



Imagining Anti-/Alter-capitalism: A Marxist Reading of Selected Contemporary Dystopian Films

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Abstract: As the latest global crisis of capitalism that started in 2008 remains technically unresolved, the anti-capitalist stance of radical intellectuals – who subscribe to Marxism or are at least influenced by certain forms of Marxism, such as Chomsky (2013); Bello (2013); Zabala (2012); Žižek; (2011); Eagleton (2011); and Sison (2009) – and the alter-capitalist viewpoint of less radical yet equally non-neoliberal academics such as Piketty (2013), Stiglitz (2012), and Chang (2012), gain more credence. This research is primarily aimed at mapping out the contours of anti-/alter-capitalist thought in three contemporary dystopian films, namely “Snowpiercer” (2013), “In Time” (2011), and “Elysium” (2013). Themes of exploitation, social inequality, class struggle, and revolution, will be discussed using the lens of various Marxist or Marxist-leaning theoreticians. In sum, inspired by Eagleton’s apologia (2011), this paper will analyze these films as “spaces of resistance” (Killick, 2013) against neoliberal capitalism, towards imagining a sustainable future where capitalism is either obliterated or at least, “humanized,” thereby proving that “Marx was right.”

Key words: capitalism; Marxism; global crisis; neoliberalism; dystopian films

1. INTRODUCTION

Capitalism remains in crisis everywhere. The latest global crisis that smashed the neoliberal world order into smithereens in 2008 remains technically unresolved as proven by a plethora of current statistics and events: 1) over-all unemployment in leading capitalist economies – from the United States to the Eurozone countries – remain either high and/or unstable; 2) austerity measures aimed at resolving the crisis but instead brought nothing but more economic turmoil are still in place; 3) global economic growth is anemic; 4) right-wing parties such as the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and the French Front National (FN) have strengthened their electoral bases through anti-immigrant propaganda that wrongly blames immigrants for high unemployment rates – brought by the 2008 crisis – that are now decimating the Eurozone middle class, and similarly anti-

immigrant and ultranationalist groups such as the Germany-based *Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes/PEGIDA* (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West) are now able to conduct big rallies in cities such as Dresden and Leipzig, and even in Britain; 5) anti-austerity and anti-neoliberal left-wing parties such as the Greek *Synaspismós Rizospastikís Aristerás/SYRIZA* (Coalition of the Radical Left) and the Spanish *Podemos* (literally, “We Can”) are poised to either form the next governing coalitions or at least become one of the most dominant factions in their respective countries’ political order, while the Greens in the United Kingdom also surge in poll surveys as they position their bloc as the most left-wing and most anti-austerity electoral force in their country’s politics; 6) Capital-rich countries such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) pooled resources to form the New Development Bank that will rival the



neoliberal World Bank in the Third World, in an effort parallel to what similar formations such as the Latin American financial consortium Banco del Sur (Bank of the South) attempt to achieve; 7) Pope Francis – to the glee of radicals everywhere – emphasizes that the current global economic set-up is untenable and must be radically transformed, devoting huge segments of his first apostolic exhortation (2013) to expound on why the faithful should say “no to an economy of exclusion,” “no to the new idolatry of money,” “no to a financial system which rules rather than serves,” and “no to the inequality which spawns violence”; 8) sundry groups from pacifist ones like Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States to armed revolutionary movements such as the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) provide a similar critique on the unjust status quo; 9) growing numbers of citizens clamor for more radical and anti-Wall Street candidates for the US presidency – such as radical Democrat Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warrens and self-described democratic socialist and independent Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders – to run for the post and possibly steer the country from the center to the Left, at least in a number of aspects; 10) poverty and inequality rates remain scandalously high in many countries.

With such a bleak capitalist present, the anti-capitalist stance of radical intellectuals – who subscribe to Marxism or are at least influenced by certain forms of Marxism, such as Chomsky (2013); Bello (2013); Zabala (2012); Žižek (2011); Eagleton (2011); and Sison (2009) – and the alter-capitalist viewpoint of less radical yet equally non-neoliberal academics such as Piketty (2013), Stiglitz (2012), and Chang (2012) gain more credence. Capitalism’s “directing motive” – which, as explained by its most powerful critic Karl Marx (1887) – “...is to extract the greatest possible amount of surplus value, and consequently to exploit labor-power to the greatest possible extent...” has failed to provide material development to a great number of people, hence discarding it or altering it seems to be the only way forward.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research is primarily aimed at mapping out the contours of anti-/alter-capitalist thought in three contemporary dystopian films, namely “Snowpiercer” (2013), “In Time” (2011), and “Elysium” (2013). Themes of exploitation, social inequality, class struggle, and revolution, will be discussed using the lens of various Marxist or Marxist-leaning theoreticians. In sum, inspired by Eagleton’s apologia (2011), this paper will analyze these films as “spaces of resistance” (Killick, 2013) against neoliberal capitalism, towards imagining a sustainable future where capitalism is either obliterated or at least, “humanized,” thereby proving that “Marx was right.”

3. DISCUSSION

Film Synopses: Our World in Theaters

“Snowpiercer” is a film directed by Bong Joon-ho (2013), based on the graphic novel “Le Transperceneige” (literally “The Snowpiercer”) by Jacques Lob, Benjamin Legrand and Jean-Marc Rochette (1982). It depicts a nightmarishly post-apocalyptic and clearly dystopian world inside the perpetually-globally-traversing train called Snowpiercer, which serves as the refuge of a few thousand survivors of the world’s failed attempt to reverse the effects of global warming through spraying a chemical called CW-7 into the atmosphere, consequently freezing everyone to death, except for the lucky few who boarded their version of the Noah’s Ark early on. Snowpiercer is managed and literally driven by the businessman Wilford with the help of Minister Mason and a plethora of armed guards. Wilford and his retinue run the train as an “efficient” private enterprise and fascist government rolled into one, where rich patrons enjoy *la dolce vita* in posh coaches, while the poor – who boarded the train without having to pay anything – subsist on “protein blocks” made of cockroach, and live in dirty and cramped spaces at the train’s tail end. Radicals led by Curtis Everett and the elderly Gilliam plan a tail section’s revolt to wrest control of the train from Wilford, releasing prisoners Namgoong Minsu (who built the train’s security system) and his clairvoyant daughter Yona, to help them reach the driver’s coach.



Eventually, Namgoong accomplished his secret plan to destroy the train's front exit door through an improvised bomb. Namgoong believed that the Earth has recovered from the CW-7 catastrophe and is potentially habitable to humans again. Only his daughter and another child seemed to survive the explosion that derailed the train, and they did not freeze to death at the film's end.

"In Time" is a dystopian film written, directed, and produced by Andrew Niccol (2011). This film shows a society where time is the currency needed for everything from a cup of coffee and rent, to toll fees and even hotel rooms. While people in their world are "genetically engineered to stop aging at 25," at the same age, their "body clock" starts "ticking" with just a year for them to spend, unless if they can get more time through 1) working for it (as wages are also given in the form of time); 2) arm duels where the strongest gets his opponent's time, consequently timing out and hence killing the latter in the process; 3) loans from banks that unfortunately charge exorbitant interest rates; and 4) short-time dole outs from a Church-like entity that relies on donations. Mirroring our world's huge socio-economic gaps, the film depicts a society where citizens from the wealthy zone of New Greenwich have centuries on their body clocks, even millions of years stored in metal time cartridges, while citizens from poor districts such as Dayton, generally have just enough time until the next pay day comes. The main film protagonist Will Salas (a Dayton factory worker) saved Henry Hamilton, (a New Greenwich resident) from experienced mobsters called Minutemen who rob people of their time, after which Henry timed himself out to give Will more than a century of his time. Will uses his time to discover the truth about the wealthy zone's hoarding of time. In a swift theatrical ideological conversion, Sylvia Weis (daughter of their world's richest businessman Philippe Weis) helps Will in redistributing or repossessing time snatched from her father. Their efforts destabilized the system so much that people from Dayton are empowered and emboldened enough to march to New Greenwich and other

zones in droves, while the police (called "Timekeepers" in the movie) end up powerless to stop the almost bloodless revolution.

"Elysium" is another dystopian film written, directed, and co-produced by Neill Blomkamp (2013). It depicts an environmentally-degraded, slum area-dotted Earth bad enough for rich Earthlings to build their own cozy space habitat called Elysium. Stark inequalities between the poor inhabitants of Earth and the rich citizens of Elysium are highlighted by the experiences of the main film protagonist Max Da Costa, a factory worker at Elysium resident John Carlyle's Armadyne Corporation which operates on Earth, where people are desperate enough to work hard for a pittance. Carlyle fired Max after a work-related accident left him terminally ill with only a few days to live. Max eventually found a way to Elysium where he can be instantly treated through a machine that wonderfully diagnoses and treats any disease or body abnormality. He ends up helping a team of hackers and human smugglers led by Spider "reboot" the Elysium's system to register Earthlings as Elysium citizens too and hence be eligible for all social services offered by the space habitat.

Marx Was Right: Exploitation and Social Inequality Exist and Both Are Economically Bad

"Snowpiercer," "In Time," and "Elysium" creatively depict the existence of exploitation under contemporary capitalism. In "Snowpiercer," the train's resources are used to maintain the rich passengers' high quality of life, at the evident expense of the poor ones who are only given cockroach "protein blocks" for food. Nothing is left for the poor, simply because the rich got it all. In the said movie, Minister Mason asserts that "We must, all of us on this train of life, remain in our allotted station," comparing tail-enders to a shoe that must never leave its "preordained position," mirroring the lack of genuine social mobility under the current highly inegalitarian capitalist system. "In Time" and "Elysium" present clearer critiques



of capitalist exploitation by highlighting how the rich time lenders led by Philippe Weis actually accumulate more time through charging exorbitant interest rates that eventually kill the poorest of the poor, and how rich factory owners like John Carlyle accumulate more wealth from the toils of laborers like Max whom they pay low wages and whom they discard like diapers as soon as they get sick.

Specifically, “In Time” presents a world where “The cost of living keeps rising to make sure people keep dying,” a system which the rich time lender Philippe Weis calls as “Darwinian capitalism,” applying of course the Law of the Jungle, none other than “survival of the fittest.” It is a system which operates on the premise “For a few to be immortal, many must die.” Such brutally frank description of the capitalist system from the fictional capitalist in “In Time” is what Cuban revolutionary socialist leader Fidel Castro criticizes in a famous speech on the rights of humanity: “Why do some people have to walk barefoot, so that others can ride in luxurious automobiles? Why do some people have to live 35 years, so that others can live to 70? Why do some people have to be so miserably poor, so that others can be excessively rich?” The same Earth is what “Elysium” portrays. It is a world where people can become “useless” and easily get discarded, a place so (a)pathetic that only an “android medic” is sent to help an irradiated worker, with the literally heartless and very business-like robot telling the victim: “You have been exposed to a lethal dose of radiation. You will experience catastrophic organ failure. In five days’ time, you will die...Please sign this to receive medication. Miporol, extremely potent, will keep you functioning normally until your death. Please take one pill with each meal. Thank you for your service.”

“Snowpiercer,” “In Time,” and “Elysium” portray capitalism as coldly indifferent to poor people and/or workers who create wealth. Thus, in a sense, these films clearly indicate that Marx and Engels (1888) were right about the inhumanity of capitalism which they equated to “brutal

exploitation,” a system which “...has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, callous 'cash payment'.” Furthermore, these films also tackle exploitation, the way Marxists discuss it. Exploitation breeds social inequality, and social inequalities are bad because they condemn the poor to perpetual slavery and poverty, for how can the poor catch up if all their lives they just have enough (at times even barely enough) to survive until the next pay day. Social inequalities make the poor incapacitated to lift themselves up. Social mobility is hindered by people like Wilford and Minister Mason in “Snowpiercer,” Philippe Weis and Timekeepers in “In Time,” and John Carlyle and Secretary Jessica Delacourt in “Elysium.”

In the real world, the capitalist elite play the same role. For example, under the capitalist system where education is just another commodity to buy, many poor citizens cannot achieve high(er) levels of education, especially in a country like the Philippines where state funding for education has never breached 6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in recent decades and consequently, where state colleges and universities are increasingly compelled by inadequate state subsidy to impose high tuition fees on top of exorbitant miscellaneous fees. Decades of what Heydarian (2015) calls as “shallow capitalism” that amounts to “Westernization without prosperity” in the Philippines – a former colony still largely beholden to American hegemony – failed to significantly increase the number of college graduates among the poorest sectors (see Figure 1), in a world where the average salary of college graduates is of course commonsensically higher than the average salary of non-college graduates (see Figure 2).

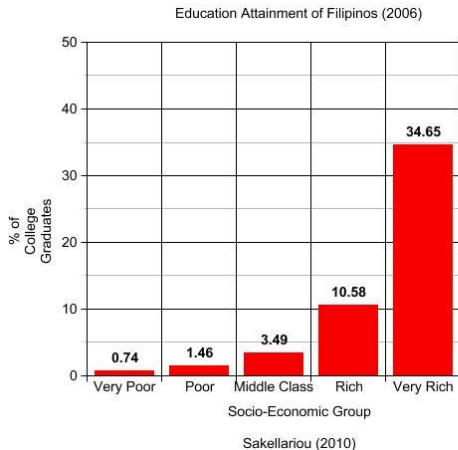


Figure 1. Education Attainment of Filipinos Grouped According to Socio-Economic Status. Source: Sakellariou, Chris. Access to and Equity of Higher Education in East Asia. Background paper prepared for World Bank 2011, World Bank, Washington, DC., 2010.

term objectives. As George Orwell explained in the novel “1984,” the elite perpetuate poverty and ignorance in order to maintain the shackles of capitalism: “For if leisure and security were enjoyed by all alike, the great mass of human beings who are normally stupefied by poverty would become literate and would learn to think for themselves; and when once they had done this, they would sooner or later realize that the privileged minority had no function, and they would sweep it away. In the long run, a hierarchical society was only possible on a basis of poverty and ignorance.”

Thanks to a world ruled by capitalists who monopolize the world’s resources, the poor are permanently shackled to dependency and poverty as the fruits of their labor further enrich those who already have so much, while the Earth’s remaining resources are also harnessed not for the common good, but for further capitalist accumulation. Piketty (2014) and Stiglitz (2012), and other similarly-minded economists have provided statistical evidence, that indeed, the dominant form of capitalism allows a very tiny global elite to accumulate more and more wealth even as huge numbers of people remain wretchedly in poverty, hence the dominant form of capitalism has been by and large detrimental or at least not beneficial to a huge number of poor people. Piketty (2014) notes that “...the reduction of top marginal income tax rates and the rise of top incomes...” under the dominant capitalist system in recent decades “...do not seem to have stimulated productivity (contrary to the predictions of supply-side theory) or at any rate did not stimulate productivity enough to be statistically detectable at the macro level.”

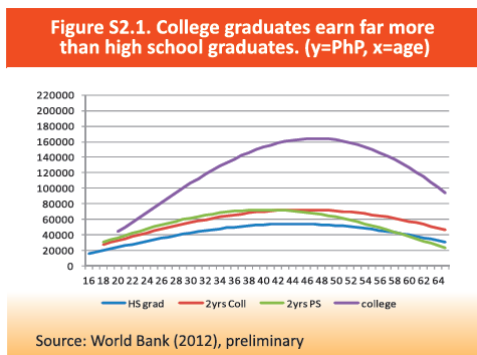


Figure 2. Average Earnings of Workers Grouped According to Highest Educational Attainment. Source: “Investing in Inclusive Growth Amid Global Uncertainty,” a World Bank PHILIPPINE QUARTERLY UPDATE (July 2012).

The elite seem either hell-bent in preventing the poor to become functionally literate and holistically educated, and hence able to liberate themselves from the oppressive economic system, or doing nothing to help them realize such long-



Incomes Database maintained by the Paris School of Economics. Such continuous accumulation of wealth "...increased the political influence of the beneficiaries of the change in the tax laws, who had an interest in keeping top tax rates low or even decreasing them further and who could use their windfall to finance political parties, pressure groups, and think tanks" (Piketty, 2013).

Stiglitz (2012) explains why such immense wealth and political power go against the common good: "Widely unequal societies do not function efficiently, and their economies are neither stable nor sustainable in the long term. When one interest group holds too much power, it succeeds in getting policies that benefit itself, rather than policies that would benefit society as a whole. When the wealthiest use their political power to benefit excessively the corporations they control, much-needed revenues are diverted into the pockets of a few instead of benefiting society at large." Noting his observations on the most powerful capitalist country in the world, Stiglitz provides evidence on the over-all negativity of unbridled capitalist accumulation to the economy: "Unemployment can be blamed on a deficiency in aggregate demand (the total demand for goods and services in the economy, from consumers, from firms, by government, and by exporters); in some sense, the entire shortfall in aggregate demand—and hence in the U.S. economy—today can be blamed on the extremes of inequality. As we've seen, the top 1 percent of the population earns some 20 percent of U.S. national income. If that top 1 percent saves some 20 percent of its income, a shift of just 5 percentage points to the poor or middle who do not save—so the top 1 percent would still get 15 percent of the nation's income—would increase aggregate demand directly by 1 percentage point. But as that money recirculates, output would actually increase by some 1½ to 2 percentage points. In an economic downturn such as the current one, that would imply a decrease in the unemployment rate of a comparable amount. Emphatically, Stiglitz argues that income redistribution is one of the best ways to deal with the current crisis: "With unemployment in early

2012 standing at 8.3 percent, this kind of a shift in income could have brought the unemployment rate down close to 6.3 percent. A broader redistribution, say, from the top 20 percent to the rest, would have brought down the unemployment further, to a more normal 5 to 6 percent."

Remembering Who The Real Enemy Is: Class Struggle and Revolution

Beyond mirroring the world's current social inequities, the three subject films echo the exhortation of the recent dystopian book-turned-film "The Hunger Games" for readers/viewers to "remember who the real enemy is." In "Snowpiercer," "In Time," and "Elysium," the enemies are clear enough to be recognized: banks, big business, and the government or ruling clique that uses violence to maintain the unjust social order – ranging from dismembering dissenters, and machine-gunning clueless people as a form of "population control" in "Snowpiercer," to the ceaseless surveillance of Timekeepers in "In Time" aimed at preventing the time-deficient poor to acquire more time, and the use of mercenary killer-agents and robots in "Elysium" to stop poor Earthlings from reaching the space habitat where any disease could be treated. The ruling class' use of violence in the film also pervades contemporary reality. Amin (2014) observed that "...fascism has returned to the West, East, and South; and this return is naturally connected with the spread of the systemic crisis of generalized, financialized, and globalized monopoly capitalism...This crisis is destined to grow worse and, consequently, the threat of resorting to fascist solutions will become a real danger." Current violent clashes between pro-capitalist governments and/or armed goons of big corporations on the one side, and workers who demand a greater share of profits on the other side – from the Marikana miners' strike in South Africa (Mkhize, 2012) to the garment workers' strike in Cambodia (Palatino, 2014) – validate Amin's analysis.

Not surprisingly, the three subject movies also advocate revolution, with the main



protagonists all involved in a violent or at the very least, armed resistance to the capitalist system that treats people like garbage. With regard to actual organization and mobilization, the struggle against capitalism in the movie “In Time” is planned and implemented almost in its entirety by the two protagonists only, though, in the end, the people realized that if they defy the system together, the police will be powerless to stop them. Meanwhile, in “Snowpiercer” and “Elysium,” groups of the oppressed have been instrumental in helping the hero defeat the forces of the status quo. Curtis had a brave band of tail-end citizens to win the struggle, while Max had a ragtag army of hackers and human smugglers who genuinely wanted to transform the system so as to make it more inclusive. All three heroes come from proletarian backgrounds. In addition, Max and Will had to battle the system’s mercenaries who also came from their ranks – Elysium agents and policemen, respectively.

In these times obfuscated by the mainstream media’s emphasis on non-economic conflicts such as ethnic strife, religious tensions, (im)migrants-versus-native-citizens encounters, the three dystopian films allow the people to remember who the real enemy is, by bringing collective attention to the economic roots of the world’s countless problems today, parallel with Marx’s (1859) emphasis on the “economic structure” as the base of the “immense superstructure” of society. These dystopian films entreat people to stop blaming the Other – usually immigrants in the context of First World countries still plagued by the impact of the 2008 crisis – as benefit scroungers, job thieves, and economic dead weights. People are entreated to be wary of neoliberal governments’ “false flag” operations that whip up chauvinism and/or religious tensions that serve “...to divert attention from the worsening economic and social situation...” (Sison, 2015). Furthermore, everyone is encouraged to scrutinize the actions of capitalists who accumulate wealth through stealing the surplus value created by workers. Instead of fighting each other in a dog-eat-dog world, people

are called upon to fight and defeat the fat cats who control the system.

In “Snowpiercer,” it was told that the elderly rebel Gilliam sacrificed one of his arms to stop people from engaging in cannibalism. His act inspired many people who started offering their arms (and even legs) too, for the same reason. Gilliam thus inspired solidarity and unity against Wilford who eventually ordered his men to churn out cockroach “protein blocks” (which, though unpalatable, is still better than eating human flesh) to feed the tail-end passengers, lest they engage in full-scale rebellion against him. In “In Time,” Will and Sylvia redistributed much of the time that they have requisitioned from the wealthy, in direct contrast with Dayton mobsters who kill fellow poor citizens as they steal the latter’s time. Meanwhile, in “Elysium,” human smugglers led by Spider hijacked and rebooted Elysium’s operating system not to monopolize the lucrative Earth-to-Elysium trips, but rather, to make Earthlings registered citizens of Elysium and hence eligible for social benefits. In general, the films emphasize that redirecting people’s anger and rechanneling their boundless energy from petty quarrels among themselves that only serve to weaken them as a group capable of collective action, to genuine anti-establishment revolt, is possible.

Imagining Alter-capitalism and Anti-capitalism: Can The Monster Be Humanized? Is Another World Possible?

The three subject films offer various solutions to what Pope Francis has labeled as “scandalous” social inequalities under the current global economic system that values profits over people. Their solutions vary from what Zabala (2013) calls as the process of “humanizing” the capitalist system through retaining the “...matrix of profit-orientation in such a way as to support the remains of social welfare,” or Lenin’s revolutionary formula of smashing the bourgeois “state machine.” “Snowpiercer” offers the destruction of Wilford’s train – the symbol of neoliberal capitalism – as the only way out. Curtis and Namgoong duelled prior to



the train's destruction, as the former initially preferred to wrest the train's control room from Wilford (tantamount to merely changing the leader but retaining the same capitalist system in the real world). But after conversing with Wilford and realizing the inhumanity of his system – where children, like everyone else in the real world, are used as disposable cogs of the system – Curtis had a change of heart and did no longer pose any obstacle to Namgoong's plan to destroy the train's exit to escape it and attempt to live in the world outside again. Namgoong's bomb was so potent that it unhinged the train and destroyed it, with only two survivors who never froze to death outside the train. Hence, "Snowpiercer" lets viewers imagine a world outside capitalism, a world where people "...construct an autonomous national system based on the establishment of self-sustaining industry combined with the renewal of agriculture organized around food sovereignty" and contribute to "the creation of conditions making possible the development of a second wave of awakening for the peoples of the South who could then link their struggles with those of peoples of the North, who are also victims of a savage capitalism in crisis and for which the emergence of a globalized production system offers nothing" (Amin, 2014). This is a direct rebuke of the neoliberal academe's There Is No Alternative (TINA) dictum. In sum, "Snowpiercer" emphasizes the compelling need to make a "clean slate" (in the words of the French original of "L' Internationale"), to create a new world "from the ashes of the old" (in the words of the American labor anthem "Solidarity Forever"), or in other words, a "war to end all wars." Hence, the movie subscribes to Marx's view (1871) of the bourgeois "ready-made state machinery" which "...the working class cannot simply lay hold of...and wield it for its own purposes." A state that serves the people, a "dictatorship of the proletariat" (Marx, 1875) or a "worker-led democracy" (Kanth, 2008 and Balch, 2009) is what is needed, and the first step towards this is to destroy the old bourgeois state through a revolution, akin to destroying Wilford's train in "Snowpiercer."

Meanwhile, "In Time" presents a seemingly anarchistic debanksterization of the system through continuous robbing of bigger and bigger time banks, and consequently, the progressive redistribution of time (wealth) to poor citizens. Indeed, in the final scene, Will and Sylvia are poised to enter what could be their world's Central Time Bank. This redistribution of wealth is similar to Marx and Engels' call for a progressive form of taxation in "The Communist Manifesto" (1888), echoed by Piketty (2014) and Stiglitz (2012). The underlying message of "In Time" is a return to the public control of the economic system, specifically the banking and/or financial sector, a very popular and quite logical idea, especially after the 2008 crisis primarily caused by the excessive risk-taking and greed for profit of big banks, as explained by documentaries such as Michael Moore's "Capitalism: A Love Story" and Charles H. Ferguson's "Inside Job," and as emphasized by Foster and Magdoff (2008); Foster and McChesney (2012); Gowan (2009); Blackburn (2008); and Wade and Sigurgeirsdottir (2010).

In the Philippines, public control of banks ("nationalization" is the typical term) had been advocated by Senator Lorenzo Tañada who served as legislator from 1947 to 1971. Tañada was founding chairperson of the left-wing multisectoral group Bagong Alyansang Makabayan/BAYAN (New Patriotic Alliance). As leader of BAYAN, he wrote the "Proposals for a Nationalist and Democratic Constitution" in 1986, where "...the nationalization of all vital and strategic industries..." namely: "(e)xtractive and non-replenishable industries such as mining, exploration and the like; (i)ndustries involving public service such as the generation and distribution of electricity, water, communication and facilities, mass transportation, and fuel; (i)ndustries strategic to genuine economic development such as banks, fertilizers, steel, smelting basic chemicals and drugs" has been recommended (Yes, Observe National Independence & Peace/YONIP, 2013). Tañada's ideas are parallel with what Chang (2012) and



Lichauco (1986) advocate in varying degrees and in different times yet similar contexts. Chang favored state-owned enterprises as engines of economic development, especially in developing countries, while Lichauco is more explicit in encouraging the state “to be an activist and pioneer in the industrialization process,” on behalf of the people whose welfare and interest it is sworn to serve.

Somehow less radical yet still progressive is what “Elysium” advocates: social democratic or social welfare statist-style social services for all in a world where everyone is a citizen. In the final scene, Max sacrifices his life by allowing Spider to hack the system through accessing the information he holds in his brain. His sacrifice enabled Spider to reboot Elysium system, after which, all Earthlings have automatically been registered as Elysium citizens. Hospital missions from Elysium were immediately dispatched to Earth to give them the services that are only previously available to the original Elysium citizens. This ending fits what a broad array of left-wing forces in Europe call and defend as the “Social Europe,” a welcoming and egalitarian Europe that is now threatened by “...attacks on public services, pensions, wages, and working conditions, as well as strong anti-democratic tendencies (Wahl, 2014). Such dream of a genuinely egalitarian society where social services will be for all – a society of “...fiscal reform, an audit of the national debt, of collective control over the strategic sectors of the economy, of defense and improvement of public services, of the recovery of sovereign powers and our industrial fabric, of employment policies through investment, of favoring consumption, and of ensuring that public financial entities protect small and medium enterprises and families...” (Iglesias, 2015) – is of course a global dream.

4. CONCLUSION

“Another world is not only possible; she’s on her way and, on a quiet day, if you listen very

carefully you can hear her breathe,” says Arundhati Roy. From evolutionary models in Latin America tackled by Amin (2014), Lebowitz (2014), and Mészáros (2014), to historical revolutionary models such as the Cuban paradigm which as Morris (2014) explains was and still is generally good for its citizens, and current radical electoral and extraparliamentary struggle against austerity and for “dignity, democracy, and justice” being waged by groups such as SYRIZA (Príncipe, 2015), the world is fully experienced on how the proletarian class and their allies can move forward from the untenable present to the grandiose future, parallel with and even beyond the alter-/anti-capitalist imagination of contemporary dystopian cinema.

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