

Consumer Drones: Utopian Toy or Dystopian Threat?

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Consumer drones are entering the U.S. domestic sphere with increasing frequency and impact, promoting both excitement and anxiety. In particular, the technology's capabilities of flying and recording have triggered a range of positive and negative reactions. For an increasing number of hobby "pilots," the swift aerial tool represents utopian empowerment to access the sky and communicate insightful views from above. For an increasing number of sceptics, the buzzing flying machine symbolizes a dystopian threat to physical safety and individual privacy.

This dissertation investigates the visual, social, and practical affordances of consumer drones as mobile media with attention to what relationships the flying camera creates. Through the multidisciplinary lenses of media ecology and mobilities theory, this study explores the consumer drone practices in U.S. recreational and artistic contexts – domains in which drone usage is steadily increasing – from three angles: 1) What perspectives onto people and places do drone-generated images open up and what relations do the aerial views create? 2) How do hobbyists use their devices for image-production and what other routines does the recreational practice entail? 3) How are consumer drones and recreational practices imagined, depicted, and narrated in U.S. mass or independent media?

To answer these questions, a qualitative textual analysis of drone visuals on social media platforms and online festival archives, an ethnography of recreational drone practices, and a critical analysis of consumer drone depictions in television and film are conducted in a mixed-methods approach. The concepts of utopia and dystopia are helpful in this study to discuss the contrasting themes that inform the contemporary social and political discourse surrounding the rising technology and its recreational uses in public spaces. Utopia and dystopia are also relevant as a method for considering the range of benefits and risks of consumer drones as operated by hobbyists which are still underexplored."

"Now, what`s next?" Rio de Janeiro Post-Olympic Games

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In 2002, Rio was elected the host city of 2007 Pan American Games and in 2009 was declared host city of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development also known as Rio+20, followed by 2014 FIFA World Cup and 2016 Rio Olympic Games. For the past 15 years, Rio de Janeiro was a host city, what it means that it was a city looking for the events to come in a near future. For the Mayors, these events were an opportunity to build a better Rio de Janeiro for the future, an utopia that driven City Hall investments and projects. For the social movements, these megaevents and the great amount of investments for them to happened was a dystopia that driven people to the streets asking for investments in health and education other than in arenas and stadiums. Now, in 2017, the Mayor do not have on its future any perspective of megaevents in the city, the infrastructure built for the previous one is degrading and City Hall is near breaking. Therefore, one question is on everyone's minds: "Now, what`s next?". What is going to happened with Rio? How will the city go on without an utopia or dystopia to drive Mayors and movements into a cause? Of course, a city like Rio must have other agendas that are going to be addressed, however, it seems like no other agenda will have so much impact or power to join utopias and dystopias like the megaevents had. Having said that, this research is looking into the Post-Olympic Rio de Janeiro, especially to the new utopias and dystopias that are going to be built for the city. In this sense, to understand utopia / dystopia as method will help me to build a theoretical and methodological approach to build the presented research project.

Institutionalizing autonomous driving as a pathway towards sustainable mobility futures

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What are you researching? My research deals with the role of autonomous driving in urban mobilities. Specifically, I want to investigate pathways through which automation and digitization can lead to more accessible and socially inclusive mobility, avoiding dystopias, such as social sorting of travel through surveillance (Urry & Dennis, 2009) and urban sprawl. In order to do so, I plan to identify the

historically developed institutional logics and actor coalitions that maintain the mobility regimes in the cities of Munich and Stuttgart. Second, I want to analyse the dynamic processes through which actors attempt to challenge rigid institutional structures and produce change. Methodologically, I build on institutional theory, actor network theory and discourse analysis, in order to analyse policies, regulations, values, norms and perceptions on autonomous driving. The objective of my research is to develop a theoretical and practical framework for the mechanisms that could enable a socio-technical transition to sustainable mobility through automation.

Why? My point of departure is the argument formulated by Canzler and Knie (2016), suggesting that new mobility concepts triggered by the convergence of digitization and automation are struggling to find support in the existing rigid legal frameworks, market structures and political mentalities. These new concepts are less about technical specifications and more about changing fundamentally mobility cultures. I claim that mobility policy-making in cities is still techno-centric. Therefore, I believe that there is a need to examine autonomous driving beyond pure technical aspects, but as part of a socio-technological system. Ultimately, my motivation is to point out ways through which policy-makers can overcome techno-centric mentalities and use technologies to the benefit of societies.

Utopia as a concept or method: Since I want to work with discourse analysis and institutional theory, which are very much about investigating how reality is (re)produced, how reality is perceived in certain socio-political contexts, and how new ideas can be institutionalized into social practices, the three modes of utopia (archaeological, ontological and architectural) developed by Levitas (2013) are the underlying basis of my theoretical and methodological framework. Reflecting on the reasons why previous utopias, such as techno-centric and socialist utopias, failed, I want to point towards the construction of a dynamic utopia for the future of mobility, which is critical, inclusive and performative rather than static, prescriptively normative and authoritarian (Gunder and Hillier, 2007). I argue for a 'hybrid' utopia, which will consider change through automation as a combination of technological, societal and institutional changes acknowledging the complexity and antinomies of mobility.

Critical Media Literacy and Future Imaginations

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How can we employ speculative design of technology as a way to materialize social imaginaries of future and as a critical reflection about how we, as humans, relate to otherness? This study explores the potential nodes between media literacy/criticism, digital media theory/digital humanities practices and object-oriented-ontologies to investigate the rhetorical-communicative relations among things, human and non-human actants. I attempt to circumscribe approaches from authors such as Bruno Latour, Ian Bogost and Mark Ratto to identify how the design practice of digital media objects (bots, mainly) realize a utopian or dystopian imaginary of possible ubiquitous computing futures. I look at science fiction narratives of human-machine hybrids (cyborg literature) in context of specific historical paradigms of science/technology. I also examine how the invention of bots in social media, mobile services, and other media services reinforce, question, subvert previous models of human-machine interaction. I believe that the crossover of fictional and factual/historical narratives of science and technology constitute informative narratives about how we envision the becoming of humankind/womankind. Ultimately, this study is sustained by an underlying question regarding technology and morality: how to further technology literacy and criticism through creative and subversive forms of technology appropriation?

Utopia and disillusion. Public transport and the embodied holding together of Modernity

Daniel Muñoz, University of Edinburgh

My research focuses on the embodied everyday life experiences of Santiago's public transport system (Transantiago) users, and the multiple ways in which both these human bodies and the materialities of this big infrastructure shape one another. My interest is particularly attentive to non-hegemonic bodies (pregnant women, wheelchair users, blind people, older people, etc.) as a conflictive element within certain utopic views of the future. From here, the utopic view behind Transantiago's implementation back in 2007 gets complicated and becomes an object of affective tension, friction, and eventually, exclusion. My research aims to develop an argument that allows to

see utopia as a driver for change just as much as a dangerous source of everyday conflict, particularly within the urban mobilities aspect of urban life in Latin American cities.

Liveable Futures in a Changing Mobile World

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This new era, known as the Anthropocene, calls for new knowledge to address its current ecological crisis, including extinction, toxic dead zones, chemical foods, climate change, water degradation, pollution, just to name a few. The dominating positions in the debates of this crisis seem to paralyse and lacks to nourish our desire to imagine, rework or resituate ourselves and our ecologically destructive lifestyles. Following, I am looking for the creativity and imagination that spur liveable futures in a yet unfolding, changing mobile world (Sheller and Urry 2006). This is not to ignore the tragedy of the anthropogenic processes, but because the current crisis calls for new thinking, new narratives, new knowledge, and following I try to find the cracks, pathways and organisations to liveable futures (Urry 2016; Gibson-Graham 2006; Gibson et al. 2015; Haraway 2016). Looking for these, I have followed a partnership project called Sharing City about sharing economy, planning and governance in seven Danish municipalities. Within the project I met new organisations that seeks to resituate humans in the ecological system and resituate the non-humans in ethical terms to overcome the idea of the non-human and more-than-human world as devoid of meaning, values, and ethics (2015, 4). These organisations help us to rethink and broaden our understandings of economy, of being-in-common, and of 'response-ability', as Donna Haraway puts it (2008; 2016). Moreover, new knowledge also entails new narratives, and in search for a language that can reflect the complexities, connectivity, interdependence of economy-ecologies, and nature-cultures, I am working with stories. Stories that among other enact connectivity, entangle us in the life us others, and draw us into deeper understandings of response-ability, reparative possibilities and liveable futures (Gibson et al. 2015, ii). Utopian stories, where utopia is used as method to explore yesterday, today and tomorrow by tracing histories, practices and desires with the help of feminist storytelling. Stories that have emerged out of the field and with great inspirations from my readings along the fieldwork. One significant inspiration is from Elizabeth Fisher's (1979) and Ursula Le Guin's (1986) two versions of the Carrier Bag Theory (Fisher 1979; Le Guin 1986). These are stories about new organisations and new economies in search of how to enhance our response-abilities to co-exist and live in – and beyond – the Anthropocene.

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The Mobile Utopia of the global south: possible dialogues between Milton Santos and John Urry

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Milton Santos was a geographer considered by many as one of the greatest Brazilian thinkers. He founded the critical geography and stood out for addressing topics such as the epistemology of Geography, globalization, urban space, among others.

In 1994, he won the Vautrin Lud Award, the Nobel Prize in Geography, being the only Brazilian to win this award and the first geographer outside the Anglo-Saxon world to accomplish this feat. In his vast work, the author was distinguished by presenting a critical position in relation to the capitalist system and the theoretical presuppositions prevailing in the geographic science of his time.

In his work *Toward an Other Globalization* (2017), recently published in English, Santos divided the world into “globalization as a fable” (as it is told to us), “globalization as perversity” (as it actually happens) and “globalization as a possibility”, exploring the idea that another globalization is possible. For the author, the change will come from the bottom up: from the disinherited, the underdeveloped, the poor and from free thinking.

By analyzing globalization from the perspective of the movement, defining it as a circulation process, Santos saw it as a phenomenon that was structured by four factors: the unicity of technique, the convergence of moments, the knowability of the planet and the existence of a single engine (globalized surplus value).

Building human relationships based on solidarity was a wish of Milton Santos. He proposed a review of globalization, which should be “more humane” without removing the technical basis that supports the economic and financial globalization.

Among its propositions we can read the desire to change the use of the technical basis created for the circulation of capital to convey human values, to allow an effective integration of distinct cultural ties that allow the construction of “solidarity happen.”

The work of Milton Santos in much dialogue with the proposals presented by John Urry, providing a reading of the phenomena of mobility and utopia as a method from the Latin American perspective.

Therefore, our proposal is to present and discuss the potentialities of a reflection on the phenomena of mobility that put in dialogue the concepts and propositions made by Santos and Urry.

Mobilities and communities in everyday life

Julie Magelund, Technical University of Munich (TUM) and the Nürtingen-Geislingen University (HfWU)

What are you researching? My research focuses on everyday life mobilities and the social practices related to this. More specifically, I am exploring the relation between everyday life mobilities, dwelling and communities. Through observations, qualitative interviews and focus groups I am aiming to research specific (at the moment yet to be decided) dwelling sites/places of living within the context of the metropolitan region of Munich, Germany and investigate social practices related to the notions of community and everyday life mobilities.

Why? My research takes its point of departure in the mobilities paradigm (Sheller & Urry 2006) and the notion of mobilities as fundamental to our everyday life (Urry 2007). Using the everyday as the analytical framework, my aim is to investigate the complexities of everyday life in late modern society with particular focus on social practices related to mobilities, dwelling and communities. Through the narratives, I aim to show the complexities in relation to these practices.

What does or could utopia as a concept or method do for you? I am interested in participating in the Mobile Utopia Bonfire School to be inspired methodologically and theoretically. I am interested in exploring if and how I could use utopia as a concept or a method in my work specifically in relation to

using narratives of everyday life complexities. Aiming to use qualitative individual interviews as well as focus groups as my main methods to collect the narratives, I am interested in exploring how utopia as a concept or method can inspire the narratives to go beyond the present everyday life practices and into imagining (social) futures of communities and mobilities.

Sharing beyond capitalism

Luca Nitschke, Technical University Munich | mobil.LAB

My research is concerned with sharing models in the field of mobilities. Specifically, I want to explore non-commercial alternatives to mainstream sharing mobilities. I am looking for these alternative sharing models within areas where the contradictions of capitalism play out the strongest, mostly at the lower and outer margins of society. People and groups of people with high (monetary) resource constraints or alternative political views are likely to develop alternative readings of sharing in a more collaborative and presumably less resource-intensive way. Methodologically, I want to develop a theoretical and practical critique of mainstream sharing concepts by examining the currently employed systems but mostly by finding alternative models of sharing mobilities.

My starting point is the argument formulated by Karl Polanyi in 1944, suggesting that the capitalist market society demolishes its own base through the marketization and exploitation of the fictitious commodities of nature and labor (Polanyi, 1944). I claim, that this fundamental contradiction is currently not resolved through mainstream approaches to sharing. Hence, to tackle this I believe it is necessary to find solutions leaving the commodity relation in its capitalist mode of production and therefore the exploitation of nature and humans, behind. Overall, my motivation is to point out ways in which the capitalist market society, with its exploitative and self-destructive tendencies, can be overcome.

As I want to work with a critical theory framework following Brenner (2009) the search for and pointing out of (utopian) alternatives is an inherent part of my theoretical framework. Acknowledging Marx's claim that 'the development of the contradictions of a given historical form ... is the only historical way in which it can be dissolved and then reconstructed on a new basis' (Marx, 1867 [1990], p. 619), I want to explore the forms in which utopia can be present within the areas of society where the contradictions are developed the strongest. Following the three meanings of utopia (archeological, ontological and architectural) (Levitas, 2013) I am asking the following questions: How did these come into place? How are they based within contemporary society? How can they help in advancing a different and potentially better society?

Designing Utopias – why and how?

Ditte Bendix Lannig, Aalborg University, Denmark

Can designing utopias be a method? If so, what can it do?

Can urban mobilities design (Jensen & Lannig, 2017) bring distinct qualities into imaginings of better worlds (through archaeological, architectural and/or ontological modes, see Levitas, inaugural lecture, 2005)? Can the architectural imagination even catalyze change and spark the collective imagination, as suggested by the 2016 US pavilion at the Venice Biennale Architettura (Davidson 2016). And which are the pitfalls? – It seems that utopian designs for some (the designers?) can easily slip into dystopias for others. Can designed utopias be multiple, provisional and reflexive (Levitas, 2005), and not too fixed blueprints of the future?

As a start, it appears meaningful to consider urban mobilities design beyond its service-industry role. Urban design does not only project solutions onto known problems. Sometimes it is as much about encircling and understanding matters of concern. In tangible details as well as in conceptual ideas it often explores the gap between what is and what could be. This quest for the 'not yet' is often a dreamy process, filled with hopes and imaginings for a better world (but see van Toorn's 2007 essay 'No More Dreams?'). Its public orientation as well as its critical drive can be strong and evocative, as when MIT called for visions for a Just Jerusalem 2050, asking for "future possibilities for a pluralist, just, and sustainable city shared by Palestinians and Israelis" thereby hoping to "encourage new ways of thinking about the many difficult issues and hardships faced by Jerusalemites" (www.justjerusalem.org/)

The research discusses examples of utopian urban mobilities design as an operative and imaginative practice that critically analyses situations through their complex interrelated variables and articulates matters of concern and opportunities (see, e.g., DiSalvo et al, 2014). The research aims to understand why we should design utopias (if we should), and how these can work in fruitful ways, to analyse, criticize, articulate and enact social, political, cultural conditions and desired futures.

Utopia on Tour: exploring a contingent dramaturgy of utopia in contemporary touring theatre

Tessa Buddle, University of Glasgow

My research considers theatre and utopia as mutually dependent quests to model better alternatives to the present. Via practice, I am investigating an approach to creating theatre that could be considered 'a search for utopia'; a practice that seeks to discover better ways of being in the world, and is in turn influenced by the principles underpinning such a better way.

My research is primarily concerned with the theatre-making process, and asks whether utopia might be a useful theoretical framework for creating contemporary radical theatre. I am interested in utopia not as a subject of representation, but as a concept that permeates the methodologies, content and context of theatre practice in a variety of ways. For the purposes of this project I am specifically concerned with small scale, collaboratively devised, touring theatre, primarily because this is the area of practice I commonly work within, but also because there are certain utopian themes bound up within this practice that have received relatively little academic attention, particularly from a practice-as-research perspective.

Collaborative theatre practice experiments with alternative hierarchies, value systems and logics, while negotiating the realities of the present system. It is always oscillating between pragmatism and idealism, between ideology and utopia, and it does so through a heuristic, dialogic, contingent process. This research argues for the continued relevance of this negotiation; stressing the current need for utopia as a method of re-imagining society, but also addressing the specific challenges facing contemporary theatre in an age of mass media, economic instability and ecological precarity.

Utopia interests me as a potential conceptual framework, a structuring principle, a narrative stimulus, a political impulse, and a methodological approach, all of which might intersect in a contemporary theatre-making model that is driven by a desire for a better way of being.

Towards Sustainable Local Transportation in Peripheral Districts of Mexico City: The case of the Motorcycle–Cab service in La Conchita Zapotitlán, Tláhuac

Juan Carlos Finck Carrales, Roskilde University, Denmark

My PhD research is the continuation of my master's thesis about the motorcycle-cabs service (MCS) in the Mexico City's neighborhood called La Conchita Zapotitlán. The outcomes of my master's research were data resulted from mostly quantitative methods: stakeholders' surveys and analysis of the study zone socioeconomic and demographic data. All that information was used to form a general diagnosis of the MCS phenomenon directed to plan further urban projects for its development. Before starting my master's thesis research, I used to live in the study zone for years and be a MCS user for moving inside the neighborhood and for connecting with mass transportation when commuting. Therefore, my everyday life was surrounded and involved into the study zone environment which affected my senses, emotions, behavior, etc. That praxis made me questioning about the possible causes and consequences of the MCS phenomenon and its future possible direction, which induced my interest on doing research about it.

After finishing my master's research, I decided to continue with it on the PhD in order to know the barriers and opportunities that could exist for turning the MCS into a formal and sustainable one. Thereby, I'm developing the phenomenon from a reflexive methodology and qualitative empirical material: interviews, observational field analysis, and stakeholders' workshops, with which I will develop my theoretical framework that is related mainly to mobility, motility, accessibility, spatial justice, and governance.

The concept of utopia defined from action research can provide me with understanding of the communicative processes of my research stakeholders through workshops as an open space wherein there will be interactions of storytelling (experiences) and emotions (affections) sharing. Hence, my

understanding of utopia will be creating imaginary futures from open scenarios for knowing problems and, in turn, define aspirations and opportunities towards possible solutions of a certain issue.

Host cities and the Olympic Gaze

Maria de Faria Nogueira, Estacio de Sao Paulo University Brazil

The research project called “The Olympic Gaze” is focuses on the way cities globally present themselves as a brand by hosting the Olympic Games. At the very moment when the so called Olympic legacy is being questioned, since the financial and social costs of the Olympic bid have increased substantially, this investigation adopts an interdisciplinary and historical perspective to analyze and discuss to what extent the legacy of the Olympic Games should go beyond infrastructural projects and focus on creating and developing a new image of a city. The first studies indicate that this new marketing image of the city, i.e. the Olympic gaze, is built on the idea of a “Utopian city”, in the sense of architecture and urban planning (when we consider the International Olympic Committee's demands on the infrastructure legacy) together with localities’ cultural background and natural landscapes. Historically, all the cities selected to host the Games undergo this mandatory period of intensive transformation in both its infrastructure and image in order to become, however temporarily, the mythical Olympia. In this sense, Utopia as a primarily concept can be useful to understand the modus operandi of this architectural and communicational transformation of the locality in a host city. The research questions that guides the investigation is to what extent is this new image of the city historically created? Under which political conditions can this image be built? Based on which social and economic gains and losses to the city and its inhabitants? To answer these questions, the depth hermeneutics methodological approach is applied to analyze the communication and marketing strategy efforts to build the Olympic Gaze in articulation with the social-historical scenario and with the conditions of power and resistance between government, the IOC, the local population, and, commercial partners as well.

Circulating blood: Experimenting with the utopian potential of transporting blood via drone

Stephanie Soderer, Centre for Mobilities Research, Lancaster University

My postdoctoral research focuses on crisis mobilities broadly and the movement of blood specifically. How do we currently, and how can we in (a utopian?) future, get blood to people in need? Working at the intersection of the mobilities paradigm, the materialist turn, infrastructure studies and STS, I explore the movement of blood as a vital material in order to highlight 1) the complexity of vital mobilities, and 2) the interface of vital mobilities with a changing climate (e.g. infrastructure disruption, mosquito-borne illness). Cargo medical drones, as used in Rwanda and Canada, may provide valuable modal flexibility in the case of disaster (e.g. severe weather events) and/or last mile logistics. Is there utopian potential within medical cargo drone technology? Can the transfer of technology (e.g. drones, blood transfusion) from military to civilian uses yield benefits in line with utopian ideals? How does the utopian potential of medical cargo drones fit with dystopic visions of climate change impacts, fossil fuel scarcity and carbon constraint? My research methodology has two components. First, through interviews, site observation and document analysis I am creating a series of narrative vignettes that ‘follows the material,’ tracing the materialities of blood as a vital commodity supply chain. Second, I am experimenting with the development of a local pilot project that involves flying a cargo drone across Morecambe Bay, a large tidal estuary in Lancaster, that currently needs to be circumnavigated (~75 kms). In combination, the vignettes and pilot project will offer rich insights into the utopian potential of moving vital materials during crisis.