



Utopias, Axioms, Science Fiction: A Quest for Educational Imaginaries

Summer School in Philosophy of Education and Educational Research

Gdynia & Gdańsk, 16-18 June 2024

16.06.2024, Sunday afternoon

Venue: Polish Naval Academy, Main Library, room 119, 1st floor (ul. Śmidowicza 69, Gdynia: entrance from Grudzińskiego street)

14:00 – 14:15 Official opening of the School

14:15 – 14:45 Self-introduction of participants (Name, affiliation, main research topic)

14:45 – 15:30 *Reviving educational imaginaries through rethinking utopias, axioms and science-fiction in theorising education: introduction to the idea of the Summer School* (The Organisational Team)

15:30 – 15:40 Housekeeping information (Piotr)

15:40 – 16:00 Coffee break (provided)

16:00 – 16:45 Keynote Lecture:

Rhiannon Firth (University College London) *Anti-authoritarian utopias, everyday life and resisting the repression of political imagination 1945-present*

There is little that can tell us more about the political achievements and failings, prevalent ideologies, and everyday lives within a society than articulations of the dreams and desires of its inhabitants. In this talk I attempt to give a history and compendium of anti-authoritarian utopias and frame fluctuations in the utopian impulse since the end of WWII until the present, with reference to societal context. I would like my contribution to function as a preliminary guide to the contemporary canon, as well as a call-to-arms in defence of utopian thought and action in increasingly anti-utopian times. Utopias in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have been incredibly diverse. I group utopias according to political developments and social movements they are associated with, to include: dystopias, movements of the New Left, critical, feminist and queer utopias, Black and decolonial utopias, ecological utopias, the intentional communities movement, educational utopias and critical pedagogy, post-left utopias, autonomous social movements, cyber- and tech-utopias, posthuman utopias and disaster utopias. Although the structure is more categorical than chronological, there is a historical narrative to be told of the proliferation and diversification of prefigurative and anti-authoritarian utopias during the demise of Soviet communism followed by commodification of the positive utopian impulse under accelerating neoliberalism, followed by its increasing repression and co-optation under contemporary conditions of securitization and counter-insurgency. I conclude calling for a revival of utopia from its present dystopian slump, as the timeless need to imagine things differently needs to be rearticulated in response to emerging situations.

16:45 – 17:15 Discussion on the Keynote

17:15 – 17:45 Coffee Break & Sandwiches (provided)

17:45 – 19:45 Laboratory in Collective Writing (Aline & Stefano)

20:30 – Beer on the beach (participants' own expenses)



17.06.2024, Monday

Venue: European Solidarity Centre (pl. Solidarności 1, Gdańsk)

10:00 – 12:00 Guided tour to the European Solidarity Centre permanent exhibition

12:00 – 13:30 Discussion on the exhibition and invited lecture (Jacek Kołtan and Piotr Zamojski)

13:30 – 15:00 Lunch (not provided)

15:00 – 15:45 Keynote lecture:

Sian Bayne (University of Edinburgh) *Utopia as method: the reimagining of (digital) education*

Critical research in the field of digital education rarely sees it as utopian. Its political economy is troublesome, its implications for sustainability and climate health are questionable, and its moral arc to date bends more toward extraction, surveillance and inequity than justice. To understand its utopian potential, a structured re-analysis of its histories and futures is needed. This talk will use Levitas's (2013) 'utopia as method' as a way to approach the histories of digital education and its possibilities. I will argue that the new 21st century utopian impulse might help us to imagine and build radically better futures for education in both its digital and non-digital forms.

15:45 – 16:15 Discussion on Keynote 2

16:30 – 19:00 Laboratories in Collective Writing

20:00 – Conference Dinner on participants' own expenses (Gdańsk Old Town)

18.06.2024, Tuesday

Venue: Polish Naval Academy, Main Library, (ul. Śmidowicza 69, Gdynia: entrance from Grudzińskiego street)

10:00 – 10:45 Keynote lecture (Auditorium B)

Tyson Lewis (North Texas University) *Utopian Science Fiction and the Education of the Infrastructural Imagination*

There are many calls for a return to the idea of cultivating a “utopian vision” of possible futures. Given the increasingly dystopian times in which we live, this is an urgent political and educational clarion call to ignite the ability to think through possible futures beyond the deadlocks defining the present. While agreeing that part of education must be focused on catalyzing such utopian visions, this paper focuses on a very specific methodological question: Where to start? How does one encourage such envisioning? It would seem that the call for utopian visions is much more easily said than done. To address this pedagogical issue, I argue that the distinctive feature of utopian science fiction is how it constructs worlds first and foremost through a detailed consideration of infrastructure. In other words, utopias offer a mapping of complex infrastructures that support the worlds and narratives that unfold within them. In this paper, I will outline a theory of infrastructure and then illustrate how science fiction utopian literature is uniquely invested in the description of infrastructure on both micro and macro levels. This is educational insofar as infrastructure is traditionally invisible and in the background of lived experience. Utopian science fiction draws out the background, enabling us to focus attention on the infrastructural complexity underlying and supporting life, thus encouraging us to think about how worlds are built out of such networks. I will conclude with a close reading of Kim Stanley Robinson's book New York 2140 to illustrate how Robinson helps educate the infrastructural imagination according to three specific dimensions: infrastructural atmospheres, powers, and materials.



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FEDERICO II



10:45 – 11:15 Discussion on Keynote

11:15 – 11:30 Coffee break (provided)

11:30 – 14:00 Seminars (room 119, Library internal rooms)

Groups led by

Alison Brady

Aline Nardo

Stefano Oliverio

Kai Wortmann

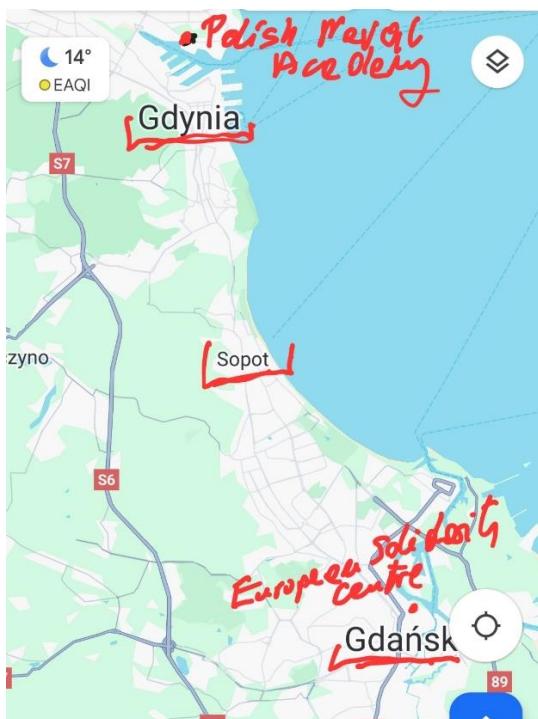
Piotr Zamojski

14:00 – 15:00 Brunch (provided)

15:00 – 16:00 Conclusion

Commuting

As announced the Summer School will take place in two venues that are located at two different ends of the Three-city. [Cities of Gdańsk, Sopot and Gdynia form one metropolis that is called the Three-city (Trójmiasto)].

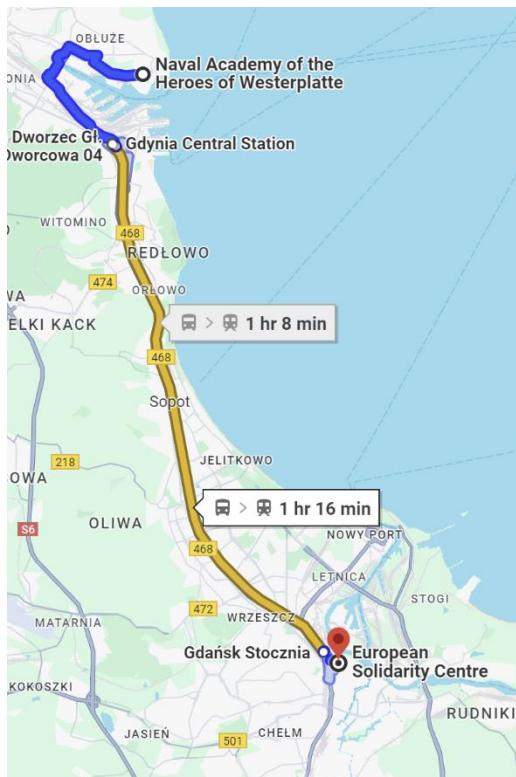




The best way to move around the Three-city is the city train: SKM

To get to the Naval Academy you need to get out on the Gdynia Główna station, and then use the bus 150 (leaving it at the junction between Śmidowicza street and Grudzińskiego street).

To get to the European Solidarity Centre you need to get out on the Gdańsk Stocznia station, and walk for about 10 min.



As you can see here, the trip takes ca. an hour (depending on the traffic it can take more). Regardless where you stay in the Three-city, the most reliable and fast way of transport is the city train (SKM). To buy a ticket for the SKM or the bus in Gdynia you can use various apps: SkyCash (I use this one – it has English language option), Jakdojade.pl, MPay, Mobilet, GoPay (and others): all available in Google and Apple stores for free. Naturally, you can also use traditional tickets which you can buy at the train station (traditional tickets for buses are more difficult to get).

However, when in need also taxi's are an option – be advised always to use corporate taxi's. The best

way is to use various apps (Bolt, FreeNow, Uber, etc.): these will be surprisingly cheap for you. NEVER use taxi's without any corporate brands waiting outside the Gdynia Główna train station: these are costly (for Polish standards). In most taxi's you can pay with a debit/credit card – but please make sure this is the case before boarding. This is not an issue when you order with an app – naturally.

Venue #1 Main Library of the Polish Naval Academy looks like this from the outside:





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FEDERICO II



And Like this from the Inside:



When entering on Sunday you go upstairs, and to the doors you see on the left (both doors lead to the same room): room 119.

Venue #2 European Solidarity Centre looks like this:



We meet there Monday morning by the box office.