Utopia, Dystopia and Climate Change: 
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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS 

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discourse fictionalized? How are current political developments, tendencies and attitudes thought through and illustrated in fictional shape?

**Joseon, a utopian society for the elite scholars and officers: Its possibilities and limitations**

Byungmin Lee

ABSTRACT: In this presentation, I would like to discuss a utopian society that the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910) pursued. Joseon existed as a long-lasting state in the Korean peninsula for more than 500 years. Joseon tried to construct a society in which the ruling class including kings was based on Confucian ideology, reading Confucian literature, and Confucian literary and educational institutions. The ruling class of the Joseon Dynasty was 'Yangban', (also called 'Sadaebu', a class of scholar-officer). It was in Joseon that there was no distinction between scholars and government officials. Sadaebu were mostly selected through regular and irregular state-run tests, assessing the knowledge of Confucian classics and related literature. This status was hereditary and passed down from generation to generation. In short, Joseon was a kind of utopia for scholars and officials. Not only did the king provide the nobles with books for free, but some young officials were granted with a royal sabbatical ('Sagadokseo') for reading for a certain period of time. Sadaebu was also exempted from both military service and tax obligations. The king and his administrative officials in the royal court held a session of reading Confucian classics almost every week, which is called 'Gyungyeon'. If Plato in *the Republic* had imagined philosopher kings in his ideal state, the king was a philosopher in the Joseon Dynasty and they dreamed of a country of scholars who worked for the king and the government. In Joseon, however, the majority of the population--peasants, craftsmen, and merchants-- were excluded from these literary practices and education. The greatest share of the tax and military burden fell exclusively on these lower classes. In conclusion, even though Joseon attempted to build an ideal society, the nation's exclusive control of thought, publication, education, and rigid caste-system resulted in the stagnation of the country as a whole.

**Modern problems of ecology and the philosophical foundations of Utopia**

Nikolay Litvak

ABSTRACT: The relevance of *Utopia* by Thomas More is in the scientific, philosophical methodology, which the author successfully applied. As a result, this philosopher of the 16th century received some heuristic results, which are relevant today. More carried out a synthesis of both sociopolitical, economic, natural science approaches, and value bases. Relevant for environmental issues is the conclusion about the differences and reproduction of such differences between people and the societies, depending on the level of education, upbringing and knowledge. In addition to justifying the important idea of moderate consumption, which can reduce the burden on nature, he described the key conflict between the level of knowledge and values of societies by the example of non-use of “excess” lands, which can now be presented as an ethical problem of forcing those who do not want to follow the latest environmental standards. And if More already believes and justifies possible mass education, and then a conscious rejection of luxury goods, of useless, irrational
consumption in general, then in the world profit-oriented capitalist system the ecological self-restriction of capitalists can only be partial. Moreover, with the continued existence of sovereign states, these sovereign nation states act as consistent defenders of the national capitalists within the framework of international rivalry.

**Dystopiyn, Dystopiyang: Possibilities for Dreaming in a Devastated World**

Amalia Louisson

**ABSTRACT:** In our age of earth-wide precarity and ideological closure, we need new conceptual tools for imagining that the world could be otherwise. In the quincentenary reprint of Thomas More’s *Utopia*, Ursula K. Le Guin gave dreamers one of these tools by approaching the concept of utopia through principles of *yin-yang*. For Le Guin, utopia failed because it has always been yang—bright, clear, active, masculine, forward-looking, abstract. This kind of envisaging invites political passivity, as it is unreachable, and violence, because it depends on suppressing other hopes. Instead Le Guin invites us to direct our utopic gaze yin-wards, to the “wet, obscure, weak, yielding, passive, participatory, [and the] circular.” Utopiyin holds subversive promise because it strips utopia of its invitation to control the future, encouraging all communities to transform present reality in accordance with their dreams. This paper identifies a limit of utopiyin for addressing today’s societal problems and develops a complementary conceptual tool for planetary regeneration: *dystopiyn*, the underbelly of dystopiyang. While utopiyin liquefies control to the forgotten masses, it is incomplete because it doesn’t address the inevitable anthropocentric nature of utopias, and so erroneously keeps fate’s cards in humanities’ hands. From a posthuman perspective, the most important political task of today is to strip ourselves of anthropocentrism. A striking but unacknowledged element of eco-dystopias (dystopiyangs) is that they are realms where humans have lost control to nonhuman forces. Such dystopic futures are depicted as hostile to humanity, yet they needn’t be. Subverting classic dystopic narratives, dystopiyn asks people to begin imagining in a way that accepts relinquished human control, and opens narration to nonhuman, pluralist tellings of the world. This conceptual tool facilitates the kind of political action we need because it slowly works to unravel anthropocentrism, working towards a future that enables multi-species flourishing.

**Counter-Cultural Preapocalyptic Perspectives within Spanish Transition to Democracy (1968-1986)**

Luis A. Toledo Machado

**ABSTRACT:** This research aims to explain why, at the end of the 1970s, a part of the Spanish youth identified as the so-called “counterculture” radicalized their utopian expectations when faced the problem of climate change. I draw on the idea that the possibility of environmental collapse shattered modernity’s faith in progress and, so some people interpreted that they had to urgently intervene in history. Through their pre-apocalyptic perspective, they got involved in the creation of spaces of utopian inspiration in order to shape new forms of life, such as communes, free schools, cultural centers, etc. Through these practices, a change in the way these people perceived utopia occurred. For them, utopia relocated from a distant future to a present in which it was urgently needed.