The Spiral Dance of Ideology and Utopia: Appropriating Humanity and Technology in Science Fiction

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Introduction

The concepts of ideology and utopia have been best dissected by Karl Mannheim and Paul Ricoeur in their *Ideology and Utopia* (1935) and *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* (1986), respectively. Both philosophers argue that while ideology attempts to legitimize the existing social order by upholding the interests of the dominant social group, utopia functions to subvert the *status quo* and to establish an innovative perspective for perceiving the present, as well as the future social order. In this article, I adapt the sociological discussions of utopia by Mannheim and Ricoeur to the study of science fiction. The question of whether the utopias depicted in science fiction contribute to a kind of spiral progression for humanity and its civilization is explored. In particular, I analyse how and why technological utopias challenge the present reality and construct alternate possible worlds through the examination of the utopian metaphors of cyberspace, cyborg and space travel in science fiction from Canada, the United States, Poland, Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Works discussed include William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984), Stanislaw Lem's *Solaris* (1961), Arthur C. Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), Haruki Murakami's *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* (1985), Shi-kuo Chang's "Dream-cutting Romance" (1976) and Jian Du's *The Ultimate War of Super-brains* (1994).

Utopia as Social Movement in Karl Mannheim

To approach the correlation of ideology and utopia, it might be useful to look at the way in which the notion of utopia is juxtaposed with ideology in relation to their func-

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tions. Karl Mannheim first takes the juxtaposition of ideology and utopia as a serious theme of research in his famous book *Ideology and Utopia*, which was published in German in 1929 and in English in 1936. In this book, Mannheim tries to put ideology and utopia within a common framework by considering them both as deviant attitudes toward reality. Both ideology and utopia are considered incongruous with the state of reality within which they occur. Nevertheless, a clear distinction between ideology and utopia is offered in Mannheim's definition of ideology and utopia: "In limiting the meaning of the term 'utopia' to that type of orientation which transcends reality and which at the same time breaks the bonds of the existing order, a distinction is set up between the utopian and ideological states of minds" (Mannheim 173). While ideology is a system of thought incongruous with reality but which helps to preserve and legitimize the *status quo*, utopia is incongruous in such a way to shatter and transcend reality.

Mannheim's initial definitions of both ideology and utopia are thus characterized in terms of their social functions either to uphold or to transform the existing order of things. By ideology, "one can orient himself to objects that are alien to reality and which transcend actual existence—and nevertheless still be effective in the realization and the maintenance of the existing order of things" (Manheim 173). Based on this constitutive definition of ideology, Mannheim further elaborates on the concept of utopia:

> In the course of history, man has occupied himself more frequently with objects transcending his scope of existence than with those immanent in his existence and, despite this, actual and concrete forms of social life have been built upon the basis of such "ideological" states of mind which were incongruent with reality. *Such an incongruent orientation became utopian only when in addition it tended to burst the bonds of the existing order.* (173; emphasis added)

We can infer here that the difference between features of ideology and utopia is that utopia offers a revolutionary possibility while ideology does not. Ideology becomes utopia when certain social groups embody the wish-images embedded in certain ideologies and try to realize them. An interesting example would be the idea of paradise in medieval society. Although the medieval idea of paradise was located outside of society, in some otherworldly sphere, it was still an integral part of the legitimation of that society. It is only when these wish-images of the medieval paradise are embodied and to be realized by certain social groups that they become utopian rather than ideological. Another criterion of utopia is also implied here. Running against a prejudice that a utopia is merely a dream, Mannheim defines a utopia as fundamentally realizable; only when a utopian mentality seeks to transcend the existing order of things and attempts to be realized does it become utopia. For Mannheim, both ideology and utopia are systems of thought that are non-congruent with actuality. Ideology functions to legitimize the *status quo* and thus resists changes by sticking to the past. It is non-congruent with reality in the sense that it has certain inertia while reality changes. By contrast, utopia contains catalytic non-congruence, which subverts the

present order of things by leaping ahead and encouraging changes.

Mannheim's conception of utopia has focused largely on functions rather than content or form. He argues that "in human mentality, it is not always the same forces, substances, or images which can take on a utopian function, i.e. the function of bursting the bonds of the existing order," and "the utopian element in our consciousness is subject to changes in content and form" (Mannheim 185). Since content and form are not the defining characteristics of utopia, Mannheim's discussion of utopia is concerned more about utopia's social functions rather than its content or form. He also rejects the use of the term to refer to a category of literary fiction. Literary utopias are, according to Mannheim, only individual wish-images that remedy some unsatisfactory portion of existing reality:

> Wishful thinking has always figured in human affairs. When the imagination finds no satisfaction in existing reality, it seeks refuge in wishfully constructed places and periods. Myths, fairy tales, other-worldly promises of religion, humanistic fantasies, travel romances, have been continually changing expressions of that which was lacking in actual life. They were more nearly complementary colours in the picture of the reality existing at the time than utopias working in opposition to the *status quo* and disintegrating it. (184)

It is only when these wish-images become the expression of the will of a social stratum, and the inspiration of successful realization in pursuit of transcending the society that they can become truly utopian. Since Mannheim's primary concern is social utopias, many literary utopias are therefore overlooked or confined to the polarity of ideology.

Mannheim's treatment of ideology and utopia, though inspirational, nevertheless contains a number of weaknesses. To have a dialectics of ideology and utopia, we should make a clear distinction between them. However, there are at least two difficulties in distinguishing between these two concepts as defined by Mannheim. First, the conception of both ideology and utopia is rather dynamic and obscure. The connotation of certain ideas as ideology or utopia is interchangeable according to different points of view embodied by different social strata. Social groups that believe in a conservative utopian mentality may consider a liberal-humanitarian utopian mentality an ideology as a means of invalidating it, and vice versa. Indeed, Mannheim considers this antagonism between different utopian mentalities to be fundamental. In his typology of utopias, each type of utopia is defined by the nature of its antagonism to the others.

Another dimension, which reinforces the notion of the ambiguous and dynamic definitions of the concepts, is the possibility of realizing utopia. For Mannheim, the possibility of realizing utopias is rather relative and he is referring to utopia, which seems "to be unrealizable only from the point of view of a given social order which is already in existence" (177). He further explains that the ideas must turn out to be realizable in order to become utopia. According to this criterion, the distinction between ideology and utopia can, as Mannheim puts it, only be applied with hindsight: "Ideas

which later turned out to have been only distorted representations of a past or potential social order were ideological, while those which were adequately realized in the succeeding social order were relative utopias" (184). Further, as time moves on, the realized utopias will be unmasked as ideological by the subordinate social group in a way to shatter the present order of things. Since the concepts of ideology and utopia are ideal types, in reality, ideologies may embody utopian elements while utopias may in turn reinforce ideological thoughts, so that differentiating between these two concepts becomes even more difficult.

Indeed, the seeds of Mannheim's conclusion in his discussion of utopia are embedded in his initial definitions of both ideology and utopia in terms of their propensity either to uphold or to subvert the *status quo*. The dichotomy between ideology and utopia as either to uphold or to subvert the existing order of things is extremely crude, leaving little space for ideas whose relationship to the present may be neutral, ambiguous, or even paradoxical. In Mannheim's view, all ideas "which do not fit into the current order are 'situationally transcendent' or unreal", whereas ideas "which correspond to the concretely existing and *de facto* order are designated as 'adequate' and situationally congruous" (Mannheim 175). However, these ideas "are relatively rare" and only a state of mind that has been sociologically fully clarified operates with situationally congruous ideas and motives. Contrasted with situationally congruous and adequate ideas are "the two main categories of ideas which transcend the situation—ideologies and utopias" (Mannheim 175). For Mannheim, almost all ideas that are situationally transcendent belong either to the concepts of ideology or utopia.

The Symbolic Functions of Ideology and Utopia in Paul Ricoeur

The merit of Mannheim's conceptualization is that he both connects and preserves the distinctions of ideology and utopia at the same time. For Mannheim, both ideology and utopia are non-congruent with reality, but ideology legitimizes the existing order of things while utopia shatters it. Having discussed Mannheim's work, I will move on to another insightful exploration of ideology and utopia by Paul Ricoeur in his *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*. Ricoeur juxtaposes the two concepts within a single conceptual framework of what could be called "social and cultural *imagination*" (1). While drawing much on Mannheim's analysis of the concepts, Ricoeur nonetheless disagrees with Mannheim's choice of emphasis granted to utopia as non-congruence rather than the function of shattering the present reality. Mannheim's model opposes ideology and utopia to a reality determined by rationalistic and scientific criteria, thus drawing the conclusion that ideology and utopia are non-congruent to and deviant from reality. However, as Ricoeur points out, Mannheim's analysis does not include the symbolic structure of life, leaving out the permanent and posi-

tive traits of either ideology or utopia, which are namely the integrative function of ideology and utopia's function to explore the possible worlds.

Ricoeur's emphasis on the symbolic realm as an integral part of reality in his theory on ideology and utopia relates to his criticism on Mannheim's view of reality. Mannheim's emphasis on the "non-congruence" of both ideology and utopia follows the fact that he treats the question of what is real as unproblematic. However, Ricoeur suggests that Mannheim's model, as well as the Marxist concept of ideology, ignores the fact that social reality is always and essentially mediated and rendered by the symbolic structure of social life:

> We must integrate the concept of ideology as distortion into a framework that recognizes the symbolic structure of social life. Unless social life has a symbolic structure, there is no way to understand how we live, do things, and project these activities in ideas, no way to understand how reality can become an idea or how real life can produce illusions; these would all be simply mystical and incomprehensible events. (Ricoeur 8)

For Ricoeur, the symbolic structure of social life must be recognized before proceeding to the discussion of reality and the distortion of reality.

After adjusting the focus on the symbolic function of ideology and utopia, Ricoeur further raises the point that the functions of ideology and utopia can be contrasted on three levels. While the first function of ideology is integration, meaning the preservation of the identity of a person or a social stratum, that of utopia is the exploration of possible worlds. This function of ideology demonstrates the real constitutive role that ideology has in social existence. "Just as models in scientific language allow us to see how things look, allow us to see things *as* this or that," ideology, in the form of the cultural system, similarly "articulates our social roles, articulates our position in society *as* this or that" (Ricoeur 11). In contrast, utopia puts in question what presently exists; it is an imaginative variation on the nature of power, the family, religion, identity, humanity's relationship with technology, and so on. As Mannheim suggests, utopia is more than a dream; it is a dream that wants to be realized; the intention of utopia is to transform, or to shatter, the present order of reality. Even though its intent is to shatter reality, the "nowhere" of utopia always maintains a distance from any present reality. Utopia is always an ideal that we never fully attain. In contrast to Mannheim's expectation of the end of utopia, I will assert that it is difficult to perceive the victory of certain matter-of-factness, or what is implied in this victory, *the end of utopia*.

The second function of ideology in Ricoeur's contrast is the legitimation of present authority while that of utopia is the challenge to this authority. Ricoeur, using the work of Max Weber, suggests that the legitimation of authority is necessary and it is ideology's role to legitimize it because "every system of leadership summons not only our physical submission but also our consent and cooperation. Every system of leadership wants its rule to rest not merely on domination, then; it also wants its power to be granted because its authority is legitimate" (Ricoeur 13). Utopia, how-

ever, attempts to confront the problem of authority itself. It functions by offering either an alternative to power or an alternate kind of power. As Ricoeur writes, if "ideology is the surplus-value added to the lack of belief in authority, utopia is what finally unmasks this surplus-value" (298).

The final contrast touches on the pathology of both ideology and utopia. At its worst, ideology functions as distortion and utopia, also at its worst, functions as unrealizable fancy bordering on madness. Ricoeur points out that "the pathology of ideology is dissimulation whereas the pathology of utopia is escape" (17). Utopia, in the extreme form of fancy, madness, escape, and the completely unrealizable, seldom addresses questions about the transition between the present and the utopian future. Moreover, in a utopia no goals conflict; all ends are compatible. Here, Ricoeur leaves us with a question which he does not want to anticipate any further: "Is not this eccentricity of the utopian imagination...the cure of the pathology of ideological thinking, which has its blindness and narrowness precisely in its inability to conceive of a nowhere?" (17).

Ricoeur concludes his lectures on ideology and utopia with a very strong and interesting conviction: "We must try to cure the illnesses of utopia by what is wholesome in ideology—by its element of identity, which is once more a fundamental function of life—and try to cure the rigidity, the petrification, of ideologies by the utopian element.... We must let ourselves be drawn into the circle and then must try to make the circle a spiral" (Ricoeur 312). Ricoeur here argues that the correlation between ideology and utopia forms a circle, a practical circle. It is impossible for us to escape from this circle, for it is the unrelieved circle of the symbolic structure of action. Within this circle, we must try to make it a spiral by conjoining the integrative and innovative functions of ideology and utopia respectively.

Ricoeur's conclusion of spiral movement unconventionally opposes both the unilinear concept of progress and the deterministic view of history. It also questions directly the dichotomy of ideology and utopia. The cultural imagination of utopia must contain certain ideological elements that help to cure the pathology of utopia. In other words, a utopia looks in two directions at the same time, comprising regression and progression, and thereby revealing a utopia that contains a significant portion of lost past—or what ideology tries to preserve—and an intended future—what the utopia attempts to establish. It brings about an overlapping of past and future, restoration and innovation. The symbolic function of utopia then encapsulates a coin of two sides, which are thought to be opposing to one another, but in fact, co-ordinate in a concrete unity. In other words, utopia implies archaeology and teleology, past and future, regression and progression, childhood and adult, as well as history and future.

The Circle of Ideology and Utopia

There is circularity in Mannheim's conception of ideology and utopia. According to Mannheim, humanity, especially intellectuals, is always caught in the oscillation between ideology and utopia. This is the paradox confronted by Mannheim in his *Ideology and Utopia*. The circle or paradox of ideology and utopia can be explained by his initial definitions of the two concepts, which are in fact rather dynamic and obscure. The connotation of certain ideas as ideology or utopia is interchangeable from different perspectives adopted by different social groups. For instance, a social group that believes in the conservative utopian idea may consider the socialist-communist mentality ideology as a means to suppress it and vice versa. Moreover, as time moves on, a utopian idea may be revealed as ideological by a subordinate social group in order to shatter the *status quo* maintained by that particular utopian mentality. Indeed, ideology may embody utopian elements while utopia may in turn reinforce ideological motifs as such. These dynamic and ambivalent definitions of ideology and utopia make the paradox and circularity of these two concepts become even more obvious.

In response to Mannheim's paradox, Paul Ricoeur suggests in his concluding remarks in the book *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* that humanity can "try to cure the illness of utopia by what is wholesome in ideology—by its element of identity, which is once more a fundamental function of life—and try to cure the rigidity, the petrification, of ideology by the utopian element" (312). To put it in another way, to resolve the circularity between ideology and utopia ultimately, humanity must let itself "be drawn into the circle and then must try to make the circle a spiral" (Ricoeur 312). Humanity cannot remove itself from the ideological and utopian circle; yet it is also not entirely conditioned by its place in the circle. Human beings are not completely caught in an ideology because they can judge it from a utopian perspective. Meanwhile, the utopian part of the paradox can be resolved by the identifying and legitimizing functions of ideology. The following section argues that the metaphorical motifs in science fiction make the circle of ideology and utopia become a spiral. In the last paragraph of the lectures on utopia, Ricoeur identifies the judgment of appropriateness as a means to make the circle become a spiral:

> Ideology is finally a system of ideas that becomes obsolete because it cannot cope with present reality, while utopias are wholesome only to the extent that they contribute to the interiorization of changes. The judgment of appropriateness is the way to solve this noncongruence problem. It is a concrete judgment of taste, an ability to appreciate what is fitting in a given situation. Instead of a pseudo-Hegelian claim to have a total view, the question is one of practical wisdom; we have the security of judgment because we appreciate what can be done in a situation. We cannot get out of the circle of ideology and utopia, but the judgment of appropriateness may help us to understand how the circle can become a spiral. (Ricoeur 314)

In what sense does science fiction embody "the judgment of appropriateness" to

make the circle of ideology and utopia a spiral? In the following discussion, I will argue that the metaphorical imagination of science and technology in terms of cyberspace, cyborg, and space travel, in the texts under examination enables humanity to appreciate what is fitting in a given situation and shapes the spiraling progression of humanity and its civilization.

The Spiral in Science Fiction

My presupposition of the metaphors of science and technology in science fiction is that the metaphorical imagination works in two different ways. On the one hand, the metaphors may function to preserve an order. In this case the function of the scientific metaphors is to stage a process of identification that mirrors the order. The metaphors thus have the appearance of a picture. On the other hand, though metaphorical imagination may have a disruptive function, it may work as a breakthrough. Its image in this case is productive, an imagining of something else, the elsewhere. The first function of scientific metaphors resembles that of ideology, which also has a function of preservation, of conservation. In contrast, the second function of the metaphors in science fiction represents that of utopia, which is always the glance from nowhere. In this sense the positive functions of ideology and utopia are integrated in the scientific metaphors adopted by the science fiction explored in this article. The polarities of ideology and utopia thus exemplify the two sides of the scientific imagination expressed in the metaphors of cyberspace, cyborg and space travel. In the same way that the ideological side of the metaphors operates at three levels—distortion, legitimation, and identification—the utopian side also works at three levels, namely that of fancy, an alternate form of *status quo*, and the exploration of the possible. Thus the dialectics of the scientific metaphors itself are at work in the relation between ideology and utopia, and in the literary realm of science fiction.

Cyberspace: An Imaginary Space of Reality and Transcendence

The metaphor of cyberspace operates on the surface layer as distortion and fancy. The surface meanings of the metaphor reflect humanity's ambivalent attitude toward the advancement of science and technology. The negative side of cyberspace is revealed as a distortion of space and time when in fact humanity desires the transcendence of these two limiting aspects. The reception of cyberspace as distortion and fancy is partly caused by the apparent antagonism between humanity and technology, which is itself a distortion. My discussion of the constitutive level of cyberspace will argue that humanity and technology work inclusively rather than exclusively. E.M. Forster's short story "When the Machine Stops" demonstrates a critical response

toward the technology of cyberspace. It shows a typical fear of the illusion that more technology means less humanity. In the beginning of the story, humanity is at risk when its members are dominated by the Machine. Humans in the story have their bodies degenerated into "a swaddled lump of flesh, with a face as white as fungus" (Forster 109). The story ends with the triumph of humanity and the collapse of the Machine. The exclusive relationship of humanity and technology figures a prominent place in this dystopian story, which continues to appear and reappear at the surface level of the metaphorical imagination in science fiction. When we read the metaphor more carefully, we will discover the deeper meanings, or the constitutive functions, it embodies.

Another distortion is suggested in cyberspace for the possibility of rewriting and recreating reality. In particular, there is a fear of the cyberspace as a powerful means to recreate non-Western histories and cultures from the Western perspective, thus making the world homogeneous. Once the distorted histories and cultures are stored and broadcasted in digital forms, they become more real than the real ones. In some sense, "cyberspace itself is a purely postmodern space, entirely dehumanized, with all evidence of human labor and culture and all national boundaries erased" (Yu 62). Nonetheless, when we reach the inner levels of the metaphor, we find that the technology of cyberspace can also function to preserve and legitimize the non-Western histories and cultures by its powerful storage and transmission capacity. Countries in Asia and the Middle East are promoting their histories and cultures on the Internet effectively. Indeed, the dominance of Western culture in cyberspace is a reflection of the physical world. Yet this domination may actually be subverted with the possibilities and alternatives that the technology of cyberspace creates. As a result, the problems and ills of reality may in fact be cured eventually by this new possible means for different cultures to interact and engage.

Whereas the ideological side of the metaphor is distortion, the utopian side is fancy, or the completely unrealizable. Fancy borders on madness. It is escapism and is exemplified by the fantasy in literature. The fancy or escapism in cyberspace resides at its virtual and imaginary space. There is generally a fear that there is a loss of reality and face-to-face human interaction because of the computer communication technology. A sense of alienation is resulted by this advanced and sophisticated communication technology. The exploration of fancy is best captured in science fiction. At the beginning of *Neuromancer* (1984), the protagonist Case is always desperate to leave behind his physical body and reality to enter his paradise of cyberspace. The experience in cyberspace is signified as "consensual hallucination that was the matrix" in the novel (Gibson 5).

In *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* (1985), the utopia, or the cyberspace, is the fantasy world of the protagonist "I" who creates the Town in peaceful and pastoral isolation after a scientific experiment performed in his brain. The experience in the fantasy world is dominated by the protagonist's dream-reading, which parallels that of the "consensual hallucination" experience in the matrix:

"Dream reading proves not as effortless as she has explained. The threads of light are so fine that despite how I concentrate the energies in my fingertips, I am incapable of unravelling the chaos of vision. Even so, I clearly sense the presence of dreams at my fingertips. It is a busy current, *an endless stream of images*. My fingers are as yet unable to grasp any distinct message, but I do apprehend an intensity there" (Murakami 61; my emphasis). Both the depiction of dream reading and that of cyberspace allude to the flow of lights and images in the non-space of mind.

The title and the scientific novum, the dreamlike skyvision, in the story "Dream-cutting Romance" (1976) strongly suggest the utopian fancy. Chang's anticipation of the future mainly focuses on the novum of dreamlike skyvision, which can create a kind of consensual hallucination for its users. In the future of Taiwan, skyvision has been invented to replace conventional television, radio and other media players. People can enjoy skyvision simply by injecting a small chip in their brain, which is done by a simple operation without any pains or dangers. Once the skyvision chip is installed, signals corresponding to all human sensorium can be transmitted to and from the brain directly at any time and place. As the narrator says, "People who have installed dreamlike skyvision can enjoy entertainment that appeals to all human sensorium. It seems like living in the fantasy world" (Chang 66; my translation).

Underneath the distortion and escapism of the metaphor of cyberspace, there are the ideological side of the legitimation of the *status quo* and the utopian side of the alternate world, or the imaginary space in cyberspace. The second level of the comparison between the functions of ideology and utopia is transferred into the dialectics between the physical world and the imaginary sphere in cyberspace. The legitimation of commonplace reality by cyberspace is achieved mainly by its connectivity and communication power. The computer and information technology provides the most efficient, economical and rapid mode of communication that humanity has ever invented or imagined. It suppresses the constraints of space and time and helps humanity to reinforce their traditions and cultures in commonplace reality. Another legitimation function cyberspace performs shows the dominance of cyberspace by the social group that is in power, which is white, middle-class males. Yet as the technology develops at a swift pace, the composition of cyberspace users will be diversified. Presently, we can see the spread of the technology to different parts of the world, reaching different classes and genders. The diversifying trend will eventually turn cyberspace into a means of providing an alternate form of power for subordinate social groups. The final legitimation function of cyberspace is facilitated by its powerful ability of control and surveillance, which can be adopted by the authority to strengthen and legitimize its political power. The fallacy of cyberspace as a panopticon can be alleviated by the security and integrative functions in the physical world. When humanity becomes aware of the potential harms that this control and surveillance can cause, laws and regulations can be imposed to resist its omnipotence. Moreover, technology may also be employed to counter-oppose the authoritarian nature of the political group presently in power.

The metaphor of cyberspace also makes possible an alternate form of the commonplace reality. The best function of cyberspace is to make possible the "nowhere-ness" and the transcendence of space and time to fulfill humanity's desire to be somewhere else, and to suppress the limitations of the physical world. Moreover, humanity expects to transcend the modernist single, fixed and consistent self and reality through the possibility provided by cyberspace. In other words, it wishes to embrace the multiple, fluid and composable identity, subjectivity and reality in cyberspace. The metaphor is presented as a utopian project that transcends the limitations and ideologies in the real world. The alternate space provided by the metaphor seems to be free of the constraints and ideological limitations of physical body, time, space and certain social boundaries of race, gender and age. Cyberspace to Case in *Neuromancer* is a paradise to transcend his flesh, or prison, as well as his dull life in the Japanese city of slums and criminals. The utopian town in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* is a perfect place for "I" to leave behind his real self because this is the world of his creation; everything there is supposed to hold him in and to serve his imagination and fantasy. Similarly, the dreamlike skyvision is a prefect technology to resolve the ills and problems of the physical reality in "Dream-cutting Romance." It provides a new sphere for humanity to project its ideals, such as having a most attractive appearance and personality.

My next discussion on cyberspace will advance the cooperative functions of ideology and utopia in technological utopia. As I have argued, the transcendental potentials of the scientific metaphor will be realized together with the integrative function of the commonplace reality, which suppresses the distortion and escapism of cyberspace. Indeed, as the close reading of science fiction reveals, the spiral of human progress is determined by the forces in both the ideological and utopian polarities. In *Neuromancer*, the mission of the merger between Neuromancer and Wintermute is made possible by the integrative function of Molly's physical and bodily strength, as well as Case's technological and transcendental power in cyberspace. This unified power enables them to carry out the mission of getting an important tool for the ultimate union of Neuromancer and Wintermute, which in turn signifies the transcendence of the Frankenstein barrier in humanity. The merge achieves a unification of humanity and the machine, the cyberspace and the physical reality. In *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, the opposite happens; yet it signifies a similar message to humanity. Instead of unification, the novel ends with a split of the protagonist into the Shadow and "I", each pursuing its own destiny. The split of the Shadow and "I" negotiates the gap between the metaphor of cyberspace and the commonplace reality. While "I" decides to stay in the utopian town, the Shadow escapes to the real world. The divide in the destiny of the Shadow and "I" represents two vectors in a single self, which form a spiral out of the circle of reality and fantasy, of entrapment and liberation, and of ideology and utopia. In a similar vein, the "Dream-cutting Romance" also suggests that the metaphor of cyberspace not only presents possible transcendence to humanity, but also cures the pathology of skyvi-

sion by what is wholesome in commonplace reality. On the one hand, the fantastic romance in skyvision is substantiated in the actual world by having the two lovers, who start their romance in skyvision, married in the physical world. On the other, the dissimulation of reality is complemented by the fantastic element in the innovative technology. Skyvision, or cyberspace, presents transcendental hope and desire; yet the realization of the hope and desire has to take place in the actual world. Instead of a close circle of the transcendental technology and the limiting *status quo*, the interaction between cyberspace and commonplace reality enables an understanding of a spiral progress of humanity.

Cyborg: The Concept of Conjoining the Human and the Machine

The concept of cyborg is similar to that of cyberspace. The discussion of cyberspace focuses more on the mental and spatial aspects whereas the examination of the metaphor of the cyborg emphasizes the aspects of human body and the definition of humanity. The metaphor of the cyborg functions at three difference levels in science fiction. The first level is the distortion and fancy, which are the pathology of ideology and utopia respectively. The distortion of the cyborg reflects the illusion of the concept of posthumanism, which considers humanism and the organic body entrapments to the subjects in the future. The human body and humanity are rendered through the distortion of the posthuman idea as inferior, limiting and to be eradicated in the technological utopia. The posthumanist idea serves as an example of the distortion in the cyborg because it overlooks the integrative functions of the body and humanism that provide the necessary and indispensable symbolic mediation of existence. In the science fiction that embodies the metaphor of the cyborg, there is a significant depiction opposite to the prediction in the posthumanist idea. The protagonists in *The Positronic Man* (1992), *Ghost in the Shell* (1995) and *The Ultimate War of Super-brains* (1994) value the organic body as much as they celebrate the liberating possibilities of technology. They similarly gain more humanity and organic parts as the stories progress toward their ends.

In *The Positronic Man*, the protagonist's desire to become Andrew Martin—"the Andrew of the Martin family"—emerges when he is first introduced to the family (Asimov 16). By the end of the novel, his desire to become human is so overwhelming in him. He confesses, "I very much want to be a man. I have wanted it more and more through generations of human beings, as the full capacity and range of my mind gradually became apparent to me, and now the urge is overwhelming in me. I can't bear to think of myself as a robot any more—or to have others think of me that way" (Asimov 193). Andrew's reflection here shows a strong desire to return to humanity and organism, which demonstrates the necessity of these terms, humanity and the body, in technological utopia.

Ghost in the Shell (1995), a film directed by Mamoru Oshii, based on the popular manga written by Masamune Shirow, similarly reiterates the traditional body and humanist ideology within the context of technological utopia. In order for the Puppet Master to form an entirely new and unique bodily identity, it asks Kusanagi to unite with it: "I want us to merge. A uniform. A complete commingling and fusion of our separate beings to create new and unique entities. We are all part of the same world. We have been subordinate to our limitations until now. The time has come to cast aside these bonds and to elevate into a higher consciousness. It is time to become a part of all things" (Oshii). The merging of Kusanagi and the Puppet Master acts as the film's climatic ending. The film ends with Kusanagi and the Puppet Master uniting their consciousness into a single entity, an entirely new individual that allows them finally to escape the control of the organizations that created them. Though the film is not clear what kind of a higher consciousness they achieve, I suggest that this new entity is somehow capable of traveling the Net, but still retains some elements of Kusanagi's bodily identity through her organic brain. At the end, it is revealed that their united entity enters a new body, signifying the incorporating of the body and the mind, the combination of humanist ideology and technological utopia. The final union of Kusanagi and the Puppet Master suggests the re-establishment of the integrative functions of the corporeality embraced by the liberating and emancipating technology. The Puppet Master's need to merge with an organic life form represents a kind of mutual re-embodiment in a new body, thus incorporating both the positive functions of the body and the mind, the humanist ideology and the technological utopia.

The Ultimate War of Super-brains begins with a description of the protagonist Zhengpo, who is a robot that reflects human psychology and projection as he introduces himself:

> I was a robot with artificial intelligence. In the age of computers, machines with artificial intelligence were not surprising. However, I was not only a machine, *but also a human being*. I had a brain made of spongy Iridium, and a mutable alloy body. My father Dr. Gu Xuanxiang modeled me after the appearance of his eldest son. Therefore, I could live in the human world and ordinary people could not see that I was a robot. (Du 5; my translation)

Here, this clearly prepares the readers to expect that Zhengpo is a humanist projection possessing both the emancipating power of technology and the humanist ideology. In the eyes of the female protagonist, he is more human than a real person (Du 17).

The fancy of the cyborg suggests that this new technology will eventually transform human beings into robots. Hans Moravec details an imaginary picture of this scenario in his book *Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence*. However, with the technology of computer intelligence and robotics, human beings will progress but also preserve their organic and humanistic aspects. They are marching toward the technology of the cyborg, a combination of organism and cybernetics,

rather than the robot, which means the domination of technology. On the one hand, the metaphor of the cyborg retains the bodily and humanistic meanings of human beings. On the other, it celebrates the transcendental possibilities of the cybernetic technology. These two dimensions of the metaphor signify that the cyborg embodies the ideological and utopian aspects simultaneously. In the texts under examination, the protagonists are all fancy robots in the beginning. Yet as the stories develop, they gradually come to possess more organic and humanistic characteristics. This is a significant indication that human emotions, sensations and feelings are to be rendered and mediated symbolically by the body and its related physical materials.

In discussing the distortion and fancy of the cyborg, I have raised the ideological functions of legitimation and identification, as well as the utopian function of providing an alternate form of existence of human beings. Indeed, the integrative and preservative functions of humanism and the organic body are important in suppressing the problems and fallacies of distortion and fancy in the cyborg technology. Meanwhile, the alternate form of being presented by the utopian function of the cyborg transcends the limitations in humanism and the organic body. The analysis of cyborgs presents two observations. First, humanity and technology are not exclusive concepts. On the contrary, they are inclusive with their legitimizing and transcending functions, respectively. Second, in a technological utopia, as reflected in the endings of the science-fiction works discussed here, humanity and technology will be integrated under the concept of the cyborg. This unification will alleviate the fear of either humans becoming robots or robots becoming humans by having the positive functions of humanity and technology conjoined in the metaphor of the cyborg.

Space Travel: A Journey to Outer space and Inner-space

The metaphor of space travel embodies vectors in the polarities of ideology and utopia at three different levels. The forces in different directions result in a spiraling movement of human progress. The ideological dissimulation in space travel is suggested in the discourse on the ancient Chinese myth of Chang-e.[1] One interpretation of this myth conceives Chang-e's pioneer action of space travel and living on the Moon as another form of confinement. Even her immortality in space is considered as a punishment for her betrayal of her husband. This perspective illustrates the conception of space travel as another form of uninteresting and limiting ideology. The perception of space travel as a dissimulation activity is echoed in *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968).[2] In both the novel and the film, the journey from the Earth to Jupiter is presented as uneventful. Even the two human protagonists, Poole and Bowman, are depicted as robot-type characters in their lack of response and the mechanical duties they need to perform. This robotic representation of Poole and Bowman is a reflection of the dehumanizing process of technological development. As a result, humanity finds

itself paradoxically imprisoned in the far smaller confines of a spaceship when it is freed from the grip of the constraints of the Earth. Nevertheless, the transcendence of Bowman in the story shows that the dehumanization of the human characters is indeed an ironic reversal of the relationship between humanity and technology. In the end, Bowman triumphs and transforms once again into a human in the sense of physical form and metaphysical compassion. The transformation and the homecoming nature of the space odyssey balance the technological and dehumanizing effects of the metaphor of space travel.

In *Solaris* (1961), both ideological limitations and the transcendental possibilities created by space travel are embraced. In the metaphor of outer space exploration as humanity's inner self-exploration, Lem suggests that transcendence lies in recognizing our human limitations and accepting them as well as opening our minds to something new. Being receptive does not mean human beings need to transform themselves into something nonhuman; they can be human while adopting new ideas and visions. The technological utopia in the novel thus recognizes both positive functions of humanist ideology and transcendence. This recognition indicates a spiraling progression of human society. Kelvin, in his reflection, sees the human mind itself as being unexplored. However, he cannot open those "doorways that he himself sealed" (Lem 165). Rheya, meanwhile, shows him a way through her love and ultimate sacrifice of self. The human simulacra that visit the human scientists in the space station represent the incarnations of the scientists' repressed erotic and guilt fixations. Thus the act of understanding Solaris and the Solarists parallels humanity's inner-self exploration. In Kelvin's words, "unconsciously it is Revelation itself that they expect, and this revelation is to explain to them the meaning of the destiny of man! Solaristics is a revival of long-vanished myths, the expression of mystical nostalgias which men are unwilling to confess openly. The cornerstone is deeply entrenched in the foundation of the edifice: it is the hope of Redemption" (Lem 180). Yet, each human character in the space station deals with his redemption and revelation in a different way. Kelvin's friend and mentor, Gibarian, unable to contemplate "murdering" the quasi-human beings, kills himself instead. The pedantic physicist Sartorius locks himself in his laboratory, emerging only after he has invented a device to annihilate the Visitors. The cyberneticist Snow takes to drink, irony, and self-pity—in fear and trembling. Only Kelvin proves open and "innocent" enough to attempt to accommodate the presence of his Visitor, a replica of his young wife Rheya, for whose suicide ten years earlier he has carried a deep sense of guilt.

While *Solaris* acknowledges and recognizes human limitations through transforming the space exploration into a metaphor of humanity's self-exploration, *2001* brings the recognition and the transcendence back to humanity on the home planet. The basic problem at the heart of *2001* is the issue of human progress—what type of transcendence or utopia is there at the end of human evolution? In his biographical essay on Arthur C. Clarke, David N. Samuelson suggests that the transcendence or utopia in Clarke's works seems "totally beyond humanity", not to mention on the

Earth (209). Clarke's prediction of the evolution of the alien in *2001* provides allusion to this interpretation. Yet, this vision remains partial. In my research, I attempt to go further. In pursuing what I call the "destination Earth and Humanity," I seek to depict the other side of the same coin in *2001*'s discussion of human and technological progress. I argue that instead of opting either for a technological utopia beyond Earth and humanity or one embracing humanistic and terrestrial ideology, *2001* chooses both.

The theme of returning to the Earth and humanity is significantly reflected in the title of the work. As Geduld points out, "Until April 1965, the work was to be called 'Journey Beyond the Stars.' The switch to *2001: A Space Odyssey*, however, clearly anchors the film to Earth by giving it an Earth date, suggesting that the journey's end is our home planet, lest we forget Homer's original thought that all 'odysseys' are really roundtrips" (33). In the epilogue to his *Lost Worlds of 2001*, Clarke makes the parallel between *2001* and Homer's epic tale of returning home *Odyssey* clear: "When Odysseus returned to Ithaca, and identified himself in the banqueting hall by stringing the great bow that he alone could wield, he slew the parasitical suitors who for years had been wasting his estate." The name *Bowman* therefore significantly refers to the hero in the earlier epic of voyage and return. At the end of the novel *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Bowman, transformed into Star Child, "was back, precisely where he wishes to be, in the space that men called real"—which is of course, the Earth (Clarke 220). The end of Bowman's voyage, therefore, is both a regression and progression in terms of evolution. On the one hand, he evolves into a higher form of being. On the other, his transformation involves a regressive journey from the present to his childhood, which is also a regression process that Hal goes through in his disconnection. The transcendence in *2001* coincides with the return to roots—the Earth and the early childhood of a human being. In the act of going out, Bowman in *2001* is simultaneously coming back. In other words, the space odyssey models the Janus face, looking forward and backward simultaneously. The technological progress in space travel therefore is actually a conservation of humanity as well. The adventure of human "progress", the contact with the unknown and the possibility of transcendence are faced with the preservation and recognition of humanity, the limits of his humanity and the "home coming" of the voyage. The evolution process is not linear advancement but spiral, a form of perpetual motion in circular movement which goes forward and backward at the same time.

The concept of space travel becomes a fancy of utopia when it claims to present transcendence or utopia that is beyond humanity and the Earth. This claim overlooks another side of the ambivalent metaphor of space travel. While *Solaris* acknowledges and recognizes human limitations through transforming the space exploration into a metaphor of humanity's self-exploration, *2001* brings the recognition and transcendence back to humanity on its home planet. The ultimate transcendence provided in space travel is about human and the Earth, which serves as the destiny of the space exploration in *Solaris* and *2001*. The metaphor embraces the positive functions of

both the liberating aspects of outer space and the integrative and legitimate aspects of humanity on the Earth.

The transcendence of space travel functions to legitimize the strength of the humanist ideology and to preserve the terrestrial meanings. Thus, the concept of space travel is not leading humans to go beyond the Earth or humanity. It provides transcendental effects that are taking place here and now on the Earth, within humanity and human society. The transcendental in space travel both legitimizes and explores the new frontier beyond and within the cosmos, the human psyche and nature. The actual experience of human space travel, as Godwin's verification of the truth of the "new science" foreshadows, validates the human cosmic theory. For instance, seeing the Earth from space tells humanity that this Earth is round and it is indeed traveling through space. Humanity's physical reality and intellectual conception are therefore brought into alignment for the first time when they go into space.

From the utopian perspective, an alternate form of human existence and evolution is suggested in humanity's actual exposure to space. The possibility of leaving the planet and living in space inspires a new concept of human evolution, which will produce the revolutionary effects no less significant than those which took place when humanity's ancestors tried to escape from the water and live on land. At the present moment, this prediction remains a visionary statement. Yet it is obvious that the new forces, powers and possibilities that will be disclosed to humanity when human beings reach the other planets or can set up stations in space will be transcendental in providing an alternate form of human progress and way of life.

In acknowledging space travel's transcendental possibilities, I have argued in this article that the ideological functions also operate at the deeper levels of the metaphor of space travel. As the classic space travel texts *Solaris* and *2001* exemplify, the space travel technology and humanist ideology will work cooperatively rather than exclusively. The space travel metaphor symbolically provides insights into the mystery of our life on the Earth and the story of humanity in its outer space orientation. In transcending the mortal corporeality and opening up the possibility of immortality or another form of being, *Solaris* and *2001* shed light on the conflicts and resolutions between human and posthuman, concrete and metaphysical, progression and regression, past and future, as well as preservation and transformation.

Conclusion: The Spiral of Humanity and Technology

Most contemporary critics of science fiction have focused on its utopian function as a future-looking genre. I suggest in this article that science fiction also possesses a prominent ideological function of preserving and legitimizing the tradition of the present reality in its backward-looking motif. In short, science fiction embodies both the ideological function as a symbolic confirmation of the past and the utopian func-

tion as an opening towards the future. The ideological and utopian functions are complementary, making the circle of ideology and utopia a spiral. If we cut them off from each other, they can lead to dystopian pathology of distortion or fancy.

In exploring the metaphors of cyberspace, cyborg and space travel, I argue that the transcendence as science fiction's utopian function is complemented by the genuine ideological functions of these three metaphors. By demythologizing the utopian innovation, science fiction is revealed as a genre of ideological preservation and legitimation in the sense of providing identifying functions to humanity. The appropriation of ideology and utopia in science fiction thus makes the circle of humanity and technology a spiral, which reaches a higher level every time the circle is turned around.

Notes

1. In the second century B.C., an ancient Chinese mythic story "Chang-e Benyue" [Chang-e Goes to the Moon] was written by Liu An in his *Huai Nan Zi* [*Works of Master Liu An*]. It tells of a woman named Chang-e who travels to the Moon and lives there forever after stealing the elixir of eternal life from her husband. This myth is perhaps the first account of space travel in literature.

2. Kubrick began his project of a film about a space odyssey, with Arthur C. Clarke, in 1965. The novel and the movie were to be published and released in 1968, which became just one year before Armstrong walked on the lunar soil for the first time. Meanwhile, Stanislaw Lem published his *Solaris* in 1961. The first film version of *Solaris*, directed by Andrei Tarkovsky in 1972, was seen as the Soviet cinema's response to *2001: A Space Odyssey*. In *2002*, Solaris was adapted again by Steven Soderbergh.

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