

## Protest Pastoral as Utopia in the work of Juliana Spahr

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In what ways can the conventions of pastoral engage with ideas of harmony? Particularly how can Paul Alpers's redefinition of the 'conventional' pastoral as invested in convening, or 'coming together', open the pastoral to considerations of community? This paper addresses the work of contemporary American ecopoet Juliana Spahr for how her collaged and composite poetics are demonstrative of a lyric pastoral with utopian aims. Looking specifically at her volume *That Winter The Wolf Came*, it proposes the protest space as a new type of convening, one that allows the interstices and vulnerabilities of both the pastoral and of utopian thought to emerge.

**Keywords:** Ecopoetry, Pastoral, Community

## Pacific City: The Dream of a Co-operative Community in Late-Nineteenth-Century Sinaloa, Mexico

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A place currently marked by the violence of drug trafficking and organised crime, the Mexican state of Sinaloa is a fascinating testament to the utopian socialist projects that were developed in America during the nineteenth century. In 1886, the Pennsylvanian civil engineer Albert K. Owen founded a utopian colony, called Pacific City, in Topolobampo Bay on the coast of Sinaloa while carrying out the building of the transoceanic railway in which Topolobampo was a key region. In order to turn Pacific City into a powerful metropolis and a settlement strategically located in the centre of the trade routes towards the East and the West, Owen devised a socio-economic system of integral co-operation intended to eradicate the social ills generated by the inefficient and unequal circulation of goods. This paper seeks to understand the significance of Owen's utopian experiment in the context of the processes of nation and identity formation in pre-revolutionary Mexico. The fact that the flourishing territory of Sinaloa did not stimulate the greed of Spanish colonisers or Mexican landowners raises the question of why North American entrepreneurs became interested in the railway and agricultural promotion of the region as well as why the Mexican government welcomed and protected the North American settlers as heralds of the economic progress and prosperous development of Mexico. Although Owen describes his project in a number of pamphlets, the analysis will principally be based on his piece of writing entitled *A Dream of an Ideal City* (1897), in which he offers a detailed portrayal of Pacific City as a great socialist metropolis whose social harmony is the result of technical improvements and a co-operative socio-economic organisation.

**Keywords:** Utopian Socialist Colonies; Co-operative Community Experiments; Mexican Utopianism.

## *Space 1999*. Harmony in the Cosmos

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This paper deals with the British TV series *Space 1999*, broadcast in the 1970s. Despite its huge budget, it was a commercial failure. However, today it remains as a cult series. In addition, it showed the crisis atmosphere in United Kingdom at that time, by providing interesting keys about pessimism in British culture, as well as its anxieties regarding the present and the future.

The story is set in a close future in a moonbase. A nuclear explosion spin off the Moon, beginning a journey through the Cosmos. The ongoing episodes described the events suffered by moonbase dwellers. They let us to cast a shadow about the role of science and technology, war, time, utopia or the relationship between rationality and emotions. Fortunately, all that situations were got over by the characters as they had built a harmonic community over the time, based on friendship and soft leadership.

**Keywords:** Science Fiction, Utopia, Social Harmony

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Despite the current fascination and fear of the Singularity, surprisingly, it is still not the cyborgs, representing a transitional state of human beings becoming machines, but the rather old fashioned zombies that dominate pop culture and our collective imagination. Both of these dystopian scenarios, the zombie apocalypse, with its recent update to a biotechnological, instead of a supernatural cause, as well, as the Singularity, which is supposed to be hostile to humanity (or in the best case scenario, will view its creators with indifference), could be argued to be representing a deep crisis of humanism. A humanism, that placed human reason above nature and all else that is living. And now, in tragic irony, is causing an apparently unavoidable defeat in a deadly competition, that was initiated by itself.

On the one hand, transhumanism, with its cyborgs, still glorifies humanity. And its proponents, like Steve Fuller and Elon Musk, argue that we need to intensify the fight. Leaving fellow humans and old principles of wrong and right behind. On the other hand, the zombie narrative, superficially, seems to tell a similar story. The possibility of a harmony between soul/intellect and body seems irreparably broken. And this separation forces us to kill. Either leaving our own souls or bodies behind.

Yet, these zombies, dehumanized humans programmed to destroy humanity, whom we are supposed to be fighting, are us. And as Dale Knickerbocker argues, could be seen as the poster children for an anti-humanist, critical posthumanism. In my paper I will explore these ideas and the utopian potential for achieving or at least reimagining a new harmony, that lays dormant in identifying, not with the survivors (and neither trans- nor posthumanism), but the zombies themselves. Zombies who awake to collectively dream of a future of being alive.

**Keywords:** Transhumanism, Posthumanism, Zombies

## The Utopia of Direct Communication in the 1960s and 1970s in Turkey

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In the 1960s and 1970s, Turkey experienced an upsurge in leftist political movements. This heightened politicization, or the “Turkish 1968,” triggered by the new sociopolitical liberties of the Constitution of 1961, paved the way for a communication boom, which involved not only students and intellectuals but also workers and peasants as agents. From the beginning of the 1960s and until 1980, every political organization had the urge to communicate with the wider public, thus had its own publications, posters, forums, or graffiti. A thorough research in the archives unearths a distinctive “communicative praxis” and the emergence of liberated and nonhierarchical communication as a possibility. Therefore, from the heightened politicization of the period, critical and revolutionary utopias of the 1960s and 1970s emerged, in this case, the utopia of direct communication, as an ephemerally realized historical possibility. However, this effusion in communication came to an abrupt end in 1980, when the coup d’état of September 12 harshly interrupted all sociopolitical movements. Since then, even after the military rule ended, such a direct and nonhierarchical practice of communication has become “unthinkable,” since arguably the ideological closure of authoritarianism and neoliberalism has rendered the anti-systemic elements of the 1960s and 1970s controllable and disguised the once-likely utopias as unlikely or dead. One of the rare exceptional moments happened during the Gezi Protests of 2013, when “possibility for a new type of organized politics” with an unrestrainable practice of communication, reminiscent of “1968” for many people, surfaced for a very brief moment.

First, based on the archival findings from the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam and the Social History Research Foundation of Turkey, this presentation will scrutinize the communication boom of the 1960s and 1970s in Turkey as a utopic moment. Second, the ideological closure of post-1980 that has rendered this political practice unimaginable will be briefly analyzed. Lastly, adding the Gezi Protests into the picture, the presentation will ponder on whether the times of heightened politicization and change trigger utopias.

**Keywords:** Political movements, 1960-80, Political change and utopias, Communication boom

## The New Harmonies: Creating Tentacular Harmony: Octavia Butler and Nnedi Okorafor Future Worlds

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This paper aims to investigate the creation of utopian futures in Octavia Butler's and Nnedi Okorafor's seemingly dystopian novels. Besides being among the firsts to write black females protagonists into science fiction, both Butler and the Okorafor imagine future worlds in which different cultures, races and species come together and learn to live in harmony. I will propose a cartography of these future worlds focusing in particular on *The Parable of the Sower* (1995) and *Lilith's Brood* (2000) by Butler and *Lagoon* (2014) and *Binti* (2015) by Okorafor. All of them, indeed, deal with a dystopian devastated Earth. However, in developing new strategies of survival in a damaged planet, seem to foreshadow what Donna Haraway proposes in her recent *Staying with the Trouble. Making kin in the Chthulucene* (2016): learning to stay with the trouble of a damaged Earth by creating tentacular linking between human and non human. I will first read *Lilith's Brood* and *Binti* as sites of tentacular linking, as both explore the confrontation between the human beings and tentacled alien species: Butler's Oankali, possessing extra-tentacular arms, and Okorafor's Meduse, a jellyfish-like alien species. I will then move to *The parable of the Sower*, whose protagonist's hyperempathy syndrome - and her consequent relation with other human beings and all forms of nonhuman life - directly influenced Haraway's *Staying with the Trouble*. Moreover, the *Parable* represents the protagonist's will to shape the universe in a more sustainable way, also connected to the rehabilitation of the oceanic harmony described in *Binti*. Harmony, I will argue, does not necessarily mean absence of the dystopian: it can also be a utopian creation which starts by taking responsibility for the dystopian present and finds new ways of surviving it.

**Keywords:** Donna Haraway, Tentacular harmony, Environmentalism