TOWARDS A NOMADIC UTOPIANISM: GILLES DELEUZE AND THE GOOD PLACE THAT IS NO PLACE

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Abstract

This thesis utilizes the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze alongside theory from the field of 'utopian studies' in order to think through how the concepts of utopia and utopianism might be relevant in an age that seems to have given up on the future. It develops – and argues in favour of – a 'nomadic utopianism', which proceeds through non-hierarchical organisation, maximises what Deleuze calls 'difference-in-itself' and creates new forms of living as it proceeds. From this, nomadic utopias are produced, meaning that the relationship between utopianism and utopia is inverted, such that the former is ontologically prior to the latter. I show how such an approach maintains an etymological fidelity to the concept of utopia as 'the good place that is no place'. I also develop the concept of 'state utopianism', in which a utopian vision functions as a 'perfect', transcendent lack orienting political organisation to its realisation and reproduction. I argue that this is a dystopian politics, and consequently that the state utopia is a dystopia. Contrary to received wisdom – which sees today's 'capitalist realism' as anti-utopian – I argues that the contemporary world can be seen as a state utopia in which 'there is no alternative'. This makes utopia a central force in contemporary ideology.

These two forms should not be seen simply as opposites, however, and this thesis also shows how nomadic utopias can ossify into state utopias through the emergence of tyrannies of habit. These theoretical concepts are then applied to works of utopian and dystopian literature (Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*, Albert Meister's *The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg* and Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*); and the practices of 'musicking' (with a focus on the symphony orchestra and collective improvisation) and education. It is hoped that this will offer a new way of theorising utopia and utopianism, as well as generating a productive political approach from the thought of Gilles Deleuze, and contributing to debates on the political function of musical and educational practice.

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Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

Utopia 'after the future'

It is easier to imagine the end of the world...

In recent years, those of us in the global north who seek a world beyond capitalism have become horribly acquainted with a paraphrased claim of Frederic Jameson's – 'it is', we frequently utter, 'easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism'.[1] That this phrase rings so true is testament to the horrifying power of Fukuyama's assertion that the triumph of liberal democracy and capitalism constitutes 'the end of history' (1993), and to the ability of neoliberalism to emerge from any number of crises more powerful than ever (Karamessini, 2012; Klein, 2008; Sears et al., 2012; Johnson, 2011). We live in a period of 'capitalist realism' that has utterly co-opted the social imaginary (Fisher, 2009a): 'the real' defeating its old, idealist enemy 'utopia', such that 'socialists and leftists do not dream of a future qualitatively different from the present' (Jacoby, 1999: 10).

Others, meanwhile, have suggested that we do at least have visions of a future qualitatively different from the present, but that these are visions of (ostensibly, at least) a *worse* future. Where Marx and Engels once scorned those who sought 'compensation' in dreams of a utopian future (Marx and Engels, 2004: 46; Engels, 2008), it seems that now we can only escape via visions of technological and civilisational collapse (Duncombe in More, 2012: xix; Cunningham, 2011).[2] We gorge ourselves on 'ruins porn', 'disasterbating' furiously like smug Noahs – imagining that we will be among those vindicated as destruction is wrought

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1   The original Jameson quote is in a 1991 essay entitled 'The Antimonies of Postmodernity', and is as follows: 'It seems easier for us today to imagine the thoroughgoing deterioration of the earth and of nature than the breakdown of late capitalism; and perhaps that is due to some weakness in our imagination' (1998: 50). Slavoj Žižek then paraphrases this (vaguely referencing Jameson) by saying 'it seems easier to imagine the "end of the world" than a far more modest change in the mode of production' (1994: 1). Somewhat bizarrely, Jameson then fails to recognise himself as the source of this quote – writing "If it is so, as someone has observed, that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism...' (2007: 199). Mark Fisher, meanwhile, returned the quote to prominence by using it as the catalyst in his *Capitalist Realism* (2009a).

2   Stephen Duncombe points to 'Postcards from the Future', an exhibition held at the Museum of London from October 2010 to March 2011. This depicted a series of post-climate change Londons by illustrators Robert Graves and Didier Madoc-Jones. In them, the city is shown flooded like Venice; the Gherkin is used as a high-density tower-block for refugees from the equitorial lands where there is insufficient food; there are paddy fields in Parliament Square; and there are slums around Buckingham Palace. John Cunningham, meanwhile, cites the popularity of Yves Marchand and Romain Meffre's *The Ruins of Detroit*: a lavish coffee-table book of photographs of abandoned affluence in the American city; the television series *Life After People*, which depicts a world left to nature following the extinction of humankind; and the huge number of Flickr groups dedicated to photographs depicting industrial decay.

on those around us (Adams, 2008). Whilst there may be a wrathful utopianism in such apocalyptic visions – bankers disappearing beneath the waves as our ark of the righteous sails on – it hardly needs to be stated that they cannot be central to an emancipatory political praxis. Those who advocate creating such a change via human agency cannot answer (or are not concerned by) the fact that such a collapse would result in the deaths of billions (Flood, 2008), whilst the realities of environmental disaster would be (and indeed already are being) heaped not upon those whose greed has caused it, but upon the planet's poorest, creating a 'combined and uneven apocalypse' – as Evan Calder Williams has it (2010).[3]

After the future

An interesting variant on the 'end of history' narrative is articulated in Franco 'Bifo' Berardi's 2011 book *After the Future*. For Berardi – like Jacoby – our era is one utterly without any sense of future (which is not to say that we do not experience the passing of time, but that the 'psychological construct' of the future as a space into which progress will extend is no longer viable). 'In the last three decades of the [twentieth] century', he writes, 'the *utopian imagination* was slowly overturned, and has been replaced by the *dystopian imagination*' (2011: 17; cf. Jacoby, 1999: 156). Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's *What Is Philosophy?*, Berardi argues that this has resulted in widespread depression: not of the individual subject, but as a social symptom: 'an inability to find sense though action, through communication, through life' (2011: 64).

Despite this depression, Berardi does not call for a renewal of futurist utopianism. We can no longer believe that 'notwithstanding the darkness of the present, the future will be bright' (18), but we *should not* either, for '[t]he rise of the myth of the future is rooted in modern capitalism, in the experience of expansion of the economy and knowledge' (ibid.). To believe in the future in such a manner is to reproduce the status quo, denying the very possibility of the future you claim to be embracing. Thus, as Berardi puts it in his 'Manifesto of Post-Futurism', we should 'sing to the infinity of the present and abandon the illusion of a future' (2011: 166). We need to be able to communicate and create our own

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3   This does not, of course, mean that utopian spaces may not arise from such destruction. Margaret Attwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2009) depicts 'pleebland' slums that take up most of the environmentally ravished earth as containing a certain utopian quality, and Lucy Sargisson identifies utopianism in a number works of fiction set after dramatic civilisational and environmental collapses (2012: 98-115). Away from fiction, Robert Neuwirth's *Shadow Cities* (2004) argues that squatters in slums around the world are creating new forms of community whilst Rebecca Solnit's *A Paradise Built in Hell* (2009) charts the temporary utopian communities that often form in the aftermath of disasters of various kinds.

meanings here in the present. 'Sense isn't found in the world, but in what we are able to create.' (ibid.)

Given this, it may seem surprising to argue for a utopian politics. Yet the concept of utopia is – as this thesis will show – not simply what it is often thought to be. It is a slippery concept, imbued with an awkward sense of irony that resists even as it tantalises: a playfulness that is both a strength and a weakness. It is alluring and inspirational, yet like most things that allure it is also dangerous. By drawing on works in the field of utopian studies[4] and the creative philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, this thesis seeks to develop a form of utopianism – *nomadic utopainism* – that answers Berardi's call to 'sing to the infinity of the present': a utopianism not driven by imagining a better future, but by creating a better present. Yet in so doing it returns the future to us: not as a glittering promise or as the-same-but-more, but as a time and space of potential.

This nomadic utopianism cannot be opposed to realism. It is a utopianism that – in its most ecstatic moments – might even be imbued with a little of Buzz Lightyear's catchphrase, heading 'to infinity *and beyond*!'. But it is a utopianism that is tempered by (and the optimism of which is dependent upon) a radical pessimism. For nomadic utopianism is aware of the shadow of what I call 'state utopianism'; it is aware of the dangers of ossification, and knows that a victory is likely to be a failure.

Why Deleuze?

In developing this concept of utopia, I draw heavily on the philosophical works of Gilles Deleuze. He is by no means a typical political philosopher. His works – those written alone and in collaboration with Félix Guattari – are not built around the signifiers and canon of the tradition, with references to Georg Riemann and Antonin Artaud rather than Aristotle or Rousseau; to the 'solar anus' and 'desiring machines' rather than 'rights' or 'democracy'. They have been utilised by – among others – geographers

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4   By 'utopian studies' I mean works that are primarily (or at least significantly) concerned with debating the meaning – and/or applying the concept – of utopia. This is an interdisciplinary field which draws on political and critical theory, philosophy, psychology, literary theory, art history, art theory, social movement praxis, sociology, geography, urban studies, musicology, planning and architecture (among others); although of these the literary is by far the most prevelant. Whilst this thesis should be thought of primarily as a work of political theory, it draws on a number of these traditions, and expands the field to include musicology and education studies (though it is not doing so alone, and references other works in these fields which could be thought of as examples of 'utopian studies').

(Doel, 1999; Bonta and Protevi, 2004; Dewsbury, 2011); educators (Roy, 2003; Semetsky, 2005; 2006; Motta, 2012a), musicologists and music theorists (Gilbert, 2004; Goodman, 2009; Alwakeel, 2009), artists and art theorists (Grosz, 2008; O'Sullivan and Zepke, 2005; O'Sullivan, 2006) and many more besides; and are undeniably creative, being concerned largely with how new forms come into existence. Yet as I show in this thesis, Deleuze's ontology of creation offers an ethical philosophy with a clear sense of 'the good'; and suggests how life should be organised in order that the new might be produced. It should come as no surprise, then, that his work has also been influential on a number of contemporary developments in politics of an autonomist (Hardt and Negri, 2000, 2005; Thoburn, 2003; Ruddick, 2010) and anarchist (May, 1994; Newman, 2001, 2007; Day, 2005; Jun, 2007; Kuhn, 2009) persuasion.

Like Berardi, Deleuze calls for new forms of living that operate without reference to the future: his ethical 'good' is created through a unity of thought and life that (drawing on a term of Deleuze and Guattari's) I refer to as 'nomadic thought' (though the inclusion here of thought should not be seen as excluding – or in any way oppositional to – action). To be nomadic is to live without reference to that which lies beyond the present and the material: it is a philosophy of radical immanence that proceeds from the here and now, but which argues that the 'here and now' reaches out into the future (as a temporal form rather than the psychological construct Berardi critiques)[5]. For this reason, he has at times been cast as an anti-utopian thinker (Bogue, 2011; Tormey and Townshend, 2006: 52). As I will show in Chapter One, Deleuze's immanence is bound up with a commitment to what he calls 'difference-in-itself', and to non-hierarchical forms of organisation. It also disrupts the opposition between the individual and the collective, and destabilises the rational individual as the subject (and object) of political change. Yet it is a pragmatic philosophy, aware of the dangers of extremism and inflexibility: there can be no 'once-and-for-all' solutions for the nomadic subject. Thus, nomadism must continually be reproduced, remaining on guard against impositions and reclamations by – and ossifications into – what Deleuze and Guattari call 'state thought': the denial of difference-in-itself and the imposition of transcendent governing principles that

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5   Jameson has suggested that the dualism of 'nomadic' and 'statist' in Deleuze's account (I also develop an account of the latter) is 'a way of recontaining all this complex and heterogeneous material [in Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*]: something like a narrative and even...an ideological frame that allows us to reorder it into simpler patterns.' (2009: 199). There is, I think, some truth in that: and my extension of the terms to tease out tendencies from Deleuze's wider body of work can also be seen in this light. I do however, seek to complicate this dualism as the thesis progresses: unravelling this ideological frame (though not, it is to be hoped, to breaking point).

'fix' the subject, preventing the creation of the new.

Given the importance he places on flows of becoming and the creation of the new, Deleuze is often seen as a philosopher of flux (Žižek, 2003); a thinker so concerned with becomings and change that no concrete gains can be made. Saul Newman likens him to Lacan's 'hysteric subject': someone who, 'in his desperate pursuit of the object of desire, overtakes it and goes beyond it' (2007: 137). There is certainly a danger of Deleuzean thought being utilised in such a way, and in order to prevent this it is important to take heed of the fact that Deleuze is also profoundly interested in how flows of becoming (and forces of being) (re)produce social space: his philosophy stresses the interconnectedness of becoming and being rather than simply asserting one over the other. This, I suggest, is where utopia can be of use for those seeking to create a Deleuzean political project.

Why utopia?

Coined by Thomas More with the publication of his *Utopia*[6] in 1516, the term utopia comes from the Greek *topos* (place), *eu* (good), and/or *ou* (no). Etymologically speaking, then, it might be rendered as 'the good place that is no place'. Colloquially,[7] it is often used disparagingly to refer to fanciful dreams of good places that fail to engage with the 'real', and which can provide only a compensatory function for the less-than-utopian realities of the present. Utopia, it is said, is a 'perfect' place – and perfect places simply cannot exist. Liberal and conservative political philosophy, meanwhile (which influences that colloquial understanding), has sought to equate the concept with totalitarian rule and the absolute domination of the individual by the collective. Mankind is not perfectible, it says, and so to attempt to realise perfection will require extensive use of state repression. Philosophers in this tradition point to the horrors of Stalinism and Nazi Germany and argue that if we try and realise utopia, such inhumanity is the only possible outcome.[8] Postmodernity, meanwhile, with its 'incredulity towards metanarratives' (Lyotard, 1984: xxiv), is often seen to be complicit with the 'end of history' (Jameson, 1984; 1998), and has further reduced the

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6   Translated literally (from the Latin), the book's full title is *A Truly Golden Book, No Less Beneficial Than Entertaining, of the Best State of a Republic, and of the New Island Utopia.*

7   I use the term 'colloquially' here to refer to uses of the word utopia that do not offer an explanation of what is meant by the term. This would include a number of uses of the term in an academic context.

8   See Sargent (1982) for an excellent critical summary of these arguments.

possibility of widescale changes to the social order. It would seem that in living 'after the future', we are living 'after utopianism'.

This narrative, however, is unsatisfactory for two main reasons. Firstly, it fails to recognise that if we live in a post-utopian age then the very claim being levelled at utopia – that it is a place of perfection – is being made for the current social order; it being understood that for something to be 'perfect' it is 'as good as it could possibly be' (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*: oed.com). In suggesting that liberal democracy and capitalism protect us from utopia and are the only plausible forms of governance, *they themselves are seen as perfect*; they come to function as the best possible form of organisation, and the world they create as a utopia. A utopia that – paradoxically – denies utopianism. Much academic work on the concept of utopia has dealt with this conundrum (although this paradox is only occasionally noted) and – by stressing the 'no place' in utopia's etymology – has offered a number of important ways in which utopia can be utilised in order to help us navigate beyond our present. It is my contention, however, that in stressing the 'no' over the 'good', the negative and critical aspects of utopianism are often overplayed, such that utopia (the place) comes to be conflated with utopianism (a social force seeking to create change). There is also a danger of academic elitism, with those who study utopia acting as conceptual gatekeepers and claiming that all other uses of the term are 'wrong'. Whilst I argue for a certain fidelity to the etymology of utopia in this thesis, it must also be accepted that language is constantly in flux (Aitchison, 2001): it should not and cannot be fixed solely in reference to the past, nor to 'expert' opinion. Claims may be offered in an attempt to redirect the colloquial flux of meaning-making, but they cannot simply be utilised as a dam to prevent this flow.

The second problem with the narrative presented above is that its account of utopia's colloquial uses is incomplete – 'utopia' is often utilised to refer to places created by forces operating in the here and now; to forms of living that, to follow Berardi, 'sing to the infinity of the present'. These are not imaginary places, but operate in and on the material present; they are not repressive, but create space in which people may explore who they want to be and how they want to live; and they are not perfect, but change as those who

inhabit them change.[9] (This is not to say that imagination is not important in their creation and reproduction; nor is it to say that there are no imaginary spaces that do 'sing to the infinity of the[ir] present'). Whilst many of these 'real' spaces are outside the realm of what would normally be considered 'the political', it is my contention that they function as spaces in which particular forms of social interaction are created, experimented with and privileged. As such, many of these spaces can – and, I would argue, *should* – be seen as important spaces in which 'new ways of making and living politics' – as a phrase of Sara Motta's (2009) has it – are produced. There are, I suggest, significant overlaps between their operation and the nomadic politics suggested by Deleuze's thought, with each having something to learn from and offer the other.

Aims of the thesis

This thesis, then, seeks to use Deleuze's thought in order to rethink the concept of utopia in accordance with the problems identified above. In doing so, it has two main aims:

1. <u>To utilise Deleuze's thought to develop an understanding of utopia that allows for the term to be used to refer to 'perfect' places and to places that are characterised by a rejection of perfection; and to theorise the relationship between these two forms of utopia.</u>

This aim is carried out in the development of my concepts of the nomadic utopia and the state utopia, and in theorising how they interact. Through these, the thesis offers a conceptual framework that may be applied to social and political spaces in order to determine the forms of utopianism they are constituted by. Yet there is also a normative element in the creation of these concepts: this thesis advocates a nomadic utopianism, and seeks to show the advantages of the nomadic utopia over the state utopia. It is hoped, however, that the conceptual framework will prove instructive even to those who remain less committed to the nomadic form than I.

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9   Examples of spaces that have – fairly or not – been colloquially named as utopias for exhibiting some or all of these characteristics include the spaces created by social movements in Latin America (Motta and Nielsen, 2011); squats (Cattaneo and Gavaldà, 2010); music festivals (Larsen and O'Reilly, 2008; Larsen and Hussels, 2011), the occupations of the Occupy movement (Gilbert, 2012), the anarcho-communist Spanish town of Marinaleda (Hancox, 2012), and anarchist social centres (Finchett-Maddock, 2008). I give further examples related to the performance of music in Chapters Four and education in Chapter Five.

It must also be noted that the relationship between Deleuze and utopia that this thesis creates is not simply operating in one direction: it also offers something to those seeking to develop a Deleuzean political project, and specifically to those interested in how Deleuze's thought might be used in order to organise space. In particular, utopia can be read as 'slowing Deleuze down': grounding his thought within a spatial conceptual framework such that the productive tendencies are brought out to counteract the 'hysterical' flux that Newman criticises.

    2.   <u>To use this understanding of utopia to theorise places in:</u>
             <u>a. Works of fiction.</u>
             <u>b. The 'real world'.</u>

Here, my aim is to show how my understanding of utopia can be utilised to read places – both 'imaginary' and 'real' (though acknowledging that this is not simply a binary opposition). These readings in no way be seen as an empirical 'test' of my theory, but rather as *applications* of the theory: they are designed to 'show what the theory can do'. Indeed, the thesis can perhaps be conceived in a non-linear manner (it gestures towards the 'rhizomatic', to use the language of Deleuze and Guattari), with the applications of my theory feeding back into the theory to enrich and complicate it.

In these applications, this thesis engages with what Lyman Tower Sargent (1967, 1994, 2010) calls 'the three faces of utopianism': social theory, literature and social practice, although it expands the second to 'utopian texts' (Sargent subsumes painting and music under the category of literature) and pushes the third to consider practices of 'everyday life', rather than conflating it with 'intentional communities' (as Sargent frequently does).

Structure

Chapter One: The Ethical Thought of Gilles Deleuze

In Chapter One I offer my reading of the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze (though I am careful to credit Guattari for insights from the texts they co-authored[10]), with the aim of developing an account of what

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10 I draw heavily on the works co-written with Guattari throughout my thesis, considering them to be as integral to the Delezean corpus as any other works. That they were co-authored does not mean they should be viewed as 'Deleuze watered down', however; indeed, following Deleuze's own philosophy (which I explicate here), it could be argued through entering into a

constitutes his (unusual) ethical project, and how his thought impacts on the (re)production of space. The chapter opens, however, with an account of his ontological approach, in which I argue that Deleuze's thought constitutes a form of 'inorganic vitalism' – an approach which argues that matter is alive, and that it is capable of entering into productive relationships in order to create new forms. I show how this is dependent upon Deleuze's concept of 'difference-in-itself' (in which difference is ontologically prior to identity) and offer a reading of the 'virtual' and 'actual' realms, which are central to Deleuze's philosophy of creation. I note that for Deleuze, the 'new' is created immanently and not in relation to a transcendent beyond, or 'lack'. I then turn to consider the importance of the concept of 'multiplicity': a vital component in Deleuze's thought, which provides the basis for the rejection of an opposition between the one and the multiple; and for the rejection of the individual as an ontologically stable subject from which politics must proceed.

I then turn to the concepts of space and place, arguing – *contra* critiques that accuse Deleuze of exaggerating the importance of flux – that the space is a vital component in Deleuze's thought. I show how he conceives of space as being (re)produced by the bodies that occupy it, and posits the task of philosophy as creating spaces in which difference-in-itself can be maximised in order for it to be able to produce 'the new', and thus reproduce the space. I note the similarities with the approach of the geographer Doreen Massey, and I briefly utilise her thought in order to think through the relationship between 'space' and 'place'. These extrapolations prove central to the understanding of utopia developed later in the thesis.

Following Deleuze in noting that much western philosophy does not share the aims of Deleuze's philosophical project, I then develop an account of what I call 'state thought', drawing on Brian Massumi's term 'state philosophy' in his translator's introduction to Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus.* I note that – for Deleuze and Guattari – the 'state' is not a geopolitical entity, but a mode of thought (upon which the geopolitical state is dependent). Drawing on Protevi's use of an Aristotlean concept, I argue that it is

relation with a co-author Deleuze *maximises* his capacity to act. I am careful to co-credit Guattari, however.

The texts co-authored with Claire Parnet take the form of discussions: I only draw on words spoken by Deleuze here (though this is not to say that Parnet's questioning did not influence Deleuze's claims).

'hylomorphic'; which means that it seeks to give form to matter that it views as incapable of self-organisation. As such, it requires hierarchical forms of organisation and ordering principles that serve to orient life around a transcendent signifier, or 'lack'. This orientation provides state thought with a moral good, and this 'moral good' comes to govern, repressing difference-in-itself and preventing the immanent reproduction of space. It creates 'striated space' in which relationships are restricted to particular structures. I note that striated space arises not only through formally imposed hierarchies, but also through what I call 'informal hierarchies', in which those outside of formal positions of power reproduce the striation.

I then turn my attention to 'nomadic thought' (drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of nomadism in *A Thousand Plateaus*). This, I argue, is the variety of thought that seeks to create spaces in which flows of becoming can be maximised, such that the spaces themselves are continually being reproduced. I show that the subject of nomadic politics is not the pre-given Cartesian subject, but is instead always under construction in accordance with difference-in-itself, and in relation to the other bodies she encounters; and how – for Deleuze and Guattari – these nomadic subjects are the 'universal creators', who create new spaces for political action. I argue that these spaces relate to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'smooth space'. I also introduce Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the 'nomadic war machine', in which nomadic subjects non-hierarchically create a form of organisation that operates autonomously from the state. I then uncover the power dynamics of this arrangement, drawing on Deleuze's reading of Spinoza to argue that a nomadic politics seeks not power-over but power-to; and I relate this to the concept of 'affect', which refers to the manner in which bodies interact with each other to create new opportunities for life. Creating such opportunities, I argue, is the ethical imperative of Deleuze's political project. Against the morality of state thought (which seeks to govern life in accordance with external principles), this ethical thought seeks to create spaces for life. It is here, I argue, that it is possible to talk of a 'good' in Deleuze's thought.

I note, however, that Deleuze's philosophy is not as simple as advocating the 'smooth space' as a once-and-for-all solution to problems of political and social organisation, and the next section of the chapter is

devoted to an explanation of why – as Deleuze and Guattari note – 'a smooth space will [never] suffice to save us' (2004b: 551): a warning that I utilise later as the 'no' in utopia's etymology. I argue that informal hierarchies will always emerge, drawing on Oscar Wilde's phrase 'the tyrannies of habit' (2008: 21) to note that there is always a danger of ossification into established patterns of behaviour which reinstate statist moralism. I also note how smooth spaces may be put to statist ends, and that 'pure' smooth space is at risk of dissolving into a chaos of flux that makes the creation of the new impossible. Utopia, I suggest, might be able to help us avoid these twin dangers.

Chapter Two: Theorising Utopia(nism)

In Chapter Two I provide an overview of contemporary debates in the field of utopian studies, and move on from these to develop my concepts of the state utopia and the nomadic utopia. I also theorise the relationship between these forms. The chapter begins by analysing approaches that equate utopia with perfection. Whilst this is a charge commonly levelled at utopia by anti-utopians, I note that it has also been adopted by J.C. Davis and Krishan Kumar – two theorists sympathetic to the concept. Whilst I do not accept that their analyses are fully correct (they limit utopia to that which is perfect), I nonetheless show that they do successfully describe a particular form of utopia. I also note that there are differences in their conceptions of perfection: for Davis, it is absolute, and located at the societal level (for the human is inherently deficient); whilst Kumar locates it at the level of the individual and states that perfection is an ongoing process.

Drawing on the accounts of Kumar and Davis, I develop my concept of the state utopia. This can be likened to the first of the colloquial accounts of utopia discussed above: it sees itself as perfect, functions hierarchically and denies further change. It is initially ordered around a lack and – once this has been satisfied – continues to be reproduced around a vision of the moral good that prevents further change. Thus, the state utopia is seen as a perfect society and functions to deny any utopianism that seeks to go beyond it. I argue that at its most 'absolute' the state utopia creates three dimensions of utopianism: the design of a utopia, the implementation of a utopia, and the reproduction of a utopia. Yet I note that it is a paradoxical utopianism, for once it reaches the third of these dimensions it denies utopianism as a

legitimate political force. I argue that in so doing, state utopianism is ultimately an anti-utopian force capable of producing only dystopian spaces which, in seeing themselves as 'the good place', ignore the 'no' in utopia's etymology. 'Capitalist realism', I contend, constitutes such a state utopian force, and sees the world today as a utopia – even while it denies the validity of the concept.

Moving away from such absolutist definitions, I turn to consider the 'function' of utopia. Here, I trace the works of a number of thinkers – including Levitas, Tom Moylan and Fredric Jameson – who argue that utopian visions should not be read as blueprints for implementation, but rather as tools of 'estrangement' that open up the future once again as a space of possibility. Whilst I am sympathetic to this turn, and draw on it throughout my thesis, I nonetheless argue that such an approach risks emphasising the 'no place' at the expense of the 'good place'. I also show how Tom Moylan's concept of the 'critical utopia' mixes a function based approach with an account of the content of utopian places, and consider Ruth Levitas' concept of the 'education of desire' – in which a positive vision is required to orient (but not determine) political action. I note that this avoids this negativity with the accounts that stress 'estrangement', but argue that it risks reasserting state utopianism. I nonetheless note the importance of the concept, which I return to – in a modified form – at later points in the thesis. I also note that the function based approach to utopia can be applied to texts or forms that cannot be conceived of as a 'utopia', and argue that – as an approach most suited to textual practices – it risks operating only on individual, atomized subjects.

I then consider process approaches to utopia, in which utopia is thought of not as a place at all – but as an immanent process. This, I argue, is the approach hinted at by Deleuze and Guattari in *What Is Philosophy?*, and has been developed by utopian theorists including Ernst Bloch (though I note that his concept of the 'Ultimuum' means that his thought cannot be seen as immanent in the Deleuzean sense). I note that such an understanding of utopia can be likened to Deleuze's concept of the ethical good, but argue that in understanding utopia as a process and not a place it conflates utopia with utopianism, risking a 'hysterical' politics that fails to capitalise on its gains through spatial grounding.

To escape having to choose between a statist, spatially grounded utopianism and a nomadic utopianism

that is incapable of creating utopian space, I argue that a turn to the content of utopia as a place is needed. Here, I draw on a number of anarchist and autonomist approaches to the concept of utopia (as well as approaches to 'good spaces' that are not explicitly named utopia), and show how they point towards – even if they do not fully embrace – an understanding of utopia as a place-in-process (rather than purely as a process). These places, I note, are non-hierarchically organised and reject the concept of perfection. Yet – I argue – they do not theorise the dangers of such spaces ossifying into a state utopian form: they celebrate the smooth space without thinking through its relation to the striated space.

From this, I develop my concept of the nomadic utopia. I show how it is a place constituted by non-hierarchical social relations and difference-in-itself, but that pays heed to the 'no' in utopia's etymology, and knows that a smooth space cannot be sufficient to answer problems of political organisation. I first cover how the nomadic utopia functions as a 'good place' by showing it to be a space in which the capacity of bodies in it to affect and be affected is maximised; something which, when it works well – makes the place itself nomadic; it never settles and comes to be a 'no place'. Thus, I show that the *utopia itself is nomadic* – it is never fixed, but is subject to a continual process of becoming, and is (re)produced by nomadic utopianism. Yet in a section on why the nomadic utopia is a 'no place', I warn that the nomadic utopia may not operate so smoothly, and the 'no' should also serve to remind us that simply creating an ethically 'good place' can never be enough – attention must be paid to a space's becomings over time in order to observe whether it continues to become nomadic or begins to ossify into statism. This, I note, introduces an important temporal – as well as spatial – dimension to the nomadic utopia. Drawing on the work of Kathi Weeks, I argue that these may simultaneously have the function of 'the education of desire' – that those who experience nomadic utopias may be unable to return comfortably to 'capitalist realism''s dystopia, and may have a renewed belief in the joys of – and possibility of creating – nomadic utopia.

The chapter concludes by noting the danger of a nomadic utopia being utilised for statist ends ('degenerate nomadic utopias') and by considering the difficulty of applying this method to read utopian places. I suggest that whilst it may be utilised as a method to read spaces, my concepts also have a normative element, and that my approach will be of the greatest use to those seeking to create nomadic

utopian spaces.

Chapter Three: Utopian Literature

Chapter Three turns towards applying the approaches developed in the previous two chapters through an analysis of three fictional works that depict utopian and dystopian spaces: Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*, Albert Meister's *The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg* (originally published under the psuedonym Gustave Affeulpin) and Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*. Zamyatin and Le Guin's texts have both been much written about in the field of utopian studies, whilst Meister's text is little known outside the art world. It is my contention that by utilising the approach to utopia and utopianism developed in the previous two chapters, new ways of reading these texts can be developed. They are all, I contend, of a nomadic persuasion – although each highlights particular dangers associated with nomadic utopianism – and function as tools that enable the reader to imagine what a nomadic utopia might look and feel like to inhabit. They also provide the opportunity to further develop an account of the relationship between the state utopia, anti-utopia and dystopia.

The first of the texts to be analysed is Zamyatin's *We*. I note that this is often understood to be an archetypal 'classic' dystopia and briefly trace how it has been utilised by conservative and liberal anti-utopians seeking to reinforce the status quo. Against this, I suggest that whilst the text is indeed set in a dystopia (the 'bad place' of 'OneState'), this dystopia should be seen as a state utopia. I then proceed to argue that the text also depicts a nomadic utopian resistance movement in the form of the Mephi, although it stops short of depicting a nomadic utopia. Thus, I argue that the text need not be read as one cautioning against utopian change, but can be understood as a work cautioning against *not* striving for nomadic utopianism.

I then turn to consider Albert Meister's *The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg*, which – I suggest – offers a utopian space that the Mephi would approve of. This is located in a 76-storey structure (the titular '*beaubourg*', or 'good place') underneath the Pompidou Centre in Paris. I show how – opened up for an undefined 'culture' by its creator Gustave Affeulpin – the space comes to function as an anarchist society in

which a 'rabble' self-organises without reference to any lack or moral principle, and in which difference-in-itself is allowed to flourish. To an extent, then, the *beaubourg* can be seen as a successful spatial embodiment of nomadic utopianism. However, I note that *The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg* is perhaps better read as a celebration of smooth space rather than a nomadic utopia: though it is acknowledged that the *beaubourg* must continue to experiment lest it fall victim to forces of ossification, no critical voices are heard in the narrative; and there is no sense of the messy pragmatism that must be worked through in order to reproduce a nomadic utopia. With this in mind, I draw on the function based approach to utopia to argue that *The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg* is best read heuristically, and that the *beaubourg* should not be viewed simply as a nomadic utopia.

The final text I engage with is Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*. Here, I present a reading of the anarchist community of Anarres (in which much of the novel is set) as a nomadic utopia, but one that is under threat from tyrannies of habit that are allowing both informal and formal hierarchies to develop, and which threaten to transform it into a state utopia. I first note the nomadic features of the society, showing that it is (mostly) formally non-hierarchical; that it seeks a state of permanent becoming; and that there is no necessary opposition between the individual and the collective. I then turn to consider the ways in which Anarres is becoming state utopian, analysing the influence of its founder Odo; and showing how informal hierarchies have emerged through bureaucracy and the division-of-labour. Whilst much of this has been reproduced unwittingly, I note how it has also allowed people to take advantage by working themselves into positions of formal hierarchy. Much of the dramatic tension in the text, I contend, comes from the struggle between these statist forces and the nomadic forces. Though it is difficult to make a definite claim, I argue that – considered over time – Anarres can be read as a nomadic utopia: its hierarchies have not fully ossified and are set to be confronted by an enormous challenge from a revolutionary 'Syndicate of Initiative'. Though the book itself has an open ending (forcing the reader to imagine for themselves what the future of Anarres must be), I note that when read alongside a number of Le Guin's other works set in the same fictional universe, it seems likely that the Syndicate of Initiative are – at least to an extent – successful in reinvigorating Anarres as a nomadic utopia.

Finally, I suggest that these novels provide fictional spaces in which debates surrounding nomadic and state utopias – and the relationships between them – can be played out, by both authors and readers, who are active in co-constructing textual meaning. In this sense, it is important to note that they have a material utopian function and do not simply operate in an ideational realm. They disturb the reader's certainty that the world in which they live is the only possible world, and offer (heuristic) models for how a nomadic utopia might function, and what dangers it might face. They help us not only go beyond *this* world, but – I suggest – beyond *any* world.

Chapter Four: Utopian Musicking

In Chapter Four I move away from ground well-trodden by utopian studies to consider the utopian spaces created during musical performance. Drawing on the work of the musicologist Christopher Small, I refer to this process as 'musicking', and argue that it has an important political (and, indeed, utopian) dimension. My argument proceeds from the claim that what is colloquially understood as 'improvisation' constitutes nomadic utopian musicking, whilst the performance of what is colloquially understood as 'composed' music constitutes state utopian musicking.

Before I go on to make this argument, however, I develop terms utilised in the chapter and argue that it is a mistake to think of improvisation and composition as being at opposite ends of a spectrum. I argue, rather, that improvisation is a *form* of composition in which it is not determined in advance what the music made will sound like – or how it will be made – but is decided immanently by performers; whilst that which is commonly understood as the performance of 'composed' music is better understood as 'concrete' musicking, in which the sound and method of performance decided in advance and imposed upon performers. Even here, however, I note that no music conforms *absolutely* to either of these ideals, and I disrupt this opposition as the chapter progresses.

Following this, I develop my claim that concrete musicking creates state utopian spaces. I do this through an analysis of the symphony orchestra. I choose this as – in the western musical tradition (in which this chapter is rooted) – it is in the symphony orchestra that the most concrete form of musicking occurs,

meaning that the symphony orchestra functions as a state utopia. I show how it is a hylomorphic, hierarchically ordered space oriented around a transcendent lack (the score), in which the individual is placed in opposition to the collective and difference-in-itself is subordinated. I also note that the symphony orchestra has – historically – performed a state utopian function: its history entwined with the history of the nation state and other institutions of bourgeois morality[11]. Recalling my claim that OneState is a state utopia and also a dystopia, I then argue that the symphony orchestra may be understood as a dystopia. In doing so, I draw on the (negative) experiences of musicians playing in symphony orchestras and note that the language they use to relate their experiences resonates with the language of the protagonist in *We*.

I then turn to consider the practice of collective musical improvisation as a nomadic utopian form of musicking. I note that a number of improvising musicians and theorists of improvisation see it as a utopian practice, and that others have linked it to forms of political organisation – or to political terms – that resonate with nomadism; and then analyse the social relations that are produced through improvisation. I note that they are – ideally, at least – non-hierarchical and constituted by difference-in-itself; and that they mutualise the interests of the individual and the collective, creating an ethically good place in which an increase in the power-to of the individual results in an increase in the power-to of the collective. I also show how the improvising musician is herself constituted by difference, and is subject to processes of becoming. I note that the nomadic utopia of improvisation may have a utopian function beyond its immediate time and place by 'educating the desires' of those involved in performance.

I argue, however, that these social relations cannot be taken for granted – and that improvisation is always at risk of ossification into statist utopianism, with informal hierarchies emerging and preventing musicians from musicking immanently. In a section entitled 'Inserting death into the system' (taken from a phrase of Deleuze and Guattari's), I argue that – in order to combat these – improvising musicians may sometimes need to utilise forms of strategic identity and/or strategic hierarchy in the form of generic identities and musical scores (although not in the traditional sense) in order to keep the space open. This, I show, means

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11 I note that within their historical context these visions may have been broadly 'progressive'.

that the relationship between concrete musicking and improvised musicking cannot simply be though of as one of simple opposition, showing the complexity of nomadic utopianism.

The chapter closes by noting two dangers of uncritically applying the concept of nomadic utopianism to improvised musicking. Firstly, I show how musical improvisation is being utilised as a form of organisation within the workplace, where it is believed to offer insights that will increase the power-over of capital. Secondly, I argue that despite improvisation's relative autonomy, it is not completely isolated from the social relations of the wider society in which the practice occurs. Thus, it is likely to reproduce forms of power-over from the wider society. I note that as a practice, improvisation has historically been riddled with exclusions based on gender and sexuality. These dangers, I argue, should not be fatal to my argument, but need to be engaged to avoid the danger of an uncritical celebration of exclusionary practices – something not in keeping with nomadic utopianism.

Chapter Five: Education and Utopianism

Chapter Five follows the previous chapter in applying my approach to utopia to spaces and activities in 'real life': in this case, to education and schools. The chapter opens with a definition of key terms utilised: in particular 'education' (which is linked to utopianism); and 'school' (which is linked to utopia). In keeping with my claim that utopian spaces are (re)produced by the forces of utopianism that traverse them, I argue that the form which a school takes will be determined to a large extent by the form of education it offers (and vice-versa). I argue that education and schools constitute vital terrains for political struggle and play an important in the (re)production of wider social structures.

Following this, I trace how education can function as a form of state utopianism. I note that compulsory education was developed as a project to strengthen the power of the nation state and the emerging bourgeoisie, and that it continues to function as a force preserving their interests. I also note the importance of education in a number of literary dystopias (that depict state utopian societies), with a particular focus on the function of education in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Drawing on the work of Paulo Freire, I argue that common to these forms of education is a particular epistemological approach in

which knowledge is viewed as a 'thing' located in a transcendent place beyond the subject of education (the individual). I note that this epistemological approach allows curricula to be designed around specific knowledges chosen by those in formal positions of power, meaning that 'other' forms of knowledge (including embodied and affective experiences) – and the social complexities of the knowledge taught – are excluded from education. This, I argue, is reinforced through examinations, which also serve to limit the capacity of teachers to explore other forms of knowledge and reduce students' enthusiasm for exploring the social aspects of knowledge. When structured in such a way, I contend that education functions as a force of state utopianism that reproduces the current state utopian system and prevents nomadic utopianism. I argue that it also produces the classroom as a state utopia: a hierarchical space that denies difference-in-itself and opposes the individual to the collective, to the detriment of both.

Yet education need not be like this, I contend, and I draw on a wide range of educational practices to develop an account of how education can function as a force of nomadic utopianism. Firstly, I argue that a radically different epistemological approach needs to be taken, and show how knowledge might be thought of not as a 'thing' to be obtained, but as something always under construction, though I note that this does not lead to an embrace of relativism. Such an approach, I show, is taken by a number of educators and theorists of education who see themselves as utopian, and I explore what they mean by the term utopia – finding it to be similar to process approaches of utopia. I then explore precisely how education might function as nomadic utopianism. Here, I suggest that knowledge needs to be constructed through bringing difference into dialogue, but that this difference cannot simply be located in the individual learner, as each learner is constructed through interacting with others (meaning that the division between the individual and the collective cannot be maintained), and will herself be constituted by difference.

From this, I draw on a number of experiments (within and outside of formal educational institutions) to argue that the school and the classroom can be constructed as nomadic utopias in which the hierarchical relationship between the teacher and student might be challenged in a number of ways, and in which the object of education is not pre-determined through curricula and examinations but is continually

reconstructed by those taking part in the education. I state that there can be no once-and-for-all way of creating such spaces, however, but that a pragmatic approach which pays attention to the desires and experiences of all those in an educational space must be adopted. This, I note, may well require the use of strategic hierarchy and a temporary division of labour. Finally, I note the dangers of constructing classrooms as nomadic utopias within formal educational institutions that play an important role in the reproduction of state utopianism.

Utopia after the future; utopia into the future?

Taken together, then, this thesis offers a way of theorising how utopia might operate in an age that has given up on the future. It does not advocate a return to an earlier age when the future stood before us as a lack that beckoned us forward with a utopian promise but suggests that utopias – *nomadic utopias* – that bring the future into the present can be constructed immanently, and that though these utopias maintain a fidelity to the etymology of the term utopia, they are very different from the 'perfect' space utopia is often felt to be. Yet it also exercises a caution, acknowledging that these spaces will never simply create 'a utopia' once-and-for-all, but that they are only utopian to the extent that they acknowledge there is always more to do. They are good places, but they must also be no-places. It also cautions against uncritically creating such spaces without paying attention to how capital might seek to benefit from their innovations, and how such spaces can never be perceived of as fully autonomous from wider societal norms and exclusionary operations of power.

In this, I suggest it offers a great deal to the field of utopian studies. The relationship between utopia and utopianism is rethought such that utopias are the product of utopianism, rather than calling utopianism into being; and practices not often considered from the perspective of utopia are shown to have much to offer the concept. It also offers a profoundly political reading of the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, drawing on earlier works that suggest his thought has a great deal to offer the field of political philosophy. Whilst this thesis can be read as advocating a nomadic utopianism, it is hoped that in theorising two different forms of utopia – and the relationship between them – it will still offer something to the reader less convinced of its merits.

Chapter One
The ethical thought of Gilles Deleuze

Introduction

As I noted in the introduction to this thesis, the concept of utopia has three conceptual ordering points: 'good', 'no', and 'place'. Yet there seems to be an inherent tension between these three concepts, which means that utopia invariably loses one – or more – of its defining qualities. One of the main aims of this thesis is to think through how it is possible to bring these three conceptual ordering points of utopia into a productive relationship without erasing the tensions that exist between them. Such a relationship is what Deleuze would refer to as a 'consistency' (2007: 179) and it is his thought that I draw on utilise in order to show how a place might simultaneously be constituted by 'the good' and 'no'. In this chapter I lay the conceptual groundwork for this problematic by providing a reading of Deleuze's philosophy, with the aim of applying this thought to these three conceptual ordering points.

Deleuze's thought, then, becomes a tool to open up the concept of utopia, in a manner consistent with that suggested by Deleuze himself, who – in conversation with Michel Foucault – stated that his theory should be used:

> exactly like a box of tools...it must be useful. It must function. And not for itself. If no one uses it, beginning with the theoretician himself (who then ceases to be a theoretician), then the theory is worthless or the moment is inappropriate. We don't revise a theory, but construct new ones; we have no choice but to make others. It is strange that it was Proust, an author thought to be a pure intellectual, who said it so clearly: treat my book as a pair of glasses directed to the outside; if they don't suit you, find another pair; I leave it to you to find your own instrument, which is necessarily an investment for combat. A theory does not totalise; it is an instrument for multiplication and it also multiplies itself (in Foucault, 1977: 208).

My reading of Deleuze's philosophy is undertaken in three broad stages. In the first, I outline his ontological approach. I develop a reading of Deleuze as a vitalist thinker, concerned with maximising the opportunities for life to unfold immanently and create the new. This, however, does not mean that he ascribes powers of creation to the biological – rather, he is concerned with the material world. For him,

everything should be considered to be alive, and thus capable of entering into productive relationships which create 'the new' through the actualisation of difference, which Deleuze believes to be primary to identity (though, as I note, this does not make him a philosopher of individualism). His thought is thus one of *vitalist materialism* that embraces both organic and inorganic forms of life. I show the importance of Spinoza's concept of *conatus* for Deleuze, and relate this to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of desire. In developing this account, I will clarify a number of Deleuze's key concepts, which will be grouped thematically under the terms 'life', 'difference-in-itself', 'multiplicity' and 'space'.

Once a reading of Deleuze's primary ontological assertions and key terms has been offered I turn to consider the political relevance of Deleuze's philosophy, with a particular focus on what is meant by 'the good'. Drawing on an implicit axis found in Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (2004b) – which runs from the state (understood as a regime of thought rather than simply as a geopolitical entity) to the nomad – I consider two ways of approaching this question: statism and nomadism. At first these are presented as a dichotomous pair, but this opposition is gradually deconstructed as the thesis progresses. The first approach – state thought – is shown to be hostile to the forces of life that Deleuze posits as the animating power for the production of the new. Its good is a 'moral good' and it seeks to order space in accordance with a transcendent morality external to life. This imposes hierarchies upon space, creating what Deleuze and Guattari call 'striated space', though I note that it is important not to see these (solely) in the colloquial sense as visible, vertically structured organisations, but rather as operations of thought that restrict the creation of the new by imposing identity on difference.

I then turn to consider 'nomadic thought', which seeks to regulate space in a manner consistent with Deleuze's ontological claims. Against the 'moral good', it draws on Spinoza to create an ethical vision of the good as that which expands the capacity of bodies to affect and be affected, and does not deny the primacy of difference: an approach that leads to the creation of new formations. I draw on the resonances between nomadic thought and anarchism, insisting that the former should not be seen as the valorisation of individualism; and show how nomadic thought creates what Deleuze and Guattari call 'smooth space', in which there is no hierarchy and connections can be made between bodies in any manner. I argue,

however, that this must be seen as a once-and-for-all utopia resulting in the end of history, and I consider Deleuze and Guattari's warnings against seeing it as such. In doing this, the 'no' enters into the equation: Deleuze's ethics 'say no' to finality and permanence, although I note that this 'no' cannot be thought of apart from the 'yes'. This chapter thus ends by suggesting that it is possible to create a 'good place', but that to remain good it must be subject to further becomings.

Deleuze's Ontology

Life, *conatus*, desire

The concept of life is central to the ontology of Deleuze, constituting an animating power that can be detected across his diverse body of work; even when it passes unnamed (as it frequently does) (Marks, 1998; May, 1991). The goal of politics is to create space for – and remain animated by – life, which is the force that brings the new into existence (May, 1991: 28). Deleuze himself points to the omnipresent status of 'life' in his work in *Negotiations*, where he states that 'everything I've written is vitalistic' (1995: 143).

Deleuze's use of the concept of life should not be understood in a biological sense however, as it maintains an existence quite separate from its appropriation in cellular, animal or human forms: this life is 'all the more alive for being inorganic' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 550). It flows through the entire field of existence, and is appropriated by – rather than defined in relation to – life-forms. 'Everything is alive', write Deleuze and Guattari, 'not because everything is organic or organized, but, on the contrary, because the organism is a diversion of life. In short the life in question is inorganic, germinal and intensive...a body that is all the more alive for having no organs' (ibid.). Life, then, resides in the physical world of forces and matter, of which all reality consists (Deleuze, 1986: 40).

It is thus important to take seriously Deleuze's claim that 'everything I've written is vitalistic', but acknowledge that this is not vitalism in the conventional, 'metabiological' sense of the term in which a 'vital force' is assigned to 'living' biological organisms and placed in a binary opposition with non-biological (dead) matter (Deleuze, 1986: 38).[12] Deleuze's novelty here is to break down the binary between

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12 It is this variety of vitalism that Deleuze and Guattari are attacking in *Anti-Oedipus* when they write – seemingly *contra*

vitalism and materialism – he 'revitalises' materialism: the 'vital force' no longer remaining within the biological realm but instead assigned to 'matter' and given a physical existence. What Deleuze creates is a *vitalist materialism*: an ontology in which everything is alive, and which denies the existence of a world beyond the material. This owes a considerable debt to Deleuze's readings of the works of Baruch Spinoza and Friedrich Nietzsche.[13] For the former – Deleuze states – 'life is not an idea, a matter of theory. It is a way of being, one and the same eternal mode in all its attributes' (Deleuze, 1988a: 13). It has 'a power of thinking that goes beyond the ends of the state, of a society, beyond any milieu in general' (Deleuze, 1988a: 4). Nietzsche, meanwhile, 'often takes knowledge to task for its claim to be opposed to life, to measure and judge life, for seeing itself as an end' (Deleuze, 1986: 100). Life should be understood as 'positive [and] affirmative', and stands:

> in opposition to the semblances that men are content with. Not only are they content with [these semblances], they feel a hatred of life, they are ashamed of it; a humanity bent on self-destruction, multiplying the cults of death, bringing about the union of the tyrant and the slave, the priest, the judge, and the soldier, always busy running life into the ground, mutilating it, killing it outright or by degrees, overlaying it or suffocating it with laws, properties, duties, empires – this is what Spinoza diagnoses in the world, this betrayal of the universe and mankind. (Deleuze, 1988a: 12)

The 'positive, affirmative' nature of life can be made more concrete through the concept of 'affect'. Taken from Spinoza, this refers to the 'ability to affect and be affected' (Massumi in Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: xvii), and is something that – when maximised – increases life's power of acting (Deleuze, 1998a: 28) creating a feeling of joy (ibid.). Life should thus strive to maximise affect: a process Spinoza refers to as

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Deleuze's claim in *Negotiations* – that the vitalist argument has been 'shattered' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a: 313).

13 These two thinkers are frequently made to speak to (and through) each other throughout Deleuze's work. *Spinoza: A Practical Philosophy* opens with the claim that 'Nietzsche understood, having lived it himself, what constitutes the mystery of a philosopher's life' (Deleuze, 1988a: 3), and the book's translator Robert Hurley notes that Deleuze creates a 'kinship of Spinoza and Nietzsche' built around a 'historical line' composed of their resonances (Hurley, in Deleuze, 1998: I). Indeed, for Deleuze, Spinoza was a Nietzschean thinker *par excellence*, someone who 'philosophises with hammer blows' (Deleuze, 1988a: 11). Meanwhile Hugh Tomlinson – the translator of *Nietzsche and Philosophy* – states that, for Deleuze, Spinoza was the 'only...predecssor' to Nietzsche aside from the Pre-Socratics (Tomlinson, in Deleuze, 1986: ix).

It should be noted, however, that these are not 'traditional' readings of these thinkers, but constitute forms of what Deleuze's philosophical method of '*enculage*' (buggery), a process of 'taking an author from behind, and giving him a child that would be his own offspring, yet monstrous. It was really important for it to be his own child, because the author had to actually say all I had him saying. But the child was bound to be monstrous too because it resulted from all sorts of shifting, slipping, dislocations, and hidden emissions that I really enjoyed' (1995: 6). There may not be an excessive monstrosity in this case, however – in a letter to his friend Franz Overbeck, Nietzsche wrote: '"I am utterly amazed, utterly enchanted! I have a *precursor*, and what a precursor! I hardly knew Spinoza: that I should have turned to him just *now*, was inspired by "instinct." Not only is his overall tendency like mine – namely to make all knowledge the *most powerful affect* – but in five main points of his doctrine I recognize myself; this most unusual and loneliest thinker is closest to me precisely in these matters: he denies the freedom of the will, teleology, the moral world-order, the unegoistic, and evil. Even though the divergencies are admittedly tremendous, they are due more to the difference in time, culture, and science' (1954: 92). These commonalities and divergences have been further discussed by Yovel (1992: 104-135), who contends that Nietzshce overstressed the similarities, and that Spinoza's immanent thought lacked the 'self-overcoming' of Nietzsche's *ubermensch*. These, of course, matter less for Deleuze's (*menage a trois) enculage.*

conatus.

Deleuze and Guattari draw upon *conatus* in modifying the psychoanalytic concept of desire in the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Boundas, 2005: 263). For them, desire refers to a 'process of production without reference to any exterior agency' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 170-171): it seeks only to maximise its own capacity to affect and be affected. They reject Lacan's claim that desire is created in response to a lack and argue instead that '[d]esire does not lack anything: it does not lack its object' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a: 28). Rather, it exists in a 'field of immanence' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 171), revelling in 'a joy that implies no lack or impossibility' (ibid).

Desire can therefore be seen as underpinning the 'production as process [that] overtakes all idealistic categories and constitutes a cycle whose relationship to desire is that of an immanent principle' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a: 5). Deleuze and Guattari talk of 'desiring-machines',[14] writing that '[t]he rule of continually producing production, of grafting producing onto the product, is a characteristic of desiring-machines or of primary production: the production of production' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a: 8). These machines are the site of production (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a: 314) and form part of a process whose ends cannot be separated from its means, except as a 'residue':

> Desire and its object are one and the same thing: the machine, as a machine of a machine. Desire is a machine and the object of desire is another machine connected to it. Hence the product is always something removed or deducted from the process of producing: between the act of producing and the product, something becomes detached, thus giving the vagabond, nomad subject a residue. (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a: 28)

Deleuze and Guattari note that these 'desiring machines...represent nothing, signify nothing, mean nothing, and are exactly what one makes of them, what is made with them, what they make in themselves' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a: 317). They can be considered as a series of 'interruptions' that cut into flows of matter, 'removing portions', but not terminating the flow. Indeed, these 'interruptions' should be

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14 With biological organisms no longer regarded as the sole possessors of life, Deleuze and Guattari reject any distinction between the human, technology and nature (2004a: 2, 5). Thus, their use of the terms 'machine' and 'desiring-machines' – as well as the claim in *Anti-Oedipus* that '[e]verything is a machine' (2004a: 2) – must not be read as being in contradiction with the claim that 'everything is alive'. I have already shown how Deleuze and Guattari have dissolved the binary between materialism and vitalism, and the concept of the machine builds on this. It abandons 'common sense' notions of the machine as non-living and places it firmly in the 'essential reality' of the living. It is through 'machinic' processes that life strives to realise itself.

understood as 'conditioning' the continuity of matter's flow.

A slightly graver tone is also sounded in *A Thousand Plateaus*, however, in which Deleuze and Guattari make clear that it would be a mistake to simply fetishize desire as an unproblematic key to a revolutionary politics.[15] It 'is never an undifferentiated instinctual energy, but itself results from a highly developed, engineered setup rich in interactions', which 'potentially gives desire a fascist determination' (2004b: 237). At times, then, desire may 'desire its own repression' (ibid.), which is to say that those who are subject to forms of totalitarian control actively reproduce this control through their desire.

Despite these warnings, life and desire are central to Deleuzean thought; the former containing all the elements necessary for creation without reference to a point beyond itself. Deleuze makes this point himself in a short essay entitled 'Immanence: A Life':[16]

> We will say of pure immanence that it is A LIFE, and nothing else. It is not immanence to life, but the immanent that is nothing is itself a life….It is complete power, complete bliss…no longer dependent on a Being or submitted to an Act- it is an absolute immediate consciousness whose very activity no longer refers to a being but is ceaselessly posed in a life. (2005a: 27, emphasis in original).

This 'ceaselessly posed' immanent life is *absolute*: it knows nothing outside its own becoming. In a key passage, and echoing Spinoza's *conatus*, Deleuze and Guattari write that:

> immanence is immanent only to itself and consequently captures everything, absorbs All-One, and leaves nothing remaining to which it could be immanent…whenever immanence is interpreted as immanent to Something, we can be sure that this Something reintroduces the transcendent (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994:45).

To cease the flow of this immanence, then, is to act in a manner hostile to life and prevent the new from coming into existence. I consider such operations more closely in the section on state thought, below.

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15 In a 1980 interviewDeleuze was asked how the circumstances surrounding the publication of *A Thousand Plateaus* earlier that year differed from those surrounding the publication of *Anti-Oedipus* eight years earlier. The answer perhaps offers a clue as to the slightly more nuanced portrayal of desire in the later text: *Anti-Oedpius*, says Deleuze, 'came just after May '68, which was a period of upheaval and experimentation. A certain economy of the book, a new politics, is responsible for today's conformity. We see a labor crisis, an organized and deliberate crisis where books are concerned, and in other domains as well. Journalism has appropriated increasing power in literature. And a flood of novels are rediscovering the theme of the family in its most banal form, doing infinite variations on mommy-daddy. It's disconcerting to discover a ready-made, prefabricated novel in one's own family. This year is the year of paternal heritage, and in this sense *Anti-Oedipus* was a total failure. It would take too long to analyze why, but the current situation is especially difficult for young writers, who are suffocating. I can't tell you where these dire feelings come from.' (2007: 175)

16 It should be noted that Deleuze here refers to 'a life', rather than 'life'. In this, he is talking of the potential for 'a life' (the life of a person, an animal or a machine) to express life to fully maximise the affections of life.

Difference-in-itself

Deleuze's claim that 'life' is capable of producing the new immanently cannot be grasped without an attempt to understand Deleuze's commitment to 'difference-in-itself'. Daniel W. Smith notes that for Deleuze 'the conditions of the new can be found only in a principle of *difference* – or more strongly, in a *metaphysics* of difference' (2008: 151). Deleuze argues that difference is ontologically prior to identity and representation, with identities imposed upon difference through an 'optical "effect"' (Deleuze, 1994: xix). If identities were prior to difference, Deleuze argues that it would be impossible to create the new. Difference is thus not a negation (to be 'different from' something) but the primary building block of existence ('difference-in-itself') (Deleuze, 1994: xviiii, xix, 50; 1986: 9; Smith, 2008). To differ is to say yes to life; to usher in new modes of living. '[I]n its essence, difference is the object of affirmation of affirmation itself. In its essence, affirmation is itself difference.' (1994: 52)

The new emerges from difference through processes of 'differentiation' (Deleuze, 1994: 48, 55-56, 208-214; 1988b: 43), but only provided difference does not seek acceptance within the rules of sameness or identity that dominate us and seeks to 'destroy the dominant equilibrium' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 521). This creation is not dialectical in the sense usually associated with the term because – as Deleuze argued in a discussion with Antonio Negri – difference does not force itself into a single point of contradiction (Deleuze in Deleuze and Negri, 1990: online at generation-online.org). Rather, it seeks to affirm itself *as difference* (Deleuze, 1994: 268), creating new relations as it does so.[17] Deleuze labels the moment when difference creates the new as a 'singularity'. In this, he draws on the language of mathematics, where a singularity is a point at which the distinguishing features of a figure reveals itself: the corners of a square, for example, or the moments at which a curve bifurcates (Smith, 2008: 156).

In a remark with obvious significance for students of utopia, Deleuze and Guattari state that singularities

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17 There may, however, be another sense in which (against his protestations), Deleuze's thought could be said to be dialectical. Robert Sinnerbrink notes similarities with Adorno's 'negative dialectics' and Merleau-Ponty's 'hyperdialectics' (2007: 190). In both, Sinnerbrink argues, the abstractions of identity contained in Hegel's dialectics are refused in favour of an understanding of difference (which, unlike Deleuze, is contained in the individual subject), meaning that dialectics becomes unstable and always seeks to go beyond what exists (see 2007: 95-100 for Sinnerbrink's discussion of negative dialectics; 162-168 for a discussion of hyper-dialectics). This, I suggest, may offer a further productive method of reading utopian spaces, although it will not be directly pursued in this thesis.

do not emerge on a pre-determined historical path, and we cannot understand 'progress' as the linear emergence of singularities – 'the movement is not from one point to another, but becomes perpetual, without aim or destination, without departure or arrival' (2004b: 389). They are unpredictable events that can be likened to Nietzsche's concept of the 'eternal return' which should not – says Deleuze – be understood as 'the return of something that is..."one" or the "same"', but that which 'is affirmed of becoming'. That which differs returns, producing the new as it does so (Deleuze, 1986: 48).

It is important to note, however, that Deleuze is not a pure philosopher of flux for whom all points of a multiplicity are singularities. In *Anti-Oedipus,* he and Guattari note that there must be 'an element of antiproduction coupled with the process [of production]' (2004a: 11). Whilst Deleuze's ontology may commit to the idea that matter is alive, he also maintain a place for Freud's death instinct, noting with Guattari that 'desire desires death also, because the full body of death is its motor' (2004a: 9). As Steven Shaviro states, it is sometimes necessary, then, for a 'dose of mortality' to be inserted so that sense can be bestowed upon the world. Deleuze thus states that we should to think 'in terms of speeds and slownesses, of frozen catatonias and accelerated movements' (Deleuze, 1988a: 129); the moment of creation coming when 'everything stops dead for a moment, everything freezes in place – and then the whole process will begin over again' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a: 8).

These 'speeds and slownesses' can be related to what Deleuze – after Bergson – calls the 'actual' and the 'virtual' realms (1988b). These should not be opposed (with the 'actual' that which exists and the 'virtual' that which does not exist) – rather, the virtual is the realm of pure difference; the chaotic mass from which order differentiates itself (Deleuze, 1994: 208-209). This differs from the field of the 'possible', as Deleuze notes in *Bergsonism:*

> the possible is a false notion, the source of false problems. The real is supposed to resemble it. That is to say, we completely give ourselves a real that is ready-made, preformed, pre-existent to itself, and that will pass into existence according to an order of successive limitations. Everything is already *completely given*: all of the real in the image, in the psuedo-actuality of the possible. Then the sleight of hand becomes obvious: If the real is said to resemble the possible, is this not in fact because the real was expected to come about by its own means, to "project backward" a fictitious image of it, and to claim that it was possible at any time, before it happened? In fact, it is not the real that resembles the possible, it is the possible that resembles the real, because it has been abstracted from the real once made, arbitrarily extracted from the real like a sterile double.

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> Hence, we no longer understand anything either of the mechanism of difference or of the mechanism of creation. (1988b: 98)

The opposition between that which is 'possible' and that which is 'actual' is thus replaced by the coexistence of the 'virtual' and the 'actual': when the virtual is 'actualised' it does so through a process of 'differentiation' (differing from itself) (Smith, 2008: 153).

The virtual operates on a level imperceptible to our 'daily reality' (which is only a counter-effect of the virtual), but which may well actualise (through differentiation) to become part of that 'daily reality'. Manuel DeLanda likens this to the science of 'intensive morphogenesis'[18] (2002: 6), in which apparently chaotic matter self-organises to produce relatively stable systems.[19] DeLanda (2002 and 2006), along with Protevi (2001) and Massumi (1992) have drawn links between this aspect of Deleuze's ontology and the science of complexity theory, in which organisation appears from an apparently 'chaotic' multiplicity of matter, and this can neatly be brought back to the concept of life via the following extract, from the essay 'Immanence: A Life':

> A life contains only virtuals. It is made of virtualities, events, singularities. What we call virtual is not something that lacks reality, but something that enters into a process of actualization by following the plane that gives it its own reality. (Deleuze, 2005a: 5)

Deleuze's ontology therefore assigns transcendental power to the immanent realm[20], leading him to claim he achieves a 'reversal of Platonism' (Deleuze, 1990a: 300) – identifying the motor for change as difference-in-itself; present in the real, the here and the now; rather than in the absent, abstract, elsewhere and else-when.

Multiplicity

Given his claim that becoming is driven by the actualisation of difference, it is perhaps tempting to think of Deleuze as a thinker who posits the individual as the agent of social change. This, however, would be a mistake for two (related) reasons. Firstly, Deleuze believes that the opposition between the one and the

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18 A literal translation from the Greek gives the phrase 'beginning of shape'.

19 Similarities can be posited with Ludwig von Mises concept of 'catallaxy' (famously taken up by F.A. Hayek), but for reasons outlined by Eugene W. Holland (2011: 105-111), capitalism can never produce this kind of organisation.

20 Deleuze positions himself as a follower of Kant in this regard, stating in *Difference and Repetition* that Kant 'is the one who discovers the prodigious domain of the transcendental. He is the analogue of a great explorer – not of another world, but of the upper or lower reaches of this one.' (1994: 135)

multiple is false. Secondly, he believes that the concept of the individual is *in itself* an imposition of sameness upon difference, and so the individual cannot serve as stable ontological ground for political action.

In rejecting the opposition between the one and the multiple, Deleuze draws on Duns Scotus' concept of 'univocity' (Deleuze, 1994: 35-36) and 'the great theoretical thesis of Spinozism: a single substance [with] an infinity of attributes' (Deleuze, 1988a: 17). For Deleuze, this single substance is composed of difference-in-itself, and so monism must not be opposed to pluralism (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 20). 'There is only one form of thought' claims Deleuze – 'it's the same thing: one can only think in a monistic or pluralistic manner. The only enemy is two. Monism and pluralism: it's the same thing' (Deleuze, 2001: 95).

Deleuze calls this 'same thing' multiplicity, drawing further on the thought of Henri Bergson (1988b)[21]. The term refers to 'a complex structure that does not reference a prior unity' (Roffe 2005a: 176); it is a single entity constituted of 'different' elements (as for Spinoza, these elements should be considered as expressions of a single substance). It 'escape[s] the abstract opposition between the multiple and the one' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 36) and should not be understood as 'a numerical fragment of a lost Unity or Totality or…the organic element of a Unity or Totality yet to come' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 36). The multiplicity is a 'body' that is defined by the 'sum total of the material elements belonging to it' in their stages of 'movement and rest, speed and slowness' and by its potential to affect and be affected (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 287; Deleuze, 1988: 127). As it increases these affects (through moments of 'singularity' – sometimes referred to as a process of 'assemblage'), it changes its nature (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 9); and this prefigurative element is an important part of a multiplicity's constitution.

The application of this concept to a collective body is clear – the collective does not have a single identity that erases the identities of those who constitute it, and is something that is always contested and open to becoming. For Deleuze, however, the individual body should be understood similarly: it too is an 'assemblage' constituted by a variety of non-identical 'material elements' in both body and mind (which

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21 Autonomist marxist thought has revived a similar notion by drawing on Spinoza's concept of the 'multitude'. The work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000); and in Paulo Virno (2004) is instructive here.

cannot be separated) – and by that with which it interacts (that which affects it and can be affected by it):

> An individual is...always composed of an infinity of extensive parts...These parts...are not themselves individuals; there is no essence of each one, they are defined solely by their exterior determinism, and they always exist as infinities; but they always constitute an existing individual to the extent that an infinity of them enters into this or that relation (Deleuze, 1988a: 77, cf. Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 288-289).

This individual body should not be understood as something separate from life, but something composed of and by life, as Deleuze and Guattari make clear when they directly address the reader in *A Thousand Plateaus*:

> You are...a set of speeds and slowness between unformed particles, a set of nonsubjectified affects. You have the individuality of a day, a season, a year, *a life* (regardless of its duration) – a climate, a wind, a fog, a swarm, a pack...Or at least you can have it, you can reach it' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 289).

Space and Place

Given this reading of Deleuze as someone who privileges difference and becoming, it is perhaps tempting to read him as a philosopher of pure flux: a thinker solely interested in flows; in the moments when life flees. Space would thus constitute a limit on life – an identity placing limits on difference by assigning desire channels and resulting in the cessation of becoming. Indeed, as Saul Newman notes, Deleuze's insistence on the primacy of desire over lack conforms to 'one of the central tenets of the poststructuralist critique of place' (2007: 102), and he is correct to say that:

> there can be no distinct place of power because power, like desire, is involved   in a multitude of instances, at every level of society. Nor can there be a distinct place of resistance because we voluntarily submit to, and often desire, domination: thus the "place" of resistance is essentially unstable, and is always in danger of becoming part of the assemblage of power. (2007: 101)

It does not follow, however, that Deleuze is not interested in space. To abandon it entirely in favour of becoming would be to embrace the hysteria Newman warns against; to privilege chaos over order rather than acknowledge their inter-relation. In this he can be seen as a modern day Heraclitus who – though so often considered a philosopher of pure flux – *did not* embrace permanent change over a semblance of place, but rather noted that 'the river where I step is not the same *and is*' (2003: 51, emphasis added). Thus, whilst the identity of the river Heraclitus steps in cannot be presupposed to the different bodies and qualities that constitute it (its levels of pollution, the water level, the wildlife present, and so on, all of

which will vary over time)[22], we are still able to identify this river as *the same river* (and name it as a place) over a period of time: it does not disappear as an analytic category, as Aristotle claims (2004: 152). Rather, what is clear here is that Heraclitus' river is produced by differences that constitute it (these differences themselves being the product of prior differences in weather systems, geological conditions, and so on): it is a multiplicitous body always open to further becoming. Repetition gives a space recognisable identity and allows it to be named, but this repetition is the repetition of difference. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze refers to this as a 'Copernican revolution', writing: 'that identity [should] not be [ontologically] first, [but] that it exist as a principle but as a second principle, as a principle become; that it revolve around the Different' (1994: 41).

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, meanwhile, Deleuze and Guattari talk of the agency required to create this repetition of difference, and refer to the space created as 'milieu' (2004b: 343-346): a 'block of spacetime constituted by the periodic repetition of the component' which, although 'coded...is in a perpetual state of transcoding or transduction' (2004b: 345). Thus, Deleuze sees space as a form (re)produced by those who occupy it (cf. Buchanan and Lambert, 2005a: 3). Against the understanding of Deleuze as a thinker who exclusively privileges flow, flux and becoming, however, this is not an ecstatic, spontaneous process: it requires moments of reterritorialisation.

It might be said, then, that space – for Deleuze – is a form of organisation: the manner in which form is given to matter. In this, his approach can be likened to that of the geographer Doreen Massey, whose work *For Space* seeks (with frequent references to Deleuze) to understand space not simply as a container in which things happen, or a form of being imposed on life; but a form 'constituted through interactions' and so 'always in the process of being made...never finished; never closed' (2005: 9). 'For the future to be open', she writes, 'space must be open too.' (2005: 12). It is, as Andrew Merrifield notes, '*simultaneously* a process and a thing' (1993: 521).

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22 Some differences can be observed over very short spaces of time: different molecules of water be passing from one second to the next, for example. Others – such as the course of the river – will only realise themselves over years, perhaps even centuries or millenia. It should also also be noted that moments of differentiation may occur suddenly, and with little warning: water-levels and speeds may change with little to no warning.

Utopia's etymology, however, mentions *place* rather than *space*, and it is important to think through what this might mean. Deleuze does not explicitly ruminate on this – perhaps because 'space' as he understands it is a conceptual rather than geographical term – and there is little secondary literature that engages with the difference between space and place in Deleuzean thought. Bruce B. Janz (2002), however, has suggested that – for Deleuze and Guattari – 'place' refers to an unstable 'sense of place' created by the subject traversing physical space; it is the 'consistency' generated through the interaction between this space and the bodies who (re)produce it and are affected by it as they do so. This is also similar to the approach taken by Massey, who writes that:

> [i]f space is...a simultaneity of stories-so-far, then places are collections of those stories, articulations within the wider power-geometries of space. Their character will be a product of those intersections within that wider setting, and what is made of them. And, too, of the non-meetings-up, the disconnections and the relations not established, the exclusions. All this contributes to the specificity of place.' (2005: 130).

Places are not pregiven, fixed localisations in an ocean of spatial flux (1994) but are '*spatio-temporal events*' (2005: 130, emphasis in original) that occupy the 'here *and* now': when the now changes, so does the here (2005: 139). What might be called a 'sense of place' emerges through the 'configurations of trajectories which have their own temporalities...where the successions of meetings, the accumulation of weavings and encounters build up a history.' (2005: 139) Place is made by 'returns...and the very differentiation of temporalities that lend continuity. But the returns are always to a place that has moved on, the layers of our meeting intersecting and affecting each other; weaving a process of space-time. (ibid.) Place, then, can be seen as when a space acquires some consistency: when it might be named – it is where events that create a particular identity occur. Thus, place should not be ascribed a pre-given, 'authentic' consistency, but one constructed by the interactions of bodies that traverse it: it is an identity that comes from the repetition of difference, from the events that *take place*. In this thesis, I move this further from strictly geographic concepts of place to conceptual places: planes upon which organisation occurs.

The task of a spatially grounded Deleuzean political philosophy, then, is to think of (and create) places produced by a multicplicities constituted by desire. When this occurs, places are unstable and open to becoming. They cannot be entirely separated from the bodies that produce it in the manner that the product cannot be entirely separated from the forces that produce it.

State Thought

Deleuze cautions that thought must not be separated from life. There should, he says, be a 'complex' unity between thought and life, in which '[m]odes of life [inspire] ways of thinking; modes of thinking create ways of living. Life *activates* thought, and thought in turn *affirms* life' (2005a: 66, emphasis in original). Yet most western philosophy fails in this task. It seeks to create places in accordance with abstract principles and should be understood as hostile to his inorganic life. Thus, before a 'nomadic' political thought that follows from Deleuze's ontological claims can be explicated, it will be necessary to consider the philosophical tradition of 'state thought' and show how it produces place.

Deleuze does not use the term 'state thought' himself, although in his introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus* Brian Massumi states that the book can be read as being against 'state philosophy': the tradition of Western metaphysics revolving around representation (Massumi in Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: xii-xiii). I have chosen to modify this to 'state thought' in order to make it clear that it is not merely abstract philosophising that generates a representationalist ontology, but rather that they are reproduced in everyday life and through 'common sense'. The term 'state', meanwhile, draws attention to Deleuze's resonances with anarchist thought (cf. May: 1991, 1994, Newman: 2007, 2010; Day, 2005; Jun: 2007; Kuhn: 2009), which I weave into the following two sections. The term should not, however, be understood as referring solely to the geopolitical state; and nor is it sufficient to expanded it to include institutional hierarchies that adopt 'statist' modes of operation (the school, the military, and so on). These are undoubtedly statist forms, but for Deleuze the state functions as a *mode of thought*: a 'concrete assemblage which realises the machine of overcoding of a society' (Deleuze and Parnet, 1987: 97), and may be produced wherever bodies interact. Thus, Deleuze does not see the state as something that can be 'smashed' (or even dismantled) solely through tackling hierarchical institutions, but recognises it also as a mode of thinking and living that is hostile to the immanent flow of life. In this, he is close to the position of the anarchist Gustav Landauer, who stated that:

> [o]ne can throw away a chair and destroy a pane of glass, but those are idle talkers and credulous idolaters of words who regard the state as such a thing or as a fetish that one can smash in order to destroy...The state is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of behavior; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently toward one another...We are the State and we shall continue to be the State until we have created the

institutions that form a real community' (1994: 1).

Yet Deleuze is more pessimistic than this: there can be no 'real community' that frees us from the dangers of statism once-and-for-all. An anarchist society cannot simply be an end of history, for even that will not be free of the state form in thought (Newman, 2001).

As a representationalist mode of thought, statism posits identity prior to difference and denies difference its role in the creation of the new. It does this via two seemingly contradictory stances. The first of these is by deeming unregulated life as the creator of a dangerous disorder – 'chaos' or 'anarchy' in their everyday, pejorative senses: matter is something that must be 'subjugated' and 'organized' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 375) and so requires 'ordering' in accordance with an essential essence. Despite drawing its power from the play of difference that characterises life (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 400), state thought fails to comprehend difference-in-itself, privileging the essences of identity and sameness – 'goals, paths, conduits, channels, organs' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 413), which posit the 'submission of the line to the point' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 323); rendering all difference a difference *from* a fixed, knowable identity. The second claim that state thought makes is that matter is not alive at all, but inert – and thus incapable of creating anything.[23] Thus, it follows Aristotle in adopting 'hylomorphism', through which 'active forms are imposed wholly and totally upon passive mater, and *voilá*, the thing is produced' (Thanem, 2001: 33, cf. Protevi, 2001). As John Protevi's *Political Physics*: *Deleuze, Derrida and the Body Politic* notes, this results in the homogenisation of difference (2001: 38, 79) through the installation and perpetuation of hierarchical forms (123). It 'resonates with fascist desire [in which] the leader comes from on high to rescue the chaos of the people by his imposition of order' (9). (It is crucial to remember that this is still a property of *desire*, however: an immanence that fails to stay true to the conditions of its own becoming.)

Such a mode of thought is 'arborescent' (tree-like): it seeks to 'root man' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 27) to a 'General' governing principle from which all laws are dictated. Trees serve 'not a[s] metaphor[s] at all but an image of thought, a functioning, a whole apparatus that is planted in thought to make it go in a

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23 Welchman discusses the (apparent) contradiction between these two positions in greater depth, arguing that because 'Chaos is matter as threat...the neutralization of this threatening conception of matter is a conception of the installation of inert or dead matter' (1997: 214-215). See also Protevi's comments in Protevi, DeLanda and Thanem (2005a: 66).

straight line and produce famous correct ideas' (Deleuze and Parnet, 2007: 25). These 'famous correct ideas' deny the free play of difference and 'organize, stabilize [and] neutralize' life- injecting it with 'redundancies' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 15). Quoting Clement Rosset, Deleuze and Guattari argue, in words that are – again – of obvious importance to students of utopianism, that through these 'redundancies' 'the world acquires as its double some other sort of world...there exists some other place that contains the key to desire missing in this world' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a: 28). The arborescent form of thought is hostile to life – it subordinates desire to lack and when that happens 'it's all over, no desire stirs...Whenever desire climbs a tree, internal repercussions trip it up and it falls to its death' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 15).

Morality is key to arborescent thought. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze notes that it portrays itself as 'divine, transcendent, superior to life' (Deleuze, 1986: 122), making judgements on differentiations and becomings in the name of transcendent principle or lack held over and above the world of forces and matter. In presenting itself as a necessary 'control' on the flows of life, morality betrays 'an extraordinary hatred, a hatred for life, a hatred for all that is active and affirmative in life' (ibid.). It is a dialectical mode of thought rooted in what Nietzsche called *ressentiment*: the jealousy of a 'reactive' subject towards the active subject leading the reactive subject to label the active subject 'evil' (1986, 44; 121). Deleuze thus approves of Nietzsche's rejection of Hegel's master-slave dialectic, in which the reactive slave comes to resent the master's ability to act and argues that the master is, therefore, 'evil'. In passing this judgement the slave notes that they are not like the master and thus must be 'good'. Such thought brings the concept of 'good' into the world only as the opposite of evil, meaning the 'negative becomes "the original act, the beginning, the act *par excellence*"' (Deleuze, 1986: 120-121). The moral good is thus predicate upon evil, and the striving force of life is something to be denied. In such a system there is no room for the becoming of difference: '[r]evolution never proceeds by way of the negative' (Deleuze, 1994: 208), a claim expanded upon by Simon Tormey, who argues that state thought 'subordinates that which exists or that which *may* come to exist to a system of formal knowledge, in turn denying the possibility of contingency, creativity, innovation and of *difference*' (2006: 141: emphasis in original).

State thought thus seeks to organise space in accordance with abstract principles – a belief in the moral good – rather allow life to regulate itself and produce the new through differentiation. Deleuze and Guattari refer to the resulting space as 'striated space' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 425). In a striated space relationships are defined and arranged in a fixed order: the flow of life is defined 'goals and paths, conduits, channels, organs, an entire organon' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 413). Governance of such a space is similar to Euclidean geometry, in which a large number of theorems are premised on a set number of axioms and in which a line is formed only between two points (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 233).[24] Law and order operate in the name of 'rationality' and difference is subordinated to abstraction, remaining 'captured, annexed, trapped in a space or territory over which it has…minimal control.' (Tormey and Townshend, 2006: 50) Striation thus provides a space for 'the art of governing people or operating the State apparatus' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 525): the 'excess' of life, difference and desire is repressed in favour of 'order'.

Deleuze argues that the striated space is a space of hierarchical arrangements, but it must be understood that he is not referring merely (or primarily) to the formal, pyramidal hierarchy in which increasing power-over rests with a decreasing number of people, as described by Colin Ward, who argues that:

> authoritarian institutions are organised as pyramids: the state, the private or public corporation, the army, the police, the church, the university, the hospital: they are pyramidal structures with a small group of decision-makers at the top and a broad base of people whose decisions are made for them at the bottom. (1973: 22).

Though such hierarchies clearly exist – and will be engaged with throughout this thesis – Deleuze is keen to highlight that the hierarchy of striated thought does not necessarily take this classic pyramidal form. Rather, it can also be utilised to refer to the way in which prevailing power relations prevent difference-in-itself from creating the new, allowing the reactive forces of identity and representation to dominate over the active force of life and imposing a 'something' to which immanence is considered to be immanent. This hierarchy manifests itself through 'the reign of law and of virtue' and so 'morality and religion are...theories of hierarchy' (Deleuze, 1986: 60-61). The law of value in capitalist society can also be added to this list, and hierarchy can be extended to cover 'bourgeois' forms of organisation in which power is

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24 There is something of a tension between Deleuze and Guattari's rejection of Euclidean geometry and the influence Deleuze draws from Spinoza, whose *Ethics* is written in an axiomatic manner derived from Euclid.

produced immanently,[25] creating:

> an unrivalled slavery, an unprecedented subjugation: there are no longer even any masters, but only slaves commanding other slaves; there is no longer any need to burden the animal from the outside, it shoulders its own burden. Not that man [sic] is ever the slave of technical machines; he is rather the slave of the social machine. (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a: 276)

Striation and hierarchy also works through the body of the (supposed) self-identical subject: the 'universal thinking subject' (herself a creation of state thought), who enables an appearance of 'universality' to come into being (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 418) through the striation of mental space, which posits the individual subject's consciousness as the locus for the creation of order (Deleuze and Guattari, 200b: 415). Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari go so far as to say that 'the unity of the faculties at the center constituted by the Cogito, is the State consensus raised to the absolute' (2004b: 415). This consensus results from the 'striating of mental space', and posits the individual subject's consciousness as the locus for the creation of new forms of order (ibid.; Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 46). It fails to acknowledge that difference creates active forces which escape consciousness (Deleuze, 1986: 38), and that consciousness is the expression of reactive force: the way a 'self-identical' individual responds to the given order (Deleuze, 1986: 39).

Nomadic Thought

Opposing state thought, Deleuze and Guattari point the way towards what I am calling a 'nomadic thought'.[26] This works in harness with the inorganic force of life in order to go beyond that which exists, encouraging virtual singularities to actualise themselves. This is not done with reference to a transcendent, lacking 'beyond', and cannot be discerned by the rational subject. Rather, it is built on the belief that the body politic can – by creating 'smooth space' – call into being the necessary forces to bring around genuine change. It is an 'artisanal' politics of 'working with' this body rather than an 'architectural' (or hylomorphic) politics of 'working on' matter (Protevi, 2001: 122-123); and has significant resonances with anarchist and autonomist forms of organisation. It draws a distinction between morality and ethics – dismissing the former as 'judging' life in the name of the ideal whilst promoting the latter as a method of

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25 There are similarities with Foucault here. He notes that power relates to the 'multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization' (1990: 92).

26 Fredric Jameson provides some useful commentary on the relationship between the nomadic and the state in an essay entitled 'Dualism and Deleuze', published in *Valences of the Dialectic* (2009: 181-201). For him, this emerges as a 'very late theme' in *A Thousand Plateaus* and is frequently utilised in order to 'recontain... all the complex and heterogenous material: something like a narrative...[or] even ideological frame that allows us to reorder it into simpler patterns.' (2009: 199) This should be kept in mind during this thesis: there is a great deal of complexity and heterogeneity to the concepts of – and opposition between – state utopia(nism) and nomadic utopia(nism).

evaluating in the name of life.

Deleuze and Guattari refer to the nomadic subject as a 'schizophrenic‘, or 'schizo-revolutionary' (sometimes plainly 'schizo') – a subject traversed by a multiplicity of active forces. The schizo is constituted by difference; not self-identity – a plurality of forces, affects and becomings combine to determine their reality. Following Nietzsche's claim that active force escapes consciousness, they do not 'think‘ change in an abstract or idealistic manner, but instead 'feel' it (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a: 21). This is not an easy position to be in – the experience is at times 'harrowing, emotionally overwhelming...which brings the schizo as close as possible to matter, to a burning, living centre of matter…that unbearable point where the mind touches matter and lives its every intensity, consumes it' (ibid.), yet such a life may lead to 'a feeling of violent, almost vertiginous, happiness' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 33). In a dazzling piece of prose, Deleuze and Guattari write that schizos:

> know incredible sufferings, vertigos, and sicknesses. They have their specters. They must reinvent each gesture. But such a man [sic] produces himself as a free man, irresponsible, solitary, and joyous, finally able to say and do something in his own name, without asking permission; a desire lacking nothing, a flux that overcomes barriers and codes, a name that no longer designates any ego whatever. He has simply ceased being afraid of becoming mad. He experiences and lives himself as the sublime sickness that will no longer affect him. (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a: 142)

Through these intense feelings the new is brought into the world, for the schizo is 'the universal producer' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a:7). However, unlike the rational subject of State Thought, schizos '[do] not speak of another world' to create this new (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a: 142): rather, they are 'propelled' by forces immanent to the present – they 'know how to leave', having 'made departure into something as simple as being born or dying' (ibid.). Their product is that which is created when they flee: the aforementioned 'residue'; an (actual) order created out of (virtual) chaos, in a manner analogous to the operations of complex systems. In this – again – Deleuze and Guattari can be seen as close to particular strands of anarchist thought, which also acknowledge that chaos and order are not simply opposites, but rather that chaos has a tendency to self-organise into order (and continue to disrupt this order) (Bey, 1994: 2; 2003: 21, 36; Crimethinc: online at thecloud.crimethinc.com).

Given my misgivings around the term 'schizo', which I feel risks romanticising (and thus trivialising)

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mental illness (though this is clearly not Deleuze and Guattari's intention), and which downplays the relationship between the subject and the spatial realm; I will draw on another of Deleuze and Guattari's figures here: the nomad. In *A Thousand Plateaus* they write that:

> the nomad is not at all the same as the migrant; for the migrant goes principally from one point to another, even if the second point is uncertain, unforeseen, or not well localized. But the nomad goes from point to point only as a consequence and as a factual necessity; in principle, points for him [sic] are always relays along a trajectory. (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 419)

The nomad's continual departure is 'life answer[ing] the call of death, not by fleeing *but by making flight create*' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 122, emphasis added) – they draw 'lines of flight' (ibid): movements going beyond the present and fleeing striated organisation. With this constant departure to an unknown destination, they embody the version of anarchism offered by George Woodcock, which sees it:

> not [as] a swelling stream flowing on to its sea of destiny...but rather of water percolating through porous ground – here forming for a time a strong underground current, there gathering into a swirling pool, trickling through crevices, disappearing from sight, and then re-emerging where the cracks in the social structure may offer it a course to run. As a doctrine it changes constantly; as a movement it grows and disintegrates, in constant fluctuation (1975: 15).

The nomad thus remains animated by desire even after the fulfilment of a particular lack – an aspect of Deleuze's philosophy which Eugene W. Holland links to Jacques Lacan's 'metonymy of desire', in which a desired object (which serves to give the subject an identity) loses its desirable qualities as soon as it is realized (2005a: 61). Thus, the nomad's movement is thus not *towards* another lack, but *away* from the ossification of striated space. As Karen Houle writes, Deleuze's philosophy 'shifts the fulcrum of action and evaluation...from the outcomes of an action to the nature of the grounds upon which an action was enabled...the worthiness of a thing or a state of affairs lies in the conditions of its becoming' (2005: 95) – these conditions of becoming, of course, being ongoing (they defined the action and are allowed to continue after the action has taken place).

Important to note is that space is central to the nomad: it is space that they traverse and that they affect as they traverse, producing what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as 'smooth space', in which state thought's hylomorphism is abandoned and life is given power to self-regulate non-hierarchically (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 389). Nomads group together and form 'pack' or 'band' like groups which are defined immanently without a pre-determined structure, organisation or an ordering moral principle (Deleuze and

Guattari, 2004b: 395), creating multiplicities which seek to increase their ability to affect and be affected, and in which there is no opposition between the individual and the collective. Their connections take the form of the 'rhizome' – a network of connections that are non-hierarchical in the traditional sense (it lacks a vertical structure) and in the Deleuzean sense (it lacks an ordering point) (Deleuze and Guattari: 2004b: 3-28).

Deleuze and Guattari refer to these rhizomatic connections between bodies as a 'nomadic war machine'. This is not related to 'war' in the everyday meaning of the term, but rather recalls Hobbes' claim that 'war is against the State, and makes it impossible' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 394, cf. 2004b: 253). The 'nomadic war machine', then, 'is the mode of a social state that wards off and prevents the State' (ibid.) – a multiplicity that seeks to perpetuate immanent relationships in a smooth space. In the nomadic war machine, difference cannot be incorporated into identity or represented according to some operation of the 'similar' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 395). Deleuze refers to the regulation of space in this way as 'crowned anarchy' (1994: 55), recalling George Woodcock's claim that anarchism universalises aristocracy (1975: 30), creating a group of masters combining with other masters. In this, the 'nomadic war machine' can be seen to offer a vision of anarchist organisation that answers Nietzsche's criticism of anarchism for forming an alliance of reactive subjects: the triumph of the 'weak' who are scared of power and too timid to forge the conditions for becoming (1994: 52).[27]

The nomadic war machine, then, seeks power; but it seeks the power of production rather than the power of hierarchy. Deleuze identifies this with the Nietzschean 'will-to-power' (1986: 49-51; 61-64) and Spinoza's *potentia* (1988a: 97-99); and uses the French term *puissance* to refer to it. Such a concept of power is distinct from hierarchical operations of power (Spinoza's *potestas*, which Deleuze often renders as *pouvoir*) – referring instead to a body's capacity to affect and be affected, and to the 'capacity to multiply connections that may be realized by a given "body"' (Massumi in Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: xviii). This understanding of power does not see it as a 'zero-sum' game in which the power of one body necessarily decreases the power of another, and does not posit the power of one as hostile to the freedom

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27 For more on the relationship between Nietzsche and anarchism, see Call, 2002: 40-42; Newman, 2007: 48; and the John Moore edited collection *I Am Not A Man, I Am Dynamite: Nietzsche and Anarchism* (2004).

of another (freedom in this sense becoming bound up with the power-to (May, 2011). Indeed, the increase in power of one body may result in the increase in the power of another.

In order to get around the fact that the English term 'power' does not distinguish between *potentia/puissance* and *potestas/pouvoir* (cf. Hardt in Negri, 1991: xi-xii), it is useful to explore the difference between the concepts 'power-to', 'power-over' and 'power-with'.[28] My reading of these concepts is indebted to Uri Gordon (who notes their importance for contemporary anarchist practice), and for him, 'power-over' refers to acts of domination: behaviours which prevent others from acting; 'power-to' refers to empowerment – the ability to act;[29] and 'power-with' refers to the manner in which 'power-to' may be enhanced by combining with others (2008: 48-55). Nomads, then, express 'power-to' and form nomadic war machines in order to enhance this through 'power-with'. I will use these three forms of power throughout this thesis – using 'power-over' to delineate the Deleuzean understanding of hierarchy, *pouvoir* and *potestas;* 'power-to' to express the striving of desire, life, *puissance* and *potentia*; and 'power-with' to refer to the way that 'power-to' can be increased by bringing nomadic bodies into contact with other nomadic bodies to form a multiplicity.

It should be clear, then, that the nomadic war machine privileges neither the individual nor the collective. Instead, it rejects the (necessity of this) opposition itself, designating it the product of state thought (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a: 308).[30] The nomad is 'fully a part of the crowd and at the same time completely outside it, removed from it...on the edge' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 33) – there is no 'self' organising life on their behalf. Lewis Hyde's re-imagining of the concept of the 'dividual' is also useful here: unlike the 'individual' (who views herself as entirely autonomous and operating in a world of metaphysical freedom), the 'dividual' acknowledges that 'we are always simultaneously individuals and sunk in our communities', and 'is constituted by the complexity of the world' around her (2010: online at

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28 These terms are used frequently in anarchist literature, but my use of them here is indebted to Uri Gordon's (2008) reading of Starhawk (1987) – although Gordon takes a more analytical approach, and is more cautious about embracing 'power-with' than I (though as I note below, the creation of 'smooth space' cannot be seen as a once-and-for-all utopian moment).

29 Their capacity to affect and be affected, perhaps.

30 Again, there are significant resonances with anarchism here. See, for example Kropotkin (2009), Bey (1994: 3) and Goldman (1998: 78-86) – although Kropotkin and Goldman see a division between the individual and the collective, even if not a necessary tension (the point of Deleuze – and, to a lesser extent Bey, is that the ontological status of the individual is disrupted).

bombsite.powweb.com). The more dividual nomadic bodies join with other dividual nomadic bodies (and acknowledge their own internal difference), the greater the power-with and the greater the chances of creating the new and ensuring that occupied space remains smooth, and remains open to new formations and modes of life.[31]

The Good

This, then, is the Deleuzean realisation of 'the good life': a space in which the future is always open and never pre-given; a space in which a multiplicitous assemblage of dividuals (a 'nomadic war machine') utilise its power-with to create the new. But given that – as I have shown – Deleuze rejects morality, on what grounds is it possible to speak of 'the good'? The answer comes in Deleuze's concept of the ethical, which he distinguishes from the moral. Again, the assemblage of Spinoza-Nietzsche is important here, as the title of Chapter Two of *Spinoza: A Practical Philosophy* – 'On the Difference Between The *Ethics* and a Morality' (Deleuze, 1988a: 17-29) makes clear. Deleuze identifies an ethical framework in Spinoza's *Ethics*, in which:

> Good and bad...are the two senses of the variation of the power of acting: the decrease of this power (sadness) is bad; its increase (joy) is good...Objectively, then, everything that increases or enhances our power of acting is good, and that which diminishes or restrains it is bad; and we only know good and bad through the feeling of joy or sadness of which we are conscious...Since the power of acting is what opens the capacity for being affected to the greatest number of things, a thing is good "which so disposes the body that it can be affected in a greater number of ways"...or which preserves the relation of motion and rest that characterizes the body. (Deleuze, 1988a: 71)

The ethical, then, allows us to evaluate (rather than judge) actions in the name of life, giving us the ethically 'good' (that which allows life to transform itself immanently) and the ethically 'bad' (that which seeks to impose an external order on life) in favour of the morally good (that which conforms to an external ordering principle) and the morally evil (that which does not conform to an external ordering principle). In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze even goes so far as to suggest that '[t]he good of ethics has become the evil of morality, the bad has become the good of morality. Good and evil are not the good and the bad but, on the contrary, the exchange, the inversion, the *reversal* of their determination.' (1986: 122)

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31 It should be noted that Deleuze himself used the concept of the 'dividual' to refer to the ability of information technologies to divide the individual into sample statistics, data banks and so on (Deleuze, 1990b).

Ethics are thus materialist and operate independently of our consciousness. We *experience* them through the passions: they are material forces that act on our bodies: '[i]t is not a matter of judging life in the name of a higher authority which would be the good, the true; it is a matter, on the contrary, of evaluating every being, every action and passion, even every value, in relation to the life which they involve.' (2005b: 136) Foucault is therefore right when he claims in his introduction to *Anti-Oedipus* that the text in question constitutes a 'book of ethics' that offers 'a way of thinking and living' (in Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a: xv), and I would argue that this could be extended to Deleuze's entire output.

The 'No'

Given Deleuze's hostility to the dialectic (see in particular 1986: 175-194), it may seem unusual to argue that there is a 'Deleuzean no'. What I want to insist on here, however, is not the 'no' as a constitutive element of productivity in Deleuzean thought – as the section on difference-in-itself, above, makes clear, '[r]evolution never proceeds by way of the negative' (Deleuze, 1994: 208). Rather, I want to suggest that the 'no' is important to this project for drawing attention to the fact that Deleuze's affirmative thought renders finality impossible: there can be *no* end of history; no colloquial 'utopia' of perfection is possible. This 'no' is, therefore, integrally bound up with the affirmation of life and difference-in-itself discussed previously. Indeed, Deleuze himself makes this point in his reading of Nietzsche's Overman, writing that '[t]here is no affirmation which is not *immediately followed* by a negation no less tremendous and unbounded than itself. Zarathustra rises to this "supreme degree of negation". *Destruction as the active destruction of all known values* is the trail of the creator.' (1986: 177). To say 'no', then, is to reject the present: and indeed any future that might be created from affirmation, for '[t]here is no affirmation which is not preceded by an immense negation' (.ibid), save the affirmation of the subject who simply accepts the present as it is – the affirmation of 'the ass' (a figure of Nietzsche's) who does not know how to say 'no' as well as 'yes' (1986: 181). Thus, 'affirmation would never be real or complete if it were not preceded and followed by the negative' (179).

This can be illustrated with reference to the concept of smooth space. Despite offering this as a terrain

that is constituted by (and constitutes) ethically good forms of organisation, Deleuze and Guattari warn us that we should '[n]ever believe a smooth space will suffice to save us' (2004b: 551). Rather, what is at stake is 'operations of striation and smoothing...the passages or combinations: how the forces at work within space continually striate it, and how in the course of its striation it develops other forces and emits new smooth spaces' (ibid.). Simply to affirm smooth space as *the answer* to problems of political and social organisation is colloquially utopian in the sense of being impossible. Smooth space should not be seen as a euphoric moment bringing about the final triumph of the good; a once-and-for-all emancipation that creates an eternal state of becoming free from hierarchical forms and artificial limits on life. To believe in this would be to have faith in the impossible, for – as I have noted – the state is not only an institutional form but a mode of thought that can be reproduced immanently. Smooth space in its pure form cannot exist (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 524) and to believe that it has been realised (as in, for example, the 'true community' of Landauer) fails to acknowledge the tyrannies of habit that will emerge – established patterns of thought and behaviour that insidiously work to reinstall power-over. The 'no', then, draws attention to the aforementioned 'radical pessimism', which cannot be separated from Deleuze's affirmative thought and might be summarised by Foucault's claim that history unfolds as an 'endlessly repeated play of domination' (1977: 51).

A Final Word of Warning: Deleuze and postfordist organisation

In recent years a number of commentators have noted how contemporary forms of capitalist organisation (which might broadly be dubbed 'postfordism') have a number of resonances with the work of Deleuze (and Guattari) (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2007; Vandenberghe, 2008; MacLellan, 2010), with Slavoj Žižek even going so far as to suggest that '[t]here are, effectively, features that justify calling Deleuze the ideologist of late capitalism' (2004: 184-185). Others note that broadly Deleuzean forms of organisation have been utilised in contemporary military strategies (Weizman, 2007; Monk, 2007). Whilst it is true that on occasion such organisational forms adopt broadly non-hierarchical principles and utilise a loosely Deleuzean language of flux and flow, Deleuze himself was well aware of this danger. Reinforcing his and Guattari's claim that simply creating smooth space is not sufficient, they note that 'the smooth itself can be drawn and occupied by diabolical powers of *organization*' (2004b: 530, emphasis in original), including

those of multinational capital (2004b: 543; cf. Deleuze, 1992; Deleuze and Negri, 1990). Thus, it is important to note that whilst there is an ethical 'good' *within* smooth space, it can also be utilised for the establishment of 'power-over' (inequality in wealth being understood as a hierarchical form), which is to say that it can be put to ethically *bad* ends: it can be made immanent to something other than immanence itself. In other words, it is not enough simply to create ethically good forms of organisation internal to that organisation: the external uses to which it is put must also be considered.

Conclusion

Deleuze's thought, then, has offered two conflicting visions of political organisation: the statist and the nomadic. The former has obvious resonances with colloquially pejorative concepts of utopia; whilst the latter – with its ethical 'good', its 'no' to permanence and its sense of space and place as something constantly being reproduced suggests a very different form of utopianism, but a utopianism that retains an etymological fidelity to the concept. As I have noted, however, there are no easy answers regarding what might constitute a utopia in Deleueze's approach, but there are certainly plenty of 'tools' that might be used in thinking through how the concept can be rethought for an age that has lost faith in the future. It is to this task that this thesis will now turn.

Chapter Two
Theorising Utopia(nism)

Introduction

In this chapter I directly address the primary aim of this thesis: utilising the the tools offered by Deleuze's theoretical framework to develop two differing forms of utopianism – one aligned with state thought, and the other with nomadic thought; as well as theorising the relationship between these forms. The chapter begins by developing my concept of state utopianism. This begins with a reading of the work of the utopian literary historians J.C. Davis and Krishan Kumar. From them, I show how utopia can be understood as a place in which statist philosophy holds sway: a 'perfect' form of organisation where difference is not tolerated and the individual is seen as a threat to the stability of the collective. I argue that this approach splits utopianism into three dimensions: the design, realisation and reproduction of the utopia (though I note that these may not be temporally discrete). I note that in the first two of these dimensions utopia functions as a transcendent lack and that the final of these dimensions is simultaneously utopian *and* anti-utopian (as well as being dystopian, from the perspective of nomadic thought). I also note that it is possible to unintentionally be a state utopian. From this, I consider the phenomenon of anti-utopianism, where I invert my earlier argument to claim that anti-utopianism is, in fact a form of state utopianism. I link this to the contemporary global order and 'capitalist realism'.

I then turn to consider ways out of this seeming double-bind. Firstly, I consider what Ruth Levitas refers to as the 'function based approach' to utopia, associated with Fredric Jameson, Tom Moylan and Levitas herself (though I am careful to acknowledge differences between these thinkers). Here, the emphasis shifts from the content of utopias to their function. I note that this approach assumes that utopias are text based and show how it sees utopian texts not as blueprints (as in state utopianism), but as heuristic devices that unpick our certainty in the present whilst turning towards the future as a space of potential. Noting that intent is again an important issue here, I offer a reading of Tom Moylan's concept of the 'critical utopia' –

a text intended by its author to have this function – and argue that here content is also important, for critical utopian texts are not only designed such that the subject who encounters them will subject their present to critique but depict utopias that themselves are constituted by critique (though these two points cannot be separated). I note that 'critical' also refers to the 'critical mass' necessary to enact any utopian change. I am (sympathetically) critical of this approach, however. I argue that it either emphasises the negative, critical power of utopian texts, or lapses back towards state utopianism, with political action guided by a transcendent lack that serves what Levitas calls 'the education of desire'. I also argue that objects other than utopian texts can have a utopian function, and that by focussing on utopian texts the function based approach runs the risk of failing to mobilise the 'critical mass' that Moylan speaks of, as utopian texts are likely to be encountered by individuals.

From this, I move on to consider process based approaches to utopia, focussing on the work of Ernst Bloch and Deleuze and Guattari's brief mention of utopia in *What is Philosophy?*. I note that the former's thought contains a number of resonances with statist thought, but argue that the process approach performs the crucial function of giving utopia a temporal as well as a spatial dimension. I then argue that in so doing, however, it conflates utopianism (as a force) with utopia (the place). In this, I suggest, it is guilty of the hysteria that Newman associates with Deleuze.

I then return to the content of utopia. Drawing in particular on anarchist approaches to utopia, I show that the term utopianism is often used to refer to forms that resonate with nomadic thought, but that such approaches are reluctant to commit to spatially grounding this utopianism. This, I suggest, results in a utopianism without utopia. I then analyse three approaches that do (to an extent) seek to ground nomadic organisation in space – Hakim Bey's 'Temporary Autonomous Zone', John Holloway's 'crack', and Andy Robinson and Simon Tormey's 'propulsive utopias', which I note come close to envisaging what a 'nomadic utopia' may look like, but which do not theorise how such spaces may produce striation; nor account for the importance of 'antiproduction'.

I then offer my concept of the nomadic utopia: a place of ethically good organisation that is immanently bound up with the utopianism that creates it. I argue that this is a material rather than ideal place constituted by non-hierarchy and difference-in-itself. I note that experiencing life within a nomadic utopia may also have a utopian function, making it uncomfortable for the subject to return to a state utopia and 'educating their desire' about how the world might be otherwise. I note that the nomadic utopia also pays heed to the 'no' in utopia's etymology by rejecting the idea that it constitutes an end of history. The 'no' thus introduces a temporal element to the nomadic utopia, structuring it as a place of permanent prefiguration that acknowledges the dangers of the tyranny of habit. I note that a nomadic utopia may at times need to embrace 'strategic hierarchy' or 'strategic identity' in order to escape the dangers of hysterical flux. I also develop the term 'deviant nomadic utopias' to acknowledge the dangers of nomadic utopias being put to statist ends.

My concept of the nomadic utopia having been developed, I briefly consider its relationship to the state utopia. Here, I argue that nomadic utopias may ossify into a state utopian form if the 'no' is not heeded and tyrannies of habit emerge. I argue that in naming a place as either a nomadic or state utopia attention must also be given to its spatial and temporal dimensions. I also argue that nomadic utopias may function as (relatively) autonomous spaces within (but distinct from) a state utopia.

State Utopianism

Utopia and Perfection

In 'The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited', Lyman Tower Sargent argues that '*[p]erfect, perfection*, and their variants are freely used by scholars in defining utopias. They should not be' (1996: 9 - emphasis in original). Normatively, I would agree, yet here I want to argue that a holistic approach to utopia must include understandings that see it as a place of perfect social arrangement ('a perfect place') because – whether or not they are intended by their authors, founders or members to be understood as perfect places – the history of utopia contains a number of places that claim perfection for themselves (which is to say that the occupants of the communities believe them to be places that cannot be improved upon).

Furthermore, I will argue, this understanding of utopia can be extended to include the contemporary global order organised by capital and state power.

In articulating this argument, I draw heavily on the works of J.C. Davis' *Utopia and the Ideal Society: A Study of English Writing 1516-1700* (1981) and Krishan Kumar's *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times* (1987) (and, to a lesser extent, his *Utopianism* [1991]). As the titles of these two main texts suggest, they are limited in scope (both geographically and temporally), but they claim to represent the concept of 'utopia' as a whole (Sargent, 1982: 683 makes this point in relation to Davis). As Sargent notes, Davis 'has to discuss works that don't fit his definition because, even though they violate his definition, he recognizes that they are utopias' (1982: 683-684). Thus, whilst he may have identified tropes common to *some* English literary utopias of this period, his claims should not be taken to fix the meaning of utopia for all of time and space. Kumar is guilty on this front as well: whilst he covers utopian works from a greater time span (believing utopia to have begun in the sixteenth century, he continues from there until the twentieth century) and a wider geographical region (though it remains anglocentric), he believes utopia to be a western, Christian construct and excludes 'modern' works that do not conform to his definition of utopia: there is little on, for example, the 'new wave' of utopias from the 1970s by writers such as Ursula K. Le Guin and Samuel Delany.[32] Yet despite Davis and Kumar being wrong to extrapolate from their narrow temporal and geographical focus to fix the meaning of 'utopia' once and for all, it would also be mistaken to state that utopia must never be equated with claims to perfection. Indeed, the value of Davis and Kumar's work is that they are both defenders of the concept of utopia and offer detailed analyses of utopias that can be associated with perfection, something that is usually associated with an anti-utopian stance.

Some notes on form

My approach here, then, is to analyse the *content* of utopian places in order that certain characteristics internal to the utopian place can be utilised in order to build a definition of the state utopia. However, it is

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32 Whilst it is plausible that these are excluded for being responses to a period of postmodern times rather than 'modern times', Kumar does not state what he means by modern, and the book is marketed as dealing with 'the latest phase of utopia's history: the period since the 1880's [sic]' (publisher's blurb in Kumar, 1987).

important to briefly consider the 'form' based approach to defining utopia (cf. Levitas, 1990: 6-7). Although I am using Kumar and Davis here to help me create an analysis of the content of utopian spaces, utopia is also a form for them. Specifically, it is a literary form (Davis, 1981: 4; Kumar 1991: 20),[33] and one of five varieties of literarily conceived perfected 'ideal society', which differs from the others in primarily through the human agency required to realise it.[34] It is clear from my introduction that I do not agree with the view that utopia should be confined to the literary. Not only is the term used to describe existing forms of organisation, conflating utopian literature with utopia does not leave a term for the societies that these texts depict. Literary utopias should, to my mind, properly be thought of as works set in and about a fictional utopia, rather than clearly and simply as utopias.[35]

Furthermore, there is nothing *uniquely* literary about the features of the societies that Kumar and Davis describe. It is perfectly plausible to perceive of them being depicted through a series of paintings, for example; or as plays, films, musical works, and so on – or even as the dreams of a single individual that are

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33 Utopia as a literary form has been widely discussed (see, for example: Sargent, 1967, 1975, 1994, 2010; Morton, 1978; Berneri, 1982; Moylan, 1986, 2000; Suvin,1979, 2003; 1996; Sargisson, 1996; 2010; Jameson, 2007; and Burns, 2008). but it is important to note a difference between four categories of thinker here. Firstly, there are those who accept that it is one utopian form among many and treat it as such (Sargisson, 2010; Suvin, 2003; Sargent, 2010). Secondly, there are those who explicitly define utopia as a literary genre (Kumar, Davis, Morton, Suvin, 1979 and Berneri). Thirdly, there are those who explicitly state that utopia is not solely a literary genre, but frequently conflate the two by using the term 'utopia' to refer to 'literary utopias', or write solely or primarily about works of literature (Sargent, 1967, 1994; Moylan, and Jameson). Finally, Burns uses literary theory (alongside political theory) and writes exclusively about literary utopias, but is careful to consistently use the term 'literary utopias', suggesting that he believes there are other forms of utopia that are not literary, but that they fall outside the scope of his work. This is a rough guide only and thinkers are often not consistent across works.

34 For Davis and Kumar, the other types of ideal society are Cockaygne, Arcadia, Millennium and the 'Perfect Moral Commonwealth' (Kumar replaces the latter with 'The Ideal City') (Davis, 1981: 22-36; Kumar, 1987: 3-19). For Davis, Utopia is unique in that it is brought around through human agency, and specifically the creation of laws (differentiating it from Cockaygnes, which contain no account of their creation; Millenniums, which arise through an act of God; and Arcadia, which results from a bountiful nature and an unexplained radical break with the present); and does not assume a perfect human nature (unlike Arcadia, where desires are only 'moderate'; the Perfect Moral Commonwealth, where they have been perfected through a process of moral reformation; the Millennium, where mankind is without sin; and Cockaygne, where the elimination of scarcity solves problems related to human nature. See pages 20-22 for Cockaygne, 22-26 for Arcadia, 26-31 for the Perfect Moral Commonwealth, 31-36 for the Millennium, and 36-40 for Utopia). Kumar differs slightly, arguing that human nature is perfectible (though not perfect) in Utopia, and that Utopias can be differentiated from other forms of ideal society in that they result from developments in science and technology: the other varieties of ideal society constitute the 'pre-history' of utopia but are not, strictly speaking, utopias (1987: 20). He is inconsistent in this regard, however, and makes reference to 'ancient' utopias later on in the text (31), though he makes it clear that these are not 'utopia proper' (1987: 32). I follow Sargisson (1994) in suggesting that all these forms are, in fact, utopian – although I do not engage with any of them in depth in this thesis.

One further thing to note is that the differences between these forms are discussed by Davis and Kumar as differences of content, though visions that they would classify as Cockaygnes can be found in the visual arts – Pieter Breugel the Elder's 'An Interpretation of the Land of Cockaigne' – for example (Frank, 1991), music – Harry McClintock's 'Big Rock Candy Mountain' (Rammel, 1990), and oral traditions (Del Guidice, 2001); Millennial societies in religious oral traditions (Thompson, 1968: 48-50; and Arcadias in the visual arts – particularly in renaissance era paintings and music (see Gerbino, 2009, for an account of Italian arcadian music of the renaissance).

35 I recognise the futility of such a claim: when referring to literary utopias it is only natural that this be shortened to 'utopia'; and where a theorist's primary interest is literary utopias it is perhaps unfair to expect them to preface the term 'utopia' with the term 'literary'. Nonetheless, the point is – at least for my argument – an important one.

never publicly depicted through any form.[36] These visions would, I believe, still be visions of a utopia (though the visions themselves would not be the utopia: a dream or a film is not a utopia, it is a dream or a film *set in and about a utopia*), and for this reason I use the term 'utopian texts' rather than 'utopian literature' (the former including, but not being limited to the latter) when referring to fictional utopias. Yet even this expansion of the category from utopian literature to utopian texts is not sufficient as it is conceivable – if not plausible – to imagine a 'real' (rather than fictional) place that attempts to meet the criteria for utopia as laid out by Kumar or Davis.   As I note below, people have tried to create communities based on perfected literary utopias, and the contemporary world of 'capitalist realism' (Fisher, 2009a) can be seen as claiming perfection for itself, and so as a utopia.[37]

Thus, in working through Kumar and Davis' analyses of the *content* of utopias, I will utilise their thought as if they were referring to utopian places, rather than utopian texts. This is, I believe, less problematic than might first appear: whilst there are a number of features of utopian texts that lend themselves particularly well to the techniques of literary and textual analysis, these are generally associated with the function based approach to utopia (see, for example, the use of semiotic squares[38] by Jameson [2007] and Wegner [2002]) and are barely considered in the works of Davis and Kumar. There is little – if anything – in their analysis of literary utopias that could not be applied to utopia understood as a form of spatial organisation or theory of place.

The content approach: utopia as a perfect space

A form based approach to defining utopia can never be sufficient. Whether one follows Davis and Kumar and argues that utopia is a literary genre, expands on this to argue that it is a broader textual form (and so might include music, art, film, etc.) or follows my claim that utopia is needs to be seen as a spatially

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36 To illustrate the danger in limiting utopia to the literary form it is interesting to consider the city of Magnasanti, constructed on the comuputer game SimCity 3000 by a 22 year old architecture student named Vincent Ocasla. Magnasanti contains over 9 million simulated residents and has 'existed' stably for thousands of game years. The city is governed by 'micromanagement for absolute perfection', and in the context of the game it works: there is near full employment; all 'sim' residents are 100% satisfied; there are no abandoned buildings; water pollution and congestion levels are at zero (overall pollution levels are at 10% - astonishingly low for any city in the game) and utilities are provided through community programmes (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTJQTc-TqpU). For a fuller discussion of computer gaming and utopia, see Sargisson (2012: 189-207).

37 Levitas makes a similar point, asking 'is it then to be assumed that when these conditions do not exist, there are no utopias?' (1990: 5).

38 These are not, of course, unique to literary analysis: but are of particular use in going beyond the limits of narrative in fictional works.

grounded sociological phenomena, attention needs to be paid to the *content* of these forms (cf. Levtias, 1990: 4-5). Simply saying that utopia is a place tells us nothing: we need to know what it is about a place that makes it a utopia. This is my concern here.

For Davis and Kumar, the key feature of utopias is that they are perfect (Davis, 1981: 14; Kumar, 1987: 28), although they differ in two key ways regarding the nature of this perfection – Davis argues that it is absolute and on the societal level, whilst Kumar argues that 'perfect' relates instead to *perfectibility* and occurs on an individual level.[39] I will deal with Davis' approach first. For him, utopia's absolute perfection (1981: 38, 40) means that its realisation results in 'the end of uncertainty, confusion [and] change[s] of heart' (1981: 381). He maintains that the 'dynamic utopia' – a utopia in which there is scientific progress – 'is a myth', for science 'has a potential to produce limitless innovation and restless change' and so is 'incompatible with a perfect society unless perfection can become dynamic' (1984: 34): perfection 'is not relative' (1984: 10). However, 'total' perfection for Davis does not mean that utopias are 'unrealistic', for they do not deny human nature (as he sees it): crime, poverty, war, exploitation and vice remain, but are successfully limited by 'restraint or punishment of recalcitrant individuals' (1981: 37).

For Davis, then, utopia's perfection is at the level of societal organisation and comes at considerable cost to the individual, whose appetite 'imperils' 'social cohesion' and 'the common good' and must be repressed (Davis, 1981: 19). Freedom is antithetical to utopia, carrying with it 'the possibility of disorder [because] [i]n offering choice, it enables one to choose wrongly, foolishly and wastefully, and not only well, wisely and to good effect. In removing the threat of disorder, one removes freedom' (1981: 374). The only form of freedom utopia allows is negative – 'freedom *from* disorder and moral chaos, freedom from moral choice altogether' (1981: 384), meaning that people living in a utopia 'have accepted a discipline which is totalitarian in its scope and denial of human individuality...the Utopian's area of choice is so limited that he is almost incapable of moral behaviour. In utopia the bad alternative is, as far as possible, unavailable' (1980: 54) – pluralism is the 'greatest enemy' of utopia (1981: 382). Davis also makes further references to totalitarianism, arguing that utopia is organised through 'discipline of a totalitarian kind' (1981: 40), and

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39 This difference in opinion partly stems from different readings of texts, and partly from the fact that Kumar casts his net wider than Davis.

approvingly quoting Nikolai Berdyaev's claim that 'utopia is always totalitarian, and totalitarianism in the conditions of our world is always utopian' (1981: 374). Davis suggests that this totalitarianism is justified as it prevents the 'anti-social' activity of 'all anti-utopianism':

> All anti-utopias to date – *Nineteen Eighty-Four, Brave New World, We* and the others – have been written from the point of view of the miscreant, the criminal. He [sic] represents our relativism, our desire for self-affirmation, the pressure to pluralism…the unorthodoxy of the rebel is what gives them their critical capacity but it also gives them their underlying weakness, their general sense of being unsatisfactory. For the utopian's answer to the miscreant's action is to point to his ignorance, ignorance of the conditions of pre-utopian life. The rebel's criticism can only be understood in terms of a selfish ignorance which stems from its anti-social nature. All anti-utopianism hitherto is profoundly anti-social (1981: 374-375).

Utopia, then, is a place that has realised the *absolute* triumph of a 'perfect' sociality over the imperfect individual.

Despite claiming that 'it seems best not to insist on some "essentialist" definition of utopia but to let a definition emerge: by use and context we shall know our utopias', and that 'nothing is to be gained by attempting to be too precise or exclusive' (1987: 26), Kumar's definition of utopia is both precise and exclusive – albeit to a lesser degree than Davis' (this is to be expected, given the greater time period that his book engages with). Again, utopia is presented as something 'perfect', with Kumar claiming (incorrectly) that 'if there is one thing that students of utopia agree on' it is that utopias are perfect (1991: 48). Yet 'perfect' here is linked not to perfec*tion* in the absolute, Davisian sense, but rather to a process of perfect*ibility*. This stems from the Enlightenment's faith in progress – Kumar cites as foundational Kant's claim that:

> [w]e can regard the history of the human species as a whole, as the unravelling of a hidden plan of nature for accomplishing a perfect state of civil constitution for society…as the sole state of society in which the tendency of human nature can be all and fully developed.' (1987: 43)

This belief in progress is founded not only in Enlightenment philosophy, however, for '[t]he introduction of science and technology into utopia also brought into it the idea of progress…There could be no resting point for scientific and technical development…so utopia too cannot achieve any final state of rest' (1987: 31).[40] Through science, a belief that scarcity can be overcome emerges, to the extent that 'there seemed no

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40 Kumar is a little inconsistent regarding the relationship between science and utopia. In *Utopianism*, he argues that utopia should be considered a 'species' of science-fiction (1991: 20), yet the wording here suggests that there are utopias to which science and technology have not been introduced. In *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, he argues that Campanella's *City of the Sun* was the first utopian text 'to make science and scientific research central to its vision' (this was published in 1602, 86 years after More's *Utopia*, which Kumar believes gave birth to utopia), but that 'it was undoubtedly [Bacon's] *New Atlantis* [1624] which was most influential in fixing the association between science and utopia' (1987: 30).

limit to human progress and perfection' in utopias (1987: 32). Thus, for Kumar, '[t]he modern Utopia makes not the philosopher, but scientific philosophy, king' (1987: 223). This requires 'scientific, experimental, tentative reason' (ibid.); the dynamic utopia is not a myth – 'proper' utopias *are* dynamic (1987: 32). Crucially, however, this is not a dynamism that threatens the political order: rather, it *reinforces* it. The liberal sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf makes this point in relation to the utopian society depicted in H.G. Wells' *A Modern Utopia*, noting that the change embraced there is limited solely to reform and so presents no threat to the status quo: 'strikes and revolutions are conspicuously absent from utopian societies' (1958: 116). The techniques of science utilised, meanwhile, are the techniques of what Deleuze and Guattari would term royal science – an application of statist principles to the field of science, and the use of this science to reinforce statist organisation (2004b: 402, 405).

Kumar's claim that there is no limit to human perfection also differs from Davis' concept of the perfect. He follows Judith Shklar and H.G. Wells in believing that utopian societies are not founded upon a belief in original sin (1987: 28, 100), although he does not agree (with Wells) that human nature is inherently good in utopia.[41] Rather, he sees the utopian human as 'infinitely malleable...a *tabula rasa*' (1987: 28), which means that when placed in the context of correct (utopian) social structures, humans are capable of perfection (1987: 28). Thus, whilst Davis equates anti-utopianism with individualism, Kumar suggests it lies in conservatism's belief in mankind's selfish human nature. For him, the anti-utopian:

> sees weak human creatures constantly succumbing to the sins of pride, avarice and ambition, however favourable the circumstances. The anti-utopian need not believe in original sin, but his [sic] pessimistic and determinist view of human nature leads him to the conviction that all attempts to create the good society on earth are bound to be futile. (1987: 100)[42]

Nonetheless, this process of perfection will not be one of absolute harmony between the collective and the individual. Drawing on H.G. Wells' *A Modern Utopia,* he notes that a utopia will be marked by an 'unceasing oscillation' between 'the private concerns of individual life and the public concerns of society...a utopia therefore must show something of the imperfection of the fit between the individual and society' (1987: 211). This 'imperfect fit' is not enough to produce political change, however. As humans

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41 He compares utopianism to Pelagianism, a Christian doctrine which rejects original sin, believing instead that humans can choose good or evil (1987: 100).
42 Sargent refutes the equating of anti-utopianism with conservatism, noting that conservatives have formulated utopian visions (1982: 566).

become increasingly 'perfected', difference is subordinated to the inexorable logic of progress and the 'new' is prevented from actualising itself.

The state utopia

If utopias are places that deny difference and make claims to perfection/perfectibility then they can be linked not only to the nation state, but also to Deleuze's concept of state thought. Their anti-vitalism is identified by Lucy Sargisson, who argues that '[p]erfection...symbolizes death: the death of movement, the death of progress and process, development and change; the death, in other words, of politics (1994: 37). These utopias, then, are hostile to life: they are transcendent forms that deny the inorganic vitalism central to nomadic thought. They are governed in accordance with a moral good that places power with 'the murderous appetites of men, the rules of good and evil, of the just and the unjust' (Deleuze, 1988a: 13). The individual is seen as a threat to the totality of vision and so must be subsumed into the collective, denying the possibility of mutually affective relations.

Though their focus is primarily on the content of utopia, Davis and Kumar also engage with the social function utopian texts perform. For Davis, utopian texts are worthy of study because of their importance in prefiguring the birth of the modern, 'total' state (1981: 9). It was in utopian texts, he argues, that the first fully formed visions of a 'centralised, bureaucratic, sovereign state with its impersonal, institutional apparatus' were apparent. They portrayed:

> [t]he comprehensive, collective state with its assumption of obligations in every area of human life, from health to employment, education to transport, defence to entertainment and leisure, is a feature of every advanced state…both revolutionaries and reactionaries…have furthered the growth of the Leviathan…And the utopian's significance is that he prefigured this development and, in a sense, prepared the language and conceptual tools to accompany its emergence…[by] inject[ing] images of a total and rational social order, of uniformity instead of diversity, of impersonal, neutrally functioning bureaucracy and of the comprehensive, the total state. (8-9)

This is an important point, and one that I will expand to include utopian practices in Chapters Four and Five. For Kumar, meanwhile, there is a simple choice between believing in utopia (as he understands it), and being anti-utopian; between being guided by visions of a better future and wallowing in the present. Utopian visions are necessary for the belief in (and realisation of) progress, which has been central to

'Western civilization', perhaps constituting its 'greatest achievement' (1987: 423). Noting that the west 'now controls, to all intents and purposes, world development', he argues that 'this is no longer a matter which concerns it alone' (ibid.): if we want progress to continue, we need utopian visions to inspire it.

Not only is this argument remarkable for histories of colonialism and continuing imperialism, it also fails to grasp what Dahrendorf (1958) understood of Wells' 'dynamic' utopia: that progress does not equate to qualitative political change. Rather, it is often marked by a multiplication and intensification of systems of control (Berardi, 2011; Gordon, 2008). The 'new' which is produced by progress is not really a 'new' at all (Suvin, 1997: 37; Jameson, 2007: 281-295) and the utopia of progress is a 'remarkably dynamic society that goes nowhere' (Noble, quoted in Suvin, 1997: 37).

The three dimensions of state utopianism

As Kumar and Davis are dealing with literary utopias, they give no account of how utopias arise, beyond saying that they are created through human agency. Here, I want to suggest on how such agency would necessarily function: what 'state utopianism' means, in other words.. The argument I present here is both a simplification and something of a straw position (I expand on this below), but is extremely useful as a heuristic device (that is to say as a mode of operation against which other utopian operations can be measured).

State utopianism is, at its 'purest' level, a hylomorphic philosophy that has three dimensions: the design, realisation and reproduction of a state utopia. It might be said that the first two dimensions have a radical function (which is to say that they seek to go beyond the status quo), whilst the final dimension has a conservative function (which is to say that it seeks to reproduce the status quo). The dimensions are complimentary and may be contemporaneous, but do not all have to occur for state utopianism to be taking place: below, I argue that the second and third dimensions may arise immanently, (re)producing a state utopia without reference to a transcendent blueprint.

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The first of state utopianism's dimensions is the designing of a blueprint. This may be carried out by an architect, author, town planner or filmmaker – anyone, in fact who presents a vision that (seeks) to hylomorphically rearrange life in accordance with a moral vision of the good (which is not to say that any of these professions is inherently state utopian). This blueprint functions as a lack: the 'key to desire missing in this world', and orients political activity to its realisation. It is important to consider intent here, however. This is usually considered to be essential for utopianism (Sargisson, 2009), which is to say that you cannot be involved in the creation of a utopia without intending to be. However, one of the claims I will make in this thesis is that utopias – of both the state and nomadic varieties – are (re)produced by people who have no intention of doing so. This is not to say that the issue should be discarded completely, however, and with regards to the first dimension of state utopianism it is important to differentiate between someone who articulates a vision of a non-existent state utopia intending it to be realised (however likely that is); and someone who articulates such a vision as a heuristic device (which is to say they do not intend for it to be realised) – although this should not be seen as a binary opposition. I return to this second 'function' of articulating a utopian vision in the section entitled 'Function Based Approaches: Utopia and Critique', below. Here, however, I want to briefly use the example of Thomas More's *Utopia* to illustrate my point.

The first thing to say here is that *Utopia* illustrates the problems with relying solely on intent for ascertaining whether someone is a state utopian or not: we cannot know for certain what More had in mind when he wrote the text (Sargent, 1984). However, as Stephen Duncombe (in More, 2011: xxxix) and Edward Surtz (in More, 1964: xxvi) have argued, it is entirely possible to read *Utopia* in a heuristic manner – and to attribute this in part to an intention of More's; others, meanwhile, have argued that More may in fact have intended *Utopia* to be read as a work satirising utopian aspirations so as to make them seem ludicrous (Wooden, 1977). Yet whilst More may not have *intended* for *Utopia* to be taken as a blueprint (and may even have been an anti-utopian), it *was* utilised as a blueprint by Vasco de Quiroga, a Spanish bishop in sixteenth century Mexico. He sought to impose a societal form based on More's *Utopia* upon the indigenous population in the state of Michoacán[43] (Mumford, 2002). Thus, whether or not *Utopia* was

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43 He thought this would help convert the locals to Christianity and restore their own 'lost heritage', believing that More had been inspired by Native American societies in writing *Utopia* (and overlooking the fact that the Utopians were not Christian).

intended to have what I would call a state utopian function, it did; whether or not More saw himself as being possessed by a state utopianism, he ultimately produced a state utopianism.

The second dimension of state utopianism, then, is the action required to realise a lack. The unrealised utopia acts as a blueprint for political action (Sargent, 1982: 568-574),[44] brought into being through human agency with as little deviation from this blueprint as possible, for the blueprinted utopia 'is perfect, and any alteration would lower its quality' (Sargent, 1982: 568). Here, utopianism becomes a hylomorphic process that necessitates the implementation of hierarchy in order to subordinate difference-in-itself and bring chaotic and/or inert matter to organisation. It was this dimension of utopianism that was exhibited by de Quiroga (though he must also have exhibited the first variety, modifying More's blueprints to the particularities of the situation[45]). Like the utopia it seeks to create, this aspect of utopianism will be hierarchically structured, with 'specialists' familiar with the workings of the plan and possessing technical knowledge regarding its implementation in positions of power-over. Again, intent is not necessary here: those seeking to realise the utopia but further down the hierarchy might include builders, engineers and so on; and they may be unaware of the political element of the task at hand. They may even be opposed to it, and only be partaking because of coercion or the promise of financial reward. To the extent that their actions are oriented to the production of a state utopia (self-consciously or not), however, they can be said to be exhibiting this second dimension of state utopianism. As their organisational form will be structured in accordance with statist principles, it is likely that the state utopia will be prefigured in this dimension of state utopianism.

Once a state utopian form has been realised, state utopianism ceases to be 'radical' (which is to say it ceases to be oriented to a lack *beyond* the present), and instead performs the conservative function of reproducing a realised state utopia.[46] This force may or may not be intentionally utopian (one does not

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44 Sargent himself does not subscribe to this view, but provides a neat summary of those who believe this is how utopianism operates.

45 Of course in trying to impose a European form of organisation on indigenous people, de Quiroga did pay a great deal of attention to particularity.

46 For Mannheim (1936), this is the difference between 'ideology' and 'utopia'. For him, both are fictions (or abstractions of a more complicated truth, at least) that help us to understand the world – but 'utopia' is that which enables us to go beyond the present whilst 'ideology' stabilises the present around existing formations of power. My claim here is that – as a sociological form, rather than a 'fiction' – utopias can be realised, and that when they are realised in the form of a state utopia they will become conservative and seek to stabilise existing power relations.

have to believe capitalism to be utopian to reproduce it, for example). It can still legitimately be called 'state utopianism' when there is no utopian intent, however, because it reproduces the state utopia.

When intentional, this conservative state utopianism is also an anti-utopianism, which is to say that it rejects the possibility of other ways of organising space. This means that there is a paradox at the heart of state utopianism: its moment of triumph results in the death of utopia. *There is no need for utopianism in the state utopia*, for the state utopia is believed to be perfect. This means that the state utopia also seeks to abolish difference-in-itself (as difference-from perfection), and so from a nomadic perspective it must be thought of as a dystopia. *The realised state utopia, then, is simultaneously a utopia, an anti-utopian and a dystopia.*[47]

As I noted at the start of this section, these three dimensions of state utopianism may well be inter-related. As Žižek notes (in relation to contemporary neoliberalism), a common trick of 'extremism' is to claim that a goal has not yet been reached and call for ever more drastic measures to ensure that it is (Žižek, 2009: 19): thus, 'victorious' state utopians may in fact deny that their state utopia has been achieved, even while claiming that 'there is no alternative'. In this, they would be mobilising both the second and third dimensions of state utopianism simultaneously. Stalin's claim that socialism had been achieved in the USSR in 1932, meanwhile, shows how arbitrary the distinction between the second and third dimensions is. Furthermore, the second and third dimensions of state utopianism will undoubtedly occur through a combination of different state utopian projects which share a set of principles but are not identical in form or content (in Chapters Four and Five, for example, I suggest that the symphony orchestra and compulsory education played an important role in creating the modern nation state).

Anti-Utopianism, 'capitalist realism' and the state utopia

The majority of what is commonly understood as 'anti-utopianism' comes from the dominant ideology's mixture of conservatism and liberalism, which sees the world of liberal democracy and capitalism as the only possible way of avoiding the perils associated with utopia and its establishment: the 'capitalist realism'

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47 Nomadic thought is not alone in labelling such places dystopias, of course: those ideologically opposed to the form of organisation would also see it as a dystopia, although these judgements may well be premised on the claim that a different form of state utopia would be better, rather than from a nomadic perspective (notwistanding that, following Gordon's [2008] argument, nomadism could itself be seen as an ideology.

of which Fisher (2009a) speaks. It is this anti-utopian view that is largely responsible for the conflation of utopianism with what I have called 'state utopianism' (Sargent, 1982) – although as I hope to show in this thesis, there are forms and practices that resonate strongly with state utopianism (including, as I will shortly argue, capitalist realism). As Sargisson (2012: 22) notes, this ideological position finds both popular and intellectual expression. The former is a powerful 'tool for ridicule' that is utilised to castigate those whose politics are (even marginally) left-of-centre (22-24).[48] The latter is a form of critique which does not automatically assume that to be 'utopian' is bad, but purports to show why it is, and it is on this that I want to briefly focus. My contention here is that it would be better cast as anti state utopianism, and that by conflating utopia with state utopianism it falls into the reverse side of the double-bind experienced the realised state utopia: here it is the anti-utopianism that is shown to constitute the third dimension of state utopianism.

One of the most influential texts in the anti-utopian tradition is Karl Popper's two volume *The Open Society and its Enemies*. This suggests that what I have called state utopianism applies to utopianism *tout court*. He sees it as a philosophy premised on the belief that:

> we must determine our ultimate political aim, or the Ideal State, before taking any practical action. Only when...we are in possession of something like a blueprint of the society at which we aim, only then can we begin to consider the best ways and means for its realization, and to draw up a plan for practical action. (1957: 157)

For Popper, this is a dangerous approach as there could be no agreement regarding the nature of 'the society at which we aim'. As such, the implementation of any blueprint would necessitate the use of centralized hierarchical power and – very possibly – violence (1957: 161, cf. Gray, 2003, 2007). This would not end once the utopia had been realised, however, and anti-utopianism typically draws attention to the totalitarian controls required to prevent change, which I noted in my discussion of Davis (Beauchamp, 1974; Dahrendorf, 1958).

As I noted, this is the reverse side of the double-bind of the realised state utopia, however: this *anti-utopianism is a form of state utopianism*. Sargent makes the point forcefully, noting that:

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48 Sargisson provides a table of the top ten google search results for 'Obama' and 'utopian' (on 26/05/2011). These are all negative, and utilise the term 'utopian' to ridicule Obama. The top two were a Richard Epstein forbes.com article 'Obama's Doomed Utopia' and a Linda Chavez article from *The Tuscan Citizen* titled 'Obama's utopian plans will ruin us' (2012: 23).

> [t]he conservative opponent of reform is in the same sense a utopian. In arguing that we cannot or should not attempt to improve on the present, he or she is saying either that we live in the best possible world, or that any change is likely to make our imperfect world even more imperfect' (1982: 580; 1994: 27)

Indeed, given that – as I noted in my introduction – 'perfect' refers to that which cannot be improved upon, the conservative opponent of reform is, paradoxically, claiming that this 'imperfect' world is perfect. Tom Moylan acknowledges this, noting that 'the anti-utopian standpoint also appropriates perfection for itself, as it argues that the "best of all possible worlds" already exists in the status quo' (2000: 75). Thus, 'realism' (of this form) – so often opposed to 'utopianism', by thinkers on both the left (Fisher, 2009) and the right (Carr, 2001) – reveals itself as a particular kind of state utopian thought itself.

Following this line of thought, the contemporary global order comes to be seen as utopian. The (apparent) 'end of history' realised by the spread of neoliberal capitalism and liberal democracy following the end of the Cold War has created a belief that liberal democracy 'remains the only coherent political aspiration that spans different regions and cultures around the globe' and thus 'the end point of mankind's ideological evolution' as 'the final form of human government' (Fukuyama, 1992: xiii). From the perspective of those who celebrate this triumph, it is a triumph over utopia – as Mark Fisher has noted, '[n]eoliberalism presented itself as supremely realistic – as the only possible realism. It told us that utopia is impossible because there is no such thing as society, only individuals pursuing their own interests.' (2009b: 95) Yet is this realism not precisely the third dimension of state utopianism? The claim that 'there is no alternative' functions similarly to Davis' claim that in utopia the individual is not permitted to choose wrongly, for there simply is no choice to be made, whilst claims that scientific progress will serve to eradicate the horrors perpetuated by capitalism can be compared to the 'perfectibility' that Kumar identifies with 'dynamic utopias'. Žižek puts it well:

> After denouncing all the "usual suspects" for utopianism, then, perhaps the time   has come to focus on the liberal utopia itself. This is how one should answer those   who dismiss any attempt to question the fundamentals of the liberal-democratic-capitalist order as being themselves dangerously utopian: what we are confronting in today's crisis are the consequences of the utopian core of this order itself. While liberalism presents itself as anti-utopianism embodied, and the triumph of neoliberalism as a sign that we have left behind the utopian projects responsible for the totalitarian horrors of the twentieth century, it is not becoming clear that the true utopian epoch was that of the happy Clintonite '90s, with its belief that we had reached "the end of history", that humanity had finally found the formula for the optimal socio-economic order' (2009: 79, c.f. 3, 5).

John P. Clark makes a similar point – noting that the totalitarianism the triumphant global order sought to associate with utopianism is a feature of its own society. In a comment that resonates with Jameson's claim that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism, he writes that:

> [t]otalitarianism today is not on the deepest level a matter of sovereignty. Nor does it depend on the state's formal abolition of all competing forms of social organisation (though the evils embodied in this political totalisation process and its system of oppression and terror cannot be overemphasised). The ultimate totalitarian achievement is the capture of the imagination, and the reinforcement of that conquest as the dominant order is legitimated through processes of sublimation and banalisation. (2009: 13)

Arguments along the same line are also made by Levitas (1990: 34; 2005: 16), Newman (2009: 209), Moylan (2000: 183-187), Jameson (2009: 412), Harvey (2000: 194-195) and Geoghegan (1987: 3).

It is not merely those opposed to the status quo who make the comparison, however. David Steele (an advocate of the free market), notes that '[t]he attempt to abstain from utopianism merely leads to unexamined utopias' (1992: 375), whilst Geoffrey M. Hodgson puts it beautifully when he states that 'such a stance typically admits utopianism through the back door while keeping all eyes to the front' (1999: 8). It is also worth noting that before neoliberalism had established itself (which is to say, before it had reached the third dimension of state utopianism), its proponents – including Hayek – argued that it needed utopian visions of its own (Hayek, 1949; Harper, 1979).

This is a difficult situation. The victorious utopian embraces anti-utopianism while the anti-utopian has been shown to embrace utopia. This is, I realise, a radical claim. Shortly, I will suggest that nomadic utopianism might offer a way of escaping this bind. Yet this seems to suggest that utopianism – and utopia – is inescapable. To some, this will seem a ridiculous statement that diminishes the power of the term, which should be reserved only for a genuinely 'other' and radically 'better' society. Yet I believe there is both conceptual and rhetorical value in such a position. It can perhaps be seen as doing for utopia what Žižek has done for ideology (indeed, Žižek sometimes conflates the two concepts in *First as Farce Then As Tragedy*, 2009), saying to those who claim to deny utopia that such a claim is 'utopian, stupid!' (cf. Žižek, 'It's Ideology, Stupid': 2009: 9-85)

Escaping the Double-Bind

Function Based Approaches: Utopia and Critique

It is not only liberals and conservatives who have positioned themselves as anti-utopians. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels critique the hylomorphism inherent to the 'utopian socialism' of Fourier, Saint-Simon and Robert Owen, stating that 'the proletariat [(ie. those who will inhabit the utopia)]...offers to [the utopian planner] the spectacle of a class without any historical initiative or any independent movement' (2004: 46): it is seen merely as inert/chaotic matter that must be given form.[49] State utopian planners reduce 'historical action' to 'their personal inventive action', and the 'spontaneous class organization of the proletariat' gives way to 'an organization of society specially contrived by these inventors. Future history resolves itself, in their eyes, into the propaganda and the practical carrying out of their social plans' (ibid.). At first glance, this seems close to the position of Popper, yet despite their scathing critique of utopian socialism's hylomorphism, Marx and Engels are not simply anti-utopian, for they note that their visions 'also [contain] a critical element. They attack every principle of existing society. Hence they are full of the most valuable materials for the enlightenment of the working class' (2007: 47).

In this, they move away from the view that utopian visions should be read as positive blueprints, and towards an understanding of them as a source of critique; a heuristic device that can be utilised to open up the present to the possibility of becoming other (through, in their case, historical materialism). Implicit in this view is that utopia is a textual form (I use the category broadly here to include literature, visual art, films, architectural plans, etc., though there is a bias towards literature in much of the criticism that takes this approach). It is such an approach that Ruth Levitas (1990: 7) refers to as the 'function based' approach to utopia – and here the emphasis shifts (although not entirely) from the content of a utopian text to its the way in which it interacts with the present by introducing an 'estrangement' to our relationship with the contemporary world (Suvin, 1972; 1979).[50] For Sargisson, this means that '[r]ather than read [utopias]

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49 For a longer discussion of this argument, see Engels' *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (2008). As Levitas (1990: 41-42) notes, this critique of utopian socialism (and Marx and Engels' critique of the 'utopian communism' of Cabet and Weitlig) should *not* be extrapolated from to claim that marxism (or even Marx and Engels) were opposed to utopia *per se*. And as I shortly note, Marx and Engels also acknowledged the positive function of utopian socialism.

50 Suvin takes the term estrangement from Bertolt Brecht, for whom it refers to a 'representation...which allows us to recognize its subject, but at the same time makes it seem unfamiliar.' (quoted in Suvin, 1972: 374)

"straight", as depictions of the desired future or as blueprints for perfection', we should 'introduce greater subtlety to our reading and see them as critical artefacts.' (1996: 40)

To follow this line of thought is to state that utopia functions not by providing a blueprint that should be enacted, but rather by giving us an alternative that estranges our senses so that we cannot return safely to the present; showing us the contingency of the world we live in and unpicking our belief in 'the end of history'. The utopia:

> anticipates and criticises. Its alternative fundamentally interrogates the present, piercing through societies' defensive mechanism – common sense realism, positivism, and scientism. Its unabashed and flagrant otherness gives it a power which is lacking in other analytical devices. By playing fast and loose with time and space, logic and morality, and by thinking the unthinkable, a utopia asks the most awkward, most embarrassing questions. (Geoghegan, 1987: 1-2)

The claim here is that having 'lived' in a utopia by reading a novel; contemplating or participating in a work of art; going to the theatre; or so on,[51] our 'structures of feeling' (Williams, 1977: 132) are altered such that we ask awkward questions of the present, interrogating relationships of power, 'common sense'; and – perhaps – coming to understand that the 'realism' of our state utopian situation is, in fact, a historical contingency and not simply an always already given. At their most radical, such texts may even serve to 'make...the present impossible' (Blanchot, 2006: 378). Utopias 'break...epistemological ground', presenting 'dangerous knowledge' in a 'minor key'[52] (Moylan, 2000: 6), offering 'disruption' as a discursive strategy. As Sargisson notes, this allows the field of utopia to escape the double-bind I observed in state utopia, creating a:

> [c]ritical opposition, [which operates] not in the classical binary tradition but opposes the existing space of opposition; *its function is not to provide an alternative but to deny that existing options are the only ones*. Opposition is thus understood as a bigger concept than the either/or position; it is comprised of multiple critiques of a(n) (omni)present structure of exploitation, hierarchy and alienation (1996: 55, emphasis added).[53]

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51 For the ways in which art may have a utopian function see Bloch (1986, 1989); Bell (2011c), Weiss (2011), Noble, (2009, eds.; 2011), Duncombe (2011), Bourriaud (1995), Adorno (2004). For theatre, see Dolan (2005), Adiseshiah (2012).

52 Perhaps a little pedantically, I would suggest that the concept of dissonance would work better than that of the minor key here. This process of cognitive estrangement suggests that something is not right; that something does not fit, and this is the dominant understanding of 'dissonance' in musicology (minor keys or chords are not necessarily dissonant and are often experienced as beautiful). For a discussion of the relationship between harmony, dissonance and utopia, see Bell (2011) and Marshall (2012).

53 This, then, is far more radical than the function that Kumar ascribes to utopias. For him, utopia's primary value is that they are the motor for progress – but this is progress that fails to disturb the status quo. Russell Jacoby (1999) at times comes close to this attitude.

Implicit in this critique is a turn towards the future. Whilst we might not believe in the particular utopian future we have been presented with but – to quote the slogan of the World Social Forum – we do begin to believe that 'another world is possible' (Moylan, 1986; 2000; Jameson, 2007; Duncombe in More, 2011, 2011; 1997; Noble, 2011). It is not so much that utopia helps us to imagine an alternative, but that it helps us to imagine imagining an alternative.[54]
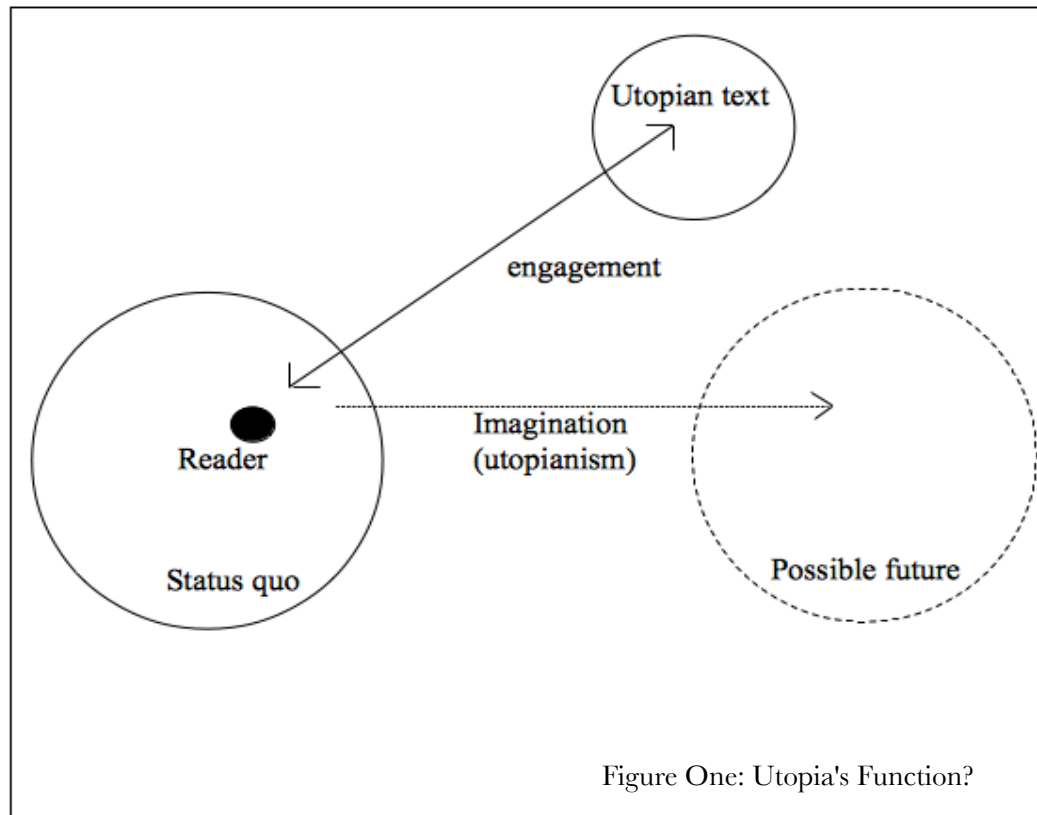
Figure One: Utopia's Function?

There is, of course, another issue regarding authorial intent here. It is undoubtedly true that many utopian texts are designed to be read in this way by their authors (I have already suggested that this may include Thomas More's *Utopia*); but just as this has been (mis?)read as a blueprint to guide political action, there is no reason that a utopia which *was* intended to function as a blueprint could not be used as a heuristic device in this way.[55] Tom Moylan's concept of the 'critical utopia' can – in part – be seen as an

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54 Jameson (2007: 281-295) argues that historicising the present is the function of science fiction, whilst utopia moves us into the domain of the future.

55 For example, Edward Bellamy certainly intended the future Boston of his novel *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* (2009) to be fairly close to a world he believed desirable and obtainable – and was taken as one by a number of intentional communities that were inspired by it – yet its heuristic function had a wider utopian impulse, encouraging William Morris to write his literary utopia *News From Nowhere* as a critical response. Thus, the value of *Looking Backward* is not just (and I would suggest not primarily) that it provides a glimpse of how life could be otherwise, but that it fed into a process of reflection on how the world could be otherwise amongst its readership, including William Morris, who then produced another text which fulfils the same function, and so the utopian function proceeds *ad infinitum*. I remain sympathetic to – and have advocated this understanding of utopia's operation in previous work (Walls and Bell, 2010).

attempt to answer this issue, and gently shifts the focus towards the content of utopian visions rather than their function (though does not do so fully). As Moylan put it in his 2008 essay 'Making the Present Impossible' (named for the aforementioned Blanchot quote), 'the subject matter has always mattered' (2008: 83).

First outlined in his 1986 book *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imaginary* and revisited in 2000's *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia* (which develops the concept of the 'critical dystopia', something I consider in relation to Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* in Chapter Three, below), the term 'critical' has three functions: the first of which is to designate utopias that intend to convey the 'Enlightenment sense of *critique* – that is expressions of oppositional thought, unveiling, debunking, of both the genre itself and the historical situation' (1986: 10). Secondly, it is utilised 'in the nuclear sense of the *critical mass* required to make the necessary explosive reaction' (1986: 10). Finally, it refers to the content as well as the function of the utopian texts, which are set in imperfect places marked by difference, conflict and change – they contain the 'Enlightenment sense of *critique'* internally (1986: 10-11). For example, Moylan analyses Joanna Russ' short story 'When it Changed' by pointing to the fact that, at its conclusion, an inhabitant of the utopian community 'Whileaway' called Janet remembers that the initial name of the colony was 'For-a-While', and that the message she must take with her to move the community forwards is to:

> [r]emember to be historically vigilant, do not lock in the utopian achievements, do not remove the social utopia from the processes of time. Don't cut a deal with the false utopian devil of your own collective imagination as it dreams of the end of history; and don't cover up the deal by changing the colony from that of a place-in-process to one of eternal delight, literally allowing time to while away (2000: 15).

Moylan's primary concern, however is not how Russ' story points to a different configuration of utopian organisation (that is, to a different, critical utopian content), but in the relationship between the reader and the text. This warning is not designed for Janet – but for the reader. Moylan follows the above quote by noting that 'Janet (and Russ in her own political moment) cautions the reader not to let the process of learning and change end, not to risk a situation – brought about by either internal or external forces – that might "take away the meaning" of life' (ibid.). Nonetheless, this is a crucial development and one I return to below.

Critiquing the Function Based Approach

Whilst I believe the function based approach to utopia is important in revealing the relationship between utopian texts and the subject who encounters them, I believe that it either overemphasises the negative aspect of utopianism, privileging the 'no' in utopia's etymology, at the expense of the 'good' and 'place'; or runs the risk of lapsing back into the philosophy of state utopia. Furthermore, it operates primarily on the individual subject and can function without a utopian vision at all. These are both dangers associated with seeing utopian as a textual form. Here, I want to explore these critiques.

In relation to the first of these criticisms I offer Sargisson's claim that – for those who ascribe to the function based approach – the purpose of utopia '*is not to provide an alternative*'. This can be seen in Jameson's claim that rather than embrace utopia, 'the slogan of anti-anti-Utopianism might well offer the best working strategy' (2007: xvi). In this, he furthers an argument developed in his 1982 essay 'Progress Versus Utopia; or, Can We Imagine the Future?'[56], where he makes the seemingly paradoxical statement that utopian fiction succeeds by failure to escape the conditions that produced the text (2007: 289) and that 'the true vocation of the utopian narrative...[is] to confront us with our incapacity to imagine Utopia' (2007: 293, cf. 1988: 101) as a result of the 'systemic, cultural and ideological closure of which we are all in one way or another prisoners' (2007: 289). Utopia allows us to 'rattl[e] on the bars' of necessity that keep us prisoner in 'intense spiritual concentration and preparation for another stage which has not yet arrived' (Jameson, 2007: 231-232), but ultimately we are still prisoners – just prisoners ever more dissatisfied with our prison. Tom Moylan puts it well (although still locates the constitutive element of change in utopia's negative power) when he says that it is important to 'move from this core negative moment to its positive penumbra' (2008: 82). If Brecht's concept of estrangement can serve as an departure point for this approach to utopia, I want to paraphrase a different quote of his here and state that the utopian should not just hold up a mirror to reality, but should seek to hammer it into shape.[57] The

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56 The version of this I am referencing is published in *Archaeologies of the Future* (2007). The first half of this is an original, book-length work entitled 'The Desire Called Utopia'; the second constitutes a number of essays Jameson has written on utopia since the 1970s. The first two references from 2007 here are from 'Progress Versus Utopia...', the final one is from 'The Desire Called Utopia'.

57 The quote I am paraphrasing here is 'art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer with which to shape it' (quoted in Turpin, 1993: 139).

negativity present in some function based approaches seems to have been emphasised over the 'good' and 'place'. Is this *all* utopia can do?

Furthermore, is it *only* utopia that can do this? By which I mean: is it only a utopia that has this utopian function? This may seem a strange question, but I believe the answer to be negative: texts or objects other than those that depict a realised utopia can have a utopian function, yet it would clearly be ludicrous to refer to them as utopias. Indeed, perhaps this function is better considered simply as critique. The architect David Garcia's (2012) plan to transform the abandoned Duda-3 radio mast near Chernobyl into a giant feeder for migratory birds might, for example, prompt us to ask questions about about nuclear power; about state cover-ups; about how climate change is affecting migratory birds; about why we cannot realise such fantastic projects under the present conditions – it might even move us to wonder in what kind of world we *could* follow through on the plan, and how that world might be realised. Similarly, Ben Anderson (2002) has shown that listening to music with no obvious utopian content (the songs of The Clash and David Gray) may move people to – however fleetingly – imagine a different, better world; and it is not too much of a stretch of the imagination to think that they might consider how this could be achieved as well. Yet neither Garcia's bird feeder nor a song of David Gray's can be called a utopia. Rather, I suggest that a better concept would be the 'imaginal machine', developed by Stevphen Shukaitis (2009a) and summarised by Duncombe as 'a technology for freeing our thinking from the prison house of the possible and for imagining alternatives ourselves' (2011: li). Indeed, Duncombe has already suggested that when a utopian text operates in the manner ascribed to it by the function based approach it can be considered a form of imaginal machine (ibid.).[58]

Ruth Levitas' approach perhaps offers a way out of these two problems (the first of which is a central concern for her), yet it does so at the cost of returning towards state utopianism. She argues that when '[w]hat becomes central is the process of imagining utopia, rather than the substance of any vision' (2003: 144) there follows a 'weakening of the transformative potential of utopia: Utopia survives, but at a cost,

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58 I am currently working on a project that is in part concerned with how urban wastelands function as a site stimulating the utopian imagination, for example (http://wasteland-twinning.net). It would be ludicrous to call a wasteland a utopia, however, though not to say that it might function as an imaginal machine (cf. Doron, 2009, on the imaginal function of wastelands).

and that cost is the retreat of the utopian function from transformation to critique' (2001: 25). For her, then, 'utopia[nism] requires the representation, the objectification, of desire' (Levitas, 2001: 33); a future oriented object upon which we can hang our utopianism (2003: 14). A phantasmic bird feeder will not do: utopianism requires a far fuller vision of the good place to orient us. This vision functions not as a blueprint, but in the manner of Habermas' (1992) regulative ideal. Utopia does not only feed into our desire to escape the present, but pulls through from the other side of the prison bars by educating our desire to break free. Levitas writes: 'if the function of utopia is the education of desire', she writes, 'the function of the education of desire is the realisation of utopia' (1990: 124, c.f. 1990: 78; 1997: 75-79; 2001: 34). This also involves theorising the agency required to achieve a utopian future: a utopian text is merely escapist if it depicts a good place with no reference to how it was obtained (1990: 200). This is a useful concept that I will frequently return to and can, I suggest, be vital in avoiding the hysteria Newman associates with Deleuzean thought.

Whilst Levitas' approach escapes the negativity of Jameson's approach – and cannot be applied to texts that could not conceivably be called utopias – there is a move back towards the system of state utopianism, with political change oriented to a lack. She states that:

> All this openness is a bit much for me. We could do with a bit of closure. Abensour's commentary on Morris suggests that it does not matter whether you agree or disagree with the institutional arrangements. What matters is that the utopian experiment disrupts the taken-for-granted nature of the present and proffers an alternative set of values.' (2007: 57)

She adds that utopianism does not exist without a pre-existing utopian vision and identifies this with lack: it 'cannot be articulated other than through imagining the means of its fulfillment. You cannot identify what it is that is lacking without projecting what would meet that lack, without describing what is missing.' (2007: 53).

Finally, I want to address one final concern with the function based approach, which is that it may well fail to mobilise the 'critical mass' Moylan speaks of. I have noted that it can be utilised for utopian texts other than literary works, but by and large these take forms whose primary subject is the individual. We read books alone, for example, and unless we know someone else who has read the same work, are a member of

a reading group, or are studying it for educational purposes it is unlikely we will talk to anyone about its (potential) meanings. Any transformation of consciousness is thus likely to occur on an individual level, as Duncombe makes clear in the introduction to his online 'Open Utopia'[59] edition of More's *Utopia*, where he notes that '[b]y posing the question of "What if?" to the individual reader, it could well be argued that *Utopia* [(he refers to More's book, but could be referring to the textual genre of utopia)] engenders an individualized response' (2012: lii).

Process based approaches: utopia as utopianism

In the years between 1954 and 1959 the German philosopher Ernst Bloch published the three volumes of his magnum opus *The Principle of Hope* (1986), a text which performs the crucial function of moving utopia away from an idealism of representational transcendence and into the realm of immanent materialism by placing practices of everyday life and the temporal at the heart of utopia. Seeking to correct what he saw as marxism's overly determinist economism, much of *The Principle of Hope* identifies a number of practices, occurrences and forms as having a utopian orientation; a list that includes art, sport, medicine, religion, architecture, advertising and daydreaming. These varied features of everyday life, Bloch maintains, contain a latency or intent towards something beyond that which exists.[60] He privileges those that are more than mere wishes, however – and names them 'concrete utopias' (against wishful 'abstract utopias' – see Levitas, 1997 for a critical summary of the distinction). These concrete utopias, which Bloch states should be understood 'in carefully considered and carefully applied contrast to utopianism' (1986; 157) show that show the world as existing in a permanent state of becoming-other and constitute 'a methodical organ for the New; an objective aggregate form of what is coming up' (ibid.).[61] This is an

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59 Open Utopia is an online project centred around Thomas More's *Utopia*, and Duncombe in part positions it as an attempt to address this problem. In the 'About' section of the website it states 'This digital edition of *Utopia i*s open: open to read, open to copying, open to modification. On this site *Utopia* is presented in different formats in order to enhance this openness. If the visitor wishes to read *Utopia* online they can find a copy. If they want to download and copy a version, I've provided links to do so in different formats for different devices. In partnership with The Institute for the Future of the Book I provide an annotatable and "social" text available for visitors to comment upon what More – or I – have written, and then share their comments with others. Those who like to listen will find a reading of Utopia on audio files, and those who want to watch and look can browse the user-generated galleries of Utopia-themed art and videos. For people interested in creating their own plan of an alternative society, I've created Wikitopia, a wiki with which to collaborate with others in drafting a new *Utopia* [sic]. More versions for more platforms are likely to be introduced in the future.' (openutopia.org)

60 Anderson's analysis of the utopianism of David Gray's music – discussed above – draws on Bloch's work.

61 It is worth noting that the past plays a similar role to the utopian space in function based approaches to utopia. For Bloch, confronting our past (with its unrealised hopes and potentials) may serve to estrange us from our present, meaning that the past functions similarly to the utopian spaces in function based approaches (Bloch, 1986: 8-9; cf. Geoghegan, 1997 for a discussion of the role of the past and memory in Bloch). There are resonances here with Derrida's notion of 'hauntology', in which our present is 'haunted' (and thus partly constituted) by past visions of a promised future that never actualised

important step: utopia here is located immanently rather than transcendentally, and has a concrete effect (and, indeed affect) on those who experience it: new 'structures of feeling' arise from 'real life' rather than textual engagement. Furthermore, it is entirely plausible for the subjects of this utopian affect to be collective rather than individual. Yet the concrete utopia – for Bloch – is not spatially grounded, but exists temporally: it transcends the operation of linear time and reaches forwards into a time yet to come (McManus, 2003). His philosophy, therefore, is 'transcendent without transcendence' (1986: 146) – it always goes beyond what exists, not in reference to a specific representation of the good place, but through actualising a becoming immanent in the present.

Yet despite this move towards immanence, Bloch has something of the state utopian in him. Firstly, his utopianism is not only driven by saying 'No to the bad situation which exists', but also 'Yes to the better life that hovers ahead' (1986: 75), for '[a]ll being is still built around the Not which induces hunger. There does *not yet* exist a food which could calm and fill up the lack entirely' (1976: 3, emphasis added): the implication being that one day there may be. Thus, his immanence is 'immanent to something', and 'this something reintroduces the transcendent' (Deleuze, 1995: 45) – or, as Bloch puts it – it is 'full of disposition to something, tendency to, latency of something' (1986: 76). Bloch's utopia then, remains oriented to a lack: which it 'drives toward' (Bloch, quoted in O'Hara and Kellner, 1976: 23). As Ze'ev Levy notes, 'Bloch asserts that life and existence cannot be understood by the question "where from?"; it is incumbent upon us to understand them by asking "where to?" and "what for?"' (1997: 176).

The answer to these questions comes in the form what Bloch calls the 'Ultimum', which 'represents the last, i.e. the highest newness, the repetition (the unremitting representedness of the tendency-goal in all progressively New) intensifies to the last, highest, most fundamental repetition: of identity.' (Bloch, 1986: 203). It is the 'ultimate reality' (1986: 435) and is linked to Marx's classless society, coming at the end of class based prehistory and serving as a glorious new dawn when mankind arrives at a home ('*Heimat*') at which it has never before been. In a beautiful passage, Bloch writes that

themselves (Derrida, 1994). Stripped of its more formally marxist content (for it is communism that we were promised but that never materialised), hauntology has recently had a great deal of influence in British music criticism, where it is applied to a movement in music that seeks to sonically (re)create the lost utopian visions of social democracy and ubran modernism (see Reynolds, 2006).

> [t]he true genesis is not at the beginning, but at the end, and it starts to begin only when society and existence become radical: that is, comprehend their own roots. But the root of history is the working, creating man [sic], who rebuilds and transforms the given circumstances of the world. Once man has comprehended himself and has established his own domain in real democracy, without depersonalization and alienation, something arises in the world which all men have glimpsed in childhood: a place and a state in which no one has yet been. And the name of this something is home or homeland. (1986: 1375-1376)

Whilst this does not function as the 'end of history' *per se*, it must still be seen as a lack: a 'teleological unfolding of what we have all "really" wanted since time immemorial' (Levitas, 1997: 79). Though Bloch acknowledges the presence of concrete utopias in the present, the potential they embody can only be universalised once this homeland has been reached: there is thus a separation ('a total leap') between the ends and means; the immanence of concrete utopia is immanent *to something*. Utopia (which, for Bloch, remember, is a process) is not enough in itself: its goal is to return us to a homeland we have never experienced.

In this, Bloch comes close to the first dimension of state utopianism: blueprinting an ideal society that will orient political action. He names it '*Heimat*' rather than utopia, however, and – confusingly – names the utopianism that will lead to it 'utopia'. Yet Bloch's flirting with lack and his semantic idiosyncracies are not the only issues with which I take issue: he also comes close to the second dimension of state utopianism in utilising the militaristic language of Leninist vanguardism to theorise the agency of the concrete utopia. In this regard, Moylan criticises him for shunning a pluralist approach in favour of a 'singular site of historical movement [that] betrays what the actually existing Left has come to know: namely, that the social spaces and movements of contestation are multiple and shifting.' (2001: 58)

Perhaps unaware of these concessions to state thought, Deleuze and Guattari approvingly reference Bloch in an endnote linked to the section of *What Is Philosophy?* in which they discuss utopia (1994: 224, n.12), which – for them as for Bloch – is a force immanent to the present that destroys the status quo:

> *utopia is what links* philosophy with its own epoch...it is with utopia that philosophy becomes political and takes the criticism of its own time to its highest point. Utopia does not split off from infinite movement: etymologically it stands for absolute deterritorialization but always at the critical point at which it is connected with the present relative milieu, and especially with the forces stifled by this milieu...What matters is not the supposed distinction between utopian and scientific socialism but the different types of utopia, one of them being revolution. In

utopia...there is always the risk of a restoration, and sometimes a proud a f f i r m a t i o n, o f transcendence, so that we need to distinguish between authoritarian utopias, or utopias of transcendence ([the 'state utopia']), and immanent, revolutionary, libertarian utopias. But to say that revolution is itself utopia of immanence is not to say that it is a dream, something that is not realized or that is only realized by betraying itself. On the contrary, it is to posit revolution as a plane of immanence, infinite movement and absolute survey, but to the extent that these features connect up with what is real here and now in the struggle against capitalism, relaunching new struggles whenever the earlier one is betrayed. The word utopia therefore designates *that conjunction of philosophy, or of the concept, with the present milieu* – political philosophy (1994: 99-100, emphasis in original).

Here, utopia is understood as a process of deterritorialization: the absolute unpicking of any certainty. Yet this also proves unsatisfactory as an explanation for utopia. For while the conflation of the system of utopian function with utopia deprives us of a term to name utopia-as-place, Bloch and Deleuze and Guattari's utopia knows no place; this is not the conflation of utopia with the system it calls into being, *but of utopia with utopianism*. As Lisa Garforth notes, '[w]hat is utopian' in Deleuze and Guattari's work 'are indeterminate "lines of flight", not where they might lead' (2009: 20), a view echoed by the artist Steve Lambert, in a letterpress print titled 'Utopia' (figure two).
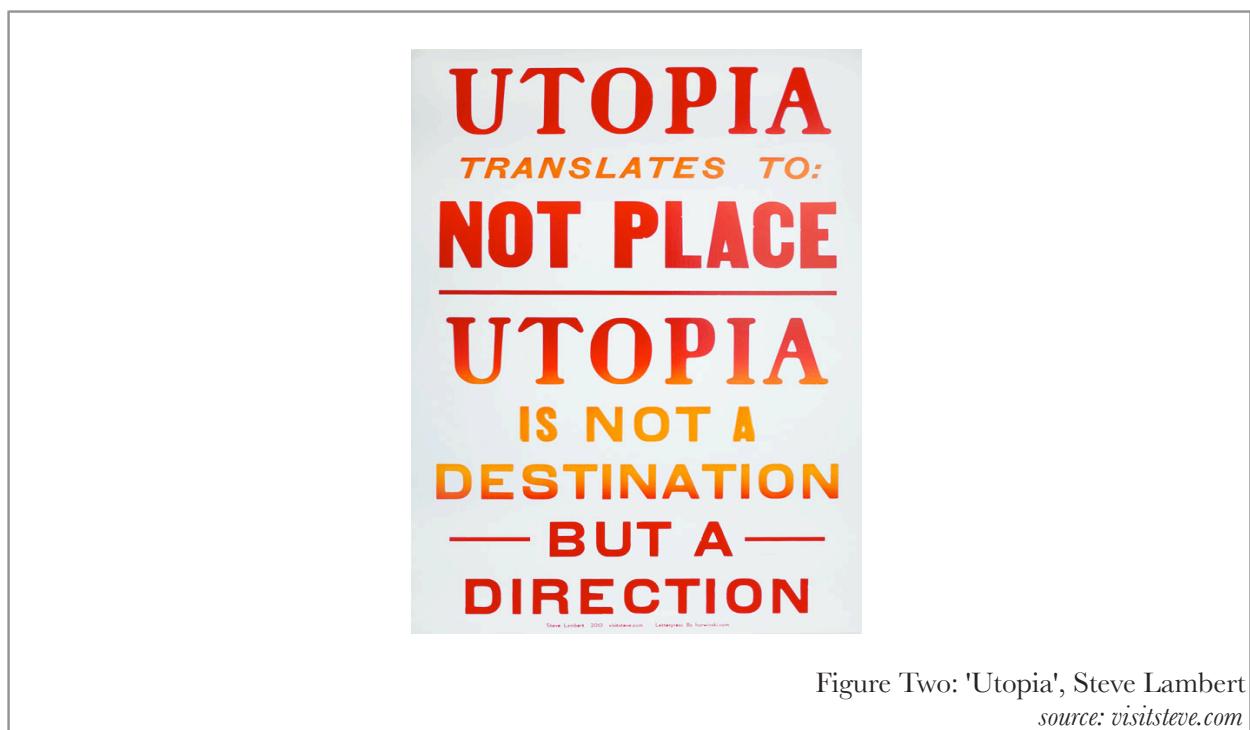

Figure Two: 'Utopia', Steve Lambert
source: visitsteve.com

There are clear resonances with nomadism in Bloch, and in Deleuze and Guattari's call for an 'immanent, revolutionary, libertarian utopia' as opposed to a 'utopia of transcendence' (what I would call the 'state utopia'). Following Deleuze and Massey's understandings that space and place is made by forces across

time, the stress on the temporal dimension of utopia is key. Important also is to acknowledge that utopia can take a plurality of concrete forms rather than merely be a textual genre and – related to this – the understanding the utopia is something that might be collectively experienced rather than something that affects an isolated reader. Nonetheless, I want to contend that positing utopia as process or 'absolute deterritorialization' risks privileging flux and becoming to the extent that utopia becomes a dizzying, disorientating and potentially dystopian process, taking on the 'hysteria' that Newman associates with Deleuze's thought. Lambert is only half right when he states that utopia is 'no place' – an aspect of utopia's etymology also emphasised by Deleuze and Guattari's reference – it is also a 'good place', and thinking of utopia as process overlooks this crucial aspect such that it becomes purely a temporal form rather than one that stresses the dynamic interplay between time and space, a problem foregrounded by David Harvey, who notes that:

> Free-flowing processes become instantiated in structures, in institutional, social, cultural, and physical realities that acquire a relative permanence, fixity and immovability. Materialized Utopias of process cannot escape the question of closure or the encrusted accumulations of traditions, institutional intertias, and the like, which they themselves produce. (2000: 185)

Thus, whilst utopia should not be thought of as the goal (or end) of utopianism in the way that the relationship between means and ends is traditionally understood, some way of theorising utopia as place in time is necessary, but without discarding becoming. To do this, I argue, means to return to the content of the utopian place; to draw on Deleuze's nomadic thought to think what it might mean for a place to be 'good', for a place to 'say no'; and to reconsider the relationship between utopia and utopianism.

A return to content: utopia, freedom and becoming

The difference between the nomadic and the state utopia is not one of form or function, but a difference in content. In starting this section, then, I begin by focussing on theorists who have looked at the content of utopias and identified a strain of utopia which resonates with nomadic thought. Whilst these approaches are diverse, I want to suggest some commonalities that may point the way to a nomadic understanding of utopia, but one that still grounds it in space rather than seeing it solely as a process.

The first of these approaches is concerned primarily with literature, and thus tends to conflate utopia with utopian literature. Nonetheless, as for Davis and Kumar above, I believe it is possible to consider these approaches as taking a content based approach to utopia, for the features of utopia they identify have no qualities which limit them to the literary, or even fictional. These approaches often identify two trends in utopia: one oriented around perfection, hierarchy and order (which I have suggested might be called the 'state utopia'); the other around qualities that resonate more positively with nomadic thought.

I have already mentioned Moylan's concept of the critical utopia, and to the extent that this should be defined as a utopia that is constituted by critique, it can be considered in this category. It is not alone, however. Marie Louise Berneri's *Journey Through Utopia* (first published in 1950 and largely a critique of utopianism's authoritarianism) identifies a strain of 'libertarian utopias', (though the only one which receives extensive focus is William Morris' *News From Nowhere*). These:

> oppose to the conception of the centralized state that of a federation of free communities, where the individual can express his [or her] personality without being submitted to the censure of an artificial code, where freedom is not an abstract word, but manifests itself concretely in work (1971: 8).

In these utopias, 'happiness is the result of the free expression of man's [sic] personality and must not be sacrificed to an arbitrary moral code or to the interests of the state' (1971: 2). More recently, and also from an anarchist perspective, John P. Clark has made a similar observation – tracing two lineages of utopia: one of domination descending from Plato's *Republic*, which he refers to as 'the original utopia of state power' (2009: 11), and one descending from the *Daodejing* (a point of relevance for the discussion of Le Guin in Chapter Three), which:

> is not achieved through domination in any of its forms, whether political, economic, patriarchal, technological, or even epistemological. Rather, through an ontology of unity-in-difference, the other is given authentic recognition. Knowledge becomes sympathetic understanding and participatory consciousness, as opposed to conquest and subjugation. The hierarchies of the utopia of domination (reason over desire, form over matter, soul over body, male over female, adult over child, civilised man over the primitive, consciousness over the unconscious, and so on.) are thus rejected. Apparent opposites are shown to interpenetrate, to complement one another, and to be necessary elements of a larger whole (that is, of course, also a non-whole). (ibid.).

A number of feminist critiques have made a similar division, separating 'masculine' utopias from 'feminine' utopias. The former are notable for the emphasis they place on rationality, hierarchy and order; the latter for privileging non-hierarchy, becoming and embodied intelligence. Of particular note here is

the role that authors of utopian texts themselves have played – Ursula K. Le Guin (1989), Joanna Russ (1995) and Marge Piercy (2003) have all drawn this distinction, whilst the theorists Lucy Sargisson (1996) and Qinyung Wu (1995) have made similar observations.

Similar claims have also been made for non-textual forms, however – and a number of these theorists also identify utopia with concrete practices in the 'real world'. John P. Clark notes that 'it would be a mistake to look at utopia primarily as a literary genre, as is often done today', for there is an 'abundant legacy of utopian practice in the real world and in actual history' (2009: 23), although he stops short of explicitly saying that there have been spatially grounded utopias in 'the real world and in actual history' and should, perhaps, be seen as being closer to Bloch here. In this, he occupies a similar position to a group of thinkers whose thought can in some way be said to resonate with nomadic thought, and who refer to utopianism or 'the utopian', but are (implicitly) hostile to the concept of a spatially grounded utopia: the anarchist inspired approaches of Judith Suissa (2009), Carissa Honeywell (2007), Uri Gordon (2009) and Nicholas Spencer (2009) can all be seen in this light.[62]

Anarchism does not abandon the idea of spatially locating its utopian politics, however, and one of the theoretical understandings of place closest to the nomadic utopia arises from the anarchist tradition: Hakim Bey's 'temporary autonomous zone' (and the related 'permanent autonomous zone'). Key here is Bey's 1990 lecture and essay 'Temporary Autonomous Zone'. Drawing heavily on the work of Deleuze and Guattari, as well as anarchist theory and the then emerging cyberculture theories, it creates the concept of the temporary autonomous zone (TAZ) to refer to spaces of open insurrection created by 'psychic nomadism' (2003: 104) that 'unfold...within the fractal dimensions invisible to the cartography of Control' (2003: 101). These are 'made real' through 'the moments and spaces in which freedom is not only possible but *actual*' (2003: 130, emphasis in original). The TAZ is thus unknowable in advance and is continually recreated by those who inhabit it – it avoids hierarchy or a transcendent ordering principle. It is not 'a harbinger of some pie-in-the-sky Social Utopia to which we must sacrifice our lives that our

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62 Judith Suissa is of particular interest here – she explicitly talks about an anarchist utopianism being grounded in an educational space, but does not call this space utopia. Uri Gordon, meanwhile, opens his essay 'Utopia in contemporary anarchism' by arguing that 'anarchist utopias are perforce places created by the actions of individuals and communities taking history into their own hands' (2009: 260) – a claim that resonates strongly with nomadic utopianism, but he then goes on to reject the concept of utopia for anarchism, associating it with perfection (2009: 267).

children's children may breathe a bit of free air' (2003: 131). Bey initially believed that such places could only exist for a short period of time before being co-opted back into – or destroyed by – the dominant systems of control (indeed, it might be argued that the very concept of the TAZ – applied as it is with great ubiquity – has itself been recuperated by cultural capital), but updated the concept in his essay 1994 essay 'Permanent TAZs', in which he suggested that it was possible to conceive of the TAZ's social relations surviving indefinitely. Interestingly, although Bey states that the permanent TAZ is not the product of 'pure utopianism' (it is unclear what he means by this), he makes six further references to utopia, utopianism or the utopian in the essay, which closes with the claim that 'the intensification of the PAZ will be....Utopia Now' (1994: online at hermetic.com), and (writing as Peter Lamborn Wilson), he refers to the autonomous zones created by Barbary Corsairs as 'pirate utopias' (2003). Sargent (2010: 48); Anderson (2002: 212); and Robinson and Tormey (2009: 156-176) have explicitly linked the 'temporary autonomous zone' to utopia, and I return to the latter below.

A further understanding of place that eschews the term utopia and resonates with nomadic thought is John Holloway's concept of the crack, as developed in *Crack Capitalism*. Holloway seeks to explicitly differentiate the crack from the utopia, arguing that the latter has a tendency to be authoritarian (2010: 38) and is concerned with controlling space, whilst the crack operates temporally (2010: 236). Yet the first of these points is answered by the anarchist concepts of utopianism addressed above and the latter point is something of a false binary, for utopia is has a temporal dimension, and Holloway *does* refers to cracks in spatial terms (2010: 25, 29, 49). Thus, they can perhaps be best understood as *spatiotemporal* phenomena which ground Bloch's prefigurative non-synchronicity in space (in the Deleuzean sense of the word). Their power comes from this spatiotemporal dimension – they prefigure the 'not-yet' (a term also used by Bloch). This is clear in Holloway's analysis of the 2001 *argentinazo* uprising in Argentina, which:

> was not just a spatial crack, it was also a temporal crack [(note, however, that it   retains its spatial dimension – the 'crack' is not pure process)]…A social energy was released, different ways of relating were created. This was a temporary crack in the patterns of domination…Often such explosions are seen as failures because they do not lead to permanent change, but this is wrong: they have a validity of their own, independent of their long-term consequences. Like a flash of lightning, they illuminate a different world, a world created perhaps for a few short hours, but the impression which remains on our brain and in our senses is that of an image of the world we can (and did) create. The world that does not yet exist displays itself as a world that exists not-yet (2010: 29-30).

The crack thus fulfils the education of desire – although in line with Holloway's belief in the plurality of struggle this should be called 'the education of *desires*' – bringing to life new structures of feeling. Although this crack – like many others – is temporary, Holloway argues it might nonetheless contribute to permanent changes in social order in a manner consistent with nomadic thought's immanent operation:

> While each rebellion has its own validity and requires no justification in terms of its contribution to the future Revolution, it remains true that the existence of capitalism is a constant attack on the possibility of determining our own lives…A crack is not a step on the path to Revolution, but it is an opening outwards…It is never entirely closed, even when it is violently suppressed. The Paris Commune lives on, despite the slaughter of so many of its participants…There is a drive outwards from…cracks. They are centres of transgression, radiating waves of rebellion, not according to some pre-determined model (for these do not work) but always experimentally, creatively. Our cracks are not self-contained spaces but rebellions that recognise one another, feel affinities [and] reach out for each other. (2010: 29-30)

As an immanently ordered space of becoming that proliferates rhizomatically, Holloway's crack bares a number of similarities to Andy Robinson and Simon Tormey's 'propulsive utopia' (2009). Drawing on Alfredo M. Bonano's essay 'Propulsive Utopia', and an anonymous essay entitled 'Desire is Speaking: Utopian Rhizomes', as well as the work of Holloway and post-left anarchism, they argue against transcendent 'utopias of deferral', and for a utopianism premised on the Delezuean concept of desire and active force, which spreads according to the logic of the rhizome, expanding the utopian space it does so. Thus, their final claim positions utopia 'not [as] a prefiguration of something-to-come, but [as] an instantiation of something-else, a not yet fully formed space/place, a becoming-different that shows that other worlds are not merely possible, they are in-formation'. (2009: 175)[63] Here, then, seems to be a concept of utopia that is spatially grounded, but is subject to an ongoing nomadic process of becoming. Yet elsewhere in their essay Robinson and Tormey seemingly downplay the idea of utopia functioning as a space positioning it instead as a processual force. 'At the most basic level', they write, 'utopia is not a particular space or place but movement or flow which in turn may create new spatial possibilities' (2009: 164). This again conflates utopia with utopianism, and leaves no word for those new spatial possibilities.

The concepts of Bey, Holloway and Robinson and Tormey are also open to the charge of believing that a smooth space will suffice to save us (indeed, if they have a utopia it could perhaps be said to be a 'smooth

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63 Rhiannon Firth (2011) takes a similar approach and utilises it as a methodology for reading intentional communities.

space') – no account is given of the inevitable and (to an extent) desirable forces of antiproduction and reterritorialization that Deleuze insists are essential for the formation of new orders (though in Holloway's case it might be that they simply do not achieve the permanence that makes this a potential danger), and so there is the potential for such places to breed only chaos and not a self-organisation from chaos: they run the risk of becoming atopian rather than utopian. Nor do they acknowledge the danger in such places becoming excessively reterritorialized to the extent that they are no longer open to the future and lapse into the status of state utopia.

The Nomadic Utopia

It is my contention, then, that the approaches to utopia I have considered so far do not   meet the conditions of nomadic thought and/or do not (consistently) acknowledge the spatial dimension of utopia. When utopia is understood as a perfect place (whether that perfection is absolute or pertains to an infinite perfectibility) it is a statist, striated space in which life is hierarchically arranged in accordance with an order of representation, and governed according to a moral good. Approaches that focus on the function of utopia, meanwhile, have a tendency to stress its negative, critical dimensions over its positive, creative potential, separating utopia from what it can do. They also focus primarily on how utopian texts operate on the individual subject, meaning there is no collective agent of transformation. Process oriented approaches, meanwhile, fail to acknowledge that utopia is a place and conflate it with utopianism. They thus run the risk of failing to spatially realise the desire that embodies them.

I have, however, highlighted three approaches to space – one that implicitly embraces the concept of utopia (Bey's TAZ), one that explicitly rejects it (Holloway's crack) and one that explicitly embraces it (Robinson and Tormey's propulsive utopia) that are consistent with   nomadic thought and – occasional inconsistencies notwithstanding – are spatially grounded. Yet even these, I suggest, are insufficient for the creation of a fully nomadic utopia, as they do not engage with the importance of striation, 'death' and 'antiproduction' in the creation of new forms; and the dangers that the utopia may face from these forces.

In order to address these concerns, I offer the nomadic utopia. To theorists of utopia I suggest that its value lies primarily in three areas. Firstly, it provides a model of utopia that more closely matches the features of many places commonly referred to as utopias than pre-existing understandings of the term, but which can also be utilised to analyse utopian texts (and can supplement – rather than replace – the function based approach to utopia) . Secondly, it insists on situating the more 'hysteric' tendencies of Deleuzean political thought – and understandings of utopia that see it as a process – in place, forcing them to 'slow down' and reterritorialize so that advantage can be taken of gains made. Finally, it enables the theorization of the dangers associated with reterritorialization; providing a way to think through the relationship of the nomadic utopia to state utopia.

The good place

Nomadic utopia is created by the ethical good in the sense outlined in Chapter One. Notwithstanding the points I make in the following section entitled 'The place that says no', it is a place of non-hierarchical social relations in which there is no opposition between the individual and the collective and in which 'difference-in-itself' flourishes. It is thus a material (rather than an ideal) place that is continually being reproduced (though this is not to say that fictional nomadic utopias cannot be depicted, as will become clear in the following chapter on literary utopias). This means that *the nomadic utopia is not the aim of nomadic utopianism, but rather the result*: nomadic utopianism (re)produces the utopia, and it does so without being oriented towards a lack. Nomadic utopianism, then, is not an operation of rational thought that escapes the present, but is the force of rhizomatic connections between affective bodies (and so includes the 'active thoughts that escape consciousness'). Comparisons can be made between the relationship to the virtual and the actual in Deleuzean philosophy – the nomadic utopia constitutes an 'actual', but its non-hierarchical organisation means that the virtual realm remains capable of producing the new; it continually 'reactualises' itself through differentiation. The nomadic utopia is thus not made by what is possible – but neither (*contra* critiques of utopianism) by the *im*possible: it is the product of the virtual.

As for the state utopia, intent is not necessary for nomadic utopianism: the (re)production of a utopia need not be the (primary) aim of those operating in the space. Those studying sociological utopianism have

often spoken of 'intentional communities', but the nomadic utopia may actually function as what Damon Miller (2009) calls an 'unintentional community'. The nomadic utopias I consider in chapters four and five, for example, have the performance of music and the production of knowledge as their primary purposes (though in both cases – and particularly in popular education/critical pedagogy – they are likely to acknowledge that this cannot be abstracted from the form of organisation they take), and even where the primary purpose of an organisation is 'political' (that is, it is seeking to create a better form of political organisation), it may reject the term 'utopia'. These organisations are, however, constituted by a sense that the structures they adopt (and so the places they create) are, in some sense, 'good'. There may not be the intent to produce a *utopia*, but there is – at least on some level – an intent to produce a *good place*, even if this good is secondary to (or cannot be separated from) what is ostensibly their primary purpose. My argument, however, is that if a place is perceived to be 'good',[64] and also pays heed to the 'no' such that it does not perceive of itself as 'finished', or 'the best possible world' (which I consider shortly) it makes sense to call it a utopia. To paraphrase the Marx Brothers: if it looks like a utopia, and feels like a utopia, then it's a utopia.[65] Thus, if part of the purpose of this thesis is argue that liberals and conservatives who claim to be anti-utopian are in fact state utopian, it also argues that those whose politics chime with nomadism are also utopians.

Whilst the ultimate aim of nomadic utopianism – which is utopian in the colloquially 'impossible' sense is the establishment of a global (or, in light of my reading of *The Dispossessed* in Chapter Three, galactic!) nomadic utopia; a crucial point to note is that nomadic utopias are not just interesting in and of themselves, which is to say that – like Holloway's 'crack' – they produce becomings that go beyond their

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64 There is a danger here of falling into an individualised judgement – of saying nothing more than 'if one person thinks it is a utopia then it is a utopia for them'. This clearly plays into an individualised politics that denies any collective subject. This is why it is so important to follow Deleuze and argue that increasing the capacity of a collective body to act will increase the capacity of the individual body to act (though, of course, Deleuze problematizes the ontological primacy of the individual body).

65 One further factor should be taken into consideration here. Firstly, there is, of course, something of a problem with coming from 'outside' a group and imposing the label 'utopian' on it (or even deciding if its organisational space is 'good' and pays heed to the 'no'), particularly if it is hostile to the concept and/or are coming from a tradition where the concept of utopia is not widely known. This may apply to fictional spaces too, although there is clearly less theoretical violence enacted in labelling a fictional space a utopia than one that exists in the real world or actual history. The theorist interested in applying the concept of nomadic utopia (as I am) must, therefore, deal sensitively with this issue, and accept that the labelling of a space as 'utopia' (or not) does not establish a universal truth. Rather, they help to expand the concept of utopia to include new forms, and (as noted in the previous footnote), this understanding of utopia may – in turn – offer something to these spaces in return. I deal with these issues more thoroughly in Chapter Four, below.

temporal and spatial boundaries. Those who have experienced life in a nomadic utopia – however briefly – *may* experience affectively productive 'structures of feeling' that estrange their sensibilities such that they cannot safely return to 'capitalist realism''s dystopia of drudgery. In this sense, nomadic utopias have the utopian function of critique, educating the desires of those who experience them. Recalling Deleuze's insistence that affirmation and negativity cannot completely be separated from one another, Kathi Weeks writes that:

> [A]lthough [utopias] are presented here as two separate functions, one deconstructive and the other reconstructive, their simultaneous presence transforms each of them…the "no" to the present not only opens up the possibility of a "yes" to a different future, it is altered by its relationship to that "yes"; the affective distancing from the status quo that might be enabled is different when it is paired with an affective attachment either to potential alternative or to the potential of an alternative' (2011: 207).

The place that says no

Deleuze's ethical good does not allow for finality, and so the nomadic utopia is never a settled place: it says 'no' to the permanence so often associated with utopia. Thus, the 'no' brings a temporality to the nomadic utopia, counteracting naïve claims that the establishment of smooth space constitutes a once-and-for-all establishment of 'the good life', a move that would see nomadism's ethical good move towards statism's moral good, and which would – ultimately – transform the place into a state utopia (I consider the relationship between the nomadic and state utopia shortly). Whilst the Weeks' quote offered above focuses on the function of utopia in the dystopia of the current global order, her theorising of the relationship between the yes and the no is important for thinking through the function of a nomadic utopia, in which a process of affirming difference-in-itself and rejecting the finality of the present is eternally ongoing.

The 'no', then, does not mean that the nomadic utopia does not exist, but rather that it is never in a state of completion: the 'good' and the 'no' acquire a consistency in the manner that Heraclitus' river 'is not the same and is'. Thus, the nomadic utopia can never be isolated from the forces of production that (re)produce it: its prefiguration is not to a final figuration, but to further prefiguration, *ad infinitum*. This means that in assessing whether a place is a nomadic utopia it is not sufficient simply to look at its form of organisation at a single instant in time: attention must be paid to its becomings through time. This has obvious resonances with Doreen Massey's understanding of place, but I want to briefly highlight to two

further points of comparison here. The first is with the manner in which E.P. Thompson defines class in *The Making of the English Working Class*. 'Like any other relationship', he writes, it 'is a fluency which evades analysis if we attempt to stop it dead at any given moment and anatomize its structure' (1968: 9); and – closer to home (so to speak) – with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the 'schizophrenic object'. The schizophrenic object exists, but cannot be distinguished from the forces that (re)produce it, and the 'nontermination' of which 'is a necessary consequence of its mode of production' (2004a: 7).[66] Both of these claims are important to bare in mind when determining the nature of a utopian space.

Strategic hierarchy and strategic identity

The nomadic utopia, then, contains its system internally: it is constantly produced and reproduced by utopianism, and cannot be conceived of separately from this utopianism. It is powered by an affirmation of difference-in-itself, which results in saying 'no' to finality. It is not simply in a chaotic state of permanent flux, however, but alternates between speeds and slownesses – at times rapidly smoothing and hastening away from ossification, at others slowing down to take stock of gains made, and striating. *Not only are such forces inescapable, they are also necessary.* In this, the nomadic utopia follows Deleuze and Guattari's insistence that death and moments of 'antiproduction' must be inserted into circuits of life (and indeed are necessary for the reproduction for such circuits). Hierarchy and identity must not be allowed to govern in a nomadic utopia, but they may be useful strategic tools to loosen tyrannies of habit. I give concrete examples of this in Chapters Four and Five.

These may also be utilised to enable the nomadic utopia to escape the second danger of smooth space – that of becoming an atopian site of pure chaos, which is experienced as a dizzying, dystopian affect in which the processes of reterritorialization fail to capitalise on gains made by deterritorialisation, resulting in undifferentiated chaos. Here, self-organisation fails: chaos does not lead to order, but to further chaos. In such moments, the extremes of statist thought may seem particularly appealing, although – as Solnit (2010) has noted – forms of organisation that resonate with nomadism may also (temporarily) emerge.

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66 There is a key difference here, however: Deleuze and Guattari state that '[t]here is no need to distinguish here between producing and its product' (2004a: 7). Yet it is precisely such a distinction that I am arguing for (between utopianism as producer and utopia as product, even if these two things cannot be fully separated). I argue that following Deleuze and Guattari on this point leads to the fallacy of the hysteric that Newman identifies, and to an understanding of utopia(nism) that fails to capitalise on its gains.

The 'deviant nomadic utopia'

Above, I noted that Deleuze's thought has been utilised for the benefit of militaries and capital. Just as it is entirely possible to utilise broadly nomadic principles to advance the state form, a place organised in the manner I have described here so far could also be put to statist ends. Here, I would return to my claim above and argue that attention needs to be paid to the wider social forces that a space forms part of: a place that functions to further a wider programme of state utopianism should be understood as a 'deviant nomadic utopia', though a binary opposition between 'pure nomadic utopias' and 'deviant nomadic utopias' should not be posited – any nomadic utopia operating within capitalism, for example, is bound to reproduce certain structures from the dominant system; and also risks reinforcing the dominant system. I discuss this further in my analysis of homophobia and patriarchy in improvisation in Chapter Four; and in the manner in which nomadic utopian education risks reproducing capital in Chapter Five. In order to escape these dangers, a coming together of means and ends is required: just as a nomadic utopia must remain constituted by nomadic utopianism, so must it feed back into that nomadic utopianism. Under capitalism, however, this may not be entirely possible, and this is something that needs to be considered by those seeking to create nomadic utopias.

The relationship between the nomadic utopia and the state utopia

When these hierarchies ossify, the place ceases to be a nomadic utopia and takes on the characteristics of the state utopia. Eventually, if becoming ceases, difference-in-itself is repressed, and the inorganic power of life is prevented from creating the new it may fully adopt that form. It is, of course, impossible to identify the exact moment at which a nomadic utopia ossifies into a state utopia: it is not the presence of hierarchy, identity or representation *per se*, but their ossification – the sense that they have acquired some permanence – and it is equally difficult to identify the freeing of a state utopia into a nomadic utopia. Thus, care must be taken to examine the workings of the place over time, or as they are likely to unfold over time: it is the becomings that a place engenders and is made by that determine whether its good is moral or ethical, and making an evaluation (which can often only be tentative, and which must be open to continued re-evaluation) on whether a place is a nomadic or statist utopia must take into account the likely nature of the place's future.

The difficulty of noting whether a place is nomadic, statist or simply a place becomes more difficult as it increases in size due to the greater number of relations of power, many of which will not be easily observable and many of which may not be known about. As the section on musical improvisation in Chapter Four, below, shows – even the smallest communities will likely be marked by both statist and nomadic features, and thus places should always be thought of as a mixture of utopian forms: they will be simultaneously nomadic and statist. Yet taking into account the temporal and the spatial dimensions of a place, it is possible to make a tentative judgement on whether it is a nomadic or state utopia.

Nomadic utopias and autonomy

It should also be noted that nomadic utopias may exist spatially and temporally within a state utopia (an anarchist cell inside a fascist state, for example; or the forms I consider in Chapters Four and Five within capitalism), but that they ward off the organisational form of the state utopia: they *make it impossible* within their own sphere of relations (that is, in the places they create). Thus, nomadic utopias contained temporally or geographically (and – at least by the dominant statist logic of the social contract – legally) within a state utopia must be subtracted from that state utopia. A city governed by strict hierarchy, but which houses a nomadically utopian resistance movement should not be seen as a mix of utopian forms, but as a state utopia: the resistance movement exists autonomously from wider society, although this autonomy can – of course – never be absolute, as I note in Chapter Four.

Conclusion: time for a turn to life

This chapter has drawn on utopian studies philosophy in order to think through two concepts of utopianism: the state and the nomadic; and has noted that they are not simply opposite forms, but that they merge into one another at an indeterminable point. So far, the concepts of the state utopia and the nomadic utopia have no life: they are merely inert theoretical frameworks. It is, then, necessary to take the step into life; to consider practices and experiments that might constitute state utopias, and – in particular – those that might constitute nomadic utopias, as well examining how these nomadic utopias may ossify

into state utopias. This turn to life will help illuminate the theoretical framework I have outlined here – bringing it to life and adding nuance. To do this, I want to look at both real and fictional spaces and consider their relationship to the concepts of state and nomadic utopia.

Chapter Three

Utopian Literature

Given that I have argued for a sociological, rather than literary, understanding of utopia, it may seem surprising that I should first turn to utopian literature in order to give life to the theoretical framework developed so far. Yet the aim of this chapter is not to engage in literary analysis *per se*, at least not in the commonly understood sense of the term – issues such as form, fictionality, authorial intent and the nature of the literary work are not my primary concern here; although this is not to say they are entirely irrelevant, and I do engage with them where appropriate. Nor is my primary concern to engage with the utopian function of these texts, which is to say that my focus is on the make-up of the utopian spaces they depict rather than the relationship between the texts and the reader – although this is an important secondary task of this chapter (and so this chapter shows how the approach to utopia I have developed can be utilised alongside a function based approach). First and foremost, this chapter is an attempt to utilise my theory of utopia in order to provide readings of both utopianism (the social forces striving to [re]create some form of 'good' place – whether statist or nomadic) and utopia (the places that result from – and perpetuate – utopia) in works of what might broadly be called 'utopian fiction'.

The three texts I consider in this chapter are Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*, Albert Meister's *the so-called utopia of the centre Beaubourg*. and Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia*. Zamyatin and Le Guin's works are among those most commonly written about in utopian studies (and have been considered together [Wegner, 2002; Burns, 2008]), but I hope to show how the approach to utopianism I have developed provides a particular (and useful) theoretical framework to read these texts; whilst Meister's work is little known in the field, but asks a number of interesting questions about what might constitute a utopia or a utopianism.

This chapter should be read as the first *application* of my theory, but one in which there is a rhizomatic relationship between the theory and the fiction: the texts not only provide some 'fictive' flesh for the

theoretical bones I have outlined so far, but force nuance and particularity onto the framework. They also provide space for me to reflect on the concept of dystopia. It is important to stress, however, that the analyses of *We*, *The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg* and *The Dispossessed* I offer in this chapter should not be seen as definitive – there are many aspects to the texts I do not consider here.[67]

The first text I consider is Zamyatin's *We*. I note that this is often read as a dystopian work that has an anti-utopian function. I undertake an analysis of OneState – the state utopian society in which *We* is largely set and argue that this is indeed a dystopia, but I then argue that it is a mistake to read *We* simply as having an anti-utopian function, contending that it is better understood as having an anti state utopian function. Indeed, I suggest that *We* also details a utopianism in the shape of the Mephi – a resistance movement seeking revolution in OneState. Their utopianism, I suggest, can be understood as a proto-nomadic utopianism, and I argue that this resonates with Zamyatin's own political philosophy, which – like Deleuze and Guattari's – utilised the concept of nomadism. I am, however critical of the Mephi for exhibiting a rather hysterical desire that fails to ground its utopianism spatially – they seem to offer a utopianism without a utopia.

I then turn to Albert Meister's *The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg,*a work set in a 76-storey deep structure hollowed out underneath the newly built Pompidou Centre in Paris. I show how this is organised in accordance with a number of principles of nomadism: it is non-hierarchical and allows difference-in-itself to flourish. Yet I contend that it cannot properly be read as a nomadic utopia because it fails to account for the 'no' in utopia's etymology: there is no detailing of conflict or critique immanent to the space, which seems to function purely as a smooth space. As such, I contend that its depiction is unrealistic and that the book's main function is likely to be heuristic rather than representational.

Ursula K. Le Guin's novel *The Dispossessed* is then considered. I situate this within the 'new wave' of utopian fiction developed in the early 1970s and relate it to Moylan's concept of the 'critical utopia'. I

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67 Other issues that commentators have drawn attention to include the role of sexual desire and romance in *We* (Horan, 2007; Self, 2007); the fact that the texts all feature white, (largely) heterosexual male protagonists and are largely written from their point of view (Attwood, 2004; Moylan, 1986: 91-120); the role of science and technology in *The Dispossessed* (Burns, 2008); postmodernism and *We* (Burns, 2008) and architecture in *The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg* (Crinson, 2007).

argue that it can be read as depicting a nomadic utopia in the form of Anarres – the planet in which much of the novel is set. I relate this to Le Guin's concept of the 'yin utopia'; a dynamic space open to forces of becoming (opposed – initially at least – to the static 'yang utopia'). I show how it is (broadly speaking) non-hierarchically structured but note that to simply embrace it as such would be to ignore the 'no' so central to nomadic utopianism. Indeed, I argue that this is a flaw of Anarres, and I show how it is succumbing to tyrannies of habit and operations of power-over which means that it risks ossifying into a state utopia. Here, I briefly consider Le Guin's Taoism and argue that instead of reading Anarres simply as a 'yin utopia', it must be seen as a place where the 'yang' is immanent; always threatening to ossify social relations into a state utopian form. I argue, however, that this ossification does not reach sufficient levels to label Anarres a state utopia, and that the novel's open ending shows that Anarres is still producing nomadic becomings.

We: nomads against the state

Yevgeny Zamyatin's 1921 work *We*[68] is often taken to be an – if not *the* – archetypal 'classic' dystopia (Moylan, 2000: xi, 133; Baccolini and Moylan, 2003: 1; Malak, 1987: 9). Its probable influence on Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and its definite influence on George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* are oft-noted (Orwell, 1946; Burns, 2008; Owen, 2009; Smith, 1976; Meckier, 1984; Parrinder, 1973)[69]. Andrew Barratt (1985) and Will Self (in Zamyatin, 2007: xii), meanwhile, have suggested that *all* works of dystopian fiction are derivative of *We*, and it is certainly true that it contains many well-worn signifiers of dystopian literature, including a totalitarian state, the privileging of happiness over freedom, the destruction of the individual, the absolute mechanisation of daily life, the spread of the city and the denigration of the 'natural' environment. It is often mobilised by liberal and conservative commentators as a warning against utopianism (which they conflate), and in this light functions as a text seeking to reinforce

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68 We was written in 1920-21. It was banned by the Soviet authorities and was first published in English in 1924 by the New York publisher E.P. Dutton, although black market copies were circulated in Russia. A legal publication appeared in the USSR following Glasnost in 1988 (Brown in Zamyatin, 1993: xi-xiv).
    All references with only a page number in this section are to the Clarence Brown translation of *We* (1993), and I adopt the vocabulary and formatting as he has translated it ('OneState' rather than 'One State' or 'United State'; 'The Benefactor' as opposed to 'Do-Gooder'). Translations have also been done by Mirra Ginsburg (1983), Bernard Guerney (1970) and Natasha Randall (2006, 2010). The original 1924 translation was by Gregory Zilboorg (1954), although Brown claims this contains errors (in Zamyatin, 1993: xii). The Zilboorg translation was original published in English as *My*, whilst there are variations of spelling of both Yevgeny (Evgeny, Evgenii, Eugene) and Zamyatin (Zamiatin).
69 It has also been acknowledged or suggested as an influence on Ayn Rand's *Anthem* (Riggenbach, 2010; Saint-Andre, 2003) and Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano* (Vonnegut, 1973).

(and indeed enhance) the power of capitalist realism's state utopia (Saint-Andre, 2003; Riggenbach, 2010).[70] Thus, it embodies the 'anti-utopian utopianism' of the established state utopia (of capital) and is often referred to – by thinkers on both the right and the left – as an anti-utopia (Barrat, 1985; Brown, 1976; Weber, 1958; Kumar, 1987; Davis, 1981; Huntington, 1982; Carden, 1987; Woodcock, 1956).

My contention here is two-fold. Firstly, I argue that the giant city state of OneState in which most of *We* is set is indeed a dystopia, and that is is a dystopia because it is a state utopia. Secondly, I argue that there are significant – and frequently overlooked – elements of nomadic utopianism in the plot, although it stops short of depicting a nomadic utopia. Thus, utilising my approach to utopia means that *We* can be read as a critique of state utopianism from the perspective of nomadic utopia. This means that the text can be thought of as 'critical dystopia' (a term I take from Tom Moylan), as although it is a depiction of a 'bad place', it pushes the reader to imagine alternatives: it has a utopian function. It is thus an error to refer to it as an anti-utopia *per se*; it is an 'anti state utopia', but this is by no means the same thing.

State Utopia in *We*: OneState

We takes the form of the diary of D-503, a twenty-sixty century inhabitant of OneState: a giant city state in which almost all of the world's drastically reduced population lives. Bringing to mind Popper's claim that the establishment of a utopia will have unacceptable costs, this population has been reduced by over 99 percent as a result of the '200-Years War between the City and the Country' (21): something that D-503 believes to have been necessary for the establishment of 'earthly bliss in the granaries of OneState' (22). D-503 works as the chief engineer of the INTEGRAL, a rocket powered spaceship that OneState will utilise to colonise nearby planets that have not adopted its social system (a metaphor, presumably, for Comintern, and designed to represent the spreading of state utopianism to new territories). He writes his diary in the hope that it will one day be read by the 'unknown people' on these planets. Through these entries we get a sense of the political and social organisation of OneState, which – as soon becomes clear

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70 Whilst Bolshevism is clearly one of the targets of Zamyatin's satire, there is good evidence to suggest that *We* was intended as an attack on modernity's hyper-rationality more generally (indeed, Zamyatin was a supporter of the Bolshevik revolution). Clarence Brown argues that it was written as a warning against 'the fate towards which a thoughtless humanity is hurtling' (in Zamyatin, 1993: xix), and OneState is inspired not only by his time in Soviet Russia but also on his experiences working as a naval engineer in Newcastle, where he experienced a highly Taylorised working system in the shipyards of the Tyne. Many of the features of OneState (including rigid timetabling of 'private' life) were also explored in his earlier novel *Islanders*, a satire on middle-class England (c.f. Brown in Zamyatin, 1993 and Myers, 1993).

– is a society in which difference is brutally repressed. For D-503 (initially in the novel's narrative, at least) it is a good place – the 'Benefactor' (who rules OneState), his instruments of torture and the Guardians (the secret police force named, presumably, after the governors of Plato's ideal city state in *Republic*) 'represent good, all that is sublime, noble, elevated, crystal pure. Because that is what protects our nonfreedom, which is to say, our happiness.' (61)

In a clear pre-echo of Davis' claims about utopia, Zamyatin has D-503 write that '[n]othing need happen' because of the 'mathematically perfect life' that OneState has almost achieved (it is not quite there, D-503 observes, because there remain people who are not convinced of its absolute superiority) (4) – a 'system of scientific ethics...based on subtraction, addition, division and multiplication' (14), in which 'the mighty power of logic cleanses whatever it touches' (23). This 'ethical' system (which, following the distinction between ethics and morality I made in Chapter One should – perhaps rather confusingly – be thought of as a *moral* system) has the aim of 'hardening and crystallizing life' and seeks an 'ideal...state of affairs where nothing ever happens anymore.' (Zamyatin, 1993: 25)

OneState, then, functions as the 'end of history'. In a passage notable for its utilisation of the figure of the 'nomad' (which I return to below), D-503 writes that 'all human history, as far back as we know it, is the history of moving from nomadic life to a more settled way of life. So, doesn't it follow that the most settled form of life (ours) is by the same token the most perfect form of life (ours)?' (11-12), whilst S – one of the Guardians of OneState, states that 'we have nowhere to fly to, we've already flown there, we've found it' (88). D-503 also states that the perfect morality of OneState ensures that no progression beyond its logic will be possible, for:

> only the four rules of arithmetic are unalterable and everlasting. And only that moral system built on the four rules will prevail as great, *unalterable, and everlasting*…that is the summit of the pyramid up which people, red and sweating, kicking and panting, have scrambled for centuries' (111: emphasis added).

In an entry that brings to mind Deleuze and Guattari's association of state thought with Euclidean geometry, D-503 also notes that OneState 'is a straight line. The great, divine, precise, wise straight line –

the wisest of all lines' (4). Everything is timetabled to perfection and OneState's residents function as a single entity – the (seemingly) titular 'we' that functions as a triumph of the collective over difference:

> We get up, millions of us, as though we were one. At the very same hour, millions of us as one, we start work. Later, millions as one, we stop. And then, like one body with a million hands, at one and the same second according to the Table, we lift the spoon to our lips. And at one and the same second we leave for a stroll and go to the auditorium, to the hall for the Taylor exercises, and then to bed. (13)

This 'we' completely dominates and subjugates the individual's capacity to manage their daily lives, and – as D-503's reflections make clear – also affects their capacity to imagine how the world might be otherwise. State utopianism's claim that 'there is no alternative' is central to his mindset:

> I've read and heard a lot of unbelievable stuff about those times when people lived in freedom…of all things the very hardest for me to believe was how the governmental power of that time...could have permitted people to live without   even a semblance of our Table, without obligatory walks, without precisely established mealtimes, getting up and going to bed whenever it pleased them… Now, that's something I simply cannot get through my head. (63, ellipsis in original)

Here, then, D-503 is the state utopian *par excellence* – he revels in his 'unfreedom' and is incapable of imagining any other world. In a passage whose wording is remarkably similar to J.C. Davis' claims about the anti-utopian, he writes that those who do not conform to the utopian system are 'criminals':

> "*Liberation?*" Astonishing how the criminal instincts do survive in the human species. I choose the word criminal advisedly. Freedom and criminality are…indissolubly linked…when a man's freedom is reduced to zero, he commits no crimes. That's clear. The only means to rid man of crime is to rid him of freedom.' (36, ellipsis in original)

This 'criminality', he fears, could result in 'chaos' (225) – an overwhelming of the unity of the 'one' by difference. Thus, the one is to be opposed to the multiple; and in order to keep out the latter OneState must resort to classically hierarchical forms of power: D-503 writes approvingly of the Guardians, whilst a compulsory 'Great Operation' removes the capacities for citizens to imagine, preventing them from considering how the world might be otherwise.

OneState, then, is a state utopia *par excellence* – an enormous striated space of control in which life has 'slowed' to a standstill. Chaos and difference have been eradicated through moral laws which are 'rationally' internalised by citizens – and reinforced through hierarchical systems of control should they be swept away by the 'irrational'. The individual is considered a threat to the totality of the system and must entirely subjugated.

Anti-Utopia or Dystopia?

Given its horrific portrayal of a (state) utopia, *We* is – as I have noted – frequently read as an anti-utopia: a text cautioning against collective organisation and utopianism (with the two conflated to a considerable extent). This is the approach taken by those on the libertarian right who seek to link Zamyatin to the work of Ayn Rand (Saint-Andre, 2003; Riggenbach, 2010). Moreover, Zamyatin himself can be mobilised in support of such a view (to support the claim that he is an anti-utopia, that is – anyone who engages with his political thought can clearly see that he was no proto-Randian). In an essay on H.G. Wells, he writes that works of utopian literature are 'sugary', 'pinkish' works that are characterised by two 'generic and invariable features':

> One is the content: the authors of utopias paint what they consider to be ideal societies; translating this into the language of mathematics, we might say that utopias bear a + sign. The other feature, organically growing out of content, is to be found in the form: a utopia is always static; it is always descriptive, and has no, or almost no, plot dynamics (1991: 286).

He then proceeds to describe Wells' *The Time Machine, The First Men in the Moon, The War in the Air,* and *The World Set Free*, noting that these 'differ from utopias as much as *+A* differs from *-A*. They are not utopias' (1991: 287). Zamyatin's rather rigid, algebraic thinking is useful here – the constant is '*A*', and this – we can assume – refers to the places in which the texts are set, and whose static nature results in the literary utopia having little by way of plot dynamic. So while literary utopias depict places deemed by their author to be good, these texts of Wells' are the opposite: they detail a place their author presumed to be *bad*, and so can be called 'anti-utopias'. They denounce the 'ideal' societies they are set in and plot interest is introduced by way of a heroic struggle against dominant morality.

On this reading, the literary anti-utopia is conflated with the literary dystopia, and dystopias are believed to warn against utopianism. Yet as many have pointed out (Sargent, 1982, 1986; Moylan, 2000: 122-132; Donawerth, 2003; Suvin, 2003) this is a mistake: a literary dystopia may present a 'bad place', but – whether this place is judged bad by the reader or is intended to be bad by the author – *it does not necessarily follow from this that the text cautions against all possible manifestations of utopia*; rather, it is against *one particular utopia*, or *one particular form of utopia*. The failure of a particular utopia does not mean that the concept is

discredited. Indeed, the anti-utopian text 'celebrates and protects the status quo and the satisfactions that it delivers to its beneficiaries' (Moylan, 2000: 131) and so has the state utopian function of preserving existing society. Its message can be compared to the views of D-503 – the world we live in is perfect (remembering here the etymology of perfect as a place that cannot be improved upon) and it would be foolish to imagine one beyond it. *There is no need for utopianism in the state utopia.*

This is not a necessary feature of the dystopian text, however. As many have noted, dystopian literature often has a utopian function. For Fitting (1995), Moylan (2000) and Sargent (2010: 28-29), this distinguishes it from the anti-utopia,[71] whilst Moylan – drawing on Raffaella Baccolini's claim that many dystopias 'negate static ideals, preserve radical action, and create a space in which opposition can be articulated and received' (Baccolini, 2000: 17) – suggests that dystopian texts that are 'strongly, and…self-reflexively "critical"' – which is to say that they contain utopian elements – should be considered 'critical dystopias' (Moylan, 2000: 188).[72] Here, however, I want to argue that – like the utopia – the dystopia should be thought of as a form of spatial organisation. It is, simply, a 'bad place', and so literary dystopias are texts set in bad places, and where a considerable narrative focus is placed on the organisation and operation of that 'bad place'.

This thesis has suggested there are two conflicting versions of 'bad': the ethical 'bad' and the moral 'evil'. Thus, in judging a place a dystopia, one can speak from the position of nomadism and say that it is 'bad' because it ascribes to a moral good; or one can speak from the position of a statist ideology and claim that a dystopia is 'bad' because it does not conform to the (morally good) tenets of that ideology. It is my belief that these two are often conflated in popular usage of the term, where 'dystopias' fail to conform to political and economic liberalism, but are also seen to limit the capacity to affect and be affected.[73]

71 Whilst Fitting stresses the importance of a utopian element within the text (a resistance movement fighting against the state utopia in which the work is set) to be the defining feature of a dystopia as opposed to an anti-utopia, Sargent argues that dystopias are extrapolations from the present (and thus function as Jeremiads, warning humanity that this is our fate unless we change our ways), whilst anti-utopias present a vision of a bad future (and thus warn humanity *not* to change its ways). This, of course, means that texts might take on different functions in different times or locations. *We*, of course, was extrapolated from Zamyatin's present and warned humanity to change its ways (see n.3, above), but to the contemporary reader in a liberal democracy it could be read as a warning *against* the need for change (though as I will argue, I believe this misses a crucial element to the work).

72 Baccolini suggests that critical dystopias have existed since the 1930s and came to the fore in the 80s, but Moylan reserves the term 'for works that arise out of the emerging sociopolitical circumstances of the late 1980s and 1990s' (the so-called 'end of history') (Moylan, 2000: 188).

73 This, I suggest, speaks volumes about the success of liberalism (and in particular neoliberalism) in co-opting nomadic concepts

Given this definition, I do not follow Fitting, Sargent and Moylan in distinguishing the literary anti-utopia from the literary dystopia; rather, I would argue that certain literary dystopias have an anti-utopian function (and so reinforce an existing state utopia), whilst others have a utopian function – which may be of the 'radical' state[74] or nomadic variety (in this, I am closer to the position of Suvin, 2003). I suggest that the former be considered as anti-utopian dystopias and the latter as critical dystopias. Deciding on which category a text falls in is a matter for each reader (and the fact that books are usually engaged by individuals divorced from sociality is, I suggest, a limit to their transformative potential) and will vary according to the time and place in which it is read. It may be influenced by the intentions of the author (where known), but is not (and should not be) limited by them, and it may also be influenced by popular and critical opinion (see Fish, 1989 for an account of the influence of critical interpretations). Thus, the views an author holds about their work should be considered as theoretical readings just as the views of other theorists should. They are of relevance, but do not fix the meaning of the work once-and-for-all. Furthermore, the distinction between anti-utopias and critical dystopias – while useful – cannot tell us whether the utopian aspect of a critical dystopia is nomadic or statist. For Baccollini, it is affirmatively the former – she argues that they can be linked to poststructuralism's 'attack [on] universalist assumptions, fixity and singularity, and pure, neutral and objective knowledge in favor of the recognition of differences, multiplicity, and complexity; partial and situated knowledges; as well as hybridity and fluidity' (2000: 18), but it is possible to imagine a work set in a dystopia, but which can be read as advocating the establishment of an alternative form of state utopia.

We as a nomadic critical dystopia

Against readings of *We* which place it as what I would call an anti-utopian dystopia, I want to contend here that it can be read as a nomadic critical dystopia. In other words, it is a literary work set in an ethically 'bad place' but which – through its portrayal of a nomadically oriented resistance movement – can be read as a text embracing nomadic utopianism, and prefiguring the poststructuralist variety of

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(non-hierarchy, flux) and putting them to statist ends. Those sympathetic to nomadism must, therefore, be careful when promoting these aspects of nomadic thought.

74 Which is to say that they may point to an unrealised, rather than a realised, state utopia. Where *We* is utilised in support of the free market and liberal democracy it might be said to function in this way.

critical thought Baccolini associates with the critical dystopia. In this, I follow Jameson (2007: 177, 202), Wegner (2002: 147-172)[75] and Suvin (1973: 15), who detect utopian aspects to *We*. It is my contention here that Zamyatin can be added to this list, and that the utopian impulse depicted in *We* – which is inspired by his Nietzschean thought – can be read as a nomadic utopianism.

Indeed, as I noted above – and have commented on at length elsewhere (Bell, 2010), there are remarkable resonances between Deleuze's nomadic thought and Zamyatin's political beliefs, which he laid out most clearly in two essays – 'Scythians' (written in 1918) and 'On Literature, Revolution, Entropy and Other Matters' (1923), collected in *Yevgeny Zamyatin: A Soviet Heretic* (1991). In each of these essays, Zamyatin argues for a permanent revolution of becoming, using the concept of 'revolution' in a manner similar to Deleuze and Guattari's inorganic life. In 'On Literature...', he claims that it is 'everywhere, in everything. It is infinite. There is no final revolution, no final number' (1991: 107), positing it as a prefigurative, immanent force which does not answer to a lack. He uses the figure of the Scythian[76] to embody this revolution. The Scythian:

> gallops across the green steppe, hair streaming in the wind. Where is he [sic] galloping? Nowhere. What for? For no reason. He simply gallops because he is a Scythian...an eternal nomad. Today he is here, tomorrow, there. Being attached to one place is unbearable to him. And if in his wild gallop he should chance upon a fenced town, he will give it a wide detour. The very odorof a dwelling, of settled existence... is intolerable to the Scythian. He is alive only in the wind, free gallop, only in the open steppe (Zamyatin, 1991b: 21).

Thus, the nomad 'can never rest on laurels, he [sic] will never be with the practical victors, with those who rejoice and sing "Glory be"' (1991: 23); whenever the movement of the infinite is stopped, the nomad will 'hasten away...to freedom' (1991: 22). They will do so 'under any regime, any external order (1991: 32) and exist outside the state, because 'at all times, under the laws of all the monarchies and republics...[they]

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75 Wegner actually goes so far as to claim *We* 'for utopia'. This is not to say, however, that he thinks that it explicitly depicts a utopia – rather that through textual analysis the reader can uncover potential utopias beyond the narrative. It is 'for' a utopia that the reader has to work towards. In other words, it produces a utopianism. My suggestion here is that this utopianism may well be nomadic.

76 'Scythian' is something of a vague term, referring to an ethnolinguistic group of nomads on the Mongol steppe for around a thousand years from 600 BC. In later periods it tends to refer more vaguely to inhabitants of the Pontic-Caspian steppe (Rolle, 1980). What is known of the social structure during the earlier periods suggests that it was hierarchical, and that Scythians were considered to be 'close to nature' by the 'civilised' power of Greece (Rolle, 1980: 123-131). It seems likely that Zamyatin uses the concept of the Scythian in a similar way to Deleuze and Guattari use the nomad: to name those who refuse fixity and embrace non-hierarchical organisation (though Zamyatin never develops an account of this as Deleuze and Guattari do with the nomadic war machine).

One interesting resonance (though probably no more than a happy co-incidence) is that the Greek philosopher Anacharsis was a Scythian. Though none of his works have survived, he is considered a forerunner to Greek cynicism, and one of its central claims – that suffering is the result of false judgements (Long, 1996: 29) – bare a similarity to Deleuze's appropriation of Spinoza and Nietzsche's ethical thought.

have been rewarded only by a lodging at government expense – prison' (1991: 23). In resisting laws, Zamyatin states that the space of the Scythian/revolutionary is is non-Euclidean (1991: 107), suggesting that their becoming is spatially grounded. Literature, Zamyatin believed, could help further this revolutionary nomadism against forces of 'entropy', which sought to preserve the status quo and – when it does so – it is 'utopian', although utopian is not only to be applied to literature – Zamyatin states that in being utopian, literature is 'absurd – like Babeuf in 1797. It is right 150 years later' (1991: 109). Such a utopianism, I suggest, can be seen as a precursor to nomadic utopianism.

It should not, however, be seen as identical to nomadic utopianism as I have developed it. Whilst my reading of Deleuze emphasises the interplay of being and becoming, and utilises place in order to 'slow down' the more ecstatic, hysterical tendencies in Deleuzean thought, Zamyatin is less nuanced, and gives no account of how gains made by the 'scythian' revolutionary might be held; his thought is one of speeds, not speeds and slownesses. He should, perhaps, best be thought of as a proto-nomadic utopian, liable to fall victim to the hysteria that Newman associates with Deleuze's thought.[77]

This 'proto-nomadic' utopianism is represented in the plot of *We* through the Mephi – a collective movement seeking liberation from OneState; a fictive embodiment of Zamyatin's Scythians. Against those who appropriate *We* as a proto-Randian work celebrating the heroic individual, I want to suggest that they can be read as a 'nomadic war machine'. As I noted in Chapter One, the nomadic war machine destroys the opposition between the opposition and the individual, and wards off the state form. Zamyatin portrays the Mephi's autonomy from state forms quite literally by locating them beyond the Green Wall that divides OneState from the natural world, and the reader gets access to them through the female character (and Mephi member) I-330, who D-503 enters into a relationship with. In an exchange with D-503, she makes clear the Mephi's hostility to OneState's statist logic, noting that:

> there are two forces in the world, entropy and energy. One of them leads to blissful tranquility, to happy equilibrium. The other leads to the disruption of equilibrium, to the torment of perpetual movement. Our – or rather, your – ancestors, the Christians, worshipped entropy as

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77 In this I differ from my earlier work on Zamyatin and Deleuze and Guattari (2010), where I did not consider this point of divergence.

they worshipped God. But we anti-Christians, we…(159, ellipsis in original)[78]

In contrast to OneState's statism, the Mephi's philosophy seeks to open up spaces for the flow of life; it insists that another world is possible, and that *another world will always be possible*. There can be no final resting point for life; no 'once-and-for-all' utopia serving as the end of history. This is made clear in what is perhaps the book's pivotal exchange, where I-330 lays bare the fallacy of hoping for a final state of being to D-503:

> "Yes – revolution! Why is that stupid?"
> "Stupid- because there can't be a revolution. Because…our revolution was the   final one. And there cannot be any further revolutions of any kind. Everybody knows that."
> …"Tell me the final number."
> "The what? I…I don't understand. What final number?"
> "You know- the last one, the top, the absolute biggest."
> "But, I-330, that's stupid. Since the number of numbers is infinite, how can there be a final one?"
> "Then how can there be a final revolution? There is no final one. The number of revolutions is infinite." (168, ellipses in original)

Across a number of such encounters, D-503 finds that his certainty in OneState's moral code is eroded, although even prior to meeting I-330 he has been developing a nomadic subjectivity, having developed a fascination with $\sqrt{-1}$: an 'irrational' number which troubles him greatly:

> For every equation, every formula in the superficial world, there is a corresponding curve or solid. For irrational formulas, for my $\sqrt{-1}$, we know of no corresponding solids, we've never seen them...But that's just the whole horror – that these solids, invisible, exist. They absolutely inescapably must exist. Because in mathematics their eccentric prickly shadows, the irrational formulas, parade in front of our eyes as if they were on a screen. And mathematics and death never make a mistake. And if we don't see these solids in our surface world, there is for them, there inevitably must be, a whole immense world there, beneath the surface…My mathematics, up to now the only lasting and immovable island in my entire dislocated life, had also broken loose and floated whirling off.' (98, ellipses in original)

As this uncertainty increases through further encounters with I-330,[79] D-503 finds that he moves increasingly away from the rationalism of the cogito, and closer to the 'schizo-revolutionary' nature of nomadic subjectivity. At one point he describes himself as suffering from a 'strange condition…[where] you wake up at night, open your eyes on the darkness, and suddenly feel- you're lost, and you start groping around as fast as you can, looking for something familiar and solid...' (143, ellipsis in original). He comes

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78 The influence of Nietzsche's thought is clear here, and must be taken into account when considering the similarities between Zamyatin and Deleuze (for Nietzsche, what I have called 'morality' here is Christian – so to be 'anti-Christian' means to embrace what I have called ethics rather than morality). See Rooney (1986) and Burns (2008: 87-88) for more on Nietzsche's influence on Zamyatin.

79 There are certainly some problematic gender politics at play here. Referring to I-330's position as a 'temptress', Horan refers to her as a 'stock femme-fatale' (2007: 134): yet I would argue that she is freeing D-503 from a politics of 'mathematics and death' and leading him into a politics of Deleuzian life: a 'femme-vital', if you will, but the fact that she remains undeveloped as a character is a shame, and even if Zamyatin is not embracing misgoynst stereotypes he is certainly not rejecting them entirely. Nonetheless, there is something attractively subversive about the way Zamyatin transforms the female temptress – a figure as old as Eve to D-503's Adam (and it is possible to read OneState as a play on the Garden of Eden) – into a figure of revolution; and I-330 is herself an active revolutionary – her function is not solely to 'tempt' men (cf. Wegner, 2002: 168).

to see an 'other' in himself – finding that he is often not alone but 'with "him", the other me' (63). This 'other' D-503 is an irrational being whose 'shell burst open, and…[whose] pieces were just about to fly in all directions…and then what?' (56): the unity of his individuality disrupted by difference-in-itself. As the book progresses, D-503 comes to embrace this internal difference; even going so far as to declare that 'everybody has to go mad…absolutely mad, and as soon as possible! This is crucial! I know it is!' (152). The loss of his rational, self-identical subjectivity and his seeming embrace of what Deleuze and Guattari might call a 'schizo-revolutionary' subjectivity coincides with his losing faith in OneState and a growing belief that the future must be different from the present. His certainty in OneState's moral code shattered, he becomes a 'schizo-revolutionary' and joins the Mephi.

For George Orwell, the Mephi's 'utopianism' can be likened to what might be called an anarcho-primitivism. He states that they represent 'the rebellion of the primitive human spirit against a rationalised, mechanised, painless world' (1946: online at theorwellprize.co.uk). Alexandra Aldridge (1977) and Gordan Beauchamp (1983) develop a similar view: the latter arguing that 'hope...lies with the primitives, with the savages beyond the Wall who have escaped the yoke of Reason' (65). Yet I cannot agree with this judgement: as the book reaches its climax, D-503, I-330 and fellow members of the Mephi seize control of the INTEGRAL, which, as I noted above, originally represented OneState's state utopian ambitions. Rather than destroy this technological marvel, as primitivists surely would, they hijack it such that it becomes a vehicle of immanent, prefigurative nomadic utopianism. Responding to D-503 asking 'What do we do now?', I-330 states 'I don't know. Do you have any idea how marvellous this is – just to fly, not knowing, no matter where. .   . And soon it'll be 12:00 and no one knows what?' (193, ellipsis in original). Here, the utopianism is nomadic – both space and time promising the unknown and the contingent. What will come will be 'new, never before seen, or imagined' (141); it will be created by the play of life and not in accordance with a transcendent ideal.

Yet there is a worry here that the Mephi may fall victim to the hysteria Newman associates with Deleuze's thought – theirs is a philosophy entirely of speeds; it lacks slowness, lacks an 'element of antiproduction' that will enable the creation of genuinely new ways of life. It privileges becoming over being and so the

reader rather feels that they will remain forever trapped in process; unable to make any spatial gains. The INTEGRAL, it seems, is doomed never to land in a new world: a utopianism without a utopia.

There is no way of assessing how true this accusation is, however: by the end of the novel I-330 has been executed by OneState and D-503 has undergone the 'operation' to remove his powers of imagination and is denouncing his former revolutionary allies (leading to I-330's execution). Yet as he notes in the final diary entry that the reader sees, OneState's battle against the Mephi has not truly be won for, 'in the western quarters [of OneState] there is still chaos, roaring, corpses, animals, and, unfortunately, quite a lot of Numbers who have betrayed reason.'[80] (225) The text itself is thus resists closure, encouraging the reader to imagine a world yet to come (Wegner, 2002: 171-172). It may be a dystopia, but it is a critical dystopia that represents nomadic utopianism and – in so doing – has a nomadic utopian function, albeit one that lacks the heuristic pull of a fictionally realised nomadic utopia.[81]

The ecstatic naivety of *The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg*

We, then, leaves the reader to imagine what kind of place the Mephi might create (or, to put it another way, what a nomadic utopia might look like). Here, I want to turn to a text that might be read as a literary nomadic utopia: that is, a work set in a utopian space that conforms to a number of nomadism's tenets – Albert Meister's largely ignored *The so-called utopia of the Ccntre beaubourg*, first published in French in 1976. This text has not been written about (to my knowledge) in the field of utopian studies (it is better known in the art world due to translator Luca Frei's relative fame there) and I have only come across one other utopian theorist who had previously been aware of its existence (and they lecture in an art school).

The work's history is rather complicated. Its author Albert Meister was a Swiss sociologist, and the book was first published under the psuedonym Gustave Affeulpin (who functions as the text's narrator/hero). It

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80 Although I-330 is never identified as the 'leader' of the Mephi (and the reader gets the impression that the Mephi would not have a leader), it is interesting that the Mephi's utopianism seems to continue even after her execution. This suggests a rhizomatic organisation that cannot be stopped merely by attacking particular nodes, and brings to mind the claims of occupy movements that 'you cannot kill an idea' (Smucker et al, 2011).

81 It is worth noting here the claims made by Peter Fitting, who states that the new 'utopian texts' of the 1970s 'break out of the passivity and illusionism of the traditional reading experience in an effort to push the reader to work for change' (1987: 26). This, I would argue, applies also to *We*.

was first published in French as *La soi-disant utopie du Centre beaubourg* (1976), and an Italian translation (*Sotto il Beaubourg*, which translates as 'Under the Beaubourg') followed under Meister's own name (1988). The first English translation was made in 2007 by the artist Luca Frei, and is credited to Frei as an 'interpretation', to which he has added visuals. This was a limited edition of a thousand, and now fetches a great deal of money online, although a scanned .pdf has circulated online. For a while I suspected it may have been a hoax created by Frei.[82] This suspicion was enhanced further as it was published as part of a book series entitled 'Fabrications', and because Albert Meister was the birth name of 'Grandpa' Al Lewis (the actor best known for his role in The Munsters, who had anarchist sympathies) – but original copies of the Italian and French versions can be found on books.google.com; and *Sotto il Beaubourg* is also available on amazon.com and in a 2008 reprint from the publishers website (http://www.eleuthera.it). The French edition is also quoted in Furter (1995: 132), and has been reissued under Meister's own name (2010).

The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg is an unusual work, and sits oddly alongside (broadly) contemporary critical utopian literature from the USA (discussed in the section on Le Guin, below). Although it has significant political resonances with these works (it is, very noticeably, a product of the events of May '68), *The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg*'s lack of plot or character development means – in form at least – it has more in common with the 'classic' utopias of More, Bacon and Campanella, and – as Owen Hatherley (2009) has noted, it is something of a boring read – an accusation often levelled at classic utopias. Like *We*, *The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg* takes the form of the diary – in this case of 'Gustave Affeulpin' (under whose name it was first published) – a mysterious man who creates a 76-storey structure underneath the newly opened Pompidou Centre in Paris. He opens it up as a space for spontaneous, self-organised 'culture' and as the narrative progresses it becomes the titular (so called-) utopia.

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82 In the manner, perhaps, of the work of the British artist Jamie Shovlin, best known for two 'fake' projects: 'Lustfaust: A Folk Anthology 1976-81' (2003-2006), which sought to mythologise a krautrock band called Lustfaust (who had never existed) through apparent archival materials; and 'Naomi V. Jelish' (2001-2004) – another fictional archive, this time of drawings made by a disappeared schoolgirl Naomi V. Jelish (see Bracewell and Tufnell, 2007).

The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg opens with Affeulpin utilising his 'moleucular matter contraction' technology in order to hollow out a giant space (the '*beaubourg*', or 'good place') in the foundations of what will soon be the Pompidou Centre in Paris (11). This ludicrous, fantastic method of creating the utopia can be read as a comment on the creation of classic utopias, which have often been criticised for failing to account for the processes of historical change required to realise them (Marx and Engels, 2004: 48; Engels, 2008; Levitas, 2001). Yet unlike the classic utopia, which is invariably a statist space built according to a blueprint, Affeulpin has no idea (in either the colloquial or the philosophical sense) what will fill the space. He calls a meeting for people interested in using the space and says only that '[a]ll these levels are designed for culture, for the culture that you will be doing, because I don't have a preconceived idea of culture' (18). Although he is the 'architect' of the space in a structural sense, he does not wish to be an architect of life within the space, something clear in Affeulpin's reflections on architects who:

> didn't understand why we [– in creating the *beaubourg* –] left so much space without precise attributes. They do it in urbanism, in housing, in cultural buildings; they pretended to come and help us to define the different functions of the rooms architecturally: here we'll dance, there we'll rest, and there we'll run etc. In other words, an exact replica of what they impose in the cities and complexes they build, where the people that will live there know in advance where they will and, especially, where they will not sleep, or run, or eat, etc. (29)

Against this architectural striation, the *beaubourg* functions as a smooth space that harks back to 'ancient cities [that] were lively precisely because they weren't planned'. It is an space of 'anti-planning, anti-urbanism, non-architecture' (.ibid). Affeulpin acknowledges that this will 'unavoidably' create 'wavering, indecision, discussion and tension', but states that such discussions should be held 'because we also know that we could never have these discussions [before],...since the planners never speak with the planned, the modellers with the modelled' (30). The empty shell of the *beaubourg* is not the utopia, then – it is only when *a sense of place* is created through the activity of those who fill it that it will become one.

The discussion on what should be done with the space is mediated on a non-hierarchical basis. At the opening of the space, Affeulpin calls a meeting. Around 4,000 people attend, expecting him to make a speech or to determine what the space is for. To their (initial) disappointment, he refuses to do such a thing, stating only that the space is owned by the public and is to be used by the public for 'culture' – however they define that term. He remains adamant that all those who use the space must 'decide

together' what it must be used for, but rejects the idea that this can be done by analysing those in the space on an individual basis, pouring scorn on a man who posits a 'study of [everyone's] motivations, in other words a cultural marketing' (20). Hierarchy is rejected by those at the meeting because, Affeulpin reflects, it would mean the *beaubourg* becoming:

> stuck in the dead end of democracy. The elected leaders would become the true master, more or less immovable because of their taste for power and, above all, because of the habit that we'll fall into, relying on them and confiding in them, transferring onto them the task of thinking the future of the centre, and the worries and the responsibilities of the everyday functions. We have been persuaded that by following the usual direction the centre would fail its mission of transforming the conditions of cultural creation and allow everybody to create. (32)

It is acknowledged that such a task is 'far from being easy' and Affeulpin writes that he can 'understand the anguish of those who haven't got bosses any more, the constant worry for...confirmation' (*Hoy*).[83]

The beaubourgians (as they come to be known), put their trust in 'chaos': the ability of the 'rabble' to self-organise into something productive without an external ordering principle, and so reject hylomorphism. They form what Affeulpin calls a 'non-organisation' (54) (by which is meant 'non-hylomorphic organisation'); and their confidence that 'in the end, as always when the conditions for freedom have been put in place, things will sort themselves out without recurring to the schemes of doctrines' (ibid.) is well-founded, for they soon have a burgeoning culture: a form of organisation so successful that it is replicated in London, Milan and a number of French cities. At the entrance, they paint words from Victor Hugo's[84] *Notre Dame de Paris*, in large capital letters:

> AND BY THE BLOOD OF GOD,
> I HAVE NEITHER FAITH NOR LAW,
> NOR FIRE NOR DWELLING-PLACE
> NOR KING
> NOR GOD! (*Gas*)

There are clear resonances with Zamyatin's nomadism here in the resistance to the metaphor of the 'dwelling' which, of course, refers to any final state of fulfilment. Thus, the *beaubourg* remains constituted by the play of life. 'To change society', Affeulpin writes, 'we should begin by liberating within us all the

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83 After page 122 of the book there are no more page numbers: instead, pages are labelled with words or phrases. I give these in itallics to avoid them being confused with an author citation, or bracketed text.

84 These are referred to as 'verses of Balzac' in the text – whether the mistake here is Meister's or Affeulpin's is not clear (if the latter, it is perhaps intended to satirise reverence for old masters). Frei provides a reference to *Notre Dame de Paris*, the novel from which it is taken, but does not correct the error in the author's name.

forces of freedom that we would like to see succeed in the society of the future' (75). Beaubourgians recognise that the process of becoming must continue permanently, and Affeulpin states that the predominant attitude is that 'the established fossilises and ossifies itself. We must never stop experimenting' (32). In order to remain a nomadic utopia, forces of nomadic utopianism need to remain, traversing the space and pushing it beyond any hint of the static. Time thus ceases to operate as a mechanism of control, as it does with OneState's strict timetabling, Affeulpin telling of a Chilean beaubourgian called Paco, who:

> one day...started to talk, not in a meeting, but to individuals, one at a time, especially to busy ones, to those who continue to go down to their studios at fixed hours and regularly come up some hours later, reproducing down here the routine rhythms of the industrial schedule. Without wearing a watch, they have internalised their schedule to such an extent that they don't need to ask anyone for the time to know when to start and when to finish. *(the end)*

Perfection is therefore wholly antithetical to the *beaubourg*. An enormously diverse range of activities and spaces spring up on the various floors: a park (complete with birds); libraries; practice rooms and recording studios for musicians; a floor covered in non-identical squares painted by a group of schizophrenics; and a motorcycling club are among the 'cultures' that use the space. Amidst such a plethora of activity it would clearly be ludicrous to talk of any kind of 'perfection', and so 'if it bothers you that when you put your hand on the railing of the escalator you touch some bird shit, too bad. That doesn't bother us, we even think it should be like that' (*Everything*).

Attempts to co-opt the *beaubourg* to ends beyond itself are resisted: Affeulpin writes disparagingly of 'pre-conditionsists', who 'pretended that it's impossible to create a counter-culture, or to create anything else that could be called different than current society, before having realised the Revolution' and who argue that 'the centre had to become the tool in the formation of the masses for the Revolution' (52-53). He notes that 'our goal wasn't, and isn't, to compete with bourgeois culture, nor to weaken its power and its domination. Entirely to the contrary, our goal is to escape from the influence of bourgeois culture' (53). Similarly, he later states that '[t]he only way to refuse the system is to negate it, to ignore it. Not against, but alongside, to create a parallel universe, science-fiction's parallel spatio-temporal continuum' (286).

Rather than change the present by reference to the future, then, the *beaubourg* seeks to change the future by changing the present. There is no clue as to what it will look in the future, but realising the future that

111

exists in the virtual realm of the present. This model proves remarkably successful, and it is worth quoting

at length Affuelpin's final reflections:

> By refusing to structure and organise ourselves, our beaubourg has avoided any possibility for a
> leading minority to emerge that, under the guise of a benevolent non-directivity, could have easily
> governed every affair and, inevitably, would have reaffirmed the division between the hand and
> the mind, between the inferiors and the Superiors. Without a power to take, without a budget to
> control, without subscribers and right to entry, we are a happy mini-people, with a beautiful
> history but without stories. And the arts that have been developed here, indisputably reflect the
> transformation of our life.
>
> Because, more than the arts, the originality and quality of which you can discuss forever, what we
> have produced is an art of living. For us, the old art has died with the death of the old man. It's
> life itself that has been remodelled and we realise very well that our studios, our floors, our
> workshops and our shaggers, have only been the pretext to transform the pale and dreary life of
> the pretentious civilisation called modern. Instead of being a screen that separates from life, just
> like the homes that enclose it, culture has become a research on life itself; and the arts, which
> prevent you from living while sometimes helping you to exist (if not to subsist), have become the
> rehearsals, the practising of the art of living, the only big Art. Culture stops being the substitute of
> the art of living, and History begins. As to finding out if our very happiness isn't favourable
> enough to push the boundaries, if creation isn't fundamentally tied to tensions and suffering, born
> out of mismatch and the acute perception of the ephemeral: in short, if we don't fall asleep in our
> new art of living, we can leave answering all those questions to those who by looking for reasons to
> live tomorrow forget to live today (*Murlafa*)

I-330 and the Mephi, one suspects, would approve.

Nomadic utopia, deviant nomadic utopia or smooth space?

The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg might be read, therefore, as a literary nomadic utopia: a text set in

(and about) a nomadic utopian place. Yet its relentless optimism and the lack of criticality within the text

place it close to the naivety often ascribed to classic utopias: Meister's text seems to be 'impossibly utopian'

in the colloquial sense, guilty of the charge of escapism that Marx and Engels; and Levitas level at utopias.

Furthermore, whilst I do not share Levitas' belief that utopia must be located in the future in order to

avoid escapism, utopias in the here-and-now must engage with wider societal power structures, and

consider how their modes of operation may have an impact beyond their immediate space, and it is not

clear that the *beaubourg* does this.[85] As a result, it runs the risk of functioning as a deviant nomadic utopia,

providing novel forms of organisation that can productively be put to use by capital. Two examples are

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85 The exchange of letters between Levitas and Sargisson published as 'Utopia in Dark Times: Optimism/Pessimism and
Utopia/Dystopia' (2003) develops this debate further. Sargisson maintains that utopias in the here-and-now perform an
important transformative function for those who experience them; Levitas remains wedded to the more orthodox Marxian
position that a rupture in property relations is required before any utopian relations can be established. The dangers I
progress to outline here – and my remarks on property relations in the conclusion, below – notwithstanding, I am closer to
Sargisson on this.

illustrative here. Firstly, the recently squatted Friern Barnet library, which has been re-opened by those squatting in it ('Squatters Reopen Library After Council Closes Local Services', *The Guardian*, 11th September 2012: online at http://guardian.co.uk) – a move welcomed by local residents and the local council. Whilst there is something wonderfully utopian about this (and I think it is fair to assume that this is a utopianism that would have more in common with nomadism than statism), without reflecting on how this relates to the neoliberal project of spending cuts (responsible for the closure of the library in the first place) – and acting accordingly – it risks *entrenching* that neoliberalism, with those behind the cuts using it as a reason to close further libraries ('because someone else in the community will volunteer to run them'). Secondly, the World Bank's utilisation of the anarchist architect and urban theorist John Turner's work, with his belief that squatters were capable of non-hierarchically self-organising communities (a claim that resonates with the beaubourgians' 'anti-planning-anti-urbanism, non-architecture') mobilized in service of policies that limited the ability of governments to provide support for those without adequate housing or access to services (Davis, 2007: 72). In such situations, nomadic organisation must be careful not to confuse the state form with the geopolitical state. Whilst the latter is – ultimately – a site of power to be overcome, its ability to protect the community against market forces can be an important ally in nomadic struggle.

There are also problems internal to the *beaubourg*. It is hard to imagine a spontaneous organisation lasting for so long with no real organisational structures to sustain it, and without an element of 'antiproduction' inserted to capitalise on gains made: the 'strategic hierarchies' or 'moments of strategic representation' I spoke of in Chapter One, above.[86] In this, there is something of the impossibility colloquially associated with the form of utopia, and the *beaubourg* veers towards being a smooth space rather than a nomadic utopia: it lacks the fragility of the nomadic utopia which comes from the danger of ossification into state

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86 Quite apart from the manner in which 'anti-planning, anti-urbanism, non-architecture' as well as 'non-organisation' might resonate with neoliberalism, it would be dangerous to abandon the idea of planning and architecture entirely in a nomadic utopia (though this is not quite what Affeulpin means by the prefix 'non-'; he uses it to mean 'atypical' or 'not what is normally meant by'). Rather, the challenge would be to create an 'artisanal' approach to these forms: one that does not hylomorphically impose a form on bodies, but seeks to create new possibilities for life: new ways of combining bodies and forces. In architecture, the work of Friedensriech Hundertwasser might be interesting in this regard – Harries suggests that this can be seen as an 'antiarchitecture' (1998: 240-242; see also Hundertwasser's 'Mould Manifesto Against Rationalism in Architecture', 1959 and Restany, 2001). Comparisons might also fruitfully be made with 'Freetowns' such as Copenhagen's Christiania. See also Andrew Ballantyne's *Deleuze and Guattari for Architects* (2007).

utopia. Whilst it keeps the ethical 'good' from nomadic utopia's etymology, and embodies it in a place (the *beaubourg*, or 'good place'): it forgets the 'no'.

The lack of criticality may – in part – come from the fact that the only voice encountered in the text is Affeulpin's (or at least when we do hear the views of others they are filtered through Affeulpin). This leaves the reader wondering whether his fellow beaubourgians experience it as positively as he does. And does his power as its creator not lead to informal hierarchy of the kind Deleuze warns against? What is done when people disagree in the *beaubourg*? What happens when someone says they don't want to be surrounded by bird shit? The reader simply is not told: like classic utopias, we are presented with only one uncritical perspective on the space. With this text, then, the approach to utopia that I developed in the previous chapters is not fully applicable.

This does not mean that *The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg* does not have heuristic (or even satirical) value for nomadic utopianism (whether intended so by Meister or not). In offering an overly optimistic (impossible) vision of a nomadic utopia it suggests what such a philosophy would be able to do in an 'ideal world' – a positive vision that lends encouragement to nomadic organisation, even as it fails to engage with the difficulties that are likely to be faced. In this, it can perhaps be seen as an 'optimistic' counterpart to Meister's own sociological work, which was largely concerned with processes of ossification, or 'organisational degeneration' in self-organised and voluntarist communities, such that power becomes concentrated in the hands of an informal elite (Meister, 1984).

The utopian pessimism of *The Dispossessed*

Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* (sometimes published with the subtitle 'An Ambiguous Utopia'[87]) was first published in 1974, and – along with works by writers such as Marge Piercy, Joanna Russ and Samuel Delany – formed part of what might called a 'new wave' of utopian literature inspired by the proliferation of new leftisms offered by critical theory, feminism, critical race theory, queer theory and – in particular –

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87 *The Dispossessed* was first published with the subtitle 'An Ambiguous Utopia', but has variously been called *The Dispossessed: A Novel* (1974, 2003), *The Dispossessed: The Magnificent New Epic of an Ambiguous Utopia* (1975) and simply *The Dispossessed* (2006) (cf. the editorial note in Davis and Stillman's *The New Utopian Politics of Ursula K. Le Guin's The Dispossessed*. The edition I use here is the 2006 Gollancz publication, which is simply titled *The Dispossessed*.

their seeming explosion in the 'event' of '68 (Moylan, 1986: 10; Cavalcanti, 2003: 48; Somay, 1984; Wegner, 2002: 172-173). As Somay notes, these works were typically open-ended, featured multiple viewpoints and portrayed their utopian societies as flawed: they are Moylan's 'critical utopias' (1986).[88] The narrative interest, meanwhile, often comes from the tension between stasis and change, with a protagonist (or protagonists) finding the supposed utopia increasingly closed and so increasingly dystopian. *The Dispossessed* is perhaps the best known of these texts – it won both the Hugo and Nebula Awards and continues to generate a great deal of commentary in the field of utopian studies, having recently been the subject of an edited collection (Davis and Stillman, 2005) and a monograph (Burns, 2008). Here, I want to suggest that it can be read as detailing the struggle between forces of nomadism and statism, and that the society in which it is largely set – Anarres – is a nomadic utopia in danger of ossifying into a state utopia.

The plot centres around the physicist Shevek, who is on the verge of inventing a device called the 'ansible', which – utilising the 'simultaneity theory of time', in which all of time exists simultaneously – will make instant galactic communication possible. Shevek lives in the anarchist society Anarres, where he finds the ansible's development hampered by his university supervisor Sabul, who has worked his way into a position of power-over; and by prevailing opinion, which functions as an informal hierarchy that prevents change and becoming. Having found Anarres increasingly dystopian in the manner it limits his capacity to affect change, Shevek is – extraordinarily – allowed to leave for the country of A-Io on the planet Urras (Urrasti consider Anarres to be its moon, and vice-versa). A-Io is a fictional representation of the Vietnam War era USA (and Urras represents Earth), and although initially finding it 'utopian', Shevek soon discovers its more dystopian/state utopian elements, and comes to see the good in Anarresti life. He joins a resistance movement on Urras and returns to Anarres as part of the 'Syndicate of Initiative', a movement seeking to unsettle Anarresti life by returning it to its anarchist origins and allowing it to go beyond itself.

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88 Moylan devotes a chapter to *The Dispossessed* in *Demand the Impossible* (1986: 91-120), but refers to it as a 'flawed' critical utopia. Rightly, he points out its heteronormativity, the passivity of female characters and its reliance on a stereotypically masculine hero to drive the plot (1986: 91-120).

This basic plot summary covers only a fraction of the *The Dispossessed*'s many themes and sub-plots, but those not covered here relate back to the conflict between forces of statism and nomadism in Anarres. The message Shevek wants to impart to its inhabitants can be compared to that which Moylan states is the central message for the reader of Joanna Russ' 'When it Changed': he is cautioning them to remain 'historically vigilant' and not to 'lock in' utopian achievements so that the utopia is removed 'from the processes of time', coming to believe it has achieved the 'end of history' in the process (cf. Moylan, 2000: 15). Thus, *The Dispossessed* is often said to belong to the critical utopian genre (Moylan, 1986: 10; 91-120;[89] Jorgensen, 2009; Seyferth, 2009: 286-287). I would agree with this reading, but add that as Anarres is depicted as fluctuating between nomadism and statism: it can be read both as a critical utopia *and* a critical dystopia.[90] My intention here is to explore the tensions between nomadism and statism on Anarres, and show how – by embracing a degree of realism not found in *The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg* – Le Guin's novel details many of the problems a nomadic utopia may face.

Anarres as a nomadic utopia

In her 1982 lecture 'A Non-Euclidean View of California as a Cold Place to Be'[91] (published in a collection of her essays in 1989), Le Guin argues that 'Utopia has been euclidean, it has been European, and it has been masculine' (1989: 88). It has been a 'big yang motorcycle trip. Bright, dry, clear, strong firm, active, aggressive, lineal progressive, creative, expanding, advancing, and hot' (1989: 90); its places static, 'perfect' and – as such – uninhabitable[92] (1989: 89). She argues, however, for the creation of a 'yin' utopia: 'Non-European, non-euclidean, non-masculinist' (1989: 90), in which '[t]here are songs [and] one

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89 Against these readings of *The Dispossessed* as a utopia, Tony Burns argues that it 'is best thought of as being, not a literary utopia at all, of any kind, and therefore not a utopian novel, but rather a *novel* pure and simple – a novel dealing with the theme of utopianism in politics' (Burns, 2008: 20). This rests upon his claim that literary utopias detail ideal societies and contain little by way of plot or character development, central to the literary genre of the novel. As will be clear by now, this is not a distinction I draw, but Burns is right to state that *The Dispossessed* is a novel dealing with utopianism.

90 As I am utilising *The Dispossessed* here to flesh out the concept of the nomadic utopia and the constant threat it faces from ossifying into a state utopia I do not consider the nature of Urras, but as a state utopian/dystopian place to do so would lend further weight to the claim that *The Dispossessed* is simultaneously a critical dystopia (like OneState, Urras contains a resistance movement) and a critical utopia.

91 The title of this lecture is one of many instances where Zamyatin's influence on Le Guin is apparent, something Burns analyses at length. In addition to this essay, he notes that Le Guin labelled *We* 'the best single work of science fiction written yet', calling it 'a subtle, brilliant and powerful book; emotionally stunning' (quoted in Burns, 2008: 82). He also points to her referring to Zamyatin as an *'internal emigre'* and her subsequent use of the same phrase to refer to herself (.ibid), and the fact there is a (female) character named 'Zayin' in Le Guin's 1969 short story 'Nine Lives' (2008: 83). As indirect evidence of Zamyatin's influence, meanwhile, Burns points to similarities in plot, theme and vocabulary between the two authors (2008: 83-85).

92 This claim indicates that – like me – Le Guin at times sees utopia in terms of place, rather than as a literary genre (though it is clear she thinks the latter too – this is evident not least in the original subtitle of *The Dispossessed*).

of the songs is called "Dancing at the Edge of the World"', suggesting that the space is always 'on the edge' – and always becoming other through creative, communal activity (the metaphorical 'dancing') (1989: 99).

Though Le Guin makes no reference to *The Dispossessed* in 'A Non-Euclidean View...', Donna Williams has suggested that Anarres functions as precisely such a 'yin' utopia (1994: 165), and a number of commentators have argued that it embodies the non-euclidean – and indeed anarchist – qualities of the yin utopia. Laurence Davis notes that it answers '[o]ne of the most powerful and persistent criticisms of utopian thinking...that it does not, and perhaps cannot, recognize the unending flow of the historical process' (2005: 3), and states that in creating it, Le Guin 'breaks radically from [the] static utopian tradition...by imagining a genuinely dynamic and revolutionary utopia in which the past never assumes a final shape and the future never shuts its doors' (Davis, 2005: 4, cf. 18; Moylan, 1986: 101). In this sense, I would agree that Anarres can be seen as a 'yin' utopia.

Yet the embrace of the 'yin' is its weakness as well as its strength, and the Anarresti sometimes seem blind to the statist operations of power that they themselves are creating. Thus, in keeping with Le Guin's Taoism[93] (and *contra* the claims she makes in 'A Non-Euclidean View...') it seems that creating a utopia does not simply mean creating an ethically 'good place' that eradicates the 'yang', for the yang is a form of thought that and way of being that cannot be banished once-and-for-all: to believe it has been is to fall victim to it. Nomadic utopianism's relationship to state utopianism is – I contend – a useful way to think through these problems.

There is much of the yin about Anarres, however. It is a (geopolitically) stateless society in which the distribution of labour integral to the functioning of a large society is organised non-hierarchically. Property is held in common, which – as Sabia (2005) notes – provides the basis for mutual relations of power-with between individuals and the community: on Anarres it is understood that 'the strongest, in the existence of any social species, are those who are most social. In human terms, most ethical' (177). This is

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93 Call (2007), Burns (2008) and Bain (1981) discuss the importance of Taoism in *The Dispossesesd*. Le Guin herself has translated the *Tao Te Ching* (1997).

reinforced by 'Pravic' – the language spoken, which has been designed so as to reduce linguistic operations of power-over: so successfully, in fact, that the very concept of hierarchy cannot be fully understood by the Anarresti (on his first trip to Urras, Shevek struggles to comprehend the 'curious matter of superiority and inferiority' he knows is central to relationships there [13]). In theory, this means that Anarres exists in a state of permanent becoming:

> [W]ith the myth of the State out of the way, the real mutuality and reciprocity of society and individual became clear. Sacrifice may be demanded of the individual, but never compromise: for though only the society could give security and stability, only the individual, the person, has the power of moral choice[94] – the power of change, the essential function of life. The Odonian society was conceived as a permanent revolution, and revolution begins in the thinking mind. (289)

Anarres' statist becomings

This quote, however, shows that Anarres also contains features that are neither yin nor nomadic. 'Odonian' refers to Odo – a woman who died 200 years before the narrative of *The Dispossessed* begins, and whose writings provided the inspiration for Anarresti society. In this, there are clear elements of statism in the founding of Anarres, with a blueprint for 'the good life' followed. Though this Kroptkin-esque blueprint stresses the importance of non-hierarchy and becoming, it also has a starkly utilitarian rationale that prevents them from flourishing (though it stresses a mutualism of interests between the individual and the community, it argues that this will be a harmonic, permanent mutualism rather than one constituted by struggle and becoming). The claim that 'revolution begins in the thinking mind' is also troubling from a nomadic perspective, displaying a privileging of the ideal over the material; and the mind over the body. These features create problems for Anarres, which – the reader rapidly learns – is not as idyllic as had been hoped. The state as a geopolitical entity may have been abandoned, but the state form survives. Indeed, it survives so strongly that – *contra* Williams' claim that it Anarres is a 'yin' utopia, Donna R. White sees it as precisely the kind of euclidean, 'yang' utopia that Le Guin rejects (1998: 98).

It is certainly true that Le Guin gives a number of examples of statist operations of power in Anarres – often through the figure of Bedap, Shevek's friend and lover. He plays a role similar to I-330 in *We*,

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94 Confusingly for the perspective I have developed, Le Guin argues that 'morality' is flexible and adaptive to situations in hand whilst 'ethics' are rigid and fixed in accordance with pre-determined principles (1989: 18-19). Burns compares Le Guin's morality to Macintyrean 'virtue ethics' (2008: 192-196).

unpicking Shevek's certainty in Anarres' goodness.[95] In a long exchange with Shevek, he argues that informal hierarchies have been established through bureaucracy and an ossified division-of-labour, which leads to 'people seeing their talent, their work, their lives wasted...good minds submitting to stupid ones...strength and courage strangled by envy, greed for power, fear of change' (144). This occurs in the name of utility (Reynolds, 2008: 86) and means that peoples' capacities to affect and be affected are severely limited. Bedap believes that simply abolishing the state has not been sufficient to abolish the state form: 'on Urras', he reflects, 'they have government by minority. Here we have government by the majority. But it is government! The social conscience isn't a living thing any more, but a machine, a power-machine, controlled by bureaucrats!' (145). He argues that this arises from the need for stability, which 'gives scope to the authoritarian impulse' (145). In the early days of Anarres, he claims, people were aware of this, but they were so successful that this has been forgotten: 'Education, the most important activity of the social organism, has got rigid, moralistic, authoritarian. Kids learn to parrot Odo's words as if they were *laws* – the ultimate blasphemy!' (146) The 'tyranny of habit' has allowed power-over to emerge immanently such that – as Bedap states – '[i]t's always easier not to think for oneself. Find a nice safe hierarchy, and settle in. Don't make changes – don't risk disapproval – don't upset your syndics. It's always easiest to let yourself be governed.' (146)

Shevek has a similarly disarming conversation with a character named Vea whilst visiting A-Io, who makes clear that eradicating formal operations of power over (sovereign power, in this instance) is not sufficient to eradicate potentially more insidious forms of power-over:

> "I know you've got a – a Queen Teaea inside you, right inside that hairy head of yours. And she orders you around just like the old tyrant did her serfs. She says 'Do this!' and you do, and 'Don't!', and you don't"
> "That is where she belongs," he said, smiling. "Inside my head."
> "No. Better to have her in a palace. Then you could rebel against her" (219).

Like many literary dystopias works (which is not to say that *The Dispossessed* is a literary dystopia, but that it has features of the critical dystopia due in part to the way in which Anarres becomes state utopian), Shevek comes to realise how pernicious these forms of hierarchy are, and toward the novel's end he claims

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95 The character of Bedap is one of the most problematic for Moylan, who notes that his role seems to be to have sex with the (otherwise heterosexual and heteronormative) Shevek, unpick his certainty in Anarres, and then disappear again: he has no political agency of his own, merely contributing to Shevek's heroism (1986: 110-111).

that 'We've made laws, laws of conventional behaviour, built walls all around ourselves, and we can't see them, because they're part of our thinking' (286). Here is perhaps the novel's key point (at least as far as this thesis is concerned): abolishing formal hierarchies and creating a 'good place' is not enough: statism is a mode of thought that arises immanently. Anarres is becoming a state utopia riddled with informal hierarchies.

Sabul – Shevek's supervisor at the Central Institute of Sciences (where he is developing the ansible) – seeks to take advantage of these informal hierarchies and the ossification of the division of labour. He has worked his way into a position of authority (power-over) at the Institute by plagirising works from Urras and – when Shevek discovers this – he blackmails Shevek by threatening to end his career as a physicist if anyone is told. Sabul is also consulted as an 'expert' on physics by the Syndicalist Organisation of which Shevek is a member, and uses this position of power to try and prevent Shevek from developing the ansibile, claiming that it will upset the 'organic function' of the society (295), and that it is of no use to the society 'because it doesn't get bread into people's mouths' (296). Sabul, then, is a reactive character: he says 'no' to life and seeks to maintain a status quo from which he (in his position of authority) benefits. But his ways of operating spread: Shevek finds that instead of being able to use Sabul in an affective, rhizomatic manner (to increase each other's capacity to affect and be affected), the best he can do is utilise him as a means to an end in the manner of a 'profiteer' (103); '[n]ot in a relationship of mutual aid and solidarity, but [in] an exploitative relationship' (ibid.) in which each man is trying to get the better of the other.

By depicting these operations of power-over, Le Guin imbues *The Dispossessed* with a nomadic utopian function. For Lewis Call, they show Le Guin's postanarchist sensibilities (which I see as nomadic) – she recognises that classical anarchism is 'not enough' (2002: 87) and so promotes a version of anarchism that is 'more flexible, more fluid, more adaptable' in order to combat different forms of power-over – particularly those forms that emerge immanently (2007: 88). Thus, *The Dispossessed*'s 'truly radical legacy' is that it 'transgresses the boundaries of conventional anarchist thinking to create new forms of anarchism that are entirely relevant to life in the postmodern condition' (2007: 88-89). Brennan and Downs,

meanwhile, argue that *The Dispossessed* offers 'a penetrating critique of all utopian experience, even that of anarchism' (1979: 117).

It is worth considering the influence of Taoism on Le Guin a little more here. Despite her seeming embrace of the 'yin' utopia over the 'yang' in 'A Non-Euclidean View of California as a Cold Place to Be', Tony Burns notes that, at times, Le Guin views the yin and the yang:

> not simply [as] "opposites" which might exist independently of one another. It is not possible, she maintains, for us simply to "compromise" between them. Nor can we produce a harmony by reconciling the tension which exists between them. We cannot synthesize them in a manner which achieves a third way of thinking which actually resolves the contradiction which they embrace. (2008: 57)

For Le Guin, then, the Taoist answers a 'most peculiar' kind of 'harmony or resolution' that 'does not preclude the possibility of tension, contradiction, and therefore, conflict, between the component principles which create and sustain it', for there is a 'balancing act' that 'results in neither stasis nor synthesis' (Burns, 2008: 58). The yang is always immanent to the yin, and it is only by acknowledging this that a utopia will avoid ossification into state utopia/dystopia. Whilst the *The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg*'s 'good place' failed to acknowledge the productive elements that this yang might bring, Anarres (at times) fails to acknowledge its dangers.

It is clear that for much of *The Dispossessed*'s narrative, the yang has ossified to such an extent that Anarres might be called a state utopia (and so – as Williams claims – a dystopia). Yet by the end of the novel there is a sense that Anarres is generating nomadic utopianism again, and that it might be possible to call it a nomadic utopia (it is, after all, still largely produced by non-hierarchy). Shevek provides the narrative driving force for this optimism but crucially he is no longer an isolated individual struggling against an oppressive society: he has joined the revolutionary 'Syndicate of Initiative'. At the end of the novel he is returning to Anarres having completed the invention of the ansible. Travelling with him is Ketho – an ambassador from the planet Hain. Explaining the political situation on Anarres to him, Shevek states that:

> "Things are a little broken loose, on Anarres. That's what my friends on the radio have been telling me about. It was our purpose all along – our Syndicate, this journey of mine – to shake up things, to stir up, to break some habits, to make people ask questions. To behave like anarchists! All this has been going on while I was gone. So, you see, nobody is quite sure what happens next..." (333)

Shevek's own nomadic utopianism is clear here – for him, Anarres is a utopia, but it can only remain so if it is acknowledged that there can be no resting place, and that the time to come is always unknowable: a reversal of Massey's claims that for the future to be open, space must be open to, and that place is made through returns. Anarres, then, must again become prefigurative: collapsing the time yet to come into the present (the ansible making this possible not only in a theoretical but in a literal sense). Commenting on this in relation to the ansible, Davis notes that Le Guin was inspired by Friedrich Kümmel's essay 'Time as Succession and the Problem of Duration', which he summarises as stating that 'the coexistence of past and future is no longer in contradiction with the present. All periods may be conceived of as existing at one and the same time' (2005: 5). This creates 'an incessant interweaving of the "times"', though this 'does not...imply their fusion...only the past *as* past and the future *as* future are able to make the present, entering into it and giving it foundation' (ibid.). Davis then goes on to note the nomadic potential of such an understanding, for:

> in the *open circle* of future and past there exists no possibility which is not made concrete by real conditions, nor any realization which does not bring with it new possibilities. This interrelation of reciprocal conditions is a historical process in which the past never assumes a final shape nor the future ever shuts its doors. (2005: 6)

Thus, whilst the landing on Anarres is a homecoming for Shevek, it represents the beginning of a journey for him, for Ketho and for those they will encounter; the start of a new adventure, of something unknown: the reader gets the feeling that Shevek's 'home' (the utopia) will not remain as he knew it – it is, like Heraclitus' river or Deleuze and Guattari's schizophrenic object – a place continually being reproduced; a site of being that is subject to becoming. It is a home that is also not a home. A no place as well as a good place: a nomadic utopia. "You're sure you want to walk through this wall with me, Ketho?", asks Shevek – as the narrative comes to a close – "You know, for me, it's easy. Whatever happens, I am coming home. But you are leaving home. 'True journey is return...'" (335: ellipsis in original).[96] We must remain nomadic, in other words, if we want our utopia to survive.

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96 The interplay of supposed opposites central to Le Guin's Taoism is again apparent here.

The Dispossessed's ending, then, is also a beginning: a new beginning for Anarres and, possibly – for the universe. For when *The Dispossessed* is read alongside the other works in Le Guin's 'Hainish cycle',[97] its closing events can be read as vital for the creation of the 'Ekumen' – an intergalactic federation of planets founded by the Hainish. Although never explicitly stated, it is possible that Ketho's engagement with the anarchism of Anarres inspired the Ekumen, whilst the instant communication made possible by Shevek's ansible allows it to function.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered three works of fiction. Each of these depicts places that relate to the concept of utopia, and I have attempted to show how my concepts of the state and nomadic utopia can be utilised to read these places (although in the case of *The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg* I suggested that this is not an entirely successful operation). In considering the content of the fictional places in these works of utopian literature I have not, however, ignored the potential utopian function of these works: I have also sought to stress the way they may impact on the subject who reads them. In this, I hope to have demonstrated how the approach to utopia I have developed can be utilised alongside a function based approach.

It is my contention that the three works considered in this chapter can be said to offer an 'education of desires', albeit one that functions slightly differently from the manner in which Levitas utilises this concept. The 'desires' that are being educated here are of the Deleuzo-Guattarian variety, and the 'education' they receive by encountering these utopian texts is a 'nomadic education' (a concept I return to in Chapter Five, below) – one that is not concerned with realising a pre-determined lack, but with expanding opportunities for life to actualise its productive force. In these three texts, I suggest that this is done by giving the reader a sense of the affective power of non-hierarchical organisation whilst warning of the pitfalls that come with an uncritical celebration of the ethical good. These are important lessons, and I will return to them in the discussion of 'real world' utopian practice in the following chapters.

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97 The novels *Rocannon's World* (1977), *Planet of Exile* (1979), *City of Illusions* (1989b), *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1974), *The Word for World is Forest* (2010), *The Telling* (2001); and a number of short stories in *The Winds Twelve Quarters* (1975), *A Fisherman of the Inland Sea* (2005), *Four Ways to Forgiveness* (1996) and *The Birthday of the World* (2003).

Chapter Four
Utopian Musicking

Introduction

In an essay on the manner in which music might have a utopian function, Ruth Levitas notes that 'the particular function of music can usefully go beyond analyses analogous to textual methods' (2010: 229). In this chapter, I take this claim seriously, utilising the approach to utopia developed so far in this thesis alongside the musicologist Christopher Small's concept of 'musicking' in order to consider the relationship between music and utopia. Specifically, I am interested in how the practice of musical performance might create utopias. My claim is, therefore, not that music might have a utopian function for the listening subject (I do not deny that this is true, but that is not my interest here), but that musical performance creates utopias, and that these utopias themselves have a utopian function. In order to develop this analysis, I draw heavily on the musicologist Christopher Small's concept of musicking, and the chapter opens by expanding upon this. I note that he sees music as a practice rather than an abstract 'thing', and that he offers 'musicking' as a gerund to describe participation (in any form) in this process. I also show how Small sees this as an inherently political practice of relevance for the organisation of society, and note that this resonates with a wider societal sense that musicking can be a force for social good.

As I have noted, however, there is a moral good and an ethical good; and at this point I make the claim that the performance of what is commonly known as composed music is a morally good practice (and so can be linked to state utopianism), whilst the performance of what is commonly known as improvised music is an ethically good practice (and so can be linked to nomadic utopianism). I note, however, that this opposition is too simplistic, and I suggest that it is better – initially at least – to oppose improvised musicking with what I call 'concrete musicking' (a term I take from Adam Harper) – though even this opposition is deconstructed later on. I argue when engaging in improvised musicking musicians have the power to create sounds immanently; whilst during concrete musicking the sounds they must make are 'set

in stone'. This concretisation does not only result from the imposition of a score, however, but may arise immanently.

I then bring the concept of utopia into consideration. I suggest that the symphony orchestra constitutes a form of organisation devoted to an extremely concrete form of musicking, and that as a result it can be seen as a state utopia. I show how it functions as an arborescently ordered place oriented around a transcendent lack (the score), in which the individual is placed in opposition to the collective and difference-in-itself is subordinated. I also argue that the symphony orchestra has – historically – played a state utopian role in the promotion of the nation state and the capitalist economic order. I then draw on the (negative) experiences of musicians in symphony orchestras and make comparisons between the language they use to describe their experiences and the language of characters in dystopian fiction. From this, I suggest, the symphony orchestra can be seen as a dystopia.

I then turn to consider the practice of collective musical improvisation. I note that a number of theorists and musicians have argued that musical improvisation is a utopian practice, and that others have spoken of it a manner that resonates with nomadic utopianism. I then analyse the social relations that are produced during collective musical improvisation, arguing that to the extent the musicking is improvised these will be non-hierarchical and constituted by difference-in-itself. Thus, I argue that the improvising assemblage functions as a multiplicity: an affective body that expresses power-with in which an increase in the power-to of one performer results in an increase in the power-to of other performers. I also show how the improvising musician is herself constituted by difference, and is subject to processes of becoming.

I argue, however, that these social relations cannot be taken for granted – and that improvisation is always at risk of ossification into concretised musicking and statist utopianism. This, I note, can happen through the tyranny of habit or from musicians exhibiting forms of power-over, both of which may prevent musicians from musicking immanently. In order to ward off these dangers, I argue that improvising musicians may sometimes need to utilise forms of strategic identity and/or strategic hierarchy in the form of generic identities and musical scores (although not in the traditional sense) in order to keep the space

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open. This, I show, means that the relationship between the concrete musicking and improvised musicking cannot simply be though of as one of simple opposition. The chapter closes by noting two dangers of uncritically applying the concept of nomadic utopianism to improvised musicking, arguing that an uncritical celebration of improvisation is likely to reproduce forms of power-over from the wider society.

Musicking

This chapter is not about 'music' as the term is commonly understood. It is not about the intentional combination of sounds and what these might mean, or what effects and affects they may have on a listener. Rather, I utilise the musicologist Christopher Small's concept of 'musicking', which he developed in his 1998 book *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* and utilise this to analyse the social relations between those making music. Following Small's work, this chapter is built on the premise that the relationships between musicians in the moment of performance – and in certain moments outside of performance – constitute political forms of organisation, and so create utopian space.

Small's concept of musicking has significant resonances with both Deleuze's philosophical project and nomadic utopianism, although should not be thought of simply as a musical application of such claims. Arguing against traditional musicological perspectives in which 'the subject matter of music is made up, primarily, of significant works of music that have outlived the culture of their age' (Dalhaus quoted in Small, 1998: 4), Small's theory rests on his claim that 'there is no such thing as music' (1998: 2). This is not to say that music does not exist, rather that it 'is not a thing at all, but an activity, something that people do. The apparent "thing" music is a figment, an abstraction of the action, whose reality vanishes as soon as we examine it at all closely.' (ibid.) To focus on the 'thing', Small suggests, is dangerous, as the concept of music comes to be thought of as 'more real than the reality it represents', which is to say – the *process* of music (ibid.). Drawing on Small's work, the musicologist Adam Harper made a similar point in a talk at the 2010 Oxford Radical Forum, in which he noted that:

there are many languages throughout the world that don't actually have a word for music. This is usually because a culture has no concept of music as an abstract noun that needs to be signified. These aren't the languages of societies and civilisations that don't have any practices we in the West might interpret as musical…far from it. For centuries, Westerners have grown up with the idea that music is an abstract thing. This handling of musical activity gives rise to the belief that music is separate from, and floats above, everyday life- at best reflecting it, reminding us of it, rather than residing in the real world and embodying it. (online at rougesfoam.blogspot.com).

Small links this point to a wider critique of philosophies of the transcendent, arguing that the concepts of 'love, hate, good and evil' have no existence aside from the activities we perceive as loving, hateful, good or evil: there is no 'universal or ideal lying behind and suffusing the actions.' (ibid.) (In this, he is close to Deleuze's rejection of morality in favour of a Spinozan ethics.)

For Small, then, music is a verb, with musicking its gerund (though I would contend that music is both a noun and a verb, and that the two cannot fully be separated from one another[98]). Musicking can be defined as 'tak[ing] part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing' (Small, 1998: 9, emphasis removed). In this sense, to focus on the utopian function of a particular musical work would be to music, but my intention here is to focus on performance, which, Small states, '*is the primary process of musicking*, from which all other processes follow' (1998: 113, emphasis in original). In looking at performance, I draw on Small's insight that '[t]he act of musicking establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships, and it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies' (1998: 13, cf. 1998: 183; 1996: 218; Davidson, 2010: 234, 237). In creating these relationships, my contention is that the musicking of performance creates utopias.

For me, as for Small (1998: 13), musical performance is thus a political act, and it is cited by Levitas (2010) as one of the ways in which music may have a distinct utopian function (although my argument here is very different to hers). As Small notes, 'in every musical performance, at any time, everywhere', we 'may be sure that *somebody's* values are being explored, affirmed and celebrated' (1998: 77). In performance, desired

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98 In his insistence that there is no such *thing* as music, Small's views on music can be seen as analogous to the process approach to utopia, in which utopia is not a thing (a noun) but an activity (a verb). Here, however, I would suggest it is more appropriate to think of music – like place – as both a noun and a verb. It is like a schizophrenic object whose existence should not be thought without attention to the relations of production that brought it into being such and not shortened to 'music', as they often are. They are instructions for musicking: they are not music.

relationships are brought into virtual existence so that those taking part are enabled to experience them as if they really did exist' (1998: 183). It is worth quoting him at length on this matter:

> By bringing into existence relationships that are thought of as desirable, a musical performance not only reflects those relationships but also shapes them. It teaches and inculates the concept of those ideal relationships, or values, and allows those taking part to try them on, to see how they fit, to experience them without having to commit themselves to them, at least for more than the duration of the performance. It is thus an instrument of *exploration*.
>
> In articulating those values it allows those taking part to say, to themselves, to one another and to anyone else who may be paying attention: these are our values, these are our concepts of ideal relationships, and consequently, this is who we are. It is thus an instrument of *affirmation*.
>
> And third, in empowering those taking part to explore and to affirm their values, it leaves them with a feeling of being more completely themselves, more in tune with the world and with their fellows. After taking part in a good and satisfying musical performance, one is able to feel that this is how the world *really* is, and this is how I *really* relate to it. In short, it leaves the participants feeling good about themselves and about their values. It is thus an instrument of *celebration*. (1998: 183-184)

These three dimensions (exploration, affirmation, celebration) can be seen as analogous to (though not absolutely conforming to) the three dimensions of the state utopian system: 'exploration' as the dimension of state utopian design, 'affirmation' as the creation of the utopia and 'celebration' as the reproduction of the utopia. Below, I move beyond Small to suggest ways in which these three stages are disrupted during/in the nomadic utopia of improvisation.

The claim that music can feed into a wider societal sense of the good – and that these relationships are related to visions of the good – is frequently made in relation to the importance of music education (see, for example, Department for Education and Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2011) and was recognised by Robert Owen, who utilised musicking (both performance based and otherwise) to foster community at his utopian community in New Lanark, stating that:

> dancing, music and the military discipline, will always be prominent surroundings in a rational system for forming characters. They give health, unaffected grace to the body, teach obedience and order in the most imperceptible and pleasant manner and create peace and happiness in the mind. (1857: 147)[99]

Yet as I have noted, there are different visions of the good, and in this chapter I explore this further, by considering the difference between morally good musical performance (state utopianism) and ethically

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99 See Lorna Davidson (2010) for a fascinating account of how what I would recognise as musicking was utilised to shape society at New Lanark.

good musical performance (nomadic utopianism).

Improvisation and concretisation

It is the basic claim of this chapter that it is improvisation that constitutes ethically good musical performance (and so is a form of nomadic utopianism), whilst the performance of what is commonly referred to as composed music is a morally good practice (and is thus a form of state utopianism). This argument is, however, deepened and problematised as the chapter progresses – a process that begins here, where the opposition between improvisation and composition is replaced by a relationship between 'improvisation' and 'concretisation'. These are only preliminary notes, however, and the relationship is complicated as the chapter progresses.

In order to develop these terms, I begin with the widely used concepts of composed music and improvised music. My basic definitional starting point here is the approach taken by the improvising musician and music theorist Eddie Prévost, who distinguishes between music that has been composed and music that has been improvised by arguing that in composed music 'most of the technical problems of preparing for a performance are solved and refined before the presentation', with 'relationships between the musicians…mediated through the manuscript which normally represents the score'; whilst in improvisation the musicians 'are searching for sounds and their context within the moments of performance' and 'the relations between musicians are directly dialogical: i.e. their music is not mediated through any external mechanism e.g. a score' (2009a: 43). When dealing with what Prévost terms composed music, then, musical performance is oriented to a transcendent lack (the score); whilst improvisation proceeds immanently.

Yet contrasting composed with improvised music is, I contend, unhelpful for three reasons. Firstly, improvisation can be understood as a form of composition. Some improvisers refer to their practice as 'instant composition' or 'spontaneous composition',[100] drawing on the sense in which composition refers to

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100 See, for example, the Instant Composition Orchestra (http://www.icporchestra.com/).

'the action of putting together or combining', or 'the forming (*of* anything) by combination of various elements, parts, or ingredients' (Oxford English Dictionary Online: online at oed.com). Secondly – even where improvisation is not understood as a form of composition, a number of 'external mechanisms' not colloquially associated with composition may be utilised. Many of these will be consciously decided upon by musicians prior to playing: examples might include deciding to play in the Dorian mode, agreeing to follow the the saxophonist's lead or playing around a particular riff. Though these constitute external limits (albeit self-imposed ones),[101] they cannot (with the possible exception of the riff) be considered 'composition' in any commonly understood sense of the term.[102] Other limits will apply that have not been consciously imposed by musicians. If they are familiar only with standard western tuning, for example, they are likely to be limited by that tuning (and the scales it makes possible) in that performance; and musicians may also repeat gestures or techniques they have utilised before and feel comfortable with.[103] Finally, limits may emerge *during* an improvised performance as hierarchies emerge or the group hits a particular mode of musicking that becomes established as the 'norm' for the duration of their playing. Once established, these limit the level of improvisation in the Prévostian sense, but as they are internal rather than external limits, they do not increase the level of composition.

I discuss the relevance of these issues for nomadic utopianism below. For now, however, I want to suggest that the simple binary opposition between improvisation and composition no longer holds. Rather, the issues I have dealt with here suggest instead a spectrum – the approach taken by Harper (2011: 48-49) and Hamilton (2007: 197) – upon which musicking is improvised to the extent that these limits do not affect the musician's capacity to create immanently, and not to the extent that they do. A term to replace 'composition' (or, more accurately, 'the performance of composed music') is also needed – which covers the

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101 A 'self-imposed external limit' may sound contradictory. I use it to refer to particular structures that limit the capacity of the musicians during performance, but that the musicians have consciously imposed upon themselves before (and therefore external to) that performance. This is a fairly broad category, and could even be used to cover instances of musicking where a group had decided to follow a particular score. It perhaps cannot be used where musicians are coerced into following a particular score through an external power (schoolchildren singing hymns in an assembly, for example); or where musicians are contractually obliged to perform particular scores (a professional orchestra, for example).

102 I have previously (2012) attempted to stretch the definition of composition to include these elements.

103 The instruments used may also be a factor here – though for reasons of space I do not consider this here. A piano, for example, can only make discrete tuned sounds and so is limited in terms of harmonic possibility (it is also hard to retune during performance. In order to get around the limitations of instruments, improvising musicians often play instruments 'incorrectly' (hitting the body of a guitar to get percussive sounds and make the strings resonate, for example), or 'prepare' their instruments by, for example, placing metal objects on the strings of a piano so they will resonate and move around the piano body (preparation is sometimes prior to performance, sometimes during) in order to get them to react in unpredictable ways. Adam Harper's *Infinite Music* (2011) discusses this in greater depth.

fact that limits on improvisation are not necessarily external to the musicking (ruling out terms such as 'predetermination', for example) and here I draw on (and adapt) Adam Harper's term 'concrete'. For him, this term refers to musicking that is 'set in stone' (2011: 47) and – though he utilises it in a broader sense than I am interested in (to include musicking beyond the immediate space of performance[104]) – it can be used to refer to musicking that meets *any* limit: whether enshrined in a score; arising through a conscious democratic decision by performers; or that arises immanently during performance.[105] Although it may read a little oddly, I utilise the gerund 'concreting' to refer to this process in places, as I believe it is important for stressing how it may emerge in action rather than being predetermined prior to action. I also use 'concretised' as an adjective to describe performances that are have been predetermined to be concrete.

Concretised performance as state utopianism: the symphony orchestra

In Chapter Two, I developed my concept of state utopianism to refer to hierarchically ordered activity producing and sustaining a transcendent vision of a moral good. It is either oriented to a lack or to the perpetuation of perfection (though this may not be conscious), and divides the individual and the collective into discrete, conflicting bodies whereby an increase in the power of one necessarily results in a decrease in the power of the other. This, I argue, characterises the relationships of performers involved in the performance of what can perhaps be seen as the most extreme form of musical organisation where concretetised performance is found: the symphony orchestra. To develop this analysis, it is necessary to analyse the social relationships between performers in a 'typical' symphony orchestra,[106] in which a large

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104 He shows how 'variations in playback equipment and acoustics will cause the sonic attributes of [recorded] music to differ' at each moment of playback, for example (2011: 47). Though interesting, this is beyond my scope.

105 Harper contrasts 'concrete' musicking to 'flexible' musicking. Here, however, I do not feel the need to replace the term 'improvisation' with 'flexible performance', as the two are more or less identical (which is to say that improvisation is the name given to flexible musical performance); the issues I introduce to problematise improvisation do not call into question the efficacy of the term to the extent that those introduced to the term composition do.

106 There is no standard definition of what constitutes a 'symphony orchestra', though they evolved in the nineteenth century as composers wrote ever grander works requiring ever larger orchestras to play them. As such, they tend to be large ensembles of 80 or more musicians, a number which would be excessive for many concertos (though symphony orchestras do play concertos).

I do not want to deny that the music made by symphony orchestras can lead to joyous experiences for both performers and listeners, and may well produce rhizomatic becomings of its own: moments that exceed its statist form. While I argue here that it engenders ethically bad relationships among performers – and it should also be noted that much of the music is born of (and perpetuates) colonialist, nationalist, patriarchal and bourgeois values, with their attendant statist logics (see Bell, 2011a; Small, 1998; McClary, 1991) – this does not mean it should never be enjoyed. We should, perhaps, reflect on our complicity in these processes if we enjoy it – but it does not mean that we should not enjoy playing or listening to it. I, for one, enjoy both of these – the sounds of Beethoven's symphonies have accompanied the writing of this thesis more frequently than, say, Ornette

number of musicians collectively perform musical works by following a score notated using the five-line staff system of notation. These musicians are overseen by a conductor, with further hierarchical ranking within the orchestra, and – despite Harper's (correct) assertion that there is a degree of flexibility to their performance (inasmuch as performers can immanently regulate certain values within loosely defined parameters) (2011: 44), the musicking undertaken in a symphony orchestra comes as close as any in the western tradition to the pole of concretisation. It thus serves to illustrate how an 'extreme' state utopianism operates. Other forms of musical organisation (the chamber orchestra, the rock band, the folk group[107]) will conform to some of these tenets, but to a lesser extent – and so they are further from the concrete pole.

The structure of the symphony orchestra

In his essay 'Generating and Organising Variety in the Arts', the musician, music producer and music theorist Brian Eno stresses the hierarchical organisation of a symphony orchestra, writing that it:

> is a ranked pyramidal hierarchy of the same kind as the armies that existed contemporary to it. The hierarchy of rank is in this pattern: conductor, leader of the orchestra; section principals; section subprincipals; and, finally, rank-and-file members. Occasionally a soloist will join the upper echelons of this system; and it is implied, of course, that the composer with his intentions and aspirations has absolute, albeit temporary, control over the whole structure and its behavior. This ranking, as does military ranking, reflects varying degrees of responsibility; conversely, it reflects varying degrees of constraint on behavior (1981: 130).

Coleman's free jazz, and I can still remember the intense joy and empowerment I felt as an eight year old when my school choir sang in a series of concerts with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

107 Two further forms of musicking that can be seen to constitute a form of state utopianism can be found in the 'guitar orchestra' of Glenn Branca and in Sun Ra's Arkestra. Both of these draw on tropes from the symphony orchestra, and the former is particularly similar – albeit without such a complexity of hierarchies between musicians or sections of the orchestra – but neither form of organisation should be understood as identical to the symphony orchestra. In an interview with the musicologist, musician and composer Wim Mertens in 1982, the composer John Cage speaks of his unease attending a Branca concert, stating that he 'felt negative about the political implications [of the music]', before continuing to say that he 'wouldn't want to live in a society like that, in which someone would be requiring other people to do...to do such an intense thing together…[it is] an example of sheer determination of one person [(Branca)] to be followed by the others…even if you couldn't hear you could see the situation, that [it] is not a shepherd taking care of the sheep, but of a leader insisting that people agree with him, giving them no freedom whatsoever...when the amplifier broke that was the one moment free of intention...if it was something political it would resemble fascism'. The audio of this interview is contained as a track ('So That Each Person Is In Charge of Himself') on Glenn Branca's album *Indeterminate Activity of Resultant Masses* (2006).

Whilst their music often sounds similar to freely improvised jazz, Sun Ra's Arkestra were also strictly hierarchical and their playing was guided by what Sun Ra believed was 'natural' for black musicians, whilst musicians individual egos were to be subordinate to the collective identity fostered by Sun Ra as bandleader (Iyer, 1996: online at http://archive.cnmat.berkeley.edu/). Sun Ra's authoritarianism was lauded by Arkestra member Pat Patrick, who described him as 'the type of musician that inspires you towards improvement and a better output' and from whom '[t]here is always something to be learned from' (quoted in Wilmer 1977:85), whilst another member of the Arkestra – John Sinclair – noted that 'we knew he was a dictator, but at least he was a benign dictator.' (quoted in Szwed, 1998: 245) An analysis of Sun Ra's Arkestra, then, reveals that there may be a disparity between the perceived freedom of a music and the conditions of those producing it: my focus here is firmly on the latter.

Small makes a similar point, noting that it is 'almost without question that these relationships should be authoritarian and hierarchical' (1998: 68), with the 'rank and file [players] rarely consulted about the nature of the product to be made' (1998: 69). He draws attention in particular to the power-over of the conductor, who 'represents the image of what all of us dream at times of doing and of what many in our time have tried to do in the field of social and political action: to resolve conflicts once and for all through the exercise of unlimited power' (Small, 1998: 86, cf. Levine and Levine, 1996: 18-20). This is a necessary operation to prevent 'chaos' (Attali, 1985: 66-67), and the conductor's power-over is so great that, in a startling example of hylomorphism, she is sometimes spoken of as 'playing' the orchestra is if it were her instrument (Galkin, 1988: 568).

Small and Eno both note that this hierarchy is necessary in order to follow the score, which functions 'as a statement about organisation...a set of devices for organising behaviour toward producing sounds' (Eno, 1981: 129); a 'lack' towards which the orchestra organises itself. In it is embodied the Platonic 'ideal form' of each piece of music, which the orchestra strives to realise in each performance (Small, 1998: 113):[108]

> The score that lies on the conductor's desk tonight is the ultimate center of power in this big space, the symbol of the composer's authority over what is played here and the means by which that authority is exercised. The authority of the conductor, supreme as it appears, is contingent on his obeying, like everyone else on the platform, the coded instructions that the score contains. He [sic] can make no gesture that is not inspired by these instructions, make no demands on the players that is not sanctioned by them. He may extend the implications of the instructions to the utmost, but he has, finally, to be able to justify his extension by reference to the authority of the score. (1998: 115)[109]

As Hamilton notes, the score constitutes a vision of perfection (in making this argument he references the etymology of perfection I discussed in Chapter Two, above) (2007: 196). It functions as a lack in a manner comparable to a utopian blueprint in the system of state utopia, even if the organisation of people is not its primary purpose.

(Re)producing the lack inscribed in the score requires the total domination of the individual by the collective: any expression of 'difference' would constitute deviance from the form established by the score

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108 For Brahms, the orchestra was always doomed to fail. 'No one can do [Mozart's] *Don Giovanni* right for me', he noted. 'I enjoy it much better from the score' (quoted in Hamilton, 2007: 113).

109 Small notes, however, how the conductors themselves are at the mercy of market forces – and also that orchestras are subject to processes of managerialism (1998: 85).

and so the individual performer must submit absolutely to the totality, governed by the score (Hamilton, 2007: 113, 197; Small, 1998: 66). Like the capitalist worker under Adam Smith's division of labour, the individual musician's contribution is also valueless on its own (Attali, 1985: 64). Thus, the individual is to be opposed to – and subsumed under – the collective and difference is considered to be difference from perfection. The symphony orchestra thus constitutes a state utopia.

The utopian function of the symphony orchestra

Although my focus here is primarily on the inner relations of musicking collectives, the orchestra also has an outward-facing state utopian function, projecting its vision of the good life to the wider world (Beckles-Willson, 2009: 4), and it is important to acknowledge this (after all, few of us will ever play in a symphony orchestra – though we may well perform in a musical group that shares many of its organisation forms). As Small notes, the relationships created in musical performance 'model, or stand as a metaphor for, ideal relationships as the participants in the performance imagine them to be: relationships between person and person, between individual and society' (1998: 13). This can be witnessed in the claim of the orchestral clarinetist and music educator Basil Tschaikov, who claims that the symphony orchestra represents a 'jewel in the crown of civilization, a microcosm of society at its best' (quoted in Fischer, 1994: 24). Mark Evan Bonds, meanwhile, traces how the symphony orchestra's playing was understood by German critics of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to embody a cosmopolitan 'we' that was integral to the development of the modern German state (2006: 63-70)[110] (resonating with J.C. Davis' claims about the state-forming function of the literary utopia), whilst Jacques Attali shows how the rise of the symphony orchestra was bound up with the development of capitalist economic order (1985: 67).

There may, however, be an 'estranging' function to experiencing life *within* the symphony orchestra. Given that – as Fisher notes – capitalist realism denies that there is any such thing as society, experiencing something collective that is as undeniably powerful as performing in a symphony orchestra (or similarly organised musical group) may function as a 'shock' to the system, which prevents the performer from

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110 This vision of cosmopolitanism is less explicitly authoritarian than the operations of power that Small ascribes to the orchestra, resting as it does on a belief that there is a balance between the individual players' differences (manifested through the different sounds that their instruments make) and the whole. Yet, as Dennis Mischke (2010) points out, cosmopolitanism privileges identity above difference and rests on an essentialist belief in universal moral codes: its 'we' thus denies difference and so has more in common with statist modes of thought than nomadism.

being able to comfortably embrace the status quo's ideology of individualism. The youth orchestras created in impoverished areas of Britain as part of the 'In Harmony' programme (http://ihse.org.uk) may fulfil this function (and is tentatively cited as an example of utopian practice in musical performance by Levitas, [2010: 227-228]). To consider what might be called 'authorial intent' complicates this picture somewhat, however, and I would maintain that in seeking to 'improve 'concentration, commitment, creativity, teamwork, [whilst] raising aspirations and self-esteem' ('In Harmony' funding announcement, quoted in Levitas, 2010: 228) it is intended not to challenge but to reinforce the dominant ideology (though this does not necessarily mean that it will be successful) – functioning primarily as a culturally imperialist and hylomorphic shaping of the underprivileged in order to create 'social inclusion'[111] and maintain the status quo – a 'repression of desire' rather than an 'education of desire'.[112] It may well be that a 'nomadic excess' escapes this intent, however (just as utopian texts may be constructed by readers in ways other than their authors intended), and may suggest ways in which a state utopianism other than that of the dominant order can be useful in prompting a transition beyond the present.[113] Venezuela's El

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111 For a critique of the way social art practices have been used to boost 'social inclusion', see Bishop (2012) and Kester (2011). See Allen (2010) for a critically nuanced application of similar debates to El Sistema's programme in Scotland.

112 Perviy Simfonicheskiy Ansambl´ bez Dirizhyora (usually known as 'Persimfans') is perhaps worth commenting on here. A conductorless orchestra founded shortly after the Bolshevik revolution in Moscow, this was inspired by the ideal of 'collective endeavour'. According to the *Grove Dictionary of Music*, it 'was a first-class symphony orchestra, which aimed to revitalize the methods of symphonic performance by relying on the creative initiative of each of its members, employing the rehearsal methods of chamber ensembles, and by resolving questions of interpretation through consensus. Based on the principle of full artistic and material equality for all of its members, its players comprised the finest artists of the Bol´shoy Theatre orchestra, and professors and talented students from the Moscow Conservatory. Persimfans acquired a reputation for expressive, virtuoso playing and brightness of sound, and played an important role in the development of concert life in post-Revolutionary Moscow. It also strongly influenced the formation of other leading Moscow schools of instrumental performance, and helped generally to raise standards of orchestral playing in the USSR. Following the example of Persimfans, conductorless orchestras were organized in Leningrad, Kiev, Voronezh, and also in several cities in other countries (such as Leipzig andNew York). The weekly Persimfans subscription concerts held at the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory over the tenyears of its existence (1922–32) enjoyed a huge success, as did those organized in factories and other unorthodox venues. Programmes were thought through carefully, and were wide-ranging and adventurous. A music journal was also published by Persimfans from 1926 to 1929.' (online at oxfordmusiconline.com). Despite this, the orchestra had difficult changing tempos, suggesting perhaps that the music written for symphony orchestras necessitates some form of hierarchy among players.

113 In a similar manner, the communal aspect of playing together in an orchestra may create a relatively autonomous space that allows for social relations – if not to be made anew – to be reconfigured in a manner that might make a utopian politics more plausible. In this sense, the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra – founded by Edward Said and Daniel Barenboim – is worth considering. Described by the latter as a 'utopian republic' (2006), it is composed of young Palestinian and Israeli musicians who democratically decide on the orchestra's programme. Acknowledging the complexity of its situation, it transcends crass generalities about 'uniting people through music' and deliberately avoids grand claims such as, for example, arguing that material inequalities between the lives of Israelis and Palestinians disappear within the orchestral space; it has nonetheless created a temporality of hope that disrupts that of ongoing conflict (Cheah, 2009). As such, it is perhaps to be tentatively welcomed, although my arguments that the inequalities of organisation *during* the moment of musical performance within a symphony orchestra would, I contend, still apply here (Barenboim's charisma, for example, cannot be overlooked in considering the success of the project – something that perhaps resonates with debates about the function of charistmatic authority in fashioning nomadic utopias [see Bell, 2011b]). Furthermore – although the rhetoric used by the orchestra is careful not to overstate its political efficacy – I cannot help but feel that by presenting Israeli and Palestinian musicians as equal runs the risk of masking (or even erasing) the very unequal power structures that perpetuate that conflict. To this end, the discussion of strategic hierarchy in Chapter Five, below, would be of relevance in considering the utopian (or simply political) efficacy of the orchestra. Claims about western classical music's universal ability to overcome cultural and political

Sistema programme of youth orchestras may well be instructive in this regard (see http://festnojv.gob.ve), and suggests that institutions closely related to the geopolitical state may functions as important sites of struggle for nomadic utopianism. I reflect more on this latter point in my discussion of education in Chapter Five, below.

The symphony orchestra as dystopia

As I showed in my analysis of OneState in Zamyatin's *We* and Anarres in Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, the state utopia is – from a nomadic utopian perspective – a dystopia (an ethically bad place), and is often felt as such by those who experience it. Here I want to briefly focus on the manner in which the orchestra may be *felt* to be dystopian by its members, or is perceived to be dystopian by observers. Although I have not found reference to a symphony orchestra musician using the term 'dystopia' (or 'dystopian') to describe the orchestra, the similarities in the way the symphony orchestra is sometimes described with the language used by characters in in literary dystopias is worth commenting on.

In a quote with remarkable resonances to some of the language used by D-503 in *We*, the Boston Symphony Orchestra violinist Marylou Speaker Churchill uses the term 'scrubbers' to refer to the string section of a symphony orchestra, stating '[w]e who are so many individuals, have to play together. If we don't it doesn't sound good. That's the orchestra routine for violinists' (quoted in Fischer, 1994: 24), whilst the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra violinist Marilyn Fischer states that there is 'a tension between the sublimity of our task and the conditions under which we work' (1994: 254), which are 'highly formal, almost ritualized' (1994: 257). Such experiences lead the musicologist Rose Rosengard Subotnik to state that 'when efforts to preserve the autonomy of the composer's vision are unbounded, the performer is turned into a kind of automaton' (1991: 256).

Despite his belief that the symphony orchestra constitutes a utopia, Basil Tshiakov can also be utilised here: his claims regarding the importance of tyranny resonating with J.C. Davis' claim that the state

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divisions must also be subject to scrutiny, not least for their foreclosing of difference and neo-colonialist assumptions. For a detailed critical account of the orchestra that acknowledges these complexities against the background of Edward Said's thought and (Beckles-Willson, 2009).

utopia is a totalitarian space that cannot tolerate difference and with the experiences of D-503 in *We* and

– to an extent – Shevek in *The Dispossesed*:

> the more successful we are as instrumentalists, the more we have to sublimate our individuality…
> to the tyranny of the conductor…players in an orchestra have to submit, instant by instant, to the
> dictates of a single individual…every movement you make, in the music that is the substance of
> your being, is dictated to you by others (quoted in Fischer, 1994: 28).

The music made by symphony orchestras may sound wonderful, but the social forms that lead to its

creation – and that it helps to perpetuate – are less so.

Collectively improvising music as a nomadic utopian practice

As noted above, there are a number of forms of collective musical performance that are less concrete than

the symphony orchestra (almost all in western musical traditions, in fact). Here, I want to focus on the

practice of collective improvisation, by which I mean musicking undertaken by groups of musicians that

comes close to the pole of 'improvisation' on the spectrum running from improvisation to concretisation

that I proposed above. For reasons that will become obvious as this discussion progresses, these forms of

musicking are not *absolutely* improvised, however.

Despite the prevalence of the term in discourses about improvisation, I do not utilise the term 'free

improvisation'. This is in part because it is often associated with a particular sound: '*the* sound of free

improvisation', and so signifies a set of generic conventions which reify the content of the musical work

over and above the practices of musicking which produced it. It is also because I believe the emphasis on

'freedom' is unhelpful, and ignores the power-relations that will always shape the process of musicking. I

discuss these below.

Improvisation and the 'good place'

My broad claim is that improvisation is a nomadic utopian practice, and so creates nomadic utopias. In

this, I draw on the work of a number of improvisers and musicologists who have noted its relevance for

political and social organisation in ways that resonate with nomadic thought. For Eddie Prévost,

improvisation can foster communitarianism: groups of people uniting in a sense around a common

purpose, but who may have very different experiences, desires and abilities (2004: 4). For David Borgo, it has a 'resoundingly social nature' (2005: xiii), by which he means that it brings people together to create music and reflect on how that music is and could be made. The singer Maggie Nicols states that 'improvisation reaches out, breaks down barriers, challenges frontiers' (in McKay, 2005: 1), stressing its constant becoming. These factors are often used to promote the music, too: the annual improv festival 'Freedom of the City' advertised its 2011 programme with a flyer stating that 'London's improvised and experimental music community has been revolutionising music for over forty years, refusing pre-determined structures and inherited hierarchies', and made no reference to what the music actually sounded like. The musician and theorist Paul Hegarty, meanwhile, notes that the improvisation collective can be seen as 'a community of the fellow free; a community that is rethinking the idea of itself continually, hopefully. Its key hope is the potential for interaction, an intersubjective entity forming from the purest kind of democracy, continually reforming' (2012: 1). He also notes that this 'seems a paradigmatic anarchistic social model: no hierarchy, no rules that cannot be altered, removed, bent' (2012: 3).[114] Eugene W. Holland (2004, 2008) and Jeremy Gilbert (2004), meanwhile have utilised Deleuzean concepts to explore improvisation; and Deleuze and Guattari themselves write that 'to improvise is to join with the world' (2004b: 344).

There is a nomadic utopianism implicit in these pronouncements, and on occasions the concept of utopia has been explicitly utilised in relation to improvised music. Paul Hegarty notes that in a capitalist world, improvisation is continually striving 'to be something else, the somewhere else of utopia' (2012: 4), whilst – speaking to the comedian Stewart Lee in an interview with *The Guardian* newspaper – the saxophonist Evan Parker espoused a naïve but appealing vision of improvisation as utopia, stating that '[w]hen I close my eyes and I am just playing with other people in a free situation, where we can all do what we want, I am in a utopian space. And I have been very lucky to spend a huge amount of my life in that utopian space' (2010: online at guardian.co.uk). Further examples come from the pianist Fred Van Hove (in

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114The improvising musicians Woody Sullender and Daniel Carter; and the musicologist Adam Harper have also noted that improvisation has much in common with practice of anarchism (Sullender, 2005; Carter in Jacobson, online at 577records.com; Harper, 2010). This claim is also made by Christopher Small, who notes that 'improvisation celebrates a set of informal, even loving relationships which can be experienced by everyone present, and brings into existence, at least for the duration of the performance, a society whose closest political analogy is with anarchism [with] each individual [contributing] to the wellbeing of the community.' (1987: 307)

Brennan, 2006); the trombonist, composer and jazz historian George E. Lewis (2008: xii); the musicologist; and the jazz historian Eric Porter (2002: 24).

A more theoretically rich passage – which resonates closely with the concept of nomadic utopia – comes from the theorists Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner, who note that:

> [f]or many [improvising musicians], the improvised musical performance serves to create – in the midst of hierarchical social relations – a utopian space, a genuinely democratic realm full of cooperation, coexistence, and intersubjective exchange. Without established musical or social props, everything is held together by these intersubjective relationships that are as strong and as fragile as a spider's web, and, as such, constantly under construction and repair' (Cox and Warner, 2002: 251-252).

It is important to note that these broadly utopian and communal views of collective improvisation are not universally shared, however. The novelist Ralph Ellison – a keen fan of jazz – saw improvisation as a site of individual struggle. He believed that

> [t]he health of jazz and the unceasing attraction which it holds for the musicians themselves lies in the ceaseless warfare for mastery and recognition – not among the general public, though commercial success is not spurned, but among their artistic peers. And even the greatest can never rest on past accomplishments, for, as with the fast guns of the Old West, there is always someone waiting in a jam session to blow him literally, not only down, but into shame and discouragement.' (2008: 555-556)[115]

Ben Watson, meanwhile, attacks the idea of 'improv-as-community', claiming that it espouses 'one world moralism' and is a form of 'liberal face-saving and feelgood ideology' (2004: 254). Drawing on Adorno (despite his well-known hatred of much jazz music), Watson claims that the best improvisation (typified, for him, in the work of the guitarist Derek Bailey) does not seek to create 'community' (Bailey is best known for his solo work, though he did regularly collaborate with a wide-range of improvisers), but is an example of an 'authentic Modern Art [that] speaks a moment of truth: controversial, nerve-wracking and

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115For a critique of this view, see *A Power Stronger Than Itself*, George Lewis' history of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (2008). Whilst the whole book works as a critique of such a view, presenting improvisation as an altogether more cooperative form of social organisation, early on in the book Lewis takes particular aim at Ellison's claims (as well as those of jazz historian Eric Porter, who felt that jazz made during and since the Second World War is 'macho'), noting that '[i]n talking with the musicians, however, one also realizes that bebop-based jam sessions on the South Side went far beyond the romantically macho "cutting session" model so attractive to American literature and folklore. While the jam session was indeed a competitively based system of authority and virtuosity, Ellison's protocapitalist, social Darwinist framing of the jam session system seems undercut by accounts that speak of communal generosity rather than shaming. Jodie Christian remembers the atmosphere of gruff, laconic learning that permeated the late-night sessions: "Now and then you might ask a question, or they might tell you some- thing without you asking a question: 'Go home and practice, man, because you need to know your scales, you need to know your chord changes.' So you went home and worked on it. Next time you'd come out, you'd be *halfway* ready. . . . I don't think that they thought in terms of teaching or imparting knowledge, the ones who were advanced in playing. Of course they were, but I don't think you can think in terms of that. When you are in a community, you *do*. (21, ellipsis and emphasis in original)

critical' (2004: 254).[116] This is an important criticism – and one that I will return to below.

It is clear, however, that it is possible to talk of improvisation as a utopian practice, and it is also clear that for those who make such a claim it is not at all like the state utopia of the symphony orchestra (which is also a dystopia): it rejects the hylomorphic belief that bodies need hierarchical organising in order to escape chaos or inertia. Indeed, hierarchy is hostile to improvisation: where one musician leads and the others follow, the musicking of those following is concretised to a degree (by what the leader plays). In fact, even the musicking of the leader is less improvised that it would be if they were not leading.[117] Hierarchy increases concretisation for all but the musician at the top of the hierarchy (and, as will hopefully become clear, potentially even for them too).

In denying the need for a score to bring order to matter, improvisation adopts nomadism's belief that difference can self-organise to produce the new. This is clear in the written introduction that Eddie Prévost offers to players who partake in his weekly improvisation workshops (which are open to all):

> Each musician should look at the materials they use for making music, as an infinite resource for sound production […] the relationship between musician and sound source is fluid and capable of far more responses that can be imagined. Imagination itself is stimulated — ignited— only by practice. The musician is urged to try and search without specific objectives and even without hope or expectation of finding anything. Paradoxically this can lead to undreamt of results. These findings become part of the musician. They are part of self-invention.

> [Simultaneously, it is suggested] that the musician refers to and extends the openness of enquiry, to the other participating musicians and what they are   doing. For here, I contend, there is an infinitude greater than that encountered in our relationship with mere static material.

> Playing then, becomes a way of experiencing and accessing constantly renewable energy — that is consequently free of expectation and formula. It is full flowing cognition. (2009b: online at workshopseries.wordpress.com)

As players come together with their different instruments, different techniques, different styles, different histories and different moods they bring these differences together and produce a powerful way of creating new forms (of relation, of sonic expression, etc.). In an article in *The Wire* magazine, Philip Clark

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116 Ironically, Eddie Prévost suggests that Derek Bailey himself is complicit in what might be called 'cosy liberalism', attacking his 'preference for musical co-existence rather than conscious processive interactivity' (2004: 15).

117 I explain this further below, but the basic argument is that the leader will have to rely (largely) on their own experiences and abilities to make musical sounds, whereas if they were involved in a non-hierarchical improvisation they be responding to the sounds made by their fellow musicians: an operation that would enable them to go beyond their habits and create new ways of playing. Of course a leader will respond to the playing of those subordinate – no matter how hard they try not to – but it can be said that to the extent they do this, they are not leading and there is no hierarchy.

describes how listening to other players at Prévost's workshops enabled him to find new ways to play. '[T]he way forward', he states, 'was to listen, respond, listen, respond. Use the ears to move the fingers – stop using the fingers to prejudge sound. There was nothing to fear no need to stew in my pit of embarrassed fear about producing the "wrong" sound' (2012: 36). I would share this reflection – my experience of improvisation is that playing with new musicians enables me to produce or configure sounds in a new way as I respond to the challenges that their playing offers.

This response in no way implies a hierarchy, however: it is not merely that Clark will follow his fellow improvisers, but rather enter an endlessly shifting dialogue with them in which they respond to his response and so on, *ad infinitum.* Thus, improvisation rebuffs Nietzsche's suggestion that anarchism displays a hatred towards life (1994: 58) and creates an inversion of Deleuze and Guattari's bourgeois organisation in which there are only 'slaves commanding other slaves' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a: 276) by creating a space in which there are only masters – those who can 'say yes' to Deleuze's inorganic life. This can likened to what Deleuze calls 'crowned anarchy' (1994: 37, 264; Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b: 175), George Woodcock's claim that anarchism constitutes a 'universalised aristocracy' (1975: 30) and – in musicology – to George Lewis' concept of 'multidominance' (2000).

Lewis uses this latter term to describe musical and visual arts traditions developing from the black African diaspora.[118] When applied to improvisation it refers to the manner in which the social relations of musicking are not characterised by a fear of power but rather a lack of power-over that enables each performer to maximise their power-to through power-with. The oft-cited phrase 'nobody solos, everybody solos' also nicely illustrates the rhizomatic[119] distribution of active force in collective improvisation, and Lewis makes clear how such an arrangement is conducive to the production of the new in performances by the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (of which he has been a member for over forty years). In their performances, he notes:

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118 Interestingly given my discussion of Deleuze anarchism and chaos in Chapter One, above, Lewis notes that both visual arts and music from the African Diaspora have been frequently dismissed by white critics as 'chaotic' (2000: 36).

119 The music critic Simon Reynolds associates this origin of the phrase 'nobody solos, everybody solos' with the group Weather Report (2007: 270). He has also utilised the concept of the rhizome to theorise the improvisatory performances of Miles Davis and Can (2007: 270), and Jeremy Gilbert talks of collective musical improvsiation as a 'realised experience of a sociality which is truly rhizomatic in its transversality and undecidable complexity', suggesting that it is here 'that the power of such improvised music lies' (2004: 125).

the extreme multiplicity of voices, embedded within in an already highly collective ensemble orientation, permitted the timbral diversity of a given situation to exceed the sum of its instrumental parts, affording a wider palette of potential orchestrations to explore. (Lewis, 2000: 36)[120]

In this, improvisation is testament to the fact that a lack of hierarchy can potentially lead to neither inertia nor chaos, but instead to an immanently generated and constantly shifting order and the production of the new. In his book *Sync or Swarm: Improvising Music in a Complex Age*, David Borgo draws on this to link improvisation to the science of complexity. For him, improvising music collectives constitute a 'complex, emergent system[s]' (2005: xvii) that immanently regulate themselves to take account of difference. Perhaps the clearest explication of this claim can be found in the following passage, which has startling echoes to the language of Yevgeny Zamyatin's essay 'Scythians' whose titular figures never rest on a victory and 'hasten away' to freedom 'whenever the movement of infinity is stopped (1991: 22-23):

> [The complexity scientist Michael M.] Waldrop's descriptions of the science of complexity spoke of systems poised on "the edge of chaos", never quite locking into place nor dissolving into complete turbulence; systems that could self-organize and adapt to a constantly shifting environment. "The edge of chaos," he writes, is where new ideas…are forever nibbling away at the edges of the status quo, and where even the most entrenched old guard will eventually be overthrown…The edge of chaos is the constantly shifting battle zone between stagnation and anarchy, the one place where a complex system can be spontaneous, adaptive and alive." I can think of no better definition of improvised music.' (2005: xvii)

As I noted above, the science of complexity has been linked to the work of Deleuze by a number of contemporary theorists, including Manuel DeLanda, John Protevi and Thorklid Thanem (the first of whom is linked to improvisation by Simon Reynolds and Joy Press [1995: 199-200]), and this description of 'the edge of chaos' nicely captures the interplay and interconnection of chaos (difference) and order (place) in the nomadic utopia.

Philip Clark's claim that the way forward is to listen and respond; and not worry about producing the 'wrong' sound is not only interesting as a springboard for an exploration of how difference-in-itself is

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120Multidominance extended to rhythm sections as well as instruments that had traditionally soloed and been privileged in performance. George Lewis charts the development of a 'non-hierarchical approach to time' in jazz, noting that '[t]he notion of drummers as primary timekeepers had already broken down with the work of Kenny Clarke, who pithily suggested to a colleague in the 1940s that rather than relying on the drummer, each musician should be personally responsible for the articulation of tempo and meter. Then, with the advent of Sunny Murray, Milford Graves, Andrew Cyrille, and Beaver Harris, the implications of the non-hierarchical approach to time became evident, as tempos were irregular, constantly changing, or even completely absent – challenging the centrality of "swing" to the identity of jazz, or (on some views) redefining the nature of swing itself. Gradually, relationships between ensemble players became more fluid, and as collective free improvisations advanced mutable notions of foreground and background, distinctions between soloists and "rhythm sections" began to blur. Instruments that formerly assumed background roles, such as the bass, came to the front' (2008: 38, cf. Corbett, 1994: 78).

brought together immanently and non-hierarchically to produce the new in improvisation, however, but for three further reasons. Firstly, it shows how that which is created cannot be 'prejudged', which makes clear the fallacy of trying to 'plan' ahead in improvisation as in nomadic utopianism (at least to the extent of imagining the finished product): the 'new' is created as a result of activity rather than calling the activity into being. The saxophonist Ornette Coleman makes a similar point in the liner notes to his collectively improvised album *Change of the Century*,[121] in which he notes that:

> [w]hen our group plays, before we start out to play, we do not have any idea what the end result will be. Each player is free to contribute what he feels in the music at any given moment. We do not begin with a preconceived notion as to what kind of effect we will achieve' (2004: 254).

In language that resonates with Borgo's referencing of complexity theory, Coleman's fellow saxophonist Steve Lacy states that there 'is a freshness, a certain quality that can only be obtained by improvisation…It is something to do with the "edge". Always being on the brink of the unknown and being prepared for the leap…a leap into the unknown' (quoted in Cox and Warner, 2004: 249). The jazz critic John Litweiler, meanwhile, states that Ornette Coleman's music:

> makes clear that uncertainty is the content of life, and even things that we take for certainties (such as cell motives) are ever altering [in] shape and character. By turns he fears or embraces this ambiguity; but he constantly faces it, and by his example, he condemns those who seek resolution or finality as timid. (1984: 39)

These claims are resonant with both Small's claim that it is musicking that produces music, and with my claim that it is nomadic utopianism that produces the nomadic utopia – although I should be clear that the 'new' I am interested in here is the social form created by the 'multidominant' relations between the musicians, rather than the music itself (though the music may well be expressive of these relations). An exploration of the further points thrown up by Clark's quote will, I suggest, show that the social form – the space created by improvisation – is a nomadic utopia. It gains identity and creates a *sense of place* through a particular form of musicking based upon the repetition of difference.

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121 There is a troubling contradiction between the collective nature of much free improvisation and the crediting of albums to solo artists – often to satisfy the demands of record companies keen to create recognisable 'products' to sell to the market. This also plays into hagiographic 'great man' (and it invariably is men) narrative of jazz/improvisation's history (see DeVeaux, 2001 and Pekar, 2001 for criticisms of the 'great man' narratives in jazz history, and the remarks made by Maggie Nicholls and Georgina Born in McKay, 2005 for the erasing of women from narrative accounts of the rise of what became known as 'second wave' improvisation in Europe. I speak more about the erasing of women and queers in improvisation below).

The second of these further points of interest in the Clark's quote is that he talks of 'using the ears to move the fingers', implying a circuit of embodied intelligence that illustrates nomadic utopianism's disruption of a simple mind/body dualism. As in Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche, 'active thought' (that which creates the new) here escapes full consciousness, finding itself also flowing throughout the body. David Borgo further develops this idea, reflecting that 'my favorite…times spent improvising seem neither entirely mental, nor entirely physical, but rather [occur] when these binary divisions seem to dissolve and disappear' (2005: 36), whilst Ornette Coleman claimed that 'sometimes I can hardly believe that what I hear when the tape is played back to me is the playing of my group. I am so busy and absorbed when I play that *I am not aware of what I'm doing at the time I'm doing it*' (2004: 254, emphasis added). As Coleman's quote suggests – and as the following interview quote from Evan Parker makes clear – this use of embodied intelligence further increases the unknowability of the music created through improvisation:

> Sometimes it's as predictable as addition, you get exactly what you expect, other times it's entirely unpredictable. For example, if...you have two basic rhythm patterns happening across the two hands – and then superimpose a related but different pattern of articulation from the tongue, you get a final result that is very hard to predict – because there's a three-layer process of filtering that might throw up patterns of accented notes which you couldn't think up (in Corbett, 1994: 83)

This leads nicely on to the third point of interest in Clark's quote: that improvisation breaks the unity of the individual. If, in improvisation, the mind and the body are no longer subject to Cartesian duality, Deleuze's claim that the unity of the individual can no longer be the starting point of political organisation also holds: the improvising 'individual' is – like Deleuze and Guattari's schizorevolutionary – constituted of difference-in-itself. For David Borgo:

> the dynamic complexity that informs, and can be generated by, an individual improviser is immense. Mind and body, moment and place, emotion and intellect, preparation, experience, and spontaneity all collide, collude, and (in the best of moments) cooperate to create a compelling performance' (2005: 62).

Meanwhile, the improvising guitarist and musicologist John Corbett – in an essay entitled 'Ex Uno Plura: Milford Graves, Evan Parker, and the Schizoanalysis of Musical Performance' – details how the limbs of an improvising percussionist (Milford Graves, in this instance, although he is utilised as an example rather than an exception) operate as bodies of individuated difference, challenging the unity of the subject (1994: 78-80), before going on to note that similar processes are at work in the improvising saxophonist

(represented by Evan Parker). Utilising the Deleuzean vocabulary hinted at in his title, he notes that the saxophone:

> may be played in such a way that it allows it to be fragmented as well, likewise at the level of the body of the performer. Fingers, mouth, tongue, teeth, lungs: these are distinct members of the solo-saxophone ensemble. Joined together as the Evan Parker solo assemblage, they are constellated in such a way as to break the seeming unity of melodic expression. (1994: 82)

Thus, he notes, 'there is no longer a single player per se', but rather an assemblage (Corbett, 1994: 84). Similar arguments, I would argue, can be made for a number of instruments utilised in improvisation: not least the human body itself.

With the individual replaced with a schizorevolutionary, nomadic dividual constituted of difference, performances of collective improvisation will contain considerable complexity, allowing ever greater opportunities for the creation of the new and unforseen (Borgo, 2005: 62). What is clear here is that in this collective assemblage the supposed opposition between the interests of the individual and the collective that proceeds from a liberal understanding of the subject does not apply. Terry Eagleton puts this well, stating that:

> [t]he complex harmony[122] [improvising musicians] fashion comes not from playing a collective score, but from the free musical expression of each member acting as the basis for the free expression of the others. As each player grows more musically eloquent, the others draw inspiration from this and are spurred to greater heights. There is no conflict here between freedom and the "good of the whole". (2008: 100)

It is possible to speak, then, of an 'affective body' of improvisation: an assemblage reproduced by *conatus* or desire. This is related to the rhizomatic multidominance engendered by improvisation that I discussed above, and is illustrated – on a simple level – in Clark's statement. His claim that he felt as if he was in a 'straitjacket' is, in essence, a statement of *powerlessness*: an inability to act. Yet by listening to another musician and engaging with what they were playing (their expression of difference), Clark found a way out of this and was *empowered* to act: an increase in the power-to of one resulting in an increase in the power-to of another musician, creating power-with that comes to constitute the entire assemblage. It is as a result of moments like this that Eddie Prévost states that '[i]f the musician...remains trapped in a perception of

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122I would question the use of the metaphor of harmony here: improvised music is frequently dissonant, and the concept of harmony has essentialist connotations. See Tenney (1988) for a discussion of 'harmony'; and Bell (2011a) and Marshall (2012) for an argument in favour of a dissonant form of political organisation rather than a harmonic one.

himself [sic], then he no longer improvises' (1995: 81).[123]

This process may not always function as smoothly as I have presented it here, however – and at times the space of improvisation may be constituted by conflict as musicians struggle to be heard or, perhaps, move the music away from a settled groove or a sound they are not keen on. In this they may struggle with each other or with the music itself: the self-organisation of difference-in-itself is not always an easy task, and can be marked by conflict. Though there is always a danger that this will restore state utopianism's split between the individual and the collective and break the mutually affective power relations I have just discussed (I consider this danger – and ways to potentially avoid it – below), this struggle should not be identified as an Ellisonian struggle for domination, but rather as an integral part of non-hierarchical organisation and the creation of new forms.[124]

This, I would suggest, is far from the cosy liberalism that Watson associates with accounts of improvisation that stress its communality, with the Adornian 'moment of truth' (or rather a succession of moments of truth) embedded immanently within the very structures of difference that constitute improvised musicking. Here, Small's stages of exploration and affirmation are simultaneously explored resulting in a turbulent, creative process of becoming that says yes to life and produces new forms.

Improvisation and the 'no place'

From this, it can said seen that the place of improvisation is ethically good, and that it increases the capacity of performers to affect and be affected. But the nomadic utopia is not simply a 'good place', it is also constituted by the 'no', which is to say that it must not be separated from the forces of becoming that traverse and produce it. In other words, improvisation must avoid the dangers of becoming settled and producing tyrannies of habit: it should not fall into the trap of the third of Small's stages of musicking as creator of cultural meaning: *celebration*, for that would be to claim improvisation as an 'end-of-history'. As

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123 This is, perhaps, a little extreme, and another example of the fallacy of the improvisation – composition/improvisation – not-improvisation opposition. Rather, I would state that when the musician fails to abandon their self the flexibility of their performance decreases and the concreteness of their performance increases.

124 Maeckelbergh (2012) identifies conflict as a source of creativity in the 'alterglobalization movement' and the Spanish 15th May movement. It is also central to the agonistic political thought of William Connolly, inspired (in part) by Deleuze's thought (2002).

Hegarty notes:

> at every point, improvising implies a breaking-free, a move outside of stifling structures, instruction, precision, correctness, moral goodness and upright participation. Machines and bodies would be exceeded, driven outside of normal tolerances and functions, and creativity would be rethought as the mobilisation of truly inventive chance. (Hegarty, 2012: 1)

This is a process that must never end. Where it does, the place of the nomadic utopia risks moving towards the state utopian form – a danger I will now turn to discuss.

Like all nomadic utopias, those created through improvisation are constantly in danger of lapsing into state utopianism – particularly when this danger is forgotten. A full account of improvisation's nomadic utopianism thus needs to include nomadic utopianism's 'radical pessimism'. Here, that means accepting that the 'good place' I have described above is not a pre-given in improvisation, and that even if reached it is always at risk of concretising into a more statist form. At times, improvisation results in informal hierarchies, represses difference in favour of identity and results in the emergence of a state utopia (which may be felt to be dystopian by the musicians). This danger may emerge within a single performance or across performances by different groups.

Within a single performance, there are two main dangers to nomadic utopianism. The first comes in the form of the improviser who fails to behave in a nomadic manner, retaining their individuality over any sense of collectivity identity, reproducing the opposition between the individual and the collective. This may be done deliberately, but is a frequent problem of inexperienced improvisers unaccustomed to the intense processes of listening to others that successful collective improvisation requires (Clark, 2012). After warning against readings of improvisation that come 'perilously close to utopianism'[125], Scott Thomson captures the dynamic well, noting that:

> [t]he model of group interaction I have been developing [(one of multidominance)] verges, admittedly, on an idealized, best-case-scenario model for collaborative music-making that is quite rare indeed in actual performance. A more thorough (and realistic) analysis of improvisation must acknowledge how "authoritarian" gestures [(gestures imbued with a will to power-over)] threaten the musical and social well-being of a performance. Such an analysis points to the real possibility of failure in any group improvisation. The fluidity of authority within a group can be easily circumscribed by gestures that fix social power in a domineering or negligent way; the good faith that a group works to establish as a foundation for responsible and responsive play is under

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125 Thompson is using the concept of the utopian in the sense of 'unrealistic', here. Thus, I would argue that he is warning against readings that forget the 'no' of utopia's etymology.

constant threat of being demolished in this way. Authoritarianism, from my own experience as a performer and listener, is commonly exemplified by a player's inability or unwillingness to listen to the other members of an ensemble, often coinciding with his or her unresponsive, soloistic musical contributions. This type of musical activity constitutes a very basic authoritarianism in which the player effectively suggests that "I have nothing to learn from you, but you have something to learn from me." Ironically, this attitude duplicates the social and aesthetic dynamic that, as I have suggested, improvisation can serve to question—the fixity of evaluative criteria and authority that pervades "mastery/exclusion" pedagogical models. (2007: 5-6)

When a player behaves in such a way in improvisation (and I would suggest that inexperience or a lack of confidence may be reasons for doing so: such behaviour does not always stem from a desire for authority), a hierarchy frequently emerges as other performers have little choice but to follow in their lead (or if their authority is challenged there may be an Ellisonian power struggle[126]). Thus, the level of improvisation decreases and the playing of the 'authoritarian' performer functions as a lack that the others must strive to follow. Whilst this may be musically interesting, the place created by the improvisation becomes (to an extent) concretised and becoming slows down, meaning that the reciprocally affective relations is replaced by a hierarchy of power-over in which all players bar the 'authoritarian' find their capacity to affect and be affected limited (and as I have noted, the authoritarian may have a decreased capacity too): they are destined merely to fulfil the role assigned for them by the performer who (consciously or not) has taken it upon herself to lead.

The second way in which an improvising space may move towards state utopia is through the emergence of tyrannies of habit. Comparisons can be made the way in which Anarres ossifies in *The Dispossessed* – not through deliberate authoritarianism (such as that of Sabul) – but through the tyrannies of habit into which so many of its inhabitants have settled: 'laws of conventional behaviour', as Shevek might put it. In improvisation, this can occur when players settle into a self-organised pattern that comes to regulate the performance (the music dominates the musicking), the result being a consensual and immanent concretisation that limits the capacity of players to express their difference in order to create new ways of playing and interacting. This, however, should not be confused with what might be called 'slow

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126In Philip Clark's article, the improviser Ross Lambert describes tactics he uses when playing alongside improvisers who are determined to follow the generic conventions associated with Reductionism (defined by Christopher Williams as a genre 'characterized by quiet unstable sounds, subdued group interaction, renunciation of gesture, and structural uses of silence adopted by younger improvisers in the mid-1990s' [2011: 1]). "'It depends on my mood'", Lambert states, "'but dealing with some Reductionist-minded player – I either disengage or challenge, and I mainly challenge. I try to psychoanalyse the miscreant and come up with the best mode of attack to unsettle them, then shut the fucker up. That's a reasonable version of what I do.'" (in Clark, 2012: 39)

improvisation' in which a particular phrase or pattern is repeated,[127] or with the establishment of a 'groove'. It is not the fact that an improvisation is (relatively) static, but that the possibility for deterritorialising this pattern is no longer present.[128]

In this light, Tom Moylan's warning to the citizens of 'Whileaway' (2000: 15) can be adapted as a warning to those engaging in collective improvisation. They must remember to be vigilant and not lock in their achievements' (interestingly, the phrase 'locked-in' is often used by musicians to describe emerging grooves)'. They should 'not cut a deal with the false utopian devil of their own collective imagination as it dreams of the end of history, and not cover up the deal by changing the improvisation from a flexible, nomadic musicking experience to a concrete, statist musicking experience'.

Concretisation does not only occur in single performances, however, but may emerge over time in the form of generic conventions, akin to the way in which Odonianism's flexible ethics ossify into 'laws' on Anarres. Whilst this chapter has focussed on improvisation as a practice rather than a genre, in truth it may not be possible to separate generic conventions from the practice itself, which is at risk from becoming 'clogged up' with particular stylistic norms derived from a dominant generic trend. Philip Clark describes such a problem in his essay on Prévost's improvising workshops, in relation to the genre of reductionism:[129]

> The guitarist Michael Rodgers, a onetime enthusiastic supporter, critiqued the workshop as part of a letter voicing wider concerns about the UK Improv scene in *The Wire* 318. "The workshop in its early years was diverse, lively and full of risk and debate. By about 2004/2005 it started feeling more like church, where one must avoid offence and observe ritual. A hegemony was replacing a much more vibrant state of being," he claimed. As someone present almost from the beginning, does [workshop participant Ross] Lambert recognise any truth in Rodgers's words? "It's true that the workshop's gone in peaks and troughs in terms of creativity," he thinks. "The initial peak tailed off as people left London or became a bit lazy, or started thinking about a generic, product-

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127 To be clear, the 'slow' here does not refer to the tempo or meter of the music, but the speed at which it changes. The music of the Australian trio The Necks is perhaps instructive here.

128 Possibility in this sense refers not only to players who want to change the pattern and do not know how because the other players appear to be so invested in it, but also to players who fail to consider the possibility of embracing new ways of musicking, and to players whose bodies become incapable of responding to desire. There is, then, clearly an issue of consciousness here: just as Shevek is not aware that there is anything wrong with the way of life on Anarres until his conversations with Bedap, improvising musicians may too be comfortable once they have settled into an established pattern (hence my claim that conflict may be productive).

129 I use reductionism because Clark's essay provides a useful springboard for the discussion, not because it is any more or less 'statist' than other stylistic conventions within improvisation. I have improvised with reductionist inspired improvisers and – whilst their playing has been recognisable as such – I have not found them to be overly dominant or inflexible (though whether they could say the same for me I cannot be sure!).

type sound. This was around the time Reductionism started coming in, and I took badly to people displaying that in the workshop." (Clark, 2012: 38)

Here, the nomadic utopianism of improvisation is faced with a different type of problem to that of concretisation emerging within a single performance: it may also emerge over time as players become familiar with each other and themselves, and settle into comfortable modes of playing. This danger is hinted at by Hegarty, who states that:

> [o]nce the vista opens up of playing any notes, incorporating any sound, taking any musical approach, then this infinite expanse itself becomes a limit, a pre-prepared instruction to "explore" this musical universe, that can lead to the ossification of the exploration as simple style (2004: 54-55).

Similarly, the composer Pierre Boulez notes that the improviser 'can only turn to information that he [sic] has been given on some earlier occasion, in fact to what he has already played' (1985: 461).[130] This, again, prevents the new from being realised immanently and sees the space move away from the pole of nomadic utopia.

In order to enable the improviser to avoid repeating what she has already played, it is worth following Deleuze and Guattari's claim that elements of 'antiproduction' are sometimes necessary. In order to avoid any of the dangers outlined above, then – and in order to keep the space of improvisation nomadic – improvisers may predetermine certain aspects of their musicking. This disrupts the operation of the spectrum running from the improvised to the concretised that I suggested above, as certain forms of concretisation are utilised to decrease the *overall* concreteness of a performance (and so increase levels of improvisation). As Steve Lacy has noted:

> the more pinned down you are [when you play], the more free you are in a way…the freedom can come out within limits. Then you are really free. Whereas when you are completely free, after a while it dries up, it turns into the same thing all the time.' (1974: online at http://emanemdisc.com)

It is unlikely that Lacy means that 'the more pinned down you are, the more free you are' in the *absolute* sense, but rather that predetermining certain structures increases the freedom – or power-to – of musicians. Thus, if it is possible to talk of 'free improvisation', it should not just be in understood in the sense of negative freedom ('freedom-from'), but must sometimes be enabled by certain structures that

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130This results in the *practice* of improvisation ossifying into a *genre*, or set of genres. This is what Rodgers is protesting against in the quote above when he laments the influence of reductionism.

provide positive freedom (the 'freedom-to').

This 'freedom to' can, I suggest, be gained by implementing what might be referred to as 'strategic concretisation': strategies utilised to prevent concretisation entering 'via the back door', so to speak. Here, I would point to improvising musician's use of gameplay or scores (though these are rarely written using the five-line staff format common to the western classical tradition). These are be used to present concretisation from arising through either domination by a particular musician (or group of musicians), or tyrannies of habit (either those that emerge in a single performance or have emerged over a number of performances). Gameplay is also often (though by no means exclusively) utilised to develop improvisational ability[131] in inexperienced improvisers (see the exercises in Higgins and Campbell, 2010, for example[132]).

Unlike the score that a symphony orchestra follows, the purpose of these games or scores is to break down established habits and/or hierarchies and generate new modes of interacting. They seek to expand the terrain of the performer rather than restrict it. To illustrate this I want to draw on the composer and improviser Helen Papaioannou's graphic score *Cogs* (figure three). This is designed 'pressurize players' interpersonal negotiations of rhythmic relationships during improvisation' (online at helenpapaioannou.com). Here,

> the emphasis is very much on the type of interaction that the visual information may engender, rather than encouraging an ethos which values a 'perfect', reproducible representation of a score. The aim is to heighten the different intensities involved in these relationships, the beating back-and-forth, and the shifting dynamics between individual/collective focuses in achieving/dissolving the synchronisation of parts. In a sense, this type of hyperactive, frenzied exchange is aimed towards collapsing the distinction between individual/collective (Papaioannou, in email conversation with author: 2011).

The purpose of such scores, then, is to coax improvising bodies to self-organisation meaning that rather

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131 This should be judged ethically rather than in accordance with the standards of musical technique. In other words, desired skills are those which enable the musician – and the musicians she is playing with – to immanently create new ways of performing. See Borgo (2007) for a fuller discussion of the problem of evaluating improvised music.

132 In this text, the authors develop a series of improvisational workshops that powerfully with nomadic utopianism. These events 'look towards...a future that is unknown and unpredictable', generating 'something new and different from what has come before' (2010: 5) by promoting 'ethical actions' that function as invitations to further action (2010: 12). They function as process and a way of being' (2010: 5); and 'invite...new ways of thinking and doing music that challenge both teacher and student with the potential to transform in various ways' (2010: 6). To put this another way, it might be said that they create nomadic utopias *and* generate a nomadic utopian function. Given the subject of the following chapter, it is interesting to note that the authors draw inspiration from the work of Paulo Freire (2010: 3).

than act hylomorphically the composer takes on an 'artisanal' role.

Figure Three: Extract from Cogs, Helen Papaioannou
source: helenpapaioannou.com
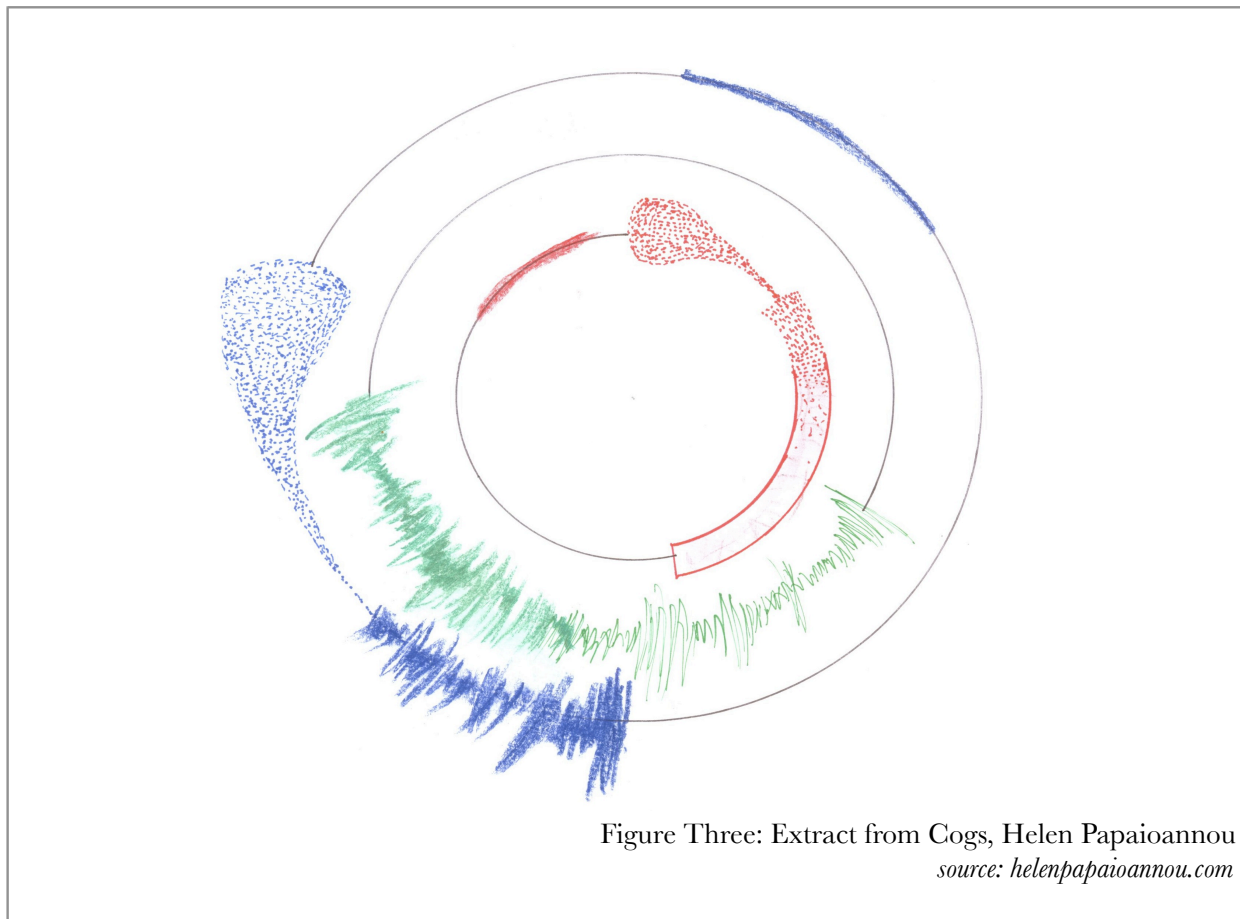
Improvisation and the 'education of desire'

Thus far I have claimed that improvisation creates nomadic utopias. In this, I believe it has an ethically good value in and of itself. Yet this can be expanded by modifying Levitas' concept of the 'education of desire'. In Chapter Two, I noted how this functions by providing the reader of a utopian text with an alternative to the status quo and by showing the steps that might be taken to realise such a space. This, I suggested, ran the risk of being a state utopian operation, with political action oriented to the realisation of a lack, although I noted that it fulfilled an important function in my readings of utopian literature in the previous chapter.

Here I want to contend that an important utopian function of contemporary nomadic utopian practices (such as musical improvisation) is the 'education of desires'. My claim in this regard is that by experiencing

musical improvisation, performers develop new structures of feeling that may lead them to believe that nomadic utopias can work. Furthermore, they are likely to experience many of the frustrations and failures that disrupt nomadic utopianism and may develop strategies that help to alleviate these (such as the scores I discuss immediately above). As the form of improvisation I have discussed here is a collective practice, these experiences will not only be the property of the individual subject: there will be others to discuss them with (which is not to say that everyone will have the same experience: indeed, different experiences may well be valuable). Furthermore, whilst the experiences of organising nomadically in improvisation may not be directly transferable to other situations, through analogy and the confidence that comes with experience they may inspire solutions to problems in other forms of nomadic organisation.

Some problems with this approach

In Chapter Two, I noted that evaluations of a place's position as either nomadic or statist are necessarily contingent and partial. Whilst the relatively 'omnipotent' perspective afforded by literature (unreliable narrators, shifting perspectives and other 'postmodern' techniques notwithstanding) sometimes affords an opportunity to minimise this, when engaging with 'real world' spaces no once-and-for-all judgement can be made. This is a particular problem in improvisation: I have partaken in numerous performances (public and private) where performers have disagreed about the power relations, and I particularly want to flag up situations where the majority of an improvising assemblage felt that the affective power relations of a performance were evenly distributed, but one or two performers did not. Whilst such performances are likely to have been more nomadic   than those where none of the performers felt the affective power relations were evenly distributed, this is not necessarily the case – it could be the result of the kind of cosy consensus that has dragged Anarres towards state utopianism. Nomadic utopia may at times be discomforting, and it cannot simply be said that an enjoyable experience is a utopian one. The problem here, then, is similar to the problem that Shevek is faced with when he is told that it is better to have your rulers in a castle than in your head, because then you can rebel against them. Affective power relations are not necessarily visible (or audible), and they may not always be felt, either.

The problem is furthered for the student of utopianism in that the primary purpose of improvising musicians is likely to be the production of music rather than the creation of utopian space. Whilst many believe that the two are inseparable (that good music comes from good musicking relationships), this is not necessarily the case (indeed, I am not sure I would follow this argument, even within improvisation). I would suggest that further work on the power relations immanent to improvisation would thus be informative, but for the reasons outlined in the previous paragraph this could only ever be contingent and partial. The best way around this problem is, perhaps, to encourage improvising musicians to reflect on how they felt power relations played out in an open and honest way after performances. This would constitute a 'slowness' in contrast the 'speed' of improvisation, but is almost certainly a necessary process in order that future performances (assuming the musicians will play together again[133]) can be as nomadically utopian as possible.

Improvisation as a 'degenerate nomadic utopia'

As a relentlessly inventive form that privileges the creation of the new and enables collective solutions to difficult problems, improvisation has – understandably – had a great deal of appeal to businesses seeking to find new markets to exploit and new ways to cut operating costs, something that many improvising musicians and theorists are acutely aware of (Hegarty, 2012; Mattin, 2009; Saladin, 2009; Brassier et al. 2010). As such, management journals (and other publications on the ever blurring boundaries between academia and business[134]) have published a number of articles extolling the potentials of improvisation in a business context, and make use of examples from musical practice. A sample of such works includes 'Improvisation as "real time foresight"' (Cunha et al.: 2011); 'Improvisation in service recovery' (Cunha et al.: 2009); 'Improvisation and Knowledge: The Challenge of Appropriation' (Kamoche and Cunha, 2008) and 'Jazz Musicians: Creating Service Experience in Live Performance' (Kubacki, 2008). Meanwhile, the website 1000ventures.com – which describes itself as offering 'Broader knowledge, better ideas!' for entrepreneurs, corporate leaders, innovators and consultants/trainers' hosts an online 'mini-course' by Vadim Kotelnikov for 'creative achievers' entitled 'The Jazz of Innovation' (some of Kotelnikov's other

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133 Even where they won't, lessons learned here can be applied by performers in future collective improvisations.

134 There is, of course, some excellent critical work coming out of Business and Management schools, but the essays I cite here are seeking to utilise improvisation to expand market opportunities.

courses include 'Strategic Management', 'SMART Innovation', 'Winning Customers', 'Your People Skills', '12 Leadership Roles' and 'Inspiring Corporate Culture').

There is, of course, a contradiction in capitalism adopting improvisation's non-hierarchical form, for in perpetuating inequalities of wealth it perpetuates what is perhaps the most insidious form of power-over in the contemporary world, whilst its attendant political form (liberal democracy) speaks the language of difference, but always as secondary to a melting pot identity.[135] Thus, to utilise improvisation for the end of capitalism is to take a nomadic form and turn it against itself by putting it to statist ends. If an improvising nomadic utopia is created for such ends it is, clearly, a degenerate nomadic utopia (although this does not preclude the possibility that it might prompt reflection on how the social arrangements of that space might be extended across society, rather than utilised in the pursuit of profit).

These degenerate nomadic utopias should not spell the end for improvisation as a form of nomadic utopianism, however: as Harry Cleaver has noted, selective readings of Marx have provided the impetus for capitalism to deepen its exploitative practices (2000: 27). They should, however, force improvisers to reflect ever harder on their practice and consider how it may be complicit in certain ideological narratives that seek to present liberal democracy and capitalism as progressive, non-hierarchical economic and political systems. To this end, I would suggest that an engagement with the forms of popular education I address in the following chapter may prove productive.

Improvisation and the problem of autonomy[136]

Above, I noted that improvisation does not operate entirely unconnectedly from social norms and identities. Thus, although spaces created by improvisation can function as prefigurative nomadic utopias, they can never do so *absolutely*: their 'autonomy' is never complete, and dominations and exclusions perpetuated in today's statist utopia will inevitably reproduce themselves within both improvised

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135 For a critique of jazz narratives that see it as expressing the 'melting pot' theory of cultural assimilation, see Hersch, 2001.

136 Marie Thompson forced me to think far harder about the issues I address in this section, for which I am extremely grateful. I should also acknowledge the importance of discussions with Ben Trott on the issue.

performances and in the culture of improvisation more broadly. By dominations I mean that those who have been socialised such that they are not confident in expressing themselves may well feel unable to express any power-to within an improvised setting and end up following fellow performers; by exclusions I mean that certain groups of people are simply less likely to partake in improvisation. The latter may not take place actively, but unless it is recognised and challenged it is likely to continue. These practices may also be interlinked: those who find themselves dominated in an improvising setting may find it an unsatisfactory process and decide that it is not for them, perpetuating the exclusion. In this, improvisation is confronted with many of the problems faced by today's social movements (X, 2000; Trott, 2012). Whilst these operations of power are not directly concerned with the operations of a nomadic utopia, they are important in understanding the relationship between prefigurative nomadic utopias and wider society, and inject my call for strategic hierarchy and strategic identity politics with an added urgency.

In particular, improvisation faces problems of exclusion and domination around gender and sexuality. Race is a more complicated issue, although improvisation in Europe tends to be mainly the domain of white males.[137] I would tentatively suggest that class is also an issue here, although there is little research on this (it must be noted that many of the most celebrated musicians are from working-class or blue-collar backgrounds, but I would suggest that – in the UK at least – improvisation is becoming an increasingly middle class practice). These dominations and exclusions are not fixed though, and operate in different ways in different geographic and temporal locations. This section, then, can only offer the broadest overview of trends, but it should absolutely not be seen as an afterthought. Whilst some may read it as an unnecessary diversion from the main argument of this chapter, I believe that it articulates *the single biggest*

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137 George Lewis charts two histories of improvisation in his important essay 'Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives' (2002), noting that European (and white American) improvisers sought to distance their music from issues concerning race (and to a lesser extent class) that predominated in Afrological forms (which, he notes, should not be based on racial essentialism, but on the ways in which the musicians in question construct their identities and their practices). In his book *A Power Stronger than Itself*, meanwhile, he details the expulsion of the white vibraphonist Emmanuel Cranshaw (though he did not think of himself as white) from the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians. Although stating that she has since changed her mind, AACM member Amina Claudine Myers states that 'I was one of the ones that was against having somebody white in the organization [and voted for Cranshaw's expulsion]. Whites were always having something. They always run everything, come in and take over our stuff, but this was something black that we had created, something of our own, and we should keep it black' (in Lewis, 2008: 200). This, however, should not be seen as comparable to the exclusion of women or queers: as members of an oppressed minority, the exclusion of white musicians by black musicians is of an entirely different order, and may well have been necessary for the development of black self-expression. This is one of the ways in which prefiguration can never be absolute: sometimes it is necessary to create spaces in which those with dominant identities are excluded.

problem for utopian narratives of improvisation and, perhaps, for autonomist practice more broadly. It also addresses a problem that is self-defeating for improvisation: in limiting the practice to certain kinds of people, it becomes less open to difference and ends up reproducing techniques and practices far more readily than if it were more open to different ways of being. Accordingly, I make no apology for the length of this section.

Sadly (and perhaps surprisingly), there is little literature on the domination of certain identity groups within improvisation – where domination is spoken of, it is usually disconnected from broader sociological factors and societal structures, and often focuses on the individual actions of the dominant musician (as in Thomson's account quoted above). This is not to say that it is not a problem, however – and I have spoken to improvising musicians (including those I have played with) who felt that societal structures of inequality had, at times, prevented them from participating as fully as they would have liked in improvised performances, and were sometimes reproduced within the place of improvisation. In order to address – and perhaps overcome these issues – I would suggest that improvisers might learn from certain social movement practices, which account for the fact that certain groups have been marginalised from social discourse and so may be less confident in speaking by creating structures through which they are encouraged to make contributions free from the interference of dominant social groups, such as allowing women and members of ethnic minorities to speak first at public meetings – a tactic utilised by many Occupy movement occupations (Trott, 2012). This would function as another necessary insertion of death into the improvising system: a form of strategic hierarchy that is necessary in order to overcome hierarchical residues from the world beyond the autonomist space of improvisation. It is not the only (nor indeed a wholly satisfactory) solution, of course, and a broader awareness of these issues within the improvising community is certainly needed – regardless of tactics adopted in any particular performance.

Exclusion is more broadly spoken about within discourses on improvisation: particularly in relation to gender. In her PhD thesis, the improvising pianist Dana Reason Myers notes that '[i]t is often a challenge even to find a recording of a women improviser, and naming more than a few women improvisers might

prove difficult even for an improvised music enthusiast[138], since the overall support of their work has been inadequate.' (2002: 1; cf. Papaioannou and Thompson, 2012; Lewis, 2008: 459-460; Oliveros, 2004; Tucker, 2000, 2004; Smith, 2004.)[139] This leads to a 'myth of absence' (Myers, 2002: 2) and a 'vicious circle' effect in which 1) there are fewer female improvisers; 2) those who do improvise are treated with less importance than men; 3) improvisation is seen as masculine activity; 4) fewer women take up improvisation.

Sherri Tucker makes a similar argument about queer improvisers (in the sense of improvisers who 'take nothing to be natural or normal', but with an emphasis on sexuality), asking a series of questions that challenge the heteronormative discourses of many representations of improvisation:

> What's going on in 2006...when a popular cable TV lesbian soap opera series animates hip young white lesbians rescuing the Planet (night club) from a jazz quartet (by convincing the African American heterosexual woman who owns the establishment to "give the girlies what they want...?" Or in 1984 when a jazz historian publishes his claim that "the incidence of homosexuality in jazz" is "not only below that in other kinds of music and all the other arts," but "far below population norms cited in studies such as the Kinsey Report"...? Or in 1965, when an eclectic music magazine solicits responses of ten jazz musicians to the validity of the claim that "HOMOSEXUALITY IS ALMOST NON-EXISTENT AMONG JAZZ MUSICIANS AS COMPARED TOOTHER LIMBS IN THE TREE OF SHOW BUSINESS"...? How does a term like "effeminacy" come to operate as the critical language deployed by jazz writers, audiences, and musicians of the 1950s to denigrate some emergent jazz styles while advocating for others that are heard explicitly as black-hetero-masculine...? (2008: 1, emphasis in original).

The improvising pianist Steve Beresford also acknowledges that contemporary British improvisation is a practice undertaken largely by straight males. For him, however, there is little that can be done to correct this as it is merely a reflection of broader social structures. In an interview with George McKay he asked 'is it entirely fair to talk about these, what you're calling "limitations on the assumptions or inscriptions of liberty" in improvised music? *We're not in utopia!* It's just a music scene in a problem society!' (2005: 24, emphasis in original).

It strikes me that it is perfectly fair to talk about them, and indeed it would be unfair not to. Defeatism

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138 Sadly, this rang true with me until I made a conscious, concerted effort to address this problem.

139 Myers cites a whole host of evidence for this claim, noting that jazz and improvisation magazines rarely feature profiles or reviews of female improvisers (and use gendered language when they do), and that prominent improvising festivals rarely book female artists to appear: of the major festivals she surveyed (up to 2000), the Tatklos Festival had the highest proportion of female improvisers, with 18.48% of improvising musicians booked in its then sixteen year history female. The worst was the Du Maurier Jazz Festival, with just 2.8% over six years. Even the flyer for politically positioned Freedom in the City 2011 that I referenced above only advertises seven female performers out of a total of thirty-nine named.

should not be an option here and – to combat this – the improvisation community must actively seek to recognise the contributions of female and queer improvisers. The former of these practices would operate against the writing out of female contributions that Maggie Nichols and Georgina Born (both members of the Feminist Improvising Group) have identified in interviews (Nichols in McKay, 2005: 20; Born in Myers, 2002: 72). As Nichols noted in an interview with Myers, 'there was a time when somebody at LMC (London Musicians' Collective) said there just aren't the women, and a couple of us sat down and wrote this huge list of women that we knew improvised, it was massive…There's lots of women, there is enough to program festivals.' (2002: 107). This task, however, should be accompanied by a critique of the assumption that female and queer improvisers constitute an exception to the norm: whilst highlighting their contributions is important, it threatens to leave the 'norm' of improvisation as a straight, male practice unchallenged (Tucker, 2008). Critical questions must therefore also be asked, but sadly this is beyond the scope of this thesis.

At times, the practice of excluding those whose identity is other than straight and male has functioned through active misogyny and homophobia rather than what can probably (if a little charitably) be understood as an unthinking reproduction of patriarchal, heteronormative structures.[140] This is a particular problem in jazz improvisation (as it is in the jazz scene more broadly – see Gavin, 2001), which at times displays an unpleasantly heteronormatively misogynist character. Although free jazz (jazz at its most improvisatory) was often perceived as a challenge to this (Ake, 1998; 2004: 438), homophobia and sexism remain. Maggie Nichols recalls the pianist Alexander von Schlippenbach complaining about 'these women who can't play their instruments' (in McKay, 2002: 22) after a Feminist Improvising Group performance, whilst Valerie Wilmer quotes an unnamed (male) improvising saxophonist, who recalled that:

> [w]hen the word got out that I was playing with a woman, the cats really came down on me. They said, "What the hell are you doing playing with a woman...?" When they heard the actual music, though, several of the musicians changed their minds and actually wanted to play with her;. (1992: 205)

140As Myers notes, the exclusion of women is frequently perpetuated by comfort and habit. '[A]n individual', she writes, 'may choose to stay with familiar people, materials and patterns, but this in turn can limit the degree to which improvisation allows for an opportunity to take chances and move into new territories' (2002: 133).

The improvising saxophonist Charles Gayle, meanwhile, has denounced homosexuality as an 'abomination' (quoted in Heble, 2000: 210). Whilst there are a number of nuances to be considered here before an absolute denunciation is made (Heble, 2000: 211-227)[141], his claims show that improvisation is not, *de facto*, a tolerant practice, and may well be exclusionary.

Despite (or perhaps, in part, because of) the problems associated with improvisation as a practice (although not because of its practices of domination and exclusion), I remain firmly wedded to the belief that improvisation offers an example of nomadic utopianism in practice (or, perhaps, praxis). The improvising musician and theorist Mattin expresses this clearly:

> The relationship between the instrument,[142] the other players, the space and audience (if there is one) becomes intensified through a mutual understanding that everything is at stake at every moment. Power structures can be changed at any point because the future of this practice is unwritten. The social relations being produced are questioned as the music develops. If successful, improvisation runs against its own dogmatism. This is done through developing agency and responsibility towards the present among the people involved by questioning established norms of behaviour. (2009: 169)

Two pages later, he notes that these practices are 'wider than just the moment in which the musicians are playing with each other.' (171) In this, he echoes a claim made by the improviser and music writer David Toop, who states that if there is a utopianism inherent to improvising music, it is not one realised in a particular performance 'of unfettered spontaneity' but one which must be realised over a long period of time and across performances (2005: 239; cf. Borgo, 2005: 194). What this points to is a careful, considered practice that alternates between ecstatic, rhizomatic creation and careful, considered reflection. Like Anarres, it does not offer an easy ride: there are no simple solutions in its utopia. It is not simply a case of abandoning all hierarchies and playing freely forever, but of continually watching out for new ways of interacting and the dangers that they bring with them, and of searching for solutions to these dangers in a dialogic, non-hierarchical manner.

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141 As an African-American who was homeless for twenty years, Gayle is clearly a structurally disadvantaged member of American society, and ethical judgements by privileged members of society (such as myself) make me uncomfortable, though equally this should not be seen as legitimising his pronouncements. Heble's handling of this, via a reading of postcolonial theory and African-American history is excellent, and I would refer interested readers there for a fuller discussion of the issues.

142 I have not considered the role of instruments (nor the audience) in improvisation for reasons of space. They should be considered part of the improvising assemblage, however, and a fuller account would think through how they might contribute to – or hinder – the nomadic utopianism of improvisation. Nor have I considered the relationship between the social relations of musicking and the particular qualiites of the music produced. For considerations of these issues, see Bell (2011a), Marshall (2012) and Heble (2000).

Conclusion

This chapter has suggested that music has an important utopian function, and that the forms of organisation that structure 'musicking' produce the musical collective as a utopia. I have argued that the symphony orchestra functions as a state utopia (and has a state utopian function both internally and externally), and that improvising assemblages can (but do not always) function as nomadic utopias. I showed how these nomadic utopias are always under threat from statist forces and suggested a number of strategies that may be utilised in order to help ward off statism. I also argued that improvisation may serve to 'educate the desires' of those who experience it, providing nomadic utopianism with confidence and experience that they may be able to carry over into other forms of organisation.

A word of warning needs to be sounded, however. In a sense, the two case studies this chapter is structured around – the symphony orchestra and the improvising assemblage – can be seen as 'extremes' of state utopia and nomadic utopia. Unlike most communal spaces, they tend to be absolutely united around a purpose that – presumably on some level – most of the performers find enjoyable (performing music). Furthermore, in improvisation 'difference' expresses itself as a musical quality, something far easier to immanently organise than the potentially incompossible differences that may arise in trying to structure a society. Thus, whilst I suggest that improvisation can 'educate the desire' of those improvising, there are dangers in thinking that improvisation provides 'the answers' to forms of social organisation – to make such a case would be to fallaciously assume that the macrocosm is a perfect replication of the microcosm.

It is, therefore, important not to overstate the case for the political relevance of musicking: it is clear that improvisation is never – on its own – going to produce nomadic utopias outside the immediate space-time of performance, and nor would I advocate the cessation of symphony orchestras: people may still demand Beethoven even in a nomadic utopia!

Chapter Five

Utopian Education

Introduction

Whilst I believe that musical improvisation allows the subject to experience the dizzying power-to generated in a nomadic utopia, it is clearly only ever going to play a marginal role in any broader transformation of social structures. Whilst I believe it is of vital importance to consider the utopian ramifications of the manner in which seemingly non-political spaces are organised (the musical collective among them), focussing solely on such cultural activity risks leaving larger cultural structures untouched. Whilst the musician may experience an education of desire in the improvising group, there is no guarantee it will prompt them to push for a nomadic utopia on a broader scale. And there is, of course, the risk that improvisation provides only a compensatory function: a temporary space of autonomy that offers relief from the negative affects of capitalism's state utopia/dystopia.

In this chapter, then, I want to turn to a practice that is less insular: education. There can be no guarantees here either, but I contend that it is more likely that a nomadic utopian education will produce becomings that resonate beyond the nomadic utopias it creates. Furthermore, given education's ubiquity I would argue that it constitutes a vital terrain of struggle: state utopians certainly have no qualms about utilising education to reproduce the status quo (whilst denying that they are doing so, of course). Roughly following the structure of the previous chapter, then, this chapter considers what a state utopian education might look like: how it utilises 'education' as a form of state utopianism, and how this produces classrooms and schools as state utopias (which themselves have a state utopian function). It then proceeds to do the same for nomadic utopianism.

Before this can be undertaken some clarification of terms used is required. The first part of the chapter is dedicated to briefly explicating what I mean by 'education' (which is linked to utopianism); and 'school' (which is linked to utopia), and to the relationship between them. I also further the case for education and

schools being vital terrains for struggle. Following this, I move on to show how education can function as a form of state utopianism. I show that compulsory education was developed as a project to strengthen the power of the nation state and the emerging bourgeoisie (playing a role in the second dimension of state utopianism), and that it continues to function as a force preserving their interests (thus functioning as the third dimension of state utopianism). I briefly show how education has a state utopian function in a number of literary dystopias, with particular attention paid to the function of education in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Utilising the work of the Brazilian philosopher of education (and teacher) Paulo Freire, I argue that what is common to these forms of education is an epistemological approach in that views knowledge as a 'thing' located in a transcendent place beyond the individualised subject of education. I show how that this approach leads to curricula being designed around knowledge that has been chosen by those in formally sanctioned positions of power-over, meaning that 'other' forms of knowledge (including those that are embodied and affective), as well as the social complexities of the knowledge taught – are excluded from the classroom. I show how the examination system reinforces this and argue that it also limits the capacity of teachers to explore forms of knowledge not on the curriculum, as well as reducing students' enthusiasm for exploring the social aspects of knowledge. I argue that when it is structured in this manner, education functions as a force of state utopianism that reproduces the status quo. I also show that it produces the classroom as a state utopia. This, I contend will have produce the state utopian function of repressing desires.

My attention then turns to how education can function as a form of nomadic utopianism. I argue that this must be predicated upon a different epistemological approach that sees knowledge not as a 'thing' to be obtained, but as something always under construction (I refute the claim that this is an epistemological relativism). I then show how this approach is taken by a number of educators and theorists of education who see themselves as utopian, and I explore how they utilise the concept of utopia – finding it to be similar to process approaches of utopia. I then turn to explore precisely how education might function as nomadic utopianism, suggesting that this occurs when difference-in-itself is allowed to present itself within the educational space such that knowledge can be non-hierarchically and collectively constructed. I note that it is a mistake to associate difference with the individual learner, as their subjectivity will be

constructed through interacting with other learners, and will herself be constituted by difference. I then consider approaches that have utilised this approach to education (within and outside of formal educational institutions) to argue that through it the school and the classroom can be constructed as nomadic utopias: (broadly) non-hierarchically organised places in which difference-in-itself is encouraged, but which never see themselves as finished. I also note the importance of adopting a pragmatic approach that pays attention to the particularities, desires and experiences of those in the space, and argue that doing so may require the use of strategic hierarchies and temporary divisions of labour. I note the potential dangers of constructing classrooms as nomadic utopias within formal educational institutions that play an important role in the reproduction of state utopianism, though I argue that this may well be a risk worth taking, not least because – as I conclude by saying – nomadic utopias in education may have a utopian function beyond their space, 'educating the desires' of those who inhabit them such that they are able to comprehend the wider world being organised in a nomadic form.

Defining Terms: Education, School and the Classroom

Untangling the meanings of 'education' and 'school' is an important task. Thinkers who engage critically in the field often fail to define their terms, and there is little consistency in the way they are used – even by individual thinkers (and sometimes within the same text). It is perhaps tempting to follow the implication of Mark Twain's oft-repeated witticism that 'I have never let my schooling interfere with my education' (quoted in Hawkey, 2001: 184) which – in the context of this thesis – would mean positing education as a nomadic utopian process and 'school' as a state utopian institution working to prevent the unfolding of 'true' education (with 'schooling' thus being the variety of 'education' delivered in schools); an institution capable of offering only *Compulsory Miseducation*, as the title of Paul Goodman's (1968) book has it. Such an argument is made explicitly by Everett Reimer in *Against School* (1971), in which he argues that:

> True education is a basic social force. Present social structures could not survive an educated population, even if only a substantial minority were educated. Something more than schooling is obviously in question here; indeed, almost the opposite of schooling is meant. People are schooled to accept a society. They are educated to create or re-create one. (1972: 121)

This distinction between 'education' as a force seeking to go beyond the present (and it is clear from Reimer's writings that he believes this would be true for *any* present, and thus that education has a

165

nomadic utopian function) and 'school' (or 'schooling') as a means to protect the status quo (and thus with a state utopian function) initially seems to be reflected by a number of those critical of contemporary practices.[143] Stanley Aronowitz's essay 'Against Schooling: Education and Social Change' (2004), for example, argues that schools have 'failed', transmitting only 'conformity to the social, cultural, and occupational hierarchy' (16), whilst maintaining that education has at least the potential to bring around political change. Ivan Illich's *Deschooling Society* (1973), meanwhile, argues that that 'equal educational opportunity is…both a desirable and a feasible goal, but to equate this with obligatory schooling is to confuse salvation with the Church' (18), and that school is 'not liberating or educational because [it] reserves instruction to those whose every step in learning fits previously approved measures of social control' (19). These arguments are not new, either: the eighteenth century English radical William Cobbett argued that schools offered not 'education' but rather 'heddekashun', a poor facsimile for the transmission of 'really useful knowledge' which would help learners transform their social world (quoted in Johnson, 1981: 6). Similar arguments have been made (in a variety of forms and from a variety of perspectives) by Freire (2000), Giroux (2009), Johnson (1981), Hern (1998, 2003), Mickey D (1993), McLaren (2009), Morris (2004: 65-67), Bakunin (no date) and Brighton Free Uni (2006).

A deeper reading of these thinkers complicates the picture, however. Many reveal themselves to be against what might be called 'actually existing schools' – and sometimes compulsory schooling – rather than the concept of school itself. Thus, whilst Aronowitz's article signals in its title that it is 'Against Schooling', the focus of its critique is on state controlled schools in the US (although many of its arguments could be applied to state schools in other countries) and not the concept of the school *per se*. Indeed, it displays a commitment to the concept of 'the school': firstly by pointing to the non-state run Rand and Jefferson Schools as utopian alternatives to mainstream schooling, and secondly by (briefly) attempting to answer the question 'what are the requisite changes that would transform schools…[in]to sites of education that prepare young people to see themselves as active participants in the world?' (120). Hern (1998), meanwhile, expresses his admiration for the 'Esceula Moderna' (Modern Schools) founded by the Spanish anarchist Francisco Ferrer, whilst Giroux and McLaren have both argued for the transformation – rather

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143 Reimer's distinction between 'accepting' and 're-creating' is – from a nomadic perspective – problematic. As I have shown – and will argue further in this chapter – perpetuating the status quo requires that status quo to be reproduced.

than the destruction – of schools, and expressed their admiration for the radical pedagogical practice of Paulo Freire, which took place within mainstream schools in Brazil (McLaren, 1994; 1997; Freire and Horton, 1990).[144]

It is clear, then, that critical approaches to education and the school are walking something of a semantic tightrope.[145] In order that this might be traversed safely, I propose to proceed from the etymology of the terms in question (taking note of both their origins and their contemporary, colloquial uses). The origins of the word education (which is commonly considered as a noun) lie in the Latin verb *educo*, meaning 'to lead forth' or 'to raise up' (*Oxford English Dictionary*: oed.com; *Online Etymology Dictionary*: etymonline.com). This suggests a hylomorphic form of organisation in which there is someone in a position of hierarchical power-over who does the 'leading forth' or 'raising up' in accordance with values already set. It implies that the subjects of education (the students or pupils) are passive, inert individuals incapable of determining the direction they wish to take in life, and suggests that education is a form of state utopianism. To a degree, this is reflected in colloquial uses of the term, with education commonly understood as the formal transmission of knowledge which occurs at schools (*Oxford English Dictionary*: oed.com) which – as I will

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144 Illich's position, meanwhile, is a little more complicated. Following the publication of *Deschooling Society*, he remained hostile to the concept of the school but developed his argument to include a rejection of the concept of education itself, preferring instead the term 'learning'. In 1995 – twenty-two years after the publication of *Deschooling Society*, he wrote that: 'I [now] understand education as learning when it takes place under the assumption of scarcity in the means which produce it. The "need for education" from this perspective appears as a result of societal beliefs and arrangements which make the means for so-called socialization scarce…educational rituals reflected, reinforced, and actually created belief in the value of learning pursued under conditions of scarcity…[which] could easily survive and thrive under the rubrics of deschooling, free schooling or homeschooling…'

'What does scarcity have to do with education? If the means of learning…are   abundant…then education never arises – one does not need to make special arrangements for "learning". If, on the other hand, the means for learning are in scarce supply, or are assumed to be scarce, then educational arrangements crop up to "ensure" that certain, important knowledge, ideas, skills, attitudes, etc. are "transmitted". Education then becomes an economic commodity, which one consumes, or, to use common language, which one "gets".' (2008: v).

A number of thinkers of an anarchist persuasion take a similar position and reject both education and schooling (Matthews, 2009; Morris, 2004: 65-67), whilst Leo Tolstoy adopted the unusual position of founding a school yet rejecting 'education', seeing it as the 'compulsory, forcible action of one person upon another for the purpose of forming a man such as will appear to us to be good' (2008: 5). Echoing Illich, he argued that education 'is culture under restraint. Culture is free' (.ibid).

Deleuze discussed the difference between a 'school' and 'movement' in *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze* ('The Alphabet of Gilles Deleuze') – an interview with Claire Parnet, broadcast on French television in 1988. There, he argued that a 'school' implied a hierarchical ordering around a charismatic figure (he cites Lacan, Wittgenstein and Breton as examples); and stated that he preferred instead the idea of a 'movement' in which there were no guarantees, no leaders and no disciples. Whilst this has obvious relevance for the task at hand here, Deleuze is referring to 'schools of thought', rather than the school as a sight for/of learning (as *L'Abecedaire* is in French, I am relying here on Charles Stivale's English overview, online athttp://www.langlab.wayne.edu/cstivale/d-g/abc1.html).

145 This, of course, is intensified when issues concerning translation are taken into account. A number of languages do not distinguish between 'to teach' and 'to learn', whilst in Hindi the word for 'education' is the same as the word for 'chastisement' (Matthews, 2009: online at theanarchistlibrary.org).

show – are largely state utopian institutions. This understanding is not absolute, however, and 'education' is also used for other forms of knowledge acquisition which do not necessitate a statist form. It would not be unusual, for example, to hear someone refer to a discussion with a friend as 'educational', and the broad traditions of 'popular education' – which I draw heavily on below – show that it is possible to have an education that is not structured in accordance with statist principles.

The word 'school', meanwhile, comes from the Greek *skhole*, meaning 'a time or place for discussion' (*Online Etymology Dicitionary*: etymonline.com) and the Latin *schola*, which refers to a 'place or establishment in which a teacher expounds his or her views' (*Oxford English Dictionary*: oed.com). The former contains no explicit hierarchy, but the latter suggests that the school is teacher-driven: it is the place where the 'leading forth' is carried out. Colloquial usage of the term school tends to reflect the hierarchical understanding but again this is not absolute, and founders of numerous nomadic experiments in education have used the word school for their projects (although some prefer the spelling 'skool' in order to emphasise their difference, or using a suffix such as 'Free'). It is also important to note that common usage of the term 'school' goes beyond the physical place in which learning takes place and refers also to the institution, with its attendant power structures. In this light, I utilise the term 'classroom' to refer to the immediate place of discussion (with the understanding that this exists in time and so will never have fixed power relations) and 'school' to refer to broader institutional structures (which would include, but not be limited to, the classroom). School in this sense might also refer to a university or college: I am not concerned here solely with education of the young.

From these definitions and contemporary uses of the terms 'education' and 'school', I would argue that neither concept should be understood as inherently statist or nomadic. In this, education can be compared to musicking in that it refers to an activity (the acquisition of knowledge) that unfolds over time, and so is a form of utopianism, whilst 'school' is the space in which education takes place and so can be understood as a form of utopia. Yet I would also retain the sense of time that accompanies the Greek *skhole*, and insist that a school also exists in time as well as space, and so is itself subject to forces of smoothing and

striation[146]. It will thus *always* have something of the nomadic in it, even where it is primarily governed by statist principles, and vice-versa.

In asserting that education and school/the classroom can be either nomadic or statist, my position echoes the approach implicitly taken by those thinkers who criticise 'actually existing schools' whilst holding out hope for education as an emancipatory force, and believing that such an education can be delivered through a school, when that concept is understood in the broadest sense as an 'institution' seeking to deliver an education. Furthermore, I share the belief of these thinkers that education constitutes a particularly important – and potentially fertile – terrain for nomadic utopianism. I would argue that there is a greater likelihood of someone who has experienced a nomadic utopia(nism) during their education will engage in nomadic forms of political organisation in their life.

Education is also an important force in reproducing the status quo. This can be seen in light of Foucault's work on how power-over does not solely come from 'above' but is reproduced by lower-level institutions and smaller communities of belonging and works its way up to formal levels of government[147] (the nation-state thus being parasitic upon these forms of organisation, rather than creating them from top-down).

146

    Schools are often understood as institutions, and here it may be fruitful to consider a comparison between the institution as understood by the 'new institutionalist' turn and utopia. For Viven Lowndes, new institutionalism 'differs from its older sister [classical institutionalism] in at least three important respects. First, it is concerned not only with formal rules and structures but also with the informal conventions and coalitions that shape political behaviour. Secondly, it does not take political institutions at face value; instead, it takes a critical look at the way in which they embody values and power relationships. Thirdly, new institutionalism rejects the determinism of earlier approaches. While institutions constrain individual behaviour, they are also (paradoxically [– though not to the dividual of a nomadic persuasion –]) human creations, which change and evolve through the agency of actors.' (Lowndes, 2009: 92) Thus, the institution is not something simply imposed from above, but is remade by the activity of those who form a part of it. There are obvious comparisons with Massey's approach to place, here.

    This understanding should not limited to institutions officially sanctioned by the state, and any institution that is aiming to offer an education (any 'school', in other words) can be seen as an institution (here I would go beyond Lowndes' definition of new institutionalism to include those that have *no* formal rules or structures), whilst the classroom refers to any place in which education takes place, and should, therefore, take into account the relationships (between students; between teachers; and between teachers and students) that in part constitute it. As such, a geographical region such as a city might function as a classroom. Colin Ward and Anthony Fyson's *Streetwork: The Exploding School* (1973), for example, considers utilising the city as a school; whilst the artist and educator Nils Norman has attempted to put some of these ideas into practice with his School of Walls and Space at the Danish Royal Academy of the Visual Arts in Copenhagen (see http://wallsandspace.wordpress.com/). Paul Goodman's novel *The Grand Piano* (1942), meanwhile, depicts New York City utilised as a school.

147 Foucault's concept of governmentality (1991) is of particular relevance here. Recalling Deleuze and Guattari's claim that the 'state form' goes beyond (and pre-exists) the geopolitical state – refers to techniques of governance beyond the institutions that are usually considered in the study of 'government'. Whilst previous forms of state power made use of punishment, and thus made the sovereign visible (as, for example, in the executions and torture in OneState), governmentality constitutes a 'disciplinary' form of power that makes the subject (in this case, the student) visible by comparing them to a 'norm' to which they are supposed to live up to (although, as I will argue in the following section, sovereign power is still present in conservative state utopian education).

Schools can clearly be seen as spaces of social reproduction – 'miniature prefigurative utopias' (after Dewey's claim that they are 'miniature communities' [1959: 41]). With this in mind, education – in both formal and informal institutions – must be understood as a vital terrain for struggle. What we learn and how we learn it (though as I will show, these cannot be fully separated) helps determine how we (re)create our world. It is a crucial form of utopianism.

Education and State Utopianism

Education and the Geopolitical State

In Chapter Two I noted that – for J.C. Davis – the greatest triumph of what I am calling literary state utopianism was its influence on the development of the modern state, whilst in Chapter Four I noted that the development of the symphony orchestra formed part of the process of bourgeois state formation. Yet the importance of both these forms in the second stage and third dimensions of the state utopian system (the realisation and subsequent recreation of a utopian vision) is surpassed by the role played by education. Its importance in the second dimension of the system of state utopianism is evidenced in the central role it has played in the establishment of a number of state utopian forms. The 'philosopher of fascism' Giovanni Gentile wrote extensively on the importance of education in implementing a successful fascist state (Gentile, 1922; cf. Clayton, 2010; Entwhistle, 2009) and was made Minister of Education in Mussolini's first cabinet, a position he used to introduce widespread reforms in education. In Mao's China the Propaganda Department declared the need for a new curriculum that would 'remold the old thoughts of the intellectuals and enhance the socialist awakening of the students' (quoted in Steiner, 1958: 286). Andy Green's *Education and State Formation*, meanwhile, examines how the rise of universal education in England, France and the US functioned as 'a powerful instrument of political conformity and an essential element in the construction of an individualist, capitalist hegemony' (1990: 35-36).[148]

Education is also a crucial component in the third dimension of the system of state utopianism (that of reproducing an established state utopia), though – as per my caveat in Chapter Two – it is not always

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148 Theorists from a variety of perspectives have noted the link between education and social control. See, for example, Colin Ward (1995), William Godwin (1797), E.P. Thompson (1968), Vladimir Lenin (1965: 84-87) and M.D. Shipman (1968: 151-156).

possible to draw a clear distinction between the second and third dimension. In the early twentieth century – as compulsory schooling was being established in the United States – the American theorist of education Alexander Inglis wrote that a key function of education is to 'assist…in the maintenance of [society's] stability and in the direction of its own progress' (1918: 360), whilst E. George Payne noted – in admiration – that '[e]ducation in the sociological sense may be identified with social control', adding that 'the process of developing social control is the same as that of education' (1927: 143). Contemporary critical theorists of education agree with these remarks, albeit in a less celebratory manner, and highlight how education is complicit in reproducing the hierarchies of life under late capitalism, socialising students into individualist, liberal ideology and an acceptance of their place within those hierarchies. For Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, American public schooling has – since its inception:

> been seen as a method of disciplining children in the interest of producing a properly subordinate adult population. Sometimes conscious and explicit, and at other times a natural emanation from the conditions of dominance and subordinancy prevalent in the economic sphere, the theme of social control pervades educational thought and policy (2011: 37, cf. Aronowitz, 2004; Ward, 1995).

At the level of higher education, meanwhile, Bill Readings (1997) shows how the rise of the university developed in tandem with the rise of the nation state, whilst Stevphen Shukaitis – drawing on Readings – notes that the contemporary, neoliberal university:

> is more geared to the development of new forms of innovation and creativity. That is to say, of course, innovation and creativity understood primarily as those forms that can be translated into new intellectual property rights, patents, and commodifiable forms of knowledge and skills. Thus, there is no "golden age" of the university that one can refer to or attempt to go back to; it is not a "university in ruins" that can be rebuilt to return to its former glory precisely because it is a space that has always played a role in creating and maintaining questionable forms of power. (2009b: 166; cf. Basole, 2009: 33).

Education in Literary State Utopias and Dystopias

Education also plays an important role in maintaining the status quo in a number of literary state utopias and dystopias (that is, fictional portrayals of state utopias that are commonly recognised as 'bad' places), including More's *Utopia* (1992), Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005)[149] and Zamyatin's *We*. In Le Guin's

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149 The education in *Never Let Me Go* constitutes an interesting counterpoint to more 'classical' forms of dystopian fiction. Whilst the dystopian societies in works such as Ray Bradbury's *Farenheit 451* (2004) and the film *Equilibrium* (2002) are sustained through the censorship of works of literature that might stimulate the imagination, *Never Let Me Go's* Hailsham school (in which much of it is set) actively encourages its cloned students (who are to be killed) to read classic works of literature. Far from having a utopian function that sees them realise their powerlessness and actively engage in creating a more utopian state of affairs, their reading serves to soften their oppression, *reinforcing* their powerlessness (Palmowski, 2010). This suggests that an education with radical (or at least liberal arts) content is not sufficient to result in political change.

The Dispossessed the fact that 'kids learn to parrot the sayings of Odo as if they were laws' (2006: 146) is indicative of the manner in which Anarres has slipped away from nomadic utopianism and towards state utopianism. Here, however, I want to turn briefly to explore how education functions to reproduce the system of state utopianism in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Like Zamyatin, Huxley created his dystopian/state utopian society as a hybrid of both Bolshevism and capitalism and so manages to portray the operations of state utopian education without limiting it to a particular ideological form. His description of education is more thorough than in *We*, however, and begins to demonstrate exactly how education can function as a form of conservative state utopianism.

In the opening scene of the novel Huxley describes an educational encounter between the Director of Hatcheries – an important figure in the hierarchy of the novel's future global state – and a group of students who are touring a hatchery, where foetuses are artificially developed on an industrial scale. The students dutifully follow the Director as he shows them round his facility, each of them carrying 'a note-book, in which, whenever the great man spoke, he desperately scribbled. Straight from the horse's mouth' (1994: 2). The phrase 'straight from the horse's mouth' is then repeated on two further occasions (3, 24), emphasising the one-way flow of information from the expert to his students in this 'brave new world'. One student does dare to ask a question, but this is a practice deemed 'foolish' (4) – dialogue is not to be encouraged. Later on, Huxley describes a process of 'moral education', which offers no opportunity for dialogue at all as it is carried out via 'hypnopaedia' (sleep-teaching). For the Director, this is '[t]he greatest moralizing and socializing force of all time' (24) as it allows for complete manipulation of the individual such that the 'mind that judges and desires and decides [is] made up of…[s]uggestions from the State' (25).

The Epistemology of State Education: Knowledge as a 'Thing'

Huxley's novel is clearly characterised by the exaggerated extrapolation common to dystopian fiction, but it powerfully demonstrates the way in which form and content combine in state utopian education. The classroom itself (the hatchery, in this case) is hierarchically structured, whilst the content – the knowledge to be transmitted – functions as a simple 'lack'; a 'thing' that the students do not have. As should be clear now, it is the process that determines the features of a place and so – as the score functions to impose and

regulate the hierarchy of a symphony orchestra – the understanding of knowledge central to state utopian education imposes and regulates the hierarchy in state utopian schools and classrooms. It also allows for (and again, I draw on the language of the previous chapter) 'predetermined' curriculums to be set, in order that knowledge(s) that may threaten the stability of the state utopia is not considered. The processes I consider here are recognisable in their most extreme form in schools that provide a compulsory education, but many of them exist in other forms of education.

The basic premise of 'knowledge' in a state utopian system of education is that it is a noun; a 'thing' that exists independently of any mind that may know it, and has an 'unproblematic connection with objectivity, or truth' (Andreotti, 2006a: no page number). It thus functions as a transcendent lack; something that students do not possess, and is posited as the object of education – abstracted from daily life and to be accessed through specific processes of learning (often in isolation). In his important work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* the Brazilian critical educator and theorist Paulo Freire argues that such an approach sees knowledge as 'a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing' (2000: 72), a process he refers to as the 'banking' approach to education. Drawing on this, Paula Allman suggests that knowledge is seen as a 'static possession'; a commodity (in the Marxist sense) and argues that it is 'perceived as a "thing"' which, 'if we possess...affects who we are, our status and self-esteem, and if we do not possess it, [has] an equal and opposite effect on who we are and how we think about ourselves.' (1999: 97) Being is thus privileged over becoming, as Freire makes clear when he writes that such an epistemological approach sees reality as 'motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable' (2000: 71). Knowledge thus becomes 'technical'; it is something 'to be mastered' (McLaren, 2009: 72) and can easily be measured and quantified through tests and examinations (McLaren, 2009: 64).[150]

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150 Whilst contemporary developments such as 'flexible learning', 'problem based learning' and e-learning (particularly prevalent in higher education) are claimed to allow students a greater role in the construction of knowledge (Allen and van der Velden, 2007; Brown et al., 2008), the reality is that these often reproduce students as individual subjects, designed to compete with each other in the labour market upon leaving education. Meanwhile, the claim that students can direct their own learning under these regimes is thrown into question by the fact that higher education automatically excludes particular forms of knowledge through, for example, high fees (which allows only students from particular social backgrounds access in the first place) and the 'qualitative' analysis of research (which makes 'other' knowledges increasingly scarce in academia). Furthermore, as both Brown et al. and Allen and van der Velden make clear, demands for this increasing 'flexibility' of knowledge in education are driven by contemporary industrial forms – what I would understand as 'postfordism' (see Rikowski, 2008 for a brief reflection on postfordism's influence on English schooling), or what Brown et al. understand as 'the knowledge economy'. It is also important not to overstate the levels of transformation to 'postfordist' forms of organisation within contemporary education: a number of pro-business commentators have argued that schools' focus on traditional forms of knowledge,

As I suggested above, this understanding of knowledge has two effects that I want to consider here. The first of these is that education becomes a form of state utopianism, oriented to the uncritical reproduction of the status quo, and incapable of producing the new. Students '"receive" the world as passive entitites [and so] education should make them more passive still, and adapt them to the world' (Freire, 2000: 76).[151] The second effect is that schools and classrooms (the places in which education takes place) function as state utopias (which in itself constitutes a form of socialisation into the status quo).

Education and State Utopianism

The manner in which the epistemology described above reproduces the status quo can be evidenced in the practice of musicking. In his essay 'Free Jazz in the Classroom', David Borgo notes that musical educators frequently view musical knowledge (of the kind that shapes and supposedly develops a musician's playing) as a 'stored artefact' (2007: 61-62). A heavy emphasis is placed on 'the absorption and imitation of pre-existing language and style' (2007: 65), with a particular focus placed on scales, modes and techniques used by 'past masters' (2007: 66). This means that students frequently fall back on generic tropes and pre-established norms (reproducing a lack) when they music (Borgo focuses in particular on improvisation, but this can be extended to the performance of predetermined works or the practice of predetermined composition), meaning that the musicking becomes more concrete than it might otherwise be (Prouty, 2008: 1).[152]

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hierarchy and centralisation leave students ill-equipped for the challenges of the contemporary economic landscape (see Zhao, 2009; Gilbert, 2005).

Despite my cynicism about such forms of education, Hardt and Negri's claim that postfordist organisation brings about the 'communism of capital' (2000: 157-180); and Virno's arguments that the increased emphasis placed on creativity and group-work in contemporary forms of workplace organisation (2004; and with Pinzin, 2010) are potentially applicable here, and would suggest a nomadic (communist) surplus lurking in contemporary forms of state education. This, I suggest, would be a productive area for further study.

151 As Bowles and Gintis (2011: 131) point out, this socialises students into the alienated labour central to capitalism.

152 The pianist Cecil Taylor expressed his frustrations at this process in response to a question about the inexperienced nature of his band: for him, '[t]he inexperience of some of the players is a virtue rather than a drawback. There are fewer things to unlearn. My approach to the members of the band – which is similar to the kind of approach I use in the class that I teach- 'Black Music from 1920 to the Present' – constitutes a fundamental attack against the whole structure of the way music is given to people and also against how our parents taught us and what they thought was necessary and important to teach us. All of us intuitively knew the things young people know today, but we could not implement our intuitions because of the way we were taught. This is why people drop out of school. I don't tell people in the band how to play. I just tell them: 'Play.' Then, by doing it, they begin to see how to play (Levin, 2010: online at http://allaboutjazz.com).

The particular knowledges privileged thus limit the world of the possible – they constitute a form of power-over which limits the power-to of the learner to create the new in a nomadic manner. Foucault (1980) refers to this as an operation of power-knowledge, which Spivak builds on in noting that 'if the lines of making sense of something are laid down in a certain way, then you are able to do only those things with that something that are possible within and by the arrangement of those lines' (1996: 151). What this means is that the power inherent to knowledge lies in the fact that what you can do with it lies not just in what you know but how you came to know it. Here, 'knowledge' is that 'something', and by positing it as a lack, educators are able to suppress difference, as I will now aim to show.[153]

Whilst music students being taught to repeat the techniques of John Coltrane might prevent them from discovering new ways of playing, it is not – in the grand scheme of things – a particularly politically troubling operation of power. Yet the seriousness of the issue at hand is apparent in the way that curricula impose a standard form of knowledge as 'correct' – and, to the extent that they are not open to questioning or revision, 'perfect'. These standard forms of knowledge are, invariably, those that support the dominant 'regime of truth' (Foucault, 2000: 131). Alternative forms of knowledge are considered – simply – to be imperfect, and therefore wrong. This is not to say that the knowledges taught *are* necessarily wrong, but rather that a limited worldview is taught and – furthemore, echoing Spivak's point – the economic, cultural and social origins and consequences of the knowledge taught – and the roles that cultural and economic power have played in the privileging of certain truths over others – are not discussed (Aronowitz, 2004: 20; Cherryholmes, 1987; Freire, 2001: 148; McLaren, 2009: 73; Andreotti, 2006; DeLeon and Love, 2009).[154] This results in certain knowledges and critical perspectives being excluded from the curriculum, including those of students of colour (hooks, 1994; Sibley, 1995: 119-137; Graham, 2001; Hong, 2008; Palermo, 1996; Darder and Torres, 2004; Atkinson, 2011: 1-2); indigenous and Aboriginal knowledges (Toews and Harris-Martin, 2007; Williams, 2009; Grande, 2008); poor and working class histories and experiences (Tiny/Gray-Garcia, 2006; hooks, 1994); feminist epistemologies

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[153] Following Foucault (2000), it must be acknowledged that the curriculum is not the ultimate source of these forms of power-knowledge: they are dispersed throughout society and history without an obvious point of origin: the curriculum designers themselves are thus subject to power-knowledge, even as they reproduce it.

[154] Critiquing this does not necessarily lead to relativism and the claim that there are no 'objective truths' (as I hope will become apparent). Rather, it means reflecting on how and why truths are produced, which truths are privileged and how some 'truths' may in fact be contestable.

and women's experiences (Weiler, 1991; Thompson and Gitlin, hooks, 1994; 1995; Haraway, 1988); queer expistemologies and experiences (Tierney and Dilley, 1998); disabled epistemologies and experiences (Erevelles, 2000). The curriculum thus serves to eliminate difference from the classroom and limits education to an exploration of knowledge that reinforces the status quo (Atkinson, 2002: 105), 'perpetuating and reinforcing' the homogeneity that state utopianism demands 'by fixing the child' (Durkheim, 1956: 70) (or, indeed, adult). It also plays into statism's mind-body dualism, with education focussed almost exclusively on 'rational' knowledge – to the exclusion of that which is affective or embodied (Motta, 2012a).

The effects of this process are amplified as curriculum design becomes increasingly centralised at a state or governmental level (McNeil, 2000).[155] This process is further reinforced in compulsory schooling by the use of standardised tests – often created in collaboration with 'business leaders' – which further reduce the critical exploration of knowledge (Darder and Torres, 2004: 82), and 'reduce...the quality and quantity of what is taught and learned in schools' (McNeil, 2000: 3, emphasis removed). Whilst curricula may encourage students to collectively explore (and occasionally construct) different forms of knowledge; and teachers and students may well (and indeed frequently do) deviate from forms of knowledge laid down by the curriculum and/or interrogate why these forms of knowledge are considered essential, the standardised test itself makes genuinely critical exploration impossible on a large scale as teachers and schools themselves are measured, managed and disciplined according to the results their students achieve (Bates, 1985; Jones, 1990; Levidow, 2002; de Angelis and Harvie, 2009); a process, which – especially when combined with procedures such as student evaluation of teaching forms – not only discourages teachers from experimenting with different forms of education, but is deeply affective. Sara Motta makes this clear when she draws on Darder to state that the 'process contributes to disabling the hearts, minds and bodies of our students and ourselves.' (2012a: 5) Thus, the standardised test has a great power, and

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155 This is, of course, a simplification. Yet often, where different approaches to life are taught, they are labelled as 'different' (meaning 'different-from' the dominant identity), and taught in an assimilationist manner that does not allow them to become on their terms, but seeks to incorporate them into the dominant identity (Andreotti, 2006b). In higher education, not all academic subjects subscribe fully to this view of knowledge, of course, but those that promote critical interrogations of the status quo (or provide the skills and tools for students to do so) are often subject to ridicule and are considered less 'worthy' than 'traditional' subjects (Young, 2011) – not least by 'top' universities, which – in the UK – are less likely to admit students with A Levels in subjects such as Media Studies, (Shepherd, 2011). Across the globe, departments that encourage critical engagement with the status quo, meanwhile, are struggling to remain open in an increasingly business-oriented academic environment (see universityincrisis.wordpress.com for a regularly updated account of neoliberal attacks on the university, or Levidow, 2002 for an academic account of the impacts of neoliberalism on the university).

recalls Foucault's claims that examinations (in the broad sense that might include – but is not limited to – the educational exam) establish:

> a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them. That is why, in all the mechanisms of discipline, the examination is highly ritualized. In it are combined the ceremony of power and the form of the experiment, the deployment of force and the establishment of truth. At the heart of the procedures of discipline, it manifests the subjection of those who are perceived as objects and the objectification of those who are subjected (1979: 184-185).

What Foucault is saying here is that the examination makes difference visible, but only in the sense of difference-from: the student who fails the exam has displayed a knowledge 'different from' the 'perfect' form privileged in the exam itself (or is lacking that knowledge), and so identity is posited as ontologically prior to difference. Those who are not able to meet expected standards are likely to internalise this – seeing a poor exam result as their failing – rather than critically considering the system (Sekula, 1984: 226); and/or display uncritical forms of (ultimately impotent) rebellious behaviour (Aronowitz, 2004: 20). It also functions to construct the learner as an individual rather than a dividual subject – someone entirely responsible for their success or failure.[156]

The crippling effects of standardised tests on students' ability to create new ways of living is evident in the words of Francis Gilbert, a secondary school teacher of twenty years who works in a London secondary school, and stated that British National Curriculum Assessments (colloquially known as SATS):

> have made children better at passing abtruse exams, but in doing so have bludgeoned out all enthusiasm for learning, leaving them lacking in initiative, floundering when confronted with unexpected challenges, unable to construct sustained arguments and powerless to think imaginatively.' (quoted in Cowden, 2010: 25)[157]

In my own experience teaching in secondary school, meanwhile, I have found that students felt any lessons that were not geared to the acquisition of knowledge they could use in exams were a waste of time.

It is not only quantifiable knowledge that is taught in state utopian education, however. As in *Brave New World*, there is also a focus on orienting students to a moral vision of the good that reinforces the status

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156 Foucault's work on the way that liberalism constructs subjects is of relevance here (see Ren, 2005 for an overview).

157 It is important to note that schools, teachers and local government institutions are also subject to these processes: they cannot risk allowing 'different' teaching methods out of fear that their students will be found 'lacking'. The 'good' student is therefore one who can internalise that which they were previously lacking and the 'good' teacher is one who can successfully enable students to acquire that which they were lacking.

quo. This is done through promotion of the individualist attributes thought to be necessary to succeed in the contemporary world (and the simultaneous failure to enhance attributes that might be utilised to go beyond it); and by 'normalising' authoritarian power relations (Giroux and Purpel, 1983; Bowles and Gintis, 2011: 131-132). This is largely fulfilled through what Giroux and Purpel (among others) refer to as 'the hidden curriculum'; a term which covers 'the tacit ways in which knowledge and behavior get constructed' beyond the explicit content of a curriculum that is examined (McLaren, 2009: 7), and might include the values stressed by teachers in lessons and assemblies; classroom design and school architecture; systems of punishment; uniform codes; or the use of senior students as prefects. 'Good' students are not only those who do well in exams, but those who embody these attributes, meaning that such an education is oriented to a moral vision of the good that reproduces the dominant reality.

When practiced in the manner described here, then, it is clear that education functions as a form of conservative state utopianism that is aimed at reinforcing and reproducing the status quo through the exclusion of forms of knowledge that may challenge it, by failing to critically interrogate the knowledge taught, and by socialising students to accept authoritarian power relations. It is an anti-vitalist philosophy governed by a moral good, which Freire – drawing on Erich Fromm – referred to as 'necrophily' (2000: 77).

The Classroom as State Utopia

When education functions as a form of state utopianism, the 'education system' operates as a state utopia: a hierarchical set of relations governed by a moral good that allows for (and indeed demands) 'progress' (in the form of ever-increasing exam results, or new teaching methods), but not for any change that may challenge the way in which it operates. At all levels, from the government down to the classroom, techniques of micro-management are utilised, serving to limit the capacities of students and teachers to decide on the content and method of their teaching, thus limiting 'possibilities of action and meaning' in education (Ball, 1990: 197). Focussing on the school itself, M.D. Shipman notes that they as hierarchical spaces 'arranged so that children feel the authority of staff as experts and models'. This authority 'comes down from the headteacher through the hierarchy of the staff, and is [also] delegated to selected children'

(Shipman, 1968: 159-160). Here, I want to narrow the focus of this operation of hierarchical power further, moving the focus to how the classroom is produced as a state utopia. I do this as the classroom function as the primary space in which students engage with teachers, and so their make-up has a profound influence on how education operates politically. It should be clear that I am absolutely *not* attacking teachers here: as I have noted (and repeat below), they are themselves caught in hierarchical power relations and have little agency to explore alternative forms of education. It is testament to their skill that many of them do nonetheless, and I can state with no uncertainty that were it not for the skill of many of my teachers – from the start of compulsory schooling at the age of 4 to my studies at university – that I would not be writing this thesis.

Recalling Dewey's claim that schools constitute 'miniature communities', my claim here is that the classroom functions as a state utopia. It is governed by hylomorphic principles, which state that without expert guidance (from the teacher) to give them the knowledge that they lack, students will produce only chaos (bad behaviour) and inertia (they will acquire no knowledge). Students thus constitute a *tabula rasa* ready to receive knowledge from an external, expert source (Sarda, 2007: 227) – '"containers" or "receptacles" to be filled by the teacher' who, 'the more completely he [sic] fills the receptacles, the better a teacher he is', whilst, '[t]he more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are' (Freire, 2000: 72). This hylomorphism is evident in the claim of the public school administrator (and theorist of education) Elwood Cubberley, who stated that that schools 'are, in a sense, factories, in which the raw materials are to be shaped and fashioned into products to meet the various demands of life' (quoted in Bowles and Gitlis, 2011: 199). Paulo Freire's description of the classroom displays this hylomorphism. For him, it is a place in which:

(a) the teacher teaches and the students are taught;
(b) the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
(c) the teacher thinks and the students are thought about
(d) the teacher talks and the students listen- meekly;
(e) the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined
(f) the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;
(g) the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;
(h) the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
(i) the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;

(j) the teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects. (2000: 73)[158]

In such a hierarchically ordered environment, students work because they feel compelled to: they fear punishment if they do not follow the teacher's instructions and are socialised to believe that this form of education is good for them. As the photographer Allan Sekula put it in relation to his arts education, the student is constructed as 'subordinate, dependent [and] incomplete without the master's discipline and support' (1984: 116). This means that students rarely have an internal, immanent desire to learn (or at least, to learn what they are taught in the classroom) – they do so out of necessity and a reluctant acceptance that they are lacking that which they require to 'get on in the world'. Thus, they 'give themselves over to the hierarchy of meritocratic schooling – working only for the sake of meeting the requirements of an authority figure, grade, credential set standard, and so forth' (Armaline, 2009: 138).[159]

The classroom is also created as a space in which the individual is considered to be subordinate to the collective: whilst a hierarchical system of setting (sometimes called streaming) may be used to differentiate between students of different 'abilities', within the classroom it is common for all students to be taught the same topic in the same manner, regardless of their interest in or ability to cope with the subject: the individual must learn to adapt or they will fail. And with the student held responsible for their failure or success in exams, they are constructed as an individual rather than a dividual – despite the clear influence that teachers and peers will have had on their performance.[160]

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158 This analysis is, of course, over-simplified and ignores the fact that the teacher in a state utopian system of education will herself be subject to a hierarchical power structure. As I noted above, curricula and syllabi set out what can and cannot be taught and so dictate what knowledge is to be valued (though in some educational establishments the teacher will be involved in their creation), and formal and informal power structures inside educational establishments dictate that teachers must present an image of being tough on misbehaviour and noncompliance from students: from my own experience of working in a comprehensive secondary school I am all-too-aware of the alienation which teachers deemed insufficiently strict can face from their colleagues, and the actions their superiors may take against them. William T. Armaline acknowledges these points, writing that both students and teachers 'must sacrifice their free will and unconstrained creative capacities to meet the goals and address the questions determined by authority' (2009: 138). To this I would add that I have had a number of empowering educational experiences facilitated by teachers who have encouraged their students to work together to create new ways of understanding.

It can also be difficult for teachers to introduce other forms of education into the classroom as students are so used to the state utopian form of education. From my own experience teaching in both secondary and higher education, I am aware that attempting to utilise other forms of teaching often does lead to chaos and or inertia in the sense I have suggested here.

159 Nomadic becomings are often formed even within such a system of education, however. Chris Carlsson makes clear the pitfalls of failing to acknowledge the possibilities inherent in today's flawed education system, noting that '[i]t is easy to criticize schools as institutions of social control which create unthinking zombies that will become the pliable workers and consumers of the future. But most of us who might make such a glib critique are living examples of the porous nature of schooling's social control agenda. For instance, almost everything of value I learned in school resulted from social interactions and experiences that took place in spite of the twisted logic of the school system' (1993: 46).

160 This is not, of course, absolute, and group-work is still relatively common in schools – particularly during primary education the prevalence of group work – particularly in primary education – may well constitute an important counter-point to the

The classroom, then, functions largely as a state utopia: it is hierarchical and closed to change, with students constructed as individuals entirely responsible for their own education. What is particularly important to stress here, however, is that *it is a state utopia with a utopian function*: it socialises students and teachers alike to believe that its particular form of organisation is the only possible form of organisation, thus limiting the possibility of experiments with nomadic forms of organisation (cf. Bowles and Gitlis, 2011: 131): not so much an 'education of desire' as a 'repression of desire'. It is a totalising form to which common sense would tell us 'there is no alternative'. In this sense, it forms an important part of the hidden curriculum, which we would do well to make visible and challenge at every available opportunity.

Nomadic utopianism and education

Challenges to statist education are present in a variety of sociopolitical contexts. Here, I want to suggest what a nomadic utopian education might look like; how it would produce schools and classrooms as nomadic utopias; and how it might avoid tyrannies of habit and perpetuating statist power formations from outside the 'autonomist' space in which it operates. In so doing, I draw on a number of traditions – including the constructivist learning theory of George E. Hein; anarchist and autonomist free schools; critical pedagogy; feminist, queer, border and antiracist pedagogies; popular education; the 'Open Spaces for Dialogue and Enquiry' (OSDE) project; and John Dewey's progressive education – as well as critical debates within these approaches. There are a number of differences between these approaches, and all have grown out of specific socioeconomic contexts, which – were they to be considered in isolation and in greater depth – would need to be considered. Some of them – such as OSDE – are designed to function in 'mainstream' schools (Andreotti, 2006a; 2006b)[161]; others will operate in informal schools, and some may be adaptable for both. Many of them also have a mixture of state utopian and nomadic utopian features. Here, however, my intention is to draw methods and epistemologies from each of these approaches in order that the beginnings of a praxis of nomadic utopian education can be presented.

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prevailing individualism (Galton and Williamson, 1992).

161 The OSDE methodology was developed for use in the UK National Curriculum's citizenship lessons for 11-16 year olds (though it can also be utilised in other settings), and draws on critical pedagogy and popular education, poststructuralism and post-colonial theory (Andreotti, 2006a; osdemethodology.org.uk).

Whilst I consider debates between these approaches, this is done with the intention of extracting the most 'nomadic' features of each, which is to say that – for the most part – I focus on what *is* nomadic about these forms of education rather than what is *not*.[162] My reading of the thinkers utilised here is thus selective.

This section should not, however, be seen as providing a 'blueprint' for nomadic utopian education: even notwithstanding nomadic utopianism's aversion to the blueprint, the contingent particularities of each situation where a nomadic utopian education might be called for must be given attention before any action is taken. As with improvisation, then, nomadic utopian education is a delicate, contingent and always-contestable task – indeed, given the importance of the task at hand, this is perhaps even more the case than in improvisation. This is clear in the words of Myles Horton – founder of the Highlander Folk School – who, in conversation with Paulo Freire, stressed that

> my ideas have changed and are constantly changing and should change and that I'm as proud of my inconsistencies as I am my consistencies. So I'd just like to shy away from the idea that somehow I've had these ideas and they've had such and such an effect. (in Freire and Horton, 1990: 9-10)

For the nomadic utopian who seeks to work immanently with matter (rather than work 'on' it from a transcendent position), inconsistent problems require inconsistent methods.

The epistemology of nomadic education: education as a political act and knowledge in construction

In the previous chapter, I noted that a number of improvising musicians saw their practice as political. The link between the forms of education I am engaging with here and politics is far more explicit: those whose views I will utilise here invariably see education as a necessarily political act. Ira Shor makes this clear in his essay 'Education is Political', in which he states that '[e]ducation is politics because it is one place where individuals and society are constructed. Because human beings and their society are developed in one direction or another through education, the learning process cannot avoid being

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In this sense, I am following the approach taken by the editors of *Utopian Pedagogy* when they say that one of the purposes of the book (an edited collection of essays) is to trace 'affinities across disparate traditions [of radical education]' (Coté, Day et al, 2007: 6).

political' (1993: 27). The pretence of neutrality underpinning liberalism's statist education is thus rejected, as Myles Horton makes clear when he states that:

> academicians, politicians. All the people that are supposed to be guiding thiscountry say you've got to be neutral. As soon as I started looking at that word   neutral and what it meant, it became very obvious to me there can be no such thing as neutrality. It's a code word for the existing system. It has nothing to do with anything but agreeing to what is and will always be-that's whatneutrality is. Neutrality is just following the crowd. Neutrality is just being what the system asks us to be. Neutrality, in other words, was an immoral act. I was thinking in religious terms then. It was to me a refusal to oppose injustice or to take sides that are unpopular. It's an excuse, in other words. So I discarded the word neutrality before I even started thinking much about educational ideas. Of course, when I got more into thinking about educational ideas and about changed society, it became more and more obvious that you've got to take sides. You need to know why you take sides; you should be able to justify it (in Horton and Freire, 1990: 122)

This discarding of neutrality does not, however, mean that the educator should seek to impose their own views on students (even if those views seek to go beyond the present) – rather, it means acknowleding that all knowledge will be constructed through particular frameworks, and should be open to challenge.

For the nomadic educator, then, knowledge is 'fluid, unpredictable, and wonderfully alive' (Armaline, 2007: 144). It is not something 'out there' to be discovered, but to be collectively constructed by students, an understanding that echoes Deleuze's view of truth as something that 'has to be created' rather than discovered (1995: 126). Such a view is evidenced in a number of diverse approaches to education (and educational theory), many of which have been set up to explicitly challenge statist forms. In the early twentieth century John Dewey (1959) developed his concept of 'progressive education', which explicitly rejected the idea that knowledge existed beyond that constructed by 'active learners' who engaged in social interaction with peers and educators and – wherever possible – with the material they were learning about, whilst Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner (1971) see education as a form of 'meaning making'. For the constructivist educator George E. Hein, meanwhile, 'we cannot divorce our learning from our lives'. For him, education is based around the idea that 'learners construct knowledge for themselves – each learner individually (and socially) constructs meaning – as he or she learns' (2011: 44).

Aihwa Ong, meanwhile, emphasises that 'theories of human emancipation, particularly emancipation of the oppressed, must see every human being as a knowledge producer' (42), and Sunil Sahasrabudhey draws a link between such an approach and 'ordinary life', stating that is a:

vast bed where knowledge is produced hourly, daily. Ordinary life is the life without condition. It presupposes no technology, no religion, no state, no university. People constantly produce new knowledge based on their genius, experiences and the needs of everyday life. There has perhaps never been a greater source of knowledge than ordinary life.' (2009: 43)

None of this, however, means that expert knowledges (in empirical, critical, theoretical, practical, etc. sense) should be entirely shunned. Indeed, they may be called upon when the group finds that knowledge (in any of those senses mentioned previously) may help them go beyond what they already know (Kane, 2010). In this, nomadic education reflects Bakunin's discussion of the authority of the expert in *God and the State*:

> Does it follow that I reject all authority? Far from me such a thought. In the matter of boots, I refer to the authority of the bootmaker; concerning houses, canals, or railroads, I consult that of the architect or the engineer. For such or such special knowledge I apply to such or such a savant. But I allow neither the bootmaker nor the architect nor the savant to impose his authority upon me. I listen to them freely and with all the respect merited by their intelligence, their character, their knowledge, reserving always my incontestable right of criticism and censure. (no date: 33)

These challenges may claim that what has been established as true is not so, or they may question why certain truths are privileged over other truths: in encouraging them, nomadic education is not simply calling for a relativist approach to education (Andreotti, 2006a), but it is acknowledging that education is always a political process marked by operations of power in all its forms.

Education as Nomadic Utopianism

As with improvisation, utopia(nism) is a concept less openly embraced by the theorists of education I draw on here. It is, however, used by many in manners that resonate with – even if they are not identical to – nomadic utopianism. William B. Stanley (1992) and Henry Giroux (2003) talk of the potential for education to function as a form of utopianism that may help the world become otherwise; the latter explicitly drawing on Ernst Bloch to argue for a utopianism that begins in the 'here and now' rather than in the elsewhere and/or elsewhen (2003: 99-100). Meanwhile, in an essay entitled 'What is Utopian Pedagogy?', which serves as the introduction to their edited collection *Utopian Pedagogy,* Mark Coté, Richard J.F. Day and Greig de Peuter develop a concept of 'immanent utopia' that informs the essays in the collection. There, they state that

> we looked to utopia not as a place we might reach but as an ongoing process of becoming. More specifically, the utopia that runs through this collection is both a critical attitude towards the

present and a political commitment to experiment in transfiguring the coordinates of our historical moment. (Coté, et al., 2007a: 15)

This utopia consists of a:

> utopian impulse that…does not lead to a promised land. It knows that domination and exploitation can only be minimized, never eliminated; that struggle will persist; and that something like a state, like a corporation, like asymmetrical power relations in any form, will forever be trying to emerge from within and without our communities and will therefore need to be warded off…utopian experiments today share a point of departure much more than a point of arrival. (2007a: 16)

This resonates with the understanding of utopia as process, and is echoed in Paulo Freire's own sophisticated conception of utopia which, for Giroux and McLaren, constitutes a 'crucial – yet generally overlooked' (1997: 138) feature of his work. In *Pedagogy of Hope*, he writes that:

> there is no authentic utopia apart from the tension between the denunciation of a present becoming more and more intolerable and the "*an*nunciation", announcement, of a future to be created, built – politically, esthetically, and ethically – by us women and men. Utopia implies this denunciation and proclamation, but it does not permit the tension between the two to die away with the production of the future previously announced. Now the erstwhile future is a new present, and a new dream experience is forged. History does not become immobilized, does not *die*. On the contrary, it goes on (2004: 77).

In this, Freire neatly captures the tensions inherent to the nomadic utopia, and implicitly covers both the 'good' and the 'no' in utopia's etymology. It is not clear, however what role there is for place in this definition – as Giroux and McLaren note – it resembles Bloch's temporal approach to utopia (1997: 138). Freire's concept of utopia is further developed in another lengthy treatment of the concept in *Politics of Education*, where, he talks of a 'revolutionary utopia' – although again, it is not clear what the role of place is. The revolutionary utopia, he notes:

> [t]ends to be dynamic rather than static; tends to life rather than death; to the future as a challenge to man's creativity rather than as a repetition of the present; to love as liberation of subjects rather than as pathological possessiveness; to the emotion of life rather than cold abstraction; to living in harmony rather than gregariousness; to dialogue rather than mutism; to praxis rather than "law and order"; to men [sic] who organize themselves reflectively for action rather than men who are organized for passivity; to creative and communicative language rather than prescriptive signals; to reflective challenges rather than domesticating slogans; and to values that are lived rather than myths that are imposed (1985: 81-82).

This understanding is shared by Joel Linares – a community popular educator in Venezuela, who argued that 'utopia is a constant process' in a talk at the University of Nottingham (2010).

Given the overlooking of place in these definitions of utopia, I would argue (in keeping with the

similarities with Bloch) that what they are actually dealing with is utopia*nism:* a force that seeks to recreate the world as a better place. (Freire's similarities with Bloch do not end here, either: he shared Bloch's belief that education had to work *towards* a lack situated in the future. He argued that 'hope, detached from the future, becomes only an alienated and alienating abstraction. Instead of stimulating the pilgrim, it invites him to stand still' [1985: 121], and also shared Bloch's belief that this future must be the classless society of communism.) Yet there is undoubtedly something nomadic in this utopianism, as there is in Coté et al.'s. As will become apparent, they – and many other educators and theorists of education – err towards understanding education as a collective force that brings the new into being through non-hierarchically organised difference. As Nirmal Puwar and Sanjay Sharma state, education should be about 'what knowledge can do...mobilizing unruly connections and ways of becoming' (2009: 46).

What, then, is needed in order for education to function as a form of nomadic utopianism? It is not enough simply to propose that the new is created through a dialogical bringing together of different knowledges – such an approach, if not deepened, runs the risk of equating 'difference' with the individual. Rather, nomadic utopian education must proceed from a rejection of the liberal, self-identical subject and acknowledge two points: firstly that the individual is better thought of as a 'dividual' who is made and remade through interaction with others; and secondly that the individual is in fact a dividual herself constituted by difference. Thus, the process of education remakes dividual learners as they proceed: knowledge is also something embodied which affects the knower (Motta, 2012a).

The first of these two points is acknowledged in the traditions of popular education utilised by social movements, autonomists and activists across the globe (de Carvahlo, 2010; Motta, 2009) and in the work of the Soviet educational psychologist Lev Vygotsky, whose *Mind in Society* (1978) stresses how learners develop not only knowledge but their sense of self communally. The sense of how a nomadic understanding of knowledge changes the learner is also evident in the reflections of Meysalun, a student on the MA module 'Local Power in an Era of Globalisation', which I taught at the University of Nottingham with my colleague Sara Motta, utilising a pedagogy devised from critical pedagogy, feminist though, border pedagogy and the approach of poststructuralist thinkers (including Deleuze and Guattari).

On the module's feedback form, she wrote that:

> it is important to locate ourselves, find ourselves in what we are learning, otherwise, why are we learning it?...I think that the way in which this module on local politics in an era of globalisation was given, made possible to answer some of these questions, and made possible the location of myself, my reality, the reality around, as a subject and object of knowledge, that is not fixed, but alive, changing, creating and reshaping itself and other knowledge, not as ends by themselves, but as means and tools of thinking, creating, being, evolving, living. (quoted in Motta, 2012a: 15)

Here, the dividual subject as well as knowledge is posited as existing in a state of becoming, and it is partly in this that nomadic education begins to move away from functioning in the manner of a cosy liberal-humanism that Ben Watson rails against in improvisation. Megan Boler and Michalinos Zembylas stress the emotional dangers of that engaging with difference can bring, and argue for a 'pedagogy of discomfort' that will function:

> as an educational approach to understanding the production of norms and differences. As its name suggests, this pedagogy emphasizes the need for both the educator and students to move outside of their comfort zones. By comfort zone we mean the inscribed cultural and emotional terrains that we occupy less by choice and more by virtue of hegemony. (2003: 108)[163]

The difference here is not the difference of the dominant 'philosophy that celebrates difference as neutral flavors of food', seeking only a 'benign multiculturalism [that] fails to address power' (Boler and Zembylas, 2003: 109); this is a form of education that seeks to disrupt tyrannies of habit wherever they are found. This is also clear in the words of the Indian edcuator Shveta Sarda, who makes clear (with reference to improvisation, and the statist hylomorph's fear of chaos) that nomadic education can be a decidedly uncomfortable task for both students and teachers alike:

> Knowledge is about the bold and simultaneous existence of a multiplicity of voices that fragment our conception of reality, decentre the very act of the production of knowledge, the translation of lifeworlds; this is where the edges of our worlds are in conversation with one another, not muted and silenced. The speech of millions is essential in this. What withholds and prevents speech is the fear of listening to too many voices, the fear of a resultant cacophony. But there is a richness in the multiplicity of a band when it plays myriad instruments, when there is improvisation, and more than one sound can be heard (2007: 231, cf. Motta, 2012a: 15-17).

163

bell hooks also rails against too-comfortable education. Recalling her experience in Women's Studies classes at Stanford University, she writes that 'white professors talked about "women" when they were making the experience of materially privileged white women a norm. It was both a matter of personal and intellectual integrity for me to challenge this biased assumption. By challenging, I refused to be complicit in the erasure of black/and or working-class women of all ethnicities. Personally, that meant I was not able just to sit in class, grooving on the good feminist vibes – that was a loss. The gain was that I was honoring the experience of poor and working-class women in my own family, in that very community had encouraged and supported me in my efforts to be better educated. Even though my intervention was not wholeheartedly welcomed, it created a context for critical thinking, for dialectical exchange' (1994: 181).

Yet as Elizabeth Ellsworth notes in her important essay 'Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering? Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy', it is not enough to talk – as Sarda does – of 'the speech of millions'; we must also acknowledge that each individual will herself always already speak with a 'multiplicity of authentic voices' (1994: 305). If this is forgotten then 'radical' education runs the risk of being reliant upon statism's 'enforcement of rationalism as a self-evident political act against relations of domination' (Ellsworth, 1994: 305). Thus – addressing the second point raised above – nomadic education must proceed from nomadic 'subjects [who are] split between the conscious and unconscious and among multiple social positionings' (1994: 316). Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari and Trin T. Minh-ha, Sara Motta argues that students and teachers are *'always* multiple, intertwined and becoming and not singular, separate and fixed' (2012a: 5; cf. Semetsky, 2006: 13).

With neither knowledge nor learner a pre-given, then, nomadic education fulfils nomadic utopianism's function of proceeding immanently. Education should thus be seen as a 'becoming-other'; a force for constructing new knowledges and new affective relationships (Semetsky, 2005; 2006). In *Pedagogy Against the State*, Dennis Atkinson – a former art teacher in a UK secondary school – uses similarly Deleuzean language to call for a 'pedagogy against the state, or pedagogy of the not-known'. 'Immanent to such a pedagogy', he writes:

> is therefore a movement against itself. The ethical imperative for pedagogy thererfore is concerned with maximizing the power of learning; *it is not focused on what we are and should be*, that is to say some transcendent position towards being, but upon the potentiality and "unknown" of becoming. An ethics of the unknown, an ethics of becoming (2011: 12).

When education functions in this way it is a movement seeking the creation of the new. Yet it does so without reference to a predetermined ideal and through the interaction of difference-in-itself. Learners are brought together as dividuals who are themselves constituted by difference, and there is no opposition between the (in)dividual and the collective. Education is not just a way of fleeing from that which is unjust, but of making flight create: of remaking the world immanently. It is, in other words, a form of nomadic utopianism. I now want to turn to how such a form of education constructs the classroom as a nomadic utopia, and how this – in turn – performs a nomadic utopian function.

Educational spaces as nomadic utopias

Whilst nomadic education potentially plays a role in changing the world beyond the school and classroom, it also creates classrooms (and potentially schools) as nomadic utopias. Just as state utopianism's epistemology called a hierarchical space into being, nomadic utopianism's belief that knowledge is something constructed through the interaction of difference constructs the school and the classroom in a non-hierarchical manner, such that they function as prefigurative spaces open to becoming. This follows from and feeds back into nomadism's epistemological approach: in order for difference to be realised, social arrangements must be non-hierarchical, and non-hierarchical social arrangements create new forms of difference-in-itself through differentiation. There is, in other words, a reciprocal relationship between the nomadic utopia (the classroom) and nomadic utopianism (the education). The anarchist educator Alan Antliff quotes Hakim Bey to describe such spaces, arguing that they will 'realize (make real) the moments and spaces in which freedom is not only possible but *actual*' (Antliff, 2007: 263). My focus is in particular on the classroom: the *immediate* space in which education occurs, although I do touch on 'school' issues such as 'curriculum' design (which, in a nomadic institution may well be carried out within the classroom – at least in part).

There can be no simple formula for creating such spaces, however: as with improvisation (and perhaps even more so here[164]), there is not a single 'form' of nomadic utopia that can be imported into different contexts as a 'once-and-for-all' solution, and even seemingly successful nomadic utopian spaces are always at danger of tyrannies of habit emerging and ossifying into a state utopian form. It would thus be a mistake to take Myles Horton literally when he states that '[t]he thing to do was just find a place, move in and start, and let it grow.' (in Freire and Horton, 1990: 53) Whilst such an approach *may* be possible in

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164 The key differences between musical improvisation and the classroom is that the primary form of communication between dividuals in the latter is representational and conversational, whilst in the former it is non-representational and polyphonic, and so differences are discussed in turn rather than played simultaneously. To utilise the Deleuzean concept of speeds and slownesses, this makes the classroom a 'slower space' than improvisation: it is less prone to ecstatic, spontaneous becomings and more susceptible to long, drawn-out arguments and conversations. In improvisation differences are expressed sonically: if one player disagrees with something another has done, or wishes to express an aspect of their difference, they modify their playing accordingly, meaning that the space is modified immediately. In education this is not possible: in a constructive conversation only one person can speak at a time, and so difference takes more time to be introduced and is not immediately synthesised into a coherent whole. Self-order may be generated, but it is a drawn out process, and one that necessarily requires structure in order to remain open. It is also important to note that there is likely to an (at least tacit) agreement that non-hierarchial organisation is preferable in improvisation, but – as I make clear – this is often not the case in the classroom.

improvisation (though even there careful reflection and contingent reassessment would be required), to do so in an educational setting would be to make the same mistake as the beaubourgians in *The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg* – it would construct the classroom only as a smooth space, not as a nomadic utopia, and would risk informal hierarchies and silencing students.

It will come as no surprise, then, that I do not endorse a 'one-size-fits-all' blueprint for creating the classroom as a nomadic utopia, but rather stress certain tactical approaches that may be taken to overcome the problems associated with applying nomadic utopianism in a world ridden with statist identities, divisions and power relations: a cautious approach that 'says no' to simplistic claims on how to create a 'good place' for education. Whilst this pragmatism is required in producing any form of nomadic utopia, it is perhaps particularly prevalent in education given the importance of the task at hand. As Sara Motta notes in relation to her experiences with the Nottingham Free School, those seeking to create educational spaces for nomadic utopianism and as nomadic utopias must be prepared (initially, at least) to work within constraints; contend with financial and emotional problems; and change plans as they go (to improvise, in othe words!) (Motta, 2012b: 146). It is also vital that such learning begins from where learners are – not all will be ready to be plunged into the – at times highly disconcerting – world of nomadic utopian education. To paraphrase (and reject) Zamyatin (himself paraphrasing Nietzsche), the nomadic educator should not simply and suddenly kick away 'the crutches of certainty' (1991: 111).

The importance of *improvisation* in the process cannot be ignored, then – something acknowledged beautifully by the title of Freire and Horton's *We Make the Road by Walking* (1990).[165] (I might paraphrase: 'we make the utopia by utopising'.) This walking cannot be a purely theoretical task, but must engage with the complexities of practice as well. It is a Deleuzean journey: one step for theory, one step for life. Kicking away crutches leaves people floundering lamely; teaching people to walk together enables them to embark on wonderful – and sometimes terrifying – journeys.

To emphasise the importance of pragmatisim, then, is not to reduce the degree of nomadic utopianism

165 The title comes from Antonio Machado's poem 'We Make the Road'.

possible; rather, it is to emphasise that the classroom – as with any nomadic utopia – must become through experimentation over time. It must constantly be made and remade by a nomadic utopianism that pays attention to circumstance. This is clear in Coté et al.'s description of some of the issues faced when establishing 'Critical U', a 'community education project' in Vancouver:

> We strive to be participant-driven to the best of our abilities, but of coursethere are constraints. Typically, a group of organizers sketches in advance an overall course outline structured around a series of general workshop themes,with recruited volunteer professors, students, and community educators acting as facilitators for a specific evening. The general ethos is that the more specific course content is decided collectively by the participants who show up at the first meeting; in actual practice, it is a negotiated struggle between the needs andcapacities of the organizers – what they are willing and able to teach – and the needs and interests of the participants. As such, we never know what to expect,and the resultant affinity or antagonism of the negotiation depends on each course's unique composition...
>
> The initial meeting of our first course was exemplary of the dynamics of Critical U: because of unexpectedly large numbers, we had been moved from a smaller room at the community centre to a large auditorium, in which the "instructors" dutifully arrayed themselves at the front, and the "students" took up positions in rows of seats facing us. We apologized for the layout, which couldn't be changed because the chairs were literally bolted to the floor. Several participants wanted more than an apology, and suggested that we reassemble as a large circle on the floor of the stage. This was done, and throughout the evening, ideas went flying around the circle, as the participants expanded on and delimited the suggested themes. (2007b: 344-345)

Had a snapshot of the social relations of that space been taken at certain points it may have appeared as a state utopia; at others it may have appeared chaotically atopian – but taken over time, the space can be read as a nomadic utopia.

How, then, does the classroom or the school 'successfully' (re)produce itself as a nomadic utopia? Given nomadic utopian epistemology's belief that knowledge is something constructed collectively, the starting point in creating a nomadic utopian education is to allow all learners and educators to operate together non-hierarchically to formulate a curriculum and develop a learning strategy appropriate to their mix of students and particular aims. This is clear in the 'identity statement' of the Anarchist Free School in Toronto, quoted by Alan Antliff (who was involved in its founding and operation):

> The Anarchist Free School is a volunteer-run, autonomous collective offering free courses, workshops, and lectures[166] that cover a wide range of topics. Education is a political act. By

166 These included a weekly meeting of the 'International Bureau of Recordist Investigation' ('open to those with an interest in Recordism, Surrealism, and other currents of the Fantastic and Absurd in contemporary art and culture'); a film-making workshop; Yoga classes; a series of classes entitled 'Introduction to Anarchism'; a 'hands on course' entitled 'Wild Plants of Toronto'; a workshop entitled 'Understanding Violence Against Women' (women-only from 6-7pm and open to all from 7-9pm); a collective singing group; and 'salons' ('colourful intentional conversational forums where people engage in passionate discourse about what they think is important') organised around a particular topic (with the topic for the following salon decided at the end of each meeting) (Toronto Anarchist Free School Flyer, Figure 14.2a in Antliff, 2007: 256). Shantz (2012)

deepening our knowledge of ourselves and the world around us, sharing skills, and exchanging experiences in an egalitarian, non-hierarchical setting free of prejudice, we challenge dis-empowering habits and broaden our awareness of alternatives to the inequalities of capitalist society.

Participation in the Free School is a commitment. The school's 'governing body' is a general meeting, open to all, which convenes once a month. At this meeting problems and proposals are brought to the attention of Free School participants, who arrive at solutions by consensus. 'Participants' are those attending workshops/courses; facilitators of workshops/courses; working committee members; and people who, having served as participants in the past, continue to support our efforts in some capacity.

Day-to-day logistics at the School are dealt with by working committees (answerable to the general meeting) which are self-organized and run by consensus. Working committees keep the School up and running by dealing with finances, time and venue scheduling, publications, and other matters. Committees report every month to the general meeting, where their needs and concerns are addressed. (quoted in Antliff, 2007: 255)

Here, there is an emphasis on the lack of hierarchy on both a curricula/organisational level and within the classroom itself. It is stressed how all are welcome to make proposals at public meetings – where the curriculum is developed – and that skills and experiences are shared in a 'non-hierarchical setting free of prejudice'.

In order to foster this non-hierarchy within the classroom, the Toronto Anarchist Free School adopts an tactic popular in critical pedagogy and popular education inspired approaches,[167] advocating use of the terms 'facilitator' rather than 'teacher', and 'participant' rather than 'student' (whilst making it clear that the facilitator is *also* a participant). Though I would not wish to denounce as statist spaces that retain the term 'teacher' and 'student', I utilise the term 'facilitator'[168] to emphasise the 'artisanal' function of facilitators who – like the composers dealing in 'alternative' forms of score at the end of the previous chapter – coax bodies to self-organisation rather than imposing order in a hylomorphic manner.[169] The concept of the participant, meanwhile, suggests that *everyone* – not only 'students' – is engaged in the

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also discusses the Toronto Anarchist Free School.

167 See, for instance, Andreotti (2006a), Trapese Collective (2007). Freire himself was against the term 'facilitator', believing that the teacher needed to retain their authority to a far greater degree than is being advocated here, and that the concept of the 'facilitator' would lead to a libertarian, laissez-faire approach to education which – as I suggest in fn.26 below – would not address issues concerning power (Freire and Macedo, 1995: 378).

168 A 'person or thing which facilitates an action' (*Oxford English Dictionary*: oed.com), with 'facilitates' defined as 'to make (an action, process, etc.) easy or easier; to promote, help forward; to assist in bringing about (a particular end or result)' (.ibid) (although in nomadic education there would not be a 'particular end of result' predetermined).

169 As Vanessa Andreotti makes clear in articulating her concept of the classroom as an 'Open Space for Dialogue and Enquiry', the role of the facilitator is not to lead the group in a hylomorphic manner, but to create a 'safe space' in which students feel as comfortable as possible sharing their experiences, fears, hopes and knowledges; but also to disrupt any cosy consensus and provide focus where necessary (Andreotti, 2006a; 2006b).

process of directing education, and removes the vestiges of hierarchy that 'student' carries with it as the subordinate partner in a teacher-student relationship.

The form of education (as nomadic utopianism) taught in such a place means that there is no necessary opposition between the individual and the collective, and a set of reciprocal affective power relations to those in improvisation can be fostered, whereby the increase in the power-to of one learner (by, for example, talking through an experience in their life, or bringing a particular piece of knowledge to the space) increases the power-to affect and be affect of all in the space.

The need for strategic hierarchies

Whilst the concept of the facilitator represents an attempt to move away from the formal hierarchy associated with the teacher, it needs to be recognised that in settings where participants have been socialised to accept a hierarchical classroom as 'normal', the facilitator may still find themselves atop an informal hierarchy – a state of affairs that, if not recognised, can be extremely harmful, and which requires a certain set of skills on the part of the facilitator to prevent the classroom from becoming fully striated (a problem, then, that is particularly likely to be found in formal educational spaces, and particularly those of compulsory education). In my own experiences of utilising the OSDE methodology developed by Vanessa Andreotti with compulsorily schooled participants, for example, I have found participants looking to me for the 'correct' way of thinking about a given problem. Andreotti acknowledges this as a potential problem, stating that until students no longer look to the facilitator to provide answers, she should withhold from offering her own opinion (2006a).

In order to break down hierarchies between facilitator and participants, a certain skill set may be required by the facilitator. In my early experiences using the OSDE methodology I was able to identify occasions when students were looking to me for answers, and was aware that this risked reproducing statism's banking approach to education; yet it was only after I had run a number of sessions (and spoken with other, more experienced OSDE facilitators) that I developed a set of techniques which enabled me to 'coax the students into self-organisation' (which at times involved me leaving the space, but at others

193

involved asking the right questions, moving on to a new discussion, etc.), and even after a number of sessions I still felt that there was much I could learn to make me a more effective facilitator.

Faced with such problems, Lilia I. Bartolomé's (2009) concept of 'strategic teaching' is of use. It refers to 'an instructional model that explicitly teaches students learning strategies that enable them consciously to monitor their own learning' (2009: 348), and can be seen as a form of 'strategic hierarchy'. Whilst the reference to participants (or students), 'consciously' monitoring their own learning sits uneasily with nomadic thought, the ability of skilled facilitators to utilise context appropriate methods to deterritorialise hierarchies between facilitator and participants such that collaborative knowledge production stemming from difference-in-itself can occur can be of great use in producing the classroom as a nomadic utopia[170].

Further problems regarding a hierarchy between facilitator and participants may result from the need for the facilitator to utilise 'charismatic authority'[171] in order to inspire belief in the project among participants. This is less likely to be a problem in informal educational spaces, as participants will have attended voluntarily – but having taught in a secondary school I can attest to the apathy with which pupils often approach classes that do not directly help them get the exam grades they want, or that utilise non-standard teaching methods – seeing them either as a waste of time or as an excuse to exhibit disruptive behaviour (neither of which should be seen as surprising, given the great pressures placed on them to perform well in tests, as per Frances Gilbert's quote, above). The facilitator, then, needs not only to believe in the form of education they are offering, but to transmit this belief to potentially disruptive/apathetic participants so that they will engage. This 'charismatic authority' should be seen as a form of strategic hierarchy, but must be treated with extreme caution, given its tendency to perpetuate extreme forms of power-over rather than facilitate power-to and affective relations of power-with (for more on charismatic authority and power in nomadic education, see Bell, 2011b).

There is also the danger of hierarchical relations emerging between non-facilitating participants and here,

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170 Here, the element of time central to both the nomadic utopia and the Greek *skhole* comes into play: it is only by observing a classroom over time that one can see power relations smooth and striate, reterritorialise and deterritorialise.

171 I use the term here to refer to 'specifically exceptional powers or qualities' (Weber, 1978: 241) that get students to believe (collectively) in the project of education at hand.

I suggest, the use of strategic identity and strategic hierarchy may be necessary. As I noted in Chapter Four, musicians partaking in improvisation may be unable to fully escape the hierarchical roles they have been socialised into in wider society – with the upshot that some musicians may feel less confident than others when musicking – and the same is undoubtedly true in the classroom, where students may feel less confident in participating as a result of experiencing relationships of domination in society outside the classroom. In order to escape this, effective facilitation is required in order that all can feel comfortable contributing to the learning process. This does not, however, simply mean that a reversal of the hierarchies of domination should be implemented, and bell hooks reflects thoughtfully on some of the difficulties that can arise from such a situation:

> Sometimes students who want professors to grapple with class differences often simply desire that individuals from less materially privileged backgrounds be given center stage so that an inversion of hierarchical structures takes place, not a disruption. One semester, a number of black female students from working-class backgrounds attended a course I taught on African American women writers. They arrived hoping I would use my professorial power to decenter the voices of privileged white students in nonconstructive ways so that those students would experience what it is like to be an outsider. Some of these black students rigidly resisted attempts to involve the others in an engaged pedagogy where space is created for everyone. Many of the black students feared that learning new terminology or new perspectives would alienate them from familiar social relations. Since these fears are rarely addressed as part of a progressive pedagogical process, students caught in the grip of such anxiety often sit in classes feeling hostile, estranged, refusing to participate. I often face students who think that in my classes they will "naturally" not feel estranged and that part of this feeling of comfort, of being "at home," is that they will not have to work as hard as they do in other classes.
>
> These students are not expecting to find alternative pedagogy in my classes but merely "rest" from the negative tensions they may feel in the majority of other courses. It is my job to address these tensions. (1994: 188-189)

Important here is hooks' claim that it is *her job* to address these tensions. Whilst I would argue that this should not rule out the possibility of the facilitator helping the class to self-organise a solution (indeed, this would be preferable), the division of labour created by having a facilitator who takes *responsibility* for addressing this problem – and who brings their experience and expertise to bare on it (even if only by supplying suggestions that can be discussed, rather than by imposing a hylomorphic solution). Thus, a division of labour (which will often constitute a temporary hierarchy) is likely to be necessary to help the class move beyond such an impasse without the classroom resorting to state utopian forms of organisation or dissolving into an atopian chaos.[172]

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172 Similar approaches may be needed when the subject matter is particularly sensitive. Reflecing on workshops on trauma run with the Nottingham Free School, Sara Motta talks of 'the necessity of having tightly organized, intensely thought out, and

The importance of this division of labour is reinforced by Ellsworth, who – reflecting on her own experiences of critical pedagogy – notes that:

> [a]cting as if our classroom were a safe space in which democratic dialogue was possible and happening did not make it so...we needed classroom practices that confronted the power dynamics inside and outside of our classroom that made [such] democratic dialogue impossible' (Ellsworth, 1994: 315)[173].

To facilitate such practices without restoring traditional hierarchies is clearly a difficult task, and Cox and Warner's metaphor of improvisation functioning as a utopian spider web could be utilised here: stretch the classroom too far in either direction (too much hierarchy, too little strategic hierarchy) and it will no longer function as a nomadic utopia; but make it and repair it as you go and it can prove surprisingly durable. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for the facilitator to rotate between classes (Motta, 2012b: 146), ensuring that power-over does not become concentrated in the hands of a particular participant. Given nomadic utopianism's commitment to non-hierarchical forms of organisation, the aim should certainly be for the division of labour between the facilitator and the participants to become less noticeable over time – even to wither away entirely – but even if achieved this could not be thought of as a 'once-and-for-all' solution, and should informal operations of power or tyrannies of hierarchy arise the division of labour between the facilitator and the other participants may need to be made again.

Educational autonomy and degenerate nomadic utopias

Whilst I have drawn on the experiences of Free Schools in discussing the classroom as a nomadic utopia, it should be clear from my use of experiments within formal educational institutions that nomadic utopian education should not be thought of as something that operates solely outside the formal academy. There are a number of good arguments for 'de-schooling' and free schooling (that is, enabling a form of education outside formal, hierarchically structured educational institutions) (see Hern, ed. 2008; TRAPESE collective, 2007; Antliff, 2009; Shantz, 2012; Motta, 2012b) – and it is important to create

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highly trained facilitators to work in situations and workshops related to trauma and other emotional issues affecting workshop participants (including the facilitator).' (2012b: 154)

173 See also Judith Suissa (2009; 2010) and Justin Mueller's (2012) criticisms of Summerhill School's liberatarian attitude to education (based on its founder A.S. Neill's claim that 'without adult suggestion of any kind' a child can reach their potential [1992: 3]).

autonomist spaces away from formal institutions – but to restrict nomadic education to informal spaces such as Free Schools necessarily limits the impact it can have (quite simply, it will reach very few people – and by and large, will only reach those people already predisposed to nomadic thought), and may well result in problems regarding resource and time management (Motta, 2012b). Against this, formal educational institutions constitute one of the few communal public spaces in contemporary life, as Chris Carlsson makes clear:

> [a] social institution, like school, that is self-consciously public and subject to political/popular control, however compromised, is important to a radical agenda that hopes to extend democratic social control over the whole of public life…The public schools could be the best arena for us to learn what public life is about, and how we can participate in it (1993: 46).

Taking on board the claim that education can *never* be neutral, then, I would encourage nomadically minded educators to work within formal educational institutions (state forms in the Deleuzean sense, whether private or publicly owned). Although it is important that experiments outside formal educational spaces are conducted, nomadic utopian educators should heed the words of Stevphen Shukaitis, who – talking of a 'nomadic educational machine'– notes that 'one *can* find ways to make use of the institutional space without being *of* the institution, without taking the institution's goals as one's own' (2009b: 167, emphasis added to 'can')[174]. In so doing, educators can create 'under-commons and enclaves within multiple disciplines and spaces' (.ibid)[175], all the while reflecting – preferably collectively – on the role that formal educational institutions play in reproducing capital, and considering alternatives (Vidya Ahsram, 2009: 165; Olssen and Peters, 2005; Canaan and Shumar, eds., 2009; Lambert, Parker and Neary: 2007; Noterman and Pusey, 2012). It is important to note, then, that nomadic becomings may be begat from within state institutions.[176]

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[174] Paulo Freire, for example, worked within formal educational institutions, whilst the Brazilian Landless Workers' Movement ('Movimento Sam Terra') collaborates – critically – with the Brazilian state and universities in its facilitation of popular education programmes (Kane, 2000; de Carvahlo, 2010). Tom Moylan (2011), meanwhile, has spoken of the utopian becomings of the Milwaukee based 'Rethinking Schools' project, which has its origins in the state school system and continues to publish material aimed at teachers within the state education sector.

[175] The concept of the commons in education is also utilised by the Edu-Factory collective (see edu-factory.org), who conceive of it using the Deleuzean concepts of the virtual and the actual. For them '[t]he common isn't the umpteenth repositioning of a new dawn, or a weak preconfiguration of utopian hope. The common is that which lives in the present, a full virtuality, intended this time as the potentiality of the actual. The paths of self-education confronted in Edu-factory are not marginal spaces but, to use the categories of Chandra Talpade Mohanty, new spatialtemporal coordinates for the production of oppositional knowledges and the organization of living knowledge's autonomy.' (2009: 11)

[176] This lends further weight to my suggestion on p.122, above, that the geopolitical state may be an important bulwark against the hierarchies and inequalities of global capitalism. Autonomist marxist theory, meanwhile, holds out hope for what I would call nomadic becomings emanating from the forms of organisation found within postfordist organisation of work (see Eden, 2012 for a sympathetically critical discussion of key strands of autonomist thought).

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how education is an important feature of utopianism. It establishes a complex relationship between education (conditioned by the epistemological approach taken); the classroom and the school; and wider society. I have argued that education is a form of utopianism that has two initial utopian functions. Firstly, it produces spaces of learning as utopias (either state or nomadic); secondly, it reproduces wider social structures either by reinforcing norms through strictly regulated forms of knowledge (state utopian education); or by challenging norms through collectively constructed knowledge (nomadic utopian education). The utopias created in the second of these structures have a further utopian function: in a state utopian society, a state utopian classroom or school serves to repress desire and thus suggests to students (and teachers) that statist forms of organisation are the only possible forms; whilst a nomadic utopian space of learning educates desires so that they believe in forms of organisation that exceed the status quo. In a nomadic utopia, meanwhile, it is reasonable to speculate that education would serve an important role in challenging tyrannies of habit that had emerged, and would thus reproduce the utopia as a place of becoming.

Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to think through how it might be possible to have a utopian politics in an age that has ceased to have faith in the future. Drawing on the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, it has developed a concept that I have called 'nomadic utopianism' – a force of 'ethically good' organisation that seeks to bring the new into being not in accordance with a transcendent lack, but through the immanent power of non-hierarchically structured affective organisation. The nomadic utopia is the place produced (and continually reproduced) by these forces, although 'place' here refers to a form of organisation that has gained an identity through time, rather than simply a location on the surface of the earth; and the nomadic utopia cannot be considered separately from the forces that reproduce it. Nomadic utopianism, then, does not restore belief in the future so much as offer the future as a time and place unknowable in advance, but that is connected to the present. It is a temporally disruptive as well as spatial form.

It is important to emphasise that the nomadic utopia is a spatial form, however. I believe that it avoids the dangers associated with Deleuze's ontological approach, as well as with approaches to utopia that view it as a process. Though I do not follow Saul Newman in claiming that Deleuze's thought is necessarily 'hysterical', there is certainly a danger that in the rush to validate desire, becoming and flux no gains will be made – resulting in a utopianism without a utopia: a philosophy embodied by the vision Zamyatin paints of the Mephi flying the INTEGRAL on a journey not to a good place, but to no place. Nomadic utopianism remembers – with Deleuze and Guattari – that deterritorialization is nothing if it does not reterritorialize.

This reterritorialization must never be absolute, however. I have shown how the concept of nomadic utopia retains an etymological fidelity to utopia, stressing the simultaneity and consistency (in the Deleuzean sense) of 'good', 'no' and 'place'. It states that there can be no 'good place' if that good place does not refuse the very name 'good place'. The utopia itself is nomadic: it knows no resting point and is reproduced through the repetition of difference-in-itself: it is a residual product of utopianism rather than

calling the utopianism into being. It flees from finality, but as it does it 'makes flight create'. It is thus vitally 'alive' in the inorganic sense of the term developed through Deleuze's thought; striving – *desiring* – to become other.

It is clear, however, that a great deal of utopian thought does not correspond to nomadic utopianism, and I have also developed the concept of 'state utopianism'. In its 'purest' form, this corresponds to a number of colloquial and anti-utopian approaches to utopia (though I note that some pro-utopian thinkers adopt it as well). State utopianism proceeds by way of rationally designing a utopia and then orienting political action (utopianism) to the creation and reproduction of this lack. Such a philosophy, I have argued, is necessarily hierarchical and limits the capacity of subjects – both collective and individual – to affect and be affected. It pits the individual against the collective and privileges stable identities over the flux of difference-in-itself, which is seen as a threat to the perfection state utopianism claims for its vision. I have also argued that this form is more prevalent than is often assumed, and that the dominant neoliberal ideology constitutes a form of state utopianism. I have argued that from a nomadic perspective the state utopia is ethically bad, and so should be understood as a dystopia.

The state and the nomadic utopia should not simply be seen as opposite forms, however and I have shown how state utopias can also emerge immanently from nomadic utopian forms of organisation due to the formation of 'tyrannies of habit': a belief that 'the good place' has been achieved and that no further becoming is necessary. In this, my approach goes beyond a number of accounts that identify two varieties of utopianism by considering the relationship between them. I have argued that at times a pragmatism may be required in order to ward off statist forms of organisation, and have shown how the philosophy of nomadic utopianism must adapt to deal with particularity, contingency and the desires of those seeking to produce the place.

Whilst my primary concern in this thesis has been to develop a sociological account of utopia, which is to say an understanding of utopia that can be utilised to analyse forms of organisation in 'real life', I also believe that it is important my concepts are applied to utopian texts (and that these texts are connected

back to 'real life'). As such, I have utilised the concepts of the nomadic utopia and the state utopia (as well as the relationship between these forms) to offer readings of three works of what might broadly be called 'utopian literature'. In doing this, my interest was primarily to observe the operations of state and nomadic utopianism in the fictional places in which these works are set in order to flesh out and nuance the theoretical approach I had developed. Yet by utilising the conceptual framework developed in this thesis alongside the 'function based approach' to utopian texts, I also considered the ways in which these texts may impact on their readers, arguing that there was the potential for them to generate nomadic becomings and offer insights that may help guide nomadic utopian practice.

Indeed, I referred back to these texts in my analyses of 'real life' utopian spaces in the thesis' final two chapters. In these, I engaged with practices that (with the exception of what I called nomadic utopian education) do not always see themselves as political. In so doing, I helped expand the terrain of 'utopian studies' beyond more frequently considered forms and practices (though this is not to say that others have not engaged with the practices I analysed), and helped to demonstrate – *contra* received wisdom – the ubiquity of utopianism. I showed how state utopianism – the form of utopianism so frequently derided – is central to mainstream educational practices and is also evidenced in the symphony orchestra; but argued that particular forms of educational practice and collective musical improvisation constitute nomadic utopianism and can create nomadic utopias (whilst using the latter in particular to think through how a nomadic utopia can ossify into a state utopia/dystopia). I also argued that the ramifications of these places goes beyond their immediate confines and that they function either to repress desires (state utopianism) or educate desires (nomadic utopianism). In this sense, the 'real life' places I have considered may have a utopian function in the manner so frequently associated with text based utopias.

In utilising Deleuze's thought to develop the conceptual framework utilised in this thesis, it is hoped that it will also be of relevance to those seeking to think through how it is possible to utilise Deleuze's thought in political praxis. By utilising the term 'state' to refer to ethically bad organisation, this thesis also implicitly positions itself as a work with anarchist resonances, although I would not wish to say that this is an anarchist work *per se*, and I believe that it can also be seen as operating in the tradition of autonomism.

Suggestions for further engagement

In *The Dispossessed*'s final chapter, the reader sees Shevek return to his home planet Anarres. As much as this is the conclusion of the book, it is also the point at which a number of becomings are seen to take flight. Similarly, I do not want this conclusion to be seen as 'the last word': nomadic utopianism resists closure, and there are a number of ways in which it – and the approach to utopia developed in this thesis – could be taken further. Broadly speaking, these can be divided into two categories. Firstly, it could be applied to further practices; and secondly, it could be considered alongside theoretical approaches, debates and concepts that may diversify and/or problematise it. These are not distinct, however: as I have argued for a theoretical approach that responds to life, the 'application' of theory to practice will in itself broaden, diversify and/or problematise that theory.

Further practices

There are a number of further forms and practices that might be considered in relation to the approach to utopia this thesis has developed: any form or practice, for example, where people are organised collectively could be analysed; as could any form or practice that influences the manner in which people relate to one another. Here, I want to suggest three such forms and practices that I believe could enter into a productive relationship with the approach to utopia I have developed.

The broad (and related) fields of architecture, planning and housing is an area I believe it might be particularly fruitful to consider. The built environment clearly has an enormous influence on the manner in which people behave, and certain forms may be more conducive to nomadic organisation than others. Robert Neuwirth (2004), John Turner (1972, 1977) and Colin Ward (1976, 2002 and with Dennis Hardy, 1984) have suggested that the practices utilised by squatters are testament to the ability of people to self-organise a built environment and – whilst not wanting to fetishise the appalling conditions that many urban squatters people live in – this clearly has relevance for nomadic utopianism: could a community that encourages difference-in-itself develop immanently? Or – baring in mind Bakunin's claim that

rejecting hierarchy does not mean rejecting the authority of the expert – is a more 'hylomorphic' approach desirable here? Might it be possible for an architect to function as an artisan, working with rather than on matter to help coax it to self-organisation in the manner of the Helen Papaioannou score featured in Chapter Four?

Contemporary art practice is another field that might offer a rich seam for engagement. Nicholas Bourriaud's influential concept of 'relational aesthetics' (2002, 2005), in which the viewer of art no longer passively contemplates an artwork located in a transcendent, autonomous realm but instead participates in – and becomes the medium of – the work itself would initially seem to resonate strongly with nomadism, particularly in its claim that artworks exist in time as much as in space. Resonances can also be detected in Joseph Beuys' concept of social sculpture (2004), which argues that everyone is an artist and that the greatest works of art are mass, participatory happenings that generate new forms of organisation. Yet both Bourriaud and Beuys' approaches have been subject to powerful criticisms that suggest they offer little more than apolitical, hagiographic curatorial strategies; provide escape and compensation rather than the transformation of subjectivity; and reproduce the logics of neoliberalism (Grétarsdóttir et al., 2012; Barok and Bishop, 2009; Hatherley, 2009; Bishop, 2012; Murphy, 2012). Is it possible to think a participatory art that does not fall victim to these critiques, and which does fulfil the function of the education of desires? And what should the status of art be? Do art institutions merely offer 'deviant nomadic utopias'? These debates also relate to what the relationship between art and everyday life should be. Is art something that should be entangled in everyday life, working for the community; or need it maintain a position of relative autonomy from which it can criticise life, shaking people out of too-comfortable habits? Should art seek to become an immanent, nomadic utopia within the present, or should it function in a heuristic manner akin to Jameson's anti-anti-utopianism or Levitas' 'education of desire'? Laurence Davis' (2009) essay on the function of art in utopian fiction and theory would be of relevance here, I would suggest.

I would also suggest that the framework I have developed here might be useful in analysing contemporary social movements and might provide them with a useful tool to encourage debate and articulate their

political visions. For the sake of brevity I will use Occupy as an example here. Firstly, my approach could be utilised to frame the debate between the 'state utopians' who believe a vision needs to be articulated beforehand in order to give cohesion and identity to the movement (Žižek, 2012); and the 'nomadic utopians' who believe that the movement's strength lies in its prefigurative nature and the very fact that it does not have a 'programme' in the conventional sense of the word (Razsa and Kurnik, 2012). Care would need to be taken to pay attention to the precise *function* of any utopian visions, however: they may, of course, be used heuristically rather than simply as blueprints directing action. Secondly, I would suggest that nomadic utopianism might offer those criticised for lacking a programme a useful concept by which to articulate their vision of the coming community. 'We are utopian', they could say to critics, 'just not as you understand it'. In this sense the communities of occupy themselves function as the nomadic utopia – its forms of organisation prefiguring the society-to-come.[177] There may be a sense here, however, that visions of how this society *may* become would aid Occupy, and so heuristic visions of a future nomadic utopia may have an important function for the movement.

Broadening the theoretical debate

Given this thesis' use of Gilles Deleuze, it has been necessarily limited in its theoretical scope. Whilst his philosophical approach has provided a useful framework for rethinking the concept of utopia, it is not – of course – complete; and I have not explored all of its aspects. Here, I want to suggest three points of engagement that might be taken up in order to take this thesis' claims further. I have tried to draw attention to issues that would perhaps challenge – rather than deepen – nomadic utopianism here, though this is by no means a complete list. This would, of course, open up the project to critical scrutiny, and may well result in the approach I have developed here being modified. No doubt some people would use these points of engagement to reject the approach I have developed here, although it is my hope that none of these points for further engagement need prove fatal.

Firstly, I would suggest that deeper engagement with property relations and economic organisation would be a worthwhile task. I briefly noted how private property has been abolished on Anarres, and that this

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177 For this to be true, I would suggest that Occupy needs to cease reproducing dynamics from dominant society. There have, for instance, been startling incidents of misogyny within occupations that have not properly been addressed (Wiley, 2012).

made a large non-hierarchical society possible; and I have also suggested that inequalities of wealth should be considered as hierarchical formations. Furthermore, private property clearly serves the statist function of opposing the individual to the collective, and frequently serves as a limit on affective relationships. Yet I have not interrogated the relationship between property and forms of utopia in this thesis, and I believe this would be an extremely worthwhile task. It would not be too much to suggest, for example, that a widespread nomadic utopianism would require the abolition of private property and workers seizing control of the means of production. In this, I agree with Alain Badiou (2010) and Žižek (2009) that the word 'communism' needs to be reclaimed from its associations with totalitarianism (much as a number of thinkers have sought to do for utopia). The question here, then, is whether it is possible to create prefigurative communist nomadic utopias within a capitalist society (not necessarily as self-contained islands, but as places whose becomings enter wider circulations of exchange[178]), or whether organisation should be oriented towards a rupture in which bourgeois property relations are shattered once and for all? The latter positions would likely judge nomadic utopianism under capitalism a philosophy of escapism; and see the nomadic utopia as a form possible only after the end of class based prehistory. Yet (unsurprisingly) I am inclined more towards the former position, and would point here to Marx's claim in *The German Ideology* that '[c]ommunism for us is not a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality will have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things' (1970: 56). I would also suggest that Dan Hancox's *Utopia and the Valley of Tears* (2012, 2013)[179] (about the anarcho-communist town of Marinadela in Spain) might be of relevance here; and believe it would be particularly worthwhile to think through how nomadic utopianism might function in light of autonomism and communisation theory's reactions to contemporary forms of capitalist organisation, and the debates between them (de Mattis, 2012; Dauvé, 1997; Theorie Communiste, 2005; Guattari and Negri, 1985; Berardi, 1980; Cleaver, 2000; Virno, 2004; Hardt and Negri, 2008; Penzin and Virno, 2010; Eden, 2012).

Of course a great deal of interesting communist experimentation has occurred in the global south in

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178 Along with Alex Andrews, I have co-founded Records on Ribs , a record label that releases music as common property. Although problematic, we see this very much as a form of prefigurative communism: a utopian (virtual) space that unpicks capitalism whilst pointing to a society beyond it (see Bell, 2010; 2011d for more on this).

179 The 2012 edition is a shortened, digital version of a longer book that will be published in 2013.

recent years, and this leads me on to the second point of engagement that I believe could be productive for the approach to utopia that I have developed here: an engagement with non-western political praxis (or at least forms of political praxis that draw on non-western traditions: there should not be a dichotomy here). This is, of course, a broad category – and I will not do it justice here, but some brief points can be made. The first is to note that interest in non-western utopias is expanding. Although utopianism has often been seen as a peculiarly western, or Christian concept (Kumar, 1987; Reis, 2010), a number of scholars in and outside of utopian studies are challenging this and arguing that utopianism exists in other – if not all – cultures (Wu, 1995; Dutton, 2010; Lauri, 2010; Sargent, 2010; Mattiace, 2003). The second point is to suggest that forms of political organisation that resonate with (but should not be conflated with) nomadic utopianism have been prevalent in the global south in recent years (Motta, 2009; Sitrin, 2007a, 2007b, 2012; Tormey, 2006; Mattiace, 2003). In seeking to apply (or modify) the concept to take into account these movements a great deal of care must be taken into account not to overcode struggles that operate in very different political traditions, but this is not to say that these movements and nomadic utopianism might would have nothing of value to say to each other. On a less ambitious note, the arguments about musical improvisation made in this thesis might benefit from an engagement with non-western forms of improvisation, many of which function very differently from the processes I have described.

Thirdly, I believe it would be interesting to consider the nature of life in a broader sense. In the first chapter of this thesis I noted that – for Deleuze and Guattari – 'everything is alive', including inorganic matter. Yet this thesis has remained largely anthropocentric. In light of work (much of it recent) on the vitality of matter and 'things' (Bennett, 2010), the nature of the ecological (Morton, 2012), the intelligence of plants (Marder, 2012) and geographies of the 'more-than-human' (Panelli, 2010; Lorimer, 2010) it would be interesting to consider what it might mean for nomadic utopianism to include objects that are normally regarded as 'inert', as well as forms of life normally considered outside the domain of political organisation (the plant and animal kingdoms). Should nomadic utopianism's non-hierarchy lead it to reject What might it mean to have a nonhuman nomadic utopia, or an ecological nomadic utopia?

Finally, this thesis has only touched on the issue of scale. In discussing improvisation I noted that the relatively small size of most improvising collectives makes nomadic organisation easier, if not possible (though there are improvising orchestras which may have up to fifty musicians playing at any one time). It may well be that organising the number of musicians that play in a symphony orchestra requires some form of state utopianism (though not, I would contend, to the extremes that symphony orchestras often take this), but I would not wish to extrapolate from this to suggest that nomadic utopianism requires small communities. It is a flexible form that can be adapted to suit the needs and requirements of life (indeed, for it to do otherwise would see it embracing hylomorphism: imposing a form on life), and the chapter on education has shown that larger groups can be organised as nomadic utopias, whilst Anarres offers a heuristic vision of how a significantly larger nomadic utopia might function. These different scales of organisation clearly bring different organisational challenges and it would be an interesting task to consider what some of these might be, and how nomadic utopianism might deal with them.

Nomadic utopianism into the future?

This is by no means the end, then. Nomadic utopianism must – I argue – go on. It must go on so we can remedy the social depression of late capitalism, and it must go on so that we can once again talk of a future: not a future to which we must defer, but a future that arrives prefiguratively in the here and now. Utopia cannot simply make the present impossible, it must make the future possible. In so doing, it must respond to debates and to the pragmatics of application in the 'real world'. It must also beware the dangers of state utopianism – but acknowledge the strength that utopian visions can have in estranging certainty and educating desire. It must create nomadic utopias in the here-and now, and think how they too might educate desires such that they form part of a rhizome of nomadic utopianism: a force of becoming that increases the capacity of all to affect and be affected. We do not yet know what utopianism can do.

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