

'Dystopia is merely a Utopia from another perspective.'  
To what extent do you agree?

Utopia is the subjective ideal of perfection in society. In regards to human nature, the idea of utter suffering, and the concept of Dystopia, lies far more within our grasp than perfection. However, if an individual were to be ignorant enough so as to be oblivious to suffering, Utopia in the eyes of the few lies quite within reach. The statement that 'Dystopia is merely Utopia from another perspective' is true to an extent, but if the status of a Utopian society were on any level conflicted, then the initial view of Utopia would have to be discarded due to an inability to cater for the needs of everyone, as the definition has come to suggest. For this reason, Utopia cannot be achievable in any circumstance, unless a level of ignorance in the masses were so high as to deny imperfection in any form.

Throughout history, scholars have proposed concepts to achieve perfection; mostly to criticism and conflict from the section of society to whom the idea would inevitably invoke Change. As a widely accepted but, so far, unmanageable concept, Marx's 'Communist Manifesto' illustrates a world where the proletarians 'have a world to win'<sup>1</sup> by emancipating themselves from the oppression of capitalism and working towards a unified goal in the maintenance of a nation. As a set of laws for the establishment of Utopia, Marxism, in theory, is ideal; the law abolishes all private ownership, relinquishing this control into the hands of the state, who monopolies control of transport, communication, factories, agriculture and education; subsequently distributing the work out to all who are able at an equal rate of pay. At face value, Communism appears as Utopia in its most achievable form. For the proletariat, namely those in lower-socio economic groups, the idea appeals through its concept of comprehensive equality. However, the dominant flaw in Communism lies in the neglect to acknowledge fundamental human traits - such as narcissism, greed and competition. Historically, there has yet to be discovered a civilisation that demonstrates absolute equality. This is due to the fact that, fundamentally, man must exist in hierarchal conditions whereby one individual holds status above another. The prime example to use in terms of hierarchy and oppression is the embodied European 'White Man'. In Western Civilisation, the 'White Man' has denounced all those below him, be it through the Church, through the use of Industries, or the Monarchy, and Government. Typically, by traditional British standards, the hierarchy runs that the upper-class white male (The Bourgeoisie) sits above the middle and lower class white male who, for their gratification, sit above women of their same class, who, subsequently and for *their* gratification, then sit above children, minority ethnic groups, and the disabled - who form hierarchies within their own negated groups so there may be no genuine 'bottom'. In the society that Communism proposes, wherein all individuals are equal and, therefore, earn equally, the trait of narcissism cannot mystically absent itself. In some form or another, an individual whom feels dissatisfaction with the state of equilibrium would inevitably rise up and infiltrate the existing order. Take, as example, the politician. Politicians - bar the few - all express egocentric attributes over the desire to gain control of the public. In a Communist state that reifies its public for the purpose of maintaining the state, the prospect for politicians to corrupt themselves is all too tantalising. Take the fictional characters of Squealer and Napoleon, of Orwell's 'Animal Farm'. From the outset these characters display their overactive Ids as a matter of condition. The novel depicts a world in which the previous hierarchal system is overthrown and the system reset, only to return to the previous state with new oppressors - a nod to the real mechanics of Communist Russia. Now, the instance depicted where 'all animals are equal'<sup>2</sup>, truly, only exists in the novel for a brief instant. For Napoleon, the most prominent narcissist of the novel, the prospect of power is enough to corrupt the current system and allow him to utilise equality in order to create inequality where he spearheads the regime, demonstrating how 'absolute power corrupts absolutely'. The Orwellian contortion of 'Animal Farm's' slogan from 'all animals are equal' with the addition that 'some are more equal than others' marks how narcissism creates conditions whereby Communism cannot manifest itself correctly.

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<sup>1</sup> Marx & Engels - 'The Communist Manifesto' - 1848

<sup>2</sup> George Orwell - 'Animal Farm' - 1945

A country with its status as Utopian commonly debated is the relatively new 'Trumpian' America, where half of the inhabitants of the state believe it to be heading in the direction of a classic Orwellian Dystopia, and the other sees it *en route* to be coming the modern embodiment of a nationalist Utopia. The mere difference of opinion in regards to the status of Trump's America reveals to the removed onlooker that the country is neither, one way or the other, Dystopic or Utopian; due to differences in opinion and a lack of comprehensive satisfaction or distaste either way. Due to the vocality of those behind the Trump regime, to an uniformed and unquestioning observer, the goings on of America seem to sway towards the establishment of a 'Great Nation'<sup>3</sup>, to quote Trump's own words. Already, the Democrat leadership in America has seemed to adopt language traits that align itself with perfection. In the speech performed at the inauguration, the President's language choices largely held dubious meanings that adopted innuendo, hyperbole and ambiguity to insinuate positive progress that, with analysis, could just as similarly allude to negative or oppressive regression. To anybody, the inauguration speech is packed with cliché and sound bites that appeal to the nationalist populous; the historically prevalent 'American Dream' is partnered by the reification of the nation's military by praising the 'Great Veterans' and promising to 'Make America Great Again'<sup>4</sup>, alluding to a previous and, practically, fictional greatness. Away from the soundbites, Trump describes his success as a 'movement'. The use of 'movement' is key here in one's interpretation of the nation's Utopian or Dystopian status, the obvious allusion is to a movement away from liberal policies and towards the campaign's more controlling legislation, however, through the warped perspective of the nationalist voter, the 'movement' is towards a situation with an 'America, first' that neglects foreign policy, trivialises military action and propagates dominance against non-conformist beliefs.

Trump's Orwellian corruption of language has evidently swayed a portion of the populous in the opinion of Trump as a nationalist icon, leading the country towards a 'great' place with 'America First' - where ever and whatever that may be. However, this very use of language is present in many dystopian literary texts where an illusion of greatness is perpetuated by the bourgeoisie class and adopted by its proletariat. In Margaret Atwood's 'Handmaid's Tale', Gilead creates uninteresting or downright awful situations and defines them with innuendo into forming positive or accepting associations. The term 'Participation' and 'Prayvaganza'<sup>5</sup> to define an execution and mass prayer both work in this way; in particular, the conjunction of 'participate' and 'execution' in the creation of 'Participation' creates a sense of unity in those taking part, while demonstrating how one's presence at the event is enough to implicate within the act. 'Participation' is effective in the same way that 'Alternative Facts' are effective, as both lies and executions hold negative connotations. The rebrand by both Gilead and Trump's regime subsequently strips the terms of their original definitions in order to alienate inhabitants of the nation from the genuine meaning, disassociating the nation from negative acts.

Arthur Schopenhauer stated that: 'Many undoubtedly owe their good fortune to the circumstance that they possess a pleasing smile.' Undoubtedly, Trump owes his current position to this very attribute, a brain that can twist language to any one set of definitions, disregard truth as a luxury, and entertainment as an essential. The fact that Trump has managed to divide a nation's opinions one way in the direction that the state is either perfect or abhorrent is an achievement in itself, and demonstrates the very subjectivity of Utopia proposed in the statement. Despairingly, the quote ends with the addition: 'Yet these hearts would do better to beware and to learn from Hamlet's tables that one may smile, and smile, and be a villain'<sup>6</sup>. Through Trump's manipulation of the press, of language and of politics, he has managed to create, in many, the illusion that America is a 'good place', as the latin definition of Utopia implies. But due to an inability to extend this illusion into the hearts of the left-wing intelligentsia, one can observe that under modern educated circumstances, the illusion of a 'good place' is the closest to Utopia one can hope for, and as 'Hope is the confusion of the desire for a thing with its probability'<sup>7</sup>, it is left for me to assume that in

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<sup>3</sup> <http://edition.cnn.com/videos/politics/2016/11/08/donald-trump-entire-victory-speech-election-sot.cnn>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.donaldjtrump.com>

<sup>5</sup> Margaret Atwood - 'The Handmaid's Tale' - 1985

<sup>6</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer 'The Horror and Absurdities of Religion' - Penguin, Great Ideas 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer 'The Horror and Absurdities of Religion' - Penguin, Great Ideas 2009.

the pursuit of Utopia, 'ignorance is bliss'<sup>8</sup> and one must accept the presence of negativities with blind conviction if they hope to believe in Utopia. With this in mind, the illusion of dystopia must similarly be present, for if there exists so much as a single person who thrives in what the majority of a nation define as Dystopia, then the nation does not conform to its definition, and is instead, predominantly negative, than thoroughly awful. The conclusion one must make is that in either case, both Dystopia and Utopia are fictional concepts with subjective definitions that cannot be achieved to their full potential. This understood, Thomas Moores interpretation that 'Utopia' shall be defined as 'No Place' aligns itself more with the literal circumstances than the fictional - neither being achievable due to the spectrum along which 'perfection' lies.

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<sup>8</sup> Thomas Gray's poem, Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College (1742)

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