

It is characteristic of our age that we no longer remember how to *feel* utopia. To experience the absence of place, a break in the flow of time. But the utopian vision is not merely a smooth or well-organized space outside of history, beyond danger and death. It is also a powerful impulse, a primary affect of sociality. The aporetic flash of insight which is glimpsed in the symphonic vision of an actual utopia is so overpowering it actually exerts an unbinding force upon thought, deforming and deconceptualizing, breaking truth down into its rhythms. Utopia as commonly conceived is above all a logical place, a space where things make sense. But what if they don't make sense to us anymore? A utopian thought imagines radical transformation, and accordingly is a thought which transforms thought, an image *taken* for a radical act. But there is no act, only images of free subjects. Only endless contradictions. But we forget they are more than contradictions. They are indications. The utopian thought is above all a directed thought, a thought of direction. We can't remember how to point to 'nowhere'. We should not allow ourselves to forget how to feel the irony of the utopian thought. We can only sketch the subtle complexity of this ancient impulse, noting this or that feature. A general utopian political project is a false ideal; it makes utopia an act, something hard, inert, dangerous. Futurism is false; we must be against the generic utopia. We must try always to see the more subtle, and political sense of nowhere.

Utopia is too often imagined to be embodied in the passionate or violent act; rather it is the question of producing subjectivity, of intensifying vitality. Without the critical shift, without the diagnostic posture, the feeling of utopia withers, the dream degenerates, until it is only an endless spectacle of excessive optimality, an ever more violent sequence of awakenings — 'growth spurts,' arbitrary acceleration, always an asymmetrical development. The aborted dream of utopia becomes the material force of the political. Acceptance of responsibility, of guilt, insistence on harmony and conformity, these are our strongest impulses, those which really distinguish modern humanity from his forebears. We certainly must reject the false utopia of liberalism and progress. The difference involved here is often very slight, and subtle. For nowadays there are many if not most who would support advocacy of minoritarian causes and even difference and mutation in general once these are seen as beneficial to the development of the *human* species: and we should not be surprised that these very instincts are the strongest, since they are the oldest. They are even more powerful than reason, but only because *they* come prior, and consequently inform our understanding of what reason is and ought to be. These prerational and preconscious intensities of social belonging have become almost impossible, anymore, to see. But they are the true basis of any utopian reformulation of the political project. The resurrection of this impulse again in thought represents an important shift. However, to think utopia does not mean to conceive just one formation, or even a multiplicity of forms. Utopia is a deconceptualization. I mean: a transformation of the sense of form, the opening onto a general phenomenology of forms and formations, the cultivation of a healthier society, healthier desires. Utopia is an expression of health, which is above all not an expression of normality. On the contrary, properly understood, utopia expresses itself as a radically divergent, anti-humanist thought of the political. Void-politics, excluded politics, transgressive politics — these are also *utopian* politics, that is: multiplicity-politics, aesthetico-ethical politics.

In short, the most urgent question today is that of the utopian impulse. It is truly an overpowering instinct. The violent flash of awakening which it inspires has the crackling intensity of lightning. Utopian becomings are not a path to be chosen lightly. Utopia stands in need of a fresh thinking.

We will begin by attempting to reconsider the question of utopia epistemologically. Now, strictly speaking, we must admit that we do not and have never known utopia, except perhaps as a radical potentiality. The thought of utopia is accordingly a thought of the optimum. Consequently, utopia has historically found epistemologically-adequate expression in one of two ways. Either the utopian state is a possible form, even a permutation of an already existing system; or, it is the pure virtuality of the dream, some ideal future state. Notice the key symmetry which exists between the two poles of utopia: in both cases, systematic differentiation activates new possibilities. Thus there always exists a radical potential for any system to overcome itself; it is contained not within its capacity for replication but in its instinct for mutation. To change one's form is to change the nature of form itself; more, it is to change one's sense of form. Utopia is in a sense a dream of forming oneself as an undivided whole. But again, especially here, there are already two utopias: one potential, one virtual. The first is the pure image of direct consciousness of an absolute being: this is the scientific utopia, a rationalist utopia.

Against this conception we posit the radical difference of the future, the return of that which has not yet been. In opposing singularities as constitutive of their own and other beings, we are affirming a multiplicity of beings, and infinite virtual potentialities for individuation. Not a single, linear history of pure events, set against an absolute scale of time and space. The second pole of utopia points towards a dynamic, non-linear inter-assemblage of intensities which constitute our apparent singularities. Moreover, this idea even suggests the possibility of new forms of co-evolution. In short, a science of static origination prepares the hygienic prison cells for the idealist utopian vision; while somewhere in the background, a science of no origins is activating the present radical virtualities against the myopic vision of events, and creates entirely new assemblages of expression and value. Transduction creates singularities; we could also say, transversality differentiates forms, and possibly the very components of form itself. Still, in either case, we are still stuck with idealisms: either we must accept mystical utopias hidden behind dystopias, or on the other hand a dystopia horribly and mockingly disguised as a utopia. We are left with a drama of the event, a history of its becoming, a vision of its dream. Mythology; and lies, moreover — there is no static origin, no initial state. No beginning, and no utopian destination. Utopia, in short, cannot be considered as a scientific object; it is precisely a prescientific insurrection, one which describes new modes of forming knowledge and sociality.

Utopia is precisely the ethical act, it is a transcendence of oneself, done of a voluntary impulse; indeed, it is our strongest urge, the one we must repress in order to possess the other and ourselves. Utopia as ideal state is a land of slaves, to no one, even perhaps to desire or morality; utopia is a sort of morality-play, after all. Origins are everything; from the slightest differentiation, an entire logos attends. The properly utopian subject is precisely in movement, even accelerating towards new forms of relation. In fact we cannot affirm singular utopian subjects; even this is mythological to some degree. The forms of relation the subject-groups strive towards are new and ever-subtler feelings of domination, of power. The post-modern is often a guilt-complex for unavowed miseries; this is probably at root why I dislike the phrase. We cannot predict whether utopian grace will simplify or complexify our relationships. The proper utopian impulse is potent, and strongly minoritarian; thus sensibility is a much better model for knowledge, justice and freedom than complexity. But more than the production of new smooth spaces for theory and practice, we also must allow the freedom to construct new senses,

to connect to new forms of sensibility — even machinic organs of in-formation. The problem of utopia is not necessarily about new desires, but new sense-abilities.

For utopia exists now or never; this is, more or less, the ontological problem and, here once again, already the question of origin. In fact, we already believe both. We cannot even help it; it is like the (in)finitude of the universe. The answer you seek depends on how the question is formed, and what formation we are trying to activate. It is similar with utopia: the idea in itself is almost worthless. For there is no utopia; there never was, and never will be. Unless, and only exceptionally, when we are thinking of utopia in a subtler sense — then and only then does utopia name only the tiniest difference, the merest duration, the slightest deviation. Utopia is a thousand tiny acts of deviance; it is one pure ethical act in name alone. It's etymology tells us more than we first thought, namely, that the problem of utopia must be framed ethically. This point is the essence what I'm saying: the truth of the void is its power of infinite containment, the truth of utopia is its power of infinite transformation. In a fairly strict sense, they are inverses, symmetrical. The void reflects a utopian transcendence, just as utopia reflects the infinite possibilities marked by the void. Thus we must deny utopia, but paradoxically this denial must be purely affirmative: *no utopias!* Which therefore also means: *intensify vitality!*