# Utopia and Non-Violence

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**"PRODUCING HOPE THROUGH PRACTICE. THE PROMISE OF EXPANSIONIST PRAGMATISM IN GENERATING NEW EVERYDAY UTOPIAS"**

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**Producing Hope through Practice. The Promise of Expansionist Pragmatism in Generating New Everyday Utopias**

**Abstract**

This Paper uses pragmatist thinking to reconsider the status of utopian projects. The argument begins by noting the defensive attitudes of many utopian advocates. This defensiveness appears due to two sentiments: that many political movements remain hostile to utopias; and that the capacity of societies to generate new utopias may be declining. Focussing on the latter assertion, the argument notes that many utopias remain uncounted, so how is falling generative capacity to be gauged? It is asserted instead that the capacity of societies to generate new utopias remains undimmed. Yet, both the mechanisms through which utopian production is done, and the qualities of the utopias themselves need further deciphering if they are not to be overlooked.

This argument builds on Gardiner’s (2004) idea of everyday utopianism, reinterpreted using the network pragmatism associated with Latour (1999). Through this lens, two examples of the playing out of everyday utopias are explored. These relate to ongoing extensions of democratic representation to non-humans; and to increasingly assertive claims to moral conduct in making war through autonomising machines. Using the lessons of these examples, four qualification requirements for a network pragmatist reading of everyday utopias are generated and contrasted with conventional utopias. These qualifications relate to: grandeur, reflexivity, normalisation and extensionism. Taken together, these qualification requirements may function as a specific test for utopias to counter ubiquitous market tests and support a specifically utopian ontological politics.

**Keywords:** everyday utopia; ethics; network pragmatism; speciesism; utopian tests

**Introduction**

This Paper advances a pragmatist approach to understanding the production of ‘everyday utopias’ (Gardiner, 2004). It begins by situating this variety of utopian practice within the wider debates about utopias and their purposes. It then identifies a strong link between everyday utopias and the allied concern with ethics. Two examples from a larger world of utopic endeavour are then identified and briefly described. These two examples concern the ongoing struggle to enfranchise non-human actors; and the claims of advocates of moral weapons. These two examples are then used as the basis for developing further claims about utopic projects and their practices. In general, it is argued that utopian practice is pervasive and profoundly vibrant in its efforts to engage with current malaises and push the development of sociotechnologies in new directions.

**Utopia Under Siege?**

Utopian thinking has been under attack for a long time. Dystopian and worldy- wise siege engines surround it, with its enterprise cut off from intellectual reinforcement. The evidence to support this assessment is not hard to find. ‘The 1980s and 90s have witnessed a widespread questioning of the legitimacy of utopian discourse’ (Gardiner, 1992, p. 21). The siege predates these decades, too, extending back into the Eighteenth Century (Brinton, 1965; Kateb, 1963). Unsurprisingly, utopians often voice this besieged sentiment in their writing. Thus, Levitas (1990) talks of the ‘ever-present need to defend utopia against those who regard it as trivial and dangerous’ (p. 13). Goodwin (1980) similarly seeks to ‘defend utopianism as a mode of thought against its liberal opponents’ (p. 384).

Liberals are not the only opponents, so utopians seek allies for their utopic projects. They have long tried to ally with socialist forces – but these have remained just beyond reach or regrettably transient. They also involve getting close to those who have been among utopians’ harshest critics, like Marx. Those efforts that seek alliances with conservative thought are rarer, but have also been attempted. Many political scientists like Barber (1997) were drawn to Nozick’s (1974) broadly conservative vision of the portmanteau framework offered by the US federal governmental system. This, Nozick claimed, provided a space within which small-scale (utopian) social experimentation might proceed (see also Parrinder, 1988). Maybe this vision was actually a counter-utopia and it certainly generated critical responses from utopians, fearful perhaps of a Nozickian Trojan Horse and its attempted subterfuges. Levitas (1993) identifies other examples of right-wing and fascist utopias, including among them ‘the most pernicious and revolting book’ (p. 259) that she had ever read. This reaction is testament to the sense of betrayal that bad utopias can invoke among utopians. On the whole, though, utopians have historically allied with left-wing forces. These include, in recent times, dialogues with positivist modernism (Haldane’s early technological utopian socialism, for example [Filner, 1977]), social democratic positions (Tilton, 1979), anarcho-syndicalist elements (Clark, 2007) and feminist movements (Russ, 1975). These alliances have sometimes been productive – not least in linguistic terms, producing new words aplenty (Vieria, 2010).

Such a generative capacity must surely indicate that utopians have grounds for optimism? This is not so, according to Shklar (1969). After all these political adventures and linguistic forays, hope continues, apparently, to leach from the defenders of utopias, as the anti-utopians move to extend their drably hyper-rational uniformity. Her despair may be misplaced, though, for even the end of explicitly defined utopian dreaming might actually be construed as a sign of hope. In Zapata-Barrero’s (2013) overview of the state of utopian thinking, he identifies one research strand of utopian political thought as follows: ‘we know we are in a utopian society if and when utopias do not exist’ (p. 175). Here, the utopian has become everyday work, ubiquitous, unremarkable and not remarked upon. The present Paper provides qualified support for this optimistic interpretation, but for different reasons to the metaphysics often cited to support it. It is contended here that there are indeed grounds for hope, for continuing to support utopians and their utopic visions. These grounds are not to be found in the degree of critical utopian insight into current conditions they afford (Gardiner, 1992), nor in their capacity to generate useful policy advice (Webb, 2009). Neither does it demand the ultimately unconvincing search for intention and the pro-utopian ‘revolutionary subject’ (Garforth, 2009). Neither does it mean establishing the terms for transcending Kant’s bounded immanence in convoluted ‘transcending without transcendence’ projects (Anderson, 2006; Van den Berg, 2003). Neither does it concern a specific (feminist) approach to doing politics, based on an ethos of transgression (Sargisson, 1996), which correlates in turn with Moylan’s (1986) influential idea of a transgressive utopianism.

These are all the things the present argument is not and does not claim for itself. Instead, it returns with pragmatist thinking to the everyday world of practice. It seeks to locate elements of utopian creativity in quotidian work and it does so not in the name of a ‘narrow pragmatism’ (Goodwin and Taylor, 2009), but an expansive one. Its basic postulate is that everyday practice is constantly replenishing utopian potential by providing it with fresh resources and new hope. A key test of the truth of this statement is the enigma identified in Goodwin and Taylor (2009) to the effect that a myriad of new utopian practice is bubbling up in the interstices of civil society with dependable frequency, but utopian scholars are unable to tabulate and explore them all. This begs the questions: where are these utopian productions coming from? Are they recognisable, using existing utopian tools of inquiry? This argument is returned to below.

To this end, this Paper now identifies the component parts of a pragmatist approach and locates those within existing debates on utopian thought. The contention is that utopians have nothing to fear from the daily practices that constitute actually-existing capitalism.

**‘Embracing Utopia means Embracing an Alternative Ethics’ (Norman Geras’ [2000] Thesis 8 on the conditions for a Minimum Utopia)**

As stated, both of the utopian production systems to be considered below concern ethics. This begs the question of the relation between ethics and utopia and the role of pragmatist thinking in furthering that relation. When Geras argued for the centrality of ethics in ‘embracing’ utopia, he deployed ethical concepts to describe some of the more nefarious faces of the present world and to engage in deep criticism of that world. Thus, a ‘contract of mutual indifference’ (Geras, 2000) addresses the many boundaries that citizens place around themselves and each other in order to be able to engage in systematic hypocrisy and acts of moral turpitude. An alternative, utopian ethics would redefine the common bond of mutuality that should define worthy and right popular conduct.

This is a wholly agreeable proposition, placing as it does an alternative ethics at the centre of new times. It is in the choice of verb (to ‘embrace’, a one-time, largely affective appeal) that Geras’ strong utopia-ethics linkage reads at its weakest. More appropriate verbs would include fashioning (and being fashioned by, in the now common reflexive turn); practising; performing (and being performed by; generating the counter-performative); and enrolling. The shift in language reflects the recent research ascendancy of the pragmatist interpretation of networks associated with actor-network theory (Callon, 1991, 1986; Latour, 2005, 1999, 1996, 1993, 1987; Law, 2002). This transitive, anti-teleological turn reflects a suspicion of final settlements, of a comprehensive constitutionalism, with its implication of a final resting place. This position challenges, among others, the logic of completion at the heart of various utopian blueprints of the last centuries, on the grounds that they offer a false universalism (Hawk, 2011). Hawk was discussing the acts of organising for caring, rather than utopic projects. Yet, his conclusion, that contemporary ethics needs to be founded on a pragmatic, anti-essentialist and relational body of ethical practice is valuable. Contradicting this, though, is the not unusual caution expressed by authors like Mutch (2002) to the effect that this recent variation on pragmatist research often has an amoral and aloof quality. Indeed, thinking ethics through the pragmatist perspective is not easy in principle (as, for example, Wicks and Freeman [1998] contend). Recent work in network pragmatism has, though, gone a long way to counter these legitimate concerns. Explicitly ethical approaches to pragmatist reasoning and new pragmatist understandings of accountability through testing processes have gone a long way to addressing these concerns. The corrections that these recent ideas involve are further explored below, in what is argued to be an entirely useful and supportive utopian critique.

The embrace of process that pragmatism entails is linked to, but not the same as, the debate about method: specifically, Levitas’ (2007) insistence that ‘utopia is understood as a method rather than a goal’ (p. 289); and as a process (heuristic, exploratory – but individualist and human), rather than a system that specifies the ends of a transformation of society. Method (in the present case, network pragmatism) can sensitise one to distributed changes in the sociotechnical order of both people and things, but the content of those changes remains a profound utopian concern.

Those utopics are not, in the present argument, confined to canonical works that are self-consciously defined as utopian, nor the actions of élites or the special insights of committed intellectuals. They are instead more inclusively defined as being distributed across a broad spectrum of activities and actors. In that sense, the current argument endorses Gardiner’s (2004) call for an ‘everyday utopianism’ that is concerned not only with (many) humans, but also with a broad range of ‘silent interlocutors’ that can be non-human, too. Indeed, one powerful impulse behind the current work on everyday utopias is a search for ways of giving voice to these interlocutors and thus ending their vow of silence.

Seeing utopics as part of ongoing generative practices may also explain a number of unresolved issues in utopian research. There is, for instance, the enigma of the ‘backlog of utopias’ noted by Goodwin and Taylor (2009) that are yet to be assayed. This backlog arises, it is asserted here, not because the utopian encyclopaedists have been idle, but because:

* The present and its situations keep producing new utopias. These productions animate political movements and their causes, even when utopian energies are otherwise failing.
* The very existence of many utopian objects has not yet been formally recognised. In other words, there are more utopias to be brought to light, registered and legitimised. Undiscovered, they remain merely shadowy ontologies, immersed in an ontological politics and with incomplete chains of concatenations and allies. These ur-utopias have not, to use Heidegger’s (1978) famous formulation, moved into the self-knowing status of the ontic. In short, the utopias do not know their own calling in this world.

It then pursues two areas further within which – largely unremarked – aspects to utopian practice are being enacted. These two areas both relate to the production of new ethics that meet certain patently utopian criteria. The main purpose in doing this is to draw attention to the unceasing and generative nature of many existing practices in fabricating everyday utopias.

Reflecting this undiscovered status, the two examples that are featured below both come from what are for politically active utopians largely unexpected (and, in the second case, ethically unsettling) quarters: they are still emergent. They are being developed, as noted, in the field of ethics, but it is legal specialists who are playing a leading role in their development. This may not be surprising to knowing observers, given the legal provenance of so many of the early utopias. For utopians with a social science background, though, this provenance has meant that they have functioned as an unseen ‘dark network’.

These examples are also notable because they are likely significantly to shape broad future sociotechnical development. They are non-trivial, because both have:

* Forcing potential, in terms of the likely abilities of the networks that are, bit by bit and maybe partially, enrolling to their causes and discerning and doing their bidding. These examples are inviting both people-and-things into their network worlds and performing them in new, often unexpected ways.
* Loading potential, in terms of the checks, balances, locks, moral imperatives and other deontological instruments that they bring with them, that extend the concatenation of proposals for organising the world and that will in turn reshape possible future actions. This factor has the effect of slowing network processes down, and this slowing has a radically anti-progressivist (Stengers, 2002) - but welcome - edge.

Koskenniemi (2012) suggests that utopians should adopt a more humble yet ‘realistic’ stance of working with the available institutions simply because these are the tools to hand in the now. This is undoubtedly a more realistic and indeed pragmatic stance than that adopted by the many utopians, including More, who have wanted, or indeed who still want to construct a utopian society and utopian institutions from scratch.

The first case concerns the continuing struggle over the breadth of the democratic franchise. The second focuses on contemporary war-making and the changing base of rules through which it may be conducted. In both cases, though, the underlying theme is ontology: who is to be involved?

The first case concerns the continuing struggle over the extent of the democratic franchise.

**Case 1 – the Task of Enfranchising Non-Humans**

The pursuit of rights for people has formed one of the epochal projects of utopians in the western world for centuries and it has been pursued to some notable success. A fitting moment of what might be termed utopian grandeur was undoubtedly the adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This has served as a template for a proliferating number of national and international laws and treaties on human rights in the subsequent decades. While gross inequality and injustice continue to violate the spirit of the UDHR on a daily basis, it does nonetheless represent a great utopian achievement. Indeed, for Moyn (2010), the struggle for human rights may be seen as the last utopia (in a now familiar pessimism), one that has become all the more significant as other blueprints of or for utopia have receded. In this argument, the codification of human rights was a consequence of a more general disillusionment with utopias and has thus become supremely important. Etinson (2012) disagrees, seeing human rights as a lamentably modest last bastion of utopianism. The task then becomes one of rescuingutopia from the ‘clutches’ of human rights - combating a narrow sectarianism and re-energising the project with an injection of displaced ambition. This lost quality may be termed, utopian extensionism.

These reflections of scholars are interesting in themselves, attesting again to the general defensiveness of utopians. It seems, though, that the world of practice is transcending this argument through a set of potentially extraordinary pragmatic moves. Staid practice is advancing not only human rights or, more correctly ‘rights for human beings’,but alsoa utopic project that may now be attachingrights to sentient non-human species, rights to other (non-sentient) species, rights to nature itself (as an inter-penetrating ecology) and indeed to human-made objects. It is this process that will be traced here.

The roots of this development are to be found in the 1970s, with the founding of movements dedicated to extending rights to a particular class of non-human beings (‘animal rights’) and to the wider natural world. This was led by another wave of neologisms, with the term, speciesism (Ryder, 1970) being in the vanguard of these new words. Although it has many definitions, speciesism is in essence human prejudice or discrimination against animals, based on a false belief that humans are superior to those other animals. There is no doubting that this proposition of symmetry between the human and non-human continues to excite controversy (Collins and Yearley, 1992). Alongside of the lexicographical work surrounding speciesism, a ‘natural rights’ movement was gaining ground, assisted by Stone’s (1972) legal activism. Stone observed that the law and the courts routinely grant *locus standi* or standing to those who do not have a ‘voice’ (like children). It also awards standing and therefore legal rights and remedies to non-human entities such as companies. Why, he asked, should the same standing not be given to humans to represent rocks, trees and rivers threatened by exploitation, development or pollution? This movement represents utopian normalisation, in formal terms.

In recent years, Stone’s proposition of a ‘voice for nature’ has moved perceptibly closer to a constitutional incarnation and has enrolled fully developed and codified networks to its cause. Taking the UDHR as its template (shorn of its own networks, therefore, and acting, in pragmatist terms as a loosely inscribed device for translation purposes), a Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth was published in Bolivia in 2010 (World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth). Bolivia’s national congress subsequently passed a law based on this declaration respecting the Mother Earth construct as a living entity for ‘the collective good’.

A more comprehensive version of the original bill was then passed in 2012. This added new ontologies to the original, creating an ‘ombudsman’ for resolving conflicts involving Mother Earth to mirror the ombudsman already in place for arbitrating on human rights issues in Bolivia. It can be surmised that the need for an ombudsman reflected ongoing capitalist pressure to exploit the country’s mineral and hydrocarbon reserves and the specific tests this posed given the requirement under Article 9.6 of the Bolivian constitution to ‘guarantee…the conservation of the environment for the well-being of current and future generations’ (Velasco, 2012, p8). It is sure that these pressures also generated a shifting controversy front, with the boundary between settled facts and values-based challenges shifting erratically. What the response involved was the expansion of the organizing network, by adding an ombudsman actor as a key micropolitical choice. This left other choices untried and unused. The ombudsman functionary may be seen as an active mediator (Whittle and Mueller, 2008) between the Bolivian governance network and the networks voicing Mother Earth and the mining interests seeking to consume it – but other forms of mediation were possible. This still leaves the question of who exactly was to be held liable for voicing Mother Earth’s interests.

Other jurisdictions illustrate the matter of choice. In 2008, a referendum was held in Ecuador which resulted in the country amending its constitution. The principles approved in the plebiscite and enshrined in law were perhaps even more radical than those subsequently adopted by the Bolivians. This is because nature appears to have been given legal standing in and of itself, without the need for mediation by an ombudsman. The Ecuadorean Constitution now asserts that nature or *Pachamama* (Mother Earth) is entitled to benefit from the rights given by Articles 71-74 of its Constitution. These states that nature has the right not only to exist but ‘to maintain and regenerate its vital cycles, structure, functions and evolutionary processes’ (Article 71 of the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador). It goes on to cast a positive obligation on the state (and others) when proscribing that:

‘The state shall give incentives to natural persons and legal entities and to communities to protect nature and to promote respect for all the elements comprising an ecosystem’ (Article 71, ibid).

This seemingly modest move by the Bolivians may have great significance. On the face of things, existing institutions or organs of state – the constitution and the ombudsman – are being utilized and yet *Pachamama* is beingendowed with an autonomous enrolling capacity, with the State (a macroactor) having to serve it, even if at least and for now, only formally. In this constructed settlement, *Pachamama* may now function as a revolutionary subject in and of itself. This capacity to instigate moves is, in Latour’s terms, substantive power. It also represents just that added load for the future – proposals have now to bear its stamp of approval - that makes this case of such broad significance. It is also plausible to argue that building this power into the emerging apparatus of government obviates the need for some kind of utopian blueprint.

There are allied developments elsewhere. In Europe, the constitution of Switzerland has since the 1990s contained a provision requiring account to be taken of the ‘dignity of living beings as well as the safety of human beings, animals and the environment’ (Article 120, Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation). The same Article enshrines protection for the ‘genetic diversity of animal and plant species’. This has given rise, in the reflections of expert committees in Switzerland, namely the Federal Ethics Committee on Non-human Biotechnology (ECNH, 2008),to discussion of the ‘moral consideration of plants for their own sake’. In The Netherlands, a ‘Party for the Plants’ entered candidates in the 2010 parliamentary election promoting so-called free trees in communities in support of their agenda of slowing climate change and promoting biodiversity (Partij voor de Planten). These globally dispersed developments are virtually simultaneous, which is itself notable. It signals the importance of a closer understanding of how ideas travel – in this case, utopian ideas around continents – and how understanding that travelling process might be of such importance to the utopian cause (Czarniawska-Joerges and Sévon, 2005). After all, utopian causes have consistently complained about being lonely. One lesson of this rights-based struggle may be that viable alliances do not have to be formed with neighbours, while causality is almost certainly not going to be straight-lined. The issue is whether these developments represent isolated examples of utopian reflexivity or a more widespread return of utopian extensionism.

**Case 2 – Swapping Drones for Grunts, or Claims for Moral Weapons**

War is fashioned to kill people. It has long functioned as a fecund source of dystopias, as well as (latterly) providing a platform for self-styled dystopian war ‘games’, in a subtle process of cultural inversion. War also degrades the physical and built environment, too, in wide-ranging collateral damage. There are thus the stark and blasted remains of formerly ‘great’ cities, from the repeated sackings of Rome dating from 390 bc to the fire-bombed shells of Dresden in 1945. As well as generating war games to populate the decadent fantasies of safe western citizens, war has also generated profound tests and trials of morality, many of which are of a profoundly utopian nature. Historians have repeatedly recorded the pillaging and destruction of civilizations and the resulting loss of great aesthetic work. Of particular interest here is Edsel’s (2013) work, recording the retention and recovery of much of Italy’s medieval and Renaissance architectural and artistic heritage in the Second World War. These stories have much to say about the relative worth of the human and non-human that is also profoundly important to the utopia/dystopias of actually-existing war-making. He records US General Eisenhower’s cautionary approach to the issue when attempting to weigh or balance the loss of human lives against the possible destruction of a landmark historic building.

To help to sharpen these ambiguous choices - to get more explicit, in Muniesa’s (2011) terms - about the trade-offs involved and to resolve cultural property controversies, a team of art scholars from universities and museums (the so-called Monuments Men) was formed as a part of the Civil Affairs and Military Governments Sections of the joint Allied Armies (Edsel, 2010). Edsel’s accounts contain numerous citations and quotes from this period that can be critically reinterpreted through contemporary pragmatist thinking. There are questions about the worthiness of differing towns and places under the hypothetical threat of total destruction (‘which city would you choose’ to save?). There are then deeper and no longer hypothetical questions about the choice between human lives and architectural and aesthetic values which are much harder to answer. Edsel (2013) cites a letter written to a senior allied officer after the bombing of the monastery at Monte Cassino in 1944 and the reply sent. That heartfelt reply made the point that it is easy to prioritise the preservation of the aesthetic over the substantive when one has no apparent emotional interest or investment in the ‘cost’ of the latter in terms of human lives. When one’s own progeny was at stake, the calculation felt different.

This humanist appeal represented only one attempted solution to the problem of substituting people for aesthetic objects. Subsequently, purely technological solutions have been attempted (notwithstanding recent theoretical cautions that such separation was not, in fact, feasible). These endeavours to try to separate out people from non-human things and to focus war-like energies on the human or non-human singularly have required the development of more subtle technologies. The device of the neutron bomb was one such attempt, using discrete wavelengths released in a controlled nuclear explosion to try to kill humans while leaving more of their built environment unscathed. This idea has been ‘relegated to ignominy’ (Beckerman, 2011), but its principal advocate, Samuel T. Cohen, persisted in presenting it as an ultimate ‘moral weapon’, given its greater potential selectivity in tactical war-making.

If the neutron bomb represented a technological cul de sac, another, seemingly wholly unrelated development that was coincident with the Second World War was ultimately to prove far more productive of the generation of new, more selective war technologies. Isaac Asimov formulated his abstract ‘laws of robotics’ to protect humans from their creations. These laws first appeared in *Runaround* in 1942 (Asimov, 1995), although they had been foreshadowed in some of Asimov’s earlier writing. They were therefore produced in an imaginary world of science fiction writing. Unlike the neutron bomb, though, they were successful, eventually, in attaching themselves to new networks that had the capacity to translate them into new situations where they could be set to work. Given Asimov’s accumulating influence, these appropriations of his robotic laws came from many directions.

Only one of these appropriations is of interest here and it is one that is explored in Shaw (2012). He observes that wars are now being fought with increasing numbers of robots, drones and so-called autonomous weapons. These ‘are being engineered to violate’ (ibid) Asimov’s Laws, and, in the process, to nullify humanist sympathies. Given that these technologies have already enrolled many allies and blackboxed entire chains of reasoning and action, it will be difficult, he argues, to ‘unmake them’. Shaw notes with approval that these weapons remain, as yet, under overall human control – they are not entirely autonomous after all. Further work done by Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the Harvard Law School International Human Rights Clinic (IHRC) (2012) reflects more fully on the possibility of autonomous (‘killer’) robots, a subject already examined in research into agentification in artificial intelligence. There is a dystopian element to many of these discussions, but debates often remain locked into cost-per-corpse debates. Yet, like the neutron bomb, autonomisation of weaponry is increasingly presented as profoundly moral (for example, Mills 2013). Both moral contest and alliance-building are underway if not yet the emergence of fully developed utopian (dystopian) grandeur, based on ontic self-awareness.

One has here, in proposals that are separated by 70 years, a broadly convergent ethical response. Asimov’s original thinking on those laws of robotics focused on developing codes of conduct – for not-yet-fashioned robots. That logic was extended in the robot-rights road map drafted in 2006 by the European Robotics Research Network (Euron). The putative control mechanism proposed by HRW/IHRC is likewise a code of conduct, but is aimed at the humans fashioning new relations in laboratories. The basic ethical design (a code controlling ethical conduct) is the same, but each is assigned to particular ontologies. Of these two, pragmatist thinking suggests that the codes governing humans are likely to prove the most problematical. Research suggests that wilful humans will take specific codes of conduct and subtly and incrementally distort them, by processes of relational drift (Hellin et al, 2011; Jensen et al, 2009). This is in all likelihood the fate that has already befallen many robotic rights efforts compromised by human subversion. One needs to look beyond militarism to find more fully reciprocal efforts that recognise the increasingly intertwined ethics of a heterogeneous world of robots and people. In 2007, the South Korean government enacted a Robot Ethics Charter to prevent domestic abuses between robots and humans and vice versa (Weng, 2010). It was reciprocal in intent and demonstrated increasing self-awareness. Through these various transitions, an everyday utopian - dystopian reflexivity is bringing new objects into being in networked contexts.

The ethical purposes of these new objects will not be easy to discern. This is the corollary of their status as hybrid ontologies, as killer robots and their human operator-soldiers will undoubtedly become. What is more, these new hybrid objects will be nested in other hybrid networks. A military-industrial complex is by definition a hybrid, and the mixing up of these ‘separate’ ontologies is second nature to it. In this situation, ethical issues are likely to become hidden (‘folded’) in obscure or missing accountabilities or in hard-to-read lines of machine code bearing instructions issued from far away in space and time (Introna, 2009). Given this probability, serious ethical probing will be needed to deconstruct the blackboxes and locate immanent ethical choice (Brey, 2000; Introna, 2007). Discerning utopian-dystopian potential is likely therefore to become much more difficult in the future of war-making.

The tools through which utopians might gauge the worth of these new things are only partially visible through a pragmatist lens. Returning to the Second World War and the sharp trade-offs between ancient monuments and soldiers’ lives: both can be valued in terms of explicit economic trials of worth (Muniesa, 2011). On such choices, though, as those made by the Monuments Men, these economic calculations will be only one among many defended claims. Some of these may be based on cultural worth, others on the infinite intrinsic worth of human life and so on. In these circumstances, multiple trials of worth are to be desired. These yet to be formulated and explicitly utopian trials must form a key part of the increased loading needed for a less unethical practice of war-waging. It is plausible to suggest that these trials should be underpinned by practical wisdom.

**Discussion**

The central claim of this Paper is that the two cases are generating new ontologies in this world and these are germane to utopian organising. Gathered together in networks, these new objects are fully immersed in ontological politics, based on the application of different tests and the often muscular exercise of trials of strength. Whether these exercises support utopian, dystopian or merely mundane ends will largely depend on the success of enrolling efforts.

A more basic question than enrolling, though, is the issue of what exactly qualifies these cases as everyday utopias in the first place? Table 1 sets out four measures that may be used to frame a specifically everyday utopian test. The Table differentiates the everyday from conventional utopia and does so using criteria drawn from a number of research disciplines. It adds little that is new in itself. In particular, it emphasises a number of measures that concern morals, norms and ethics. Thus does it endorse Geras’ categorical linkage between utopianism and ethics, but it does so in particular (pragmatist) ways.

A central tactical concern in writing this Paper has been to counter what the evidence on the continuing production of utopias suggests to be undue pessimism among utopians. The approach taken to this task is a familiar one in utopian historiography: to distinguish a fuller range of utopian generative activity than is customarily acknowledged. Precedents to this move include **Mumford's (1922) distinction between utopias of escape and reconstruction; or Hansot's (1974) division between classical and modern utopia. Both are apparently concerned with taxonomical niceties, but both efforts are more centrally committed to expanding the boundaries surrounding utopias. Theirs is an extensionist ambition and so too (if more modestly) is the present argument. It is indeed through such extensionism that a new principle of hope may be contrived. This extension has been achieved using the overall sense of Gardiner's (1992, 2004) idea of the everyday utopia. That idea has been wrested from its currently discursive linkages and recast in a pragmatist manner, in pursuit of new ontologies, concrete actions and the moral connotations of those actions.**

**Table 1 – Qualities of Everyday Utopias**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Utopian Measure** | **Qualification Requirement** |
| Grandeur | * All utopias involve contest over ethics & often lay claim to higher level ordering of ethical perspectives (fashioning of metaethics).
* Conventional utopias typically use postmodern metanarratives (large discursive story-telling) to underscore grand claims & grand projects.
* Everyday utopias tend to deal in practical action in daily life. Grandeur immanent as modernist practice enfranchises nonhuman things (natures, robots) in progressive pragmatogony (Latour, 1999).
 |
| Reflexivity | * Conventional utopias provide proof of own utopian status (using completed syllogism types) as they seek entry or withdrawal from situations.
* Everyday utopias engage in extension (see below) based on incomplete syllogisms, disjointed forms of incrementalism & opportunism.
 |
| Normalisation | * Conventional utopias based on full identity disclosure that give full utopian proofs for own truth status. Concatenation shortening abstracts utopian propositions & other - non-utopian - tests are increasingly applied to them. Fragments of utopian propositions transform into market or war-making propositions.
* Everyday utopias normalise leading practice through application of tests in trials of strength. Tests use explicitly moral criteria of wisdom & worth. Goal of everyday utopians to endow subjects with full moral status - forging non-human objects into ‘directly morally considerable’ (Light, 2002) subjects.
 |
| Extensionism | * All utopias seek extension & network expansion through enrolment as generative politics.
* Conventional utopias seek extension based primarily on aesthetic, affective or intellectual extension.
* Everyday utopias based on enthymemic hints & generate longing for completeness: extend ontology (through, for instance, panspecies enfranchisement [Cafaro, 2008]) with practical ethics rooted in successive sociotechnical problem-solving. May involve constructing new, secondary – constitutional, deontological - objects to block amoral action. Everyday utopias extend by adding load, making trials more protracted & slowing action.
 |

The current arguments do not claim to have provided anything like a complete theory of everyday utopian action, or even a characterisation of emerging ontological politics. What can be claimed, though, is that the four utopian measures set out above provide one starting-point for constructing an evaluative framework through which to begin to test the utopian worth of different propositions about how better lives might be organised. The case of a military-industrial complex hybrid birthing new (drone) hybrids illustrates how impenetrable conducting those tests is likely to prove. The quiet and entirely private folding of ethical choices within machine code and rules of engagement that mobilise thousands of distributed humans and machines equally manifest those barriers that will make testing the new and passing utopian judgment so difficult.

In this thoroughly mixed-up polity, utopians will need to prepare both themselves and others for contests to come. It is to be expected, after all, that extensionist utopias will also generate counter-narratives and (potentially dystopian) definitions of the counter-performative (MacKenzie, 2006). To this end, a range of silent interlocutors and ‘virtual witnesses’ (Shapin and Shaffer, 1985) will need help in learning how to speak. The identity (and fealty) of the utopians themselves cannot be guaranteed, though. Identity is unstable in existing market systems (for instance, Niemark and Tinker, 1987). Such stability is also unlikely in the pursuit of both every day and conventional utopias. Networks will grow and fold and their goals will follow them. Individual macroactors and actors will enrol, dissemble and die, as the causes change and they are changed by those causes in turn. It is highly unlikely, given these reflections, that there can ever be a stable (non-situational) revolutionary utopian subject.

With these general comments in mind, there are then some observations that are specific to each of the two cases set out above. The pan-species enfranchising case has drawn an increasingly wide range of networks into its sway over time. This reflects the fact that its controversy front is moving outwards and a process of ontological inflation is occurring. Again borrowing a phrase from Bruno Latour, a collective experiment is underway. That experiment is epochal in nature, for enfranchising is, after all, a process of performing entire societies (Alcadipani and Hassard, 2010). The case poses an intrinsically uncomfortable issue, though (Law, 2007): ‘how could they not see’ (p. 365) the scale of prejudice? The question recurs across the generations, so that future generations may ask this question of one, just as current citizens ask it of previous generations.The rights conferred by the UDHR remain, decades after its signing, far from universal. Given this inequity, it is unsurprising that any extension of rights to other species and to nature has been *ad hoc* and piecemeal thus far.

This case has, as its central proposition, a pan-species egalitarian assertion: that representative principles need to include non-humans, too – in an assertion that contradicts ideas of inherent value or *scala naturae*. Everyday utopias will need to develop new forms of political competence - specifically, the ability to construct a framework that can interpret the move-instigating power of a host of non-human agents. Here, the interrogative measures proposed by researchers like Adams and Thompson (2011) should form a part of utopia's (re-)discovery of its revolutionary qualification. To answer Law’s rhetorical question, ‘they’ could not see precisely because their view was blocked by the (anthropocentric) scientific inquiry methods of current times. The ability to work better with non-human kinds will be a significant counterweight to this speciesism.

In relation to the case of moral (robotic) weapons, the principles espoused by Asimov that sought to ensure right conduct and to regulate robot-human interaction were the subject of systematic distortion and relational drift over subsequent decades. This drifting proceeded to the point that drones might be designed specifically to breach certain of those fundamental principles (or their transformed contemporary equivalents) and engage in highly selective war-making. Hints as to how this creeping reversal of deontological principles might be negotiated in practice are to be found in the pragmatist-inspired research (Bonner and Chiasson, 2005; Frandsen, 2009). The precise focus of such research lies elsewhere - in the progressive weakening of rules surrounding privacy. Nonetheless, this research provides lessons for utopians in how generic processes can gradually erode seemingly absolute principles.

One of the benefits that the approach set out here may have is its ability and potential to trace the dynamics of utopian ventures as they unfurl over time. Through processes that may progressively alter the complete (syllogistic, concatenated) utopian account of itself, it may be asserted that fragments of what was once a fully worked through everyday (or indeed, conventional) check entries on table may be normalised. Thus does the utopic become atopic or even wholly subverted and turned into a dystopia. The utopian fragment becomes enrolled in the dystopic. This is, it has been argued, the fate that befell Asimov's principled effort to design a humanistic robotic world. To revert to the military metaphor of the siege with which the current argument began, though, this judgment on a utopia accords it the status of the reviled turncoat.

The case also underscores the need for new utopian systems of inquiry that are capable of penetrating into the ethical folds (Introna, 2009) of that increasing number of war-making people-and-thing actors in ways that hide or displace moral responsibility. Table 1 sets out some possible measures that could support these utopian processes of inquiry and scrutiny. The issue is then in which circumstances should these utopian tests be applied and which circumstances demand other, non-utopian (for instance, market explicitness) tests. It seems plausible to contend that the need for utopian scrutiny will tend to grow over time as scarcity no longer dominates choice. There are, though, many other details - on, for example, how to structure a utopian equivalent to a market (agora) - that are beyond the remit of this Paper.

**Conclusion**

The present argument is based on a pragmatist reinterpretation of the idea of everyday utopianism. In considering two ethically challenging cases of the exercise of everyday utopianism, it has generated four specific utopian measures that, taken together, might constitute a new utopian test. They have been designed, in particular, to enable the distinguishing of everyday from conventional utopias. This categorisation sought to identify new sources of utopianism that might counter existing notions of the decline in utopian energies in contemporary societies. Both forms of utopia affirm Geras' insistence on the centrality of ethics, but network pragmatism highlights the ubiquity and tough challenge posed by folded morals. Utopians need, it is argued, to master this ethical challenge and engage more fully with the detail of ontological politics in a widely enfranchised world.

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