Sam Bunn
(Kunstuniversität Linz, Austria)

In a more Eutopian world, there would surely be a Ministry of Reaching, that was also a lighthouse, sometimes a task force or an island - and of course a society. It's constituents would not only be concerned with evaluating the quality and intellectual properties of existing utopias, they would also be involved in supporting the continual production of further eu- and dys-topias for the local and the global populace - to maintain the balance of dreams. Hopping forward in imaginary time, helping to guide, influence and suggest to themselves and their global co-inhabitants - who would of course be involved in generating narratives - what might be.

Today, eutopia is largely missing from popular story forms, particularly mainstream film, while dystopias and narratives that support the existing status quo are prevalent. Considering that the power of advertising and story telling to reinforce ways of thinking and being is well known, this omission is problematic, particularly as global catastrophe looms: aren't we writing our own doom? The implications of a shared, breaking world are that the Earth is everyone's problem, and that to fix it we all need to work together. Stories for wide audiences that explore the widest and most optimistic divergencies from our current track appear vital for shaking things up.

As a precursor to the Ministry of Reaching, imagine a film school that took as its grounding principle the need for other types of stories about our future. A novum wrestling school; a Brechtian hot bed of improvisation; an advertising agency of possibility. A place for sketches, green screens and prototypes - for what better way to imagine the future than through incomplete images? A school that could decant itself to the Sahara or Times Square and always, through forging hope, make itself relevant. A beacon for frustrated actors, directors tired of the repeating of convention, utopian scholars tired of reading, and citizens brave enough to dream their ideal futures closer to being.

Keywords: Advertising, Eutopia, Activism

Samantha Hyler
(Lund University, Sweden)

What is sustainability? Understood by some as an empty signifier (Markusen 2003, Gunder 2006, Davidson 2010), the precise meaning and use of sustainability varies broadly. Despite the widespread use and praise of sustainability initiatives across industries, without specific meaning it is capable of endless applications and interpretations. Typically sustainability is regarded as positive, regardless of its application. Sustainability has considerable utopian underpinnings and expressions, with its idealistic ambitions that promote a good life in accordance with a loose set of definitions. Frequently, buzzwords like tolerance, multiculturalism, and balance are employed as sustainability promotes a version of harmonious living. This paper will examine sustainability discursively to discuss the concept as a future oriented and utopian notion, drawing on the researcher's current work with sustainability, visions, and dreaming. The paper will also discuss the role of dreaming in sustainability and how positive utopian dreams are important drivers of societal change. What does it mean to strive for utopian ideals with ambiguous preconditions, like in much of sustainability rhetoric? Why are the utopian elements of sustainability continually so captivating? The societal need for utopian dreams, and why sustainability has become a popular contemporary source of inspiration, is telling of desires as well as social trends towards notions of harmony, balance, and lastingness today and for the future.

Keywords: Sustainability, Visions, Dreaming

Commoning and Utopia in the Intentional Community of Alt Ungnade, Germany, and their Meaning for Socio-ecological Transformation

Sarah Holzgreve
(University of Greifswald, Germany)

In this paper, I apply tools of commons analysis and utopian thinking to an intentional community and use my findings to draw conclusions for the transformation of society at large. Both intentional communities and local commons have been seen as small-scale experimental spaces for new social harmonies and socio-ecological transformation. The respective discourses offer complementary perspectives on community and are both deeply connected to utopian thinking. In intentional communities, people share a vision and often their daily life. In commons, a community of people shares and preserves common resources by creating rules and institutions in a social process called commoning. My case study focuses on the intentional community in Alt Ungnade, a small rural village in north-eastern Germany. It consists of up to 30 adults and children living in wooden trailers on four hectares of land. The community is currently going through a phase of transformation following internal conflicts about, inter alia, the possibilities for communal ownership of land. I analyse the situation of the community using the Institutional Analysis and Design Framework by the Ostrom Workshop, the pioneers of commons research. I then map its characteristics in relation to communities listed in the *Eurotopia Directory* and the criteria of Scott Peck's community theory. Next, I outline several future visions for the Alt Ungnade community following Ruth Levitas' utopian method. The visions are based on qualitative interviews with community members and a visioning council and highlight different core elements of transformation. In a concluding philosophical discussion, I relate these core elements of transformation to commons and community theory and use them to outline the utopia of a commons- and community-based new society.

Keywords: Intentional community, Commoning, Utopia as method

Sayed Bokhari
(Independent researcher)

A peculiar paradox presents itself. The quest for utopia has often resulted in terrible atrocities as individuals and revolutionary movements seek harmonious societies. Proof, one can say, that Freud was right. The instinct for destruction (Thanatos) lurks beneath the surface of the human condition and forms the raison d'etre of the dystopian tradition. Quite a far cry from More's fictional text, *Utopia*, of 1516 where inhabitants would eat in communal halls and an egalitarian society would flourish. Yet More also gave this society a name soberly suggesting its impossibility (in Greek, 'utopia' means 'nowhere').

Academic studies focusing on the utopian/dystopian dichotomy can unearth stark patterns that permeate through key historical events. The French Revolution and the Terror sets modernity off into a precarious trajectory as the quest to reengineer society into a de-Christianised republic forms the psychology of subsequent revolutions. The pairing of utopia and terror (to use Popper's thesis) has formed the backdrop of many events in modern history. The Bolshevik Revolution that sought to actualise the Marxist concept of the *Dictatorship of the Proletariat* saw Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin fulfil a deep tragedy that re-surfaced again in Mao's *Cultural Revolution* whereby millions perished through violence and famine. Similarly, as the French revolutionaries celebrated a new epoch in human existence, so did Pol Pot with the establishment of an agrarian utopia, hallmarked as the *Year Zero*.

This French Revolutionary 'ghost in the machine' resurfaces in the modern period and aside from its human toll, the impact on an entire literary genre cannot be exaggerated. Dostoyevsky, Orwell, Zamyatin and Huxley seek to demonstrate the human capacity for evil and this presentation will shed light on how the quest for utopia has given ammunition to the dystopian camp; a camp that uses literary prowess to delve into the psychology of man.

Title: A Study on FARC's Hector Ramirez Zone As an Autonomous Community

Serhat Tutkal,
(Universidad Nacional de Colombia)

Utopian communities of America aimed to create a fundamentally different kind of community. They have especially focused on education, labor division, gender relations, distribution of the means of production, and the distribution of the political power. Even though most of these attempts were shortlived, attempts to create a different kind of political organization kept being popular for a while. While admitting that there are not really numerous recent attempts on creating these type of communities, there are some interesting cases and further research is required on these cases. My objective is to examine one of these examples: former La Montañita of Caquetá, Colombia which is currently named as Hector Ramirez zone. The village is founded by ex-FARC militants and in the village, members of the community apply a different manner of managing the economy and the governance. The objective of my work is to examine the politics, and the means of production of this village in order to comprehend if we can see this experiment as utopian or not. Ernst Bloch claims that in Owen's New Harmony private property, the Church and the prevailing form of marriage did not exist. I will investigate this community of ex-FARC militants in respect to their approach on these themes and on production in order to determine the similarities and differences between them and utopian socialists of 18th and 19th centuries.

Keywords: Autogestion, Commune, Utopian socialism.

Shashi Khurana
(University of Delhi, India)

This paper attempts to analyse the seminal role of Translation in creating a corpus of narratives of marginalised experiences and perspectives to find space in mainstream Literature and discourse. Hierarchically divided societies along caste and gender have, over centuries, been rigidly closed and exclusionary, denying social mobility and in the case of the third gender, identity. Shifts in social systems, for instance from feudalism to Secular and Democratic Systems in India, generated over time legislated access to education and literacy as a general policy. Literature about the other was dominated by accounts from an 'outsider's' perspective generally influenced by pre-conceived assumptions or produced as 'official' documents. A study of Bama (b.1958) *Karukku,* Om Prakash Valmiki (1950-2013) *Joothan,* Manobi Bandhopadhyay (b.1966) *The Gift of Goddess Lakshmi* are some translations which have contributed to throwing light on the experience of the marginalised who suffered oppression and humiliation. Such translations have been recognised as a meaningful measure towards empathy and solidarity, even though limited to sections of the youth, women and progressive ideologues. The analyses will take us into the study of the social and cultural practices of purity, pollution, taboos and deprivations and the confluence of new levels of awareness, 'tapping' on the seams of social structures. The vernacular and oral narratives, translated into more and more languages have become the means of greater solidarity. This paper is aimed at continuing the discourse on divisiveness and resistance through *Joothan* (A short story) and *Karrukku* (An autobiography) and the *Gift of Goddess Lakshmi* (An autobiography).

Shoja Ahmadvand
(Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran)

Iranian myths are the most important part of ancient Iran political thought in which three utopian aspects such as the utopian city, the utopian monarch, and the utopian social classes can be considered as the focal points in the field of Iranian utopian studies. The ontology of ancient Iran political thought consists of two pillars based on Iranian myths: *Ahura Mazda*, the god of light and goodness; and *Angra Mainyu* (arch-demon), the god of darkness and evil. This dichotomy is the foundation of ancient Iran political thought. *Ahura Mazda* and its *Amesha Spenta*, Holy Immortal, constitute all dimensions of the entity or the cosmic world. The political entity is a copy of that entity. However, *Ahura Mazda* is at the centre of the entity. The six metaphysical forces that cooperate with *Ahura Mazda* to create different aspects of the cosmic world are *Vohu Manah, Asha, Amertat, Haurvatat, Armaiti*, and *Khashathra Vairya*. The political entity is a miniature of this hierarchical order. Thus, Iranian utopian Monarch is at the centre of the political order. Therefore, the true Iranian Monarch is a combination of religion and politics based on the ideals of the Iranian utopian Monarchy in which politics is symbolized as monarchy and religion as charisma. The monarch has six characteristics: a just ruler and the symbol of order, a legitimate ruler and the symbol of attraction of the consent of the masses, an authoritative ruler and the symbol of power, a progressive ruler and the symbol of development, a protective and supportive ruler who follows the goodness and the good life of the people. This article tries to discuss the utopian political thought of ancient Iran by focusing on various dimensions of the Iranian utopian ruler with some comparative approaches in other Silk Road cultures to found a field of study related to intercultural utopianism.

Keywords: Utopia, Utopian Ruler, Ancient Iran, Intercultural Utopianism

Silvia Anna Rode
(University of Southern Indiana, USA)

Philosophers have argued that the catalyst for new harmonies and forms of utopia involves the rejection of the negative status quo. Friedrich Nietzsche echoed this sentiment in *Genealogy of Morals* (1887), when he wrote, "Everyone who has ever built anywhere a new heaven - first found the power thereto in his own hell." But what if the catalyst for new harmonies and forms of utopia does not rest on the conscientious rejection of the negative status quo, but is instead involuntary? My presentation focuses on an involuntary utopia, namely, a U. S. WWII prisoner of war camp and a chronicle published by inmates who were captured in North Africa and who describe life in the camp. Despite denazification attempts by U.S. authorities and ideological struggles within the prison population, prisoners transformed the camp into what the French philosopher Michel Foucault called a heterotopia, a meticulously arranged enclosure that was in stark contrast to the chaos and destruction of the war. Moreover, the conversion of a wasteland into a flourishing landscape provided a place of harmonious discovery and transformative experience only to disappear shortly after the war.

Keywords: Involuntary Utopia, Prisoner of War Camp, Wasteland

The Caliphate – a Jihadist Utopia? Reading ISIS Propaganda Videos as Utopian Texts

Simon Spiegel
(University of Zurich, Switzerland)

In Western media, the jihadist militia called ISIS is primarily known and feared from their extremely cruel execution videos. But these graphic depictions of beheadings and other forms of killing form only a fraction of the propaganda output produced by ISIS and affiliated organizations. As a study by the British think tank Quilliam Foundation has shown, "brutality" is by no means the dominating theme in ISIS propaganda. The most pervasive key narrative is rather one of "utopia" which emphasizes the stately qualities of ISIS's so-called caliphate and the idea of building a better – Islamic – world together.

In my paper which grew out of my research on utopias in nonfiction films, I will take up on this observation and look at a selection of ISIS videos which in the tradition of the classic literary utopias combine criticism of the current state of affairs with the promise of a better way of living in the caliphate.

The brand of utopianism advocated by ISIS is, of course, a very peculiar one. On the one hand, some of the available videos are heavily grounded in the here and now and portray the Islamic State as a well-organized and smoothly running entity. A very concrete project, in which every Muslim of good faith can and should take part. On the other hand, ISIS's utopianism is decisively apocalyptic. Ultimately, the project of the caliphate can only be justified by the fact that the Day of Judgment is imminent. The utopia of the caliphate is therefore an unusual and to some degree paradoxical combination of classic utopian and eschatological traits. The utopia of the caliphate is equally located in the present as well as in a messianic beyond, it exists – in a way quite different from traditional literary utopias – in a *no-time.*

The presentation will not contain any graphic depictions of violence.

Keywords: ISIS, Nonfiction film, Propaganda

Sorin Antohi
(Orbis Tertius Association, Bucharest, Romania)

> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more. It is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing.
> (*Macbeth*, Act V, Scene V)

The paper offers a short history of the strong association between the concepts/discourses of/on Utopia and Harmony. This association has gone all the way to synonymity or even conflation. Moreover, it has come to signify that harmony is the ideal form of life, equally distant from the meaningless 'sound and fury' of life (i.e., of history) and the silence of death (cf. the meanings of 'the rest is silence' in *Hamlet*). Nonetheless, the extremes of this sound-silence continuum are more ambiguous, as is their 'middle voice' (Hayden White), harmony. The harmony of the Cosmos (the music of the spheres, from Pythagoreanism to Humanism) can be a normative metaphor for the (ideal) Polis (cf. *megiste mousike*), while silence may mean quite literally the (ideal) absence of noise (i.e., of Chaos). Indeed, the music of the spheres itself is not (necessarily) audible, while silence may be the perfect form of the individual's inner life. This kind of positive (living) silence can be an inaudible *musica humana* (the 'static' of the body, as in Boethius, a complement to the music of the spheres, *musica universalis*, and to the music produced by voices and instruments), the expression of inner peace, as in the pre-*Brave New World* Huxley and in New Age eupsychias, or a highly spiritual, mystical, ascetic silence, *hesychia*, as in Orthodox Christian theology.

Is harmony spontaneous, organic, given (transcendental), perennial or rather planned, artificial, elusive? Is it an illusion, a fantasy, a (spiritual) quest? A utopia? Utopia? What are the sources, the status, and the effects of dissonance, disharmony, cacophony?

To answer such questions, authors as diverse as Plato, Pierre-Simon Ballanche, Robert Owen, Charles Fourier, Hector Berlioz, Karl R. Popper (to name but a few), as well as a number of old and new harmonies (both imaginary and real) shall be revisited along the way.

Keywords: Utopia, Harmony, History of ideas

Against Wellness: False Harmonies and Flawed Private Utopias in *Eat, Pray Love* (2010), and *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* (2011)

Stankomir Nicieja
(University of Opole, Poland)

The astonishing rise of the "wellness culture" is one of the most intriguing and symptomatic phenomena in recent years. Although never clearly defined, "wellness" has grown into a giant industry offering a wide gamut of solutions to various challenges and problems of modern life. It has duly generated its own celebrities, institutions and narratives. In my paper, I am going to take a closer look at two landmark cinematic adaptations of popular novels, Elisabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love* (published in 2006, and adapted to screen by Ryan Murphy in 2010) and Deborah Moggach's *These Foolish Things* (published in 2004 and adopted to screen by John Madden as *Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* in 2011). As I will argue in my paper, the two films constitute interesting early examples of the wellness narratives that dramatize the protagonists' struggles for harmony and balance in life. They provide ready illustrations of the attractions as well as darker sides of the entire wellness phenomenon. I will look at those two films through the theoretical lens of the growing anti-wellness literature. The authors such as Carl Cederström and André Spicer (*The Wellness Syndrome*, 2015), William Davies (*The Happiness Industry*, 2015) or Svend Brinkmann (*Stand Firm*, 2017), have developed their compelling critiques of the wellness culture unmasking its ideological underpinnings and demonstrating that in the long run it often exacerbates problems it promises to solve. In my view, it would be interesting to apply the authors' broader insights to the concrete examples of two popular cinematic narratives.

Keywords: Wellness, Cinema, Ideology, Utopia, Neoliberalism

From Utopia to Dystopia: The Matter of Harmony in Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World*

Stella Achilleos
(University of Cyprus, Cyprus)

This paper aims to examine the question of harmony in Margaret Cavendish's utopian fiction *The Blazing World* (published in 1666). Harmony is an idea Cavendish frequently explores in many of her diverse writings, from her more playful texts in her collection of *Poems and Fancies* (1653) to her more serious ruminations on natural philosophy in her *Philosophical Fancies* (1653) and her *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy* (1666). More specifically, harmony provides a central idea in how Cavendish conceptualizes the interaction but also the hierarchy of matter and the way in which that contributes to the ordering of the universe. As Lisa T. Sarasohn has already suggested, in presenting these ideas Cavendish often uses political metaphors that highlight the need to impose hierarchy and produce harmony through conflict and disunity. Many of the questions found here were again taken up by Cavendish in *The Blazing World* – though in this instance Cavendish treats harmony more explicitly as a social and political idea(1), the value of which is variously challenged by the introduction of the figure of the Empress in the titular world. As I would like to suggest, while *The Blazing World* revisits some of Cavendish's earlier ideas on harmony and matter, it also points to her engagement with the concept of harmony in some of the classical sources she (as I have argued elsewhere) probably drew inspiration from – particularly, from Plato's twin dialogues *Timaeus* and *Critias* that narrate the story of the mythical Atlantis. Quite importantly, in Cavendish's text as well as in Plato's story about the Atlantis, the question of harmony is of central significance in the disintegration of the narrative from utopia to dystopia.

Susanna Layh
(University of Augsburg, Germany)

The term dystopia generally describes literary works that prolongate contemporary events, developments and tendencies into fictional outlines of society that seem to the readers worse than the outerfictional socio-political reality. But this fictional extrapolation has an appellative function in the text. It is perceived by most readers as didactic warning, and therefore, evokes implicitly the utopian principle of hope *ex negativo*. Usually dystopia appears in prose form connected with certain narrative patterns and specific poetological characteristics. The leading question of this paper therefore is, how dystopia as a name, a motif, an idea and/or a concept emerges in popular music (songs, concept albums, music videos) and in what way the traditional features of dystopia are maintained or transformed.

Utopia and Technology. The Poverty of Utopian Imagination on the Subject of Work, Machinery and Political Organization

Szymon Wróbel
(University of Warsaw)

Technological utopias appearing in literature and cinema are by no means uncommon. I therefore ask why is it technology which provides the abundance of material for reflection on Utopia and why technology is the key concept in shaping the utopian imagination? In previous times, starting from Thomas Morus, the foundation of utopian thinking was rather the state and social organization, not the means of production. Surprisingly, it appears that without technological support both social and political utopias are nothing. Technology gives credibility to the utopian project. Jules Verne or Edward Bellamy only give credibility to what is otherwise incredible. What, then, is the utopian feature of Utopia as regards technology? The question becomes intriguing considering Heidegger's view of technology being world's Enframing, composition, set, Ge-Stell. For Heidegger, technology sets upon nature. Does technological utopia, similarly, set upon the world in such a way that it appears a visible system of powers? Perhaps Utopia reverses the methodological maxim, whereby conclusions about possibilities can be drawn only from the real. Utopia does the opposite: everything that exists operates within the technological organization and its capabilities. After all, Herbert George Wells' time machine does not bring us to a politically-thought-out organization, benefiting everyone, but a sluggish race living in small groups and feeding on fruits. It is a humanity liberated from both work and thinking, humanity at its end, unemployed humanity. In my speech, following the path laid by Friedrich Jünger, Martin Heidegger and Bernard Stiegler, I would like to rethink the problematic "utopian perfection of technology" seeking universal automatism and generating a new organization of work, i.e. universal proletarization, and common unemployment.