

A Dialogue between Paul Ricoeur and Ernst Bloch on Utopia and the Future of Humanity

Arvin Joshua S. Diaz

University of Santo Tomas | arvinus71@gmail.com

Abstract: This research will examine the similarities between Paul Ricoeur’s and Ernst Bloch’s notions of utopia. Aside from experiencing sufferings and despair, there is such a thing we all commonly share: “The hope for a perfect world where the struggles end and the end of human sufferings have been realized.” This is what we called as the vision of “utopia”. Utopia is a place or a world that is perfect which most of the people believed that it does not and will never exist. Common visionaries and philosophers have many ideas on what society or the world we should have in the future. That’s why utopia reveals itself in music, arts, literature and even in religion, myths, philosophies, socio-political views and theories. Every culture has an ideal society which they wish to attain.

The theoretical framework will be used in this research are Hermeneutic phenomenology and Marxist Hermeneutics. This comparative approach between Ricoeur and Bloch’s notions on utopia will be tackled based on these themes: a.) Critique of past utopian ideas before Marx; b.) Marxist idea on utopian society; c.) Critique of Hegel’s “end of history”; d.) Idea of the ending of human sufferings and e.) Their interpretations with what will they offer for humanity’s hope. The conclusion of this paper is that the phenomenon of desire for the utopia is part of our experience that arises from the hope amidst the experience of human suffering in dialogue between these two thinkers.

Keywords: Utopia, Hermeneutic Phenomenology, Suffering, History

According to Lyman Tower Sargent, *utopia* is defined as a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space.¹ The word utopia came from Modern Latin from Greek “ou” which means not and “topos”, place. It came from “Utopia” by work of Sir Thomas More (1516), describing an island in which such conditions existed.²

In various religions, myths and philosophical expositions and also secular and scientific fictions, utopia has been the common theme of these views. Every religion and faith have their versions of utopia in their theologies and this is what we called “eschatology”.³

From the perspective of philosophy, scholars believed that Plato’s idea of government and society in his work *The Republic* was the start of the notions of utopia in Western philosophy.⁴ Hegel also had his notion of utopia through his notion of history as unfolding into man’s freedom. Being free, for him is the self-actualization of man’s rationality. First, he considered that the people of Orient viewed that one is only free which is

the Emperor. Next, the Greco-Roman people viewed that only some are free and others are not. Judeo-Christian civilization came and maximized the notion of freedom of man which the Greco-Roman civilization never had. Lastly, the Prussian Empire viewed that all is Free. For him, the German civilization is the model of a free society. At the end of history, all men will be able to realize their freedom by being self-conscious about the Absolute.⁵

Marx critiqued the idealism of Hegelian dialectics and his (Hegel) end of history. Instead, he viewed that history reveals itself in the contradictions between the ruling class and the oppressed class on the basis of material security of each class. For him, the end of history is communism where the stateless and classless society will be fully realized.⁶ Due to the notions of utopia in the past ages in the history of philosophy in the West, as well as in the East, Theodor W. Adorno had criticized the notion of “end of history” in the book he wrote entitled “Negative Dialectics” which deals with the notion that history is cyclical yet progressing with the new idea or kind of

¹ Lyman Tower Sargent, “What is a Utopia?” in *Morus: Utopia and Renaissance*, Accessed on: June 15, 2018. Retrieved from: <http://revistamorus.com.br/index.php/morus/article/viewFile/139/119>, 154.

² *Ibid.*,

³ Eschatology is the branch of theology which deals with the “last things” as the literal meaning of this word describes. It tackles about the nature of death and the ultimate destiny of man like the “end of the world” or what commonly called as “The Judgment Day”. See from: New Advent. “Catholic Encyclopedia: Eschatology-New Advent” in *New Advent*, Accessed on: July 14, 2018, Retrieved from: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05528b.htm>.

⁴ Dr. Alfred Geier. (2008). “Plato’s Republic: A Utopia for the Individual” in *Philosophy Now: A Magazine*

of Ideas, Issue 118, Accessed on: January 28, 2017, Retrieved from: https://philosophynow.org/issues/70/Platos_Republic_A_Utopia_For_The_Individual.

⁵ Joseph McCarney. (2000). *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook: Hegel on History*. London New York: Routledge, Chapter 9, 137-139.

⁶ Karl Marx & Frederick Engels. (1969). “Manifesto of the Communist Party”, Translated by Samuel Moore in cooperation with Frederick Engels in *Marx/Engels Selected Works*, Vol. One. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 98-137.

⁷ Theodor W. Adorno (2004). *Negative Dialectics*, Edited by Taylor and Francis Group, Translated by E.B. Ashton. London York: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. 358-361.

progress that negates the former idea and sees progress as relative.⁷

The desire for utopia is almost seen in the literary and philosophical genres of most of the cultures of this world. It is because of the desire to have the sense of perfection in the imperfection of man's condition. Utopia can only be realized if we can understand on how every men and women dreams for it, by which it manifests in our subconscious drives called "hope". This study will try to understand on how Paul Ricoeur's and Ernst Bloch's notions of utopia in the light of hermeneutical phenomenology and how this desire to be realized can be considered as part of human experience. I will delve on why "hope", as a subconscious drive, rather than a virtue. It is also a principle that drives man to reach the possibility of attaining this "vision of perfect world".

The theoretical framework follows the historical approach of the development of philosophies of Paul Ricoeur and Ernst Bloch. Paul Ricoeur made a contributions to the Contemporary Western Philosophy using Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Marxist Hermeneutics from Ernst Bloch's notion of utopia. This study follows Hermeneutic phenomenology because this will have to understand the phenomena of utopia and why it is deeply manifested in the actions and symbols of cultural and literary expression of human desire for emancipation from sufferings. It also follows the Marxist Hermeneutics, because it seems fit for the need

for integration of Marxist utopic vision of communist society as foundation for Ernst Bloch's notion of hope as interpretation for human desire for the attainment of this "dream".

PHILOSOPHY OF PAUL RICOEUR

Hermeneutic phenomenology has its origins from Martin Heidegger. Accordingly, hermeneutic phenomenology "is an attempt to unveil the world as experienced by the subject through their life world stories."⁸ This means is that whatever we want to know the world, we describe it through interpretations. There are five considerations in the historical development of hermeneutics as a philosophy. In a first and traditional sense, Ricoeur viewed before Husserl's phenomenology, it limits itself only to the exegesis. In the second consideration, hermeneutics is considered as a science of linguistic understanding. This means hermeneutics deals with understanding the text in its proper context. Third consideration is it is considered as methodological basis for *Geisteswissenschaften* (Sciences of the Spirit) by Wilhelm Dilthey. By this, he considered hermeneutics deals with not only with the text, but also as the foundations of all disciplines both from natural and social sciences. Fourth consideration is to consider the notion of *Dasein* and understanding of it. Heidegger considered that the role of philosophy is understanding of phenomenology of human existence. Fifth consideration, by which Paul Ricoeur contributed, hermeneutics is considered as a process that interprets an

⁸ Narayan Prasad Kafle. "Hermeneutic phenomenological research method simplified" in *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 5, 2011, ISSN: 2091-0479, Accessed on: July 14, 2018, Retrieved from:

http://kucc.ku.edu.np/bodhi/vol5_no1/11.%20Narayan%20Kafle.%20Hermeneutic%20Phenomenological%20Research%20Method.pdf, 186.

explicit or hidden context in meaning. It goes back to the understanding of text through the symbolism in society.⁹

His kind of hermeneutics is through dialogue with other disciplines. This can be done through the dialectics between explanation and understanding mediated through interpretation.¹⁰ For him, Hermeneutics is understanding the dimensions of human being in its totality.¹¹ This means, it is necessary that the human will, which is the basis for human action and facticity, must have its explanation and understanding for his or her existence in the limits of historical and social conditions.¹² He also posited that there are many meanings on the limits of symbols and languages which we call *polysemy*. In this kind of thought, he posited that there are many meanings that are latent in the human behaviour. Language and the role of aesthetic experience are necessary in understanding human existence phenomenologically.

What made Ricoeur revolutionary in the history of Western philosophy was his view of the role of hermeneutics deals not only with the repetition of what it means through interpretation; but also it must creatively discover and interpret the hidden meanings of every language, art, and sciences or any aspects of human civilization through the context of human symbols in behaviour.

PAUL RICOEUR ON LECTURES ON IDEOLOGY AND UTOPIA

Paul Ricoeur's *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* is a collection of his lectures that deals with the problem of ideology and utopia as two different phenomena. He considers that these two must be treated separately. For him, his hypothesis of these two opposite sides can function as what we call the social and cultural imagination.¹³

In his view, both of these phenomena have ambivalent characters. They can be used for building a "new world" or destroying the world. For him, he defined ideology based on how Marx viewed with these two phenomena, first is that this is the representation of ideas that is contrary or related to the material productions of the society and second is that these are the ideas that usually reflect the different groups of people from different epochs (i.e., the ideas of ruling class).¹⁴

Aligning itself with the second representation of ideology, it is considered as not an individual stance, but a stance of someone else which is not always a revolutionary one; because it has the tendency to maintain and reinforce the status quo. Utopia, on the other hand, is always advocated by authors who have their own specific genre which are sometimes subversive against the

⁹ Marlene Gomes Terra, Lucia Hisako Take Gonçalves, Evangelist Kotzias Altherino dos Santos, Alacoque Lourenzini Erdmann. (2009). *The Use of Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutic-Phenomenology philosophy as a methodological framework to guide an educational nursing research in Meanings of sensibility the professor-nurse-being in teaching and learning to be and practice nursing from the perspective of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology*. 93-94.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*,

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹² *Ibid.*,

¹³ Paul Ricoeur. (1976). "Ideology and Utopia as Cultural Imagination" in *Philosophic Exchange Number 1 Volume 7*. New York: Digital Commons @Brockport, 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 17-19.

ruling order or system in the society.¹⁵ The negative connotation of ideology came from Napoleon and he designed those philosophers and thinkers who opposed his grand project of French Empire as *ideologues*.¹⁶

Although, most people have a notion that utopia as an ideology, he considered that “utopia knows itself as a utopia and claims to be a utopia.” “Utopia is a very personal and idiosyncratic work, the distinctive creation of its author”.¹⁷ An author can have a notion of utopia without the use of ideology. For most of cultures, this is an “ideal” for their respective societies. Ricoeur noted the difference between these two; ideology merely wishes itself to integrate within the social reality even if it has an inverted view towards this “reality”. Sometimes this has the tendency to reinforce the ruling social system, while utopia offers the imaginative alternative constructs towards the society and this ideal becomes subversive to any social structures.¹⁸

He explained the notion of utopia with these three persons: Manheim, Saint-Simon and Fourier. But I will only focus on Manheim because this paper will focus on Marxist Hermeneutics on utopia. Manheim was influenced by the Marxist strain of utopia.¹⁹ He (Ricoeur) saw that there is a lack of parallelism between ideology and utopia on how Manheim viewed it. Manheim had reconciled the opposite natures between ideology and utopia with each other and at the same time reserved their differences.²⁰ The similarity between these phenomena is that these two realize in the

processes of history which they both called their non-congruence, or a deviation. What he meant is that both ideology and utopia are contraries of the reality which we want to realize in the society. The difference between these two is that utopia transcends the reality while ideology cannot. The first characteristic between the differences of these two phenomena is utopia transcends the reality of the present conditions of man and the second characteristic is that if it could be realized, it will shatter our common prejudice that utopia is merely just a dream. In other words, utopia is a process that is still actualizing.

Because of the transcendence of utopia, Ricoeur gave Manheim’s views on utopia some new perspectives. First, he explained, that, although we may have the notion of utopia as something a “golden age of the past” or “restoration of the lost paradise”, Manheim’s notion of utopia is but the realization of utopia that is within our potentialities, not on restoring the “lost perfection”. Secondly, utopia are one of the alternative possibilities for a better world and perfect human condition of the oppressed strata of the society. To explain further, utopia, especially in a Marxist and socialist sense, has the capacity to shatter any ruling social order or systems that oppresses any man and woman. Another perspective, is that the past notions of utopia have been fully synthesized in Marxist utopian vision. Because, even though communism is still remote, Marx had noted that only by a mature and enlightened proletarian revolution will realize it. In order to understand on how it will be realized, we must

¹⁵ Paul Ricoeur. *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 15-16.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Introductory Notes, 17.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Part 2 Chapter 16, 269.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 272.

understand that the present understanding of utopia is that it is latent in the potencies of revolutionaries in the history of human race. So in this sense, Ricoeur's rereading of Manheim's Marxist utopic vision view that history is still in the process of utopia but can only be realized because of the drive for its realization.²¹

ERNST' BLOCH MAIN IDEAS AND NOTIONS OF UTOPIA

Leszek Kolakowski compiled most of the philosophers and thinkers whom Marx influenced. One of these thinkers was Ernst Bloch. He made a philosophy of utopia through the synthesis of metaphysics, cosmology, and speculative cosmogony in a gnostic and apocalyptic way which were inspired from its varied sources.²² In the first volume of *The Principle of Hope*, Bloch tends to see that there is some part of us that drives us to act directing towards the future. This is what he called "hope". In most of his notions of utopia, he viewed that Marxist end of history is the right and only valid utopia. Because he saw that this is the synthesis of all the past notions of utopia. In order to actualize this future, man must discover his or her potential perfection which is latent upon his or her "being."²³ This tends towards the actualization of the perfection in future which does not need to be realized by returning to any "golden ages of the past". What we need, according to him, is the strong will that could lead to his or her

salvation through the perfection of humanity or destruction by which the end of all human existence.

In the second volume of the same book, he discussed that past notions of utopia before Marx called for the return of the "lost paradise" which according to him, is illusory. Because it did not bring us to the "end of history" or building of a "new world". But what he admired among these past notions of utopia is the Stoic's ideal society called *cosmopolitan*. It is known that he admired the global community that already achieved the universal brotherhood of mankind as a utopic vision of the Stoics and he considered it as almost near to Marx's vision of utopia.²⁴ The Medieval Age, especially the eschatological views of Abrahamic faiths in their sacred literatures, viewed that all men and women will become equal when the "kingdom of God" comes, since they viewed that it was lost by our "first parents". For those who lived in the Age of Enlightenment, there were some particular tendencies for men of this time to chide away from the past and also gave birth to the alternative notions of utopia towards the future by conceiving the notion of human rights as necessary for the progress of humanity. But even it seems it has an emancipatory view, he also exposed the failed promise of the Age of Enlightenment, especially the French Revolution. Because for him, it is only the revolution of the bourgeoisie class.²⁵

²¹ *Ibid.*, 276-282.

²² Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Origin, Growth and Dissolution*, Vol. III The Breakdown, Translated from Polish by P.S. Falla (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), XII, 421.

²³ Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, Volume I, Translated by Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul

Night, Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press, Part 2, 284-285.

²⁴ Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, Volume II, Translated by Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Night, Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press, Part 2, 491.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 541-559.

In the third volume, he extensively discussed the notions of utopia which for Bloch came from what we call “hope” as a subconscious drive. What made Ernst Bloch differ from the psychoanalytic thinkers is that he views the subconscious as only a temporary condition. For him, we should always view it as “not-yet-conscious.” Likewise, in this work, he believed that the individual and the community have shared their roles in changing social structures in the history of human race because of “hope”. Past revolutionaries and thinkers had dwelt on the hope that man must be liberated from the shackles that enchained him or her from reaching his or her possibilities to live a perfect life. So the individual and the community must help each other that they may change the society instead of alienating from each other.²⁶ He also explained the causes of man’s fear of death. Fear of death came because man knows that he will become non-existent someday. So peoples of all faiths have speculated what life will be after death.²⁷ In most of human history, he viewed that it seems normal for all people to become more cynical because of the difficult social conditions and always thought that whether we could also have a brighter tomorrow without resorting to any action that will liberate them. So he had narrated the past notions of afterlife from the religious perspectives on how do we overcome the fear of death.²⁸ According to him, they needed to have a notion of God as something perfect from our fallibility to overcome the “fear of death”. But in the near future, he said that “God” would be realized in us. That’s why

in the ancient times, pagans had viewed God as far from us and not one of us. But in the near future, he said that “God” would be realized in us. It was due to these three monotheistic religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam that helped us to break the conception of many gods from the people whom they spread their religion.²⁹ But in his view of Feuberbach’s notion of God, “God” is considered as the fulfilment of man’s desires and wishes in a materialist sense.³⁰

In conclusion, Bloch supported Marx’s vision of humanity. For him, hope must not be confined within the limits of wishful thinking.³¹ Man’s role in struggling against bourgeois domination is the most liberating thing to do. The Marxist end of history is the synthesis of all struggles and also the hope that drives us to full humanization and destruction of his alienation not only from his “species-being” but also realizing his potential perfection in the near future.

COMPARATIVE THOUGHTS ON RICOEUR AND BLOCH’S NOTIONS OF UTOPIA

1. Critique of Past Ideas of Utopia Before Marx

In order to understand the past notions of utopia before Marx, we must consider why both of Ricoeur and Bloch explained it as a pure abstraction and considered creating a “new world” out of these man’s potentiality for

²⁶ Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, Volume III, Translated by Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Night, Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press, Part 5, 973.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1105

© TALISIK
Volume V, Issue no.1
ISSN 2362-9452



²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1215-77.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1284-85.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1286-87.

³¹ *Ibid.*, Part 5, 1354-1355.

perfection. First, in ancient and medieval times, the notions of utopia had the idea restoration of the lost “paradise” due to man’s fall which have already been part of sacred and literary texts in every cultures.³² Most of these past ideas of utopia that advocates the return of “lost paradise” are pure abstraction for them.³³

Ricoeur, in his explanation of Manheim’s interpretation of Marxist utopian society view that non-Marxist utopias are counter-utopias because it highly advocates the return of the “golden age” and also some of utopias had been used by the ruling class or groups of people to make the ruling system dominant and not to break away from it.³⁴ Although, some of those who promised utopias were revolutionaries of their time, they have betrayed the hopes of the masses; because they hid their self-interests behind their good motives.³⁵ In this case, both Ricoeur and Bloch criticized the utopic narratives of Age of Enlightenment which had influenced French Revolution because they did not represent the will of the people. Instead, only the will of the middle class (*bourgeois*) as what both of these two philosophers viewed it. In this sense, they believed that although the Age of Enlightenment and modernity brought man almost near in realizing his or her potential perfection and also realizing his or her liberation in the end, it also brought forth the dominance of the *bourgeois* which supports unbridled capitalism that made man victims of the new oppression.

I view that these two philosophers had critiqued past notions of utopias. Although, some of the revolutionaries of the past were inspired by their utopic vision, there are tendencies of past notions of utopia by which it becomes the “only narrative” of certain groups of people and certain ideologies which I thought betrays the Marxist utopian society. And also, these certain groups of people and their ideologies also betray the revolutionary tendencies of the oppressed which those who fought for it only retain the status quo if they become the ruling class.

2. Marx’s Idea on Utopian Society

Like in what I have stated earlier, every culture, society and philosophy has their own versions of utopia. From the ideas of the Contemporary Western Philosophy, Marx’s communist vision of the society is one of its example. Learning the context of his own time, we saw the Industrialization of Europe. It was at this time that science and industry would lead to humanity for progress because machines have already helped men to produce products and commodities faster. Yet, even he did see these advances and progress, it had also mired with dehumanization of labourers, accumulation of too much wealth and profit, degradation of environment and the accumulation of too much wealth for a few and privileged people which made the laborers oppressed.³⁶

³² Ze’ev Levy. (1990). “Utopia and Reality in the Philosophy of Ernst Bloch” in *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 1 No. 2. March/April Issue. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 9.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Ricoeur, Part 2 Chapter 16, 285.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Part 2 Chapter 17, 285-286.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre and Beyond: A History of Philosophy*, Part 4 Ch. 17, 348-349.

Because of this experiences, he wrote many works that critique the dehumanizing conditions of the capitalism of his own time. His idea of human activity in history must be resolved in order for the actual human freedom, as he sees it, will be realized.³⁷ Freedom for Marx is economic in approach. He saw in capitalist society that man is commodified and objectified because it did not make man free to actualize the individuality and possibility in his own self. So capitalism deprives man not only of his choice of labor, but of doing what his nature wishes him to do. In his ideal society, man are free to do his or her nature because the work is now his or her own.³⁸

Paul Ricoeur, in his explanation of Manheim's interpretation of Marxist Utopia states that there are instance wherein, Marx wishes that his idea of utopia needs to be done in praxis. Utopia although, it may be abstract, is useless if it will not reach to its point to become real. He stated that sacrifices of revolutionaries in order for these to happen and those who hope for this advent in the present has already gained utopia in the present while gaining the future even more when he or she is in that future vision of utopia. In Ricoeur's view of Marxist utopia, the "Truth" needs to be practiced and near to human sentiments; not merely ideology alone, but the synthesis of all the forces of human desires to be liberated which does not need ideology, but rather the will to be free.³⁹ On the other hand, Bloch argued that Marxist utopia is a possibility not within only in the present but also in the near future and it must break from pre-Marxist

notions of utopia and traditional Marxist version of utopia.⁴⁰ Like Marx's notion of freedom, he also added another aspect of freedom in Marxist utopic vision and that is "freedom from" and "freedom to": "Freedom from oppression and also freedom to develop our individuality without restraints which was hindered by oppressive forces of dominant social forces".⁴¹

Both of these philosophers interpreted Marx's ideal society as somehow faithful to his communist vision of society which I thought that Soviet and China did not achieved. It was because of over-emphasis to the collectivism of Soviet and China-style Marxist society which hindered man to develop his or her individuality. I think the more "orthodox" in Marx's ideal society are Ricoeur and Bloch. Ricoeur explained that the Marxist notion of utopia came from making the "utopia" not just as a "literary device" but also from the human sentiments which hopes for the brighter future. Bloch, on the other hand, this drive (hope) "utopia" is possible and with this drive, we have to actualize "utopia".

Because of this comparison, Marxist utopia is considered as synthesis of all the revolutionary forces in the world; because it wishes to liberate man from anything that hinders his capacity to develop and also liberates him to make him more and more human being through the actions which came from his nature. Freedom is not only a choice, but it is also a capacity to become what I will be and not only what I am now.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 355-356.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 357.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Ricoeur, Part 2 Ch. 17, 296.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Levy, 7-8.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

3. Critique of Hegel's End of History

Karl Marx, in the view of these two philosophers, thoroughly mentioned their views with regards to their criticism on Hegel's "end of history". Ricoeur, on his view of Marx's Critique of Hegelian end of history based on the opposition between practice and ideology.⁴² This means that, Hegelian end of history is an ideology, but that it has its lack of praxis to attain it. But what is the most striking thread in his view is that the realization that our consciousness defines our own humanity which differs from Hegel.⁴³ Like Marx, Ricoeur's reading of Hegel's end of history is that it is an idealistic notion of our humanity. Humanity is not considered to be something concrete in Hegel's lens and he did not see that man struggles against what hinders his freedom through its total material and spiritual aspects.⁴⁴

Therefore, in Ricoeur's view, Marx sees that the true historical and universal narrative of all classes that could implode a widespread revolution is the communist revolution which comes from its actual praxis of struggle.⁴⁵ He may have different notions of Hegelian end of history from Marx, but nevertheless, he shared his view that it is a positive possibility that can be viewed in the light of humanity's drive to act for its liberation.⁴⁶

Ernst Bloch's view of Hegelian end of history in Marx's critique shares Marx's criticism in his utopian vision. In order to understand his view, we must first understand

how does he shared his view of Hegelian notions of "object" and "subject". The first stance is that they viewed that there is a dichotomy between the "object" and "subject" and the final goal is that there must be the merging of the "object" and "subject" into one "being".⁴⁷ In this sense, he also believed that man is not an abstract entity but a concrete reality. The only end of history for Bloch is man's capacity to create will not be hindered by any forces.

In synthesis with these two philosophers, struggle could only be realized if man is both body and soul had gained the experience of being "oppressed". Marx is right when he critiqued Hegelian notion of attaining the end of history but what is lacking of Marx is the subjective aspect of our struggle which cannot be ignored. Because he viewed that our liberation in the sense only in economic liberation is too reductionist. I do view that man experiences oppression not only by material conditions, but also by these conditions, human being cannot actualize his or her "subjectivity". Due to the external factors man can contribute to his oppression or liberation. The "end of history" is possible only if man through individual and collective efforts has unitive factor of their struggle and that is more than just anger; but rather "hope" which is a drive towards freedom and embrace freedom in its entirety.

4. Idea of End of Human Suffering

⁴² *Ibid.*, Ricoeur, "Marx: The Critique of Hegel and the Manuscripts" in *Lectures of Ideology and Utopia*, Part 1 Chapter 2, 21.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Levy, "Utopia and Reality in the Philosophy of Ernst Bloch", 3.

In line with “utopia” and its connection to our daily struggles, our notions of suffering came from the problem of evil which is a metaphysical problem in nature. In our daily struggles, we tend to hope that our sufferings will cease to exist. Paul Ricoeur and Ernst Bloch’s interpretations of utopia will be suspended for a while in this part of this paper and I will delve into what is their view of suffering and analyse and in the light of comparison and hermeneutics what will be the case find its interpretation on the end of our sufferings which are the part of this synthesis.

We should understand first Ricoeur’s notion of evil which he interpreted in the light of hermeneutic phenomenology. In Ricoeur’s work *The Symbolism of Evil*, we saw that how the myths of traditional Western Civilization (Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian) gave the narrative of problem of evil and suffering. So in his interpretation of these two traditions, he critiqued the notion of soul and body as opposite towards each other, but rather, he posited that the souls and body is undivided whole reality of man.⁴⁸ The notion of why there is suffering in different cultural myths is the belief in the “imprisonment” of the soul in the body.⁴⁹ But, he also interpreted the notion of “evil” in mythical representation in this four types which these two traditions in Western civilization viewed why there is suffering: origin of evil came from the things by which they created because they are not perfect; fall

of man after creation which he could only restore by salvation through opening another chapter in our history; in Greek tragedy where most of their myths ended with tragic because of their belief that every sin deserve punishment and it is irreversible which is in accordance on their belief in freedom and necessity and lastly is the notion of the exiled soul.⁵⁰

What is his idea on the end of suffering? He related this notion to the Biblical history of the people of Israel whom their forefathers had been given a promise towards their fulfilment of their hope which is based on their material prosperity.⁵¹ However as time passes by, they realized that the fulfilment of their received promises can only be done in the “mythologized” future.⁵² In this sense, Christianity would offer the Biblical prophecies that the Jews would understand literally in the light of metaphorical understanding of the Bible. He considered as well that suffering is a necessary step for the fulfilment of humanity which is the whole redemption of the whole Cosmos and that the body and soul will be saved (i.e., salvation cannot be realized if the body and soul are separated because these components of man are his totality).⁵³ In this understanding, man is both body and soul and it needed the cooperation of these two components that will give the realization of human will and desires. Man can only be

⁴⁸ Paul Ricoeur. (1967). “The Myth of The Exiled Soul and Salvation Through Knowledge” in *The Symbolism of Evil*, Translated by Emerson Buchanan. New York: Harper and Row, Part 2 Chapter 4, 280.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 283-289.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Ricoeur. “The Symbolic Function of Myths” in *The Symbolism of Evil*, Part II Introduction, 172-174.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, “The “Adamic” Myth and The “Eschatological” Vision of History” in *The Symbolism of Evil*, Part II Chapter 3, 263.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 263.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 277-78.

liberated if both of the body and soul would experience it.

Ernst Bloch also had notions of evil, suffering and the end of suffering which can be found in his work, *The Spirit of Utopia*. There is no doubt that Marx's ideal society had influenced Ernst Bloch's notion of utopia. In the last part of this book, he considered that in the order of evolution of organisms, it was man whom he considered the firstborn, yet the last to be developed because he broke the limits of his animal nature by the awareness of his creativity which can be the root cause of all the sufferings. Because he is aware also of the limits which is imposed by his nature not like the animals.⁵⁴ Yet, at the same time, man is creative. His death is shared by all the finitude of things which we can consider what we called death. But what differs us from the death of other creatures is that it can generate life itself which we can consider as "the immortality of the soul".⁵⁵ The notion of his death is similar to all the myths which have its notion of "souls" but differs from his notion of "soul" is that the subjectivity of man can bring a possibility of the "Kingdom of God" here on earth, in the sense there will be the end of suffering and even death.⁵⁶

In comparison with these two philosophers, evil, suffering and death came from not only of the awareness of man's finitude. But because of his subjectivity, he or she experiences these negative forces because of the notion that we are still in the making of our own existence. What they meant is that it is still a possibility. That's why the notions of

utopia had pervaded in the myths of different cultures and civilizations in order not only to give them the understanding of the problem of evil. But also to understand that there will be a new beginning, a new chapter for each one of us. Myths of liberation and salvation had inclined man to make sense of the goal of our suffering. Since both of these philosophers were also influenced by the Judeo-Christian belief that man will be resurrected from the dead at the time when the history will brought to its end, it is a possibility that the liberation of the soul is not only possible but also liberation of the body because it is part of a concrete reality of man. Man who is a body and soul at the same time makes him not only a creature but a creature that can only manifest his or her possibilities if both of them are intertwined. Amidst all the sufferings and hopes man seeks to find consolation, and it is always directed to the future. Many cultures have resorted to myths to explain the problem of evil and why there is suffering and also by these myths, these cultures tried to re-awaken the sense of "hope" in every person and in turn directed their actions towards the utopia. The concrete origins of suffering is still a mystery. Yet, when we try to make what console us is not only its end; but rather the fulfilment of the end of our human limitations.

5. Interpretations to Offer for Humanity's Hope

Paul Ricoeur's *The Fallible Man* presents an argument that man's fall have been narrated in many mythologies and also how this fall related to the connection of our human

⁵⁴ Ernst Bloch. (2008). "The Lower Life" in *The Spirit of Utopia*, Translated by Anthony A. Nassar. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 233.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 259.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 267.

freedom.⁵⁷ Like his works about the problem of evil, he clearly stated that the myths of fall from all cultures gave us the understanding of the fallibility of man which can only be understood by man's feeling of weakness because of our freedom.⁵⁸

What is his concept of fallibility? For him, there are two kinds. First, is that it came from human weaknesses and also came from the realization that man is capable of weakness, yet he has full of possibilities.⁵⁹ Second, that there is an opposition between the extremes of good and evil which is heavily seen in the dualisms of Western notions of ethics.⁶⁰ He also considers that fallibility is only the possibility of evil which is external and at the same time the capability of weakness and failing.⁶¹

His concept of fallibility helped us understand the sense of weakness in us, fallibility or anything we can associate as evil are not the real hindrances in fulfilling the "utopia". Even though, we seem to be hindered by the external and internal fallibility, man learns to discover what his future will become. That's why people use symbols and myths for us to understand our hopes and dreams of utopia.

Ernst Bloch view that men have dreams for a better and brighter world: a world where there is no struggle and suffering which can be revealed in the contexts of individual

aspirations and also revolutionary utopias.⁶² He considered that all civilizations expressed "petty utopias" but not the "full utopia (Marxist utopia)".⁶³ The nature of man is utopian and that sometimes he does not act upon it because he is prevented by any dominant social system. He viewed as well, that from the pure fantasy of all religions it is possible that we can create the "kingdom of God" as which we can say utopia which is Communism (sharing Marx's aspirations).⁶⁴

The different notions of utopia is inherent in cultures, music, art, religion, myths and anything that are great expression of human civilization. Although, being "fallible" is part of our human nature, it does not mean that it is one of the great hindrances in attaining "utopia". But rather, it is a necessary step for it. This vision of an ideal society had been already there for thousands of years in different forms which inspired many revolutionaries to make some changes for their respective societies in different times. So by that, we can say every person has the potentiality to realize this vision of utopia, even there are hindrances from external and internal factors.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The topic of this research is the dialogue between Paul Ricoeur's notion of utopia together with Ernst Bloch's notion of utopia (resonating Marx's ideal society) which has its best understanding on why it is in the

⁵⁷ Paul Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, Revised Translation by Charles A. Kelbey, Introduction by Walter J. Lowe (New York: Fordham University, 1986), Preface, xlii-xliii.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 141-142.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁶² *Ibid.*, Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, 429.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 429.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 429-438.

human nature that man seeks, fights and build a just and humane society. Utopia became part of literary expressions from every culture, philosophy and religion. As what we saw earlier, this came from the desire of “sense of perfection” in the midst of human sufferings. Bloch considered it as possible. Because he has this notion this is within us which is what we call “hope”. “Hope” is a subconscious drive that is driving towards the positive future.

Hermeneutic phenomenology has reshaped our understanding of philosophy as “interpretation” in this contemporary times. Because it interprets human acts behind the human will. In this sense, we can see that hermeneutic phenomenology is a philosophy of “being human” that gives the human subjectivity a sense of being interpretative amidst the complexities of reality.

Ricoeur noted that both ideology and utopia are part of what he called “social and cultural imagination”. Both of these ideas are the contraries of social reality and wishes to liberate or destroy the “world”. What made them different from each other is that ideology wishes to integrate itself with the reality, no matter how it seems contrary towards social reality, while utopia, on the other hand, it wishes itself to be subversive. He considered

that utopia is a literary genre and gave a new perspective of it as an idea or a dream that can shatter any ruling social system.

Ernst Bloch inherited the Marxist vision of society. But he claimed it as different from past notions of utopia. Because he considered that this “vision” has the capability of making a “new world”. He considered that “hope” drives us towards this future. He also considered that perfection of our nature is possible because it is inherent in us. So utopia is possible for him.

With the synthesis of the thoughts of these philosophers, I have three concluding statements. These are: **1.) The ideal society is not only a possibility, but rather can be actualized because of the human will and drive; 2.) Past utopian ideas had reshaped and gave us the notion of ideal society amidst the struggles in human history; and that, 3.) Marx’s ideal society culminated these past utopians which I can affirm is the future stage of humanity.** This vision had inspired past revolutionaries and cultural and literary expressions of many civilizations. Therefore, we could agree that utopic vision is part of our human experience which arises from “hope” amidst human sufferings and inspires us to make this world a better place

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adorno, Theodor W. (2004). *Negative Dialectics*, Edited by Taylor and Francis Group, Translated by E.B. Ashton. London York: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

Bloch, Ernst. (1986). *The Principle of Hope*, Volumes I, II & III, Translated by: Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight. Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press.

_____. (2000). *The Spirit of Utopia*, Translated by Anthony A. Nassar. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press.

Geier, Dr. Alfred. (2008). "Plato's Republic: A Utopia for The Individual" in *Philosophy Now: a Magazine of Ideas* Issue 118 November/December Issue. Accessed on: January 28, 2017. Retrieved from: https://philosophynow.org/issues/70/Platos_Republic_A_Utopia_For_The_Individual.

Kafle, Narayan Prasad. "Hermeneutic phenomenological research method simplified" in *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 5, 2011, ISSN: 2091-0479, Accessed on: July 14, 2018, Retrieved from: http://kucc.ku.edu.np/bodhi/vol5_no1/11.%20Narayan%20Kafle%20Hermeneutic%20Phenomenological%20Research%20Method.pdf, 181-200.

Kolakowski, Leszek. (1985). *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Origin, Growth and Dissolution*, Vol. III The Breakdown, Translated from Polish by P.S. Falla. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 421-449.

Levy, Ze'ev. (1990). "Utopia and Reality in the Philosophy of Ernst Bloch" in *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 1 No. 2. March/April Issue. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 3-12.

Marx, Karl & Engels, Frederick. (1969). "Manifesto of the Communist Party", Translated by Samuel Moore in cooperation with Frederick Engels in Marx/Engels *Selected Works*, Vol. One. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 98-137.

McCarney, Joseph. (2000). *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook: Hegel on History*. London New York: Routledge.

New Advent. "Catholic Encyclopedia: Eschatology-New Advent" in *New Advent*. Accessed on: July 14, 2018. Retrieved from: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05528b.htm>.

Ricoeur, Paul. (1985). *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, Edited and Translated by George H. Taylor. New York: Columbia University Press.

_____. (1976). "Ideology and Utopia as Cultural Imagination" in *Philosophic Exchange*, Vol. 7: No. 1, Art. 5. Accessed on: February 17, 2017. Available at: http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/phil_ex/vol7/iss1/5,17-28.

_____. (1986). *The Fallible Man*. Revised Translation by: Charles A. Kelbley; Introduction by: Walter J. Jove. New York: Fordham University Press.

_____. (1967). *The Symbolism of Evil*, Translated by Emerson Buchanan. New York: Harper and Row.

Sargent, Lyman Tower. "What is a Utopia?" in *Morus: Utopia and Renaissance*, Accessed on: June 15, 2018, Redirected from: <http://revistamorus.com.br/index.php/morus/article/view/File/139/119>, 153-160.

Terra, Marlene Gomes, Gomçalves, Lucia Hisako Takase, Dos Santos, Evangelia Kotzias Altherino, Erdmann, Alacoque Lourenzini. (2009). "The use of Paul Ricouer's Hermeneutic phenomenology philosophy as a methodological framework to guide an educational nursing research" in *Meanings of sensibility for the professor- nurse- being in teaching and learning to be and practice nursing from the perspective of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology*, A doctoral thesis presented to the Santa Catarina Federal University- UFSC- Nursing Doctoral Program, with a grant from the MEC/CAPES (Brazilian Ministry of Education/Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel), city of Florianopolis, state of Santa Catarina, Brazil, 93-99.