

**Power and Utopia in Thomas More's *Utopia* and Jonathan Swift's
*Gulliver's Travels***



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Power and Utopia in Thomas More's *Utopia* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.

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DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Sanjid', is written over a horizontal line.

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Abstract

Utopia is an imaginary community where everything is perfect and everyone is in peace and harmony with one another. But whether such a society can exist is still a big mystery in itself. Even so, people still believe in the possibility of its existence as they all hope for a positive future. One of the key features to keep this utopian society stable is power. However, power brings in lots of serious issues with itself. So, it is necessary to investigate how power is utilized in a utopian society. Unfortunately, even though lots of research has been conducted on the topic of utopia, few of them have tried to investigate how power is exercised in utopia. So, the primary objective of this research paper is to bring in Michel Foucault's theory of power and explore how power is exercised in the utopias of Thomas More's *Utopia* and Jonathon Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and how the use of this power overall affects the utopian vision.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Utopia is really a very malleable concept which generally refers to an ideal society where everyone is in peace and without any sort of conflict with each other. But whether such a society can actually exist is a big question in itself and an issue of big debate. This is because more often than not, most utopian models of living are enacted and projected through texts like literary texts and there are few examples of a utopian society in real life. Also, most of these texts present nothing but the projection of an imaginary “distant past, or an invented present in a faraway site, the future, or the world of fantasy” (Greene 2). But even so, it is believed that utopia is achievable as everyone hopes for a better and brighter future in a peaceful society. So, writers like Thomas More and Jonathan Swift have written about utopias.

Another reason why these writers have written about utopias is because utopia is a particularly interesting genre, which is also why this researcher became interested in it. The researcher came upon Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* during one of his courses. He enjoyed reading it and so became fascinated with it, which is why he explored the idea of utopia. While researching on the utopia of *Gulliver's Travels*, the researcher discovered, on reading Chlöe Houston's article "Utopia, Dystopia or Anti-utopia? *Gulliver's Travels* and the Utopian Mode of Discourse," that Swift had read Thomas More's *Utopia* and, as a result, might have been particularly influenced by Thomas More's idea of utopia, which is evident from his novel *Gulliver's Travels* as there are many similarities between *Utopia* and *Gulliver's Travels*. This became the starting point for this thesis.

Thomas More was an avid dreamer of utopia. He was a 16th century English author, lawyer, judge, statesman, social philosopher and Renaissance humanist. Most of his works

involved themes like wealth, power, slavery, and injustice which indicates his discontent with the ruling system of his time and society. His novel, *Utopia*, may have been a reimagining on More's part of what the society would have been like if everyone lived in an ideal society where there was no war, crime, or hunger, where everyone had lots of free time on their hands and received proper education. More's deep expectations for the emergence of such a society could be easily felt from his descriptions of the utopia through the narrative voice of Raphael Hythloday in *Utopia*.

Jonathan Swift was another experimenter of utopian ideas, which is evident from his often presenting suggestions for ideal societies. For example, in his essay "A Modest Proposal," Swift talks about how children of the poor may be used as a solution to alleviate the overpopulation and dire economic conditions of Ireland if they were just fattened up and then used to feed the wealthy landlords. Like this, Swift experimented with lots of utopian and dystopian ideas. He was an Anglo-Irish essayist, priest, political writer, poet, and one of the foremost satirists of his time. He liked to write on topics like corruption and political and social criticism using satire and humor. This could be seen very clearly from his novel *Gulliver's Travels*. This text mainly tells the tale of Lemuel Gulliver who went on four different voyages to four different lands and experienced the customs, traditions, and governance of those lands. During his fourth and last voyage, Gulliver arrives at Houyhnhnmland which, to him, seemed like the most ideal place or utopia on Earth. As this research is primarily being conducted on utopia, it will mainly focus only on the fourth voyage or final part of *Gulliver's Travels* as through this storyline, Swift exposes the abuses and misuses of power in utopia with light humor and satire.

So, both Thomas More and Jonathan Swift were more or less involved with utopia. But this utopia is also very intricately related with power, which brings Michel Foucault to the table. Michel Foucault, the French philosopher and literary critic, wrote about the link between power and knowledge, and how these are used as a tool for social control. One of his key ideas is that power is everywhere, meaning power is present in all positions of society and everyone in society possesses power. But even so, this power which is supposed to be controlled by everyone is not actually controlled by everyone. This is because only those who are sufficiently knowledgeable or create and control knowledge, are the ones to control the power. Others are unaware of their power or ability, so they remain powerless.

The way this theory of power, meaning power is everywhere, is related with utopia is that power is actually really everywhere in utopia, every institution, every member of More's utopia and Swift's utopian society more or less possesses power. But some people are unaware of that power, which leads to their powerless condition, while other people are aware of it, so they enjoy the benefit of it. This is why this researcher brings up Michel Foucault's theory of power and examines how this power is presented, meaning who are using the power, who are the beneficiaries of this power, who are suffering as a result of it, and how it is used, in the utopias of Thomas More's novel *Utopia* and Jonathan Swift's novel *Gulliver's Travels*. The result of this investigation will determine the way that power is exercised in utopia and the impact it has on the utopian vision, which are brought up in the next sections of this research paper.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Everyone understands that utopia is typically a perfect society where everybody lives in peace and harmony with one another. Unfortunately, very few understand that a utopian society functions smoothly only with the existence of rules and regulations. This immediately creates the idea of consequences, which leads to the need for a body to see if those consequences are effectively followed. Although this leads to power imbalance which defeats the utopian purpose, it is also true that without laws, rules, it would be almost impossible for a society like utopia to exist. So, this unique power relationship is one of the fundamental key conditions necessary for maintaining a utopia. Sadly, very few studies have been conducted on this topic of how power is exercised in the utopian society. To investigate this relationship between power and utopia, several scholarly sources and articles are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Michael Johnson's article "Power, Utopia, and the Manipulation of the Historical Consciousness: Perspectives from Collingwood" can shed some light on this issue of power and utopia. As Johnson investigates the hidden link that history has with the element of utopia and power through the lens of Collingwood's philosophy of history, he finds out that the historical past can often be manipulated and propagated to achieve certain agendas. Through this process, power can be obtained. Johnson further unearths that while utopic vision makes it possible for someone to be in a position of power, utopia is dependent on the position of power to implement its vision too. So, without power, utopia would be nothing but a fantasy. But if properly managed by the faculty of power, ideologies like utopia could become a wonderful guidance for a positive and better future. This demonstrates the close connection between utopia and power.

“Five Hundred Years of Thomas More’s *Utopia* and Utopianism” by Lyman Tower

Sargent also gives some clues regarding utopia and power. But it mainly reflects Sargent's own personal understanding of More's *Utopia* and utopian texts as a genre. This is as both *Utopia* and Utopian texts are filled with various ambiguities, uncertainties. Like, the word 'utopia' itself is a catch. The coiner of the term Thomas More, sometimes used it to convey the meaning “no place” or “nowhere,” while other times, he used it to convey “good,” “happy,” or “fortunate place” (185). So, there is a confusion about what’s the meaning of the term ‘utopia’, although not many people are even aware of this confusion. Like this, Sargent clears several ambiguities about the utopian genre. Also in this article, there is a clear suggestion of power. For instance, Sargent mentions that during his reading of More's *Utopia*, he found it filled with elements of “authoritarianism, hierarchy, and patriarchy”, also attaching “colonialism” to that list later on (187). All of these forms of power indicate that there is an obvious power struggle or imbalance present in *Utopia*. So, this is another evidence that power and *Utopia* are interconnected.

Susan Bruce’s “Utopian Justifications: More’s *Utopia*, Settler Colonialism, and Contemporary Ecocritical Concerns” exhibits one of these forms of power. Through a juxtaposition, Bruce points out that just like how Israelis are gaining ground day by day, Utopians of More's *Utopia* are also taking over other people's territory by settler colonialism. This is because whenever the population of their territory reaches beyond a certain number, utopians go to other islands, take over uninhabited lands, and employ their laws in the occupied territory. If the natives resist this take-over, nothing but war awaits them. This demonstrates clearly just how power is used for colonialism and also just how barbaric and illogical Utopians' actions are. So, this article is evidence that *Utopia* and power are really closely connected with each other.

Similarly, in “Punishment, Power, and History: Foucault and Elias,” PiererSpierenberg also brings up another aspect of power. The way he brings this up is by comparing Foucault and Elias's ideas, their perspectives about power. On the one hand, both of them have many similarities, like both agree on the issue of the omnipresence of power. But on the other hand, they also have various differences regarding issues like the changes in the penal system. This change includes things like the lessening of severe punishments like direct decapitation to imprisonment, etc. According to the article, this lessening of severe punishment is another form of power. As it is not to treat criminals more benevolently, but to keep them under tighter and stricter control. In that sense, it is not softening or lessening the penalty at all. It is just another form of power. The same can be seen in Thomas More's *Utopia*, as most of the criminals in Utopia are given softer punishments like doing social work. Slavery and death penalty is given only to rare cases. So, this is another way that power is linked with *Utopia*.

Likewise, another aspect of power can be seen in David Halpin's article “Utopianism and Education: The Legacy of Thomas More.” Halpin brings them up by providing an overview of utopianism and its impact in particular to the education sector. According to him, since the publication of More's *Utopia*, it has exerted an extraordinary influence in various social reforms and political considerations. For example, in the education sector, More's importance on universal education in *Utopia* has encouraged and inspired many new writers, social reformers to reconsider the purpose of education. But Halpin does not just praise *Utopia*, he also mentions some shortcomings of it. Like, all the higher officials including the prince of each individual city are actually all selected from the educated classes of their society. These educated classes also have the privilege of being pardoned from the normal working conditions. Moreover, More's utopian society is patriarchal, meaning that women are subjected to domination by men. These

indicate that patriarchy and social stratification are some of ways that power is exercised in the utopian society. So, power and *Utopia* are really associated with each other.

Additionally, John M. Parrish's "Education, Erasmian Humanism and More's *Utopia*" is one more article that talks about another aspect of power in utopia. It primarily focuses on Erasmus and his fellow humanists' theory of education and how it is then reflected in Thomas More and his writings. Erasmian humanism essentially has three distinct messages regarding education, all three of which could also be seen in More's writings like in *Utopia*, for example, Utopian education starts from childhood. Besides this, Utopians also employ amusements like chess-like games in which the vices fight against the virtues, to make education as amusing as possible. Moreover, Utopians firmly believe "in the idea of education for virtue" as they think that education without virtue is meaningless (599). All these show that More was influenced by Erasmian Humanism. Parrish's article also mentions that Utopia's educational institutions are immersive and invasive. From their birth, Utopian children are kept under a high degree of surveillance and are made sure they only learn virtuous and moral things. So, there is an absolute loss of privacy in Utopia. Parrish compared this highly disciplined environment of education to Foucault's panopticism, which is a symbol of power. Even though there does not seem to be any kind of powerful authority hiding behind it, there is actually an invisible power present here, which is shaping the children's mind, instilling them with ideas that are beneficial for the commonwealth of Utopia. So, there is really a close connection between power and *Utopia*.

Moreover, in Gregory Claeys' article "*Utopia* at Five Hundred: Some Reflections" too, there is a short discussion about another theme of power. This article mainly focuses on Thomas More's novel *Utopia*, arguing that to many, *Utopia* is a "highly ambiguous, even "dystopian" portrait of an "ideal society"" (402). Besides this, the article also gives a brief overview of the

evolutionary process through which utopian ideas had evolved over the centuries to the current period of time, concentrating on gradual change of ideas and the outcome of those ideas on the immediate society. Furthermore, it also mentions that in *Utopia*, there is a kind of breathlessness situation. This is because according to Claey's, in Utopia, people eat, dress, or behave almost in exactly the same manner. All the citizens constantly monitor and surveil each other. They also do not allow people to travel outside their towns without a passport. Thus, Utopians grow up in a sort of oppressive, breathless condition. This is why Claey's claims that Utopia "is not really a fun place. It is a safe place," since in all aspects of their life and lifestyles, power and restraint are present (405). So, this is another proof that power and *Utopia* are interrelated.

Furthermore, Kevin Barry's paper "Exclusion and Inclusion in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*" also presents some important information about utopia and power. But unlike the previous papers, which uses More's *Utopia*, this article uses Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* to conduct its research, focusing on the issue of exclusion and inclusion. Like, it discusses how just because of some differences, Gulliver is excluded over and over again by the Lilliputians, Brobdingnagians, Houyhnhnms during his journey. But even when he was included by the Yahoos or by his family after his voyage, Gulliver voluntarily excluded himself from mixing with them. The root of all of this is toleration, how much a person can tolerate others. According to Barry, this issue of toleration is something Swift wanted to convey to his readers. Barry also mentions that Gulliver's journey, in the land of Houyhnhnms is an "especial kind of arrangement between those who have power and those who have not" (45). Now it is known for a fact that those with power are the horse like Houyhnhnms and those without it, meaning slave class, are the human like Yahoos. So, sometimes Houyhnhnms treats the Yahoos even worse than slaves or animals. But this is the land that Gulliver considers as utopia, where everyone is supposed to be

treated equally. Yet despite this, Yahoos are dominated over. So, it can be seen that even in a perfect society like Houyhnhnmland, power relationships exist, one group excluding and dominating over the other. This is verification that power and utopia are correlated.

In the same way, “Gulliver as Pet and Pet Keeper: Talking Animals in Book 4” by Ann Cline Kelly is another important source of information that talks about the power dynamics present in *Gulliver's Travels*. But first, it presents an overview of Gulliver's gradual change of mindset, how Gulliver who believed in the chain of beings, where man is placed above all sentient beings, came to acknowledge that nurture is more important in shaping the identity. This means that whether someone is a Houyhnhnm, or Yahoo or Human being, does not matter at all, as it is his or her surroundings, upbringing, meaning nurture, will determine what kind of identity he or she will possess. This paper also introduces several instances of *Gulliver's Travels* where power can be felt clearly. Like, after a short stay in the Houyhnhnmland, Gulliver “acknowledges that the power and rationality of these creatures gives them dominion over him” (325). So, he becomes a pet of Master Horse and tries his hardest to please him by learning their language. This is as he fears that if is unsuccessful in his endeavor, he will either be “eaten, skinned or put to hard labour” (326). Another time, Gulliver himself murders and skins some Yahoos to make himself some clothings. He enacts this vicious act to re-establish and reconfirm his difference and dominance over the Yahoos. Like this, this article shows several instances of power dynamics present in *Gulliver's Travels*, which is why the power and utopia of *Gulliver's Travels* are actually interconnected.

Finally, “Utopia, Dystopia or Anti-utopia? *Gulliver's Travels* and the Utopian Mode of Discourse” by Chlöe Houston provides some relevant information regarding our research of utopia and power. Houston also tries to discover whether *Gulliver's Travels* is a utopian, or

dystopian or anti-utopian fiction. The evidence she gathered points out that *Gulliver's Travels* is both utopian and dystopian at the same time. This is because *Gulliver's Travels* engages both utopian and dystopian modes of discourse, through the utilization of satire, rejection of an ideal society in the earthly or mundane society etc. Besides this, Houston also uncovers in her article that humans are not capable of obtaining the utopia. This is because both *Utopia* and *Gulliver's Travels* arrive at this same conclusion. It is proved by the fact that when Gulliver returns to his native land in England, he is “unable to manage to emulate the Houyhnhnms’ rational model in his own world” (435). In Raphael Hythloday’s case too, “a seemingly ideal society can only be imagined far from English shores” (435). Both of these factors show that humans are incapable of obtaining utopia. Human vices like pride, desire to control, dominate over other people etc. are at the root for this incapability. As all of these vices at length turn utopian vision into a total failure.

From all these articles, it becomes evident that power is truly everywhere, as even in an ideal society like utopia, high and low hierarchical power relationships exist. But then again, if there is really the existence of a hierarchical power relationship in a supposed ideal society, it is proof that is not really an ideal utopian society. As power brings into existence abhorrent things like domination, punishment, patriarchy, slavery, colonialism, narrow mindsets etc. All of these destroy the utopian vision that an utopia is supposed to chase after. The literature review, therefore, shows that neither More's Utopia nor Swift's Houyhnhnmland are really utopia. They are like the failed vision of a dreamer, imaginary and unreal. The next chapters will now closely analyze the two texts to show how power is enacted in utopia.

Chapter 3: Power in *Utopia*

From the literature review, it has become obvious that the critics think that utopia and power are closely interconnected with each other, as there are various forms of power in utopia. According to Foucault, power is everywhere. This means that power exists everywhere, regardless of a person's background, religion, skin color, class, gender, age, everyone in society owns power. So, power does not flow from just top-down, or bottom-up, it flows in both directions. The catch is that only those who are aware can use that power, others remain powerless because of ignorance. This is why even in an ideal society like Utopia inequality exists. This fact can be proven by the different ways and forms of power like colonialism, war, patriarchy, the penal system, social stratification, government manipulation that are presented in More's *Utopia*.

Colonialism is one of the ways that power manifests itself in Thomas More's *Utopia*. According to Utopian traditions and rules, whenever there is a shortage of land in their territory, they try to pick up a certain percentage of their citizens and dispatch them to a nearby neighboring island. There they find out if the natives of the island have more than enough land than they can cultivate well. If the natives really possess land beyond their needs, then Utopians settle down and establish their “colony” on the island, welcoming the inhabitants that are willing to settle down among them and follow their rules and regulations (More 83). But if the natives refuse to accept their presence and reject their rules, then Utopians drive them out of their territory, use force if it becomes necessary. This is because, according to Utopian traditions, every man has the basic human right to own uncultivated land that is going to waste for his own subsistence. So, Utopians do not see the occupation of other people's native land as unjust. But

this occupation, however justified or logical it appears to be on the surface, in reality, is nothing but pure use of force and violence. It could never be anything but one powerful force oppressing or suppressing another weaker force, the educated taking advantage of the ignorant, exactly as Foucault's theory states that power is in the hands of the well informed. Bruce compares this colonization of the natives by Utopians with Israelis occupying the Palestinian land through settler colonialism (24). So, this colonialism is one of the ways that power is exercised in the Utopia of More's *Utopia*.

War is another one of the ways that power reveals itself in *Utopia*. According to Hythloday, the narrator, Utopians are not big fans of war, as they take the lives of their people very seriously. War on the other hand, takes the lives of their people. So, they detest war and try to avoid it as much as possible. But this does not mean that Utopians are afraid of war or losing to their enemies when attacked. In the case of unavoidable war, unlike the other nations who fight war in a brutish fashion, Utopians deploy tactics that reduce the bloodshed of their people to the bare minimum. Like, they tip the enemy personnel with great rewards to betray, kill or capture their prince and those next in line of succession. Or, they sow seeds of discord and “animate the prince’s brother, or some of the nobility, to aspire to the crown” (More 145). Tactics like these, although seem underhanded, cheap, but they always bring victory to the Utopians, as they create mistrust and confusion in the enemy camp. So, those who became enemies with the Utopians never saw the face of victory. Now what describes this huge superiority of the Utopians is that Utopians are much more educated, tactical and knowledgeable than their enemies. They see the use of tactics, design, reasoning as a way to reduce the bloodshed of their people as something fundamental in the way of war. Much like how Michel Foucault agrees with J. A. de Guibert's view of this knowledge as the base or root of the vast

science of war (168). So, Utopians are more powerful than their enemies as they are more informed and tactical than their opponents. This can be obviously seen from the result of the war. In this way, war is another one of the ways that power is exercised by the Utopians in *Utopia*.

Similarly, patriarchy is one more way that power is practiced in More's *Utopia*. At first glance, even though Utopia may seem like a civil society where men and women are treated equally, this is clearly not the case. This can be grasped from the subtle hints found in More's writing. Like, during the beginning and the ending of each month and year, Utopians hold festivals. On the first day of the new season “before they go to the temple, both wives and children fall on their knees before their husbands or parents and confess everything in which they have either erred or failed in their duty, and beg pardon for it” (More 171). This indicates that there is an obvious hierarchy present in Utopia, where the males dominate over the females. It becomes more understandable when looking at all the decision making posts, positions in the governmental body of Utopia, like the prince, magistrate or priest, are rarely held by women, so women have almost no say in any decision making matter, even though they occupy almost half of their population. This makes it even clearer that Utopia is a male dominated society as almost all important decisions are taken by the males. Males exercise their supremacy, power, control over the females here. The cause behind this inequality is because even though males and females both receive education in Utopian society, females are still not educated and aware enough to know of their rights. Or maybe there is a fundamental problem with the Utopian education system, so it is more partial towards males than females ruling the society. As a result, females who are clueless regarding their rights, are not actually fighting for their rights, so they are also powerless compared to the males. Thus, this patriarchy is another one of the ways that power is exercised in More's *Utopia*.

Additionally, the penal system is a great example of how power is exercised in More's *Utopia*. In *Utopia*, “if any man goes out of the city to which he belongs without leave, and is found rambling without a passport, he is severely treated, he is punished as a fugitive, and sent home disgracefully” (More 91). And if he is again found guilty of committing such a crime, then he is punished with slavery. Similarly, those that commit adultery and defile their marriage bed, are also condemned to slavery for hurting their spouse. Yet, those that bear their punishment silently and show actual signs of repentance, are sometimes forgiven and become free. But if they relapse, they are condemned to death. Like this, varying degrees of flexibility and punishment are present in *Utopia*. Ultimately the penal system of *Utopia* is for maintaining social stability, which is doing its job properly. So, the prince, senate of magistrates and syphogrants who are the backbones of this institution, are supported by normal or common Utopians for doing their part properly. This shows that power is not only flowing from top to bottom of the social stratum in *Utopia*, but also from the bottom of the social stratum to the top of the social stratum, exactly as Foucault's theory affirms it to do (177). So, power is really everywhere as it is flowing in both ways. Thus, this penal system is another of the mediums through which power is exercised in *Utopia*.

Likewise, social stratification is another way that power is exercised in *Utopia*. At first glance, *Utopia* does not seem like a place where anything like class struggle or discrimination could happen. But, in reality, social stratification actually exists in *Utopia*. This is because education is a huge deciding factor in *Utopia*. Although everyone, regardless of their gender or age, receives education in *Utopia*, those who are well-educated have an edge over those who are less educated. Jobs like the position of the ambassador, the priest, or even the prince himself are chosen from the more knowledgeable and learned section of the society. Even rules that dictates

“no man may live idle, but that every one may follow his trade diligently,” makes an exception for those who are more knowledgeable (More 75). They are exempted from their labor so that they can focus fully on their study. Like this, education has created two different social hierarchies based on “a hierarchy of knowledge or ability” in the Utopian society which comprises the common, less educated utopians and the privileged, highly educated utopians (Foucault 147). Here too, the effect of knowledge is seen as those who are more knowledgeable are chosen to hold the position of power, because they can make the most suitable choice for the Utopian society in case of an emergency, which is highly unlikely in case of an ignorant illiterate person. So, those who hold the knowledge also hold the power. This is why social stratification which is the result of education is another way that power is employed in *Utopia*.

Utopian lifestyle is one last factor from which power in Utopia can be easily perceived. This is because all Utopians follow a simple lifestyle, so monotonous that it may seem unbearable to others. Throughout the islands, Utopians all wear the same bland clothes without any variance or decoration. They all eat the same food. They are mostly involved with simple careers like agriculture, masonry, sewing, smithing or carpentry. They live simple lives without luxury. People living such a monotonous life seem almost impossible, but Utopians enjoy living life like this. They are thriving on it. Utopian children from their young childhood are taught to live in the same way. They are kept under heavy surveillance by the elders and parents so that they do not learn anything crooked or beyond their simple lifestyle. In John M. Parrish’s words, Utopian children grow up in “an immersive, even invasive educational environment” (599). This educational environment is the root reason why Utopians are not questioning why they are living life like this. It is like there is an invisible power present in Utopia, which with the help of teaching is manipulating and sculpting people's minds in such a way that they follow the social

norms and do not question it in any way. This invisible power is the government. It is the institution that, with the help of education, is manipulating the Utopian society, keeping it stable and maintaining its prosperity. Thus people are also supporting the government. So, this manipulation by the government is another way that power is exercised in *Utopia*.

From all of these, it becomes crystal clear that no matter how much Utopia pretends to be an equal society, it is not really one. An inherent power struggle is present in it. This is proved by the fact that various different forms of power like colonialism, war, patriarchy, social stratification, penal system, utopian lifestyle etc. are innately inherent in Utopia. So, power is one way or another always exercised in Utopia and this power which is the result of knowledge has penetrated deep into Utopian society. It has given birth to different social status and classes. As a result, some people are powerful, while others are powerless. Ultimately, power in Utopia, which is tasked with the duty to protect the utopian society and its vision has in of itself destroyed the utopian vision of More's *Utopia*.

Chapter 4: Power in *Gulliver's Travels*

Gulliver's Travels by Jonathon Swift, just like Thomas More's *Utopia*, is another primary source for this research paper. This book was chosen because Swift, the author of *Gulliver's Travels*, might have been greatly influenced by Thomas More, the author of *Utopia*. This can be seen from the fact that in his novel *Gulliver's Travels*, in the part "A Letter from Capt. Gulliver, to his Cousin Sympson," Swift mentions it himself that some people are "so bold as to think my book of travels a mere fiction out of mine own brain, and have gone so far as to drop hints, that the Houyhnhnms and Yahoos have no more existence than the inhabitants of Utopia." This indicates that Swift was clearly aware of Thomas More's *Utopia* as he had most likely read it and was influenced by it. As a result, both books share many similarities with one another, for example, "tall tales of marvellous voyages, newly discovered peoples, and fantastic societies" (Houston 425). This becomes especially accurate since the book 4 of *Gulliver's Travels* or Gulliver's journey in the land of Houyhnhnms bears the most striking resemblance or similarity with More's *Utopia* as it features both Yahoos and Houyhnhnms, two fictional races of people just like the Utopians of *Utopia*. So, *Gulliver's Travels*, particularly the fourth part of Gulliver's journey in the land of the Houyhnhnms which is compared to an actual utopia by Gulliver, is chosen as another primary source to conduct this research on. Consequently, just like More's *Utopia*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* also shows similar influence of power and knowledge. This means, just like various forms of power noticed in the Utopia of *Utopia*, there are also various forms of power exercised in the utopia or Houyhnhnm-land of *Gulliver's Travels*. But these powers are ultimately the result of knowledge, meaning only those who own the knowledge, own

the power. It can be proven by the various different ways and forms of power like social stratification, slavery, situation reverse, pet keeping, that are present in *Gulliver's Travels*.

Just like in *Utopia*, social stratification is one of the elements present in *Gulliver's Travels* through which power exertion in the land of Houyhnhnms could be easily perceived. Although Gulliver's master Gray finds many faults with the Human or "Yahoo" society on the shore of England, his own Houyhnhnm society is not at all perfect in this regard. It is also filled with various vices like social stratification. This can be seen from the several hierarchies present in the Houyhnhnm society. For example, Houyhnhnms like Gulliver's master Grey who are bay, dapple-grey, or black, stand at the apex of this social hierarchy. Then came the Houyhnhnms like the sorrel nag that served Gulliver's master Grey. These white, the sorrel, or the iron-grey Houyhnhnms were not "born with equal talents of mind, or a capacity to improve them; and therefore continued always in the condition of servants" (Swift 244). Finally the class consisted of Asses, Cows and Yahoos who are treated even less than the servants, more like slaves, domestic animals. They are used for the most labor intensive jobs like carrying the carriage or ploughing the field. Like this, Houyhnhnm society is divided into several different social hierarchies. Now the reason why social hierarchies like these exist in the society of Houyhnhnms is only because of the existence of differences in capacity for rationality, education, and knowledge. Some Houyhnhnms like Gulliver's master Grey possess much more sophisticated knowledge and rationality than others, so they stand above the other Houyhnhnms. While other Houyhnhnms like sorrel nag who possess less in this capacity, continue to serve as servants. Asses, Cows, Yahoos, on the other hand, have no capacity for rationality at all, or may have rationality just equal to that of an animal. So, they are treated just like how domesticated animals or slaves are treated. Hence, it can be seen that someone's social status or hierarchy depends

totally on one's own capacity for knowledge, rationality just like Michel Foucault dictates it to be in his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (147). This is how and why social stratification is one of the elements through which power is exercised in the book 4 of *Gulliver's Travels*.

Slavery or domestication is another form of power through which power in the land of Houyhnhnms can be viewed. Asses, Cows, Yahoos are the prime victims of this process. Asses, for example, should be a close relative of the Houyhnhnms. But as they lack cognition or intelligence to make up a rational race, Houyhnhnms do not view Asses as one. Contrary to that, they view the Asses as just another “comely animal, easily kept, more tame and orderly, without any offensive smell, strong enough for labour, although they yield to the other in agility of body, and if their braying be no agreeable sound, it is far preferable to the horrible howlings of the Yahoos” (Swift 260). This indicates that Houyhnhnms see Asses as a more suitable target of domestication than the Yahoos, so they are thinking of replacing the Yahoos with the Asses. Just like this, Cows and Yahoos are also treated as domesticated animals by Houyhnhnms, especially the Yahoos who were formerly used as slaves. But as the Houyhnhnms have grown tired or weary of them, they plan to replace them with more docile Asses. Now the reason why Houyhnhnms who are seen as noble, virtuous and wise, are able to do something as extreme as choosing a whole race for domestication or discard it when they feel like it is because they are rational and knowledgeable. According to Michel Foucault, power is just another form of knowledge, meaning only those who are rational, are able to acquire knowledge, so they hold power in their hands. As Houyhnhnms are a rational race, they are able to seek and acquire knowledge, thus they hold more power in their hands than any other races in the Houyhnhnm land. In Kevin Barry’s words, Houyhnhnms hold “sovereignty in an absolute form” (37). So,

they are able to domesticate or enslave all other races like Asses, Cows, Yahoos, who are powerless to resist which originates from their irrationality. So, this is another way that power is exercised throughout the civilized society of Houyhnhnmland of *Gulliver's Travels*.

Reverse phenomena or situation reverse is another simple but very effective way to observe the actual mystery behind the power exertion in book 4 of *Gulliver's Travels*. In Houyhnhnmland, for example, Houyhnhnms are the most dominant species. So, they rule and dominate over all other species including the Yahoos or humans. But in one of his conversations with Gulliver, Grey came to know that things were not going exactly the same for Houyhnhnms in other parts of the world. For instance, in Gulliver's own homeland England, Houyhnhnms are known as horses and they in fact,

were employed in travelling, racing, or drawing chariots, they were treated with much kindness and care, till they fell into diseases, or became foundered in the feet; but then they were sold, and used to all kind of drudgery till they died; after which their skins were stripped and sold for what they were worth, and their bodies left to be devoured by dogs and birds of prey. (Swift 229)

So, their situation has completely turned upside down and the Houyhnhnms, who were once the dominating party, have now become the oppressed and dominated party. The cause for this is that “they had not the least tincture of reason any more than the Yahoos” in Houyhnhnmland (Swift 229). As a result, the mindless Houyhnhnms are being dominated in England by those more rational and knowledgeable than them, meaning Yahoos that he so looked down upon. While being shocked by this fact at first, Gray soon came to terms with it as he understood that “Reason will in time always prevail against brutal strength” (Swift 230). Thus, the real mystery behind power is that it is the result of rationality, cognition or knowledge, which is why Michael

Foucault states that “power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge” (27). So, the only reason why the Houyhnhnms in Houyhnhnmland are able to stay in power and are able to control the Yahoos, even though the Yahoos are more numerous and fast breeding than them is because of their rationality or their superiority in knowledge, which gives them a huge edge. Otherwise, they would have lost control of the situation and become powerless in the face of the fast growing Yahoo population. This is why reverse phenomena is another one of the ways through which the readers can get an idea of why and how power is being exercised by Houyhnhnms in *Gulliver's Travels*.

Pet keeping or Gulliver's treatment as a pet is another unique situation through which power in Houyhnhnmland could be perceived. When Gulliver was stranded in Houyhnhnmland first and attacked by the Yahoos, Grey came to his rescue. It was also he who gave Gulliver shelter when he had nowhere to go. But this came at a price. Grey took him in and treated him as a pet. This is since Grey and his fellow Houyhnhnms always saw Gulliver as just another Yahoo, although different from the rest of his kind, but ultimately he was the same yahoo. Beside this, as Gulliver showed signs of wisdom and rationality in his conduct, out of curiosity Grey may have taken him in and tried to experiment with him. For example, he tried to teach him the Houyhnhnm language. To meet Gray's expectation and to get out of his unfavorable situation, Gulliver decided that his "principal endeavour was to learn the language" as soon as possible (Swift 222). So, in just five months, Gulliver mastered the language relatively well and began to communicate with his master Grey. Both of them exchanged all kinds of knowledge with each other. Although it seems that this exchange had a greater impact on Gulliver than it had on Grey, so much so that Gulliver had to affirm “his keeper’s physical and intellectual sway over him”

(Kelly 325). Also since their exchange, he began to hate his kind or the Yahoos more and more even to the extent that imagining about his wife made him feel revolted. The knowledge of the Houyhnhnms had such a severe impact on Gulliver's mind. Moreover, this was not the end of Gulliver's endeavor. When the council of the whole nation came to know about Gulliver's existence and his intelligence, they began to see him as a threat. So, they exhorted Grey to banish Gulliver and send him back to his country. This dealt the final blow to Gulliver who was almost impaired by the knowledge of the Houyhnhnms. Now the reason why they were able to deal such severe blows to Gulliver, is because of their power, which comes from their rationality and knowledge. This is why pet keeping or Gulliver's treatment as a pet is one more point through which power in book 4 of *Gulliver's Travels* can be seen.

So, it can be seen that just like Utopia of Thomas More's *Utopia*, Houyhnhnm-land of *Gulliver's Travels*, is not really a utopia as no matter how much Houyhnhnm-land pretends to be a superior and civilized society, it is not really one. An inherent power structure is palpable here too. This fact can be backed up by the various different types and mediums of power described above. So, Houyhnhnm-land is not a utopian society just as Gulliver imagined it to be. On the contrary, it is actually totally dystopian as only the logic and rationality works here. So, Houyhnhnms who are not really “mingled, obscured, or discolored by passion and interest” are the dominant power in Houyhnhnm-land (Swift 255). But this rationality comes at a serious price since its presence has huge adverse effects on the utopian vision of Houyhnhnm-land. A good example of this would be that Houyhnhnms are governed by their rationality so much so that they are unable to fight back against reason. Just like Gray who had to send Gulliver back to his country against his personal feelings and better judgment just for maintaining the public interest.

Like this, Houyhnhnms are chained by their reason and rationality. So, they have no futuristic or utopic vision to look forward to, since nothing but darkness awaits them.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Utopia is a society that is supposed to have no war, no hunger, no poverty, no inequality or any kind of insufficiency at all, meaning it is a society that is perfect in every aspect and sense of the word. One of these aspects is to keep up a perfect law and order, which is fundamental to maintaining the peace and prosperity of such a society. As only with the existence of perfect rules and regulations, can such a society come into existence. But this immediately creates inequality and sequel, as to maintain such law and order, a governing body is needed which oversees if those laws and orders are effectively followed. So, it is curious to know how a perfect society like utopia maintains its stability and uses such power. Unfortunately for us, this still remains a big mystery as very little research has been conducted on this topic. Thus the goal of this paper was to study how power is actually exercised in utopian societies of some of the famous utopian novels like More's *Utopia* and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and how the usage of this power even affects the outcome of the utopian vision in those texts. To accomplish this task, this researcher had to use Michel Foucault's theory of power and delve deep into it to find out some answers. What he found out is truly surprising, that whether it is Houyhnhnmland or Utopia, even though it holds the title of 'utopia', is not actually one. Because even though on the surface, both of these societies are perfectly normal utopian societies, if properly dug and investigated deep inside, it still becomes clear that widespread power struggle, inequality, injustice, discrimination runs rampant in both of these two societies, which can be seen from the fact that slavery, social stratification, war etc. existing in these societies. Although most of these issues arise from reasons like the lack of knowledge and rationality, just like Foucault theorizes it to be, it still does not deny the fact that these problems actually exist in both societies. Thus

whether it is Utopia or Houyhnhnmland, are not really actually utopias and they are just well-made imitations of it. As for the utopian visions of the texts, nothing but a stagnant or bleak future awaits them as the issues they keep suppressing over with power, will one day come to bite them back in the future. So, no bright future is awaiting them, this is exactly what this researcher concluded upon towards the end of his research.

Now during conducting the research, this researcher faced several limitations. For example, there was a shortage of time. So, the researcher might not have been able to gather all the secondary sources and thus consider all the factors and draw a perfect conclusion. Also, the researcher was interested in how power is actually used in utopian societies and if he could, he wanted to discover if it could be reflected in the development of the society of his country into a society similar to utopia. Due to his inexperience and again as there was a shortage of time, the researcher failed to find anything significant on this topic. But this is a wonderful topic to conduct a study on. So, future researchers, if they are really interested, may try to investigate this topic like how power is actually exercised in various utopian societies and is it possible that we could really learn something from them, then use it to develop our society.

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