

de bailar toda la noche. Nada de misas, ni curas, ni prédicas latosas. Ni pobrecito el cola, perdónelo, Señor, para entrar en el santo reino. Nada de llantos, ni desmayos, ni despedidas trágicas. Que me voy bien pagá, bien cumplida como toda cupletera. Que ni falta me hacen los responsos ni los besos que me negó el amor... Ni el amor. Miren que ahí voy cruzando la espuma. Mírenme por última vez, envidiosas, que ya no vuelvo. Por suerte no regreso. Siento la seda empapada de la muerte amordazando mis ojos, y digo que fui feliz este último minuto. De aquí no me llevo nada, porque nunca tuve nada y hasta eso lo perdí.

La Chumilou murió el mismo día que llegó la democracia, el pobre cortejo se cruzó con las marchas que festejaban el triunfo del NO en la Alameda. Fue difícil atravesar esa multitud de jóvenes pintados, flameando las banderas del arco iris, gritando, cantando eufóricos, abrazando a las locas que acompañaban el funeral de la Chumi. Y por un momento se confundió duelo con alegría, tristeza y carnaval. Como si la muerte hiciera un alto en su camino y se bajara de la carroza a bailar un último pie de cueca. Como si aún se escuchara la voz moribunda de la Chumi cuando supo el triunfo de la elección. Denle mis saludos a la democracia, dijo. Y parecía que la democracia en persona le devolvía el saludo en los cientos de jóvenes descamisados que se encaramaron a la carroza, brincando

sobre el techo, colgándose de las ventanas, sacando pintura spray y rayando todo el vehículo con grafitis que decían: ADIÓS, TIRANO. HASTA NUNCA, PINOCHO. MUERTE AL CHACAL. Así, ante los horrorizados ojos de la mamá de la Chumi, la carroza quedó convertida en un carro alegórico, en una murga revoltosa que acompañó el sepelio por varias cuadras. Después retomó su marcha enlutada, su trote paquidermo por las desiertas calles hacia el cementerio. Entre las coronas de flores, alguien ensartó una bandera con el arco iris vencedor. Una bandera blanca cruzada de colores que acompañó a la Chumi hasta su jardín de invierno.

Tal vez, la foto de la fiesta donde la Palma es quizás el único vestigio de aquella época de utopías sociales donde las locas entrevieron aleteos de su futura emancipación. Entretejidas en las muchedumbres, participaron de aquella euforia. Tanto a la derecha como a la izquierda de Allende, tocaron cacerolas y protagonizaron, desde su anonimato público, tímidos destellos, balbuceantes discursos que irían conformando su historia minoritaria en pos de la legalización.

Del grupo que aparece en la foto, casi no quedan sobrevivientes. El amarillo pálido del papel es un sol desteñido como desahucio de las pieles que enfiestan el daguerrotipo. La suciedad de las moscas fue punteando de lunares las mejillas, como adelanto maquillado del sarcoma. Todas las caras aparecen moteadas de

esa llovizna purulenta. Todas las risas que pajarean en el balcón de la foto son pañuelos que se despiden en una proa invisible. Antes que el barco del milenio atraque en el dos mil, antes incluso de la legalidad del homosexualismo chileno, antes de la militancia gay que en los noventa reunió a los homosexuales, antes que esa moda masculina se impusiera como uniforme del ejército de salvación, antes que el neoliberalismo en democracia diera permiso para aparearse. Mucho antes de estas regalías, la foto de las locas en ese año nuevo se registra como algo que brilla en un mundo sumergido. Todavía es subversivo el cristal obsceno de sus carcajadas desordenando el supuesto de los géneros. Aún en la imagen ajada se puede medir la gran distancia, los años de la dictadura que educaron virilmente los gestos. Se puede constatar la metamorfosis de las homosexualidades en el fin de siglo; la disfunción de la loca sarcomida por el sida, pero principalmente diezmada por el modelo importado del estatus gay, tan de moda, tan penetrativo en su transa con el poder de la nova masculinidad homosexual. La foto despide el siglo con el plumaje raído de las locas aún torcidas, aún folclóricas en sus ademanes ilegales. Pareciera un friso arcaico donde la intromisión del patrón gay, todavía no había puesto su marca. Donde el territorio nativo aún no recibía el contagio de la plaga, como recolonización a través de los fluidos corporales. La foto de aquel

entonces muestra un carrusel risueño, una danza de risas gorrionas tan jóvenes, tan púberes en su dislocada forma de rearmar el mundo. Por cierto, otro corpus tribal diferenciaba sus ritos. Otros delirios enriquecían barrocamente el discurso de las homosexualidades latinoamericanas. Todavía la maricada chilena tejía futuro, soñaba despierta con su emancipación junto a otras causas sociales. El «hombre homosexual» o «míster gay» era una construcción de potencia narcisa que no cabía en el espejo desnutrido de nuestras locas. Esos cuerpos, esos músculos, esos bíceps que llegaban a veces por revistas extranjeras, eran un Olimpo del Primer Mundo, una clase educativa de gimnasia, un fisicoculturismo extasiado por su propio reflejo. Una nueva conquista de la imagen rubia que fue prendiendo en el arribismo malinche de las locas más viajadas, las regias que copiaron el modelito en New York y lo transportaron a este fin de mundo. Y junto al molde de Superman, precisamente en la aséptica envoltura de esa piel blanca, tan higiénica, tan perfumada por el embrujo capitalista. Tan diferente al cuero opaco de la geografía local. En ese Apolo, en su imberbe mármol, venía cobijado el síndrome de inmunodeficiencia, como si fuera un viajante, un turista que llegó a Chile de paso, y el vino dulce de nuestra sangre lo hizo quedarse.

Seguramente, el final común que compartieron la Palma, la Pilola Alessandri y la Chumilou

avert or turn away from the present. Rather, it critiques an autonaturalizing temporality that we might call *straight time*. Straight time tells us that there is no future but the here and now of our everyday life.⁷ The only futurity promised is that of reproductive majoritarian heterosexuality, the spectacle of the state refurbishing its ranks through overt and subsidized acts of reproduction. In *No Future*, Lee Edelman advises queers that the future is "kid stuff."⁸ Although I believe that there is a lot to like about Edelman's polemic—mostly its disdain for the culture of the child—I ultimately want to speak for a notion of queer futurity by turning to Bloch's critical notion of utopia.

It is equally polemical to argue that we are not quite queer yet, that queerness, what we will really know as queerness, does not yet exist. I suggest that holding queerness in a sort of ontologically humble state, under a conceptual grid in which we do not claim to always already know queerness in the world, potentially staves off the ossifying effects of neoliberal ideology and the degradation of politics brought about by representations of queerness in contemporary popular culture.

A posterior glance at different moments, objects, and spaces might offer us an anticipatory illumination of queerness. We cannot trust in the manifestations of what some people would call queerness in the present, especially as embodied in the pragmatic debates that dominate contemporary gay and lesbian politics. (Here, again, I most pointedly mean U.S. queers clamoring for their right to participate in the suspect institution of marriage and, maybe worse, to serve in the military.) None of this is to say that there are not avatars of a queer futurity, both in the past and the present, especially in sites of cultural production. What I am suggesting is that we gain a greater conceptual and theoretical leverage if we see queerness as something that is not yet here. In this sense it is useful to consider Edmund Husserl, phenomenology's founder, and his invitation to look to horizons of being.⁹ Indeed to access queer visibility we may need to squint, to strain our vision and force it to see otherwise, beyond the limited vista of the here and now.

To critique an overarching "here and now" is not to turn one's face away from the everyday. Roland Barthes wrote that the mark of the utopian is the quotidian.¹⁰ Such an argument would stress that the utopian is an impulse that we see in everyday life. This impulse is to be glimpsed as something that is extra to the everyday transaction of heteronormative capitalism. This quotidian example of the utopian can be glimpsed in utopian bonds, affiliations, designs, and gestures that exist within the present

moment. Turning to the New York School of poetry, a moment that is one of the cultural touchstones for my research, we can consider a poem by James Schuyler that speaks of a hope and desire that is clearly utopian. The poem, like most of Schuyler's body of work, is clearly rooted in an observation of the affective realm of the present. Yet there is an excess that the poet also conveys, a type of affective excess that presents the enabling force of a forward-dawning futurity that is queerness. In the poem "A photograph," published in 1974 in the collection *Hymn to Life*, a picture that resides on the speaker's desk sparks a recollection of domestic bliss.

A photograph

Shows you in a London
room; books, a painting,
your smile, a silky
tie, a suit. And more.

It looks so like you
and I see it every day
(here, on my desk)
which I don't you. Last
Friday was grand.

We went out, we came
back, we went wild. You
slept. Me too. The pup
woke you and you dressed
and walked him. When
you left, I was sleeping.
When I woke there was
just time to make the
train to a country dinner
and talk about ecstasy.
Which I think comes in
two sorts: that which you
Know "Now I am ecstatic"
Like my strange scream
last Friday night. And
another kind, that you
know only in retrospect:
"Why, that joy I felt
and didn't think about

when his feet were in
 my lap, or when I looked
 down and saw his slanty
 eyes shut, that too was
 ecstasy. Nor is there
 necessarily a downer from
 it." Do I believe in
 the perfectibility of
 man? Strangely enough,
 (I've known un-
 happiness enough) I
 do. I mean it.
 I really do believe
 future generations can
 live without the in-
 tervals of anxious
 fear we know between our
 bouts and strolls of
 ecstasy. The struck ball
 finds the pocket. You
 smile some years back
 in London, I have
 known ecstasy and calm:
 haven't you too? Let's
 try to understand, my
 handsome friend who
 wears his nose awry.¹¹

The speaker remembers the grandness of an unspectacular Friday in which he and his addressee slept in and then scrambled to catch a train to a dinner out in the country. He attempts to explain the ecstasy he felt that night, indicating that one moment of ecstasy, a moment he identifies as being marked both by self-consciousness and obliviousness, possesses a potentially transformative charge. He then considers another moment of ecstasy in retrospect, a looking back at a no-longer-conscious that provides an affective enclave in the present that staves off the sense of "bad feelings" that mark the affective disjuncture of being queer in straight time.

The moment in the poem of deeper introspection—beginning "Do I believe in / the perfectibility of /man?"—is an example of a utopian desire

inspired by queer relationality. Moments of queer relational bliss, what the poet names as ecstasies, are viewed as having the ability to rewrite a larger map of everyday life. When "future generations" are invoked, the poet is signaling a queerness to come, a way of being in the world that is glimpsed through reveries in a quotidian life that challenges the dominance of an affective world, a present, full of anxiousness and fear. These future generations are, like the "we" invoked in the manifesto by the Third World Gay Revolution group, not an identitarian formulation but, instead, the invocation of a future collectivity, a queerness that registers as the illumination of a horizon of existence.

The poem speaks of multiple temporalities and the affective mode known as ecstasy, which resonates alongside the work of Martin Heidegger. In *Being and Time* Heidegger reflects on the activity of timeliness and its relation to *ekstatisch* (ecstasy), signaling for Heidegger the ecstatic unity of temporality—Past, Present, and Future.¹² The ecstasy the speaker feels and remembers in "A photograph" is not consigned to one moment. It steps out from the past and remarks on the unity of an expansive version of temporality; hence, future generations are invoked. To know ecstasy in the way in which the poem's speaker does is to have a sense of timeliness's motion, to understand a temporal unity that is important to what I attempt to describe as the time of queerness. Queerness's time is a stepping out of the linearity of straight time. Straight time is a self-naturalizing temporality. Straight time's "presentness" needs to be phenomenologically questioned, and this is the fundamental value of a queer utopian hermeneutics. Queerness's ecstatic and horzonal temporality is a path and a movement to a greater openness to the world.

It would be difficult to mistake Schuyler's poem for one of Frank O'Hara's upbeat reveries. O'Hara's optimism is a contagious happiness within the quotidian that I would also describe as having a utopian quality. Schuyler's poetry is not so much about optimism but instead about a hope that is distinctly utopian and distinctly queer. The poem imagines another collective belonging, an enclave in the future where readers will not be beset with feelings of nervousness and fear. These feelings are the affective results of being outside of straight time. He writes from a depressive position, "(I've known un- / happiness enough)," but reaches beyond the affective force-field of the present.

Hope for Bloch is an essential characteristic of not only the utopian but also the human condition. Thus, I talk about the human as a relatively stable category. But queerness in its utopian connotations promises a human

that is not yet here, thus disrupting any ossified understanding of the human. The point is to stave off a gay and lesbian antiutopianism that is very much tainted with a polemics of the pragmatic rights discourse that in and of itself hamstrings not only politics but also desire. Queerness as utopian formation is a formation based on an economy of desire and desiring. This desire is always directed at that thing that is not yet here, objects and moments that burn with anticipation and promise. The desire that propels Schuyler's "A photograph" is born of the no-longer-conscious, the rich resonance of remembrance, distinct pleasures felt in the past. And thus past pleasures stave off the affective perils of the present while they enable a desire that is queer futurity's core.

Queerness is utopian, and there is something queer about the utopian. Fredric Jameson described the utopian as the oddball or the maniac.¹³ Indeed, to live inside straight time and ask for, desire, and imagine another time and place is to represent and perform a desire that is both utopian and queer. To participate in such an endeavor is not to imagine an isolated future for the individual but instead to participate in a hermeneutic that wishes to describe a collective futurity, a notion of futurity that functions as a historical materialist critique. In the two textual examples I have employed we see an overt utopianism that is explicit in the Third World Gay Revolution manifesto, and what I am identifying as a *utopian impulse* is perceivable in Schuyler's poetry. One requires a utopian hermeneutic to see an already operative principle of hope that hums in the poet's work. The other text, the manifesto, does another type of performative work; it does utopia.

To "read" the performative, along the lines of thought first inaugurated by J. L. Austin, is implicitly to critique the epistemological.¹⁴ Performativity and utopia both call into question what is epistemologically there and signal a highly ephemeral ontological field that can be characterized as a *doing in futurity*. Thus, a manifesto is a call to a doing in and for the future. The utopian impulse to be gleaned from the poem is a call for "doing" that is a becoming: the becoming of and for "future generations." This rejection of the here and now, the ontologically static, is indeed, by the measure of homonormative codes, a maniacal and oddball endeavor. The queer utopian project addressed here turns to the fringe of political and cultural production to offset the tyranny of the homonormative. It is drawn to tastes, ideologies, and aesthetics that can only seem odd, strange, or indeed queer next to the muted striving of the practical and normalcy-desiring homosexual.

The turn to the call of the no-longer-conscious is not a turn to normative historical analysis. Indeed it is important to complicate queer history and understand it as doing more than the flawed process of merely evidencing. Evidencing protocols often fail to enact real hermeneutical inquiry and instead opt to reinstate that which is known in advance. Thus, practices of knowledge production that are content merely to cull selectively from the past, while striking a pose of positivist undertaking or empirical knowledge retrieval, often nullify the political imagination. Jameson's Marxian dictate "always historicize"¹⁵ is not a methodological call for empirical data collection. Instead, it is a dialectical injunction, suggesting we animate our critical faculties by bringing the past to bear on the present and the future. Utopian hermeneutics offer us a refined lens to view queerness, insofar as queerness, if it is indeed not quite here, is nonetheless intensely relational with the past.

The present is not enough. It is impoverished and toxic for queers and other people who do not feel the privilege of majoritarian belonging, normative tastes, and "rational" expectations. (I address the question of rationalism shortly). Let me be clear that the idea is not simply to turn away from the present. One cannot afford such a maneuver, and if one thinks one can, one has resisted the present in favor of folly. The present must be known in relation to the alternative temporal and spatial maps provided by a perception of past and future affective worlds.

Utopian thinking gets maligned for being naively romantic. Of course, much of it has been naive. We know that any history of actualized utopian communities would be replete with failures. No one, other than perhaps Marx himself, has been more cognizant about this fact than Bloch. But it is through this Marxian tradition, not beside or against it, that the problem of the present is addressed. In the following quotation we begin to glimpse the importance of the Marxian tradition for the here and now.

Marxism, above all, was first to bring a concept of knowledge into the world that essentially refers to Becomeness, but to the tendency of what is coming up; thus for the first time it brings future into our conceptual and theoretical grasp. Such recognition of tendency is necessary to remember, and to open up the No-Longer-Conscious.¹⁶

Thus we see Bloch's model for approaching the past. The idea is not to attempt merely to represent it with simplistic strokes. More nearly, it is important to call on the past, to animate it, understanding that the past has a