

The Body as Heterotopia

Martijn Loos, Johanna Kaszti, and Rick van der Waarden

Utrecht University, the Netherlands

ABSTRACT

Utopianism contains myriad tensions between the individual and collective, which are often acted out on the body. To engage with these tensions, this paper postulates a theoretical framework conceptualizing the body as heterotopia: simultaneously a real corporeal space and a performed locus of social values. Such a conceptualization, which draws heavily from the works of Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, and Ruth Levitas, enables the negotiation of these tensions and draws out the entanglements in and between the body, utopianism, the individual, and the collective. This framework is then both demonstrated and complicated by way of two literary case studies: we explore the notion of ‘hyperempathy’ in Octavia E. Butler’s *Parable of the Sower*, and tattooed bodies in Ray Bradbury’s *The Illustrated Man*. These concepts are put to work to flesh out our central claim: heterotopia—signifying the body and its relationship to utopianism—remains the best conceptualization to approach and understand tensions relating to the individual and collective in utopianism. This provides a theoretical basis on which others can build to help tackle moral and political issues related to the tensions laid bare.

KEYWORDS

embodiment, utopianism, performativity, transculturality, Octavia E. Butler, Ray Bradbury.

INTRODUCTION

It has been noted that the smaller the scale of utopianism, the better its utopian project becomes, and that individuals need not surrender their autonomy in favor of the collective (Jendrysik 2016, 41). Although the smallest scale of the individual relevant to utopianism—the individual body—is often mentioned in utopian discourse, utopian theories are rarely applied to the body *itself* (Roux and Belk 2019, 483). Conceptualizing the body as a utopia may provide large-scale consequences for utopianism because it involves the question of individual autonomy over one’s body in light of the collective. Yet the body is not a purely corporeal *or* imagined space; it incorporates both materially real and unreal sites situated in one conflicted space: a *heterotopia* (Foucault 1967). We thereby put forward a framework positing the body as heterotopian, which in turn brings forth questions of individual agency, communal commitments, and where and how these matters encounter one another.

Not only is the concept of heterotopia taken from Michel Foucault. The larger relevance of conceptualizing the body as heterotopia should be understood in Foucauldian terms as well: as a way of supplementing our understanding of the role of the body in constituting ourselves

simultaneously as both a subject in relation to ourselves and as subjects of knowledge and power. Reflexivity—such as the conceptualization of one’s body—is one of the many ways in which one constitutes oneself as an individual subject (Davidson 2005, xxii). Yet, simultaneously, the subject and its body are not only self-constituted but are also shaped by society and history; that is, by the collective (Oksala 2011). The body often plays a vital role in the latter sense of subjectivation (Foucault 1975), and, in turn, these two ways of subjectivation influence each other (Taylor 2014, 173). This double-sidedness and inter-entanglement of subjectivity, or ‘the question of the knowledge of the subject, of the subject’s knowledge of himself’ (Foucault 2005, 3), hints at the shortcomings of an understanding of the body as strictly utopian. A multifaceted approach such as heterotopia must be used if one wants to scrutinize the tension between the individual and the communal in relation to the body. This is the intervention we set out to make: to conceptualize the body as heterotopian, rather than utopian, because of the impasse—both political and ontological—that the latter conceptualization runs into.

Foucault’s work on heterotopia, subjectivity and (self-)subjectification, and the utopian body provides the first theoretical pillar for positing the body as a heterotopian site of individual and collective power. The second main theorist drawn from is Judith Butler (1990; 1993). Her work on performativity, following J. L. Austin, complicates individual agency: are bodily utopias expressions of the Self, or does the Self erode in its performance for social acceptance? Bringing Butler’s performativity in conversation with utopian/heterotopian thinking can be seen as an attempt to bridge the gap between abstract and concrete utopianism. This gap was formulated by Ernst Bloch (1986), whose work is fundamental to utopian thinking and a third interlocutor in our project. Butler’s stress on performativity as a way of becoming aligns with Foucault’s conception of subjectivity as a practice, instead of a passive state of being (Taylor 2014, 175). It is in this way that performativity becomes a useful theoretical tool for postulating the body as heterotopia.

We will think with two literary works to demonstrate and complicate the dialogue between bodies, utopia, heterotopia, and to draw out the relationship between the individual and the collective. The first considers Octavia Butler’s *The Parable of the Sower* (1993) and brings the main character’s *hyperempathy* into conversation with questions of corporeality and heterotopia. This case study demonstrates this paper’s dialectic on the complications of the individual/collective narrative in utopianism. To open up this dialectic to a transcultural context, the second case study discusses the frame narrative of Ray Bradbury’s short story collection *The Illustrated Man* (1951) and considers the network of tattoos on the individual Illustrated Man as a rhizomatic expression of transcultural nodes. Both case studies also pose the importance of performativity as a way of becoming and advocate a heterotopian mode of thinking about the body.

Through these case studies, we will elucidate whether individualism is (im)possible in utopianism when acted out on and through the body, and why this is a transcultural concern. We will explore the tension inherent in both the body and utopianism on the one hand and between the individual and the collective on the other. We will argue throughout that these issues are best understood and approached by conceptualizing the body as heterotopia. At stake is a reconceptualization of (self-)subjectivation, which also has practical implications: a critical ontology of ourselves is crucial to understanding ourselves, but also puts ourselves to work on ourselves as free beings (Davidson 2005, xxvii). As a result, positing the body as heterotopia has relevance to our relationship with truth (Foucault 2005, 2), morality (3), and politics (38-9), whether in a utopian mode or not.

The goal is to provide a theoretical basis that enables the conceptualization of the body as heterotopia, and to both illustrate and further explore such a conceptualization by way of two literary case studies. While our paper takes its critical power from theory and applies it to literary works, the proposed framework resulting from that work is applicable in multiple societal and political contexts. The Black Lives Matter protests and their focus on the Black body; the call for police abolition, partly informed by a debate surrounding the rights of the individual body *vis-à-vis* collective security; and questions surrounding the individual obligation of vaccinating against COVID-19 for the good of the collective all signify the need for a close analysis of the tension between individualism and the collective in relation to the body. Positing the body as heterotopian can provide a framework that sheds new light on such issues and can potentially help in formulating answers to them.

FROM THE BODY AS UTOPIA TO THE BODY AS HETEROTOPIA: DEFINITIONS AND COMPLICATIONS

When considering the body in utopian thought, Ruth Levitas' notion of utopianism as 'the desire for a different, better way of being' (1990a, 209) is a useful starting point because it circumvents the problems associated with positing utopia as a specific geographical place. Specifically useful for our project, 'a way of being' does not exclude the body. Although thinking along specific spatial lines is beneficial in regard to utopian practices such as intentional communities (Sargent 2010, 20), it severely limits the productivity of the term in relation to other forms of social and political activity. In addition, although the body is, in many ways, a 'place,' it is also not—which we will return to later—and hence 'a way of being' is more useful to theorizing the body as a 'place' in this case. Another perk of Levitas' concept of utopianism as an activity is that it opens

up the line of inquiry into utopianism as performative, which will prove to be very helpful when considering the relationship between utopianism and the body.

The utopian ‘way of being’ as ‘different, better’ from the contemporary way of being of the utopian practitioner is perhaps the least contested part of Levitas’ definition, a feat considering ‘the contradictory nature of utopianism’ (Sargent 2010, 21). More contested, because of its contradictory nature, is Levitas’ utopianism being ‘a desire.’ This nudges her definition toward the abstract side of the distinction between ‘abstract’ utopianism and ‘concrete’ utopianism as theorized by Ernst Bloch (1986, 144–7). Levitas’ gravitation toward the abstract is important, because, according to Bloch, only concrete utopianism holds the possibility of actual change—a ‘way of being’—as attainable. Bloch praises abstract utopia for being ‘wishful thinking’ (Levitas 1990b, 14-17) aimed at liberation, but criticizes it for not being accompanied by a will to actually change anything; hence it remains ‘mere fantasizing’ (Bloch 1986, 144). Concrete utopia, however, is characterized by ‘a will within it [which] insists: it should be so, it must become so’ (Bloch 1986, 147). This distinction is marred by ideal types: utopias often do not fit neatly in either category and, therefore, the distinction loses productiveness beyond the analytical domain (Levitas 1990b, 18). It appears that a different approach for conceptualizing the body in relation to utopianism is needed. This approach must incorporate not only the body’s presence as ‘real’ corporeal and material, but also its presence in the ‘unreal’—that is, not materially ‘there’—social and cultural, and must be mindful of the tension between these two sites of presence that such an approach necessarily evokes.

Michel Foucault posited utopias as ‘sites with no real space,’ or ‘fundamentally unreal spaces’ (1967, 3). As such, utopias unfold in a fantastical region, a materially unreal locality. As outlined above, this cannot be the case with the body as utopia; the body is real, after all. Therefore, Foucault’s notion of utopia carries the same problem for analyzing utopianism in relation to the body as Levitas’ too abstract notion. Helpfully, Foucault postulates another -topia, which he calls heterotopia:

There are also...real places—places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society—a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites...are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted. (Foucault 1967, 3)

As such, heterotopia exists simultaneously in the real *and* the unreal: heterotopia is a ‘real place,’ yet it is also ‘enacted utopia;’ and utopia is, after all, a ‘site with no real space’. The notion of the heterotopia is thus more readily applicable than the term utopia when analyzing the relationship

between utopianism and the body. Positing the body as heterotopia also accounts for both ‘sides’ of self-subjectivation—the individual and the communal—which will be important to our analysis later. The concept of heterotopia helps tremendously with the problems encountered previously in Levitas’ and Bloch’s definitions, as it takes the better parts of their formulations and eloquently weaves them together. The strength of Levitas’ ‘way of being’ is included in the concept of heterotopia: it is ‘enacted’ and ‘formed,’ yet it is still a ‘real site.’ The stress on heterotopia being a contested and inverted, yet *real* site, acknowledges the body’s existence as both ‘real’ and ‘unreal.’ Productively analyzing utopianism in regard to the body, therefore, means reconceptualizing the body existing as heterotopia.

The *Body* as Heterotopia: Performativity and the Body as Social Locus

Foucault uses the mirror to illustrate the connection between utopia and heterotopia because the mirror is a ‘placeless place’ (1967, 4). This is of note, for the object most often gazed at in a mirror is, of course, the body. In his explanation of the mirror as heterotopia, place, and site—and by extension, the body—are crucial elements:

In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. (Foucault 1967, 4)

Foucault’s focus on space as a site is, as stated in the previous chapter, not the focus of this paper. The *body* as a site, however, is. And it is in this respect that Foucault’s analysis in ‘Of Other Spaces’ lacks a critical point: not only is the body as seen in the mirror a spatial heterotopia, but *the body in itself* is heterotopic, too.

The body is a spatial site, and also a locus of values and norms. Foucault’s mirror example retains its demonstrative power here; the self-perception of one’s body is influenced by viewing oneself in a mirror, a non-real place. This reassessment of self-perception, based on norms and values, is social in that it is dependent on social recognition. This is the social, historical, and cultural side of subjectivation that the body—amongst many other factors—engages in; the communal side. Turning to Judith Butler can elucidate this social body-perception formation: ‘the discursive condition of social recognition precedes and conditions the formation of the subject: recognition

is not conferred on a subject, but forms that subject' (1990, 19). As such, the body is not "free" to stand outside these [social] norms or to negotiate them at a distance' (J. Butler 1993, 22). The body is thus a heterotopia in that it simultaneously exists as a real place for the individual since the individual's 'spatial dimension cannot be disentangled from time in such a way that they form specific space-times [i.e., corporeal bodies]' (Roux and Belk 2019, 498); and as a locus of social norms and values. Butler's notion of performativity also strengthens this by way of looking at the body as 'a repetition and ritual' that takes place in 'a culturally sustained temporal duration' (1990, xv). Therefore, the body is 'not to be confused with any ideal corporeal modality' (Leroy 2016, 160), but instead is 'the result of the exterior intersection of historical determinations and political operations,' which is 'far from being an infrangible given' (Potte-Bonneville 2012, 17). Again, conceptualizing the body as purely a utopia turns out to be a critically insufficient position, but the alternative we put forward in the previous section remains an enticing option: analyzing the body in relation to utopianism means reconceptualizing the body as heterotopia.

The body as heterotopia 'retains the meaning of a strange, incongruous displacement' (Roux and Belk 2019, 486), precisely because it exists simultaneously in a materially real space and another real site; that of social norms, values, and power. As a site of both one's own bodily lived experience and a site where social values and norms accumulate, the body is a junction where the Self and the Other become entangled. This has consequences for an individual's agency: although the corporeal body of the Self can be seen as autonomous, the societal norms and values of the Other, shaping its heterotopic elements, cannot. There is therefore not only an entanglement but also a tension between the individual and communal in the body. This tension is mirrored in utopianism, and is, at times, as 'incongruous'—and hence, heterotopic—as the body itself.

The Individual and the Communal: Tension, Entanglement, and the Body

There is an inherent tension between the individual and the communal in utopia. Throughout utopian history, the two have most often been mutually exclusive in both theory and practice (Jendrysik 2016, 27). In classic utopian theory, the individual would always have to give up their autonomy in favor of the success of the community as a whole. While one might think that surrendering one's individual freedom would not work in a utopian context, classic utopian scholars view the abandonment of the individual's 'selfish personal desires' as a necessity for a thriving utopian community (Jendrysik 2016, 27). Whether law-based or self-organizing, the good of the utopian community requires the individual to surrender autonomy. Although Clint Jones and Jen Rinaldi correctly note that the 'incorporation of the body into the design of utopia has long been rendered necessary to the productivity of the utopian individual' (2016, 229), this conceptualization of utopia is concerned with the body *in* utopia, not the body *in relation to*

utopia—let alone the body *as* utopia; or, as we maintain is a better conceptualization, as heterotopia. The latter two are theorized far less often than the former: ‘Traditional definitions of space are more about somewhere exterior of the body where activities and such can take place, the body as a space is not often talked about’ (Roux and Belk 2019, 483). Nevertheless, the tension between the individual and the communal in utopia is equally visible, if not more, in the body.

If utopia is only attained through achieving communal goals, then the individual goal must be suppressed: ‘Utopian thinkers see the abandonment of selfish personal desires as necessary for the good of the whole’ (Jendrysik 2016, 27). It is important to note however, that seemingly personal, individual desires are—like the body itself—not purely individual phenomena. Many are social by nature, yet are acted out through the individual corporeal body. Therefore, the relationship between the body as individual/social on the one hand, and utopia as individual/communal on the other, is fraught with multiple contradictions, similarities, tensions, and entanglements which can be analyzed through the notion of heterotopia.

Jendrysik explains that if the community requires the individual to be ‘subsume[d] . . . in the whole’ (2016, 30), it ‘must also limit, degrade, and ultimately ignore the happiness and even agency of individuals’ (27). That is why ‘the pursuit of physical pleasure,’ that is, the body, ‘has always been seen as a danger to the social order in any utopia’ (32). Due to this, some communal utopias attempt to communalize even the body; something which can never be entirely realized due to the inherent individual characteristic of the corporeal body. Yet when we return to the conceptualization of the body as heterotopia, we see that the body has always been, and simultaneously will never entirely be, both individual and communal.

The similarity of the tension in two of these topics of investigation is striking: the body as heterotopia is constituted by a tension between the individual and the social, and utopia has always struggled to balance the autonomy of the individual and the needs of the communal. This similarity is indicative of the entangled state of utopia, heterotopia, the body, the individual, and the communal. We will now explore and ‘thicken’ these entanglements by way of two literary case studies.

THE BODY, HETEROTOPIA, AND THE INDIVIDUAL/COMMUNAL IN OCTAVIA E. BUTLER’S *PARABLE OF THE SOWER* (1993)

Octavia E. Butler’s 1993 dystopian novel, *Parable of the Sower*, does not just explore the fine line between dystopia and utopia, but also decidedly brings these concepts in conversation with the body, heterotopia, and the individual/communal dialectic. It tells the tale of 17-year-old

Lauren Olamina in her quest to find a place to found ‘Earthseed,’ a religious community that hopes to bring hope and freedom to the post-apocalyptic United States of America. She is joined by several others in her journey north while being both aided and hindered by her ‘hyperempathy:’ an ability to share in others’ pain.

In this section, we will explore the body as heterotopia from three different perspectives in relation to *Parable of the Sower*. Although scholars have analyzed the relationship between the body and utopianism in Butler’s novel (e.g., Phillips 2002; Stillman 2003; Hampton 2005), taking the angle of the body as heterotopia is new. To provide that angle, we will first argue that Lauren’s hyperempathy is essential to her utopian mission of starting Earthseed. Secondly, we demonstrate how Earthseed is presented by Butler as a transcultural and a potentially ‘transplanetary’ (Nicol 2019) community, seen in the entries from *Earthseed: The Books of the Living*, a religious/philosophical text which is being written by Lauren as the novel progresses. Lastly, this segment will bring Lauren’s body and hyperempathy in conversation with the body as heterotopia, and thus with the complications that arise from the debate surrounding the individual and the communal.

In *Parable of the Sower*, readers get a glimpse into the life of protagonist Lauren Olamina through her journal entries. Early on in the novel, it is established that Lauren has a rare condition called ‘hyperempathy syndrome’ (O. Butler 1993, 11), which means that she can ‘feel what [she] see[s] others feeling or what [she] believe[s] they feel’ (12). Both she and her father blame her biological mother, who used a drug called ‘Paracetco’ (12) during her pregnancy. Lauren’s hyperempathy syndrome—or ‘sharing’ (12), as Lauren comes to call it—makes life outside of her walled community quite difficult to bear. All the suffering that surrounds her takes a toll; in fact, she is barely able to defend herself, because her hyperempathy makes her feel the same pain as the pain she inflicts on others, rendering her incapable to act. Lauren’s sharing should be a fatal condition since she is unable to adopt the kill or be killed mentality that is sweeping across the dystopian landscape of the United States of America in the 2020s. Yet despite her condition, Lauren emerges as the leader of her group once the walls of her community come tumbling down. Lauren’s leadership abilities and her resolution to start Earthseed materialize as the novel progresses, not despite her hyperempathy syndrome, but rather because of it.

As she describes at the beginning of the novel, Lauren’s idea for Earthseed considers that ‘Maybe...Maybe it’s like my sharing: One more weirdness; one more crazy, deep-rooted delusion that I’m stuck with’ (O. Butler 1993, 25). Lauren’s feeling of being stuck with Earthseed is what Bloch defined as a concrete example of the utopian impulse; something that ‘must become so’

(Bloch 1986, 147). After all, it is this inevitability of change that keeps Lauren compelled to follow her drive to create Earthseed. The foundation of Earthseed's philosophy is the repeated phrase 'God is Change' (O. Butler 1993, 119), which directly reflects Bloch's definition of a concrete utopia. This sentiment is further echoed towards the end of the novel when Lauren finds out about the other sharers in her group. Mora, a newcomer to the group, questions the group's practice of stripping the dead for valuables. Lauren defends their position by saying, 'we don't kill unless someone threatens us... We fight together against enemies. If one of us is in need, the rest help out... Will you live as we do?' (286). Even though Mora accepts the rules of the group, he is still skeptical: he cannot believe that a group of people that 'don't feel anything' (286) can operate via humanity and empathy. In this excerpt, it becomes clear that Lauren's sharing capabilities—despite the lack of sharers in the group—are fundamental to the rules of their community. In this sense, Lauren's hyperempathy, which brings her mostly pain, is not just crucial in constructing her views on utopianism but also in constructing the community that surrounds her. In that sense, her hyperempathy *enables* her to acquire a subjectivity that allows her to form a utopian community (Agusti 2005, 352). The heterotopic element is that hyperempathy is by definition a condition that exists simultaneously in one's individual body and in the communal.

The community that Lauren builds is the beginning of Earthseed, a religion that strives for change in a transcultural environment. As Wolfgang Welsch states, 'transculturality aims for a multi-meshed and inclusive . . . understanding of culture' (Welsch 1999, 7). Lauren's way of leading her community echoes this sentiment, as she has learned that borders do not mean much in the dystopian world they live in; all walls must eventually come down. Therefore, for Lauren, it does not matter where one comes from as long as they are willing to *change* and live according to the rules of Earthseed. Furthermore, throughout the novel, *The Books of the Living* always refers to Earthseed as a 'We' (O. Butler 1993, 142). This community finds its strength in diversity, as can be seen in one of Lauren's Earthseed teachings that tells people to 'Embrace diversity/ Unite - / Or be divided,/ robbed,/ ruled,/ killed,/ By those who see you as prey./ Embrace diversity/ Or be destroyed' (185). The extreme way in which this transcultural ideal is portrayed further emphasizes its importance in this dystopian world. Earthseed, in Lauren's eyes, can be said to have transplanetary goals; she reveals early on in the novel that 'the destiny of Earthseed is to take root among the stars' (O. Butler 1993, 73. Not in a figurative way, but quite literally traveling from this planet to the next, like a plant scattering its seeds, which can be thought of as a logical extreme of transculturality. The importance of transculturality to conceptualizing the body as heterotopia will be explored further later on in this paper.

To briefly reiterate, heterotopia with regards to the body can be considered as something that is both existing in real material space and time (as in here), and as something that is *somewhere else* (as in not here). In addition, Judith Butler's concept of performativity can also be applied to the body as a heterotopia, not as 'a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration' (1990, xv). The body is conceptualized along similar lines in Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*: Lauren's ability to be both an individual *and* a collective is fundamentally heterotopic and performative.

This view of the body as a contested space is applicable to Butler's novel, as Lauren extraordinarily exhibits these heterotopian characteristics through her hyperempathy syndrome and the way that she has designed Earthseed as a transcultural—or even transplanetary—community. Lauren is not just responsible for her own body, but through her condition occasionally also for that of others. Through sharing, other people's pain and pleasure inhabits her body and renders her capable to perform both the individual and the collective aspects of her heterotopian body. Therefore, the space that her body takes up is not just in the 'here' and the 'there;' it is multiplied by the spaces of the bodies of the ones she is sharing with. Furthermore, it should be restated that, like the utopia/dystopia dichotomy, the individual and the collective can never truly be severed either. Through its conceptualization of Lauren's body and ability, *Parable of the Sower* makes the definition of heterotopia increasingly complex and multilayered; even more entangled than Foucault's original concept.

EMBODIED HETEROTOPIA IN RAY BRADBURY'S *THE ILLUSTRATED MAN* (1951)

To further consider the body as heterotopia, and the tension between the individual and the collective therein, we take Ray Bradbury's *The Illustrated Man* (1951) as a second case study. As a framing device connecting eighteen narratives in this short story collection, eighteen tattoos engraved on the body of one man—the Illustrated Man—unfold to the protagonist. These are preceded and followed by a prologue and epilogue describing the relationship between the protagonist and the Illustrated Man. Each of the tattoo narratives covers themes of transcultural understanding; for instance, in 'The Fire Balloons' a group of priests set out on a pilgrimage to Mars, only to find that its population consists of non-corporeal bodies and thus lacks sin to be forgiven. Here, we look primarily at the framing device of the tattoos *themselves* as a transcultural network of nodes which, being projected onto the body of an individual, have a prominent spatial-temporal dimension. Additionally, two of the stories, 'The Other Foot' and 'The Man'—which

are told through the Illustrated Man's tattoos, and as such signify someone's narratives and values inscribed on another man's body—are read to explore how the tension between the individual and communal can raise political and transcultural stakes.

The modification of one's body by permanent markers such as tattoos has been examined by Roux and Belk (2019), who follow up on Foucault's heterotopia by considering the tattooed body as an embodied heterotopia. Due to the symbolism of tattoos, their spatial-temporal distribution, and their cultural significance, the tattooed body can be postulated as a performative space of culture. Yet these markers of significance are not decided solely by the tattooed individual; they are places of simultaneous individual *and* societal meaning-making. As such, one's own modified body becomes a contested space between the individual and communal. Roux and Belk 'consider body modifications as a form of compliance with socio-moral prescription and marked-shaped expectations' (2019, 484). This acknowledgment of a significant element of performativity at work in body modification—both as a Butlerian locus of social values and as a space of culture—once again prompts a conceptualization of the body as heterotopia. Such rethinking of the self and one's body is evident in *The Illustrated Man's* tattoo narratives. We maintain that the Illustrated Man's tattoos are allegorical transcultural communal narratives, tattooed on an individual body. This raises the question of whether the Self of the individual Illustrated Man has to disappear in order to foreground these communal narratives. The answer to this question can be discussed by considering the centrality of performativity in conceptualizing the body as heterotopia.

The heterotopian body inevitably becomes a site of cultural significance. We can demonstrate this by expanding our conception of the tattooed body as a spatial site to include a temporal element, something already explicit in notions of performativity (Butler 1990, xv). Roux and Belk also discern a temporal space: as a heterotopia, the body becomes a 'diary of time accumulation' (2019, 492). The eighteen tattooed narratives on the Illustrated Man can thus be read, following Butler and Roux and Belk, as time-intervening events 'that temporarily suspend the established order' (Roux and Belk 2019, 488). His tattooed body, spatially and temporally, engages in a dialogue between the 'here' and 'elsewhere' (484). That dialogue proves to be two sides of the same coin. In 'The Other Foot,' a population of Black people has moved to Mars and is prepared to meet any White settlers with retaliation for the subjugation and violence suffered at their hands under racial segregation. When a White man visits the planet and desperately explains how a Third World War has destroyed many cities and homes on Earth, the Mars settlers peacefully welcome the White arrivals. In doing so, Bradbury's universe flips the perspective of Othering; just as Black people have experienced displacement in Western cultures following the

Transatlantic slave trade and segregation, in this story White people have lost their homes and now experience what Black people always have experienced as cultural disparity (Reid 2000, 42). Willie Johnson, a Black man whose initial response was to segregate the White newcomers, exalts the story's last line: 'Seems like for the first time today I really seen the White man – I really seen him clear,' noting how 'everything's even' (Bradbury 1951, 37) now. It is this now-mutual clarity of White and Black perspectives which signifies the story's transcultural understanding.

Bradbury's focus on locating such narratives on multiple planets, rather than solely on Earth, introduces 'a de-territorializing perspective on the global, opening up different configurations of space and mobility, people and place' (Nicol 2019, 122). This notion of deterritorialization also occurs through religion in 'The Man,' in which a group of space explorers go from planet to planet to catch up and meet with a mysterious 'Messiah-esque' figure 'who leaves each planet in a state of happiness.' As one crew member states, 'He doesn't need [a name]. It would be different on every planet' (Bradbury 1951, 42). In this way, a transcultural and transplanetary dialogue opens up: if this figure can be multi-interpretable across the universe, why would it not be possible on Earth as well?

Yet in the framing narrative, the Illustrated Man himself—on whose body these transcultural stories take place—dreams of not having illustrations 'which predict the future' (Bradbury 1951, 3) on his body at all. The Illustrated Man himself has tried '*sandpaper, acid, a knife*' to '*burn them off*' (3; original emphasis). His inability to erase the bodily-inscribed future reaffirms the tension inherent between the individual and the communal in embodied heterotopia. If the tattooed stories themselves are read as transcultural stories that surpass the individual, their indelibility from the Illustrated Man's skin signifies the infringement of the communal on the individual's body. This mirrors the long-standing tension between the two: 'The incorporation of the body into the design of utopia has long been rendered necessary to the productivity of the utopian individual.' (Jones and Rinaldi 2016, 229). Yet, as the Illustrated Man shows, this 'incorporation' is not utopian in the colloquial sense of the word, but tense, contested, and painful.

Following Butler's formulation of performativity allows us to conceptualize the body as a locus for social values. Following Foucault's theories on (self-)subjectivation, the body as heterotopia implies that the body is, both individually and socially, also a locus for *political* stakes. Indeed, through Bradbury's framing device, the tattooed narratives voice topics of racism, colonialism, and the transculturality of the Illustrated Man. Consequently, it is hard not to see the Illustrated Man as a scapegoat of the Self (Miller 1990, 94). In order to offer a multicultural network space—both spatially and temporally—he surrenders his individuality and becomes a decentered subject.

This erosion of the Self in favor of the Others epitomizes the communal aspect of utopianism, affirming the individual's responsibility for the community. Nevertheless, this responsibility is precarious; political resolution of such issues is heavily contested (Ashcroft 2007, 418). Like opacity and transparency, individuality and collectivism are also on two sides of the same coin. Much like 'any national identity is shaped by transnational factors' (Nicol 2019, 122), the individual body is shaped by communal factors, which does not forego the fact that there is still an individual present. The illustrated body, as a locus of social *and* political values, becomes the common denominator for sociocultural inscription 'in a world of cultural relativity' (Weiss 2004, 175). Therefore, cases of embodied heterotopia such as the Illustrated Man's tattooed body cannot escape this sociocultural inscription, while simultaneously becoming individual symbols as well.

CONCLUSION

Foucault's dynamic definition of heterotopia can be put to work to engage with the body as a contested space that is simultaneously *here* and *not here*. The case studies of Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower* and Ray Bradbury's *The Illustrated Man*, and the concepts explored in them—hyperempathy and tattooed bodies—are utopian expressions of transcultural acceptance and understanding, best approached through the conceptualization of the body as heterotopia. Performativity is foregrounded, as bodily (self-)subjectivation is a process, a becoming both on the individual side—as a real, corporeal space—but also on the communal side, as a locus of social, cultural, political, and historical values. The most fitting and critically productive conceptualization of this body, its resultant tensions, and its relationship to utopianism, is as heterotopia in which the power relations between the individual and the communal can be witnessed. The tension between the individual and the communal in the body on the one hand, and the same tension in utopianism itself, on the other hand, are too entangled to make easy distinctions. Therefore, heterotopia—signifying both the body and its relationship to utopianism—remains the most fitting conceptualization of these tensions.

The provided theoretical framework could now be used as a starting ground for further research on the heterotopian body and the role it plays in our understanding of the tension between the individual and communal. As such, this paper contributes to the ongoing discussions on the politics of the self and on (self-)subjectivation in a modern, transcultural world. One could think of using our established theoretical framework for cultural analysis of other case studies, or explorations of topics in which the body, utopianism, and the individual/communal play a large role. Think for instance of the Black Lives Matter movement and the myriad tensions it lays bare concerning the Black body—e.g., subjugating, or even killing, a Black person to combat a

perceived threat to White security. Or consider the debate on whether the COVID-19 vaccine should be mandatory for individuals because of certain responsibilities to the collective—be they corporeal (e.g., group immunity) or social (e.g. the social pressure to vaccinate). As it stands, conceptualizing the body as heterotopia can open up new vistas on matters such as these.

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