Dialectics of Utopian Space

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The broad rejection of utopianism over the past two decades or so should be understood as a collapse of *specific* utopian forms, both East and West. Communism has been broadly discredited as a utopian project and now neoliberalism is increasingly seen as a utopian project that cannot succeed (Harvey, 2000, 195).

1. Introduction

The main theme of the 2nd International Critical Geography Conference which is held in Taegu, S. Korea, from 9 to 13 August 2000 is "For Alternative 21 Century Geographies". What is meant by 'alternative'? Why do we need such alternatives ? The alternative usually means another one different from the present one. Thus, to want an alternative means to see the present conditions critically, and to try to make a change in the present things and their relations in society and space. What is more, in order to make a change of the present and to realize an alternative, we need a visionary scheme on the future. That is, any attempt to pursue an alternative needs an ideal or utopian imagination about the circumstance which would be produced after the change of present conditions.

Recently it has been often said that utopian imagination has been exhausted, and/or that 'there is no alternative'. This is partly because most of the existing socialist countries were collapsed, and incorporated into the world system of capitalism, and partly because the neoliberalist strategies for globalization of capitalism are so strong as to suffocate any other ideas on the future. Thus, there seems a pervasive pessimism, especially within the left, which reflects this degeneration of the utopian imagination. As Gindin (2000, p.36) complains, "we live in an era of foreclosed hope in the possibility of a better world. Even people who look at their lives and wonder if that is all there is see no way of realizing a life beyond capitalism, or fear that any attempt to do

so can only result in another nightmare".

But it should be noted that this does not mean the 'death' of the whole utopian imagination, even though it becomes more and more difficult for us to find alternative ways for restoration of its energy. Overcoming this debilitating pessimism and keeping some sense of utopian imagination real and alive is the most important issue that anyone who takes the concept of 'alternative' into consideration seriously must confront. Tackling this issue, I think, is a (or the) major reason why we get together here, and why we talk about alternative 21st century geographies as a central theme of this conference.

On the basis of this consideration, 1) I will be concerned with such concepts as 'utopia', 'space', and 'dialectics', suggesting a categorization of utopian space, which should be seen in a dialectic relation to the now-and-here place, and specifying some epistemological problems in dialectics of utopian space. 2) I will then reconsider both the existing communist ideology which originated from a creative utopianism inherent in the thoughts of Marx and Lenin, but which became Stalinism as a politically distorted authoritarian utopianism of the Soviet Union, and the current capitalist ideology which has been emerged in the Thatcher-Reagan years from the belief of free market mechanism, that is, the neoliberal utopianism, and which is now intermingle with what may be called postindustrial utopianism propelled by information technology. 3) Finally I will suggest some items which should be considered as basic elements and hence realized in utopian space.

2. Utopia, Space and Dialectics

How to define 'utopia' may depend on what sense or purpose we want to use it. Some one thinks that utopia does not exist in the real world, and hence that any kind of utopianism is referred to 'unrealistic', 'unscientific', 'irrational', 'self-indulgent', 'escapist' and so on. Moreover, a variety of utopianism in this vein, defining utopia as a happy place, that is, a paradise in the future or a shining city on the hill, have played ideological roles in history. We cannot deny this kind of technical and ideological usage of the term, and indeed such a definition of utopia can be found in many writings on utopia. But when Thomas More created the word to designate an alternative community in *Utopia*(1516), he appears to have provided something which could be applicable not merely to an imaginative, if not unrealistic, future of the world, but also to the modern conditions of politics and way of life. According to him, utopia is

"not only the best country in the world, but the only one that has any right to call

itself a republic ··· The utopian way of life provides ··· the happiest basis for a civilized community ··· They've eliminated the root-causes of ambition, political conflict, and everything like that" (More, 1965, 128-31).

That is, More wishes to use the term, utopia, in two ways; one is to eliminate political domination and conflict in the existing system, and the other to provide a possible model for more civilized society for a better world in the future.

As a imaginative construction of the socio-spatial world, the utopia can bring into play a rich critical apparatus of modern world, it can illuminate and emphasize the neglected shadowy, hidden parts of the existing system. Moreover, utopia can be seen as a good alternative, an outline of the better world, which can have some implications for both the present and the future. What utopia can avoid falling into 'unrealistic' or 'irrational' is both the criticism of the represent and the possibility of the future which it describes. "The possibility of such a future helps undermine the complacency and overcome the inertia of existing society by showing that it is neither eternal nor archetypal but merely one form amongst many."(Geoghegan, 1987, 2).

The word 'utopia' is usually attached to spatial images, as its original meaning is no place as well as a happy place. Thus, many great thinkers in history described it in spatial terms (distinctively with an urban form). For example, More's Utopia is described as the closed land, isolated from our world by the sea. Many other utopian writers attempted to design alternative society with a visible feature of built environment. The description of utopia in terms of spatial forms or spatial configurations does not mean that they ignored entirely social relations of activities and social institutions and structures. Robert Owen built 'New Lanark' in Scotland and 'New Harmony' in America as an isolated and self-supporting village, in order to change the whole of the capitalist social relation to the communal society, though he could not provide clear vision of communal relation of production and consumption, and hence he failed eventually to establish an alternative community through such a spatial form.

Given such a failure of materialization of spatial forms of utopia in the real world, as Harvey points out, "the failure of realized utopias of spatial form can just as reasonably be attributed to the processes mobilized to materialize them as to failures of spatial form *per se"*. Harvey thus draws a distinction between utopianism of social process and that of spatial form. But according him, utopias of social process also have some defects and difficulties. That is "materialized utopias of the social process have to negotiate with spatiality and the geography of place and in so doing they also lose their ideal character,

producing results that are in many instances exactly the opposite of those intended (e.g. increasing authoritarianism and inequalities rather than greater democracy and equality)" (Harvey, 2000, 180).

In order to avoid this dilemma, Harvey suggests, it is necessary to ground social processes in spatial forms. That is, in such a dilemma, "the most obvious alternative (other than total abandonment of any pretense at utopianism whatsoever) is to build a utopianism that is explicitly spatiotemporal" (Harvey, 2000, 182). This kind of utopian thought into which the production of space and time is incorporated is what Harvey calls 'dialectical utopianism'. The idea of dialectical utopianism that he suggests to overcome the defects and difficulties of utopias of both spatial form and social process appears to have indeed a close relationship with a classical theme in geographical debates, that is, how to formulate the relation between spatial form and social process, and/or that between the spatial and the temporal (or the social), as we can recall, for example, the concept of 'socio-spatial dialectic'. But I do not here want to reconsider this theme, but rather turn our attention again to Harvey's conception of dialectics.

One may regard 'dialectics' either as a very complicate and philosophical way of thinking or as a simple and banal view on the world. But, once again following Harvey, it can be argued that "an understanding of dialectics can deepen our understanding of socio-ecological processes in all manner of ways, without entirely refuting or abandoning findings arrived at by other means" (Harvey, 1996, 6-7). In order to make dialectics more understandable, Harvey summarizes 11 propositions as the principles of dialectics, though he knows well that "the reduction of dialectics to a set of 'principles' might be self-defeating". The first one and the second are:

1. Dialectical thinking emphasizes the understanding of process, flows, fluxes, and relations over the analysis of elements, things, structures, and organized systems. ‴
2. Elements or 'things' (as I shall call them) are constituted out of flows, process, and relations operating within bounded fields which constitute structured systems or wholes (Harvey, 1996, p.49-50).

What he calls 'dialectical utopianism' also may be understood in this context. But it is somewhat wondering to me that Harvey in his last book, *The Spaces of Hope*, trying to formulate the dialectic utopianism, talks about the dialectics of spatial form and social process, and further about 'the dialectic of 'either-or' and that of 'both-and'. Even though this kind of usage of dialectic should be clarified by Harvey himself, the latter usage of

dialectic seems to presuppose that elements or things pre-exist prior to processes or relations between them.

At this juncture, I am apart from Harvey's conception of dialectic utopianism, and I will suggest what I mean by the term, dialectics of utopian space. First of all, the term, 'utopian space' should be clarified, because it sound curious due to the fact that certain spatial implications are already inherent in the concept of utopia. But I want to make such implications more explicitly[1]. Than, by the term, I understand that utopia should be seen neither as a spatial form nor as a pure social process; rather it would be seen as a process of dialectic relations between spaces, and/or between space and time (and society). In particular, I wish to emphasize that utopian space is not an end-result of such dialectics but an instantiation of its ongoing process. This is partly because space itself can be conceptualized as dynamic and flux, and not as static and eternal, and partly because, I think, there is no spatial form which is functionally absolutely either repressive or liberating[2].

On the basis of this concept of utopian space, four dialectic ways of thinking in which utopian space can be imagined, and appreciated on the dimension of space and time.

1. A utopian space is imagined to exist - regardless either experienced or not - far away from now and here, and hence we have to go there. An example of this kind of utopian space can be found in Homer's *Odysseus* in which the hero of Troy war, Ulysses put forth every ounce of his energies and imagination to return to his hometown, struggling against stormy sea and threatening people. The hometown would be the utopian space for Ulysses and his followers. Thus, a utopian tells that a utopia is located nowhere in our world, but it is exactly somewhere.
2. A utopian space exists now and here, but people are not conscious about it. This kind of utopian space is unrecognized, either because people in such a space are unconscious about it, or because they are not absolutely satisfied with such a space. This kind of utopian space is important in both positive and negative consideration

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[1]) Consider that "Idealized versions of social processes, in contrast, usually get expressed in purely temporal terms. They are literally boud to no place whatsoever and are typically specified outside of the constaints of spatiality altogether (the qualities of space and place are totally ignored)" (Harvey, 2000, 174).

[2]) According to Foucault, any spatial form by itself cannot have an inherent political significance or function, even though spatial materialization, especially certain spatial projects, have played important parts in political strategies. See Foucault (1984, p.247).

of the present conditions. In particular, one may argue for 'utopianism now' (and here), though this kind of argument is usually ideological.

3. It can be thought that a utopian space once existed in the past, but it no longer exist at the present. Even though the lost utopia was irretrievable, we can use memories of time past as both models of, and evidence for, a new utopia. This is not a call to return to the past, but rather to incorporate the essential qualities of those times in considering the present conditions of society and space, and in imaging the future utopia[3].
4. As most utopians have described, utopian space is imagined as one to be realized in the future, as a better alternative than now-and-here conditions. This kind of conception of utopian space can be seen both as transformative (or, creative and productive) and as destructive (or, status quo and ideological) utopianism. This is transformative, because utopians in this kind always dream an alternative way to change the existing socio-spatial conditions of the world. But this can be often destructive, because some utopian ideologies promote this kind of utopian to maintain or strengthen their powers by bewildering people with it.

As implied in the above consideration, these four kinds of utopian space does not endorse that these are true, real, concrete and authentic, and hence not ideological, abstract, or irrational. Perhaps, we need to give more attention to how to identify whether a certain utopianism is categorized into the former or the latter. What is more, there are a lot of anti-utopian writers and novelists. It is well known, for instance, that George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1946) and *1984* (1949), Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932, 1958) were anti-utopian, giving a good cautionary warning for people involved in social change[4]. We can not reject this kind of anti-utopian or dystopian

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[3]) Even Plato used the example of ancient humanity in the *Laws* to show that truly moral societies have exist on the earth. Among modern political thinkers, Rousseau looked back to Sparta in his *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts*, while Hegel extolled the virtues of ancient Athens in *The Philosophy of History*. Marx was very negative against a certain type of revivalism in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, while he recognized a partially creative use of the past by the great bourgeois revolutionaries (Cromwell, Danton, Napoleon etc).(Geoghegan, 1987, 56).

[4]) We also can consider Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) as anti-utopian. The former envisages a future society in which television dominates a society in which people rely upon TV for entertainment and emotional support and radical thought is eliminated by the power structure by the systematic banning and burning of books, while the latter describes a chilling portrayal of a right-wing military theocracy running a future ecologically devastated America.

imagination on the future. What is a problem here is how we can verify a certain imaginative - either utopian or anti-utopian - argument is true, real, authentic, etc.

Thus we need to consider some epistemological foundation for utopian imagination, which can be summarized as follow.

1. We start our imagination from the present conditions in which we live and make everyday experience, which is only real and concrete. It is the present conditions that motivate and sustain us in a commitment to utopia. Thus we can define the desire for utopia as the yearning to close the gap between lived experience (life as it is) and imagination (life as it might be). The two are not independent: the social construction of our experience - its contradictions - affects our imagination, and vice verse. This is why the above four kinds of utopian space are commonly based on the imagination from explicit now-and-here experience. Indeed, the dialectic implied here is that between the known and the unknown (or between the conscious and the unconscious). The dialectic imagination of utopian space starts from the experienced or the known, and image the unknown from it.[5]
2. Utopianism should reach a consensus through communication, without ideological deception or compulsion. Thus the utopian imagination is not individual, but social (or collective), in order to be real, that is, to be realized. When we share similar imaginations as well as similar experience, and such imaginations become part of a common consciousness, this common consciousness (as group or class consciousness) opens a door to acting beyond the present. The utopian imagination presupposes a capacity to discuss and agree/disagree about individual's imagination, and extend it to be shared by all members of the community[6]. This is not to say that there is only one true utopia to which the members of community should obey, as if 'this is your future'. That is, utopianism should not lead to teleology, for the

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[5]) Strabo seems to have already think about this kind of way of imagination, though he described it as a rhetoric with poetic imagination, and not dialectic. See Strabo (1917 edn), 61 (1-2.4-5). Vico also gave a close attention to the relation between the known and the unknown. What is more, we can here think about what Harvey emphasizes with the concept of translation of knowledge gained in the one world to that for the other world. It is in a dialectical imagination that we can "translate and transform other bodies of knowledge accumulated by different structures of enquiry and to show how such transformations and translations are revealing of new and often interesting insights".(Harvey, 1996, 7).

[6]) Andre Gorz (1989), despite his repeated attempted to say "farewell to the working class," kept returning to its organized expression as the only hope for change.

alternative has many shapes, with the utopian impulse in its many forms.

3. A utopian imagination presupposes practical capacities to realize it. The practice is based on the struggles of daily life to shape and realize our imagination, that is, our desire towards the goal of realizing our potential to be full human beings and extending that principle to all members of society. Such practical capacities are the link between the ideal and the possibility of reaching it, between ends and means. To complete the voyage from the present to the not-yet reality, people must develop the practical (and discursive) capacity to analyze, to imagine, to communicate, and to act politically to change the present. In the process of 'doing-other', people can change both themselves and socio-spatial conditions of their life, thereby 'becoming-other' (Gindin and Panitch, 2000, 39).

3. Reexamining Current Utopianism

1) Utopianism in Marx-Leninism and Stalinism.

As one may see utopianism as a product of speculative imagination, and such speculation is viewed as somehow arbitrary and abstract, it seems as if utopianism is a mortal sin. But Marxists, like other (especially positivist) scientists, wanted to avoid committing the sin of utopianism, though they felt the need for speculation or imagination (or prediction in the positivist terminology) on the future. Thus when people discuss what Marx's socialist or communist society might be, some would contrast the 'scientific inevitability' aspect (as the inevitable outcome of historical transformation) with the 'speculative dreams' of more conventional utopian thinkers. Yet, even though Marx gave short shrift to utopian thinking, a utopian sensibility flows through his texts. It is by its very nature that his revolutionary goal must involve an element of the speculative future which it is reaching for[7]. Marx (and Engels) did not object to anticipation as such, and rather had a greatest respect for Owen, Fourier and Saint-Simon[8], though not for most of these thinkers' disciples.

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[7] But it should be noted here that there was an analytical and strategic gap between Marx' vision of revolution for socialist utopianism and his detailed critique of political economy.

[8] For example, in an article, Engels highlights the feasibility of the Owenite and other communal schemes: "For communism, social existence and activity based on community of goods is not only possible but has actually been realised in many communities in America and in one place in England with the greatest success" (Marx and Engels, Collected Works,

Indeed, the category 'utopian socialism' was a product of Marx and Engels' growing involvement in working-class politics. They saw *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* as a contribution to the collective conscious-raising of the proletariat. One important task was to provide a guide to the various socialism, and it is in this context that they produced their first systematic analysis of what they now termed 'Critical Utopian Socialism and Communism'. According to their analysis (Geoghegan, 1987, 28), utopian socialism emerged at a time when the class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat was undeveloped. It was aware of the divided and unstable nature of capitalism, and of the proletariat as the most suffering class, it could, of necessity, see no potential in the infant proletariat. Thus, the utopian socialists saw themselves as champions of all humanity, above classes and their struggles.

Marx and Engels underline the critical element in the early utopian socialists and maintain that it still has continuing validity: "They attack every principle of existing society. Hence they are full of the most valuable materials for the enlightenment of the working class" (Marx and Engels, 1975, 516). However they saw their dispute as methodological; the utopian socialist vision is at best a subjective imaginative abstraction from the divisions of class society, while the communist vision, by contrast, is the objective *telos* that capitalist society creates as it negates itself. In this context, Lenin insisted on Marx and Engels' synthesis of left-Hegelianism, critical political economy and, of course, utopian socialism, the three 'sources' and 'component parts' of Marxism (Lenin, 1963, 19, 23-4).

This kind of utopianism in Marx's thought might be ensured it's significance through the Bolshevik Revolution. Indeed, the triumph of the Bolsheviks in 1917 immediately raised the issues of 'utopianism'. But as is well known, there was a considerable different interpretation of that Revolution as realization of a utopianism between Kautzky and Lenin (Geoghegan, 1987, 73-74). Kautsky saw the Bolshevik Revolution as 'utopian' in that it sought to build socialism on an inadequate base. This let to further 'utopianism', in Kautsky's view, because socialism, instead of being borne by the proletariat, as in the West, was in the Soviet Union grounded in the Bolshevik fraction. In other worlds, an inevitably simplistic and narrow party goal, and not society's own movement, was the motive force of the revolution. This in turn meant that the Bolsheviks had to use dictatorial methods to impose their vision against the actual dynamics of the society.

For Lenin, on the contrary, the revolution was a triumph of 'creative' Marxism.

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4. 214).

According to him, 1917 had put the possibility of revolution on the historical agenda and the Bolsheviks had seized the moment. His theory of the 'weakest link' of capitalism legitimated the reversal of Marx's historical speculation that revolution would take place in the most developed capitalist society. The revolution in a backward society would lead to the collapse of the entire capitalist chain. Once this had occurred, the more advanced societies would help the less developed. The Revolution on October 1917 was the start of this process - the start of a new world. In this sense the revolution's existence, owed much to the conception of Lenin.

We can see here two broad and potentially (and actually) conflicting types of utopianism. In Kautsky's conception, what was realized through the Bolshevik Revolution was pure utopianism, that is, "not a Marxist, but a pre-Marxist, Utopian ideal, which "represents socialism as an ideal picture of a perfect society". Thus, for a number of Marxists, the Bolshevik Revolution was itself a massive piece of unacceptable utopianism. On the other hand, what was implied in the revolutionary spirit of Lenin is creative utopianism, allied with analytical rigor, recommended in *What is to be done ?* As many Marxists praised, his revolution could release great utopian energies, and realize such creative dreams. Even though it is beyond my ability to appraise these two kinds of interpretation suggested by great thinkers and revolutionists, it can be said that Kautsky's utopianism was moved far beyond the reality, though he properly pointed out the inevitability of dictatorship, while Lenin's utopianism could not anticipate the fate of the Soviet Union that came to be dominated by the Stalinists' dictatorship, though he set up his utopianism on the basis of a 'rigorous' analysis of the reality.

Stalinism built upon a Leninist vanguard strategy which always had the potential for authoritarianism. After the Stalinists' capture of the revolution in the 1930s, all those utopianism fell foul of the authoritarian utopianism of the Stalinist Party. The principal justification for party rule was couched in terms of the scientific credentials of the Party, though lip-service was paid to the democratic form of the party. This had a number of deleterious consequences for Marxist utopianism (Geoghegan, 1987, 73).

1. The peculiar authoritarian utopianism entailed in the Stalinist ideology became virtually hegemonic among Marxists (including politicians, activists and theorists) and further among general people throughout the world.
2. As the Soviet and East European experience became itself a source of utopian inspiration, its failings were to generate disillusionment with Marxism itself.
3. The right in the Western capitalist countries was able plausibly to sell the equation

totalitarianism = Stalinism = Marxism = utopianism.

From this consideration, we can say that the death of a (and not the) Marxist utopianism was anticipated from the Bolshevik Revolution, even though it has appeared to be finally recognized and identified with the collapse of the Berlin Wall. But it should not be seen as the end of utopian imagination (or the end of history). We can find many utopian Marxists. For example, writing in exile after Nazism's destruction of all the labor movement's institutions in Germany, Ernst Bloch emphasized this crucial need to rehabilitate, within Marxism, the category of utopia to "make the defeated man try the world again" (Bloch, 1986, 148). The issue here is not an idealist turn in Marxism, but a recognition that Marxism as a material force needs what Bloch called its 'warm stream' of desire, passion, and dreaming as much as it needs its 'cold current' of analysis. It is now Harvey who, following Bloch, Williams and other Marxist utopians, struggles for "a revitalization of the utopian tradition [in Marxism]" which would "give us ways to think the possibility of real alternatives" (Harvey, 2000, 156).

2) Neo-liberal utopianism with free market and information technology

Neoliberalism can be seen as a variation of the classical liberalism of the 19th century, when British and other imperialism used the ideology of market competition and free trade to justify capitalism at home and colonialism abroad. The crisis in the 1930s and the world war II ended classical liberalism and most colonialism. It is often said that Keynsianism has resolved some parts of the economic crisis, advocating government intervention into the market mechanism (including subsidies to industry to support productive growth, management of the wage and collective bargaining, and other functions of the welfare state). Within less than 30 years, however, another international tendency ended Keynesianism: it has been replaced by neoliberlism.

Neoliberalism has risen as dominant ideology in the Thatcher-Reagan years, and it has been exported around the world through a mix of persuasion and economic force[9]. Now neoliberalism describes a familiar set of policies that became the reigning orthodoxy in almost all countries in the world during the 1980s and 1990s - privatization, free trade, deregulation, balanced budgets, production for export on the

[9]) But seen from a Third World perspective (e.g. Selfa, 1999), it can be said that neoliberalism came to be widely named as such in Latin America in the wake of the international debt crisis that exploded in 1982 when Mexico announced it could no longer meet its debt service obligations.

world market and the dismantling of the social safety net. Even in the socio-cultural realm as well as political and economic ones which were once under the control of government, neoliberalism unleashed the capitalist market to determine nearly every facet of social life.

The neoliberal programme draws its social power not only from those who are operating in the economic and political domains (stockholders, financial operators, industrialists, conservative or even social-democratic politicians), but also from those who are endeavoring to realize their interests in academic and cultural domains (conservative scholars, opinion leaders in mass media, and writers and other artists). Neoliberalism expresses their interests which have been converted to the reassuring layoffs of laisser-faire. What is more, the globalisation of neoliberalism when joined with the progress of information technology, ensures an unprecedented mobility of capital. Thus, in globalising financial markets, investors are concerned only with the short-term profitability of their investments, and not with the future of the local/global economy. This is a major reason why the economic crisis in East Asian countries was broken so suddenly (Choi, 1998).

Neoliberalism can be seen as a utopianism in two ways. In the neoliberalist conceptions and strategies, the economic world is assumed as a pure and perfect order. This economic order would be no more than an implementation of a utopia - the utopia of neoliberalism. The movement toward the neoliberal utopia of a pure and perfect market is made possible by the politics of deregulation. And it is achieved through the transformative and destructive strategies with all of the political measures which regard all collective institutions as obstacles to the logic of the pure market. But this is not to say that the state interventionism has been disappeared or even reduced in the reality.[10] Nevertheless, "Neoliberalism tends on the whole to favour severing the economy from social realities and thereby constructing in reality an economic system conforming to its description in pure theory, that is, a sort of logical machine that presents itself as a chain of constraints regulating economic agents" (Bourdieu, 1998).

Neoliberalism also can be seen as a utopianism in a sense that technology, especially information-based technology, allows us greater control over society and nature, and that this control affords an opportunity to advance utopian aims and ameliorate social and spatial problems. Even though Neoliberalism itself does not have a direct relation to

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[10] It is rather true that "To make the contemporary wave of neoliberalism work, the state has to penetrate even more deeply into certain segments of political-economic life and become in some ways even more interventionist than before (Thatcherism was in certain respects highly interventionist)" (Harvey, 2000, 65).

information technology, this can be seen its connection to the so-called postidnustiral society in advanced countries and grobalisation abroad. Daniel Bell's(1976) arguments for postindustrial society are typical and consider a societal shift in manners that workers increase in service industries and professional occupations, resources are related to intellectual technology and scientific knowledge, and outcomes connected to technological control. In short, for many postindustrial writers, informational technology in postindustrial society promises increased control and enhanced opportunities for a utopian future. This kind of utopian ideals are evident in Bell's (1976, 366-7) discussion of the 'communal society' and in Block's (1990, 189-218) discussion of 'alternatives'.

An extreme case of such postindustrial and technological utopianism can be found in cyberspace. Cyberspace is presented as a space where digital information is freely transmitted electronically, without the theoretical, emotional, existential, and political preconditions of traditional Western culture. The nature of cyberspace has been seen as a network, as a chaotic nonhierarchical interchange among various sets of information, values, identities, and interests. According to cyberspace optimists, it is an arena where knowledge seems to be decentered and authority to be overcome. Accordingly, within cyberspace as a decentralized communication system in which questions of origin, authenticity, or true knowledge become irrelevant, knowledge is freed of the claim of universal validity. It seems as if there is no room for the claim for authority within this framework, no room for traditional Western metaphysical and actual violence. It seems to permit non-ethnocentrist dialogues among differences, according to this line of argument, yet it also encourages multiperspective receptions of the various dialogues. In cyberspace, one may say, we can find a true and decisive utopian world in which people can express themselves, and communicate each others, without authority, violence, and hierarchy, ethnocentrism. But can we see cyber-democracy or cyber-libertarianism as a a real and concrete utopia ? This kind of utopianism which cyberspace has provoked may be a typical form of abstract utopianism in the so-call era of informational technology (cf. Poster, 1995, Winnter, 1997)

Whatever utopian imagination neoliberalism gives to the reality ('ultra-logical utopia', as Bourdieu(1998) puts it), the world is there, with the immediately visible, but severe effects of the implementation of the great neoliberal utopia: not only the poverty of an increasingly large segment of advanced capitalist countries, the extraordinary expansion of income differences, the progressive disappearance of place-specific cultural production, through the intrusive imposition of neoliberal interests, attitudes and values. The ultimate foundation of neoliberal economic and political order placed

under the utopian ideology such as free trade, deregulation, individual freedom and social liberty is in effect the structural violence of unemployment, of the insecurity of job tenure and the menace of layoff.. The 'harmonious' functioning of the free market mechanism presupposes the existence of a reserve army of the unemployed, and brings about a mass phenomenon of rapidly increasing disparity in income and property distribution

The Neoliberal utopianism cannot be seen as a true and real utopianism, in my view. It is a utopianism only for few people who can realize their interests in the reality that "more than 85% of the world's population received only 15% of its income', and that 'the net worth of the 358 richest people ‴ is equal to the combined income of the poorest 45% of the world population - 2.3 billion people" (Harvey, 2000, 42-3). The cyberspace utopianism also cannot stand scrutiny. Only some part of population in the world, equipped with personal computer and electronic facilities, can gain access to such a utopia of cyberspace, and enjoy their participation. It tends to extend the inequality between the included and the excluded people. What is worse, cyberspace itself in reality does not ensure a communication without authority, violence, and hierarchy, ethnocentrism: the reverse is rather the case.

Yet, there are two more important effects of the globalization of neoliberal utopia, which should be taken into our consideration very seriously. One is the imposition of competition everywhere (a new social Darwinism, the struggle of all against all and cynicism as the norm of all action and behaviour). The other one is fragmentation of revolutionary imagination and the destruction of collective institutions (in particular, labor unions), capable of counteracting the effects of neoliberalism. The latter is more relevant for us here today. In facing with neoliberal strategies, we may feel tired and exhausted by ourselves, and come to pose a question. Can it be expected that the mass of suffering will one day serve as the starting point of a movement capable of stopping the race to the abyss ? Indeed, we are faced with here with a paradox. The neoliberal political-economic regime has produced an extraordinary mass of suffering, but they are benumbed only by their belief in that sort of neoliberal utopianism, but not by their everyday life in unavoidable compulsive competition. For the left, opposition to neoliberalism is the starting point for new forces and struggles reconstituting the society today. But we can evoke once again a top-down operation of revolutionary party (like Stalinist one) or of past guerrilla organization. In this regard, neoliberal politicians might have declared that there is no alternative. Yet it should be inevitably admitted that the (new) left has not yet developed an alternative perspective.

4. For Alternative Utopian Space

In the concluding lines of an article on an alternative for Europe published in the *New Left Review*, we can find a following sentence: "A continental welfare state, modeled on the comparatively successful social democracy of the United States. That's the ticket. Do it the American way" (Galbraith et al., 1999, 237; recited from Gindin and Panitch, 2000, 36). How can we interpret this kind of degenerative argument in a journal which was once the home and hope for a rejuvenation of creative Marxism. Perhaps we have to admit that this kind of degeneration of the progressive imagination reflects a pervasive pessimism within the critical theorists and activists. Thus, on the one hand, we have to admit that "We live in an era of foreclosed hope in the possibility of a better world. ⋯ There seems no way of realizing a life beyond capitalism, and people seem to fear that any attempt to do so can only result in another nightmare." But on the other hand, "overcoming this debilitating political pessimism and keeping some sense of transformative possibilities alive is the most important issue that anyone seriously interested in social change must confront" (Gindin and Panitch, 2000, 36).

Despite there seems a lack of attention paid to alternatives, actually some writers in recent years have attempted to rethink and reformulate a utopian world. But, these works unfortunately provide a rather clear perspective on the demoralized nature of much utopian thinking today. Unger (1987), for example, proposes cross-class partnerships with export-oriented 'vanguard' firms and thereby erodes the very possibility of the militant organization of the 'oppressed, the poor, and the angry" that he once called for. While the institutional content of such alternatives extends social democracy, what remains common is the same defeatism and related overcautious pragmatism. They have not so much abandoned the idea of change but, like the Greek god Procrustes, who adjusted the size of his guest to fit the size of his bed, they have shrunk the meaning of change to fit what capital and the state will accommodate.

The lacuna we consequently face is accompanied by a great deal of pessimism. But overcoming that pessimism is not a matter of asserting a new, yet equally short-sighted, optimism. We should not underestimate the social power of capital and the oppositional politics necessarily involved in changing it. Rather, it means drawing inspiration from the concrete, popular struggles in evidence around the world as people strive, in a multitude of diverse ways, to assert their humanity and community, encompassing ideals that integrate a utopian sensibility and a concern with capacity-building. Some important items in those ideals can be summarized as follows:

1. **Enhancing life chances with security of basic needs**: the security of food, housing and cloths is most fundamental for survival of human life. Thus, just and favorable remuneration should be ensured for individuals and their family, as living wage and adequate social security are necessary.

2. **Inviolability of the human body free from violence**: the human body should be free from the tortures, incarcerations, killings, and other physical coercion. Especially women who have been subservient to patriarchal and paternalistic systems of domination should be able to control their own reproductive functions and to live free of coercion and violence.

3. **Freedom of thought, belief, and expression**: People have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. Moreover, every one should have the right of expression with speaking, writing, and other means. The freedom of expression of what people feel, think, or believe is necessary for them to be critical against what people do not want, or to make claims for what they desire.

4. **Self-control over labor process, overcoming alienation**: Workers in production should be able to exercise their own control over labor process (and over what is produced as well as over how it shall be produced). The self-control over labor process and its products enable us to overcome alienation, and to realize self-development. Thus, this can be seen as more crucial than any conceptions of democracy and freedom. We should here include the production of space (not only free circulation within existing spaces, but also reconstruction of new spatial relations)[11].

5. **Attenuation of the division of labor and promotion of socio-spatial difference**: We need to attenuate ever-increasing division of labor, which tends to transform "personal powers into material power", and hence to diminish personal freedom[12]. On the other hand, we need to promote socio-spatial difference between regions (even including uneven geographical development). Attenuating the division of labor seems to have an internal relation with promoting socio-spatial difference.

6. **Transforming consumption and alternative ways of living**: Any transformation of the relations of production would be conditional upon other changes of mode of consumption and of life-style. This is not only a matter of connecting

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[11] According Harvey, people should be able not only to "circulate within a pre-ordained spatially structured world", but also "to reconstruct spatial relations … in ways that turn space from an absolute framework of action into a more malleable relative and relational aspect of social life"(Harvey, 2000, 251).

[12] Even though it is still questionable whether the division of labor should be entirely abolished, it may be true that the capitalist division of labor is the source of commodity fetishism and the subordination of individuals to money and material power.

consumers to decisions about what is produced, but of developing capacities for diverse enjoyments rather than the consumption of homogenized commodities, as well as improving ecological capacity of a society or region. In transforming mode of consumption, we also can bring about alternative ways of living. More communal forms of living have the potential of extending intense and affectional bonds to a broader supportive community beyond the nuclear family (Brenner, 2000).

7. **Communalization of property and its collective control**: It was insisted long before Marx that a utopia that accepted private property - and therefore the existence of classes - as a given wasn't worthy of the name[13]. Capitalism has typically asserted its universal claims for private property. This system however is now widely seen as defective and even destructive. One of typical instances is common property resources varying from genetic materials in tropical rain forests to air, water, and other environmental qualities, including built environments. Thus we need an alternative form of public or collective control system of such common resources.

8. **Healthy living environment and ecological planning**: Everyone should be free from threats and dangers of polluted environment and unnecessary hazards, and need to live in a decent and healthy living environment. Moreover, in order to prevent and preserve environment from degradations, we need to make urban and regional planning much more ecologically. As people now appeal to 'sustainability' or what is often called 'ecotopia', such ecological planning should be seen as a necessary condition for materializing utopian space.

9. **Freedom of political association with democratic communication**: People must have the right to organize political association in order to shape and control political institutions and cultural forms. The presumption is democratic communication. That is, "some adequate definition can be found for properly democratic procedures of association" and "collective forms of action must offer reasonable protections to minority opinions".

10. **'Good' governance and realization of democracy**: Even though the definition of 'good' governance is far from homogeneous and its concept has been used for legitimating ruling political powers, it can take up a utopian character. As Harvey describes, "individuals plainly should have rights to produce their own spaces of

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[13]) "The power of the great old utopian books," Bloch (1986, pp.530, 582) demonstrated, was that "they almost always named the same thing: Omnia sint communia, let everything be in common.". As the protagonist in Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516, 66) so clearly asserted, "… you'll never get a fair distribution of goods, or a satisfactory organization of human life, until you abolish private property altogether".

community and inscribe their own rules therein". This argument can be seen as a geographical version of democracy. Indeed we need to make the deepening and extension of democracy viable, in a way that it contributes to break down reinforced distinctions between the rule and the ruled, politicians and citizens, as well as between managers and workers.

11. **International equality and formation of security regimes**: International equality means not only a commitment to a solidaristic transfer of resources from rich to poor countries, but also common struggles to transcend geopolitical barriers to the development of international alliances, with communicating 'geographical conditions and diversities' of working-class existence. Political, military, economic and environmental security regimes are also needed for self-regulation of the nation as well as for international peace.

12. **Equality between races, between generation, and between species**: As inequalities can be made between races as well as classes and genders, we need to give more attentions to racism to be overcome. There are also many issues (especially in the field of environmental discourse) concerning the proper treatment of next generations, and of other living creatures. We need to make our responsibilities to the generations which follow our own, and our recognition of the impact of our way of life upon animals and the wider living world.

Indeed, these elements which I suggest have been frequently mentioned by many scholars and political leaders, but they remain still in the ideal. I hope this conference would be the starting point to pursue these elements for alternative 21st century geographies. From now and here, let’s start our practice to make our utopia (a place nowhere).

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