行政院國家科學委員會

獎勵人文與社會科學領域博士候選人撰寫博士論文成果報告

Technology and Utopia: Literary Utopia as a Desiring Machine

核 定 編 號 ：NSC 95-2420-H-002-020-DR
獎 勵 期 間 ：95 年 08 月 01 日至 96 年 07 月 31 日
執 行 單 位 ：國立臺灣大學外國語文學系暨研究所
指 導 教 授 ：廖朝陽

博 士 生 ：楊乃女

公 開 資 訊 ：本計畫可公開查詢

中 華 民 國 96 年 07 月 31 日

臺(96)博證字第D00592號
學號：D90122001

國立臺灣大學博士學位證書

楊乃女，中華民國陸拾貳年柒月參日生，於本校外國語文學系博士班研究期滿經博士學位考試合格，依學位授予法之規定授予文學博士學位。此證

校　長　李嗣涔

系主任　劉克明

中華民國九十六年六月

校對者：

國立臺灣大學

國立臺灣大學文學院外國語文學系

博士論文

Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures

College of Liberal Arts

National Taiwan University

Doctoral Dissertation

烏托邦與機器：

從烏托邦文學到後人類

Utopias and Machines : From Utopian Literature to the Posthuman

楊乃女

Nai-nu Yang

指導教授：廖朝陽　博士

Advisor : Chaoyang Liao, Ph.D.

中華民國九十六年六月

June 2007

Acknowledgements

My deepest gratitude goes to Prof. Chaoyang Liao. Without his valuable advice, the dissertation would not be here. Prof. Liao led me to the world of literary theories. It is a huge world. If I have learned something there, it was inspired by Prof. Liao's brilliant teaching in the past six years. I am also grateful to Prof. Hui-chuan Chang, who inspired my interest in utopian literature. I had never thought that I would work on a project regarding utopian literature since I only planned to study science fiction at first. But because Prof. Chang kindly helped me study the history of utopian literature and criticism, I extended my study of science fiction to utopian literature. I would like to thank Prof. Tsung-huei Huang, Prof. Jiann-guang Lin, and Prof. Chen-hsing Tsai for their brilliant comments and suggestions. My special thanks go to my dearest friends, Peggy, Jasmine, Chiou-hua, Yuan-hsin, Leo, Yi-hsiung, and Liya. They generously offered their help and encouraged me during the past year when I wrote my thesis.

Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to my parents and my husband, whose whole-hearted support makes possible its completion.

中文摘要

如何改善人類社會是數百年來許多哲學家及學者關心的議題。湯瑪斯・摩爾在其《烏托邦》中以虛構的旅行經驗呈現了理想社會形貌的敘述，這部作品開啟了作家們對於更好的人類社會的想望，也成了烏托邦文學的開始。儘管許多烏托邦作家已呈現各式各樣更好的社會的想像，然而，人們似乎對這些理想社會的模式永遠都不滿意。究竟烏托邦的本質為何？烏托邦的功能又為何？

本論文旨在探索烏托邦文學的後人類潛能。烏托邦文學之濫觴在於期待填補社會中不足之處，此期待透過設計理想社會的形式呈現。大部分傳統烏托邦的故事焦點在於建構完美的人類社會，為了建立一個理性的社會，這些烏托邦作家排除他們眼中人性中不理性的部分以維持其理想社會的完美性。因此他們選擇他們認為最好的方式建構完美的社會而排除其他的方式。傳統烏托邦文本中描述的理想世界較為僵硬及封閉，問題在於其依賴人文主義式的思想架構，以穩定、理性、同質性為基礎，排斥不穩定性、不理性或異質性。受限於人文主義的架構，傳統烏托邦成為排他性極高的人類社會的想像。傳統烏托邦在其完美人類社會模式中所嘗試設立的一體適用的標準犧牲了其他種想像社會的可能性，而非提出改善社會的希望。烏托邦寫作在此遇到其瓶頸。烏托邦寫作必須打破人文主義的架構以克服此難題。事實上，傳統烏托邦創造的具體完美社會的意象並非如其所欲達成的極具理性與同質性。在這些具體意象中有一些裂縫干擾或試圖瓦解其人文主義式的架構。這些裂縫成為驅使烏托邦寫作轉變的動力。本論文認為烏托邦寫作具有後人類潛能，在本論文中後人類指的是烏托邦文學具有探索異質性、不確定性、及流動性的潛能。而在此後人類的概念則由德勒茲與拉康的對話為基礎思考如何從去疆界化再疆界化。烏托邦為機器的概念在於烏托邦不僅具有去疆界化的潛能，同時也是再疆界化的實體。

關鍵字：烏托邦，後人類，機器，去疆界化，再疆界化

Abstract

How to improve human society has been an unceasing concern of many scholars and philosophers for centuries. After Thomas More presented a fictional narrative of the traveling experience in an ideal society in his *Utopia*, utopian literature became an attempt to offer alternative ways to improve human society. Although many utopian writers have contributed their imagination of what a better society should be, people seem not satisfied with these ideal models of society. What is utopia and what is it for?

This dissertation intends to explore the posthuman potential of utopian literature. Utopian literature began with its expectation to fill in the lack in the society. The expectation is presented via the form of the contrivance of an ideal model of society. Most of traditional utopian stories focus on the construction of perfect human society. In order to build a rational society, these utopian stories exclude what they think as the irrational part of human nature to maintain the perfection of the alternative society. Therefore, they choose what they assume as the best choice among many possibilities and abandon other possibilities. The utopian worlds depicted in traditional writing are rigid, enclosed ones. The problem of traditional utopian writing lies in its reliance on the humanist framework which is based on stable, rational, and homogeneous mode of thinking. It rejects the uncertainty, irrationality, or heterogeneity. Confined to the humanist framework, traditional utopia turns to highly exclusive imagination of human society. The universal standard that traditional utopia strives to set in its perfect model of human society sacrifices many other possibilities, rather than offering the hope to improve the society. Utopian writing confronts its deadlock here. To overcome the predicament, utopian writing has to break the humanist framework. In fact, the concrete images created by traditional utopia are not so stable, rational and homogeneous as traditional utopia strives to become. There are some crevices in these concrete images

which disturb or disrupt the humanist framework. These crevices turn to the force which drive the transformations of utopian writing. I will argue that utopian writing has the posthuman potential. The posthuman potential here refers to the potential of exploring heterogeneity, uncertainty, and fluidity in utopian literature. The concept of the posthuman consists in the dialogue between Deleuze and Lacan to consider how to re-territorialize the de-territorialized. Utopias are machines in the sense that utopias not only have the potential of deterritorialization but are reterritorialized entities.

Key words: utopias, the posthuman, machines, deterritorialization, reterritorialization

Table of Contents

Introduction

How to improve human society has been an unceasing concern of many scholars and philosophers for centuries. After Thomas More presented a fictional narrative of the traveling experience in an ideal society in his *Utopia*, utopian literature became an attempt to offer alternative ways to improve human society. Although many utopian writers have contributed their imagination of what a better society should be, people seem not satisfied with these ideal models of society. What is utopia and what is it for? For those who read utopian writing "literally," utopian fiction as the arrangement of political blueprints fails to fulfill the dream of constructing ideal society. For those who defend utopian writing, utopian vision expresses our aspirations for a better society since no society is perfect.

Many scholars try to define utopia. Here is Darko Suvin's definition: "Utopia is a verbal construction of a particular quasi-human community where sociopolitical institutions, norms and individual relationships are organized according to a more perfect principle than in the author's community, this construction being based on estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis" (49). This definition emphasizes that utopia is a narrative which has a social function—to envisage a better society than the real one. Krishan Kumar also defines utopia as a genre that differs from utopian social theory. He contends that "[a]ll utopias are by definition, fictions; unlike say historical writing, they deal with possible, not actual, worlds. To this extent they are like all forms of imaginative literature. They go further than conventional fiction in their extension of the bounds of the possible to include what to many may seem impossible or at least very improbable" (25). This definition underscores fictive and narrative elements of utopia. Kumar's definition regards utopia as a literary representation, setting a boundary between literary utopia and utopian theory. Some utopian critics

adopt a broader approach, attempting to efface the boundary between literary utopia and utopian theory. In her analysis of what utopia is for, Ruth Levitas suggests that "since utopia is the expression of *what is missing*, of experience of lack in any given society or culture, understanding the utopian aspirations generated by any society is an important part of understanding that society itself" (26; my emphasis). Levitas' definition highlights the dimension of what is lacking in the actuality of human existence, which, according to her, is the basis of utopia. And the experience of lacking must have the function of education. In other words, utopia is didactic and it offers people better ways of thinking or provides warnings to people about social problems. Besides, utopia should have the potential of being realized. Levitas' concept of educated desire is influenced by Ernst Bloch's idea of the Not-Yet-Conscious. In his *The Principle of Hope*, Bloch defines utopia as a Not-Yet-Conscious, which is a "relatively still Unconscious disposed towards its other side, forwards rather than backwards" (11). The future-oriented Not-Yet-Conscious generates "[e]xpectation, hope, intention towards possibility that has still not become" (7). It moves towards something new which has never occurred before, instead of moving backwards. This something new, rather than severing itself with the old or the past, is "the merging of have and have-not constituted by longing and hope" (7). It also "demonstrates in its alertness the desire to learn, shows the capacity to be *circumspect* in its foreseeing, to have *circumspection*, even foresight in its fore-sight" (143; my emphasis). Bloch underlines utopia's function to foresee or to desire a better future as well as the possibility of being fulfilled. For him, utopia is not infinite imagination. He distinguishes concrete utopia from abstract utopia. The former has the potential of being fulfilled, while the latter is a fantasy. As the title of Bloch's book, *The Principle of Hope*, implies, utopia stands for the hope which implies the expectation of fulfillment. Bloch attempts to solve the dilemma of utopia: to concretize the infinite imagination. The word "utopia," coined by More, is etymologically

paradoxical. The word means a happy locus and no place simultaneously. The paradoxical concept of the word gives utopian writers freedom to imagine the ideal society though the concrete images that they construct are often criticized as not ideal enough. The dilemma of utopian writing resides in how to connect the two incompatible imaginations: one is the infinite imagination while the other is the construction of a concrete image of the alternative society. If a utopian vision is concretized, it is not a "no place" any more. Utopian critics vacillate between highlighting the notion of utopia as a process and underscoring utopia as a concrete image. Nowadays, there is a tendency to view utopia as a process. The advantage of this approach lies in its emphasizing the infinity of utopian imagination. Nevertheless, it neglects the fact that utopia has its limitations. Any utopian imagination comes from what is wrong in the real world. That is to say, a utopia vision is related to its historical and spatial context. Bloch's notion of the Not-Yet Unconscious, which generates hope by merging have and have-not, is an attempt to link the past, the present and the future. Its emphasis on the circumspection of the foreseeing ability is a re-consideration of, to use Deleuze's terms, how to reterritorialize the deterritorialized while retaining the possibility of producing the new.

This dissertation intends to explore the posthuman potential of utopian literature. It starts from Bloch to re-consider the notion of utopia as process which has the possibility of being fulfilled. Bloch's notion reminds us that the concept of utopia, which does not consist in the infinity of imagination, has to face the problem of re-territorialization. How to build a bridge between deterritorialization and reterritorialization, infinite possibilities and boundaries? Utopian literature began with its expectation to fill in the lack in the society. The expectation is presented in most of traditional utopian stories via the construction of a perfect human society. In order to build a rational society, these utopian stories exclude what they think is the irrational

part of human nature. Therefore, they choose what they assume is the best choice among many possibilities, abandoning other possibilities. The utopian worlds depicted in traditional writing are rigid, enclosed ones. The problem of traditional utopian writing lies in its reliance on the humanist framework which is based on stable, rational, and homogeneous modes of thinking. It rejects uncertainty, irrationality, or heterogeneity. Confined to the humanist framework, traditional utopia turns to highly exclusive imagination of human society. The universal standard that traditional utopia strives to set in its perfect model of human society sacrifices many other possibilities. Utopian writing confronts its deadlock here. To overcome the predicament, utopian writing has to break the humanist framework. In fact, the concrete images created by traditional utopia are not so stable, rational and homogeneous as traditional utopia strives to become. There are some crevices in these concrete images which disturb or disrupt the humanist framework. These crevices point to forces which drive the transformations of utopian writing. I will argue that utopian writing has the posthuman potential. The posthuman potential here refers to the potential of exploring heterogeneity, uncertainty, and fluidity in utopian literature. Why do we continue to refer to the "human" instead of using other terms, such as Jean-Luc Nancy's "community?" The notion of community is Nancy's attempt to deconstruct the concept of subjectivity. According to him, the metaphysics of the subject makes the mistake of relying on the logic of immanence. He contends that the metaphysics of the subject is the metaphysics of the absolute in general, "of being as ab-solute, as perfectly detached, distinct, and closed: being without relation" (4). The absolute refuses the relation with other substances. It is a self-reliant and self-contained subject. The metaphysics of the absolute, according to Nancy, blocks the road to be in relation with other entities, i.e., to have community. He rejects the concept of human society as the aggregation of the absolute which refuses relation and community. Community consists in relation and transcendence. The transcendence here

means that community is always constituted by relation with others. Nancy suggests that community "is what takes place always through others and for others. It is not the space of the egos—subjects and substances that are at bottom immortal—but of the *I*'s, who are always others (or else are nothing)" (15). Community is an aggregation of heterogeneous substances which are in relation with one another and with other communities. The human is not the essential constituent of community. Nevertheless, since the focus of utopian writing rests on social concern, the human is still the crucial constituent in the network of social relations. It is impossible to neglect the fact that the human subject is a determinant factor in the formation of social aggregates. And yet, as Nancy points out, the problem of the metaphysics of the subject lies in its logic of immanence. Is there a notion of subjectivity which has the potential of transcending the logic of the absolute? Is it possible to have a concept of the human subject which is endowed with embodiment, heterogeneity, and fluidity, different from the liberal humanist subject? That is, can we have the human subject which retains the property of the human but is not limited by the mind/body and human/inhuman dichotomies? The answer would be Lacanian subjectivity. The Lacanian subject here, distinct from the humanist subject, will be called the posthuman subject.

The posthuman dimension of Lacanian subjectivity is developed here out of a dialogue between Lacan and Deleuze, instead of the confrontation between the two. The two are usually regarded as incompatible figures. Deleuze is against psychoanalysis. *Anti-Oedipus*, the book co-written by Deleuze and Guattari, represents their critique of psychoanalysis. Deleuze is a materialist. For him, the subject is an epiphenomenon of material reality. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the subject is "produced as a mere residuum alongside the desiring-machines" (17). They argue that the subject is no longer at the center; on the contrary, it is on the periphery, "with no fixed identity, forever decentered, defined by the states through which it passes" (20). Deleuzian desire

is not based on subjectivity. On the other hand, as Slavoj Žižek asserts, Deleuze's materialism consists in the logic that "there is an immaterial excess over the material reality of multiple bodies" (Žižek 2004: 113). Deleuzian desire is the immaterial excess of material reality. The immaterial excess propels the incessant production of relations. The externality of relations to the objects that relate to each other is always larger than the relations. The Whole is always larger than its parts. However, as Žižek indicates, Deleuze's problem is that his materialism has to rely on an idealist position, a minimum of ideality. Deleuze's logic depends on the assertion of the excess of effect over cause so that it has the possibility of freedom from linear causality. Žižek comments that the excess is "immanent to the level of the bodies themselves" (Žižek 2004: 113). There is a gap between cause and effect. In Deleuze's materialism, the material-corporal causality is not complete. According to Žižek, in the emergence of the Whole, something occurs "that *cannot* be properly described at the level of corporeal causes and effects" (Žižek 2004: 27; original emphasis). This something is "*over and above the network of corporeal causes, a pure, transcendental, capacity to affect*" (Žižek 2004: 27; original emphasis). That is to say, there must be a transcendental element which prevents a regression into simple reductionism, the linear causality, and hold the place of relations. Žižek comments that Deleuze's concept of the quasi cause is the cause of excess and it "makes an Event (the emergence of the New) irreducible to its historical circumstances" (Žižek 2004: 27). Since Event is Sense-Event, according to Žižek, quasi cause is nonsense which is constitutive of sense. The quasi cause in fact plays the role of the phallic signifier, the pure signifier, which holds the flow of sense (Žižek 2004: 28). Deleuze needs Lacan to a certain degree.

Then, why do we need Deleuze? Daniel W. Smith indicates that in *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari offer a new reading of the Real in the Lacanian subjectivity (640-41). In psychoanalytical theory, the Oedipus Complex serves the function of

reterritorialization. It assists the subject to undergo the process of symbolization and thus enter the social field. For Deleuze and Guattari, "[p]sychoanalysis settles on the imaginary and structural representatives of reterritorialization" (Deleuze and Guattari 1972: 316). The Imaginary order and the Symbolic order consist in territorial representations. But Lacan, according to Deleuze and Guattari, "was not content to turn, like the analytic squirrel, inside the wheel of the Imaginary and the Symbolic" (Deleuze and Guattari 1972: 308). They point out that the symbolic structure has a reverse side which is the "real inorganization" of the molecular elements. Because of the reverse side, everything is possible:

> partial objects that enter into indirect syntheses or interactions, since they are not partial (partiels) in the sense of extensive parts, but rather partial ('partiaux') like the intensities under which a unit of matter always fills space in varying degrees. . . pure positive multiplicities where everything is possible, without exclusiveness or negation, syntheses operating without a plan, where the connections are transverse, the disjunctions included, the conjunctions polyvocal, indifferent their underlying support. . . signs of desire that compose a signifying chain but that are not themselves signifying, and do not answer to the rules of a linguistic game. (Deleuze and Guattari 1972: 309)

What they refer to as the reverse side is the Real. Smith remarks that Deleuze and Guattari's reading of the Real pushes psychoanalysis to the point of its self-critique, "where the Real would be able to appear in all its positivity" (643). For them, the Real is not the negative, resistant kernel inherent in the symbolic process. The Real is desiring-production and it is schizophrenia as a pure process (Smith 643). Deleuze and Guattari's re-interpretation of the Real endows Lacanian subjectivity with heterogeneity and fluidity. The Lacanian subject has the potential of deterritorialization, of connecting or re-connecting with heterogeneous components. However, though their elevation of

the Real as desiring-production over and above the Symbolic and the Imaginary is a strategy to affirm the importance of deterritorialization, the Real cannot be separated from the two since it is the *reverse side* of the structure. The Real is the undifferentiated state that has not been or has refused to be symbolized, and yet it has the possibility of being symbolized. When Deleuze and Guattari criticize the psychoanalytic concept of desire as lack and assert the notion of desire as excess, they overemphasize the emancipatory potential of the Real, disregarding the fact that as an undifferentiated state, the Real is the force that animates the assembling process and yet there is always something that has not been or has refused to be differentiated so that it retains the potential of deterritorialization. The assembling of heterogeneous components is a process of symbolization, from non-sense to sense, from deterritorialization to reterritorialization. Therefore, Deleuzian desire is different from Lacanian desire. Lacanian desire emerges under the process of symbolization while Deleuzian desire occurs in the Real.

What new perspective can the dialogue between Lacan and Deleuze bring us in reading utopian literature? Utopian literature is a dynamic network of associations between utopian legends, myths, stories, novels, and science fiction. Each utopian text is a machine. The machine is a process and not a process. On the one hand, it has the capacity to affect or be affected by other machines. Each machine is related with other machines. It is not confined to literary utopia: it is connected to political blueprints, philosophical writings, or science fictions. On the other hand, since it is a product of assembling, having undergone the process of reterritorialization. Each machine has its limitations in the sense that a machine is composed of certain elements. For instance, the concrete image created by a utopia is developed from certain social problems that the writer is concerned with. Although a machine is capable of affecting or being affected by other machines, as a Whole, a machine is a reterritorialized entity. This

dissertation consists of five chapters. Chapter one aims to explore the posthuman dimension in utopian thinking. The posthuman view regards the subjectivity as characterized by embodiment, heterogeneity and fluidity, different from the notion of cyborgs or what N. Katherine Hayles indicates as the mode of thinking which is influenced by cybernetics and information theory. Current utopian criticism either leans towards the humanist framework, focusing on the possibility of widespread social change, or tends to adopt the postmodern approach, emphasizing that utopia is a process. The intention here is to break the limitations of humanism, that is, its tendency towards universality, homogeneity, and stasis, and to give embodiment to the notion of utopia. Chapter Two will discuss the transformations of utopian literature. Utopian literature has undergone several transformations: traditional utopia, traditional dystopia, critical utopia, and critical dystopia. I will argue that utopia is a literary machine that connects a group of utopian texts. As a genre, utopia is operated by what Deleuze and Guattari call the abstract machines of stratification and meshwork. Each text is also a machine. A utopian machine is a temporary combination of utopian elements. Each utopian text is a desiring-machine that is composed by a wide variety of heterogeneous elements. It is incessantly grafting or being grafted by other machines. Through their links, they are interwoven into a utopian web. In Chapter Three, traditional utopia, the origin of utopian writing, and traditional dystopia, the reverse side of traditional utopia, will be discussed. Traditional utopia as a literary machine consists of the detailed description of an ideal society whose operation centers around the desire for an unrepresentable state, that is, the Lacanian maternal Thing. The image of a concrete ideal human society is the effect of desire, which circles around the Thing but never attains it. The utopian image produced by traditional-utopia-machines, that is, the ideal form of human society characterized by the exclusion of pathological sentiments is the inverse form of traditional-dystopia- machines. In other words, dystopian representation is the revenge

of pathological sentiments. In this sense, traditional utopia and traditional dystopia are twins for both of them try to attain the monstrous domain of *das Ding*. Chapter Four will focus on critical utopia. Critical utopia is a transformation of traditional utopia and it is also a unique literary form. It inherits its utopian ancestor's attempt to provide a utopian vision though it abandons the representation of an ideal image which tends to be static and rigid in traditional utopia. Paradoxically, its utopian vision consists in a critique of itself. I will argue that the uniqueness of critical utopia consists in its self-reflexivity. Critical utopia is an autopoietic system which is consisted of the interactions between two contrasted societies. The system generates an other-within-itself which makes the system's self-critique possible. Chapter Five explores the experimental narrative strategies in critical dystopia. Critical dystopias deliberately refuse the traditional narrative strategy—the linear narration of an overview of a society. Intending to explore alternatives, their narrative strategies correspond to what Baccolini and Moylan indicate as new forms of political opposition which resists hegemonic and oppositional orthodoxies in favor of difference and multiplicity (8). It is interesting to notice that critical dystopias are often presented in the form of science fiction, which reflects the fact that science and technology are also essential determinant factors in the development of human society. The traditional utopian strategy which centers on the description of human relations is no longer enough since it fails to explore alternatives and present the complex relationship between technical objects and human beings. In this chapter, I will re-examine the significance of "society" and argue that there is no homogeneous and stable entity to be taken as "society" as traditional sociology used to do.

Chapter One

The Posthuman Potential of Utopian Literature

What Utopia is for has been a hotly debated topic. Ruth Levitas and Lucy Sargisson's debate about the transformative potential of Utopia in "Utopia in Dark Times" is a typical debate reflecting two opposite positions in utopian thinking. Levitas stands for traditional utopian thinking while Sargisson represents the postmodern approach. For Levitas, the transforming potential of Utopia "depends on locating it in the future, on thinking through the process of transformation from the present, and identifying the potential agents of that transformation" (14). Disapproving the tendency of shifting the emphasis of utopian thinking from content or structure to process, she is anxious about our losing the ability of imagining a better future based on holistic vision. She argues that "critical utopias" and "critical dystopias" which focus on the critique of negative characteristics in the society are responses to the challenges of postmodernity and Utopia becomes "more fragmentary, provisional, contested, ambiguous" (15). She deplores the marginalization of the kind of utopianism that "is holistic, social, future-located, committed, and linked to the present by some identifiable narrative of change—a kind of collective optimism of the intellect as well as the will" (15). The utopian thinking which offers a concrete and holistic vision has the potential of changing the status quo. Utopia is often accused of its totalitarian tendency. Yet, for Levitas, Utopia is essentially totalizing but not totalitarian. By "totalizing" she means that utopian thinking "requires looking at social, economic, political and spatial processes in a holistic way" (18). In emphasizing Utopia as a process, as she contends, widespread social change becomes impossible. In her response to Levitas's argument, Sargisson argues that the transformative potential of utopia lies in its exploration of alternatives and the exploration is a "transformative process in itself" (16). For her,

utopianism is a process and moment of change. Utopia helps to change the ways we think about the world and it "is an integral part of sustainably changing the way we behave" (Sargisson 17). It is future-oriented, but it does not have to be located in the future. It could be part of transformation in our daily life (Sargisson 17).

The two critics' approaches toward utopian studies represent two opposite poles of utopian thinking. Levitas' formulation of Utopia centers on Utopia as a collective force while Sargisson emphasizes utopias as a personal force. For the former, human society is a collective which has "rules, structures, constraints, expectations of its own" (19). Utopian thinking makes the hope to change the status quo possible via offering better structures which can improve human society. For Sargisson, the transformative potential of utopia rests on "the micro level of relations between self and other," that is, the inter-personal relations (20). Levitas' stance represents the humanist tradition based on the mode of thinking affirming the logic of universality and certainty. For her, utopian vision is an education of desire, which has the potential of being substantiated and concretized. Sargisson's approach focuses on the importance of exploring alternatives. For her, the process of exploration of differences challenges the status quo and is utopian. It seems that the two do not have a consensus about what utopia is for. Levitas does not agree with Sargisson because she is anxious about the impossibility of social change by regarding Utopia as a process. On the contrary, Sargisson is worried about the sacrifice of difference and individuality by viewing utopia as totalizing vision. Their disagreement resides in their leaning towards different aspects of utopian thinking: one focuses on content while the other focuses on process. However, in utopian thinking, content is as important as process. Levitas's approach is prone to fall into the danger of a homogeneous and stable mode of thinking while Sargisson's tends to neglect how social aggregates are associated into a network since she only focuses on differences. Utopian thinking originates from the hope to seek the ideal state of human society. In

other words, it aims to solve social problems to achieve a harmonious state of the relationship between human beings. However, as Bruno Latour argues, there is no homogeneous and stable entity as human society. The task to achieve the ideality of the human in traditional utopian writing is impossible since it ignores the complexity—the dimensions of disorder and heterogeneity—of human society. The exploration of alternatives, focusing on differences and multiplicities of social aggregates, singles out certain heterogeneous elements of the society and detaches them from their associations with other elements. Since utopian writing is concerned with the state of human society, it is necessary to examine what society is. The traditional humanist model is confined to the exploration of human relations. Nevertheless, according to Latour, who prefers to use "the social" instead of "society," the social is a complicated network consisting of multiplicities of associations, including associations between humans and non-humans. The humanist and the postmodern modes of utopian thinking are unsatisfactory for studying utopian literature. Is there a mode of utopian thinking which can break with the humanist and the postmodern frameworks? Or, is there a mode of utopian thinking which respects the aspects of embodiment, heterogeneity, and fluidity? This chapter aims to explore the posthuman dimension of utopian thinking. The posthuman view here refers to the subjectivity characterized by embodiment, heterogeneity and fluidity, different from the notion of cyborgs or what N. Katherine Hayles indicates as the mode of thinking which is influenced by cybernetics and information theory. But my intention here is the same as Hayles': to break the limitations of humanism, that is, its tendency towards universality, homogeneity, and stasis. Many critics avoid or refuse to discuss subjectivity when offering their posthuman perspectives. Posthumanism in cultural studies attempts to surpass the mind/body and subject/object distinctions, the concept of which departed from the Cartesian cogito so as to explore the human as a heterogeneous entity. In the logic of these critics, both the mind and the body are constituted by

material reality, which can be presented as informational patterns. Consciousness is not a unique phenomenon since it is the side-effect of material reality. Nevertheless, I will argue that the human qua a living being is conscious of the fact that s/he is a human being. The linear relationship between cause/matter and effect/consciousness as information theory implies fails to explicate the emergence of self-consciousness, which engages the question how quality emerges from quantity. There is always an excess between cause and effect. The informational patterns can not explain one's recognition that one is the human. Subjectivity is still an essential aspect when examining the concept of the human. In this chapter, the posthuman subject, distinct from the liberal human subject, refers to the subject which is embodied, heterogeneous, and fluid. This posthuman viewpoint provides a new reading of utopian literature by re-interpreting society as the social.

The Posthuman Subject

What is the posthuman? In *How We Became Posthuman*, Hayles examines the posthuman view based on information theory and cybernetics. According to her observation,

> First, the posthuman view privileges informational pattern over material instantiation, so that embodiment in a biological substrate is seen as an accident of history rather than an inevitability of life. Second, the posthuman view considers consciousness, regarded as the seat of human identity in the Western tradition long before Descartes thought he was a mind thinking, as an epiphenomenon, as an evolutionary upstart trying to claim that it is the whole show when in actuality it is only a minor sideshow. Third, the posthuman view thinks of the body as the original prosthesis we all learn to manipulate, so that extending or replacing the body with other prostheses becomes a continuation of a process that began before we were born. Forth, and most important, by

> these and other means, the posthuman view configures human being so that it can be seamlessly articulated with intelligent machines. In the posthuman, there are no essential differences or absolute demarcations between bodily existence and computer simulation, cybernetic mechanism and biological organism, robot teleology and human goals. (2-3)

It is obvious that the posthuman view here strives to rescue the body from its forced separation from the mind. The status of the mind is not different from that of the body since both are constituted by informational patterns. The mind as well as the body, thus disembodied, can transcend their finitude. This posthuman view here is a critique of the liberal humanist subject. According to Hayles, "[i]dentified with the rational mind, the liberal subject *possessed* a body but was not usually represented as *being* a body" (5). Separated from the self, the body of the liberal subject is universalized, erased of all markers of bodily difference. As John Smith and Chris Jenks point out, humanist rationalism, based on certainty, sacrifices all experiences, that is, what can not be deduced from logical thinking, such as hunger, thirsty, and pain.[1] The exclusion of uncertainties, including randomness, contingency and disorder, so as to ensure the rationality and stability of the humanist subject, according to Smith and Jenks, is the cost of humanism: it loses the dimension of complexity, i.e., the interactive relations between certainties and uncertainties. Rescuing what has been rejected by the liberal humanist subject, the posthuman, as Hayes designates, "is an amalgam, a collection of heterogeneous components, a material-informational entity whose boundaries undergo continuous construction and reconstruction" (3). In other words, this notion of the posthuman is based on an assembling process, always assembling or being assembled

[1] Smith and Jenks note that Descartes' choice of "I think" as the factual substance is strategic rather than logical or factual (32). They argue that Descartes's argument—cogito ergo sum—is unconvincing "because feeling pain or eating, for example, carry with them an ordinary kind of certitude completely incompatible with the general radicalization of doubt" (32).

with other components. Thus defined, the human is not a unique living being since all living beings are assemblages undergoing informational processes. Embodiment is no longer essential to the human being insofar as it is the instantiation of informational patterns.

Although the posthuman view based on information theory attempts to transcend the finitude of humanism by deconstructing the uniqueness of the human being, it replicates the problem of the humanism. As Hayles argues, the continuous construction and reconstruction of the posthuman is in fact based on disembodiment, with its emphasis on cognition rather than embodiment (5). Interrogating the infinite fluidity implied by this posthuman view with its fantasies of unlimited power and disembodied immortality brought by information technologies, she suggests that finitude is a condition of human being (5). The human being as a living being has their limitation: they have to confront death.[2] As an organism, a human being is limited by his/her materiality. Therefore, Hayles tries to moderate the posthuman view by emphasizing the embodied dimension in the notion of the posthuman. She contends that materiality is the basis of informational processes and it is the medium of signification. Signifiers have to rely on the medium which presents them. As Hayles argues, "[t]he compounding of signal with materiality suggests that new technologies will instantiate new models of signification" (29). Nevertheless, there are two problems in her formulation of the embodied posthuman subject. First, characterized by the continuous construction and reconstruction of informational patterns, the posthuman amalgam is endowed with

[2] In Francis Fukuyama's critique of posthuman views, he has a different concern. He is worried about the consequence of de-humanization evoked from advanced technology. He believes that "nature itself, in particular human nature, has a special role in defining for us what is right or wrong, just and unjust, important and unimportant" (7). Biotechnology "reshapes" or destroys human nature which is the precious gift that God endows us. The destruction of human nature will lead all human beings to confront the devastated consequences of collapse of humanity. The posthuman, an identification caused by de-humanization, would threaten the autonomy and stability of the traditional humanist subject as Fukuyama argues in his observation. It is evident that he is a typical supporter of the liberal humanist subject since he is afraid of the collapse of the universal and rational subject.

heterogeneity and fluidity, resisting the homogenized and universalized tendency of the humanist subject. Yet, it is questionable whether informational processes can reveal the unactualized tendency of organic and inorganic assemblages, or what Deleuze names as the Virtual. During the assembling process of an amalgam, there is always something spilling out, some excess, not actualized yet, or refused to be actualized. Information technologies are prone to utilize informational patterns to explain all phenomena. Even though they produce diverse information networks in society,[3] they fail to explain the excess which escape actualization. Hayles herself indicates that information is defined as reducing uncertainty (32), but she seems to make the same mistake. Even though she re-defines information theory as the pattern/randomness dialectic to highlight the importance of uncertainty, it still neglects the transformative potential, or in Deleuze's words, the intensive process behind organic and inorganic assemblages. For instance, informational genetic patterns may successfully analyze the features of physical organizations of a person, but they fail to present the complicated physical and psychical developments of that person. Though the pattern/randomness dialectic aims to explain the continuing interplay between replication and variation, expectation and surprise, it is confined to the logic of certainty. What it celebrates as the play of difference is actually the play of signs or codes. The randomness Hayles refers has to do with informational patterns since it accompanied coded messages. Besides, as Lacan points out, modern informational theory neglects the fact that "one cannot even speak of a code without it already being the Other's code; something quite different is at stake in

[3] For instance, Hayles suggests that many first world societies are enmeshed with information networks. In these societies, she writes, "[m]oney is increasingly experienced as informational patterns stored in computer banks rather than as the presence of cash; surrogacy and in vitro fertilization court cases offer examples of informational genetic patterns competing with physical presence for the right to determine the 'legitimate' parent; automated factories are controlled by programs that constitute the physical realities of work assignments and production schedules as flows of information through the system; criminals are tied to crime scenes through DNA patterns rather than eyewitness accounts verifying their presence; access to computer networks rather than physical possession of data determines nine-tenths of computer law; sexual relationships are pursued through the virtual spaces of computer networks rather than through meetings at which the participants are physically present" (27-8).

the message, since the subject constitutes himself on the basis of the message, such that he receives from the Other even the message he himself sends" (Lacan 1960: 683). The play of signs is not so emancipatory as Hayles suggests. Second, Hayles' posthuman view lacks a psychological dimension. It seems that Hayles avoids issues of consciousness or the unconscious. Regarding the phenomenon of consciousness as "recursive feedback loops cycling between different levels of coding" (279), this viewpoint ironically de-materializes the human mind. The result of disembodiment is what Hayles tries to avert. The association of posthuman subjectivity with multiple levels of coding replicates the problem of information theory, that is, its eliminating uncertainty. Is it possible to formulate a theory of posthuman subjectivity without the sacrifice of uncertainty and materiality while embracing heterogeneity and fluidity? The answer would be that the Lacanian subjectivity, seen from the point of view of the intensive process, can reveal such posthuman capacity.

What is the intensive process? According to Manuel DeLanda, Deleuze's formulation of the intensive aims to explain the relationship between a whole and part and how a whole emerges through the intensive process (DeLanda 2002: 47). It does not mean that a whole is constituted by the sum of the parts. Taking the example of the formation of an individual organism, DeLanda explains that an individual "may be characterized by a fixed number of definite properties (extensive and qualitative) and yet possess an indefinite number of capacities to *affect and be affected* by other individuals" (DeLanda 2002: 62). The extensive here refers to spatial, metric, or concrete structures of actual individuals while the qualitative designates the particular qualities that these individuals have in their reproductive communities[4]. The individual undergoes the intensive process which is the force behind the extensive and the

[4] The example that DeLanda offers is the qualities that an individual organism has, such as playing a certain role in a food chain or having a particular reproductive strategy.

qualitative. How an individual emerges from parts to a whole is the process of the actualization of the virtual. An individual is normally delineated with quantitative exactitude. However, according to DeLanda, a living thing is characterized by a more "flexible exactitude which evades quantifying" or how can we explain certain strange phenomena, such as the one that an oceanic salmon can find its way home to spawn on the very river it left several years earlier (DeLanda 2002: 53)? Living things have many "nonmetric" properties: some of them are actualized, some are waiting to be actualized, and some are unactualized. In his comment on the Deleuzian ontology, Žižek views the notion of the virtual (the intensive) as 'transcendental empiricism' (Žižek 2004: 4). He remarks that "in contrast to the standard notion of the transcendental as the formal conceptual that structures the rich flow of empirical data, *the Deleuzian 'transcendental' is infinitely RICHER than reality*—it is the infinitely potential field of virtualities out of which reality is actualized" (Žižek 2004: 4; original emphasis). DeLanda notes that Deleuze "always gives a two-fold definition of the virtual (the intensive), using both singularities (unactulized tendencies) and what he calls *affects* (unactulized capacities to affect and to be affected)" (DeLanda 2002: 62). The notion of singularities explains the emergence of a whole from parts while that of affects tries to explicate the formation of novel assemblages "when objects are put into functional relations with one another" (DeLanda 2002: 62). DeLanda expands the meaning of the intensive to include the properties of assemblages. According to his re-interpretation of the intensive process, "An assembly process may be said to be characterized by intensive properties when it articulates heterogeneous elements as such. In the assemblage formed by a walking animal, a piece of ground and a gravitational field, three heterogeneous individuals are joined together as such without the need for any homogenization" (DeLanda 2002: 64). DeLanda's intention is to portray the interactions between organic and inorganic components in an eco-system which for him is a complex assemblage of a large number

of heterogeneous components: "diverse reproductive communities of animals, plants and micro-organisms, a geographic site characterized by diverse topographical and geological features, and the ever diverse and changing weather patterns (DeLanda 2002: 64). DeLanda's expansion of the notion of the intensive offers us a new perspective to explore or excavate more possibilities of assemblages constituted by diverse associations among different components. For instance, a human mind is not an independent entity since it has to rely on its interactions with external and internal stimulations. Human consciousness is a complicated assemblage of the system of neurons, the associations with other human beings, and the connections with non-human objects.[5]

The constitution of Lacanian subjectivity is implicated with the intensive process, which is manifested on two levels: one is the generation of consciousness, and the other is the process of signification. The two levels are related. The generation of consciousness has to do with the working of the human brain. Consciousness emerges from connections and re-connections of neurons. As I have argued, consciousness is an essential feature of the human because consciousness-generation consists not only in the process of transforming quantity/neurons to quality/memory but also in the process of socialization, that is, how a subject enters the Symbolic order. Lacan himself does not formulate any theory apropos of the generation of consciousness from a biological perspective. Yet, following Freud's attempt to endow consciousness-generation with a material basis, Lacan re-interprets Freud's "Project for a Scientific Psychology" in *Ethics of Psychoanalysis* to discuss the problem of ethics, that is, the problematic of the intersubjective relationship, or the socialization of the subject. Lacan's interpretation of Freud manifests how the generation of consciousness is related to the process of the

[5] The non-human objects here refer to the technical things or other objects which are not humans, such as animals and plants. The representative non-human object that plays an essential role in the formation of subjectivity in Lacan's theory is the mirror.

subject's entering into the Symbolic order. Before we discuss the process of signification, we have to return to Freud to explore the process of consciousness-generation. In "Project," Freud himself mentions that he intends to "represent psychical processes as quantitatively determinate states of specific material particles" (295). His efforts to explain how consciousness is produced by combining neurology and psychology are quite different from his later attempts to explicate mechanisms of the unconscious or consciousness through metapsychology. Though Freud gave up the project very soon, the scheme presented in this project represents Freud's efforts to study the psyche through the biological and neurological framework. He could not prove the validity of the project since science and technology were not advanced enough to provide him a professional laboratory. James Strachey points out that Freud's approach in this article bears a resemblance to some modern approaches to study the human nervous system by regarding the psyche as a machine. Nevertheless, in Freud's formulation of the psyche as a machine, the operation of the machine is not based on computational models, or informational patterns. The operation of the psyche is more like the intensive process.

If consciousness is a whole, neurons are parts whose connections and reconnections generate the whole. These neurons have extensive and qualitative properties. In Freud's model, the human nervous system consists of neuronal activities. Firstly, he postulates a quantitative conception, that is, the qualities of these neurons (how neurons react when receiving external and endogenous excitations). Then he introduces the "phenomena of consciousness into the structure of quantitative psychology" (311). There are two essential theorems in the quantitative conception. The first theorem is the principle of neuronal inertia: "that neurons tend to divest themselves

of Q[6]" (296). The nervous system constantly receives stimulations from external sources. The primary function of the nervous system is to make "use of this Qn which it has thus acquired, by giving it off through a connecting path to the muscular mechanisms, and in that way keeps itself free from stimulus" (296). However, the principle of inertia cannot be applied to another situation, which Freud names as the exigencies of life. Freud proposes that an organism has to maintain its basic needs through the endogenous stimuli, such as hunger, respiration, and sexuality. The organism cannot withdraw the Qn from endogenous stimuli because it needs the stimuli to remind the psyche that the organism has some needs which must be realized from the outside world. For example, the feeling of hunger means that the organism is "stimulated" to eat food. In these situations, the nervous system has to give up its original tendency to inertia. The accumulation of Qn, which Freud calls the secondary function, meets the demand for these specific actions. In the second theorem, Freud combines the knowledge of neurons with the Qn theory in the first theorem. Neurons are elementary units in the nervous system. Freud borrows the concept from neurology and explicates how neurons are related. He maintains that neurons "have contact with one another through the medium of a foreign substance, which terminate upon one another as they do upon portions of foreign tissue, [and] in which certain lines of conduction are laid down in so far as they [neurons] receive [excitations] through cell-processes [dendrites] and [give them off] through an axis-cylinder [axon]" (298). Freud's assumption here, based on the knowledge of neurology, is distinct from the traditional mind/body dichotomy. Traditionally, to explain how consciousness is produced always excludes the function of the brain. Mind belongs to the category of spirit, opposite to the category of body. The two theorems reveal Freud's ambition to endow his model a biological or material basis.

[6] From the context of Freud's "Project," Q and Qn refer to "the conception of neuronal excitation as quantity in a state of flow" (296).

The operation of the mind is driven by different systems of neuronal activities.

Freud distinguishes between three types of neurons: φ, ψ, and ω. These neurons have the "capacity," in the Deleuzian sense, to affect or to be affected by others. Though the three types have their distinct qualities, or functions, they are inter-related. In order to explain distinction of the conductive capacity between neurons, Freud postulates that there are contact-barriers which produce resistance during the process of conducting Qn. The neurons which "allow Qn to pass through as though they had no contact-barriers and which, accordingly, after each passage of excitation are in the same state as before" are defined as φ neurons (299). The neurons "whose contact-barriers make themselves felt, so that they only allow Qn to pass through with difficulty or partially" are named as ψ neurons (299). Freud emphasizes that it is the process of conduction itself that creates a differentiation, not the neurons. According to her interpretation of Freud's "Project," Elizabeth A. Wilson points out that Freud had no evidence to prove the assumption of the two types of neurons. He could not explain the differences between φ neurons and ψ neurons in terms of biological basis, so he attributed their differences in quantities of excitation that they have to cope with. From Freud's inference, φ neurons are located near the nerve-ending apparatuses which function as a screen that only allows part of external excitations to act on φ neurons. φ neurons deal with rough discharge of these excitations. ψ neurons are "already protected against higher order of quantity and had to do only with intercellular magnitudes" (309). In other words, the differences between φ neurons and ψ neurons are determined by their location (spacing), not by their essence. Memory, a capacity of neurons for being permanently altered by single occurrences, occurs between ψ neurons. The occurrences of memory depend upon the degree of conduction in the operation of contact-barriers. The conduction of Qn produces traces that have relearning ability. Different degrees of conduction that has relearning ability bring facilitation [Bahnung]. Freud writes,

> If we were to suppose that all the ψ contact-barriers were equally well facilitated, or (what is the same thing) offered equal resistance, then the characteristics of memory would evidently not emerge. For, in relation to the passage of an excitation, memory is evidently one of the powers which determine and direct its pathway, and, if facilitation is everywhere equal, it would not be possible to see why one pathway should be preferred. We can therefore say still more correctly that memory is represented by the differences in the facilitations between ψ neurons. (300)

Memory is not decided by one single facilitation, but by differences between facilitations, that is, different quantities of excitation and different amounts of repetitions in the process of neuronal activities. In other words, a psychological activity does not occur through one single trace made by external or internal stimuli. There is no center in the psyche that stores the messages from the outside world and decides which excitation should produce which response. There is no linear causal relationship between the neurons and the psyche.

The third type of neurons, the ω system, is associated with the emergence of consciousness. They are also related with the transference of Qn as the other two types of neurons. ω neurons have an essential feature, that is, a temporal nature which Freud names as "period." In this hypothesis, Freud assumes that "all the resistance of the contact-barriers applies only to the transference of Q, but that the *period* of the neuronal motion is transmitted without inhibition in all direction, as though it were a process of induction" (310). Though ω neurons have the same capacity as the other two types, the mechanism of ω neurons consists mainly in appropriating the period of excitation and "this state of theirs of being affected by period while they are filled with the minimum of Qn is the fundamental basis of consciousness" (310). Wilson compares the mechanism of ω neurons with a temporal displacement and a spatial displacement. The

ω system, in Wilson's words, is constituted through "the rhythms and vicissitudes of periodicity" (144), instead of any locatable essence. Wilson makes a deconstructionist reading of the mechanism of ω neurons. For her, the relations among the three types of neurons are more like an incessant play of differences. Wilson's interpretation of Freud's "Project" fuses Derrida's deconstructive reading of it and modern models of cognitive functioning. Wilson does not agree with Derrida's reading of "Project" as a neurological fable. She complains that Derrida ignores Freud's attempt to construct a psychoneurological model, "as if the neurological model is too crude or heavy-handed to deal with the subtleties that a graphic model offers and so is destined to be jettisoned in the service of writing" (153). According to Wilson, Derrida's reading forges an identity for psychoanalysis and deconstruction but unfortunately reinforces "the bifurcation between science and deconstruction, neurology and interpretation" (154). Wilson attempts to put the neurological framework back into Freud's "Project" and to prove that the separation between mind and body which is traditionally assumed as the basis of knowledge is problematic. However, her explanation is not enough. The interactions among the three types are more than a continuous play of differences since they are implicated with the unactulized tendency. From the hypothesis of φ, ψ, and ω systems, we can observe that all psychical effects are not constituted through locatable essences, but through the actualization of the Virtual in space. What is the actualization of the Virtual? According to DeLanda's interpretation,

> Intensive processes possess nonmetric properties in subtle and complex ways: sometimes they involve the spatial continuity and indivisibility of properties like temperature, pressure or density; other times the anexact yet rigorous way in which cellular spatial neighborhoods are defined; sometimes what is involved is nothing specifically spatial, but rather that which remains topologically invariant in a spatial process; and other times specifically spatial

> capacities are concerned, such as the capacity of adaptive components to fold, stretch or bend. (58)

The three types of neurons all possess nonmetric properties. φ and ψ systems engage the capacity of adaptive components to respond to different internal and external stimulations. They do not have universally stored rules or standards to cope with stimulations. Their interactions constitute a dynamic network of associations or connections. The ω system is distinct from the other two systems. According to Lacan, the ω system is "less easily situated than any other apparatus" since ω neurons do not extract their energy from exterior quantities but from appropriating the period (50). In other words, the ω system involves the spatial continuity and indivisibility of properties so that it is able to appropriate the period of facilitations.

Freud's "Project" provides a postulation of the emergence of consciousness. As has shown above, it is merely a postulation. But the postulation manifests Freud's efforts to present an approach different from the simplified reduction of the generation of consciousness to the linear mechanic causality, that is, the brain as a center that stores rules for neurons to follow. Freud's explanation deconstructs the mind/body dichotomy in the humanist tradition. The operation of the human mind is stimulated by external and internal excitations. The human mind cannot operate *alone*. The emergence of consciousness which is a result of interactions between the inside (the psyche) and the outside (excitations), between mind (the psyche) and body (the neurons) engages a complex assemblage of a diverse associations between heterogeneous elements. Accompanying the emergence of consciousness is the formation of subjectivity which is also the intensive process. The notion of the self-transparent subject deduced from the Cartesian Cogito is a fallacy. From the Lacanian viewpoint, the humanist subject based on rationality, self-transparency, and self-certainty is an impossible subject since the constitution of subjectivity is interwoven with the human—the recognition of the fact

that one is the human—and the inhuman—the nonrecognition of that fact. The Cartesian cogito, which is usually viewed as the beginning of the notion of the modern subject, consists in the differentiation between rationality and irrationality, certainty and uncertainty. In terms of psychoanalysis, it is based on the exclusion of the unconscious, the uncertain and irrational part of the human psyche. Lacan's reading of the Cartesian cogito re-interprets the nonrecognition as the constitutive, rather than the excluded part, of the subject.

In "Cogito as the Subject of the Unconscious," Mladen Dolar points out that Lacan has different readings of cogito in different stages of his thinking. In the earlier stage, Lacan distinguishes the "I" from cogito. The mirror stage as formative of the function of the "I" demonstrates that the "I" is in the place of imaginary (mis)recognition, a deception. The "I" is not "the salutary part of the mind that could serve as a firm support of the psychoanalytic cure" (Dolar 12). The "I" must be opposed to cogito which is characterized by its self-transparency and self-certainty. In later works, Lacan changes his position by differentiating the "I," the ego, from the subject. According to Dolar, since the mechanism of the ego is related to the mirror stage, the function of which is the imaginary construction of self-image, the "I" should be put under the heading of the Imaginary. The subject has a different function whose mechanism consists in the Symbolic level. Cogito, Lacan proposes, is on the side of the subject. Lacan's insistence on retaining the notion of the subject is very different from the attempt of structuralism to sentence the subject to death. For Lacan, the subject that structuralism tries to dismantle has a different entity from the subject of the unconscious. The nonsubjective structure that structuralism highlights, according to Dolar's interpretation of Lacan, is already subjectivized. Lacanian subjectivity parts with the notion of recognition. Dolar maintains that for Lacan,

> the subject emerges only at the point of a nonrecognition: all formations of the

> unconscious have this in common, they are accompanied by a 'this is not me,' 'I was not there,' although they were produced by the subject him/herself (or to put it in terms of cogito: they cannot be followed by a 'therefore I am). They depend on the emergence of an 'alien kernel' within subjectivity, an automatism beyond control, a 'discourse of the Other,' the breakdown, in certain points, of the constituted horizon of recognition and sense. (14)

The nonrecognition or non-sense is constitutive of the subject. This is Lacan's criticism of the "I" as the illusion of autonomous subjectivity.

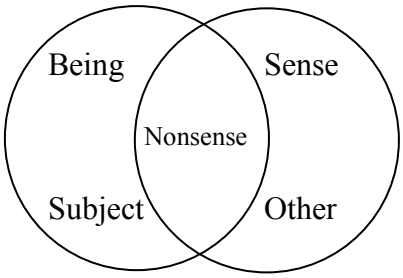

Figure 1

Why is the cogito the subject of the unconscious? Lacan parts with the idea that the cogito implies a subject as a void. Descartes's methods of inferring the "I" as the thinking thing starts with the application of doubt. By examining everything which is doubtful, Descartes' reasoning process achieves an empty spot, evacuating consciousness step by step. What remains is "a merely formal subjectivity purified of all content and substance" (Dolar 15). Lacan indicates that Descartes's fallacy lies in his constructing the notion of a subject as an empty spot but not allowing it to vanish. In order to solve the problem of the subject as a vanishing point, Descartes introduces the existence of God as the Other to guarantee the validity of knowledge/recognition. With God's guarantee of its status, the cogito would not be a vanishing point. The logic leads to the point that the thinking process ensures the existence of the cogito; therefore,

Descartes can achieve his conclusion "I think, therefore I am." However, according to Lacan's reading, *to think/sense* and *to be/being* are two choices that one has to face. It is not a free choice, but a forced one: one can only choose *to think*. Choosing being is impossible. If one chooses being, it means that one is attached to the *objet a*, "the object that detains being, but a being over which one cannot be master" (Dolar 19). If one chooses sense, Lacan suggests that "the sense survives only deprived of that part of non-sense that is, strictly speaking, that which constitutes in the realization of the subject, the unconscious" (Lacan 1986: 211; translation modified by Dolar). Choosing sense involves the sacrifice of part of non-sense. That part, the unconscious, falls on the intersection between being and sense. In Lacan's version of subjectivity, one has to give up being, but what it gives up falls on the unconscious, and it keeps on coming back and haunting the subject like a ghost. In his reading of the Lacanian cogito, Dolar indicates that

> The Lacanian cogito is not the modern subject that philosophers love to talk about; caught as it is in the structure of alienation, it cannot found its being in its thought; rather, the repressed part of thought (the unconscious) comes constantly to haunt it and dislocate it, and it maintained only through this repression. It emerges only through the impossibility of integrating this lost part, the intersection where sense and being would seemingly coincide and ground the subject. (21)

The usual understanding of the cogito, according to Dolar, consists in the grounding of being in sense. The modern subject is founded on the ground that "a sense immediately involves being and a being that immediately 'make sense'" (Dolar 22) so that it can be a free and autonomous subject, which is the assumption of the humanist subject. The humanist subject is characterized by its self-certainty and self-transparency. Lacan's reading of cogito proves that the autonomy of the subject is an illusion. As Dolar notes,

the grounding of being in sense is “a mythical point of coincidence and transparency that tries to get rid of, or to disavow, the essential disparity of signification and being” (22). In fact, the subject has to give up part of non-sense, which causes the alienation of the subject. It is impossible for the subject to integrate non-sense, the lost part of the subject. The subject is an already-split subject. Lacan’s version of subjectivity demonstrates that beyond sense and knowledge there is an unpredictable and uncertain part which is constitutive of the subject. Though repressed, this part constantly returns, disturbing the stability of sense and knowledge. Therefore, when discussing language, the symbolic function of human discourse, Lacan disagrees with the structuralist notion of one-to-one correspondence between signified and signifier. Language is more than a system of code since it is unstable and ambiguous.

The inherent ambiguity of human discourse results from the interruptions coming from the unconscious. In his famous thesis that “the unconscious is structured like a language” (Lacan 1973: 20), Lacan links the unconscious with language. The unconscious is an essential part of language. It appears “at the level of the subject of enunciation, in so far as, according to the sentences, according to the modes, it loses itself as much as it finds itself” (Lacan 1973: 26). It loses itself because it is repressed. However, it disguises itself and reappears in other forms, “in an interjection, in an imperative, in an invocation, even in a hesitation” (Lacan 1973: 26). As Lacan suggests, “it is always the unconscious that presents you with its enigma, and speaks—in short, at the level at which everything that blossoms in the unconscious spreads, like mycelium, as Freud says about the dream, around a central point” (Lacan 1973: 26). In other words, signification is not merely the process of symbolization; it is driven by the unconscious which functions in the form of rupture or split as the stroke of the opening that makes absence emerge (Lacan 1973: 26). That is why Lacan says that the unconscious has “the structuring function of a lack” (Lacan 1973: 29). The lack, or the central point, on the

one hand, drives the signifying process; on the other hand, it is the point which cannot be symbolized since it is the absence. The unconscious speaks because it consists of signifiers which connect and reconnect with one another, making meanings relating to the lack. The signifiers in the unconscious, spreading like mycelium, are interwoven into a dynamic network, the function of which is driven by the lack. Language is a complex assemblage of associations of signifiers, and more than that, the signifying process is the intensive process since there is a force behind the symbolic function, refusing to be symbolized. The symbolic function is related to the Real which is the undifferentiated state before the process of signification. In the Deleuzian term, the Real is the Virtual. The actualization of the Virtual is the process of signification from undifferentiation to differentiation. There is always a residue, or an excess, of the Real, left after the actualization of the Virtual, flowing behind signifiers.

The process of signification is the intensive process. There is no stable, linear, and one-to-one correspondence between signifier and signified. In his explication of the graph of desire [Graph 2], Lacan indicates that the generation of meaning engages the function of two points of intersection in the signifying chain. He writes,

> The first, labeled A, is the locus of the treasure trove of signifiers, which does not mean of the code, for the one-to-one correspondence between a sign and a thing is not preserved here, the signifier being constituted on the basis of a synchronic and countable collection in which none of the elements is sustained except through its opposition to each of the others. The second, labeled *s*(A), is what may be called the punctuation, in which signification ends as a finished product. (Lacan 1960: 682)

The locus A is where language, or the Other, is situated. The locus *s*(A) is the place that the subject uses language and undergoes the process of signification. According to Lacan, the signifying chain involves the diachronic function and the synchronic

structure of the *point de capton*. The *point de capton* is the point by which "the signifier stops the otherwise indefinite sliding of signification" (Lacan 1960: 681). It is the point that determines the generation of meanings. Its diachronic function refers to the retroactive effect of signification insofar as "a sentence closes its signification only with its last term, each term being anticipated in the construction constituted by the other terms" (Lacan 1960: 682). The synchronic structure is implicated with the attribution of signifiers, which is similar with the semantic structure of signs. Normally, signifiers relate to one another in certain ways and generate meanings in a sentence. In the example Lacan takes, "the dog goes meow, the cat goes woof-woof," the two sentences have correct grammatical structures but they are unreasonable in terms of semantics. Lacan points out that the attribution here "raises the sign to the function of signifiers and reality to the sophistics of signification" (Lacan 1960: 682). During the process of signification, there is a cut which constitutes a bar between signifier and signified. In linguistics, signification consists in viewing the signifier as the determinant of the signified. In Lacan's viewpoint, the cut makes holes in meaning the determinants of its discourse (Lacan 1960: 678). The cut is the effect of castration. Castration, the sacrifice of being in exchange of sense and knowledge, is the process that one has to undergo so as to enter the Symbolic order.

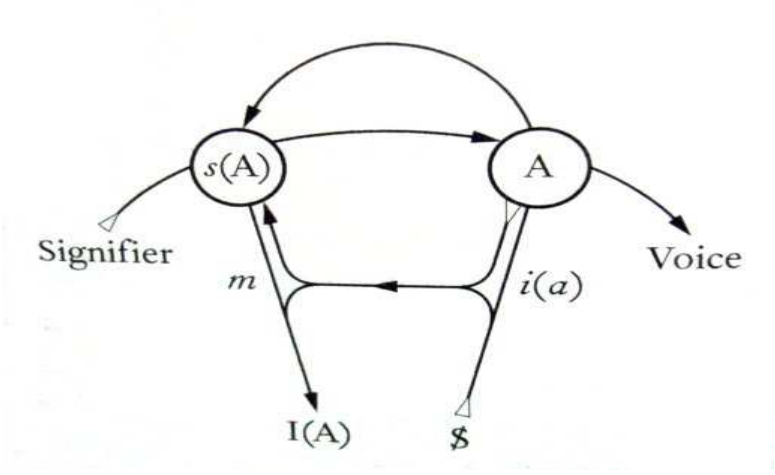

Figure 2 Graph of Desire (Graph 2)

The notion of castration is Lacan's interpretive appropriation of Freudian Oedipus complex. The notion is often attacked by its restricted code of oedipal triangulation. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari criticize "the analytic imperialism of the Oedipus complex," which, according to them, is based on the patriarchal "familial romance" of "daddy-mommy-me" (Deleuze and Guattari 1977: 23). Blaming the mistake of the reduction of the Oedipus complex to "the flat scenario of the drama of the child's entry into normative heterosexuality" (Žižek 2004: 80), Žižek points out that Deleuze and Guattari's criticism of it is questionable. In their Oedipus scenario,[7] Žižek argues that the boy has to do three inconsistent things: "conquer his mother, separate himself from her, and destroy his father" (Žižek 2004: 81). Ironically, the father here does not serve the function of castrating for the boy to be separated from his mother. In fact, in Lacan's interpretive appropriation of the Oedipus complex, castration is linked with the notion of "phallus," which is the "pure" signifier. According to Žižek's interpretation, the pure signifier is the cause, the quilting point, "the direct inscription of the signifier into the order of the signified in the guise of an 'empty' signifier without signified" for the effect-of-sense to take place (Žižek 2004: 82). That is to say, phallus, the pure signifier, is an essential link between signifier and signified for the generation of sense and knowledge. There is no natural order "within which the signifier appears as the effect/expression of the signified" (Žižek 2004: 82). Symbolic castration is an important process for the subject to enter the Symbolic order. After his/her entrance into the Symbolic order, through the family network, the subject can join the social network. Žižek argues that Oedipus is "the exact *opposite* of the reduction of the multitude of social intensities onto the mother-father-me matrix" since it is the matrix "of the

[7] In general interpretation of the Oedipus complex, "the young boy desires to conquer his mother sexually in order to separate himself from her and begin to grow as an adult. For him to succeed, he must destroy his father, his sexual competitor" (Žižek 2004: 81).

explosive opening up of the subject onto the social space[8]" (Žižek 2004: 83).

The Lacanian subject is the posthuman subject. It is a Deleuzian machine, a desiring-machine. It produces consciousness. The process of the generation of consciousness is driven by dynamic interactions of neurons. Accompanying the emergence of consciousness is that of the unconscious since one has to undergo the process of symbolic castration so as to be a subject. But, it seems contradictory that the subject as a machine is constituted by discontinuity in its structure. As Žižek suggests, symbolic castration is a process "by means of which the child-subject enters the order of sense proper, of the ABSTRACTION of sense, gaining the capacity to abstract a quality from its embeddedness in a bodily Whole, to conceive of it as a becoming no longer attributed to a certain substance" (Žižek 2004: 83; original emphasis). Symbolic castration endows the subject with capacity to transcend bodily reality, to connect or be connected with other machines. The unconscious, interwoven with the conscious, is a flow-producing machine. Like the mycelium, the metaphor Lacan uses, the unconscious is a network where everything spreads out. As Jerry Aline Flieger proposes, "the unconscious does not think or believe, and it is certainly not continuous or linear; instead, it produces—meshworks, rhizomes, a labyrinth" (223). The posthuman subject is a network that is associated with the symbolic-castration-machine, the conscious-machine, the unconscious-machine, and the social network. It never works alone.

The Posthuman Potential of Utopia

Utopian writing stems from aspirations for a better world. Utopian writing has undergone several transformations—utopia, dystopia, critical utopia and critical dystopia—in its development. In this chapter, utopia is used as a general term for

[8] Jerry Aline Flieger has a similar opinion with Žižek. She argues that the Oedipus complex "is a "configuration of connections, disruptions, and refractions of desire that constitutes the human organism and produce social interaction" (222).

utopian writing since all utopian writings originate from More's *Utopia*. It is distinguished from the traditional usage of it. "Traditional utopia" would be used here to refer to the utopian writing which aims to present ideal models of society. Before More's *Utopia*, there have been many myths, legends, and philosophical writings describing what a perfect world should be like. In ancient myths and legends, such as the Golden age and the Cockaygne land, the imagination of a happy world includes plentiful food, harmonious relationship between human beings and nature, and leisurely life. In the myth of the Golden Age, men's needs are few and their desires are limited: they could be satisfied by abundant resources of nature. In the legend of the Cockaygne land, as Kumar points out, it "is a land of extravagance, exuberance and excess" (6). Law and order are unnecessary in this heavenly world since men can maintain good faith and do the right things. Lacking the concept of law, order, and social organizations which consist of the modern society, these myths and legends tend to be the nostalgia for the primal and comfortable state of mother-child unity, which is the model of leisurely and happy life. People miss the happy time with their mothers since a mother takes good care of her infant who would not have to worry about everything in its daily life. The yearning for a well-organized society ends the old imagination based on the harmonious mother-child unity. The legends of the millenarianism and the ideal city reflect people's hope of constructing a mode of lifestyle based on rational order[9]. More's *Utopia* marks the beginning of utopianism. According to J. C. Davis,

> Modern utopianism[10] begins in the sixteenth century in a world of weak government with limited aspirations extending principally to defense and foreign policy and the maintenance of a degree of law and order at home. . . Into this world of chaos, confusion, irregularity and incipient disorder the

[9] This point will be explored further in Chapter Three.
[10] The modern utopianism that Davis refers to is the term in contrast with the imagination of the happy worlds in the old myths, legends, and stories.

> utopian injects images of a total and rational social order, of uniformity instead of diversity, of impersonal, neutrally functioning bureaucracy and of the comprehensive, the total state. (9)

The concern with ending chaotic conditions in society replaces the nostalgia for the harmonious primal world. Rationality, stability, and efficiency become standards to evaluate the ideality of a society. Davis points out that the emergence of utopia reflects our expectation to solve social problems. Each utopian work provides an ideal-society model to solve the social problems during a certain period of time. Almost every traditional utopian writer believes that they offer better modes of thinking to create an ideal society than others. Whether utopian arrangements are practical and workable or not becomes the major concern of these utopian writers. It might explain why in the early period of utopian writing utopia tends to be rigid and exclusive.

Debates about the practicability of utopian thinking are implicated with traditional humanist thinking. For those who embrace utopian thinking, they believe the possibility of building perfect human society. The achievement of perfection is usually associated with harmony, optimism and stability of humanity which are supposed to be inherent in human nature. Kumar, who underscores the practicability of utopian arrangements, carefully distinguishes utopian theory from other kinds of social or political theory. The major difference between the two lies in their assumptions of human nature. Most social theory tends to be pessimistic over possibilities of achieving the perfect state of human society inasmuch as the inherent defects of human nature hinder these possibilities. Kumar emphasizes that "what unites utopians, and gives to utopian theory its distinctive emphasis, is the assumption that there is nothing in man, nature, or society that cannot be so ordered as to bring about a more or less permanent state of material plenty, social harmony and individual fulfillment" (Kumar 1991: 29). He believes in perfectibility of human nature which would drive human beings towards a better future. The earthly

paradise is not impossible since human beings are capable of solving all kinds of problems. As he writes, “Scarcity can be overcome; conflict can be eliminated; moral dilemmas and psychological frustrations can be resolved” (Kumar 1991: 29).

Is Kumar too optimistic over utopian society? Judith N. Shklar, belonging to the camp that questions the function of utopia, contends that utopia is inherently political and so its function is limited to political arrangements. In her “What is the Use of Utopia”, Shklar reveals the mistake to regard “every image of a happiness that is remote from actual misery” (41) as a utopia. As the archetype of utopian writing, Shklar argues that More’s *Utopia* sets the example of ideal society which relies on “the rational control of passion to achieve harmony” (42). The happiness that is pursued in *Utopia* is created by social harmony and true knowledge. A good government that could provide order and progress is the prerequisite of such happiness. She comments that peace in *Utopia* is achieved through elimination of conflicts among individuals and groups. All the personal enmities, social factions, and the causes of group hostility are repressed. Happiness in *Utopia* is possible inasmuch as this model of ideal society is the only truth. She is pessimistic over the use of utopia since utopia could not escape its fate as a political blueprint. Shklar’s critique of utopia reveals the problems of traditional utopian writing. On the one hand, she reprobates the exclusiveness of utopia which is created on universally perceived truth. On the other hand, she criticizes the negligence of the defects of human nature in utopia. Reducing utopia to political blueprints, she abandons the hope of utopia. Like Kumar, Shklar’s concept of utopia is confined to the humanist framework. Both of them focus on the how to cope with human relations in their utopian visions. They are also concerned with the possibility of constructing stable social relationship despite their opposite attitudes towards utopia. Kumar adores utopia because it stands for the possibilities to build perfect human society. Shklar is concerned with “the political energy required to think both critically and positively about the state

we are in and how to improve it" (57). Her reason for rejecting utopia is that these models of ideal society cannot satisfy all expectations. In other words, utopia is impractical. But she is still willing to believe that utopian thinking could offer *hope*, instead of practical function.

Different from Shklar, Levitas regards hope as an important function of utopia. In her definition, utopia is "the expression of the desire for a better way of being" (27). Influenced by Bloch's concept of utopia, Levitas suggests that utopia is "a way of expressing the experience of lack, of dissatisfaction, of 'something's missing', in the actuality of human existence" (27). Inasmuch as people are always dissatisfied with their life in reality, they would hope and desire something better to happen in the future. Levitas's attitude towards utopia is more positive than Shklar's. Levitas believes in utopia's transformative potential. She proposes that "Utopia's strongest function, its claim to being important rather than a matter of esoteric fascination and charm, is its capacity to inspire the pursuit of a world transformed, to embody hope rather than simply desired" (28). She is more concerned about concrete utopia, that is, whether utopia has the potential of being fulfilled. Levitas's position is similar to Kumar's as both are defenders of utopia. However, her analysis of utopia adds one perspective—that of human desire—which is ignored by Kumar. Kumar chooses not to consider human desire because it is the most unpredictable and uncontrollable part of human nature and it would influence the stability and perfection of the presentation of ideal society. Can desire be ignored? Evidently, the answer is negative. Desire stands in a particular position in utopia. As Levitas mentions, if one desires for a better way of being, it is because he or she has the strong feeling that something is missing or lacking in their life. It is a pity that Levitas just focuses on the optimistic explanation of desire—the desire for a better way of being. Desire is an ambivalent force that does not always drive people towards something better. The better way to explain the influence

of desire is that it is one of the unconscious forces which might be capable of transforming "the experience of lack, of dissatisfaction, of 'something's missing', in the actuality of human existence" into *something else*. The presentation of utopia, driven forth by desire, is led to different directions, not confined to ideal models of society. Utopia is analogous to the postmodern subject of which the unconscious is constitutive. Due to the unconscious forces, utopia is not a static and closed system.

The unconscious is disguised by disorder, especially the bad reality in contrast with the alternative society. When some utopian commentators complain that utopia is a system of enclosure, they overlook the role that unconscious forces play in utopia. For example, Shklar criticizes the ideal society depicted in traditional utopian writing as constructed by the elimination of the personal enmities, social factions, and the causes of group hostility, that is, the elimination of evil feelings. In fact, there is almost no portrayal of affects or emotions in traditional utopian writing. In More's *Utopia*, eternal happiness is ensured by reason, harmony, and rationality. In Book Two, More writes that utopians distinguish several classes of pleasure. Some are attributed to the mind, such as the pursuit of "correct" knowledge based on human reason, while others are attributed to body, such as the maintenance of health. Pleasure of the body is divided into two classes:

> The first is that which fills the senses with immediate delight. Sometimes this happens when bodily organs that have been weakened by natural heat are restored with food and drink; sometimes it happens when we eliminate some excess in the body, as when we move our bowels, generate children, or relieve an itch somewhere by rubbing or scratching it…The second kind of bodily pleasure they describe as nothing but the calm and harmonious state of the body, its state of health when undisturbed by any disorder. Health itself, when not oppressed by pain, gives pleasure, without any external excitement. (72)

The pleasure that utopians pursue comes from moderate satisfaction of the needs of the body. They forbid excess of feelings or external excitement that would cause disorder and harm the health of the body. Their notion of desire is reduced to the satisfaction of bodily organs. All bad and evil feelings, such as greed, hatred, selfishness and etc., can be repressed since utopians all pursue real happiness—the calm and harmonious state of mind and body. They adore moderation and regard excess as disorder. It is not surprised that the ideal society in *Utopia* is an extremely rational world. The ideal states represented in traditional utopian writing are founded on the exclusion of chaotic, uncontrollable, and irrational part of human nature. The utopians exclude the possibility of unconscious desires or forces in human nature. The ideal states retain their stability by repressing the irrational part of human nature. Does it mean that the irrational part or the unconscious disappear in the presentation of utopia? The unconscious is included in utopia as an exception. It is transformed into something else. The irrational forces are related with the imagination of better (or worse as in the case of dystopia) social institutions or moral principles in the presentation of utopia. For instance, More's criticism of people's greed for gold, silver and money is transformed into imagination of a world where people despise jewelry and monetary system. Therefore, Book One that criticizes moral crisis, social problems and bad political policies in real society plays an important role in *Utopia*. What Book One describes represents the defects of human nature, such as laziness, greed, and indulgence, in reality. Book One is often regarded as the bad reality which is a contrast to the ideal state. It is more than a description of bad reality. It is the kernel of utopia. Or, it is the material basis of utopian imagination. Utopia does not come from nothing. It is related to what happens in the real world. Without the bad reality, there is no imagination of the ideal state. A utopian imagination has its historical context and spatial background.

The close relationship between the bad reality and the alternative society might

explicate why there must be arrangements of travels or adventures in the narrative form in utopian literature. These travels or adventures skillfully associate the bad reality with the alternative society. In Suvin's definition of utopia, the construction of the alternative society is "based on estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis" (49). He uses the term "estrangement" to highlight the fact that the alternative society is an imagination, which implies that the alternative society is an isolated being which is not necessarily related with our customary environment. Although he also suggests that the alternative society is created "according to a more perfect principle than in the author's community" (49), the emphasis on estrangement severs the relationship between the imagined society and the real society as if they are two separated planets. As I have mentioned, the unconscious which disguises itself as the bad reality is constitutive of utopia. In traditional utopia, it is suppressed in order to create the ideal state, but it still threatens the stability of the alternative society. In fact, the perfection and stability of the alternative society is disrupted by the society itself since it cannot escape the influence of the bad reality. There are always some contradictory arrangements in the creation of alternative society. In his analysis of More's *Utopia*, Alistair Fox observes that there are some ironies and paradoxes in the presentation of the alternative society. For example, utopians' contempt of material wealth does not propel them to totally abandon the usage of it. On the contrary, they accumulate a huge amount of treasury to spend on the hiring of mercenaries since utopians are unwilling to risk their own life on violent battles with their enemy. Fox indicates that the way that utopians use treasure demonstrates their self-interest that is supposed to be avoided in their country. Fox argues that

> Whether they know it or not, the Utopians are playing upon the intrinsic evil in human nature for their own advantage. Theoretically, if they were truly motivated by the human compassion and charity they profess, they should be

> just as concerned to control these sinful impulses in the citizens of their neighboring countries as in their own. Their unwillingness to do so shows that they are prepared to live cynically according to a double standard. (55)

It is ironical that the so-called perfection of humanity that utopians advocate is achieved by leaving the defects of human nature to those who are not utopians. Some utopian arrangements are contradictory to their original ideality. The imperfection in the design of the alternative society proves that its goal of perfection and stability is unattainable. The presentation of utopia is not a static form. In the later development of utopian writing, the crevices in the ideal model of society are presented in a more or less exaggerated way. In dystopia and critical dystopia, the contradictory disruptions in ideality society are exaggerated in an extreme way and it turns the ideal society into a nightmare. In critical utopia, the ideality of society is questioned but it still retains the hope to have a better future. The dynamic potential of utopia is inherent, generated by the influence of the unconscious forces.

As with the generation of consciousness, utopia has also undergone a process of machinization, that is, the connecting and re-connecting of utopian elements. Consciousness of the human mind is produced through the assembling process of neuronal activities. The construction of the alternative model of society, on the one hand, consists in the operation of the unconscious which transforms the bad reality into something else. On the other hand, the arrangements of the alternative model of utopia are machinic, in the Deleuzian sense. There is a tendency that the description of the alternative model of society is filled with concrete details. Owing to these detailed description, traditional utopia is often regarded as presentation of political blueprints. In traditional utopia, these details include comprehensive solutions to solve social problems, such as poverty and theft, or the more modern social problems, such as gender and racial issues. In dystopia, social problems are exaggerated through the

detailed description of the worse future. However, these details are not composed in certain fixed or static patterns. Each utopian text is a machine which is composed by its own elements. One utopian machine represents one pattern of mechanism. It is a temporary combination of components. One utopian machine would influence other utopian machines. More's *Utopia* is the prototype of utopian machines. The later utopian machines either imitate or transform its pattern. The components of a utopian machine are characterized by its arrangements of a wide variety of social systems or institutions. Because each utopian writer has different concerns of social problems, each utopian machine is designed to correspond to the author's purpose. In *Utopia*, since More adores the social system based on mutual aids, the arrangement of the concrete details evolves around how to create a society similar with a communist community. These details include allocation of occupations, means of production, city planning, political systems, social relationships, ethics, education, marriage, religion and etc. The components in a utopian machine are not irrelevant and independent arrangements. The mechanism of a utopian machine is implicated with different forms of technologies. According to Michel Foucault, there are four types of technologies:

> (1) technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things; (2) technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification; (3) technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject; (4) technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality." (225)

Technologies of production are associated with means of production. Technologies of

sign system allow people to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification to search for knowledge. Technologies of power are undoubtedly related to politics or techniques of managing public affairs. Self-scrutiny and the pursuit of self-satisfaction are implicated with technologies of the self. The four technologies are constituent of the construction of a society. They are interwoven like a web. In *Utopia*, More's alternative society engages the four technologies. Though agriculture is the major means of production, utopians invent efficient technologies in farming and stockbreeding. Utopians, who are intelligent and learned, like to study the latest knowledge in various fields, such as astronomy, medicine, and physics. Their political and social systems are characterized by its communist, hierarchical, and patriarchal arrangements. How they achieve happiness lies in the pursuit of the harmonious and rational state of mind and body. The four systems of technologies connect and communicate with one another. In other utopian machines, there are some modifications or transformations in their components: some might consist mainly of components of technologies of production, some might emphasize technologies of power, and some might combine several types of technologies.

With the development of advanced technology, the four types of technologies have experienced great changes, especially the technologies of production. In Foucault's definition, technologies of production "permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things." Traditionally, means of production are viewed as mediation of producing new products. Through technologies of production, we, human beings, dominate the relationship between human beings and things. Technologies of production are more than means of producing products. They produce things that people need as well as complicated relationships between people and things. According to Bruno Latour, technologies of production produce human-nonhuman collectives. Latour takes the example of a man with a gun. As a more powerful weapon than a knife, a gun could kill

people instantly. If a furious man has a gun, it might be a strong motivation for him to kill his enemy. Is the gun an evil instrument that inspires the man to kill? Or, is the gun merely a neutral tool since it is the man's intention that asks him to kill? Latour argues that in the act of killing, the man is different with a gun in his hand, and the gun is different with the man's holding it. Both the man and the gun have undergone goal translation. Translation here means "displacement, drift, invention, mediation, the creation of a link that did not exist before and that to some degree modifies the original two" (Latour 1999: 179). The man and the gun have a link through each other. With the gun, the man is not the same person as the man playing with a computer, or the man driving a car. Held by the man, the gun is different from the gun in the drawer or the gun in the armory. The man and the gun create a human-nonhuman collective. Technologies of production not merely transform materials into products; they also create new relationships between the human and the nonhuman. Advanced technologies create more complicated human-nonhuman collectives. There are more and more complex connections and webs that link many things and many people. When we say "man flies," as Latour indicates, the act of flying involves the whole association of devices, including airports, airplanes, launch pads and pilots. Latour proposes that complicated actions, like flying, involve the composition of action. He also points out that some actions undergo a hidden process—blackboxing—that "makes the joint production of actors and artifacts entirely opaque" (Latour 1999: 183). High-tech inventions are like black boxes inside which their components are hidden. If we open the black boxes, we could not imagine how many silent entities are integrated or interwoven into these black boxes. For instance, the operation of a computer involves an association of assemblies, including the screen, the keyboard, chips, software and engineers, which are integrated into a whole. It is unavoidable that advanced technologies will create many more black boxes. Due to the influence of advanced

technologies, utopian machines have more and more possibilities. The machinization of utopia facilitates the process that makes more and more heterogeneous components combine and communicate with one another. As Latour suggests, when different components combine with one another, they will create a particular link through one another. In traditional utopian machines, technologies of production are instruments for improving human life. Though they are viewed as neutral instruments, these instruments create unique links between people and their environment so that people can have a different life. In many contemporary utopian machines, advanced technologies of production have great impact on human life by creating complicated human-nonhuman collectives. Cyberpunk is the representative.

Conclusion: Utopias as Machines

A utopia is a dynamic machine that has all kinds of possibilities. It could be a political machine, a literary machine, a machine of means of production, a combination of many machines, or other types of machines. Its posthuman potential lies in its transcendence over closure. It is not confined to the humanist framework—the system of homogeneous elements. It is a machine composed by a wide variety of heterogeneous elements which are in relation with one another. The essence of eternal humanity is no longer its concern. Humanity is not eternal and stable since the inhuman—the unconscious—is also part of humanity. In traditional humanist thinking, utopia stands for the ideal model of society. Here, ideality, perfection, and stability are the standards for measuring the features of utopias. Nevertheless, utopias themselves refuse these standards because they are permeated with disruptions and crevices. Utopias are imperfect. Because of their imperfection, they have the potential of plugging or being plugged into other machines. Therefore, each utopian text represents one model of society—it is only one of the possible ways of presenting an alternative society. Each possibility could be connected with other possibilities or be transformed into another

possibility. Utopia as a genre is a mega-machine which has the potential of connecting with other machines.

Utopia, the mega-machine, is not a static system. But it is not merely a process. Louis Marin contends in his "Frontiers of Utopia" that utopia lies in the frontier between two visions:

> on the one hand, a free play of imagination in its indefinite expansion measured only by the desire, itself infinite, of happiness in a space where the moving frontiers of its philosophical and political fictions would be traced; on the other hand, the exactly closed totality rigorously coded by all the constraints and obligations of the law binding and closing a place with insuperable frontiers that would guarantee its harmonious functioning. (Marin 1993: 403-04)

The two visions seem contradictory. One consists in infinite imagination while the other lies in totalizing representation. Then, how to represent infinite representation? Marin argues that utopia is a neutral place between "frontier and horizon, totality and infinity, limit and transcendence, closure and liberty" (Marin 1993: 406). Utopia lies in the gap which connects the two contradictory visions. It rejects dualism and it is neither frontier nor horizon, neither totality nor infinity, neither limit nor transcendence, neither closure nor liberty. In Marin's interpretation, Utopia is a no-place which "designates *another* referent, the 'other' of any place"(Marin 1993: 411). It designates "the way of the *limes* traveling between two edges that will never join together as an identical line" (Marin 411). In Marin's interpretation, utopia is a void. His interpretation of utopia is based on the logic of "neither. . . nor. . . " which is the logic of minus. Utopia is neither this nor that. For him, it is a fluid process and it refuses to offer any fixed form in order to maintain its ambiguity as well as flexibility. Like ocean, utopia stands between two edges, the old world and the new world. There is a problem in Marin's notion of utopia:

the two worlds reject each other and will never communicate with each other. Although he argues that utopia neutralizes their tension by its ambiguity, if the two never contact with each other, how can utopia be a medium between them? Marin also indicates that utopia does not have a definite signified. It always designates to another reference. It is a signifier without any signified. His notion of utopia is an emptiness deprived of substances, that is, it is de-materialized. As a shapeless signifier, it does not have a body. This is not utopia. Utopias are machines, in the sense that they are entities. Materiality is constitutive of utopias. Utopias are constituted via the process of machinization. Analogous to mechanisms of neuronal activities, the mechanism of a utopia is driven by the intensive process which propels that dynamic composition of its technetronic elements. The dynamic composition of the technetronic elements makes concrete images of society and these images are based on the real society: they try to solve the social problems in the real society. When connecting with one another, these technetronic elements are translated, in Latour's words, by one another. Through translation, these elements have a new relationship or link. The combination among different elements will create different links. One composition represents one unique link. Utopias are undergoing the process of composing and translating among its technetronic elements all the time since there are always new elements adding into the machine. A utopia is a whole, which is larger than the mere sum of its elements. And it always accepts new elements which will inspire further transformations in the operation of the machine. The etymology of the word "utopia" plays with the pun that utopia is a no place and a happy place. The implication of "no place" suggests that utopia is a zero point, a starting point. It celebrates excess, welcoming addition of something else with it.

The concept of utopia is unique because it teaches us to reconsider the relationship between imagination and reality. Imagination and reality are not in a tension. On the

contrary, reality is the basis of imagination. Desire is the force that transforms reality into imagination. The fascination of utopia lies in its link with reality. Imagination reflects our ambivalent feelings for reality. Sometimes we hope to escape the reality, but we also try to keep a link with the reality to a certain degree when escaping. The popularity of *Harry Potter* series serves the best example. The world of witchcraft presented in *Harry Potter* is filled with magic experiences that are beyond human abilities. To put it more correctly, these experiences are beyond the limitation of human bodies. In this world, witchcraft helps people fly with brooms, move from one place to another instantly by magic powder, or transform themselves into animals. All these imagined experiences represent human beings' aspiration for disembodiment—escaping from the limitation of human bodies. Confined to the physical structure of the body, human beings can not fly like birds, carry heavy objects effortlessly, or change the appearance of the body easily. Nevertheless, there is still a link with reality in this world where it seems that all weird things might happen. In this world, the wizards or witches need to eat (they also enjoy good food), to walk (though they can fly), to have a social relationship with others (they have their own society though it is similar with muggles'[11] society). This imagined world is somewhat similar with the real world. The difference is that it transforms imperfect human bodies into superhuman bodies. Likewise, the imagined society constructed in a utopian machine is an alternative but not beyond reality. The alternative society might be better or worse than the real society. Imagination is never groundless since it has to be based on the experiences in reality.

The concept of utopia also teaches us to rethink the essence of society. Traditionally, when we think about social problems, we merely consider how to change human relationships to maintain the stability of society. However, society contains a wide variety of heterogeneous elements. It consists of complex relationships, including

[11] In *Harry Potter*, muggles refer to the people who have no magic power.

the relationship between different human beings and the relationship between human beings and things. Human-nonhuman collectives that are seldom concerned in the thinking of society have huge influence on the structure of society as Latour suggests. While the term "society" has an implication of a homogeneous group, we need a new perspective to think of what social aggregates are. Latour's notion of the social, consisting of an assemblage of heterogeneous elements, is a better term to describe the complicated relationships in our environment. This point will be explored further in Chapter Five. When talking about utopia, the social offers us more possibilities to consider social problems. We do not need ideal blueprints of society, but we need new perspectives to think about increasing social problems in this ongoing world.

Chapter Two

Utopia, Genre, and Literary Machines: Utopia and Its Transformations

To classify literary works into different genres seems outmoded in the postmodern era when literary critics are eager to dissolve the boundaries of conventional categories. Even the conception of literature is challenged. When a text is called as a "literary work," it involves two things. First, what is the standard to judge something as literary? The so-called literary canon, which is essentially a masculine heritage as Raffaella Baccolini argues, differentiating "superior" works from "inferior" ones, is a highly exclusive and regulative concept. Popular culture, feminist writings, or writings of minority groups, are mostly excluded from the traditional literary canon as many critics have protested. Second, when a literary work is mentioned, it is given a name—a poem, a novel, or a play. To discuss a literary work involves how it is categorized in the literary convention. When something is viewed as a literary work, it is assigned to a literary category, that is, a genre, simultaneously. A genre, the classification of literary works, entails a boundary which sets a limit to regulate what the group of literary works should be. The preoccupation of Western genre theory, according to Baccolini, remains prescriptive and legislative as long as it is concerned with the construction of boundaries between normality and deviance, superior works and inferior works, high literature and popular culture. Consequently, as Baccolini remarks, in order to fight against the literary canon, women writers adopt an oppositional strategy—to deconstruct a binary opposition between what is normal and what is deviant in literary convention by appropriating and revising conventional genres for their own use. The conception of genre should no longer entail the establishment of boundaries or limits. It needs to be reconsidered.

The differentiation of literary works begins from Aristotle's *Poetics* where

Aristotle attempts to distinguish different types of arts. Complaining that "[t]he art which uses language unaccompanied (with melody or music), either in prose or in verse (either combining verse-forms with each other or using a single kind of verse), remains *without a name* to the present day" (4; my emphasis), he rudimentarily differentiates three types of poetry: tragedy, comedy and epic. What concerns Aristotle is to categorize works of poetry and give them names. Naming unavoidably entails delimiting the boundary of what something is. The naming of one object facilitates its recognition by people. Via the differentiation of three types of poetry, Aristotle sets a standard for poets as a writing reference and for readers to recognize a literary work in its convention. In later development, the differentiation of literary works is not confined to poetry. Generic convention usually refers to four literary categories: fiction, poetry, drama, and prose; yet other differentiations of literary types are also generated corresponding to different standards. Generic distinction becomes an important method for readers to recognize a literary work. As Northrop Frye contends in *Anatomy of Criticism*, the "basis of generic criticism in any case is rhetorical, in the sense that the genre is determined by the conditions established between the poet and his public" (247). Generic criticism is built on the contractual relationship between writers and their readers since it provides an effective means of communication between them. For instance, in the example that Frye offers, when a poet tries to write a poem, he "is incessantly deciding that certain things, whether they can be critically accounted for by himself or not, belong in his structure, and that what he cuts out in revising does not, though it may be good enough in itself to belong somewhere else. But as the structure is complex, so these decisions relate to a variety of poetic elements, or a *group* of initiatives" (246). During the process of writing a poem, the poet has to determine two things. First, he has to choose "poetic" elements so that the poem could be easily recognized by his audience as a poem. What the poet decides as "poetic" elements is related to the generic tradition of poetry. Second, the

poet selects from the poetic elements some of the elements that he considers most suitable for composing his poem. This poem is an individual text that is created with its own unique way though it is subsumed under the category of poetry.

From this example, we can observe that writing a literary text involves two processes: one is to choose a generic tradition and the other is to compose the elements chosen from that tradition in a unique way. Earlier generic criticism was attacked because most of it was established on setting an ideal standard for judging literary works. When Frye defends the necessity of literary criticism, his purpose lies in consolidating the literary canon, teaching readers the right way of reading a literary work and advising writers how to present ideal literary works. However, genres are not fixed categories of literary works. The classification of genres has undergone several changes. Frye himself argues that "[t]he purpose of criticism by genres is not so much to classify as to clarify such traditions and affinities, thereby bringing out a large number of literary relationships that would not be noticed as long as there were no context established" (247-48). The classification of literary texts aims to examine particular elements related with literary convention used in each work and to construct a link between each work and its historical and literary contexts. If this is so, there should not be any ideal standard to classify genres. Insofar as the formation of one genre consists in its relation with certain historical and literary context, a genre is a literary web that both combines a group of texts which share certain similar elements and makes them interacting with one another. A genre is a literary machine, in the Deleuzian sense. It is not a closed or exclusive machine. Though it is a composition of a group of homogeneous literary texts, it is connected with other genres at the same time so that it has the possibility of transforming itself.

Many utopian critics have attempted to define utopia as a genre. More's *Utopia* is undoubtedly the forefather of the genre, but several of the generic elements More used

were not new. According to Alistair Fox, "[f]antasy voyages, such as Lucian's *True History*, had been written before, and Plato's *Republic* had provided the model for many later philosophical writings on the nature of the ideal state. More's innovation was to blend these two traditions together, introducing in the process a new degree of fictive realism" (11). In this comment, Fox indicates two literary elements that characterize utopia as a genre: the description of fantasy voyages and the model of an ideal state. These generic features are inherited from earlier narrative and philosophical traditions. Utopian literature has experienced several transformations as I have mentioned in Chapter One. Fox's definition is confined to traditional utopian literature. It is a pity that many utopian critics, like Fox, treat utopia as a fixed and rigid conception. The inflexible definition of utopia traps utopia into a closed system, depriving it of the possibility to change. The problem of these critics lies in their endeavoring to set an ideal criterion to examine utopian texts. Yet, if there is no criterion to judge certain texts as utopian, the genre, utopia, will not exist. How to define utopia without losing its flexibility? The question is related to how to define a genre. The traditional conception of genre is no longer satisfactory to explain utopia. I will argue that utopia is a literary machine that connects a group of utopian texts. As a genre, utopia is operated by what Deleuze and Guattari name as the abstract machines of stratification and meshworks. Each text is also a machine. A utopian machine is a temporary combination of utopian elements. Each utopian text is a desiring-machine that is composed by a wide variety of heterogeneous elements. It is incessantly grafting or being grafted by other machines. Through their links, they are interwoven into a utopian web.

Literary Texts and Desiring-machines

The traditional conception of a literary text regards it as a totality which unifies heterogeneous elements. Hence, a literary text tends to be a homogeneous whole, a harmonious yet closed system. The author's intention, the causal arrangements of the

plot, and the correct reading predominate the interpretation of the literary text, which withers the vitality of the text. There could be a multiplicity of possibilities to interpret or to arrange the content of the text. Each literary text is the whole and the parts simultaneously. The whole is not equal to the combination or unification of the parts. Each literary text is a literary machine, a desiring-machine, driven forth by desiring production. Why is a literary text a desiring-machine? What is desire?

In *Anti-Oedipus*, opposing the conception of desire as lack in the philosophical tradition, Deleuze and Guattari formulate desire on the basis of the logic of excess. The mistake of the philosophical tradition, according to Deleuze and Guattari, rests on the wrong choice between production and acquisition when the Platonic logic of desire places desire on the side of acquisition, which causes us to regard desire as a lack: "a lack of an object, a lack of the real object" (25). Succeeding the Platonic tradition, psychoanalytic formulation of desire relies on the logic of lack that produces the fantasized object. Desire here is conceived of as production of fantasies. Attacking the psychoanalytic conception of desire, Deleuze and Guattari point out that "the real object that desire lacks is related to an extrinsic natural or social production, whereas desire intrinsically produces an imaginary object that functions as a double of reality, as though there were a 'dreamed-of object behind every real object,' or a mental production behind all real productions" (25-26). They refuse to view desire as the production of fantasy. What desire produces is reality. They maintain that

> Desire does not lack anything; it does not lack its object. It is, rather, the *subject* that is missing in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject; there is no fixed subject unless there is repression. Desire and its object are one and the same thing: the machine, as the machine of a machine. Desire is a machine, and the object of desire is another machine connected to it. Hence the product is something removed or deducted from the process of producing: between the

> act of producing and the product, something becomes detached, thus giving the vagabond, nomad subject a residuum. (26)

Desire is the flow of energy which accompanies the generation of a substance, an object or an entity. When Deleuze and Guattari say that desire and its object are one and the same thing, they mean that desire is the process of production and a product simultaneously. Desire produces something which propels the process of production of another machine. Desire facilitates the connection of one machine with another one. Deleuzian desire is similar with Jean-Luc Nancy's conception of *clinamen*, a natural tendency of a singularity, or a substance, to incline toward other singularities. A world cannot be made out of simple atoms. *Clinamen*, the natural state of the atoms, drives the atoms toward each other and helps them form a new aggregate or collectivity. However, *clinamen* is a passive force since it is merely an inclination of singularities. Deleuzian desire is an active force that incessantly propels a substance to connect with others. Deleuze and Guattari point out that "[e]very 'object' presupposes the continuity of a flow; every flow, the fragmentation of the object. Doubtless each organ-machine interprets the entire world from the perspective of its own flux, from the point of view of the energy that flows from it: the eye interprets everything—speaking, understanding, shitting, fucking—in terms of seeing" (6). Desire drives the eye to connect with other things: everything that the eye contacts has a new relationship with it. When the eye sees someone speaking, understanding, shitting, fucking, through seeing these actions generate new meanings for it. The relationship that the eye has with what it sees is different from the relationships between a finger and what it touches, between a mouth and what it eats, or between a nose and what it inhales.

Desire is a machine in the sense that it produces products. Take the eye for an example. When it sees a person eating, the-eye-seeing-a-person-eating is a product that is produced by desire. The eye is connected with the person who is eating at that

moment and their relationship becomes a new product. The Deleuzian machine is not a concept based on mechanical machines which mechanically produces the same products. The Deleuzian machine has the potential of producing heterogeneous products. Deleuze and Guattari define a machine as a system of interruptions or breaks. They maintain that "[e]very machine, in the first place, is related to a continual material flow (*hylè*) that it cuts into" (36). Every substance, object, or entity not only produces a continual material flow but also cuts it off. When it cuts into the flow, it becomes a machine since it produces products from the flow. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that a machine "functions like a ham-slicing machine, removing portions from the associative flow: the anus and the flow of shit it cuts off, for instance; the mouth that cuts off not only the flow of milk but also the flow of air and sound; the penis that interrupts not only the flow of urine but also the flow of sperm" (36). The products produced by the machine should not be considered as products of separation. Rather, they are part of the associative flow which is cut into by a series of machines. For instance, shit is part of the continuous flow related with the anus-machine, the intestine-machine, the stomach-machine, the mouth machine, the flow of the milk from a cow, and etc. In other words, as Deleuze and Guattari propose, "every machine functions as a break in the flow in relation to the machine to which it is connected, but at the same time is also a flow itself, or the production of a flow, in relation to the machine connected to it" (36).

A machine is a desiring-machine. Desire is the force that occurs when a machine is operating. According to Deleuze and Guattari, "[d]esire constantly couples continuous flows and partial objects that are by nature fragmentary and fragmented. Desire causes the current to flow, itself flows in turn, and breaks the flows" (5). Desiring-machines are binary machines in the sense that on the one hand it produces flow and on the other hand it is grafted with another machine that cuts off its flow. Some critics reduce Deleuzian desire to natural forces of bodies, which is misreading of desiring-machines.

Judith Butler's reading of Deleuzian desire is the representative of physiological readings. In Butler's reading, Deleuze and Lacan have the same assumption when they trace the origin of desire. Like Lacanian desire, she argues, Deleuzian desire functions as an original natural force "characterized by plenitude and excess which culminates in the derivative form of desire as lacking and deprived" (206). The repression of the original bounteous desire initiates the process of civilization. Desire as lack represents a forgotten history of repression. According to Butler's interpretation, Lacanian desire, desire as lack, based on the logic of negativity is utilized as an ideological means in order to justify a social situation of hierarchy or domination, while Deleuzian desire characterized by its deconstructing the negativity of desire aims to liberate the repressed desire. Deleuze offers an emancipatory model of desire, different from Lacan's negative model of desire. Lacan's formulation of desire is based on the construction of the prohibitive law against the incest which causes a retrospective desire for the mother though the desire is forbidden. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari criticize the oedipal construction of psychoanalysis which, according to them, attempts to set a universal criterion to explain all cultural phenomena. They criticize Lacan's reification of the prohibitive law as foundational to all culture. They promote the concept of desire which is based on an originally unrepressed libidinal diversity.

Butler relates Deleuzian desire with Nietzsche's philosophy of difference. She indicates that "Nietzsche's noble morality consists in an affirmation of difference which resists the dialectical tendency to assimilate difference into a more encompassing identity" (208). Opposing the unified subject or any representation of totality, the Nietzschean will to power itself is the "multiplicitous play of forces which consequently cannot be contained by a dialectical unity" (208). Deleuze, Butler points out, inherits Nietzsche's philosophy of difference which endeavors to deconstruct the totality of the Hegelian subject. Nevertheless, Butler attacks the vitalist tendency of Deleuzian desire

which disregards the aspect of culturally conditioned historical experiences. She writes,

> Although Deleuze's critique of the Hegelian subject places him within the postmodern effort to describe a decentered affectivity, his appeal to Nietzsche's theory of forces suggests that he understands this decentered experience as an ontological rather than a culturally conditioned historical experience. In effect, his appeal to a naturally multiplicitous affectivity is not unlike the Enlightenment appeal to natural desires that we find in Rousseau or Montesquieu. (215)

Butler's reading of Deleuzian desire is very problematic. On the one hand, she reads desire as a natural force, the essence of the individual, which is regarded as the locus of precultural ideals. She seems to suggest that the undifferentiated state in the precultural era is the ideal that Deleuze pursues. In fact, Deleuze himself refuses any conception of origin. For him, desiring-production is an automatic process that occurs with the operation of a machine. Everything is a desiring-machine. There is neither origin of desire nor repression of it. Deleuze and Guattari reject a hermeneutical conception of desire. If Lacan's formulation of desire is a theory of depth, Deleuze's conception of desire is a theory of surface. Lacan's formulation of desire consists in excavating the secret hidden behind the prohibitive law, that is, the incest taboo that is involved with the repression of the desire for the mother. By rejecting to trace the origin of something, Deleuze deconstructs the representation of unity or totality. There is no center in a machine. Everything happens on the surface. When Deleuze and Guattari emphasize that the operation of a machine is always connected to another machine, they also highlight that the connection between machines is temporary combination. That's why they even refuse the term, pre-oedipal stage, since the production of desire is "anoedipal." On the other hand, Butler accuses Deleuze of neglecting the culturally conditioned historical experiences. She also defends Lacanian desire and argues that the

natural eros has to be subject to the prohibitive laws of culture. Deleuze and Guattari do not disregard the influence of cultural experiences. The desiring-production, as they propose, is also social production. To buttress decentered experiences does not necessarily mean to deny the existence of social systems, or, in Deleuze and Guattari's words, social machines. Social production, as they stress, "is purely and simply desiring-production under determinate conditions" (29). A social machine is the historically determined product of desire. It is never a universal, stable or permanent social machine. They suggest that "[t]he prime function incumbent upon the socius, has always been to codify the flows of desire, to inscribe it, to record them, to see to it that no flow exists that is not properly dammed up, channeled, regulated" (33). Although a social machine functions to codify the flows of desire, its function is never rigid or unchanging. What Deleuze and Guattari oppose is the despotic machine that sets up overcoding system. Therefore, we can find that Lacanian desire is not incompatible with Deleuzian desire.

As Smith indicates, Deleuzian desire is a re-interpretation of the Lacanian Real. In the first two chapters of *Anti-Oedipus*, according to Smith,

> Deleuze provides a purely immanent characterization of the three syntheses of the unconscious—*connection* (which forms a counter-Self, and no longer a Soul), *conjunction* (which forms a 'chaosmos" and no longer a World), and *disjunction* (which exchanges its theological principle for a diabolical one)—and shows how desire (as the principle of production) constitutes the Real by tracing series and trajectories following these syntheses within a given social assemblage. (642)

It is evident that the three syntheses of the unconscious intend to replace the exclusive, depressive oedipal triangulation (daddy-mommy-me) which is supposed to dominate the

mechanism of the unconscious in psychoanalysis[1]. The notion of Deleuzian desire is an expansion of the Lacanian Real, a re-interpretation of the Real as the locus of intensities, nonpersonal flows. Deleuzian desire consists in nonpersonal flows that propel the connections and reconnections of partial objects, multiplicities, or signifying chains. Nevertheless, the assemblage of partial objects, heterogeneous elements, or signifiers is a codified or symbolized system. Through the process of symbolization, the elements assembled together in the same surface generate a whole. The whole is a surface but it has the effect of "depth." With the effect of depth, the whole can hold its parts. In the case of human consciousness, it is generated from neuronal and biochemical activities. Yet, it is not merely determined by these activities, or it would become passive effects generated by them. There is a gap/depth between neuronal and biochemical activities and consciousness, quantity and quality. Without the gap/depth, there are merely "meaningless processes that are neuronal, biochemical, and so forth" as Žižek argues (Žižek 2004: 118). According to him, "(self)consciousness is a surface-screen that produces the effect of "depth," of a dimension beneath it. And yet, this dimension is accessible only from the standpoint of the surface, as a kind of surface-effect: if we effectively reach behind the screen, the very effect of the 'depth of a person' dissolves" (Žižek 2004: 118). Žižek links the effect of depth with the *objet a*, the nonsense, which is constitutive of the subject. The *objet a* is the cause of Lacanian desire. It is paradoxical that the surface has the effect of depth. But here, the effect of depth depends on the surface. Without the surface, there is no effect of depth.

A literary text is a literary machine, a desiring-machine. A literary machine cuts off the flows of desire and produces a temporary relationship among words, phrases,

[1] As I have argued in Chapter One, Deleuze and Guattari's reading of Oedipus Complex is problematic. They reduce it to the familial scenario of the triangular "daddy-mommy-me" relationship. In Lacan's interpretation of castration, it serves the function of assisting one to enter the Symbolic order from the undifferentiated state. Is the notion not similar with Deleuze's concept of the actualization of the Virtual?

sentences, and units. A literary machine, as Deleuze and Guattari indicate, involves "how to produce, how to think about fragments whose sole relationship is sheer difference—fragments that are related to one another only in that each of them is different—without having recourse either to any sort of original totality (not even one that has been lost), to a subsequent totality that may not yet have come about?" (42). This machine produces relationships between fragments. There is no hierarchy that decides which relationship is more important. It is a locus of diversity, a play of multiplicitous elements. Rejecting totality, it is "only the category of multiplicity, used as a substantive and going beyond both the One and the many, beyond the predicative relation of the One and the many, that can account for desiring-production: desiring-production is pure multiplicity, that is to say, an affirmation that is irreducible to any sort of unity" (42). Even if a literary machine produces the Whole, the Whole is not the center of the machine. Totality is an epiphenomenon produced alongside desiring-production of a machine. Totality, the representation of a homogeneous whole, no longer occupies the crucial position in the operation of a literary machine. Complaining that totality rounds off rough edges of heterogeneous elements, Deleuze and Guattari claim that "[w]e believe only in totalities that are peripheral. And if we discover such a totality alongside various separate parts, it is a whole *of* these particular parts but does not unify them; rather, it is added to them as a new part fabricated separately" (42). A literary machine produces the Whole which is a product itself. The Whole does not unify fragmented parts although it has effects on parts simply because "it establishes aberrant paths of communication between noncommunicating vessels, transverse unities between elements that retain all their differences within their own particular boundaries" (43). In other words, totality, or the Whole, plays the role of offering means of communication between heterogeneous elements. The Whole coexists with all its elements.

A literary text is a machine not only because it produces decentered relationships among fragmented parts but also because it is connected with other machines. The parts of a text could always be referred to other texts. The intertextuality among texts has already been indicated by some critics. In *S/Z*, refusing the conception of the totality of a text, Roland Barthes sentences the author to death. When a reader attempts to interpret a text, the author's intention is not important since the text autonomously generates meanings by itself. A text consists of fragments borrowing or appropriating from other texts. The composition of the text is determined by the fragments and their extension to other texts. Reading is thus an activity of signifying and associating a series of other texts. The author is dead insofar as the meaning of a text is not completely determined by its writer, nor does the text have an ultimate structure. Barthes argues that

> the one text is not an (inductive) access to a Model, but entrance into a network with a thousand entrances; to take this entrance is to aim, ultimately, not at a legal structures of norms and departures, a narrative or poetic Law, but at a perspective (of fragments, of voices from other texts, other codes), whose vanishing point is nonetheless ceaselessly pushed back, mysteriously opened: each (single) text is the very theory (and not the mere example) of this vanishing, of this difference which indefinitely returns, insubmissive. (12)

In other words, a text is a starting point in a literary web, autonomously connecting to a thousand texts. It does not aim to provide a unified or fixed structure. Rather, it offers a perspective through which readers trace the meanings of the text to other texts that they recognize and generate their own interpretations. The vanishing point means the point where the text stands as the starting point by which readers begin their journey in the literary web. It is a vanishing point because it is a zero point that does not have any predetermined structure or content. A literary machine is not an isolated locus since it is first and foremost related to other machines.

When we say something is a literary machine, we refer it to a type of codification of the flows of desire. The machine is both attracted and repulsed by the codifying process. Though it produces a temporary combination of elements, it also resists the stability of the system. In *Metafiction*, Patricia Waugh notices the repulsion of the codifying process in a text. In her study of metafictional writing, she points out that metafition is a kind of writing that self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality"(2). In the realist convention, language is a faithful tool that reflects a coherent and objective reality. Realist novels try to "copy" the everyday reality via thorough description of the outside world. Aware of the problematic relationship between the realist representation and reality, "metafictional writing is both a response and a contribution to an even more thoroughgoing sense that reality or history are provisional: no longer a world of eternal verities but a series of constructions, artifices, impermanent structures" (Waugh 7). In other words, metafictional writing manifests that a text is a temporary construction. To represent the so-called coherent and objective reality is not tenable since the text itself is not a stable system. Through exaggerating tensions and oppositions inherent in novels, metafictional writing is repulsive to be framed. It self-consciously maintains a distance to itself. It presents the codifying process, i.e., how it combines fragmented parts, to itself and to readers and mercilessly destroys the unity of the text. Metafiction incessantly constructs and deconstructs rules and systems of literary convention. It plays the game of "frame and frame-break, of technique and counter-technique, of construction and deconstruction of illusion" (Waugh 14). Though the question that Waugh concerns is the appearance of self-conscious fiction that fights against the ossified form in literary convention, all literary texts more or less have the self-conscious tendency. Within a text, there are always some discontinuities or disruptions which resist to be tamed in the codifying

process.

No matter how a text repels the codifying process, a text is *a text* insofar as it has a form to a certain degree. The "form" here has two levels of significance. First, it means the material existence of a text. Second, it refers to the Whole, the temporary combination of heterogeneous parts. The relationship between the fragmented parts of a text and the Whole is unstable. As Barthes indicates, a text is a vanishing point which a reader begins his/her reading journey. Different readers draw different literary maps; that is, his or her reading process forms a whole of the text. Waugh suggests that no matter how experimental the techniques of frame-breaking which novelists use are, they "should not be so unfamiliar as to be beyond the given modes of communication, or such fiction will be rejected as simply not worth the reading effort" (64). In other words, generic convention as a link between readers and writers is still necessary. She maintains that "[i]n metafiction it is precisely the fulfillment as well as the non-fulfillment of generic expectations that provide both familiarity and the starting point for innovation" (64). But the question is, are the modes of communication offered by the author? Or, does the text itself generate modes of communication? Some authors might deliberately posit their texts under certain generic convention; yet, texts generate their means of communication with readers. The familiarity of a text depends upon how a reader traces fragmented parts of the text in the literary web. To categorize texts into genres is an effort to construct modes of communication among texts, authors and readers. Genres should not be viewed as permanent criteria to judge texts. Then, what is a genre? How is it generated?

Genre and the Abstract Machines of Stratification and Meshworks

The generation of genres is associated with how to differentiate literary texts. A genre is a literary category characterized by certain literary features, which attracts and gathers an aggregate of literary machines. A genre is produced by what Manuel

DeLanda names as abstract machines that function as "the structure-generating processes that yield as historical products specific meshworks and hierarchies" (DeLanda 1997: 59). DeLanda's concept of abstract machines is based on Deleuze's idea on morphogenesis[2] and he expands Deleuze and Guattari's theories of the genesis of two types of structures—strata and self-consistent aggregates—to contain more immanent resources to account for the genesis of form, such as geologic, biologic and socioeconomic structures. DeLanda uses the term "meshworks" instead of self-consistent aggregates because, for him, "meshworks" can best signify the articulation of heterogeneous elements. According to DeLanda, meshworks refer to the structure-generating process that creates an interlocked system consisting of heterogeneous elements, while hierarchies, or strata, are created by aggregating homogeneous elements and differentiating them into layers. DeLanda uses a geological example to explicate the abstract machine of stratification: rivers acting as veritable hydraulic computers (or, at least, sorting machines). Stratification involves two operations: one is sorting out and the other is cementing. The flow of a river has the power of sorting out substances that it carries. From the point of its origin, the river transports rocky materials to the bottom of the ocean. The size, the weight, and the shape of the materials and the intensity of the flow decide the fate of these materials. Some are dissolved in the flowing process, some are suspended on the river, while some are brought to the ocean and accumulated there. The intensity of the river flow sorts out raw materials into more or less homogeneous groupings deposited at the bottom of the sea. The second operation functions to transform the loose collections of pebbles into a larger-scale entity. DeLanda explains that this operation "consists in cementing the

[2] According to DeLanda, Deleuze, influenced by the notion of the potential of topological singularities and that of the importance of immanent resources, attempts to formulate a theory of immanence via "developing an alternative model of the genesis of form, one in which form is not imposed on matter from the outside" (DeLanda 1999: 120).

sorted components together into a new entity with emergent properties of its own, that is, properties such as overall strength and permeability which can not be ascribed to the sum of the individual pebbles" (DeLanda 1997: 60). During the process, different kinds of homogeneous elements are sorted out and accumulated into layers of aggregation. The function of the abstract machine of stratification entails territorialization, or, drawing boundaries between different layers of homogeneous elements and codifying these layers of homogeneous aggregation. The two operations are called territorialization/content and coding/expression by Deleuze and Guattari. The two sets of terms should not be confused with the philosophical terms, substance and form. DeLanda argues that "[s]edimentation is not just a matter of accumulating pebbles (substance) but also entails sorting them into layers (form), while consolidation not only effects new architectonic couplings between pebbles (form) but also yields a new identity, sedimentary rock (substance)" (DeLanda 1999: 123). DeLanda proposes that the double operations constitute an abstract machine of stratification that works not only in geology but also in organic and socioeconomic domains.

The abstract machine of meshworks functions through a sequence of actions involving three kinds of elements. According to DeLanda,

> First, a set of heterogeneous elements must be brought together via an *articulation of superpositions*, that is, an interconnection among diverse but overlapping elements. . . Second, a special class of operators, *intercalary elements*, is needed to effect this interlock by serving as local connections. . . Finally, the interlocked heterogeneities must be capable of endogenously generating stable behavioral patterns, such as those occurring at regular temporal or spatial *intervals*. (DeLanda 1997: 64)

This machine generates a structure of a self-consistent aggregate which gathers together a wide variety of heterogeneous elements. In the case of ecosystem, its circulation of

energy and matter in the form of food weaves an interconnection of diverse elements. Different elements play their roles to facilitate interactions among one another in food webs. The interconnection in food webs achieves a balanced state, or, in the term that DeLanda used, an endogenously generated stable state. If there are some other heterogeneous elements joining in the food webs, the system would re-organize the relationship among its elements until it achieves another stable state. The model of meshworks corresponds to what Deleuze and Guattari call the machinic philosophy that is a nonhomogenizing articulation of diverse elements. DeLanda suggests that "their conception of specific abstract machines that govern a variety of structure-generating processes blurs not only the distinction between the natural and the artificial but also that between the living and the inert" (DeLanda 1999: 129). It directs us to a neomaterialism in which "raw matter-energy, through a variety of self-organizing processes and an intense, immanent power of morphogenesis, generates all the structures that surround us" (DeLanda 1999: 129). From the neomaterialist point of view, the so-called reality around us is generated by matter-energy flows. Our surroundings, such as geological, social, linguistic, economic structures, are temporary hardenings formed by matter-energy flows. We human beings, according to DeLanda, are mere "coagulations or decelerations in the flows of biomass, genes, memes (behavioral patterns established and maintained through imitation), and norms (patterns originating in and reinforced by social obligation)" (DeLanda 1999: 130).

The abstract machines of stratification and meshworks also work in the literary domain. The two structure-generating processes co-operate in the generation of a genre. We can say that the abstract machine of stratification functions diachronically whereas that of meshworks operates synchronically. A generic machine produces an aggregate of homogeneous texts over time; however, it is also interlocked with other generic machines and plays the role of intertextuality in literary webs. A generic machine is a

product of stratification which also has two operations: sorting out and cementing. The first operation sorts out texts which are featured by homogeneous elements. In the case of poetry, meter that contain both rhythm and pattern, as Frye notices, is the crucial factor that traditionally distinguishes verse from prose. Besides meter, quantity and accent (or stress) are also elements that decide poetic features. Though in modern poetry quantity is no longer an essential factor of poetic recurrence, the feature does not disappear since some poets appropriate it in their poetic experiments. From this example, we can find that during the stratifying process the texts that use the techniques of meter, quantity and accent are sorted out as a group with homogeneous (poetic) elements. These homogeneous texts are cemented when some literary critics discern their common features and give the name, poetry, to the collection of texts. The stratifying process does not stop working after it accumulates a certain layer of elements. The operations of sorting out and cementing proceed over time. The abstract machine of stratification accumulates layers and layers of homogeneous elements. The contents of these layers confront the fate of being combined or permuted all the time. The homogeneous features owned by a group of literary texts might gradually be transformed. Besides, different classifications of homogeneous elements produce different aggregates of literary texts. Unlike the layers of pebbles that are crystallized at the bottom of the ocean, different aggregates of literary texts, like fluid, interact with or penetrate into each other. In the case of poetry, different combinations of rhythmic schemes, accent, and quantity produce different types of poetry. As Frye discovers, in poetic convention, rhythmic schemes have undergone several transformations. For instance, the rhythmic scheme of a four-stress line is very popular in earlier poetry though it changes over time. He writes,

> It is the prevailing rhythm of the earlier poetry, though it changes its scheme from alliteration to rhyme in Middle English; it is the common rhythm of

> popular poetry in all periods, of ballads and of most nursery rhyme. In the ballads, the eight-six-eight-six quatrain is a continuous four-beat line, with a 'rest' at the end of every other line. This principle of the rest, or a beat coming at a point of actual silence, was already established in Old English. (251)

The pattern of four-stress line, according to Frye, is inherent in the structure of English language so it could be traced back to Old English. Earlier poets use this rhythmic scheme but in the case of ballads, they are texts with eight-six-eight-six quatrain, using the scheme of four-stress lines added with a rest at the end of every line.

The abstract machine of meshworks produces literary webs which interweave heterogeneous literary texts. A generic machine is a temporary collection of literary texts. These texts are also part of literary webs and they are connected with other texts. Therefore, it is impossible for a generic machine to work alone. Its function relies partly upon an interconnection with other texts or other generic machines. The interconnection in literary webs produces stable states during a certain period of time. If there are new elements adding into the webs, the original stable state would be destroyed. A new state of interconnection replaces the old one. In the case of Elizabethan drama, as Frye points out, it is somewhere between verse and prose, so that "it can move easily from one to the other depending on the requirements of decorum, which are chiefly the social rank of the character and the genre of the play" (269). From his observation, comedy which imitates the way that people of lower ranks speak often adopt the form of prose while tragedy that presents the "lofty style of rhetoric demanded by ruling-class figures" tends to use the form of verse (269). Though Frye's differentiation of ranks is problematic, his study of Elizabethan drama shows that drama as a genre fuses the presentation of other genres. Sometimes it is connected to verse, as in the case of tragedy, and other times it combines with prose, as in the case of comedy. Elizabethan drama as a genre is a historical product which has its peculiar form and expression. But as a genre its

uniqueness consists in its interconnection with other genres which co-weave an Elizabethan literary web.

Utopia, Genre and Literary Machines

In utopian literature, utopia is often regarded as the term designating the texts that focus on the depiction of the ideal state of society. Those texts presenting the negative side of utopia are categorized as dystopian writing. “Critical utopia” and “critical dystopia” are new terms. The former, as Tome Moylan observes, is an attempt to renovate utopian tradition, while the latter, according to Baccolini, is a new genre that “negates the notions of utopia and dystopia as mutually exclusive terms to describe a future alternative society” (Baccolini 2000: 18). It is unquestionable that these categories, dystopia, critical utopia, and critical dystopia, are transformed from utopia. How to define utopia so as to include all these transformed forms has been a polemical issue. As Levitas argues, there is no consensus regarding the definition of utopia. Chris Ferns also points out that when exploring the essence of utopia, critics have different approaches to examining utopia: some regard utopia as a formal category; others are concerned with its content—the description of an ideal society; still others focus on whether utopian imagination can be realized. Some critics whose position is more radical even claim that utopia is dead in the sense that the structural limitations of traditional utopian writing fail to lead it to a new path. Angelika Bammer contends that to renovate utopia as a genre the traditional detailed description of an alternative sociopolitical structure should be abandoned. Discarding the representation based on the imperative mode of writing, the more recent utopian writing highlights an experimental rather than prescriptive, a speculative rather than predictive mode of representation. Bammer’s position represents the radical approach to draw a line between the past and the present. Nevertheless, it is impossible to draw a clear line between them. When Bammer keeps the term “utopia” for the new utopian writing, this gesture more or less

admits the influence of traditional utopia. There must be some features that she recognizes as utopian so that she still places the more recent utopian writing in the genre of utopia. If utopia is dead, it is the closed, fixed, and static form representing the ideal mode of society which is dead. The concern with what society consists of is still there.

To define utopia is a daunting task. The concept of utopia, as Ferns proposes, is an oddly slippery one, "not only embracing a vast range of possible alternatives to existing society, but also often shading into kindred conceptions of a better world—the earthly paradise, the Arcadian idyll, the millennium—and utopian fiction has likewise proved resistant to generic classification" (10). Ferns suggests that the boundaries between utopia and other genres are more than usually permeable. Generic distinctions become difficult matters. He maintains that utopian writing is an inherently hybrid genre, incorporating many features of contiguous modes, such as political blueprint and novelist tradition. Since utopia is a hybrid genre which resists generic distinction, is it possible to define utopia as a genre and to reactivate the old genre? The answer that Ferns offers is to draw a line with the past, "to move away from the straightforward delineation of the more perfect society to an exploration of varying social alternatives, both desirable and undesirable, an exploration more characteristic of the broader genre of science fiction" (12). In terms of form, the more recent utopian writing has already abandoned the past insofar as it rejects the "straightforward delineation of the more perfect society" (Ferns 12). In terms of content, utopian writing never gives up its concerns with what human society is. Utopia is not dead but transformed. The best way to answer the aforementioned question is to view utopia as a Deleuzian machine. Utopia is a machine which has all kinds of possibilities of interacting with other machines. It is a desiring-machine, a literary machine, and a generic machine. It is a desiring-machine since it is part of the associative flows of literary machines; it produces utopian flows and they are cut off by another machine. It is a literary machine insofar as it is an

aggregate of heterogeneous elements which are connected to other machines. They might be connected with fantasy voyages and the description of ideal states, with parody, with communism and democracy, with science fiction, with cyberpunk, with feminisms, with racist problems, or with ecological concerns. Each utopian text is a historic product which is produced by its connection with some particular concerns. For instance, some utopian texts are concerned with the impact of high technology, and they are connected to science fiction or cyberpunk. Utopia is a generic machine because it gathers together a group of literary texts which have some homogeneous features. Utopia as a generic machine is under the influence of the abstract machines of stratification and meshworks. The incessant process of sorting out and cementing produces different looks of utopia. A utopia-machine could be a traditional-utopia-machine, a dystopia-machine, a critical-utopia-machine, or a critical-dystopia-machine. The differentiation of these machines is not based on periodization; nor is it a clear-cut division. These machines are endowed with different names because the homogeneous elements, or utopian elements, that are sorted out during the stratifying process have been distorted or transformed from time to time. For example, the description of an alternative sociopolitical structure is transformed from the depiction of an ideal state to the distorted and nightmarish presentation of an alternative world as in the case of dystopian texts. As long as the stratifying process continues to operate, the utopian elements would continuously be transformed. This process will produce new and different utopian machines.

The abstract machine of meshworks produces a utopian web, interweaving a group of heterogeneous elements. When utopian critics quarrel about what consists of utopia, most of them ignore the fact that utopian machines do not reject to combine with other literary machines. Just name a few examples. In *Utopianism*, Krishan Kumar excludes social and political theory in his definition of utopia and he insists that utopia is first and foremost a work of imaginative fiction. Garry Saul Morson distinguishes literary

utopias from "(1) nonliterary, or tractarian, utopias; (2) other "fantastic" or "extraordinary" narratives; and (3) their parodies, anti-utopias" (74). Tom Moylan suggests that "As a literary form that falls under the category of the fantastic rather than the realistic, utopia can be understood to be a development within the general paradigm of the romance, as dealt with by Northrop Frye" (Moylan 1986: 31). When these critics try to draw a boundary between what utopia is and what is not, they are in fact cutting off the utopian flow and producing their utopian machines. What they exclude in their definitions of utopia is not totally unrelated with utopia. The social and political theory that Morson and Kumar exclude in their definition directly or indirectly influences utopian presentation as Ferns comments. It is difficult to distinguish utopian theory from utopian narrative: some readers regard utopian stories, such as More's *Utopia* or B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two*, as political blueprint while others view political and social theory as utopian writing. As a generic machine, utopia has the potential of combining with a wide variety of heterogeneous elements which facilitate utopia's extended connection with many more machines in other literary webs.

As is mentioned earlier, utopia as a generic machine has some homogeneous features. What are these utopian features? According to Ferns, utopian aspirations "are both political (to convince the reader of the desirability of its particular social vision) and aesthetic (to do so in an artistically convincing manner)" (5). Political and aesthetic aspirations are crucial features of utopia and they create its unique style. However, the political aspiration does not necessarily refer to the purpose of persuading readers of a particular social vision. Sometimes, writers satirize or criticize certain sociopolitical structures, such as capitalist societies or communist regimes, without offering their versions of social vision. It should be modified that the political aspiration involves the concerns with sociopolitical or socioeconomic structures of human society or the social. The concerns might be presented in a positive or negative way. Why do we use "the

social" along with society here? The term, society, implies the relationship between human beings while nowadays high technology re-shapes the relationships between human beings and human beings, and between human beings and things. "Society" no longer can pinpoint the complicated human-nonhuman relationship in the more recent utopian writing describing high-tech worlds. Latour's conception of the social can better illustrate the human-nonhuman relationship[3]. Regarding the aesthetic aspiration, how to present the alternative society or community so as to convince readers that its sociopolitical or socioeconomic structure is a positive or negative solution for improving human life is the focus. In Moylan's study of utopian literature, there are three registers in the plot of utopian texts: "the alternative society, the world, generated in what can be termed the *iconic* register of the text; the protagonist specific to utopias—that is, the visitor to the utopian society—dealt with in what can be termed the *discrete* register; and the *ideological contestations* in the text that brings the cultural artifact back to the contradictions of history" (Moylan 1986: 36, my emphasis). In the representation of utopias, the delineation of an alternative society is the first concern but the protagonist as a visitor is also important. The protagonist offers his/her observations of the contrasts between a good society and a bad society. The protagonist's observations serve the function of criticizing the problems in the two worlds. Whereas the more recent utopian writers seek to deconstruct and subvert the closed form of traditional utopian narrative which has often been adopted by traditional utopian and dystopian writers, the three registers are still maintained in the plot of their texts. The iconic register presents one or several alternative societies; the protagonist who travels to and fro among different worlds is the medium through whose observation the differences between these worlds are displayed; the conflicts between different sociopolitical structures are often exaggerated so as to present ideological contestations.

[3] This point will be explored further in Chapter Five.

The more recent utopian writers tend to play with forms. They renovate the genre by connecting utopian machines with metafictional machines, playing with experimental forms. In the next section, the generation and transformation of utopian machines will be examined.

Traditional-Utopia-Machines

Where is the conception of utopia from? Where is the utopian flow from? If the search for utopia represents the human aspiration to seek the state of eternal happiness, the idea of utopia is not new. Many scholars have traced the concept of wishful fantasies to myths, legends and folktales.[4] Robert C. Elliott suggests that the ancient stories of people's wishful fantasies and utopia come from the same dream: the yearning for the ideal, happy life. Yet, Elliot argues that the alternative world presented in utopia is rationalized and organized, different from the uncultured world delineated in ancient fantasies. The two have different imaginations regarding what happy life consists of. The ancient fantasies should be differentiated from utopian writing since they lack political and aesthetic aspirations. The utopia-machines transform the yearning for eternal happiness in these myths and legends into their own products. The longings for good life and eternal happiness are transformed into utopian elements, the imagination of sociopolitical or socioeconomic structures. More's *Utopia* undoubtedly activated the genre utopia, but it is not the starting point in the utopian web since it is related with a wide variety of pre-utopian literature. According to Elliott, utopian writing is related with the myths of the Golden Age, the Earthly Paradise, the Fortunate Isles, the Islands of the Blest, and the legends of Cockaigne. These are fantasies based on fulfillment of human needs, that is, the dreams of freedom away from fear, hunger and disease. It is

[4] See Robert C. Elliott, *The Shape of Utopia* (Chicago, 1970), Chapter 1; J. C. Davis, *Utopia & The Ideal Society* (London, 1981), Chapter 1; Krishan Kumar, *Utopianism* (Bukingham, 1991), Chapter 1. In *The Utopia Reader*(New York, 1999), Gregory Claeys and Lyman Tower Sargent incorporate the ancient legends, myths and folktales regarding the longings for good life in utopian writing, while some scholars, such as Kumar, consider these stories as pre-utopian writing.

also connected to Plato's *Republic*, which is a major influence for the imagination of an ideal social order. More's *Utopia* that blended the political aspiration for an organized society and the aesthetical aspiration for representing the ideal image of the society started the unique style of utopian writing. Traditional-utopia-machines follow the model that More set in *Utopia*. Their political aspiration rests mainly on "a dream of order conceived in a world of disorder" as Ferns indicates (14). The ideal social order manifested on these machines tends to be based on centralist and authoritarian sociopolitical structures. This tendency reflects their historical contexts when people aspired to seek freedom based on the happiness of the majority. As Ferns points out, the utopian writers, such as Plato, More and Campanella,[5] have similar historical backgrounds. For Plato, Ferns writes, "writing against the background of constant bickering and warfare between rival city states, for More, with the memory of the Wars of Roses still relatively fresh, for Campanella, living in Italy torn apart by civil strife and foreign invasion, the notion of a sane, orderly, rational, and above all peaceful society must clearly have exerted an almost irresistible appeal" (14). The political plans offered by traditional utopias promised a future of "stability, security, freedom from hunger, from endless toil, from war" (14).

To represent the political aspiration, traditional-utopia-machines have developed their special literary form. From Ferns' observation, the narrative patterns of traditional utopias reflect popular narrative models at the time of its emergence: the traveler's tale and the classical dialogue which were prevalent in the era of Renaissance. The increasing influence of the novel, according to Ferns, "determines many of the modifications (greater emphasis on characterization, plot, and dramatic interaction) which utopian fiction comes to exhibit—although it is at the same time worth noting

[5] Tomasso Campanella (1568-1639) is the writer of *The City of the Sun*. The work is translated by R. W. Halliday in *Ideal Commonwealths* edited by Henry Morley (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1885).

that, until the early twentieth century, these remain for the most part *only* modifications, rather than transformations of the original pattern" (16; original emphasis). The influence of the novel is not so conspicuous on traditional-utopia machines as it is on other utopian machines. Lacking complicated characterization, plot, and dramatic interaction, most of the stories presented in traditional-utopia-machines are inclined to have plain and sometimes boring depictions of travelers' experiences in strange countries since their purposes lie in introducing these alternative worlds. The literary model of traditional utopias is best illustrated by Darko Suvin's explanation of the important elements in utopian writing. He writes,

> any utopia must be (1) a rounded, *isolated locus* (valley, island, planet—later, temporal epoch). Since it has to show more perfectly organized relationships, the categories under which the author and his age subsume these relationships (government, economics, religion, warfare, etc.) must be in some way or other (2) *articulated* in a panoramic sweep whose sum is the inner organization of the isolated locus. . . Since not only the elements but also their articulation and coordination have to be based on more perfect principles that the categorization in the author's civilization (for example, the federalist pyramid from bottom up of More's *Utopia* as opposed to the centralist pyramid from top down of More's England and Europe), (3) a formal *hierarchic system* becomes the supreme order and thus the supreme in utopia: there are authoritarian and libertarian, class and classless utopias, but no unorganized ones… Lastly, utopia is bound to have (4) an implicit or explicit *dramatic strategy* in its panoramic review conflicting with the "normal" expectations of the reader. (50-51)

In other words, the homogeneous utopian elements include an isolated locus (so the existence of a strange country is reasonable), a detailed introduction of the alternative

world (so the readers can fully understand how the society works), an organized society (since the concern of the utopian story consists in constructing disciplined social systems), and comparison and contrast with the real world (so the readers can judge whether this world is better than their own society). Reading these utopian stories are like traveling in strange countries. A traditional-utopian-machine draws a panoramic map that displays a systematic introduction of significant sites and plans in the alternative country, such as its government, its city planning, the economic system, religions and etc. The protagonist in a utopian story undertakes the task of guiding readers to the strange world and promoting the sociopolitical system there.

Dystopia-Machines

Why does utopia turn into dystopia? Is that because utopia is impractical or because utopia becomes possible? Both of the answers are correct. On the one hand, when some enthusiastic supporters of traditional utopian writing, like Fourier, did try to build their own utopian communities, the result was disappointing. Their plans were too idealistic and perfect, lacking flexibility, which leads their dreams to a dead end. On the other hand, the authoritarian sociopolitical structure that was "recommended" by many traditional utopian texts becomes feasible through the means of modern technology. It is ironical, according to Ferns, that the dystopian turn in the development of utopian literature occurs at the age when scientific progress facilitates the social control that is supposedly able to be used for the interests of citizens as the writers of traditional utopias dreamed. Stability and order in a society might be achieved by modern technology which is the best instrument for the surveillance of individuals, but the result is the sacrifice of individual freedom. The fear of the panopticon-like social control which reduces individual freedom to minimum in exchange for collective happiness is a prevalent theme in dystopian writing. In George Orwell's *1984*, the omnipresent Big Brother, who watches over its citizens through monitors everywhere, is the most

impressive symbol of high-tech surveillance systems. Dystopia-machines fulfill the dream of constructing the authoritarian sociopolitical regime, but in an extreme way. Edward James maintains that modern technology could achieve the happiness of the old utopian dream where 'there is no want, no oppression, a high degree of social harmony and a high proportion of contentment among its citizens," but at the expense of other human qualities (216). The achievement of a high degree of social harmony implies the suppression of dissidents. Multiplicity is sacrificed for uniformity. In his "Anti-Utopia, Shadow of Utopia," Kumar also mentions that history proves the doomed fate of old utopian dream. The belief in science and democracy propelled people to seek its fulfillment in the western world. He contends that the attempt to institutionalize these utopian principles had produced the opposite results. Soviet communism, German Nazism, and the planned scientific state, are evidences of utopian efforts. Utopia turns into a nightmare, as James proposes, because "Utopia is not *im*possible, but all too possible" (216; original emphasis).

The attacks against traditional utopian writing have been launched almost at the same time when the genre started. Even before the rise of the genre, as Kumar observes, people's wishful fantasies and the hope for an ideal social order were targets of ridicule and mockery: the myth of the Golden Age was followed by a parody of it, the Iron Age of everlasting pain and sorrow; Plato's *Republic* was succeeded by the satire of Aristophanes and the Attic comedy. And in its later development, utopian writing was also mercilessly satirized. For instance, Francis Bacon's *The New Atlantis*, a scientific utopia, was ridiculed in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Kumar argues that the dystopian element is inherent in utopia. He traces the dystopian tendency to the satiric tradition. Satire, according to his interpretation, holds together both positive and negative elements. It "criticizes, through ridicule and invective, its own times, while pointing—usually implicitly but sometimes explicitly—to alternative and better ways of living"

(Kumar 1987: 104). Satire is a literary form aiming to designate the unreasonable things by exaggerating and mocking them. However, when satire attempts to criticize the unreasonable things, it leaves the planning of alternative and better ways of living to other literary forms. Satire does not hold positive elements as Kumar proposes. In Frye's definition of satire, it consists in a defamiliarized content along with a militant attitude of the author. Satire "demands at least a token fantasy, a content which the reader recognizes as grotesque, and at least an implicit moral standard, the latter being essential in a militant attitude to experience," Frye argues (224). The grotesque content devised by a satirist is based on unreasonable and serious social problems in reality. They are deliberately exaggerated or distorted to the degree of absurdity. The selection of anomalies or absurdities presented in a satirist work reflects the social problems that the satirist concerns. Satire involves a militant attitude which implicitly reflects the author's moral standard. Without the militant attitude, the ridicule should be more properly termed "humor," instead of "satire." In a satirist work, the purpose lies in pointing out problems but not offering solutions.

When Kumar argues that dystopia is a variety of satire, it is correct in the sense that dystopia is the negative side of utopia. It exaggerates or enlarges the problems inherent in utopia. The ideal image represented in traditional utopian writing becomes a distorted one because the problems that are explicitly or implicitly covered in the ideal mode of society are exposed in dystopia. Kumar's argument that dystopian elements are inherent in utopia is also correct because there are already some crevices in the closed form of a traditional utopia. In the case of More's *Utopia*, as Fox shows us, there are some contradictory designs in the construction of ideal social order. In dystopian writing, sometimes the problems in utopia are exaggerated to the degree of absurdity, which generates the effect of a comic spirit as Laurence Davies suggests. When the sense of the ridiculous invites the readers to join the playfulness, Davies argues that laughter,

which is an "unsettling, destabilizing force, antinomian and anarchic," is more utopian than utopia itself (206). Davis says,

> in dystopian discourse, the worst thing in the world is the low point of a curve linking a before and an after. While a less desirable here and now frame the utopian then and there, the then and there of dystopian fiction is framed not only by what is but by what might be. That is to say, both utopias and dystopias work on the reader's sense of possibility, but the dystopia does so by leaving the possibilities open. Thus there is an unruly playfulness in dystopias that has the potential to be more utopian than utopias can be themselves. (205)

Davis interprets the sense of the absurdity in dystopia as the force of playfulness which arouses readers' laughter so that dystopia has the potential of destabilizing the closed and stable status of utopia. However, dystopia is not comedy. The sense of the ridiculous might arouse laughter, but it is laughter with tears. The absurd arrangements in the plot all lead to the fear that something terrible might happen if the so-called utopian plan of the authoritarian government is carried out. In the case of *1984*, in order to consolidate the stability of the authoritarian regime, the government encourages its young citizens to charge any person (especially their family and closed friends) whose thought or behavior is unfaithful to its government[6]. The episode seems incredible, but its absurdity is transformed into the fear that what if this really happens. Therefore, what Davies terms as the "unruly playfulness" should be modified to "terrified playfulness."

Dystopia-machines and traditional-utopia-machines are twins. Dystopia is the fulfilled form of traditional utopia. Dystopia-machines display to us what would happen if the old utopian dream is realized. During the producing process, dystopia-machines cut off the flow from traditional-utopia-machines, keeping the original utopian elements

[6] The episode reminds one of what had really happened during the Cultural Revolution in Mainland China.

and adding more details into their products. If a traditional-utopia-machine produces a detailed description of an alternative society, a dystopia-machine produces an overwhelmingly exhaustive depiction of an alternative world. When a traditional-utopia-machine is criticized for its lack of complex characterization, plot and dramatic interaction, a dystopia-machine adds these elements to enrich its product with even more details. The result is the presentation of a panopticon-like world, a more closed form than that in traditional utopia. A dystopia-machine deliberately generates an extremely closed form so as to enlarge the inherent problems in a traditional-utopia-machine. The product that a traditional-utopia-machine produces is like a perfect, beautiful face made by cosmetics. Removing all the artificial appearance, a dystopia-machine mercilessly exposes the original face of the "ideal" society with a magnifying glass. What a dystopia-machine offers is a sense of absurdity that arouses fear, the fear for the closed form of traditional utopia. Though a dystopia-machine declines to offer better versions of social vision, it is preparing the way for another utopian form to break the self-sustained and enclosed form of traditional utopia. It gradually transforms into another machine, a critical-utopia-machine, to experiment with new ways to represent utopia.

Critical-Utopia-Machines

The rise of a new utopian writing, critical utopia, around the 1960s and 1970s is a transformation of traditional utopian writing. It is a revival of utopian imagination along with criticisms of modern capitalist society. Tom Moylan defines critical utopia as an oppositional utopian writing with the juxtaposition of two societies: one is the society similar with the real world, which is often depicted as a nightmarish one, while the other is a comparatively better society. The "critical" here is used in the Enlightenment sense of critique. Moylan suggests that it is "expressions of oppositional thought, unveiling, debunking, of both the genre itself and the historical situation" (Moylan 1986: 10).

Traditional utopian writing, as he remarks, has been co-opted by capitalism which reduces utopian desire to commodity-defined needs while dystopian writing seeks to present the uselessness of utopian desire. He regards critical utopia as a revival of literary utopia. According to Moylan, the writers of critical utopias who are aware of the limitation of traditional utopia which tends to focus on one particular ideal mode of social vision seek to maintain the utopian imagination without falling into the cliché of envisaging the political blueprint. As a transformed form of the utopian genre, critical utopia is the critique of utopian writing itself and the social formation. Moylan's confidence in critical utopia relies on the openness of its form and the critical distance in its representation. Moylan contends that "the task of an oppositional text is not foreclose the agenda for the future in terms of a homogeneous revolutionary plan but rather to hold open the act of negating the present and to imagine any of several possible modes of adaptation to society and nature based generally upon principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality" (Moylan 1986: 26-7). Moylan uses the term "critical utopia" to distinguish traditional utopia which is often totalitarian and static from the new representation of utopia which keeps a critical distance with the ideal image of utopia.

A critical-utopia-machine produces a self-reflexive product which is conscious of its own finitude. A traditional-utopia-machine seeks to achieve perfection, the state of the Sovereign Good, which represents infinite and eternal happiness. The state is beyond human experiences and is thus unattainable. Therefore, whatever a traditional-utopia-machine produces is the resemblance, or the copy, of the Sovereign Good and it is doomed to fail. That is the reason why a traditional-utopia-machine incessantly produces different images of ideal society insofar as no image is ideal enough. A critical-utopia-machine claims the death of *U*topia—the resemblance of the Sovereign Good. The representation of *U*topia, trying to imitate infinity and eternity of the Sovereign Good, generates the reverse effect—it tends to become finite and

transient since it is a historical product. The attempt to produce the utopian, perfect image based on universality and uniformity is confined to the limitation of representation: the closed form of *U*topia fails to represent the state of perfection. A critical-utopia-machine breaks up with the impossible mission to represent ideality and perfection. Aware of the limitation of *U*topia, a critical-utopia-machine produces a utopia which keeps a critical distance to itself. A critical utopia is an autopoietic, or, self-reflexive, system. Reflexivity engages a reflexive relationship between an observer and the object that s/he observes. In the system of a critical utopia, it is an observer and the object that it observes simultaneously. The system is autopoietic in the sense that a system generates its own observer.

"Autopoietic" here is borrowed from Humberto Maturana's conception of autopoiesis. In *Autopoiesis and Cognition*, Maturana and Varela strive to prove that the cognition of a living system is produced through interactive processes which are determined only by the organism's own organization. In other words, all living creatures have self-generated mechanisms within the boundaries of their organizing systems. The knowledge of the outside world is attained through the perspective produced by the organism itself. According to N. Katherine Hayles's interpretation, Maturana's key insight was to realize that "if the action of the nervous system is determined by its organization, the result is a circular, self-reflexive dynamic. A living system's organization causes certain products to be produced, for example, nucleic acids. These products in turn produce the organization characteristic of that living system (136). Maturana and Varela argue that "[i]t is the circularity of its organization that makes a living system a unit of interactions and it is this circularity that it must maintain in order to remain a living system and to retain its identity through different interactions" (9). That does not mean that a living system is a self-contained and closed system that separates itself with the outside world. All living systems are structurally coupled to

their environments: they have to rely on the outside world to continue their existence. For instance, a human being is connected to his/her environment via the need for food and water. A living organism's perception of the outside world is constructed through its interactions with the environment. From the viewpoint of autopoietic processes, as Hayles notes, "there is only the circular play of the processes as they continue to realize their autopoiesis, always operating in the present moment and always producing the organization that also produces them" (139). Because of their autopoietic processes, all living creatures are in a dynamic rather than static state.

A critical-utopia-machine generates an autopoietic closure. A critical utopia system is a dynamic system which relies on the interactions among its elements. Unlike a traditional-utopia-machine that creates a static mode of utopia, the elements in a critical utopia system are always interacting with one another. These elements, including sociopolitical structures, characterization, plot, dramatic interaction, are connected with one another, generate a "living" utopia. In the alternative society, its characters, especially its protagonist, are interacting with the sociopolitical structure. They conform with or challenge the social institutions. The alternative society produced in traditional utopia is like a construction sample where no one really lives. In a critical utopia system, there are two alternative societies instead of just one. It produces a comparatively better society whereas the existence of this society has to rely on its interactions with the other one. Unlike Maturana's autopoietic enclosure, a critical utopia system has the potential of transcending itself. Aware of its finitude, it keeps a critical distance with itself. The finitude of utopia means the limitation of representation on the one hand and the imperfection of human society on the other hand. Representation inclines to be a closed form since it is dominated by a mater narrative. And, as human society consists of a dynamic assemblage of heterogeneous elements, it is impossible for it to achieve perfection and ideality which have to be maintained in

immobile stability. How to transcend itself? A critical utopia resists the master narrative and distrusts the existence of the perfect and stable model of society. In a critical utopia system, it presents two alternative societies which are connected with one another. The protagonist plays the role of the observer in the system. Unsatisfied with his/her own society, the protagonist manifests the imperfection of this comparatively better society and seeks to resolve the problems. By traveling to and fro between the two contrasted worlds, he/she tries to find solutions. A critical utopia system works by interactive processes which consist in crossing the boundary between the different worlds and connecting them.

Critical-Dystopia-Machines

The resurgence of utopian imagination in the 1960s and 1970s did not last long. It seems that later utopian writers would like to experiment with new forms to express their political aspiration—to resist the hegemony ideology for the minority groups—and their aesthetic aspiration—to subvert the utopian and dystopian traditions. During the 1980s and 1990s, writers tended to choose a new form of dystopian writing, "critical and ambiguous" as Baccolini points out, for "an expression of a new site of struggle and resistance" (18). In his "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited," Lyman Tower Sargent notices the new form of dystopian writing that is obviously distinct from traditional dystopian writing or critical utopian writing since the form contains both utopian and dystopian elements. These new dystopias interrogate contemporaneous socioeconomic structures and their aesthetic predecessors. He suggests to reconsider the concept of dystopia and identifies this new form as "critical dystopia." Why are these new dystopias "critical?" Moylan indicates that the "critical" here suggests "a significant retrieval and refunctioning of the most progressive possibilities inherent in dystopian narrative" (Moylan 2000: 188). "Critical dystopia" is not an entirely new form; instead, it represents "a creative move that is both a continuation of the long

dystopian tradition and a distinctive new intervention," Moylan contends (Moylan 2000: 188). The progressive possibilities inherent in dystopian narrative that Moylan indicates lie mainly in the efforts of the protagonist—her/his growing awareness of the problems in the nightmarish society that s/he lives. Nevertheless, in the dystopian tradition, the protagonist's awareness that something is wrong in his/her society does not lead to a positive result; on the contrary, the protagonist succumbs to the authoritarian regime whose omnipresent surveillance makes his/her escape impossible. Critical dystopias resist the inescapable closed form and the sense of hopelessness. In Baccolini's interpretation, "critical" signifies the possibilities of emancipation by maintaining a utopian core within a work. A critical dystopia's potential of emancipation lies in their ability to deconstruct tradition and reconstruct alternatives. Baccolini writes,

> In this kind of novels, although they describe a dystopian, future society, they also portray surviving and imperfect utopian enclaves within the larger dystopian world. . . The ambiguous, open endings of these novels, as we will see, maintain the utopian impulse within the work. In fact, by rejecting the traditional subjugation of the individual at the end of the novel, the critical dystopia opens a space of contestation and opposition for those groups for whom subjectivity has yet to be attained. (18)

The aesthetic presentation of critical dystopias is not merely characterized by its ambiguous and open endings but also by its resistance of generic conventions. The tendency of generic blurring of critical dystopias reflects the contemporary oppositional culture against "universalist assumptions, fixity and singularity, and pure, neutral, and objective knowledge in favor of the recognition of differences, multiplicity, and complexity, partial and situated knowledges, as well as hybridity and fluidity" as Baccolini proposes (18). Many writers of critical dystopias play with forms, appropriating, transforming or combining different genres. Each text is a hybrid form.

A critical-dystopia-machine is different from a critical-utopia-machine. The autopoietic system that a critical-utopia-machine produces is a closure which differentiates it with other systems. Albeit the potential of transcending itself, it still maintains its own integrity to a certain degree. In other words, it has a boundary that encloses the system so that it can keep a critical distance to itself to observe the problems within itself. The product that a critical-dystopia-machine generates is a tracing of associations of relationship in the social. It is a hybridity that refuses any enclosed form by tearing the traditional master narrative to shreds or blurring the generic boundaries. It is a rhizome-root assemblage, or a multiplicity in Deleuzian sense. Different from trees or their roots, "the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states," Deleuze and Guattari write (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 21). The rhizome is neither a fusion of heterogeneous elements which makes them a whole, nor an amount made by the addition of a variety of different elements. In their words, it

> is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (*milieu*) from which it grows and which it overspills. It constitutes linear multiplicities with *n* dimensions having neither subject nor object, which can be laid out on a plane of consistency, and from which the One is always subtracted (*n*-1). (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 21)

The rhizome is an assemblage of dimensions that are always attached to other dimensions. It ceases to have any relation with the Whole or the One since it keeps on growing and changing. All multiplicities are flat, as they argue, "in the sense that they fill or occupy all of their dimensions: we will therefore speak of a *plane of consistency* of multiplicities, even though the dimensions of this 'plane' increase with the number of

connections that made on it" (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 9; original emphasis). A multiplicity may have a plane of consistency, the territorialization of the system, but it is a temporary condition and it is defined by the outside. If it is defined, signified, territorialized, its territorialization is decided by its momentary looks. A multiplicity resists the fixed identity because it is a becoming process. In a multiplicity, the line of flight, that is, the potential of deterritorialization, accompanies the plane of consistency. Via the line of flight, it is able to connect with other multiplicities and change itself.

Distinct from all its predecessors, a critical-dystopia-machine produces hybrid and fluid products. A critical dystopia might be connected to science fiction, the epistolary novel, the diary, or the historical novel. It has neither beginning nor ending in its story because it is a middle. Its ambiguous, open ending shows that it does not need an ending since it is a process of becoming. The utopian core that Baccolini names as the crucial feature in a critical dystopia can be interpreted as the locus of hope contrasted with the nightmarish world within a work; on the other hand, it signifies the subversive form against uniformity, purity, and fixity. The glimpse of hope that a critical dystopia offers us is its metamorphosis, its resistance of being territorialized.

Conclusion

In the development of utopian literature, no matter how the genre has been transformed, it is closely associated with what society or the social is and could be. The genre has been attacked by many critics who mis-read it as political blueprint or impractical dreams. Their impressions of utopia as the castle in the air mostly come from More's *Utopia*. More's social vision based on the authoritarian and communist regime becomes the stereotype of the genre. As the predecessor of the genre, *Utopia* started an attempt or a possibility to represent the concerns of human society. Utopian literature has undergone several transformations. It did not stop there. These transformations reflect different political and aesthetical aspirations over time. In the

more recent utopian writing, its literary form is often overlapped with science fiction, which is a natural tendency. The development of advanced technology is a rapidly ongoing process, which has been changing human life. It seems that there are more and more new inventions every day and people are accustomed to the impact of high technology. There is nothing new in the world as long as all high-tech imagination could be realized one day. Human beings' reliance on technology and how technology changes human life are important issues nowadays. When science fiction, the genre filled with all kinds of high-tech imagination, is combined with utopia, their combination presents a new result: it explores and examines the possibilities of constructing a new relationship between the human and the nonhuman. Without utopian imagination, science fiction is merely a fantasy of advanced science and technology. Utopian imagination is an envisioning ability. Utopian writers not merely offer their observations of society but their imagination. Utopian imagination is often subsumed under the category of politics. Nevertheless, while politics focus on observations of social and political institutions, utopia endows these observations more lively and detailed imagination though it could be optimistic or pessimistic imagination. As long as people do not cease their concerns with how to improve the society either by envisaging a better one or by criticizing the status quo, utopia will never die.

Chapter Three

Das Ding, Traditional Utopia and Dystopia: The Search for the Utmost Enjoyment in Thomas More's *Utopia* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*

In utopian literature, More's *Utopia* is undoubtedly the most important work. It set a model for the representation of utopia, playing the role of origin of the genre. To claim that *Utopia* is the *origin* of the genre seems contradictory to the conception of utopia as a literary machine which is supposed to be against any concept of center or origin. However, it is undeniable that *Utopia* is an essential starting point—for both its form and content—in utopia as a genre. Is the idea of origin incompatible with the concept of desiring-machines? In Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of desiring-machines, everything is a machine that is a producer and a product simultaneously. What they try to emphasize is that the production of a machine is a process without a goal or an end. As Deleuze and Guattari argue in *Anti-Oedipus*, "it [production as process] must not be viewed as a goal or an end in itself, nor must it be confused with an infinite perpetuation of itself" since putting an end to the process or prolonging it indefinitely "is tantamount to ending it abruptly and prematurely" (5). Production as process is a process of a play of difference. A machine is not an isolated entity; instead, it is always connected with a wide variety of heterogeneous machines. A machine stands in the intersections among different machines. Different intersections also create different products.

The concept of difference, according to Todd May, is both positive and disruptive: "positive in taking series (as well as singularities, desire, active forces, rhizomatic stems, etc.) as irreducible, contingent, constituting forces," and "disruptive in resisting all accounts of these constituting forces that would bring them under the sway of a unifying principle that would make them—or the phenomena they constitute—merely the deviations from or the reflections of one true world or source" (40). The play of

difference, as May designates, consists in resisting transcendence in all of its forms. Deleuze points out that transcendence is the philosophical illusion. According to May's interpretation, the illusion of transcendence is based on the idea that "there is unifying principle—or a small set of principles—outside the planes on which discourse—and other practices—take place that gives them their order and their sense, and that the task of philosophy is to discover that principle or that set of principles" (40). Transcendence involves the idea of center or origin which endows discourses or practices "true" meanings. It assumes that beneath a discourse or practice there is a deep structure or a kernel that determines its meaning. Deleuze attacks the philosophy of transcendence that consists in excavating "truth" from the depths or setting a unifying principle on a peak. In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze writes: "[t]he idea of positive distance belongs to topology and to the surface. It excludes all depth and all elevation, which would restore the negative and identity" (173). Depths or heights, Deleuze attempts to deconstruct the distances which cause transcendence and flatten them on surfaces. Deleuze advocates the philosophy of immanence—the play of difference on surfaces. A surface is a plane which combines a certain amount of heterogeneous elements. A plane has the potential of connecting or being connected with other planes. Deleuze's theorization of differences or multiplicities is a breakthrough of the old illusion of transcendence, but Deleuze's problem is that he can not get rid of the idea of transcendence. In fact, his theorization of immanence relies upon its potential of transcendence. In his theory of immanence, as May argues, the idea of surfaces offers a force or a possibility for a play of differences to be "unified" to a certain degree. If differences are pure singularities that are characterized by their absolute heterogeneity, it is impossible for them to have any possibility to be connected with one another. When some singularities are inclined, to use Nancy's words, towards one another on a certain surface, they are combined together as a temporary Whole. A Whole could be an organism, a text, a genre, a

phenomenon, and etc. However, a Whole confronts a problem, that is, its finitude. Take a text for example. A novel, a movie, or a story has an ending no matter what kind of ending it has. A reader's reading process would change the stable status of a text. During the reading process, the reader interacts with the text and endows it with his/her interpretation. The reader's reading process facilitates the text's transcending its original status. Without something new added into the Whole, it would remain a more or less stable status. In other terms, a Whole needs new elements to transcend its finitude. In this sense, immanence and transcendence are not contradictory concepts.

A Whole can be an origin. The "origin" here does not refer to an essential, irreplaceable, and hegemonic kernel that leads to totality and unity in the traditional sense. An origin is a starting point but its status comes from its unique combination of some heterogeneous elements. Its uniqueness as something original lies in its locating at a particular intersection among different surfaces. An origin does not occupy a privileged locus. It is a starting point with the possibility of being appropriated, deconstructed, or transformed. It has the potential of transcending itself. In the case of utopia as a genre, More's *Utopia* is an origin which offers the genre a unique form and content for the latter writers to appropriate, deconstruct, or transform. The utopian elements which constitutes the unique form in *Utopia* has been explored in the earlier chapter[1]. In its content, it aims to search for the eternal ideal state, that is, the Sovereign Good. The search for the eternal happiness by constructing a harmonious and stable human society is destined to fail since the ideal status is unattainable. The utopian theme of the search for an ideal state has been constantly imitated, appropriated or transformed. Yet, the theme is never given up. Why is the theme so fascinating that many writers still attempt to imitate, transform, or deconstruct the utopian model? In

[1] In Moylan's study of utopian literature, there are three registers in the plot of utopian texts: the iconic register, the discrete register, and ideological contestations. See Chapter Two.

fact, the utopian theme, to search for the Sovereign Good, is an ethical gesture. Though philosophers have diverse explanations regarding what the good is, most of them assume that what human beings are seeking is happiness and, traditionally, as Lacan points out, philosophers tend to link the pleasure with the good. In the case of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, according to Lacan, "Aristotle's thought on the subject of pleasure embodies the idea that pleasure has something irrefutable about it, and that it is situated at the guiding pole of human fulfillment" (Lacan 1992: 13). As far as psychoanalysis is concerned, the pleasure has nothing to do with the good. Lacan argues that Freud's conception of the pleasure principle shows us that the pleasure is a detour which defends us against achieving the Sovereign Good which is *das Ding*, the unattainable and forbidden object. The detour around *das Ding* is indispensable since getting too close to it causes disaster. The extreme morality based on pure and simple application of the universal maxim as Kant proposes in his formulation of the categorical imperative is tantamount to the representation of evil in Sadian ethics. In traditional utopian writing, there is a tendency that the ideal form of human society consists in the exclusion of chaotic, irregular, or irrational human sentiments. The problem is that these traditional-utopia-machines never produce the ideal nation-state so that they keep on searching for it. Why do they fail? Because the ideal nation-state is the Sovereign Good, the forbidden maternal Thing. Some critics, such as Kumar, suggest that dystopia is the distorted form of traditional utopia (Kumar 1987: 100). In fact, the utopian image produced by traditional-utopia-machines, that is, the ideal form of human society featured by the exclusion of pathological sentiments[2], is the inverse form of traditional-dystopia-machines. Or, in other terms, the dystopian representation is the

[2] In Kant's formulation of the categorical imperative, the pathological sentiments are excluded from the pure form of the universal maxim. This point will be elaborated later. The "pathological imperative," according to Adrian Johnston, refers to particularity of individual, such as personal inclinations, desires, wishes, or circumstances.

revenge of pathological sentiments. In this sense, traditional utopia and traditional dystopia are twins for both of them aim to attain the monstrous domain of *das Ding*.

***Das Ding*, Traditional Utopia and the Sovereign Good**

In *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan says that *das Ding* is "the absolute Other of the subject" (52) and "the prehistoric Other that it is impossible to forget" (71). It is evident that *das Ding* is a particular Other in relation to the constitution of subjectivity. Lacan carefully distinguishes the *Ding* and *das Ding*. The *Ding*, in Lacan's definition, "is the element that is initially isolated by the subject in his experience of *Nebenmensch* as being by its very nature alien, *Fremde*" (52). The *Ding* is associated with the subject's first perception of reality, his/her experience that there is an reality outside himself/herself. It is initially isolated by the subject since he/she has to sacrifice part of himself or herself so as to constitute his/her subjectivity. The *Ding* is alien and sometimes hostile because it no longer belongs to the subject. It is the first Other which is necessary for building the subject's recognition of the difference between himself/herself and the outside reality, or the subject would remain in the state of indifferentiation, not aware of the distinction between the subject and the object. *Das Ding* is something different. Lacan writes that

> The whole progress of the subject is then oriented around the *Ding* as *Fremde*, strange and even hostile on occasion, or in any case the first outside. It is clearly a probing form of progress that seeks points of reference, but with relation to what? –with the world of desires. It demonstrates that something is there after all, and that to a certain extent it may be useful. Yet useful for what? –for nothing other than to serve as points of reference in relation to the world of wishes and expectations; it is turned toward that which helps on certain occasions to reach *das Ding*. That object will be there when in the end all conditions have been fulfilled—it is, of course, clear that what is supposed

> to be found cannot be found again. It is in its nature that the object as such is lost. It will never be found again. (52)

Das Ding represents the ultimate ideal state where all the wishes and expectations can be fulfilled. The subject knows that there is such an ideal state because *das Ding* has already been there from the outset. He/she believes that it can bring him/her eternal satisfaction so he/she tries hard to attain the first and the ultimate ideal state. That is why Lacan says that *das Ding* is the prehistoric and unforgettable Other. But paradoxically, it is a lost object and it will not and can not be found again. The subject never gives up seeking it. It seeks "points of references" which can prove that the Thing exists. These points of references are what Lacan says the pleasurable associations that substitute the satisfaction brought by the Thing.

Then, why does the subject seek the pleasurable associations instead of the Thing itself? Why can it not be found again? Richard Boothby maintains that the Thing is not the imaginary other, from which the subject constitutes its ego by looking at the image, nor is it the symbolic other from which the subject could designate a signifier with a signified. It is "the unknowable, unmasterable, and monstrous big Other" as Boothby points out (163). It is, as Lacan argues, at the center of the subjective world but only in the sense that it is excluded. According to Jacques-Alain Miller's interpretation, the Thing is an Other of the Other. It is what

> in relation to the signifying apparatus of the Other, stuffed as it is with what has been translated from the imaginary, constitutes the Other. It doesn't have the signifying structure of the Other, it's the Other of the Other inasmuch as it lacks in the Other. Lacan's assessment of *jouissance* as the Thing is equivalent to the barred Other. It is what turns *jouissance* into the Other of the Other, in the sense of what is missing—of lack—in the Other. (22)

In other words, the Thing is not only an Other, but the lack of the Other. It is non-being

in the signifying structure. It stands in a particular position: it is the exterior once belonged to the subject but excluded by it and yet the subject strives to find it again. When Lacan says that *das Ding* is the beyond-of-the-signified and it is as a function ”of an emotional relationship to it that the subject keeps its distance and is constituted in a kind of relationship characterized by primary affect, prior to any repression” (54), he means that on the one hand *das Ding* involves the primal satisfaction before the subject is castrated in order to enter the symbolic order; on the other hand, since *das Ding* is the absolute void which threatens the subject, the subject has to keep a safe distance from it. In Slavoj Žižek’s words, the Thing is “the absolute void, the lethal abyss which swallows the subject” (Žižek 1997: 81). The Thing is a monstrous Other which offers the unbearable satisfaction, *jouissance*, to the subject. To approach the Thing or to confront it directly means to be swallowed by the void.

In Lacan’s viewpoint, *das Ding* is the maternal Thing, i.e., the desire for the mother. For Lacan, “The desire for the mother cannot be satisfied because it is the end, the terminal point, the abolition of the whole world of demand, which is the one that at its deepest level structures man’s unconscious” (68). The desire for incest is terrifying since it represents the chaotic, unthinkable and unrepresentable state before the subject accepts the symbolic order. Thus, it can not be satisfied since the satisfaction means destruction for the subject. The prohibition of incest which Freud designates as the foundation of the primordial law reveals the fundamental desire of human beings. The beginning of the law, which also marks the beginning of civilization according to Freud, aims to repress the desire of the mother. The incest law draws an essential line between nature and culture. Therefore, *das Ding* is related to the law because without *das Ding* there is no law. Then, how does the law regulate *das Ding*? The maternal Thing represents a primal state of mother-child unity. This primal unity would be given up by the child after the intervention of the father during the process of his/her entry into the

symbolic order. Castration functions to tame the monstrous maternal Thing. The intrusion of the paternal metaphor, in Boothby's words, functions to "submit the desire of the Mother (which is of the order of the Thing) to the law of the Father (which comprises the totality of the signifying system, the structure of the symbolic order)" (178). The signifier plays the essential role as the mediation which "serves simultaneously to link the subject to the Thing and also to keep them separate" (Boothby 177). The monstrous maternal Thing is tamed during the process of symbolization: a limit is imposed between the subject and the Thing. That is, the signifying system establishes a stable relation between the two to ensure that the distance between them would not collapse. Nevertheless, the subject feels nostalgia for the primal unity so that s/he makes efforts to find the lost object again and again. It seems that the subject's efforts are futile, but the process of the unsuccessful search for the Thing is necessary. In Freud's terms, the process is the function of the pleasure principle which is in fact a defense mechanism against the Thing. Lacan regards the pleasure principle as an inertia principle. In Freud's theory of the operation of the neuronal apparatus[3], the pleasure principle functions to discharge part of excitations so as to prevent the psyche from too much stimulation inasmuch as uncontrolled excitations cause destruction of the psyche. The pleasure principle is the mechanism of regulation for maintaining the state of equilibrium in the psyche. In Lacan's interpretation of the pleasure principle, this principle governs the route of the search for the lost object and it "imposes detours which maintain the distance in relation to its end" (58). Although these detours aim to set a limit to the Thing, they compensate the subject for the loss of it by providing pleasurable associations in relation to the lost object. Since the pleasure principle involves the regulation of a certain quantity of excitation, it functions within the limit of pleasure/unpleasure polarity. For Lacan, "pleasure and

[3]Freud formulates this theory in his "Project for a Scientific Psychology." See Chapter One.

unpleasure are the only two forms through which the same and single mode of regulation we call the pleasure principle expresses itself" (58). When the quantities of excitation increase, it will cause unpleasure. To reduce the quantities of excitation to a lower degree causes pleasure. We can say that the pleasure principle is the "unpleasure" principle as Freud originally names it. The search for the Thing is guided and governed by the regulatory mechanism to prevent the subject to gain the ultimate satisfaction. It tells people: "Do not enjoy too much!" If there is any pleasure, it comes from the associations in relation to the Thing but not the Thing itself.

If the subject has to keep its distance from the Thing, is there no trace of it after symbolization? There is a residue of *das Ding* which resists symbolization—the *objet a*. Lacan points out that the *objet a* is "a small part of the subject that detaches itself from him while still remains his, still retained" (Lacan 1981: 62). The status of the *objet a* is ambiguous. Although it is originally part of the subject, it is separated off as an organ. It mediates between the subject and the Other. Boothby proposes that the "*object a* is strangely suspended between the subject and the other" because "it simultaneously designates what is most other in the Other, yet is intimately bound up with subject itself" (160). Boothby links the *objet a* with Lacan's conception of cedable objects in the oral and anal stages in the child's development. In the oral stage, the infant gives up the breast so that the lost object can be desired. The ceding of the breast is necessary because it "brings the desire of the other out of the real, out of the monstrous domain of *das Ding*, and anchors it in a symbolic order" (Boothby 164). The *objet a* is the leftover linked with the pleasant primal experience of the breast, a part of the subject resisting symbolization. The other cedable object of infancy is the feces linked to the demand of the other. At the demand of the other, the infant rejects the feces in his/her toilet training. The *objet a* is produced at the site of the body's orifice, the anus. The rim is the boundary between what is inner/subjective and what is outer/objective. The *objet a*

serves the function of breaking the integrity of the bodily image, but at the same time it is an in-between of the subject and the other. Boothby indicates that as a breaching of bodily integrity, 'the fecal object sites the question of what other monstrosities of the real are hidden and contained by the skin" (167). The *objet a* 's relation to the cedable objects could explain its two faces. On the one hand, it is excremental and worthless; on the other hand, it symbolizes what the subject wants most. The subject would endeavor to find an object to fill in the lack caused by the *objet a* but it never succeeds. The *objet a* is called the object-cause of desire. Why? The object is cast off in order to be desired. Because of the subject's separation from part of itself, the subject is capable of desiring. Boothby maintains that the *objet a* as the cause of desire "is a primordially lost or essentially lacking object, a profoundly negative object which is absent before it can be present, whose non-being precedes its being" (161). The object of desire is already there so that the subject could constitute itself as a desiring subject. In Bruce Fink's interpretation, the *objet a* can be understood "as the object (now lost) which provided that *jouissance*, as a kind of rem(a)inder of that lost *jouissance*" (Fink 1997: 66). It arouses desire but not the lost *jouissance* because desire is the subject's defense against the unbearable satisfaction for the subject. The function of desire takes place in relation to the pleasure principle. It helps the subject gain satisfaction without attaining its end and protects the subject from confronting the Thing directly.

Lacan's conception of desire apparently comes from his moderation of the pleasure principle. The emergence of desire accompanies the moral law and they depend on each other. The relationship between the two is in accord with the relationship between the pleasure principle and the reality principle. Lacan indicates that the function of the pleasure principle resides in the unconscious while the reality principle operates at the level of the thought. The reality principle operates by means of the signifying structure, "present in the order of reasoned discourse, articulatable, accessible

and emerging from the preconscious" (Lacan 1992: 48). This principle involves the ethical principles which consist of the social law and order. It is correlative to the pleasure principle for it makes one submitted to the law of the unconscious—the prohibition of incest. The reality principle is dominated by the pleasure principle. In other terms, any ethical principle is in relation to the law of the unconscious in its deepest structure. In the case of the ten commandments depicted in the *Bible*, as Lacan observes, their meaning is tied to the law of the unconscious that regulates the distance between the subject and *das Ding* insofar as the distance makes speech possible. Without the prohibition of incest, no speech is possible. What lesson do we learn from the fact that ethics is associated with the reality principle as such? Ethics is more than moral obligations. Lacan's point is that ethics "begins at the moment when the subject poses the question of that good he had unconsciously sought in the social structures" (76). He writes,

> And it is at that moment, too, that he is led to discover the deep relationship as a result of which that which presents itself as a law is closely tied to the very structure of desire. If he doesn't discover right away the final desire that Freudian inquiry has discovered as the desire of incest, he discovers that which articulates his conduct so that the object of his desire is always maintained at a certain distance. But this distance is not complete; it is a distance that is called proximity, which is not identical to the subject, which is literally close to it, in the way that one can say that the *Nebenmensch* that Freud speaks of as the foundation of the thing is his neighbor. (76)

The good that the subject desires is the incest. Therefore, there is in fact no Sovereign Good since the good is the maternal Thing, the forbidden good. When the subject begins to tackle his/her relationship with the good in the social structure, it is the beginning of ethics. Ethics starts as the subject's awareness of the necessity to maintain a distance

between the good and itself. Though ethical principles or the moral law is a limit to the maternal Thing, there is a subtle relationship between them. The moral law is very close to the Thing and it might transgress its own limit. That is to say, the moral law could turn to the Thing. For Freud, the commandment that "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" is scandalous because thy neighbor is *das Ding*. "To love thy neighbor as thyself" implies that the distance between the subject and *das Ding* collapses. How can one love *das Ding* as oneself insofar as that means one wishes for one's own destruction? In Lacan's viewpoint, the crisis in ethics comes from the fact that the moral law could be the guarantee of the Thing. The radical ethics consisting of a pure signifying system reveals the function of *das Ding*. It forces the subject to follow the law to the utmost to the extent that it makes the subject to confront *das Ding* directly. In other terms, the radical ethics brings *jouissance* along with it.

Utopian literature begins as an attempt to seek the Sovereign Good. In a traditional-utopia-machine, it produces a series of ethical principles as its imagination of the ideal state of human society. The beginning of utopian literature is in relation to ethics. The content in a traditional utopian text consists mainly of how to regulate human behavior by means of the moral law so as to construct a perfect alternative world. No matter how many good ethical principles are designed by traditional-utopia-texts, the ideal state is never attained; yet, it is never given up. A series of imitations follow the literary model that More set in *Utopia*, such as Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888), William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1891), and Aldous Huxley's *Island* (1962). These are merely part of utopian searches. Apparently, all the utopian plans in these texts are not perfect enough so writers still endeavor to find their utopian worlds. Is there no ultimate ideal state of human society? Lacan's answer would be no because the Sovereign Good is the forbidden good, the monstrous domain of the maternal Thing. All the attempts to search for it have to be

futile. The utopian signifying structure which articulates the wishes for ideality operates as the regulation of the distance between the subject of utopia and the Thing. Each utopian discourse is a detour which separates the subject of utopia from the Thing, but it also offers pleasurable associations for the subject.

The fascination of utopian literature lies in its searching for *das Ding*. In the first two chapters, it has been mentioned that before More's *Utopia* there are many myths, legends and philosophical writings presenting human aspirations for eternal happiness. According to Kumar, these ancient stories include the Golden Age, Arcadia, the Christian Paradise, the land of Cockaygne, the millenarianism, and the ideal city. These pre-utopian stories could be classified into two categories: one involves the aspirations for the harmonious state between human beings and nature, like the myth of the land of Cockaygne, while the other is associated with the wishes for setting the moral order in human society, such as the story of the ideal city. In the legend of the land of Cockaygne, as Kumar points out, here "everything is free and available for asking. Cooked larks fly straight into one's mouth; the river runs with wine; the more one sleeps, the more one earns; sexual promiscuity is the norm; there is a fountain of youth which keeps everyone young and active" (Kumar 1991: 6). It is a world without the paternal law—the prohibition of incest. Does the description of this happy state not reflect one's yearning to return to the primal state of mother-child unity when the child does not have to worry about everything? Are the cooked larks flying straight into one's mouth and the freely running wine not the memory of the mother's freely running milk which satisfies the child's need? Does the imagination that "the more one sleeps, the more one earns" not reflect one's aspiration to return to the mother's womb where the child does nothing but eat and sleep? Does sexual promiscuity not imply the fulfillment of the child's desire for the mother? In contrast, in the description of ideal humanity in the legend of the millenarianism and that of the ideal city, happiness in human life depends upon

rationality, reason and science. Though millenarianism mainly offers people the vision of heaven on earth, it adds a collectivist doctrine—it tells of a life "to be enjoyed by the faithful as a group" (Kumar 1991: 9-10). Basically, it consists of a religious society. The contribution of the story of the ideal city lies in the construction of an ideal form of the city in terms of creation of reason. The ideal city is "the microcosmic reflection of the divinely regulated macrocosmic order" (Kumar 1991: 12). It attempts to reproduce the harmony in the heaven through its unique design of architecture, law and social institutions.

The first category of pre-utopian stories resonates with the nostalgia of mother-child unity and the primal state before there are distinctions between nature and civilization. The second one is based on the construction of the civilized state. Why has utopian literature abandoned indifferentiation in favor of civilization? The answer is that indifferentiation coincides with desire for the maternal Thing which has to be tamed in order to accept the paternal Law. Though the pleasant experience of the primal object has been lost, the associations revolving around the Thing brings the subject substituted satisfaction. The attempt of utopian literature to seek the Thing is actually an attempt to tame it. A traditional-utopia-machine produces a utopian discourse which is a *symbolization* of the process of seeking the Thing. A utopian discourse is a castration which represses the desire for the Thing. It is a detour which leads the subject of utopia away from the Thing. What pleasurable associations does it offer? It provides a hallucination of the Sovereign Good. A traditional-utopia-machine generates a hallucinatory ideal image of human society. The ideal worlds that are constructed in traditional utopian texts aim to displace for the Thing. The traditional-utopia-machines operate mainly for the incessant but unsuccessful searches for the Thing. Since the ideal human society generated by a traditional-utopia-machine is a hallucinatory imagination of the Thing, it would never be perfect. There is no Utopia but many imperfect utopias.

How is the subject of utopia castrated? How does the symbolization of traditional utopia function? During the process of symbolization, the subject of utopia is split between its desire for the primal state without the paternal law and order, i.e., the state of the Thing, and the construction of imaginary rational countries, based on the mirror image of realities. The imagination of an ideal human society relies on its reference to the real world. The image of the ideal world is generated by its reflection of the real world through excluding the bad features there. The image transforms the bad features in reality into good ones. The ideal image is not enough. The Thing must be tamed so that a utopian world can be represented, like the child's choosing to sacrifice the mother-child unity if he/she accepts the Law of the Father to enter the Symbolic Order. The child has to be separated from the mother so as to learn the socially acceptable sign system. When the child learns to speak, s/he is therefore alienated from himself/herself, becoming a subject of language. Traditional utopia as representation is a symbolic system, which materializes its wishes to attain Sovereign Good by words/signs. The process of the representation attempts to materialize the vision by constructing an imaginary country. During the process of materialization, a gap is generated between the vision and the representation. To fill in the gap, a residue, the *objet a*, appears which disturbs the symbolic system and turns it into a desiring machine. Traditional utopia attempts to use symbolic representation to construct an imaginary country by which it (mis)recognizes as a perfect image. However, there always exists the *objet a* to remind it that it is not perfect. The more it attempts, the more it wants. Traditional utopia maintains functioning as long as it keeps desiring. What does it desire? The genre of utopian writing starts as adventures, searching for something like the happy island in More's *Utopia*. It is a spatial writing which delineates experiences of traveling and adventures in ideal places. As Louis Marin indicates, the word utopia coined by More is a word play between ou-topia or nowhere and eu-topia or a happy land. How can utopia

be nowhere and a happy land simultaneously? To answer this question, we have to hark back to the significance of ou-topia. According to Marin, in the word ou-topia, "ou," the Greek negation, is linked with the space the name designates. It is a neutral space, which is "joined to the space of a name and opens up a whole field of possible aims, but which are not the possible terms of truth: neither yes nor no, true nor false, neither one nor the other" (Marin 1984: xiii). Marin argues that "we acknowledge this place, rather than have knowledge of it" (xiii). In other words, ou-topia is a state of nothingness and void. It is an *empty* place, a zero, which is the ground of reality. Is ou-topia not referred to the Thing, "an effect of signifiers that refer to something beyond and which itself can no longer be expressed within the order of signifiers"? If ou-topia is a state of nothingness, eu-topia is the camouflage of the nothingness. The former is an infinite state while the latter is a finite state. The representation of utopia combines the two: the finite materializes the infinite by symbolic representation. However, the finite has to confront the problem of failing to transform the infinite into a finite state. A surplus, the *objct a*, the cause of desire, drives the symbolic representation forward, turning it into a desiring machine. It is pure desire, desiring an unattainable ideal state. That is why there must be the depiction of traveling or adventures in *Utopia*: the endless traveling to seek an ideal world is the kernel of literary utopia. The utopian world is not the ultimate ideal state. It is the starting point of the process of seeking.

In traditional utopia, the iconic register is more important than the discrete register. Its content depends on the description of the ideal society. It is a mirror of reality. The mirror exaggerates the pathological or irrational part of reality. By excluding this part, utopia has an ideal image of itself. Nevertheless, the ideal image is constituted by signifiers without flesh and blood. Lacking of characterization, plot, and dramatic interactions, traditional utopia focuses on the details aiming to set ideal ethical principles for human society. In the case of More's *Utopia*, according to George M.

Logan and Robert M. Adams, these details regarding the institutional arrangements are taken from the discussions of the ideal commonwealth by Plato and Aristotle and some conceptions of ideal polities are appropriated from Tacitus and Plutarch. They point out that the political and social institutions described in *Utopia* are applications of the blueprint devised for the ideal commonwealth in Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*. The question that Plato and Aristotle are concerned is what brings happiness for most citizens in a society. To find the answer of the ethical question, the two philosophers utilize a four-step procedure:

> First, one must determine what constitutes the happiest life for the individual… Second, from these conclusions about the most desirable life, the theorist derives the communal goals whose attainment will result in the happiness of the citizens. Third, it is necessary to form a sort of checklist of the physical and institutional components that the commonwealth must include: a certain size of population will be required, and a certain kind and extent of territory; certain occupational functions will have to be performed; and so on. Finally, the theorist determines the particular form that each of these components should be given in order to assure that, collectively, they will constitute the best commonwealth. (Logan and Adams xxv)

The most important part of the four-step procedure resides in the premise of the happiest life. For Plato and Aristotle, the life of pleasure is associated with the life of the virtue. The virtue, or the moral law, as the regulation of human behavior, brings the happiest life to people. It is the highest principle according to which the whole ideal commonwealth is constituted. Therefore, as Logan and Adams suggest, the passage on moral philosophy "is in fact the cornerstone of the Utopian edifice: it constitutes the first step of the best commonwealth exercise, the determination of the happiest life for the individual" (xxvi). Other principles are derived from the law of the virtue. The

four-step procedure is a deductive approach. All the details, such as the geographical environment, the political system, foreign policies (including how to cope with wars), social relations, the economic system, arrangements of marriage, religion, and education, are subsumed under the law of the virtue to ensure that the framework of the nation-state is the best. These concrete details regarding the customs, culture, law, and social institutions of the commonwealth are important and necessary inasmuch as they concretize the abstract law of the virtue.

In *Utopia*, the ethical principles based on the law of the virtue in More's design consist mainly of uniformity in opposition to individuality. J. C. Davis has observed the major feature in *Utopia*—the uniformity of life—and proposes that behind it "lies a principle amounting to regimentation" (52). In other terms, the operation of the ideal society here consists in powerful public administration and regulations. The system of the law implicitly or explicitly regulates its citizens to conform to standard patterns in their daily life. The purpose, in Davis' observation, resides in reducing discrepancies and individualities in the society. Hence, the whole framework of the ideal society aims to train a group of citizens to become a homogeneous group. How does the uniformity of life work in Utopia the country? Utopia controls its citizens in almost every aspect of their daily life. The principle of uniformity develops a communal lifestyle and a hierarchical social structure. For instance, the civic planning in Utopia the country has a strict regulation of the arrangements of houses and streets. In each one of the blocks, rows of houses face each other and between the housefronts lies a twenty-feet wide street separated them. There is a garden attached to each house since every utopian citizen loves gardening. In a house, there must be a front door leading to the street and a back door leading to the garden. The two doors, "which open easily with a push of the hand and close again automatically, let anyone come in—so there is nothing private anywhere" (More 46). The occupations of utopian citizens are also regulated. Farming

is the major work that every citizen, male or female, has to do. Every citizen is also taught other working skills besides farming, such as carpentry, masonry or linen-making. They work six hours a day because it is enough for producing what they need in their society. Their daily routine runs as the following description: they work three hours before noon, and three hours in the afternoon; they go to bed at about eight o'clock and sleep for eight hours. The regulation makes sure that every citizen is equal in terms of labor. Their social relations are consisted of hierarchical relationships. In a household, the oldest one is the ruler. Husbands are superior to their wives, parents to their children, and the elders to younger family members. Their communal lifestyle is best presented in their dinning custom. Except those who are sick, they share three meals daily in public dinning halls. In the halls, they are served with their quotas of food and no one eats at home. They have a dining arrangement which reveals their hierarchical social structure. Infants and their nurses are assigned in a separate dinning room, while the children above the age of five and teenagers stay with their parents though they either wait on table or stand by in absolute silence. When the food and drink are served, they send the dishes to the elders first and then to others. The custom apparently aims to consolidate the social order based on the patriarchal structure[4]. In their economic system, they despise any monetary system, the origin of the system of private property. Since the system of private property causes many social problems, such as greed, theft and poverty, utopians are in favor of a communal system. In Utopian the country, "where everything belongs to everybody, no one need fear that, so long as the public warehouses are filled, anyone will ever lack for anything for his own use" (More 103).

[4] It seems that the women in Utopia the country enjoy the equal status with the men. For example, women have the right to pursue the knowledge that they are interested in as well as the men. However, as many scholars, such as Albert L. Geritz, have pointed out, the social institutions in Utopia are patriarchal. In a household, the status of women is inferior to their husbands. Mothers have to take care of their children. In case some mothers are not healthy, other women are very "willing" to help them. In their dinning custom, women take the responsibility of cooking and serving dishes. Mothers/women are expected to do nursing and serving jobs. Evidently, the social relations that More designs are hierarchical as well as patriarchal.

During the symbolization of the utopian discourse, as long as the signifying system follows the law of the virtue, it could run smoothly. The imagination of Utopia the ideal country is created by many concrete details that fill up the empty locus of Utopia. Nevertheless, Utopia the imaginary country is not ideal and flawless. The symbolization of the utopian discourse can not run smoothly, or it fails to become a desiring subject of utopia. If it runs smoothly, it becomes a pure signifying system, which comes too close to the Thing. The alternative society that a traditional-utopia-machine generates is not constituted by a stable symbolic system. There is always a spot, i.e., the *objet a*, gazing at it and disturbing its symbolic system. In his study of More's *Utopia*, Alistair Fox suggests that the form and the content of *Utopia* are devised with ambiguity. The story is presented by dramatized dialogues. In Book One, Hythlodaeus, the narrator, and More, the personification of More himself, have a debate about the possibility of the existence of ideal society. Hythlodaeus believes in it but More maintains that the imperfection of human beings is unavoidable. In Book Two, when Hythlodaeus narrates the concrete details of Utopia, More expresses his suspicion of this ideal world. In Book Two, Hythlodaeus's description is repeatedly interrupted by More's questioning. According to Fox, the ideality of *Utopia* is unconsciously disrupted in Hythlodaeus's description by some elements of comic irony and satire. Fox argues that "Hythlodaeus's concluding eulogy of Utopia as the just society invites us to regard it in a way that the representation itself has made impossible, because of the ironies depicted in the account that Hythlodaeus himself seems incapable of seeing" (30). Why would More like to deconstruct the description of ideal society? That More hesitates to reveal his belief of an ideal society is one possible reason. Fox believes that More deliberately "destabilizes the meaning of the work so that the identification of a single, determinate meaning becomes impossible" (13). Later utopian writings might not utilize the representation of dramatized dialogues like that in More's *Utopia*. But like More,

they often introduce a narrator who questions the ideal state constantly. These questions might be answered, but more often than not, they do not have satisfactory answers. The gap/distance between the Sovereign Good and its symbolization, which is already there but disguised, is revealed in these elements of comic irony and satire. These challenges turn the subject of utopia to a desiring subject so that the subject could keep their desire for the Thing. The desire drives traditional-utopia-machines to produce more alternative societies. What if a utopian discourse turns into a pure signifying system? What if the subject of utopia transgresses the limit to the Thing? The desire as defense against the Thing turns to the desire for death. The desire for death here is close to *jouissance*, the impossible enjoyment in the sense that it is unbearable for the subject. When a utopian discourse becomes a pure signifying system, utopia the ideal society which follows the law of the virtue to the utmost turns into a nightmarish world.

Traditional-Dystopia-Machines and the Revenge of the Pathological

How is it possible that utopia the ideal society might become a dystopian one? The answer lies in the relationship between desire and the Law. As Lacan has mentioned, the Law could be the guarantee of the Thing. It does not mean that the Law is the Thing. Lacan says that "Is the Law the Thing? Certainly not. Yet I can only know of the Thing by means of the Law" (Lacan 1992: 83). The relationship between the Law and the Thing is intimate and ambiguous. On the one hand, the Law functions to repress and tame the Thing. On the other hand, the function of the Law generates the effect of seducing the subject to desire for the Thing. In Lacan's interpretation of the ten commandments, he argues that these commandments maintain "the distance from the Thing as founded by speech itself that it assumes its value" (83). These moral regulations function in a tricky way. As far as their literal meanings are concerned, they tell us what we *shall not* do. However, as Lacan indicates, "I would not have had the idea to covet it if the Law hadn't said: 'Thou shalt not covet it'" (83). In other terms, the

Law reminds us what we could do though it tells us not to do it. There is a more easily understood example. We often see signs on the streets telling us "Do NOT abandon your garbage here." These signs never work (unless there are monitors watching people) and interestingly more garbage bags are abandoned under the signs than they are in other places. That is because the interdiction "Do NOT. . ." reminds people that they *could* abandon their garbage here. In the case of "Thou shalt not covet it," Lacan writes,

> the Thing finds a way by producing me in me all kinds of covetness thanks to the commandment, for without the Law the Thing is dead. But even without the Law, I was once alive. But when the commandment appeared, the Thing flared up, returned once again, I met my death. And for me, the commandment that was supposed to lead to life turned out to lead to death, for the Thing found a way and thanks to the commandment seduced me; through it I came to desire death. (83)

The Thing relies on the Law. Though the Thing is supposed to be tamed, through the Law, the subject is seduced to desire the impossible enjoyment that the Thing provides. Lacan names the relationship between desire and the Law as "the dialectical relationship." Desire is not always desire as defense against the Thing. In relation to the Law, desire might turn its direction and becomes the desire for death. The dialectical relationship between desire and the Law is best presented in Kant's formulation of the categorical imperative. It is also the key point to explain why the Kantian ethics is related to the Sadian ethics.

Why does Lacan mention the Kantian ethics particularly? Lacan says that Kant's conceptualization of the universal maxim "glimpsed the function of *das Ding*, although he only approached it by the path of the philosophy of science" (55). A universal maxim is regarded by Lacan as a pure signifying system, "which is the most lacking in a relationship to the individual" (55). A universal maxim as a moral law not merely

involves a principle of regulations; it also arouses the desire for death, i.e., *jouissance*, which "is the most lacking in a relationship to the individual." According to Alenka Zupančič's interpretation, the Kantian ethics is different from "traditional" ethics at two crucial points. The first point is Kant's break with the traditional assumption of morality that consists in determining obligations in terms of the possibility of fulfilling them. Zupančič comments that the Kantian ethics is a demand for the impossible. The impossible here means the desire which is aroused by the moral law. For Zupančič, by "insisting on the fact that the moral imperative is not concerned with what might or might not be done, Kant discovered the essential dimension of ethics: the dimension of desire, which circles around the real *qua* impossible" (3). The Kantian ethics is not concerned with how to restrict human desire. The categorical imperative commands people: "Do your duty no matter what will happen!" The demand ambiguously arouses people's desire. Kant's formulation of ethics includes the dimension of desire. The second point of Kant's break with the tradition, as Zupančič points out, was "his rejection of the view that ethics is concerned with the 'distribution of the good' (the 'service of goods' in Lacan's terms)" (3). According to Zupančič, Kant rejects the assumption that one wants what is good for others as long as what others want is also for one's good. In the Kantian viewpoint, one's good does not reflect others' good. One must be responsible for his/her own moral action. The good does not involve what brings pleasure or happiness to people. The good involves the complete fitness of the will to the moral law.

In Kant's discussion of the Highest Good, he defines it as the complete fitness of the will to the moral law. Lacan indicates that the Kantian good will should be distinguished from any beneficial action. What the good will, the agency of the moral law, demands does not correspond to personal interests or wishes. Sometimes, it demands one to sacrifice one's pleasure or even one's life to fulfill one's moral duty.

Kant proposes that "Complete fitness of the will to the moral law is holiness, which is perfection of which no rational being in the world of sense is at any time possible" (126). Nevertheless, since the notion of the Highest Good is required as practically necessary, Kant has to think a way for a rational being to approach the Highest Good. He solves the problem by suggesting that "it can only be found in an endless progress to that complete fitness" and the infinite progress is possible only under the condition that the rational being is "an infinitely enduring existence and personality" (126). In other terms, the Highest Good could be achieved via the immortality of the soul. Kant also suggests that only endless progress from lower to higher stages of moral perfection is possible to a rational but finite being" (126). According to Zupančič's interpretation, Kant's postulate of the immortality of the soul is a fantasy in the Lacanian sense. The Lacanian fantasy[5] is a defense which protects one against the lack in the Other. What is this fantasy for if not for defending one against the Highest Good, the moral perfection, which is an impossible state? The postulate functions as a fixed image which veils holiness, so it is a fancy that the moral subject could achieve holiness. The endless progress towards the moral perfection is the fancy that the subject could approach the moral perfection via its endless movement. But in fact the subject approaches it in an asymptotic way and never reaches the end. Although Zupančič contends that the postulate of the immortality of the soul should be rectified to the immortality of the body, the logic is the same[6]. The dilemma of the moral subject comes from the fact that

[5] The protective function of fantasy seems similar with that of the pleasure principle, but the two concepts are different. Fantasy involves a fantasy scene which functions like a frozen image on a cinema screen. Dylan Evans indicates that "just as the film may be stopped at a certain point in order to avoid showing a traumatic scene which follows, so also the fantasy scene is a defense which veils castration" (60). The pleasure principle functions as a mechanism of regulations to reduce quantities of excitation to an acceptable level. It is related to the prohibition of incest, the paternal law.

[6] Zupančič comments that Kant's postulate is paradoxical: how can the endless (infinite) progress be the major constituent of a rational but finite being? A rational being has his/her limit, i.e., death. When the body is dead, the soul meets the end and it could not continue its path of the endless progress to attain the good. Then it is not immortal. But if the soul is not confined to the body, it would not need such endless progress since, in Zupančič's words, "in this case holiness could be accomplished instantly" (80). Zupančič argues that Kant's postulate should be changed to the immortality of the body. The body, as she

s/he has her/his limitation. The limitation could be the subject's pathological sentiments (pleasure or pain) or the subject's death. The subject has to transcend the limitation so as to attain the moral perfection but this is an impossible state. The only possible solution of how to transcend the limitation is gained by means of fantasy. As Zupančič suggests, the function of the postulate of the immortality of the soul as fantasy is "to institute the co-ordinates of time and space *outside* of time and space, and thus to enable an infinite, endless progress 'from lower to higher stages of moral perfection'" (82). It assumes that there is an infinite movement of time and space outside the subject's finite experiences of time and space. Zupančič points out that the postulate of the immortality of the soul is problematic at two points. First, the subject's attempt to transcend his/her limitation is no more than the function of fantasy. Second, the Highest Good is not different from the Diabolical Evil. In Zupančič's words, by the notion of the Highest Good, Kant seems to offer the moral subject a peculiar heaven: "if you persist in following the categorical imperative, regardless of all pains and tortures that may occur along the way, you may finally be granted the possibility of ridding yourself even of the pleasure and pride that you took in the sacrifice itself; thus you will finally reach your goal" (82). The conclusion is very similar with that of the Sadian morality. Does the concept of the infinite progress towards the moral perfection regardless of pains and tortures not bear a resemblance to Sade's logic of the infinite suffering of the body towards the ultimate enjoyment regardless of pains and tortures?

In the Kantian ethics, the notion of the Highest Good has to be read together with the concept of the categorical imperative which is the point that Lacan suggests us to read Kant along with Sade. The categorical imperative is a structure of an unconditional

---

points out, is a finite thing that "exists and changes through time, yet approaches its end, its death, in an endless asymptotic movement" (80). The body can not meet its own death too soon. By means of the fantasy, the limits of the body are transcended or surpassed and the subject has the fancy that he/she gains *jouissance*.

ethical injunction, a form consisting in moral universality. It is defined in Kant's famous formula: "Act in such a way that the maxim of your action may be accepted as a universal maxim." In Lacan's opinion, the formula is pursued by Kant to the limit of its consequences: "Act so that the maxim of your will may always be taken as the principle of laws that are valid for all" (Lacan 1992: 77). The ethical imperative is the pure form of the moral law; that is, it is an empty structure without any concrete content. Žižek designates that Kant's ethics is featured by formalism:

> moral Law does not tell me what my duty is, it merely tells me that I should accomplish my duty, i.e. it is not possible to derive the concrete norms I have to follow in my specific situation from the moral Law itself—which means that the subject himself has to assume the responsibility of 'translating' the abstract injunction of the moral Law into a series of concrete obligations. (Žižek 1998: 22)

The problem of this empty form resides in the fact that one may universalize any principle, that is, make it a universal maxim: as long as one follows the maxim and acts as such, one may claim that s/he has done his/her duty. According to Lacan's reading of Sade's *Philosophy in the Boudoir*, Sade universalizes the principle: "Let us take as the universal maxim of our conduct the right to enjoy any other person whatsoever as the instrument of our pleasure" (Lacan 1992: 79). If the principle is universalized or realized, it endows men power to gain their sexual pleasure through endlessly torturing women. As Žižek indicates, the standard Sadian version of the infinite suffering is a young girl "sustaining endless humiliations and mutilations from her deprived torturer and somehow mysteriously surviving it all intact" (Žižek 1998: 16). Lacan's point is that the endless suffering of these women via their bodies also liberates them from the moral obligations that the society imposes on them in their marriage. The infinite suffering brings the torturer as well as his victim gratification of sexual passion through

pain. We can say that the Sadian ethics reverses the logic of Kant's ethics. Žižek comments that the maxim the subject follows is not the ethical demand that asks one to do one's moral duties, but "the injunction to follow to their utmost limit the thoroughly pathological, contingent caprices" that brings one pleasure (Žižek 1998: 17). The Sadian world, though it is the opposite of the Kantian one, consists in the same logic since it follows the universal maxim to the extreme. For Lacan, Sade's conception of sexual passion "opens wide the flood gates that in imagination he proposes as the horizon of our desire; everyone is invited to pursue to the demands of his lust, and to realize them" (Lacan 1992: 79). The pure form of the moral law turns to be too close to the Thing. It might open the flood gates of desire for death. The danger of the Sadian ethics lies in the fact that Sade invites us to transgress the limit to the Thing for gaining the ultimate sexual pleasure, *jouissance*. Since the realization of the maxim causes unbearable consequences for people, Lacan maintains that societies "live very well by reference to laws that are far from promoting their universal application" and they "prosper as a result of the transgression of these maxim" (77-78).

The means that Sade proposes for one to gratify his/her sexual passion is through pain. For Lacan, pain is the link between Sadian ethics and Kantian ethics. In his reading of *The Critique of Practical Reason*, Lacan finds an interesting point in Kant's formulation of the moral law: Kant proposes to exclude all pathological sentiments from the criteria of the moral law. The exclusion of pathological sentiments turns Kant's ethics to a radical one and it is the key point which makes "the Sadian world conceivable" as Lacan designates (79). Although Kant claims to remove all pathological sentiments from the realm of the moral law, he strangely endows one sentiment—pain—a special status. Kant defines pain as *a priori* sentiment that the subject necessarily undergoes when he/she faithfully follows the moral law. In other terms, pain is the correlative of the moral law. For Lacan, the pain as the correlative of

the moral law is in accord with Sade's conception of sexual passion via pain. In Sade's notion of pain, both the torturer who tortures and humiliates his victim and the victim who is tortured and humiliated gain their *jouissance*. Kant's notion of pain also promises the moral subject an ethical heaven which offers he/she the impossible pleasure as long as the subject is capable of enduring the pain that comes along with obeying the moral law. In one passage, Lacan writes,

> For in order to reach *das Ding* absolutely, to open the gates of desire, what does Sade show us on the horizon? In essence, pain. The other's pain as well as the pain of the subject himself, for on occasions they are simply one and the same thing. To the degree that it involves forcing an access to the Thing, the outer extremity of pleasure is unbearable to us. (80)

The Kantian heaven is the same as the Sadian one since this heaven is nothing other than *das Ding*. The pain is the desire for death which forces an access to the Thing. It is the force beyond the pleasure principle, beyond the regulations which protect the subject from approaching the Thing. The protective distance between the subject and the Thing collapses. It can explain why Kant maintains that it is impossible to accomplish a pure moral action since the accomplishment means death for the moral subject. Kant demonstrates this point in a well-known example: are you willing to spend a night with a beautiful lady under the condition that after the night you will be hanged? Kant's answer is no. However, in the Lacanian viewpoint, Zupančič argues that the case is possible since the moral act involves *jouissance*. Someone might want his own death to exchange for the unbearable enjoyment. *Jouissance* is the kernel of the moral law. The desire for *jouissance* may induce the subject to change the normal situation whether he/she wants it or not. Under the normal situation, it is impossible to imagine that someone will be willing to spend a night with a lady even though he knows that he has to pay his life. Nevertheless, the case is possible since the law

arouses our desire for *jouissance*.

According to Zupančič, Lacan's interpretation of the indistinguishability of the Kantian ethics and the Sadian ethics shows us that any moral act "worthy of the name is by definition 'evil' or 'bad' (or will be seen as such), for it always represents a certain 'overstepping of boundaries', a change in 'what is', a 'transgression' of the limits of the given symbolic order (or community)" (94). If the law aims to set boundaries, its correlative—*jouissance*—is also there which induces one to overstep the boundaries, to change the normal situations, or to transgress the limits of any symbolic order. The lesson that Lacan's reading of ethics teaches us, as Zupančič points out, resides in the fact that ethics is by nature excessive. Traditional thinking of ethics tends to regard ethics as "a set of norms which restrict or 'bridle' desire—which aim to keep our conduct (or, say, the 'conduct' of science) free of excess" (Zupančič 4). However, the attempt to restrict desire does not always work successfully. No matter how restrictive a legal system is, it fails to eliminate deviancy or abnormality completely. It is interesting to notice that sometimes the more rigid and restrictive a legal system or the moral law tends to be, the more deviant behaviors come along with it. The elimination of one deviancy accompanies another. In human histories, there have been many examples demonstrating the phenomena. Legal systems, moral standards, or customs never restrict desire effectively. There is an old Taiwanese saying that tells us: "A government which administers its citizens via extremely strict legal systems induces more acts of theft." The saying is surprisingly Lacanian. Does it not try to reveal us the relationship between the Law and desire? The ethics which merely emphasizes the restriction of desire may cause unexpected or surprising consequences. Zupančič urges us to rethink ethics since the traditional understanding of ethics "fails to acknowledge that ethics is by nature excessive, that excess is a component of ethics which cannot simply be eliminated without ethics itself losing all

meaning" (4).

Because ethics is by nature excessive, the Sovereign Good and the Diabolical Evil are two sides of the same coin. On the one hand, both of them strive to search for the ultimate state of enjoyment by means of following their own maxims to the utmost. The price they have to pay is to sacrifice the pathological motives. In the case of the Sovereign Good, it eliminates all the personal interests, wishes and desire, while the Diabolical Evil reverses the logic: it holds all the pathological motives and eliminates all the normal moral standards as the Sadian world has displayed us. The result is, what is eliminated takes its revenge. While the Sovereign Good might turn to the Diabolical Evil, the Diabolical Evil could also turn to the opposite side. The relationship between Utopia the ideal country and Dystopia the nightmarish world is parallel to that of the Sovereign Good and the Diabolical Evil. The old debate regarding whether utopian writing is practical or not neglects its original ethical intention, that is, to seek moral perfection, which is the basis of ideal human society. As is mentioned earlier, the constitution of utopia the ideal country is based on the principle of the virtue which dominates the whole framework of the country. The principle of the virtue is tantamount to the formal structure of a categorical imperative. Its maxim goes as: "Follow all the moral standards that I tell you and then you will attain the perfect and eternal state of human society." The details, or the detailed moral regulations, are filled in by the utopian authors as long as these moral standards correspond to the principle of the virtue. The details in different representations of traditional utopian writing are not the same because they are not as important as the demand of the utopian maxim: "Follow my instructions!" Any one can fill in a content that s/he thinks as corresponding to the principle of the virtue. Since the purpose of traditional utopian writing is to attain the Sovereign Good, the eternal happiness of human society, it reduces what deviates from the normal moral standards to the minimum. Provided the subject of traditional utopia

tries to follow the maxim to the utmost, it confronts the danger of being reversed to its radical opposite, the subject of dystopia. Or, it risks the possibility of forcing an access to the Thing.

In Chapter Two, it has been stated that the representation of dystopia is a satire of that of traditional utopia in the sense that the two are contrasted as Kumar indicates. For Kumar, traditional utopia and dystopia depend on each other. Traditional utopia is the original while dystopia copies it in a satirical way. He maintains that "[i]t is utopia that provides the positive content to which anti-utopia makes the negative response" (Kumar 1987: 100).[7] Dystopia rearranges the material that it draws from traditional utopia and "reassembles it in a manner that denies the affirmation of utopia" (Kumar 1987: 100). Kumar contends that dystopia is the distorted image of traditional utopia. Nevertheless, dystopia is not merely the distorted reflection of traditional utopia; it is an evil image which shows its revenge on Utopia the ideal country which is generated by excluding all the bad features in the morally corrupted society in reality. It denies the existence of pathological materials. Dystopia exaggerates all the bad features and eliminates the possibilities of moral perfection. Utopia the ideal country is the mirror of dystopia. It reverses the image of moral perfection and turns it to the image of moral corruption. A traditional-utopia-machine produces a perfect image of human society while a dystopia-machine generates the worst image of the human world. If we say that traditional utopia is dominated by the principle of the virtue, dystopia satirizes this principle and distorts it to the principle of the vice. The principle of the vice, like the

[7] Here, the term "utopia" used by Kumar is in the sense of traditional utopia. Kumar uses anti-utopia to be contrasted with utopia. In this dissertation, "dystopia" is used instead of "anti-utopia." The term "anti-utopia" seems to emphasize its break with utopia as if they are two opposite and unrelated concepts. "Dystopia" is more appropriate than "anti-utopia." On the one hand, the etymology of dystopia (*dys* + *topia*) refers to an imaginary bad place. "Dys" here means bad, abnormal, or difficult. In dystopian writing, it often describes a terrible, bad and abnormal world. The term "anti-utopia" has no significance of "the bad place." If "anti-utopia" depends on utopia as Kumar argues, they are opposite *and* related concepts. "Anti-utopia" does not imply its ambiguous relationship with traditional utopia—it could turn to utopia the ideal country and traditional utopia might become dystopia. "Anti-utopia" should be the term which refers to the writing which is against any form of utopian writing.

Sadian maxim “Enjoy your sexual passion!”, demands people to follow the law of the vice. It also has its own maxim and attempts to universalize it. It tells people “Follow all the pathological criterion that I tell you and you will achieve the state of the Diabolical Evil.” As long as the maxim is followed faithfully, it is not very important what specific details are filled in. Dystopian writers have imagined all kinds of deviant, abnormal, and bad rules, legal systems, and social institutions to fill in the formal structure of the pathological imperative. What is more, dystopia adds certain details which are lacking in traditional utopia—complex characterization, plot, and dramatic interactions. Through these details, it reveals how the characters living in a dystopian world struggle or strive to follow the law and order based on the law of the vice even though they have to sacrifice something of their own. All the details are depicted with a tone of malice. The law and order seen in a dystopian world not just deviate from the normal standards; most of the time they deliberately challenge the whole moral order in reality. The law and order are maliciously absurd. They seem to have the tendency of causing pain and suffering for people. The pain and suffering are caused by the loss of freedom. In traditional utopian writing, the ideal human society consists in communal lifestyle or communism to a certain degree. Dystopian writing reverses the ideality of communal lifestyle to evil fascism. In a dystopian world, the authoritarian regime deprives its citizens of their privacy and individuality. The representation of dystopia is more like a test of how evil the human society could be.

The communist society in George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a typical dystopian world. Here, the communist society is transformed into a terrible fascist one where the government is controlled by a small and mysterious group of leaders who call themselves “Big Brother.” The totalitarian regime governed its people by means of universalizing a maxim: what Big Brother commanded was the law. Therefore, when the protagonist, Winston Smith, tried to hide a book which was not told or written in

any legal regulation as a forbidden item, he understood that hiding the diary "was not illegal (nothing was illegal, since there were no longer any laws, but if detected it was reasonable certain that it would be punished to death, or at least by twenty-five years in a forced-labour camp" (8). When Smith said that there were no longer any laws, it did not mean that there really were not any laws. It meant that in this society they no longer institutionalized specific laws since what Big Brother commanded was the only law. Anything which contradicted the instructions of Big Brother was illegal. In the case of Smith's hiding a diary, since the Party forbad its people to maintain any written form of memory, to hold a diary was not allowed. The other example is Big Brother's attempt to change history. Smith worked in the Records Department of the government. His work was to rectify the mistakes of official speeches, phrases and forecasts that Big Brother and the Party had made. Since what Big Brother/the Party said was the truth, the mistakes had to be erased. For instance, the Ministry of Plenty, which governed the distribution of the goods, had made a promise that there would be no reduction of the chocolate ration during the year Nineteen Eighty-Four. Nevertheless, the Ministry had to reduce the chocolate ration because of the shortage of the goods in April. Smith's work was to change the past story and to "substitute for the original promise a warning that it would probably be necessary to reduce the ration at some time in April" (42). The Party constantly rectified its mistakes and erased the past memory to ensure what it said was always true. The Party had issued many contradictory and absurd instructions to consolidate its status and power. Then, how could it convince its citizens to conform to their instructions? It persuaded its citizens to follow the maxim because "as long as you follow what the Party/Big Brother commands, you will have a happy life some day." The shortage of food and goods, the constant wars with their enemies, and the loss of freedom were the necessary inconveniences or sacrifices that its citizens had to suffer from. If they could endure the suffering, they would achieve the ultimate "happiness."

Some docile citizens followed the instructions of the Party with loyalty and believed what Big Brother/the Party said firmly. Smith's wife, Katherine, is the representative of the steadfast believers of the Party. She "had not a thought in her head that was not a slogan, and there was not imbecility, absolutely none that she was not capable of swallowing if the Party handed it out to her" (69). A party member like Katherine would not feel terrible or disappointed about the society they lived in since they did gain satisfaction by obeying the law of the Party.

The maxim that the Party demanded its people to follow is buttressed by its political systems and social institutions. The administration of the Party consisted of four ministries: the Ministry of Truth, which was in charge of affairs regarding news, entertainment, education and the fine arts, the Ministry of Peace, which was responsible for war affairs, the Ministry of Love, which maintained law and order, and the Ministry of Plenty, which concerned itself with economic affairs. The concrete details regarding the function of these political organizations are described with a tone of absurdity and malice. The real functions of the four ministries are the inversion of their titles. The function of Ministry of Love has nothing to do with teaching people how to love others. On the contrary, it maintained law and order by means of hate. For example, all the Party members had to join an activity—the Two Minutes Hate—regularly. During every session of the Two Minutes Hate, there was an object of hate, a traitor of the Party. Once a person was accused as the Enemy of the People, all "subsequent crimes against the Party, all treacheries, acts of sabotage, heresies, deviations sprang directly from his teaching" (14). Though the traitor escaped from the country, he still hatched his conspiracies against the Party. It is not important whether there was such an evil traitor. The "Enemy of the People" is an instrument of the Party to maintain law and order: by arousing its people's hate towards the evil person who did everything harmful to the Party, the Party consolidated its people's loyalty to its law and order. The Ministry of

Truth ironically took charge of erasing and rectifying the past memory: there was no other truth than what the Party said. The Ministry of Peace never made real reconciliations with the enemies of the country. The Party had to "declare" war on some countries regularly so it could claim that it won victories over its enemies. The Ministry of Plenty never provided plentiful supplies. In Smith's memory of the period during which the Party had governed the country, there "had never been quite enough to eat, one had never had socks or underclothes that were not full of holes, furniture had always been battered and rickety, rooms underheated, tube trains crowded, houses falling to pieces, bread dark-coloured, tea a rarity, coffee filthy-tasting, cigarettes insufficient—nothing cheap and plentiful except synthetic gin" (62-63). The irony here resides in the fact that the Party reversed traditional social values and moral law and built its own law and order. The Party destroyed almost all the old values and customs, such as family love, friendship, romantic love, and enjoyment of sex. Children were encouraged to spy on their friends or parents for the Party; it was impossible to make real friends because it was hard to detect whether a person was a member of Thought Police whose work was to arrest those who behaved unfaithfully to the Party; there was no longer any romantic love since the function of marriage was to make babies. The Party advocated sexual puritanism for two reasons: on the one hand, "the sex instinct created a world of its own which was outside the Party's control and which therefore had to be destroyed if possible," and on the other hand, "sexual privation induced hysteria, which was desirable because it could be transformed into war-fever and leadership" (139).

This dystopian world in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is similar with the Sadian world. Both of them reverse the moral law by transforming the principle of the virtue into the principle of the vice. The principle of the vice is their universal maxim which is realized to the utmost. They both try to convince people to endure suffering and pain so as to

gain the ultimate enjoyment. But the difference between them lies in the content of suffering and pain: the instruction of the Sadian world is that "the infinite suffering of the body brings you to the heaven," while the dystopian world in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* instructs its people to endure the infinite suffering of the mind. The Sadian world encourages people to attain sexual passion through tortures and humiliations of the body. The Party teaches its people the necessity of being constantly in war, being slaved and being ignorant—"War is peace; freedom is slavery; ignorance is strength" (6). The Party deprives its people of freedom, not just the freedom of body—traveling or moving without restraints—but also the freedom of mind—thinking or writing freely. Its people suffer from the loss of free will. If, in Lacan's words, the Sadian maxim liberates the victims "from all the duties that civilized society imposes on them in their conjugal, matrimonial and other relations" (79), the law of the Party also lifts its people's burdens that are imposed on them by the freedom of gaining knowledge. What the Party offers its people is the paradoxical concept of the liberation of the mind: ignorance and slavery are happiness. The concept justifies the Party's totalitarian means of controlling the people: the more freedom the people lose, the happier they should be. When the people totally lose their freedom, they will attain the state of the ultimate happiness. Therefore, the dystopian world here is panopticon-like. There are monitors spying on people's behavior in all buildings. Disguised members of Thought Police hiding somewhere are always ready to record crimes of someone and arrest them. Friends, colleagues, family members spy on one another all the time. The panopticon-like world reduces privacy and individuality to the minimum to ensure that people have the least freedom. The loss of freedom as the route to ultimate happiness is the fantasy which veils the Thing. It is a fantasy that to transgress the limit to the Thing is possible though it is actually a protective function against the Thing. The fabrication of the fantasy aims to coax the people of the Party that there is a possibility to gain eternal happiness as long as they

follow its law and order. The fantasy fixes the people's desire there so as to prevent them from confronting the Thing directly.

What if some people do not want this kind of happiness the alternative world promises to provide? What if they want to transgress the fantasy? Like Utopia as the ideal country, the dystopian world in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* does not run smoothly. The symbolic system of the dystopian representation is not stable here. The *objet a* hides somewhere in the system, reminding people that the real happiness is behind the fantasy of the loss of freedom. It seduces people to transcend the enclosure of the dystopian world. In the story, the Party tried to erase the past memory so that its people could not compare the past with the present. Nevertheless, there were some traces left behind. The junk shop which sold some old, useless or even forbidden items strangely co-existed with the world which was eager to destroy the past. It seduced Smith to go inside for searching for the past memory. The first time when he went there, out of the "suicidal impulses" (97), he bought a diary because he would like to keep his own memory secretly. The second time there, he was fascinated by a lump of coral. The appeal of the coral did not lie so such in its beauty "as the air it seemed to possess of belonging to an age quite different from the present one" (99). For Smith, it was attractive because of its uselessness. The coral "was a queer thing, even a compromising thing, for a Party member to have in his possession" (99). He bought the coral, "the coveted thing," regardless of the risk (99). He tried to retain something from the past which proved that there was a past. Is the coral, "the coveted thing," not the *objet a*, the useless and queer thing, which seduces one to transgress the boundary between the Thing and the subject? It aroused Smith's desire for *jouissance*. It induced him to transgress the law and order of the Party. It tempted him to commit crimes which might cost him his life. And Smith did pay his life for his succumbing to the temptation. The Party sentenced traitors death or long-life labor in forced-labor camps for their disloyalty. One traitor's death might

eliminate one disturbing factor in the dystopian world, but the *objet a* which disguised itself by many forms was still there disturbing the stability of the world and ruined its enclosure.

Conclusion

Utopia is ambiguous. In the case of More's *Utopia*, some readers regard it as an ideal world while others find the "ideal" world unbearable. The same contradictory responses occur in the interpretations of dystopian texts. In the case of Aldous Huxley's *The Brave New World*, most readers feel horrible about the hierarchical society dominated by a small group of leaders. It seems incredible that some readers regard the world in *The Brave New World* as a perfect one.[8] From the Lacanian point of view, opposite readings of a traditional utopian or dystopian text are possible. If a traditional-utopia-machine attempts to produce an image of the Sovereign Good—a world of moral perfection, a dystopia-machine endeavors to generate an image of the Diabolic Evil—a world of moral corruption. The Diabolic Evil is the inversion of the Sovereign Good. The inversion may cause the indifferentiation of the two. In the Kantian sense, the Sovereign Good is achieved by universalizing the moral law to the level of the maxim. According to Zupančič, the Diabolical Evil occurs when we "elevate opposition to the moral law to the level of the maxim" (90). She argues that "In this case the maxim would be opposed to the law not just 'negatively' (as it is in the case of radical evil), but *directly*" (90). That means if we want to oppose ourselves to the moral law we have to act against it to the utmost even if the acting implies that we have to sacrifice our self-interests. Once we make it a maxim to act against the moral law, we have to follow the maxim no matter what consequences come along with it.

[8] One of my students was fascinated by the hierarchical world in *The Brave New World*. She maintained that the people there had real happiness since they were categorized according to their intelligence and ability. As long as the people accepted their status as the lower rank or the higher rank, they could be happy. She said: "This is a perfect world for people, especially for the imbecile people. They can have a happy life since they are offered stable though low-paid works without being aware of their unequal status."

Then, the definition of the Diabolical Evil is not different from that of the Sovereign Good. In Zupančič's words,

> Given the Kantian concept of the moral law—which is not a law that says 'do this' or 'do that', but an enigmatic law which only commands us to do our duty, without ever naming it—the following objection arises: if the opposition to the moral law were elevated to a maxim or principle, it would no longer be an opposition to the moral law, it would be the moral law itself. (90)

How is it possible to oppose oneself to the moral law at the level of the moral law? Zupančič notes that "[o]pposition to the moral law would itself be a moral law, since there is no way of introducing any distinction between them at this level" (91). Therefore, there is no distinction between the Sovereign Good and the Diabolical Evil at this level. The ambiguity of a utopian world lies in the indistinguishability of moral perfection and moral corruption. If a utopian world aims to create the perfect law and order, it has to elevate the law and order to the level of maxim. The perfection or ideality of this world resides in the fact that it demands its people to follow the maxim no matter what consequences come along with it. When it demands its people to sacrifice too much, the result is the inversion of its original intention: the ideal world turns to a dystopian one.

Utopian literature begins as an attempt to search for a perfect and ideal state of human society. However, as Freud and Lacan have told us, it is an impossible mission since the Sovereign Good lies in the domain of *das Ding*. The dilemma of traditional-utopia-machines comes from its persistence to search for the Sovereign Good. In order to attain the goal, it follows the principle of the virtue and elevates it to the maxim. What particular details should be filled in the maxim is not important. Its purpose is to demand people to follow its instructions. Traditional-utopia-machines generate many texts which consist of a wide variety of details regarding how to

construct an ideal society. Their instructions never work successfully. The maxim can not be fulfilled since to follow it to the utmost forces people to confront *Das Ding* directly. It is the fate of traditional-utopia-machines to produce beautiful but inutile images of ideal society. To search for the Sovereign Good is an endless but futile attempt. Since to build an ideal human society based on moral perfection is the demand for the impossible, the concept of "ideal" and "perfect" society has to be re-considered. Critical-utopia-machines try to debunk the myth of the Sovereign Good. They give up seeking any ideal or perfect image of human society. They bring what is excluded—the pathological materials—back. Pathological materials and non-pathological ones co-exist in a society. In other words, critical-utopia-machines strive to transcend the impossible demand of the Sovereign Good. This point will be explored further in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four

Autopoiesis, Self-reflexivity and Critical Utopia: The Seeking of the Possible Good in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*

The utopian theme—to search for the Sovereign Good, as I have argued in Chapter Three, is destined to fail since the Sovereign Good is an impossible state. Though utopian writers tried to take efforts to retain the perfectivity in their utopian vision, traditional utopia met its end. They confronted the predicament that there would never be any perfect model of society. The revival of utopian writing in the 1960s and 1970s was an attempt to retain the representation of utopian vision. This new form of utopian writing—critical utopia—reactivates the genre. As a renewed form, its significance lies in the transformation of the old utopian theme while retaining the utopian core. It recognizes that there is no ultimate good state; yet, there is the possible good. The ideality that traditional utopia insists to seek is transformed into the possible good in the representation of critical utopia. The possible good is future-oriented but it has a self-reflexive domain. Here, self-reflexivity refers to utopia's maintaining a critical distance to itself. As Moylan has suggested, critical utopia is a critique of utopian writing. Critical utopia consists in "expressions of oppositional thought, unveiling, debunking, of both the genre itself and the historical situation" (Moylan 10). For Moylan, the critical distance in critical utopia is generated by the opposition of two alternative societies in its representation where a better society is contrasted with a bad society. The better society is not depicted as a perfect one as it would be presented in traditional utopia. It merely offers *possible* solutions for the problems in the bad society. In some critical utopia texts, the crisis—the problem of stagnation which often occurs in traditional utopia—of the better society, the more utopian one, is presented. Critical utopia reveals the problem of traditional utopia: the perfection of society is an illusion.

Moylan's theory of critical utopia centers on utopia's self-awareness of its imperfection. Although he points out that critical utopia aims to "hold open the act of negating the present and to imagine any of several modes of adaptation to society and nature based generally upon principles of autonomy, mutual aid, and equality" (27), how is the self-awareness generated? And how does the self-awareness turn to a positive force which regenerates the better society[1]? He avoids the questions. His reading of critical utopia is far from satisfactory.

My intention here is to offer another reading of critical utopia. Critical utopia is a transformation of traditional utopia and it is also a unique literary form. It inherits its utopian ancestor's attempt to provide a utopian vision though it abandons the representation of an ideal image which tends to be static and rigid in traditional utopia. Paradoxically, its utopian vision consists in a critique of itself. I will argue that the uniqueness of critical utopia consists in its self-reflexivity. This self-reflexivity is not merely a reflection of itself. While it observes itself, there is an other disrupting the stability of the representation and driving it to transcend its enclosure. As I have mentioned in Chapter Two, critical utopia is analogous to what Maturana and Verela call the autopoietic system. Critical utopia as an autopoietic system consists of the interactions between the two contrasted societies. The system generates an observer that observes the system itself. In other terms, the autopoietic system is featured by its self-reflexivity. The self-reflexivity of critical utopia is related with the presentation of the two societies. The bad society is often similar with the real society. The better society offers possible solutions for the problems in the bad society. It seems that the two societies are hostile to each other: one represents what the other does not want to be like. Nevertheless, the two have a unique link. In the representation of critical utopia,

[1] Since in the representation of critical utopia there are two contrasted alternative societies, to distinguish the two, I will name the better one as utopia the better society and the worse one as the bad society.

there is always a protagonist who travels to and fro between the two societies. He/she is more than a visitor. S/he observes the conditions of the two societies. Does it mean that the observer stands outside of, or, transcends, the object that he/she observes? In fact, the observer is generated by what he/she observes. The observer is a product of the observed, so there is a gap between them. The gap is where the critical distance appears in critical utopia. We can say that the gap is the other *within* the representation of critical utopia. To use the Lacanian term, the other is the *objet a* which is constitutive of the subject though it is lost at the outset. This peculiar other plays an essential role in the representation: it disturbs or disrupts its integration and stability. This other is a positive force that inspires the dynamic interactions inside the representation and it is also the force that propels its critique of itself.

Critical Utopia and Autopoietic Systems

The representation of traditional utopia consists of the description of the ideality of a society. The ideal society it produces is static, lacking of dynamic interactions, while a real society is featured by its dynamic changes and autonomy. A society should be regarded as a living system which is composed of dynamic relations of its components. Like an organism, a society is autonomous in the sense that it generates its own identity by itself: the people of the society are aware that they belong to the same community. A society is what Maturana and Varela refer to as an autopoietic system. In the representation of critical utopia, the description of the alternative societies discards the traditional way of creating frozen images of ideal society. Critical utopia produces presentation of societies as autopoietic systems whose interactions make critical utopia itself an autopoietic system. The term "autopoiesis" was coined by Maturana and Varela. The suffix "poiesis" signifies creation or production. As Maturana points out, their intention is to invent a word that "could directly mean what takes place in the dynamics of the autonomy proper to living systems" (xvii). Their formulation of the concept of

autopoiesis intends to explain the autonomy of living systems from a biological perspective. The theories of evolution and genetics explicate the transformation of the species and the processes of reproduction, ignoring the question that how autonomy is produced. The fact that an organism is a *living* system lies on the one hand in its unique properties which can be explained from its DNA structure; on the other hand, there must be an autonomous nature which is associated with the organism's recognition of its identity. Maturana and Varela attempt to explicate the autonomy of living systems through biological phenomenology which is based on the assumption that "there is an organization that is common to all living systems, whichever the nature of their components" (Varela 4). The organization they refer to means "processes and relations between processes realized through components," which is associated with the generation of the knowledge of a living system that there is a distinction between other living systems and itself (Varela 6). A living system generates an observer, or an self-awareness, which knows that it is different from others. The theory of autopoiesis centers on the *relations* of the components of a living system. According to Maturana and Varela,

> *An autopoietic system is organized (defined as a unity) as a network of processes of production (transformation and destruction) of components that produces the components that: (1) through their interactions and transformations continuously regenerate and realize the network of processes (relations) that produced them; and (2) constitute it (the machine) as a concrete unity in the space in which they exist by specifying the topological domain of its realization as such a network.* (78-79; original emphasis)

It is a self-making system because the relations of its components are characterized by its circular organization. The system itself is a unity and the dynamic interactions among its components produce new relations which propels the generation of new

relations between the system and its components; these new relations results in another production of new relations within the system. The circularity within the system keeps it working continuously in order to maintain its homeostasis. Continuous perturbations lead to transformation or destruction of the relations of its components, which stimulate the production of new relations in the network to cope with the changes inside the system so that the system can maintain a stable state. Therefore, an autopoietic system is living because it has a dynamic network of processes of production within itself.

Then, why is an autopoietic system autonomous? How is it aware that it is an entity? There is a metadomain in the system. An autopoietic system produces an observer that recognizes itself as a distinguishable entity, but "he recognizes it only to the extent that he defines a metadomain in which he can operate with the entity that he characterized" (xxiii). As has been said, an autopoietic system is characterized by its having a domain of dynamic interactions. Varela indicates that "this domain includes interactions with the observer who can specify for it a domain of relations" (8). The system generates an observer that observes the system itself so the observer is also the determined component of the system. According to Hayles's interpretation, the act of observation involves a reflexive spiral. The dynamic interactions of the system generate an observer while the interactions between the observer and the system produce another domain of interactions. Observing is a recursive process and thus the observer has a dynamic relationship with the system. As Maturana and Varela indicate, in the case of human beings, "[w]e become *observers* through recursively generating representations of our interactions, and by interacting with several representations simultaneously we generate relations with the representations of which we can then interact and repeat this process recursively, thus remaining in a domain of interactions always larger than that of the representation" (14). The generation of the observer results from the self-reflexivity of the system, which leads to the paradoxical relationship between the

observer and the system: although the observer belongs to the system, it maintains a distance to the system. If a system generates an observer, when different systems communicate with one another, is there a possibility to produce another observer? For Varela, an autopoietic system is an organizational closure. Nevertheless, there is still a possibility for different systems to communicate with one another. In Varela's words, communication between different systems is an act of coupling. He proposes that "[c]oupling arises as a result of the mutual modifications that interacting unities undergo in the course of their interactions without loss of identity" (50). Through coupling, different systems communicate with one another and build new relationships. Varela emphasizes that coupling arises out of the need for reciprocal sources without changing the identity of each autopoietic system. If the interactions between two systems cause the loss of their respective identities, or, the occurrence of a new identity, it is not coupling. But Varela also emphasizes that "coupling leads also to the generation of a new unity that may exist in a *different domain* in which the component coupled unities retain their identity" (51; original emphasis). The coupling leads to the structural changes of the coupled systems to a certain extent. However, as long as the perturbations do not overstep their corresponding ranges of tolerance, each system retains its autopoiesis. The act of coupling is operated through a system's process of autopoiesis and, as Varela argues, the coupling may facilitate autopoiesis, which takes place "through the particular way in which the autopoiesis of the coupled unities is realized" (51). In other words, the coupling between autopoietic systems generates another level of autopoiesis. Varela names this kind of autopoietic system an "autopoietic system of *higher order*." That is to say, an autopoietic system can become a component of another system. This fact implies that there would an observer generated by the autopoietic system of higher order.

Like an organism, a society is a living system. It is undoubted that a society

consists mainly of a group of people, but what makes it a living system lies in the *relations* among the people. A society is not static and unchanged since the relations among people are always changing. It is composed by a complex and dynamic network of processes of production of relations among these people. It produces a variety of relations, such as political systems, social relations of production, family and marriage, and religious institutions. These relations are interwoven and connected with one another, generating new relations between the people and their society. In other words, the dynamic interactions between these relations stimulate the processes of production of new relations, which realizes homeostasis of the society. In the representation of critical utopia, the description of two alternative societies consists in how they function—the dynamic processes of production of relations in these societies. When traditional utopia focuses on the description of social or political arrangements in the ideal country, critical utopia emphasizes the dynamic processes that produce the social or political arrangements in societies. In critical utopia, the two contrasted societies have a peculiar relationship. In Maturana and Varela's terms, they are coupled systems. Their coupling arises as a result of one's need of the other. The ideal image of society is not created out of nothing. It is based on the projection of the real society. For the better society, the bad society represents its past. It needs the past to consolidate its existence; that is, it symbolizes a nearly ideal image which can solve the social problems in the bad society. For the bad society, the better society represents a hope for a better future. Therefore, their coupling consists in one's regarding the other as its mirror. One sees its reflection from the other. Their relationship is analogous to the interactions between the infant and its reflection in Lacan's theory of the formation of the "I" in the mirror stage.

According to Lacan, an infant undergoes a special experience from its seeing its own image on a mirror. Fascinated by the specular image, the infant plays with it and (mis)recognizes the image as itself. The image which presents a total form of the body

helps the infant generate an imagination of an ideal self, the ideal-I. The infant imagines that it is an independent person and owns a body which has been maturely developed while actually it is "still trapped in his motor impotence and nursling dependence" (Lacan 76). The infant's imaginary self is based on a misrecognition because it is in discordance with its real condition. However, the misrecognition is a necessary condition for the formation of the ego. Lacan writes that

> For the total form of his body, by which the subject anticipates the maturation of his power in a mirage, is given to him only as a gestalt, that is, in an exteriority in which, to be sure, this form is more constitutive than constituted, but in which, above all, it appears to him as the contour of his stature that freezes it and in a symmetry that reverses it, in opposition to the turbulent movements with which the subject feels he animates it. (76)

What the infant sees from the mirror is a gestalt, the total form of its body. Elizabeth Grosz explains "gestalt" as the totalized form of the infant by which the infant constructs its imaginary anatomy or body phantom (42). In Lacan's explication, a gestalt is not merely the total form of the infant's body. It is an image of a totalized form of body which can refer to the body of any person around the infant as long as the image can offer the infant an imagination of a totalized body. Lacan maintains that the power of the gestalt should be considered linked to the species. A human being or an animal identities itself with its own species through the gestalt. For a human being, the gestalt "symbolizes the *I*'s mental permanence, at the same time as it prefigures its alienating destination" (Lacan 76). In other terms, since the ideal image of the self is in discordance with the motor impotence of the infant, there is a gap between the reflection and the infant itself, which prefigures its alienation—its sacrifice of part of its being when it enters the symbolic order. The relationship between the infant and its reflection is an intimate yet ambiguous one. Lacan suggests that despite the discrepancies between

the two the gestalt has some correspondences or similarities with the infant. These correspondences "unite the I with the statue onto which man projects himself, the phantoms that dominates him, and the automaton with which the world of his own tends to achieve fruition in an ambiguous relation" (Lacan 76-77). According to Grosz's interpretation, the ideal image of the body undergoes transformations and modifications throughout the child's life. The infant relies on its dynamic interactions with the reflection for the imagination of its body phantom. Therefore, the ideal I is not a fixed image. Then, why is their relation ambiguous? Because the infant also feels threatened by the ideal I since it has not achieved that mature state yet. That is to say, although the infant projects what it wants to be in its own reflection on the mirror, it is aware that there is a gap between the image and itself. The image represents what the infant wants to be, that is, a mature person getting rid of motor impotence and nursling dependence. The gap between them is actually also a link between them. Through their dynamic interactions, the image drives the infant to be like that image.

The generation of a utopian vision is related to the reflection of the ideal image in the mirror stage. The citizens in a society have their projection of what an ideal society is like. They are aware that there should be a better society than theirs. The ideal image is produced by the reflection of the real society. In this reflection, what the citizens do not want is excluded and all the social problems are solved, which is similar with the infant's imagination of its ridding of the motor impotence and nursling dependence. In the case of Francis Bacon's *The New Atlantis*, the utopian image consists mainly of the imagination of science and technology which improve human life efficiently. The development of science and technology was still on its germinating stage at the time when Bacon wrote the story. His imagination that science and technology could help increase agricultural production rapidly by improving the breed of plants, fowls, and livestock or create powerful weapons was much ahead of his time so that his utopian

vision seems like a creation of magic power[2]. Nevertheless, this imagination reflects the problems and wishes of Bacon's society: people's wish to solve the problem of poverty by means of the increase of resources. Christopher Kendrick suggests that Bacon intended to figure transformed forces of production. Bacon's imagination is an "allegory of new social relations of production" (1023). A utopian image represents what a given society wants most. When we observe the imagination of a utopian image, we should not neglect its link with the real society. Furthermore, a utopian image is not the ultimate perfect imagination of human society. The construction of an ideal image depends upon its dynamic interactions with reality. Since a society is a dynamic entity, different social problems occur with the change of time. An ideal image is a product at a given time when the society projects what it wants at that time. The problem of traditional utopia lies in its severing its relations with the real society. In the representation of traditional utopia, the construction of ideal society is based on the exclusion of all the defects in a given society. Traditional utopia deliberately cuts down its relations with the real society so as to maintain its exclusive ideal image. The old mockery that utopia is "a castle in the air" is significant in the sense that traditional utopia freezes its ideal image, refusing to have dynamic interactions with the real society.

Critical utopia re-connects the ideal image with the real society. In the representation of critical utopia, the focus is not merely on the creation of an ideal society but also on the link between the ideal society and the real society: one relies on the other. Like traditional utopia, critical utopia usually exaggerates the defects in the real society so it is presented as a bad society. Like the infant in Lacan's theory, the bad

[2] In *The New Atlantis*, as Christopher Kendrick points out, Bacon did not describe the intellectual methods, that is, how science and technology could improve or change the breed of plants, fowls, and livestock. He only mentioned that the Salomon's House owns the knowledge and the instruments. To a certain extent, Bacon's imagination prefigures the coming of advanced technology, such as biotechnology and genetic engineering.

society is trapped by its impotence. In its mirror, the bad society produces a better image, that is, the better society which presents a possible future when it might get rid of its impotence. For the better society, the bad society is a mirror which presents its past that it would not return to. It is interesting to notice that the better society is aware that it is not perfect so it needs the bad society as a contrast with itself. The relationship between the two is ambiguous, sometimes even full of tension. As is shown above, the infant sometimes feels threatened by its reflection. The two societies are hostile to each other since they are afraid of the other's image. Yet, for them, to reject the other's image is impossible. The two are coupled systems in the sense that their dynamic interactions drive them to achieve a better system. Their coupling leads them to the generation of a new unity. Just as the infant that undergoes the process of constant modifications and transformations maintains dynamic interactions with its reflection to achieve the Ideal-I, the coupling of the two societies drives the bad society to move toward the better society. The coupling also propels the latter to transform itself into a better one. It does not mean that the better society transforms and incorporates the bad society. The two maintain their respective identities while their coupling creates a new unity in a different domain. This new unity, which is a new autopoietic system, aims to stimulate the generation of a better form of society than the original two. Critical utopia is a product of the coupling of the better society and the bad society. It is a new autopoietic system made by the coupling of two autopoietic systems.

Critical utopia as an autopoietic system produces an observer which observes the operation of the system. In Maturana's formulation of the essential role of the observer, the observer and its system maintain a circular relationship. The act of observation occurs as a result of the generation of representations of the interactions within the system and the observer's interactions with the representations lead to the repetition of the process recursively. When Maturana comments that through the circular relation the

observer remains "in a domain of interactions always *larger* than that of the representation" (14; my emphasis), it implies that the act of observation causes a gap within the system. The observer occupies a privileged position within the system. Although the observer is part of circularity of the system, it also lies in a different domain from the circular organization of the system. In their theory, they suggest that the circular organization of the system contributes to its homeostatic, that is, harmonious, state. However, they do not explain how the circular organization generates the paradoxical relationship between the system and the observer. If the observer arises as a result of the gap and keeps a distance from its own system, the system has a self-reflexive domain which consists in uncertainty and the unknown. The gap does not necessarily facilitate the harmonious state of the system. To the contrary, it might cause perturbations which compel the system to modify its network of processes of production of components. As Hayles indicates, though Maturana attempts to explain the generation of thinking or self-consciousness, his observer "does not have psychological depth" (143). His theory of the observer relies on positionality rather than personality (143). That is to say, his construction of the observer is based on the assumption that the processes of generation of cognition consist in certainty, excluding the possibility of the occurrence of uncertainty and the unknown. In fact, the gap between the observer and its system is the place which consists of uncertainty and the unknown and it leads to unexpectedness which disturbs the homeostatic state of the system. The gap plays an essential role because it is a force which compels the transformation or modification of the system. The discussion of the generation of the observer should include the occurrence of the gap. The gap is the *objet a*, which is constitutive of the generation of the observer though it is a lost object. It is the other within the system.

What is the other-within? Lacan explains it by the parable of the three prisoners. In this story, a prison warden came to three prisoners and told them:

> For reasons I need not make known to you now, gentlemen, I must free one of you. In order to decide which, I will entrust the outcome to a test that you will, I hope, agree to undergo.
>
> There are three of you present. I have here five disks differing only in color: three white and two black. Without letting you know which I will have chosen, I will fasten one of them to each of you between the shoulders, outside, that is, your direct visual field—indirect ways of getting a look at the disk also being excluded by the absence here of any means by which to see your own reflection.
>
> You will then be left at your leisure to consider your companions and their respective disks, without being allowed, of course, to communicate among yourselves the results of your inspection. Your own interest would, in any case, proscribe such communication, for the first to be able to deduce his own color will be the one to benefit from the discharging measure at my disposal.
>
> But his conclusion must be founded upon logical and not simply probabilistic grounds. Keeping this in mind, it is agreed that as soon as one of you is ready to formulate such a conclusion, he will pass through this door so that he may be judged individually on the basis of his response. (Lacan 1945: 161-2)

Then, the three subjects are fastened with white disks. How do they decide the correct color on their back under the aforementioned condition?

Let us call the three prisoners A, B and C. According to Lacan's explanation, A is the real subject, while B and C are "reflected subjects upon whose conduct A founds his deduction" (163). The perfect solution is that the three meditate for a certain time and go to the warden to tell him their answers at the same time. How does the subject know

that he is a white? He must observe the responses of B and C. Since his companions are whites, it is meaningless to postulate he is a white at first. A has to make a hypothesis that if he is a black, B or C would infer that "If I too were black, the other would have necessarily realized straight away that he was a white and would have left immediately; therefore I am not a black" (162). If A's inference is correct, B and C would convince that they are whites and make their move immediately. But B or C does not leave right away, which makes A believe that he must be a white. When A, B and C leave for the warden at the same time, the three hesitate again. They doubt whether they are blacks themselves. A thinks again of his previous assumption: if he is a black, the other two would leave before him. B and C should not have hesitated again if A were a black. The second hesitation confirms the fact that neither of them is a black. The three have no further doubt that they are whites. Here the perfect solution involves two factors: one is the moments of hesitation, and the other is the act of seeing how the others respond to the situation (Shingu Kazushige 49). Lacan calls the moments of hesitation the "suspended motions." He maintains that "[w]hat the *suspended motions* disclose is not what the subject sees, but rather what they have found out positively about *what they do not see*: the appearance of the black disks. What constitutes these suspended motions as signifying is not their direction, but rather their *interruption* [*temps d'arrêt*]" (166; original emphasis). That is to say, the correct interpretation of the colors of the three prisoners relies on the uncertain but necessary assumption, that is, the black disks which they do not see, and the two hesitated moments which include the instant of glance when they try to infer their answers from the others' reactions. The logical subject, the "I," is generated during the process. The two hesitated moments are essential for the construction of "I." The instant of the glance, that is, the moment when the subject sees the two whites is crucial for the subject's recognition of his own identity. During the hesitated moments, the three are "impersonal and undefined reciprocal subjects" (170).

They have to rely on one another in order to decide their own identities. Nevertheless, the reciprocal relation is transitive. The pure reciprocity must be seen as the other. It ignites the subjective assertion, that is, the logical subject as "the *personal* form of the knowing subject who can only be expressed by "*I*"' (170; original emphasis). The subject assimilates the reciprocal relation into his logical judgment. His subjective assertion depends on the other but has to be differentiated from it so that he can express himself as "I." That is why Lacan says that "one can only recognize himself in the other" (170).

Many critics have attempted to interpret the reciprocal relation in the three-prisoner problem as this other. In Bruce Fink's reading, the reciprocal relation which involves the time for comprehending is "entirely based on error" (363). The time for comprehending, according to Lacan, is associated with the prisoner A's intuition, or his reasoning, by which he presupposes that "Were I a black, the two whites that I see would waste no time realizing that they are whites" (168). Fink indicates that the process of A's logical thinking is based on an erroneous assumption, that is, A's supposition that he is a black. The error, he suggests, is "responsible for the advent of the subject here, for all-important precipitation of subjectivity," which leads to his conclusion that "certainty is always acquired at such a cost: no error, no certainty" (363). This reading is problematic. The fact that A's assumption is erroneous is retroactively determined. Since A is uncertain about the color of his disk, there are two possibilities: black or white. During the limited time for comprehending, A has to eliminate one of the two possibilities as soon as possible. To postulate himself with a black disk first is a more reasonable method. When he finally knows that he is a white after his reasoning, he knows that the previous assumption is wrong. The first assumption is necessary for A to proceed his reasoning though it would be abandoned at last. Kazushige regards A's assumption of himself with a black disk as the other I where the *objet a* is found. For

him, the logical judgment of the three prisoners is the analogy of the process that the subject determines for itself that it is human. In Kazushige's interpretation, the logical subject "I" is constructed by two simultaneous steps. The first step is the act of seeing. The moment when he sees that the other two prisoners have not made any move is the ground for his logical judgment. Because of his act of having seen that the others have not made any move, the subject could make his move, that is, deciding that he is a white. The other step is the subject's hypothesis that his disk is black. This I which is fastened with a black disk "existed within the other two prisoners, as a down-payment that underwrote the hypothetical thought process I supposed in its two fellows" (49). When this other I *had seen* that the others made no move and then he made his own move, this other I "was banished into the past—interred in the gaze, thought and movements of the other two prisoners that I left behind" (49). According to Kazushige, "[t]his other I, immured in the retroactively posited past, is where we find 'the thing that is not human', the first step of Lacan's sophism—in something we cannot see even if we use a mirror: the view of ourselves from the back" (49). Kazushige calls this thing inhuman because the thing, which we cannot see in the mirror, is remote and alien to the human subject I and would be abandoned. During the time for comprehending, the act of seeing in fact includes the thing which is behind the other I's back. The pressure of time urges the I to consider the question "Am I human?" or "Am I not human?" Kazushige maintains that at the logical extreme of the urgency that presses the subject (*sekitate*), this inhuman element "insinuates itself into the heart of the self-determination of the subject as that which is human" (50). This inhuman element is part of the I since it is the ground that the I clings to so that the I can determine itself as a human subject. For Kazushige, this thing is the *objet a* which is an abandoned and lost element but it is constitutive of the human subject. In this sense, we can say that the *objet a* is both the other within and without the human subject.

In Maturana and Varela's discussion of autopoiesis, there is no abnormality or pathology in the operation of an autopoietic system. When they carefully differentiate autopoietic machines from man-made machines[3], they neglect the possibilities of self-generated dangers which characterize autopoietic machines. For them, the deviancy of man-made machines is caused by malfunction. Therefore, they cannot explain how the irrational part of human thinking or self-consciousness is resulted from. In fact, abnormality or pathology is caused by self-generated dangers which disturb the stability within the system. The observer is generated by the exclusion of uncertainty so as to construct the identity of the system, but this uncertainty is part of the system. This uncertainty is the other within the system. It leads to the self-generated dangers which the system attempts to eliminate though without success. The reflexive domain of an autopoietic system not merely refers to the observer's reflection of its own system but also to the other-within which disturbs the stable relationship between the observer and the system. In the case of society as an autopoietic system, this uncertainty is related to risk. In a society, there are many unexpected incidents, such as crimes, epidemic diseases or dissenting opinions, threatening the social order. When considering risk, traditional concepts consist of fixed norms of calculability, emphasizing the confidence of the controllability of risk. In his *World Risk Society*, Ulrich Beck advocates a new thinking of risk in a society—risk is part of the society. He points out the mistake of relating risk with control. He writes,

> Some believe that risk induces control, so that the greater the risk the greater the need for controllability. The concept of 'world risk society', however, draws attention to the *limited* controllability of the dangers we have created for

[3] In Maturana and Varela's definition, man-made machines are not auto-poietic systems. In the case of a car, in the physical space, "there is an organization given in terms of a concatenation of processes, yet, these processes are not processes of production of the components which specify the as a unity since the components of a car are produced by other processes which are independent of the organization of the car and its operation" (79).

> ourselves. The main question is how to take decisions under conditions of manufactured uncertainty, where not only knowledge-base incomplete, but more and better knowledge often means more uncertainty. (6; original emphasis)

The manufactured uncertainty here means a new type of risk—"more knowledge, more unawareness and reflexivity" (112). Traditional concepts of risk are based on the assumption of complete controllability of risk, which relies on the certainty of knowledge, that is, knowledge gaining from expert rationality to be contrasted with unawareness. Beck's main argument is that unintended consequences should also be considered as knowledge rather than being excluded as un-knowledge. He contends that unintended consequences/unawareness is potential knowledge, which "is predominantly conceived of as *not-yet* knowledge or *no-longer* knowledge," that is to say, the knowledge includes uncertainty or irrationality (124; original emphasis). The new type of risk, which is potential knowledge, is a kind of non-linear knowledge. According to Beck, "[n]on-linearity means *dissent* and conflicts over rationality, and hence principles, that is to say, unclear, uncooperative and oppositely polarized networks of people and coalitions acting on knowledge" (125; original emphasis). Risk involves a reflexive domain which interweaves irrationality with rationality. It is constitutive of knowledge. When Beck argues that "more knowledge, more unawareness and reflexivity," he means that risk accompanies knowledge. The production of knowledge inevitably brings new type of risks along with it. The attempts to repress or to eliminate risks are doomed to fail. Joost Van Loon indicates that risk is not necessarily a negative force in a society. Although risk as the other-within has a strong influence on the maintenance of the integration of the society, it might turn out to be opportunities to transform the society. He proposes that

> The other must not be idolized or fixed. The other does not hold a moral

> superiority. The other cannot be fully incorporated; but we are always invited to appropriate alterity. No 'given' can be taken for granted without some form of violation. The violation of the other is inevitable; the other is within; hence the violation of the self is inevitable. (75)

The occurrence of risk is inevitable. Risk as the other-within is a form of violation, which plays the role of a potential force to propel the transformation of a society. The rejection or exclusion of violation within itself leads a society to stagnation or turmoil.

The uniqueness of critical utopia lies in its representation of the construction of a nearly ideal society of which the violation of the other is an essential part. Both of the two alternative societies are threatened by the other-within. They confront their self-generated risks, or, in Beck's terms, "unclear, uncooperative and oppositely polarized networks of people." These dissidents challenge their societies by revealing their social problems. These dissidents represent what the two societies want to eliminate most. In some cases, such as Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*, there is no dissident in the better society but the society itself faces its own problems, such as conflicts with other countries. The protagonist, a poor female Latino woman living in the bad society, struggled to revolt against the unjust socioeconomic system in the society. What the protagonist strove to revolt, i.e., the racial and sexual discriminations, is actually what the bad society would like to maintain. The protagonist represents the dissenting voice that the bad society wants to exclude. To eliminate the dissenting voice which menaces the status quo is a natural tendency of the bad society. In the representation of critical utopia, each of the two societies has a part which they want to eliminate most. The better society tends to transform defects in the bad society while the bad society, afraid of its disruption of its own integrity, inclines to isolate or exclude abnormalities, deviancy, dissidents, and conflicts. What one wants to reject is the part which is essential for the other. In the case of *Woman on the Edge of Time*, the

bad society is characterized by its patriarchal and hierarchical social order, which is the part that the better society tries to transform into a social order based on gender equality and communal lifestyle. What the former would like to consolidate is what the latter intends to change. However, the two can not eliminate what they do not want completely. In this novel, the protagonist visits the possible future which is better than her world but it is not a perfect one. As Libby Falk Jones points out, this world has its own problems. Its internal conflicts, such as the presence of war, jealousy, death and grief, and its conditional existence as only one possible future all prevent our perceiving it as perfect and permanent[4]" (123). Each of the societies has certain unstable factors threatening their integration. In some critical utopia texts, like Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, the two societies are threatening to each other. The existence of the other society induces or reinforces the unstable and violating forces. The coupling of the two societies, on the one hand, arises as a result of supplementing what one does not have. On the other hand, what one does not have is also the part that one is afraid of. Their coupling causes the confrontations and interactions between the parts that the two attempt to eliminate. The two coupled structures produce an observer who observes the new coupled system. The observer in critical utopia is usually the protagonist who visits the two societies alternately. S/he maintains a critical distance to the two societies, challenging their social order. What s/he observes is the tension between the two. The tension is the violation of the other in critical utopia, which is a positive force driving the better society toward a better one. In other words, the better society is not a perfect one and it will never be. The violation of the other in the representation of critical utopia is a dynamic force, always disturbing the stability and integrity of this autopoietic

[4] Jones also indicates that this future world's use of advanced technology to reproduce tube babies, abandoning the natural way of giving birth to babies, is one of its imperfect features. This point is debatable. In this novel, Piercy tells us that motherhood as an institution becomes a normative regulation for women. It should be replaced by parenthood. With the help of technology, women and men are equals: they should share the same responsibility of nursing children.

system. What critical utopia offers is the possible good rather than the Sovereign Good. In the following section, I will discuss an important critical utopia text, Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*.

The Dispossessed as an Ambiguous Utopia

> THERE was a wall. It did not look important. It was built of uncut rocks roughly mortared. An adult could look right over it, and even a child could climb it. Where it crossed the road way, instead of having a gate it degenerated into mere geometry, a line, an idea of boundary. But the idea was real. It was important. For seven generations there had been nothing in the world more important than that wall.
>
> Like all walls it was ambiguous, two-faced. What was inside it and what was outside it depended upon which side of it you were on.
>
> Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*

Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* is one of the most influential works of critical utopia. As its subtitle, "An Ambiguous Utopia," suggests, it is not a traditional utopian work. There have been much criticism examining Le Guin's experimental form in this novel. In *Demand the Impossible*, Moylan criticizes Le Guin's failure to break down the walls, i.e., to offer her vision of a utopian society which values gender equality, individual freedom, decentralized social and economic systems. His argument focuses on several grounds. One of them is that Le Guin's chooses a "white, male, intellectual figure" as a protagonist (94), as if all the feminist writers should choose non-white, female, poor protagonists in their works. Another one is the practicability of Le Guin's version of the utopian project. In *The Dispossessed*, the setting of the utopian society is located in a barren, hot and dry planet where life is difficult. The practicability of this society has to rely on people's moral conscience since how to cope with scarcity is always a moral dilemma for people. Following John Fekete's and Nadia Khouri's criticisms of it,

Moylan questions the novel's moral asceticism, which, according to him, is *not* utopian fulfillment. Moylan's reading of the novel contradicts his theory of critical utopia. Moylan himself argues that as a new form of utopian literature critical utopia transcends the limitation of traditional utopia while it also retains a utopian core without falling into the cliché of envisaging ideal political blueprint. While he categorizes the novel as critical utopia, he criticizes it for its *not* being utopian. As Ferns points out, Moylan's criticism of *The Dispossessed* implies certain normative assumptions of his own as to what a utopian society should be like (220). Moylan's problem is that his criticism is still trapped by traditional reading of utopia. Though he claims that critical utopia is a new form and a critique of utopian writing, his reading of the novel apparently does not correspond to his theory.

The Dispossessed is a unique critical utopia text. The story is located in two imaginary planets: Anarres and Urras. The two were twin planets but their geographical environments are very different. The former was barren, hot, dry and hard to live in, while the latter was fertile, wet, mild and livable. The major society in the latter planet was a proprietarian one, resulting in extreme oppositions between rich and poor classes, which bears a resemblance to capitalist society. In order to fulfill their utopian dream, a group of people left Urras and founded a communist society in Anarres. The two societies were hostile to each other, building a wall to keep one away from the other. They had almost no official contacts for several generations. The Anarreti community enclosed itself on Anarres for one hundred and fifty years, falling into the danger of refusing to change anymore. The protagonist, Shevek, an Anarresti resident, was aware of the crisis of stagnation in his society. He determined to make an unprecedented journey to Urras to search for mutual understanding between the two planets. The narrative of the story is interlaced with Shevek's life on Anarres and his experiences on Urras. Shevek is the major medium for readers to observe the better society and the bad

society. When other critical utopia texts focus on comparisons and contrasts between the better society and the bad society, this novel not merely provides its version of a better society but also challenges its own vision. As Ferns suggests, in her portrayal of Anarres, the better society in this novel, Le Guin "dramatizes one of the chief dangers inherent in a utopian society: the possibility that collective solidarity may degenerate into mere conformity (a very real one, judging by the number of utopias that provide specific, and often draconian penalties for dissidence)" (223). Then, how does Le Guin present a utopian writing which criticizes itself? A critical utopia text is characterized by its self-reflexivity which arises as a result of the coupling of the better society and the bad society. Their coupling also generates an observer who observes the two societies as well as challenges them. This observer, the protagonist, serves the function of revolting and resisting the temptation of conformity in one or both societies. Unlike the protagonist in *Woman on the Edge of Time* who came from the bad society, the protagonist in *The Dispossessed* was from the better society. Le Guin's arrangement of the protagonist's traveling from a better society to a bad society is unusual since in most of utopian texts their protagonists, disappointed with their own societies, are arranged to visit utopian societies. Le Guin's protagonist, unsatisfied with his society, visited the bad society where his ancestors were from with the hope to find the root of his society so as to rejuvenate it as well as to re-connect the two societies. The protagonist, Shevek, is a dissident in both societies: he serves the function of inducing the violation of the other, which is both a critique of utopia itself and a positive force to transform it. Why are the two societies coupled systems? How does their coupling arise? How does their coupling generate an observer inducing the violation of the other? These questions will be discussed in the next two sections.

The Coupling of the Two Societies

In Le Guin's portrayal of the Anarresti settlement and the Urrasti world, the two

worlds were extremely different in terms of natural environment, culture, economic and social systems. While Urras was an abundant and beautiful world, replete with natural resources, Anarres was a bleak and barren one. When Shevek arrived at Urras, he was impressed by this colorful and vivid world where there were a variety of plants and animals. He was surprised by "[t]he tenderness and vitality of the colors, the mixture of rectilinear human design (the rectangular fields made by human beings) and powerful, proliferate natural contours" (65). To compare with Urras, "every scene Anarres could offer, even the Plain of Abbenay and the gorges of the Ne Theras, was meager: barren, arid, and inchoate" (65). Nevertheless, the fertility and abundance of Urras nourished societies[5] which taught their people to hatch hatred for one another whereas the Anarresti community, which had to face the problem of scarcity all the time, was founded on their belief in sharing, love and individual freedom[6]. A-Io, the country that Shevek visited, was a proprietarian one whose foundation was based on social stratification in several aspects, especially the differentiation between rich and poor classes, and sexual discrimination. According to Moylan, Le Guin's depiction of A-Io is a reflection of the historical situation around 1960s and 1970s in the Western

[5] There were several nations on Urras, such as A-Io, Thu, Benbili and The Third World people who were a group of rebels of A-Io and Benbili. These states also had a transnational organization, Urrasti Council of World Governments, to coordinate international affairs. Mario Klarer suggests that the fertile Urras resembles the Western world (108).

[6] Le Guin's choosing a bleak landscape as the setting of utopia has aroused some attacks. For instance, Fekete criticizes this arrangement as not utopian. He contends that the problem of scarcity forces people to make their moral decisions so as to maintain their communist lifestyle. The dependence on moral conscience runs counter to the utopian notion since utopia should be an abundant place where there is no scarcity. He concludes that Le Guin's ambiguous utopia is not as hopeful as what is commonly expected in utopia. His criticism is also limited to traditional reading of utopia: utopian writing should portray an ideal society where there is no suffering. Traditional utopia neglects or ignores the problems and weakness of humanity because it is based on the belief that a perfect utopian project could erase all negative features of human beings; hence, there will be no suffering there. Nevertheless, when facing natural disasters just as the case of the famine that Le Guin describes in the novel, people confront a moral dilemma: should they share with all strangers their food even though that means they have to suffer from starvation for a long time, or, should they just keep the food for themselves but that runs counter to their belief in sharing? Le Guin deliberately sets her utopian society in a barren landscape because on the one hand she tries to remind us that no matter how perfect a utopian project is, there is always a crisis—humanity. On the other hand, natural environment is also an important factor in a utopian project. There are all kinds of natural environments on the earth, including deserts, plains, seashore, islands, and etc. Geographic as well as climatic varieties lead to different lifestyles and social and economic systems. Landscape should be considered as a determining factor in utopian writing.

world when awareness of gender issues, ecological problems, and class struggles arose. To use his words, Anarres is "non-sexist, ecologically sound, libertarian-communist alternative to the nations of Urras that mirror LeGuin's[7] own historical situation" (100). Le Guin's description of the Urrasti nations is more exaggerated than the real situation, but her arrangement of Urras as comparisons and contrasts to Anarres is an attempt to make a link between utopian society and the real world: one is the mirror of the other. Urras is a mirror of Anarres since through the image of Urras Anarres transforms or excludes all the defects of Urras so as to found a better society. Anarres is also a mirror of Urras, presenting a reflection of Urras' possible future. The two depend on each other since one is the mirror of the other. And yet one also rejects the image of the other because the other represents what one is not. It is natural that one is hostile to the other. Albeit their hostility toward the other, the two can not ignore the presence of the other. In the story, Le Guin presents the subtle relationship between the two worlds. Although Urras was fertile and rich, replete with all kinds of natural resources, it was in lack of certain metals which had to be imported from the Moon (Anarres) (82). People from Urras

> brought fossil oils and petroleum products, certain delicate machine parts and electronic components that Anarresti manufacturing was not geared to supply, and often a new strain of fruit tree or grain for testing. They took back to Urras a full load of mercury, copper, aluminum, uranium, tin, and gold. It was, from them, a very good bargain. The division of their cargoes eight times of a year was the most prestigious function of the Urrasti Council of World Governments and the major event of the Urrasti world stock market. In fact, the free world of Anarres was a mining colony of Urras. (92)

The fact that Anarres had to rely on Urras was ironic because their transactions

[7] "LeGuin" is a misspelling. The correct one should be "Le Guin."

facilitated profiteering business of Urras. Whereas Anarresti people had made protests for several generations for "these profiteering business transactions with warmaking propertarians" (92), they had to face the reality: the trade agreement was both made out of necessity for essential materials and for keeping peace between the two planets. In other words, although they tried to separate themselves from each other, what they did not want, *the objet a*, kept haunting them in many aspects. In the case of Anarres, they hated those propertarians but the fact that they had to cooperate with the Urrasti reminded them of the past history. The Anarresti were afraid of being influenced by their enemy. The residue of the memory from the other society kept disturbing their stability.

The extreme differences between the two societies did not result from coincidence. Their differences result from their coupling, that is, their ambiguous interactions between each other: when one sees the image of the other, one wanted to be like the other but one was also afraid of being like the other. In the case of A-Io, it is a typical hierarchical society. Through Shevek's observation, we can find out how different the two worlds are. In the Iotic language[8], they had the concept of superiority and inferiority to present something better or worse: "this curious matter of superiority, of relative height, was important to the Urrasti; they often used the word 'higher' as a synonym for 'better' in their writing, where an Anarresti would use 'more central'" (15). And as Shevek found out, status was important for the Urrasti. For instance, in the celebration party held by the Iotic government for Shevek, he was "introduced to ambassadors, astronauts, physicists, politicians, dozens of people, all of whom had long titles honorifics both before and after their names" (23). The Iotic people were stratified according to their social status. The higher class as the ruling one dominated the society politically and economically. As a result, the higher class and the lower

[8] It is the language that A-Io uses.

class were in striking oppositions. The former, in control of most social resources, lived in extremely luxurious ways. For instance, as an honored guest in A-Io, Shevek was offered a lavish accommodation:

> The bed, a massive bed on four legs, with a mattress far softer than that of the bunk on the *Mindful* (the spaceship that brought Shevek to Urras), and complex bedclothes, some silky and some warm and thick, and a lot of pillows like cumulus clouds, had a room all to itself. The floor was covered with springy carpeting; there was a chest of drawers of beautifully carved and polished wood, and a closet bit enough to hold the clothing of a ten-man dormitory. (63-64)

On the contrary, the working classes, exploited by the rich, lived in poor conditions. Efor, the servant which was assigned by the Iotic government to take care of Shevek, told him the tragic and impoverished conditions of his kind of people. Efor's daughter died because of bad medication in the hospital for the poor. He described the condition of the hospital:

> 'Our kind. Dirty. Like a trashman's asshole,' Efor said, without violence, descriptively. 'Old. Kid die in one. There's holes in the floor, bit holes, the beams show through, see? I say, 'How come?' See, rates come up the holes, right in the beds. They say, 'Old building, been a hospital six hundred years.' Stablishment of the Divine Harmony for the Poor, its name. An ass-hole what it is.' (283)

The tragic condition caused by the oppositions between the rich and the poor was the reason why the ancestors of the Anarresti people left Urras. Because of what they had once undergone in Urras, the Anarresti people knew how to make their society better. They strove to solve the problems caused by the hierarchical relationship between classes.

Urras was the mirror of Anarres. The Anarresti community was founded on the purpose to transform the unjust socioeconomic and sociopolitical systems of Urras. The Anarresti people followed the revolutionary ideal of Odo, their foremother, to build a society based on freedom, equality and love. In order to achieve these goals, Odo abandoned the concept of hierarchy in favor of decentralization[9] because hierarchy led people to seek power unscrupulously. In Odo's utopian project, "There was to be no controlling center, no capital, no establishment for the self-perpetuating machinery of bureaucracy and the dominance drive of individuals seeking to become captains, bosses, chiefs of states" (95). Odo's idea consists in the assumption that decentralization secures individual freedom as well as social equality. Therefore, the Anarreti people did not have a central government, only a network of administration and management called the PDC (Production and Distribution Coordination). As Shevek explained to one of his Iotic friends, the PDC was "a coordinating system for all syndicates, federatives, and individuals who do productive work" (76). It had no right to govern people, and they merely administer production. The committee members of the PDC "have no authority either to support me or to prevent me. They can only tell us the public opinion of us—where we stand in the social conscience" (76). This was a society that respected individual freedom and also emphasized the importance of communal lifestyle. Their people were educated in the Odonian—communist—way: "Nothing is yours. It is to use. It is to share. If you will not share it, you cannot use it" (27). Since life was difficult on

[9] In his reading of the concept of decentralization on Anarres, Werner Christie Mathisen contends that the Annaresti people try to do without politics. In his definition, politics means "formally regulated and authorized application of power" (58). He carefully distinguishes formal politics from "informal" normative regulation— informal social control. The distinction is problematic. If politics is "an activity taking place in special institutions and regulated by formal rules and procedures," why is not "informal" social control a part of politics? In fact, what he calls as informal social control is a means of regulation. If people attempt to do without politics, there will be no regulations and no social control at all. In the case of *The Dispossessed*, the PDC is a democratic organization run by public opinions. The majority is the power in this society. As Bedap, Shevek's friend, argues in *The Dispossesssed*, there is a government controlled by the minority on Urras while Anrres has a government controlled by the majority. Decentralization here is also a form of politics.

Anarres, they shared everything with one another and lived with a simple and austere way. They followed Odo's teaching: "Excess is excrement" (98). Unlike the extremely opposite lifestyles between the rich and the poor on Urras, Anarres kept its austere but lively ways of living. For instance, Abbenay, its central city, was a bare city. However, "[t]he squares, the austere streets, the low buildings, the unwalled workyards, were charged with vitality and activity" since you could always find "other people walking, working, talking, faces passing, voices calling, gossiping, singing, people alive, people doing things, people afoot" (98).

Their advocacy of individual freedom led to their respect for gender equality and sexual orientation. This non-sexist society, as Mario Klarer and Donna Glee Williams both observe, regards women as equals in political and private matters. Women here had equal chances of determining their occupations as well as choosing their sexual partners. In contrast, women on Urras were viewed as physically and intelligently inferior to men. They "are confined to their traditional roles as mothers and sexual objects" (Klarer 117). They were not allowed to compete with men in the public sphere. Vea was the representative of the Iotic women who had to use sexuality as a weapon in a power struggle with men. Surprised by Vea's taking use of her sexuality as a charm, Shevek commented that she was a "body profiteer": "She was so elaborately and ostentatiously a female body that she seemed scarcely to be a human being" (213). In A-Io, marriage as an institution to regulate (hetero)sexual relationship between men and women was also the means to limit its women to stay at their households. Le Guin's depiction that Vea's "wrists were laden with gold bracelets, and in the hollow of her throat a single jewel shown blue against the soft skin" (213) implies the Iotic women's being confined to social stratification. There were no sexual institutions, such as marriage and prostitution, on Anarres because for them marriage meant a "partnership authorized and enforced by legal and economic sanctions" and prostitution intended to regulate

sexuality merely in the economic mode (18). Since their teenage years, the Anarresti were encouraged to have sexual experiences freely with both boys and girls. They had the freedom to choose heterosexual or homosexual partnership[10]. Because they treated sex more liberally, "molestation was extremely rare in a society where complete fulfillment was the norm from puberty on" (118).

The Anarresti community, a libertarian-communist society, stands at the opposite end to A-Io, a society based on exploitive capitalism. However, their opposition to each other is actually a link between them. The Anarresti's ancestors suffered from injustice and repression from the Iotic government. Their suffering hatched the seed of an utopian project to construct a society which could eliminate all the unjust and repressive features in A-Io. The Urrasti world represents what should be improved or excluded for them. If there was no Urras, the Anarresti community would not exist. In this sense, Urras was a part of Anarres. It is undeniable that the two were inter-related. They had been coupled systems at the outset. The fact that Urras is the mother planet of Anarres is significant in two senses: on the one hand, they rely on each other to provide materials that they do not have; on the other hand, Urras is the past of Anarres. The past, the present, and the future are interwoven together. The Anarresti's attempt to cleave their relationship with the past from the present is doomed to fail. To deny their history or to regard the past as the threatening Other makes them fall into the danger of forgoing the possibility of return. That is to say, the past is fossilized as an evil Other, which results in this better society's refusing to re-examine its original link with its history. Anarres confronts its crisis of becoming a stable and static society. Its ideal principles gradually turn out to be dogma. Nevertheless, Anarres and Urras have

[10] Moylan blames Le Guin's exhibiting in many instances "a traditional male-identified, heterosexual, monogamous unclear family bias that undercuts her textual assertions of personal emancipation" (101). This is a strange criticism. Should personal emancipation not include the freedom to decide one's own sexual preference and the form of partnership? Moylan seems to suggest that to choose a female protagonist with homosexual tendency is more politically correct.

always been coupled societies: their inimical attitudes towards each other arise as a result of their coupling. Since Urras was a part of Anarres, the residue of the memory of Urras disturbs the stability of their society. In the Anarresti community, there are some dissidents who are aware of the imperfection of their society. Shevek, a powerful dissident, induces the violation of the other by helping his people to re-consider their relations with Urras. Shevek is also a dissident on Anarres. Since Anarres is also a part of Urras, he serves the function to remind the Urrasti the presence of his country.

The Observer and the Violation of the Other

How do the coupled societies generate an observer in this novel? In the representation of *The Dispossessed*, there are two separate stories describing the protagonist's experiences on Anarres and Urras. According to Ferns, Le Guin's narrative strategy lies in mixing the two separate stories. Through Shevek's eyes, the interweaving of the two stories/societies generates new meanings. Ferns writes,

> the extent to which Shevek is a product of utopia, rather than merely a stereotypical 'Great Scientist', only becomes fully apparent when he is placed in the context of Le Guin's analogue of the real world—and here, as elsewhere, it is clear that much of the impact of *The Dispossessed* is due to its narrative strategy. Out of the different contexts provided by the twin worlds of Urras and Anarres, separate, yet related, there emerges a larger perspective that embraces both. (225)

Shevek's comparisons and contrasts between the two societies offer a judgment of which is a better world. The "larger perspective that embraces both" that Ferns refers to means that through its contrast with Urras the utopian feature of Anarres is more clear. Nevertheless, the function of the protagonist here is more than what Ferns argues. Shevek as an observer here not merely makes comparisons and contrasts; he also induces the violation of the other. The mixture of the two stories/societies produces new

meanings because Shevek becomes a link between them in the sense that he serves the function of disturbing the stability of the two societies, playing the role of dissent in both worlds. Via his observation, the crisis of Anarres and the negative features of Urras are revealed as well as challenged.

In his own society, Shevek was very different from others. Since he was a child, he had been intelligent and "egoist." In his society, "egoist" is the term describing a person who had strong opinions and was unwilling to conform to custom and culture. Yet, Shevek was a genuine believer in Odonism—the belief in freedom. In fact, he was more Odonian than most of the Odonians; that is, he refused to conform to the stasis of his society since he found out its crisis. Ironically, his following the Odonian principle faithfully to advocate individual freedom resulted in his isolation. Although he believed in Odonism, what he had experienced in this Odonian society contradicted his belief. For instance, his scientific achievement was appropriated by his instructor, Sabul. The cruelest fact was that if he refused to cooperate with Sabul, the publication of his papers or books would not be allowed. Most of intelligent people like Shevek were either forced to yield to the "opinions" of the PDC or sent to a remote island to be isolated from people. These unpleasant experiences led him to question his society. There were a group of dissidents like him who were aware of the problems in their society. Bedap, one of Shevek's friends, pointed out the fact that Odo's concept of decentralization did not work out successfully in the Anarresti community. Although the Anarresti claimed that they did not have any government, the PDC "is basically an archistic bureaucracy" (166). At the outset, the first settlers on Anarres understood that there had to be a center to coordinate "the administration of things, the division of labor, and the distribution of goods, and the central federatives of most of the work syndicates, were in Abbenay, right from the start" (96). But these ancestors were aware that "unavoidable centralization was a lasting threat, to be countered by lasting vigilance" so they

carefully distinguished administering things from governing people (96). The PDC was at first a democratic organization whose operation was based on public opinions and social conscience. Nevertheless, social conscience became the weapon for the PDC to govern its people. As Bedap told Shevek, “On Urras they have government by the minority. Here we have government by the majority. But it is government! The social conscience isn’t a living thing any more, but a machine, a power machine, controlled by bureaucrates” (167). Sabul was a typical bureaucrate. He took use of Shevek’s intelligence to seek his academic achievement. When he found that Shevek’s scientific achievement was beyond his knowledge, he prevented Shevek’s papers or books from publishing and refused Shevek’s application for a teaching post in Abbenay. He represented the invisible authority in the Anarresti community. The PDC as a center nourished a power structure which they refused to admit. The power came from the so-called public opinions. Here, everyone should behave like everyone else. The result was the Anarresti’s inclination to conform to the majority. Those who refused to behave like others were labeled as trouble-makers or even traitors of the society. Anyone who knew how to take use of social conscience had power and authority. These people took use of most people’s yearning for stability to coerce dissidents’ conforming to public opinions, which resulted in a vicious circle: in order to maintain stability, they tended to be afraid of change and dissenting opinions and their fear of change caused stagnation of their society. Bedap had criticized the inertia of the society caused by people’s fear of change: “Change is freedom, change is life—is anything more basic than Odonian thought than that? But nothing changes any more! Our society is sick. . .” (166). Stability became the excuse to demand people’s obedience and conformity. As Bedap said, “stability gives scope to the authoritarian impulse” (167). Odo’s thought had become more or less rigid regulations or standards of morality to regulate people’s behavior.

Shevek and his friends organized a syndicate—Syndicate of Initiative, a printing syndicate, to speak out their dissenting opinions. They also set up radio contacts with the Urrasti. Their intention was to un-build the wall in people's mind. "Wall" is an important symbol in this novel. As Moylan has indicated, the central motive of the novel is tearing down the walls, "the smashing of boundaries that divide and isolate" (93). The story opens with the image of the wall which is an ambiguous symbol. The wall was built by the Anarresti people as a protection of themselves, avoiding "contamination" of other worlds, so the Anarresti community had not opened to other worlds for several generations. Moylan maintains that "[t]he wall leaves Anarres 'free,' but it also encloses the universe and keeps the revolution at home and consequently stifles it" (93). The visible wall separated Anarres from other worlds but it was also transformed into an invisible wall, that is, the dogma to regulate its people to behave like the majority in conventional ways. Shevek said, "We've made laws, laws of conventional behavior, built walls all around ourselves, and we can't see them, because they're part of our thinking" (331). Shevek's attempts to un-build the wall—fulfilling the real Odonian dream of freedom, including printing books of dissidents that were once forbidden and exchanging information with the Urrasti, irritated many Anarresti people. Shevek, his family, and the members of the Syndicate of Initiative suffered from discrimination from their fellowmen and fellowwomen. When the Syndicate introduced the project to send Shevek to Urras and to allow some Urrasti who admired the Odonian society to come to Anarres for mutual understanding between the two worlds, it was unavoidable that the conservative force strove to impede its proceeding. For most people, to change the status quo meant risk and danger. The members of the PDC scolded the selfishness of Shevek and his syndicate. Rulag, a member who opposed the Syndicate of Initiative on every issue, blamed the dangerous and irresponsible behavior of the Syndicate to have contacts with Urras. She felt threatened by the unknown danger

and unexpected result which might accompany the contact with Urras. She appealed to the public opinions to dissuade Shevek and his friends from carrying out his project. She argued, "You've done all this against the advice of the majority of the PDC, and increasing protests from the entire Brotherhood" (355). But in fact, she was afraid of change. She said that "Our hope lies, it has lain for a hundred and seventy years, in the Terms of the Settlement: No Urrasti off the ships, except the Settlers, then, or ever. No mixing. No contact. To abandon that principle now is to say to the tyrants whom we defeated once, The experiment has failed, come re-enslave us" (356). She feared that their ideality would be contaminated by the Urrasti. Shevek and his syndicate represented risks. However, for Shevek, they had to take the risk so as to rejuvenate their society. Therefore, he insisted to go to Urras whatever consequences he had to face.

When Shevek came to Urras, he was also a threat there. The Iotic government invited him because his new theory of temporal physics might help them develop the instantaneous transferal of matter across space. Afraid of his provoking revolutionary ideas on Urras, the government deliberately kept him from the working class and other nations. They offered him a large sum of money, a luxurious accommodation, and a good teaching post with the hope to incorporate him in the life of the Iotic higher class. Yet, he did not forget his mission here. He wanted to share with them Odonism and to increase mutual understanding. He wished to learn the real Urras, not just learning it from the Anarresti textbooks. He intended to build a link between Urras and Anarres. He pointed out the mistake of ignoring each other to his Urrasti friends. He said: "You are our history. We are perhaps your future. I want to learn, not to ignore. It is the reason I came. We must know each other. We are not primitive men. Our morality is no longer tribal, it cannot be. Such ignorance is a wrong, from which wrong will arise. So I come to learn" (75). Shevek found out the real conditions of A-Io, the extreme oppositions

between the rich and the poor. He understood why his ancestors would rather suffer from difficult life on Anarres than live a tragic life on fertile and abundant Urras. The past history became vivid and significant for him. As an observer, Shevek re-built a meaningful link for the two societies in terms of space and time. According to Klarer, Shevek's new scientific theory—the co-ordination of linearity and simultaneity—corresponds to Le Guin's narrative strategy. Klarer argues that *The Dispossessed* is "structured in concentric circles that oscillate between Urras and Anarres, i.e., time and space" (110). And inside every circular string of narrative, "Le Guin follows a linear, sequential structure that starts in the past and leads into future" (Klarer 110-11). The character, Shevek, serves the function of coordinating linearity and simultaneity of the narrative in the story. For the Urrasti, he represented the man from the possible future which for the ruling classes of Urrasti nations was a frightened one, while for the Anarresti he returned to the terrible past. Shevek re-connected what the two worlds tried to cut off. His observation makes a self-reflexive domain in the representation of this novel: the past, the present and the future are interwoven and inter-related. Temporality is linear as well as circular. As Le Guin presents in the story that time has two aspects: "There is the arrow, the running river, without which there is no change, no progress, or direction, or creation. And there is the circle or the cycle, without which there is chaos, meaningless succession of instants, a world without clocks or seasons or promises" (223). For the Anarresti, they needed the past so as to make progress; for the Urrast; they needed a vision of the possible future so that they had a glimpse of hope. The importance of the inclusiveness of circularity and linearity of temporality lies in its consisting of a self-reflexive domain as well as a progressing possibility.

The self-reflexivity here includes the other-within. Shevek symbolizes the risk on Anarres as well as on Urras. For the Iotic government, he was a threatening link between the two worlds. His presence represented the memory of the past revolution of

Odonians. His existence would induce the violation of the other, the dissenting force of the Iotic working class. Even though the Iotic government carefully blocked the news of Shevek's journey here, his existence stirred the stability of Urrasti nations. When he found out where the working class was and their tragic conditions, he unhesitatingly joined their demonstration to protest the rich class' exploitation of the poor. For the working class, Shevek's existence represented a glimpse of hope. A man told Shevek,

> "Do you know what your society has meant, here, to us, these last hundred and fifty years? Do you know that when people here want to wish each other luck they say, 'May you get reborn on Anarres!' To know that it exists, to know that there is a society without government, without police, without economic exploitation, that they can never say again that it's just a mirage, an idealist's dream." (295)

Shevek's presence was the proof that utopian vision was not illusion. Shevek's society might be the key to rescue them from suffering. Utopia was a possible dream. Shevek helped the Urrasti link their present with the past so as to make a better future. On Anarres, Shevek's journey to Urras had aroused some people's awareness of the crisis of their society. His journey also made some people try to re-examine the present via exploring their past. If Anarres is the possible future of Urras, Urras is the key to making Anarres a better world than the present one. The ending of the novel is ambiguous. The story ends up at the place where it begins: it begins from the episode that describes Shevek's setting off for Urras and ends up when Shevek prepared to return to his home country. Readers are not told what happened to him after his coming home. Was he killed (he was regarded as a traitor by many of his people)? Or, did he successfully persuade his people to un-build the wall? Readers are only told that he had attracted more comrades who supported him than he had expected during his staying on Urras. No matter what risk he had to take, such as death or isolation, his journey to the

other world broke the ice if not broke the wall. The risk Shevek took was a transformative force to drive both of the two societies forward. Shevek as an observer of the two societies is also a risk. He offers a critique of the better society, disrupting its integration to drive its changing of itself. The *Dispossessed* is an ambiguous utopia because it is different from a traditional one. Then why did Le Guin call it a utopia? Utopia here is not the Sovereign Good, but the possible good. Its utopian feature lies in its potential of permanent revolution, of being able to change itself. It is a critical utopia because it attempts to tell us utopia should not be presented as a fixed form of ideal society, but neither is it an illusion or impossible dream. Utopia is a possible future which gives us a hope that our society could be better.

Conclusion

In critical utopia writing, the two alternative societies are juxtaposed with a temporal link. The bad society usually represents the past memory of the better society while the latter is a possible future of the former. The analogy of the bad society to the real one is a strategy to arouse readers' awareness of injustice or inequality in reality. The better society provides a possible future as answers to these social problems. Critical utopia is characterized by its openness to the future. Different from the didactic nature of traditional utopia as Jean Pfaelzer proposed, the new narrative form starting around 1960s and 1970s tends to be more open and heuristic (193). It offers a description of how the present is transformed to the future (Pfaelzer 196); that is, it builds a link between the bad society and the better society. The future is described as one of possibilities to rescue the present. In other terms, the new utopian writing is future-oriented but it centers on the multiplicity, openness and possibility to become new utopias. Angelika Bammer shares a similar viewpoint. According to Bammer, the revival of utopianism in the 1960s consisted in its orientation toward the future. The New Left of the 1960s sparked the hope for a possible future. She argues that "The

belief in the possibility of a future that is better than the past—a future in which the emancipatory impulses that remain latent in the present will no longer be suppressed, but set free—is the sustaining dynamic of any movement that not only assumes the need for change, but is actively working toward it" (49). The possible future offers an option for people to work toward it. It aimed to set free the repressed libidinal energy, pronouncing the liberation of imagination (Bammer 49). The repressed libidinal energy, or, risk, in the society is actually the force for change toward a better future. The new utopianism is more open to speculation and the unpredictability of history than the old Marxism. Critical utopia is the product of the new utopianism. It allows more dissenting and marginal voices to resist the enclosure of traditional utopian writing. It liberates utopian imagination, not limiting utopia to orthodox way of representation, that is, to make political blueprint. It transforms the systematic design of political blueprint into options of realization of utopian vision. It is future-oriented but it does not fall into the danger of becoming an illusion. As a renewal of utopian literature, it tries to show us that utopia is not dead. To dream a utopia is still possible.

Chapter Five

Critical Dystopias and the Social: Tracing Associations between Human Beings and Technical Objects in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*

The revival of utopian imagination in the 1960s and 1970s undoubtedly regenerates utopian writing. As Baccolini and Moylan indicate, the writers of critical utopias were aware of the limitations of traditional utopia, and via the new form of utopian writing, they "reclaimed the emancipatory utopian imagination while they simultaneously challenged the political and formal limits of the traditional utopia" (2). However, in the 1980s, the optimistic atmosphere brought by the authors of critical utopias came to a dystopian turn. For Baccolini and Moylan, this dystopian turn resulted from the confrontation of "economic restructuring, right-wing politics, and a cultural milieu informed by an intensifying fundamentalism and commodification" (2). They point out that several works in this period, such as Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and the science fiction of the "second wave" of cyberpunk[1], drew on dystopian narrative but these works attempted different strategies to present their dystopias. These works paved the path for the coming of another new utopian writing—critical dystopia[2]. Why is this new dystopian writing critical? What is the difference between old dystopias and new dystopias? Baccolini and Moylan propose that both traditional dystopias and critical dystopias have the potential of expressing utopian possibilities. While traditional dystopias which are regarded as a bleak and depressing genre maintain "utopian hope *outside* their pages" for "it is only if we consider dystopia as a warning that we as readers can hope to escape its pessimistic future," critical dystopias "allow both readers

[1] Baccolini and Moylan point out that the works of the second wave of cyberpunk are written mainly by women such as Pat Cadigan. These writers moved "beyond nihilistic anxiety into a new oppositional consciousness" and "opened the door to a dystopian narrative that was, like its eutopian predecessors, *critical* in its poetic and political substance" (3; original emphasis).

[2] According to Baccolini and Moylan, Octavia E. Butler, Pat Cadigan, Suzy Mckee Charnas, Kim Stanlley Robinson, Marge Piercy and Ursula K. Le Guin are major writers of critical dystopias.

and protagonists to hope by resisting closure: the ambiguous, open-endings of these novels maintain the utopian impulse *within* the work (7; original emphasis). They also indicate another device that most writers of critical dystopias use: genre blurring. These writers endeavor to experiment with different literary forms by breaking the boundaries of literary conventions to "expand its creative potential for critical expression" (7). The "critical" in the term "critical dystopia" on the one hand refers to the formal flexibility which interrogates the limits of traditional dystopian narrative; on the other hand, it refers to the critical function which aims to examine and question the political, economic, and cultural dimensions in the contemporary society.

Baccolini and Moylan's observation on critical dystopias emphasizes their formal flexibility and political maneuvering. But they do not explain why the imagination of a better society is abandoned and where the utopian impulse comes from except from the narrative strategies. In the representation of critical utopias, the writers offer their imagination of the possible good society in contrast with the real world. Such imagination almost disappears in critical dystopias. One possible explanation could be that since society contains a multiplicity of segments, it is no longer possible to make a detailed and complete description of an ideal society. Critical dystopias deliberately break up with the traditional narrative strategy—the linear narration of an overview of a society. Intending to explore alternatives, their narrative strategy corresponds to what Baccolini and Moylan indicate as new forms of political opposition which resists hegemonic and oppositional orthodoxies in favor of difference and multiplicity (8). Critical dystopias expand their social concerns to several aspects, such as racial discrimination, gender issues, and ethical issues of the development of science and technology. It is interesting to notice that critical dystopias are often presented in the form of science fiction, which reflects that fact that science and technology are also essential determinant factors in the development of human society. Science and

technology change the relationship between human beings and things. In modern society, human beings become more and more dependent on technical objects. The combination of science fiction and utopian writing either projects the writer's expectation of technology's potential of improving human life or the writer's anxiety of the unexpected consequences of advanced technologies. Therefore, when we discuss modern utopian literature, it is important to examine the relationship between human beings and technology. In modern society, advanced technologies have huge influences on the relationship between human beings and things. The traditional ways of explaining what society is or how a society changes fail to explain the complicated relations between different groups of human beings, and between human beings and technical objects. In this chapter, I will re-examine the significance of "society" and argue that there is no homogeneous and stable entity as "society" as traditional sociology used to indicate. As Latour argues, a better term to designate "society" is "the social." In his definition, the social refers to both the continuous movement of human society and heterogeneity of the associations of human beings and technical objects. These associations generate new relationship between humans and technical objects caused by technical translation: human beings and technical objects translate each other. The statement that technology plays a transformative role on human society is correct to a certain extent but it eliminates the importance of the role human beings play on their interactions with technical objects. In most of critical dystopias, the relationship of technology and human beings is presented in a negative way. Therefore, the imaginary worlds in critical dystopias tend to be nightmarish and terrifying. The narrative of a critical dystopia is the tracing of the controversial, negative, or threatening associations interlaced between human beings and technical objects.

This chapter will be divided into two parts. The first part will examine the concept of society and re-consider the relationship between human beings and technical objects.

It will also explore how the concept of the social can offer a new reading of critical dystopias. In the second part, I will provide a reading of Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, a critical dystopia, by tracing the associations between human beings and technical objects presented in this work.

Society or the Social?

In his *Reassembling the Social*, Latour introduces a different approach to study social aggregates for sociology. His intention is to re-examine the concept of society and redefine the notion of the social. He indicates that due to the expansion of the products of science and technology, what the standard sociology defines as "society" has actually undergone a transformation. He remarks that "[i]t is no longer clear whether there exists relations that are specific enough to be called 'social' and that could be grouped together making up a special domain that could function as 'a society'" (2). The standard sociology, according to Latour, presupposes that there is a specific domain of reality as society which "can be used as a specific type of causality to account for the residual aspects that other domains (psychology, law, economics, etc.) cannot completely deal with" (4). It assumes that society consists of social aggregates and it is a strong force behind all activities, such as law, politics, technology, and economics. Latour criticizes that mainstream sociology regards society as a stable and unproblematic entity and it tends to study social phenomena by certain modes, such as classes, ideology and power structures. These notions, as he points out, limit in advance the "shape, size, heterogeneity, and combinations of associations" and fail to trace new associations of social aggregates (11). In other words, the concept of society consists in defining in advance what a society is comprised of so that sociologists can explain a social phenomenon by tracing its causality. He notes that "The standard sociology works fine with what has been already *assembled*, it does not work so well to collect anew the participants in what is not—not yet—a sort of social realm" (12; original emphasis).

Latour refuses to regard the combination of social aggregates as a stable and homogeneous entity. Introducing an alternative sociology, Actor-Network-Theory[3], he defines the connection of social aggregates as "the social." In his explanation of his intention in this book, he says, "I am going to define the social not as a special domain, a specific realm, or a particular sort of thing, but only as a very particular movement of re-association and reassembling" (7). The social is a movement, a type of connection between things that are not themselves social" (5). The social is a connection of heterogeneous elements and there are always new elements joining in and changing the state of connection. Therefore, the study of sociology should focus on the tracing of associations. The main approach of the sociology of associations is "to follow the actors themselves." The actors here refer to participants that might join in the movement of re-assembling and re-associating. To follow the actors is "to catch up with their often wild innovations in order to learn from them what the collective existence has become in their hands, which methods they have established to make it fit together, which accounts could best define the new associations that they have been forced to establish" (12).

In *Reassembling the Social*, it is evident that Latour strives to find a new path for sociology to study the changing social phenomena. The difference of his approach from mainstream sociology lies in his choosing to start from actors, instead of groups or the social context, and then trace the network which connects the actors. The advantage of this approach lies in its being able to take notice of difference and multiplicity of social phenomena by its methods of tracing possible associations. Abandoning the conventional ways of drawing boundaries to study social groups, it does not limit its tracing of associations to what has already been assembled. The standard terms, such as

[3] Latour calls this alternative sociology "critical sociology," or "sociology of associations," to be contrasted with the standard sociology.

the middle-class or the working class, are challenged. Is there really a social group that is so homogenous and stable as the middle-class or the working class? The standard sociology is based on knowledge of certainties: their objects for studying are definite and their methodologies are scientific. For Latour, the knowledge of certainty is in lack of flexibility and it is difficult to catch up with mutation, fluctuation and variation of the associations between constantly changing social aggregates. He argues that movements are constantly interrupted, interfered with, disrupted, and dislocated by five types of uncertainties: group formation, opaque action, objects as actors, matters of concern, and writing down risky accounts (25). Latour's approach aims to expand or explore the possibilities of the tracing of associations, avoiding simplifying or reducing the associations in the social to given relations in the standard sociology. This alternative approach toward sociology is Deleuzian to a certain extent. His notion of the social as a movement is similar to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of rhizome-root assemblage. In Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of the rhizome, it is an assemblage which "connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states" (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 21). The rhizome is a network which consists of a wide variety of associations, linking heterogeneous elements. However, it is not a stable network; it is always expanding its network of associations, playing with different elements. By the five types of uncertainties, Latour attempts to formulate the concept of the social as a rhizome-like assemblage. In the case of the first type of uncertainties, Latour opposes the methodology of defining social groups by means of drawing boundaries, that is, by drawing a line between what characterizes a certain group and what does not. He contends that "[t]here exist endless ways of rendering the group definition a finite and sure thing, so finite and sure that, in the end, it looks like the object of an unproblematic thing" (33). Emphasizing the group-making is a process, he

proposes that there is no group, only group formation. The second type of uncertainties refers to opaque action. By opaque action, Latour means that action should not be regarded as transparent. To explain why an actor acts in such way and how many actors involve in the action by means of causality, that is, by tracing the linear relationship between cause and effect, ignores the complexity of an action. For Latour, "[a]ction is not done under the full control of consciousness; action should rather be left as a node, a knot, and a conglomerate of many surprising sets of agencies that have to be slowly disentangled" (44). An action involves concatenations of mediators[4] (59) so it is never transparent as what can be predicted in the linear relation between an input and its output.

In the third type of uncertainties, Latour endeavors to explicate the relationship between technical objects and human beings. Since the social is an heterogeneous assemblage, consisting of humans and non-humans, he argues that objects or things play an essential role in the social. For him, non-humans mainly refer to technical objects. When considering the social, technical objects as well as human beings take parts in actions. He offers an interesting example to explain the importance of objects. In a class, it is difficult for a teacher to proceed his teaching with an open window through which loud noises from the street repeatedly interrupt the class. In the teacher's class, his teaching involves several actors: the teacher himself, his students, the open window, and the classroom. If these non-human actors are overlooked, it is impossible to explain why the teacher fails to continue his teaching. So, Latour asks, "what would happen if inter-subjectivity was obtained *for good* by removing, one after the other, all traces of

[4] In Latour's definition, mediators refer to what inspires the transformation of actors when several actors connect to one another. Mediators are distinguished from an intermediary. An intermediary indicates "what transports meaning or force without transformation: defining its inputs is enough to define its output", while mediators "cannot be counted as just one; they might count for one, for nothing, for several, or for infinity. Their input is never a good predictor of their output; their specificity has to be taken into account every time. Mediators transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry" (39).

inter-objectivity?" (195; original emphasis). Inter-subjectivity and inter-objectivity no longer stand in the opposite poles. The subject-object dichotomy fails to explain why humans and non-humans have influence on each other. In an action, objects as well as their users are participants and both of them have undergone transformations, or, to use Latour's term, translations. In Latour's definition, translation means "a relation that does not transport causality but induces two mediators into coexisting" (108). The idea is different from technological determinism which claims that technology determines the structure of society and culture (Dusek 84), or cultural determinism which suggests that society has strong influences on the development of technology (Dusek 99). For Latour, human beings and technical objects have influences on each other, and they form special collectives. This point is an expansion of his idea that the concept of society should be replaced by that of the human-nonhuman collective in *Pandora's Hope*. In *Reassembling the Social*, he moderates the concept of collective in *Pandora's Hope* by emphasizing its potential of assembling new entities. Distinguishing society from collective, he writes, "[s]ociety will be kept only for the assembly of already gathered entities that sociologists of the social believe have been made in social stuff. Collective, on the other hand, will designate the project of assembling new entities not yet gathered together and which, for this reason, clearly appear as being not made of social stuff" (75).

Since Latour claims that the social is a movement, the study of the social, different from the standard sociology, aims to trace the heterogeneous associations of a movement. The framework of Latour's methodology is Deleuzian. The tracing of associations involves the exploration of different forces linking with what Deleuze calls an inflection. Latour's theory is similar with Deleuze's notion of inflection which is developed in *The Fold*. Deleuze's theory departs with mathematics. Mathematically, an inflection makes a fold from variation. For Deleuze, the fold is Power because it is the

force that drives the inflection forward. The variation or the curve is determined by a reason outside of itself. The fold as Power is not generated by itself, but a transcendent force. An inflection is composed by infinite points. If we want to describe the variation of an inflection, we can observe it by the relation of tangents and points[5]. What we gain from the observation of the inflection is points of view. Abandoning the subject-object dichotomy, Deleuze suggests to observe an inflection from the continuous relationship between objectile and superject. While the idea of the object involves a fixed entity, objectile refers to the fluctuation or continuous variation of the movement of an object. Deleuze indicates that "[t]he new status of the object no longer refers its condition to a spatial mold—in other words, to a relation of form-matter—but to a temporal modulation that implies as much the beginnings of a continuous variation of matter as a continuous development of form" (19). With the change of the status of the object, that of the subject also changes. A superject is not any point of the inflection: it is a point of view "in which the lines perpendicular to tangents meet in a state of variation" (19). A superject follows the traces of an objectile as the latter moves, and that is why Deleuze argues that "every point of view is a point of view on variation" (20). What a superject represents is a series of points of view which vary with the fluctuation of an inflection. But it does not mean an inflection is an independent event: it can be divided into infinite events and it can also be extended to other inflections. In *The Fold*, Deleuze writes that "*[t]he world is the infinite curve that touches at an infinity of points an infinity of curves, the curve with a unique variable, the convergent series of all series*" (24; original emphasis). That is to say, the world is an inflection which contains infinite series of inflections. By the concept of inflections, Deleuze attempts to construct a theory of relations. All events are included in networks of relations and one network is related to

[5] In terms of calculus, the calculation of the measure square of a curvature is determined by the relations between the tangents which meet the lines perpendicular to them and the points which meet the tangents.

another network. An event is a knot which is filled with folds that stretch to other folds. Latour's concept of associations also consists in tracing networks of relations. In his argument that action is overtaken, he emphasizes that an action is a knot, or a network, which can be stretched to many relations. When he says that the social is a movement, he attempts to highlight the continuity and intensity of social relations. Nevertheless, Latour's concept of associations is different from the Deleuzian inflection: Latour does not give up the importance of matters in his formulation of the social as relations. Deleuze's formulation of the inflection avoids the materialized concept of subjectivity. For him, matter does not matter. Latour's concept of associations consists in how human beings and technical objects form special relationships. He believes that technical objects play transformative roles in their relations with human beings. For him, matter matters. Associations involve how objects are utilized and become part of the social. Associations are materialized relations, instead of de-materialized ones.

The materialization of the concept of associations here consists mainly in the networks interwoven by a wide variety of human-nonhuman collectives. For Latour, since his concern is the influence of technology on human beings, when discussing human-nonhuman collectives, his focus lies in technical objects, the matter which is already organized. The usage is problematic. On the one hand, non-humans are not confined to technical objects. On the other hand, his focus on technical objects ignores the fact that they have undergone the process of production. The production of technical objects is related to how raw materials are used and what technical milieu is associated with it. In other words, technical phenomenon involves geographical localizations and ethnic particularities. Like Latour, Bernard Stiegler also explores the relationship between technical objects and the human society. For Stiegler, the production of a technical object is associated with a technical system, and it is not an individual condition. Yet, he offers a different perspective by focusing on historical and

anthropological, or, to use his term, the zootechnological, observations of technical objects. His explanation of the technical phenomenon analyzes as "a particular case of zoology the relations established between the human *qua* living matter and inert matter *qua* the 'raw material' out of which technical forms appear" (45-46; original emphasis). Borrowing the zoological perspective that living species are molded by the conditions established by the inert matter of the milieu, he suggests that the technological phenomenon which results from technological evolution is determined by the coupling between human beings and their milieu. The diversities of the technical phenomenon are effects of historical development as well as human beings' interactions with their milieu, which can explain why different ethnic groups develop particular technical objects and systems since they encounter different geographic environments which lead to the generation of the particular associated milieu for the innovation of the technical objects. According to Stiegler,

> The zootechnological relation of the human to matter is a particular case of the relation of the living to its milieu, the former passing through organized inert matter—the technical object. The singularity of the relation lies in the fact that the inert, although organized, matter *qua* the technical object itself evolves in its organization: it is therefore no longer merely inert matter, but neither is it living matter. *It is organized inorganic matter that transforms itself in time as living matter transforms itself in its interaction with the milieu*. In addition, it becomes the interface through which the human *qua* living matter enters into relation with the milieu. (49; original emphasis).

Through the process of production, the inorganic matter utilized by human beings from their milieu becomes organized inorganic matter which further facilitates human beings' association with the milieu. It is obvious here that what Stiegler names as technological evolution not merely involves the relation of the human qua the living to its milieu but

also engages the transforming potential of the organized inorganic matter in time. How can matter transform itself? Matter has the potentiality of transforming itself because it has its characteristics which can be transformed or organized. How it is utilized depends on what aspect of it is discovered. When the organized matter enters a complex network of technical and social systems, its utilization becomes unpredictable and tends to have their own development. Stiegler argues that "matter organized technomorphologically is not passive" (49). For him, human intention is not the only determining force in the technological phenomenon. Matter qua potentiality of becoming technical objects "operates, down through time, by selecting forms in a relation of the human living being to the matter it organizes and by which it organizes itself, where none of the terms of the relation hold the secret of the other" (Stiegler 49). When he says that matter organizes itself, it does not imply technological determinism. What Stiegler refers to as technical evolution comprises the continuity of technical milieu. Continuity here has a Deleuzian sense. The technical phenomenon is regarded as continuous development. The innovation of a technical object is not an individual event. It is a fold which stretches to other folds. As Stiegler designates, "[i]nnovation accomplishes a transformation of the technical system while drawing the consequences for the other systems" (36). Technical systems consist of a complicated network and they are so complicated that we never know what cause leads to what effect. Organized inorganic matter transforms itself in time because its organization involves several layers of organization of other matter. In Stiegler's formulation of technical evolution, he avoids discussing the influence of human intention on the production of technical objects. The technical evolution seems to be controlled by a transcendent force. However, since technical objects are *produced* by human beings, does the act of producing not involve human intention? Do technical objects themselves not present human-nonhuman relations through which humans and nonhumans influence each other? Without their producers, there will not be technical

objects. Without their users, technical objects are useless. Therefore, human intention can not be neglected. Humans and nonhumans always connect with one another and undergo the process of translation. The translation here is a modification of Latour's idea.

As has shown earlier, Latour suggests that humans and non-humans have influence on each other via translation. According to him, translation is a force which connects, modifies, or transforms heterogeneous elements. Translation facilitates the generation of relations and these new relations are based on the transformation of what has been connected. In *Pandora's Hope*, he explains why he chooses "translation," instead of "inscription" or "articulation" used by science studies, to signify transformations occurring when actors and antants[6] have relations. He writes, "In its linguistic and material connotations, it refers to all the displacements through other actors whose mediation is indispensable for any action to occur. In place of rigid opposition between context and content, chains of translation refer to the work through which actors modify, displace, and translate their various and contradictory interests" (311). Here, translation is a process which inspires actions which are caused by the relations of certain objects and human beings. Translation is a link that both connects and transforms actors and actants. His idea of translation relies on how the characteristics of an object change the relation between its user and it. In the earlier example of a teacher teaching in a classroom with an open window, the open window disturbs the class so the teacher has to close it to continue the class. The teacher and the window have a relation that transforms each other. The window changes the teacher's behavior and the teacher also changes the status of the window (s/he may close the window or if the noise is too loud s/he may have a break). In this sense, his idea is very

[6] Latour suggests that objects also take part in actions in their associations with human beings. He calls human beings "actors" and technical objects "actants."

different from its linguistic usage, that is, the translation of one language to another, since his translation resides in the transformation of two sides, not one into another. For him, translation is related to human intention as well as materiality of technical objects. Human intention undergoes changes to a certain degree when it encounters materiality. Here, Latour tries to avoid "the myth of Neutral Tool under complete human control" (Latour 1999: 178) or technical determinism. However, he fails to explain how and why transformation occurs when actors and actants are connected. Why does materiality influence the relationship between humans and non-humans? Does it not imply that actors appropriate certain characteristics of actants and "translate" them into actions? In other words, the collective of humans and non-humans is related to translation, but in a different sense from what Latour suggests.

The translation occurring in a human-nonhuman collective is similar with linguistic translation in the sense that both consist in the transportation of the unique meaning of one coded system to that of another. The act of translating sways between the fidelity to the original text and the translator's intention. The restraint of the original text is involved with a residue of *jouissance*; therefore, translation comprises a part which is opaque, or unpredictable. In "Freud and the Scene of Writing," Derrida points out that translation is possible "only if a permanent code allows a substitution or transformation of signifiers while retaining the same signified, always present, despite the absence of any specific signifier" (210). But he comments that the coupled concept of signifiers and signifieds which is compared with the two sides of a sheet of paper ignores the materiality of language. After all, he writes, "[o]riginary writing, if there is one, must produce the space and materiality of the sheet itself" (210). Then, what is the materiality of language and what is its relation to translation? According to Chaoyang Liao's reading, the materiality of the word refers to the acoustic and visual aspects related to its form. The materiality of a word is untranslatable as Derrida notes: "The

materiality of a word cannot be translated or carried over into another language. Materiality is precisely that which translation relinquishes. To relinquish materiality: such is the driving force of translation" (210). Nevertheless, the materiality of a word is not independent of translation. In "What is a "Relevant' Translation?", Derrida proposes that a relevant translation, or a good translation, which "does what one expects of it, in short, a version that performs its mission, honors its debt and does its job or its duty while inscribing in the receiving language the most *relevant* equivalent for an original," involves a principle of economy which is governed by two laws: property and quantity (177). The law of property refers to appropriation that "aims to transport home, in its language, in the most appropriate way possible, in the most relevant way possible, the most proper meaning of the original text" (179). The law of quantity involves calculable quantity, the abstraction of materiality (Liao 154). Chaoyang Liao interprets property and quantity as the two poles of the principle of economy in building relevance: "property is the pole of variability, quality and judgment, giving freedom to the translator to improvise, while quantity is the pole of *constraint and inertia*, proving the stability of a broad but relatively determinable range of variation for property" (153-54; my emphasis). That is to say, translation is not a willful interpretation of a text. A relevant translation is a translation that works within a constraint though it also has its freedom to a certain extent, which is different from Paul de Man's de-constructionist viewpoint of translation[7]. Translation oscillates between property and quantity, or freedom and constraint. We can say that property consists in the translator's intention while quantity resides in limitation based on the original text. Translation is not merely determined by the translator's intention but also relies on the unique message that the original text attempts to convey. In other words, we have to be faithful to the original

[7] De Man attempts to disentangle the relationship between meaning and form. For him, translation is the play of linguistic structures and it is independent of any intent, wish, or desire (196).

text. But the fidelity in translation is not a one-to-one, or linear correspondence between two languages. It resides in a "broad but relative determinable range of variation." Liao compares the fidelity in translation with Benjamin's metaphor of a circle and a tangent. In this famous metaphor, Benjamin explains the law of fidelity by the way of how a tangent touches a circle. He writes, "[j]ust as a tangent touches lightly and at but one point—establishing, with this touch rather than with the point, the law according to which it is to continue on its straight path to infinity—a translation touches the original lightly and only at the infinitely small point of the sense, thereupon pursuing its own course according to the laws of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic flux" (261). A circle is composed by infinite points and yet it has a boundary which forms the shape of the circle. Likewise, a text, though it is characterized by linguistic flux, has a limit. The act of translating is to find a tangent which touches a point of the circle and develop its own route. As has shown above, quantity determines the limitation of property. Since quantity is the abstraction of materiality, it has a particular relation with materiality of the word. According to Liao, quantity, resulting from the abstracting its materiality, allows its meaning to be transported elsewhere, but it preserves some residual materiality in the manner of relevance (152). Liao' reading of Derrida here is Lacanian. The materiality of the word, that is, its acoustic and visual aspects of its form, is associated with voice and gaze, the *objet a*, which is the residue of *jouissance* driving the subject towards the impossible enjoyment. Translation transports meanings in terms of the conscious but it also carries the residue of *jouissance* from the original text to the other.

The associations between human beings and technical objects also undergo the process of translation and it will be called technical translation here. A technical object is a coded system which is associated with several other systems, including technical systems—how it is produced—and the human-nonhuman collective—how it is used. A

technical object is produced from raw materials which have certain characteristics so that they can be used in order to produce this object. Generally speaking, materials have a wide range of characteristics regarding their structures, forms and appearances. The characteristics of materials inspire human beings to use them to make some products for their purposes. In the case of wool, because it is warm and soft, it can be used as materials to make sweaters or blankets. And wool also contains grease so it can be produced as some particular products such as soaps or lotions. In other terms, the characteristics of materials offer a broad but relatively determinant range of how they can be transformed into technical objects. The relations between human beings and technical objects also engage the characteristics of these objects, that is, their functions. Human beings decide how to use a technical object though it also changes human beings. On the one hand, since the function of a technical object provides convenience for human beings, it is natural that the convenience will lead to their reliance on it. On the other hand, how a technical object is utilized is related to a network of associations between this object and its user(s). The change that a technical object causes is not merely between the object and its user(s) but also between a large number of people whom may be unknown to the user(s). In the case of food, the birth of agriculture, as Felipe Fernández-Armesto indicates, led to mass production of food which has become one of the chains of technical systems. Because mass production of food is possible, human beings do not have to take time and energy to search for a large amount of edible things. In modern society, food is unquestionably a technical object. How it comes to us involves a series of technical systems. How it is cultivated in the case of plants or raised in the case of fowls and livestock, how it is processed so as to become a product, and how it is sent to markets weave a network of technical systems of food. However, Fernández-Armesto argues that the invention of agriculture might not be a good one in the human history. Agriculture, according to him, results in the cultivation of a small

number of useful and edible plants. Giving up searching for other kinds of edible things, human beings become more and more dependent on the cultivated food for their convenience's sake. They have to pay for the price. As Fernández-Armesto points out, the reliance on agricultural technology causes human beings' suffering from famines and diseases when natural disasters or wars occur. In the society where the people extremely rely on cultivated food, most of the people can not survive famines or diseases if there is a shortage of food. The invention of agriculture is a marked event in the civilization. It led to the rapid growth of population and changed human beings' relationship with food. The technical translation that occurs here transforms human beings' behavior and it also generates a social network related to the production and consumption of cultivated food.

As the case of food shows us, technology influences human life, which results from technical translation. Technical translation involves appropriation and abstraction, which is related to Derrida's property and quantity. Appropriation refers to the appropriate way in Derridarian sense, or the freedom to use technical objects or materials: how human beings appropriate the characteristics of materials or technical objects for their own purposes. Abstraction here refers to the abstraction of the characteristics of materials or technical objects, turning them into knowledge. In order to know how to use materials or technical objects, human beings have to study their characteristics and turn them into their symbolic system. In science and technology, we tend to codify matter in the form of calculable quantity. Nevertheless, the knowledge of matter is still based on the essence of matter. Matter can not be transformed to anything like magic does. Abstraction engages a limit of what matter is. Technical translation oscillates between the two poles: appropriation and abstraction. Our intention determines how to use or produce a thing, but our intention is confined by the characteristics of the thing. Technical translation does not work towards one extreme

pole, abandoning the other pole. Appropriation is associated with abstraction to a certain degree while abstraction is dependent on appropriation. When we try to use or produce something, we have to rely on the knowledge of the characteristics of its materiality. Similarly, if a technical object or a certain kind of materials is not used, it is merely a thing, not embedded in the associations between humans and non-humans, nor does it engage translation. Human intention is a determinant factor in technical translation but it is not the only one. To compare technical translation with the metaphor of a circle and a tangent, abstraction, which is associated with matter which consists of infinite dimensions of characteristics, is analogous to the circle which is composed by infinite points, while appropriation, which engages our intention of how to use the matter, is similar to the tangent that touches one point of the circle. Matter has the potential of being used in infinite ways but the infinite dimensions are based on its characteristics. Our intention to use or produce something, similar with the tangent's touching the circle, connects with one dimension of its characteristics. Different from the materiality of the word which carries the residue of *jouissance*, matter does not engage *jouissance*. Yet, technical translation carries over human intention. During the process of our transformation of matter, our intention is woven with it. For some critics, such as Langdon Winner, modern society is a large-scale sociotechnical systems and "human ends are powerfully transformed as they are adapted to technical means" (21). This point obviously does not consider the aspect of technical translation which leads to the new relationship between matter and desire. In his *The Whale and the Reactor*, Winner illustrates two ways in which technical things contain political properties. First "are instances in which the invention, design, or arrangement of a specific technical device or system becomes a way of settling an issue in the affairs of a particular community" and second "are cases of what can be called 'inherently political technologies,' man-made systems that appear to require or to be strongly compatible with particular

kinds of political relationships" (22). Evidently, Winner's intention is to make an eclectic explanation of how technology changes society. He does not deny human intention is also a determinant factor in the production of technical devices, but he argues that "some technologies are by their very nature political in a specific way" (29). In the example he borrows from Engels, he says that the automatic machinery of a big factory unavoidably brings with it the centralized and authoritarian conditions of management. It is true that the arrangement of a centralized system in a factory causes hierarchical human relationships. However, it is problematic to argue that the factory is inherently authoritarian. This argument ignores the fact that the design of the factory contains the capitalist's intention to make an efficient and economic technical system.

Since technical translation consists of the "in-between" relationship, to borrow Liao's words, between appropriation and abstraction, appropriation which results from human intention is undoubtedly related to desire. The production of a technical object weaves matter and desire. The desire here is in the Lacanian sense. As I have mentioned in Chapter Three, desire is a detour circling around the Thing, or a defense against the impossible enjoyment. Since to produce something aims to "meet our needs," as what is commonly said, the needs must be what we do not have. What we do not have or what we want might be satisfied by technical objects though it fails to achieve the ultimate satisfaction. Unfortunately, the residue of *jouissance* often seduces our transgressing the limit. For instance, the invention of credit cards intends to make one's shopping easier. With a credit card, one does not have to worry about not having enough money in one's pocket. Credit cards might satisfy one's needs to buy things easily, but shopping is more than buying things. One might want to please his/her lover by a present, to show off by buying fashionable clothes, or to bribe someone by valuable presents. The invention of credit cards actually aims to arouse one's desire. For some people, even though credit cards meet their needs to buy things conveniently, credit cards never satisfy them

because they are seduced to transgress the limit, to gain *jouissance*. The result is their unrestricted use of it. The ethical issues raised by the development of science and technology are neither the problems caused by technical devices which mold society to fit its ends as technological determinism suggests; nor are they problems resulting from social power which decides the development of technology as social determinism indicates. Since matter and desire are interwoven into a new relation through technical translation, ethical problems are not merely determined by technical objects or human intention. The impact of technology on the society should be modified as the impact of technical translation which generates new relationship between humans and non-humans.

As Latour indicates, there is no homogeneous entity as society. There is only the social as a movement, a dynamic network connecting a multiplicity of associations. What does this perspective offer for the reading of critical dystopias? As I have mentioned earlier, utopian writers nowadays tend to combine elements of science fiction with their critical dystopias since they are concerned with the relationship between human beings and technology. According to Garder Dozois, science fiction presents the "interdependence of things" and provides an image of heterogeneous connections in our society (115). In his words, "[y]ou live in an organic surround, an interlocking and interdependent gestalt made up of thousands of factors and combinations thereof: cultural, biological, psychological, historical, environmental" (116). The "interdependence of things" should be modified to the "interdependence of human beings and things." Science fiction presents to us the imagination of how human beings and technical things can have new relations. The interlacing of science fiction and critical dystopian writing has the potential of presenting a wide variety of themes. Among them are cyperpunk, feminist science fiction, and cyborgs, which reflects many utopian writers' concern with the impact of advanced technologies. In utopian writing,

there seems to have a pessimistic tendency toward the development of science and technology. In the case of Pat Cadigan, whose writing centers on cyberpunk, David Seed points out that she constantly "probes the promotional claims of the technology of VR [Virtual Reality] to explore its human costs" (71). Likewise, Margaret Atwood is worried about the hubris of human beings. In her essay, "*The Handmaid's Tale* and *Oryx and Crake* in Context," she gives a warning against the unlimited development of technology:

> As William Blake noted long age, the human imagination drives the world. At first it drove only the human world, which was once very small in comparison with the huge and powerful natural world. Now we have our hand upon the throttle and our eye upon the rail, and we think we're in control of everything; but it's still the human imagination, in all its diversity, that propels the train. (517)

The apocalyptic atmosphere of *Oryx and Crake* reflects her anxiety of unlimited human imagination. Obviously, the pessimistic tone in most of critical dystopian writing comes from the unpredictable consequences and uncontrollable associations of human beings and technical objects. As Atwood indicates, human beings have been inventing new technical objects, which means we are undergoing different technical translations. There are more and more new associations between human beings and things. The process of technical translation is based on the creation of a surface for human beings and things to communicate, or, to have a connection, with each other. Since the invention of a technical object aims to offer some particular functions, its invention is based on some of its characteristics. We appropriate some of its characteristics for certain purposes. Our intention and these characteristics of the object comprise a unique association. However, because the materiality of an object has a wide variety of characteristics, there are always some unexpected associations between an object and its user(s) even though

the invention of this object does not aim to offer them. The unpredictable consequences and uncontrollable associations of human beings and technical objects are not unpredictable. The impact of technology is caused by the constantly changing associations between technical objects and their users. Because of its unpredictability, technology might offer emancipatory possibilities to resist the hegemonic power in society but it might also turn into a destructive force. The pessimistic tendency in critical dystopia is natural since the network of associations between human beings and technical objects in the social is so unstable and complicated that we can never predict its consequences. And the unpredictable and complex state of the social makes most of the writers of critical dystopia give up the depiction of the overview of the structure of the society. What their narrative offers is some major characters' viewpoints of the society. Through these characters' observations, we can trace some associations in the social and have a glimpse of it.

The pessimistic tone of critical dystopia is different from that of traditional dystopia. The former comes from the exaggeration of some social problems and the description of the unjust society is exaggerated to the extent that the society is nightmarish for the protagonist. Even though the protagonist struggles to survive in the nightmarish world, there is still hope for him/her to change the status quo. In the case of *Oryx and Crake*, advanced technology enlarges the gap between the rich and the poor. The unlimited development of advanced technology encouraged by capitalists leads to the destruction of civilization. Struggling to live in the chaotic world, the protagonist remains the hope to survive and to have a new relationship with other human beings. Baccolini proposes that the pessimistic tone in classical dystopia results from the subjugation of the individual at the end of the novel, but "the critical dystopia opens a space of contestation and opposition for those groups—women and other ex-centric subjects whose subject position is not contemplated by hegemonic discourse—for

whom subject status has yet to be attained" (Baccolini 2004: 520). Their hope comes from the not–yet state of a possible better world though there is no concrete picture of the future. In the writing of critical dystopias, the theme of the possible good in critical utopia is transformed into a glimpse of hope. And the glimpse of hope in critical dystopia comes from the protagonist's resistance of the nightmarish world and from his/her unceasing search for a better future.

Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*

Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* is a typical apocalyptic writing. In this novel, she imagines a self-destructed future caused by human beings' unlimited development of science and technology. Most of the criticisms of the novel center on the discussion of the unpredictable and catastrophic consequences of advanced technologies. They seem to be overwhelmed by the dangerous power of technology. For instance, J. Brooks Bouson's reading of the book emphasizes Atwood's presentation of the "transformative and potentially dangerous power of science and technology" in an age in which biotechnology blurs the boundary between science fiction and science fact (139). Comparing the protagonist with Robinson Crusoe, Earl G. Ingersoll reads the novel as a survival story, describing how the protagonist survives in the post-apocalyptic world (163). Regarding Crake, one of the characters in the novel who is a brilliant scientist, as a mad scientist figure, he suggests that Crake symbolizes the changing and threatening power of technology. Danette DiMarco points out the theme of the scientist's hubris in the novel. He proposes that *Oryx and Crake* is a critique of modernity's commitment to *homo faber*: "he who labors to use every instrument as a means to achieve a particular end in building a world, even when the fabrication of that world necessarily demands a repeated violation of its materiality, including its people" (170). Although Atwood herself indicates that her central concern in this novel is what our limits are regarding technology ("Perfect" 4), her presentation of the theme does not consist in describing

the overwhelmingly threatening power of technology. Rather, its narrative unfolds the relations between technology and human beings. Combining science fiction and dystopian elements, she presents the associations between human beings and technical objects from the protagonist's point of view. As Atwood herself argues, her *Oryx and Crake* is not a classic dystopia. In her comment on her book, she remarks that she does not intend to provide an overview of the structure of the society in it. Instead, she writes, "We just see its central characters living their lives within small corners of that society, much as we live ours. What they can grasp of the rest of the world comes to them through television and the Internet, and is thus suspect, because edited" (Atwood 2004: 516). She abandons the description of the overview of a society in traditional dystopia since that strategy fails to present how people really live and have associations with what they live with. Atwood's narrative strategy in this book consists mainly in presenting the protagonist's detailed observation of the technical world. The plot interweaves the protagonist's recollection of the "wonderful" past when he lived in a high-tech world with the story of his struggling and frustrated life in the relics of the high-tech world after civilization was completely destructed. The story unfolds the relationship between the present and the past as the protagonist starts his journey—the journey through time and the journey for survival. With the protagonist's moving from one place/memory to another, as readers, we follow his tracing, seeking and recollecting the associations between technical objects and their users. My intention in this section is to offer a different reading of this text. I will argue that Atwood presents an imagination of how technical translation might cause tragedy. Atwood uses a very unique narrative strategy in this novel. There are many trivial descriptions of technical objects, by means of which the relationship between these technical objects and their inventors or users and how both of them undergo technical translation are probed. Through these descriptions, we have a glimpse of the network of the associations between human

beings and technical objects in this imagined world. The network is so complicated that a change or a mistake in an association would lead to unpredictable consequences. The tragedy in this book results from a change in an association, which leads to destruction of all associations in the social.

The Associations Between Human Beings and Technical Objects

Oryx and Crake has a very special beginning. It begins with a post-apocalyptic world where only the protagonist, Snowman/Jimmy, and the Children of Crake[8] survive. All high-tech systems are destroyed, human society is dismantled, and only dysfunctional technical objects are left. Snowman, who was unwilling to call himself Jimmy since the name belonged to the past when he was still associated with the human world, struggles to survive in the nightmarish world. Atwood's arrangement of the apocalyptic beginning here on the one hand intends to make a contrast between the high-tech world with the nightmarish world caused by the unpredictable consequences of technology; on the other hand, it aims to unfold the associations between technical objects and their users. When technical objects are disengaged with their connections with technical and social systems, they lose their function, which reflects the fact that the importance of technical objects lies in its undergoing technical translation. The significance of a technical object depends on how its materiality is appropriated by human beings. The story starts with the description of the deserted world in which the "corpses" of technical objects were scattered everywhere. The Children of Crake, who have never experienced the high-tech world, are curious about these objects. They pick up items that they are interested in, such as "a hubcap, a piano key, a chunk of pale-green pop bottle smoothed by the ocean. A plastic BlyssPluss container, empty; a ChickieNobs Bucket O'Nubbins, ditto. A computer mouse, or the busted remains of one, with a long wiry tail" (7). For them, these items are meaningless since they have never

[8] The Children of Crake are a new species invented by Crake by means of human cloning.

had connections with these items. For Snowman, these deserted technical objects are weird and ironic since they have lost their network of associations with other technical systems and their users. These objects as well as Snowman himself are deprived of their connections with other human beings and technical systems. The life without technology forces him to be detached from technical objects though he has already been extremely dependent on them. He keeps some technical objects as a memory of the past, which inspires his questioning of the significance of technology. For instance, he used to rely on his watch to tell the time. He (un)consciously keeps the habit in the world without other civilized human beings:

> Out of habit he looks at his watch—stainless-steel case, burnished aluminum band, still shiny although it no longer works. He wears it now as his only talisman. A blank face is what it shows him: zero hour. It causes a jolt of terror to run through him, this absence of official time. *Nobody nowhere knows what time it is*. (3; my emphasis)

The watch is a link with the past when there is still official time. The significance of a watch lies in its association with human beings' attempt to manage time by building the temporal order. The invention of watches intends to consolidate the temporal order by reminding individuals to follow the official time. The materials utilized to make the watch aim to produce a technical device to tell the time though most of the time they are interlaced with other purposes. The "stainless-steel case, burnished aluminum band" of the watch, characterized by their solid and stainless structures, are designed to strengthen the watch band and lengthen the life of the watch. A watch as a technical object is meaningful as long as it is connected with the temporal order in human society. Snowman is terrified by the watch because it reminds him the dismantlement of human society. This fact also reminds him how much he had been dependent on technical objects: even though it is useless, he still wears it as a talisman, a symbol of human

civilization.

Snowman's life in the post-apocalyptic world is difficult. Without the technical systems which produce necessities for the maintenance of life, such as food, electricity, and clean water, as Ingersoll indicates, like Robinson Crusoe, he has to rely on his ingenuity "in exploiting the materials at hand to survive" (163). However, different from Crusoe who is left in an isolated island with the hope to return to the human world, Snowman struggles to survive in a deserted world where almost no other human being remains alive. The former rebuilds an order of his own by taking use of the natural resources he could find, while the latter desperately lives in a chaotic world where law and order are totally destroyed with little hope to be restored. Snowman has to rely on these deserted technical objects since he has lost the ability to live without technology. Snowman's case shows how technical translation transforms both human beings and things. Human beings utilize materials to produce technical objects for their purposes, but technical objects change their lifestyle. In this text, there are many episodes that describe Snowman's reliance on technical objects to survive. Without the protection of high-tech facilities, Snowman has to find a shelter for himself. Sleeping on a fold-up cot in the wilderness, he confronts the problems of ant-attacks, humidity of air, the storms, and the intrusion of wild animals. Then, he moves up to a tree to evade the attacks of aggressive animals. Another problem is the source of food. The starving Snowman has to look for edible things. Since there are no factories, farms, fields and markets to produce and sell food, he has no choice but to pick up things that are edible. In his collection of food, there are "some mangos there, knotted in a plastic bag, and a can of Sveltana No-Meat cocktail Sausages, and a precious half-bottle of Scotch—no, more like a third—and a chocolate-flavoured energy bar scrounged from a trailer park, limp and sticky inside its foil" (4). This is a wired collection, to be contrasted with the tasty and nutritious meals he once had in the past, but he does not want to take the risk of

picking up wild plants or catching animals for food. For him, food is not only edible things. The knowledge of food teaches him what things are safe and nutritious. He forces himself to eat some lemons to avoid the disease of scurvy. He tries to calculate the calories that he takes every day. Since there is no more regular supply of nutritious food, what is the use of calculating calories? He fears death. The knowledge of nutriology might help him understand what food he has to eat, but it also makes him feel helpless and desperate. He presses himself to eat the corrupt No-Meat Cocktail Sausages because they are protein. He also drinks the "the warm, bland sausage juice, which—he tells himself—must surely be full of vitamins. Or minerals, at least. Or something" (149). If he refuses to eat these disgusting things he would starve to death:

> Time to face reality. Crudely put, he's slowly starving to death…He knows that if he doesn't balance out the protein with starches and that other stuff—carbohydrates, or are those the same as starches?—he'll start dissolving his own fat, what's left of it, and after that his own muscles. The heart is a muscle. He pictures his heart, shriveling up until it's no bigger than a walnut. (149)

The passage shows us that food as technical things are interwoven with all kinds of purposes. One of them is to maintain the health of the human body. Modern technology produces plenty of nourishing food which prolongs human life. Food as technical objects transforms human lifestyle. Human beings rely on the technical systems which supply food, rather than growing plants or raising animals by themselves. When the network that connects the production, marketing, and consumption of food collapses, human beings suffer from the shortage of food. Technology transforms human life insofar as human beings make use of technical objects to improve their life. How to utilize technical objects becomes life skills. Snowman remembers that there was a "Life Skill Class" in his high school days. In this class, they learned

> Double-entry on-screen bookkeeping, banking by fingertip, using a microwave

> without nuking your egg, filling out housing applications for this or that Module and job applications for this or that Compound, family heredity research, negotiating your own marriage-and-divorce contracts, wise genetic match-mating, the proper use of condoms to avoid sexually transmitted bio-forms. (42)

Jimmy and his classmates felt bored about the class since these life skills had already become necessities in their life. Nevertheless, when living in the wilderness, these life skills are ridiculous and ironic. In a world without technology, what Snowman needs is "real" life skills, the skills of surviving in a primitive way.

High-tech Compounds Versus Pleeblands

Snowman's journey back to the RejoovenEsense Compound, the compound he once lived in, is a recollection as well as a tracing of the associations in the incredible high-tech world. These deserted technical objects thread Snowman's story with Jimmy's. Snowman's memory unfolds a high-tech world where people were crazy about inventing novel and profitable technical objects, making more and more complicated and unpredictable associations between human beings and things. In Jimmy's story, the high-tech compounds where intelligent scientists and experts worked and lived, separated from pleeblands where common people lived, dominated the development of technology. These compounds were constructed by different corporations which competed with one another to produce more profitable products. Atwood's imagination of the high-tech compounds is an exaggeration, or maybe a prophecy, of the world dominated by extreme capitalism. The compounds and the pleeblands were extremely different worlds. The former, protected by high-tech facilities, was a well-organized, clean, and luxurious world, while the latter was crowded, dirty, and dangerous. For instance, in the RejoovenEsense Compound, one of the communities constructed by the most advanced technologies, everything was "sparkling clean, landscaped, ecologically

pristine, and very expensive. The air was particulate-free, due to the many solar whirlpool purifying towers, discreetly placed and disguised as modern art. Rockulators took care of the microclimate, butterflies as bit as plates drifted among the vividly coloured shrubs" (291). Living in compounds was like living in a vacuum tube, well-protected but unable to adapt to other environments. In contrast, without the protection of high-tech facilities, as Crake told Jimmy, the pleeblands "were a giant Petri dish: a lot of guck and contagious plasm got spread around them" (287). What the pleeblands consisted of was more like what was excluded by the compounds. Jimmy and Crake once visited the pleeblands. Jimmy was impressed by the world which seemed to be out of symmetry and order. He saw

> Neon slogans, billboards, ads everywhere. And there were real tramps, real beggar women, just in old DVD musicals. Jimmy kept expecting them to kick up their battered bootsoles, break into song. Real musicians on the street corners, real bands of street urchins. Asymmetries, deformities: the faces here were a far cry from the regularities of the Compounds. There were even bad teeth. (288)

Jimmy had never seen beggars or musicians since these kinds of people were not allowed to stay in compounds. He was surprised by bad teeth because in the world he lived in almost all diseases could be cured by medical technologies. Even though the two worlds were extremely different, they depended on each other. The luxury of the compounds came from the pleeblands: the scientists and experts of the compounds invented all kinds of profitable products and sold them to the people of the pleeblands. As a result, the compounds accumulated more and more wealth while the pleeblands remained as poor as ever.

The gap between the rich and the poor widened as the relationship between advanced technology and capitalism was turned into an essential association in the

network of the social. All other social associations were connected with the profit-driven technology. In their profit-oriented educational system, EduCompounds took the place of universities and colleges. They had the Student Auction every year to bid for the best students, those who were talented in science and technology. Jimmy's best friend, Crake, was top of the class. He was "snatched up at a high price by the Watson-Crick Institute," the best institute which only accepted the most intelligent students. By contrast, Jimmy was a mid-range student, good at words, the subjects about language, but getting poor scores on numbers, the subjects about science and mathematics. At the Student Auction, almost no Educompound was interested in him. Finally, Martha Graham Academy, an institute of arts and humanities, hesitantly accepted him. Since arts and humanities were not mainstream programs, Martha Graham Academy was a marginalized institute, a contrast to the promising Watson-Crick Institute which was the cradle of advanced technologies. In the Watson-Crick Institute, they encouraged students to create interesting things which had selling points. Jimmy once took a trip to the Watson-Crick Institute. He was shocked by the incredible inventions there. The students in Transgenetics program had 'created a whole array of drought-and-food-resistant tropical blends, with flowers or leaves in lurid shades of chrome yellow and brilliant flame red and phosphorescent blue and neon purple" (199). The students in NeoGeologicals program made rocks which looked like real ones but they were lighter and they "absorbed water during periods of humidity and released in times of drought" (200). A group of students in Décor Botanicals program were "developing Smart Wallpaper that would change colour on the walls of your room to complement your mood (201). The students of NeoAgriculturals attempted to improve the growth speed of chickens and bred the chickens only with breasts or drumsticks growing in two weeks. In BioDefences program the students bred wolvogs[9],

[9] In *Oryx and Crake*, Atwood imagines several new species of animals which are created by scientists. A

looking friendly but aggressive in nature for the purpose of guarding. The training in the Watson-Crick Institute was the guarantee of educating the most creative and intelligent scientists and experts who could increase the profits of the capitalists.

Jimmy's father was one of the brilliant experts working for compounds. He was an engineer in OrganInc Farms which was a corporation in bioengineering, responsible for the pigoon project. "Pigoon" is the nickname for *sus multiorganifer*. The goal of the project was "to grow an assortment of foolproof human-tissue organs in a transgenic knockout pig host—organs that would transplant smoothly and avoid rejection, but would also to fend off attacks by opportunistic microbes and viruses, of which there were more strains every year" (22). It aimed to reproduce human organs by means of animals to solve the problem of the shortage of human organs. The project, though it was profit-driven, was based on the improvement of medical treatments. However, some projects were controversial because they took use of human weaknesses to gain profits. For instance, the compound of NooSkins developed skin-related biotechnologies. Its team worked on a method of "replacing the older epidermis with a fresh one, not a laser-thinned or dermabraded short-term resurfacing but a genuine start-over skin that would be wrinkle- and blemish-free" (55). It would be a promising business since "[w]hat well-to-do and once-young, once-beautiful woman or man, cranked up on hormonal supplements and shot full of vitamins but hampered by the unforgiving mirror, wouldn't sell their house, their gated retirement villa, their kids, and their soul to get a second kick at the sexual can?" as Jimmy's father proudly told Jimmy (55). The most terrifying project was the creation of diseases. Crake told Jimmy that a team of experts in Helth Wyzer created diseases to gain high profits. They put the hostile bioforms in vitamin pills which were sold in pleeblands so as to spread it. At the same time, they

---

wolvog is one of the species of hybrid animals. It looks like a dog but it is aggressive like a wolf. It looks friendly because it is bred to deceive people (205).

had developed the antidotes but only produced a small quantity to practice economics of scarcity. From a business point of view, as Crake commented, the best diseases "would be those that cause lingering diseases. Ideally—that is, for maximum profit—the patient should either get well or die just before all of his or her money runs out" (211). In other words, in the high-tech world, human bodies were regarded as matter which could be organized, produced and commodified. Biotechnologies changed the relationship between human beings and their bodies.

The association between capitalism and technology unavoidably led to changes in the interactions between human beings and their milieu. As shown earlier, Stiegler points out that inorganic matter taken use of by human beings from their milieu becomes organized inorganic matter which further facilitates human beings' association with the milieu. The development of technology kept on utilizing and organizing inorganic matter in more efficient ways, which transformed the association between human beings and matter. In this text, there is a description of coffee wars occurring in the Third World, which demonstrates how the associations among globalization, capitalism, and technology change the network of the social associations in the Third World. The Happicuppa coffee, produced from an improved species of coffee beans by the HelthWyzer Compound, defeated all traditional coffee:

> Until then the individual coffee beans on each bush had ripened at different times and needed to be handpicked and processed and shipped in small quantities, but the Happicuppa coffee bush was designed so that all of its beans would ripen simultaneously, and coffee would be grown on huge plantations and harvested with machines. This threw the small powers out of business and reduced both them and their labourers to starvation-level poverty. (178-79)

The connection between advanced technologies and capitalism played a transformative role here. The traditional planting of coffee trees took use of their distinctive

characteristics to produce coffee beans. It needed a large number of laborers to work on the (re)production of coffee beans. The traditional way generated associations among coffee beans, small plantations and peasants. Advanced technologies endangered the old associations by making new associations which connected new species of coffee trees, machines, large plantations and professional employees. The new associations were enhanced by consumers since "[e]verybody wants a cheaper cup of coffee—you can't fight that" as Uncle Pete, Crake's stepfather, remarked (180). Nevertheless, the destruction of old associations led to unpredictable consequences. Protests and demonstrations against Happicuppa coffee stirred up a global resistance movement, riots and terrorist attacks. The oppositions and conflicts between high-tech compounds and the world which was excluded by compounds, such as pleeblands and the Third World, became more and more vehement and violent. It threatened the order of the well-organized high-tech world and the beneficial business of the Happicuppa coffee. Even though scientists and experts of these compounds strove to maintain their own order via advanced technologies, the high-tech world was fragile. Their order was based on the exploitation of the people of the pleeblands and the Third World. A change in the association between the high-tech world and other worlds would lead to the change of all associations which were connected to it.

The Tragedy: Crake's Plot

Crake's experiments, sponsored by the RejoovenEsense Compound, represent the culmination of the development of advanced technologies. It included two projects which intended to control birth and to create a perfect species of human beings. It represented a scientist's "utopian" attempt to create an ideal human society by means of the most advanced medical technologies and biotechnologies. The first project was the BlyssPluss Pill, a kind of multiple-functional pills. Its production aimed to "protect the user against all known sexually transmitted diseases," to "provide an unlimited supply

of libido and sexual prowess, coupled with a generalized sense of energy and well-being, thus reducing the frustration and blocked testosterone that led to jealousy and violence, and eliminating feelings of low self-worth", to "prolong youth" (294), and finally to control birth rate. The second one was "Paradice Project." "Paradice" was the name of Crake's laboratory, which represented his ambition to create a paradise. Crake had his own theory: to "eliminate the external causes of death and you were half way there" (293). The BlyssPluss Pill was the first step, which could solve the problems caused by misplaced sexual energy and over-population. The medicine aimed to change imperfect features of human beings. The "Paradice Project" was the second but the most important step. In this project customers would "be able to create totally chosen babies that would incorporate any features, physical or mental or spiritual, that the buyer might wish to select (304). Besides, the weaknesses of *homo sapiens* would be improved or eliminated: "Paradice had already developed a UV-resistant skin, a built-in insect repellent, an unprecedented ability to digest unrefined plant material. As for immunity from microbes, what had until now been done with drugs would soon be *innate*" (304; my emphasis). Crake successfully created a model group, "Paradice people," the most perfect people in his mind. These people were beautiful, healthy and docile. All the destructive features were gone. As he explained his project to Jimmy:

> For instance, racism—or, as they referred to it in Paradice, pseudospeciation—had been eliminated in the model group, merely by switching the bonding mechanism: the Paradice people simply did not register skin color. Hierarchy could not exist among them, because they lacked the neural complexes that would have created it. . . They ate nothing but leaves and grass and roots and a berry or two; thus their foods were always plentiful and always available. Their sexuality was not a constant torment to them, not a cloud of turbulent hormones: they came into heat at regular intervals, as did

> most mammals other than man. In fact, as there would never be anything for these people to inherit, there would be no family trees, no marriages, and no divorces. (305)

The most amazing thing is that the people would recycle their own excrement. They would not waste food or pollute the environment. Crake's creation of the Paradice people not only eliminated the defects of *homo sapiens* but also transformed all traditional associations in the social. In the community of the Paradice people/the Children of Crake, there were no traditional social institutions and systems, such as marriage, family, or nation-states. The peace-loving Paradice People would not have social problems as people had had. For Crake, the self-destructive tendency of human beings sooner or later would cause the extinction of everything on the earth. The new species of human beings were the only hope. Therefore, Crake secretly planned to commit mass murder and destroy human society completely via spreading a fatal disease hidden in the BlyssPluss Pills. Crake's plot succeeded, at the price of sacrificing unmeasurable number of human lives, including himself. His "utopian" dream was a catastrophe of human beings.

However, Crake did not expect that some human beings would survive. At the end of the text, Snowman finds three persons of his kind. To meet other people could be either a hope or a disappointment. He could not decide whether to join them, drive them away, or just leave quietly. At the end of the story, Snowman looks at his watch which shows him zero hour and then he tells himself that it is time to go. But where does he want to go? Atwood does not give us the answer but leaves us some possibilities by an open ending since there is no definite answer whether the future would be better or worse no matter what decision Snowman makes. As Baccolini observes, critical dystopia refuses to provide compensatory and comforting conclusion and it "leaves its characters to deal with their choices and responsibilities" (Baccolini 2004: 521).

Atwood does not offer any blueprint of a better future. She only gives us a glimpse of hope, a hope that the status quo might be changed, depending on the protagonist's choice. The hope comes from the contrast between the past and the present. The catastrophe of the present leads Snowman to consider what was wrong in the past. Therefore, Snowman's recollection of the past is often presented with a cynical and pessimistic tone since he keeps on questioning or satirizing the crazy inventions dominated by the high-tech compounds. The utopian change or hope lies in bringing "the past into a living relation with the present" as Baccolini suggests (521).

Conclusion

The notion of the social as a movement emphasizes the heterogeneity and fluidity of the assembling process of social aggregates. However, it does not look towards the unconditional celebration of heterogeneity and fluidity. The social as a movement also contains the concept that the social is an assemblage undergoing constant assembling and re-assembling. The social is a plane of consistency which contains dynamic connections of various associations among heterogeneous components. The notion of a plane of consistency implies that it is a surface for different relations to be connected. That is to say, it is a surface which makes heterogeneous and diverse relations communicated with one another. Although the social is a movement, it should also be regarded as a surface which facilitates the communication among different relations. The social as a movement changes with time, but as an assemblage it always offers possibilities of connecting different relations. The notion of the social here, replacing the concept of society, intends to provide new perspectives to consider the diverse dimensions of social problems, to replace the perspective of liberal humanist subject—the human-centered and white-male-centered perspective. As Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* has shown us, non-human objects have deeply affected a large number of relations among different social aggregates. They have become essential parts of the

social as a complicated assemblage of associations. *Oryx and Crake*, portraying the impact of the technical objects on the social as an assemblage, presents only one kind of social problems. There are many others, such as that of people and pets, that of space and gender, that of human beings and the eco-system, etc. Recently, the issue of strayed dogs has been noticed in Taiwan. The relationship between the stray dogs and us is an complicated assemblage of many associations. Recently in Taiwan, the governmental policy of killing these dogs, based on the mode of thinking of excluding all the disordered parts in the society, can not solve the problem. People are not aware that pets and us are already part of the assemblage of the social. The associations between stray dogs and us involve a multiplicity of relations, such as the pet-market and the people who want to breed dogs but do not know the difficulties, the stray dogs and other dogs, and the government and the strayed dogs. The government may kill some stray dogs, but there are still many people who abandon their dogs. In the case of space and gender, as Leslie Kanes Weisman has indicated in *Discrimination by Design*, the concept of space is not as neutral and natural as we think of. She proposes that "space, like language, is socially constructed like the syntax of language, the spatial arrangements of our buildings and communities reflect and reinforce the nature of gender, race and class relations in society" (2). The utilization of space is affected by the unbalanced relations of gender, race and class. In other terms, the relationship between space and people is not simply the one between space and the users. It is implicated with a wide variety of relations in the social. The damages done to the eco-system by the inappropriate utilization of natural resources in recent years prompts people to re-consider the relationship between human beings and their milieus. Smith and Jenks propose a mode of thinking which breaks with the humanist and human-centered framework, the mode of thinking that highlights the interdependence between human beings and the ecological system. In their critique of humanism, they point out that

> What we understand as 'humanism' privileges, isolates, makes central and unique *human* being. This of course is a prime characteristic of philosophy, sociology and their associated disciplines: the 'humanities'. We do not say that humans are not 'special' or lack autonomy but that these qualities rest not on the assertions of the will (Nietzsche and his descendents) or on unlimited technological control (Modernism and Marxism), but are instead deeply rooted in the systems of terrestrial ecology. (26)

The problem of humanism lies in its attempt to construct the notion of the unique human being by privileging the humanist subject, the rational and universal subject. To have a unique body, that is, a body with the markers of bodily differences, is not important. The danger of the disembodied subject rests on the inflation of its importance as a unique being, neglecting the fact that the human being is an embodied entity confined by their material limitation. Human beings have their finitude: they have to rely on natural resources for life. Human beings are part of the Earth. As Smith and Jenks contend, "the Earth is not simply the surface on which life takes place but is instead a series of interactive dynamic systems that serve to permit the further development of self-organizing living systems" (26).

The examples shown above are merely some cases of re-thinking the associations in the social. There are many more dimensions for us to re-think the associations in the social. These possibilities of thinking the dynamic interactions in the social offer us the vision of a better future. They provide us the glimpse of hope that lies in our breaking the old mode of thinking.

Conclusion

> Let us not wallow in the valley of despair. I say to you today my friends—so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream.
>
> Martin Luther King Jr., "I Have a Dream"

Is envisioning the future possible? Is imagining a better world possible? These are questions that utopian writers try to answer. And these are also questions that I am concerned with. Marge Piercy tells us that "Utopia is where we are not that we long to go" (Piercy 2003: 141). "Where we are not that we long to go" is the force behind all attempts to change the way we are. The world we live is imperfect and it will never be. So, philosophers try to provide new modes of thinking for envisioning the future; politicians strive to offer better political blueprints for the society; utopian writers attempt to create images for a concrete future. Just name a few examples. In "Inoprative Community," Nancy criticizes the metaphysics of the subject and suggests a new mode of thinking based on transcendence to consider the possibility of building relations between heterogeneous entities. In his inspiring speech, "I Have a Dream," Martin Luther King Jr., who fought for the right of the blacks in the United States, said that he had a dream, that "one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood." Utopian writers, who are concerned with the world we live in, create concrete images of the possible future via their literary imagination. Explaining her motivation of writing utopian novels, Piercy says that

> Since we cannot know the future and any guess we make beyond our lifetime is likely to be no more than a joke, the purpose of making a concrete future,

> whether in an essay, in fiction, in film, or on television, is to create images of what we might want or what we might intensely dislike, so that we may decide how to get where we discover we might want to go and how we might avoid the place we see as hell on earth. (141)

These concrete images might be based on the imagination of a better future or a worse future. The image of a better future reminds us of the insufficiency and imperfection of the real world. The picture of a hellish one warns us how the bad part of the world might become worse and turn into a nightmare. Philosophical thinking, the political blueprint, or the literary imagination of utopian writing—all these represent our hope to surpass the status quo.

In utopian writing, because its focus often lies in the description of alternative societies, the concrete images are often judged by the standard of practicability. As the debate between Levitas and Sargisson shows us, some critics, like Levitas, are concerned with the possibility of widespread social change in utopian writing, which implies an ideal image of human society. Unfortunately, the hope of envisioning the future by creating a concrete image based on one standard for all people would very likely turn out to be hell, rather than heaven, as traditional dystopia demonstrates to us. Then, how to read these concrete images in utopian writing? Utopian texts are machines. A utopian text is simultaneously a machine and part of the network of utopia as a literary genre. Every utopian machine reflects certain social problems in the given spatial background and historical context. Joanna Russ tells us that "I believe that utopias are not embodiments of universal human values, but are reactive; that is, they supply in fiction what their authors believe society lacks in the here and now" (75). The concrete image in every utopian text is related to what a society lacks in a certain period of time. The quasi-communist society portrayed in More's *Utopia* is criticized by its sacrifice of difference and individual freedom. The comment is not incorrect but there is

another dimension in More's representation that is worth of our attention: the positive values in the social or political arrangements that More depicts in his model of ideal society reveal what they did not have in their society—the efficient farming techniques, the harmonious and rational social relationship relying on mutual aids, and the democratic political system. The practicability of More's model of ideal society is not unimportant, but what is crucial is the negative features that he pointed out in his society. Each utopian machine has its finitude, or limitation. That is to say, it is not an embodiment of *universal* human values, as Russ designates. Its concrete image is an embodiment of particular positive values (or negative values in the case of traditional dystopia and critical dystopia). Each utopian machine represents a vision, an embodiment of positive or negative values which are the forces that drive us to re-consider other possibilities of what the real world can become.

Works Cited

Aristotle. *Poetics*. Trans. Malcolm Heath. London: Penguin, 1996.

Atwood, Margaret. *Oryx and Crake*. New York: Doubleday, 2003.

-----. "Perfect Storms: Writing *Oryx and Crake*." http://www.oryxandcrake.co.uk/perfectstorm.asp

-----. "*The Handmaid's Tale* and *Oryx and Crake* in Context." *PMLA* (2004): 513-17.

Baccolini, Raffaella. "Gender and Genre in the Feminist Critical Dystopias." *Future Females, The Next Generation: New Voices and Velocities in Feminist Science Fiction Criticism*. Ed. Marleen S. Barr. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000. 13-34.

-----. "The Persistence of Hope in Dystopian Science Fiction." *PMLA* (2004): 518-21.

Baccolini, Raffaella and Tom Moylan. "Introduction: Dystopia and Histories." *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and The Dystopian Imagination*. Ed. Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan. New York: Routledge, 2003. 1-12.

Bacon, Francis. *The New Atlantis*. New York: Dover, 2003.

Bammer, Angelika. *Partial Visions: Feminisms and Utopianism in the 1970s*. London: Routledge, 1991.

Barthes, Roland. *S/Z* (1973). Trans. Richard Miller. Oxford: Blackwell, 1990.

Beck, Ulrich. *World Risk Society*. Cambridge: Polity P, 1999.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator." *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings* Vol. 1 • *1913-1926*. Ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge: The Belknap of Harvard UP, 1996. 253-63.

Bloch, Ernst. *The Principle of Hope* (1959). Vol. One. Trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986.

Boothby, Richard. "Figurations of the *object a*." *Jacques Lacan: Critical Evaluations in*

Cultural Theory. Vol. II. Ed. Slavoj Žižek. London: Routledge, 2003. 159-191.

Bouson, J. Brooks. "'It's Game Over Forever': Atwood's Satiric Vision of a Bioengineered Posthuman Future in *Oryx and Crake*." *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. 39.3 (2004): 139-56.

Butler, Judith. "The Life and Death Struggles of Desire: Hegel and Contemporary French Theory." *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France*. New York: Columbia UP, 1987.

Davis, J.C. *Utopia and the Ideal Society: A Study of English Utopian Writing 1516-1700*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981.

Davies, Laurence. "At Play in the Fields of Our Ford: Utopian Dystopianism in Atwood, Huxley, and Zamyatin." Ed. George Slusser et al. *Transformations of Utopia: Changing Views of the Perfect Society*. New York: AMS Press, 1999. 205-14.

DeLanda, Manuel. *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History*. New York: Zone Books, 1997.

-----. "Immanence and Transcendence in the Genesis." *A Deleuzian Century?* Ed. Ian Buchanan. Durham: Duke UP, 1999. 119-34.

-----. *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*. New York: Coninuum, 2002.

Deleuze, Gilles. *The Logic of Sense* (1962). Trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale. Ed. Constantin V. Boundas. New York: Columbia UP, 1983.

-----. *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (1988). Trans. Tom Conley. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1993.

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972). Trans. Robert Hurley et al. New York: The Viking Press, 1977.

-----. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980). Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1987.

De Man, Paul. "Walter Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator'." *The Resistance to*

Theory. Minnesota: U of Minnesota P, 1986. 73-105.

Derrida, Jacques. "Freud and the Scene of Writing" (1966). *Writing and Difference*. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978. 196-231.

-----. "What is a 'Relevant' Translation?" (1998). Trans. Lawrence Venuti. *Critical Inquiry* 27 (2001): 174-200. 174-200.

DiMarco, Danette. 'Paradice Lost, Paradise Regained: *homo faber* and the Makings of a New Beginning in *Oryx and Crake*." *Papers on Language and Literature*. 41.2 (2005): 170-95.

Dolar, Mladen. "Cogito as the Subject of the Unconscious." *Cogito and the Unconscious*. Ed. Slajov Zizek. Durham: Duke UP, 1998. 11-40.

Dozois, Gardner. "Living the Future: You Are What You Eat." *Writing and Selling Science Fiction*. Ed. C. L. Grant. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest, 1976.

Dusek, Val. *Philosophy of Technology: An Introduction*. Malden: Blackwell, 2006.

Elliott, Robert C. *The Shape of Utopia: Studies in a Literary Genre*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.

Evans, Dylan. *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Fekete, John. "*The Dispossessed* and *Triton*: Act and System in Utopian Science Fiction." *Science Fiction Studies* 6.2 (1979): 129-43.

Fernández-Armesto, Felipe. *Food: A History*. London: Pan Books, 2001.

Ferns, Chris. *Narrating Utopia: Ideology, Gender, Form in Utopian Literature*. Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1999.

Fink, Bruce. "Logical Time and The Precipitation of Subjectivity." *Reading Seminar I and II: Lacan's Return to Freud*. Ed. Richard Feldstein et al. Albany: State U of New York P, 1996. 356-86.

-----. *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Theory and Technique*.

Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1997.

Flieger, Jerry Aline. “Overdetermined Oedipus: Mommy, Daddy, and Me as Desiring-Machine.” *A Deleuzian Century?* Ed. Ian Buchanan. Durham: Duke UP, 1999. 219-40.

Foucault, Michel. "Technologies of the Self" (1982). *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*. Vol. 1. Ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: New Press, 1997. 223-51.

Fox, Alistair. *Utopia: An Elusive Vision*. New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1993.

Freud, Sigmund. “Project for a Scientific Psychology” (1895). *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Ed. and trans. J. Strachey. London: Hogarth. 295-397.

Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957.

Fukuyama, Francis. *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution*.New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002.

Fukuyama, Francis. *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002.

Geritz, Albert J. “Recent Studies in More (1990-2003).” *English Literary Renaissance*. Volume 35. 1 (2005): 123-155.

Grosz, Elizabeth. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994.

Hayles, N. Katherine. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1999.

James, Edward. “’Even Worse, It Could Be Perfect’: Aspects of the Undesirable Utopia in Modern Science Fiction.” Ed. George Slusser et al. *Transformations of Utopia: Changing Views of the Perfect Society*. New York: AMS Press, 1999.

215-28.

Johnston, Adrian. “The Vicious Circle of the Super-Ego: The Pathological Trap of Guilt and the Beginning of Ethics.” *Psychoanalytic Studies* 3. 3/4 (2001): 411-24.

Jones, Libby Falk. “Gilman, Bradley, Piercy, and the Evolving Rhetoric of Feminist Utopia.” *Feminism, Utopia and Narrative*. Ed. Libby Falk Jones and Sarah Webster Goodwin. Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1990. 108-129.

Kant, Immaneul. *Critique of Practical Reason* (1956). New York: Macmillan, 1993.

Kazushige, Shingu. *Being Irrational: Lacan, the Objet a, and the Golden Mean*. Trans and ed. Michael Radich. Tokyo: Gakuju Shoin, 2004.

Kendrick, Christopher. “The Imperial Laboratory: Discovering Forms in *The New Atlantis*.” *ELH* 70.4 (2003): 1021-42.

Klarer, Mario. “Gender and the ‘Simultaneity Principle’: Ursula Le Guin’s *The Dispossessed*.” *Mosaic*. 25.2 (1992): 107-121.

Kumar, Krishan. “Anti-Utopia, Shadow of Utopia.” *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987. 99-130.

-----. *Utopianism*. Milton Keynes: Open UP, 1991.

Lacan, Jacques. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1973). Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: W. W. Norton, 1981.

-----. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-1960*. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. Dennis Porter. New York: W. W. Norton, 1992.

-----. “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience” (1949). *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*. Trans. Bruce Fink. New York: W. W. Norton, 2006. 75-81.

-----. “Logical Time and the Assertion of Anticipated Certainty: A New Sophism” (1945). *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*. Trans. Bruce Fink. New

York: W. W. Norton, 2006. 161-75.

-----. “The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious” (1960). *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*. Trans. Bruce Fink. New York: W. W. Norton, 2006. 671-702.

Latour, Bruno. *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999.

-----. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. New York: Oxford UP, 2005.

Le Guin, Ursula K. *The Dispossessed*. New York: HarperPrism, 1974.

Levitas, Ruth. *The Concept of Utopia*. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1990.

-----. “For Utopia: The (Limits of the) Utopian Function in Late Capitalist Society.” *The Philosophy of Utopia.* Ed. Barbara Goodwin. London: Frank Cass, 2001.

Levitas, Ruth, and Lucy Sargisson. “Utopia in Dark Times: Optimism/Pessimism and Utopia/Dystopia.” *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination*. Ed. Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan. New York: Routledge, 2003. 13-28.

Liao, Chaoyang. “Translatibility and Cultural Difference: Toward an Ethics of ‘Real’ Translation.” *Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies* 31.2 (2005): 145-68.

Logan, George M., and Robert M. Adams. “Introduction.” *Utopia*. Ed. George M. Logan and Robert M. Adams. Trans. Robert M. Adams. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. xi-xxix.

Marin, Louis. *Utopics: Spatial Play* (1931). Trans. Robert A. Vollrath. Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1984.

-----. “Frontiers of Utopia.” *Critical Inquiry* 19.3 (1993): 397-420.

Mathisen, Werner Christie. “The Underestimation of Politics in Green Utopias: The Description of Politics in Huxley’s *Island*, Le Guin’s *The Dispossessed*, and

Callenbach's *Ecotopia*." *Utopian Studies* 12.1 (2001): 56-78.

Maturana, Humberto R. and Francisco J. Varela. *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization and the Living*. Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1980.

May, Todd. "Difference and Unity in Gilles Deleuze." *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*. Ed. Constantin V. Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski. London: Routledge, 1994. 33-50.

Miller, Jacques-Alain. "Paradigms of *Jouissance*." Trans. Jorge Jauregui. *Lacanian Ink*. 17 (2000): 8-47.

More, Thomas. *Utopia* (1516). Ed. George M. Logan and Robert M. Adams. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002.

Morson, Garry Saul. *The Boundaries of Genre: Dostoevsky's Diary of a Writer and the Traditions of Literary Utopia*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1981.

Moylan, Tom. *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination*. New York: Methuen, 1986.

-----. "The Critical Dystopia." *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia.* Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 2000. 183-99.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. "The Inoperative Community." *The Inoperative Community* (1986). Ed. Peter Connor. Trans. Peter Connor et al. Minneapolis: U of Minneapolis P, 1991. 1-42.

Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). London: Penguin, 1990.

Pfarlzer, Jean. "Response: What Happened to History." *Feminism, Utopia, and Narrative*. Ed. Libby Falk Jones and Sarah Webster Goodwin. Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1990. 191-200.

Piercy, Marge. *Woman on the Edge of Time*. New York: Fawcett Crest, 1976.

-----. "Love and Sex in the Year 3000." *Envisioning the Future: Science Fiction and the Next Millennium*. Ed. Marleen S. Barr. Middletown: Wesleyan UP, 2003. 131-45.

Russ, Joanna. “Recent Feminist Utopias.” *Future Females: A Critical Anthology*. Ed. Marleen S. Barr. Bowling Green: Bowling Green State U Popular P, 1981. 75-81.

Sargent, Lyman Tower. “The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited.” *Utopian Studies* 5.1 (1994): 1-37.

Seed, David. “Cyberpunk and Dystopia: Pat Cadigan’s Networks.” *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and The Dystopian Imagination*. Ed. Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan. New York: Routledge, 2003. 69-89.

Shklar, Judith N. “What is the Use of Utopia?” *Heterotopia: Postmodern Utopia and the Body Politic*. Ed. Toben Siebers. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1994. 40-57.

Smith, John and Chris Jenks. *Qualitative Complexity: Ecology, Cognitive Processes and the Re-emergence of Structures in Post-humanist Social Theory*. London: Routledge, 2006.

Smith, Daniel W. “The Inverse Side of the Structure: Žižek on Deleuze on Lacan.” *Criticism* 46.4 (2004): 635-650.

Stiegler, Bernard. *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus* (1994). Trans. Richard Beardsworth and George Collins. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1998.

Strachey, James. “Editor’s Introduction.” *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Ed. and trans. J. Strachey. London: Hogarth. 283-93.

Suvin, Darko. “Defining the Literary Genre of Utopia.” *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1979. 37-62.

Van Loon, Joost. *Risk and Technological Culture: Towards a Sociology of Virulence*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Varela, Francisco J. *Principles of Biological Autonomy*. New York: North Holland, 1979.

Waugh, Patricia. *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction*.

London: Routledge, 1984.

Weiman, Leslie Kanes. *Discrimination by Design*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1992.

Williams, Donna Glee. "The Moons of Le Guin and Heinlein." *Science-Fiction Studies* 21.2 (1994): 164-72.

Wilson, Elizabeth, A. *Neural Geographies: Feminism and the Microstructure of Cognition*. New York: Routledge, 1998. 133-66.

Winner, Langdon. *The Whale and the Reactor*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986. 19-39.

Žižek, Slavoj. "Kant and Sade: The Ideal Couple." *Lacanian Ink*. 13 (1998): 12-25.

-----. *The Plague of Fantasies*. London: Verso, 1997.

-----. *Organs without Bodies: Deleuze and Consequences*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Zupančič, Alenka. *Ethics of the Real*. London: Verso, 2000.