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**Utopie/Utopia**

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Abstract

The word «utopia» (from the Greek *οὐ* «no» and *τόπος* «place», thus «no place» viz. «non-existing place») was coined by Thomas More and refers to the unreal and ideal state described in his book *Libellus vere aureus nec minus salutaris quam festivus de optimo reipublicae statu, deque de nova Insula Utopia* [*A Truly Golden Account of the Best State of a Commonwealth and of the New Island of Utopia*], first published in 1516. Following the example of Plato’s *Republic*, More as well as other thinkers and writers of the 16th and 17th century reflect on the political relevance of utopia and provide unique accounts of ideal, perfect and just «no places», as paradigms and standards of social, political, and religious reformation of the coeval real world.

However, the *political* significance of utopia (both as an unrealizable or abstract model, and as a method of criticizing and renovating the present-day society or state) relies on a basic *anthropological* feature, which incidentally is underlined already by More: the relationship between imagination and experience. This means that: 1) The human being is – Jonas would say – an «eidetic» being characterised by the inseparable relationship between imagination, reflection, experience and action; 2) Utopia is endowed with normative relevance, since what distinguishes us is the «imaginative engagement with a model which can modify our attitudes and even qualify our conduct» (Baker-Smith 2014).

Indeed, Jonas fully develops the anthropological relevance of utopia by investigating the very relationship between imagination and experience, and by underlining how the eidetic and reflective constitution of the human being leads to ethics. This is the basis for Jonas’ praise of the vulnerable sacredness of the «image of man» and for his criticism of specific aspects of the anthropological, political, and technological utopias stemming from modernity, such as the «Baconian ideal», the «utopia of the coming “true man”», the «idea of progress», and the «Marxist utopianism». Finally, I wish to highlight that the anthropological relevance of utopia can both shed light on the complex and interesting relationship between Jonas and Ernst Bloch, and provide a theoretical and practical appreciation of our dialectical and ambivalent nature.

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