



**Does The Concept of Utopia Have Useful Political Functions in Contemporary
Society and If So, Can It Be Used to Transform Desires into Hope for Radical
Change?**

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Abstract:

This dissertation will explain why utopia has multiple political functions from being a vital form of social criticism and critical thinking to acting as a form of resistance against the status quo. However, utopia is fundamentally about inspiring society to imagine new possibilities and believe in them, moving towards radical change or creating it. Utopia should be used as an open-ended method towards enacting radical change, not as a rigid blueprint of a perfect world. There will be three main areas of analysis. This dissertation will examine utopian novels as a mechanism for expressing our alternatives for the future, as tools for articulating socio-political criticism and inspiring new possibilities. However, utopia should mean more than expressing our utopian desires and opening our minds to new possibilities. The second section will look at 'realistic utopia', which combines realism with utopia to pursue political plans that are deemed hard to achieve, such as 'universal basic income'. 'Realistic utopia' indicates that when utopia is imagined collectively, it can change the world. But we must be wary that 'realistic utopia' can compromise and dilute the utopian imagination with perceived realism. Lastly, Ernst Bloch's concept of 'educated hope' will be used to explain how utopia can change the mindset of society, to turn our desires into real possibilities. Postcolonial political analysis will be used throughout to show how utopia is not Western only and that utopia is a useful form of resistance against our ideological convictions. The utopian method must include postcolonial studies analysis on power and the concept of hope because they aid in tearing down ideological convictions to create a counter narrative against what is deemed possible. The concept of utopia is about the journey towards radical change, shaping our perceptions of what is possible.

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Introduction

This essay will use Ruth Levitas' definition of utopia as ultimately a method to 'desire for a better way of being', not predominantly as an individualistic imaginary world as a starting point for tackling the question (2013, p.1, p.12). It is a necessarily broad definition because utopias come in many forms, have many functions and the content will always differ in one way or another (Levitas, 2013). It will be argued that utopia ultimately is the method of 'construction of imaginary worlds, free from the difficulties that beset us in reality', but it has very practical political uses (Levitas, 1990, p.1). This essay will try to revitalise the concept of utopia by showing that it has useful and significant political functions. These functions when put together can help us move towards and achieve radical change. Utopia allows us to think critically about present politics and search for new alternatives. Utopia can represent what we desire and mould our dreams into a concrete vision that is focused on the journey and not on a one-way only rigid blueprint of a perfect world. This is significant because by providing a type of critical thinking that is searching for social transformation, we can better challenge the status quo and what is deemed possible. Believing in change and being ready for it is necessary for the growth and life of society. If there is something that connects all utopias, it is the desire for better and aim for 'human happiness' in some manor (Goodwin and Taylor, 1982, p.207). However, they differ on how and in what way to achieve the highest greatest happiness because all political theories differ in their definition of what true happiness is and how to get there. Frederic Jameson (2007) views utopia's three varieties as being present in culture, political practice and as wishful thinking. It will be shown that this is too simple as all three types can influence each other to an extent. We need to acknowledge that the way the concept of utopia is analysed varies profoundly, due to the contestation surrounding the definition and functions of utopia in schools of thought from literature to political theory. A lack of coherence surrounding the uses of utopia in political theory limits its impact on politics. This essay will argue that utopia is at its best in politics when it functions as critical thinking against the dominant ideology, by opening our minds to new possibilities and providing belief in our aspirations for a better world.

To not confuse the concept of utopia with utopianism, this essay will define utopianism as a broader way of hopeful thinking about the future. Utopianism is not necessarily political, unlike the concept of utopia being explained here. Utopianism is not the method of creating a better world through using the imagination, it is a certain mindset on how to view the world that encapsulates many schools of thought. The concept of utopia has political functions, whilst utopianism is a much broader mode of thinking and feeling. This essay argues utopia is about a method towards establishing hope and then social transformation itself. Utopianism is vital in this process as it gives us the utopian critical thinking and imagination needed.

What is hope? Why do we feel that we lack hope in politics? Hope is a tool for resistance against the dominant ideology and the politics of bureaucracy (Skrimshire, 2008). Utopia is about hope, to imagine a better world. Therefore, it will be argued that utopia is a form of resistance against our ideological convictions that tell us we cannot change the system. Utopia is not simply about big blueprints of society that are uncompromising, such as the Third Reich leading to totalitarianism, as anti-utopians, such as John Gray argue (Skrimshire, 2008). For Gray, realism should reject utopianism and idealism as merely escapism, but without utopian aspirations universal suffrage and civil rights movements would have not happened (Skrimshire, 2008). This shows utopia has a practical role in creating a better world step by step using our utopian impulse, which is the part of us that desires and imagines a better world. This utopian impulse is a universal human characteristic needed to live explains Ernst Bloch (1986), as it is the ability to desire and imagine better that keeps us going.

'Heimat', for Bloch is the utopian aspiration, 'the home we are longing for but have never experienced' (Ashcroft, 2012, p.5). For Bloch, we should always be trying to get to this aspirational place, but without a focus on a static endpoint. This essay will argue that utopia should be theorised not as an endpoint, but as a method for predominantly establishing hope in new alternatives, something that is necessary to politics for installing radical change (Ashcroft, 2012, p.2). Dreaming of a utopia activates our utopian impulses that in turn can create change based on the collective will of a group. Thus, this essay will argue that utopia as a concept is necessary from both Marxist and

postcolonial studies standpoints as it is a form of resistance and a vehicle for hope, not a direct rigid destination. We need to decolonise utopia from Western-centrism and emphasise that desiring and searching for better might well be universal.

Political theorists who agree utopia is fundamental to political theory, rarely agree on why or in what way it should be used. There is also a feeling that utopia needs to do more than just critique the present. Liberal and socialist theorists, such as John Rawls have attempted to bind together realism and utopia to create a way in which a utopian vision can be realised and achieved (Böker, 2017). 'Realistic utopia' is a concept mostly used in Liberalism and Marxism that attempts to implement 'utopian' change but the transformation is tied up in 'real' historical social facts and is imagined only in the present conditions, to avoid wishful thinking (Audard, 2014). It will be argued that utopia needs to be open without compensating the important tool of the human imagination, something that 'realistic utopia' often fails at. 'Realistic utopia' has many problems, for example it focuses on the social realities more than the imagination and becomes caught up in the universality of western ideas.

An issue in using utopia for political means is that utopia has mostly been assessed in its literary form since the end of the Cold War (Levitas, 1990). Many theorists will mention that the word utopia comes from Thomas More's 'Utopia', written in 1516 and that More meant the word to mean the good place and consequently for him no place (Goodwin and Taylor, 1982). This puts utopia in a linear Western literary form and labels it as too idealistic to be possible (Goodwin and Taylor, 1982). This has caused the revival of utopia in recent years to ignore its political uses, leaving utopia in politics to be used interchangeably with being unachievable or a fantasy (Ingram, 2016). As Lyman Tower Sargent (2005) argues, we should remember that utopian dreams, such as capitalism and colonialism have been pursued and enacted. Francisco Fernández Buey (2016) explains that the word 'utopia' is used in a negative sense as impossible and even dangerous, to deny the validity of half of history's alternative possibilities, from the ideas of Karl Marx to Rosa Luxemburg.

This essay will argue utopia's ultimate functions are to imagine new alternatives and to create radical change, but society must first believe in new possibilities. Utopia provides us with a mechanism to search for alternatives and resist the dominant ideological presumptions of what progress should be, pushing us towards creating open-ended change. Utopia must fundamentally be a method that focuses on a journey towards radical socio-political transformation. Whilst utopian imagining can be from any school of thought and should not be restricted to socialism by any means, the method of utilising utopia that will be theorised here is that of pursuing social egalitarian goals. This change will not result in totalitarianism because the method of utilising and understanding utopia for social transformation as understood here does not pursue perfection nor involves a rigid endpoint. Instead the utopian process includes pluralism and utopian ideas must be contested. Utopia is not just a destination; it is a way of being. Believing in utopia is about thinking forward, willing on change in the present.

Ruth Levitas, Frederic Jameson, Eric Olin Wright, Stefan Skrimshire and Ernst Bloch will be heavily used in this work. Together, they show how utopia is a broad, non-Eurocentric method of critical thinking against the status quo, starting a journey towards new possibilities. There will be three main discussions, the first one is on the significance of utopian novels to political theory. Utopian novels have a useful function because they start discussions on what is desirable and undesirable. They inspire society and the individual to pursue better political alternatives. There will be a focus on 'Brave New World' by Aldous Huxley (1932). There will also be analysis on non-Western utopias. Secondly, there will be a discussion on the value of the concept of 'realistic utopia'. Wright's 'real utopias' (2010) will be assessed to counter the other 'realistic utopias' mentioned. By using concepts such as power, space and resistance as defined in postcolonial studies this essay will argue that 'realistic utopia' is still too western-centric and limits the utopian imagination with ideologically presumed 'social facts'. But Wright's 'real utopia' thinking is significant in understanding the journey towards social transformation. Lastly, there will be a focus on what we can learn from Ernst Bloch's analysis on utopias, from his concept of 'educated hope' and other Frankfurt School utopian

thinking. Bloch shows how the utopian desire is an ontological condition because we are forever changing and searching for satisfaction (Skrimshire, 2008, p.239). It will be argued that utopian novels show how individual imagination opens the mind and inspires new alternative possibilities. Postcolonial studies' critical thinking adds to this by going against our ideological convictions and challenging people to resist power structures and find new possibilities. 'Realistic utopia' gives us guideposts for pursuing radical change. The concepts of 'educated hope' and the 'spirit of utopia' aid us in searching for new possibilities and to establish belief in these alternatives. Crucially we should only focus on the journey towards social transformation without thinking of an endpoint. It will be argued we must always be pursuing better to not become static or rigid in our politics and pursuits of a better world.

Chapter 1: The Political Function of Utopian Novels

This essay will argue that utopian novels are important political tools as they offer a form of valid social criticism which in turn can inspire individuals to search for alternatives themselves, helping towards the quest to radical change. Utopian novels inspire new possibilities which are not restricted by 'social facts'. These alternatives will be subjected to 'social facts' if attempted, but they would have not been imagined if the utopian imagination was restricted by 'social facts'. Utopia shows us possibilities that we would not otherwise have imagined. Utopian novels, such as Edward Bellamy's 'Looking Backward', are viewed as anti-political by many liberals, such as Warren Wager (1988, p.109) because they encompass a world where there is no conflict or politics, making them unrealistic. This leads to utopian novels becoming, what Arthur Lipow calls, a 'necessarily authoritarian viewpoint' (Wager, 1988, p.106). The presumption is that utopian novels are irrelevant to political theory because they are unrealistic and are dangerous to democracy. There are two assumptions to be challenged here, first that utopian novels are intrinsically authoritarian and overly unrealistic and secondly that novels cannot impact political decision-making.

Utopian Novels are not intrinsically Authoritarian

Sargent (2005) shows how utopian novels are cross-national and global, for example utopian writing has evolved into critical utopias since the 1970's, which are not only critical of the real world, but are also self-reflective on the utopia offered. Ursula Le Guin's 'The Dispossessed' (1974) tackles issues such as individualism, collectivism, temporal time and many other complicated political topics. Le Guin (1974) offers a communal anarchist utopia that is not depicted as perfect, making it a self-reflective assessment of a utopia. 'The Dispossessed' is an example of how utopias do not rely on simplistic world views and instead can consider multiple narratives at once, improving our critical thinking about our ideal worlds (Le Guin, 1974). Critical utopias avoid authoritarian tendencies and expand our critical thinking because they reflect on multiple narratives of the world's ills, not just

one singular rigid narrative. Utopian writing is not static but dynamic and diverse, meaning it rarely involves authoritarian imaginings. A utopia will only risk being authoritarian if it pursues a static and rigid vision. This essay argues against pursuing this sort of vision.

Utopian Novels and their Relationship to the Political Sphere

This essay will argue that utopian novels can impact the political. Jameson (2007, p.232) argues that utopian novels serve as a criticism against our 'universal ideological convictions' to imagine the future outside our present political paradigms. They disrupt present politics and show us that alternatives are possible (Jameson, 2007, p.231). Jameson (2007) thinks utopia should remain unrealised and should just be used as critical thinking because enacting a utopia will lead to dangerous consequences because they are too ideal. But this essay argues that utopian novels can inspire people not just to think critically, but to search for political alternatives and impact the quest to social transformation.

To expand on the function of utopian novels we need to understand the role of cultural artefacts, in this case utopian fiction in the political realm to show how novels can impact the political. Firstly, politics should not be done on behalf of society, instead politics should be understood as intrinsically part of society. Kees Vuyk (2016) explains that novels allow citizens to be part of the democratic process as they give the individual a unique insight of the world. This essay argues that utopian novels transport the reader outside of the real world, allowing them to interpret the novels' messages as an autonomous democratic citizen without ideological influence (Vuyk, 2016). Marxists Karl Manheim and Ernst Bloch regard cultural artefacts and practices as able to impact the political realm (Levitas (1990). In trying to rehabilitate the concept of utopia in Marxism, both made categories for useful and pointless utopias towards challenging the dominant ideology. Manheim views most cultural depictions of utopia as serving the status-quo (Levitas, 1990, p.18). This makes them unhelpful in finding new alternatives or for expanding critical thinking. Bloch does regard most

utopian fiction as 'abstract', therefore not useful for directly creating radical change because he believes they are too wishful and some are compensatory to the status-quo (Levitas, 1990). For Bloch, other utopias are 'concrete utopias', which address 'real' possibilities (Levitas, 1990). Bloch's 'abstract utopias' can still impact the political by inspiring individuals to believe in new possibilities. This is contrary to Manheim who categorised utopias only as useful if they could directly create social change (Levitas, 1990, p.19). Using Bloch's analysis on utopia, this essay argues that utopian novels that operate in a contested and open manor can be catalysts in shaping perspectives towards social transformation.

Western Utopian Novels and Analysis on Aldous Huxley's 'Brave New World'

Now there will be an examination of Aldous Huxley's 'Brave New World' to explain how utopian fiction can change the way we think about the future, pushing us to take control of it. At face value, Aldous Huxley's 'Brave New World (1932) is a dystopian novel, but in many ways the novel and Huxley are utopian. It will be argued later in this section, dystopias are intrinsically linked to utopias, therefore they are not anti-utopian. Huxley's 'Brave New World' (1932) will be dissected from a utopian perspective. Firstly, Krishan Kumar examines the assertions of 'Brave New World' as anti-utopianism because Huxley himself said he wrote the novel based 'on the horror of the 'Wellsian utopia' and a revolt against it' (1991, pp.225-226). The 'Wellsian utopia' is about a perfect society with high levels of fairness and equality, controlled centrally through science and technology. Kumar (1991, p.226), to the contrary regards Huxley as a utopian. Huxley used his utopian imagination to warn against dangerous futures. In 'Brave New World', Huxley (1932) shows us his criticisms of the present and why we need to take control of the future. For example, the novel tackles what we mean by universal happiness and how this clashes with individual freedom, shaping the reader's thinking on what ideal world they desire with complex political ideas.

Huxley's 'Brave New World' (1932) is about a utopian world gone wrong, where a society which sought to improve the lives of citizens ended up making them worse. Individuals' lives are controlled by scientific elites to make them efficient and happy. Arguably, in what Huxley termed the 'civilised world' as opposed to the savage world where people were not controlled, is happier because they do not suffer from emotional stress. Huxley asks what is more desirable, full individual freedom or universal happiness as both cannot occur together. When The Savage, an outsider confronts the controller Mustapha Mond, The Savage insists, 'I'm claiming the right to be unhappy' in response to Mond's controlled happiness (Huxley, 1932, p.240). Huxley makes it clear that we need to think about what we mean about happiness. Essentially, Huxley (1932) delivers a world which he feared could be our potential future, where the mind and body are controlled. For example, there are no intimate relationships to stop anger, anxiety and sadness, whilst Ford has replaced God to indicate that material objects are what makes this society happy. Another fascinating character, Lenina, goes from the model 'Brave New World' citizen to someone who she would have frowned upon at the beginning of the novel, a person who falls in love. Through Lenina's development, we can visualise how 'Brave New World's' society can be torn apart, from 'it's most sacred and primary rationale', happiness (Kumar, 1991, p.286). Even in a world so alien and sad to Huxley there is still hope. Huxley's message is that we can avoid this world, but we need to take control of our future. Huxley asks the reader to question what they desire the most, such as do they put individual freedom over social stability. 'Brave New World' continues the discussion on key concepts that are important for what we desire from radical change.

There is a utopian impulse in 'Brave New World' that means it is not anti-utopian because Huxley uses utopian critical thinking to attack the world he imagined. We must acknowledge that dystopias, like 'Brave New World' have utopian features and vice-versa (Kumar, 1991). Dystopias are intrinsically linked to utopias, they come from the same branch of thinking. Anti-utopianism is about arguing against utopian thinking. Imagining dystopias often means using similar mechanisms to utopian thinking to dismiss a certain utopia. Dystopian writers like Huxley, often have a vision of a

better world that they put against the dystopia. Dystopias are intrinsically linked to utopias and are crucial for building our utopian visions and in allowing utopian thinking to be self-critical.

First and foremost, Huxley was a utopian writer, however it was only in 1962 that he decided to publish his utopia in 'Island'. At the start of the novel, Huxley quotes Aristotle, 'In framing an ideal we may assume what we wish, but should avoid impossibilities' (1962, p.i). What is impossible can be challenged, however this quote signifies that Huxley believed in open utopias and certainly in the importance of utopian thinking. 'Island' (Huxley, 1962) is about an island called Pala, so remote that they can practice the 'Palanese Way', which is to be at one with nature and with the community and focuses on individual and collective happiness. That is until Will Farnaby travels to the island and eventually, the island gets invaded (Huxley, 1962). The island being invaded signifies that utopias cannot last forever and it is necessary to note that it is not an entirely negative ending to the story. This is because the future is left open at the end of the novel and Huxley challenges us to choose utopia over disaster, telling us to think about how our choices can create positive change (MacDonald, 2001). Huxley's utopianism is a model for why utopian thinking of open-ended alternatives is crucial for when an unexpected event demands society to change. Huxley disliked utopias that saw themselves either as inevitable or concrete. In Huxley's 'Boundaries of utopia' essay published in 1930, he values cooperative governance, self-realisation, self-awareness and deliberation. These are all features of what utopian thinking should involve for Huxley. To understand the Huxley utopian way, we need to comprehend how values, such as freedom and equality are not universally achievable because they are ambiguous concepts that have multiple definitions to individuals, therefore we need to be aware of how our thinking and ideas harm and benefit others (Huxley, 1930). With a dose of pessimism, Huxley sees utopian thinking at its best when it is not narrow and rigid, but open-minded and tolerant of oppositional ideas. Huxley shows us that utopia can teach us about ourselves and what we want politically, herein lies the reason why he started a debate on utopianism with 'Brave New World'.

Edward Bellamy's 'Looking Backward' written in 1888, is a rigid imagination of a militarist socialist state, which is in stark contrast to Huxley's utopian thinking and debating. But 'Looking Backward' started necessary discussions on the future, shown by how it sold around 250,000 issues by 1897 in the USA and created political debates, such as with William Morris' response with 'News From Nowhere' (Kumar, 1991, p,133). Even rigid utopian worlds create open discussions on the future. Utopian novels help us to comprehend better our personal desires and what it means to be human (Levitas, 2013). Anti-utopians criticise utopia based upon the assumption that all utopias are like 'Wellsian utopias', which they regard as ignoring political debate as they create uncertainty and conflict (Wager, 1988). But this an extremely narrow viewpoint on utopia. Oscar Wilde advocated publicly for utopian thinking because he saw value in how it allows the individual to raise their creative potential and to anticipate the future, to make society better (Beaumont, 2004). Utopian fictional worlds can inspire the individual to think critically about present society and to search for new alternatives. Utopian novels are central to articulating and developing our desires for a better world. They create new possibilities by spreading utopian ideas and causing discussions on them throughout society.

Broadening Utopia with Postcolonial Utopian Novels

By basing utopia on Levitas' definition of utopia, 'a desire for a better way of being', we must acknowledge utopian thinking is more than a western idea (2013, p,12). Utopia is a broad concept that should not just be constrained by its Western connotations. In effect, we need to take the concept of utopia out of Western academic tradition and place it in a broader sense of meaning, applying it to different cultures to make a correlation of a general way of desiring better. Firstly, the likes of Krishna Kumar and John Gray would argue utopia's Christian and classical heritage means it is Western only (Dutton, 2010). But Jacqueline Dutton does not, instead Dutton questions 'the epistemological foundations of utopia as a Western way of imagining the ideal society' (2010,

p.224). Instead of basing utopia upon Western history and tradition, Dutton defines utopia as 'intercultural imaginaries of the ideal' because the concept of utopia should reflect all cultural imaginings of a better world (2010, p.224). By placing utopia in postcolonial studies, we are claiming there is no universal utopian dream and we need multiple images to combat our present 'dystopias' (Sargent, 2005). Time has moved on, we need to accept two things, that utopia as a tool for expressing desires of a better world and establishing hope to give these desires substance, goes across most cultures in many forms, such as in rituals or novels. Secondly, we need to see ourselves in utopias and vice-versa for there to be a valid connection (Sargent, 2005). We can no longer relate to old utopian fiction like Edwards Bellamy's 19th century socialist state in 'Looking Backward' in the same way people did over one-hundred years ago.

'The Hungry Tide' by Amitav Ghosh (2004) is one example in how utopian novels have evolved and how memory is used to express present concerns of the future, in this case the 1979 Morichjhāpi massacre in India, which is the backdrop of the story. The novel shows that out of resentment comes hope. Set around real historical events, this fictional story is not a static perfect world like traditional Western utopian novels often were. Instead it uses the concept of deep time and dynamic spatial changes to show why things should change and how to enact social transformation (Jones, 2018). The novel offers us hope in how we can tackle climate change, especially climate-induced migration. Another fascinating point is how one of the characters wants to create a static utopian ideal at first on the island of Morichjhāpi but decides it to be wrong to enforce universal values (Jones, 2018). The message of hope is that we can dream for better and have better if we discuss and think creatively about future possibilities by searching for flexible alternatives (Jones, 2018). Utopian novels have changed, they are no longer just Western intellectual space and are not static. In fact, utopian fiction is forever evolving because the imagination is forever creating. Therefore, the utopian imagination is a powerful tool for thinking about future possibilities for improving on our current politics. For Aimé Césaire, novels work as critical thinking and as a form of resistance because they help the collective find its voice (Ashcroft, 2012). For critical thinking to be at its most

powerful and express pain and desires, there need to be multiple utopian worlds learning from each other (Ashcroft, 2012). We need to learn from multiple utopian visions to search for open-ended, pluralistic social transformation.

Utopian novels are more than a genre, they are a valuable form of critique of the present that transcends multiple genres. They also help to articulate and assess future possibilities. In postcolonial utopian fiction for example, utopia is a mechanism of resistance against 'imperial ideological structures' by offering not only escapism, but solid hope of a better future to the oppressed (Smith, 2012, p.2). Utopian novels awaken the utopian impulse inside us, which helps us to think critically about the present and future. We need to think of utopian fiction as forever evolving and as innovative, inspiring the reader to search for new possibilities and to adopt utopian critical thinking. It has been explained that utopia can have a practical political impact by being open-ended in its pursuit of a better world, inspiring many complimentary visions and discussions on the meaning of utopia. Utopian novels teach us to think critically about present society and politics. They are one of the first steps towards radical change because they allow us to find and articulate new political alternatives.

Chapter 2: The Concept of 'Realistic Utopia' and Implementing Radical Change

Utopia often has a reputation of being unachievable or dangerous in the mainstream of politics. However, it can be argued that most political theory is ideal and unachievable if utopia is. Most political opposition to the concept of utopia comes from the assumption that it is fantasy, making it worthless to the real world and dangerous if people follow these rigid perfect dreams in real life. This is where 'realistic utopia' comes in. Many liberal and socialist theorists, regard utopia as an important concept that can revitalise political theory because it is a creative tool that can shape our perspectives on what is possible in society. Mathias Thaler (2018) believes utopia benefits realism because it provides it with utopian imagination, a special form of socio-political critique, which in turn creates innovation, something which a conservative and pessimistic view on human nature cannot deliver. In the words of George Lawson, 'utopias always require a tempering with an appropriate dose of realism' to make them safe (2008, p.902). 'Realistic utopian' thinkers all have different definitions of 'realistic utopia' but it is possible to generalise something being 'realistic' as likely to be implemented due to considering real social facts and by accepting some values and egalitarian goals will never be achieved due to human imperfection (Böker, 2017). This section will analyse the legitimacy of realistic utopian theory. To counter 'realistic utopia', there will be a use of postcolonial analysis of power, focusing on Michel Fourcault. Firstly, to understand why these theorists who regard utopian thinking as useful to political theory, there needs to be an explanation of the liberal arguments against utopia to comprehend why these theorists want to alter utopia with realism.

Criticisms and Fears of Utopia and Utopianism

The fears of chasing utopia stem from the negative connotations of Western traditional utopia. Anti-utopianism can be defined as a suspicion of a designed state that regards utopia as 'the fruitless pursuit of nowhere', making utopia either pure escapism or totalitarian (Skrimshire, 2008, p.232). To

understand where 'realistic utopia' comes from, we must acknowledge the arguments of those who influenced them, such as Isiah Berlin a liberal pluralist. Isiah Berlin argues against utopia because he assumes it seeks perfection for the real world, which is an impossibility and presumes it to be about establishing large political projects, like Fascism or Communism (Davis, 2000). Utopianism for Berlin is 'value monism', meaning utopians expect one static answer to the world's problems with no disagreement tolerated (Davis, 2000, p.58). This way of thinking leads to suffering and is in stark contrast to 'value pluralism', the idea at the heart of liberal pluralism that states happiness, love and honesty cannot be established under one set of principles as we are all from different cultures and livelihoods (Davis, 2000, p.59). The issue here is that this criticism of utopia and utopianism is of one type of utopia, a static and rigid planned utopia that this essay is arguing completely against. This essay argues that utopian thinking is complimentary to pluralism because it widens and engrosses the competition between ideal alternatives and subjects them to utopian critical thinking. In his assessment of Berlin, Laurence Davis (2000) concludes that Berlin's generalisation of totalitarianism inside the utopian impulse does an injustice to utopianism because utopianism activates the ethical imagination which in turn can initiate democratic debate from outside the status quo. Davis (2000) explains that utopias should be regarded as dynamic, not as ways to achieve monistic perfection. The concept of utopia is necessary to critique the present accepted 'social facts' and to create a dynamic society.

Another anti-utopian, John Gray has a similar view on utopia to Berlin. For Gray (2007), utopias consist of irrational, universal narratives, inherited from Christianity that destroy the meaning of life for those who do not follow the same narrative. Gray (2007) believes utopia took all of religion's bad traits, such as hope of a better world as a form of escapism and willingness to transform the world by force to find meaning in life. Gray (2007) is not a fan of apocalyptic thinking or religion and sees this in utopianism, but again his understanding of utopia is extremely narrow. Gray (2007) is right that we are influenced by narratives and ideology. But just like Berlin, he regards utopia as part of the problem, regarding utopia as enormous political projects that want to override society

completely. In line with Berlin, Gray understands utopia as impossible because he believes utopians pursue only perfection, therefore utopian ideals become dystopian rapidly (Skrimshire, 2008). Aside from the criticisms made on Berlin's analysis, there are other points that can be made to criticise Gray's understanding of utopia. Firstly, religious and spiritual beliefs may have bad traits that can divide us, but they can shape for the better our politics because they give people meaning and identity, they are a part of how we live. Secondly, Gray's ideal world is one of non-interventionism so of course he does not want individuals or groups aspiring for great societal change, especially when it comes from communitarianism (Skrimshire, 2008). Utopia can benefit our democratic debates if we view it as a form of critical thinking that aspires for better rather than a static blueprint vision of a world. This essay wants to avoid oppression at all costs and does not view totalitarianism as intrinsic in utopian thinking. Next, there will be analysis on two liberal types of 'realistic utopia'. Afterwards, postcolonial studies analysis will be used to address the issues of these types. Lastly, there will analysis on 'real utopia' and the use of guideposts in pursuing realistic utopian change.

'Realistic Utopia' Type 1: John Rawls' Vision of a Better World

Rawls' 'realistic utopia' is a vision of an ideal society rather than a pathway towards social transformation based on his values of social justice, limited by human nature (Böker, 2017). Rawls believes 'facts' are not a given, but he takes into account laws, human habits, historical conditions and social values in his 'realistic utopia' without much questioning (Audard, 2014). Rawls' 'Society of Peoples' is his 'realistic utopia', one that pushes everyone to his type of progressive liberalism (Audard, 2014, p.690). Rawls' utopia is open-ended to an extent. Rawls does not want to create universal laws as he does not want to force progressive liberalism on any society, however all would accept 'diversity' and a definition of the 'common good' (Audard, 2014, p.690). The vagueness of Rawls' 'achievable social world' makes his utopia limited, in addition what Rawls sees as possible is limited to what is possible today (Böker, 2017). What is deemed possible, is barely challenged.

This is shown in Rawls' 'realistic utopia' of 'Kazanistan' (Hatzendberger, 2013). 'Kazanistan' is explained by Rawls in 'Laws of the Peoples' (1999) to show an imagined and ideal Islamic people. For Rawls, it is utopian because they utilise his principle of 'justice by fairness' and whilst they are still culturally unique, they respect the general liberal values of being in the 'Society of Peoples' (Hatzendberger, 2013). 'Kazanistan' is barely near what Rawls himself would deem as his ideal utopia but it is 'realistically utopian' for Rawls (Hatzendberger, 2013). So, this begs the question whether 'realistic utopia' is utopian if it sacrifices our utopian ideals for the truths which stand in the way of our ambitions. 'Kazanistan' is not liberal idealism, it is compensatory because Rawls uses 'real facts' to determine that this Eastern model would not want liberal individualism, but associationism with only some equality (Hatzendberger, 2013). The paternalism involved and historical compromising in 'Kazanistan' would lead one to assume that Rawls views Islamic democracy as 'unrealistic' (Hatzendberger, 2013, p.114). Rawls does not challenge his own Western centrism or prejudices, shown in how the name 'Kazanistan' is an Orientalist imagining. This points out that he has not challenged the status quo or our assumptions on what is possible, crucial aspects to utopian thinking. Thus, Rawls robs utopia of its critical thinking as resistance and as a method towards radical change. Rawls' 'realistic utopia' is determined by his political subjectivities, damaging his utopian impulse and allowing the utopia to be captured by present dominant truths. 'Kazanistan' is an example of why this 'realistic utopia' is barely utopian and not part of the concept of utopia advocated for in this essay.

Type 2: Deliberative Democracy and 'Realistic Utopia'

Another definition of 'realistic utopia' is one advocated by Marit Böker. This type tries to strike a balance between reality and utopia, without compromising the imagination (Böker, 2017). If the imagination is constrained, utopian thinking is just ideal theory with a fancy name (Böker, 2017). Instead of being about implementing policy, this utopia is about meta-visioning and furthering

widespread debate of ideas leading to 'deliberative democracy', where ideas are thoroughly discussed and the status quo is challenged (Böker, 2017). There is no end goal here, what is important is the process. However, there is no specific vision, instead it combines utopianism with pluralism to make an open-ended future. For Böker (2017), it is 'realistic' because it is not about implementing policy but a way of thinking. This essay argues that utopian imagining is not restricted here. The goal is to create a democracy full of utopian ideas and it is 'realistic' in that it does not pursue an optimistic plan (Böker, 2017). Böker (2017) wants a society based on pluralism and on a contestation of utopian ideas in the hope that equal voice and new possibilities will lead to a more just society. But Böker (2017) is not pursuing utopian ideals himself and offers no guideposts, instead he advocates a deliberative democracy that contests multiple ideas of 'realistic utopias'. In his deliberative democracy, the 'utopian spirit' is vital for critique and for a less apathetic democracy. Böker (2017) wants to change how democracy operates, to make participation fairer. This is valuable, but the 'utopian spirit' should also be used to pursue social and economic equality. Deliberative democracy may lead to the agency that is needed to create social transformation, but Böker does not offer a path towards how we can obtain agency for radical change. Steven Friedman (2012) also advocates a theory similar to Böker's type of 'realistic utopia'. He regards utopia as significant in establishing further political contestation and therefore advocates for open-ended utopias (Friedman, 2012). But again he is vague and is not focused on making a fundamentally more equal society. Both Friedman and Böker do not acknowledge how we need to change our ideological assumptions, how structural power needs to be challenged, such as with class, gender and racial privileges. We need to spread the wealth to shape our democracy and give voice to the voiceless.

'Realistic Utopia' type 3: 'Real Utopia', Roadmaps and Guideposts

Building on our analysis on the two types of 'realistic utopia' mentioned, there will now be analysis on Marxist theorist Eric Olin Wright's (2010) 'real utopia' thinking to build on 'realistic utopia'.

Wright believes utopia can 'provide empirical and theoretical grounding for radical democratic egalitarian visions of an alternative world' (2010, p.1). 'Real utopia' is described as a way of thinking about social transformation that keeps our innate 'deepest utopian aspirations' but embraces the real world's tests and boundaries of change for the imagination not to be unrealistic (Wright, 2015, p.217). Wright (2010) takes into consideration realistic constraints like the human psychology and social feasibility to determine whether the utopia in question is a 'real' possibility or a fantasy. Wright tries to solve the tension between dream and actual possibility. There are similarities with Rawls as both are in the pursuit of a world that is in line with their individual ideas of social justice. Rawls offers a vague ideal progressive liberal world that is constrained by 'real facts', in contrast Wright (2017) explains 'real utopias' as guideposts to social transformation for human flourishing. 'Real utopias' are alternative ways of living in the capitalist world, situated inside it (Wright, 2017). They inspire and build on our world in a pluralistic and contested fashion, attributes of Böker's 'realistic utopia'. But Wright goes further as to want a redistribution of power and to reorganise the power structures, indicating they could potentially act as postcolonial heterotopias (Wright, 2017). A 'real utopia' can be theoretical, such as 'universal basic income' or empirical like 'urban participatory budgeting', an act of direct democracy where constituents participate in making the council budget, an example being the region of Porto Alegre onwards from 1989 (Wright, 2017, pp.153-155). 'Real utopia' indicates that utopia has been or can be implemented (Wright, 2017). Wright (2017) wants to put the utopian imagination in check like all 'realistic utopia', with 'the real potential of humanity' to stop unintended consequences of pursuing visions of a better world (2010, pp.6-8).

Wright's guideposts to social transformation keep the 'utopian spirit' better than the other types of 'realistic utopia' mentioned because there is less focus on 'real facts' and more on how the imagination can shape our world into a more equal world. It is the most valuable type of 'realistic utopia' for our understanding of utopia, but it is still compensating for possible consequences of the utopian imagination. It does not challenge our ideological convictions enough as what is possible is still constrained by what we perceive as reality. Individual utopias are also categorised as fantasy,

ignoring their potential for inspiring real change. Another criticism is that Wright does not challenge the racial and gender power structures sufficiently that must be resisted as they will stand in the way of radical political change.

Universal Basic Income

Wright (2017) calls UBI a 'real utopia' but his worries about it show that utopian imagination is too constrained by his perception on what is possible. UBI involves giving 'free money' to make sure everyone has the right to live above the so-called 'poverty line'. For Wright (2017), this means redesigning income distribution to eliminate poverty, but would mean getting rid of other state income transfers, such as child benefit. Crucially, Wright (2017, pp.157-159) mentions that if incentives are destroyed and many people decide to live on UBI alone, there could be economic collapse and UBI would be deemed a fanatical. Firstly, UBI does not necessarily mean getting rid of other state grants and his 'realistic' fears are cynicism, worries not based on facts but perceptions. Rutger Bregman has a similar 'realistic utopia' that is not a blueprint of 'high-resolution' but one that 'offers not solutions but guideposts' (2017,p.13). He argues that experiments of UBI, such as in 1969, Speenhamland, England show that people want to spend their newfound time and security to innovate and be productive rather than settling on UBI income alone (2017, pp.78-82). To add, why should we not aspire to go further than UBI and pursue a World Basic Income of \$30 a month (Bannister, 2019). This could be done by funding it through an 'international carbon tax and dividend' and can be spread through bank transfer texts in the poorest countries (Bannister, 2019). Why not pursue climate justice principles and tackle poverty by using the imagination to take advantage of the decentralised technology at hand for egalitarian purposes (Bannister, 2019) This represents how we must not compromise our values and aims by going for 'realistic' and 'feasible' policies. If we say an idea is not possible, then it will be given that tag. If we allow it to influence society, then it can have an impact in the journey towards social transformation.

Postcolonial Political Analysis on 'Realistic Utopia'

This essay argues Rawls and Wright are right to use utopia for implementing ideals because utopia should be used to pursue change for a better world. Böker is right to talk about contestation, open-endedness and pluralism in debating utopian alternatives. The problem is realism. Who decides what is possible? We need a dose of realism in politics. But by combining utopia with realism, there seems to be an agenda to pursue change without changing the overarching power structures. For utopia to be deliberative and open-ended, it does not need to be 'realistic'. In fact, making it 'realistic' makes it less able to do these tasks.

Postcolonial studies are about thinking critically about the lasting effects of colonialism. This involves challenging the way we see the world, truth, spaces and power. Power is not only domination and influence, it is also relational and productive (Abrahamsen, 2016). Power is not always repressive because it creates and shapes our identities, therefore we do not just hold power, it surrounds us according to Michel Foucault (Abrahamsen, 2016). Power produces truths and rationality, which categorises knowledge as modern or traditional (Abrahamsen, 2016). Truth, what is deemed to be possible is not objective 'but the effect of discourse' (Abrahamsen, 2016, p.156). Edward Said's 'Orientalism' (1978) is an example of how power is produced. Like other geographical areas, the Orient (the East) is a man-made category that started as an idea and became reality through Western thought, imagery and vocabulary (Said, 1978). Orientalism is about how the West made the Orient its 'other' to define itself as modern and its 'other' as backward and exotic (Said, 1978). This can be seen in Rawls' description of 'Kazanistan'. This shows that dominant discourse through relational power shapes truth, meaning the Western perspective on the world shapes what we believe to be right.

By assuming utopia needs to accept 'social facts' to be enacted, we are assuming dominant Western scientific knowledge and our perspectives on what is possible as more or less objective. Instead,

utopia's primary role should be to challenge the concepts that make global inequality possible, as change starts with critical thinking (Abrahamsen, 2016). Utopia needs to be open-ended and plural in a way that can help cultures take control of their own knowledge and ideas, without being prisoners of knowledge (Mignolo, 2003). Utopia opens new ways of understanding (Mignolo, 2003). This essay argues that to make utopian change, utopia needs to challenge truths instead of accepting them, as only by resisting what is deemed possible will radical change happen.

Foucault is against utopia because he wanted immanent political struggle and saw utopia too entangled in Western universal prophesising (Kelly, 2014). Foucault argued 'utopias are sites with no real place' because they deny the complexity of the world and will lead to nowhere (1986, p.3). However, Foucault expressed the importance of practical utopia, heterotopias which occupy 'real space' (Roman, 2015). Foucault (1986) explained there is now an obsession with spaces and explains heterotopias are counter-spaces within societies that act as a resistance against the dominant culture. It would be easy to dismiss utopia in postcolonial politics as Western intellectual occupied space that reinforces order as utopias are unreal, preventing change in the 'real' world. Foucault's (1986) dismissiveness of utopia comes from how he regards utopia, he views utopia as intrinsically 'unreal' and in the traditional sense, as a single rigid narrative. This essay argues against this rigid understanding of utopia. We can incorporate heterotopia in our definition of utopia because we want utopia to be a form of resistance, to be plural and alive. We can learn new forms of understanding the world by discussing our individual utopias, which are more like heterotopias than linear narratives that aspire to an end goal (Chatterjee, 1999). This essay argues utopia must be understood in a way that transcends many cultures because there needs to be multiple visions of utopia for it to be pluralistic and dynamic in pursuing radical change.

This essay argues the utopian imagination should not be tweaked to make utopia 'realistic' or else utopia will lose its mechanism for critical thinking against the hegemonic narrative. We need to move towards radical change by resisting and not accepting ideological 'social facts'. Rawls' 'Realistic

utopia' fails in imagining an ideal world that has a utopian impulse. It falls into Marxist Miguel Abensour's neo-utopianism category, utopias that focus on a closed and realised system that is not offering a new world, but 'proposing adjustments to the existing order', trying to rationalise the current system further (2016, p.36). 'Realistic utopia' works as a mechanism for advocating and inspiring progressive politics, for example as shown by Bregman (2017). It can increase contestation and pluralism in democratic debate against the status quo too, shown by Böker (2017). 'Real utopia' must be taken into consideration in discussing how to pursue radical change using guideposts and enacting small pockets of utopia on a constant journey towards social transformation. But it is argued that 'real utopia' cuts off many utopian alternatives that are deemed not possible now. By accepting present 'social facts', 'realistic utopia' cannot act as a form of resistance against the dominant ideology if it does not challenge it further, such as how postcolonial studies does. Most importantly, we cannot sacrifice the imagination, the most important ingredient in utopian thinking or else we lose sight of new possibilities. Utopia asks us to believe in possibilities that we would otherwise dismiss as unrealisable. When combined with realism, it loses some of this function.

Chapter 3: Marxist Perspectives on Utopia and 'Educated Hope'

So far, this work has argued that utopia's political functions are as critical thinking to challenge the status quo and inspire new possibilities, but most importantly it works as a mechanism towards social transformation. 'Realistic utopia' shows how utopia can complement pluralism, democratic contestation and it can be used to guide us towards radical change. However realism can eliminate new possibilities through our assumptions on reality and what is realisable or not. It has been demonstrated that the utopian imagination must not be compromised or else the contestation of ideas and of new possibilities will disappear. The utopian imagination must be used to pursue radical change and not only to challenge the status quo because we need to strive for better. History shows that utopia is a useful tool for enacting radical change. To build on this, there will now be considerable Marxist and postcolonial studies analysis to show the usefulness of the concept 'educated hope' in pursuing utopian change. Utopia can give us hope, turning our desires into concrete possibilities. Utopia will be continued to be understood as a method towards enacting social transformation. This involves imaginary worlds to challenge the status quo, guideposts to help us not become static or rigid in the pursuit of better but most importantly we need to believe change is possible and not just want social transformation. This will be shown in this chapter.

The Relationship Between Marxism and Utopia

Utopia is highly contested in Marxism. The easiest place to start is Engels and Marx's opposition to utopia because they believed socialist utopians' ideas, such as those of Robert Owens and Charles Fourier, had no structure, no actors and had fanatical ideas (Jameson, 1976). However, they did not completely dismiss utopian socialists, they acknowledged utopias spoke the truth, being what society and individuals truly desire (Jameson, 1976). Marx saw value in how utopia anticipated the

future, as he viewed it as abstract because it has no mechanism for implementation, making it unrealisable (Geoghegan, 1987).

From the 1930's there has been an intense appeal to renew utopia in Marxism, to find it a role. This was in part due to Marxism's focus turning to the present movement and the impact of culture rather than waiting for a revolution (Geoghegan, 1987). For example, Theodore Adorno's analysis that consumer capitalism's main commodity 'is its own ideology' led to explaining how the control of culture suppresses new alternatives (Jameson, 1976, p.57). Herbert Marcuse and Ernst Bloch, both from the Frankfurt School believed there needed to be more analysis in how society regresses individuals and how society needs to change its perception on the future to challenge the status quo (Geoghegan, 1987). This is because it was deemed that the Marxist critique of consumer society benefited 'big business', leading to protest and political alternatives being suppressed (Geoghegan, 1987). Marxist criticism was too vague, there needed to be more analysis on the human and cultural level, not just the scientific to better understand how to challenge the status quo. The Frankfurt School of thought was broad, for example there was Walter Benjamin who combined utopian social transformation with Jewish 'redemption', referring to how God will redeem the Jewish people. Benjamin valued utopia because he saw revolutions as coming from utopia, due to utopia's successes in history. (Gur-Ze'ev, 1998). Karl Manheim explained that without 'reality transcending elements' in our world, the 'decay of the human will' would happen. This essay argues that utopia offers these crucial elements. (Geoghegan, 1987, p.38). Utopia was revitalised in the Frankfurt School quickly from the 1930's onwards, allowing the likes of Levitas and Jameson to continue the work on utopia's functions. Utopia is a highly contested concept in Marxism, but the idea regained prominence through utopia's supposed ability to inspire new possibilities inside us, to contest ideas and to lead us on a journey towards social transformation.

Utopia, Ernst Bloch and 'Educated Hope'

Next, there will be analysis on Ernst Bloch and his understanding of utopia and 'educated hope'.

Bloch believed utopia was innate in human nature, that we all desire better. Bloch wanted to counter the culture of despair that led to the two world wars (Skrimshire, 2008). He believed the 'spirit of utopia', in other words the utopian imagination and the belief a better world is possible, could counter pessimism and despair, in turn giving society the belief in a better world (Skrimshire, 2008). Bloch wanted utopia to be plural and contested, not a rigid narrative on a quest to an end destination. Born in 1885, Bloch witnessed a lack of joy and a lot of suffering in Germany, he wanted to create a theory where politics is just, social and ethical by learning that we rely on each other in the community for individual happiness (Zipes, 2019). To find meaning in our lives, Bloch explained that we need to discover hope and realise we can avoid man-made catastrophes (Zipes, 2019). Without discovering or using this utopian hope, 'The world stripped of anticipation turns cold and grey' and we become less able to face catastrophic events (Jacoby, 1999, p.181). Bloch (1986) understood hope as something that can be educated and as a crucial alternative socialist theory based on emotion.

Bloch's ground-breaking 'Principle of Hope' (1986) first published in 1947, is about understanding that emotion needs to be a part of politics, as politics needs to feel more personal and meaningful for the individual. Politics understood only in the scientific, becomes distant and uninspiring, making it unable to create belief in new possibilities to challenge the status quo. For Bloch, this meant making utopia his magnum opus, giving it a place in Marxism to advocate the importance of hope. Utopian thinking is necessary because 'thinking means venturing beyond' the expected and accepted (Bloch, 1986, p.xxxii). Utopia allows us to think of unexpected and innovative possibilities. If we do not push the boundaries of expectations, Bloch (1986) believed, we will simply be static and stuck, unable to find meaning and happiness in life.

Furthermore, politics should not be about narrow visions of reality, society needs many alternatives for an open and hopeful society (Bloch, 1986). Bloch explained that for this to happen, society needs 'educated hope', to activate the 'Not-Yet' in us to find new meaning in life and discover a willingness to change the world (Bloch, 1986, p.195). This means countering the accepted order of things, disagreeing with what is deemed possible and realising there is an enormous amount of unoccupied space yet to be ventured into (Bloch, 1986). In this sense, utopian 'educated hope' is about allowing ourselves to open-up to discover our true selves, to search for new alternatives and to challenge the status quo.

Paul Tillich's understanding of utopia adds to this, taking a theological route. Tillich regarded utopia as natural to humans as 'to have utopia', is to strive for fulfilment, something we all want (1979, p.296). Utopia opens new possibilities, it is truthful because it expresses what we want but utopia also holds untruth (Tillich, 1979). For example, utopia can cover impossibilities as real and it allows us to imagine unfruitful alternatives when imagined rigidly (Tillich, 1979). Utopia, if it leads down the negative path is fixed to pursue an end point of history, which would likely lead to mass disillusionment (Tillich, 1979). But what is important here is that the faith and 'spirit of utopia' overcomes the untruth of it because the belief of a joyful and fulfilling future keeps us going (Tillich, 1979). This is similar to Bloch's concrete and abstract utopia categories, telling us not all utopia is socially helpful. But this essay argues even rigid utopias can inspire us to think critically of a better world by learning from their mistakes, such as with Bellamy's utopia in 'Looking Backward' (1888). 'Educated hope' teaches us to struggle and to live for the now by searching and believing in a better future. With this newfound belief in human life, we can challenge the dominant ideology which wants us to be either satisfied with the world or pessimistic about the future.

The Journey towards Utopia

Now there will be an explanation of how 'educated hope' can allow utopia to be a catalyst for a better world (Levitas, 1990). This essay argues that utopia creates a path to radical change by raising society's consciousness, allowing society to find new possibilities. 'Educated hope' is what give society the belief that a better world is possible. Levitas (1990) explains that the desires from utopia need to be turned into hope, to create the belief that our aspirations of a better world are possible. Utopia with 'educated hope' can change our ways of thinking and shape our consciousness, to gain the understanding of our 'Not-Yet' form and realise we can have better. We must not constrain utopia, or we will limit our abilities to imagine, strive and enact a better world. Bloch believed utopia is everywhere, it is embedded in culture and philosophy but the issue for Bloch is too many of these utopias are 'abstract', merely wishful thinking that does not really impact the political (Levitas, 2013). Another problem is many abstract utopias are controlled by the elite to deepen and empower their social positions further (Levitas, 2013, p.5). That is why the process of 'Docta Spes', introducing 'educated hope' in society is crucial for Bloch because utopia needs to be given to the masses uncorrupted and to turn oppositional desire into wilful thinking (Levitas, 2013, p.5). This is crucial for the journey to open-ended radical change. This essay argues we need to understand that all utopia has a role on the journey to social transformation, but some are bigger contributors than others. By understanding 'abstract utopia', we can learn from its mistakes, for example that we should avoid dominant ideological imagery and selfish dystopian traits to aid us on the quest to open-ended radical change. Utopia combined with 'educated hope' allows collective groups to counter the dominant ideology and go on a journey to the open-ended goals of utopian radical change.

Jameson explains that utopia must challenge the ideas that are filtered through the dominant ideology and create opposition. Utopia must not be reformism of the dominant ideology enforced by our 'universal ideological convictions' (Jameson, 2007, pp.231-232). 'Educated hope' can counter this pessimistic feeling. Then we can search for new possibilities and advocate and build on them

when the dominant ideology is breaking. Sargent (2005) argues there is a cycle where the dominant utopia becomes dystopia and is overthrown by another utopia, showing the important connection between utopia and dystopia. Sargent (2005) argues that alternative undominant utopias, existing in opposition to the dominant utopia are key to the balance of the world. We must believe that hegemonic powers do not last forever. We are just told what is possible by the dominant ideology to keep society under its control. Sargent (2005) is right that we need multiple visions of utopia if we are to achieve radical, but not absolute and oppressive change. For the method of utilising utopia to help the collective group achieve radical social change, they must believe change is possible, thus why 'educated hope' is important. Levitas makes the vital point that, 'the dream becomes vision only when hope is invested in an agency capable of transformation' (1990, p.200). For utopia to aid towards social transformation, utopia must include 'educated hope', which tells us to believe in new possibilities and ourselves. It is argued society's mindset must be less ideologically controlled to find this agency for radical change and must be ready to act on alternatives when the moment is right.

Marxism, Postcolonial Political Resistance and the Concept of Utopia

In addition, truth and power structures must be challenged to find this transformative agency. Articulating our desires and challenging the dominant ideology is a significant part of postcolonial studies. If utopia acts as postcolonial resistance, then it will challenge the concepts of truth and power better. Both understand that change starts with critical thinking and challenging accepted perceptions of the world. Postcolonial studies and the method of utilising utopia are compatible because by using the postcolonial lens, we can see how imaginings of a better world and utopian practices for creating hope are constant in how postcolonial people resist and challenge the dominant ideology.

It is argued by understanding utopia as compatible with postcolonial studies, we envisage more clearly how utopia should challenge the dominant ideology and that it should open new possibilities

for oppressed people. The 'spirit of utopia' allows the voiceless a voice through a new sense of hope and belief in alternatives, giving them the tools to challenge and re-shape their socio-political situations. Utopia can establish hope, which has been denied by neoliberalism and its impact on culture to stop the belief in alternative systems as explained by Marcuse (Fernández Buey, 2016, p.97). Hope is predominant in postcolonial studies, with authors like Ngugi Wa Thiong, Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche and Ben Okri being examples for imagining Heimat, searching for the change and peace we are longing for (Ashcroft, 2012). Hope is often present in postcolonial utopian imaginings because it acts as a form of resistance and belief in a better world. For example, in Indigenous Australians' culture there is a process called 'Dreaming', focusing on being at one with nature to maintain life and order (Dutton, 2010, pp.246-247). 'Dreaming' connects the past of their ancestors to the present community and to the future (Dutton, 2010, p.247). It is hard to translate these ideas, but they are messages of hope and illustrate the importance of connecting together culture, people and the land (Dutton, 2010). This is an example of an alternative way of being to Western civilisation where we can see hope acting as resistance to the dominant ideology. There are now indigenous communities that live alongside others, continuing to counter colonial creations and shows how imagined and practiced utopia can act as resistance to colonialism (Dutton, 2010). Postcolonial studies show how the learning and practicing of hope through utopian imagining is important in resisting the dominant ideology. This shows how utopia can act as postcolonial resistance.

Postcolonial studies show that it is possible to challenge our ideological convictions using utopian imaginings. This indicates that utopia provides postcolonial studies with self-critical and reflective possibilities that help challenge ideological power structures (Abensour, 2016).

It is argued placing utopia in postcolonial studies benefits our understanding of utopia as resistance to the dominant ideology. The utopian impulse is everywhere, the word utopia might be Western made, but the idea of imagining our desires into possibility can be seen across the world (Dutton,

2010). In turn, this understanding of utopia should shape how we pursue radical change into being open-ended, non-aggressive and pluralistic.

Realising Utopia: Abdullah Öcalan's Democratic Confederalism of Kurdistan (2017)

To expand on why pluralism and open-endedness are important in utopia and how hope can be established, it is useful to analyse an attempted utopian community. Abdullah Öcalan's Democratic Confederalism of Kurdistan (2017) is a challenge to the nation-state, but they live side by side. Democratic Confederalism is about putting politics and morality back into society, governing by collective and voluntary consensus (Öcalan, 2017). Here, people are elected directly to administrate what the people decide (Öcalan, 2017). Diversity, ecology and feminism are dominant theories that have developed Öcalan's thought (2017). This can be analysed as postcolonial resistance because Öcalan (2017) opposes state boundaries made by colonialists, instead he calls for Kurds in Syria, Iran, Turkey and Iraq to unite under an umbrella democratic confederation. This is an attempted utopia that did not achieve many of its goals (Öcalan is in a Turkish prison cell) but it represents a plural, inclusive alternative that attempts to be fairer than capitalism, albeit not perfect. Instead it acts as a heterotopia, a society living in resistance and harmony next to the one society it no longer wants to be. It shows a willingness to move utopia from perfection (there is no call for the destruction of the nation-state) to open-endedness with the possibility of implementing the alternative remaining intact. This is because 'educated hope' has been established, a step on the way to social transformation. Öcalan's world is an opposition to the capitalist ideology without forcing his world on everyone. It's just for those who want his alternative to a capitalist white male-dominated culture and neo-conservative law. Öcalan's utopia (2017) is the embodiment of hope of a better world with a pluralistic vision that is searching for agency alongside other systems.

'Educated Hope' and the Utopian Imagination in Contrast to Negative Political Moods

Bloch made utopia his magnum opus because he wanted to counter despair, the 'there is no alternative' attitude (Skrimshire, 2008, pp.2-4). For utopia to be about a journey towards social transformation, it needs to counter this attitude with 'educated hope'. Social emotions shape our politics, such as pessimism which as an attitude is the tendency to expect the worst. Pessimism can as a theory according to Joshua Foa Dienstag (2006), be a weapon to oppose traditional assumptions and ideology. It can help us rethink time against constant progress, opposing the dominance of liberal capitalism (Dienstag, 2006). Pessimism wants to uncomplicate our existence (Dienstag, 2006). Albert Camus believed in relative utopia, but he was also to an extent a pessimist (Dienstag, 2006, p.45). It is not scepticism, knowing nothing nor nihilism, wanting nothing, however pessimism is dangerous because it tells us to expect nothing. At the very least, we need utopia and hope to counter or balance pessimism's quiet but powerful philosophy and its loud attitude.

We need to understand that 'educated hope', is the condition of opening new possibilities by challenging these negative emotions, allowing us to find the 'Not-Yet' inside us to anticipate what is next (Fernández Buey, 2016, p.102). William Chaloupka (1999) insists that to counter negative emotions in politics we should make politics more lively, deliberative and honest. These are values that the method of utilising utopia can help to install through establishing 'educated hope' and the belief in new possibilities. We require a balance of emotions in politics. But as Skrimshire (2008) explains, hope is what gives life meaning. The big political question for Skrimshire (2008) is how we can counter fear, alarm and the way they are politically managed. This essay argues 'educated hope' through utopia can provide society with the belief to search for alternatives and to believe that they are possible instead of being in fear of the future. Slavoj Žižek insists we need to focus on our emotions and use our utopian instincts to question the 'rules of the game' (2005, p.259). This means to enact radical change, we need to counter the feeling that the future will be catastrophic and do what Rosa Luxemburg believed and shape our future by questioning the ideological power around us

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because as Luxemburg said, 'Freedom is freedom for those who think differently' (Žižek, 2005, p.259). This essay argues utopia can produce and construct real possibilities by being a mechanism for critical thinking and by producing hope that can establish belief in new alternatives. We should live for the journey towards social transformation, being prepared for what is to come by continuously learning and imagining new possibilities.

Conclusion

This essay argues that utopia allows us to tackle and balance out the pessimism and other negative emotions in our politics that teach us that no other world or way of living is possible. 'Educated hope' provided by utopia is needed to search and believe in alternatives and to find the agency needed for social transformation. Levitas has concerns that utopian studies' shift from content to form has made utopia's function primarily social criticism and not social transformation (Ingram, 2016). This essay agrees but has argued that utopia's main function is as social transformation by analysing its functions not focusing on content, to avoid a rigid picture of a utopian imagining. However, critical thinking is crucial for the journey towards radical change and to find new possibilities. For James Ingram, the 'utopian spirit' is too abstract and risks utopia becoming 'everywhere and nowhere' (2016, p.xx). This essay has argued there needs to be a focus on how the 'spirit of utopia' and the concept of hope enacted with social agency can help on the journey to radical change. Ingram (2016) is right to insist that utopia needs a specific character and to fill the intellectual gap of new alternatives. He is right that utopia as method can be too abstract, but ironically Ingram (2016) offers no solutions, just that utopia must have political functions. He inevitably leaves utopia broad despite calling for more clarity. It has been shown that utopia needs to be broad because utopia needs to offer hope and alternatives in multiple arenas and cultures to act as resistance to the dominant ideology and avoid authoritarian tendencies.

For new radical alternatives to have a powerful voice through utopia, we need to have resistance and critical thinking against the dominant ideology. We need to inspire society to search for new possibilities and believe they are realisable. The method of utilising utopia for social transformation can do these things. Utopians need to be self-critical. Contrary to the dominant narrative, they have been for some time according to Miguel Abensour (2016), but we need to stop compensating for fear of what could happen, forcing out the utopian imagination and its ability to transform society and our politics. One common theme throughout has been about the tension between so-called real

and imaginary utopia, but this essay argues that we should not limit utopia with our presumptions on 'social facts', as this constrains the utopian imagination with our pessimistic view of the way the world works. The utopian imagination can be practical and real by showing us new political alternatives and how to get there. Some utopia will be more politically useful than others, but we should not dismiss imaginary utopias because they can help inspire us to think more creatively about the future.

Utopia should be envisioned as a method towards radical change because we need to realise change is possible before enacting it. Crucially, we need to focus on the journey to social transformation.

This essay argues that utopia is ultimately about searching for new political possibilities in the present. Utopian novels and practices help spread utopian ideas and inspire individuals to think critically about the present and to search for new alternatives. It is necessary to take 'realistic utopia's' focus on contestation and pluralism and 'real utopia's' pursuit for social transformation with guideposts. It is argued we need to take away the realism, which distorts the utopian imagination and presumes utopia asks too much, making it irrelevant and as asking too little, grinding it down to reformism (Ingram, 2016, p.xvi). The Marxist concept of 'educated hope' is vital to the method of utilising utopia because it acknowledges the importance of establishing belief in new possibilities for the future. Postcolonial studies enhance the method of utilising utopia by developing how utopia should challenge the status quo. Utopias will always discriminate against groups if they take a rigid form, if we can talk openly about our utopian dreams, we may be able to install hope. This can lead to change in our local, national or other communities. Hope inspired through imagining utopia and critical thinking has been a focus because it is needed currently for those who do not believe some sort of radical change is possible even if they want it.

After the debate on the concept of utopia, we need discussions on what a fairer and more equal world looks like. From the year 2020, it has become even clearer that for 99% of us, our health and quality of life depends on each other, locally and globally. It can be said that not just liberals and

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socialists should want 'utopian' policies, such as 'universal basic income' as a safety net but conservatives too as they want to protect their society, institutions and traditions from climate change, inequality and pandemics. When crisis arrives, the neoliberal capitalist structure we have is not made to tackle the issues mentioned above. We need to imagine utopias because we need to think critically and be continuously open to learning to realise new possibilities. We need 'educated hope' to believe in the possibilities of our desires. Additionally, we need guideposts and policies, such as 'universal basic income', to know what direction to go in. This can transform our society for the better, moving towards a world with no extreme poverty and more equality.

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