

Eutopism

(cf. Utopia)

This website has been created expressly to posit a constellation of new words, whose lodestar is 'eutopism', meaning 'how-to-create-a-benign-place-to-be.'

Its fellow-words, 'eutopy', 'eutopic' and 'eutopology', will be explained in due course.

The neologism is, of course, cognate with - and indebted to - Thomas More's coining, "Utopia", whose meaning is, however, I submit, ambiguous, even contradictory.

First eutopy:
Robert Owen at New Lanark

Second eutopy:
Summerhill Unschool

Third eutopy:
Thomas Traherne in Credenhill

Fourth eutopy:
The Dymock Poets
In Preparation

Fifth eutopy:
The Christmas Truce, 1914

Sixth eutopy:
A folk religion: Cricket
In Preparation

Seventh eutopy:
Wainwright of the Fells
In Preparation

Eutopism: a lexicon
In Preparation

The Oxford English Dictionary

As you shall see, I submitted these new words to **The Oxford English Dictionary** with the intention of sounding out my proposed words with what is widely considered the most authoritative dictionary of the English language, asking whether there were already words with the meanings which I had ascribed to them, and, if not, if there were a case for their adoption into the language.

There was a short correspondence with **The Oxford University Press** during June 2004, which included the following sentence:
"[The OUP has] . . . copied all your material to our files, and hope that by the time we are working on vocabulary in that part of the alphabet, we will have enough evidence to proceed to draft an entry."

Perhaps I may give a short account of how the word came into print.

New Lanark

In June 2001, I was invited to present a talk to The Utopian Studies Society at New Lanark and chose as its title:

Utopia is as Eutopy does: A Tale of Two Communities

New Lanark and Summerhill

Since the dawn of mankind there have been exponents of what I have coined 'eutopism', but the two *practitioners* - as distinct from *theorists* - whom I have chosen to exemplify its philosophy speak with similar afflatus from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries:

"I know that society may be formed without crime, without poverty, with health greatly improved... and no obstacle intervenes except ignorance to prevent such a state of society becoming universal."

Robert Owen

“The observed results... [of ‘self-regulated children’] so far suggest the beginnings of a new civilisation more profoundly changed in character than any society promised by any kind of political party. The future of Summerhill itself may be of little import. But the Summerhill idea is of the greatest importance to humanity. New generations must be given the chance to grow in freedom. The bestowal of freedom is the bestowal of love. And only love can save the world.”

A.S Neill

I copy here the letter written to **The Oxford University Press**. For their - and now your - convenience and speed of reading, I abbreviated my letter to include only the New Lanark section.

13th June 2002

Eutopy Eutopology Eutopism

“I should be very grateful if **The Oxford University Press** would care to comment on the above neologisms, which I have felt constrained to use, since I know no words to describe the meanings I have in mind.

“I have been using these coined words in personal conversation, correspondence, and, as you shall see, in one public address.

“They are related to Thomas More’s own coinage, with which he entitled the book by which he is best known: **Utopia**.

“Unfortunately, his word has - or has acquired - a pejorative meaning, that of an impractical, mostly unattainable state; there is, apparently, no word extant to impart a *meliorative* one. How may we refer to a *practical* experience of ‘Utopia’? And what is the point of an ideal state which cannot be demonstrated to exist?”

Not Utopia

Wordsworth makes the point emphatically:

*Not in Utopia - subterranean fields -
Or some secreted island, Heaven knows where!
But in the very world, which is the world
Of all of us, - the place where, in the end,
We find our happiness, or not at all!*

Not Utopia, but Rather Rightly... Eutopie

But perhaps our Thomas has not been read aright. Does he not himself say:

“Wherefore not Utopie, but rather rightly my name is Eutopie, a place of felicitie.” (1)

However, there are two disadvantages to his neologism: is not ‘eutopie’ too alien-looking? and does it not *sound* too much like ‘Utopia’? to be distinguished from it?

So, for my own purposes, I decided to anglicise the ‘-ia’ into ‘-y’, and to back-shift the emphasis from Utopia to eutopy, from the second syllable to the first. [pronounced *you*’topy - emphasis on the first syllable]

Reference

1. *More’s Utopia: The English Translation thereof by Raphe Robynson*.
Printed from the second edition, 1556 page171