Something's Missing: A Study of the Dialectic of Utopia in the Theories of Theodor W. Adorno and Ernst Bloch

By Michael R. Ott

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Art by Darren Waterston

In response to the strategically planned and increasingly deadly globalization of U.S. led neoliberal transnational corporate capitalism as well as of its neoconservative covert and overt acts of espionage and wars for regime-change and empire[1], this essay raises the question of the contemporary meaning and relevancy of a depreciated concept that for most of the 20th and now 21st centuries has been relegated to the trash heap of history as being anachronistic and thus, worthless for addressing the increasing crises of modernity. This disdained and all but forgotten concept is *utopia:* that future-oriented, religious and/or secular expression of a society so organized as to put to an end to the horror of humanity's pre-history through the production and reproduction of itself in all of its structures for the well-being and happiness of all its people, as well as that of nature. As such, utopic thinking is expressive of the humanistic and humanizing longing that has the potential of creating a historically grounded, revolutionary theory and praxis for that which is *"not-yet,"* for that which is "other" if not the religiously conceived totally "Other" – the new creation of God – than the globally metastasizing systems of domination, exploitation, suffering and death. Because of its revolutionary potential, especially in the midst of the contemporary globalization of Western capitalist "interests" and the corollary of military domination, the notion of utopia has been devalued strategically to the realm of culture in the forms of science fiction, video games, and/or narrative apocalyptic projections of the historically experienced horrors of class warfare, experienced particularly in the lives of the oppressed masses, into its consummation in a totally administered, instrumentalized, cybernetic, "iron cage" [Horkheimer & Adorno 1972; Adorno 1973, 1974, 2008; Marcuse 1964; Weber 1958:181] future society – a dys- or cacotopia.[2] As an expression of resistance and alternative to this strategic historical and systemic debasement of the critical and liberating potential of utopic thinking and concrete action, this study addresses the dialectic of the religious and secular complexities of utopic thought and of its relevancy in any revolutionary struggle for a more reconciled and humanistic future global totality. The focus for this study is on the theoretical work on this topic by the critical theorist of the Frankfurt School, Theodor W. Adorno, and the Marxist philosopher, Ernst Bloch. This paper concludes with a brief analysis of Adorno and Bloch's 1964 public discourse in which they present and defend their dialectical theories on utopia.

Early Utopias: Freedom in Space

The first use of the word "utopia" has been attributed to Sir/Saint Thomas More, who in 1516 used it in the title of his book – *De optimo rei publicae statu deque nova insula*

Utopia, which translates literally into English as, *"Of a Republic's Best State and of the New Island Utopia."* However, as the word at least became more common, the book has been entitled solely by the name, *Utopia* [More 2003]. In creating this term, More is said to have adapted the Greek word *eutopia,* meaning "good place", into *outopia* or utopia, which means "no place" or "no land." As the first of this utopic genre written in the midst of and as an expression of Renaissance Humanism, More's book is what is called a social utopia conceived of being in *space,* as he situated his good, alternative society to that of Europe on an island in the South Sea of the so-called New World. More's island Utopia was the place of the greatest realization of human freedom and happiness. Utopias of freedom in space were depicted as already existing in the present but in some remote part of the world. The utopia already existed; people were just not there yet. Due to the burgeoning exploration of the world via sea travel, made possible by the scientific discoveries of navigation, this already existing utopia of freedom in space gave expression to the longing of people to move from one place to another in search of a better life. This was expressed in More's description of the main character of his utopia, Raphael Hythloday, who is described as having travelled with Amerigo Vespucci in his voyages of "discovering" the New World, and then through his own further travels arrives at the island of Utopia.

The content and the particular place of such utopian expression in space changed over the centuries according to the vision of the author that was grounded in the existing social situation and its possibilities of creating that which was deemed better and/or new. Thus, in the 17th century Tommaso Campenella's *The City of the Sun* appeared as the first technological utopia; a theocratic, semi-socialistic city situated on a hillside with an ideal climate that was protected by seven circles of artistically painted walls in which everyone worked for the well-being of all and there was no private property. Unlike More's focus on realizing the greatest human freedom, Campenella's utopia was an expression of the greatest possible normative order for the achievement of a good society. This early scientific-technological utopia of space received its greatest expression in 1627 by Sir Francis Bacon's *Nova Atlantis;* the story of an island in the South Pacific Ocean called *Bensalem*, at the center of which was the *"Templum Salomonis"* – the ideal, modern scientific research university. Within the paradigm of utopia in space, the utopic content changes but the temporal location of utopia thought – be it positively or negatively imaged – always remains the same.

Critique of Capitalism

These new expressions of Utopia in the Renaissance were a critical response to the collapsing conditions of the desperate classes, the peasants, farmers, and the serfs, who had to bear the crushing weight of the developing economic transition to early capitalism. As Max Horkheimer [1993:363] states, "the utopians realized that profit was becoming the driving force of history in the burgeoning trade economy." In anticipation of Rousseau's critique of capitalism, these early utopians understood what was creating the increasing misery of the newly created working class: the ownership of private property and the pursuit of ever-increasing levels of profit. As the utopians of the Enlightenment, these early utopians understood that it was [and still is] this competitive, class pursuit of capital over human well being that was crushing the masses of humanity into its service as well as setting the stage for wars between nations.

It was no coincidence that in the face of this early development of capitalism both More and Campanella, who were Catholics, remained true to the humanizing substance of the faith. For both, it was religion that kept alive the demand for justice and equity in the face of human suffering, and in the name of Christ they both advocated for a society in which such socially created suffering and oppression no longer existed. Their utopias gave expression to an early communist form of society based on a unified humanity in which there was no private property over and against a society governed by the laws of a free market. They envisioned the establishment of such a new, alternative society based completely on the appeal to their faith and human reason.

However, as Horkheimer [1993:367-368] states, "a utopia leaps over time" as it is "the dreamland of a historically bound fantasy."

Utopianism wants to eliminate the suffering of the present and retain only what is good in it. However, it forgets that these moments of good and evil instances are in reality two sides of the same coin, for the same conditions equally give rise to each. In a utopia, the transformation of existing conditions is not made dependent on the arduous and devastating transformation of the foundations of society. Rather, it is displaced to the minds of the subjects.

The utopia of the Renaissance is the secularized expression of the old Medieval notion of heaven, without the arduous historical struggle for its creation. This utopian idealism ignores the objective, material productive conditions of the early capitalist society while it seeks its dream-like transformation in the subjective minds and good will of people, who are thereby supposed to eliminate the destructive power of private property. In its resistance against the increasing suffering and horror of the masses, such utopic critique is merely a reaction and thus, a continuance of the modern bourgeois logic of domination. In this modern divide between the powerful social totality and the weakness of the individual person, those that are suffering in this system of domination have little to rely on but their own subjective fight for survival and the utopic dream of redemption. Again, as Horkheimer [1993:369] reminds us, utopias have two expressions: one being the critique of what is, and the other, being the representation of what should be. For Horkheimer as for Adorno, the importance and truth of utopia is found in its critique. As we shall see, Horkheimer's critique of utopia is the substance of Adorno's critique of Bloch's philosophy of utopia.

Utopic Change: Freedom in Time

In the late 1960's, the critical, political theologian Jürgen Moltmann, Professor of Theology at Tübingen University in Germany, was a Visiting Professor of Systematic Theology at Duke Divinity School in Durham, North Carolina, USA. While here, Moltmann [1969, 1967], who was greatly influenced in the development of his theology of hope and of Christian eschatology by Ernst Bloch's philosophy of hope, presented the theological doctrine of Christian eschatology in terms that expressed the influence of Bloch's Marxist thinking on utopia, e.g., "The Prophecy of the New," "Religion, Revolution, and the Future," "Christians and Marxists Struggle for Freedom," "God in Revolution," "The Future as New Paradigm of Transcendence," etc. In the language of hope, Moltmann spoke about and wrote on the notion of utopia, its history, and its

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Judeo/Christian religious roots.

Moltmann made the historical distinction between the notion of utopias of freedom in space and utopias of freedom in time, between the existence of a New World and the historical "New Age" of the future. Using the United States as his case study, Moltmann stated that for Europeans, where there was no longer any open and unpopulated territory, the New World of America with its vast open and supposedly unpopulated frontier, presented itself as a utopic chance for a new beginning, for freedom and happiness in a new place. However, as this open frontier of America became more and more populated, it became obvious that in America as in Europe there was no "new" place to which one could travel and find such spatial freedom any more. With this experience of the "falseness" of the notion of utopia in space, a change occurred in the thought of utopia: Freedom in space was changed now to the pursuit of freedom in *time* in terms of the movement in history toward a new future.

In Europe, particularly for those who had no chance of emigrating to the New World or to any other far-off and thus, different place, people internalized their longing for freedom and made it into the spiritual world of the soul or mind. Of course, this spiritual mystifying of the utopic longing for freedom and happiness did little if anything to change the actual, existing social conditions that produced the utopic longing for that which is "other" than what is. As Marx [1975:85; Moltmann 1969:xii] stated, this reduction of human freedom to the realm of an inner light ultimately was changed through philosophic reflection seeking to realize itself outwardly in society and history.

When philosophy turns itself as will against the world of appearance, then the system is lowered to an abstract totality, that is, it has become one aspect of the world which opposes another one. Its relationship to the world is that of reflection. Inspired by the urge to realize itself, it enters into tension against the other. The inner self-contentment and completeness has been broken. *What was inner light has become consuming flame turning outwards.* [Emphasis added by author]

It is with this turn outward to now address the existing socio-historical conditions that generate the utopic longing for a more reconciled, free, rational, just, equitable, good, happy and peaceful future that the theory and praxis of utopia became dangerous to the status quo and its ruling elite.

Religious Substance of Utopia: Eschatology

As Marx, Bloch, Adorno, Benjamin [1968:253-264], Fromm [1949:257; 1966b, 1976, 1992]; Moltmann, Metz [1980b, 1981], Habermas [2008a & b; 2006a; 2005b], and many others have stated, this dangerous, revolutionary longing for a better future *in history* is rooted in the myths, narratives, and teaching of the world religions. Particularly, the hope-filled utopic genre in time has its roots within Judaism's and Christianity's world-shattering prophetic, Messianic, eschatological/apocalyptic theodicy proclamations that announced God's *kairos:* the Infinite breaking into the finite world-order and history to liberate and redeem the enslaved, the oppressed, the suffering, dying and dead, in order to bring an end to this barbaric pre-human history and create a good "new creation" in preparation for the coming of God's kingdom [e.g., Exodus 2:23-15:21; Deuteronomy

26:5b-10; Psalms 2, 9-10, 12, 14, 22, 33-34, etc.; Isaiah 9, 11, 60-66; Micah 4; Matthew 5-7; Luke 4:4-18; Acts 2:42-45, 4:32-35; Romans 8:18-25, 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Ephesians 4:17-24; Revelation 21:1-6; Horkheimer 1972:129-187; Fromm 1992, 1966b; Bloch 1970b:118-141, 1972, 1986:I-III, 2000; Tillich 1926, 1968; Brown 1965; Moltmann 1967, 1969, 1996; Metz 1977, 1980b, 1981; Gutierrez 1973; Cardenal 1978, 1979, 1982; Zizek 2000; Ott 2001, 2007:167-196, 273-306]. As Ernst Bloch [1986:1193] states:

And if the maxim that where hope is, religion is, is true, then Christianity, with its powerful starting point and its rich history of heresy, operates as if an essential nature of religion had finally come forth here. Namely that of being *not static, apologetic myth, but humane-eschatological, explosively posited messianism.* It is only here – stripped of illusion, god-hypostases, taboo of the masters – that the *only inherited substratum capable of significance in religion lives: that of being hope in totality,* explosive hope.

Particularly for Bloch, the Bible contains within itself a covert yet foundational underground, non-theocratic element of subversion, which biblical criticism and the interpretation of historical materialists have revealed. The biblical scriptures proclaim not only the *Deus absconditus* [the hidden, unknown God] but also the *homo absconditus,* the hidden or not-yet human being, who was originally expressed in terms of *Eritis sicut deus scientes bonum et malum* ["You shall be like gods knowing good and evil" – Genesis 3:5] to the later prophetic, Messianic notion of the "Son of Man" [Daniel 7:13; Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Revelation 1:13, 14:14]. For Bloch [1972a:82], it is this hidden human being, who is the revolutionary substance of the *Biblia pauperum* [the paupers' picture bible], that expresses the biblical intention of "overthrowing every state of affairs in which man appears as oppressed, despised and forgotten in his very being." In the biblical Hebrew and New Testaments, it is this revolutionary underground intent that is the foundation for the creation of a utopia of religion's non-mythical elements. Although this revolutionary, religious potential became reified in the dogmatic notion of God, the original biblical call for people's *covenant* with this God for the sake of God and humanity's mutual future gave expression to future-oriented essence or *entelechy* of humanity.[3] For Bloch, the religious and secular utopic longing is "the pervading and above all only honest quality of human beings."

Doctrine of the End

Christianity's eschatological hope and revolutionary praxis for a new creation or new age in this world is the universalizing determinate negation [*Aufhebung*] – i.e., the negation, preservation, and furtherance – of Israel's remembrance and hope of the liberating God of the Exodus and of the prophetic, Messianic promise of a time of peace, justice and integrity coming in which there will no longer be any type of predators and prey as the "the wolf will live with the lamb, the panther lies down with the kid, calf and lion cub feed together, with a little child to lead them" [Isaiah 11:6-9]; wherein the weapons of war, domination, fear and death (swords, spears, guns, bombs, tanks, missiles, WMDs) will be turned into instruments not of aggression and death but those that create life and happiness, e.g., plowshares, pruning hooks, universal health care systems, free education, etc. [Micah 4:3-4; Isaiah 2:3-4]. The revolutionary, historical materialist theory and praxis of utopia is the continuation of this determinate negation as it is the secular

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translation or inversion of Christian eschatology and its social utopias [Bloch 1970b:118-141; 1972a; Adorno 1973:207; Fromm 1992:3-94, 95-106, 147-168, 203-212; 1966b; Ott 2001, 2007:167-196, 273-306]. According to Moltmann [1967], Christian eschatology was long called the 'doctrine of the last things' or the 'doctrine of the end.' According to this doctrine, the "fallen," pre-history of humanity will be brought to its end through God's *kairos* – the dawning of God's New Creation. As a result of this New Creation being the work of God and not humanity, eschatology was theologically pushed to the end of history and thus, increasingly was seen to have little if anything to say about life in the world. Christianity's eschatological hope for God's New Creation, has thus become little more than an embarrassing addendum to the Christian evangelion, and as such, has become increasingly irrelevant. Coupled with this, the more Christianity became an institution of the Roman Empire and thus a religious component of the Roman state religion, the more eschatology and its concrete, revolutionary, prophetic and Messianic purpose in history was betrayed by the Church [Moltmann 1967, 1969, 1974, 1996; Metz 1980, 1981; Horkheimer 1972:129-131, 1974a:34-50, 1985:385-404; Ott 2001, 2007:167-186; Reimer 2007:71-90]. This demeaned and forgotten hope and praxis for a new and good future did not die out, however, but migrated into the struggle for a better future as expressed in the thought and action of revolutionary groups, e.g. the revolutionary Christian social utopianism of the 13th century Calabrian abbot Joachim di Fiore, the 16th century German radical reformer and Peasant War leader Thomas Münzer, Karl Marx and modern expressions of historical materialism, as well as the third-world base-Christian communities and the "Theology of Liberation," etc. [Moltmann 1967, 1969, 1974, 1996; Metz 1973c, 1980b, 1981; Bloch 1970b:118-141; 1971a:54-105, 159-173; 1972a; 1972b; 1986a; Engels 1926; Gutierrez 1973, 1983; Cardenal 1976, 1978, 1979, 1982].

Yet, in critically returning to the Hebrew and Christian biblical texts to confront the historical church's betrayal of its own living and world-changing gospel – the dangerous, revolutionary memory, hope, and praxis of freedom in Jesus the Christ, critical, political theologians have made it clear that *eschatology and its hope of a new future given by God is not the end but the beginning and dynamic, prophetic and Messianic purpose of Christianity* [Metz 1980b, 1981; Moltmann 1967, 1969, 1974, 1996]. One is not to worry about one's life, about one's need of food, drink, clothing, commodities, nor even about tomorrow, but rather is "to renounce oneself and pick up one's cross" for the sake of the oppressed so as to negate the fearful power of the cross and of death itself by setting one's "heart on (God's) kingdom first, and on (God's) righteousness" and by so doing "all these other (material needs) will be given you as well" in the new, future community of love, equity and shalom – the new society/creation/history of which followers of Christ are to be "ambassadors" [Mark 8:34-38; Matthew 7:25-34, par. 33; 5:1-12; Acts 2: 42-47; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:17-24; Colossians 3:9-11; 4:32-351 Peter 3:13-15; Revelation 21, 22]. As Bloch [1970:118-125] stated, there is no other book that remembers the nomadic God of freedom over and against the static gods of place and time and describes the corresponding nomadic institutions of "primitive semi-communism" as does the Bible.

A single line, full of curves but recognizable as one and the same, runs from the Nazarites' memories of primitive semi-communism to the prophet's preaching against wealth and tyranny and on to the early Christian communism of love [Acts 2, 4]. In its

background the line is almost unbroken; the famed prophetic depictions of a future kingdom of social peace reflect a Golden Age which in this case was no mere legend [Bloch 1970:119].

From the "Alpha" to the "Omega" from the beginning to the end, Christianity is eschatology, an anamnestic and proleptic hope and praxis for the promised and redeemed future of humanity and God. Again, as Bloch states:

"… nowhere is the Omega of Christian utopianism so untranscendent and at the same time so all-transcending, as in the 'New Jerusalem' of Revelations 21, 22. Religion is full of utopianism, as is evident above all in the Omega which lies at its heart … This is a realm … where the world is *totally* transformed, so that (humanity) is no longer burdened with it as with a stranger."

Parousia Delay

It is this future-oriented hope for the Omega – the New Creation of God and humanity - that is the dynamic truth of Christianity that can lead to a revolutionary socio-historical praxis that transforms the present. However, it is also this promise of and hope for the coming of the Omega that confronts Christianity with its destructive theodicy problem: the *parousia delay*. In the gospel of Luke [9:27], Jesus told his disciples: "there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God." It has been almost 2,000 years since this statement was made and yet the end of the barbaric, pre-human history with the arrival of the Omega/kingdom of God has not happened. As history has shown, religions rise and fall in importance based on their ability to address convincingly and redemptively the theodicy question of the innocents' suffering and dying in the world. Because of the delay of the parousia as Christianity's theodicy answer, the very prophetic, Messianic and eschatological substance of the Christian evangelion – to defiantly pick up the revolutionary "cross" of the present in order to negate its systemic power and deadliness in the hope for the promised New Creation of God – ends up sharing the same fate today as that of utopia: as being little more than a irrelevant myth.

Restoring Utopia

In their 1964 public discourse on the topic of utopian longing and its ambiguities [Bloch 1988:1-17], Adorno stated that his friend Bloch [2000] was the one responsible for restoring honor to the word "utopia," which began with his first book, *The Spirit of Utopia*. In an article written in 1965, Adorno [1992:211-212] stated that he first read this book in 1921 when he was an 18-year-old student and found that like a trumpet blast, it aroused such profound expectations as to bring traditional philosophy into suspicion of being shallow and unworthy of itself. Through Bloch's book, as though "written by Nostradamus himself," philosophy escaped "the curse of being official" and "calibrated to the abominable resignation of methodology." Bloch's book was seen to be one continuous protest against thought's positivistic conformity to conventional patterns, and thus gave a "promise of heresy" in a double sense of being mystically explosive and going far beyond the ceremonial expectations of the established intellectual culture. Adorno was so moved by this, that "prior to any theoretical content," he identified

himself with Bloch's critical *intent* and because of this, he did not believe that he ever wrote anything without either an implicit or explicit reference to this book.

For Adorno, what is specific to Bloch's entire philosophy is his emphasis on "the gesture" toward that which is other than what is. This gesture is the dynamic potential within everything and is not to be understood as merely a subjective reference to the objective world.   Bloch [1972:264-265] spoke of this also "as the unassuaged, explosive hunger of the life-force," as the search for meaning, for "the Not-yet of true human possession." It is only in this pursuit for the fulfillment of humanity's utopian needs that "the radical, subversive dream of the Bible" can be realized. This even applies to Bloch's central and organizing notion of the messianic end of history and the corollary revolutionary praxis of historical transcendence. Written in the midst of the horror of World War I, and published at the War's end in 1918 and republished in 1923 – in the beginning years of the nascent Weimar Republic, Bloch's *Spirit of Utopia* was a defiant philosophic, Messianic theological, and transcendental poetic proclamation of utopic hope in the midst of the latency of the revolutionary "not-yet" that is located in the darkness of the present.

So it goes without saying that even this: that we humans are, represents only an untrue form, to be considered only provisionally. … we are located in our own blind spot, in the darkness of the lived moment, whose darkness is ultimately *our own darkness,* being-unfamiliar–to-ourselves, being-enfolded, being-missing. … Yet – *and this is of decisive importance* – the *future*, the *topos of the unknown within the future,* where alone we occur, where alone, novel and profound, the function of hope also flashes, without the bleak reprise of some anamnesis – is itself nothing but *our expanded darkness, than our darkness in the issue of its own womb, in the expansion of its latency.* Just as in all the objects of this world, in the "nothing" around which they are made, that twilight, that latency, that essential amazement predominates where merge the reserve and yet the strange "presence" of seeds of gold blended into, hidden in leaves, animals, pieces of basalt; *whereby precisely the very thing-in-itself everywhere is this, which is not yet, which actually stirs in the darkness, the blueness, at the heart of objects* [Bloch 2000: 200-201, emphasis in the text itself].

This dialectical, liberation theory of utopia, of the "not-yet," of its hope and the possibility of its continual realization in a truly new socio-historical future birthed from within the hidden "darkness" of the given, capitalist class dominated "civil society" was the dynamic emphasis of all of Bloch's writings [e.g., 1970; 1971a; 1972a & b; 1976; 1986; 1988; 2000]. Yet, for all of Adorno's praise of his friend's work on the topic of utopia coming from within their shared dialectical methodology of historical materialism, there were fundamental differences in their theoretical understanding and approach to this important notion and its praxis.

Religions Migration into the Secular

<u>*Hegel*</u>:

A dominant argument in the resurrection of utopian thought in Bloch's work as well as the first and second generation of the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School is the

needed migration of the religious eschatological hope for a more humane and reconciled future into the secular, particularly into the theory and praxis of historical materialism. This modern, dialectical movement of the religious into the secular is grounded in Hegel's Absolute Idealism and Logos Logic, wherein the object of religion is "eternal truth in its objectivity, God and nothing but God" which is translated into philosophical "knowledge of that which is eternal, of what God is, and what flows out of God's nature" [Hegel 1984:152-153; 1974a:18-20; 1967a:70-88; 1956:7-41;]. In both religion and philosophy, "the object is Truth, in that supreme sense in which God and God only is the Truth" [Hegel 1991:24/§1]. Thus, for Hegel [1969b:50; Genesis 1, Wisdom 1-9, John 1], the content of his Logos Logic as the system of pure reason and the realm of pure thought is nothing less than "the exposition of God as he is his eternal essence before the creation of nature and a finite mind." For Hegel, religion and philosophy have the same content, need, and interest in the service of God but differ only in their distinctive approaches to the Absolute. The true form of truth as science is the determinate negation of religious representational thought and image, with its immediacy of knowledge expressed in terms of feelings, ecstasy and intuition, into its philosophical, scientific form. According to Hegel [1967a:79ff], truth is grasped and expressed not as a monochrome, formalistic Substance, as in Transcendental Idealism's *Naturphilosophie* which expresses the Absolute as the inert night in which are to be found, in which "all cows are black,[4]" but as Subject, will and action as well. This Subject is not conceived dualistically as the isolated bourgeois monad over and against that objectivity that is equally empty and reified, but is rather the living Substance that is realized in the process of its own self-actualization in history, which mediates or determinately negates itself from one state into its opposite. This is Subject as pure and simple negativity through which it reinstates its self-identity in returning to itself through its otherness in history [Hegel 1967a:80ff]. For Hegel [1956:9ff], God's Divine Providence, Wisdom, or Reason is both the substance and infinite energy of the universe. God rules the world understood as both physical and psychical nature and thus, rules both nature and the history of world, which as he states "is not the theater of happiness" [Hegel 1956:9ff, 26]. Hegel [1967a:81ff, 808; 1956:21] makes perfectly clear that the notion of God ruling the world becomes an ideological false consciousness and collapses into edification, which can be utilized to legitimate the horrors of society and history, if it lacks the seriousness, suffering, patience and labor of the negative, of history as a "slaughter bench" of the innocent and as a Golgotha of the Absolute Spirit. The task of philosophy is to comprehend Reason in that which historically exists, not to instruct how things ought to be, but rather to reveal how humanity, thought, morality, the family, civil society, the State and culture are to be understood. For Hegel [1967b:11-13], God's Reason is thereby understood to be "the rose in the cross of the present" that is to be comprehended and enjoyed, which thereby allows people to possess a subjective freedom while living in what exists in truth. This was Hegel's [1956:15; 1974a:83-85; 1974b:1-10;] *Theodicæa,* or philosophical justification of God in the face of the horror of history. By Reason's own dialectical march through history, determinately negating that which prevents Reason's further realization in the dawn of a new age, history will move to its consummation in the Realm of Freedom, in which the Idea and concrete manifestation of Reason will be united.

Karl Marx:

The left-wing Hegelian, Karl Marx, critiqued Hegel's translation of religious content into his idealistic philosophy and Logos Logic as theodicy. Marx rejected the theological content of Hegel's philosophy as a mystification of his own dialectical method. As Marx [1976:102-103] stated, his dialectical method is not only different from Hegel's but is "exactly opposite to it." The real world is not created by God or "the Idea" but it is just the reverse. The real, material world is what is reflected into human thought and religiously projected into the notion of God, who thereby acquires an independent subjectivity outside of the world. This projection theory of God was developed in the materialism of Ludwig Feuerbach [1957], a materialism that Marx [1998:569-571] critiqued as being bourgeois since Feuerbach reduces the correction of this projection to "sensuous intuition" of the individual and not to a revolutionizing practice. Although he rejected Feuerbach's theory, Marx stated nevertheless that Feuerbach is the "river of fire" through which one must walk to come to the shore of truth and freedom in historical materialism. Marx [1976:103] rejected the mystified, religious content of Hegel's philosophy but not his dialectical methodology of determinate negation, which was the first to unfold the general dynamic of dialectical movement as a comprehensive and conscious method. For this, in the face of the increasing empiricist rejection of Hegel and dialectics itself as being a "dead dog," Marx [1976:102-103] praised Hegel as a great thinker and declared himself Hegel's pupil. However, Marx materialistically inverted Hegel's philosophy as theodicy, which justifies the sovereignty of God's Reason in the barbarism of history, so as to focus rationally on the negativity of that history as the slaughter bench and cruel altar upon which the innocent, weak, slaves, serfs, peasants, and the modern working class have been and continue to be sacrificed. This history of class domination and its horror for billions upon billions of its innocent victims is not to be philosophically interpreted and thereby merely understood but is to be exposed and thereby negated by revolutionary class praxis for the creation of a real, consciously created human history. Imaged as the "owl of Minerva," which spreads its wings and takes flight only with the falling of dusk when the age has become old, Hegel [1967b:13] admits that philosophy cannot change what is but can only "paint its grey in grey" and thus, understand it. As Marx [1998:574] stated in his eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, this philosophical interpretation of the world is not good enough. The owl of Minerva is to be replaced by the "Gallic Cock" whose crowing announces the revolutionary birth of change toward a utopic new age of liberation; the beginning of true human history [Marx 2002:182]. It is of particular interest that in continuing his great teacher Hegel's idealistic, dialectical thought, Bloch [1976:8-9] images the herald of the new age not as Marx's Gallic Cock but as the owl of Minerva, who, he says, "does not fly in the dusk, among the ruins of contemplation … but rather because a thought is rising which belongs to the dawn, to that open time of day which is least alien of all to Minerva, the goddess of light. … [In this] the owl becomes what it really is for Minerva: the allegory of vigilance." The images not withstanding, both Marx and Bloch give expression to their truth in the "genius of dialectics" as a force of revolutionary change.

According to Marx's [2002:171-182] materialist dialectical critique, religion is the fantastic mystifying product and "spiritual aroma" of this horrifying pre-human history of class domination. When this history is finally negated through the conscious, revolutionary creation of a classless, non-alienated, and reconciled future society, both

religion and the State as systems of domination will "wither away." Yet, within this history, religion nevertheless plays an ambiguous role. On the one hand, as expressed particularly in the history of Christianity, religion functions as socio-cultural ideology that produces a false consciousness of reality in humanity. As such, it gives an "aura" of religious legitimation to the reified economic and political relations of social production and its class antagonisms. This is religion of and for the victors of history's class war. This is religion as "an inverted consciousness of the world" that blesses the dehumanizing global system of class domination by the few – the "winners" – that produces the resulting suffering and horror of the many – the "losers" – to continue. In this barbarically "inverted" society and history, this is positivistically called "progress" [Benjamin 1968:253-264]. As a social action system given the function of producing equilibrium and maintenance within a society and history of class domination, religion thus becomes the illusory happiness of people that thereby allows if not demands that people avoid taking responsibility for "pulling the emergency brake" on this "progressive" train ride through hell for the revolutionary purpose of creating a more humane, reconciled and shalom-filled future society. As Marx [2002:179; Adorno 1973, 1974; Horkheimer and Adorno 1972; Benjamin 1968:253-264; 1999:456-488] states, it is not this radical revolution for universal human emancipation that is a utopic dream, but rather it is the patch-work reform efforts of partial socio-political changes that allow the structures and system of inequity, suffering, horror and death to stay in place that is the ideological covering of dystopia. For Marx, it is the dual task of philosophy to not merely interpret the world but to change it by unmasking the religiously veiled deadly "Medusa head" of class domination and of Capital [Marx 2002:171; 1976:91]. For once, the "holy form of human self-estrangement" has been unmasked, then the "unholy forms" of human alienation and enslavement can be unmasked and revolutionarily changed. Thus, criticism of religion in the form of its own betrayal of its substance turns into emancipatory criticism of the socio-historical system and structures of domination and death.

This socio-historical revolutionary task, however, gives expression to Marx's other, humanistic understanding of religion within the history of class domination, namely, its protest against domination and the cry for liberation. It is in this understanding of religion as protest against the murderous social system of class domination in history, which gives expression to the utopic longing of the oppressed for liberation/redemption that religion contributes to the secular, historical materialist theory and praxis of revolution. In the tradition and spirit of the Hebrew prophets and of Jesus of Nazareth, religion, particularly in its sacred texts from which the institutions of these religions can never escape, expresses real human suffering and the protest against it. Thus, for Marx [2002:171-172], religion as protest "is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions." In this veil of tears world, religion is "the opium of the people," who use it as a form of self-medication to bring some relief against their systemically produced alienation and hopeless suffering. This prophetic and Messianic cry and protest against the systemic exploitation, degradation, suffering, and death of innocent victims is the revolutionary, ethical substance of the Abrahamic religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – that is betrayed by these religions own historical institutions that make up Marx's [2002:171-182] despised first form of religion as pre-human history's general theory, encyclopedic compendium, popular form of logic, its point of spiritual honor, its enthusiasm, moral sanction, and universal basis of

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consolation and justification. Until the revolutionary day in which this history of class domination is ended, the religiously expressed protest of this history's innocent victims and their longing for the creation of a reconciled and good world needs to be heard and included in the theory and praxis of revolution.

Marx's Materialist Christology

Marx's notion of the ambiguity of religion, and his appreciation of religion as protest, has been poignantly preserved in Marx's daughter Eleanor's remembrance of her father. Eleanor Marx-Aveling [Fromm 1961b:252-253] was asked by some Austrian friends to send them some remembrances of her father after his death on March 14, 1883. In these recollections, Eleanor tells of her father taking her to a Roman Catholic Church to hear the beautiful music, which produced for the young girl questions about Christianity. She confided these questions to her father, whom she called "Mohr," who quietly and gently answered her questions so clearly that no doubt about religion ever crossed her mind again. Marx told his young daughter the plain and unadulterated truth about Jesus of Nazareth – the Christ – as *"the carpenter whom the rich men killed."* This non-theological, historically backed statement – one of the few if not only one that is verified by non-Christian writings, e.g., the Roman historian Tacitus and the Jewish historical Josephus – is the most precise, truthful and ecclesiastical damning historical materialist Christology ever spoken concerning the rejection, torture, suffering and death of this poor, revolutionary faithful, day-laborer Jesus of Nazareth. In this simple statement to his young daughter, Marx gave expression to the abhorrent ambiguity of religion – in this case Christianity – giving voice to the tortured cries and longing for redemption of the oppressed whom the capitalist class kills spiritually, psychically and physically, all the while this very same religion blesses the very system of the rich and powerful that does the killing. It was religion as the defiant, utopian cry for eschatological redemption – for that "no place … yet" that migrated into Marx's dialectical materialism's goal of a new historical age that would be brought about through the revolutionary praxis of the oppressed proletarian class.

Materialist Inversion

As heirs and critics of Hegel's idealistic and Marx's materialistic dialectical translations of religion into secular theory and praxis, both Adorno and Bloch also gave conflicting expression to the need for the religious to "migrate" into secular form. Both Adorno's and Bloch's dialectical theories are deeply grounded in and expressive of the historical materialist "inversion" of the Judaic and the Christian prophetic, Messianic and eschatological religious content. For both, their critical philosophy contained within itself religion as an inheritance, as the dialectical determinate negation of the religious into their critical, materialist logic and theory of critique and of revolutionary social transformation. Both theorists knew that *if* religion was to have anything of relevance to contribute in critically addressing the increasing irrationality and barbarism of the capitalist system, the religious form – the language, dogma, rituals, symbols, institutions, reified traditions, etc. – needed to be determinately negated for the possibility of the religious content of protest and liberation to be translated into modern secular emancipatory language and praxis.

It was Adorno who stated explicitly the need of the theological content of religion to *migrate* into modern secular form. In his article entitled "Reason and Revelation," Adorno [1998:136] stated:

If one does not want either to fall under the sway of the notion that whatever has long been well known is for that reason false, or to accommodate oneself to the current religious mood that – as peculiar as it is understandable – coincides with the prevailing positivism, then one would do best to remember Benjamin's infinitely ironic description of theology, "which today as we know, is wizened and has to keep out of sight." *Nothing of theological content will persist without being transformed, every content will have to put itself to the test of migrating into the realm of the secular, the profane.* [Emphasis added by author].

This dialectical transformation of religion into the secular critical theory of Max Horkheimer, Adorno, Benjamin, et al. is expressed by Adorno's as an "inverse theology" into which, as he told Benjamin, he would "gladly see (their) thoughts dissolve" [Adorno and Benjamin 1999:66-67, 52-59 (par 53-54), 104-116, 116-120; Adorno 1973, 2008; Horkheimer and Adorno 1972]. Like Horkheimer, Benjamin, and Marx, Adorno's inverse theology is a radicalized application of the second and third Commandment of Judaism's Decalogue against imaging or naming the sacred [Exodus 20:4-7]. The second and third Commandments state:

You shall not make yourself a carved image of any likeness of anything in heaven or on earth beneath or in the waters under the earth; you shall not bow down to them of serve them. For I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God and I punish the father's fault in the sons, the grandsons, and the great-grandsons of those who hate me' but I show kindness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments [Exodus 20:4-6].

You shall not utter the name of Yahweh your God to misuse it, for Yahweh will not leave unpunished the man who utters his name to misuse it [Exodus 20:7].

The critical theorists radicalized these commandments against any type of idolatry through the inversion of the religious faith in God into the secular, historical, critical longing for that which is "other"- if not totally "Other"/God – than the social and natural catastrophe produced throughout history by the dominant classes' warfare on the powerless masses of humanity in their pursuit of ever-more power and capital.

New Categorical Imperative

It is this course of pre-human history that, in Adorno's [1972:365ff] words, forces materialism upon metaphysics and religion, its traditionally conceived antithesis. Adorno [1972:365ff; 1998:191-204; 1997b] explains that his modern dialectical synthesis of two formerly opposite forces is the result of the "Shoah," summarized by the name of the largest Nazi extermination camp – "Auschwitz," in which human reason was used instrumentally and strategically to create not the highest good but absolute evil through the systematic persecution and mass genocide of Jews, the mentally ill and disabled, gypsies, homosexuals, Christians of the non-conformist "Confessing Church," protesting students – e.g. "The Edelweiss Pirates," "The White Rose," Communists, Socialists, and

many other nationalities deemed "unworthy." This monstrosity of the mind and of reason has produced a new categorical imperative for modernity: that Auschwitz never happens again [Adorno 1998:191-204]. This horror is not to be reduced to a mere intellectual and moral discourse on what happened. The morality of this new imperative, imposed on modernity by Hitler and the Nazis, is rooted not in the mind but in the practical bodily pathos of solidarity with the innocent victims and thus, and an outrage against such barbarism ever happening again. As Adorno [1972:365ff] states, it is in such materialistically driven undistorted, genuine and practical solidarity with the innocent victims of history's slaughter-bench that morality survives at all.

The Rise of Reason

According to Adorno [1974:238-244; 1972:23-24; 1973:207] the religious development of Monotheism was the rise of human consciousness through "'judicious reason' that had elevated itself to the notion of one God" that showed it to be to some degree more free of earlier forms of human submission to the power of nature. The "great," prophetic, Messianic, eschatological religions of Judaism and Christianity are expressions of the rational development of humanity in its still rational pre-maturity. Both Judaism and Christianity – with its eschatological proclamation of the resurrection of the flesh at the dawning of the Kingdom of God – took very seriously the dialectical inseparability of the spiritual and physical. In the Jewish religion, the dialectical disenchantment of the world and thus, the advance of human consciousness beyond magic and myth is expressed in the second and third commandments prohibition of making any image of or pronouncing the name of God. Judaism allows no word that would alleviate the despair of or bring consolation to that which is mortal. In Judaism, hope is expressed *negatively* in the ban against making anything finite into infinite; of making the lie into truth; of making the limited and thus, false into the Absolute. Humanity's emancipation, happiness, redemption and salvation are dialectically conceived of as the rejection of anything that would replace this negative and thus, historically dynamic hope of the oppressed. It is for this reason, as Walter Benjamin [1968:253-264] and Yosef Haytim Yerushalmi [1996:5-26] have made clear, that Jews were not to be concerned about the future. The future and the coming of the Messiah was the domain of God alone. Rather, in resistance against losing the historical foundation and identity of Israel's covenantal faith with Yahweh, the Hebrew biblical texts [e.g. Exodus 20:1-3; Deuteronomy 26:5-10] instruct Israel to remember (*Zakor)* the redemptive acts of Yahweh as well as the deeds, hope and suffering of the faithful in the past. In Judaism, the truth of the being and notion of God is preserved in the faithful pursuit of its not being reified into an idol and thus, equated with anything finite. In Judaism, the truth of the being and notion of God is preserved in the faithful pursuit of its not being reified into an idol and thus, equated with anything finite. Adorno's negative dialectics is the consistent, radicalized application of these Judaic prohibitions against hallowing anything in this world as an expression of the Holy, the Good, the Truth. He particularly applied this to the notion of utopia.

Negative Dialectics

Both Adorno and Bloch inherited their dialectical logic and method from the idealistic dialectics of Hegel and the historical materialist dialectics of Marx; both of whom were the heirs of the dialectic within Judaism and Christianity. In Adorno's critical theory of

society and religion, these religious prohibitions have migrated into the dynamic substance of his *negative* dialectical methodology of "determinate negation." Since the time of Plato, dialectics has been understood to be the method of achieving something positive – the new – by means of "mediation" or negation [Hegel 1967a: (par. 80-88); 1969b; Adorno 1973; Bloch 1976; Žižek 1993; Siebert 2013:7-31]. For Hegel [1967a:81-82], "the truth is the whole." However, the truth only realizes itself through the process of its own unfolding. This logical and historical transition is accomplished via mediation, which "is nothing but self-identity working itself out through an active self-directed process; or, in other words, it is reflection into self … It is pure negativity, or … the process of bare and simple becoming" [Hegel 1967a:82]. Truth, philosophically understood, means the agreement of a content with itself. However,

God alone is the genuine agreement between Concept and reality; all finite things, however, are affected with untruth; they have a concept, but their existence is not adequate to it. For this reason they must perish, and this manifests the inadequacy between their concept and their existence [Hegel 1991:60]

The dialectical method of negating the negative is thereby understood to free the historical process of that which prohibits the creation of the positive: the "entelechia of the All!" [Bloch 1976:6]. For Hegel [1969b:836f] "the negative of the negative, is immediately the positive, the identical, the universal." Marx's materialistic inversion of Hegel's idealistic dialectical methodology envisioned the same positive result in terms of the creation of the historically new, communist society that would be achieved through the revolutionary negation of history as the continuation of class domination. Adorno's negative dialectics rejects both of his predecessor's positions (as well as that of Bloch [1976]) as being too "militantly optimistic." As an expression of the theological ban on naming or imaging the Absolute, the dialectical negation of the negative does not automatically create or naturally unfold the positive. Instead as history has shown, such hope filled negation of what is can produce even more horrifying conditions than what existed before. This is the historical epitaph of the French Revolution turning into the terror of the guillotine and the Russian Revolution turning into Stalin's gulags and the extermination of millions of peasants.

Dialectics as Writing

For Adorno, the negative dialectics of determinate negation translates every image as writing; a method that reveals in its very process the limitedness and falseness of such images, while yet appropriating them in the historical pursuit and longing for truth. Unlike positivism that reduces and thereby reifies the dialectical relation between the subject and object, between thought and reality into a "scientific" system of identity and thus domination, for Adorno [1973; Horkheimer & Adorno: 1972], dialectics is an "anti-system" that expresses the consistent sense of non-identity; that subjective concepts, images, language, and knowledge cannot grasp [*Begriff*] the entirety of its object. For Adorno, that which is contradictory to the reified civil society of capitalism is that which is non-identical to the identity producing system of society. That which contradicts the system and the manufactured consciousness of an identity producing social totality is the non-identical that has the threatening capability of exposing the authoritarian lie of a positivistic, identity producing social system of domination. Thus, dialectics is not the

taking of an ideological standpoint. Rather, it is the awareness that reality goes beyond the thought of it. Dialectics is the awareness of thought's insufficiency in giving expression to reality. The dialectical methodology of determinate negation acknowledges that there is always an objective remainder that lies beyond the concept of it; that the concept does not exhaust the thing conceived. As such, dialectics is born from within the experience of the negative and, thus, is the consistent sense of nonidentity [Adorno 1973:3-57, esp. 5, Part II; Marcuse 1941:vii-xiv]. The Hegelian/Marxian dialectical logic and its methodology of determinate negation are thus, much more than the "algebra of revolution" [Rees 1998: par. 145, 60n]. Dialectics arise from and apply to every aspect of human experience and knowledge in the pursuit of truth, human liberation and happiness. Yet, in socio-historical terms, the methodology of dialectics is at least this method of revolution as it identifies the reified untruth of every system of domination and seeks its overthrow. It reveals not only that the authoritarian concept does not express that which it is supposed to grasp and represent in truth, but also that the class-dominated social system that creates the ideology of identity falls far short of its expressed cultural and political ideals. The dialectical methodology of determinate negation ruthlessly identifies the contradiction between the concept and experience and reveals that there is "something missing" [Brecht 2007:20], that there is a non-identical, contradictory "residue" [Bloch 1988:2ff.] or "remainder" [Adorno 1973:4-8, Part II] that lies outside of the representation and control of the system and ideology of identity production. Thus, the dialectical dynamic of determinate negation is the negation of that which limits humanity in its struggle toward freedom, solidarity, and happiness. As expressed by Hegel, Marx and the Critical Theorists, the method of determinate negation is not abstract or total negation, which divides knowledge and thus life into antagonistic realms, but the negation of that specific element that no longer allows the significance, meaning, happiness or truth of life to be expressed adequately or experienced. This realization produces of itself the dialectical dynamic of determinate negation as the perpetual pursuit of objective knowledge and truth through the negation of those specific forms of knowledge that are not adequate to its object.

Life is Not Lived

Adorno's negative dialectics is thereby materialistically grounded in the experience of life's pain and negativity; the knowledge that in the metastasizing global system of capitalism, there is no life any longer. It is the awareness that "there is no longer any beauty or consolation except in the gaze falling on horror, withstanding it, and in unalleviated consciousness of negativity holding fast to the possibility of what is better" [Adorno 1974:25]. Adorno thereby brought the theological ban on images into secular form "by not permitting Utopia to be positively pictured," which would hypostatize the utopic as something known toward which those with such knowledge will lead. For Adorno [1974:50; 1993:87; 1973], the truth is not the whole but rather "the whole is the false/the untrue." This untruth of totality is not merely mythical but a very real, socio-historical force of systemic domination and illusion that entraps and subsumes everything. By exposing the untruth of totality, thought satisfies the postulate of determinate negation. Thus, the possibility of a utopic redemption of life is to be contemplated negatively, not as dystopia but as the living, historical theory and praxis of determinately negating that which causes the suffering and destruction of humanity and nature. "In the end hope, wrested from reality by negating it, is the only form in which

truth appears. Without hope, the idea of truth would be scarcely even thinkable …" [Adorno 1974:98]. As Adorno [1974:247] stated, this determinate negation of the negative is the religious notion of redemption that has been translated into his historical materialism. It is this materialistic understanding of redemption that is the "light" of knowledge – the light of the history. As Adorno [1993: 88] stated, "The ray of light that reveals the whole to be untrue in all its moments is none other than utopia, the utopia of the whole truth, which is still to be realized." The dialectical methodology of determinate negation "is the ontology of the wrong state of things" and as such serves the utopic end of achieving reconciliation [Adorno 1973:6-11].

All other forms of knowledge are seen to be little more than positivistic techniques to "progressively" reconstruct what already exists. For Adorno, Horkheimer, and Benjamin, from the experiences of those who are "non-identical" – the poor, the oppressed, the weak, the dying and the dead, critical perspectives and interpretations need to be created that reveal the deadliness of existing society and its history "as it will appear one day in the messianic light." In this can be heard the materialistic inversion of the prophetic, Messianic, and eschatological longings for the future of the Omega God, who broke into the nightmare of history to set at liberty the oppressed and to make all things New, as proclaimed in the biblical texts of Judaism and Christianity. Here, in the historical struggle for the negation of the causes of suffering and of that which prevents the fulfillment of satisfying human need, materialism comes full circle to be united with theology, as it too seeks the resurrection of the body of humanity and of nature in a new history and thus, a new creation. This, as Adorno states, is the task of knowledge in the light of redemption and of its revolutionary praxis. Yet, as he states, this task is an "utterly impossible thing" since it is a perspective that idealistically stands outside of the reality of which it is a part. *"Hic Rhodus, his saltus"* [Hegel 1967b:11]. This perspective and knowledge of redemption is thus infected with the same disease that it seeks to escape [Horkheimer 1972:129-131]. This is a positively conceived utopia of "perfect justice" that in its idealistic flight beyond the cruel reality of the present ultimately dissolves into irrelevancy and tragically sinks unconsciously into the quagmire of injustice that it wants to change. In the spirit of the radicalized Decalogue prohibitions translated into his materialist negative dialectics, Adorno asserts that this positive utopic impossibility must be acknowledged for the sake of that which is possible. It is because of Adorno's [1998:133-142; 1973] translation of Judaism's prohibitions of naming and/or imaging the Absolute into his negative, materialist dialectics that he rejected of any type of revealed faith and its utopic image of a redeemed future and steadfastly held on to the radically negative materialist interpretation of the religious prohibition of images. This negative dialectical approach to the utopic, quite simply, is the substance of Adorno's critique of Bloch utopic thought, as well as it being the basis of Bloch's critique of Adorno's.

Religion as Inheritance

Bloch [1972:82] also expressed the need for the translation of Christianity's utopic, eschatological substance into the historical responsibility and praxis of human beings in saying that:

"the Bible only has a future inasmuch as it can, with this future, transcend without transcendence. Without the Above-us, transposed, Zeus-like, high up-there, but *with the 'unveiled face,' potentially in the Before-us, of our true Moment (nunc stans)*."

In speaking of the relevancy and future of the Bible and of the biblical religions ability to "transcend [the present] without transcendence," Bloch changed the traditional vertical axis orientation of Hellenistic theological thinking in Christianity back into that first Jewish apocalyptic paradigm of early Christianity; to the revolutionary Jewish and Christian responsibility for making the religion's utopic hope of the *eschaton* – of the mythologically conceived "end-time" – a goal of history [Küng 1995:CI-II]. Because of this, the critical, political theologian Moltmann [1969:Chapt. VIII] stated that Bloch's entire philosophy of hope results in a type of "meta-religion." To be heirs of this religiously expressed explosive hope for the end of the continuing history of inequity and misery through the dawning of a new and just creation, historical materialism must embody religion's – especially Christianity's – eschatological hope. For as Bloch [1987:1370] states, "Marxism, in all its analyses the coldest detective, takes the fairytale seriously, takes the dream of a Golden Age practically; real debit and credit of real hope begins." The Judeo-Christian archetype of the prophetic, Messianic, and eschatological Kingdom of Freedom overthrowing and historically transcending – without reducing this to other-worldly transcendence – the reified and deadly Kingdom of Necessity towards a concrete utopia in the future is the dynamic religious heritage of revolutionary Marxism [Bloch 1972; Žižek 2000, 2003, 2010; Žižek and Milbank 2009]. For Bloch, it is only Marxism that has taken the utopic substance of Christianity's expressions of hope and liberation and transformed them into the revolutionary theory and praxis for a better world; one that does not abstractly repudiate the present world but seeks its metaphysically inspired determinate negation so as to allow its materialistic *Meta,* the *Novum* contained and restrained within the present, the "Tomorrow within the Today," the "Not-yet-essentially-being" and the moral "Ought" to unfold and develop its truth logically in history. For Bloch [2000:179-186], it is in this inward, transcendental and thus, becoming understanding of humanity and history that Kant's Subjective Idealism and Schelling's Transcendental Idealistic Philosophy of Nature triumph over or "burns through" Hegel's Absolute Idealism, which Bloch states has objectified all their "inward" utopic vision and impulse into his "explicitly concluded system." Because of Bloch's almost ontologically conceived historical materialism, which metaphysically envisioned the historical necessity of nature and humanity's freedom and truth ultimately realizing themselves in and through each other, Habermas [1983:61-77] called Bloch "a Marxist Schelling." Adorno expresses the same critique of Bloch's utopic philosophy, albeit more critically.

Fundamental Differences

Although both Bloch and Adorno identify themselves as historical materialists, and are thoroughly grounded in the dialectical methodology of both Hegel and Marx, there are serious, fundamental theoretical and political differences between them on the notion of utopia. Both of these differences were expressed by Adorno [1991b:200-215] in his 1959 revised review of Bloch book *Spuren* (*Traces*). In this review, Adorno also compares Bloch's utopic philosophy with that of the Romantic philosophy of Schelling and with

literary Expressionism, which express their discontent with the reification of modernity. However, according to Adorno, Bloch is not content to stay in the midst of the objective, social negativity and seek to create something wherein human subjectivity can find itself. While his historical, philosophical focus remains on the experiences of individuals, Bloch nevertheless addresses the objective conditions in a regressive expressionist, narrative form of knowledge that belongs to the past. Adorno [1992:218-219] expresses this lack of critical philosophical substance in Bloch's philosophy by comparing it to the invention of a Hassidic tale and as being "in close proximity to sympathy for the occult." Adorno [1999:8] harshly expressed his critique of Bloch's philosophy of utopia in a letter to his friend Siegfried Kracauer as being "the toilet stench of eternity." Adorno [1973:56-57] rejected Bloch's more transcendent use of dialectics, since for Adorno dialectics focuses on the *content* of reality, which is not reified. Unlike positivism, which is the mythology of what already exists and has become today the new, albeit perverted form of enlightenment, dialectics is the protest against all forms of mythology and its cyclical reification of reality. "To want substance in cognition is to desire a utopia," since it is the content of reality that produces this desire for utopia and the consciousness of its possibility. Utopia, therefore, is prevented by the *dream* of its possibility, but not by the immediate reality in which the possibility of the utopic can be found. From within the midst of reality, real thinking is in the service of the utopic as a concrete element of existence that points beyond itself – no matter how negatively – to that which is not. As Adorno [Adorno & Horkheimer 2011:1-17, esp. 4-5] said in a discourse with his close friend Horkheimer, thinking cannot be limited to the mere positivistic reproduction of what exists. This is the reduction of thought into an instrumental technique that merely reproduces what already is. However, the dynamic truth of Reason, which can instrumentally keep the machinery of society running, also contains that which is other than what is. Of course, there is no guarantee that this other will ever be realized, but there is no thinking without the thinking of that otherness. The positivistic reification of thinking, knowledge, reality, and of life itself in the socio-historical development toward total integration of everything into the dominating empire of capitalist equivalence is the consequence of modernity's rejection of utopia. When the sigh and longing for the utopic, for that which is "not yet," is rejected, then reason and thinking die. Historical materialism, thus, is the prism in which the color of utopia is refracted as the not guaranteed possibility of determinately negating the negativity from within the concrete present.

Adorno's [1977:151-176] critique of Bloch's philosophy of utopia extended into his – as well as Georg Lukács' and Brecht's – enthusiastic celebration of Soviet society as the beginning realization of the hoped for utopic reconciliation of past antagonisms. However, as Adorno [1977:176] states, the antagonisms and their terrible consequences remain, exposing the assertion that they were being overcome as a lie. Because of this, Adorno [1991b:214] accused Bloch of telling stories about the transformation of the world as if it was the fulfillment of what had been pre-decided, with little reflection on what had happened to the Revolution or to the concept and possibility of revolution under completely changed socio-historical conditions.

For Bloch, on the other hand, it was precisely Adorno's unrelenting negativity, of his radical application of the Decalogue prohibitions to utopic thought that raised despair to a level in which any revolutionary struggle for change is meaningless, that Bloch could not

accept. According to Bloch, Adorno's "…reified despair counts for no more than reified confidence of the kind that has been practiced from time immemorial by the church and the authorities with their highly conformist message 'Be consoled' [Claussen 2008:273]." Against its own intentions, such negativity allows the status quo to remain the same.

Realized Utopic Dreams

These similarities and differences in Adorno's and Bloch's [1988:1-17] theories of utopia were given quite concise expression in their 1964 public discourse that was aired on radio in Baden-Baden, Germany. Adorno set the stage for their discourse on the ambiguity and contradictions of utopia by grounding the discussion concretely in the historical success of technology to realize particular utopian dreams of former times, e.g., T.V., space travel, moving faster than sound, the wish to fly, etc. It seems quite obvious that Adorno did this in order to prevent the discourse from becoming abstract and transcendental. According to Adorno, by the realization of these particular dreams, their very best element – their future-oriented, utopian dynamic/spirit/purpose – is increasingly endangered of being forgotten and thus, lost. This very real fear, of course, is grounded in the reality of the capitalist culture of consumption that systemically and ideologically reduces humanity's utopian longing into a commodity fetishism that prioritizes "having" over "being" [Siebert, et al. 2013; Fromm 1976]. These realized utopian dreams have become nothing more than tiresome, positivistic facts produced by the success of modern science and technology. As such, these realized wishes become ideologically deceptive – producing a "false consciousness" – with regards to any utopian longing. The fulfillment of the wish takes something away from the future-oriented, "erotic" utopian vision and dynamic from which the wish began [Bloch 1988:1]. Such realized longings are emptied of their utopian dynamic of the hope for that which is other than what is. Civil society's technological success in fulfilling a specific utopian wish reduces the critical substance and dynamic of utopian thought into being little more than a scientific/technological justification of bourgeois historicism's concept of "progress." Utopia and its hoped-for future strategically become absorbed into the static status quo, the eternal positivistic now, which transposes the dynamic, future oriented, hope-inspiring utopic dynamic of the "not-yet" into the progressive expectation for the given economic productive forces to provide consumers – today called "customers" not citizens – with the ever-new realization of such commodified dreams. This abstract, chronological notion of "progress" on a historical continuum into an empty and meaningless future quantitatively replaces the qualitative, utopic theory and praxis for a new, more humane, reconciled future society. This loss of the dream, longing and hope for that which is "other" than what is the case is a consequence of the success of an instrumental rationality and logic made socially concrete by modern technology and a mass culture that lauds its ability to realize these specific utopian wishes. Adorno [1974:110] gave expression to this absorption of the cry and hope for utopic social transformation into the existing antagonistic social totality through the example of modern bread factories reducing Christianity's "the Lord's Prayer" for God to "give us this day our daily bread" [Matthew 6:9-13] into mere poetry, which might edify the person saying the prayer while the horrific need of the poor for bread continues. Through the mass production of a staple of life, technology absorbs the religious utopic promise and hope of a new creation into the apparent success and continuing potential of the existing status quo. Utopic theory and

praxis for that which is "other" than what is becomes reduced to the flat-lined, ideological continuum of progress. As Adorno asserts, this development becomes a strong argument against the possibility of Christianity and its eschatological hope, even more so than all the modern critiques of the life of Jesus [Horkheimer 1972:129-131; 1974b].

Residue

Bloch agreed with Adorno that technology has this type of effect on specific realizations of utopian wishes – it destroys them. Yet, for Bloch [1986b:2ff], there always remains a still meaningful, utopian *"residue"* that falls outside of and is not fulfilled by such technological accomplishments. For Bloch, the historical movement toward a totally administered, cybernetic and dehumanized society had not yet been achieved. Although, as stated above, Adorno was much more skeptical than Bloch about the possibility of an alternative to civil society's progressive transition to a totally administered system and world, his entire philosophy was nevertheless a negative dialectical critique of the falsity of Modernity's historicist philosophy of history and its "unity principle," which has been given its logical justification through a subjective identity philosophy that dualistically and thus, imperialistically privileges the authority of an abstract, isolated subject and its all-defining Concept in knowing and dominating objective reality. As Adorno stated in a 1956 discourse with his friend, colleague, and the Director of the "Frankfurt School" Max Horkheimer, from within the ever-increasing "hell" of capitalist class domination and the "creative destruction" it produces in Western civilization and globally, a crisis that is ruthlessly yet "progressively" moving like a juggernaut into a positivistically conceived homogenous, empty future, their entire critical theory – as well as that of Walter Benjamin – could be described in the best possible way as a *"Flaschenpost,"* an emergency message in a bottle of social critique of the increasing crises, and hope for the creation of a more reconciled future global world [Adorno & Horkheimer 2011: chapt. 10, esp. p. 100; Adorno 1974:209; Bloch 1989; Benjamin 1968: 253-264; 2003 IV:389-411; 1999:101-119, 456-488, 651-670, 693-697, 698-739, 779-785, 787-795, 800-806; Marcuse 1964; Neumann 1942]. This message was not to be passed on to the masses or to powerless individuals, but "to an imaginary witness," who one day might take responsibility for it so that it would not perish with its authors [Horkheimer and Adorno 1972:256]. For both Adorno and Bloch, the objective world is heterogeneous, in terms of both nature and history, and thus epistemologically falls outside the definitional control and self-serving meaning of such class-interest driven, identity-creating concepts that seek in god-like ways to create the world in the bourgeoisie's own image [Genesis 1-2; John 1:1-5; Colossians 1:15-17; Adorno 1973]. Since, as an expression of the "premature birth" or "pre-history" of humanity [Bloch 1976:3-4; Marx 1970, 1973; Benjamin 1968: 253-264; 2003 IV:389-411], such concepts and the meaning and values they express are the intellectual reflection of the dominate class's interests and the social system that is created to further those interests, it is this systematically marginalized, "non-identical" if not meaningless "other" that is the dynamic essence of dialectics and its methodology of determinate negation [Hegel 1967:67-1330, par. 118-130; 1991b:136-152; Adorno 1973: Intro. & Part I; 2008: Lecture 1; Adorno and Benjamin 1999:104-116].

Human Intelechy

According to Bloch, every technological realization of utopian wishes or dreams, which can produce a disempowerment of further utopian thought and longing, also produces a utopian residue that continues to foment. This residue exposes the negativity from within the identity system and is, as such, the footing for the revolutionary resistance and hope that can lead toward utopic social change. For Bloch, the technological fulfillment of utopian wishes is very limited to particular "wish dreams." The critical question that needs to be asked is to what future do these dreams point? Is it toward the ever-increasing production of consumer commodities? Toward newer, faster, bigger versions of what already is: cars, computers, I-pods, technological gadgets, airplanes that hold more cargo/people and are faster, global communications, military weapons, everything that increases the need for heightened security measures such as spy technology and centers, anti-immigration walls between nations – all expressions of the defensive and retaliatory *jus or lex talionis*? Or, does the dominance of an instrumental reason and its technology keep the door open toward a more humane, just, rational, loving, merciful, hopeful, shalom-filled future society and world? Although he doesn't explain what is meant by this or what it will take for its realization, it is this later possibility that Bloch calls the "residue" of a capitalist society and its technological fulfillment of utopian wishes, a residue of that which is still not realized by the already existent economic, social, political, scientific, and technological means of production possibilities. The residue is the "other" – this hope of a more reconciled future society – that is, for Bloch [1988:11-17], rooted in the intelechy of humanity unfolding its "being" toward what "should be." It is this "other," this "residue" that is expressed in the Jewish foundational narrative and hope of the Exodus, which is anamnestically and proleptically to be remembered and to be personally identified with by the faithful [Deut. 25]. This "residue" of otherness is also the dominant and defiant substance and dynamic of the Golden Rule and the Sermon on the Mount – "So always treat others as you would like them to treat you; that is the meaning of the Law and the Prophets" [Matthew 7:12; Horkheimer 1985:390; Küng 1991c, 2000]; the same Law and Prophets that Jesus says he came not to cancel but to fulfill through his present prophetic and eschatological praxis [Matthew 5:17-18]; the very same Torah which calls Israel – God's people, those who wrestle with God and humanity to bring about a more redeemed future and prevail [Gen. 32] – to become a good nation – a light to the rest of the nations who will come to Israel to learn of its/god's ways – in the hope of the coming of God's Reign – the totally "Other" [Matthew 6:25-33; Bloch 1970b: 73-92, 111-117, 118-141; 1972a; 1986: I, II, III; Küng 1991c; 2000]. In this, utopia is not conceived of as a place but a living dialectical praxis through which the possibility of a more utopic society is created – ever created. It is in *this* sense that the concept, theory, vision and praxis of utopia has not become meaningless or ridiculously unreal, as it has been defined defensively by modern civil society.

Utopian Possibilities

Bloch believed that the modern epoch lives much closer to the possible realization of utopia. According to Bloch, due to the power and capability of technology and science to realize some utopian dreams, the modern epoch may have elevated the possibility of utopian thought more than hinder it. The modern translation of the notion of utopia into

technological possibilities and even into the genre of science fiction is not the end of utopia but keep the utopic other alive. As an example of this, Bloch returned to the early development of utopic thinking from being envisioned in *space* to its transition of being in *time.* For Bloch, Thomas More's conception of Utopia in space meant that the utopia was here now, but that I/we are not there. However, in placing utopia into time meant that not only were *we* not in utopia, but also that utopia wasn't here *yet.* Placing the utopian into the future did not empty it of its meaning and critical purpose as though it did not and could not exist. Utopia does not exist *yet* but depends on people living and working now to realize it in the future. Bloch imaged this as the more we travel toward the future isle of utopia, the more it will arise from the sea of the possible – out of the present chaos, which the sea represents. For Bloch, it is the ever-present *residue* and dynamic hope of utopia that can overcome the deadly rejection of the utopian longing for that which is other than what is and its justifying positivistic metaphysics of "progress" made real through specific technological creations of new commodities. Specific things may progressively be altered, even created and thus give the appearance of change and of the new, but the crushing, class dominated social totality and its system remains the same – increasingly the same.

For Bloch, defiant utopian wishing, dreaming, visioning and consciousness, rooted in the nature of being human, has the critical, concrete capability of critiquing and transforming the existing social totality and its relations of production and power. For the owners of the means of production – the capitalist class power-elite, such potential change of the social totality, which is constructed to serve their class profit motive, must be prevented at all costs. It is for this reason that a critical, eschatological culture that transcends the boundary of the status quo is dangerous to the capitalist class domination of society.

Paradise Lost

Adorno's critique of the contradiction between the capitalist class's domination of the modern social totality and its scientific and technological potentials for overcoming the existing social antagonisms – the critically framed division between the owners and the means of production – expresses the difference between the two theorists concerning the possibility of utopia and its realization. Because of the narrow, specific realization of utopian dreams by means of an instrumental rationality and technology, which are far too often the derivative of research done for "national security," Adorno thinks that people have lost their utopian consciousness or imagination that the social totality itself could be something other than what it is. Within this socially manufactured collapse of thinking for that which is "other" than what exists, *particular* changes within the existing status quo can be imagined if not hoped for, but not change of the status quo/social totality itself. Thinking in categories of the Absolute, universality, totality has been jettisoned ideologically as being the anachronistic, "Grand Narrative" metaphysics of totalitarianism or as that which cannot be scientifically analyzed and proven. This rejection of the philosophical category of totality is ideological since the globalization of neo-liberal capitalism through its various international structures, e.g., the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and its Structural Adjustment Programs, etc., as well as the political, cultural and military policies of its neoconservative hand-maid, is directed toward nothing but the totality of global domination. This systemic dummying down of human consciousness and knowledge,

particularly that of the working class, gives concrete expression to Marx's [1976:91] warning of capitalism as being the deadly Medusa head that is veiled and thus, unknown. Thus, there is little to no consciousness and knowledge of the reality of the capitalist "system" of globalizing domination, which thereby disembowels any thought of revolutionary praxis to change the dominant and manipulative power relations that determine the social totality. It is this class dominated social totality of Western capitalism and its ideology producing "culture industry," which has produced the "strange shrinking of the utopian consciousness," that is the focus of Adorno [1988:3-4; 1973; 2008, 1991a] negative theory of utopia. For the masses, ignorance, cynicism and apathy reign, as the system moves ineluctably toward its consummation in a totally administered, antagonistic social totality.

It is Adorno's thesis that deep down human beings feel or intuit that life and society could be different, that people's needs could actually be satisfied and that they could be happy and free, both subjectively and objectively in solidarity. However, according to Adorno [1988:4], "a wicked spell has been cast over the world" by an increasingly reified class system that prevents people from attaining such a universal utopian consciousness and thus, living for its realization. This spell is the mystification or "aura" of capital and its fetish of commodification, which, along with a cultural and media industry that incessantly advertises and creates the idolatrous need for such things as being the fulfillment of life, causes people to reject any alternative to the existing status quo and to identify with their masters. Adorno's solution to overcoming this contradiction is for people to be compelled by this contradiction – to become critically conscious of this contradiction – in order to enter into the socio-historical struggle to determinately negate it; to identify themselves with the utopian "impossibility" and make it their own. This ownership of the utopic impossible is the materialist expression for the religious faith commitment to a hope for that impossible "Other."

The Content of Utopia

The fundamental difference between Adorno's and Bloch's theory of utopia is expressed clearly in the different paradigms they use to answer the question about the content of utopia. Both Adorno and Bloch agree that the content of utopias is dependent on the existing social conditions and possibilities of its realization and that it is not comprised of one single, isolated category, i.e., happiness, freedom, etc. The objective, scientific, economic, technological, productive forces of the existing social totality must be taken into account in any discourse on the content of the utopian other as it is this socio-historic context that gives the meaning and purpose to all of the individual utopian categories. As Adorno [1988:3] states, "Whatever utopia is, whatever can be imagined as utopia, this is the transformation of the totality." The consciousness of this possibility of the society's transformation can only occur negatively, through the knowledge of the social totality as antagonistic. Thus, utopia is to be found in the determinate negation of the falseness, the negativity of what is, which thereby points through the negative to what should be, but is not guaranteed. In his final aphorism in his *Minima Moralia* entitled "Finale," Adorno [1974:247] gave expression to this negative utopic endeavor.

Here, Adorno materialistically inverts Judeo-Christian religious categories of redemption and "the Messianic light" as the dialectical lens through which to contemplate the

negativity of the social totality. The only truth that knowledge has to offer to the world is the redemptive/liberating determinate negation of the existing negativity. Anything else isn't an expression of real knowledge and its redemptive task of educating and thus, redemptively leading humanity out of its enslavement to the historical system of domination. From such negative, dialectical knowledge, alternative perspectives are to be created that expose the antagonisms of the existing social totality as they "will appear one day in the messianic light" [Adorno 1974:247]. Such perspectives are not just an issue of abstract theory construction, but are to be derived from "felt contact" with the reality of the antagonistic social totality. This is the sole task of thought, which is not absolute but also conditioned by the negativity of the system of which it is a part. This ever-present negativity, conditionality and thus, impossibility of an absolute knowledge has to be acknowledge for the sake of achieving the possible through the determinate negation of the existing negativity. The wisdom and truth of utopia is manifested in the continuing, vigilant, historical act of negating the social conditions that destroy humanity and nature.

Longing

Also, for Bloch [1988:12, 5], "the essential function of utopia is a critique of what is present." Although the utopic content changes depending on the social conditions of the time, the *transcendental, humanistic* longing for utopia remains the same. For Bloch, that drive for the "other" than what exists is rooted in the historical becoming process of being human which is expressed as "longing;" "a longing that is the pervading and above all only honest quality of all human beings." Unlike Adorno, for Bloch utopia is the goal of being human and is not *completely* endangered by the barbarism of history and its development toward a totally administered society. Unlike Adorno's [1973, 1974, 2008, Adorno and Horkheimer 1972] assertion that history is moving toward the realization of a totally class-dominated, cybernetic, dehumanized future society and thus, toward the end of utopia, Bloch [1988:15] does not believe that utopia can be removed from history in spite of everything, since it is rooted in what it means to be and struggle for being human.

The Social Totality

For Adorno and Bloch, there is no one, singular utopian content. The concept of utopia is not defined by the transformation of one particular category, such as happiness or freedom. Each category of the existing social totality can change itself according to its own experience. However, this reduction of the meaning of utopia to one, isolated category equates utopia to the subjective epistemic meaning and purpose of idealism. The socio-historical context or totality, which connects all the categories, must be taken into account in any discourse on the content of utopia. It is this socio-historical totality that gives the established meaning and purpose to all of the particular categories, be it in terms of the modern bourgeois and even reactionary post-modern social construct based on the paradigm of an isolated, monadic, ego-centric subject that stands against any and all "others" – the *bellum omnium contra omnes,* or a collectivist notion of humanity in solidarity expressed the mutual recognition of the "other" and objectified in the system's economic productivity and humanistic distribution of wealth and power. Particularly, in the later expression of a socialistic social totality, the transformation of a one utopic category, e.g. happiness, freedom, equality, justice, etc., would necessitate a change in the other categories, which no longer stand in isolation

from each other as subjective ends in-themselves, but fulfills itself in terms of the newly created social context.

Death

However, for Adorno and Bloch, the crucial and determining issue for utopian thinking is the elimination of death, which also necessitates the elimination of the jus/lex talionis – the law of retaliation and revenge [Exodus 21:23-27; Qur'an 2:178-179, 16:126]. Within the given modern antagonistic social totality, the elimination of death is considered to be the most horrific thing possible for a necrophilic globalizing social totality. Even the suggestion of the utopic elimination of death threatens the very existence of an antagonistic social totality that produces and reproduces itself by means of death. The theory and praxis for a more reconciled future society is the enemy of every system of domination and it must be abolished. The social totality's identification with death, which produces the same hopeless identification in the oppressed social classes, is a reality that once was religiously called "evil." Yet, there is no secular term that can replace the word "evil" in expressing the depth and breadth of the horror created by the capitalist social totality and its globalization.

The biophilic, utopian consciousness is one that contains nothing horrific about death as it holds out the possibility that people no longer have to die, or suffer, fear, be or become defensive, despairing, hopeless, etc. However, this biophilic utopian consciousness is at present trumped by the absolute anti-utopia that sanctifies and makes death absolute. Although there is no one category that alone can realize the utopian consciousness and longing, the elimination of death is the most important dynamic purpose of utopian theory and praxis. For Bloch and Adorno, the fear of death is the fundamental root of utopian thought. This was expressed in the scientific, utopic pursuit of medicine as well as religion in their attempts to combat the power of death and ultimately conquer it. Particularly, Christianity proclaims the ultimate victory over death with the proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The elimination of death and the fear of it, thus setting people free from the "final enemy" [1 Corinthians 15:26; Revelation 21:4] is proclaimed throughout the eschatology of the New Testament and particularly in the Sermon on the Mount [Matthew 5-7; Luke 6:20-49] – the prophetic and Messianic proclamation, vision, dynamic longing that inspires concrete social praxis of/for a good, just, reconciled future without death and its consequences.

Faith

According to Bloch [1988:9-10], there are two parts to utopian thought: *social utopias* – construction of social totalities in which there are no exploited and dominated human beings, and *natural law* – in which there are no degraded, humiliated people. To this, Bloch adds *death* itself and the transcendental element of *faith* as the third component of utopian theory and praxis; faith in the elimination of death; faith as the victory over death that humanity cannot do for its self. For this, a transcendental "Other" is needed. "So we need the help of baptism, Christ's death, and resurrection" [Bloch: 1988:10]. Faith in a totally "Other," which can negate the final enemy, the anti-utopia of death and its power of fear, dialectically belongs to utopia while it also transcends it.

Adorno agrees with Bloch that without a faith in that which is totally "Other" than what is, without the notion of a life freed from death and everything connected with it, which is not solely an issue of science, the very idea of utopia cannot be thought. Where the idea, threshold, reality, antinomy and aporia of death is not considered, then there can be no utopian thought or praxis as the resistance against it. Thus, particularly for Adorno, because of the existential, social and historical reality of death, the very content of utopia cannot be imaged in a positive but only negative dialectical manner. As in all things, Adorno applies the very same prohibition of the second and third commandment of the Jewish Decalogue against naming or imaging positively the Absolute, the totally "Other," to any consideration of utopia. Only that which utopia is *not* can be stated. According to Adorno, the horrific reality of death is the metaphysical reason why utopia cannot be spoken about in a positive but only a negative manner. For Adorno [1988:10], utopia can only be expressed as the struggle to determinately negate the negativity of an antagonistic social totality that operates through the power, system, and structures of death. Utopia thereby includes and yet goes beyond death, as death is "nothing other than the power of that which merely is" [Bloch 1988:10]. Thus, for the sake of the continuing consciousness of and historical struggle for the possibility of utopia, nothing can be imaged, named, or known of utopia, as it is the struggle itself.

Bloch's theory agrees with Adorno's negative dialectical critique and revolutionary rebellion against every social system of domination. Yet, Adorno warns that the voices of utopic longing must always be on guard against compromised, patchwork solutions or of becoming satisfied with progress in addressing the powers of death, which creates a false consciousness of being victorious in the struggle with the socio-historical manifestations of death that, as a social totality, remain in power. One cannot negotiate with the devil. The negative dialectical, eschatological critique against all systems of domination and oppression, against that which should not be, in terms of the secular if not also religious longing and struggle for the utopia of the elimination of the socio-historical powers of death must be kept alive. This is done through attaining in solidarity with others the undaunted commitment to this negative utopian consciousness of transcendence for that which is historically beyond what is, that keeps the life-giving longing for that other/"Other" dynamically and concretely alive in terms of both theory and praxis. While Adorno focuses on the determinate negation of the specific negatives of humanity's and nature's destruction in a social system moving toward its consummation in a totally administered, class dominated society as the dynamic of utopia, Bloch, nevertheless presents his theory of utopia in a transcendental optimism for the ultimate, revolutionary overthrow of the social totalities of death.

Something's Missing

In their discourse, Bloch quoted the lumberjack character Paul Ackermann from Brecht's [2010:19-21, Scene Eight] *City of Mahagonny,* who proclaims, "something's missing" in Mahagonny, which was suppose to be a capitalist paradise.

> Jake: *Paul, why are you running away?*

> Paul: *Well, what is there to keep me here?*

Harry: *Why are you pulling your face like that?*

Paul: *I could not help seeing a notice*

On which was the word: 'Forbidden'.

Joe: *Haven't you got gin and cheep whiskey?*

Paul: They're too cheap!

Harry: *And peace and concord?*

Paul: *It's too peaceful!*

Jake: *If you feel like eating fish*

You can go and catch one.

Paul: *That won't make me happy.*

Joe: *You can smoke.*

Paul: *You can smoke.*

Harry: *You can nod off.*

Paul: *You can sleep.*

Jake: *You can swim.*

Paul: *You can pick a banana!*

Joe: *You can look at the water.*

Paul just shrugs his shoulders.

Harry: *You can forget.*

Paul: *But something is missing.*

Jake, Harry, Joe: *Wonderful is the approach of eventide*

And delightful are men's intimate conversations!

Paul: *But something is missing.*

Jake, Harry, Joe: *Delightful is the peace and quiet*

And congenial is the concord.

Paul: *But something is missing.*

Jake, Harry, Joe: *Quite splendid is the simple life*

And beyond compare are the wonders of nature.

Paul: *But something is missing.*

I think that I just want to eat my hat

I think that will fill me right up.

Why ever should you not just eat up your hat

If you've nothing, if you've nothing, if you've nothing else to do?

You've mixed a different cocktail every day

You've seen the moon shine down the whole night through.

They've closed the bar, the bar of Mandalay

And still nothing has come to pass.

My God, boys, and still nothing has come to pass.

According to Bloch [1988:15], this phrase that something is missing in the "paradise" of Mahagonny (capitalism) was one of the most profound and truthful statements ever penned by Brecht. The excerpt above expresses the dehumanizing deadness of capitalism that at best treats people as livestock: providing them diversionary and mindless entertainment, as they are lead daily to the slaughterhouse. The productive system of capitalism remains hidden, while the working class decays with no work, no meaning, no happiness, no life, and no future. For Adorno, Brecht's statement gives expression to his thought that people are conscious that life could really be different than the way it presently is. It could be just. It could be peaceful. It could be reconciled and happy. People are conscious, "deep down," that what is missing is utopia, a concrete socio-historical utopia. The truth and purpose of utopia is to negate the conditions that turn human beings and nature into nothing but reified objects, whose spirit and life is reduced systemically to nothing. Bloch [1988:15] too critiques this horror by quoting an old peasant proverb, "There is no dance before the meal." Until people have their immediate needs fulfilled, there is no dancing, no play. "Only when all the guests have sat down at the table can the Messiah, can Christ come." Bloch's and Adorno's friend, Walter Benjamin [1968:254-255; 1978:312-313; Matthew 7:33] expressed the same materialist inversion of Jesus' teaching in the demand that the concrete needs of people for food, water, clothing, shelter, and happiness must be met first, whereupon the kingdom of God will then be added to you. In terms of historical materialism, utopia has to be taken out of the clouds so as to address the unjust material conditions of the present to become a force of socio-historical critique of the necrophilia of modernity and of revolutionary change. In this sense, for Bloch, Marxism itself is only a precondition for utopia – not

utopia itself. Marxism is that which allows all people to the table, that which seeks to meet the human needs of all people. It sets the stage for the beginning of a human history and life in freedom, happiness, possible fulfillment, creativity and content – beyond that of mere necessity.

Again, at the end of their discourse, Adorno expressed the concrete difference between Bloch's transcendental approach to historical materialism's utopic critique of capitalism and his own negative dialectics of determinate negation as utopia. Adorno critiqued Bloch's use and explanation of Brecht's statement of "something is missing" as coming strangely close to St. Anselm of Canterbury's [1962] ontological proof of God. To say that something's missing means that the seeds, the incipient foment of that something is already present, without which no one would know that it is missing. The concept of God or utopia already contain the elements of the utopic reality that is missing, and it is from this knowledge and experience that utopia can be realized. Without this eschatological dynamic, no notion of utopia or of thinking itself would be possible. For Adorno [1992b:200-215], Bloch's transcendental materialist theory is entirely too optimistic that such change can and will ultimately happen. For Adorno [1992b:209, 211], Bloch is a mystic in the paradoxical way in which he unites theology and atheism. Bloch's theory of utopia is a materialist metaphysics that naively constructs the theological notion of transcendence into the profane realm of history, which thereby turns philosophy back into idealism, into a "phenomenology of the imaginary." The oppressive and deadly reality and power of the increasing negativity of capitalism – and of all authoritarian systems of domination – is acknowledged but transcendentally and thus, logically glossed over in the hope filled struggle of its negation. For Adorno, it is the seriousness of suffering and death itself that is the horrifying power and reality of capitalism as a globalizing juggernaut moving toward its consummation in the iron cage of a totally administered, prison society that is *missing* in Bloch's theory of utopia.

Hope

Of course the difference between Bloch and Adorno must not be reduced into a dualistic, zero-sum equation. Bloch, as Adorno, was a dialectical philosopher of historical materialism, deeply grounded in Hegelian dialectics and Marx's revolutionary critique of capitalism. He knew of capitalism's negativity and power. He also knew of the historical expressions of revolutionary resistance against all systems of domination, especially that of Judaism and Christianity, the alternatives presented in aesthetics, as well as of the French, Russian, and even Weimar revolutions. For Bloch, the systems of death are to be critiqued, resisted, and negated by the theoretical and practical power or "principle" of hope. For Bloch, hope is concerned with and envisions perfection.

Max Horkheimer [1972:129-131] addressed the issue of perfection as an anachronistic illusion that has been carried over into modern social practice from the religious longing of the past. For Horkheimer, the realization of perfection in reality is impossible, for even if a better society is created that negates the negativity of the given society, it still will be impossible to rectify or redeem the suffering of the past's innocent victims in history or nature. The transition of the religious longing to transcend the horror of the present into the modern "impotent [conceptual] revolt against reality" is part of humanity's historical development. However, as Horkheimer states, what differentiates a

progressive person from a retrogressive one is not the refusal of the idea of transcendence, but the understanding of the historical limits to its fulfillment. For Horkheimer and Adorno, the concern for perfection is a "vain hope."

Yet, for Bloch, the critique of that which is imperfect, incomplete, and should not be so contains within itself the conception of and longing for the possibility of perfection. For Bloch, perfection is understood to be the rebellious possibility of the negation of the present negativity. Bloch [1998:14] gives expression to his defiant hope in the words of the 19th century German novelist, Wilhelm Raabe: "illusions are necessary, have become necessary for life in a world completely devoid of a utopian conscience and utopian presentiment …" It is precisely in this glorification of the idealistic "lie," from the perspective of Adorno's negative dialectic theory, that Bloch becomes overly hopeful if not dangerously illusionary. The determinate negation of negativity does not produce the possibility of perfection. The negation has possibly overcome a specific form of the social totality's negativity, which, as history shows, is often recreated into another, more strategically "rationalized" form of cybernetic of negativity. Nevertheless, for Bloch [1972:264], hope is "the unassuaged, explosive hunger of the life-force, [that] presents itself as the continual Not-yet of true human possession." It is from this hunger and hope for that which is other than what is that feeds and empowers people to live and work for utopia. According to Bloch [1972:264-265], it is from this defiant, hope-filled work for utopia that "the radical, subversive dream of the Bible" for the future, "to the great dimension of light with which the world is pregnant" comes into being. Hope is not confidence of that for which it hopes as it is well aware of its being surrounded by the power of negativity. Hope can be thwarted, but for Bloch [1999:16-17], that does not mean it is defeated. Even in the midst of its decline and disappointment, hope still nails a flag on the sinking ship's mast, for the decline is not accepted. For the hunger of hope is "an irrepressible sense of the awakening of meaning," and, as such, true hope is an expression of never ending defiance against all odds for the Not-yet-being, whose ultimate realization will be the beginning of the true Utopia.

Conclusion

Both Adorno and Bloch fought tirelessly to overcome the "wicked spell" of capitalism and of its epistemological mythology of positivism. Nevertheless, this authoritarian system of death has continued to spread across the globe, destructively creating it in its own deadly imperialistic image. Although their historical materialist methodologies and theories of utopia differed, this system was theirs and our common enemy. Their theories are indeed *"Flaschenpost"* – notes in a bottle cast into the sea of chaos in the hope that they would be found, understood and taken responsibility for by people in the future. Bloch and Adorno's theories of utopia, although fundamentally different, need to be determinately negated and thus critically revived in the 21st century to help in the present day fight against the much further developed anti-utopian, capitalist system of domination and its deadly threat not only to the present but also to the past and to the future. Through such committed and continuing work on their dialectical materialist theories of society and religion – particularly, by the religions and by academia – against the progressive collapse of modernity into the positivistic reproduction of hell, the possibility of a more reconciled future may be created, even if it is just a little bit.

Notes

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[1] For example, see *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America 2002 & 2010,* [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf.], as well as the text of the U.S. President Barak Obama's UN General Assembly speech on September 24, 2013[http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/25/us/politics/text-of-obamas-speech-at-the-un.html?_r=0]

[2] John Stuart Mill is credited with coining these terms in an 1868 speech before the British House of Commons in which he along with others denounced the British government's Irish land policy. Among the numerous dystopia novels published since the beginning of the 20th century, the Critical Theorist Erich Fromm [1949:259 ftnt.] identified Jack London's prediction of fascism in the United States in his 1908 published *The Iron Heel* as the first, modern negative utopia.

[3] See the biblical covenant calls to faith through which the faithful's identity and future are open to the future in the dynamic relationship with their God: Abram [Genesis 12:1-9]; Moses and the Hebrews in the Exodus [19:3-8]; Jesus' call to discipleship [Mark 8:34-9:1].

[4] This proverb was expressed by Hegel as a harsh critique of his former friend and colleague F.W.J Schelling's Romantic Philosophy of Nature, in which all particularity is subsumed abstractly and thus, in an unmediated way into the equally abstract and dark Absolute Idea. As will be shown below, Habermas [1983:61-77] critiques Bloch's philosophy in similar terms, by calling Bloch a "Marxist Schelling."

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