

# Living in a utopian vs. dystopian society

[Media](#), [Television](#)



As soon as there comes the topic about a society, people often tend to view the positive things about it rather than the negative. This is where Utopia and Dystopia makes an entrance, since the positive aspects of a society makes it a Utopian society while if its filled with more negative aspects it is viewed as a Dystopian society. Utopia is the impression of a perfect civilization where the splendours of society rule; such as equality, no existence of discrimination, a perfect legal system, law abiding citizens or a law free society due to being crime free and eco-friendly. In short Utopia is a theme that explores the significant extents of deceiving power and plan an impelling illusion of a ' perfect society. Wherein in our society only the rich people who can afford to live a luxurious life happens to experience the Utopian side of a society whilst the people who cannot afford are just seen as puppets to the ones who can. Thus, it can be said that inside every Utopia there lies a Dystopia striving to get out. One of the prime examples of this element is seen in the movie Snow piercer by Bong Hoo. Throughout this discussion paper, the movie Snow piercer and the utopian and dystopian situations in it are going to be discussed as well as many other known texts; such as, Harry Potter and the Philosopher's stone by J. K Rowling, Watchmen by Alan Moore and the Genesis are going to be compared to the utopian and dystopian similarities from the Snow piercer movie.

Snow Piercer is a Korean Bong Joon-Ho's science fiction film where the challenge is to reverse global warming by releasing an active gas into the atmosphere. As a result, to the gas the earth becomes an inhabitable block of ice. The last survivors are all gathered in a train that surrounds in a loop motion around the earth. The train becomes the new world for the humans

and whoever has ever tried to escape the train has brutally died and froze in the outside world of the train due to the extreme cold temperature. Is it shown in the film that within the train there were lying two totally distinct worlds, one is a utopian world which are in the first few wagons of the train also referred as the head by the character Mason who was portraying the character of the prime minister of the Snowpiercer. Those wagons were beautiful it had a luxurious lifestyle for the upper class, or ticket holders, these different wagons were consisted of a Shushi-bar, a salon, an aquarium, a wagon in which plants are grown, another where there is a huge swimming pool, another where water is recycled etc. Another was a dystopian world which was the very last wagon of the trains referred as the tail also by Mason. “ Would you wear a shoe on your head? Of course, you wouldn’t wear a shoe on your head; a shoe doesn’t belong on your head. A shoe belongs on your foot, a hat belongs on your head. I am a hat, you are a shoe. I belong on the head, you belong on the foot. Yes, so it is.” (Snowpiercer) Since Mason herself belongs from the upper class wagons she treats the people in the last wagon as her and Wilford’s slaves. Wilford is the “ other” in the movie who is viewed as the God because he built the Snowpiercer train and has been running the sacred engine for 17 years since the outburst. In this scenario he holds the power instead of the “ hero.” However, Curtis the “ hero” despite of not having any power in his hands due to being in the last wagon of the train, decides to change things around and does not want to accept their situation and thus arises the inevitable revolt. “ To fix the economy, the environment and our attitudes towards sex, gender and race we surely need a fresh start.” (Freedman, p. 78, 2016)

As mentioned earlier Wilford the “other” in the film is viewed as God who has built a train to save humanity from the epic ice-cold world. He watches everyone on the train from the sacred engine wagon and rules over the entire train. In the film there’s a scene when a man throws his shoe to one of Wilford’s special lady and ends up hurting her. Later, a couple of Wilford’s men come to the last wagon of the train and punishes the man by freezing his arm and cutting it off. This scene was very similar to the Genesis where God when he created the world, Adam and Eve, He mentioned; “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.” (Gen. 2. 16-17) Thus when Eve fails to abide by God’s rules, He punishes both Adam and Eve by removing them from the Garden of Eden and sent to the world to work for a living. Since God had power because He was the creator, He could do anything and everything. Similarly, in the film Snowpiercer, Wilford was portrayed as God by Prime Minister Mason because he created the train and saved humanity getting extinct from the world. This brings back the main argument of Utopia being more powerful due to the rich and people who can afford. Only because Wilford was the man who created the train and had enough to afford to be the ruler he made the life of the people in Dystopia miserable and did inhumane actions towards them.

Another sequence in the film Snowpiercer shows that the people in the last wagon of the train wore old dirty clothes, lived in bunkers with small spaces and all they got to eat was protein bars. On the other hand, people in the front wagons had delicious meals to devour on. Other than this in the film it

is also shown that children in the last wagon are used as extra engine parts to keep the engine running as the parts were breaking down slowly, however at the same time children that belonged to the rich families in the front wagons were being taught in a beautiful classroom with various kinds of activities around them suited for their age. This type of utopian and dystopian discrimination also existed in another text known as, Harry Potter and the Philosopher's stone by J. K Rowling. In Harry's story, Harry and Dudley were both children but there was a discrimination where Harry had to live in a Dystopian life, but at the same time Dudley got to experience a Utopian one. " Perhaps it had something to do with living in a dark cupboard, but Harry had always been small and skinny for his age. He looked even smaller and skinnier than he really was because all he had to wear were old clothes of Dudley's" (Rowling, p. 14) In Dudley's Utopian life he had the control over Harry as well as his parents because he knew he would get away with anything and everything he did. He demanded thirty-nine presents for his birthday and he got them, on the other hand Harry had to wear Dudley's old clothes and had to lived in a small spaced cupboard while Dudley had two whole bedrooms' one for himself and the other for his toys. Thus, the argument of dystopia always being a part of a utopian society lives on as well as the saying that only the rich and powerful gets to live a utopian life and rule.

Lastly, near the very end of the film when the ' hero' Curtis and the ' other' Wilford comes to a confrontation at the sacred engine wagon, Wilford exclaims, " Wilford has allowed the revolution to take place under his watchful eye so that once the lower class's strongest individuals are quashed

in the uprising, residents of the overpopulated ghetto can be more easily culled.” (Freedman, p. 78, 2016) This sequence of the Snowpiercer film is very similar to the iconic ending of the famous DC comic book Watchmen by Alan Moore. In Watchmen near the end to the story, Adrien Veidt aka Ozymandias reveals to Rorschach and Nite Owl II that, he was the one who did the murders and planned a whole Alien invasion in half of New York city to save the country from a bigger effect as big as WWII. “ To frighten governments into co-operation, I would convince them that earth faced imminent attack by beings from another world.” (Moore, p. 369) Ozymandias’s plan killed an enormous amount of people just so that he can himself get saved from a war and can save the country. Ozymandias being the smartest man in the world in this case was living in a Utopian society because he could afford the power and to rule over the people in the dystopian society who had no say over his plan and had to die by being in the streets of New York in the night of the attack. Similarly, in the film Snowpiercer Wilford planned the entire revolt under his watch that Curtis had thought was his plan. This plan of Wilford’s was to keep the train’s economy in balance and to avoid a bigger effect as big as the train being out of service or them having too many people on the Snowpiercer.