Reinventing Utopian Spaces

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GRZEGORZ ZINKIEWICZ
AND LYMAN TOWERS SARGENT

Interview Questions

1. Do Utopia as a concept and Utopian Studies as a discipline have an influence on the research conducted in other academic disciplines?

LTS: Certainly. Utopian Studies is both interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary. For some, probably a majority, it is a subfield of literature. But for others it is part history, political science, sociology, and most other social sciences. The concept of utopia is, at times, used in all these fields.

2. What are the recent important publications on Utopia and what perspectives are taken by their authors?

LTS: It is hard to select among the many publications because there have been many important books and articles in all of these fields with the authors' perspectives generally derived from their discipline and/or from their personal ideological or political perspective. The best way of keeping up with the field is to read the journal *Utopian Studies*, both for its articles and its book reviews. The following are limited to those in English; there is excellent work also being done in many other languages. For those most interested in literature and literary theory:

- Fitting, Peter. *Utopian Effects, Dystopian Pleasures*. Ed. Brian Greenspan. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2021.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*. London: Verso, 2005.
- Moylan, Tom. *Becoming Utopian: The Culture and Politics of Radical Transformation*. London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021.
- Suvin, Darko. *Defined by a Hollow: Essays on Utopia, Science Fiction and Political Epistemology*. Oxford, Eng.: Peter Lang, 2010.
- Suvin, Darko. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979. Rpt. Ed. Gerry Canavan. Oxford, Eng.: Peter Lang, 2016.
- Wegner, Phillip E. *Invoking Hope: Theory and Utopia in Dark Times*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2020.

For those most interested in history:

- Claeys, Gregory. *Dystopia: A Study of Modern Despotism, Its Antecedents, and Its Literary Diffractions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Claeys, Gregory. *Utopianism for a Dying Planet*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, Forthcoming.

For those interested in political and social theory:

- Czigányik, Zsolt. *Utopian Horizons: Ideology, Politics, Literature*. Budapest, Hungary: Central European University Press, 2017.
- Levitas, Ruth. *Utopia as Method: The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Sargisson, Lucy. *Fool's Gold: Utopianism in the Twenty-First Century*. Houndsmill, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- Wright, Erik Olin. *Envisioning Real Utopias*. London: Verso, 2010.

- Wright, Erik Olin. *How to Be an Anticapitalist in the Twenty-First Century*. London: Verso, 2019.

3. Some scholars tend to relate Utopia to social, political, and historical conditions in their own country at a given moment in time. Do you consider Utopia in terms of its universal relevance, or should it be rather applied to individual state formations studied in their specifications and particularities?

LTS: Both. Utopia has universal relevance, but the way it is applied and operationalized varies from country to country and over time.

4. Being the author of many popular books and monographs on Utopia, among others the classic *Utopia Reader*, what criteria do you consider in selecting a particular text and, possibly, in omitting another?

LTS: I've answered that at great length in many of my publications. The most readily accessible can be found in the definition section of my online bibliography at https://openpublishing.psu.edu/utopia/content/definitions. The most recent reconsideration of definitions that refers to issues with the second edition of *The Utopia Reader* is my essay "Utopia Matters! The Importance of Utopianism and Utopian Scholarship" (*Utopian Studies* 32.3 [2021]: 453-77).

5. Many of your publications, Professor Sargent, are concerned with Utopia and political ideology. What is your current research with regard to Utopia? Have your interests evolved with time?

LTS: My interests have changed many times. Currently, I am trying to finish two essays I began long ago on aspects of New Zealand utopianism, writing up the keynote address that I gave at the December Utopian Studies Society Europe Conference on work in utopian literature and communal societies (extended to also include leisure), and trying to complete essays that Lucy Sargisson and I had written in our intended book *Utopia and Everyday Life* that got derailed by her illness. If I finish these, I have additional ideas. And,

of course, I constantly add to the online two bibliographies I am involved with:

- *Utopian Literature in English: An Annotated Bibliography from 1516 to the Present*. State College, PA: Penn State Libraries Open Publishing, 2016 and continuing. Openpublishing.psu.edu/utopia. doi:10.18113/P8WC77.
- *Lyman Tower Sargent's Bibliography [of Secondary Literature]*. Porto, Portugal: Advanced Research in Utopian Studies, 2017 and continuing. https://www.cetaps.com/lyman-t-sargent-bibliography/

CHAPTER 1

REIMAGINING UTOPIA AS DWELLING: AN ATTEMPT AT A CRITICAL THEORY OF SPACE

ANTON HEINRICH RENNESLAND

In this essay, I provide a reimaging of utopia that is founded on dwelling contrasted to modernity's kinetic utopia. A city that is patterned after the latter portrays a fragmentation of style, reflecting the deeper reality of the patchwork city it has become (Garrido 2019, 5). Numerous cities around the world manifest how this type of utopia has imposed itself upon the citizens' everyday life. Architecture is just one tangible facet, evidenced by the unsound admixture of infrastructures, smirched with a multitude of ill-planned housing. These kinetic cities extol auto-mobility, following the crude equation of progress and economics or how constant constructions are landmarks for success. On a deeper level, we are left to consider if indeed such speed allows one to be sensitive to everyday desires. The kinetic citizens already experience the fissures of kinetic reality through immobility – traffic jams, long queues, and restricted movement; the speed at which these cities progress causes a crisis of everyday life since the speed of auto-mobilization fails to provide the fullest experience of freedom it espouses and instead causes the individual to lose meaning in lived space.

I critique kinetic utopia in this essay following the insights of Henri Lefebvre and Peter Sloterdijk. The alternative that I offer comes from Sloterdijk's (2020, 54) consideration of the experience of the present in two senses: "the opening up of the world as arriving-from-without and the subject's holding-out of itself into the world as the space of arriving." What I do though is a mediation between this poetic alternative to kinetic utopia

and Heidegger's concept of dwelling to provide a reimagining of utopia that is sensitive to the desires of everyday life. I consider this part of a critical theory of space that reflects on the quasi-transcendental structures of our experience of space which is conveyed through a critique of kinetic utopia alongside an alternative reimaging of utopia. In sum, this essay offers a view of reimagining utopia from the vantage of experiencing space as to how it opens to us to experience while at the same time the holding-out of the subject into this space to fashion meaning for existence. I do this in two parts: (1) I present how a kinetic utopia functions and its implications for both the city and the person, followed by (2) a reimagining through a critique of everyday life to conjure a utopia as dwelling.

1

In this section, I elucidate what a kinetic utopia is to highlight how it has imposed itself upon the everyday. A utopia "is treated as a kind of schizophrenic attitude toward society, both a way of escaping the logic of action through a construct outside history and a form of protection against any kind of verification by concrete action" (Ricoeur 1986, 1-2). A utopia is a moot imaginary, an ambition beyond the gambit or certitude of anything current; the more radical it is, the more desirable it becomes and the more utopic its esteem. Ricoeur (269) juxtaposes utopias and ideologies for they have a common denominator which is the tendency to become a victim to them, something acknowledged more easily for ideologies (i.e., *their* ideology) than utopias (i.e., *our* utopia). This captivation of utopias is something evident throughout history as a visual, if not a spatial, projection of society. Plato's *Republic* presents delineated classes that correspond to actual functions in society (Bloom 1968, 368). This social imaginary is further fleshed out with his *Laws* that systematize regulations in the Cretan colony to even the tiniest details such as the number of lots and the laws of their succession (Morrow 1960, 103-112). Another utopic image is found in the poem "Ode to Joy" by Friedrich Schiller (Cook 1993, 108). In this, we have a euphoric glimpse in imploring Joy as Elysium's daughter; we, as siblings, enjoy the fruits of freedom while entering the goddess' shrine full of lust for life and drunk on the fire of passion. This utopic vision of unity does not stray far from eschatological images awaiting the faithful. Lastly,

utopia's spatial reference may also be noticed in liberation movements, succinctly captured through Marx's legacy on the Frankfurt School, hinging on the emancipation from slavery and the abolition of injustice (Pinder 2013, 3; Bolaños 2013, 6; Ricoeur 1986, 68ff.). What is common in these social imaginations is their spatial element, i.e., their territorialization within the immediate or actual spatial references that bind the presented utopia to what its author has experienced and wished to transcend.

Utopia's territorialization is something lost in a kinetic utopia. The latter de-territorializes in exemplifying transitoriness and mobility as *the* spatial expressions of modernity's kinetic mood. Instead of a utopia hinged on space, we have a utopia based on time. This is brought to the fore, according to Sloterdijk (2020, 8), in modernity as the period of realizing Being's composition as "being-towards-movement." Rather than the Kingdom of Ends, a kinetic utopia's ethical outlook is a Kingdom of Means; traveling rather than arriving: everything is done for the sake of mobilization's amplification. Being-towards-movement is auto-mobility, a type of movement prized not for its capacity to arrive at the destination, i.e., the social imaginary itself, but its means to accumulate subjectivity towards that end and to push one's boundaries further. A kinetic utopia is the exaltation of this type of mobility.

It may be useful to use an analogy: the automobile is the shrine of a kinetic utopia (Sloterdijk 2020, 9). Rather playfully, this bears an affinity with Henry Ford's depiction of his River Rouge Complex as the temple of the United States' new religion (Binelli 2012, 6-7). What the automobile represents is the "unprecedented freedom, flexibility, convenience, and comfort" that is collectively unmatched by other means of transportation (Sperling and Gordon 2009, 1). This association of automobility with freedom flourished specifically in Detroit, Michigan, 'Motor City', where American muscle cars found prominence due to their sheer power coupled with a stylish finish, making them at home either in interstate driving or in drag races within suburbia's sprawl.[1] The automobile was identified with auto-mobilization which made its glory survive the muscle car's decline as it was eventually patronized through sport, perhaps explaining the global

[1] In fact, the Big Three of the automobile industry in the United States (General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler) have their headquarters in Detroit (Martelle 2014, 179-180; Hanlon 2010, 1-2).

support for motor racing such as NASCAR or Formula One. Throughout the race season the automobile takes its fullest prominence; the vehicle's celebration is an ostentatious image of kinesis utopia as it reflects our high regard for auto-mobilization. Race after race, speed and mobility are set up as museum pieces, grandeur spectacles of nearly three times the horsepower of former muscle cars. Although the sanctum was decentred in the streets, it found its eternal representation within city tracks or devoted circuits just for this event, not receiving its crowning glory in arriving at a destination but by outdoing itself either on speedways or on tracks amidst chicanes and DRS zones.[2] The automobile accumulates freedom not in its arrival but through its motion. Being-towards-movement: its sheer mobility is its freedom; its mileage represents the freedom it has accumulated in transit.

With such a coupling of freedom and auto-mobility, it may be intriguing to imagine how today's cities that cater to the sanctum of movement – automobiles – fail to deliver on mobility's promise. A city patterned after this is,

> calculating and organized around the profit principle, but due to the anarchic economy, it is also a disarranged society, one of economic coincidence […], the absolute lack of reflection and of planning. The only thing homogeneous is their dreariness, the chasms, the desolate line of streets leading into nowhere, the kitsch of their own style of misery or stolen ostentatiousness; the rest of the layout, nevertheless, is anarchic like profiteering on which it is based (Bloch 1988, 191).

Traffic jams abound in these cities which are the sanctums of automobiles. The city's failure to deliver on the freedom promised reflects a pathological element in our kinetic utopias. This may be understood on two levels. Firstly, it is evident in how, especially for developing nations, thoroughfares represent economic pulsation (Berg). Vehicular transportation is equated to economic progress as the understanding of accumulation in the kinetic utopia is here reduced to purely material terms. A city, thus, aligned to this

[2] The year 1970 marked the first Earth Year which decentred these screeching muscle cars, amplified by the oil crisis and the 55-mph speed limit. Almost overnight, it became clear that horsepower ought to be sacrificed for more fuel consumption (Ingrassia 2012, §7). It may be noticed likewise that around this time Formula 1 races began to receive global attention.

ideal considers road-widening projects and similar works as standards of progress, falsely considering them as the vascular system that supports the nation's body. The pathology of this association is a false sense of immunization from any threat to society. In fact, the problem arises not from outside but from within the city. Here, individuals swing like a pendulum between indifference and fear, similar to the French experience in the 19th century (Sendra and Sennett 2020, §1). A city patterned after a kinetic utopia is where "bodies, psyches, and opportunities die all too often, a mortuary where the dreams of respect are embalmed" (Galster 2012, 280). The speed of a kinetic utopia exhausts the city to its limit, causing its fragmentation, revealing the explosion of our utopic images (Sloterdijk 2020, 3; Ricoeur 1986, 270).[3] Mapping the geography of this kind of city shows a rushed landscape covered with dysfunctionality, inequality, and insecurity.

This type of mapping leads to the deeper dimension as the imposition of the kinetic logic of utmost mobility, intensification, and maximization unto the patchwork city conjures everyday life's precariousness. In a kinetic utopia, fear *is* the existential affirmation – "I fear, therefore, I am" – which is caused by (1) ignorance of what will happen next; (2) impotence in face of what is to happen; and (3) a humiliation because of one's inability and inattention to that which is to come (Bauman and Donskis 2013, 95-97). Fear becomes the disposition in a city according to a kinetic utopia as the speed of this ideal causes the individual to push their means to the limit, not to arrive at the end but to further their capacity. The individual becomes indifferent to and fearful of what will happen and of their capacity in respect to this. Fear likewise cripples the individual to forget even their subjectivity because the entire city, just as the ideal, is fragmented. An individual becomes fearful because that individual does not know what will happen next or even what the greater idea is of accumulating so much.

This leads to the understanding of how a kinetic utopia equates to the exhaustion of subjectivity's intense accumulation. This accumulation,

[3] The explosion of our utopias is brought forward by Mark Featherstone contra John Gray's declaration of the death of utopia. He argues that utopia per se is not bankrupt, as Gray would argue, but that it has exploded due to the various terrains it has accumulated such as economic, political, and even religious projections (Featherstone 2010, 8ff.; Gray 2007, §4-5).

according to Sloterdijk (2020, 16-18) denotes the "autogenic movement to increase movement, concentrating on concentration, immersing oneself in immersion," which makes possible its grandeur display: self-dramatization, self-eroticization, self-exaltation, and self-mobilization. This has been fundamental to existence from ancient Olympic games to monastic traditions, yet the shift in modernity has caused this intensification to turn back on itself, especially the desires of everyday existence. The shift has been caused due to a transition of an understanding of the self as a subject to the self as a project, trying to be better for there are limitless rooms for improvement (Han 2017, §1). Everyday life is understood, according to this ideal, as simply the means for something else rather than something to be truly experienced and lived through. What we witness is kinetic utopia's ultimate paradoxical quality, in that the speed which makes it desirable liquifies longstanding traditions, severing the individual from the social fabric. Because of such a boundless projection, fear stands as the existential affirmation of the fragility of our self-projection against the backdrop of inexhaustible expansions and improvisations.

In this critique of the kinetic utopia, it may be insightful to consider the rather apt question of Henri Lefebvre (1996, 99) for this: "Could there not be a pathology of space?" I opine that kinetic utopia's inherent contradictions are due to a primal misunderstanding of space. To be sensitive to space amidst kinetic utopia's rubble, it is necessary to focus on the everyday:

> The concept of everydayness does not therefore designate a system, but rather a denominator common to existing systems including judicial, contractual, pedagogical, fiscal, and police systems. Banality? Why should the study of the banal itself be banal? Are not the surreal, the extraordinary, the surprising, even the magical, also part of the real? Why wouldn't the concept of everydayness reveal the extraordinary in the ordinary?
> […] The everyday is covered by a surface: that of modernity (Lefebvre 1987, 8-10).

The everyday is what constitutes the lived, i.e., the experienced space (perhaps articulated through *Erfahrung*) in which an individual fosters

meaning.[4] According to Lefebvre, modernity, exacerbated by kinetic utopia, is the mask that conceals this type of space. It makes the ordinary banal or boring, causing the individual to desire what is bombastic. The crisis of a kinetic utopia is the crisis not of the actual space before us or the mental representation we have, but of lived space because of one's inability to conjure meaning for such an experience. The speed at which a kinetic utopia requires its followers to travel prevents the individual obtaining experience (*erfahren*) of what is lived through (*erlebten*), and such an inability to articulate meaning for oneself causes fear to arise in this space (Elden 2004, 190). According to Lefebvre however, the everyday ought to be the source of life's rejuvenated consideration. Everyday life is succinctly captured by the word quotidian, etymologically from the Latin *cottidianus*, implying a daily repetition, a regular rhythm that gives life a structure and provides a closure similarly found in rituals. The harmonious repetition of the everyday makes it possible for one to cognitively dwell in or to ritually contemplate one's actions (Han 2017, §3). Kinetic utopia's conundrum is the obfuscation if not radical alteration of everyday life's rhythm by valorising maximization and efficiency at the expense of dwelling in and creating meaning in lived space. A kinetic utopia does not provide the measure to its progress but an invitation to improve itself more: construct more infrastructure, maximize each plot of land, and expand as many roads as possible. It fails to focus on engaging with everyday life and instead chooses to exhaust it. Its citizens find themselves self-project-ing as kinetic utopia's fullest expression of auto-mobilization. There must be another way.

2

Having mapped kinetic utopia, what I seek to provide now is a reimagining of utopia based on a releasement from subjectivity's accumulation and informed by an epistemology of the urban. Sloterdijk presents two

[4] Social space, broadly speaking, involves the perceived, conceived, and lived spaces. Although I do not deal with their differences directly in this essay, it would be best to understand perceived space as actual space, conceived space as the space of the social imaginary or as a mental representation of space, while lived space is the spaces of representation, i.e., the space that yields meaning for it is the domain of everyday life (Stanek 2011, 129).

alternatives to a kinetic utopia: (1) a metaphysical divergence and (2) a poetic difference from infinite mobilization. The first alternative has already been attempted but is futile for, according to him, it failed to provide any radical difference as the metaphysical divergence to a kinetic ideal simply petrified the movement. This is evident in how "the ideals of law, permanence, and divine finality" have been immortalized in the skyscrapers of global cities: "metaphysics illustrat[ing] the thesis that the wound of time is healed only by eternal stone" (Sloterdijk 2020, 49). The wound of time caused by the kinetic utopia's speed is plastered by towering edifices; through this concreteness, the eternal movement has been concentrated in vertical sanctuaries, novel Towers of Babel that unite our language to speak that of kinetic utopia. Alongside unifying our expression, these sanctums calcify social interactions by compartmentalizing lived spaces high above the ground, mimicking Le Corbusier's 'Plan Voisin' "by monofunctional shopping malls, by gated communities, by schools and hospitals built as isolated campuses" (Sendra and Sennett 2020, §2). These form a closed system of living that converts cities into a cohabitation of strangers, cold as the concrete which houses them (Bauman 2000, 94-98; Bauman 2003, 5-8). We notice how this first alternative fails to be a resource in our reimagining since the ideals of a kinetic utopia have simply been adapted. Besides these vertical relics that stand as fossils of true social encounters, kinetic utopia became enclosed in horizontal immobility; the "large-scale traffic jams on the summer highways of Central Europe" show us "that a piece of false modernity fails and in them that we encounter the end of an illusion" (Sloterdijk 2020, 10). Sloterdijk illustrates that the first alternative to kinetic utopia failed to truly address the problems of the kinetic ideal for the petrification of movement still caused movement to our façades: city-centres dominated by gigantic edifices under constant construction and renovation; skylines filled with colossal skyscrapers and an array of cranes that further outdo the neighbouring tower; and stretches of roads always blocked by various modes of transportation, wedged and immobile, alongside endless repairs. We conjure kinetic utopia's utter subsummation of movements carved into stone both vertically and horizontally.

It is peculiar how people accept the inconveniences of everyday life in these kinetic centres – the traffic jams, the cramped metros, and the endless constructions and retrofitting – as part of the urban. This nearly

cynical acceptance, I opine, is the effect of modernity's masking of the postmodern experience of immobility. Modernity signifies auto-mobility and, thus, postmodernity ought to imply not its antagonism but a supersession of modernity's malaises (Lefebvre 2016, §8). Yet, dysfunctional signs of modernity – the inconveniences in daily urban living – condition citizens to consider immobility as an offshoot and an essential component of auto-mobilization. The loss of our sensitivity to this reality is due to the value associated with progress under a kinetic utopia. Reimagining utopia, as I presently argue, requires a grasp of the inhibition of movement dissimilar to the former metaphysical founding. What is vital in a new utopia is to be sensitive to these inconveniences, to what the everyday discloses to us.

This consideration leads us to Sloterdijk's second alternative: a life of presence is articulated through a poetic relation to space. "Poiesis does what it 'does right' by placing it 'into presence' – not merely turning it out but bringing it *forth*, putting it out there, into the open and into the public" represented by a threefold sense of experiencing space as "coming-into-the-world or *ars nascendi*, bringing into the world or *ars pariendi*, and the serene letting live or *ars vivendi*" (Sloterdijk 2020, 56). Sloterdijk emphasizes a life of presence to what is open before us. His use of *poiesis* hints at this threefold experience of space that underscores this natal ability in the context of lived space. Poiesis, Sloterdijk presents, is successful not by compartmentalizing the meaning that we create in lived space but through a successful flourishing that allows each of us to poetically relate to objects and other subjects in this lived space. Through this second alternative, we are provided a threefold art of subjectivity's releasement from auto-mobilization which causes a way for desiring to be brought back to everyday life, unmasked of kinetic utopia.

Working on Sloterdijk's idea, I contend that reimagining utopia must proceed through an entry, a birthing *into* the present. We must conceive of an empty space from which we can regard ourselves, an emptiness through which we realize nothing other than our mere existence (Ricoeur 1986, 15; Sloterdijk 2020, 55). A critical theory of space paves the way for a poetics of space that births anew the understanding of being-in-the-world, not in kinetic utopia's sense of occupying all of space through accumulation. Instead of considering space as something that must be

consumed, I argue that a reimagined utopia must leave space empty for it to be experienced. The emptiness of space allows one to experience it once again. For an illustration, we turn our attention to a poem by Bashō (54):

> old pond—
> a frog jumps in,
> water's sound

The emptiness of space allows one to encounter the three panels this haiku presents – the old pond, the action of the frog, and the sound of the encounter (of both the pond and the frog). The poem does not impose a particular sound on the reader and its true appreciation requires the reader to approach it from an empty space, receptive to what comes and able to create meaning in any encounter.

To reimagine utopia, we ought to reconsider this being who is present in this empty space – *to be human is to dwell and to desire* (Heidegger 1993, 349; Lefebvre 2014*, Volume II*, 295-305). It is necessary to consider Heidegger's (349, 351) etymological demonstration of dwelling: to dwell is to spare; to build is to be free. Sparing in this case must not be mistaken for accumulation. The latter is a gathering, while the former is a setting aside. Sparing here refers neither to any material component nor addition to subjectivity's accumulation. To dwell is to spare, or better put, to release oneself from kinetic accumulation. To dwell is to find the solace that releases oneself from kinetic utopia's self-intensification that has prompted the dweller to utter the existential affirmation of "I fear, therefore I am" and convert it to a nearly religious conviction "I fear that I may be". Such a form of saving breaks free from the speed at which an individual is supposed to travel, supposed to accumulate. It is a dwelling devoid of auto-subjugation, auto-projection, and auto-mobilization. Dwelling highlights an emptiness that reveals how being-in-the-world reflects the miniature being (Bachelard 1994, 173).

Turning to desire, we notice how desiring in kinetic utopia has been bastardized to simply mean self-projection. Such a vulgar definition neglects the individual's dialectical relationship with the everyday because kinetic utopia's appraisal of self-projection is grounded in the individual's independence of engagement with others and of their capacity to dwell. This

is a fetishized desiring that causes the city's flourishing as an estrangement of cohabitors, each competing to outdo themself. It comes to no surprise that any image of kinetic utopia does not include total communal engagement but minute variations of the same defamiliarization of strangers under the banner of alleged happiness or success (Lefebvre 2014*, Volume III*, 723-724).[5] Reimagining utopia necessitates a vital re-understanding of the city which has become a victim of its prosperity – "it is imperative to create space within it to fill the emptiness of progress that serves as the alleged image of the modern life" (Cariño 2018, 39). By bringing together dwelling and desiring, this understanding of utopia centres on a releasement from subjectivity's accumulation and seeks to refocus on our desires which ultimately stem from the quotidian, contrasted to the speed of interaction in a kinetic utopia.

A utopia as dwelling figures the individual, not as a self-project but as one that has desires brought back to the everyday life. Space and time are concepts that cannot be harmonized despite kinetic utopia's attempt for utopia fundamentally being a spatial concept which we must re-imagine in light of the effects of our kinetic reality. In building it anew, for us to be free and to desire we ought to be sensitive to space; through our dwelling, we are provided the opportunity to set meaning aside and to ritually contemplate it. The meanings amassed from lived spaces are not simply accumulated in one's travel but are set aside in one's dwelling, allowing us a more fruitful engagement in everyday life. What is necessary is a dwelling that is dialectically engaged with the everyday. Such a dialectical relation uncovers style (Sloterdijk, *The Aesthetic Imperative*, §IV.3; Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, 38). Style has been lost through kinetic utopia's valorization of concepts such as maximization and mobilization. Dwelling, on the other hand, allows its recovery through a sparing which begets the birthing into (*artem nascendi*), the bringing into (*artem pariendi*),

[5] Lefebvre provides a difference between modernity and modernism, the former as an ideology that encompasses all aspects of reality while the latter as the technological takeover of these aspects; the former has passed, the latter remains. Despite this distinction, in this essay I have maintained the banner of modernity to encompass both the ideological dominance espoused by the kinetic utopia and the technological measures that make this possible.

and the serene letting live in the world (*artem vivendi*). Sloterdijk (2017, §IV.1) presents the stark contrast between Pindar's Greek polis and Baudelaire's Parisian city: the former as the theatre of desire that balances ambition and depression, mortality and immortality; the latter, the liquidity of social interactions that forces those with ambitions to live a double life of actor by day and audience by night. Both Athens and Paris, though separated by nearly two millennia, reveal the problem of style: whether the highly formal element of the former, or the material component of the latter. The style of both cities fails on the one hand to consider the desires of those who inhabit them and on the other to provide an empty space for the citizens to experience the city in its fullest sense. The problem of style is the problem of estrangement – from one's neighbours and from oneself, simply waiting for the theatre act to commence.

A utopia as dwelling is a utopia of desire, one that does not impose but comes from the streets, from social interaction, from everyday life. This "implies a four-place relationship because it describes the existence of somebody with somebody and something in something" that is induced not regarding a particular thing but its total absence as "being held out into nothingness" (Sloterdijk 2017, §IV.2). Being held out into nothingness should not prompt modernity's existential affirmation but rather a cultivated disposition that is willing to experience this nothingness. A utopia of dwelling entails our ability to honestly dwell in empty space and to save the meaning we have created for ourselves. It implies allowing ourselves to ritually contemplate the meaning we have created yet at the same time to refrain from imposing it upon what we are still to experience. Desiring at this level means not accumulating multiple houses and units but allowing ourselves to be serene with the meaning we have learned to spare for ourselves. These desires are sourced from the quotidian – the untold everyday stories that provide structure to daily life, of which many unfortunately, have been forgotten due to kinetic utopia's engulfing of various aspects of existence. A utopia of dwelling is where one is provided the opportunity to dwell, to build meaning amassed through lived experience, wherein meaning becomes richer as it is shared, not simply in economic transactions in public spaces but through authentic engagements.

Everyday life requires us to be sensitive to what lies before us, not to simply accumulate what we think is necessary for progress but for us to

create meaning in lived space, to set this aside, and in turn to share it with others. What is to be articulated in reimagining utopia is an understanding of space not to be filled but to be dwelt in: a society that still has space left open from the imposition of kinetic utopia; has people who have not consumed their entire life just for the accumulation of subjectivity. Formulating a critical theory of space to reimagine utopia as dwelling requires this dialectic between the city as the melting pot of society and the actual experiences in the quotidian that have become footnotes to the rewriting of modernity's narrative, the lost foundations in its liquidity. Any social imagination that fails to integrate the everyday into the city is unable to be an alternative, just as how vertical edifices became erections of modernity's self-eroticization. Dwelling ought to provide releasement; it ought to remind us of our minute being-on-earth-ness in the penultimate face of vast empty space, not to make people fear and accumulate but to be more attentive to the quotidian; not to make them cloistered in their apartments high above in the sky but for them to engage with social reality on the street. What is brought into the world through this poetic alternative is an integrated view of the city, not akin to kinetic utopia's homogenization or the desire-as-becoming (Deleuze 1992, 3-7), but as a recognition of everyday life. Dwelling ought to provide a break from utmost movement and as a poetic stance, allow an aesthetic awareness, i.e., sensitivity, of the everyday to inform our relationship to the world, to others, and ourselves.

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In this essay, I have attempted to juxtapose kinetic utopia and a reimagined utopia based on dwelling. I have presented kinesis' presence in auto-mobilization and how this notion of mobility is evident through modernity's scramble of the everyday. Following Lefebvre and Sloterdijk, I provided the vantage of releasement as the birthing of style in the epistemology of the urban. Going even further, I have proposed how to be human is to dwell and to desire. These two components of being human ought to come together since to sacrifice one fails to integrate the individual into society as found in the kinetic utopia which maximizes desiring at the expense of dwelling. Style ought to find its prominence in a reimagined utopia both about architecture but also vis-à-vis social engagement. The current problems of

society ought to be understood as a problem of architecture – architecture representing the fusion of material reality and style as its composition (Upton 2002, 707). What is needed in a utopia of dwelling is a balance between the formal element and the material component, between compartmentalizing everyday life and social interactions that fundamentally lie at the heart of everyday living.

Looking at cities around the world, we are baffled at how luxury towers are at times boarded by impoverished lands filled with informal settlers, at how gentrification alters the city's social interaction, and at how open and public spaces are given up for the rise of increasingly commercialized enclosed spaces. To reimagine utopia as dwelling would require a recognition of space's pathology and a sensitivity to the experience of the everyday. The authentic experience of dwelling in the city allows for a more radical critique towards a social imagination: how the street, not the academy, shapes society (Joaquin 1980, 5). There must be a more integral vision to balance the hustles of economic activity and the lofty aspirations of everyone, providing an opportunity to be at home in the city, far from the fear of criminality or of failing to reach one's ambitions. The aspiration of each city-dweller ought to be to further enrich one's experiences in the city via social interaction than simply to cloister oneself in hope of escaping the difficulties. Reimagining utopia in a city patterned after a kinetic ideal ought not to push one to the nostalgia of a lost past or a missed possibility for a better future. Instead, it should make one sensitive to the pathology at hand and poetically encounter a radical alternative through a utopia founded on dwelling.

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CHAPTER 2

CROSSING LANGUAGES IN ALIEN WORLDS: UTOPIAN SCIENCE FICTION BY AMERICAN WOMEN WRITERS

JOANA CAETANO

> Civilized Man says: I am Self, I am Master, all the rest is Other—outside, below, underneath, subservient. I own, I use, I explore, I exploit, I control. What I do is what matters. What I want is what matter is for. I am that I am, and the rest is women and the wilderness, to be used as I see fit. (1989, 161)

This "highly tendentious" provocation by Ursula K. Le Guin illustrates the position women writers and women's experience had been relegated to in the science fiction genre. Le Guin used the term "wilderness" and not "Nature" because "[men] distrust that word (…). Nature as not including humanity, Nature as what is not human, that Nature is a construct made by Man, not a real thing; just as most of what Man says and knows about women is mere myth and construct. Where I live as woman to men is wilderness. But to me it is home" (*ibidem*). With this Le Guin was saying that men's "Nature" does not include the experience of women as women or their shared experience with men or wilderness; women's wilderness is utterly other, which is unnatural to men. That wilderness is what has been left out, silenced or discarded by civilization. It is a wild country, and that "wild country" is a metaphor for that *other* country which is, "the being of women" (*idem*, 163). It is worth-noting that wilderness is also a key concept in the American imagery, representing that unconquered space beyond the frontier: a space of the unknown, of otherness, daunting and yet shaped by dreams and possibilities. By combining an inherently American trope with gendered differentiation, Le Guin denounced the androcentric culture of the

science-fiction genre, which tended to marginalize women writers and exclude women's experience. Similar to Le Guin, other American women writers from the 1960s and 1970s resorted to narrative strategies to denounce, subvert and revise the classic plotlines of the genre. These strategies formed a new language – a crossing language – designed to address new concerns and rethink old problems. The aim of this chapter is to map out some of the strategies employed by science-fiction women writers, especially Ursula K. Le Guin, in (re-)creating utopian alien worlds.

Alien worlds: utopian science fiction

Science fiction, as a literary genre, has at its core a utopian impulse, although not all science-fiction texts are utopian. Despite its resistance to a crystalized definition, science fiction can be described, Isaac Asimov argued, as "that branch of literature which deals with the reaction of human beings to changes in science and technology" (1975, 62), which refers not only to scientific potentiality but also to its consequences, and implies, according to Robert A. Heinlein, a "realistic speculation about possible future events, based solidly on adequate knowledge of the real world, past and present" (1959). These definitions lead us to believe that, apart from the escapist nature of the genre – or perhaps because of it – science fiction cannot be entirely separated from the real world, and sometimes works as a direct reaction to it. The transgressive and subversive quality of science fiction is intrinsically interrelated with utopian and political questioning, and it is this specific kind of science fiction that is alluded to in this chapter.

The concept of utopianism, not unlike the definition of science fiction, is unstable and easily mutable. Therefore, it is important to clarify that here utopianism is understood as an umbrella term that embodies Lyman T. Sargent's definition of "social dreaming", Ernst Bloch's concept of the "utopian impulse" as a capacity to idealize beyond the author's own experience and an ability to rearrange the world, and Ruth Levitas's notion of utopia as an inherent desire for different (better) ways of being. By this, I mean that the concept of utopianism applied in this chapter does not refer to literary utopias or to utopian practice *per se*, but to a combination of the function of utopia which, as Fátima Vieira explains, refers to the impact that utopian texts have on their readers, urging them to take action, and the desire