OUKA
The University of Osaka
Institutional Knowledge Archive

Title	The problem of “the real” and “history” for Fredric Jameson : Toward a shift from literary criticism to social theory
Author(s)	Nojiri, Eiichi
Citation	Osaka Human Sciences. 2019, 5, p. 157-183
Version Type	VoR
URL	https://doi.org/10.18910/71752
rights	
Note	

The University of Osaka Institutional Knowledge Archive : OUKA

https://ir.library.osaka-u.ac.jp/

The University of Osaka

Osaka Human Sciences, **5**, 157-183
March 2019

THE PROBLEM OF "THE REAL" AND "HISTORY" FOR FREDRIC JAMESON: TOWARD A SHIFT FROM LITERARY CRITICISM TO SOCIAL THEORY

Eiichi Nojiri*

Abstract

Author aims to elucidate the outline of Fredric Jameson's theory in terms of the relationship between history and representation. Jameson argues that the representation works are the effects of the structure of history; we can access history as an absent cause only through representations, narratives and fictional stories, which are our formal and imaginary resolution of insurmountable real social contradiction. He prudently avoids and rejects any kinds of attitude to pretend to be able to know directly the structure of history since that kind of subject is to call him/herself a master of knowledge or history. Because of this Althusserian-Lacanian theoretical doctrine, however, his dialectical critical theory ends up having difficulties defending the superiority of science fiction genre as a mode-of-production aesthetic. It also leads him to analyze Marx's work of *Capital* as a novelistic representation instead of deriving a formula for interpretation theory from it. After close and overall examinations of Jameson's scheme on narrative and history, author proposes further developments using Hegelian-Derridean theory on imagination (Einbildungskraft), negativity, temporality and future-ness to find a missing link between the form of private fantasies and the laws of capitalist mode-of-production, which is to lead us to a revitalizing contemporary reinterpretation of *Capital*'s key concept; the organic composition of capital, as a bridge from literary criticism to critical social theory.

Key words: history as absent cause, Marx's *Capital* as a master novel,
science fiction as a mode-of-production aesthetic, imagination (Einbildungskraft),
utopian theory

This article is the English translation of the original one "Nojiri, E (2017). On the problem of 'the real' and 'history' for Fredrick Jameson: Toward a shift from literary criticism to social theory. *The Journal for Studies of Social Theory*, **18**, 4–24 (in Japanese)". The publication of its English translation has been permitted by the International Society of Social Theory.

* Graduate School of Human Sciences, Osaka University. 1-2 Yamadaoka, Suita-shi, Osaka, 565-0871, Japan.

1. Why focus on Jameson now?

History is a fiction, but then again, fiction can be historical.
—L. Marin, *Utopics*

Many of Fredric Jameson's publications have been translated into Japanese, but it seems that his world of ideas has not had as large an impact in Japan as it has had in the West. There are several reasons why Jameson is appreciated in the West. Unlike psychoanalysis review methods in family psychology that are limited to individualistic analyses, and unlike postmodern-type review methods that emphasize the autonomy of signs and representations (i.e., structures), Jameson reads literary works as representative acts that mediate between individual subjects and social structures. That is, he consistently maintains a perspective that grasps works as things capable of approaching an understanding of social structures as an absent cause only after an analysis of the works as the "effects" of structures, rather than grasping these works as simple reflections or results of social structures. This position seems to have won constant and firm support from various fields, including literary criticism, philosophy, contemporary thoughts and social thoughts.

The author will focus on Jameson's theories for the reason that although Jameson adopts a commentary position on post-modern thought, such as that exemplified by Deleuze and Derrida, even while taking a critical stance on them from the dialectic thought of Hegel and Marx, the author was also drawn in by Jameson's stance, at the same time, of valuing works in genres seen as subcultural, such as science fiction novels, as media for understanding the structure of modern society. The author was particularly drawn in by the fact that the utopian images that fill science fiction novels demonstrate the potential of future collectivity (this word is a little unclear, but if it is said to be a new type of connections between people or the state of sociality, perhaps the concept can be understood). Jameson ridicules the high culture favoritism of Adorno and Horkheimer. "Even all pop culture texts, extremely vulgar things, for example, advertising slogans, show the work of utopian impulses—whether a vision of an outwardly gorgeous lifestyle, or a vision of physical transformation, or a vision of an entirely unbelievable feeling of sexual satisfaction. No one saw through this better than Ernst Bloch, and his truly enlightening discovery may prove useful as an analysis model for appearance. In other words, through that analysis, it may be possible to demonstrate that even the cultural operations of the roughest sort rely on mankind's ancient desire for utopia. To mention criticism of the *Culture Industry* propagated by Adorno and Horkheimer, this same impulse for utopia—which is also found in the shadows of their systems—while having a stubborn stance of abusing pop culture and defending high culture in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, it is made into something obscure" (Jameson, 1981, pp. 287–88).

However, even though he says "extremely vulgar things," Jameson himself keeps his discussion to the classic, so-called orthodox works from among the science fiction literature of the West.

He does not reach for content labeled “Cool Japan” within this country, such as modern manga or anime. It is impossible to tell if that is his prudence as a theorist or simply a matter of personal preference. Nevertheless, Jameson is the only scholar who directly studies science fiction novels, which could be said to have played a large historical role as a 20th-century genre, while also being a scholar who is highly regarded worldwide (if we limit the region to Japan, there are examples such as Hiroki Azuma). Regarding Cool Japan, the author, who is attempting a new approach toward modern thought using philosophy and social theory commentary (which includes criticism of existing Japan thinkers), expects that Jameson’s thought can be used as a stepping stone (which includes criticism).

The author’s line of thought recognizes that Marx’s “social character of human labor” is a manifestation of “negation” within Hegel’s philosophy. This is a scheme in which the “social character” is released from the production site (through the relative saturation of the accumulating process in capitalist production when it arrives at a standard with a rise of organic composition of capital) and is exhibited in the culture industry to the extent that it is still trapped in that organic composition. That is, originally, it is understood within a scheme that suggests that things that should be exhibited as images of society as a whole (affirmative imaginations about society) or as visions of history (affirmative imaginations toward the temporal future or the spatial outside) are released and consumed in the realm of subculture.[1)] The author’s perspective shares Jameson’s attempt to introduce a temporary orientation, which suggests that the function of “the Imaginary” mentioned in Lacan’s psychoanalytic theory has been brought to the relative fore, in line with changes in the industrial structure, and to upstream from a representation that is the result of the imaginary, and toward the issues of their futuristic or utopian nature. The difference is that the author understands the workings of Hegel’s negativity historically through a connection to Marx.

The big questions that emerge are as follows. With the social effects brought about by the production and consumption of the cultural products known as a subculture, is there potential for some kind of transformation or liberation? Or do these effects not go beyond acts that simply continue while reality remains as it is? In this discussion, based on this kind of awareness of the problem, the author will attempt to examine the potential of Jameson’s critical theory from his own point of view closely. What author wanted to express by the subtitle of “a shift from criticism to social theory” is an awareness of the issue that attempts to consider the productive bridge between “criticism” (in Japan this word has broad implications from literary criticism to representative culture theory) and social theory, and/or the potential transition from the former to the latter, through a close examination of Jameson’s critical theory.

To make a preemptive statement at this point for the sake of the reader, it will not be possible

1) See the following: Eiichi Nojiri, “Negativity, History, and the Organic Composition of Capital: Toward a principle theory of transformation of subjectivity in Japan,” *Canadian Social Science*, Canadian Academy of Oriental and Occidental Culture, Volume 10, Number 4, 2010.

to *complete* the task of transitioning Jameson's critical theory to social theory within the scope of this paper. What this discussion will achieve is the run-up necessary for accomplishing this task. The author will first outline the structure of Jameson's theories, and then attempt to detect whether those theories are incomplete as a social theory. What will be detected are the issues that arise through the positioning history within Jameson's work as "the Real" from Lacanian theory. Based on the ideas of Lacan and Althusser, when Jameson places history in the Real, namely the realm of the unknowable, there is an appropriate reason based on the conventions of the history of thought. In the development of modern thought during and after the 1970s, based on reconsiderations of 20th-century philosophy's linguistic turn and the course of events that led from vanguard party Marxism to Stalinism, a trend of abandoning the presupposition that the human intelligence could grasp the law of history was generated.[2)] Jameson's theories obey these rules. However, because of this, Jameson's theories fail to historicize history, and experience difficulty in explaining the transitions of popularity of genres.

2. Jameson's reading of *Capital*

First, we will attempt to grasp Jameson's "dialectic critical theory" methods beginning with his reading of Marx's *Capital*.

After his life's work, *Archaeologies of the Future*, a collection of works criticizing science fiction was published in 2005, Fredric Jameson seems to have begun to summarize his own interpretations of the thought classics, including dialectics theory (*Valences of Dialectics*, 2009), Hegel (*The Hegel Variations: On the Phenomenology of Spirit*, 2010), and Marx (*Representing Capital: Reading Volume One*, 2011).

Of those works, *Representing Capital: Reading Volume One* is Jameson's first summary of reading volume one of Marx's *Capital* as one work. If this is to be Jameson's Marx interpretation, what one would expect (or at least what I personally expected) would be a demonstration of how the methodological basis for his "dialectic critical theory" (a reading of the corresponding relationship between literary works and social structures through Hegel's and Marx's dialectic thinking methods) is drawn from Marx's works. Namely, that the rationale for his methodology would be clarified. However, in this book Jameson *applied the dialectic criticism techniques to Marx's own text*.

Jameson's dialectic criticism method grasps the daydreams, delusions, and fantasies that individuals hold (wishing one's life or destiny to be a certain way and imagining that one's life problems would be solved if things were a certain way) as the effects of "structure" (the structural

2) Regarding the origins of the assumption of history being equated with the Real (absent cause) in Jameson's work, William C. Dowling provides a detailed commentary on this topic (Dowling, 1984). Dowling mentions criticism against Marxism by the new philosophers (nouveaux philosophes) triggered by the Stalin problem, the influence of Lacan and Althusser's theories, and the influence of American new criticism.

interactions between subjects and society, or the structure that is neither the subject nor society, but both). It regards the acts of protagonists in literary works that harbor daydreams, or otherwise, the acts of the writer writing and the reader consuming the literary work themselves, as the "symbolic acts" which imaginarily solve real social contradictions. What is important here is that the literary works, in this case, are not essentially simple means or phenomena for expressing social structures. Socioeconomic structure as reality cannot be directly approached itself; this line of thought establishes reality as inferred only through the subject's imagination.[3)] The subject's imagination appears as an "effect" of the subject participating in the structure through symbolic and imaginative routes. What we have in hand are only the "effects" of this structure; the structure itself can never be seen directly.

Let us review the above topic alongside Jameson's own texts.

> [According to Lévi-Strauss's interpretation in *"Tristes tropiques"*] the visual text of Caduveo facial art constitutes a symbolic act, whereby real social contradictions, insurmountable in their own terms, find a purely formal resolution in the aesthetic realm. (Jameson, 1981, p. 79)
>
> The aesthetic act is itself ideological, and the production of aesthetic or narrative form is to be seen as an ideological act in its own right, with the function of inventing imaginary or formal "solutions" to unsolvable social contradictions. (Jameson, 1981, p. 79)
>
> In order to be consistent, the will to read literary or cultural texts as symbolic acts must necessarily grasp them as resolutions of determinate contradictions. (Jameson, 1981, p. 80)
>
> A symbolic act is on the one hand affirmed as a genuine *act*, albeit on the symbolic level, while on the other it is registered as an act which is "merely" symbolic, its resolutions imaginary ones that leave the real untouched, suitably dramatizes the ambiguous status of art and culture. (Jameson, 1981, p. 81)
>
> Still, we need to say a little more about the status of this external reality, of which it will otherwise be thought that it is little more than the traditional notion of "context" familiar in older social or historical criticism. The type of interpretation here proposed is more satisfactorily grasped as the rewriting of the literary text in such a way that the latter may itself be seen as the rewriting or restructuration of a prior historical or ideological *subtext*, it being

[3)] This way of thinking of Jameson's is founded on Althusser's "structural causality," but from this line of thought Hegel's methods (particularly in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*) are criticized as being based on "expressionist causality." This is because Hegel's "phenomena" are thought of as expressions of the "spirit," which are essential existences that are there from the beginning. It depends, however, on the interpretation method of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Incidentally, for a long time, the author did not understand the meaning of Althusser's expressionist causality criticism (Hegel criticism), but he became self-aware that this was due to his already having read *The Phenomenology of Spirit* in a Lacanian or Althusserian way. That is, the author had been reading it as if the "spirit" finally appeared as a phenomenon after going through expression as the externalization of social and historical multilayered-ness carried by personal consciousness. It may be possible to interpret this such that the absolute knowledge that consciousness arrives at is empty in content, but this might be a rather modern interpretation. The discussion is divided about what Hegel himself thought.

> always understood that that "subtext" is not immediately present as such, not some common-sense external reality, nor even the conventional narratives of history manuals, but rather must itself always be (re)constructed after the fact. (Jameson, 1981, p. 81)

Thus, the concept of this "subtext" is historical reality itself, and Jameson, following in the footsteps of Althusser or Lacan, takes the position of being unable to approach reality itself directly. First, using the concept of "subtext" (something under the text) rather than "context" (something in the background of the text, along with the text) and, second, taking the position of being unable to approach that thing itself are the features of Jameson's methods. The logic lies in austerely committing himself to the position of being unable to approach reality itself, called the subtext, while also finding the raison d'être of the work therein. Therefore, the analysis of cultural matters and the analysis of novels or literary works are not acts that are limited to mere literary criticism, but the acts through which we theoretically grasp what kinds of *reality* we are touching when we create the fictions. Only through the fiction we create are we able to perceive our *reality*. Still, just theoretically. Jameson's stance is that the analysis of works is an important and essential way to go upstream to *reality*.

> The literary or aesthetic act [being rewrites and reconstructions of subtexts] therefore always entertains some active relationship with the Real; yet in order to do so, it cannot simply allow "reality" to persevere inertly in its own being, outside the text and at distance. It must rather draw the Real into its own texture, and the ultimate paradoxes and false problems of linguistics, and most notably of semantics, are to be traced back to this process, whereby language manages to carry the Real within itself as its own intrinsic or immanent subtext. (Jameson, 1981, p. 81)
>
> The whole paradox of what we have here called the subtext may be summed up in this, that the literary work or cultural object, as though for the first time, brings into being that very situation to which it is also, at one and the same time, a reaction. It articulates its own situation and textualizes it, thereby encouraging and perpetuating the illusion that the situation itself did not exist before it, that there is nothing but a text, that there never was any extra- or con-textual reality before the text itself generated it in the form of a mirage. (Jameson, 1981, pp. 81–82)
>
> The social contradiction addressed and "resolved" by the formal prestidigitation of narrative must, however reconstructed, remain an absent cause, which cannot be directly or immediately conceptualized by the text. It seems useful, therefore, to distinguish, from this ultimate subtext which is the place of social *contradiction*, a secondary one, which is more properly the place of ideology, and which takes the form of the *aporia* or the *antinomy*: what can in the former be resolved only through the intervention of praxis here comes before the purely contemplative mind as logical scandal or double bind, the unthinkable and the conceptually paradoxical, that

which cannot be unknotted by the operation of pure thought, and which must therefore generate a whole more properly narrative apparatus—the text itself—to square its circles and to dispel, through narrative movement, its intolerable closure. (Jameson, 1981, pp. 82–83)

3. Was *Capital* a novel?

Through reading the structure of Balzac's novels, Jameson conceptualizes the format changes which novels accomplish as symbolic acts driven by the causes mentioned above (Figure 1).

Ordinarily, this is a point that would require careful explanation, but here I will provide a brief explanation.

Subjects as individuals hold a form of "wish fulfillment" or "daydreams," of wanting their own circumstances or life path to be a certain way, or to become a certain way. These wishes are formed by making his or her fundamental family circumstances (which reflect social class circumstances) into an unconscious master narrative ("fantasm"); furthermore, these wishes are formed on the foundation of an ideology as an "the axiomatic". Ideology, in this case, is the "imaginative representations related to subject's relationship with the conditions of his or her reality" as told by the Althusser School. However, Jameson strictly differentiates the "imaginative representations" from the conditions which establish the narratives. For example, this would differentiate the image of the legitimate child of a formerly great landowner who fell into ruin due to a revolution, coming back to take control of the territory once again and wield power, and the ideology of the "eldest child inheritance" as the *axiomatic* that establishes that fantasy text. "In other words, as those conceptual conditions of possibility or narrative presuppositions which one must 'believe,' those empirical preconditions which must have been secured, in order for the subject successfully to tell itself this particular daydream". (Jameson, 1981, p. 182)

However, continuing to harbor daydreams is by no means a simple and straightforward act; it

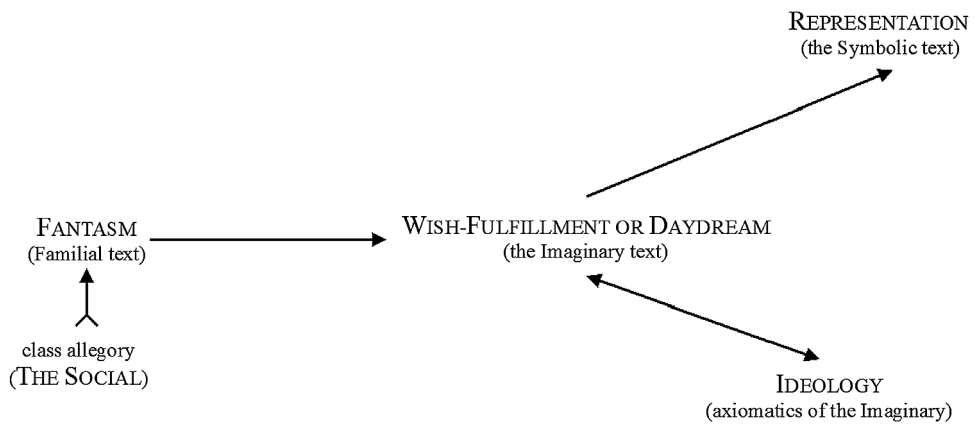

FIGURE 1. (Jameson, 1981, p. 184)

has rather complex mechanisms. Human mental mechanisms call to mind things that would hinder one's own wishes, and through that, they attempt to continue the daydream. "It would seem, indeed, that the production of a whole ideology as a precondition for the indulgence of a specific daydream implies something like a reality principle or censorship within the latter. This peculiar dialectic, in which the desiring subject is forced to enumerate the objections to his or her Imaginary gratification in order to realize the latter even on the level of a daydream"(Jameson, 1981, p. 182). However, this is still no more than the first level of wish fulfillment, and naturally, authors like Balzac attempt to depict conditions beyond that point.

> But one can imagine a more consequent act of desire in which the wish-fulfilling mind sets out systematically to satisfy the objections of the nascent "reality principle" of capitalist society and of the bourgeois superego or censorship. Unlike the more degraded, and easily commodifiable, texts of the Imaginary level, these new second-level narratives—we will call them, following our earlier distinction, "Symbolic texts"—entertain a far more difficult and implacable conception of the fully realized fantasy: one which is not to be satisfied by the easy solutions of an "unrealistic" omnipotence or the immediacy of a gratification that then needs no narrative trajectory in the first place, but which on the contrary seeks to endow itself with the utmost representable density and to posit the most elaborate and systematic difficulties and obstacles, in order the more surely to overcome them, just as a philosopher imagines in advance the objections his triumphant argumentation will be summoned up to confute. (Jameson, 1981, p. 183)
>
> This is the sense in which Lukács is right about Balzac, but for the wrong reasons: not Balzac's deeper sense of political and historical realities, but rather his incorrigible fantasy demands ultimately raise History itself over against him, as absent cause, as that on which desire must come to grief. The Real is thus—virtually by definition in the fallen world of capitalism—that which resists desire, that bedrock against which the desiring subject knows the breakup of hope and can finally measure everything that refuses its fulfillment. Yet it also follows that this Real—this absent cause, which is fundamentally unrepresentable and non-narrative, and detectable only in its effects—can be disclosed only by Desire itself, whose wish-fulfilling mechanisms are the instruments through which this resistant surface must be scanned. (Jameson, 1981, pp. 183–84)

Assuming this is the case, the more deeply a subject holds their imaginary desires, in other words, the greater the subject's longing for fantasy, the more distant they will seem from reality at first glance when they are in fact the ones who listen most closely to the calls of the Real.

Jameson does not go as far as to say here (in *The Political Unconscious*) that Marx, in *Capital*, was also attempting to lead this approach toward the Real through desire as seen in Balzac, namely the approach toward History through the medium of reappearance = representation.

However, perhaps what he wanted to say in *Representing Capital* was that the above construction fits *Capital*. Desire is something that must be historicized. However, conversely, only where desire exists does *History* signal its existence to us. By supporting and maintaining desire through the axiomatics as ideology, this dialectic reversal finally becomes possible. The existence of the Real can be perceived only through its effects. That is, it can be perceived only through the contradictory circumstances of characters (workers) imprisoned in the double-bind situation of "work, but don't work." This is where *desire* as "imagination" appears. That *desire*, or the not-A clinging to the A, is proof that movements of the Real exist. To put it in terms of the above diagram, what applies to (1) "wish fulfillment or daydreams" would be the "world where we need not work like this" depicted by workers in a hopeless working situation. If one were to develop a specific narrative, in the formation of the text developed there, we might see the development of the fantasm as a familial text to an imaginary text as a solution. Then, the "ideology" that supports this daydream, which for Balzac would be the "eldest child inheritance," for Marx would be the "communist revolution." However, if the described formation remains at this level, it would be no more than the first level of the representation of desire. Many of the romanticist narratives in the world stop at this level (even if they are not self-aware of the communist revolution as an ideology). Early Marx could perhaps be positioned at this level. (2) One could argue that late Marx advanced to this second level. The task would have been to take the existence of the daydream as desire as the starting point, and to take an approach toward the things that make its occurrence possible, namely, the things that prevent wish fulfillment while producing wishes, and things that obstruct that fulfillment while establishing the conditions for generating wishes. Marx supposed the existence of the movements of "capital" on the ground of the existence of a daydream (or the existence of an imaginary desire) about communism (a world that has resolved the contradictions of capitalism). No one can see the movements of capital, but what we can do is infer the contradictory structure of the Real from the existence of our imaginary desires. Fundamentally, if we assume the task of this book (*Capital*) to be the clarification of the wish fulfillment mechanisms of a "world where we need not work like this," then it is only a matter of course that it would not include the methods for determining how to make the conquest of capitalistic production mode possible in reality. The only thing that can be done is to depict thoroughly how that is impossible. "[This analysis] entitles us, allows a welcome recoding of these multiple situations of misery and enforced idleness, of populations helplessly in prey to the incursions of warlords and charitable agencies alike, of naked life in all the metaphysical senses in which the sheer biological temporality of existences without actively and without production can be interpreted" (Jameson, 2011, p. 151). In other words, the thorough depiction of how we are trapped in an intractable structure of contradiction becomes the main purpose. What Jameson wants to say is that if it is explained this way, one can read the representational structure of *Capital*. If that is the case, perhaps it could be said that *Capital* was a novel. *Capital*, as a master novel, the prototype for all novels.

4. Where do we go, then?

The "communist revolution" is an ideology for supporting the dreams we create in order to live in the reality of this society and *Capital* is self-analysis applied to the structure of that dream. This is the Jameson's remarkable elucidation of *Capital*. Jameson's argument in *The Political Unconscious* is that the desire for utopia is ideological, and at the same time, ideology is always utopian as a conclusion. What Marxist criticism suggests is the social science and historicization of desire, and the demystification of the hopes and dreams we hold for the future. However, this demystification effect has two orientations. These are traditionally labeled negative dialectics and positive hermeneutics. The former criticizes utopian wishes as a desire for the repressive uniformity and has a negative connotation, but the latter perceives utopian wishes as representations of human destiny beyond individual dreams. Here, Jameson uses as a model a four-step interpretation based on a Christian exegesis Bible reading, and he indicated this model already at the beginning of *The Political Unconscious*. The Old Testament can be read through an accumulation of the following four levels of interpretations. (1) Literal interpretation (historical and textual referent); (2) allegorical (allegorical key or interpretive code); (3) moral (psychological reading [individual subject]); and (4) anagogical (political reading [collective "meaning" of history]). Namely, the Old Testament stories are at first literally the facts (*history*) of the Jewish people, but they can also be read as allegories that represent the life of Jesus. At the same time, the story of the life of Jesus is accepted by individual subjects and interpreted as a basis for moral judgments about how individuals live. However, interpretations as rewrites of the story do not stop there. Stories that are reduced to the individual level are finally rewritten at a level that goes beyond the individual. The story of one specific ethnic group is transformed into a universal story that tells the fate of all of humanity. Thus, going from the hardships experienced by the Jewish people, "the historical or collective dimension is thus attained once again, by way of the detour of the sacrifice of Christ and the drama of the individual believer; but from the story of a particular earthly people it has been transformed into universal history and the destiny of humankind as a whole" (Jameson, 1981, p. 31). Jameson argues that when we interpret our dilemma of the modern divide between individuals and a society, this four-level system for Christian interpretive exegesis becomes the criteria for discussing which type of interpretation is superior.

> We have also suggested, in our discussion of Northrop Frye's system in Chapter 1, that even within an ostensibly religious framework such varied options can be measured against the standard of the medieval system of four levels, which helped us to distinguish the resonance of the "moral" level—that of the individual soul, or of the libidinal Utopia of the individual body—from that ultimate and logically prior level traditionally termed the "anagogical," in which even such individual visions of Utopian transfiguration are rewritten in terms of the

> collective, of the destiny of the human race" (Jameson, 1981, pp. 285–86).
>
> Such a demonstration might be staged under a reversal of Walter Benjamin's great dictum that "there is no document of civilization which is not at one and the same time a document of barbarism," and would seek to argue the proposition that the effectively ideological is also, at the same time, necessarily Utopian. What is logically paradoxical about such a proposition can be understood, if not "resolved," by considering the conceptual limits imposed on our thinking and our language by categories that we have had frequent enough occasion to unmask in the preceding pages, namely those of the ethical code of good and evil, in which even our own terminology of "positive" and "negative" remains unavoidably imprisoned. We have suggested that the vocation of the dialectic lies in the transcendence of this opposition *toward some collective logic "beyond good and evil,"* while noting that the language of the classics of dialectical thought has historically failed to overcome this opposition, which it can only neutralize by reflexive play across these categories. Nor is this particularly surprising, if we take *dialectical thought to be the anticipation of the logic of a collectivity which has not yet come into being*. In this sense, to project an imperative to thought in which the ideological would be grasped as somehow at one with the Utopian, and the Utopian at one with the ideological, is to formulate a question to which a collective dialectic is the only conceivable answer. (Jameson, 1981, pp. 286–87) (emphasis by Nojiri)

The basis of dialectic thought is to see a kind of unifying *element* that allows for the dichotomy between the two which seem irreconcilably oppositional. That is, of course, the case, but Jameson's logic that links that to future collectivity still includes many leaps. If we view this destination as the limit of Jameson's theory, the map necessary to get there is still only a rough sketch. This does not stop at the level of rereading the daydreams of workers who envision a "world where we need not work like this" into the ethical story of the elimination of capitalists that exploit us. It goes even further and rewrites the story to the one of humanity's destiny, of the birth of the population class (lost population) stuck in the double bind of "having to work, but having to not work." When one reads Marx's *Capital* as one narrative, it is certainly possible to read it that way. Is that all? The issues can be summarized in the following points. Something that should be called an unconscious *element* is certainly contributing to the formation of dialectics. Jameson is attempting to extract this *element* as a utopian desire from the products (works) that are a function of the Imaginary world that clings to the Real. "The future lies entangled in that unrepresentable outside like so many linked genetic messages" (Jameson, 1994, p. xiii]. However, can that be said to be an omen of a new collective, as Jameson states? Perhaps there is another step in the theory construction that needs to be completed in order to be able to confirm this. Only after properly completing that step can Jameson's critical theory break free from "literary criticism" and arrive at the level of critical social theory.

5. Science fiction literature as a response to history

Jameson's central task in *Representing Capital: A Reading of Volume One* was to apply dialectic criticism methods to Marx's text. It was to read the first volume of *Capital* as a novel, as it were. Of course, in this task, the methodology ends up being cyclical. To be sure, Marx's work includes apocalyptic salvation narratives that instantly transform the downtrodden proletariat into the bearers of a new era. However, at the same time, there is also a grasp of an equation of the social construct movement in Marx's work, which is cornering us into an insoluble *aporia* and is labeled a terrible and cruel history by Jameson. Jameson is attempting to state that *Capital*, which Marx wrote in his much later years, was a hybrid composition of a novel as so-called ideology, and a description of the social structure that prompted the production of that novel. Perhaps Jameson wants to assert that this hybrid construct (*Capital*) was a forerunner of more refined dialectic criticism of his own. This assertion is certainly original. Other than Jameson, who has attempted to discuss the literary aspects of *Capital* seriously?

Nevertheless, it would seem that his understanding of Marx's "history," or the laws of motion of the social construct, still has room for a more precise theorization that combines the necessity of producing narratives and the role that production plays in the reproduction of the unified social construct. I described this above as a hybrid, but perhaps it would be appropriate for his emphasis to be placed more on the side of interpreting *Capital* as literature in *Representing Capital*. However, even if it is a superior work, if we assume that *Capital* is nothing more than one literary work, where is the master key for reading all other works? Jameson suppresses the direct representation of the laws of the Real, and this position of self-restraint makes his theory difficult to understand. The author is particularly curious about the relationship between "reality" (what the subject suppresses) and "imagination" (what creates the narrative) in Jameson's work. To use Lacan's terms, this would be the relationship between the Real and the Imaginary. Let us advance the line of thought on this question a little further.

The advantage of Jameson's theory is that when we consume products when we consume science fiction novels, and when we aimlessly let ourselves daydream, it is clear that the utopian cathexis brought about by the relationship to *History* is at work. Perhaps merely personal delusions are challenged by others. No one wants to hear the contents of other people's daydreams. However, when that is refined to the level of a work that is acceptable to others, it creates a form that reflects the structure of *History*. Then, history can only be approached in the process of analyzing representations in this way, and from there going back upstream and reconstructing the form. The psychoanalytic life story that Freud conceived of in "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" (1907) was a method that linked individual biographical facts to the possibility for universal understanding in this way. "Cultural manifestations and individual productions come to be grasped as responses to a determinate situation and have the intelligibility of sheer gesture, provided the context is reconstructed with sufficient complexity. From an

effort at empathy, therefore, the process of analysis is transformed into one of a hypothetical restoration of the situation itself, whose reconstruction is at one with comprehension (*Verstehen*)" (Jameson, 1988, p. 80). (Here, Jameson presumes that Sartre is the developer of this psychoanalytic biography method, but at the same time points out in his explanatory notes the close association of Sartre's methods and Dilthey's hermeneutics. This indicates the model that forms the foundation of his value judgment toward utopian representations.)

There is value in taking up this utopian cathexis and the image of utopia that is an expression of that. The reason is that they are a response to the call of history as the Real. This is Jameson's utopian literature theory and science fiction theory. Žižek, who apparently inherited and refined Jameson's Lacanian methods, would likely say that the creation of the image of utopia that Jameson attempts to assess positively is a counterattack from the Real and that these creations are nothing but *empty gestures* and mere *symptoms*. "What is the 'empty gesture' by means of which the brute, senseless reality is *assumed*, accepted as our own work, if not the most elementary ideological operation, the symbolization of the Real, its transformation into a meaningful totality, its inscription into the big Other? We can literally say that this 'empty gesture' *posit the big Other, makes exist*" (Žižek, 1989, p. 262). According to Žižek, the figure of the individual (albeit an exceptional individual) who undertakes this "foolish command" to accomplish that core empty gesture was Jesus Christ. Žižek's understanding is that taking in the "foolish command" as one's own "will" and the composition of a subject therein is the "essence of human liberty," but I am not sure if Žižek wants to arrive at some kind of atheism by positioning the "empty gesture" in the place of Jesus, a representative mediator, and "brutal reality" in the place of God. On the contrary, to the author, this seems to be a rather Christian way of thinking.[4)] In any case, Jameson and Žižek's theory compositions have in common the point of attempting to place the Real as something that cannot be represented at the foundations of *History*. They differ in that Jameson believes "human happiness lies in the limitless endeavor to try to represent God," whereas Žižek believes "being humans is a sickness of trying to represent a limitless God." The important point in question for us is whether Jameson's theories can skillfully answer Žižek's cynical counterattack that utopian representations that Jameson thinks much of are mere symptoms.[5)]

---

4) See Žižek's strongly declared antipathy toward "capitalism with Asian values": "a capitalist civil society organized into estates and kept in check by a strong authoritarian state with managerial "public servant" and traditional values" (Žižek, 2009, p. 77, 148). This apparently includes Japan.

5) Recently, the morality of Žižek's "empty gestures" has become more articulate (*First as Tragedy, then as Farce*). To Žižek, standing in a position of singular universality facing the Real in singularity as *something excluded*, without averting one's eyes from the results of the terrible laws of the Real, and without being subsumed into intimate relationships as a product of the Imaginary, is the ethic that is now sought. See also the appendix, "Žižek: the Real, the Imaginary, and Hegel."

6. The issue of the ebb and flow of genres

That quesition appears in the title of Jameson's lifetime masterpiece, *Archaeologies of the Future* (2005), which discussed 20th-century science fiction works as part of the lineage of utopian literature, as an "archaeology" of the "future." This title presents the heyday of 20th-century science fiction, a representational form drawing hopeful visions of the future from utopian cathexis as if it were already in the historical past. Within the collection of narrative works collected as artifacts, that era must be restored after they are dug up, using critical archaeological techniques. In the fifth chapter of this book, Jameson discusses the differences between the two literary genres of science fiction and fantasy. According to him, science fiction is a legitimate successor to utopian literature, but fantasy is not. Science fiction is historicist literature, but fantasy is lacking historicity. Here, historicity is determined whether or not there is a formal framework based on the concept of modes of production. However, Jameson acknowledges that science fiction is currently only popular with a very small minority of readers, while Harry Potter and the Lord of the Rings (fantasies) have acquired an incomparably large number of readers. Fantasy works feature narratives that revolve around the ethical and imaginary dichotomy of good and evil and depict magic powers, and Jameson seems to grasp the narrative structure of that dichotomy as considerably reflecting postmodern circumstances. Jameson states that the postmodern creates thinking that stops at the level of dichotomic thought paralysis.

> The paralysis of postmodern thinking by the structure of the antinomy […] confronts thought with a static reversal and repetition in which identity turns into difference, and difference back into identity in an unproductive way that can understandably lead some people to abandon theoretical work altogether […]. I warned at the outset of this exploration that the antinomy is by definition more capable of figuration and representation than the contradiction: which is to say that it is easier to lay out the pattern effects we have offered as our exhibits here qua effects than it is to offer any satisfying account of the causes they must be thought to imply. Everyone surely feels instinctively that these new types of thinking, these new and urgent anomalies in which we are gripped, as in a riptide or galactic time warp, are at one with what we call the postmodern, and that their historic originality has something to do with the mechanisms of late capitalisms as such. But this feeling is by way of a preliminary working hypothesis, rather than any substantive conclusion: the way in which the connection might be dramatized—homology, mediation, participation, symptom—is very far from being evident. (Jameson, 1994, pp. 68–69)

He argues that it is important to move the thought to the underlying totality in the course of the alternation of the dichotomy. By playing around with dichotomy and limiting itself to the realm of the fight between good and evil, fantasy works stop at the level of the workings of the

Imaginary. However, it is essential to drive the thoughts toward the question of what is generating the workings of the Imaginary, and what is generating ethical representations.

> The analogy with the modern sciences, however, offers a loose way of grasping the representational problem as it were from the outside, in the absence of its resolution: we are told that Newton's laws still hold, after Einstein's conceptual revolution, but that their application has been found to be structurally diminished and to apply to but a small corner, a small room, of the totality that Einstein found the universe to be. Newtonian law would then govern the realm of appearance of our own historical world and lived experience—an objective appearance to be sure, and very far from being mere error or superstition—while Einstein's hypotheses designate something beyond our reach that we can reconstruct only by allowing for the palpable distortion of our own coordinates. This is a lesson in the philosophically correct use of the concept of totality, as something that by definition we cannot know […]. How then to coordinate our very limited positions, as individuals or indeed as historical subjects and classes, within a History whose dynamics representationally escape us? The lesson was given as far back as Spinoza, surely the most dramatic of all the thinkers of totality, when he recommended a kind of stoic adjustment, as a part or component, to that immense whole of being or nature of which we are the merest partial reflexes; it was then reinvented by the practical side of Freudian psychoanalysis, not as a cure, but as an adjustment of our self-knowledge in the light of the impossibility of the cure itself—the passionate choice of and cleaving to what Žižek has called the Symptom. Nor is Tolstoy far from this kind of political wisdom when he sardonically shows the greatest of world-historical leaders in the process of running to stay in the same place and affirming the inevitable and the inescapable as though it were precisely their own strategies. Yet none of these visions constitutes a resignation to necessity exactly; each one posits a certain wisdom in this process of epistemological adjustment, from which alone whatever praxis it is given us to exercise may eventually come. (Jameson, 1994, pp. 69–70)

Here, Jameson's thought seems to be extremely close to Žižek's ethics of the Real. However, while Jameson criticizes the superficiality of thought that stops at the postmodern dichotomy, he simultaneously asserts that it is important to experience the dichotomy thoroughly.

> Reification can be interrupted, if only in a punctual fashion that cannot last or produce any permanently transparent discourse (the dialectic cannot become a Utopian lingua franca). For one thing, figuration, as we have seen, is capable of arresting the effects of nomination and reappropriating them for a new moment of dialectical awareness. For another, the very structure of binary oppositions which would seem to condemn thought to a perpetual repetition of stereotypical dualisms contains mechanisms which can be turned against its own traditional

> ideological dynamic to short-circuit it and produce a more complex and historical awareness in its place. (Jameson, 2011, p. 135)

Now I would like to organize the positional relationship between "dichotomy (antimony)" and "contradiction" in Jameson's work. The level of "dichotomy" is considered the superstructure, which is the expression of "contradiction" of substructure.

> It should be added that the distinction we have made here between a contradiction in the social infrastructure and the form it takes when it becomes registered in the realm of thought and ideology, or in the superstructure—namely the antinomy—is an essential one […]. Contradiction […] subcellared in the deeper structures of mental life, must be understood as betraying its operations through those surface clicks and malfunctionings in which the former consist, and which serve to signal an approach to the conceptual limits or closure of a given ideological system. Such antinomies cannot be solved or resolved in their own terms; rather, they are violently restructured by an infrastructural praxis, which, rendering the older oppositions meaningless, now lays the preconditions for some new conceptual system or ideology which has no *immediate* link with the preceding one. In this sense, even a social contradiction itself cannot be resolved; it can only be disarticulated and destroyed in its turn and its elements fundamentally reorganized. (Jameson, 1988, pp. 401–02)

As (it is assumed that) a direct approach cannot be taken to the substructure, all that we can do is analyze the dichotomy at the level of the superstructure. However, by conducting a formalistic analysis (Greimas's semiotic rectangle, to be mentioned later) of the dichotomy's ideology in the superstructure, we can reveal the conceptual limits and blind spots within the system. Then, the appearance of the thing that had been impossible to conceptualized until now, which contradiction in the substructure, that is, the Real had been trying to create, might be foreshadowed as a metaphorical figure. This foreshadows the "future" being attached to the "contradictions" in the totality, the substructure, the Real, and the outside impossible to be represented underlying the dichotomy. It will appear as a "vacuum"; a spatial absence.

> These cartographic discrepancies [in More's description] reach their climax on the economic level of the text, which assigns the island's commercial activity to central market for which no place can be found in the strict letter of Hythloday/More's account. When we remember, however, that the lasting historical originality of More's conception of Utopia springs from the radical elimination from it of money as such, it becomes difficult to resist the feeling that this structural absence of the marketplace betrays some deeper contradiction than any of the foregoing and, through the very difficulty it suggests of thinking an exchange system that would somehow be separate from money itself as a medium, designates that fundamental

> blank or blind spot in the episteme of the time which is the notion of capitalism itself, and which will therefore only gradually be filled in by the developing political economy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This absence of a theoretical discourse yet to be developed, this figural anticipation, in the form of a blank or gap, of what could not in the very nature of things be conceptualized, is for Marin the very place of origin and inauguratory impulse of the genre itself: Utopian discourse is the one form of ideological discourse that has anticipatory value of a theoretical kind: but it is a value which can only appear as such *after* theory itself has been elaborated, that is to say, subsequent to the emergence of the material conditions for the new productive forces. (UJe, 255/199) Such, broken, yet carrying within itself that absence of which it is itself but the fragmentary and uneven surcharge, is the Utopian figure. (Jameson, 1988, pp. 408–09)

Through this kind of utopian discourse and the analysis of the metaphorical images therein, Jameson attempts to construct a new relationship between semiotic formalization and Hegel and Marx's dialectics. A thorough attempt at formalization is essential as a path toward making the dialectics operational. Through this attempt, the vacuums held by the structure are revealed, which means that the impossibility of formalization is revealed. By going through the experience of this impossibility, we arrive at "neutralization" (discussed below) through mutual conversion without immobilizing the dichotomy terms. The dialectics function through this kind of fluidity and the passage open into a dimension of dialectic totality. However, on the other hand, that formalization must go through metaphorical figures. If only through abstract forms, can A go through not-A and merely return to A. The dialectic at this abstract concept level only reinforces itself without demonstrating the existence of totality. The self must be lost, and totality must appear. That requires the process of fitting the specific metaphorical figures into a formalistic structure (Greimas's semiotic rectangle) and giving it form.

> Attention to figuration may continue to be helpful here, for Marx's practice of system is quite different spatially from the Hegelian one, where a consciousness or an idea "returns into itself," thereby reaching a higher stage of self-consciousness, a more intense thematization. In Marx, on the other hand, the dynamic of separation sets in motion a dialectic of the inside and the outside: in order to discover profit we must "step outside the sphere of circulation"; consumption takes place "outside" production or circulation; and so forth. This figure then dramatizes the expansive nature of capitalism which draws its outside within itself and enlarges its own sphere of activity to envelop the former outside within its now all-encompassing dynamic (imperialism is only the most striking exemplification of this process). Thus in a prophetic moment, Marx observes the dynamic of the working class family, whose impoverishment must be replaced by "substitutes" from the outside, which then open up a larger field for the production of new (and cheaper) commodities. (Jameson, 2011, p. 134)

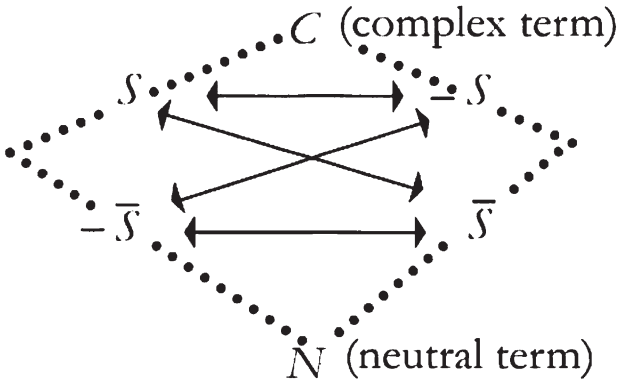

FIGURE 2. (Jameson, 1988, p. 390)

This explanation is late, but I would like to explain now about that Jameson states by relying on Greimas's semiotic rectangle[6] and Marin's utopia theory that applies it[7] that the effects of science fiction as utopian literature result in the creation of a "neutral term" (Figure 2). Jameson applied this diagram, in which he also applied Greimas's rectangle in a manner after Marin, in his early paper "Of Islands and Trenches: Naturalization and the Production of Utopian Discourse" (1977), and has consistently used it since then. It could be thought of as the basic diagram for Jameson's representational cultural analysis. In Levi-Strauss's interpretation of myth, myths were things that brought about imaginary solutions to real problems by basically creating intermediary terms, but Marin interprets utopian narratives as things that cause the opposite effects of myths.

> This logical schema then permits us to identify at a glance the quite different position Marin assigns the Utopian narrative; it is for him the structural inversion of myth in the following sense: whereas the narrative operation of myth undertakes to mediate between the two primary terms of the opposition *S* and -*S*, and to produce a complex term that would be their resolution, Utopian narrative is constituted by the union of the twin contradictories of the initial opposition, the combination of -*S* and *S*, a combination which, virtually a double cancellation of the initial contradiction itself, may be said to effect the latter's *neutralization* and to produce a new term, the so-called neuter or neutral term *N*. (Jameson, 1988, p. 390)

[6] See the following on Greimas's semiotic square: Greimas, A.J. (1970). *On Meaning.* trans. Frank Collins and Paul Perron. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1987. Also Greimas, A.J. (1966). *Structural Semantics: An Attempt at a Method.* trans. Daniele McDowell, Ronald Schleifer, and Alan Velie. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press. 1983.

[7] See the following: Marin, Louis. (1973). *Utopics: The Semiological Play of Textual Spaces.* trans. Robert A. Vollrath. Amherst, New York: Humanity Books. 1984.

If we simply apply the distinction between Hegel and Marx from the previous quotation to this comparison of myths and utopian narratives, perhaps a Hegelian dialectic vector would create complex term as mythical representation, and a Marxist historical materialism vector create the neutral term as utopian representation. Assuming that this is the case, perhaps Hegel's dialectic is oriented toward mythical and fantastical solutions, while Marx's historical materialism is oriented toward a science fiction form of naturalization operation. However, Hegel's philosophy is not that simple. Therefore, we cannot say that as with myths, or as with fantasy, it is oriented toward solutions to history using superhuman heroes or magic powers. Hegel does indeed discuss the role of heroic individuals in historical philosophy, but this is not to say that history's problems are solved through the powers of those individuals; individuals are just expressions that the structure of history creates. Jameson appreciated Adorno, who repeatedly stressed[8)] that it might be accurate to read Hegel's dialectic as containing opportunities for a negative dialectic. If we look at "absolute knowledge," which is the conclusion of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, and "infinite judgment" in the science of logic, we just see that they do not solve the problems of knowledge or history and that the permeation of the negativity that makes those problems relative is one of the utmost limits of Hegel's philosophy. As illustrated in the above diagram, by placing Jakobson's linguistics and the structural analysis produced by Lévi-Strauss's cultural anthropology through Greimas's semiotic rectangle and Marin's utopian theory, Jameson deduces the critical operation of neutralizing the mythical solutions created as complex terms. In other words, this is the vector going from the complex term *C* to the neutral term *N*. To place it in the schema of classic German philosophy; this critical operation vector would correspond to Kantian criticism of antinomy and Hegelian generation of infinite judgement as a developmental successor to Kant. Both of these arrive at the state of making the dichotomy relative, from the completion of the experience of the dichotomy's endless and intractable opposition (bad infinity); Kant does this by crossing the dimension of the thing-in-itself, and Hegel through the permeation of negation. This is neither "S or -S" (antinomy), nor is it "S and -S" (irony or the formation of complex terms), but "$\bar{}$S and –$\bar{}$S" (non S, and not non S, in other words, infinite judgment as the negation of negation). The domain of the Real (history) in Jameson's theory would be the thing-in-itself to follow Kant's term, and to deliberately position it in the above diagram (setting aside the issue of whether that kind of spatial position representation is appropriate), it might be located in the innermost center of the rectangle. Through the thorough experience of the dichotomy, it crosses the domain of the thing-in-itself and arrives at the neutral term. In Hegel's case, because he avoids assuming the thing-in-itself, it is not possible to say such a thing. All that can be said is that infinite judgment is created from moving across the surface of the semiotic rectangle. Otherwise, in Hegel, everything is an

8) See the following: Adorno, Theodor (1990). *Negative Dialectics.* Trans. E. B. Ashton. London: Routledge. (Original work published 1966)

infinite judgment, to begin with. In that case, Hegel does not explain the origin of the negativity that makes infinite judgment possible, nor the occasion in which that operation begins. It is already operating before we know it.

Regarding the distinction between fantasy and science fiction, fantasy can be defined as narratives that solve things mythically through complex formations, namely, narratives in which the battle between good and evil is resolved by superhuman heroes or by the power of magic, in an imaginary realm. Science fiction, on the other hand, inherits the decorum of its prototype, utopian literature, and its narratives have a critical operation that neutralizes the dichotomy, by mediating the thorough experience of the dichotomy through metaphorical figures (the characters in the narrative). According to Jameson, this critical operation of science fiction is made possible by its historicism, in other words, the sense of history rooted in the relationship between the modes of production and the modes of our own existence. “Medieval material, as well as a Christian (or even Anglican) nostalgia particularly pronounced in Tolkien and his fellow-travelers as well as in the Harry Potter series, must first be radically distinguished from the historicisms at work in the SF tradition, which turn on a formal framework determined by concepts of the mode of production rather than those of religion” (Jameson, 2005, p. 58). In other words, science fiction is “a mode-of-production aesthetic” (Jameson, 2005, p. 59). Fantasy is lacking this sense of history. “The absence of any sense of history that most sharply differentiates fantasy from Science Fiction” (Jameson, 2005, p. 61). However, although fantasy contains elements of nostalgia toward the Middles Ages or ancient times, it looks to have a kind of sense of history, and at times it is difficult to determine how the magical powers that appear in fantasy are substantially different from the type of science, technology, and psychic abilities that appear in science fiction. There are some works that are a mixture of science fiction and fantasy. However, on this point, Jameson mentions a substantial relationship between utopian things and Marx’s “General Intellect.” Magic conceals that relationship. This is the basis of the distinction between fantasy’s simple preference for history, and science fiction’s historicism, which is based on an interest in the mode of production. The magic in fantasy amounts to a tool in the power struggle between great magicians who represent the cosmic battle between good and evil, whereas in science fiction the effects of the introduction of science and technology are conceptualized as “cognitive estrangement” (Darko Suvin) (Jameson, 2005, p. 63). In other words, the sense that the science and technology created by the industrial economy are the property of human society in general, and that these are something that promotes the awareness and transformation of the existence of all individuals, by being spread through the medium of commodity, is itself the sense of history mentioned here.

7. The meaning of the permeation and spread of science fiction

Thus, we finally come to understand the reasons that Jameson required science fiction to be a part of utopian literature. The contradictions involved in "History" as the Real, for example, the contradictions in the capitalistic production mode of "work is necessary but unnecessary," seem to become dichotomous daydreams for individual subjects, such as "in this society we have to work, but it would be great if there were a utopia in which we didn't have to work." However, the actual resolution of those contradictions is achieved through the acquisition of cheap labor by moving production sites outside of the country or by bringing in immigrant workers. This reality of history urges individual subjects to have a new self-understanding through fundamentally transforming the dichotomy of the superstructure. However, individuals want to cling to the old dichotomy. As such, individuals want to suppress the fear of the transformation of the self. Therefore, the possibility for transformation at first does not appear in the imaginary dichotomy. There are some aspects of this example that I am not entirely sure are formalistically accurate, but to bravely simplify the complex process that Jameson takes on, the mythical image was composed by individual subjects to resolve the contradictions of the Real imaginarily and is the reverse side of the fear of losing the self. Thus, by demonstrating an oppositional state to the mythical image, the utopian image encourages the individual to confront History, as it were.

To Jameson, the most important feature of the utopian image is "closure" through "separation." He points out that the nature of closure through separation is that utopian societies are represented as existing temporally or spatially separated from the society in which we currently live. By having this kind of internal closure, the utopian image temporally or spatially separates and imaginarily composes the fate that the mechanisms of history try to impose on individuals existentially. What is suppressed in there is the "future". Accordingly, the suppressed "future" or "history" form a "political unconscious" (meaning "human society's collective denial or suppression of historical contradictions"[9]). As it is suppressed collectively, this is where all of our futures lie, and this is the logic that Jameson is attempting to compose.

To return now to the contrast with Žižek, perhaps Žižek does not see a need for science fiction nor utopian literature. Žižek's manner of discussing science fiction (films) uses the themes like aliens and androids as the image of something different and does not seem to use science fiction to discuss the future. The decline of orthodox science fiction as a genre is thought to demonstrate a drop in the status of utopian representations, and this is thought to be to Žižek's benefit. However, the full discussion cannot help but give way to the following opportunities, and the issue is that both Žižek and Jameson have been unable to explain the reasons behind the

[9] This definition of the "political unconscious" is by Dowling (Dowling, 1984). Jameson himself does not provide a clear definition in *The Political Unconscious*.

rise and fall of utopian literature and science fiction literature as genres. This is not only the issue of how the aesthetic status of science fiction as a genre is defended or not defended. The inability to discuss the hegemonic rise and fall of the science fiction genre is the inability to explain the fluctuations and directional variations of utopian cathexis and its origins and structure: that is, whether it turns toward the *past* and *origins* (Bloch) or whether it is oriented toward the *future* (Jameson). In other words, Jameson's aesthetic theory (literary criticism theory) tries to point to historicity, but it fails (in Žižek's case, there is no intention to try to bring historicity into the realm of aesthetics; on this point, we can say that Žižek is devoted to the traditions of psychoanalysis). Based on Jameson's theory, it is not fantasy, but science fiction that should prosper in order for us to take back *History* and the *future*. However, if this were true, it would turn out that this theory is not about history, but is a theory that thrusts "should" onto history. That ultimately comes from Jameson's propositional placement of "History" in the instance of the Real and his belief that it is unknowable.

In contrast, if we examine Japanese society, the subculture market is crowned as "Cool Japan," and demonstrates a thriving level of popularity. One can point out that through video games, anime, manga, and light novel works, the science fiction narrative form is spreading and permeating. In this case, the strict literary process of "separation" and "closure" in orthodox, genuine, hard science fiction novels, typified by the Hayakawa science fiction library, is abandoned and there is the possibility of the creation of a mutual permeation with the everydayness. In the world of pop culture, while traditional Western science fiction might be losing its hegemony as a representative culture genre, Japanese-style science fiction is flourishing.

Jameson invented the method of appreciating Hegel's dialectic by layering it with Lacan, and Žižek followed suit. However, there seems to be something forced about the distribution of the Real as "History" and the Imaginary being the domain of individual subjectivity or "existence." Jameson states that "contradictions" and "historical time" exist in the realm of "History" as the Real, but, in my view, human subjects should be participating in the composition of those "contradictions" and "time." According to the author, without the workings of the Imaginary, "contradictions" and "time" cannot occur. As far as the "History" is surely something created by human beings, even if it is considered to occur by collective workings, the movements of history would be impossible without the participation of subjects. In other words, there are inconsistencies in the line of thought about the contradictions in history itself, and the contradictions in the Real itself. However, Jameson seems to omit the theory on the composition of history that incorporates the participation of subjects, at least, for the present. Perhaps we could call this *the spell of Althusser* in Jameson's work. However, surely history theories are something that reveals the composition of history? If one objects to the disappearance of temporality in the postmodern, the disappearance of an orientation toward the future, and fixates on the modern heterogeneous temporality, one must also explain why the transition from modern to postmodern even happened in the first place.

In Marx's *Capital*, it is formularized that capital's dynamic movement is created and the progress of surplus value production and technology is increased in an accelerated way through the rise of organic composition of capital (variable capital + constant capital). To use Lacan's concepts, this movement of the improvement of capital's organic composition could be explained as the interaction of the Imaginary (human labor's social character) and the Symbolic (transforming it into abstract value), and this creates an accelerated process by forming a self-referential loop. Of course, through the involvement of the Real (natural resources), that movement advances toward the accumulation of constant capital. If you want to maintain the assumption that reality is unknowable, let's leave it. At the same time, is it also possible to conceive of all of these movements as being created by humans confronting the totality of the Real. This in-front domain fit the realm of the "Schema" in Kantian theory if the author's association that Lacan could be following Kant's theoretical composition (the Real = Thing-in-Itself, the Imaginary = Imagination, the Symbolic = Understanding) is correct. This could be said to be a logos-ified imagination and could be said to be the logos that are already mixed with imaginaton. History theories could also be thought of as something that should be developed in the realm of this "Schema" (regarding historical philosophy founded on the Schema theory, in Japan there is Kiyoshi Miki's *Rekishi Tetsugaku* [Philosophy of History]). Thus, if it is conceivable that Hegel's philosophy developed only in the realm of this "Schema," and if my assumption is correct that Lacan's theory is based on Kant, it might be the case that the attempt to applicate Hegel based on Lacan is a mistake to begin with (which would also mean that Žižek followed this error). What is the fact that human beings can arrive at the absent cause as totality only through the movements of dichotomy if it is not Kant's antinomy theory (transcendental dialectics) and its moral solution? By scrutinizing the differences between Kant's transcendental dialectics and Hegel's dialectic once again, while accounting for the theories of Lacan and Althusser, perhaps we can take this as the focal point of the assessment of Jameson's "dialectic criticism." However, perhaps that would be too much of a defense of Hegel. Since it is not specifying the causes of history's transitions or the origins of negativity, even in Hegel's work, the theory of history is unclear. At the end of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel states that negativity creates time, and creates the dynamic of history. In other words, that is where the creation of history itself is told. However, that narration itself is not historical. In other words, it does not speak of the historicity of history's creation. That being the case, what of course is important is Marx, who spoke historically about the creation of history. From here, we must once more consider whether *Capital* should be read like a novel, that is, whether it is an aesthetic subject, or whether it could be something that offers an aesthetic method for assessing the ideological character of various other works.

8. Blank metaphysics and memories of the future

I am reaching the limits of the space of this paper, so in this section I will outline and summarize questions to be taken up going forward.

To put it simply, one could argue that Jameson lacks a theory of imagination (Einbildungskraft). The place where memory and imagination work is the location in which dichotomies are created, the birthplace of temporality and dialectic, and the place where history is created. Jameson emphasized against the tendencies of Lacan himself in the 1970s the workings of "l'imaginaire (the Imaginary)" in Lacanian psychoanalysis theory.[10] However, Jameson seemed to believe that there was no relation between the Imaginary of Lacan and the issue of classic German philosophy's "imagination" (Jameson, 1988, p. 86). He also stated that there was no room for imagination to work in Hegel's philosophy (Jameson, 2010, p. 119). The author finds it plausible that Jameson's understanding of Lacan closes the path that passes through classic German philosophy and connects to Derrida's semiotics. Here, Derrida's name has suddenly emerged; but Derrida's issue of "signs" established as metonymy discussed through the workings of imaginary power in Hegel is the path which reintroduces the linguistic theories of Jakobson again today, on which rely the semiotic structuralism of Levi-Strauss and Greimas that Jameson relies on. This goes back to the very structure of Western European metaphysics, and can once again be said to be a clearance path for the present day. That is, Derrida is the path that allows us to follow back to the creation of dichotomy, which is Jameson's point of departure. Jameson states that figurative thought is the midpoint between Understanding and Reason (Jameson, 2010, p. 122). However, that realm is already after or outside the occurrence of dichotomy and would be a topic outside the previously mentioned Greimas Semiotic Square. The issue is the interior of the rectangle. That is where temporality is generated. The interior of the rectangle, but the place that is still some distance from history as the center of the rectangle, that is the place where we need to engage.

Jameson follows Marx in pointing out that capitalistic production mode (to put it in a structural theory way) differentially reflect other production modes, or to put it more simply, that capitalism as a developed production mode has a disposition that connotes production forms that precede capitalism. The past included therein is not the object of nostalgia, but is something different from the present; it is an existence that condemns the present and causes us to have disturbing experiences. Thus, he asserts that it includes future production mode coexisting there with the present as being in the process of appearing (Jameson, 1988, p. 477). In other words, for Jameson, it is the utopian impulse that Bloch mentions. However, while including a heterogeneous temporality as this kind of "the other," transforming that into the past or future *of the self* is

[10] "The Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan" (1977). Published in *The Ideologies of Theory*.

the very structure of Western metaphysics that Derrida criticized[11]. Jameson certainly calls past and future production modes the things that judge us. However, Derrida's semiotics have the range to criticize the hearing of those dreadful voices of others as one's own voice, feeling the glittering utopian impulse in traces left by people of the past or in signs of a future being born, and thinking of them as one's own past or future, agreeing that this is the structure of the organic composition of capital in capitalistic mode of production (that past technology and capital accumulation are changed into present productivity through human labor), and the fact that the modern temporal dynamic and history's dynamism are born from that process. The structure of modernity is sympathizing with the past as the other, projecting the self onto that, erasing the contents after incorporating them into the self and converting it to a blank memory, namely, changing it into a memory of the future. Derrida called this a white or blank metaphysics[12]. *We knew something important, but we have forgotten that thing*. Of course, as Jameson repeatedly points out, Derrida tended to point out that problem as an issue of Western metaphysics in general or of linguistics in general; this is Derrida's stumbling block. As Lacan tried to implement, settings that establish the object of desire as metonymy can be traced back to Plato's *Symposium*[13]. That theoretical possibility deceives us. In this, we run into the troublesome issue of the pioneering modernity of ancient Greece. This possibility is the wellspring that produces the fiction of Western metaphysics' 2,500-year continuity, but unfortunately, there is no room to discuss that here. The issue is summarized in the fact that Jameson, who criticized Derrida and Deleuze, lamenting their loss of temporality in postmodern thought, and their loss of modern historicity, was unable to penetrate historicism. This is the weakness of Jameson's theory as it does not discuss the historical mechanisms of the event of losing modern temporality. That topic is one that should be achievable when taking the semiotics of Derrida that Jameson continues to deny into account and further succeeding in *historicizing* them. That discussion should possibly be titled "Memories of the Future," but I will conclude this discussion while setting that as the next task.

Appendix
Žižek: the Real, the Imaginary, and Hegel

In *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce* (2009), Žižek transposes the Real and the Other to accumulated General Intellect in constant capital, neutralizes the fact that the fetishistic illusory nature arising from that is converted into the social collective, and advocates an ethic of being an excluded singular, and the universal individual. That ethic lies in completely accepting "absence of the Other" and looking at the positive aspects of the reification of "relations between

[11] Jacques Derrida, Marges—de la philosophie, Les Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1972.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Jacques Lacan, *Le transfert (Le Seminaire, VIII) 1960–1961*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1991.

people" into "relations between things"; rather, it lies in the avoidance of restoring "relations between things" into "relations between people" once more (Žižek, 2009, pp. 138–141). A capitalist society is a society that has deconstructed meaning, and the global market mechanisms of capitalism are a meaningless truth, or *the Real* (Žižek, 2009, p. 25, 80). The personification of the "relations between things" ultimately awakens the Other that is the subject of history, and leads to equating that with the self. Whether a dictatorship type of capitalism or a parliamentary democratic system of capitalism, by depending on the Other, this is mistaken on the point of thinking that it moves history forward without accident or error; catastrophe occurs. The acceptance of this awakened fate as inevitable, and going back into the past to examine the possibility of this not having happened carefully is the ethic of "project time" (Jean-Pierre Dupuy) that Žižek advocates.

"*This* […] is *in nuce* the Hegelian dialectic of contingency and necessity. In this sense, although we are determined by destiny, we are nonetheless *free to choose our destiny*" (Žižek, 2009, p. 151). "Free" in this sense is difficult to understand at first, but the main point is fundamentally in avoiding the belief of being able to foresee the future. "We have to accept that, at the level of possibilities, our future is doomed, that the catastrophe will take place, that it is our destiny—and then, against the background of this acceptance, mobilize ourselves to perform the act which will change destiny itself and thereby insert a new possibility into the past." (Žižek, 2009, p. 151). "The certainty on which an act relies is not a matter of knowledge, but a matter of *belief*: a true act is never a strategic intervention in a transparent situation of which we have full knowledge; on the contrary, the true act fills in the gap in our knowledge" (Žižek, 2009, pp. 151–52). "The reference to the big Other puts the Leader in the position of the "subject supposed to know," a subject whose activity is grounded in full knowledge (of the "laws of history," etc.)—the path is thereby open to the madness of, for example, celebrating Stalin as the greatest linguist, economist, philosopher, and so on. […] This, perhaps, is the lesson to be learned from the traumas of the twentieth century: to keep Knowledge and the function of the Master as far apart as possible. (Žižek, 2009, p. 152).

This "ethic" of Žižek is supported by accepting a direct union between singularity and universality in Marx's thought (communism). "It is thus crucial to insist on the communist-egalitarian emancipatory Idea, and insist on it in a very precise Marxian sense: there are social groups which, on account of their lacking a determinate place in the "private" order of the social hierarchy, stand directly for universality; they are what Ranciere calls the "part of no-part" of the social body. All truly emancipatory politics is generated by the short-circuit between the universality of the "public use of reason" and the universality of the "part of no-part"—this was already the communist dream of the young Marx: to bring together the universality of philosophy with the universality of the proletariat. From Ancient Greece, we have a name for the intrusion of the Excluded into the socio-political space: democracy" (Žižek, 2009, p. 99). "One is truly universal only when radically singular, in the interstices of communal identities. […] This space

of singular universality is what, within Christianity, appears as the "Holy Spirit"—the space of a collective of believers *subtracted* from the field of organic communities, or of particular lifeworlds ("neither Greeks nor Jews")" (Žižek, 2009, p. 105).

To put it differently, this could be said to be a moral philosophy of deducting mediation, but what sets Žižek apart is that he asserts that this is not Spinozistic, but Hegelistic. However, the author does not agree that the connection of singularity and universality was Hegel's idea. Žižek also notices this issue and recognizes it as one side of Hegel's two possibilities. These are the "*Philosophy of Right* Hegel" and the "crazy about Haiti Hegel" (Susan Buck-Morss). Žižek explains that the former, rather, has the same intentionality as "capitalism with an Asian values" that he criticizes, and that the latter is the path to true communist revolution. This is homologous with the former division between the old Hegelians and the young Hegelians. Even if the truth were that the Haitian revolution influenced Hegel's dialectic of masters and slaves, there would seem to be many leaps necessary in interpreting this as the idea of "singular universality." One can point out the affinity between Žižek's ideas of singular universality with Japan's Koujin Karatani, but Karatani relies on Kant rather than Hegel, and this is easier to understand. The question of how to assess Žižek's "Hegelianism" might be one of important tasks for contemporary Hegel studies.

References

Dowling, W.C. (1984), *Jameson, Althusser, Marx: An Introduction to "The Political Unconscious"*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press.

Jameson, F. (1981), *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press.

Jameson, F. (1988), *The Ideologies of Theory: Essays 1971–1986. Volume 1&2.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (Citation page numbers are based on a reissued one-volume edition. London & New York: Verso. 2008).

Jameson, F. (1994), *The Seeds of Time*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Jameson, F. (2005), *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*. London & New York: Verso.

Jameson, F. (2010), *The Hegel Variations: On the Phenomenology of Spirit*. London & New York: Verso.

Jameson, F. (2011), *Representing Capital: A Reading of Volume One*. London & New York: Verso.

Žižek, S. (1989), *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London & New York: Verso. (Citation page numbers are based on the second edition. London & New York: Verso. 2008).

Žižek, S. (2009), *First as Tragedy, then as Farce*. London & New York: Verso.