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Distinguishing Patterns of Utopia and Dystopia, East and West

Huai-Hsuan Huang
University of South Florida, huaihsuan@mail.usf.edu

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Distinguishing Patterns of Utopia and Dystopia, East and West

by

Huai-Hsuan Huang

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Liberal Arts in American Studies
Department of Humanities and Cultural Studies
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Benjamin Goldberg, Ph.D.
Amy Rust, Ph.D.
Daniel Belgrad, Ph.D.

Date of Approval:
December 1, 2017

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ABSTRACT

Before Sir Thomas More published Utopia and defined his ideal world with this fictional land, humans had been looking for their ideal society for centuries based on various religions and cultures. Yet, there are a few studies focusing on Utopia and Dystopia in cross-cultural contexts. This thesis will explore the two main questions: 1) can Utopia and Dystopia be separated? and 2) how does the utopian concept in the West involve in Eastern culture during the postwar period in postcolonial perspective?

Phoenix in Japan and *THX 1138* in U.S. are two well-known works during the post-World War II period via their popular media: manga in Japan and film in U.S. *Phoenix*, a renowned Japanese manga created by Osamu Tezuka. *Phoenix* the manga not only reveals the rise and fall of human civilization but also shows the reincarnation of life with Buddhist ideas, which means one living being starts its new life in different physical form after it dies. This reincarnation of life also points out how utopian-dystopian system functions in the East. *THX 1138*, a famous American film directed by George Lucas, starts with a robot-dominated world. More's definition of Utopia reveals several features of ideal society: an isolated society,

well-trained and well-ordered citizens, a democratic government, universal education, and loose religious limits. According to More's utopian features, the society in *THX 1138* is quite familiar with the so-called utopian world. However, the method of dehumanization in this film brings the concept and features of Dystopia.

After the 16th century, the term Utopia, as a Western ideology, entered East Asian cultures. In Eastern perspective, Utopia and Dystopia are the continuous states of one society like a circulation system. In the West, utopian-dystopian works tend to focus on the specific period. By discussing *Phoenix* and *THX 1138*, I want to show this continuous social pattern in different cultural contexts.

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I explore two main ideas: the first one is that utopia and dystopia cannot

be separated in both the East and the West, and secondly, that we can characterize two

different patterns in understanding Eastern and Western ideas about utopia. In the language

that will be discussed below, the Eastern pattern of utopia and dystopia is more

comprehensive, characterized by both a circle and a wave, than Western one only with waves.

I will use, as a case study, two works: *Phoenix* (1967 to 1988), a manga from Japan written

by Osamu Tezuka, and *THX 1138* (1971), a film from the U.S. written and directed by George

Lucas. This thesis will explore the different ideas of utopia presented in these two sources in

terms of historical background, philosophical theologies, and religious practices.

While scholars have discussed both utopias and dystopias for centuries, in both the

East and the West, as of yet, there has been relatively little comparative work attempting to

understand utopias across cultural contexts. This is especially true when it comes to in-depth

studies of particular cultural products. Thus, for this thesis, I have chosen to compare *THX*

1138 and Mirai-hen ("The Chapter of Future") of *Phoenix* in some depth in order to delineate

the differences and similarities of utopia in the East and West in some specific cases. In

addition, there is a related issue concerning how these two contexts affect people's values and

expectations of utopia and dystopia, as portrayed in these particular products. A key concept

organizing this discussion will be the idea of utopian expectations. The idea of these utopian

expectations refers to several features expected of a utopia: 1) an isolated society, 2)

well-trained and well-ordered citizens, 3) a democratic government, 4) universal education,

and 5) loose religious limits. These features become standards of these so-called ideal and

perfect worlds after Sir Thomas More established these basic features in his book *Utopia*.

In geographical perspective, a utopia is an isolated island. It does not have any

connection with other continents or, importantly, with other societies. In terms of social

standards, citizens are well-trained and well-ordered, in terms of, e.g., having enough housing

and farming to support their family and the whole of society. Governmental servants are

elected, and they represent all the community. When it comes to education, both men and

women are given good education. In terms of religions, different religions can tolerate each

other in harmony. These expectations are related to those things that people dream about the

various elements of a utopia: a well-organized and flawless world. The particulars of each

imagined perfect world differ between cultures and societies, but the general picture is of a

world full of universal happiness and harmony. Take *THX 1138* for example. Before getting

into this story, audiences are more or less aware of the features and standards of utopia. In

this story, the society is built up by isolated world. Humans being dominated by robots

rationally creates well-organized and well-trained social structure. To build up the

combination of happiness and harmony, well-organized rules and social structure are

fundamental. At the end, this well-framed world can finally become the ideal and perfect

product for people to apply to their ideal society.

If these utopian expectations define the typical standard of a perfect world, then

dystopian expectations form a world based on the opposite of these standards. Even though

different cultures have universal happiness and harmony as a founding principle of their

utopian ideas, the ways they contrast this perfect world to a dystopia differ greatly in each

culture and society.

In order to explore the differences of utopia and dystopia in the East and the West in

Phoenix and *THX 1138*, I will employ the close reading and comparison of a number of

scenes from these two works. By focusing on historical and cultural background knowledge,

as well as the story setting and structure of these two works, I will be able to provide an

in-depth analysis and discussion of several particular scenes in these two works, focusing

especially on how they represent the transition from utopia to dystopia, as well as the nature

of problems in the seemingly perfect utopian world. I have also chosen scenes that will be

useful to compare and contrast the similarities and differences between ideas and

expectations of utopia and dystopia in the East and the West.

It will be useful to provide an overview of the scenes from both of the two-chosen works as a way of sketching the argument of this thesis. At the very beginning of *THX 1138*, the whole world is in an absolute white setting, and audiences can see how robots dominate human society and function in this world. I choose this scene as the first fundamental structure which fits the isolated and well-organized utopian expectations. Secondly, I will discuss scenes in which we see how medicines eliminate humans' feelings. Humans' desires, emotions, and feelings will be one of the most significant obstacles if robots are to control the whole of society and to ensure that social benefits come out above individual interests. Since each human has his or her own thoughts and feelings, each individual's differences can make society lose homogeny. Finally, I will examine the scenes where THX 1138 escapes from this community and runs to an unknown place to start his new life. The transition between utopia and dystopia from the beginning to the end is profound. At the beginning of this story, even though this world somehow fits the features of utopia, audiences can sense the dystopian structure by dehumanization, such as eliminating human's feelings. At the end, THX 1138 seems to leave his expectations-matching utopian world for an unknown place, and eventually starting his new future. Even though audiences cannot be certain that he will be better or worse in the future, he does escape from the superficial utopian world. The superficial utopian world means only focus on specific elements such as being well-organized or well-order rather than actually being harmonious and flawless.

In Mirai-hen ("The Chapter of Future") of *Phoenix*, the story is set up in the near

future. Humans are dominated by robots and artificial intelligence. Humanity and civilization

have reached their peak and start to decline. I will discuss several scenes to explore the

transition between utopia and dystopia and the match between *THX 1138* and *Phoenix*. Firstly,

in order to get rid of this superficial world, Masato, the protagonist, runs away with his alien

lover Tamami. Secondly, when Masato and Tamami arrive an unknown place above their

previous community, they meet Dr. Saruta and Phoenix. After all of the human civilizations

die out because of nuclear war, Masato, who drank the blood of Phoenix once, gains the

power to have an eternal life. Thirdly, after his body is eliminated thousand years ago, his

spirit still exists in the whole cosmos. Finally, with the existence of his spirit, he becomes an

observer of the rise and fall of different civilizations. By the method of parallel comparing,

both *THX 1138* and the *Phoenix* start with the setting of well-organized, well-order, and

robot-dominated society. Following the utopian elements of being well-organized and

well-order, the protagonists in these two works, THX 1138 and Masato, try to fight against

the illusion of utopia like the well-organized societies in THX 1138 and *Phoenix*. In bringing

back his own feelings, THX 1138 senses humans' deepest desires, such as wanting to be free

in both mind and body. Even though Masato has his own feelings and desires, he is still

controlled in this robot-dominated society. By following the rules created by robots, he finds

that he cannot betray the whole social structure. When he decides to escape from his society

because of his lover, his wanting to break rules and get free is aggressive just as in THX 1138. The story of THX 1138 is ended at a scene when he encounters the sun after his escape, but Masato's story keeps developing after he escapes from his community, and he eventually becomes a spiritual observer of the whole world.

In the Western perspective found in a film like *THX 1138*, there is also a rise and fall of humanity and utopian-dystopian society, but the place of the circle of life is quite different. Audiences can see the rise and fall of humanity and civilization but not the circle of life like *Phoenix*. *THX 1138* shows instead a world that is built by utopian expectations in the West, and, in particular, focuses on how dehumanization, as one of the dystopian factors, causes the fall of the utopian world and civilization. In *THX 1138*, humans are lost at the beginning of the story; THX 1138 experiences the enlightenment of humanity; finally, he successfully escapes from what people think is a perfect world but somehow still feels lost in facing the unknown future. One of the main themes in *THX 1138* is about the utopia formed upon science and technology, quite different from the life-force based ideas of *Phoenix*. As Kumar has asserted in his *Utopianism* (1991), even though humans instinctively seek for personal interests and protection rather than that of others', a well-organized social structure is still one of the elementary standards of most, if not all, utopian works. Therefore, both these works offer insight into how utopian and dystopian features function, or more precisely how utopia and dystopia affect the whole social system as well as the very

contents found within human beings' states of mind, and how they have played out in these

different cultures and society during the same time period. This is, in other words, a look at

how these ideas were understood at the height of the Cold War in the 1970s and 80s, which is,

of course, part of a much larger story about how these ideas have played out over time in

different cultures. Moreover, by exploring the utopian and dystopian ideas in the East and the

West, this thesis can help us to understand whether there are, in fact, any universals among at

least these two examples of utopia and dystopia.

It is also important to provide some historical background. Before Sir Thomas More

published *Utopia* in 1516, there was no particular term for general ideas of a perfect world.

According to Krishan Kumar, even though there was no specific word to generalize the

universal idea of a perfect society, many cultures and religions had their own word to

describe their concept of an ideal world, such as the Golden Age in Greek mythology, the

millennium in Christianity and Sham-bha-la in Buddhism (Kumar, 1-19). Utopia, as More

depicted, was affected by the Golden Age of ancient Greece and the concept of the

millennium in Christianity. It was developed by certain perspectives to support his idea of a

society to be defined as a perfect place: where no man needed to worry about poverty and

hunger, where education was universal, and where politics had a democratic structure.

Different religions worshiped in the same churches, which were run by the same priests, all

of whom had the highest moral and religious level in utopian society. Economically speaking, personal interest was replaced by the benefits of the social welfare (More, 38-70).

On the other hand, from the Buddhist point of view (a view also shared in many respects by Taoists), an ideal world for humans should be based on the circle of life. Kanoksak Kaewthep suggested that the Buddhist ideal world included individual enlightenment and the balance between human and nature (Kaewthep, 226). The main Buddhist principles refer to getting rid of suffering and tortures which are related to humanity and humans' desires. Buddhists believe that when one is enlightened during his or her training, he or she is more able to avoid the harm from his or her humanity. When he or she actually links with nature and the world, his or her spiritual state will be balanced and harmonious. With the idea of an endless circle of life, this kind of self-enlightening training will never stop. During this process, the connection between man and nature and man and world is what Buddhists consider to be the essential element of their ideal world. Today the typical image of utopia in the West shows a technological dreamland, which guides people's vision and imagination of a perfect and well-organized society. On the other hand, Buddhism in various cultures and societies keeps the core of the balance between individual and entirety of the world. By carrying the goal of individual enlightenment and the circle of life, the balance between man and nature and world is the basic standard and expectation that leads Buddhists to their ideal world. Thus, we see how term utopia creates a stereotype and a set of

expectations for people to believe in certain concepts of the perfect society and guide their viewpoints to particular standards of their ideal worlds.

The idea of utopia in the West started with Sir Thomas More's *Utopia,* published in 1516. As Sir Thomas More originally defined the word, utopia initiated from the Greek "ou-topos" which meant "no place" or "no where." The book was an ironic critique of corrupt social structure and religious beliefs in British society at that time. Before the Reformation of 1517, the pervasive authoritarian influence of the church on the politics was at its peak. People who were under the system of the church like priests would not be judged by the government, but by the church. The utopian world that More created was a well-organized, rational, and balanced society. There was no poverty and hunger, everyone was educated, and the society was democratic structure. Different religions worshiped in the same churches which were run by the same priests, all of whom had the highest moral and religious level in utopian society. In the economical perspective, social welfare was more important than personal interests (More, 38-70).

Dystopia, as the opposite of a utopia, designates an anti-utopia. One common dystopian feature is that such societies employ dehumanization or disasters to cause the fall of humanity or human society. This situation negates the ideal blueprint of utopia or utopian viewpoints. Typically speaking, utopian perspectives are usually interpreted as being perfect, wonderful, and well-organized. However, More's idea of utopia was set up as a place which

is, in fact, too well-organized and rational to exist in reality. Today, people tend to associate

utopia and dystopia as a rise and fall, especially when considering large-scale human

civilizations. In Western culture, when utopian expectations and standards reach their peak,

the society is understood to (almost invariably) become (or turn out already to be) a dystopia,

like that found in *THX 1138*. On the other hand, from the Eastern viewpoint, the idea of *yin*

and *yang* creates an idea of the circle life and death, or the endless cycle of the rise and fall of

humanity and human societies. The question then becomes to distinguish how these utopian

and dystopian ideas and expectations diverge from culture to culture.

Before Western ideologies became widespread in Asian cultures, there was no one

term referring to any idea of a utopian world. The Ancient Chinese had some similar

philosophical ideas, in particular, those of Laozi around the 6th century BCE. Laozi, the

founder of philosophical Taoism, developed a concept known as "*Wu wei*." This concept

literarily means non-action or non-doing. Based on the idea of *Wu wei*, Laozi led his

followers to "return" to what he thought of as the natural state of a human being (Kirkland,

10-23). Furthermore, the fundamental ideas of Taoism affected Tao Yuanming to create a

well-known Chinese work called "The Peach Blossom Spring" in 421. Today people

categorized it as a utopian work because this story advocated a peaceful and harmonious

world which had no war, poverty, and hunger in contrast to the chaotic and disappointing

situation of the Jin Dynasty. The relationship between utopia and dystopia is thus akin to yin

and yang in the East, which represents a binary, balanced system of the world. Moreover, yin

and yang are also associated with the rise and fall in East Asian cultures (Kirkland, 29-32).

After the 1st century, Buddhism first entered China and then spread to Japan, Korea,

and other East Asian countries. One of the main Buddhist ideas of life and death is

transmigration. It means that a being travels to a new existence after death. This rise-and-fall

viewpoint corresponds to the idea of yin and yang in Taoism, which has long affected and

shaped various philosophical ideologies in East Asian cultures. Quite differently, before

More's idea of utopia, Christianity had an idea of the millennium which referred to, as Kumar

asserts in *Utopianism*, "an ideal condition of humanity, [which] connects with the idea of 'the

once and future Paradise'" (Kumar, 6). Even Greek mythology, as noted above, described the

period of the Golden Age which referred to the wonderful balance of humans, their society,

and nature. Thus, we can see the importance of rising and falling in the utopian ideas of both

cultures.

The terms utopia and dystopia were set up by Western ideas, but Eastern people had

their own utopian and dystopian perspectives specific to their own cultural contexts.

Although sharing the same terms, people in the East and the West do not exactly share the

same meaning for these ideas within their own cultural contexts. Even though both of them

share the same misunderstanding about utopia as a perfect place, the utopian expectations in

these two different locations that people seek are expressed differently, based on certain

aspects of their culture, in particular, aspects of their history and religion.

On the contrary, dystopia does not have an actual work like *Utopia* to discuss its

features. Nonetheless, I choose *1984* by George Orwell in the West and *Battle Royale* by

Koushun Takami in the East to narrow down some characteristics in dystopian society: 1)

future settings; 2) oppressive or even totalitarian society; 3) restricted freedom and thought; 4)

dehumanization; 5) non-individuality; 6) the illusion that the dystopia is, in fact, a perfect

utopian world.

I use *Phoenix* and *THX 1138* as my main materials to approach the differences and

similarities of the utopian-dystopian patterns in the East and the West. I divide the discussion

between *THX 1138* and *Phoenix* into three main categories which affect how these two works

present different utopian-dystopian patterns: religious practices, philosophical theologies, and

cosmologies. In terms of religious practices, I explore how Catholic and Christian features

connect to *THX 1138*, such as confession with artificial god and monitors as god's eyes. In

Phoenix, the religious practices focus on Buddhist principles, especially the cycle of rebirth

and karma.

After the discussion of fundamental utopian and dystopian feature in the East and the

West, I then turn to the similar scenes in both *THX 1138* and *Phoenix*: 1) future setting, 2)

robot-dominated or robot-manipulated society, 3) escaping from dystopian society. However,

the story of *THX 1138* ends up after he emerges to the ground and walks alone, but the story

of *Phoenix* portrays the following development after the main character Masato escapes.

These are the specific plots between *THX 1138* and *Phoenix* to show how the Eastern and

Western patterns of Utopia and Dystopia function differently. The Western pattern is similar

to the motion of pendulum. It seems to be continuous like what we as spectators see THX

1138 keeps walking, but actually it is a periodic activity, which refers to the unexpected

ending that we do not know THX 1138 will better or worse. In *Phoenix*, Masato's following

adventure becomes everlasting after he receives eternal life from Phoenix. He is learning

what life is and how the life cycle of all living beings function in Nature through his endless

journey until he meets Phoenix again. He observes rises and falls of civilizations, and he

realizes this process will happen again and again like what it happened in the past. The

Eastern pattern emphasizes this cycle for all living beings at all times and places.

When it comes to philosophical theologies, I claim that THX 1138 is the character

who resists fatalism and predetermination in the dystopian society. Fatalism has three main

features: 1) every living being is powerless to resist destiny, 2) the view that refuse to accept

inevitable events in the following future, and 3) because no one can escape from the

inevitable situations in the future, living beings accept their destiny without struggle or

hesitation. Predetermination is similar to fatalism but has its own features. It is an idea that

every event has already been determined in advance, which is another way of referring to

God's plan in the Christian world. THX 1138 resists fatalism and predetermination in order to look for his own freedom. This freedom is not only about physical freedom but also mental freedom. Reducing taking drugs helps THX 1138 to regain his feelings, or more precisely, he is able to identify himself as an individual rather than a mindless slave in this society.

In terms of the philosophical theologies in *Phoenix*, I mainly focus on how Buddhist and Taoist principles apply to the story. As I mentioned, Buddhist and Taoist concepts of Utopia and Dystopia are related to the idea of the cycle. Buddhist idea here is the cycle of karma: good deeds will result in good consequences and bad actions will cause sufferings. In Taoism, Taiji, or so-called yin and yang, represents the balance of Nature, which is the state of equilibrium between all living beings. Because the concept of yin and yang means the balance of Nature, they do not surpass each other. Both sides are necessary, and neither side can exist or be understood independently without the other.

The last section of Chapter 2 is about Eastern and Western cosmologies. Based on ancient Greek, the word cosmos refers to pure perfection and goodness, which means the perfect state of the whole universe. However, in terms of pure perfection, the further interpretation is no improvement and evolution, which means it reaches its ending like the pendulum motion moves from point A to point B and stops there. According to Buddhist cosmology, there are two parts in this whole cycle: one is temporal and mortal, and the other is immortal which refers to every living being's eternal spirit. The temporal part will

disappear after dying, but the immortal one will carry one's karma in the cycle and wait for next rebirth. When it comes to Taoist cosmology, all living beings are a part of Nature. The symbol of Taiji is also the representation of Taoist cosmology: balance and simultaneity. Both Buddhism and Taoism emphasize the cycle of life in their cosmology. At the end of *Phoenix*, Phoenix observes countless rises and falls of human civilizations in the past, present, and future. Phoenix represents not only the hope and eagerness of life, but also the cosmos which functions in the whole universe based on Buddhism and Taoism.

To conclude this thesis, I would like to suggest that neither of these two different patterns is better than the other. According to what I discuss in this thesis, these two patterns show different perspective based on their different cultural context. More importantly, I not only want to provide a more complete picture of utopian and dystopian ideas between the East and the West, but also want to discuss why these differences of these two patterns matter to Easterners and Westerners: what can Easterners and Westerners learn from these differences?

CHAPTER ONE:

The Fundamental Ideas of Utopia and Dystopia and *Phoenix* and *THX 1138*

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I argue, first, that utopia and dystopia cannot be conceptually

separated, and, second, that because Buddhist and Taoist principles of birth-death-rebirth

have been deeply ingrained the Far Eastern cultures for centuries, the pattern of

utopia-dystopia in the East differs from that of the pattern in the West. In terms of the

concepts introduced below, the pattern in the East is more comprehensive, containing both

the circle and the wave pattern to represent a life cycle for all living beings, instead of only

the wave pattern. The cycle of life in the East refers to an eternal system of birth-death-rebirth

for all living beings. In the Western world, many utopian and dystopian works focus not on a

system or cycle for all of life, but on a specific period: a story starts with utopia and ends up

in dystopia, or vice versa. This way of understanding the patterns of utopia/dystopia will be

evidenced by my analysis in later discussions in this chapter, and I will apply this understanding to the materials I chose for close reading in Chapter 2.

We can describe these Western concepts are engaged in a periodic process of utopian-dystopian transition. Even though this kind of periodic motion looks like a continuous activity, it actually starts from point A and ends up to point B. This motion is periodic instead of being cyclic, and I shall argue that this pendulum motion can help us understand the wave pattern of utopia and dystopia in Western culture (See Fig. 1-2, Appendix A, Page 85). Meanwhile, Eastern concepts of utopia and dystopia form a cyclic pattern. According to certain ideas common to both Taoism and Buddhism, utopia and dystopia exist *simultaneously*. Compared to the Western pattern of utopia and dystopia, the Eastern one provides a more complete picture about how all living beings are involved in this cycle of Nature: it provides a holistic system encompassing all living beings at all times and places, rather than just focusing narrowly on humans in a particular time and place.

Returning to the idea of utopia and dystopia as inseparable, it should be clear given the discussion above that utopia and dystopia are concurrent throughout the whole system of Nature. However, in the Western world, it may seem that, because the utopian-dystopian pattern is the pendulum motion or wave, utopia and dystopia can be seen as separate. However, we must remember that this motion is periodic: utopia is always followed by dystopia, dystopia by utopia, and so on. Thus, in both contexts, utopia and dystopia are

intimately related and connected. And so, the differences in the East and the West here is that

Eastern concepts focus on the simultaneous occurrence of utopia and dystopia, meanwhile,

Western concepts stress on the one following the other. Even though these two patterns are

not the same, they both present a close connection between utopia and dystopia.

I. Utopia/Dystopia

In the following sections, I hope that the historical and conceptual evidence will

become clear. Also, I want to expand the comparison of two patterns here a bit, more

completely introduce them, and suggest why they will be important, beyond demonstrating

the close connection between utopia and dystopia. Given these characterizations of Western

and Eastern concepts, I can now argue that utopia and dystopia should not be seen as separate,

and that, instead, we should characterize these concepts as embodied in Figures 1-4. Western

utopian concepts I describe in terms of a periodic process of utopian-dystopian transition.

Even though this kind of periodic motion looks like a continuous activity, it actually starts

from point A and end up to point B. This motion is periodic instead of being cyclic, and I

shall argue that this pendulum-like motion can be described by wave pattern of utopia and

dystopia in Western culture (See Fig. 1-2, Appendix A, Page 85). Meanwhile, Eastern

concepts of utopia and dystopia form a cyclic pattern. According to certain ideas common to

both Taoism and Buddhism, utopia and dystopia exist *simultaneously*. Compared to the

Western pattern of utopia and dystopia, the Eastern one provides a more holistic picture

concerned with how *all* living beings are involved in the cycles of Nature and History: it

provides a complete system encompassing all living beings at all times and places, rather than

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not the same, they both present a close connection between utopia and dystopia.

II. Defining Utopia

In this section, I argue that utopia, or what people named or termed to refer to an ideal

world, is a state of belief about the world rather than an actual place in the world. More

precisely, because Utopia is a state of belief, it could be applied to religious or political

structures to make people believe that there might be an ideal world in the future. I shall first

discuss the features More described in his *Utopia* because he was the first person coined the

term utopia in the Western world, and, in so doing, he crystalized a number of themes that

had long been running through aspects of Western philosophical and religious thought.

Moreover, I will set up some of the fundamental background historical knowledge during

More's period.

As More originally defined the term, Utopia comes from the Greek "ou-topos" which

means "no place" or "no where." The book was an ironic critique of the corrupt social

structures and religious beliefs of British society at that time. Before the Reformation of 1517,

the pervasive authoritarian influence of the Catholic church on the politics was at its peak.

Clerics would be judged not by the government, but by the church, which meant the political

power of the church was often higher than the one of the actual government. Further, the

century before the Reformation was a time of massive corruption in the Catholic church,

involving not just ecclesiastical corruption, but which also included influence over the secular

realm as well.

The utopian world that More created in response to this corruption was a

well-organized, rational, and balanced society. There was no poverty or hunger, everyone was

educated, and the society was democratic in structure. This democracy was also applied to

churches. People were able to worship their own religions in this society, without

authoritarian repression from church or state. Economically speaking, overall social welfare was more important than personal interests (More, 38-70). Based on a close reading of More's description of this ideal world, we can extract the essential features of Utopia[1]:

1) a physically isolated society;
2) a well-trained and well-ordered populace;
3) a democratic government;
4) universal education;
5) religious tolerance.

These features become standards of so-called ideal worlds after More's Utopia was published, deeply influencing the development of utopian ideas in the West. As should be clear, religious ideas form a quite important part of More's concept of the perfect world.

I now turn to I explore Western features or expectations of the ideal world before *Utopia*. According to Kumar's *Utopianism*, there are several different concepts of an ideal world before *Utopia* in the West. They were called The Golden Age, Paradise, or the millennium. Even though these terms refer to the similar idea of ideal state of human civilization, there are important differences. For example, Kumar suggests that the Golden Age refers to "a time of beginnings in which humanity lived in a state of perfect happiness and fulfilment" (Kumar, 3). Paradise in the Christian world, as Kumar noted, is close to the idea of renewal of humanity in the following new world or future. Like the millennium, Kumar suggested that it is an ideal state of humanity which links with the idea of "once and

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[1] See Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* in Chapter 10, and Levitas' *The Concept of Utopia* in Chapter 4.

future Paradise" (Kumar, 6). Even though these terms and approaches to the ideal world are different, the key elements of this world are related to humanity and Reason.

According to Peterson and Seligman's arguments in *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification* (2004), humanity in philosophical perspective contains several virtues which are related to ethics: Love, Kindness, and Social Intelligence. "Humanity [refers to] interpersonal strengths that involve tending and befriending others" (Peterson, 28); love is the concept of belonging and being close to others; kindness is behaving with good deeds; social intelligence means "[b]eing aware of the motives and feelings of other people and oneself" (Peterson, 28). When it comes to Reason, Nikolas Kompridis suggested that Reason refers to an ability to being aware of facts, logically practicing or judging beliefs and thoughts based on information or knowledges (Kompridis, 292-293). To carry the ideas of humanity and Reason approach the concepts of an ideal world, here Plato suggested that highly developed humanity and Reason brings people's happiness and harmony, moreover, a society will lead to the so-called The Golden Age because of this kind of mental satisfaction (Sedley, 19-22). Plato[2] was the one who asserted that Reason can show us a better way to live. He argued that if we truly understand human nature we can find "individual happiness and social stability". According to Plato's ideas, "pleasure is always the filling of a lack or the restoration of a harmonious state and therefore presupposes

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[2] See Plato's *The Republic*, especially the chapter "Happiness, Virtue, and Vice."

some kind of disturbance of the physical or mental equilibrium" (*Timaeus*, c31b–55c).

"The decision about what mixture will make for a happy life leads to a combination of the

true and pure pleasures with all the kinds of knowledge and disciplines that are necessary

for life's needs" (*Phaedo*, 59d–64b). I think what Plato wanted to suggest is that humanity

and Reason can lead humans to build up their ideal society, and moreover, they are able to

pursue their pleasure in this kind of society. The features of an ideal world in the following

generations are involved in both Greek concepts like Platonic thiking and Christian concepts

like Paradise or millennium. Indeed, Christianity to a large degree absorbed many of the ideas

of Plato during the Middle Ages, and again during the Renaissance and Early Modern periods.

Throughout this long history, the core of this utopian world is an idea of a highly developed

and rational humanity that can lead to happiness.

I now turn briefly to a number of utopian works in the West to illustrate some aspects

of the development of these utopian concepts. In particular, I first discuss *Gulliver's Travels*

(1726), by Jonathan Swift, which shows an instance of this development about midway

between More and today, some two hundred years after the publication of More's *Utopia*.

(Note, too, that Swift works are ironic and satirical like More's, though to a different degree.)

I want to stress here the similarities and differences between utopia features after *Utopia* was

published in 1516. Further, I will use *Utopia* and these three works to discuss the pattern of

pendulum motion (See Fig. 5, Appendix A, Page 86) that I argue characterizes western

utopias, and which is related to my analysis of *THX 1138*.

In *Gulliver's Travels*, the stories focus on Gulliver travelling to several places and

record his experiences in those places. The fourth part of *Gulliver's Travels* is often seen as a

kind of depiction of the ideal world, which is about Gulliver visiting the land of

Houyhnhnms[3]. In this context, Chloe Houston has argued that "*Gulliver's Travels* can be seen

as utopian in its refusal to concede that the ideal society can exist in the real world. As in

Utopia, a seemingly ideal society can only be imagined far from English shores" (Houston

435). What Houston stressed here is that an ideal world is *literally* no place—Utopia. For

Swift, after he became the representative of the Irish church, he tried to negotiate with Queen

Anne and the Whigs to get some financial support to the church. Ultimately, however, he

failed and turned against Queen Anne and the Whigs. We can thus infer that, given Swift's

historical background when he published *Gulliver's Travels*, he was criticizing the naïve

expectations of an ideal world during his time in terms of his experience of politics and

human nature.

In *Gulliver's Travels*, the land of Houyhnhnms is isolated from other places and it is

ruled by a race of horses whose behaviors are close to human beings. Many scholars defined

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[3] See Houston's "Utopia, Dystopia or Anti-utopia? Gulliver's Travels and the Utopian Mode of Discourse," and Hammond's "Nature-Reason-Justice in Utopia and Gulliver's Travels."

the society of Houyhnhnms as an idealistic place, or a so-called utopian society. There are

several important features that Swift uses to describe this society[4]:

1) the land of Houyhnhnms is isolated;
2) Reason is the most important virtue in this ideal society. With completely rational social values, there is no religion;
3) Houyhnhnms do not have anything to be called happiness because they are rational but not passionate in their lives;
4) decency and civility are how Houyhnhnms function their social rules;
5) they are self-sustaining;
6) there is no law because no one acts unreasonably;
7) they have an institution called Representative Council for citizens to discuss what they need every four years.

It should be clear that there are some similarities and differences between *Gulliver's Travels*

and *Utopia*. Importantly, both places are isolated, and the narrators in these two stories both

accidentally encounter the ideal societies during their fictional journey. Most importantly,

reason is a core element in both *Utopia* and the land of Houyhnhnms. As Eugene Hammond

has argued, based on the virtue and social value of reason, these two societies represent a

stable social structure even though they approach this social stability in different ways

(Hammond, 445). In terms of differences, in *Utopia*, More depicted a complete solid

education, stable economy, and even politics and religions. In the land of Houyhnhnms,

however, Swift writes that "Nature and reason [are] sufficient Guides for a reasonable animal"

(Swift, 2403). Thus, reason is the highest rank of social structure and value, which means

Houyhnhnms do not specifically need other organizations to function in this society: reason

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[4] See Traugott's "A Voyage to Nowhere with Thomas More and Jonathan Swift:" Utopia" and" The Voyage to the Houyhnhnms" and Hammond's "Nature-Reason-Justice in Utopia and Gulliver's Travels."

can get rid of all the chaos in one society. Swift even called Houyhnhnms as "the Perfection

of Nature" (Swift, 2889) because they represent pure reason and are thus not affected by

feelings and emotions, which cause eagerness, aggression, and desires within humans.

Hammond has asserted that, "the distinctive features of the terms 'nature' and reason,' as the

Utopians and the Houyhnhnms use them, are: 1) that nature is idealized and taken to be a

reliable normative standard; and 2) that reason is in perfect accord with nature" (Hammond,

450). I believe that this is correct, and, further, I have suggested that the feature of being

isolated is important, mostly because this feature can avoid the possible influence from other

societies. This means that this specific society can maintain its original and pure social

structure, without fear of outside influence and degeneration. For *Utopia* and the society of

Houyhnhnms, being isolated helps their societies in the state of Nature, and because of the

state of Nature, Reason can be maintained by citizens who have been developing with

advanced humanity.

According to how *Utopia* and *Gulliver's Travels* depict the ideal world, the main

elements in these ideal worlds are humanity and reason. Furthermore, based on the stories in

these utopian works, I suggest that the periodic wave pattern is deeply ingrained in Western

ideas about Utopia and Dystopia. At the end of both *Utopia* and the story of Houyhnhnms,

the two protagonists cannot go back to the ideal world where they accidentally encounter

during their adventure. Applying to the Western pattern of Utopia and Dystopia, the wave

only moves forward and there is no chance to go back. The periodic transition between

Utopia and Dystopia is what Western pattern presents.

As I mentioned in the introduction, the pendulum motion can be seen as relating to

various aspects of Western thought (See Fig. 5, Appendix A, Page 86), an idea and metaphor

used constantly to describe regular, periodic change, especially in terms of ideas relating to

politics and religion. Just to cite some rather different sorts of examples, indeed, Roy

Williams and Drew Michael pointed out an idea from the Bible in the work *Pendulum: How*

past generations shape our present and predict our future (2012). They note that the,

"…phrase 'forty years' appears fifty-four times in the Bible and in virtually every instance it

refers to an epoch a window of transformative change…. The phrase came to mean, 'a long

window of time during which things become totally different'" (Williams, 217-220). The

pendulum motion in Western religious perspectives reveals the routinely and periodic

changes. Quite different from the periodic changes of the West, in the East we often see

instead an unending cyclic pattern. In Buddhism and Taoism, for instance, they argue that the

cycle of life is endless. This means that every living being will experience the process of

birth-death-rebirth in this system. Before Western ideologies became widespread in Far East

Asian cultures, there was no actual term referring to a specific idea of a utopian world. There

are, however, ideas that are central to Eastern ideas of perfection, and which are, as in the

case of the West, based predominantly off of certain religious concepts and ideas, and which

ultimately reinforce this cyclic pattern.

I will start in ancient India, when Buddhism, a religious philosophy that originated

around 6th BCE, postulated one of its foundational ideologies: The Wheel of Life. The Wheel

of Life is also an important symbol in Buddhist arts (See Fig. 6, Appendix A, Page 87).

According to Tibetan Buddhist teaching, The Wheel of Life represent saṃsāra, or cyclic

existence in English. In *Buddha and His Teachings*, before a famous Buddhist monk and

translator Ven. Narada Maha Thera explained the elements in The Wheel of Life, he first

pointed out the fundamental rules of The Wheel of Life. "Because of A arises B. Because of

B arises C. When there is no A, there is no B. When there is no B, there is no C" (Thera, 268).

What he wanted to emphasize here is the correspondent interaction between every living

being, action, and event in the past, present and future. The process seems to be like cause

and effect, but the development can be carried further that this kind of binary or

correspondent interaction in the world is related to what he stressed on the process of birth

and death instead of the evolution of the world (Thera, 268).

Thera suggested that the elements in The Wheel of Life are:
> (1) the center circle: Ignorance, Attachment and Aversion;
> (2) the second circle from center: Karma;
> (3) the third one: Saṃsāra or cyclic existence;
> (4) the forth one: Twelve links of dependent origination, which can refer to all the
> stages or events which every living being will experience in the process of
> birth, death, and rebirth;

(5) the fierce figure which holding the wheel: Impermanence, which means
changes;

(6) the moon above: free from saṃsāra or cyclic existence

(7) the Buddha above: the one who liberate from cyclic existence, which means it
is possible to be freed from this cycle (Thera, 268-278).

The Wheel of Life represents the vivid picture of how the world for all living being functions in Buddhist teaching. In the wheel (or the cycle), all living beings face the cyclic process, but the future is full of changes. Reincarnation is a part of saṃsāra (or cyclic existence), which means the concept of a living being gets rebirth in new physical form. David Y. F. Ho, a professor of psychology, said in his "Selfhood and Identity in Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Hinduism: Contrasts with the West" that "[r]eincarnation is really metamorphosis, not metempsychosis: Birth is new birth, not rebirth. The self, then, cannot be an unchanging or permanent individual entity, for there is no lie outside the domain of transmigration. Rather, it is a transient flux in the endless process of cosmic changes; for there is nothing eternal or permanent, but change" (Ho, 122). My interpretation here is that reincarnation is a part of the process of cyclic existence, which means all the changes and impermanence take place during this process, but the process is still in the cycle of The Wheel of Life. In Western concepts, change is best characterized by the linear wave pattern of the pendulum, but in Buddhist teaching, even though there the universe is full of changes in like the linear waves of the West, there is still a circle surround by this pattern of waves. This concept can be associated with Taoist Taiji.

When it comes to Taoist teaching, the ancient Chinese had some similar philosophical ideas at the same time, in particular, those of Laozi in the 6th century BCE. Laozi developed a religious philosophy called Taoism. Literarily, Tao refers to a "road" or "path" in Chinese. But a more complete and useful translation would understand Tao as the natural order of the whole universe, and which is also related to an idea of reincarnation or transmigration. According to Taoist concepts, reincarnation or transmigration means the cycle of life: the process of birth, death, and rebirth for all living beings. Following the basic idea of Tao, Laozi developed the concept known as '*Wu wei*." This concept literarily means "non-action" or "non-doing," but Laozi defined *Wu wei* as a paradoxical idea of "action of non-action" (Creel, 4). *Wu wei* refers to a state in which humans act and exist spontaneously and effortlessly, like the ebb and flow of the cycles of the natural world (Creel, 4). In other words, how a living being acts will bring about the correspondent reaction from Nature. It refers to an ideal state of reaching perfect harmony with Nature.

When it comes to the works related to an ideal world in ancient China, Tao Yuanming wrote a well-known work called "The Peach Blossom Spring" in 421, which is today categorized as a utopian work because of how the story advocates for a peaceful and harmonious world. Set in its historical context, this work presented a completely different picture of the world in comparison to the chaotic and disappointing situation of the Jin Dynasty. Tao Yuanming's "Story of Peach Blossom Spring" (c.400 AD), which was deeply

affected by Taoism, can be seen as the fundamental text on the utopian features in ancient

Chinese society[5]. According to this text, there are three foundational features to portray

ancient Chinese ideal world:

1) an isolated place;
2) no war and suffering;
3) human live as a whole self-sufficient unit harmoniously.

As noted above, Taoism and Buddhism both rely on a similar concept of the cycle of life as a

system of balance between living beings and nature that brings harmony and happiness to

humanity. According to Tian Xiaofei's *Tao Yuanming and manuscript culture: The record of a*

dusty table (2005), when Tao was 30, he subsequently joined the government and military

under two empires to support the revival of Jin Dynasty during the period of Six Dynasties.

After he realized his master did not actually want to revive Jin Dynasty, he quitted his job for

avoiding being killed by his master (Tian, 56-57). During the period of serving in both

government and military, Tao understood the dark side of politics and wars not only for

himself but also for mass populace, so he wrote the poem "Story of Peach Blossom Spring"

to describe his ideal society. In particular, the hardship people face in their daily life is what

motivate the dream about an ideal world.

According to Taoist concepts, yin and yang cannot be separated (See Fig. 3-4,

Appendix A, Page 86). The big circle outside the wave and the two small circles inside show

that both the cycle and wave of life interlock simultaneously. They represent the balance of

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[5] See Tian's *Tao Yuanming and manuscript culture*, especially the Chapter Lost Homesteads: Returning to Tao

Nature and demonstrate how the whole cycle of Nature functions. According to Tony Fang

and other scholars' studies[6], the balance of Nature is the like state of equilibrium between all

living beings. So, for example, yin represents moon, imagination, and feminine; yang

represents sun, rationality, and masculine. One of the most important ideas in Taoist thought

on yin and yang is that they do not, and, indeed, cannot, surpass each other, as they symbolize

harmony and balance in Nature—both sides are necessary at once, and neither side can exist

or be understood independently without the other (Fang, 31-33). Thus, even the colors of the

yin and yang, white and black, show that even light cannot exist without darkness and vice

versa. If one were to be supreme over the other, balance would be destroyed. There are also

related Buddhist ideas which have played an important role in shaping the ideas of utopia and

dystopia, of which one of the most important is the cycle of karma: good deeds will result in

good consequences and bad actions will cause sufferings. In addition to agreeing with the

ideas of balance and harmony central to the Taoist cycle of life, the cycle of karma also

emphasizes that every living being has its own eternal spirit. A living being's identity and

thoughts will end when the being dies, but its eternal spirit will carry its karma forward

through the cycle of life, death, and rebirth. Thus, returning to the figures above, and given

these Buddhist and Taoist concepts, we must understand that the pattern of periodically

reaching Utopia or Dystopia at the crest of a wave (See Fig. 1-2, Appendix A, Page 85) is but

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[6] See Fang's "Yin Yang: A new perspective on culture," Ho's "Selfhood and identity in Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Hinduism: contrasts with the West," and Lang and Jing's "A Taoist Foundation of Systems Modeling and Thinking."

one half of the story in the East, and a complete account must also refer to the endless cycle

of life applied to all living beings (See Fig. 3-4, Appendix A, Page 86).

The relationship between Utopia and Dystopia is thus akin to yin and yang in the East,

which also represents a binary, balanced system of the world. Moreover, yin and yang are

also seen as the symbol of rise and fall in Far East Asian cultures (Kirkland, 29-32).

According to Taoist ideas about yin and yang, there is no actual end in this cycle, or more

precisely, there is nothing can be simply defined as Utopia or Dystopia because all living

beings are in the life cycle in Nature. When human civilization reaches its apotheosis

(Utopia), it will then begin to decline until it reaches its nadir then, before beginning the cycle

anew and moving towards apotheosis again. Discussing a few aspects of Taoist cosmology

and how it relates to utopian-dystopian concept will now prove helpful. The Taoist concept of

yin and yang is developed from its cosmology. Yin is related to the idea of moon, dark, and

passive; yang is related to sun, light, and active. Yin and yang represent a cycle of balance

and they cannot be separated. Yin will become yang and yang will turn into yin. In Taoist

perspective, it is an endless process in Nature. Thus, these Taoist concepts and cosmology

refer to how Chinese imagine their own ideal world, just as More's concepts and Christian

millenarians came to be central to how some in the West came to see their version of such a

world

III. Defining Dystopia

Defining Dystopia is more complicated than Utopia, in part because there is no specific work talking about actual dystopian features in either the West or the East. Dystopia might be simply seen as the negation of utopian features, but this is too simplistic. Most relevant to the current thesis, are ambiguous cases, that seem to have some parts of Utopia, but at the end, it does not seem especially Utopian. In particular, some have claimed that the robot-manipulated society in *THX 1138* is a Dystopia even though it displays some of the utopian criteria[7]. In order to get a grip on what dystopia means, and how this idea has developed, I will look at a number of works to discern the core features of the idea in those contexts.

We find a famous dystopian work in an Eastern context in the Japanese novel *Battle Royale.* In *Battle Royale*, the government, which is called the "Republic of Greater East Asia," manipulates its people by conducting a killing activity called "The Program" every year. Many high school students are chosen to join the game in deserted islands and forced to fight each other to the death. In "Simulacra, Sacrifice and Survival in *The Hunger Games*, *Battle Royale*, and *The Running Man*," Helen Day charadterizes Battle Royale in the following way: "[w]ith death so imminent, identity becomes little more than a series of memory flashes and fantasies" (Day, 171.) In other words, when facing death, humans cannot keep their identity stable, especially when only one person can survive in this game. "[F]rom the beginning of

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[7] See Telotte's "The Problem of the Real and '*THX 1138*,'" Kellner's "Blade Runner: a diagnostic critique," Berg's "'Goddamn you all to hell!': The revealing politics of dystopian movies," and Halper's "Hobbes in the City: Urban Dystopias in American Movies."

Battle Royale, the Program is framed [as an entertainment program] …. The Program

functions effectively because it relies on suspicious and lack of trust among the players."

Even the character Shogo's words show how superficial and illusionary this society is, and

Day notes that "the Dictator is only an actor…. The entire political narrative of the Republic

is predicated on falsehoods and second-order simulacra, masking and perverting reality. (Day,

172). Following Day, I suggest that media and propaganda are two of the main methods

governors manipulate people in this totalitarian society. The function of this program is to

brainwash people's mind that governors have the authority and power to destroy their lives

even young children cannot be exempt. In this case, many people will not risk to put

themselves in danger and eventually become governors' slaves.

In the famous dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, George Orwell created for his

readers first impressions of this fictional world by invoking the names of various ministries

whose very names are undermined by their missions: the Ministry of Peace is about war, the

Ministry of Plenty for economic rationing, and the Ministry of Truth deals with propaganda.

Based on their names, readers gain an *illusory* understanding of how this society functions,

quickly learning, however, that these names are all utopian lies hiding the dystopian truth.

What scholars point out in this work as dystopian traits are how one totalitarian system or

social structure reaches its peak and manipulates people's thoughts and minds via media and

propaganda. According to Erika Gottlieb's arguments in *Dystopian Fiction East and West:*

Universe of Terror and Trial (2001), dystopian concepts are related to religious perspectives, or more precisely, Dystopia refers to the struggle between salvation and damnation in modern human societies (Gottlieb, 3). "Twentieth-century dystopian fiction reveals the underlying structure of a morality play," further pointing out that, "salvation is represented as a just society governed by worthy representatives chosen by an enlightened people; damnation, by an unjust society, a degraded mob ruled by a power-crazed elite" (Gottlieb, 3). Based on her ideas, Orwell's protagonist, an everyman, struggles against not only a Bad Angel but also the faith and belief of the Spirit of Man. More specifically, he struggles against the dehumanizing forces of totalitarian dictatorship. Gottlieb summarizes this well:

> "each a hellscape from which the inhabitants can no longer return, so that we realize what the flaws of our own society may lead to for the next generations unless we try to eradicate these flaws today…. It is one of the most conspicuous features of the warning in these classics of dystopian fiction that once we allow the totalitarian state to come to power, there will be no way back" (Gottlieb, 4).

From this brief analysis, we can summarize, first, that there is less unity to dystopia than to utopia, even though the two ideas are deeply connected. And second, there are a variety of features that serve to characterize dystopian works:

> 1) future settings;
> 2) oppressive or even totalitarian society;
> 3) restricted freedom and thought;
> 4) dehumanization;

5) non-individuality;

6) the illusion that the dystopia is, in fact, a perfect utopian world,

This last is, perhaps, the most important, and it brings us to an important question about

Utopia. That is, no matter the features of an ideal world is before or after More, it seems like

if human civilization can reach highly developed humanity and rationality, an ideal society

has chance to come true. But the truth is that the so-called Utopia does not exist. One of the

features in Dystopia might be related to this result: the illusion that the dystopia is, in fact, a

perfect utopian world. What people expect to reach an ideal world is based on Humanity and

Reason, which means this society should be well-ordered and well-organized. However, in

order to maintain this stable social structure in real world, governors have to be oppressive or

even totalitarian, then that is not what people expect to happen in Utopia; it is Dystopia.

Another question here then becomes, can a single dystopian feature undermine a host of

utopian features? In fact, I do not think a single dystopian factor will lead to an actual

dystopia, or more precisely, one dystopian factor can turn utopia into non-utopia, which

means it is not an ideal world any more, but it is not as bad as a dystopian society.

In a so-called dystopian world, as exemplified by *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Battle*

Royale, there are a number of different kinds of social control: corporate, bureaucratic, and

technological. Corporate control means governors take advantage of propaganda and media

to brainwash their citizens; bureaucratic control means a society is worked by a group of

mindless governors who follow rules without thought or reflection; and technological control means a society is dominated by technology like artificial intelligences.

IV. Applying Utopia and Dystopia to *THX 1138* and *Phoenix*

When it comes to how to apply these various ideas of Utopia and Dystopia to *THX 1138* and *Phoenix*, I shall start with the setting. *THX 1138* shows a world that is built following utopian features based on More's utopian ideas, and, in particular, focuses on how dehumanization, as one of the dystopian factors, causes the fall of the utopian world. At the very beginning of *THX 1138*, Dystopia is hiding behind scientific and technological achievements, ones that would normally be perceived as realizing utopian expectations. George Lucas set up a society in which humans have reached a period of highly advanced developments in science and technology, but, in fact, have also become captives of robots and artificial intelligences. Utopia, as Krishan Kumar suggested in *Utopianism*, is a social state which refers to an almost impossible perfection. This perfection involves not only highly developed humanities and virtues, but also a highly stable social structure. Furthermore, the whole process of dehumanization through the elimination of humans' feelings and desires causes the fall of humanity and human society, undermining the utopia, and becoming a dystopia.

In contrast, *Phoenix* the manga not only reveals the rise and fall of human civilization but also shows the cycle of life following the Buddhist and Taoist concepts, which means that all living beings will reincarnate in different physical forms after dying. This reincarnation of life also shows how Utopia and Dystopia function in the East, especially for the countries deeply affected by Buddhism and Taoism. The concept of reincarnation implies the potential rebirth for all living beings in this cycle, which refers not only the possibility to

In *THX 1138*, even though the setting of the robot-manipulated society is similar to More's utopian ideas, the method of dehumanization in this film, such as eliminating humans' desires, brings up the concept and features of dystopia. As Kumar argued, before More termed this ideal fictional world as utopia, humans had been looking for their ideal world in centuries. In the Western culture, before Catholics and Christianity have become two of the most profoundly influential religions, the Golden Age in Greek myth and Virgil's *Arcadia* showed the fundamental ideas of how people looked for their ideal world and how this particular world featured and functioned in their dream. Kumar defined that one of the commonest utopian features is "to live in a world that cannot be but where one fervently wishes to be: that is the literal essence of utopia…. Utopia does share the quality of a dream" (Kumar, 1). His statement points out that Utopia is such a dreamland and the value of this fictional dreamland is not about how to be practicable in present but about how to reach a possible brighter future (Kumar, 3).

V. Motivating the Choice of Media

Having introduced these basic ideas of Utopia and Dystopia, it must be admitted that

both the works under analysis in this thesis cannot be easily categorized as definitively

utopian or dystopian works. They share the features of both, though this should not be

surprising if, as I've suggested, these two ideas should not be separated. In the remainder of

this section, I shall attempt to motivate the choice of these two works of different medium.

Both *Phoenix* and *THX 1138* are two well-known works of popular media in each

culture: manga in Japan and film in U.S. According to Kinko Ito's journal "Manga in

Japanese History," manga in modern Japanese era was deeply affected by Western culture,

especially French and American cultures (Ito, 30). Japanese manga have been used as

political satire since Meiji period (1868-1912) in order to spread the ideas of freedom and

human rights. Even though many scholars have not seen manga as serious academic material

until recently, manga have been involved in the everyday life of the Japanese for years. It was

posted in newspaper as pictures about social values or ironic political issues during that time.

Manga not only shows aspects of how Japanese people function in their society, but also

allows us to understand some Japanese values and thoughts as they exist in everyday

moments.

Meanwhile, as argued in *Film History: An Introduction*, American film companies

were rapidly developing up until 1912 (Thompson, 44). Moreover, after World War One,

American culture took over world markets (Thompson, 44). Film is one of the most important popular media in the domestic American context, and one of the most important means by which Americans have spread their culture. This type of media actually influenced not only the Americans' everyday life but also other cultures' vision of American life. In particular, the author of *Phoenix*, Osamu Tezuka, is one such example. Both manga and film share the fact that they are closely related to, and influence as well as present, Japanese and American lives.

Let me now introduce these two works in some more detail. *Phoenix* is a series of Japanese manga released from 1967 to 1988. The author, Osamu Tezuka, started his manga career in 1939. Tezuka was called "the god of manga" in Japan because of his influence on the whole manga and animation industry. According to Power's *God of Comics*, Tezuka was actually inspired and affected deeply by Walt Disney when he was a child. He took advantage of the techniques of framing in film in his drawings, which broke with the traditional manga format at that time. During World War Two, he went through the nuclear attack in Japan. Tezuka's works mainly discuss the cycle of life and the respect of life, especially after WWII. (Power, 20). *Phoenix* is composed of many short stories which approach one main question: what is life? He explored the themes of life, war, and the rise and fall of human civilization, depicting several rises and falls of civilization to show how world history functions continuously in an endless cycle, which I shall argue is often a key component in Eastern utopian-dystopian works. *Phoenix* cannot be simply defined as a utopian work or dystopian

work because it consists of the of rise and fall in humanity and civilization. The whole pattern in *Phoenix* indicates how this cycle of life, or the cycle of the whole world, functions. Rise and fall are like yin and yang, beauty and ugliness, light and shadow. They are a dual and relative system, moreover, when this concept applies to the cycle of life, the cycle shows its nonstop and everlasting function.

  THX 1138 is an American film directed by George Lucas in 1971. Lucas is well-known as the creator of *Star Wars*, a film that deeply affected and influenced the whole of American society, turning Lucas and the film into American pop icons. The huge success brought science fiction to the masses, and turned it into popular entertainment. As noted above, following More's utopian features, it is easy to find some similar features in *THX 1138* such as an isolated society or well-ordered and well-organized citizens. But, in terms of what spectators can see and sense, this world is not a Utopia. During the process of watching this movie, the expectations of the audience has about Utopia, and the disillusionment that happens with the undermining of these utopian features, bring about a Dystopia. Thus, this earlier and much less successful film (his first full-length feature) presents a much darker world, one that uses utopia and dystopia to criticize a possible future for humanity. Of particular importance is the setting of *THX 1138*, which is a robot-manipulated society. Here robots control humans through a process of dehumanization. Dehumanization, as discussed above, is a way to eliminate human's identity, personality or spirit. For example, the robots

attempt to eliminate humans' desires and emotions through drugs which dull these feelings

and wants. Lucas set up this world to illustrate a world that claims to be a utopia but which in

fact depicts a dystopian future for human civilization. At the end, the main character THX

1138 runs away from this society and starts his new life. The story ends here, but we as

spectators cannot know whether he can find his Utopia or the following future is another

Dystopia.

When it comes to the choice of *Phoenix* and *THX 1138*, I shall focus on an in depth

parallel comparison. Before this however, a number of things should be noted about these

two texts. First of all, they are different media: *Phoenix* is a Japanese manga and *THX 1138* is

an American film. So, while the respective formats of these two works are quite different,

they do share some important commonalities, including the fact that they were released in a

close time period. As such, these two works clearly present how at least some people in these

two different cultures represented their utopian and dystopian concepts in artwork, in similar

and dissimilar ways in the East and the West.

Second, religion plays a key role in these two works. In Japan, Japanese local religion

(Shintoism), Buddhism, and Taoism are three influential religious powers, and in the United

States Christianity is the dominant religion. By discussing the religious principles in both

cultures, I am also able to provide some aspects of the different cultural patterns that affect

their respective utopian-dystopian systems.

CHAPTER TWO:

Comparing and Contrasting *THX 1138* and *Phoenix*

INTRODUCTION

In this second chapter, I use *Phoenix* and *THX 1138* as my main materials to approach

the differences and similarities of the utopian-dystopian patterns in the East and the West. I

divide the discussion between *THX 1138* and *Phoenix* into three main categories that present

different aspects of how these two works present different utopian-dystopian patterns:

religious practices, philosophical theologies, and cosmologies. In terms of religious practices,

I explore how Catholic and Christian features connect to *THX 1138*, such as confession with

artificial god and monitors as god's eyes. In *Phoenix*, the religious practices focus on

Buddhist principles, especially the cycle of rebirth and karma.

I will start by noting some similar aspects shared by both works: 1) a future setting, 2)

a robot-dominated or robot-manipulated society, 3) the desire to escape from dystopian

society. However, the story of *THX 1138* end at just the moment at after he emerges from the

ground and walks into his future alone, whereas the (much longer) story of *Phoenix* portrays

the development after the main character Masato escapes his (quite similar) underground confinement. These are the similar scenes in *THX 1138* and *Phoenix* to show how the Eastern and Western patterns of utopia and dystopia function differently. The Western pattern is similar to the motion of pendulum. It seems to be continuous like what spectators see THX 1138 keeps walking at the end. But on the other hand, this scene can be seen as an ending of the periodic activity. Because the story of THX 1138 actually ends here, spectators cannot predict THX 1138's following future will be better or worse. In *Phoenix*, Masato's following adventure becomes everlasting after he receives eternal life from Phoenix. He learns what life is and how the life cycle for all living beings functions in Nature through his endless journey until he meets Phoenix again. He observes the rise and fall of civilizations, and he realizes this process will happen again and again as it happened in the past. The Eastern pattern emphasizes this cycle for all living beings at all times and places.

When it comes to philosophical theologies, I claim that THX 1138 a character who resists fatalism and predetermination in the dystopian society. Fatalism has three main features: 1) every living being is powerless to resist destiny, 2) the view that refuse to accept inevitable events in the following future, and 3) because no one can escape from the inevitable situations in the future, living beings accept their destiny without struggle or hesitation. Predetermination is similar to fatalism but has its own features. It is an idea that every event has already been determined in advance, which can be referred to God's plan in

Christian world. THX 1138 resists fatalism and predetermination in order to look for his own freedom. This freedom is not only about physical freedom but also mental freedom. Stopping taking drugs helps THX 1138 to regain his feelings, or more precisely, he is able to identify himself as an individual rather than a mindless slave in this society.

In terms of the philosophical theologies in *Phoenix*, I mainly focus on how Buddhist and Taoist principles apply to the story. As I mentioned, Buddhist and Taoist concepts of utopia and dystopia are related to the idea of the cycle. Buddhist idea here is the cycle of karma: good deeds will result in good consequences and bad actions will cause sufferings. In Taoism, Taiji, or so-called yin and yang, represents the balance of Nature, which is the state of equilibrium between all living beings. Because the concept of yin and yang means the balance of Nature, they do not surpass each other. Both sides are necessary, and neither side can exist or be understood independently without the other.

The last category is about Eastern and Western cosmologies. According to the ancient Greeks, the term cosmos means pure perfection and goodness. It represents the perfect state of the whole universe. However, in terms of pure perfection, this means that there can be no improvement or change, and which thus means it has reached its ending like the pendulum motion moving from point A to point B and stopping there. In Buddhist cosmology, there are two parts in this whole cycle: one is temporal which refers to mortal beings, and the other is immortal which links every living being's eternal spirit. The temporal part will die out, but

the immortal part will keep carrying one's karma in the cycle and waiting for next rebirth. In

Taoism, all living beings are a part of Nature. The symbol of Taiji is also the representation of

Taoist cosmology: balance and simultaneity. Both Buddhism and Taoism stress on the cycle

of life in their cosmology. At the end of *Phoenix*, Phoenix says, "No matter how advanced

[man's] civilization [becomes], he seems to bring about his own doom. But the Phoenix

keeps hoping that this time man will succeed. That this time man will realize his mistake.

And make use of the life bestowed upon him" (*Phoenix*, 285-286). Phoenix observes the rises

and falls of human civilizations again and again in the past, present and future. Phoenix

represents not only the hope and eagerness of life, but also the cosmos which functions in the

whole universe based on Buddhism and Taoism.

I. Settings of THX 1138 and Phoenix

Before getting into the discussion of specific scenes in *THX 1138* and *Phoenix*, I shall

first introduce the settings of these two stories. The setting of *THX 1138* is in the 25th century.

The world where THX 1138 lives in portrayed as an isolated community, one manipulated by

robots and artificial intelligences. Biologically, sexual interaction and reproduction are

strictly limited by governors. To eliminate humans' desires and feelings, citizens have to take

drugs that paralyze their senses and emotions, and which also help the governors avoid

rebellions. This setting creates uniformity: every feeling or emotion that could distinguish an

individual from others is taboo. Further, people must wear the same white uniform, shave

their heads, and are named by meaningless strings of numbers and letters like THX 1138,

allowing the governors to effectively eliminate many of their differences as individuals.

According to the setting of Mirai-hen of *Phoenix*, the story starts in 3404 A.D.

Humans have reached an advanced level of technological and scientific achievement. The

Earth, however, is dying rapidly, and no living beings could survive on the ground. Humans

thus escaped underground, recreating their cities and countries again. Here too the society is

dominated by robots and artificial intelligences (Phoenix, 6-7). People seem to have

wonderful lives in this society, but their minds are actually paralyzed by superficial

entertainment, such as sports and fashion shows. Robots and artificial intelligences, as

governors, manipulate humans through this process of emptying their mind. Without the

ability of thinking, humans will not complain about this robot-dominated society because

they concentrate on feeding themselves via those material desires rather than mental or

spiritual needs.

Though *THX 1138* and *Phoenix* share some similarities in utopian features in terms of

the setting, such as 1) robot-manipulated and robot-dominated society, 2) the underground

world, and 3) eliminating or propagandizing humans' thoughts and mind, these two stories

lead to different endings. When it comes to similarities, both societies depend on artificial

intelligence or robots of some sort, and, further, the overall trajectory of the two works is

remarkably similar. *THX 1138* lives in a robot-manipulated society, with artificial gods that

work in the role of confessional. In *THX 1138*, what the artificial gods serve is one of the

main ways to paralyze citizens' feelings. When people confess to the artificial gods, what

people expect to perceive are forgiveness and conformance from the artificial gods or the

process of confession. Take THX 1138's confession for example. He feels weird about

himself when he gradually regains his feelings and emotions, but he comes to the artificial

gods because he does not know how to handle this weird feeling. He wants to get rid of his

anxiety and keep his feeling of belonging and safety in this community, so he confesses.

In *Phoenix*, the artificial god Hallelujah has actual power and can demand things from

and manipulate humans. Civil servants can talk to it, but they can only be submissive to its

orders, and those officials conduct its orders upon the mass populace. The mass populace

does not have the right to meet Hallelujah. Humans live in their own world like what their

ancestors did before they escaped to the underground places. The topics they are interested in

are sports, children, business, family, fashion, and latest high-technology rather than politics,

religions, philosophies, and education (*Phoenix*, 9). All their everyday life is stuffed by these

topics. They can hardly think about what kind of society they actually live in because there

are no wars or suffering, which means it is good enough to ignore other flaws like a

robot-dominated government.

At the end of the story, THX 1138 successfully runs away from this society and emerges above the ground. In *Phoenix*, there is also an artificial god Hallelujah which rules over the whole society. Here people ask for help or advices, indicating how she has the power to dominate humans' life. This robot-dominated society creates a utopian illusion where people believe in their artificial god, and that their lives are wonderful. Similar to THX 1138, *Phoenix*'s main character Masato runs away with his lover and emerge to above ground. However, despite the startlingly similarity in trajectory, these stories do not, in fact, have a similar ending, once we take into account the affective implications for these end sciences. Whereas *THX 1138* ends on a bleak and hopeless scene with THX 1138 above ground entirely by himself, *Phoenix* ends with a scene demonstrating hope, in particular, eagerness to teach humans to respect the value of life.

II. Situating *THX 1138* and *Phoenix*

I begin by situating *THX 1138* using a number of texts that emphasize the importance of religious contexts in the analysis of American Film, in particular, utopian/dystopian productions. Before moving on to *THX 1138*'s close reading, I want to discuss an aspect that why I divided the discussion of both *THX 1138* and *Phoenix* into religious practices, philosophical theologies, and cosmologies. Firstly, in terms of religion, Colleen McDannell's "Why the Movies? Why Religions?" in *Catholics in the Movies* (2008), has pointed out that

the dimension of religion is seldom mentioned by historians and critics, and that this can

sometimes be a missing opportunity, especially insofar as religions are typically deeply

ingrained in people's everyday life. McDannell argued that, in particular, American society

and culture have been deeply affected by religion, we cannot completely eliminate the

influence of religion to discuss other issues like economy or education in reality. He wrote,

"[r]eligion is not merely learned in synagogues, mosques, and churches. The common

admission— 'everything I know about religion I learned from the movies' — is true for

believers as much as for unbelievers" (McDannell, 7-8). According to his argument, films are

one of the tools which convey the ideas of religion, especially, when we consider film

depicting people's everyday life, films also convey specific ideas to their spectators.

For example, many scholars have discussed how popular culture, especially American

culture, is widespread through globalization[8]. In modern Asian societies, film is one of the

main accesses for many Asian people to know Western cultures, such as social values,

religions, and everyday behavior. They learn from Western films and picture their own

Western world with their imagination, and even apply to their lifestyle, which has the similar

function for Westerners as spectators to their or foreign films like how Westerners imagine

samurai and ninja in Japan. In religious perspective, familiarity in films is one function of

approaching spectators, especially if spectators are from specific religions families like

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[8] See Ferguson's "The mythology about globalization," Crane's "Cultural globalization and the dominance of the American film industry: cultural policies, national film industries, and transnational film," and Pells' *Not like us: How Europeans have loved, hated, and transformed American culture since World War II.*

Christianity or Catholics in the West, or Buddhism in the East. The spectators who are not

from these families learn the particular religious concepts from films; those who are familiar

with these concepts will reinforce their ideas of these concepts. Secondly, I explore the

perspective of philosophical theologies in *THX 1138*. In this discussion, I will emphasize the

reasons why characters in Dystopias resist fatalism and predetermination and how this

discussion is related to the Western pattern of utopia and dystopia.

I now turn to discuss the parallel context that will help us understand *Phoenix*. I first

discuss Buddhism as a fundamental religious influence, explaining how Tezuka employs

Buddhist ideas in *Phoenix*, especially the idea of the cycle of rebirth. In philosophical

theologies, Buddhism and Taoism are my two main approaches to *Phoenix*. I will discuss the

specific scenes with Buddhist concept of reincarnation and Taoist concept of Taiji. In

particular, Creel's statements about *Wu wei* will help me to develop and connect with

Buddhism. At the end of this section, I will explain why the scenes we discussed are related

to Eastern pattern of utopia and dystopia and how this pattern function in this story.

Finally, given this discussion about religions and philosophical theologies, we can

then turn to Eastern and Western cosmologies, which will help reinforce the image of linear

wave pattern of utopia-dystopia in the East and the West. More importantly, I am going to

explore why the differences of the Eastern and Western patterns matter to us and what we can

learn from these cultural differences.

III. Religious Practices in *THX 1138*

In this section, I suggest how *THX 1138*, in the context of Western religious practices,

can be seen as evidence for the claim that utopia and dystopia cannot be separated, and for

the linear wave pattern of utopia and dystopia in the west. Before starting the discussion of

THX 1138, let us be reminded of More's utopian features:

1) a physically isolated society;
2) a well-trained and well-ordered populace;
3) a democratic government;
4) universal education; and
5) religious tolerance.

Moreover, as Kumar has argued, utopian concepts actually focus on *perfect* happiness and

beliefs about the new and wonderful future (Kumar, 1-3). As I noted, dystopian features are

not as clear because there are a few works that directly point out what specifically makes

so-called dystopias dystopian. Based on different works which are seen as dystopian works in

the East and the West, such as *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Battle Royale*, however, we can

extract some common features found in both cultural contexts:

1) setting the story in the future;
2) the existence of an oppressive or even totalitarian society;
3) numerous restrictions freedom and thought;
4) an active process of dehumanization;
5) the impossibility of individuality;
6) the illusion of living in a perfect utopian world.

A number of scholars[9] defined *THX 1138* as a utopia and dystopia film, in this

account, J.P. Telotte[10] and Paul Ricoeur have argued that it is hard to separate utopia and

dystopia. Furthermore, Ricoeur has also pointed out that utopian-dystopian narratives help

spectators to understand cultural nostalgia concepts in films (Ricoeur, 24-26). In fact, if we

take into consideration More's utopian features noted earlier, we can see that there are, in fact,

some similar elements in *THX 1138*. For example, we must assume that the world in *THX*

1138 is isolated because spectators never see this society communicate with other

communities, and it is located, by itself, somewhere underground world. All human activities

take place in this restricted society. Next, because humans are dominated by robots and

artificial intelligences, everything is well-organized just like a computer program, and of

course, people are well-trained to be submissive. We, as spectators, can see robot police and

monitors almost everywhere. Humans cannot disobey those robots, or they will be punished,

and their every movement is recorded by monitors. Even though *THX 1138* reveals these

features, it is not seen as a utopian work but as a dystopian one.

Then, in the following part, I will explore religious elements which are involved in

THX 1138 and discuss how those elements are related to Western pattern of utopia and

dystopia. Religion is one of the main themes in Western films. Or more precisely, as

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[9] See Kellner's "Blade Runner: a diagnostic critique," Berg's "'Goddamn you all to hell!': The revealing politics of dystopian movies," and Halper's "Hobbes in the City: Urban Dystopias in American Movies."
[10] See Telotte's "The Problem of the Real and '*THX 1138*'"

McDannell suggested, because religion has been deeply ingrained in people's everyday life, films, as a tool to depict society, are inevitably related to religious concepts (McDannell, 7-8).

I choose two scenes or elements for this discussion: 1) artificial god in confessionals and 2) monitors. In *THX 1138*, confessing to an artificial god (See Fig. 9, Appendix B, Page 89) is one of the processes used to correct or paralyze an individual's mind. When THX 1138 gradually loses control of his own feelings, he confesses to the artificial god on the screen, who answer only with pre-record phrases to all his confession such as "I understand" and "Yes, fine." There is no actual feedback but only to let him ignore or oppress his feelings. This feeling of losing control arises because his mate, the female LUH 4317, secretly reduces his regular drug intake, which is used for eliminating all of one's feelings. Over the whole film, THX 1138 confesses to the artificial god twice for not being able to control himself. However, the artificial god not only comforts him with pre-recorded words, but also encourages him to be grateful to his life and job because all the gifts he received from this society make him a perfect consumer. The second time, THX 1138 cannot help but feel sick to the artificial god.

These confession scenes show how confessing functions as one way to release people's feelings. Confession paralyzes their feelings just like the drug which they are taking. When people confess, what people expect are to receive forgiveness and conformance. In THX 1138's case, he wants to get rid of what he calls "wrong feeling" and keep his feeling of

safety in this community. By repeatedly admitting guilt or weakness and embracing the feedback of confessionals, the artificial god is able to record his confession and let him ignore or oppress his regained feelings because he cannot receive the feedback he needs, which means he will lose the chance to regain his feelings in this process and become mindless like other people in this society, as well as eliminate their feelings by taking drugs. This process is similar to some aspects of the Catholic Church in Western Europe. In Catholicism, confession is one of the fundamental sacraments (called, more formally, the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation). The purpose of the confession is to purify the soul, and to perceive the grace of God. In the Catholic Church, there are three required steps for confession: 1) contrition, 2) confession, and 3) amendment[11]. Firstly, one has to feel contrite about one's sin. Secondly, one must disclose one's sins to God, and, finally, the one must try to amend for one's sins. THX 1138 goes through a process just like this. He feels something unusual in his mind, he confesses and then receives the pre-recorded feedback which does not improve any situation.

The second element of *THX 1138* that is important to note, is the technique of what we might call "God's eyes"—that is, electronic monitors (See Fig. 10, Appendix B, Page 89). In this society, monitors are omnipresent, and all are afraid of being caught by those eyes. After LUH 4317 successfully triggers THX 1138's feelings and emotions, sexual desire is also triggered. LUH 4317 tells THX 1138 that they might be caught by their governors, but

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[11] See Hanna, E. (1911). The Sacrament of Penance. In The Catholic Encyclopedia. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved September 14, 2008 from New Advent: http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11618c.htm

THX 1138 believes that when they are in the private room, no one can see them. In the next

scene, it turns out that monitors don't respect privacy, and, instead, the monitors reveal to the

governors how THX 1138 and LUH 4317 have violated the rules, stopped taking the drugs,

and had illegal sexual relations. Again, the parallel to the traditional Christian world should

be clear: Almighty God is able to see and know everything humans have done in the past,

present, and the future. People, at least God-fearing ones, are aware of God's supervision,

and thus are (or should be) afraid of doing anything wrong. If they commit crimes, they have

to confess their sins. In *THX 1138*, the function of those monitors, is based on citizens' fear.

Because of the fear of the almighty artificial intelligences, those citizens will not dare to

violate any rules in this society.

According to these two religious practices, we can see how the governors in this

society manipulate humans in religious ways. Confession is the way to release their feelings

and emotions, and supervising from monitors is the way to trigger their fear and to make

them be submissive. Returning to the dystopian features I listed before,

1) setting the story in the future;
2) the existence of an oppressive or even totalitarian society;
3) numerous restrictions freedom and thought;
4) an active process of dehumanization;
5) the impossibility of individuality;
6) the illusion of living in a perfect utopian world.

The story of *THX 1138* matches these features well. More importantly, in order to maintain

this kind of society, the role of religion in this whole dystopian social structure is to oppress

and restrict one's individuality and identity, moreover, these two processes are in humans'

everyday environment. When it comes to confession, when people feel guilty or anxiety

about their behavior, they confess. In THX 1138's case, because he needs to cease his

irrational feelings or emotions, he decides to confess. However, the process of confessing is

just to oppress his feelings and emotions as a human being. In terms of monitor, people have

no choice to get rid of those monitors. It seems like that confessing is related to one's will

and mental needs and being supervised is forced by governors, which means the governors

seem to provide two options for citizens in religious perspective, but actually they can rarely

decide anything.

To approach the philosophical theologies, here I shall first suggest that, based on

religious practices in this section, we can see how religion in this society helps robots and

artificial intelligences to manipulate humans, which means they have already planned and

programed everything for humans to follow mindlessly. In the scene during THX 1138's

escape, he and a man who calls himself hologram hide in a private room. In there, the

hologram man says, "[h]ow shall the new environment be programmed? It all happened so

slowly that most men failed to realize that anything had happened at all" (*THX 1138*,

01:00:27-01:00:40). What this hologram tries to tell is that everything in this dystopian

society has already be programmed, and every hint of this forming process is too invisible for

humans to notice. THX 1138 is one of the few people who resists this predetermined program.

The following section will explore why THX 1138 as the protagonist in the dystopian society

resist fatalism and predetermination.

IV. Refusing Fatalism and Predetermination

Before getting into this section, I shall first introduce fatalism and predetermination.

Fatalism emphasizes on destiny. The philosopher of religion Hugh Rice has suggested that

fatalism has three main features: 1) every living being is powerless to resist destiny, 2) the

view that refuse to accept inevitable events in the following future, and 3) because no one can

escape from the inevitable situations in the future, living beings accept their destiny without

struggle or hesitation (Rice, "Fatalism"). Predetermination is similar to fatalism, but

emphasizes that every event has already been determined in advance, and which, traditionally,

can be depended on the idea of God's plan for the Christian (and larger) world. In this case,

there is no need to struggle because no one can change consequences in the future (Birx,

1035-1036), which means that all activities in the past, present and future, have been already

determined by destiny, fate, or other forces. More importantly, this predetermined plan

implies that it is unchangeable, which means no matter what kind of actions humans decide to

take, they have already been planned in advance. In *THX 1138*, I choose two scenes to

explain two questions: 1) why and how THX 1138 resists fatalism and predetermination and

2) how this discussion relates to the Western pattern of utopia and dystopia.

The first scene I have chosen is when THX 1138 is prisoned by robot police. Before

he is put in prison by robot police, he experiences the process of being mindless and

regaining feelings and identity. Here in the prison, he realizes that this society is not like what

the governors told them: a place where they only need to obey and follow without worrying

about any other problems or sufferings. Like what the hologram tells THX 1138, everything

had happened before, and it is too slow and invisible for humans to notice. Here, I shall return

to the dystopian feature of dehumanization, which not only eliminates humans' feelings and

identities, but also makes them like robots that follow every predetermined program

mindlessly. According to Herbert Kelman, humanness has two specific traits: 1) one's own

identity; and 2) one's social communication with others. A person's identity refers to how

others can perceive someone as an independent individual, one who has the ability of

thinking and making choices for his or her life. A person's social communication refers to

how an individual is recognized as belonging to a community (Kelman, 48-52). Without these

two factors, as is the case in *THX 1138*, a human is only a *tool* in the robot-manipulated

society. Robots and artificial intelligences exploit them to function the whole society, and if

anyone violates the rules, they will be put in prison or be completely eliminated by governors

like THX 1138's mate LUH 4317 (See Fig. 11, Appendix B, Page 89). According to THX

1138's confession, we as spectators can see he feels afraid of his unusual feelings. He feels

something wrong inside him, but he does not know how to deal with it. This fear is derived

from losing the feeling of belonging to this community. THX 1138's identity and the feeling

of belonging are based on how robots and artificial intelligences brainwash them like how the

artificial god tells him, "[y]ou are a true believer. Blessings of the state, blessings of the

masses…. Let us be thankful we have an occupation to fill. Work hard; increase production;

prevent accidents, and be happy" (*THX 1138*, 00:17:41-00:18:07). Based on this

brainwashing, he can hardly think by himself. He represents the process of how other humans

become mindless and submissive in this society. Humans' feelings and emotions are factors

that can trigger irrational behaviors, and so, in order to create a perfect society immune to

these irrational factors, the governors eliminate citizens' feelings and emotions by drugs.

However, without the ability to perceive and think independently, humans are not any better

than mindless robots. They do exactly as their told, and, because of the drugs, don't even

suffer for it (at least, they don't feel that suffering).

The second important element refers to the final scene of the film where THX 1138

emerges from below ground (See Fig. 12-14, Appendix B, Page 90). His emergence can be

seen as the revival of an individual identity. We can look closely to THX 1138's transition: 1)

being mindless like others, 2) regaining his feelings, and 3) realizing that this society is not

like what he was taught by the government. These three stages reveal not only the transition

wherein THX 1138 regains his feelings and identity, but also the process by which he decides

to escape from this society. In the story, he is not the only one who regains feelings and

identity, but he is the one who survives during his escape. When he is prisoned by robot

police, a man in there tells him, "when posterity judges our actions here, it will perhaps see us

not as unwilling prisoners, but as men who for whatever reason preferred to remain as

non-contributing individuals on the edge of society" (*THX 1138*, 00:48:04-00:48:19). In other

words, when THX 1138 resists being dehumanized by drugs, which imply to pursue

individual freedom of thinking and identity, he also challenges or even destroys the core

element of fatalism and predetermination: unchangeable and unbroken predetermined plans

of history in past, present, and future.

If fatalism and predetermination are the reasons why a dystopian society can function

stably, it also presents only a linear pattern without any wave. Because everything has been

planned in advance, there is no peak or bottom in this pattern, which implies that there is no

improvement and evolution: it is a dead end. Breaking the rules of fatalism and

predetermination means to break the linear-only pattern in the previous society. Furthermore,

THX 1138 also brings back the linear wave pattern which can be changed by different forces

such as humans' will power. Take the last scene, where THX 1138 is walking alone on the

ground. According to Williams and Michael's idea of a pendulum motion, they suggested that

every activity of pendulum motion is periodic for better or worse. We as spectators cannot

expect what he will face in the following future, but he triggers the pendulum to move and

bring back the wave pattern in his life.

V. Similarities between *THX 1138* and *Phoenix*

Before getting into the specific scenes of Phoenix, I shall introduce the similar scenes

of THX 1138 and Phoenix. I do this to point out the similarities so that then we can then

focus on the different ending in these two stories. In Mirai-hen of *Phoenix*, the story is set in

3404 A.D. Humans have highly accomplished technological and scientific achievements. The

Earth is dying because of humans' exploitation, and none of the living beings can survive on

the ground. In this situation, humans are thus forced to the underground for their new life

(*Phoenix*, 6-9). These first few pages present the basic idea of how human civilization has

reached its peak and then declined rapidly, with humans eventually having to bring

everything to the underground to build their new empires. These empires, as in *THX 1138*, are

highly dominated by robots and artificial intelligences. Just as in *THX 1138*, the first few

scenes are also about how humans have reached these technological and scientific

achievements, and constructed a robot-manipulated world in the underground.

According to the scenes at the very beginning (See Fig. 7, Appendix B, Page 88),

Tezuka uses several images to present how human civilization has reached its peak, but

which led to the destruction of Nature. It gives spectators a first impression of the human

civilization: cruel, heartless, and mindless. Because of their greed and desire, humans exploit

and destroy the Earth and escape to the underground (*Phoenix*, 6-9). Humans are actually

dominated by robots and artificial intelligences in this world, even though they seem to live in a wonderful world. For instance, they do not have to worry about hunger and poverty, and there is no war or suffering in this world. However, the only things people have to do are producing more humans, work for their society, and wait to die. Artificial intelligences are the real beneficiaries of this civilization, and humans are only their slaves. But because everything looks fine, no one complains about this society. The settings in *THX 1138* and in *Phoenix* are both different and similar. In *THX 1138*, humans are literarily enslaved by science and technology, but we as spectators can still see other humans look through monitors (See Fig. 10, Appendix B, Page 89) rather than only robots supervising them. That is the reason why I define the world in *THX 1138* as robot-manipulated society rather than robot-controlled society: we as spectators do not see there is an actual robot or artificial intelligence as the highest governor, but we can see robot police and artificial intelligences manipulate humans. In *Phoenix*, humans are *actually* ruled by artificial intelligences which can demand humans' death. This sort of society, meanwhile, we can call a robot-dominated society.

The second element I chose is Hallelujah, the dominant artificial intelligence. When the protagonist Masato escapes with his lover Tamami, his friend Roc reports Masato's escape and ask Hallelujah to punish Masato (See Fig. 15, Appendix B, Page 91). Hallelujah in this story is an artificial intelligence which represents an almighty, heartless, and artificial

god. Roc calls her "Gracious Mother," "Savior of Earth," and "Supreme Leader of the Human Race," which show its absolute power over the human race, even if it is the product of human beings themselves. Hallelujah is similar to the artificial gods in *THX 1138*, but because it is an artificial intelligence, it can actually communicate with humans rather than only saying pre-recorded phrases. The second element are the monitors. In both *THX 1138* and *Phoenix* (See Fig. 10 and 18, Appendix B, Page 89 and 92), monitors are everywhere in their societies. People are supervised by governors without any privacy.

The third element is that Masato and Tamami's escape and emergence to the ground on the Earth (See Fig. 16-17, Appendix B, Page 91-92). This scene very similar to THX 1138's emergence (See Fig. 12-14, Appendix B, Page 90). For Masato and Tamami, their escape is their form of resistance to an illusionary utopian society. It is their escape, in other words, from the illusion that everything seems to be perfect and harmonious in the society; no one questions the dominance of artificial intelligences; no one realizes they are enslaved and prisoned by robots. In *Phoenix*, that society is a superficial Utopia, and what I called the illusionary Utopia.

A further difference between Masato and THX 1138 is the elimination of their feelings or not. In *Phoenix*, the artificial intelligences as governors do not eliminate humans' feelings, or more precisely, they confuse and distract humans' feelings and emotions by all the wonderful and harmonious happiness for human beings via mass media or entertainment.

When people only concentrate on their happiness, they can hardly pay attention on how this society functions. In *THX 1138*, governors use drugs to manipulate their people in order to create an absolute-controlled society. For THX 1138, his escape is the resistance to his previous society. Masato and THX 1138's escapes here also symbolize their refusal to following their destiny in these superficial utopian societies. Moreover, they are both looking for freedom outside their previous societies. When it comes to freedom in *Phoenix* and *THX 1138*, both Masato and THX 1138 are seeking for their freedom. However, THX 1138's story ends here. We as spectators do not know whether he will be better or worse.

Both works have some similar features with utopian concepts, but their societies are not the so-called utopia, more importantly, even though they share some similarities, they lead to different endings. In particular, what causes the different endings in these two stories is related to the differences of Eastern and Western patterns of utopia-dystopia. Here, I am going to explore the following section of Buddhist and Taoist religious practices and philosophical theologies in *Phoenix*.

VI. Religious Practices and Philosophical Theologies in *Phoenix*

In Far East Asia, Chinese culture, such as Confucianism and Taoism, has influenced the surrounding cultures for centuries, as has India, especially with the advent of Buddhism. In *Phoenix*, I suggest that the image of the ideal world in the East is based on Buddhism and Taoism. I will first explain how Eastern Utopia and Dystopia, which I discussed in the first

chapter, apply to *Phoenix,* before, in the following section, showing how religions and

religious philosophies are employed in this work. As I mentioned in the first chapter, the ideal

world in the East is related to Buddhism and Taoism, but since Buddhism and Taoism are

both related to religious and philosophical perspectives, I will put the discussions of religious

practices and philosophical theologies together and explore them in order.

To get a better way to think of the religious practices and philosophical theologies in

Phoenix, one of the elements which is involved in the ideal Eastern world is to seek for the

eternal life (*Phoenix*, 45). It is a myth for ancient people in the East to search for the eternal

life, especially for royal families in every country. Take ancient China for example, Chinese

emperors or royal families wanted to have the eternal life., especially for emperors who were

seen as 天子 which be can translated as the Son of Heaven. The term implies that those

emperors are selected by god (Dull, 59)[12]. In order to get rid of the fear of death and to keep

his absolute power as long as possible, an emperor would look for many different ways to

become immortal.

In fact, the character Phoenix in Tezuka's story is not same as Chinese Phoenix.

Chinese Phoenix, which is called 鳳凰 in Chinese (Fenghuang) and in Japanese (Houou),

appears in many Eastern common myths and folktales, especially those are affected deeply by

Chinese culture[13]. People in the East and the West have been thinking this kind of legendary

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[12] See Ebrey's The Cambridge illustrated history of China.
[13] See *Shan Hai Jing* - chapter 1. "Nanshang Jing"

birds as a mythic symbol for centuries. What Tezuka used in his works as 火の鳥 (Hi no

Tori or Phoenix in English) is the image of Phoenix in Western myths, which represents the

eternal life and the meaning of rebirth. I suggest that the function of Phoenix in the story is to

reveal the energy of life and humans' fear of death. It also represents the cycle of

birth-death-rebirth More importantly, the fear of death triggers humans to seek for the way to

gain eternal life in human history.

The second element I choose here is the first meeting between Masato and Phoenix

(Phoenix, 147-158). When Phoenix first comes to see Masato, it brings him to see what is

called cosmos inside itself. The cosmos here will be explored below in the section on Eastern

and Western cosmology. In this plot, Phoenix brings Masato's pure consciousness to the

cosmos inside it (See Fig. 19-20, Appendix B, Page 93). During Masato's first adventure,

Phoenix brings him to see elements in cosmos, and even life. It explains to him how cosmos

functions as a cyclic system for all living beings, but Masato cannot understand in the first

meeting. Phoenix tells him, "[The Earth is also a living being in cosmos.] The Earth must not

die. It must live, but something has been mistakenly trying to kill it. A tiny 'life' called

Man… The evolution which gave birth to and raised him was on a mistaken course. So, Man

must be destroyed and then reborn" (*Phoenix*, 156). After their meeting, Masato becomes

immortal because Phoenix asks him to create a new civilization in the future. After he decides

to drop some ingredients, he goes through thousands of years alone to wait for the up-coming

civilization. Finally, he meets the civilization which is created by slugs after countless years;

however, this civilization still fails because of similar reasons to the fall of human civilization:

greed and pride which create conflicts and wars. Masato keeps waiting for another

civilization until he meets Phoenix again.

To approach this second chosen aspect of Masato and Phoenix's meeting, I want to

discuss pure consciousness and what Masato does to conduct the rebirth of civilizations. Pure

consciousness, as I mentioned in the first chapter, is close to what Buddhist's call eternal

spirit or cyclic existence, and this concept is related to the cycle of karma and The Wheel of

Life. Chung-Yuan Chang, a scholar who studies both Buddhism and Taoism, has argued that

"the Buddha nature is within you, and that all you have to do to find it is to realize it" (Chang,

41). The idea of "within you" is represented in the way that Phoenix takes Masato to explore

the cosmos inside itself. My interpretation is that Phoenix, as the cosmos in this story,

represents not only the cosmos for all living beings but also the cosmos in everyone's

innermost spirit.

Before Masato dropped those ingredients in the sea to produce new creatures, he had

tried countless times to produce animals by himself for centuries, but the results were always

disappointed. He constantly uses introspection to question and understand his decision for

producing creatures, and he drops the ingredients in the sea and waits patiently for living

beings to evolve and develop by themselves. When it comes to Masato's waiting, Taoist *wu*

wei shows a spontaneous and effortless state of human actions in Nature, which means every action in this world interacts correspondently. To understand this process of correspondent interaction, it can be simply defined as the concept of cause and effect. More precisely, according to Edward Slingerland's arguments, *wu wei* is "the ideal that it [describes acting] effortlessly and spontaneously in perfect harmony with a normative standard and thereby acquiring an almost magical efficaciousness in moving through the world" (Slingerland, 296). In particular, what Laozi wanted to suggest is that the concept of "action of no action" in *wu wei* means humans shall act without bias. Bias is the specific mental activity which will force humans' mind to negative direction. Because all elements in Nature interact spontaneously and correspondently, actions with bias will destroy the balance of this spontaneous and correspondent process. Without bias, humans are able to perceive the harmony in Nature, will act humbly, and then will perceive virtues in humanity.

Quite contrary values and ideas are found in *THX 1138*. Returning to philosophical theologies in *THX 1138*, if fatalism and predetermination mean that there are some forces which can predetermine all the events of history in the past, present and future, then THX 1138, who resists this predetermined plan, will face unpredictable future after his emergence. For Masato, it is the *beginning* of his journey to look for not only physical freedom but also spiritual freedom. At first, he just wants to free himself physically, so he escapes from his previous society. At the end, when he meets Phoenix, he finally perceives spiritual freedom as

pure consciousness in the cycle for all living beings. The first two chosen scenes in *Phoenix* are similar to THX 1138's story and setting. As I mentioned in the previous section, even though these two works have some similarities, they lead to different endings. Masato's action of dropping ingredients and waiting for changes also implies he is waiting for Nature to react to his action. No matter how many rises and falls take place in the following civilizations, all living beings are learning how to evolve, develop, and finally respect life through this cyclic endless process for all living beings.

VII. Eastern and Western Cosmologies

This last section is about Eastern and Western cosmologies. According to *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, the term cosmos in ancient Greek means goodness, good order, and the world or universe from its perfect order (Liddell, 446). Based on *A Hundred Years of British Philosophy*, Rudolf Metz introduced John Stuart Mackenzie's idea of cosmos which suits the concerns of this thesis quite well:

> "[t]he world that is familiar with to us is far from having the perfect order that constitutes a cosmos; on the other hand, it cannot be regarded as a mere chaos, since it contains a considerable degree of order, and since the factors that make for order on the whole predeterminate over those that make for disorder. This being so, we are

justifying in making the assumption that our own world is but part of a larger whole

which has the perfect order of a cosmos" (Metz, 310).

In short, cosmos represents the perfect order of the whole universe. However, in terms of

perfection, the further interpretation is no improvement or no evolution, which means it

reaches its ending like the pendulum motion moves from point A to point B and stops there.

Returning to the very last scene in *THX 1138*, the story ends while THX 1138 is walking

alone. As spectators, we do not know what will happen to him in the following future. In his

previous society, everything is well-organized, and humans are well-trained to maintain the

function of this perfect world. Like I brief conclusion in the section of philosophical

theologies in *THX 1138*, this society is in perfect form. There is no improvement or evolution

in it. It reaches its dead end not only for the society itself, but also for the citizens. THX

1138's escape breaks his dead end in this society and he brings the potential future and hope

at the end even though we do not know he will be better or worse.

On the other hand, Eastern cosmology is related to both the cycle and wave pattern.

Before getting in to the cosmology and pattern, I want to bring up a specific scene in Phoenix.

The scene I chose for Eastern cosmology is the very last plot in Phoenix: when Phoenix

comes to see Masato again. When Phoenix comes to see Masato, Masato realizes his body

has already existed for thousands of years. He is the actual pure consciousness and the

element particle at that moment. At the very end of the story, Phoenix's prologue carries the

message of respecting life with Buddhist and Taoist cosmologies and philosophies:

> "Life had been destroyed, reappeared, evolved, flourished, and then been destroyed
>
> again, countless times, and the Phoenix had witnessed this. [Men] once more [were]
>
> treading the same path. [Phoenix] often thought 'They too were once an advanced
>
> form of life. I wonder why the evolution of all living creatures goes awry.' The same
>
> is true of man. No matter how advanced his civilization he seems to bring about his
>
> own doom. But the Phoenix keeps hoping that this time man will succeeded. That was
>
> this time man will realize his mistakes. 'And make use of the life bestowed upon him'"
>
> (Phoenix, 275-286).

For Phoenix, the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth is the fundamental and universal system for

all living beings. No matter what kind of communities or civilizations different living beings

build up, they are all in this cycle.

When it comes to Buddhist cosmology[14], there are two parts in this whole cycle: one is

temporal which refers to mortal beings, and the other is immortal which links to every living

being's cyclic existence. The temporal part will die out, but the cyclic existence is immortal,

and it will keep carrying one's karma in the cycle and waiting for next rebirth. Moreover, The

Wheel of Life can explain how Buddhist cosmology functions. Returning to the discussion of

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[14] See Sadakata's *Buddhist cosmology: Philosophy and origins* and Kloetzli's Buddhist Cosmology (1983).

Buddhist The Wheel of Life in the first chapter, Thera suggested that the features of The

Wheel of Life are:

(1) the center circle: Ignorance, Attachment and Aversion;
(2) the second circle from center: Karma;
(3) the third one: Saṃsāra or cyclic existence;
(4) the forth one: Twelve links of dependent origination, which can refer to all the stages or events which every living being will experience in the process of birth, death, and rebirth;
(5) the fierce figure which holding the wheel: Impermanence, which means changes;
(6) the moon above: free from saṃsāra or cyclic existence
(7) the Buddha above: the one who liberate from cyclic existence, which means it is possible to be freed from this cycle (Thera, 268-278).

The wheel represents the cyclic pattern in Buddhist teaching. All living beings face this cyclic

process in their lives. Life is mortal, but the cyclic existence will keep one's karma and wait

for the next reincarnation. And, the impermanence, which refers to all the changes in this

cycle, presents the linear wave pattern here. As we can expect, everyone will experience

various happiness and difficulties before dying. These ups and downs are related to the wave

pattern.

In Taoism, all living beings are a part of Nature. The symbol of Taiji is also the

representation of Taoist cosmology: balance and simultaneity. Both Buddhism and Taoism

stress on the cycle of life in their cosmology. According to *Tao Te Ching*, "Tao engenders One,

One engenders Two, Two engenders Three, Three engenders the ten thousand things. The ten

thousand things carry shade and embrace sunlight. Shade and sunlight, yin and yang, Breath

blending into harmony" (*Tao Te Ching*, Ch. 42). Laozi's description of the linear wave

pattern and the circle pattern in Taiji is clear. Tao literally means road or path, but it implies the universal philosophical approach to perceive and understand how universe and Nature function. The first line "Tao engenders One" means Tao is the origin in the cosmos and Tao engenders Tian (天), which is One. Tian is one of the most important concepts in Chinese mythology, philosophy, and religion, which is translated as Heaven" in English. Then, in the second line, "One engenders Two" means Tian separated into two parts: one is still called Tian, and the other is called Di (地), which is translated as "Earth." Here, Tian and Di are related to yin and yang. Tian is associated with yang, and Di is connected with yin. As I mentioned in the first chapter, the concepts of yin and yang are related to how Nature functions. Thus, the next two lines "Two engenders Three, Three engenders the ten thousand things" mean that the myriad living beings are born by yin and yang, more precisely, yin and yang are the two essential powers in Nature, thus, their cooperation implies flourishing production in Nature. More specifically, the process from Tao to One, One to Two, Two to Three, and Three to the ten thousands things is like the step-by-step process, which can be implied as the linear wave pattern. Then, the cyclic pattern is derived from the harmonious balance of yin and yang.

According to Buddhist and Taoist cosmologies, I suggest that the combination of wave and circle pattern can be applied to the whole story of Phoenix. Thus, I will use the ending of Phoenix to show why and how this pattern is applied to the story. As the most

important character who is immortal and able to observe all the lives and deaths of different living beings and rises and falls of different civilizations, Phoenix itself represents the cycle and the cosmos in Buddhist and Taoist teaching. All the changes in the world, including birth and death, represents the linear waves inside the circle like the image of Taiji. Phoenix says, "I wonder why the evolution of all living creatures goes awry.' The same is true of man. No matter how advanced his civilization he seems to bring about his own doom" (*Phoenix*, 285). As the cosmos, Phoenix tries to take some action to re-direct the evolution of all living beings, but it also waits for Nature to react a like what Masato do when he waits for a new civilization. The way of evolution, which Phoenix wants to talk about, shows the similar idea of Buddhist karma in cyclic existence: if they do not succeed this time, they will have to pass it to the next reincarnation. Phoenix's waiting and directing are related to Taoist *wu wei*; it follows the rules of Nature to take actions and waits for spontaneous reactions from Nature. At the very last part, "the Phoenix keeps hoping that this time man will succeeded. That was this time man will realize his mistakes. 'And make use of the life bestowed upon him'" (*Phoenix*, 285-286). Through the process of failing, introspecting, learning, what Phoenix looks forward is humans will eventually bestow and respect the value of life. The circle and wave pattern in Phoenix is to present that in this cycle, all the living beings will experience the process of failing, introspecting, and learning within the cycle of birth-death-rebirth till

they finally understand how to respect life and how to apply themselves in the circle and

wave pattern like Taiji.

CHAPTER THREE:

EPILOGUE

In this thesis, I have explored the idea of an inseparable Utopia and Dystopia in the

East and the West. Furthermore, I have focused on describing how the Western

utopian-dystopian pattern functions in *THX 1138,* and how the Eastern one functions in

Phoenix. I want to suggest that neither of the Eastern and Western patterns surpasses each

other. They have their own pros and cons based on deep cultural differences, and, more

importantly, the purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate what people in the East and the West

might be able to learn from these two different patterns. By approaching utopia and dystopia

in a cross-cultural context, this thesis can help provide some fundamental perspective on how

different religions and cultures affect ideas of utopia.

In the Western concept of utopia and dystopia, we can see how the linear wave pattern

functions like a pendulum's motion. This linear wave pattern reinforces the transition from

utopia to dystopia or vice versa, thereby understanding this transition in utopian-dystopian

works as a periodic activity rather than as a continuous one. In this case, like THX 1138

resisting fatalism and predetermination, protagonists in Western often take similar actions to resist their fate or destiny. We might assume that even though those protagonists do not know that their future will be better, they, at least, refuse to be manipulated by fate or destiny. After their resistance, they are able to decide what they want to do in the future based on their own will power.

In the Eastern context, according to the discussion above, we can see the idea of both a linear wave and a continuous cycle are important. Even though all living beings have their own wills, or, more properly, their eternal spirits, they are all in the cycle of utopia and dystopia. The linear wave is like one living being's life long journey: it starts in the cycle and ends up in it too. The cycle is endless, and it provides a kind of hope and stability with its eternal continuity. Moreover, based on the feature of endlessness, introspection is important for all living beings to live in this cycle. Based on Buddhist teaching, if a man is able to introspect and correct himself successfully in his life, he will not suffer from this karma in his next rebirth. And if he cannot overcome this karma, then he will have to challenge it again in his next rebirth. The concept of this continuous cycle implies that all living beings have chance to introspect and reincarnate in it.

When it comes to further studies, to put these two patterns in the East and the West together, I would suggest that it is important to question how Eastern and Western people in modern eras change their expectations about utopia and dystopia. I believe that it is quite

likely that that there are some utopian-dystopian works, such as *The Giver* (1993) and *Her* (2013), where utopian and dystopian features which can be usefully applied. If the standards or expectations of an ideal world in modern era changes, why do people not swift to the new version of utopia and dystopia? And, because here I only focus on Eastern and Western ideas with *THX 1138* and *Phoenix*, it is hard to infer the larger picture of how utopian-dystopian studies will be affected with more cross-cultural studies. I think it is important to explore different concepts of an ideal world in various cultures like India or Egypt, in order to determine to what extent and whether the utopian and dystopia features we discussed can be applied in different cultural contexts.

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APPENDIX A
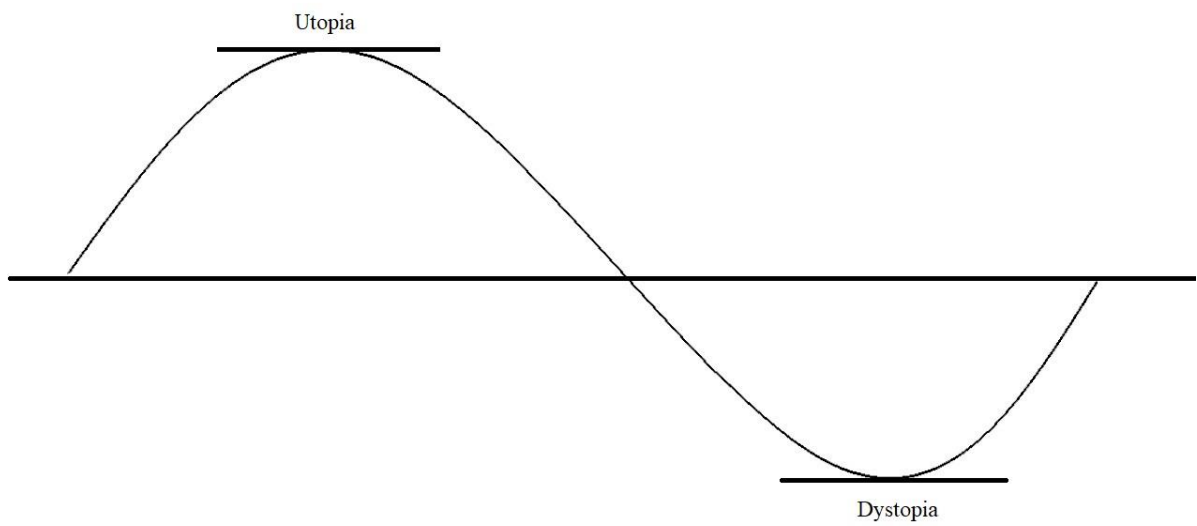
Figure 1: Utopia to Dystopia
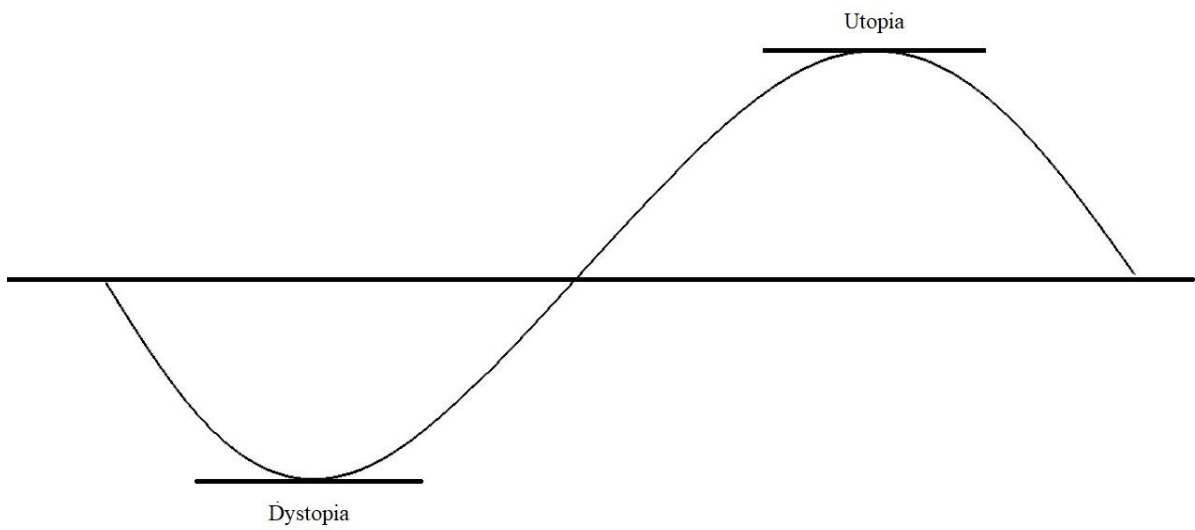
Figure 2: Dystopia to Utopia
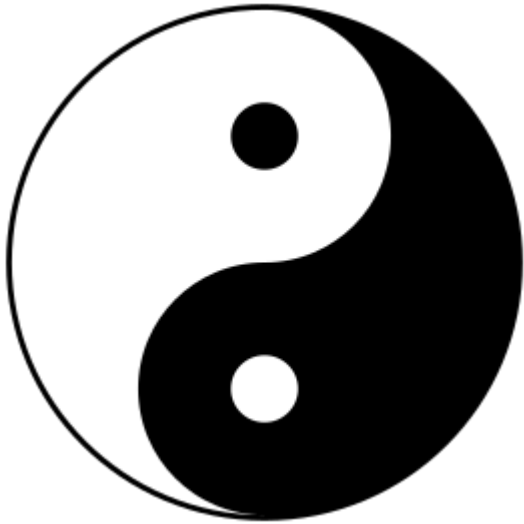
Figure 3: Taiji – Yin and Yang
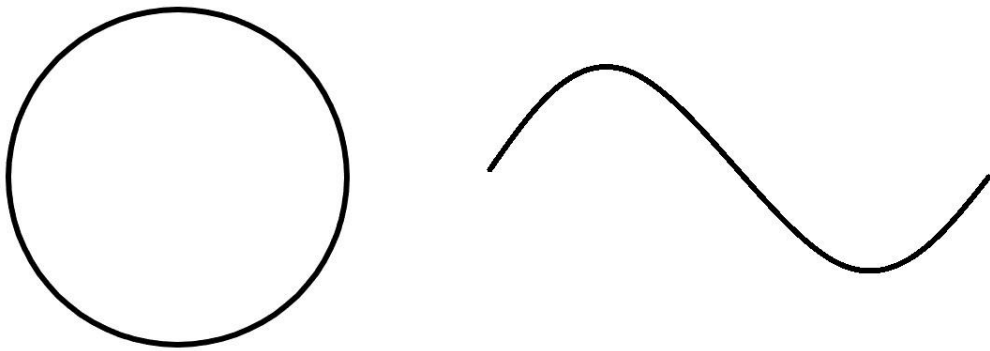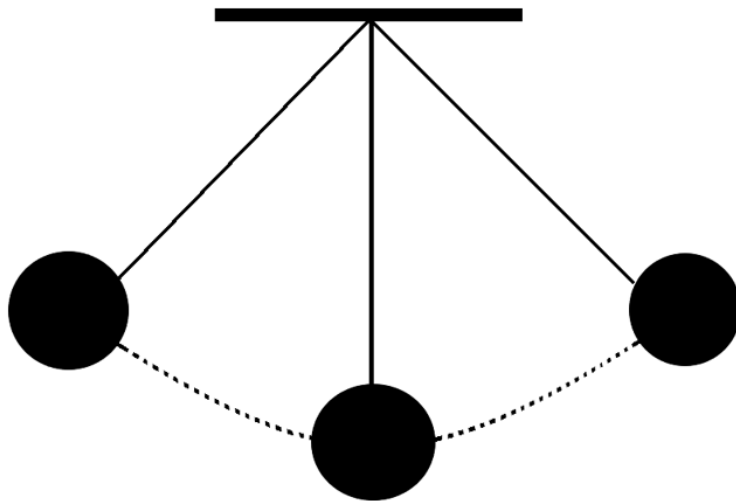

Figure 4: Decomposition of Taiji

Figure 5: Pendulum Motion

Figure 6: The Wheel of Life

APPENDIX B

Figure 7: The Setting of Phoenix

Figure 8: The Artificial God in *THX1138*

Figure 9: Monitors in *THX 1138*

Figure 10: LUH 4317 Being Eliminated

Figure 11: THX 1138's Escape and Emergence I

Figure 12: THX 1138's Escape and Emergence II

Figure 13: THX 1138's Escape and Emergence III
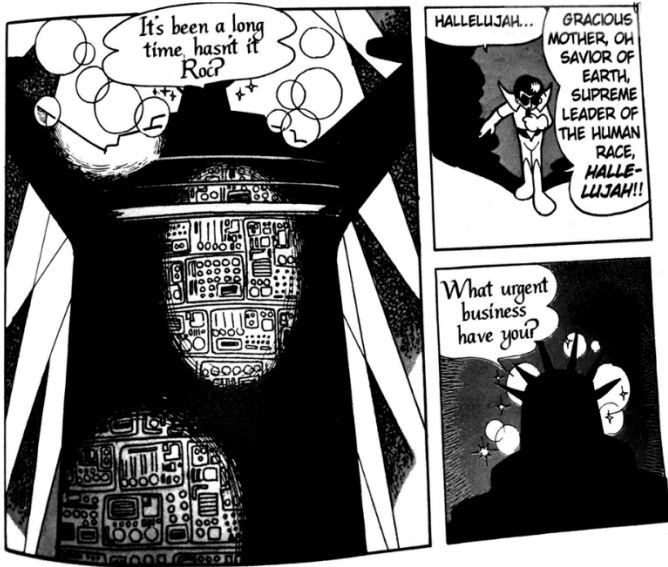
Figure 14: Artificial God Hallelujah in *Phoenix*
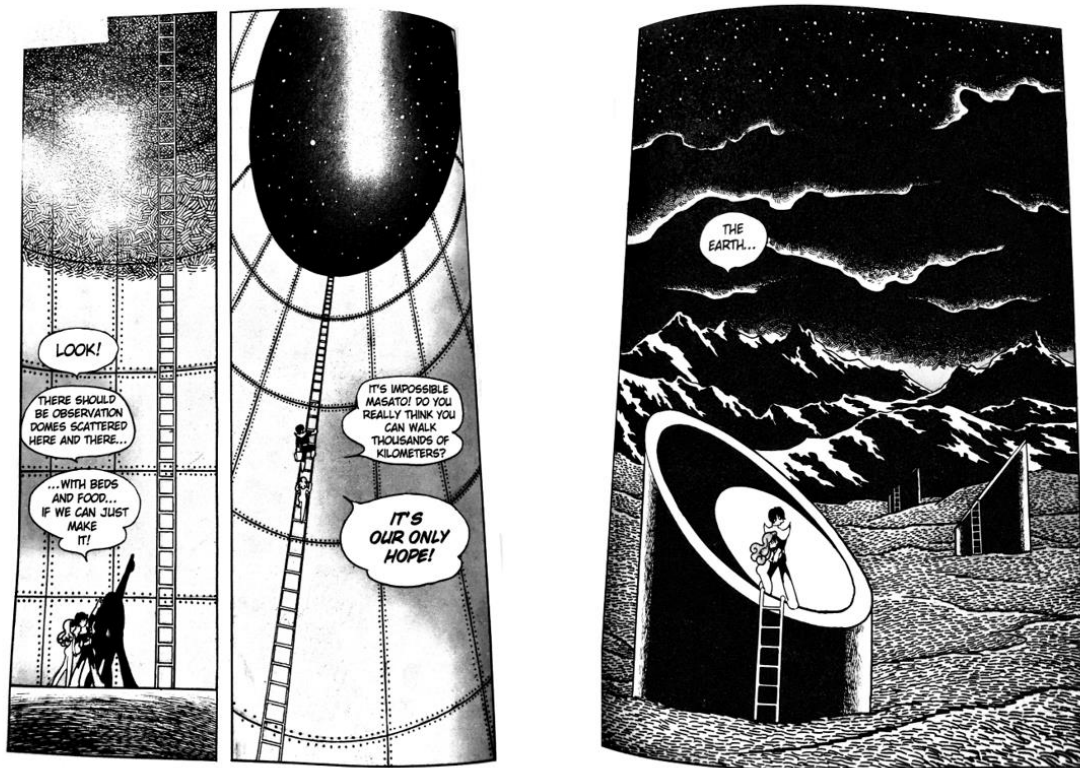
Figure 15: Masato and Tamami's Escape and Emergence I
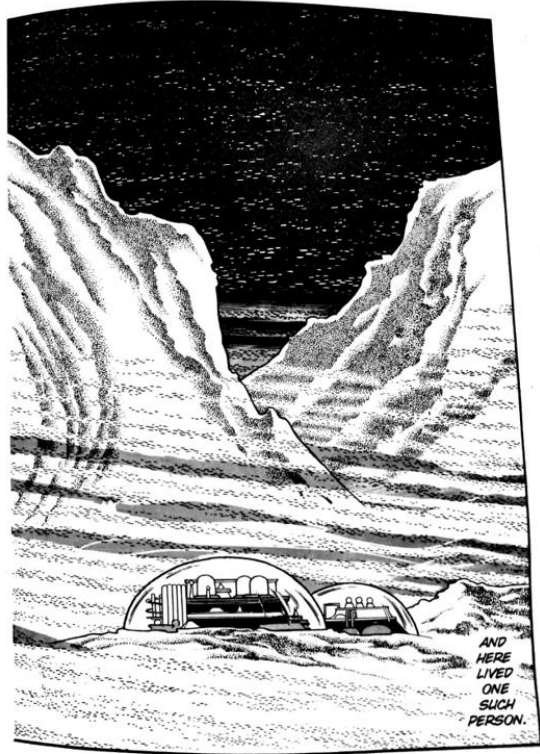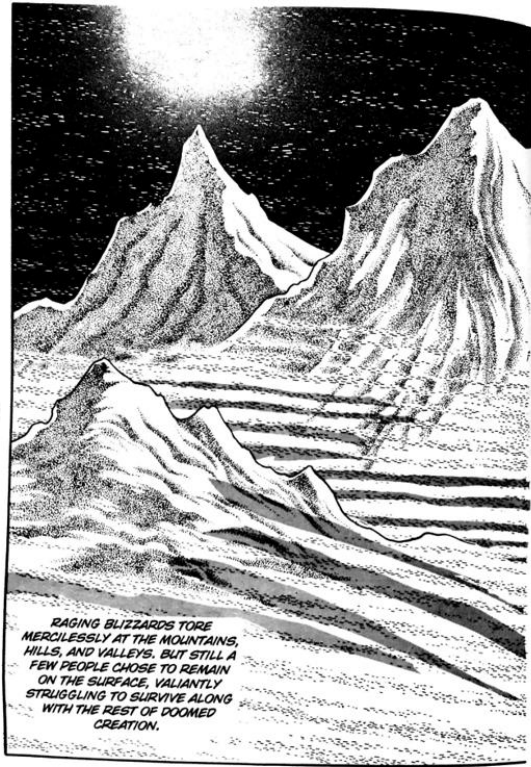
Figure 16: Masato and Tamami's Escape and Emergence II
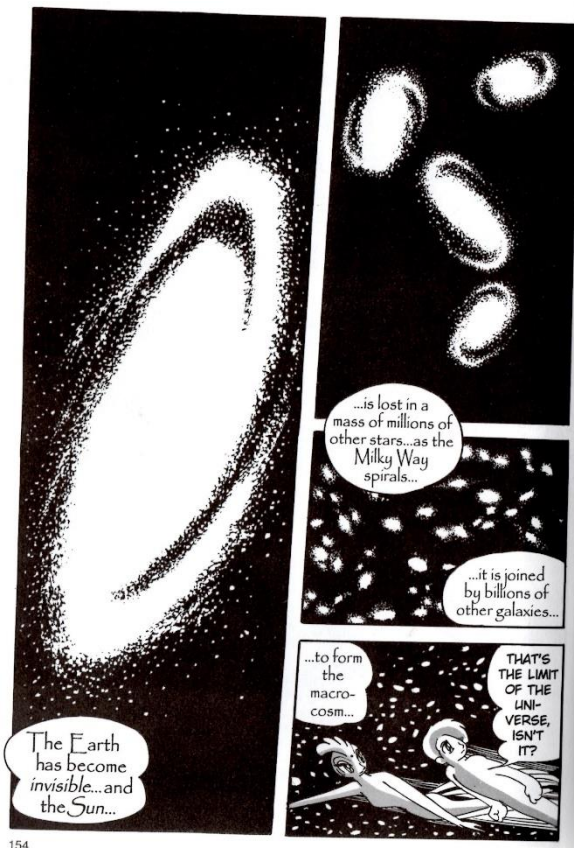

Figure 17: Monitors in *Phoenix*
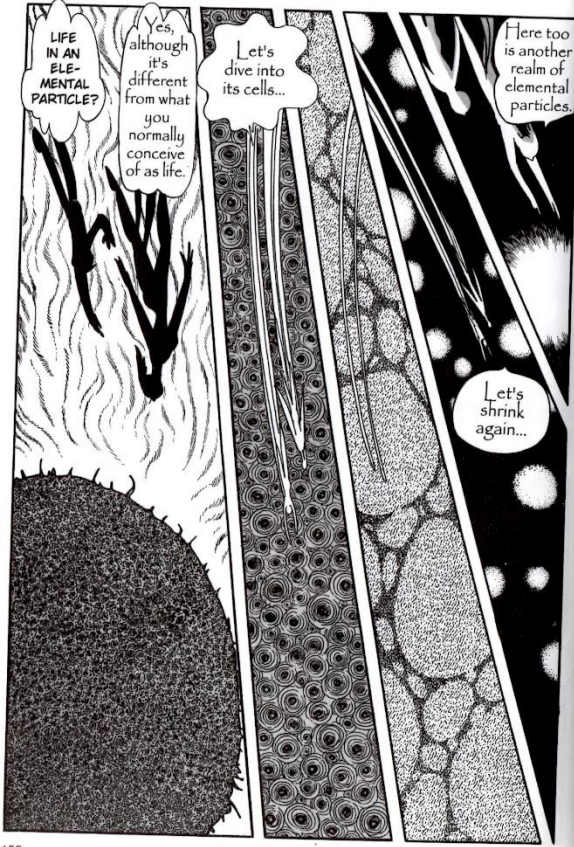
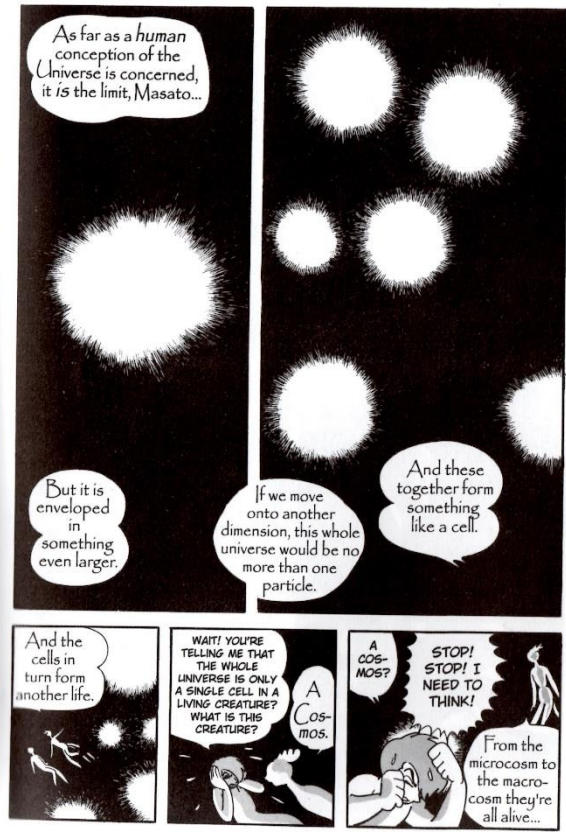Figure 18: Cosmos inside Phoenix I

Figure 19: Cosmos inside Phoenix II

Figure 20: Cosmos inside Phoenix III