

There is one more assumption underlying both Popper's prescription for utopia's defeat and Fukuyama's proclamation of its demise that Bloch contests: the claim that utopianism is extraordinary enough to be judged incompatible with the pragmatism demanded of ordinary existence and, consequently, tenuous enough that one could imagine it overcome. Indeed, to its critics, utopianism is something anomalous, a rarified pursuit and peculiar indulgence, something distant from the normal routines and practical concerns of everyday life. It is because utopian desire is deemed exotic that Popper can expect not only that it should, but that it could, be conquered, and Fukuyama can claim that it has dried up, its wellsprings exhausted. Here again Bloch offers a counterargument that can better account for the persistence of the capacity for and will to utopia.

The "Not-Yet-Conscious" is the term Bloch uses to designate what enables us to anticipate the Not-Yet-Become as an open possibility. He develops this concept through a comparison, or series of comparisons, to the Freudian conception of the unconscious. The Not-Yet-Conscious is another side of the unconscious, one that taps a reservoir of social and political desire comparable to the individuated desire of the Freudian libido. Whereas the Freudian unconscious is backward-looking, a storehouse of the forgotten and repressed, the Not-Yet-Conscious is oriented toward the future. Bloch complains that whereas "*there is nothing new in the Freudian unconscious*" (1: 56), the Not-Yet-Conscious is conceived as a source of creativity and site of intellectual productivity (1: 116).

The Not-Yet-Conscious—this capacity for thinking and wanting the future—can be discovered in a wide variety of practices and artifacts. One place where Bloch locates it, although only in incipient form, is in the act of daydreaming. Although many examples of mundane protoutopianism could be used to illustrate the argument about the ubiquity of utopian desires and imagination, the daydream seems a particularly appropriate instance to consider because, like utopia itself, it is so often doubly discredited as at once wasteful and trivial: a notoriously unproductive use of time—indeed, perhaps the epitome of an "idle indulgence"—and, compared to the night dream, a superficial phenomenon without the same psychological heft and depth. Bloch means to question these judgments, responding to the productivist critique with

the suggestion that the daydream might be something to cultivate rather than outgrow, and challenging the psychological critique's assumption that the night dream unlocks doors to our deepest drives and motives, whereas the daydream can be dismissed as pointless and inconsequential. This indictment of the daydream extends beyond its supposed uselessness and triviality. Daydreaming is often treated as an embarrassment, not only for the lack it represents—a lapse in concentration, a waste of time, an interruption of productive activity—but for what it reveals of our immoderate desires to be and have more, an excess of social desire comparable to the libidinal excesses that can fuel the sleeping dream. And it is not just that these desires for undeserved pleasures are seen as irredeemably self-indulgent; these experiments with the social and political imagination are also considered dangerous—risky violations of that strategy of social adjustment by which we allow ourselves to want only what we are likely to have. In this familiar estimation, daydreams are without value, neither sufficiently productive nor functionally reproductive to merit indulgence or warrant exploration.

Here Bloch again poses a rather polemical contrast to the Freudian night dream. Speaking of polemics, it is worth noting that the daydream that emerges from Bloch's analysis is something of an ideal type: he highlights certain tendencies and minimizes others, magnifying those he wants us to notice so that we might learn to recognize something different in a phenomenon that is so familiar and yet, oddly, so philosophically unattended. Bloch invites us to recognize in these wishful escapes and individual fantasies the traces of a rather different kind of desire and mode of speculation, another form of cognitive and affective practice, and he deploys the distinction between the daydream and the night dream as a way in. According to Bloch, each kind of dream “enters and unlocks a very different region” (1: 87); as we will see, both the modes of dreaming and the contents of the dreams tend to differ.

More specifically, there are four points that distinguish daydreams from night dreams. First, unlike a night dream, a daydream is more typically characterized by what Bloch calls a “clear road.” In contrast to both hallucinations and night dreams, a daydream may mute or even distort reality, but does not generally alter it wholesale; the basic tenets of the physical and social setting of the action tend to remain more or less familiar. Moreover, daydreams are more subject to the dreamer's guidance than are sleeping dreams; the dreamer “is not abducted or over-

powered by his images, they are not independent enough for this” (1: 88). Daydreams are directed constructions; dreamers can make choices about their contents. Second—and closely related to the first point—daydreams are more likely to be characterized by a “preserved ego”: “The daydreaming ‘I’ persists throughout, consciously, privately, envisaging the circumstances and images of a desired, better life” (Bloch 1970, 86). The dreamer is typically recognizable as the self, even if transformed into a self that the dreamer might wish to become. Another sign of the ego’s relative strength is that this daytime imagination tends to be less subject to censorship. Whereas the dream work serves to disguise the wishes that animate nighttime journeys, such wishes are revealed more clearly as the wellsprings of daydreams. In the process of daydreaming, dreamers are less likely to feel ashamed of their wishes or as inclined to atone for the pleasures found in entertaining them. Indeed, in this arena in which the daydream ego—a “utopistically intensified ego,” an ego “with the will to extend itself” (1995, 1: 91)—imagines a better life, desires are given a freer rein; here we allow ourselves the private exploration of our desire for more, with less of the usual self-recrimination and moralizing that can hobble the utopian imagination of different worlds.

Bloch presents the third and fourth characteristics of the daydream under the headings of “world-improving” and “journey to the end.” As world-improving exercises, daydreams, or at least those that Bloch wants to recognize and consider, typically involve a social component. That is, the daydreamer is less likely to imagine being alone on a deserted island than to envision herself or himself as part of a social world (1995, 1: 92). Night dreams tend to be intensely private, even solipsistic, with their contents disguised and therefore difficult to communicate. (Here one has only to recall the tedium of listening to a friend struggle to recount the details of a recent night’s dream.) The wishful images of daydreams, on the other hand, being both grounded in a recognizable reality and more intersubjectively oriented, are more readily communicated (1: 93–94). (One suspects it would be far more interesting to hear a friend recount a recent daydream, but since daydreams are less subject to self-censorship and in them our desires are so directly exposed and indulged, they are also less likely to be shared.) But daydreams are not just worldly rather than otherworldly, they tend toward world-improvement. As world-improving exercises, daydreams differ from night dreams in that they typically invoke a reformed intersubjective situation, one com-

patible with the strengthened—stronger, happier, more admired, better loved, and so forth—version of the self that is dreamt. They are forward dreams in that sense, less wholly backward-looking than “forerunners and anticipations” (1: 87). Bloch reminds us to pay attention to the collective element, the world-improving aspect that may be part of even the most narcissistic of these musings. And finally, as journeys to the end, daytime fantasies are more committed to the fulfillment of their wishes. Daydreamers practice imagining the outlines of a situation in which their wishes could be satisfied. Unlike the night dream, then, the daydream “has a goal and makes progress towards it” (1: 99).

Daydreams in this sense indulge desires for different futures, experiment with ways to fulfill them, and enjoy their imagined satisfaction. Daydreams are not utopias, but in them we might nonetheless catch a glimpse of the same Not-Yet-Conscious that animates utopian thinking: nascent expressions of political reason and imagination inspired by the desire for and will to new and better forms of life, even if only in this limited and—in Bloch’s estimation—unambitious form. One reason Bloch’s treatment of these dreams is so interesting is that it can help us to appreciate the omnipresence of the speculative social imagination and begin to take charge of its practice. In contrast to people like Fukuyama who conceive of utopianism as a relatively isolated phenomenon that could be subdued, the example of daydreaming suggests that there may be something far more persistent and durable that fuels the imagination of better worlds.

As we have seen, Bloch defends utopia on the very epistemological and ontological grounds the critics use to attack it. Bloch seeks to shift our conception of utopian thought and desire from the merely illusory to something with an ontological grounding in and claim to the real; from an unrealistic pursuit to a practical endeavor with the epistemological authority of a mode of realism; from the most exotic of indulgences to the most mundane of practices. But there is one more challenge that we need to address: the affective obstacles to the type of imagination of and investment in the future on which utopian thinking and action depends.

The Project of Hope

Arguments about what counts as reason, realism, and reality are familiar philosophical territory. The final impediment is more difficult to ad-