were invoked in the quasi literary paradigmatically oriented discourse shaped the addressee group by rallying some (i.e. patriotically oriented “real Poles”) to the traditionally understood “noble cause” and deliberately excluding others (i.e. a patchwork of foreigners, traitors and misled idiots).

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Session 28, Sun. 11.00-12.30, Rm A011 (Chair: James Block)

Utopian Desire in the Classroom: Capitalist Critique and Alternative Economy

My conference objective is to stimulate a conversation about how we (as faculty together with our students)

conceptualize, problematize, and struggle with questions of utopia, crisis, and justice.

- (1) What can we learn from each other about how we approach these questions with our students?
- (2) What specific pedagogical methods, materials, practices, experiences, and assignments have proven most valuable?

My substantive focus is informed by a longstanding commitment to the project of capitalist critique and alternative economy, *i.e.*, challenging the possibility of capitalist utopia and exploring the practicality of alternative utopian economy.

My pedagogical assumption is that the quality of our students' substantive work on questions of utopia, crisis, and justice is somehow related to the ways in which we acknowledge the relevance of these questions not only in the world beyond academia but also within our own classrooms. So, for example, I answer the following questions in the affirmative:

1. Is the classroom a site of injustice?
2. Can education be a justice-seeking practice?
3. Does such practice – specifically when framed as utopian thinking about the just economy – aid students in developing more critically sophisticated analyses and new sensibilities about actually existing economic inequality?

Or, put another way, what do we mean (and what do we learn) when we acknowledge that our teaching expresses, to some extent, a desire to create a bit of utopia right here and now with our students? And, when -- on the first day of class -- a student declares, "*We are not here to make friends.*", how do we understand (and respond to) the crisis that arises when our desire for utopia confronts the heavy demand embedded in such an opening move?

My plan is to share a number of my pedagogical moves (*e.g.*, conceptual framings, assignments, activities) and examples of student work from several courses. Then, I will invite conference participants to examine closely these artifacts, not for the purpose of providing feedback but rather as a way of thinking critically about how each of us -- as teachers -- creates spaces in our classrooms so that critique and imagination become possible.

(Participants in this session are welcome to bring artifacts from their own classrooms, though this is not required for participation in the session.)

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Session 12, Sat. 11.00-12.30, Rm A112 (Chair: Jacqueline Dutton)

Utopian nostalgia in Māwardī

A very common feature of Islamic religious and political thought in its classical age is the reliance on the precedent set by the community of the Prophets and the immediately following generations as an example of virtue and perfection. Abū al-Hasan al-Māwardī, a prominent jurist and political thinker of the eleventh century, used this reliance to build a political and religious project revolving around the Imam, or Caliph, the just leader of the best possible community. In his authoritative book *Kitāb Ahkām al-Sulṭaniyya wa al-Wilāyāt al-Dīniyya*, he exploits nostalgia as a basis for criticism of the present. He uses a call to an idealized past as a response to the long-term crisis of the historical Caliphal institution he was experiencing in his time, between the heterodox Fatimid claim to supreme authority above Muslims and the changed political landscape of the Muslim East brought by the oncoming Seljuk sultanate. He uses the past to put the person of the Commander of the Believers outside and above historical time, so theoretically overcoming historical crisis. Thus he shows a better world in the idealized past, aiming at its reconstructing in the future. On the other hand, he rationally elaborates the inherited tradition into a coherent political theory and allows for pragmatic solutions, balancing historically rooted pragmatism and supra-historical demands of the transcendent Law. While his book is hardly a utopia in the proper sense, nostalgia seems to offer the

framework to answer the deep crisis of the Caliphate in a way that shows utopianist features.

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Session 4, Sat. 11.00-12.30, Rm A008 (Chair: Christos Hadjichristou)

Spaces of Utopia

Utopias are, really, architectural construction of spaces. For this reason it is impossible to make a distinction between Utopia and the Spaces of Utopia, the thought of a new society from the concept of its architecture. In my speech I would like to investigate this relation.

The ideal city in modern age. I will start from the classical time of Utopia; in these examples we have a classical way to conceptualize space. These Utopias are characterized by an absolute formal perfection (Moore and Campanella and their descriptions of utopian spaces), an expression of a particular way to think the society: these spaces, within which societies live, are built on strict formal rules; beauty and perfection are the utopian elements of these civilities, on these elements they build their absolute diversity from the real world. We can describe these Utopias as *formal utopias*, because they based the idea of a new world on formal bases.

Utopian city as functional city. In twentieth century, instead, we have a different type of utopia. The perfection of classicism is over, and utopias often became a way to express the crisis of the society. In this time architecture produces the functional city (Le Corbusier or Hilberseimer, for example), where the city begins as a machine. The architectural shape is sublimed. In this kind of utopia the crisis of modernity is realized. Literature produces anti-utopias.

The anarchic city. What about the contemporary? What will be the future of utopia? Is it possible today to think about utopia?

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Session 19, Sat. 14.30-16.00, Rm A007 (Chair: Kalpana Seshadri)

Traurige Erlösung: Utopia and Disenchantment in 20th century German-Jewish Thought

In my talk I will deal with authors belonging to the 20th Century German-Jewish cultural and intellectual *milieu*. Making reference to figures such as Gershom Scholem, Walter Benjamin, and Werner Kraft, I will try to demonstrate how in these people's writings it is possible to point out an interesting relation between melancholy and utopianism, which I think can help shed light on the German-Jewish way of experiencing modernity. Indeed, in the aftermath of World War I all these intellectuals were forced to face a very unstable economical, social, and political situation. All of them in their own field tried to respond to this crisis by developing highly critical reflexions very often loaded with utopian expectations. As I will try to show, I think we can interpret this recurring to Utopia as something somehow related with a return to the sources of Messianic Jewish tradition. I will also argue, in particular referring to Scholem and his reluctant Zionism, that in late Twenties utopian expectations had to confront historical reality and soon turned in a very melancholic disenchantment towards early convictions. I will also argue that such a melancholic approach to modernity shared by German-Jewish intelligentsia have been also adopted retrospectively as an hermeneutical instrument by these same authors, who indeed have provided a representation of the essence of Judaism very often connected with the image of crisis.

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Session 27, Sun. 14.30-16.00, Rm A008 (Chair: Lyman Tower Sargent)

Anticipating Australia's Future: Utopian fictions from the 'Nervous Nineties'

But the nineties did mark a decisive turn in the way Australians thought about themselves and their future. [?] The dream of the nineties had two strands? Radicalism and nationalism. (Turner, "Introduction", xvi)

The last decade before the turn of the century was characterized by social unrest, unemployment, strikes, bank crashes, the development of the Australian Labour Party, and the discussion about the political future? dependence on the mother country or federation of the Australian colonies and autonomy; these are topics dealt with in the literature of the time. This paper discusses "utopias that predict a harmonious domestic future" (Albinski 1987, "Survey" 17), as in Andrade's *The Melbourne Riots* (1892), Rosa's *Oliver Spence, the Australian Caesar* (1894), Tucker's *The New Arcadia* (1894), Lucas's *The Curse and Its Cure* (1894) and Galier's *Visit to Blestland* (1896). Their authors describe societies which have abolished competitive capitalism and corruption as a prerequisite for a cooperative way of life. They correspond in their rejection of communism and in valuing the work of each individual. While writing these authors were fully aware of popular English and American utopian literature, especially Bellamy's and Donnelly's novels.

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Session 2, Sun. 18.30-20.00, Rm A112 (Chair: Stella Achilleos)

Confronting Crisis: A Study of Some Twentieth Century Reactionary Dystopian Science Fiction Related to Global Societal Conflicts

Between World War I and World War II (1917-1939), a preponderance of dystopian science fiction in pulp magazines featured beings from other worlds, from within the subconscious, through time suspension and immersed in untenable dilemmas. My questions for study include: Why were so many reactionary dystopian science fiction texts made available for the public during that period of time, between world war crises? Why is it necessary to suspend time? What did any of the science fiction stories suggest as global solutions to war?

The decade after World War I was one of contradictions. Despite the post-war changes, there was an economic boom in the United States beginning in 1922 since unlike Europe, the war did not take place on American soil. This accounts, in part, for the generally optimistic outlook of U.S. science fiction as opposed to the more depressing character of British science fiction after the war. Yet Hollywood [U.S.A.] chose a dystopian story to depict on the silver screen during this period of American prosperity between wars. I question how dystopian science fiction pieces such as the film in 1925 based on Arthur Conan Doyle's "Lost World" (1912) influence the general public.

In another film, *Metropolis* (1926), I question why technology is depicted negatively. What was Lang's (and von Harbou's) global message for the future of society?

The focus of my paper is to assess the socio/political issues in literature and film with relationship to the resolutions offered as a means of coping with the global crises of World Wars.

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Session 38, Mon. 11.30-13.00, Rm A011 (Chair: Lorna Davidson)

Theatre as a Counter-Apparatus and Beckett's Profane *Euaggelein*: The Playland of *Waiting for Godot*

My contention in this essay is that *Waiting for Godot* is an attempt to reclaim what Giorgio Agamben has called “infancy,” that “*experimentum linguae*” that throws into relief the very “*thing* of language,” i.e. its absolute exteriority to the human (*Infancy and History* 4-5). Thus, what has traditionally been read as Beckett’s nihilistic obliteration of the very category (and value) of the human (through the meticulous and cynical tracing of its inevitable decline, its painful Being-Towards-Death) is, instead, I argue, a homecoming, a return to that shared space of deprivation that marks our humanity and that, following Agamben, constitutes the foundation of *oikos* (i.e. relations of intimacy) as much as history and the *polis*.

In my reading of *Waiting for Godot* I shall trace the characters’ infancy-bound journey, a journey that encompasses both Pozzo’s restless desire to move “On” as well as Gogo and Didi’s exasperating rootedness, which (in my account) is, rather than the symptom of a personal and communal pathology, the return to a state of pure “potentiality that is not consumed in the act” (*The Time that Remains* 137). To this end, I shall pay particular attention to the profane function of *play* in *Waiting for Godot* which renders possible another dimension of time. As I shall argue, this other dimension of time that prepares the ground for a new form of experience and an *infantile* future bond is what Agamben in his discussion of St. Paul calls “messianic time.”

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Session 15, Sat. 16.30-18.00, Rm A010 (Chair: Verity Burgmann)

Embodying the Alternative through Prefigurative Action: Utopias in Cyberspace

This paper explores how social movement activists create an ‘alternative’ cyberspace from the grassroots. It looks at radical internet activists (henceforth, radical techies) who provide other fellow activists with digital infrastructure and web-based services such as ‘secure’ email accounts, web hosting, and mailing-lists. It reflects on the disruptive potential and the limitations of the direct action implemented by these groups engaged in prefigurative action in cyberspace.

Radical techies represent the ‘digital backbone’ of contemporary social movement organising. Usually small groups operating on a voluntary basis and through collective organising principles, they are rooted on principles of autonomy, emancipation, direct action, and self-organisation.

The creation of alternative communication infrastructure in cyberspace signals the need to think of ‘liberation’ as an everyday process that disrupts immediate realities. Such ‘liberated infrastructure’ represents the translation ‘here and now’ of the values the activists stand for: it is one of the many possible embodiments of an utopian cyberspace that has the potential to change the way we think power relations, collaboration, and knowledge exchange. It carries a revolutionary message, and aim at changing the way people think and operate in cyberspace and in the real world. These utopias in cyberspace are fundamental moments of transformation in the long-term ‘universal’ struggle for a more just world.

In this paper I explore the boundaries of these utopias in cyberspace, their strengths, limitations and disruptive potential in the present conjuncture. I draw upon the literature on utopian communities, feminist anarchism, direct action, cyber-libertarianism, and the hacker culture. The empirical data supporting this theoretical analysis are taken from my four-year study of emancipatory communication practices.

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Session 22, Sat. 14.30-16.00, Rm A112 (Chair: José Eduardo Reis)

Session 29, Sun. 11.00-12.30, Rm A010 (Roundtable on Henry Near, Chair: Joachim Fischer)

Utopian Visions in Response to Crisis: The Case of Indigenous North Americans

The world’s history is filled with tragic stories of eradication of cultures as conquering nations have obliterated the peoples in their paths. One group of such stories involves the American Indian, or

indigenous, or First Nations people in North America, who were exploited and victimized by the Spanish, French, and English settlers of the continent and whose cultures were nearly eradicated and remain badly damaged.

As early as 200 years ago it became evident to some indigenous people that armed resistance to the conquering Euro-Americans was futile. By the late eighteenth century prophets and visionaries began to arise in several tribes urging an end to violent resistance to the European incursion. By and large the Indian prophets, as they are generally known, urged their people to turn inward in their pursuit of justice, reforming their own beliefs and practices instead of continuing to fight the invaders. Many of the prophets offered a utopian reward to those who would follow the path they proclaimed, a renewal of traditional Indian culture and a golden age of peace and plenty.

This paper will examine the messages and teachings of some of the prophets, focusing on Wovoka, the prophet of the millennial and utopian Ghost Dance movement, and Quanah Parker, whose advocacy of peyote religion led to a new kind of inward utopian vision.

The paper will be illustrated with powerpoint slides of Indian prophets and the ceremonies associated with their teachings.

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Session 7, Sat. 11.00-12.30, Rm A107 (Chair : Yannis Stavrakakis)

Session 25, Sat. 16.30-18.00, Rm A107 (Roundtable on Nathaniel Coleman, Chair: Tom Moylan)

Globus terraqueus: Cosmopolitan Right, Fluid Geography and *Commercium* in the Utopian Thinking of Immanuel Kant and Joseph-Pierre Proudhon.

In *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant makes it clear that the physico-geographical fact of the earth's sphericity grounds "cosmopolitan right". This idea is in turn defined as a "peaceful, even if not friendly, thoroughgoing community of all nations on the earth that can come into relation affecting each other". He then develops a mereological argument to demonstrate how particular claims to parts of the land's surface as 'private property' are to be reassessed in terms of others' more universal, and rightful, claims to access to the planet and its resources *as a whole*.

This paper will explore Kant's 'utopian' theory of cosmopolitan justice in the light of contemporary ecological and political crises. It will also draw out parallels between Kant's work and that of the anarchist, Joseph-Pierre Proudhon, for whom the limited nature of the earth's resources and the ensuing right of everyone "to a place under the sun" led to a radical questioning of the justice of property "rights".

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Session 37, Sun. 16.30-18.00, Rm A011 (Chair: Hans Ulrich Seeber)

Prospecting and Temporal Blending in the Search of Utopia

The act of prospecting implies a deep searching of a landscape, locating the hidden and assessing the potential of a presence—of a treasure beneath. It also presupposes the discovery of something beneficial, needed and worthy of the invested effort. What is compelling about this process is the penetration of material 'scapes', a physical unearthing, but there is also a metaphorical search for an entity whose assets and influence cannot be fully anticipated.

I am speaking of moments brought forth through cultural time to alter and give context to the *prospective* betterment of the everyday. In other words, I am concerned with the attempt to actualise a utopian notion of the past to satisfy an anxious, hopeful future.

Prospecting moments of a pre-industrial 'Golden Age' is a preoccupation that yields a melancholic desire to re-enact and reconfigure the past. This paper will consider instances that demonstrate moments

reconstructed from idealised conceptions of the past and performed within a contemporary space. The designed space of amateur historical re-enactment and technologies developed to capture the form of valued bodies (taxidermy, digital avatars) are fruitful and contrary examples of the tendency to manipulate time—one being a visitation and the other being a bringing-forward. Nurturing or denying the presence of age on an object or bodily surface (aesthetic surgery) takes this discussion to the extreme. There emerges an interesting dialogue of *surface* integrity and a tension between isolation and performance, temporality and documentation.

If Utopia is a directive pursuit of an ideal (Bloch's concrete Utopia) and interest in history begets a compulsive inquesting, visitation and recreation (George Steiner), the combination of these impulses yields a unique historical materialism mediated by the past and future. If, however, historical time converges, there exists a danger in layering the so-called 'beloved shadows' Steiner attributes to our fascination with the past. The discussion will close with issues surrounding this dense phantasmagoria and whether it becomes a haunting of nostalgic potential rather than a directive guide towards a desired Utopics.

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Session 15, Sat. 16.30-18.00, Rm A010 (Chair: Verity Burgmann)

From Utopia to Fantasy in the Pro-Space Movement

This paper begins with Jameson's distinction between the utopian form or program and the utopian impulse or wish (from Bloch). It explores ways in which personal wish-fulfilment fantasy and its collective elaboration have been theorised in psychoanalytic theory. It then moves to discussing the proposition that in contemporary social movements the collective construction of utopias has receded in favour of highly individualised fantasies that carry with them no impetus for social change. Using Bookchin's description of the move from social anarchism to lifestyle anarchism as a precedent, the paper looks at trends within the contemporary pro-space movement (which supports the human exploration, development and settlement of outer space). The author argues that this movement has undergone a similar transition from a utopianism capable of imagining alternative social forms in space to a collection of individuals pursuing personal daydreams under the aegis of 'collapsed' libertarianism. It is proposed that this shift reveals the basis of the movement in wish-fulfilment fantasy, and exposes the relationship between these fantasies and the ideologies that have supported them. This trend is seen as the result of economic, social, ideological and political shifts that have facilitated the emergence of sub-movements dedicated to new entrepreneurial space ventures and space tourism.

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Session 5, Sun. 16.30-18.00, Rm A007 (Chair: Nader Vossoughian)

Pothole Gardens as Interstitial Utopias

This short paper responds to reports in the British press last year on the exploits of two 'pothole gardeners' who had been planting flowers in potholes in the road (made worse by the cold weather at the beginning of the year). The paper takes the pothole gardens as both an allegory for and an example of Michel Maffesoli's concept of 'interstitial utopias' or 'utopias in the gaps'. It is argued that gaps in the road's surface can be, and have been, seen as symbolic of the opening of contradictions in the modern city. Public responses to the appearance of such gaps can therefore be read as both literal and symbolic illustrations of forms of contemporary political action. The paper argues that the pothole gardens can be read as representing Maffesoli's notion of ingressive 'little utopias' which celebrate the gaps in everyday life, as opposed to totalising progressive utopian programs. However, the paper goes on to outline public responses to the pothole gardens through newspaper blogs, and suggests that both more 'progressive' readings of the pothole

gardens, and more 'progressive' alternative solutions to the pothole issue, are alive in the public imagination. It concludes polemically with a critique of the view that would see pothole gardening as a form of political activity, and for the necessity of genuinely progressive collective action.

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Session 30, Sun. 11.00-12.30, Rm A107 (Chair: Jim Arnold)

Post-apocalyptic Americas in Jim Crace's *The Pesthouse* and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*

The paper seeks to explore the correspondences and differences in the post-apocalyptic representations of America as envisioned by two writers from the opposite sides of the Atlantic, an Englishman, Jim Crace, and an American, Cormac McCarthy. The theoretical framework of the analysis is based on the existing studies of utopia and dystopia (e.g. L. T. Sargent, D. Suvin, T. Moylan) as well as on the studies of (post)apocalypse contained in the works of Frank Kermode and James Berger.

Set in the imagined future, the two dreary travel narratives show their protagonists traversing the once Promised Land, now turned into a post-cataclysmic wasteland, whose humanity is exiled and degraded, struggling against slave-traders or cannibals, while the last forces of civilization hide in their flimsy bulwarks. Franklin and Margaret (*The Pesthouse*) and the father and son (*The Road*) set out for the sea in the hope of escape and survival. The dystopian spaces of their peregrinations in the ravaged continent, where old institutions and governments have ceased to exist, moral systems have collapsed and the world has come back to primitive power relationships, will be the subject of analysis in the first part of the paper.

The latter part will be devoted to the discussion of the utopian impulse in the world supposedly deprived of hope (particularly noticeable in *The Pesthouse*), which manifests itself through the rise of the communal spirit (individual bonds as well as intentional communities) and through the characters' retracing of the traditional paradigm of a journey westward, which in the end reaffirms the perennial myth of America.

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Session 24, Sun. 16.30-18.00, Rm A010 (Chair: Pere Gallardo Torrano)

'Jenseits des Sees': Werner Koch's Lake Life Trilogy

My paper will introduce and discuss the utopian trilogy by Werner Koch (1926-1992), *See-Leben*. Published successfully in the 1970s, it has been sadly neglected as a philosophical reflection on utopian change. It sketches the conflict between capitalist apparatus and rebellion, between the private individual and anonymous public, between freedom and obligation in three parallel scenarios. In the vein of the critical utopia, it leaves the question open if utopia as a concept is possible and indeed, if a meaningful life is possible.

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Session 15, Sat. 16.30-18.00, Rm A010 (Chair: Verity Burgmann)

Nonviolent Salafi-mission and Mobilization under State Repression: A Case Study of Egypt

This paper seeks to discuss Salafi micro-mobilization in Egypt since 2000. It seeks to increase our overall understanding of their beliefs and modes of activism under repression by looking at low-level activists' explanatory narratives. The activists' discourse is divided into three major analytic categories: emotions,

identities and beliefs. From here, it is possible to discern how Salafis have succeeded in increasing their numbers through presenting their vision of a utopian society. Their assumed success is contextualized by presenting state repression as a major indicator of religiously inspired social mobilization. Furthermore, there are some indications that point out their utopian message has had an impact on other Islamist social movement organizations. These are presented in form of activists' discourse through analysis of daily interactions between different forms of Islamist activists (e.g. Salafis and Muslim Brothers). The vast majority of Islamist movement organizations are non-violent, and some are even prepared to work within the political structures set up by the ruling regimes (as the Muslim Brotherhood) others are not (as the Salafi Mission in Alexandria). It is therefore necessary to revisit theories of state repression and social movements in order to increase our understanding of activism under extreme conditions. What explains the religious revival and emergence of religiously based social activism in these societies? What leads some of people to engage in utopian high-risk social activism? How are everyday practices transformed into socio-political activism in repressive states? Lastly, the paper argues that social movement researchers have given little attention to (Islamist) social movement organizations active in repressive states. I argue that theoretical frameworks have not allowed for large-scale exploration of these types of SMOs. This paper presents a direction by which social movement research may develop more resourceful theoretical framework(s).

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Session 20, Sat. 14.30-16.00, Rm A010 (Roundtable on Postcolonial Utopianism, Chair: Lyman Tower Sargent)

Session 27, Sun. 14.30-16.00, Rm A008 (Chair: Lyman Tower Sargent)

Escaping the Parasite: Utopia, Dystopia and the Politics of Destitution in the Fiction of Dambudzo Marechera

Despite a growing range of essays and books addressing the issue of utopianism in the African world, African literary criticism today still feels uncomfortable with the notion of literature projecting into the open future instead of looking back nostalgically into the 'great' African past. The aim of this paper is to carve out the peculiar utopian dimension at work in the fiction of Zimbabwean writer Dambudzo Marechera (1952–1987), taking into account his unique power to destabilize and desacralize traditionalist images of African identity. In order to better explore and situate his unique style of writing and cult status as Africa's foremost 'enfant terrible', Marechera's intriguing literary powers will be associated with the notion of a creative, 'parasitic' art devising sites of irritation and reconfiguration where concepts of the past and the future may be renegotiated so as to offer distinct routes for renewal and rearrangement. Two related concepts will come in handy to make a case for a particular brand of utopian thinking formed under conditions of prolonged suffering and privation. First, the concept of destitution, usually defined in terms of an extreme want of resources or means of subsistence, will be taken up to elucidate Marechera's complex ways of gathering a variety of objects and signs into a single fictional context. (Connor 2000) Secondly, Michel Serres's philosophy of the parasite as intruder and intervening power will be considered as a supplementary scheme. Marechera's difficult style of writing forms what Serres describes as a milieu, an intermediary space: it is active between worlds that couldn't by all means be more different; the one assiduously producing and processing and pretending to give and provide, the other depleted and indigent, a site of paralysis and decomposition left to bleed dry by despotic rulers ancient and new. Marechera seems to draw a perverse yet stimulating kind of gratification from his role as parasitic messenger in this framing milieu. Literally describing himself as cultural "parasite" in his near-future and civil war dystopia *The Black Insider* (1990: 33–35), he ventures to break the established symmetry of exchange between discrete or culturally separate units designated to be positioned eye to eye in the same constellation for ever: the one receiving, passive, the other active, handing out with magnanimous gesture. Feeding off all kinds of western discourse systems – art, existential philosophy, liberation theology, Beat literature, to name just a few sources – Marechera looks for the utopian in different places, in other epistemologies: his long-neglected writing leads the way in achieving a new interventionist ideal, if only as an alternative literary currency representing the parasitic

power of signs and symbols in a thoroughly mediatized society, nourishing a new order.

Frequently, African critics have lamented this withdrawal from an African mythopoeic framework grounded in traditional orality and folklore, finding in this only the unwholesome influence of the capitalist west. But Marechera grew up in the rapidly globalizing world of ‘altermodernity’ (Bourriaud 2009) where steady states are not imaginable any more, where – in theory at least – utopia may be achieved but only by constantly intercepting the unidirectional cultural flow (from oppressor to victim, resource to consumer, etc.); by creating, amidst a cancer of intermediate forms, a “pathological growth” of “flights, losses, holes” (Serres 1982: 12) inspiring the desire to conserve and carry on, to multiply affect, fluctuation, disorder. This, naively remonstrative or gratuitously ‘altermodern’ as it may sound as first, may indeed hold some – aesthetically and politically – creative potential in the African postcolony where far too many of the unifying processes of independence and postcolonial nation-building of the past have proved faulty or fatally deficient in some way.

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Session 22, Sat. 14.30-16.00, Rm A112 (Chair: José Eduardo Reis)

What Bloch Did Not Know When He Wrote *The Principle of Hope* or Eastern Christianity and Utopia

When in the middle of 14th century Gregory Palamas, a Byzantine monk, wrote a polemical treatise defending the Eastern Christian tradition of hesychasm, the practice of sensuously experiencing the godhead, in which he claimed that philosophy alone cannot be an agency of salvation, he was in a curious way prefiguring Marx’s *Theses on Feuerbach* and his criticism of Feuerbach’s contemplative materialism. Of course, there are vast differences between Palamas and Marx; Palamas’ ideas were about Eastern Christian theological anthropology, about ways humans can re-appropriate their true divine essence, while Marx’s criticism of Feuerbach, was about the necessity of changing the economic conditions in order for humans to stop construing their essence as religious. The point that fundamentally connects them, though, is that they both talk about overcoming the division between essence and existence through theoretical and practical destruction of the division happening on the existential level. For Marx, the destruction meant revolutionising the relations of economic production, for Palamas that meant rejecting the Western, late medieval Plato-cum-Aristotle rationalistic, body/mind, material/immaterial, man/god, dualisms and unmasking their fallacies. In this sense, both were concerned with man in its concrete, historical form and both understood the present as an existentially bound dialectical process moving towards a utopian condition in which humanity will find itself free from divisions and at peace with its true self. The paper discusses the differences between the Eastern and the Western Christian understanding of the utopian and their possible consequences in terms of historical action.

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Session 4, Sat. 11.00-12.30, Rm A008 (Chair: Christos Hadjichristos)

Architecture, Utopia, and the Politics of Neutrality in 1960s Cyprus

This paper reconsiders the ties between modern architecture and utopia by focusing on two grand modernization projects in mid-1960s Cyprus, when the island’s nation-building project became entangled with internal socio-political crises. The first project was a proposal for a large office complex in Nicosia, which constituted the epitome of the Government’s aspirations for a centralized administration; the second project was a major hotel in Famagusta, emblematic of the Government’s ambitions for tourist development. The paper contemplates each project’s formal and social agendas and particularly their insistence on scientific rationality and internationalism, to then reflect on the ways in which these architectural/modernist

preoccupations became intertwined with the local government's aspirations to advance a vision of social unity and nationhood. The paper ultimately asks a twofold question: First, whether in the saturated political environment of mid-1960s Cyprus, the modernist aesthetics (and politics) of order, efficiency and neutrality had a particular appeal, as a strategy promising to overcome Cyprus's dystopian realities of the time. Second, the paper also contemplates the ways in which these two architectural manifestations of utopia also transcended the political agendas that supported them, to constitute a repository of alternative politics in postcolonial Cyprus.

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Session 41, Sun. 18.30-20.00, Rm A010 (Chair: Teresa Botelho)

Identity, Otherization, Representation: Utopianism and Intercultural Communication

The three main areas which intercultural communication deals with – identity, otherization and representation – are usually approached either by means of the stereotyping model of the nature of culture or by applying the heuristic one. By challenging the “you are, therefore I am” stereotypes, the non-essentialist model develops a complex interpretative process of exploring ways of which people communicate within and across social groups. This paper will thus use popular contemporary representations of self and community identity in order to discuss intercultural communication as a subject for utopian critical judgement on social, political and cultural communities.

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Session 33, Sun. 14.30-16.00, Rm A112 (Chair: Ludmiła Gruszevska Blaim)

Science in Utopia, Utopia in science: vacuity, indetermination, interdependence at the centre of Utopian reality

The genesis of the literary utopia genre geared to the ideal representation of the other best place is historically associated with the advent of modernity and the intellectual process that led to the differentiation and discreet empowerment of the cultural spheres of art, morality and science. It comes to no surprise therefore that since its institutionalization as a literary form, most particularly since Francis Bacon's seventeenth century *New Atlantis*, utopia thematizes, among others, the topic of science, or more specifically, the topic of the technical applications of scientific knowledge. In broadly schematic terms, it may be said that literary utopias tend to represent such technical applications either as essentially advantageous to the progress of civilization, or, alternatively, as ominously disturbing, even apocalyptic as to the final outcome of such process.

My paper will probe on the double appropriation, benevolent and nefarious, of this topic in literary utopia. However, I shall do so by focusing on the affinities that some of the concepts, significantly closer to phenomenology of utopia, such as emptiness, indeterminacy and interdependency, have with the subatomic physical universe. Hence, I shall reflect on what might be called the utopian nature of the real, or in a less extravagant formulation, the inclusion of the evanescent quality of utopia in the physical laws of nature.

For this reflection on the seemingly utopian aspect of the laws of matter, as explained by a relatively new theory of science, systems theory, I shall be drawing on significant fragments of the film *Mindwalk* (1990), shot on the island castle Mont St. Michel and based on the quantum physicist Fritjof Capra's book *The Turning Point*.

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Session 30, Sun. 11.00-12.30, Rm A107 (Chair: Jim Arnold)

Dystopian design: Exploring Worst-case Scenarios as a Tool for Social Change

We live in an era where conjuring the end of humanity has become quite frequent, in some cases even credible, because we live constantly with knowable fears. A dystopia evidences the most alarming aspects of a society and provides propaganda for a change in direction. This is achieved by a fictional visualization of the future, extrapolating the key factors that keep us on the road to apocalypse.

This research presents a design strategy – dystopian design – based on the depiction of worst-case scenarios. It explains how it can be applied to objects, as well as its value and position within critical design theory.

How can design fiction be used to initiate social change? A bleak view upon the future can tell us a lot about the present hopes and concerns of our society. The vision of a landscape shaped by dystopia serves as an ideal scenario to commence debate. This will serve to highlight the often-invisible problems of contemporary living and make them visible through design concepts. Working within this vision delivers a meaningful message and acts as a way of warning. In the end this could echo into the present and improve things not by better design, but by better thinking.

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Session 35, Sun. 16.30-18.00, Rm A107 (Chair: Timothy Miller)

Session 44, Mon. 9.30-11.00, Rm A107 (Workshop: Writing, Presenting Research and Crafting an Academic Career)

Theorizing Intentional Community in the Twenty-First Century

In this paper I explore the nature of intentional communities, the neutral term for what has been given many other labels, including communes, practical utopias, and utopian experiments. I argue that intentional communities have been seriously undertheorized and that some of the most used theories are deeply flawed. The basis of this argued is my contention that complex theories are needed to discuss a multifaceted phenomenon like intentional communities and most of the theories currently in use are too simple or even unidimensional.

One of the central problems in being able to understand intentional communities and thus theorize about them is that they are not just a historical phenomenon to be understood through written records but a contemporary phenomenon with real people living their lives in them. And a constant refrain that one hears from these people to those of us trying to understand them is, “You just don’t get it”. This problem is one of my central concerns.

Here I address a number of questions that bother scholars of intentional communities, with the following perhaps the most important questions: How do intentional communities relate to utopianism or do they at all? Should temporary or intermittent communities be included? How should what I shall call “dystopian” communities be dealt with? The first question is my main interest and central to my need to discuss the perceptions of members because they generally forthrightly reject any such connection.

I also briefly address questions relating to cooperation, cohousing, gated communities, ecovillages, and virtual communities.

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Session 21, Sat. 14.30-16.00, Rm A011 (Chair: James Block)**“Son, listen to your father: don’t smoke.” Ex-Yugo Children of War and the Prospect of Post-Socialist Utopian Thinking in the Balkans Today**

The prospect of burgeoning utopian imagination in former Yugoslavian societies is tied to the way we theorize the psycho-political personhood in the contemporary (postwar and post-Socialist for the Balkans) era, especially the *empowering* transgenerational effects of social trauma. The claim of this paper is that the emotional and developmental differences between youth and adults of the transitional era can be read as a political and cultural rupture, alienating, but also radically empowering the subjects who experience the social trauma at different stages of their psycho-social development. Reading power in the sense of the capability to think outside of previous culture's determination (and thus empower oneself as a subject in history) uncovers the opening of spaces in the lives of people being transformed by their experiences of social dissolution and war. Through case studies, I hope to offer the way that both young and mature people in Bosnia think about the future, and the connections that I can make between their imagining and their pasts. By reading psychosocial histories in light of hopes and desire, we can get access to the universe constituting the foundation of utopian imagination, in itself the basis of a future-looking, utopian practice.

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seshadrk@bc.edu**Session 38, Mon. 11.30-13.00, Rm A011 (Chair: Lorna Davidson)****The Temporality of Utopia: Alain Resnais’ *Last Year at Marienbad***

In his 1938-39 lectures on Hegel, Kojève had raised the question of humanity and how it would be figured at the end of history, i.e. after the dialectical progress of time reaches its fulfillment. Kojève speculated that Man as we understand the term would disappear, “that is, Action negating the given, and Error, or, in general, the Subject *opposed* to the Object. In point of fact, the end of human Time or History—that is, the definitive annihilation of Man properly so called or of the free and historical Individual—means quite simply the cessation of Action in the strong sense of the term.” A few years later Kojève clarified that negativity would survive in post-history, but that it would now appear as a form of rarefied humanity—a humanity whose every action is gratuitous—a means without end.

For the contemporary philosopher Giorgio Agamben in *The Open: Between Man and Animal*,² and several other works including *Nudities*, the idea of fulfilled history is also the space when ethical life appears as a species of “worklessness” or “inoperativity.” From a deconstructive perspective, the question that remains unanswered is the problem of difference, repetition and presence. This paper pursues the following question: If post-history is the desired utopia of “worklessness,” and if time and action cease to move or be counted in the utopia of the last day, then what is the *temporality* of utopia? Something like an answer to these questions, I suggest, can be glimpsed in Alain Resnais’ 1961 film *Last Year at Marienbad*.

Last Year at Marienbad has long puzzled viewers with its plot-less episodes, its nameless characters, and its indeterminate time and location. It has been variously characterized as a dream, a surrealist experiment. In this paper, I offer an interpretation of the film in relation to the concept of post-history as an ambivalent utopia when time, memory, and history are doomed to loop repeatedly because they are now inoperative. Using the work of both Agamben and Derrida, this paper considers utopia in terms of the cessation of time and the opening of another temporality.

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Session 9, Sat. 16.30-18.00, Rm A008 (Chair: Vincent Geoghegan)

“From Each According to their Vulnerability: To Each According to their Greed”: Scepticism, Utopia and Anti-Utopianism: David Cameron’s “Big Society”

The Big Society was the flagship of the 2010 UK Conservative Party Manifesto. Despite its seeming vacuity it has engendered tremendous intellectual debate. It is an idea for revolutionising the relationship between the individual and the state and implies quite profound changes in the way Britons think and behave. In short it is an attempt to bring about the ‘good society’. The Big Society has simultaneously been labelled as a radical ‘Conservative Marxism’ and as a revival of pre-trade union ‘Victorian Liberalism’. For some it heralds a return to a 1950s Britain that never was and for others, looking to the future, would lead to a state akin to Somalia in all its social aspects. For others it is a continuation of the ‘third way’, a ‘Blairite chimera.’

The origins of the idea have been attributed to EF Schmacher and also Saul Alinsky but might it also be the outcome of American-inspired optimism? The vision of a Big Society is being pursued at the same time as huge budget cuts, at a time of crisis, so the question has been raised whether the Big Society is a genuine romantic aspiration or simply cynical political sophistry? In its aspirations is it utopian or indeed, a fundamentally anti-utopian project?

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Session 34, Sun. 16.30-18.00, Rm A008 (Chair: Evi Haggipavlu)

The End and the Future in the Art of Gordon Cheung

In his essay “Framing Catastrophe”, Andrew Milner refers to an informing tense of positive utopian myth. He calls this the indicative future imperfect, the fiction of a completed truth. This has a corollary in that which we seek to avoid, in the tense of dystopian prevention, the subjunctive future perfect. This is the informing tense of dystopian future fiction: “what would have happened had the readership or audience not been moved to present it.”

I would like to cross these tenses, to pass them through the imagery of the painter Gordon Cheung. In Cheung’s work, neither tense dominates. Rather, the focus on his particular approach to the practice of painting as future orientated imaging will address a contested yet generative performing of utopian agency.

Resonating with Moylan’s reading, in “New Maps of Hell”, of Jameson on anti-utopianism, Cheung’s practice confronts anti-utopianism, while resisting the “premature” creation of images of alternative systems. This work undertakes an explicit dramatisation of a tension between the pulls of utopian and dystopian forces. There is a breaking through of barriers that might impede processes of utopian imagination. Cheung’s imagery expands the cultural matrix, clearing a space of political imagination in which agency, and perhaps the construction of alternatives, can begin to be realised.

Cheung’s fascination with science fiction, constituted by an engagement with both literary and cinematic trajectories, provides a force with which to intersect and disrupt the present. There is a sense of anticipatory consciousness at play here, made more reflexive through a critical interruption of the illusory perpetual present.

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Session 18, Sat. 16.30-18.00, Rm A011 (Chair: Stephanos Stephanides)**A Form of Crisis: Dystopian Fiction in the mid-twentieth Century**

The predictive warnings of what may be termed ‘classical’ dystopias like *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Brave New World* have since become cultural clichés, from mass-made pornography and ubiquitous CCTV to test-tube babies and sex-orientated consumerism. In the estranged future settings of such dystopias, the future society is not the only society subject to socio-political critique and satire. Dystopian narrative arcs are often based upon a proleptic strategy, whereby the author projects her/his story into a future setting. Within the narrative, however, the focus is often an analeptic gaze backwards over history to the author’s own present and near-future. The past and the author’s own present are thereby given increased significance. Typically, an authoritative, high status male character such as O’Brien/Goldstein (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*) or Mustapha Mond (*Brave New World*) reveal a historical narrative. This offers a fragmented and elliptical path between the crises of the contemporary world of the author and the apparent stasis of future dystopian society.

These works, as novels of ideas, offer significant historiographical models and question the nature of historical truth, objectivity and fictionality. The authorities’ strict control of the past in these novels aims to arrest history, and create uniform stasis. But to stop history is to stop the future. This cuts both ways: the paradox of dystopian narrative is that the hero’s/heroine’s subversive activity, aimed at re-opening the future, usually involves them investigating the past. It is therefore in the practice of history and a critique of the past that a radical space of alterity and hope can be opened for a radically better future.

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Session 36, Sun. 18.30-20.00 Rm A112 (Chair: Nicole Pohl)

Engendering Utopia: Feminist Theatre

Western theatre has a strong tradition of political engagement, whether this is in the topics addressed, the dramatic form, or the organisation of theatre companies. Women’s interests have been present in political theatre at least since Lysistrata, and very clearly in the radical theatre of the twentieth century. From the late eighteenth century, both feminist dramatic themes, and the politics of women’s involvement in theatre as writers, actors, and company managers have been present.

Feminist theatre encompasses dramatic content, form, and the organisation of theatre companies. In the development of feminist theatre, and in particular the women’s theatre companies of the late twentieth century, we can see a clear thread of gender-utopianism running through. On the one hand, this is evidenced in the dramatic content of plays like Caryl Churchill’s *Top Girls*, on the other it can be seen in the cooperative organisation of theatre companies, such as Women’s Theatre Group, in which professional roles were exchanged.

This paper will explore the utopianism of two projects: Women’s Theatre group and Monstrous Regiment from the perspectives of both dramatic content and company organisation.

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Session 34, Sun. 16.30-18.00, Rm A008 (Chair: Evi Haggipavlu)

The Diagram as a strategy for transformation

‘Whatever Utopia is, whatever can be imagined as Utopia, this is the transformation of the (social) totality. And the imagination of such a transformation is very different in all (so called) Utopian accomplishments’(Adorno and Bloch, extracts from ‘Something’s missing: A discussion between Ernst Bloch and Theodor W Adorno on the contradictions of Utopian longing’ (1964). Quoted from Noble, R., *Utopias*,

Documents of Contemporary Art, Whitechapel, 2009, p 54.)

During the first few decades of the 16th Century the Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus produced a drawing (a series of diagrams), which was to augment the proposal that the sun, and not the earth, resides at the centre of the universe. This simple renaissance drawing formed the basis for the first published heliocentric theory(1), which famously unsettled the teachings of the church and displaced the ancient world view that was informed by an Aristotelian philosophy. One that had prevailed over Western thought for the previous 2000 years and that placed the earth at its centre. If the visual plane of a diagram has the potential (and the history) of changing the shape of a known world, of inviting such potent social disruption, how might this be harnessed as a strategy of conceptual drawing in the field of contemporary art?

This paper proposes that a history of problem solving through the diagrammatic sketch, across all disciplines from social science to art, and the diagrams' seminal relationship to 'world building'(3) has had a profound effect on the development and the shape of drawing in a contemporary art context. Questioning Deleuze' notion of *failure*(2) I would like to suggest that an alignment exists between the crisis facing the idea of Utopia as a functional form (what constitutes a failure or success?) and the *problem* of defining contemporary drawings which employ the functionality and reasoning of the diagram as a deliberate conceptual strategy. A strategy by which nothing '*emerges*' from the drawing except the drawing itself is ruptured, its 'being' is transported elsewhere and it is transformed into a space of conceptual engagement(3).

In the opening quote Adorno, the Frankfurt school theorist, warns against designing and imagining Utopia as a set of seemingly fixed perspectives, forms and programs. Instead he argues that any imagining of Utopia must consist of many interconnected categories and disciplines. The diagram by Copernicus may not have resulted in '*the transformation of a social totality*' but it caused a revolution.

Notes

1) '*On the Revolutions of the heavenly spheres*' was published in 1543. The Heliocentric theory of the universe was to trigger the scientific revolution of the Renaissance (later called the *Copernican Revolution*) 150 years before Issac Newton.

2) In relation to architectural planning, engineering and scientific innovation as described in this text.

3) According to Deleuze, 'the essential point about the diagram is that it is made in order for something to emerge from it, and if nothing emerges from it, it fails'. Deleuze, G. (1981), *Francis Bacon: The logic of sensation*, Translated by D. W. Smith. London: Continuum, 2003, p. 102.

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Session 32, Sun. 14.30-16.00, Rm A007 (Chair: Marios Vasileiou)

Dubling: Utopian Connections Created by the Relationship Between Art and the Written Word

The idea of designing this study appeared in the city of Dublin (Ireland) on July 1, 2008, prior to my participation in the 9th International Conference of the Utopian Studies Society "Bridges to Utopia." On this day, I conducted a walk guided by "The James Joyce Centre" and bought the book *Ulysses* by Joyce. I started reading it the same day. The reading was completed on July 1, 2009, in the city of Porto (Portugal), during the 10th International Conference of the Utopian Studies Society / Europe - "Far Other Worlds and Other Seas", marking a period of one year's work. This presentation describes the design process of an artwork that incorporates the experience of reading the novel *Ulysses* by James Joyce, absorbing the proposition circularity of ideas and invention of language thus opening times and spaces utopian. DUBLING is the title of an installation artist who was born assuming the power of a verb in gerund. Leopold Bloom takes to the limit the idea of crisis and creating opportunities for new perspectives on the world. The confident character of the text showcase the value of the testimony and dialogue with the reader / listener, weaving conversations that include elements of art and literature. From this reading I made an art installation with empty bottles in clear glass, cork with printed words and postcards. All elements are present in equal amounts, corresponding to the 4311 verbs in gerund identified and underlined while reading the text.

Vesela, Pavla

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pavla.vesela@ff.cuni.cz**Session 39, Sun. 18.30-20.00, Rm A008 (Chair: Artur Blaim)****Translating Utopia in the Czechlands**

Perhaps with the exception of Jack London's *Iron Heel*, which appeared in Czech translation several times after 1921, probably benefiting from Vladimir I. Lenin's weak spot for the author, literary utopias have not had an easy life in the Czech context. Nevertheless, in the 1920s, several texts were translated—including *A Modern Utopia* by H.G. Wells, Alexander Bodganov's *A Red Star* and *Engineer Menni*, and William Morris's *News from Nowhere*—and translations (accompanied by appropriate prefaces and afterwords) continued to appear even during the forty years of “real socialism.” The past two decades generated a handful of further translations, most notably Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* and Aldous Huxley's *Island* (the latter was issued by a publishing house that specializes in Buddhist literature.) My presentation will focus around Czech translations of selected utopias. I will trace the trajectories of these works in the Czech context and possibly sketch some discussions that surrounded their publication.

Vimercati, Tomaso

Independent Scholar

osamot@hotmail.com**Session 41, Sun. 18.30-20.00, Rm A010 (Chair: Teresa Botelho)****E-Topia: Communicating Utopia and Communicative Utopias in the 21st Century**

In order to survive and bear fruit, any idea -especially a utopian idea- needs to be shared: incapacity or ineffectiveness in communicating ideas means no less than the death of the utopia itself.

For millennia man has employed fictional narratives to present utopias: Plato's *Republic*, the Gospels and Thomas More's *Utopia* are only the most famous examples. In the 20th century, the spread of new media and the related innovation of pre-existing languages such as writing and theatrical performance influenced the communication of utopian ideas: pop music, for instance, served as a manifesto for the hippie movement, while the Dudeism phenomenon originated from a feature film.

In the last twenty years, the Internet has become a means of diffusion and, at the same time, an incarnation (real, pretended or potential) of “classical” utopian concepts such as free sharing of goods and information. Being not in any place (*ου τόπος*), the Internet is indeed something real and concrete, that exerts ever stronger influence over our society.

What are the best ways to communicate a utopia today? How does a specific medium shape the communicated idea and permeate the utopia itself? Is there a realistic hope that the Internet could succeed where other media have fallen short?

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nvossoug@gmail.com,nvossoug@nyit.edu**Session 6, Mon. 11.30-13.00, Rm A008 (Chair: Marios Vasileiou)****Anarchy and Utopia: Crisis, Freedom, and the Contemporary City**

This paper seeks to make a contribution to our understanding of the role that crisis and insecurity play in the utopian imagination. Traditionally, one thinks of utopia as an idealized or imagined “answer” to a crisis. Its *raison d'être* is thought to be the removal of encumbrances that stand in the way of harmony and stability. Interestingly, however, there is also a substantial utopian tradition that *embraces* crisis, that idealizes and

romanticizes disasters and upheavals, and this presentation seeks to explore that landscape, particularly as it manifests itself in the context of the history of anarchism. In this paper, I will explore anarchism's long-standing fascination with post-conflict and post-disaster zones in particular, in order to highlight how crisis and freedom have been intimately connected since the Enlightenment. My contention will be that freedom is virtually unthinkable in the absence of crisis, in the absence of events that bring us back into stark confrontation with the "state of nature," and this predicament has haunted many of the most radical utopian experiments of the last two centuries. On the one hand, utopian thinking gave birth to the infrastructure of public space – the public library and museum, for instance, as well as the encyclopedia. On the other hand, it also spawned the many allergies to modernity that continue to preoccupy us to this day. Our current fascination with the informal megacity (i.e., as in Rem Koolhaas' recent analysis of Lagos) illustrates this trend, and will be taken up as a case study.

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Session 2, Sun. 18.30-20.00, Rm A112 (Chair: Stella Achilleos)

The Politics of Utopia in the Work of Paulo Freire

Paulo Freire, the widely revered Brazilian educator, is a fascinating figure in the history of utopian thought and practice. Insisting on the need for a concrete, normative, positively annunciated goal while at the same time emphasising the inherent openness of the future, and condemning as authoritarian those who conjure visions that claim to speak for others while simultaneously arguing that the role of liberating education is to direct, persuade and even 'convert' the other, Freire was a champion of both "blueprint" and "process" utopianism. This paper uses the tensions within Freire's work as a means of exploring tensions within the politics of utopia.

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Session 39, Sun. 18.30-20.00, Rm A008 (Chair: Jim Arnold)

Polish Ideal State in the Southern Seas: *A Journey to Calopea* by Wojciech Gutkowski (1775-1826)

Published for the first time over 150 years after being written, the first Polish socialist utopia remains an unknown and unappreciated contribution to the world's utopian literature. *A Journey to Calopea* by Wojciech Gutkowski is a classical utopian narrative written before the third partition of Poland (1795), the final territorial division of the country perpetrated by Russia, Prussia and Habsburg Austria that erased Poland from the map of Europe. Thus, the social and political tensions that provided historical background to Gutkowski's narrative were enormous, leaving literature to be the only space for cultivating patriotic feelings. Eager to fight for his motherland both as a soldier and a writer, and aware that his idealist vision could never be implemented in Poland, Gutkowski presents a journey of an emigrant-wanderer to distant Australia where a great and powerful nation of Calops is situated. The location of the utopian country is interesting in itself, as it follows popular in the eighteenth century British and French travel narratives exploring the theme of the great southern land. Yet, unlike a simple travel narrative *A Journey to Calopea* focuses predominantly on political and social issues. Visiting Calopea the traveler witnesses inconceivable technological progress, remarkable advancement of science and flourishing culture, but most of all, he admires social equality based on equal access to education. In my paper I would like to discuss this relatively unknown text, presenting it as a response to specifically Polish situation of deep national crisis, and locating it in the context of political thought of the Enlightenment as well as in the wider tradition of utopian writing and travel narratives of the time.

Williams, Rhys

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badlywritten@hotmail.co.uk**Session 9, Sat. 16.30-18.00, Rm A008 (Chair: Vincent Geoghegan)****Violence and the Utopian Impulse in More's *Utopia* and the Libyan Intervention**

More's Utopians profess to loathe violence, but display in fact a propensity and eagerness for it. Extending far beyond self-defence to outright colonisation and righteous intervention in the affairs of other societies, Utopians - like the so-called 'West' - are masters of war, though apparently reluctant. Their lack of doubt in the basic virtue of their society unavoidably makes them colonists at heart since, with their laws and their morality so seamlessly aligned, exporting their culture marries both their interests and their values. Through investigating the structural source of the Utopian lack of self-doubt, this paper will explore the place of violence in the utopian impulse. Utilising Benjamin's ideas of 'law-making' and 'law-preserving' violence (*Critique of Violence*) and Graeber's recent re-conceptualising of 'Joking' and 'Avoidance' relations (*Possibilities*), the paper will look at the secret kernel of private property, power and 'the sacred' that founds and sustains Utopia. It will conclude by drawing some parallels with the West's intervention in Libya, and consider how the utopian impulse comes to be abused as a Trojan horse for exporting culture and self-interest rather than true change and possibility.

Yannopoulos, Alexis

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yannopoulos@gmail.com**Session 1, Sat. 11.00-12.30, Rm A007 (Chair: Jorge Bastos da Silva)****Building a Literary Feminist Utopia in Latin America: The Work of Angélica Gorodischer**

In her science-fiction books, Angélica Gorodischer (Buenos Aires, 1928) establishes a critical and reflexive dialog with a conflictual society undergoing ideological crisis and other radical transformations. Adopting a distant point of view, she initiates a reflexion on social and political institutions, specifically questioning the injustices caused by Argentinian authoritarianism and the patriarchal structures which sustain it. Through a process of anamorphosis of reality, her work reveals the historicity of cultural and social constructions, triggering their denaturalization and inventing new forms of subjectivity. Temporality constitutes an essential element in this effort as her stories mostly take place in a post-apocalyptic future where people need to build a new society upon the ruins of their predecessors and where Empires succeed one another.

Although Gorodischer's work is solidly linked to Argentinian literary tradition (to authors like Jorge Luis Borges or Silvina Ocampo), she carries out a constant transgression of its limits. Indeed, in order to better understand the utopian character of her fictions, we must connect them to a long genealogy of feminist utopias, from Christine de Pizan's *City of Ladies* to contemporary feminist science-fiction like Ursula Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*. There exists nevertheless a constant parodic tension in Gorodischer stories which contributes to her profound originality and that could also be considered as the fundamental feature of a nomad utopian creation – constantly renewed, open and moving. This subversive parody functions at three different levels: it challenges social inequalities produced by gender or race, transforms the literary canon and induces a progressive and nearly imperceptible change of perspective.

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ravarian@riau.ac.irryavarian@yahoo.com**Session 23, Sat. 16.30-18.00, Rm A007 (Chair: Maria Aline Ferreira)****David Mamet's *Lakeboat*: A Utopian Hell or Dystopian Heaven?**

Lakeboat, a less-known play (in comparison with some of his which are now considered the classics of twentieth-century American drama) of David Mamet, shares, in some ways, the features of his plays in its language (fragmented, obtrusively ‘life-like’, obscene and purposeless), setting (limited to one single place and limited continuous time), and the all-male dramatis personae. However, it is, in its own way, a very unique one. The notion of journey as a vital utopian concept is treated deconstructively not to provide freedom or a path to freedom in utopian world but to entrap the characters in itself and imprison them in the loop of the journey itself. The journey, in fact, is manifested in the play in different fields such as the trip of the boat on the lake, the movement of the sailors on board the boat and the elaboration of a storytelling. Their life is a utopian desire of many, which has turned to be a hellish boredom for sailors of the boat who are excited by the development of a story originated from the land which gives them the opportunity of experiencing the plurality and diversity of a dystopian heaven in fabricating the story.

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Session 12, Sat. 11.00-12.30, Rm A112 (Chair: Jacqueline Dutton)

Andô Shôeki’s ‘Shizensei’: Anarchy, Myth, or Utopia?

It seems clear that in Japan, as elsewhere, nascent utopian thought is evidenced in its mythology and fairytales. Stories of bamboo-cutters and fishermen, which refer to mysterious cities on the moon and fabulous undersea palaces, can be read as proto-utopian visions, as heterotopic imaginary spaces. These myths, like utopias, are fictions that can be seen to serve definite political functions.

Unlike utopia, however, myth does not appeal to reason; it justifies states of affairs that arise through magical transformations, and thus we cannot bring ourselves to rationally prefer a myth to a utopia. Myth is preferred, where it is preferred, due to the appeal of its other features. Centred, as myth is, on phenomena, experience, and intuition, it caters to certain psychological, emotional, or spiritual needs and wants. Due to the implausible content of their narratives, myths lack the logical structure that would make them rationally appealing—in other words, we must suspend our rationality to find myths plausible.

This is not to imply that all myths need be deleterious (in that they work against the interests of the lower classes) or coercive (in that they are enforced by an authoritarian regime). This paper examines how, in the manner that Plato justified inegalitarianism through his ‘myth of the metals’ in the *Republic*, Andô Shôeki conversely offers a justification for egalitarianism with his concept of ‘*shizensei*’ (‘the natural order’), wherein:

people of the plains would provide grain; people of the mountains, wood; and people of the seacoast, fish. Natural resources are distributed in all three environments, so there should be neither rich nor poor people... Thus people will not bear grudges, quarrel, or fight. With everybody equal, there will be no egoistic teaching, *no distinction between the wise and the foolish*. Seiji Naita, in *Aware of Utopia*, David Plath ed. (University of Illinois Press, 1971), p. 21 [emphasis added].

Andô’s vision of epistemic, economic, and political parity is the polar opposite of Plato’s epistocracy of the *Republic*, and yet it is no less valid. Ultimately, a myth of equality is no less (and no more) plausible than a myth of inequality. While Andô’s vision aims to eliminate the advantage of the strongest, it nonetheless requires the suspension of the reader’s critical faculties—for, critically, we may suspect that any equilibrium between the peoples of the mountains, plains, and seacoast will be fleeting and temporary. To avoid these concerns, Andô’s *shizensei* must, it seems, remain in the land of the mythical.

However, this is not to say that there is no possible rational *application* for Andô’s schema. This paper invokes the grand philosophical tradition of the thought experiment, which includes utopian proposals, and in which we can comfortably situate the *shizensei*. Especially in early modern political philosophy, thought experiments often took the form of ‘state of nature’ theories, such as those laid out in the work of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. The point of these thought experiments was not to explain how people could actually coexist in a state of nature, but to justify the establishment of a proper State to arbitrate disputes between them. In Karl Mannheim’s terminology, these could be construed as ‘ideologies’ rather than ‘utopias’. An argument is offered as to how Andô, in positing a state of nature wherein no disputes will break

out (and therefore no formal State is necessitated to arbitrate), could be interpreted as endorsing *anarchy*, rather than either an ideology (a myth supporting an existing State) or a utopia (a fiction agitating for a perfected State).

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Session 8, Sat. 14.30-16.00, Rm A008 (Chair: Gregory Claeys)

Engineering Morality: Positive Situationism and its Utopian Applications

Situationism is the philosophical and social psychological position that environmental factors significantly influence or supervene upon what we ordinarily characterise as moral behaviour. It is typically invoked, by authors such as Gilbert Harman and John Doris, as a foil to the virtue ethicist's claim that moral behaviour issues from within moral agents, from their settled states of character. Harman holds that situationism proves that character traits do not exist, while Doris makes the more modest claim that if character traits do exist, situationism shows us that they are not stable, i.e. they do not constitute the 'settled states' they have previously been theorised to be, as in the neo-Aristotelian schema of ethics.

This 'negative situationism' of Harman and Doris is largely descriptive. It focuses on securing a firm basis for its anti-virtue theory postulates in the field of social psychology; in the work, for example, of Milgram, Isen and Levin, and Darley and Batson. Drawing on new theoretical directions in situationism (suggested in the work of Luke Russell and others), I describe a 'positive situationism', a normative ethical position that recommends the intentional manipulation of environmental influences in order to stimulate appropriate moral responses in contexts wherein moral lapses are found to be common, or likely to occur.

Positive situationism (in its most robust form) requires the development of social psychology to the state of a precise science of human behaviour, capable of predicting the effects of minute variations in environmental stimuli on dispositions to act, but does not imply a recourse to the cruder methods of Skinnerian behaviourism. It thus constitutes the continuation of a major line of thought in the utopian canon: that by perfecting, or at least improving, the (built) environment, we can perfect, or at least improve, the humans who inhabit it. I argue this central intuition, shared by utopian architects and urban planners alike, finds its ultimate site of theoretical substantiation in the doctrine of positive situationism.

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Session 17, Sat 14.30-16.00, Rm A107 (Chair: Maria Margaroni)

Futuristic Utopias and Dystopias in Angela Carter's fiction

The present paper modestly attempts to study the elements of Futuristic Utopias and Dystopias in the fiction of Angela Carter. As a feminist writer of Science Fiction, Angela Carter contrasts reality with the imaginative world of the future, or the world populated by bizarre characters and situations.

Futuristic Utopias and Dystopias appears to be the hallmark of Angela Carter's fiction, making it rich with meanings and associations to a variety of references in the literary canon of English and European world.

In *Heroes and Villains*, she uses the process of defamiliarization to deconstruct rationality as well as Rousseauian utopia about the Noble Savage. She also challenges the Enlightenment doctrine of Binarism, showing how the dominant societies construct the 'Other' for their own identity and survival. This strategy of deconstruction finds a powerful expression in *The Passion of New Eve*, in which she questions the anthropological idylls of both Rousseau and Levi-Strauss. In *The Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman*, she virtually deals with the war between the forces of passion and reason. Angela Carter interrogates values and beliefs of the mainstream society through the situations and characters created by her in her fiction because,

according to her, these values and beliefs lead to oppression and exploitation.

The paper concludes that Angela Carter exploits and reverses the strong world to examine and comment upon the reality. It seems that the aim of these female Utopias is to bring revolution in the social and political system and in the system of beliefs.