

SUMMARIES

Bjarne Sode Funch: Silence: An Existential Utopia

This article introduces the idea of silence as an existential utopia. Accounts of religious and spiritual practices, along with fiction writing, show how humans have always sought silence for contemplation and self-confrontation. Chaos and silence can be thought of as opposites, and silence becomes essential in the quest for clarity and existential insight during difficult times when suicide seems to be the ultimate release. Silence also seems to be an urgent necessity during times when wars and crisis are more predominant than positive visions of the future, and when many people occupy themselves with cyberspace rather than their physical reality. It is concluded that silence is not only a challenge for encountering the unknown, but it also has a potential for leading to a spiritual way of life and artistic creativity.

Bjarne Jacobsen: Utopia and extreme sport

Extreme sports began in the 1980s. From then on it has developed both concerning the amount of disciplines and the number of participants, and today it even receives some public interest – many ordinary people have run a marathon.

Man has always occupied himself with wondering about utopia and the kind of utopias that might be achievable. This is caused by existential concerns that force man to look beyond the given.

Conditions associated with globalisation and the progress of science and technology in the twentieth century has been an offensive against the last century's great utopias. At the same time, on the one hand increased demands have been imposed upon the individual to form his own life, and on the other hand expectations encourage him to choose this life within the range of conformity. The consequence is that man's basic existential endeavour is blocked behind the conformed and hopeless. In this dilemma, extreme sport appears as a domain where the individual is given free rein to set their own goals and to pursue them uncompromisingly. In this way, disciplines of extreme sports can be perceived as small individual utopian projects.

Kasper Levin: The Utopian Body – Capoeira and the Deterritorialization of ADHD

Etymologically defined as a non-existing place, the concept of utopia is commonly associated with abstract ideologies and social movements toward ideal societies. Thus, a utopian element of thought is generally characterized as an imaginative projection or social dreaming. However, in this article it is argued that our physical body is the site of a more concrete utopia that cannot be relegated to an unreal realm of dreams or imaginary projections.

With the starting point in a critical analysis of the description of the body in *Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder* (ADHD), it is suggested that the body expresses a

utopian element or dimension, a placeless place, which has been approached by phenomenology through the concept of pre-reflexive consciousness or ‘the embodied mind’ heavily inspired by Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s work. However, beyond the phenomenological idea of a pre-reflexive consciousness, it is further argued that the notion of a utopian dimension of the body has a fundamental affinity with cultural theory. The cultural formation of the body concerns the question of the material conditions for the body in movement, which reveals what Michel Foucault terms the ‘utopian body’ or an ‘incorporeal materialism’. By animating Gilles Deleuze’s and Felix Guattari’s notion of deterritorialization, the utopian or incorporeal materialism is linked to the immediacy of sensation foregrounding aesthetic and expressive aspects of the body in cultural formation. In exploring the psychological potential of this utopian and aesthetic territory between phenomenology and cultural theory, it is suggested that the Brazilian martial art *capoeira* is an expression of a concrete aesthetic practice that challenges the description of the body in ADHD.

Anne Maj Nielsen: Mindfulness – implicit ideas of utopia?

The field of mindfulness and meditation has experienced a growing interest in the western world in recent decades. Mindfulness aims to develop a friendly, accepting and mindful awareness in the present moment. Critiques have argued that this aim is deployed in a new kind of management technology where mindfulness is used for individualized stress-reduction in order to keep up with existing or worsened working conditions, instead of stress-reducing changes in the common working conditions.

Mindfulness research emphasizes positive outcomes in coping with demands and challenges in everyday life, especially considering suffering (for example, stress and pain). While explicit constructions of Utopia present ideas of specific societal communities in well-functioning harmony, the interest in mindfulness can in contradistinction be considered an implicit critique of present life-conditions and an “implicit utopia” with ideas about better ways of living.

Some core ideas in mindfulness are included in a discussion of mindfulness as a kind of ‘modernity-tool’ for the development of a basic attitude and way of being that was formerly supported in aspects of everyday practices, which could be the occasion and opportunity of sensory-aesthetic experiences of existential belonging. Similarly, mindfulness can be the opportunity for sensory-aesthetic experiences of existential belonging, which implies an implicit critique and implicit utopian imaginations due to the radical difference between experiences of mindfulness and of a prevailing goal-directed orientation to effectiveness.

Louise Margrethe Pedersen: What are we fighting for? – The good utopian society versus the utopian self-realization

Utopias do not only exist ideally as a dream of great societies in books and in the minds of men. Utopias exist in human praxis, human communities of praxis and the culturally developed items and language that support this praxis. The main thesis of this article is that

there has been a shift from the utopia of the good society to the utopia of self-realization. The development of peoples' participation in volunteer associations over the last 50 years in Denmark and the United States shows that activities in the idea-based and community-oriented associations are declining or stagnating, while activities in cultural and leisure associations, which focus on a limited interest or activity and on the members' own activities, are increasing. Associations that have self-fulfillment and self-development as a product are often opted for.

The social utopias are 'outsourced' to professional mass organizations through subscription payments. In return, members avoid having to use time and energy on behalf of the cause they support. This is unfortunate as the community-oriented associations create social capital through their 'bridging' and socializing function in society. In this regard, our common utopias concern us all.

In this article an activity-theoretical analysis and concepts are used (Leontyev, 2002) in order to uncover the utopias that have existed in peoples' praxis over the years. Furthermore, an activity-theoretical analysis is used to detect inconsistencies between the actual realization of utopias in praxis and the ideal conception of a utopia that the individual acknowledges as their own.

Jesper Holm & Kasper A. Kristensen: Sustainable Utopian Communities

In this paper we will analyze examples of selected contemporary, minor and institutional communities for people with development deficiencies in Denmark, contrasting the complexity and non-sustainability of recent modern societies. We perceive these partly resilient and sustainable communities as realutopian cases (Olin Wright 2013), where people conduct their lives in processes of shared social, cultural and spiritual living and produce viable life resources through co-shaping whole-system community environments. The analysis will focus on the background and characteristics of one of these real-utopian institutional communities, which is formed historically through utopian ideologies and social standards of practical, cultural and inclusive life-world settings. The main example in the paper is a case analysis of the 60-years-old special institution Marjatta, which has developed a flourishing living community in a minor, sustainable society. The example is picked out from an empirical research study of 3 special institutions, which provide education, treatment and housing for children and youths with developmental deficiencies and differing diagnoses. The research project was researched in an open partnership concentrating on the experiences of the institutional staff and leaders, and attempting to shape health promotion through various methods and community welfare. The paper will introduce our approach by reconfiguring the historical search for concrete or real utopian social community systems, by contextualizing current conflicts of disability inclusion in Denmark and giving other examples of sustainable communities. We will explore this in a historical and political social context with a critical perspective on the contemporary dystopian social changes. We conclude by arguing what this case has to say about the underlying conditions for realizing real utopian communities in a rapidly changing, surrounding society.

Peter Berliner, Elena de Casas Soberón & Jeppe Høj Christensen: Utopia as action – learning as a space for peace

The educational system can promote social resilience through organizing learning processes as experiential spaces for peace, i.e. a learning environment that gives hands-on knowledge on how to provide security (social support) and freedom for all of the participants. The article presents empirical data from a training seminar on building peace through educational methods and values. The participants saw school-based peacebuilding as a process involving moving from a culture of punishment and discipline to a culture of curiosity and support. This movement comprised strengthening social support, focusing on resources and solutions, welcoming diversity, and promoting openness to new options and understandings. Peace education is to start practicing a concrete utopia of trust, openness, security and hope – in a shared learning process facilitated through a structured, but open-ended method of teaching.

Morten Nissen: User-Driven Standards as Concrete Utopia: A Cultural-Historical Approach to the Generalization of Subjectivity

The article expounds an understanding of standards with a view to articulating a concept of user-driven standards relevant to work with young drug users. This is done in a developmental logic, from a contradictory universal determination through the concept of meaning in cultural-historical psychology, as ideals for practice embodied in artifacts. This determination leads to the critical discussion of standardization as the governance without ethics, which emerges with modernity and capitalism and which frames the problematic dichotomy of standards and subjects in the social sciences. The kind of critical modernity theory that seeks a standpoint outside this process is problematized as abstract utopia and a kind of concrete utopia is suggested, setting off from social movements, cultivates ‘thickened narratives’ of the context, the inside, and the transcendence of standards. The approach is unfolded in the field of drugs by identifying three issues; evidence, pharmaceutical harm reduction and mutual help, which, finally, are formulated as questions for the practices with young drug users.

Jakob Skov Knudsen: A reality behind reality – Utopia viewed from a phenomenological perspective

The aim of the article is to explore a deeper understanding of time and its role in everyday life. Whereas a traditional understanding of the concept of utopia sees it as something negative, the argument in this article is that reaching out, grappling with what is ahead of us, no matter how feeble, is a very commonplace part of orientating in everyday life – here named “micro-utopian projects”. Furthermore, it is argued that this reaching out towards the future opens for new possibilities to appear – possibilities that otherwise would not have manifested themselves.

For this purpose, two cases are introduced – therapy and religiosity. Within both of these two spheres one can identify ways of orientating and acting, which pave the way

for new possibilities to appear. Possibilities that would otherwise have remained impossible or invisible – in the sense that they did not appear as possibilities until after new orientations toward the future have begun.

By referring to Kierkegaard it is argued that exactly this oscillation, this constant reflection, between what is, what could be and what has been, where all three time domains are influential on one another, is the foundation for human existence and in that sense, the source of tremendous possibilities and challenges. A deeper understanding of the concept of utopia therefore provides us with better ways to understand human beings.

Kim Rasmussen: Children's Utopias?

Do children have utopian ideas and thoughts of the future? If the answer is yes, in what form are they expressed? And how can adults interpret them? Based on these questions, the article attempts to show that the concept of “children’s utopias” may represent “a field” or phenomenon that includes both criticism of contemporary issues and children’s fantasies about the future and improvement of current conditions. The article includes examples of “children’s utopias”, so the concept is supported by reference to empirical data and experiences.

Søren Berthelsen Holm and Gitte Riis Hansen: Utopia and general education – General education in an existential perspective.

This article is based on the assumption that the general education is under pressure from the more evidence-based understanding on education that has its focus on effect, predictable outcome and so on. The evidence-based education, which is based on the PISA research, has a more casual approach. This carries the risk that education will be approached with methods on what works, and specially designed methods and concepts, and not an approach that embraces life lived, which concerns ethics, community and life philosophy in general. The consequence will then be that humans will be reduced to instrumentalized competence. In this article, we will use utopia as an approach to an existential general education, where being and becoming is seen as important themes in education as opposites of the evidence-based education. Existential education is seen in a historical context and thereby is seen in a way to educate in the trials that postmodern society brings to the subject, without falling into superficial social constructive thinking. Education is, in this perspective, a continuum where themes such as time, transcendence, wonder, meaning and search for the truth become the main characteristics. General education is never an education without an idea, in an existential perspective these ideas collaborate with the ability to be and in being participate in the complexity of the postmodern – these ideas can be summed up in the approach from serendipity, which is the article’s message on an ontological general education.