



Utopia Now and Forever: A Discussion On The Perpetuity Of Utopia

Ezgi ÖREN¹

Abstract

The history of humanity is, in a way, the history of the chaos that is immanent in society. People have endless desires that could never be satisfied since they lived in society. The demand for a better life is one of the foremost desires. This quest, which has been lasting since the beginning of social life has been tried to be met with a wide variety of solutions throughout history. Perhaps the most striking of these propositions is Utopia, which took the stage with the Renaissance. It emphasizes the reality of the moment, criticizes it, and replaces it with an alternative that never comes true. Utopia is one of the ideal order proposals which is put forward in response to the desire for an "ideal life without chaos" for "now". It embodies hope and change. It promises hope even when the prospect of changing the facts seems impossible. It also feeds and reproduces the optimistic desire for the realization possibility of a better life. This is what keeps it alive at all times, even though it will not be realized and inaccessible. Therefore, there is always a need to review utopias to redesign the world we live in with a critical eye. Observing and understanding these experiences and trying to put new designs over them could be promising. Because utopias are an important means of stimulating socioeconomic changes. For this reason, even if it does not come true, the utopia that makes an impact with its thoughts will always continue to be a hope. So, it will exist forever and ever. To clarify this approach, the relations between scientific texts have been examined by using the literature review method. And relevant analyzes and inferences have been made in the light of the data obtained by this method.

Keywords: Utopia, Utopianism, Hope, Desire, Political Order, Alternative Order

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Ütopya Şimdi ve Daima: Ütopyanın Daimiliği Üzerine Bir Tartışma

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Öz

İnsanlık tarihi bir bakıma topluma içkin olan kaosun tarihidir. İnsanlar toplum yaşamına başladıklarından beri bitmek bilmeyen ve asla tatmin edilemeyen arzulara sahip olmuşlardır. Daha iyi bir yaşam isteği de bu arzuların başında gelmektedir. Toplumsal yaşam var olduğundan beri süregelen bu arayış tarih boyunca çok çeşitli çözüm önerileriyle karşılanmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu önerilerin en çarpıcı olanı ise belki de Rönesansla birlikte sahneye çıkan Ütopya'dır. Anın gerçekliği üzerine basan, onu eleştiren, yerine alternatif koyan ama buna rağmen asla gerçekleşmeyecek olandır o. Ütopya, "şimdi" için "kaossuz ideal bir yaşam" arzusuna cevaben ortaya atılan ideal düzen önermelerinden biridir. Umudu ve değişimi içinde barındırır. Gerçekleri değiştirme ihtimali imkânsız görüldüğünde bile umut vaat eder. Aynı zamanda daha iyi bir yaşamın gerçekleşme olasılığına yönelik iyimser arzuyu besler ve yeniden üretir. Gerçekleşmeyecek ve erişilemeyecek olmasına rağmen onu tüm zamanlarda canlı tutan da budur. Bu nedenle günün şartları dâhilinde yeni arayışlar daima iyiye yönelen değişime, yani ütopyaya kapı aralayacaktır. Çünkü o ihtiyacımız olan umudun kaynağıdır ve gerektiğinde saklandığı yerden çıkar. Dolayısıyla içinde yaşadığımız dünyayı eleştirel gözle yeniden tasarlayabilmek için ütopyaları gözden geçirmeye her zaman ihtiyaç vardır. Bu deneyimleri gözlemleyip, anlamaya çalışarak onların üzerine yeni tasarımlar koymayı denemek umut verici olabilir. Çünkü ütopyalar, harekete geçirici işlevi nedeniyle sosyo-ekonomik değişimi canlandırmanın önemli bir araçlarıdır. Bu nedenle kendisi gerçekleşmeyecek olsa bile düşündürdükleri ile etki yaratan ütopya daima bir umut olamaya devam edecek ve dünya durdukça varlığını sürdürecektir. Ütopya ile ilgili bu yaklaşımı açıklayabilmek üzere çalışmada literatür tarama yöntemi kullanılarak bilimsel metinler arasındaki konuya dair ilişkiler incelenmiştir. Bu yöntemle elde edilen veriler ışığında ilgili analiz ve çıkarımlar yapılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ütopya, Ütopyacılık, Umut, Arzu, Siyasal Düzen, Alternatif Düzen

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Introduction

The basic instinct that makes man a future-oriented being is the impulse to survive and it turns into an impulse of self-development over time (Bloch, 1985). This stimulates the human being to live in a society in almost every historical period. And it could be said that the history of humanity is, in a way, the history of the chaos that is immanent in society. The desire for a "good" / "ideal" life and "livable world" has been kept up from ancient times to the present, and has been the subject of some thinkers/philosophers of the period. This process has led to some suggestions of an "ideal society" or "ideal state" which are concerned with eliminating or minimizing the ongoing problems. Although not every solution proposal focuses on the suggestion of an idealized society, the submissions adopting this type of thinking have been more impressive and remarkable. The dream of attaining a better life which has remained on the agenda of philosophy throughout history and discussed in various contexts at different times. For example; while Plato and Aristotle saw the state as a high purpose for human happiness, the theories which do not attribute the same sublimity to the state (such as Stoicist, Epicurean or liberal, Marxist, anarchists in modern times, etc.) did not hesitate to make suggestions for the realization of the ideal society (Acar, 2018). The word utopia originated with the book of the same name by English writer and statesman Thomas More. It is formed by combining the Greek words *ou* (no) and *topos* (place) and means 'no place'. However, there are different approaches to the definition of the concept. There is also a reference to the word 'eutopia' meaning 'good place', which consists of the combination of 'eu' meaning 'good' and 'topos' meaning place. Thus, the concept of 'utopia', which More introduced for the first time, appeared on the stage of history as a concept that seems to contain both the meanings of a good place and a no place (Omay, 2009). In other words, utopia is both a no place (outopia) and a good place (eutopia). Living in a world that is impossible, but where one aspires to be: This is literally the essence of utopia (Kumar, 2005). So utopia is the design of the "best", but via "no place" this best can never be reached. Because if it is achieved it will not be utopia. It can be said that the concept of Utopia has two basic meanings, since it is both the name of More's book and the name of the state he describes in the book. In the first sense, it is the name of the literary work More wrote. In the second sense, it is an ideal city-state fiction that contains unrealized ideality and realizability claims, which does not exist in this world at the moment, where everyone is happy thanks to a collaborative order (Omay, 2009).

Mankind's belief and imagination of the possibility of heaven on earth had expanded as far as possible with the discovery of transatlantic and then its precious metals in the 16th century and afterwards. The developments in Europe had changed the spirit of the period. The new discoveries heralded a great potential, and possible new spaces to stimulate the imagination. The discovery of the new world caused a change in the horizon of the society, excited them, perhaps gave them hope. More was also inevitably affected by this atmosphere. The experiences of travelers and explorers of the era were also influential in shaping More's fiction. On the other hand, in this process, in which thinkers like More were an important part, the world was being reshaped within the framework of a human-centered understanding through Renaissance. So it was the right time to bring heaven down to earth. At this stage, utopia emerged as an ideal design for a humane life.

Utopia is one of the ideal order proposals which is put forward in response to the desire

for an "ideal life without chaos" for "now". Since people are worthy of happiness, the main concern of utopia is human happiness. And since happiness is only possible with sociality, the good life should be arranged accordingly. Gathering a desirable world from an undesirable social order appears as the usual theme of almost all utopias (Acar, 2018). Every utopian design situated itself against the realities of the era in which it is produced. It describes a disturbance, criticism about the existing social order, and also the rebellion that will create the alternative. Namely, it could be said that utopia is an optimistic negation that wants to reach a positive one. When a human is moved from heaven so that he no longer thinks about and suffers it, he acquires the power of will, the ability to turn to action, to destroy himself with enthusiasm and vigor as a compensation (Cioran, 1998). So, according to the utopian approach, the way for achieving happiness is possible by demolishing the existing social order, which is the cause of all evil, and replacing it with a completely renewed system. This desire for a new order, which points to a certain sociality, is an intellectual seeking for how a new political society should be. Thus, utopian argues that it is possible to abolish the existing corrupt political order and to establish an untouched new order in its place. Because humans with intelligence and will are capable of doing this. In addition, utopia contains the reasons why the existing order should change, the detailed design of the alternative social model, the descriptions of all the material and spiritual institutions of the proposed order, and explanations about their superiority. In this respect, utopias imagine a radically different order from the society they criticize. And while constructing this, they rethink the nature of social cohesion which ensures harmony and stability (Yalçinkaya & Ören, 2011). Unfortunately, such an alternative was not possible in the known geography. Therefore, an alternative "good" society could only be possible in "no place". In this way, More overturned reality and created his new world in "no place" outside the known world. Because social justice and welfare can never be realized in a place where property is a personal right and everything is measured by money; namely in this world.

According to Sargent, utopias are not plans for future perfect societies. Utopias give us the critique of today's society and the expressions of the highest human cravings (Sargent, 1994). Utopia, which is presented as a solution proposal for a happy and good life, first determines the existing problems. What allows these problems to be defined is the social conditions that the "critical-alternative order" emerges. This process requires a certain amount of imagination, but the utopia is not simply a product of imagination. The socioeconomic conditions in which utopias are born to determine the limits of the criticisms and proposals (Yalçinkaya & Ören, 2011). Therefore, utopia tries to find solutions to the problems in the current order within this framework. The power and persuasiveness of utopia stem from this; handle real problems with realistic solutions. It also feeds and reproduces the optimistic desire for the realization possibility of a better life. However, criticism alone is not enough to create a utopia. For example, according to Mannheim, critical consciousness is a utopia when it takes action and has orientations that completely disrupt the established existential order (Mannheim, 1979). Hence, utopia argues that a better political order or society is possible with reason and will that act a certain consciousness. From this viewpoint, the purpose of the study is to remind us that utopia now and always hangs in sight as an alternative that offers signposts to the solution for the better one. And, progress could only be possible with the dream of utopia.

This study discusses the meaning of utopia as regards its function in political thought. The text sets out from the thesis that utopia will exist forever and ever and tries to put forward the reasons for this discourse theoretically. Here, there is a theoretical analysis around questions such as what utopia means conceptually and practically; why it always makes its presence felt; its potential to satisfy human desires, and why it is needed politically. For this, first of all, the features of utopia have been emphasized; under the first title, the critical characteristic of the concept and its feature of being an alternative order have been explained. In the second part, the social and political value and importance of the utopia have been tried to be explained by the following thesis. So the text is planned as an informative and review article via text analysis. In the study, literature review, which is one of the qualitative data collection methods, is used. With this method, previous scientific texts have been scanned and the relationship between them and other texts to which they referred has been examined. Hence, in the conclusion part, the questions of why utopia exists and will continue to exist politically, have been tried to be clarified in the light of the collected data.

Critical-Alternative Order

Cioran asks that shall it be said that we replace one ghost with another, that golden age fables are preferable to the eternal present we think of, and that the original self, which is the basis of our hopes, evokes emptiness and is ultimately reduced to it? Ok! But wouldn't a void that compensates for fullness contain more reality than all history has? (Cioran, 1998).

Utopia was born in the XVI. century when absolute monarchies began to rule. Of course, the atmosphere created by unlimited power has also caused a reaction to it; utopian thinking, which points to the necessity of a new political/social order and also hopes that a better system is possible via the human mind and will, against the "current" bad order... A wording that was born with Thomas More and whose influence will last for centuries.

Naturally, utopias primarily reflect the epoch in which they appeared like its first example reflected the XVI. century England. Here, the existing order is severely criticized and negated. For instance according to More, in England, the main cause of the poverty of the people is the multitude of aristocrats. These useless, honey-free bees make a living by the sweat of others, skin them in order to benefit more from those who work on their land, and they do not know any other source of income. Besides, It is not in the king's interest that the people are rich or free; wealth and freedom make them powerful and destroy their will to submit to a cruel, unjust government. However, poverty and misery blunt this power, enabling them to be patient, weaken them, and break the spirit of rebellion. But a king's dignity lies not in ruling over beggars, but in ruling over a rich and happy subject (More, 2003). However utopian thinking is not content with criticizing. Because More not only criticizes the dominant political order of his time but also put an alternative instead. By eradicating everything he would not like to happen, he establishes his alternative order with whatever he affirms. Therefore, utopia is not only the name of criticism but also the name of fiction. So it seems that a world that follows alternative scenarios and conventions (Davis, 2017) is important for More. Eventually, utopias first define the existing problem with a critical view and then propose several alternative solutions with the help of creative imagination. The source of both the problem and the solution is the socio-economic conditions of the utopian.

These conditions make it absolutely necessary for the utopian to find solutions for happiness. Because the basic principle of utopia is happiness and the purpose is social happiness. Given that people could be happy as long as they live in a happy society. So how can this be realized? Utopia builds this ideal which is difficult to create and maintain, on equality. Thus, it embodies a new alternative political order, equipped with the happiness of equality. To ensure the continuity of this egalitarian order, it is necessary to close the system to change. Because the biggest enemy of this new order that has to repeat itself every day is change. Hence, utopia must be a closed system in which all the factors that can lead to change are controlled. Utopia designs an alternative society to the "Now" in "nowhere" by criticizing the "Now". This vision itself creates an obstacle to change.

The radical difference of this new society, which rises on the ideal of equality, is that it has been built on communitarian principles: Common education, common work, common entertainment, common nutrition, common property, common dressing for all citizens... This common lifestyle dissolves the social hierarchy and builds a relative egalitarian order, and as a result of all these, social conflicts are pushed out of the order (Yalçınkaya & Ören, 2011). Yet another means is needed to ensure the continuity of the order. The important institution that ensures the system always repeats and reproduces itself is education, which operates continuously in the public sphere. It is a social pursuit that enriches the personality of all citizens, increases their happiness, and is successfully carried out together (More, 2003). Education eliminates selfishness and ensures that collective cohesion remains in a happy, harmonious, and stable state of stagnation. However, although it is accepted that it is a product of humanism reflecting the spirit of the Renaissance, it should not be overlooked that utopia consists of passive elements accompanying a completed design, not acting willed agents.

But first of all, interpreted correctly, utopias are visions of what ought to be, even if they show what ought not to be. Utopias are visions we care about because they try to tell how the world should be and what we should work for (Rothstein, 2003). Therefore, the importance of utopia stems not from its practicality and actuality, but from its longing impulse and its relation to the possible future. It gets its power from its criticality. Nevertheless, its "nowhere ness" also provokes our inner desire to seek it (Tandaçgüneç, 2013). Certainly, utopia provokes by the alternatives it produces. But the real source of its destructiveness lies in its critical expression of social order (Kumar, 2005). In this sense, utopia has indeed a serious "danger" suitable for mobilizing the sentimental masses by way of criticizing, questioning, and producing alternatives.

The Value of Utopia

Utopia is always valuable because it promises hope. And this is also one of the elements that makes it permanent. "Desire and design, harmony and hope: they are of course present in the formation of utopia, as they probably are in the formation of other social and political philosophies. The bearers of these elements are undoubtedly important in the construction of utopia. But utopia does not just reunite these elements. It has its own inventiveness. Once established, it offers a map with many different possibilities for reasoning on the human condition" (Kumar, 2005). Because utopia is intended for the construction of a way of life. Utopia is one of the responses of people to their current life. In other words, utopia is nothing but the dream of prioritizing life itself. The ground of utopia, whether imaginary or real, is in accordance with a certain lifestyle.

(Alver, 2009). Utopia arising from the search for a better life emerges especially in the dark times; criticizes the existing order and reminds us what should be. It is a hope that speaks for change. Because man is a creature that hopes to overcome the existing situation, and the order he is in, through his aspirations. Therefore, utopia is an expression of desire for a better existence or way of life, and in terms of desire, the definition of utopia is analytical rather than descriptive (Levitas, 2013). Utopia breaks the mold of "normal" practices of organizing society but there is no consensus on what a "good" utopia will look like or on how to determine it when we have imagined or created one (<https://theopenutopia.org/full-text/introduction-open-utopia/>). Still, it can become a place for many to reflect on and a space for everyone to think about. Because utopias are much more than just an adventure that takes its readers on an imaginary journey. Rather, utopian fiction is a projection of desires and hopes for now and regarding now. However, the value of utopia lies not in its current viability, but in its relation to a possible future. Its 'practicable' utility is to jump over present reality to describe a social situation whose desire attracts us like a magnet. What makes utopia strong here is its illusory and 'impractical' nature itself (Kumar, 2005). By creating a philosophical order, More actually makes sure that the reader will not accept the plan he describes as perfect, complete, or finished and so he paves the way for reflection and criticism of it. Surely, it is a serious issue for utopia to be critical and to create an alternative order with its own political and social claims. However, what distinguishes it from other political approaches is its impressiveness stemming from its appeal not only to reason but also to human emotions and hopes. There is a time and a place in the human relentless effort to change the world when alternative visions, how fantastical they are, sow the seeds of shaping the forces of political change. In any case, utopian dreams never completely disappeared. They are always existed and secretly point to our desires (Harvey, 2000).

Another important feature of utopia is that it stems from reality, but tries to overcome this reality by pushing the limits of imagination and constantly producing the unattainable. Utopian fiction can constantly produce the ultimate good, and it constantly transcends reality with this characteristic. As the creator of this style, More succeeded in transcending the horizon of his time and country with "Utopia" (Kautsky, 2006). Rather than making us think about a different social order, he created a world that we can imagine through the elements in his design, despite the unrealizability of utopia; a vision of a better world that could reorient our perspective. In this way, while More awakened the idea of an alternative order in which a better life is possible, he also stimulates the imagination. Utopian imagination is necessary, and what makes it triggered is its hopelessness as well as its inaccessibility. The perfect society can be conceived, but it is never reached, because if it is achieved it will not be a utopia. To change the existing one, it has put the changed one in an inaccessible place. It is here that imagination enters this space that invites imagination. The fact that the goal will never be reached causes it to be dreamed of constantly. Therefore, utopias contribute to social development as well as being the basis of any kind of social change. The endeavor to reach it corresponds to comparing our self-image to the realities of our society or to compare one with the other, to encourage judgment and reflection by being aware of the existing problems and/or our practices regarding all of these. Because utopia is what should be out of the "ordinary". Its addressee is not only a society that is wanted to be destroyed but also a new world conception that is wanted to be built.

Conclusion: Utopia Forever

Prometheus wanted to do better than Zeus; We, who are improvising creativity, do better than God, make him experience the humiliation that a heaven superior to his own will bring, and remove the impossible; In Proudhon's words, we want to make the world destined. As a general purpose, utopia is to dream of a universe at the level of history (Cioran, 1998). According to Bloch, every product of human sociability has been the subject of thinking as a sociocultural heritage that contains the power of another kind of life beyond categorical distinctions (Aydin, 2021).

This study tried to explain the thesis that utopia will exist forever and ever based on the relevant studies in the literature. So according to the obtained data, it could be said that utopia always waits on the horizon to be summoned and never disappears. Its traces are seen in every move that Reason makes with the endless desire of man to change the world. Because the search for a good/happy society is universal and will continue as long as the world lives. For a better society, change is inevitable and utopia is the guide of this path. So we certainly need utopias as a product of the modern mind (Baudrillard, 2006), at least for those who deal with the problems of the "now". Although it seems sometimes to have lost its function most of the time, the desire for change equipped with imagination will always bring it out of its hiding place. The mortal messiah of this world is the utopia. So mankind should strive to make the world a livable place (More, 2014). For a better world, whatever the times we are in, the circumstances, the pace at which history is unfolding, and the existing cracks in the system, we must act in the hope of transformation. (Moynan, 2007).

Utopianism, which Sargent defines as the social dream, is a phenomenon of dreams and nightmares that often envisions a society radically different from the society in which the dreamers live. But this may not all be radical, because people basically dream of something familiar (Sargent, 1994): A better world filled with hope. Utopia, which includes both our individual and collective hopes as well as our fears, is a proposal for change that will save us from our nightmares. Sometimes such a change becomes not just a dream but a real possibility, and our individual and collective energies achieve at least some of what we hoped for. Often what we achieve is less than we would like, which leads us to new dreams. After we achieved something, we dream again (Sargent, 2007). Every finished utopia is the beginning of a new one.

Utopia, which is a necessary combination of the creative genius that enables the definition of the problem, the suggestion, and testing of a series of solutions (Jameson, 2009), is important in terms of a set of general values such as unity, simplicity, integrity, comfortable harmony of person and life for some writers and its suggested institutions for others (Sargent, 1994). However, its main importance always comes from the fact that it indicates deep-rooted needs, desires, and hopes. Man owes his desire for more and better, to the urge to survive (Bloch, 1985) and this nature of man also makes him a utopian. And utopia, as a product of reason, adds meaning and value to life with the inherent principle of hope. Unending hopes will always create utopia. Therefore, man lives in utopia to the extent that he does not give up his dream of a world where his wishes and desires are fulfilled (Bobaroğlu, 2018). As Wild said, it's not worth even looking at a world map that doesn't show the country of Utopia, because that's the place which humanbeing is always coming back. And when Humanity lands there, it looks forward to the horizon and, seeing a better country, sails there. Progress is the

realization of utopias (Wilde, 2017). So, why should the search for utopia take us to the high seas instead of examining existing social formations that resist oppression? (Stock, 2019). Because if we want to change the world, we must be unreal, illogical, and impossible (Bregman, 2018), and always sail to the horizon. "Utopia is on the horizon. I move two steps closer; it moves two steps further away. I walk another ten steps and the horizon runs ten steps further away. As much as I may walk, I'll never reach it. So what's the point of utopia? The point is this: to keep walking" (Eduardo Galeano, 1997).

Societies that have lost their imagination have no future. Real utopia, on the other hand, arises when the situation is unsolvable, that is when there is no way to go to a solution within the coordinates of the possible, with the only impulse of survival having the necessity to invent a new field. Utopia is not a product of free imagination, utopia is a matter of inner necessity, you have to dream because it is the only way out. This is the utopia we need today (S. Zizek cited in Mcmillian, 2019). And it is an urgent need to reconstruct society in imagination and reality (Levitas, 2013). Even if your efforts do not bring good, at least they reduce evil (More, 2003). Our job here is to be utopian, to make different aspects of a cohesive and happy imaginary world, one by one, as vivid and believable as possible (Wells, 1967). As Bregman says; a single outlier can make a difference in the world. Let this be an incentive for those who feel that they are screaming alone in the desolation: Keep building those towers in the sky. Your time will come too (Bregman, 2018).

As an expression of the desire for a better way (Levitas, 2009) we must choose Utopia. We must choose it as the expression of the desire for a better way. We must choose the belief that the world can be radically amended. We have to let our social dreams affect our lives. The choice for Utopia is a choice by which the world can be radically improved (Sargent, 2007). Therefore, it is always here and will always exist, like an illusion that makes life meaningful and bearable.

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