sciendo
National University of Political Studies and Public Administration
Faculty of Management

Write Like You're Living in a Better World: Creative Writing as a Means for Building the Societies We Wish to See

Luke Ray Di MARCO CAMPBELL
University of Glasgow, Room 662, St. Andrews Building, Glasgow, G3 6NH, Scotland;
LukeRay.Campbell@Glasgow.ac.uk

Abstract
The following article explores a proposed educational programme premised on writing for utopias. Specifically, through facilitated dialogue, participants would collectively engage in creative writing as a mechanism for envisioning alternative futures grown out of divergent political ideologies or social norms to those they experience today. Participants are encouraged to question their current mentality, reflect on why society operates as it does today, and consider what changes they would want to bear witness to. The contribution outlines core concepts for the programme, whilst offering a sample twelve-session guide with suggestions on how to adapt it based on previous knowledge or the participants' ambitions. The ambition of such an undertaking is that students are supported - and support each other - to break with traditional formulaic tasks and, instead, develop their creativity and vision. Their works then serve as a starting point for further tasks predicated on critical dialogue over why they hold particular beliefs, rely on their stated visions to be utopian, and, ultimately, what steps are required to build towards the society they wish to see. The premise is non-prescriptive to enable writers to take their narratives in whichever directions they see fit - for example, whilst science fiction permits us to consider far flung futures, and fantasy enables perspectives to emerge from any source (flora, fauna, or otherwise), historical fiction enables us to revisit significant moments in time to ask what could have been had different choices been made. Throughout the submission, several literary and cinematic fiction examples are drawn upon to help demonstrate the relevant points.

Keywords
Creativity; Criticality; Ideologies; Exploration; Utopia; Co-creation; Dystopia

Ask yourself, 'What would it mean to live in a better world than the one we experience today?', 'Has artificial intelligence and automation liberated us to a workers' utopia?'; or 'Is there simply an end to war?', 'Do we need a monolithic state that offers that kind of compassion most of us can only dream of today?'; or 'Should we establish networks of autonomous communities predicated on relationships with the people, land, and animals we share it with?' Whatever aspirations we hold for the future, often these are confined by the systems we live in today. Rather than pursuing all-encompassing radical change, we find ourselves tied down to reformist practices – tinkering with systems so limited in scope that minor ideological shifts to the political left or right are so narrow and the elected parties so constrained by the actions of their predecessors that little difference occurs. Such restrictions creep into our mindset, leading many to embody the cliché that individuals become increasingly conservative as they get older (Gonsalkorale, Sherman, & Klauer, 2009; Fisher et al., 2021; von Hippel, Silver, & Lynch, 2020). But what if we sought ways to break that?

This contribution advocates the use of creative writing as a means for fostering critical consciousness, thereby encouraging learners to recognise and engage with the

How to cite
Di Marco Campbell, L. R. (2023). Write Like You're Living in a Better World: Creative Writing as a Means for Building the Societies We Wish to See. *Culture. Society. Economy. Politics, 3*(2), 81-91.
https://doi.org/10.2478/csep-2023-0011
ISSN (online) 2810-2010
https://website.sciendo.com/publication/culture-society-economy-politics/
http://www.facultateademanagement.ro/culture-sep/

complications and contradictions of the social and political worlds around them - coming to better understand concepts of agency, ideology, and interactions as they do so (Freire, 1970; Darder, 2009). As a non-research paper, it lies within the briefer word range of the call for papers (Hrib, 2023). Predicated as a chance to sincerely ask ourselves what we want to see in the world (be that in our local communities or a genuinely global context), this process promotes visionary thinking and pushes participants to sincerely reflect on how we might get there. Note that, at this stage, the programme proposed below as a means for enacting this writing for utopias project is envisioned as a formative learning process rather than an assessment. Far from limiting the writer to prose about 'the real world,' authors may engage in any form or genre they see fit. Whilst science fiction permits us to consider far flung futures, fantasy enables perspectives to emerge from any source - flora, fauna, or otherwise – and historical fiction enables us to revisit significant moments in time to ask what could have been had different choices been made. However, as William (1978) stresses, 'the relationships between them are exceptionally complex,' with divergent intentions and visions of what kind of society is desirable. Despite this, each approach and genre allow for complex narratives and themes to emerge, whether the participants are experienced authors or not.

To clarify how this task is envisioned in the learning space, let us close the introduction by defining the process's parameters (or lack thereof). Participants may choose to undertake the production of a direct matter-of-fact story, advising the reader of the specific social and political structures the characters live under (precise ideologies of governance, representatives' democracy, dictatorship, etc.). Alternatively, more immersive approaches would see precise perspectives serve as our entry point into new worlds, with the identified character(s)'s experiences serving as the mechanism for how we (as readers, audience, or respondents) are introduced to the ideologies and social norms of a potentially utopian creation. However, know that these two approaches are not the totality of options and that other potential strategies may be enacted. As with Skipper's (2023, p.234) creating writing workshops, '[t]he facilitator scaffolds the work, setting tasks which are achievable and gradually reducing support as the writers gain confidence, which leads to feelings of competence as the writers successfully achieve each milestone,' meaning the learners retain control of their works whilst operating in a collaborative co-learning space.

Inspiration: breaking boundaries and limitations

In part, this work has been produced in response to witnessing the frankly pathetic scope of the *2050 Edinburgh City Vision* poster series produced by the City of Edinburgh Council (2016) on the back of a series of dialogues that saw participants engage in 'a major conversation about the future of a city and a society.' Clustered under themes of establishing a Welcoming City, Fair City, Thriving City, and Pioneering City, the campaign was so limited in its ambition that the demands many respondents gave are precisely the same they want to see now, not circa two decades on. The lack of ambition for near-future social progress was startling, yet this initiative is pitched as one of the most progressive attempts to engage community members in fostering a Scottish capital 'without barriers to achievement and where a good quality of life is a basic requirement enjoyed by all' (ibid.).

Overseen by the Lord Provost (equivalent in several Scottish cities to what others might recognise as a mayor - namely Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, and Glasgow; Dundee City Council, 2023), *2050 Edinburgh City Vision* was composed of precisely those whom we would expect it to be - 'key stakeholders' identified by the state. Many were selected from within the private sector (non-state-run organisations), and others held senior roles within the public and voluntary sectors (statist bodies and not-for-profit organisations, respectively). In Scotland, as elsewhere, it is often those who hold senior roles within the 'voluntary' sector who hold secure and paid positions, whilst the majority of others rely on sessional opportunities, precarious or short-term and low-

Vol.3 (2023) no.2, pp. 81-91; DOI 10.2478/csep-2023-0011

paid contracts (Cunningham & James, 2009; Martin, 2012), or 'donate' their time, energy, and talents to a cause they either deem worthy (Dean, 2022; Acheson et al., 2022; Davies, 2018), or, in the worst cases, take on positions where they can asway a degree of proselytising condescension to ease the guilt they may otherwise bear (Biddle, 2021; Dull, Hoyt, Grzanka, & Zeiders 2021; Save the Children Australia, 2017). Furthermore, the individuals quoted on the website include the Chief Executive Officer of the Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council, a former leader of the City of Edinburgh Council, the Chief Executive of Children in Scotland, the Creative Director of the Edinburgh International Science Festival, and the Head of Information Services at VisitScotland – hardly the everyday people of Scotland's capital. This thereby demonstrates ample opportunity to explore opportunities to bring alternative voices to the fore, with the full diversity and contradictions that entails.

Figure 1. Photos from Edinburgh City Council's (2016)
Edinburgh City Vision 2050 poster series.

Were we to break with such limited conceptions of whose opinions matter in identifying the desired social direction - recognising the topping economic and political hierarchy - and understand that visions need not originate with those occupying traditional positions of power (CEO, mayoral positions, politicians, etc.), we have the opportunity to envision a different way of being. Some may advocate for universal housing provided by the state, whilst others may argue for deposit-free and no-interest mortgages to allow everyone to own their home – very much pushing for basic needs to be met that the existing systems so consistently fail to address (for evidence of this in the U.K. and the abundance of negative consequences this entails see, e.g., Cross, Bywaters, Brown, &

Featherstone, 2022; Spratt, 2023; Broughton, 2019; Cooper & Whyte, 2016; Walsh, Wyper, & McCartney, 2022; and Clelland, 2021). Other authors may dismiss such reformism entirely and advocate for the abolition of statist apparatus, encouraging people to support each other to construct their own homes, engaging in acts of mutual care in their communities, or push for an outright return to naturism (a la anarcho-primitivism; see, e.g., el-Ojeli & Taylor, 2020).

It's to be expected from a state-run imitative like *Edinburgh City Vision 2050*, but heartbreaking from a social perspective, then, to see the posters where people – presumably intended to embody the 'every[wo]man' (the individual who 'has experiences and emotions that are like those of any ordinary person' [Collins Dictionary, 2023]) bearing placards advocating such rudimentary demands. As illustrated in the sample posters above, 'affordable houses,' hoping the city will actually be inclusive of diversity, 'have glass recycling bins' (something the majority of the city already has close access to), and 'have less homelessness' (not none, 'less') more than twenty-five years from now, these are such weak and profoundly reformist visions – as if tweaking the current system could rectify the very issues it's created. Capitalist culture does exactly when it intended to do so (Harvey, 2020; Dinerstein & Pitts, 2021), noble as some may consider these ideas (positioning it as a meritocracy rather than recognising the harms it causes), and none of these proposals promoted by City of Edinburgh Council (2016) will kill the roots that hold it in place. So, what can we do to encourage more radical thought?

Envisioned Programme

To explore how this proposed activity might work in practice, the following considers the idealised approach - one built on a long and thin learning structure. Proposed as a twelve-session programme, the envisioned version of this activity sees small group learning (circa twelve learners) with participants engaging in a combination of facilitated input, individual exploration, time dedicated to writing, and small group dialogue. Note, however, there is room to expand this programme significantly with assigned reading or viewing activities that allow further exploration of existing materials (film, literature, political theory, etc.). The core concern is ensuring that learners can undertake a programme that suits their capacity and ambitions, with the learning space an issue open to co-constructed agreements (e.g., age-appropriate tasks, in-person or online formats, adult-only or family-friendly spaces, etc.).

This version affords opportunities for an educator/facilitator to outline the task and reflect briefly on approaches to creative writing – an activity that may feel quite alien to learners who have, generally, been pushed to write in 'traditional' academic forms, citing evidence of core data and grounding their works in the theories of others. Whilst not negating the importance or theory, the sessions are oriented towards creative writing rather than academic justifications. Certainly, the early weeks could see learners engage with a range of entry-level texts to political ideologies – Andrew Heywood's *Political Ideologies: An Introduction* (Heywood, 2012) and *Political Theory: An Introduction* (Heywood, 2015) being two that I use with my first-year undergraduate students – building to appropriate levels based on the cohort's existing knowledge, but the ideal version of this programme would see learners have every third week set aside within the learning space for critical dialogue around their creations. This exchange of ideas (e.g., in groups of three or four) allows learners to give voice to their ideas, name their worlds, trial different forms of narrative with a receptive audience, and reciprocate for those undertaking this collective learning journey.

Whilst the remit is incredibly open, with participants able to pitch their envisioned societies at any level (hyperlocalised or even individual, national, or international), the dialogical space assists with world-building and peers encourage the authors to solidify their concepts through critical collective inquiry. In asking a participant who has centred their narration around an individual character expansive questions, peer learners might

Vol.3 (2023) no.2, pp. 81-91; DOI 10.2478/csep-2023-0011

query where this character is situated from broader social perspectives – what is their relationship to the state (if one exists)?; how does the character address their basic needs (e.g. farming practices, exchange, or self-contained units)?; what shared fictions do the characters agree upon (e.g. paper money holding value, a basic human rights framework?); is there a class or caste-based system (and, if so, where is the lead character placed within that)?; etc. By critiquing without criticising the vision and allowing the author to retain control over their vision, learners have the opportunity to address such lines of questioning, emboldening their creations in the process to produce something more fully-rounded.

By way of a template for trialing this approach, the below outlines one vision of a typical twelve-week programme.

Week #1: Introduction to creative writing.
Week #2: Overview of political theories.
Week #3: Envisioning and manifesting utopia.
Week #4: Character creation & world building.
Week #5: Facilitated writing.
Week #6: Group work: Sharing stories.
Week #7: Exploring cinematic examples.
Week #8: One-to-one support session.
Week #9: Group work: Sharing stories.
Week #10: Facilitated writing.
Week #11: Unanswered questions & limitations.
Week #12: Full cohort sharing.

This agenda is far from prescriptive, but it enables would-be groups to adapt it to a version that best suits their learning needs, thereby improving access at the hyperlocalised group level (Ash, Drew, & Clark, 2021). It ensures those who are perhaps less familiar with creative writing techniques or who might struggle with deinstitutionalisating their approaches to such tasks given the way many educational institutes operate so formulaically – in essence, learning to disentangle education from a culture of 'teaching to the test' (Popham, 2001; Volante, 2004). Additionally, as Skipper (2023) detailed of her creative writing sessions with the White Water Writers (U.K.), this approach serves as 'an intervention which allowed prisoners to collaboratively write and publish a novel for their children in a week' – demonstrating that the programme could be drastically altered towards a rapid immersion model. Furthermore, as noted in the access needs commentary within this paper, family-friendly learning can provide a unique learning space, creating opportunities not only to better enable a range of participants but, as with Skipper's (2023) initiative, the programme could encourage intergenerational learning, perhaps 'engag[ing] children in producing the illustrations' for any such texts.

Between utopia and dystopia: one step beyond

Numerous works across film and literature have permitted us to experience far-flung realities and those just one step beyond where we are today. The below section recognises just a handful of examples before advocating an approach we can take in education to turn this premise towards a pedagogy of hope. Whilst joyous utopians are somewhat less prominent, in part because stories of hardship and struggle engage significant viewers/readerships – darkness offers something to fight against, to overcome.

Consider, for example, *Plan 75* (Hayakawa, 2023), which presented a near-future government initiative intended to address the nation's rapidly aging population. The 2023 release was 'a feature-length follow-up to Hayakawa's 2018 short as part of *Ten Years Japan* in which five visions were presented of dangerous paths Japan might take', with this precise version detailing a dystopia in which the 'Japanese state implement a pro-euthanasia programme for senior citizens in an attempt to address the suggested impending crisis that according to the International Longevity Center Japan (2017) will see one-third of the domestic population aged sixty-five or older' (Di Marco Campbell, 2023). Hayakawa's vision intentionally serves as a warning, yet, we, the viewers, are tasked with recognising the reality of this situation (one that was based on a murderous attack on an assisted living facility in Kanagawa [Japan] in July 2016) and ask ourselves what can be done to prevent it.

Other interpretations borrow from less traditional genres; for example, the German-language horror film *Old People* (Fetscher, 2022) offers a zombie-esque metaphor for generational disconnect, social marginalisation, and intergenerational neglect. Though there's been a negative backlash for the extent of the violence shown in the film, the premise is not entirely distinct from works like *Plan 75*. Though the Poland-based religious storyline relies heavily on Christian orthodoxy to promote the sanctity of marriage ('whoever breaks up families is cursed'), emotionally manipulative and controlling relationships constitute a significant aspect of the storyline. In brief, as a response to their abandonment, the village's elderly mutate – with the aid of a virus – into zombie-like beings, 'beasts' which, premised on the experiences the primary villain relays, embody the way residents in the care home have been 'treated like animals.' Rather than the state provision of a direct solution as in *Plan 75*, *Old People* toys with the oppressed, taking violent revenge.

Each cinematic example showcases dystopia, but can there be hope in such storytelling? Williams (1978) contests that utopias can take four distinct forms:
(a) 'the paradise, in which a happier life is described as simply existing elsewhere;
(b) the externally altered world, in which a new kind of life has been made possible by an unlooked-for natural event;
(c) the willed transformation, in which a new kind of life has been achieved by human effort; and
(d) the technological transformation, in which a new kind of life has been made possible by a technical discovery.'

Conversely, he argued that dystopian narratives offer similarly clear categories:
(a) 'the hell, in which a more wretched kind of life is described as existing elsewhere;
(b) the externally altered world, in which a new but less happy kind of life has been brought about by an unlooked-for or uncontrollable natural event;
(c) the willed transformation, in which a new but less happy kind of life has been brought about by social degeneration, by the emergence or re-emergence of harmful kinds of social order, or by the unforeseen yet disastrous consequences of an effort at social improvement; and
(d) the technological transformation, in which the conditions of life have been worsened by technical development.'

Across these forms, notions such as 'hell' are deeply context-dependent with the negative portrayals generally countering our own belief systems (hell is other people's ideals), though Williams (1978) emphasises that these are 'inherently universal and timeless.' The premise of external imposition can see legislative changes that alter the ways we live our lives, exposing 'human limitation or indeed human powerlessness.' Under this form, 'the event saves or destroys us, and we are its objects' (Williams, 1978) meaning that humanity must adjust to survive or face its own demise (think, for example, H. G. Wells' [1898] *War of the Worlds*). The latter two categories of dystopia see an intentional transformation take place – social, political, or technological. A class-based revolution might see new modes of worker organisation, it may entail upending social relations; yet the science-fiction component frequently explores Butler's (n.d.) question of 'what if this continues?', therein creating 'an image of consequence' (Williams, 1978) that shows the extreme end point of a possible pathway for humanity's future.

Vol.3 (2023) no.2, pp. 81-91; DOI 10.2478/csep-2023-0011

The technological visions have not universally been negative, however, with examples such as *Robbie* by Isaac Asimov (1940), which explored dynamics of care within programming versus the risk of harm; whilst Asimov's other works, such as *Runaround* (1942), offered the Three Laws of Robotics that have become foundations for utopian visions of technological development; or *Escape!* (1945), which hands power over a team of humans to a supercomputer. Engels (1880) identified similar concepts under 'scientific socialism,' distinguishing socialist utopianism, which he suggests is idealistic and fanciful, and the alternative supposedly grounded version premised on his belief that scientific progress was possible to commence under and, subsequently, construct against capitalist structures. As such, he contested that scientific socialism was a sincere possibility given the drive for innovation under efforts motivated by capital. Yet, his theories were predicated on technological advances coming under the control of the working class rather than becoming the oppressive tools they have in many real-world instances today, whereby machines replace a significant proportion of the workforce without liberating them from the need to work. Hope abounds in these examples, even if they create dystopian frameworks via the events, allowing those engaging with them to consider often radically distinct environments.

Building Utopia

> '[T]he importance of utopian thought is itself being revalued, so that some now see it as the crucial vector of desire, without which even the laws are, in one version, imperfect, and, in another version, mechanical, needing desire to give them direction and substance. This reaction is understandable but it makes the utopian impulse more simple, more singular, than in the history of utopias, it is. Indeed the variability of the utopian situation, the utopian impulse, and the utopian result is crucial to the understanding of utopian fiction.' Williams (1978)

Understanding storytelling as a valuable space for engaging with ideologies, philosophies, and conflicts makes this premise apt. That same notion has served as the foundation for many of the greatest literary and cinematic worlds; however, this article hypothesises that we need not exclusively act as recipients. By building from our own world as it is now, we can consider the changes we wish to see (hopefully more divergent in scope from our current societies, just with more opportunities to recycle glass or dream of having to witness *fewer* people rough sleeping - seemingly the limit of Edinburgh City Council's ambitions).

To develop from where we are today and ask 'what else might there be?' enables literary grounding in reality, supporting the authors to create something that feels 'real' or, at least, builds from what the writers already know. All ideological approaches include challenges, yet, in some instances, these are as in-built as the duration required for consensus-building (e.g., direct democracy), whereas, under others, specific demographics face extreme victimisation (e.g., fascism, nationalism, etc.). As witnessed through the brief outlining of several literary or cinematic outputs above, dystopian narratives can serve a vital purpose in exploring struggle. The works, thus, don't need to propose universal buy-in to the new society(ies), but could examine the impact of competing ideologies, or demonstrate the gaps and failures of our current threats if they are more responded to with radical alternatives. However, this contribution argues that learners have opportunities to dedicate time and energy to alternative ideologies, social structures, or relationship dynamics than they experience day-to-day in their communities (geographic, social, work, faith-based or otherwise).

To consider another example in *Star Trek*, whilst certain episodes of The Original Series (1966 - 1969) and The Next Generation (1987 - 1994) asked 'How can we bring the ideals of a United Federation of Planets to other worlds?' (creating a post-scarcity society; Spalding Andréolle, 2012), it was not until Deep Space Nine (1993 - 1999) that the extent of this myth was truly revealed. With the 'remote' outpost of the former Terok

Nor station ('remote' being predicated on its distance from the central planets of The Federation) permits insight into the societies external to the member nations we frequently focused on. Centred on Bajor, we witness the aftermath of a decades-long occupation and the suppression of a once-advanced society that has been fed lies about its history and place in the universe. We also see, largely through the lead character of Benjamin Sisko (portrayed by Avery Brooks), that The Federation's interest in protecting Bajor is tactical, not built on compassion. Elements of this were introduced towards the end of The Next Generation, but authentic questioning of that vision did not occur until later. *Star Trek*, thus, inspired some with its early visions (Geraghty, 2005), whilst others questioned the seeming ease with which conflicts could be resolved.

That toxic relationship between humanity as a whole and animality, the Studio Ghibli film もののけ姫, (ENG: *Princess Mononoke*; Miyazaki, 1997) offers a tale in which the titular character has abandoned mankind for its harmful ways, instead aligning herself with the wolves of the forest in their conflict against harmful aggressors. Other examples include Plato's (380 B.C.E.) The Republic in which notions of 'justice' at the individual and societal levels are explored, asking how these relate to or permit happiness (whatever that means for the concerned character[s]). In Ursula K. Le Guin's (1980) *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* utopia comes at a trade-off for one young person's suffering, forcing a reflection of what or who we are willing to sacrifice to achieve the greatest degree of happiness for the largest number of people - a tale of morality. Aldous Huxley's (1932) *Brave New World* where the 'soma drug' creates a docile and non-confrontational population, ensuring a peaceful world, albeit under the direction of the order. These texts and films demonstrate that the creative process need not present a perfectly unified society, rather, there are opportunities to expose the limitations of existing or threatened systems, and to then demonstrate alternative ways of being.

As we build our worlds, we recognise just how diverse notions of 'community', 'society', and 'relationships' truly are. Eco-fictions might focus on what true social and environmental harmony might constitute, showcasing how we might interact with the Earth without extracting all that we can - damaging it, polluting it, and destroying the habitats of our neighbouring species. A borderless utopia would see the end of the criminalisation of migration, and may advocate for free movement for love, learning, and adventure. By the same token, ideologies rooted in forms of orthodoxy might envision a society built on universal subscription to a given denomination (e.g., Sunni Muslim, Lutheran Christian, Vedist Hindu, or Mormonism). Devout commitment to gospel teachings, to some, might be that utopian vision, yet, for many others, that merely exchanges one complex hierarchy (that of religion under capitalism) for a stripped-down religious life where fear of a deity replaces incarceration by the state which equally shapes the boundaries of what we belief it safe to do in our daily lives m. Within Christianity, this was epitomised in the Garden of Eden where humanity failed the faith God placed in 'us,' resulting in permanent banishment from the seeming safety of the garden.

Conclusions

Though, at present, creative writing in this manner would frequently be deemed as largely unsuitable for the needs of academic programmes such as those I'm involved with teaching at the university level (Community Development), there is potential to take action based on the idea informally or within community settings. Whether participants build from the adage of 'write what you know' or are endeavoring to foster something entirely new, the absence of restrictions (i.e., without institutionally-imposed assessment protocol for graded-programmes) may be somewhat liberating. The scope is wider than the set remit of a formal educational environment, yet, the writers can utilise their real-world knowledge to build their visions - whatever dramas, environments, or belief systems that entails.

Vol.3 (2023) no.2, pp. 81-91; DOI 10.2478/csep-2023-0011

Treating this as both an individual and a collective activity allows learners to develop their knowledge collaboratively and to peer review works as they are drafted. That critical collegiality is intended to avoid marginalising those we disagree with (ideologically or in what constitutes effective storytelling methods). This means that come the end of the initial programme (whether the twelve-week version or not), learners have refined their understandings of political ideologies - both their own idealised form, but also competing or contrasting ambitions - and, thus, are better able to articulate their desires. To conclude, learners leave the programme with a clearer vision of what their dream society could look like. Progress becomes a question of not what we hope for but how we can work towards it. If we can write it, we can embody it, fight for it. Creative writing becomes a transformative political process in building a better world.

References

Acheson, N., Crawford, L., Grotz, J., Hardill, I., Hayward, D., Hogg, E., Dafydd Jones, R., Linning, M., Rees, S., Rutherford, A., Speed, E., McGarvey, A., Goodall, C., Stuart, J., & Maltman, D. (2022). 2. Mobilising the voluntary sector: critical reflections from across the four UK nations. In *COVID-19 and the Voluntary and Community Sector in the UK* (pp. 17–29). Policy Press. https://doi.org/10.51952/9781447365532.ch002

Ash, A., Drew, C., & Clark, M. D. (2021). *Imaginative Teaching through Creative Writing.* Bloomsbury Publishing.

Asimov, I. (1940). *Robbie*.

Asimov, I. (1942). *Runaround*.

Asimov, I. (1945). *Escape!*.

Biddle, P. (2021). *Ours to explore: Privilege, power, and the paradox of voluntourism*. University of Nebraska Press.

Boughton, J. (2019). *Municipal Dreams: The Rise and Fall of Council Housing*. Verso Book.

Clelland, D. (2021). In a straightjacket? Targeting deprivation in rural Scotland in the context of localism and austerity. *Journal of Rural Studies,* 83, 155-164. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2021.02.008

Collins Dictionary. (2023) *Everyman*. Retrieved from https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/everyman

Cooper, V., & Whyte, D. (2016). *The Violence of Austerity*. Pluto Press.

Cross, S., Bywaters, P., Brown, P., & Featherstone, B. (2022). Housing, Homelessness and Children's Social Care: Towards an Urgent Research Agenda. *The British Journal of Social Work*, *52*(4), 1988-2007. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcab130

Cunningham, I., & James, P. (2009). The outsourcing of social care in Britain: what does it mean for voluntary sector workers?. *Work, Employment and Society, 23*(2), 363-375. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017009102863

Darder, A. (2009) Decolonizing the Flesh: The Body, Pedagogy, and Inequality. *Counterpoints*, 369, 217–232

Davies, J. (2018). "We'd get slagged and bullied": understanding barriers to volunteering among young people in deprived urban areas. *Voluntary Sector Review*, *9*(3), 255-272. https://doi.org/10.1332/204080518X15428929349286

Dean, J. (2022). Informal Volunteering, Inequality, and Illegitimacy. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *51*(3), 527-544. https://doi.org/10.1177/08997640211034580

Di Marco Campbell, L. R. (2023). *Plan 75: A Near Future Warning*. Bella Caledonia. Retrieved from https://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2023/05/23/plan-75-a-near-future-warning/ [Accessed on 25th September 2023]

Dinerstein, A. C., & Pitts, F. H. (2021). *A world beyond work? Labour, money and the capitalist state between crisis and utopia*. Emerald Publishing Limited

Dull, B. D., Hoyt, L. T., Grzanka, P. R., & Zeiders, K. H. (2021). Can White Guilt Motivate Action? The Role of Civic Beliefs. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, 50, 1081-1097.

Dundee City Council. (2023). *Lord Provost of Dundee.* Retrieved from https://www.dundeecity.gov.uk/dundees-civic-history/lord-provost-of-dundee Edinburgh City Council. (2016). *Edinburgh City Vision 2050.*

el-Ojeili, C., & Taylor, T. (2020). "The Future in the Past": Anarcho-primitivism and the Critique of Civilization Today. *Rethinking Marxism*, *32*(2), 168-186. https://doi.org/10.1080/08935696.2020.1727256

Engels, F. (1880). *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*.

Fetscher, A. (2022). *Old People* [Film]. Arbor Films.

Fisher, M., Phoenix, D., Powell, S., Mousa, M., Rosenberg, S., Greenia, D., Corrada, M. M., Kawas, C., & Paganini-Hill, A. (2021). Cognition and Political Ideology in Aging. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, *69*(3), 762-766. https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.16935

Freire, P. (1970) 1970. *Pedagogía del Oprimido.* Montevideo: Tierra Nueva

Geraghty, L. (2005). *Living with Star trek: utopia, community, self-improvement and the Star trek universe.* PhD thesis. University of Nottingham.

Gonsalkorale, K., Sherman, J. W., & Klauer, K. C. (2009). Aging and prejudice: Diminished regulation of automatic race bias among older adults. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *45*(2), 410-414. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2008.11.004

Harvey, D. (2020). Anti-capitalist politics in the time of COVID-19. *Jacobin Magazine*, *20*(1).

Hayakawa, C. (Director). (2018). *Ten Years Japan* [Film].

Hayakawa, C. (Director). (2022). *Plan 75* [Film].

Heywood, A. (2012). *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Heywood, A. (2015). *Political Theory: An Introduction*. Red Globe Press.

Hrib, B. (2023). The Dynamics of Books. Writing, Publishing, Reading. *Culture, Society, Economics, Politics, 3*(2).

Huxley, A. (1932). Brave New World. Chatto & Windus.

International Longevity Center Japan. (2017). In Di Marco Campbell, L. R. (2023). *Plan 75: A Near Future Warning*. Bella Caledonia. Retrieved from https://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2023/05/23/plan-75-a-near-future-warning/

Le Guin, U. I. (1980). *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas. New Dimensions*. Vol.3

Martin, N. (2012). "There Is Abuse Everywhere": Migrant Nonprofit Organizations and the Problem of Precarious Work. *Urban Affairs Review*, *48*(3), 389-416. https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087411428799

Miyazaki, H. (Director). (1997). *Princess Mononoke* [Film].

Popham, J. W. (2001). Teaching to the Test? Helping All Students Achieve. *Educational Leadership*, *58*(6), 16-20.

Save the Children Australia. (2017). *How to volunteer responsibly: Our top tips.* Retrieved from https://www.savethechildren.org.au/our-stories/how-to-volunteer-responsibly-our-top-tips

Skipper, Y. (2023). My child the hero: How a collaborative writing project changes prisoners' self-concept and family connection. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, 62*(4), 233-254. https://doi.org/10.1080/10509674.2023.2193435

Spalding Andréolle, D. (2012). *Les séries télévisées dans le monde: Échanges, déplacements et transpositions ... Paved with the Best Intentions? Utopian Spaces in Star Trek, the Original Series (NBC, 1966-1969)*.

Spratt, V. (2022). *Tenants: The People on the Frontline of Britain's Housing Emergency*. Profile Books.

Volante, L. (2004). Teaching to the Test: What Every Educator and Policy-Maker Should Know. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 35

von Hippel, W., Silver, L., & Lynch, M. E. (2000). Stereotyping against your will: The role of inhibitory ability in stereotyping and prejudice among the elderly. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *26*(5), 523-532. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167200267001

Walsh, D., Wyper, G. M. A., & McCartney, G. (2022). Trends in healthy life expectancy in the age of austerity. *Epidemiol Community Health*, *76*(8), 743-745. https://doi.org/10.1136/jech-2022-219011

Wells, H. G. (1898). *War of the Worlds*. William Heinemann Ltd.

Vol.3 (2023) no.2, pp. 81-91; DOI 10.2478/csep-2023-0011

Williams, R. (1978). Utopia and Science Fiction. *Science Fiction Studies #16, 5*(3). https://www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/16/williams16art.htm

Received: November 9, 2023
Accepted: December 21, 2023
Published: December 30, 2023

Author's biography

Luke Ray Di Marco Campbell is a lecturer in Community Development at the University of Glasgow (Scotland) and researches social movements the world over. A keen linguist currently starting out with Czech has previously produced translated works in French and Spanish. Their work is grounded in anarcha-feminist theory and practice. They're big into boxing and association football and now hold a doctorate - but it's still just 'Luke Ray' (he/they).