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De/Reconstructing Utopianism: Towards a World-Historical Typology

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Towards A World-Historical Typology

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We often find ourselves debunking utopianism because of the historical shortcomings of Marxism, despite realizing that Marxism itself, in its classical writings at least, never claimed to be a utopian doctrine in the first place. For the founders of "scientific socialism," in fact, being both scientific (as Marxism claimed to be) and utopian was a contradiction in terms. If anything, it would be more logical to explore the problems of Marxism with regards to its claimed scienticity than its alleged utopianism—if we intend to pursue a dialectical critique of the inner consistency of the doctrine, that is. For the contemporary critics of Marxism and utopianism, however, one seems to have been a failure because it has been the other.

Underlying the above controversy over whether Marxism was scientific or utopian (with the former implying a positive attribute, and the latter a negative one—regardless of whether sympathetic or critical stands are taken vis-à-vis Marxism) is the commonly assumed typological dualism of science vs. utopianism itself. Frederick En-gels, of course, famously immortalized this typological dualism in his 1880 work, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, in order to legitimize the newly arisen doctrine as a "scientific" enterprise in contrast to its "utopian" precursors. Consequently, we still have a hard time treating Marxism as being both utopian and "scientific," which of course would make the attribution of its failures to the two aspects that much harder. It has to be one *or* the other—an instance of either/or formal logical dualism which seems to run counter, in fact, to the dialectical logic Marxism prided itself to have materialistically reinvented. The long-inherited binary structures of our knowledges seem again to pose a difficulty here.

Is it possible that the real problem is with the way the problem itself has been posed—that the boundaries of science and utopianism are fuzzier than they appear to be? To be sure, those who are still interested in making efforts towards a just global society have found the identification of utopianism with Marxism to be an obstacle, to say the least. It may therefore be useful to make an effort at deconstructing our taken-for-granted positions on the matter and revisit the plethora of definitional and conceptual fuzziness and inconsistencies surrounding utopianism in the hopes of making a clearer stand on the subject.[1]

My aim in this paper is to deconstruct utopianism as a world-historical social movement, and reconstruct a typology of utopianism that allows the interpretation of the historical debunking of utopianism by Marxism (or vice versa) as an expression partly of internal rifts among various types of utopianism, partly of gradual departure of Marxism from utopianism in its classical lifetime, and partly of the "false" con-

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1. This paper is a revised version of an excerpt from the second chapter of my previous work, "Mysticism and Utopia: Towards the Sociology of Self-Knowledge and Human Architecture (A Study in Marx, Gurdjieff, and Mannheim)" (2002).

sciousness of the movement about its own dual identity vis-à-vis utopianism and science due to ideological-political exigencies. Using the proposed typology of utopianism, in other words, I will argue that Marxism's efforts to distinguish itself from utopianism (and vice versa) had as much to do with ideological rhetoric as with substance and lack thereof. What explains the ideological aspects of the controversy has to do with self-promotion in light of the perceived failures of the other types. But this does not mean Marxism was not utopian in a certain sense; it was a specific type of it in contrast to others (as will be explained later). But it gradually lost its utopian message as it "matured," which should legitimately raise the question whether its failures were due to its specific form of utopianism and/or its gradual departure from utopianism altogether.

I will argue below that Marxism failed its own ends both because of the limits of its specific approach to utopianism, and because of its gradual abandoning of utopianism altogether,[1] eventually embracing a non-utopian, "realpolitik," antisystemic mode preoccupied more with shattering (or running) the existing social institutions than with creatively building alternative ones in their midst, a way proven more effective in previous successful historical "transitions." The failures of the practical types of utopianism or departures from the utopian mode altogether have also been met, on the opposite end of the contrast, by

the self-limiting of the contemporary utopian tradition to its literary and science-fiction types, which has had the opposite, but similar, effect of abandoning the applied utopian pursuits of a just global society. One way or another, the above developments have served the ideological-political function of preserving the status quo in micro and macro social spacetimes—a function or interest to which the Mannheimian sociology of knowledge may trace the origins of the typological confusions surrounding utopianism in the first place. The historical result has been the gradual throwing away of the baby of utopianism in general with the bath-waters of failures of specific types of it.

Marxism represented a new, "scientific," type of utopian movement in contrast, on one hand, to the philosophical and religious varieties preceding it, and on the other hand the briefly revived humanist type (as somewhat represented by utopian socialists) which was soon frozen in embryo by Marxism's own ideological-political rhetoric and ascendance in the world-wide opposition to capitalism. What I intend to point out is a need to go beyond the polemics and the rhetoric of these movements in order to develop a typological framework of utopianism which accounts for the historical failures of Marxism due in part to the shortcomings emanating from its specific utopian type and partly due to its gradual departure from the utopian typology altogether. The point is to redeem the value of utopianism as a specific strategy for social change in contrast to the antisystemic mode characterizing the dominant form of opposition movements to capitalism during at least the past two centuries.

MARXISM AND UTOPIANISM

Historically, there has been a curious attitude on the part of both Marxist and utopian currents to deny their common lot.

1.Consideration of the distinction between the young and old Marx, and multiplicities of Marxisms is important in this regard. It is this dual nature of Marxism as a utopian and an antisystemic movement that explains Karl Mannheim's classification of Marxism as both an ideology and a utopia in his classic *Ideology and Utopia* (1936). In other words, the dual positioning of the movement did not have to exist if it was not due to the intrinsic duality which the movement came gradually to develop in the transition from the young to old variants of Marx's thought. For further details on this, see Tamdgidi 2002, 2003.

The case of Marxism's efforts to dissociate itself from utopianism is well known and does not need much elaboration. Considering itself a "scientific socialist" doctrine, Marxism from its very beginnings built its self-identity on a clear polemical program of dissociating itself from utopianism in general, and "utopian socialism" in particular.[1] But the other side of the equation, often overlooked, seems to be as perplexing as the other.

Five bibliographers in English language on the utopian literature (Haschak 1994; Negley 1978; Beauchamp 1977; Lewis 1984; Sargent 1979, 1988) hardly mention or include Marxism (some not even the "utopian socialist" literature) in their commentaries and resource lists on utopianism. The problem, judging from the standpoint of these bibliographers' own explicitly stated criteria, seems to be more than a matter of impracticality of listing the enormous amount of literature on Marxism. Nor does this seem to be due to the limitations emanating from the boundaries imposed by the bibliographers on their own subject matter. The very definition of utopianism offered by these compilers, which basically seems to limit utopianism to the so-called "utopian literature" or at best to sources on isolated experimental "utopian societies or communities," defies inclusion of Marxist literature in their works. Consider, for example, this statement by Glen Negley, a major bibliographer of the utopian literature:

> The Declaration of Independence or the Communist Manifesto may be said to be an expression of profound political and philosophical ideals, but neither is a utopia. (Negley 1978:xii-xiii)

The attitudes on both sides cited above, nevertheless, are in sharp contrast to approaches employed in other encyclopedic entries (e.g., Kateb's entry in *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 1968, 16:267-70,[2] or his entry in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 1972, 8:212-215), or in major scholarly works on the subject (Manuel and Manuel 1979;[3] Mumford 1941;[4] Mannheim 1936;[5] Kateb 1972; Kumar 1991[6]) in which Marxism is treated as an integral part of utopianism in general. The more recent *Encyclopedia of Utopian Literature* (Snodgrass 1995), also,

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1. Marx and Engels wrote in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* ([1848] 1978:498-499): "The significance of Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism bears an inverse relation to historical development. In proportion as the modern class struggle develops and takes definite shape, this fantastic standing apart from the contest, these fantastic attacks on it, lose all practical value and all theoretical justification. Therefore, although the originators of these systems were, in many respects, revolutionary, their disciples have, in every case, formed mere reactionary sects. They hold fast by the original views of their masters, in opposition to the progressive historical development of the proletariat. They, therefore, endeavor, and that consistently, to deaden the class struggle and to reconcile the class antagonisms. They still dream of experimental realization of their social Utopias, of founding isolated "*phalansteres,*" of establishing "Home Colonies," of setting up a "Little Icaria"—duodecimo editions of the New Jerusalem—and to realize all these castles in the air, they are compelled to appeal to the feelings and purses of the bourgeois. By degrees they sink into the category of the reactionary conservative Socialists depicted above, differing from these only by more systematic pedantry, and by their fanatical and superstitious belief in the miraculous effects of their social science."

2. "Perhaps Marxism is the only utopian, or quasi-utopian, body of thought that large numbers of men have actually tried to translate into practice. But Marxism is not the only version of utopianism that has worked to generate the feeling that the real world is profoundly imperfect and that some sort of change, even small, and not even in a utopian direction, is a pressing necessity" (Kateb 1968:269).

3. "Despite the persistence with which they belabored some contemporary utopians, essential parts of the *Critique of the Gotha Program* were in fact the answer to a utopian inquiry that Marx himself had initiated ... A hundred years after it was written, the *Critique of the Gotha Program* can be most effectively illuminated if it is restored to the utopian landscape in which it was originally planted" (Manuel and Manuel 1979:699).

includes entries on "Marx," "Engels," and "The Communist Manifesto." Kateb's commentary in his 1972 piece in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1972) regarding the need to view Marxism as a part of the western utopian tradition hardly needs further elaboration:

> Those philosophies of history which culminate in a vision of achieved perfection are a third type of utopia. These are the theories of inevitable progress created by men like Condorcet, Hegel, Spencer, and Marx. Hegel and Marx especially would have fought against inclusion in the utopian tradition ... For all that, their writings have been taken by others as utopian. No list of the major sources of utopian literature would be acceptable without them and the other theorists of inevitable progress. (Kateb 1972:213)

Even if the shared terrain occupied by utopianism and Marxism are acknowledged, however, the estrangement between the two movements must itself be accounted for. Why do Marxists and utopists deny their common lot?

An immediate explanation that comes to mind may perhaps be found in the perceptions by adherents in each current of the failing and/or discredited nature of the theories and/or practices affiliated with the other current. Marx and Engels explicitly criticized their utopian predecessors in terms of the speculative nature of their doctrines and/or of the isolated scope of the communal experiments they carried out in the context of the reality of a globally expanding capitalist mode of production. In order to advance their own political and organizational agenda in the interests of the working class to create a world communist society, in other words, founders of scientific socialism had to clearly dissociate themselves from the failed movements which had actually prefigured and nourished their own past.

The reverse process of estrangement, that of the traditional utopians' dissociating themselves from Marxism, of course surfaced later. The reality of increasing failure of the Marxist movement to abide by its own principles, let alone of setting an example for an alternative communist society, soon led traditional utopian writers, communal experimenters, or simply those interested in utopianism as a literary genre only, to either dissociate their own utopian interests from the failing experiments of the world communist movement, or to attack the existing order and/or Marxist social experiments by developing a specifically new genre of utopian literature. The emerging dystopianism in the twentieth century, a lit-

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4. "In his Socialism: Utopian and Scientific, Frederick Engels made a plea for a realistic method of thought, which limited itself to a here and now, as against what he derided as the utopian method, the attempt on the part of a single thinker to give a detailed picture of the society of the future. Yet at the present time it is easy to see that if the utopian socialism of Owen has been ineffective, the realistic socialism of Marx has been equally ineffective; for while Owen's kind of socialism has been partly fulfilled in the co-operative movement, the dictatorship of the proletariat rests upon very shaky foundations, and such success as it has had is what it would be like as to anything else" (Mumford 1941:242-43).

5. "Even the socialist-communist mode of thought and experience which, as regards its origins, may be treated as a unity, is best understood in its utopian structure by observing it as it is attacked from three sides ... It represents not merely a compromise but also a new creation based upon an inner synthesis of the various forms of utopia which have arisen hitherto and which have struggled against one another in society" (Mannheim 1936:239-240).

6. "Marx and Engels, it is true, went out of their way to deny that the future socialist or communist society would be a closed or completed system. So much could be admitted, however, without necessarily affecting the perception of the basically utopian quality of their vision of the future socialist society" (Kumar 1991:60).

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erary movement focusing on the evils of modern society, used the medium of utopian literary style to criticize not only the existing capitalist order but also the dehumanizing nature of social realities emerging from the realpolitik conduct of Marxist, socialist, and communist movements across the globe. As Kumar has pointed out,

> [a]ll the major anti-utopias of the twentieth century have been so dependent on actual contemporary societies as sometimes to run the danger of merely seeming descriptions of them. Zamyatin's *We* and Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* rehearsed and projected the forms and thought structures of the new Soviet society. George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* similarly drew on the theory and practice of the Soviet Union... (Kumar 1991:66)

The above discussion is meant to highlight the debated nature of the relationship between Marxism and utopianism, questioning taken-for-granted assumptions that general consensus exists regarding their identity and/or difference. To explore the debate further, however, we need to delve more carefully into the definitional landscape surrounding the utopian thought and movement.

UTOPIA AND UTOPIANISM

What exactly is utopianism?

"Utopia," which is derived from the word "topos" (place) in Greek and phonetically plays on the Greek words "eu" (good) and "ou" (no), has the double-meaning of a good place that does not (yet) exist[1] (Sargent 1988; Kumar 1991; Kateb 1976). Of course the term, invented by St. Thomas More in 1516 in his classic satirical novel by the same name, inherited a preexisting tradition that goes back in the west, from a literary standpoint, to Plato's *Republic* at least, and in the East to the earliest religious and mythological beliefs and texts. Therefore, from a general point of view the search for a good place that does not (yet) exist can be regarded as an aspiration of all humanity across all times and places. The fact that the term "utopia" was coined in the west in relatively recent times should therefore not distract us from recognizing that the reality which the concept denotes is much older and much wider in origin, and the concept itself embodies or signifies the human desire to move beyond the existing social status quo and to live an ideal life.

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1. In his *Ideology and Utopia* (1936), Karl Mannheim presented a typology of modern utopian mentalities that included the Orgiastic Chiliasm of the Anabaptists, the liberal-humanitarian idea, the conservative idea, and the socialist-communist idea. The conservative notion of utopia, Mannheim suggested, is that of utopia already achieved in the sense that the social status quo represents the perfect or ideal society achieveable from the point of view and interests of dominant social forces. This is in contrast to the other three forms which involve seeking an alternate social reality in the here-and-now (Chiliastic), as a result of socio-political progress and state action (liberal-humanitarian), or socio-economic revolution (socialist/communist). Acknowledging the usefulness of the typology, I think Mannheim's attribution of a utopian status to the conservative perspective as reiterated above obfuscates the consistency of the definition of "utopianism" as a search for ever new social conditions that do not (yet) exist. In other words, the notion of utopianism by definition involves transcendence of the social status quo and is by nature a critical outlook (which to be sure can be of both reactionary or progressive kinds, i.e., can be conservative for its regressive seeking of social conditions lost in the past, or progressive for its seeking of social conditions not yet achieved). The point here is that a reference to existing social conditions as achieved utopias, is a contradictory statement that diminishes the definitional value of the concept as denoting a desire and/or action for social transformation beyond the status quo—whatever that may be. This is a good example of how in the course of both ideological and scholarly debates the conceptual distinctiveness of utopianism has been diluted.

There was, however, a specific meaning attached to "utopia" as More practiced it, and that was the belief in the good life's being realizable on this earth through the initiative of ordinary human beings. It was this creative humanist bent in the Morean version that may explain why his particular name, term, and attitude became in time the standard bearer of what modern world understands by utopianism. In fact, it was this earthly scope of Morean utopianism effected through the action of ordinary human beings creatively building and running a new communal arrangement, that distinguished it both from the earlier religious and philosophical (Platonic) forms, and what gave impetus to the later scientific variety which found its classic form in Marxism.

Therefore, qualifying the utopian nature of various movements merely based on their practical orientation or the spatiotemporal scope of their experimentation is misleading. The imagined/practical attitudes or the spatiotemporal scope of envisioning/implementation of the movement's project may provide a sub-classificatory scheme for types of utopianism as a whole, but they should not enter into the determination and definition of whether a movement is utopian or not. For instance, utopianism has sometimes been envisioned and/or practiced in a limited spatiotemporal scope—say an inner experience, an interpersonal relationship, a communal organization, a particular societal or even civilizational project—rather than generalized as a global, transhistorical movement encompassing the whole humanity. Certainly, this was one sense in which Marx debunked his utopian predecessors or contemporaries. For him, the good life could only be a global reality. However, this does not make the local experimentations any less real—perhaps less effective, but not less *real*. Likewise, simply a proclamation, or a theoretical clause, in the most militant of antisystemic manifestos asserting the global nature of the emancipation project does not make the movement espousing that viewpoint any less utopian. So the distinction between a utopian and non-utopian movement cannot really be a matter of the spatiotemporal scope of social experimentation and/or projected transformation. We need to look elsewhere to define what utopianism actually introduced into the discourse on the means and the ends of achieving the good life.

How is utopianism distinguishable from the "antisystemic" modes of social movement behavior? After all, all movements struggle for a "nowhere," or an aspired goal that has not yet been realized or fulfilled—how can it be otherwise? Nor can the distinguishing feature of utopianism be that it merely deals with speculative and mental constructions of an ideal life, rather than making efforts at practical realization of those goals. There have been many practical utopian movements and communal experimentations often using scientific tools and knowledges in their endeavors. And conversely there have been many "antisystemic movements" that have not gone beyond mere declarations and manifestos of protest against their adversaries. Moreover, just because utopian efforts have failed, or been identified with "unrealistic" social aspirations, cannot be a distinguishing feature of utopianism. Obviously, many "antisystemic movements" (let alone, mainstream political mobilizations) have also failed in bringing about the good life. Failure per se, in other words, cannot enter our efforts at defining and understanding what is distinctive about utopianism as a social movement. So what is it that actually distinguishes the utopian movement from all others?

Utopianism can be most generally defined as a movement in human thought and/or action to bring about an ideal life *beginning in the here and now.* In the antisystemic mode, the attention is on fighting the

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adversary, building a self-identity around that fight, while the goals for which the fight is waged are relegated to the background and projected into a future to be created once the fight is won. There is an inherent gap and alienation between means and ends in the antisystemic mode of bringing about social change. In contrast, in the utopian mode, building the alternative vision in the thought and/or realities of the here-and-now is the primary focus of the movement. The utopian movement changes the world by the examples of its alternative imaginations, visions, experimentations, and self-constitutions of what the world can or should be, not by promises and decrees declared in the midst of antisystemic fervor.

To begin with, the spatiotemporal and social *relativism* of the utopian aspiration must be taken into account. The standards for a desired "perfect" life have of course been always geographically and historically relative and changing. A utopian desire or demand raised at a particular historical conjuncture may become, once and if realized, the status quo with respect to new utopian demands and aspirations. Likewise, a utopian desire in one place may not be shared by others in other places. Besides, socially, the utopian demands raised by a particular class or strata, seeking goals or changes that best suits its own interests (often wrapped in the universalistic language of "for the good of all"), may in fact be considered reactionary, regressive and simply undesirable from the standpoint of other social classes or strata. Obviously, "utopia" as a universal term must always be historically contextualized. Utopianism always involves a search for a good life by and relative to the interests and visions of a specific historical agency at a particular place and time.

Utopianism may be further qualified as a movement that is concerned with the design and construction of alternative historical realities beginning in the *here and now.*

Whether such a concern becomes limited in one or another utopian movement to the speculative and mental domain, whether such a concern is not actually intended to be practically implemented by the utopian movement, or whether such ideal constructions are actually implemented but in practice fail, are secondary as far as the general definition above is concerned. In contrast to reactive modes of antisystemic behavior that concentrate on building a movement that instrumentally focuses on the destruction of the old order in order to reach a good life projected into the future (be that future distant or near, illusively or "realistically" conceived), the utopian attitude involves making efforts, whatever their scope, towards imagining, theorizing and/or practically realizing that future goal in the here and now.

If this is what makes a utopian project utopian, then how can Marxism be utopian? After all, Marx, while being convinced of the necessity and the possibility of a future ideal society, refused to provide a blueprint of it (except for brief philosophical and/or political tracts), and instead directed workers' attention to the struggle against capitalism as personified in the bourgeoisie. Should we not then agree with the founders of scientific socialism that what they were advancing was not utopian, but scientific?

In what follows, by introducing a typology of utopian movements as a whole, I will argue that the difference between Marxism and other forms of utopianism is partly a matter of typological differentiation within utopianism and partly a result of departure of the Marxism from that typology in its development during Marx' lifetime. Marx and Engels, despite their rejections of utopianism, and reluctance to draw up blueprints for the future society, nevertheless to an extent practiced in a different form what utopian movements (according to the above definition) engage in—namely, seeking the utopian society be-

ginning in the here and now by building a communist party and movement adhering to certain principles of communal living projected to become universal in at least the early developmental stages of communist society. Marx and Engels's repeated calls to see communism not as a blueprint for a "future society" but as an actual movement taking place in the midst of the present "under our own eyes" merely represented the *modus operandi* of a different, a "scientific" type, of utopianism which legitimated itself "scientifically" based on assumptions of what were thought to be inevitable "objective" movement of class society towards a classless state. In Marx's view the incessant participation, in the here and now, of the proletarian-communist movement in an objectively given and inevitable building of workers' unions, of proletarian communist parties, of an international association of proletarian parties, of proletarian states, etc., towards achieving the immediate goal of a world-wide communist revolution were simply historically necessitated stages of progress towards attaining a utopian society.

However, at the same time, built into Marx and Engels's doctrine, was a self-imposed denial of the utopian nature of their movement, ideologically serving the function of dispelling doubts about the scientific nature of their views and misassociations with what was perceived to be failing utopian efforts in the recent or distant past. Therefore, while Marxism drew powerful inspirations from utopianism (hence Engels's regarding, say, French socialism, as one of its sources) it also sought to distance itself from it for the purpose of self-promotion. This attitude which lies at the root of the antisystemic form of the movement, in contrast to its utopian content, served the purpose of postponing not only the blueprints, but also the practice, of the utopian imaginations which initially inspired the movement. This antisystemic strategy became in time framed by the doctrine of class struggle which came to be regarded as the means towards the idealized classless society under communism. The central thesis guiding this non-utopian, antisystemic, movement strategy towards utopian ends was based on the revolutionary nature of the proletariat as an oppressed class whose emancipation will, as the theory claimed, would bring about the self-abolition of itself as a ruling class in the postrevolutionary period and the emancipation of the society as a whole. To end all classes, in short, a class-based antisystemic strategy had to be pursued.

For further clarification of this point, let me proceed with introducing a typology of utopianism.

TYPES OF UTOPANISM

A general typology of utopian movements can be developed based on three basic criteria: 1-The perceived **agency** that is considered to be the primary determinant for the realization of the utopian project (ordinary humans, distinguished elites, supernatural forces, objective natural/historical laws); 2-The **attitude** adopted for the pursuit of the utopian project (reflective, literary, experimental, transformative); and 3-The **scope** of imagination and/or realization of the utopian vision (intrapersonal, interpersonal, communal, societal, environmental, or cosmic).

Figure 1 (next page) shows the way in which the general typology of utopian movements may be conceptualized along the three criteria listed above. Notice that the combination of five agencies (considering the two subtypes of scientific utopianism as separate categories), four attitudes, and six agendas provide a total of at least 120 different ideal-types (in terms of various tracks along the agency, attitude, and agenda criteria). Of course, our numerical suggestion here is only illustrative, and by no means do I mean to rigidify the three
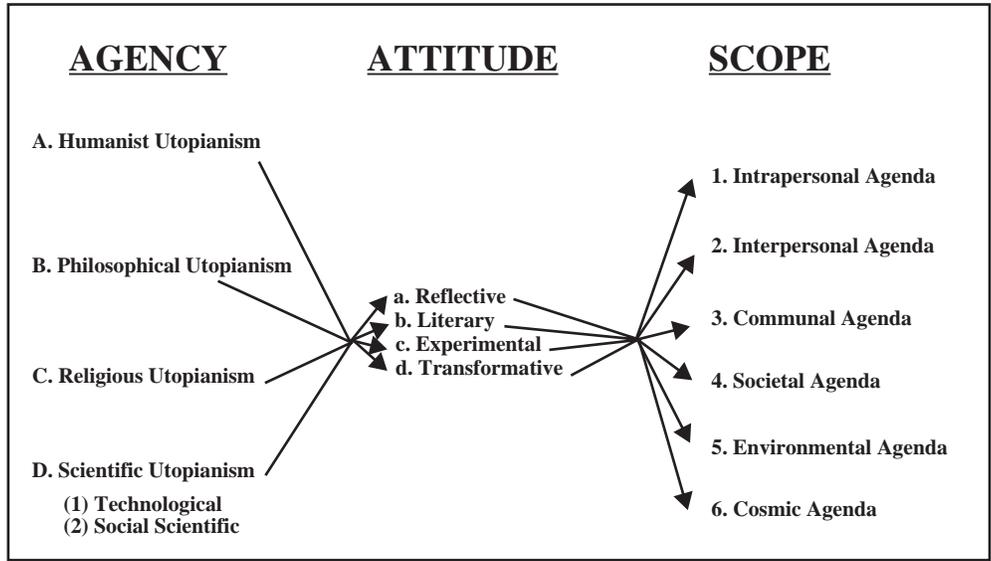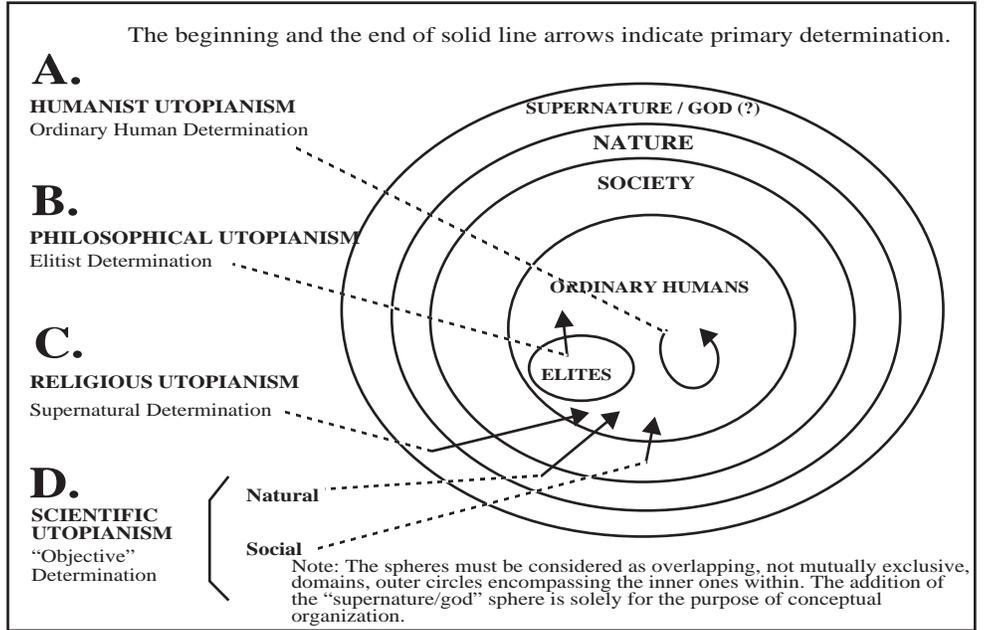
Figure 1: Types of Utopian Movements

Figure 2: Typology of Utopianism Considered in Terms of Part-Whole Schema

major criteria and their sub-classifications into arbitrary numerical formulations. What I would like to convey here is that the classificatory scheme suggested here allows us to consider the rich totality of the varieties of forms utopian movements may take in historical context. It must also be noted that an actual historical utopian movement may display a multiplicity of types and trends in itself, with one perhaps being predominant at a time. Whether a predominant type can be identified in each historical case of utopianism cannot of course be ascertained in an a priori manner, for one or any combination of the ideal (agency/attitude/scope) types may develop (and thus be discovered) in one or more phases or stages of any given utopian movement. In fact, actual historical movements may evolve from one type or subtype to another while sublimating remnants of the older varieties.

Type A utopian movements are those in which ordinary humans determine the utopian project. In this type, the arts and the creative impulses drive the efforts to build the good life. The other three types may be considered alienated forms of humanist utopianism, in that the determining factor in the realization of the project in these other forms shifts away from ordinary humans themselves and becomes associated with outside forces, be they a group of elites, supernatural forces beyond, and/or objectively pre-ordained natural/ historical laws.

Type B utopian movements are those in which one or more "distinguished" individuals, elites, wise men, "philosopher kings," geniuses, etc., are seen as determinants of the utopian project. Type C utopian movements are those in which the primary determinant of the origins, development, and/or realization of the utopian project is perceived to be supernatural forces. The determination may not be always positive and supportive of the utopian project, though; God may be perceived, for example, to have created this world for suffering and trial, the actual utopia being realizable not in this world but in the promised hereafter. Type D utopian movements are those in which the primary determinants of the utopian project are perceived to be the "objective forces" operating in nature in general and/or in history in particular. In these movements the objective "laws of motion" of nature and history, and not supernatural forces such as God, or ordinary or distinguished humans, enable or retard progress towards an ideal life.

The difference between the humanist and elitist (A and B) on one hand and the "social scientific" type (B2) on the other hand, can be considered in terms of the distinction between agencies. Humanist and elitist movements, despite their differences, emphasize the role played by the human agency, creativity or knowledge/will, to bring about the good life, whereas the social scientific utopists emphasize the inherent laws of motion objectively operative in society as determining factors, which then allow human actors to play (or not) their historical roles as catalyzers (or fetters). In scientific utopianism, the role of human or elite agencies is downplayed and subordinated to the dictates of the limits and/or opportunities posed by objective natural and/or historical conditions. In Marx's words, expressing the scientific utopian model, men do make their own history but not under conditions of their own choosing, but through aligning their actions with the objective laws governing society.

With regards to the four broad agency types, it is important to consider their relationship in a dynamic, rather than rigid and mutually exclusive, manner. A particular type A may not negate the role played by elite, god, or nature/history agencies in the utopian project, but consider that their influences are, or are meant to be, processed through the will and creativity of ordinary human agencies. Perceiving ordinary humans as being equally invested with the ex-

traordinary powers of the elite, of god(s), or of natural/historical progress, is an example. Type A, B, or D movement may also be "religious" in the sense that they may not deny the existence of God, but for various reasons consider divine intervention not primary for the realization of the utopian project—they may in fact adopt the argument that it was divine intent to leave it to the ordinary humans, to distinguished individuals or prophets, or natural or historical evolution to guide humanity towards the good life. The same may be considered for type A or B movements that may not deny the relevance and effect of objective natural, social, or divine forces, but maintain the significance of human volition and action—as *natural* and/or *historical* forces themselves—in the pursuit and success of the utopian project.

In general, the typology of utopian movements presented above may best be conceived in terms of a part-whole modality rather than conceptualized in the pattern of mutually exclusive movement types (see Figure 2, previous page). In other words, each type does not exist apart from domains singled out by other types. The totality is operative for each type; however, in each a particular sphere of reality is perceived to be more important and determinant than the other. From the standpoint of humanist utopianism, to say that ordinary humans are masters of their own destiny does not necessarily contradict the notion that history, nature, or even supernatural forces are at work, if human powers are perceived to be also those of society, nature, and divine spirits. The power of the elite may also be considered to be an alienated form of ordinary human powers. So are the powers attributed to nature, history, or even the supernature, which can be interpreted as alienated forms of ordinary human powers. Only when these alienated powers are divested from their human origins and projected as "other" forces beyond the power of human understanding, will,

and action, do distinct forms of utopianism become clearly distinguishable.

To proceed with the second criteria of subclassification of each of the above major types, we may consider subtypes a, b, c, and d as being based on what **attitude** the utopian movement takes with regards to the realization of the utopian vision. In type a, the utopian project is a reflective experience, individually or collectively, in sensation, feelings and imagination, not even communicated to others perhaps, or at most existing in oral forms of expression—not yet finding its way into literary or practical realms. By acknowledging type a, we are basically recognizing that just because a utopian vision is not written down, expressed in objective form, or realized in historical context, does not mean that it does not exist. Utopian visions are often reflective at first, and only in subsequent development become expressed in literary or practical forms.

In type b, the utopian project is expressed or systematized in literary or art forms, making it possible to be communicated to others via objectified writings and artifacts. This is a crucial step, for it allows the utopian project to be communicated across time and space regardless of the intentions of its originators. The literary utopias may themselves take various forms, of course, ranging from the most fantastic and fictional to the most precisely formulated, constitutional, and programmatic tracts intended for implementation.

Type c attitude involves experimentation, in practical terms, with the utopian ideas, visions, or theories in every day life. But this is only "experimental" in nature, that is, the primary purpose is not to commit oneself to transforming reality as an end in itself, but changing reality is pursued only to further develop and elaborate on the utopian idea, vision, or theory.

In type d attitude ("transformative"), finally, the aim is to make persistent and continuing efforts towards the realization

of the utopian project in reality.

Again in the above attitude typology, the various tracks must not be conceived in isolation from one another. Often, especially in the later types, all the elements of the (preceding) types may be present, but one may be predominant at any given time and place. Moreover, the attitude typology must be considered in its multiple variations with respect to the agency typology. Each of the agency typologies may adopt one or more of the utopian attitudes.

The **scope** typology sub-differentiates utopian movements based on which domain the utopian movement primarily focuses on for bringing about change. Type 1 is intrapersonal, and denotes the inner life of the individual. Note here, for example, that based on the attitude typology, this inner personal utopianism may take reflective, literary, experimental, or transformative forms. For instance, an individual may not only envision a utopian ideal for and by her/himself, but proceed with writing down or expressing in various art forms specific plans of realizing that vision in her/his individual life, and actually proceed to do so.

For Type 2 (interpersonal) utopianism the primary focus of utopian reflection, writing/expression, experimentation, and/or transformation is the interpersonal space, of specific relationships with another person. Type 3 (communal) utopianism acquires a strong organizational dimension considering that individuals are influenced by the type of social organization in which they live. In other words, type 3 introduces elements of social externalization and structuration of the utopian project beyond the immediate dyadic intentions of interpersonal actors. In this case, conscious and persistent effort is spent on the development of alternative objective social structures and organizations alongside fostering of new behavioral patterns.

Type 4 (societal) is concerned not just with the affairs of the narrow utopian commune, but the latter is used as a means or an example for a wider societal (ethno-national, civilizational, or global) utopian project for which the utopian vision is developed. Type 5 focuses on the environmental context within which the utopian project is to be realized. It is one thing to conceive of the utopian project in terms of human species, another to consider the latter as part of the biosphere as a whole, including consideration of all other life forms. Type 6 involves primary concerns with the cosmic dimension and implications of the utopian vision.

Notice here that in the scope typology, there is not an assumption of a particular intellectual and/or practical *attitude* towards the utopian project. A utopian vision, for instance, may involve cosmic preoccupations without necessarily involving any practical steps to realize it, one way or another—most science fictions of outer space variety are in this category. In the latter case, though, one may also find a cosmic utopianism which involves practical steps, regardless of how strange they may be (mass suicide to spiritually link up with a passing comet!). That is why I have separated the attitude typology from the scope typology to allow more flexible intermixing of various subtypes within and across the major agency typologies. In each of the latter, the concern with the particular domain of utopian vision may be reflective, literary, experimental, or transformative at a give time or place for a given utopian movement. Any utopian movement may experience one or another of the various agency, attitude, or scope typologies in the course of its life cycle. For the purpose of clarification, the possible alternative tracks of the utopian movement can be considered using arrow tracks in Figure 1 (above).

IMPLICATIONS OF THE TYPOLOGY

The inclusive model of utopianism as

explicated above moves beyond a classificatory system that is based solely on what can be readily "observed" as a utopian movement. The literary utopias or utopian communities investigated by scholars are then treated as only a fraction of the world-historical utopian movement as a whole. In the new typology, the "silent utopias" in everyday lives of ordinary people which never find expression in any tangible literary or communal forms are treated as being as much a part of the unfolding global story of utopianism as the more visible and "classical" forms.

What Wallerstein has called (1998) "utopistics" or "efficacious" utopianism, a distinction also made somewhat similarly by Mannheim (1936) in terms of utopias that aim to "shatter existing society," may be considered as the specific type involving social scientific agency and experimental/transformative attitudes in the scheme considered above. But these, as in the case of Marxism, also display tendencies for postponing creative efforts in building the future society in the here-and-nows of the present. The projection of utopia to a future apart from making efforts, no matter how small, in building it by example in the midst of the present, would be seen as a departure from the utopian mode of bringing about social change and as proximity to the antisystemic social movement variety. Antisystemic social movements, as noted above, may be defined as those more preoccupied with shattering the present as the means of the movement, at the expense of making greater efforts at building the ends of the movement in the here-and-now.

For the purpose of this investigation, the determination of whose utopia is more "efficacious" and "shattering" than others is considered to be a subjective matter, depending on which historical agency proclaims or judges the case. Any utopist may claim her or his approach to be the most effective from the particular vantage point of her or his own interests and purposes in pursuing the project. Likewise, a non-efficacious or non-shattering utopia may not necessarily be of any lesser value or significance than those espoused to be more realistic. Many of the more efficacious utopianisms of the modern times had their beginnings in fictive utopian literature (St. Thomas More's *Utopia* is the best example), and many of the dystopian literature of twentieth century have had significant impact on the critical historical and social consciousness of a large international audience (George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* is a good example). It may thus be more fruitful to treat all forms of utopianism as diverse exercises in utopianism, and relegate judgments regarding their efficaciousness and substantive realism to the investigation of such theories and/or practices, rather than dismissing one or another utopian project on an a priori basis.

My proposed typology incorporates existing classifications of utopianism, but goes beyond them in providing a more inclusive picture of human efforts on a global scale in search of the good life. This typology treats utopianism broadly as a world-historical movement, of which only a particular branch may be attributable to the western tradition, while regarding the scientific variety as a western artifact, or a "western" concept and movement (Kumar 1991) by pointing out the notion of utopia as a naturally and/or historically pre-ordained goal towards which humanity is making "progress" in an "evolutionary" process. The typology incorporates religious "precursors" of utopianism as being themselves a particular type of utopianism. What is useful in the suggested typology is the distinction made between humanist and philosophical/elitist utopianism on one hand, and the religious and scientific types on the other. To elaborate on this let me turn to the question with which I began this paper.

Besides what I consider to be the original historical type of utopianism, namely

humanist utopianism, which relied on creativity and artfulness of ordinary humans to bring about a good life, there have been three major types of utopianism in world-history, adopting, respectively philosophy, religion, and science as the paradigms from which to derive their utopian visions and/or practices. The splitting of humanist utopianism into its three alienated forms may be seen as corresponding to the splitting of ancient civilizations into diverse forms of classical political, medieval religious, and more recent modern economic empires.

Philosophical utopianism is best represented by the Platonic search for the good society as formed and guided by the philosopher kings. Although religious sentiment and vision may be considered to have existed in all early utopias, including humanist and philosophical ones, it is with the rise of cultural/religious empires that religious utopianism gains its classic form. Given that most of the earliest civilizations and classical political empires had developed in the non-western regions of the world (Egypt, India, Persia, Mesopotamia), it is not surprising to see that religious utopianism is predominantly and classically eastern in origin ("east" is used here in its broadest meaning of what is non-west).[1] Jewish, Christian, and Islamic forms of reli-

gious utopianism and mysticism took their classical shape during the long medieval period. Scientific utopianism of both technological-bourgeois and socialist types, originating in the west in the course of the so-called Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution, were of course best represented by various types of bourgeois utopianism and Marxism. More's *Utopia* or Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*, may be considered heretical utopian movements in thought that do not easily fit in philosophical, religious, or scientific utopianisms, and have much more affinity with the humanist variety that emphasizes the value of ordinary human agency in bringing about the conditions for the good life. When they emerged, these heretical utopianisms heralded a return to humanist utopianism in reaction to the failure of orthodox religious efforts; however, despite their openness to skepticism and secularism, they may not easily be classifiable also under the scientific variety that emerged later. Omar Khayyam in particular was skeptical as much about the claims of science as about the claims of orthodox religion and philosophy—despite being himself publicly a scientist/astronomer, a religious man, and a free-thinking philosopher. Works by More (who was beheaded by religious orthodoxy), or eastern utopists such as Omar Khayyam, and certain other utopian literature and communal experiments emphasize, along with their acknowledgment of religious morality and/or use of scientific imagination and knowledge, the role of creative and willful action by ordinary humans in favor of utopian landscapes. As such they may be considered precursors of a humanist utopian renaissance that does not shy away from incorporating the contributions of philosophical, religious, and scientific utopianism within the framework of a new humanist utopianism. Humanist utopianism may therefore be considered both eastern and western in origin.

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1. For similar use of the East-West distinction see Abdel-Malek (1981a/b): "For studies in the human and social sciences in the contemporary Orient--tentatively defined here as Asia and North Africa, but which also encompasses the whole North African continent as well as other areas in the central and southern-eastern part of the Western hemisphere—must address themselves primarily to this very transformation which the Orient is undergoing in a changing world" (1981b:192); "The structuralist-functionalist networks in the human and social sciences were busily elaborating their 'neo-Marxist' theories of 'center' and 'periphery', where the 'center' was, of course, the West, and the 'periphery', needless to say, the sphere of the nations of the Three Continents--in a word, the Orient" (1981b:193); "... the emergence of the Orient, the access and emergence on to the contemporary scene of the Three Continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America" (1981a:177).

By pointing out the spatial origins of various types of utopianism, I do not mean to suggest that each type has been confined to its original birth-place. On the contrary, all types of utopianism in time have often become global in scope. The global scope of each type, however, should not necessarily prevent us from ignoring their spatial points of origin. Christianity, for example, which is claimed often to be a "western" religion, is obviously an eastern religion (taking the eastern shores of the Mediterranean sea as a cut off point) which only later spread throughout the west and world as a whole. Most world religions are eastern in origin, despite the fact that most have now institutionalized themselves globally. In contrast, Marxism which is a global socialist ideology and movement, clearly originated in the west and built itself primarily on the economic, political, and philosophical sources that were European in origin. Its global expansion to the east (such as China, for example) should not prevent us from recognizing its western origin.

The break with religion in the paradigmatic structure of scientific utopianism is clear. The bourgeois ideology of "separation of church from state," to which Marxism also adhered, provides a historical demonstration of this defining feature of western utopianism. Western utopianism in the form of the bourgeois ideology of "progress" is the dominant type of utopianism today. Even Marxism adhered to and operated within the utopian ideology of progress which is the cultural *raison detre* of the modern capitalist world-system as well. The emphasis in western utopianism on experiment and practice on one hand and the predominance in modern times of this type of utopianism on the other hand are the two mutually reinforcing aspects of its character.

The policy of downplaying the other three major philosophical, religious, and humanist forms of utopianism, shared by both the bourgeois and socialist forms of western utopianism, emanates from their perceived and claimed hegemonic status in the global political arena. Although as a western doctrine Marxism has itself been regarded as the latest, the farthest advancing, and failing, global experiment in utopianism, the "success" of bourgeois utopianism characterized by the ideology of progress can hardly be sustained today even according to the data generated by global financial institutions (such as the World Bank and the IMF). The deepening gap between the rich and the poor across the globe and within nation-states, the worsening problems of hunger, housing, and environmental degradation, the outbreak of modern plagues and diseases such as AIDS, etc., and the inability of the system to eradicate them, are more than mere statistical data, but facts of everyday life for a majority of the world's population.

UTOPIANISM BEYOND MARXISM

While the typology presented above clarifies in what sense Marxism may be regarded as a utopian doctrine (i.e, as a scientific variety of it based on the predetermined action of natural/historical objective laws), it also points to the extent to which Marxism also departed from utopianism as a whole by embracing an anti-systemic mode preoccupied more with fighting a class enemy than with building the alternative cultural, political, and economic structures in the midst of the existing society. In his comparative study of several urban social movements (1983), Castells has stressed the degree to which the success of social movements historically has depended on their efforts in articulating the cultural, political, and economic dimensions of their aspired communal life in the existing reality than in declarations and demands to be made from the State. Building the alternative social arrangement, even in a minor scale, in the here and now, in other

words, is a much more powerful strategy for social change than promises made in the most militant manifestos and declarations.

The danger of drawing the wrong lessons from the experience of Marxism, however, is to associate its wrongs with utopianism as a whole—a mistake that obviously pleases the conservative trends in the social and political establishment. Critical theorists and activists have found much inspiration in Marxism to the extent that they have been able to decipher the utopian message found in the early writings of the young Marx. Some of the self-critical reflections of Marx may have found its way to Engels's correspondence (Marx and Engels 1975), but perhaps not sufficiently to transcend the economistic structure of mature Marxism and a dialectical return to the utopian spirit in Marx's early writings in which neither idealism, nor materialism, but humanism was declared to be the riddle of human history resolved.

The typology presented above is only a preliminary effort at clarifying the meaning and forms of utopianism as a world-historical social movement. By distinguishing various types of utopianism from one another, the typology allows us to refrain from doing away with a social movement simply because of the failures of particular approaches to it in world-history—especially so, if such failures actually emanate from ideas or practices not belonging to the typology altogether. In essence, utopianism has been about desiring and/or making efforts towards optimally better worlds that do not (yet) exist—and doing so beginning in the here and now, by the example of how we think, feel, imagine, and act while conducting our everyday lives.

The debunking of utopianism as a whole has been a significant ideological and political feat for the guardians of the status quo across world-historical time and space—paved in modern times with the good intentions of antisystemic movements who have internalized the ideology in their movement rhetoric and agenda. How could the desires and/or movements for radical social change in favor of optimally better human conditions be more effectively extinguished, other than through declaring any efforts made towards such ends altogether fantastic, unrealistic, and impractical:

> Where the critics of the utopian method were, I believe, wrong was in holding that the business of projecting prouder worlds was a futile and footling pastime. These anti-utopian critics overlooked the fact that one of the main factors that condition any future are the attitudes and beliefs which people have in relation to that future."
> (Mumford, 1922: 298)

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