

Free Minds for a Free and Moral Society: A Critical Exposition on the Deceits of Utopian Régimes

RAJAN

Azim Premji University

Lord Acton's famous aphorism, "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" (Lazarski, 2012, p.11), carries profound humanistic implications. It serves as a warning to those who advocate for true freedom and those pursuing positive axiological aims in life. As we will discuss in this paper, many thinkers have shared and supported Acton's saying in diverse ways. Their existential agony is simple: reflecting on dreadful historical events leads us to question who most negatively impacts society when holding excessive power—often the so-called utopian regimes. While some argue that not all state structures are corrupt, this paper challenges the foundational proposition of a perfect state. It questions the optimism in utopian states, exploring strategies like cultural relativism, deceitful propaganda, and romantic fantasies. By examining historical events qualitatively, the paper encourages philosophical and moral reflection on the challenges to achieving the values essential for a healthy society. Precisely, the author aims to provoke thought on the ideal regime, considering historical flaws and the need to overcome challenges in pursuing humanistic values.

Keywords: Freedom, Régimes, Culture, Utopias, Ideology, Anarchism

...Enlightenment implies employing one's reason, which is nothing more than always asking oneself, about everything one is supposed to accept, whether one finds it possible to make the ground on which one accepts it or the rule that follows from accepting it, into a universal principle for one's use of reason. Everyone can apply for this test for himself, and he will see superstition, false narratives, and enthusiasm immediately disappear with this examination. (**Immanuel Kant, what is Enlightenment? ,1784**) (Fleischacker, 2013, p.23).

Thinkers such as Lord Acton, George Orwell, Susan Rose-Ackerman, James C. Scott, and numerous others, whose perspectives will be further elucidated in this composition, have articulated, and implied the viewpoint that "the state has historically been the most potent institution for enabling corruption (Scott, 2020)." They argue that corruption thrives within the state due to its inherent nature of concentrated power structure and resources in the hands of a few (Mookherjee & Bardhan, 2006). This concentration of power creates an environment where individuals within the state apparatus exploit their positions for personal gain. The state's ability to regulate and control various aspects of society, including laws, policies, finances, resources, and decision-making processes, provides many

opportunities for corruption and sadism to flourish (Shaw,2019). Furthermore, the state's control over resources and distribution channels creates avenues for rent-seeking behaviour and favouritism, further contributing to corruption. By concentrating power, the state can create a system in which accountability and transparency are diminished. The absence of oversight facilitates unchecked corruption, enabling individuals in influential positions to manipulate regulations, and partake in bribery, theft, and other illicit activities to further their interests, often under the guise of a utopian regime, rather than serving the public good. In the words of Karl Popper:

The Utopian attempt to complete an ideal state, using a blueprint of society as a whole, demands a strong concentrated rule of a few, which is therefore likely to lead to a dictatorship (Katz et.al, 1972, p.267).

With such Popperian prospects, it can easily be implied that the politically elite but unsympathetic individuals within the state can leverage their positions for personal gain, disregarding justice, and equity in the process. Their behaviour may be driven by sadistic or hedonistic motivations, as our understanding of human decision-making processes is limited. The thoughts cited above somehow connote this thing and argue that corruption is not a mere aberration within the state, but rather a consequence of its structure and concentration of power while neglecting the abstract human value. To address the state's corruption and sadism effectively, they suggest the need for robust institutional checks and balances, transparency, and accountability mechanisms to counteract the humiliating tendencies inherent in the state. Philosophical thinkers who have such a normative stance contend that the state, due to its concentration of power and resources, has historically been susceptible or conditioned to corruption and heartlessness. This perspective aligns with the concept of philosophical anarchism, asserting that nothing possesses inherent justification in and of itself (Chomsky, 2014). One of the key justifications for such kind of conviction and scepticism is that once a government is allowed to employ force for purposes beyond safeguarding basic liberties, it sets in motion a cascade of harmful consequences.

The real danger begins when anybody of persons, central or local, are equipped with powers... that exceed those of the individual. Then we prepare for ourselves a formidable source of oppression, from which, as time goes on, it becomes more and more difficult to escape (Herbert,1885, p.40).

Moreover, thinkers who posit such critique argue that those in positions of authority root the notion that the state can be a corrupted agency in a critical examination of its historical development, genesis, underneath motivations, patterns, and the exercise of power. Throughout history, numerous states have exhibited patterns of corruption and abuse of power. This can be seen in different forms, such as authoritarian regimes, dictatorships, or even democratic systems plagued by majoritarianism and corruption (Kenez,1985). The historical record demonstrates how individuals and groups in positions of political power have used their authority for personal gain, suppressing dissent, manipulating resources, and disregarding the well-being and rights of their inhabitants (Brandenberger, 2012). The history of state corruption is intertwined with the quest for power and control. Across different empires and periods, rulers and governments have succumbed to the temptations of wealth, influence, and unchecked authority. This has led to the concentration of power in the hands of a few, resulting in the subjugation and exploitation of the

masses (Kollman, 2013). What is troublesome is that sometimes atrocities and humiliation are not traced for even a century, and sometimes they even multiply, making the case even worse. In the famous words of Voltaire: “Those who can make you believe absurdities; can make you commit atrocities (Cronk, 2017, p.36).” Or as Jonathan Glover conveys: “Atrocities are easier to commit if respect for the victim can be defused. For this reason, humiliation handed out by those with power can be ominous. The link between humiliation and atrocity is often found (Glover, 2012, p.93).”

Of equal importance, as indicated, state corruption often involves various forms of unethical behaviour, including bribery, propaganda, larceny, nepotism, cronyism, and the manipulation of laws and institutions to serve personal interests (Jowett & O’Donnell, 2014; O’Shaughnessy, 2004). As H.L Mencken put it: “The urge to save humanity is almost always only a false face for the urge to rule it (Mencken, 2013, p.369).” Albert Camus likewise observed: “The welfare of the people, in particular, has always been the alibi of tyrants (Szasz, 2017, p.75).” The actions motivated by such conventions disregard transparency, accountability, and the fundamental principles of good governance, often exploiting aspects like religion, culture, and ideology to justify their objectives. They erode public trust in the state and hinder social and economic progress. It is important to acknowledge that corruption is not solely limited to the state itself but can also be present in other societal institutions (Kollman, 2013). However, the state, as an entity entrusted with governance and the welfare of its people, has a significant impact on the lives of individuals and communities. When the state becomes corrupt, it can lead to systemic injustice, unequal distribution of resources, and the erosion of true democratic principles. Addressing state corruption necessitates bolstering legal and institutional frameworks, promoting transparency, fostering philosophical integrity, and empowering civil society and the media for accountability.

Thus, in the complex and dynamic landscape of today’s world, it is crucial to foster independent thinking within a society dedicated to individual freedom and moral integrity. This composition explores the theme of deceptive utopian regimes, aiming to expose their inherent flaws through a critical examination of historical and philosophical dimensions (Ingram, 2017). The goal is to elucidate their potential threats to personal autonomy and societal well-being. Historically, utopian visions have enticed the human imagination, promising an idyllic state free from all socio-economic troubles. However, our analysis uncovers hidden perils and fundamental contradictions behind these promises. A rigorous examination of historical context, ideological underpinnings, and practical implications reveals how utopian movements can erode individual freedoms and compromise moral principles. This critical exploration advocates for a culture that nurtures critical thinking and moral consciousness. Equipping individuals with tools to question and analyse utopian visions empowers them to discern inherent flaws and potential dangers. The objective is to convey that through the exercise of free minds, we can safeguard against the allure of utopian promises and prevent the descent into dystopian realities. Following this, the upcoming sections aim to strengthen the foundation of genuine freedom and ethical progress, fostering a culture that encourages critical thinking and independent minds.

The relationship between culture and politics has been undeniably intertwined, as the cultural backdrop in which it emerges directly influences the type of state we

build (Kusch, 2019). Culture, comprising elements such as religion, myths, philosophy, and globalised impacts, serves as a synthesis of multiple dynamics that shape societal norms and values. Consequently, the culture of a society, both internally and externally, plays a significant role in determining the nature of its political system (Jan-Erik & Ersson, 2020). However, a critical challenge arises when cultures assert their perfection and individuals, particularly political demagogues, claim to possess a complete understanding of a particular culture. This creates a dangerous situation, especially if these individuals are elected or form a government. In such instances, catastrophe becomes a looming possibility (Zechenter, 1997). Even within democratic states, cultural values often take precedence over constitutional principles, leading to majoritarianism and the banishment of minority rights. However, culture is not an excuse for oppression or a shield against criticism. While acknowledging and respecting cultural diversity is important, we must also acknowledge that cultural relativism, taken to an extreme, can become a dangerous tool that undermines the principles of justice, equality, and human rights. When cultural relativism is used to justify practices that violate fundamental human rights, it becomes a corrosive force within the state. By hiding behind the veil of cultural relativism, oppressive regimes, and powerful elites can evade accountability for their actions, eroding the foundations of a just and equitable society.

Throughout history, we have observed how invaders, dictators, and other similar figures have justified their actions by invoking their own culture and values (Marshall, 2012). This pattern serves to sermonise atrocities committed either in their judgment or in the eyes of the public. Political demagogues often resort to lying and ideological propaganda as primary tactics to conceal their frauds, mistakes, and hidden motives (Malcolm, 2007). These practices have become integral components of political demonstrations and the formation of specific types of states in modern times. The recognition of these dynamics underscores the importance of critically examining the influence of culture on politics. It highlights the need to move beyond cultural absolutism and embrace a more inclusive and nuanced approach that respects diverse perspectives and upholds universal values. By challenging the dominance of cultural claims and examining the motives behind political rhetoric, we can work towards creating a more just and inclusive society. The recurrence of these patterns across diverse political systems underscores the need for a critical examination of governance structures. It calls for a reevaluation of our approach to governance and the recognition that the mere adoption of a particular system does not guarantee the preservation of human dignity.

Adding to the central problem, the proliferation of false narratives in the process of state formation has become increasingly prevalent, particularly with the advent of technology and media. It is concerning that many individuals have now become interested in and actively engaged in such practices, treating them as mere games where winners and losers are determined. In this pursuit, they often lose sight of the fundamental purpose of state formation and socio-political leadership. Instead, the discourse devolves into a shallow competition of who is winning and who is not. The real problem arises when unjustified regimes are established based on such superficial considerations. Political lies and deceit reach extreme levels, leading to dire consequences such as subjugation and enslavement of the masses. This distortion of truth and manipulation of public perception can have far-reaching and sinister effects on society. To ensure the integrity and ethical functioning of states, it is crucial to

address these issues, but governments have hardly any interest in it. Thus, citizens must acknowledge the significance of truth and transparency in politics, and the media has a responsibility to uphold journalistic integrity and fact-checking practices. These imperatives highlight a dystopian critique of all forms of the state, as history demonstrates that states have consistently highlighted their interests rather than fostering inclusive well-being. As Nietzsche famously echoed about the State:

A state is called the coldest of all cold monsters. Coldly lieth it also; this lie crept from its mouth: "I, the state, am the people." It is a lie! Creators created people and hung faith and love over them: thus, they served life. Destroyers are they who lay snares for many and call it the State: they hang a sword and a hundred cravings over them. Where there are still people, the State is not understood but hated as the evil eye and as a sin against laws and customs (Nietzsche, 2017, p.27).

Following the Nietzschean prophecy, there has been a collective illusion throughout humanity's history, i.e., we intrinsically need a command, a leader, and a State to live a good and safe life (Rose, 2022). With this presupposition, we have seen great atrocities. Throughout history, we have witnessed various forms of governance, including democracy, communism, socialism, oligarchy, aristocracy, monarchy, theocracy, and colonialism. However, a common pattern emerges from these diverse systems: a lack of genuine concern for human dignity. Although the expressions and manifestations may differ, such as totalitarianism, authoritarianism, or majoritarianism, the experiences of individuals and collective consciousness have often been considered by similar hardships and disregard for fundamental human rights. Under different political ideologies and systems, the realities faced by individuals have consistently fallen short of upholding human dignity. Whether it is the suppression of dissent in totalitarian regimes, the concentration of power in the hands of a few in authoritarian regimes, or the disregard for minority rights in majoritarian systems, the result remains the same: a failure to arrange and protect the inherent worth and dignity of each individual. In short, all felt embittered by false promises and unbearable anguish. As Barry Goldwater put it:

Even though they seek to do what they regard as good, those who seek absolute power demand the right to enforce their version of heaven on earth. Furthermore, let me remind you, that they are the very ones who always create the most hellish tyrannies. Absolute power corrupts, and those seeking it must be suspected and opposed (Shermer, 2018, p.114).

Or, as *Zygmunt Bauman* put it:

All [totalitarian] visions of society-as-garden define parts of the social habitat as human weeds. Like all other weeds, they must be segregated, contained, prevented from spreading, removed, and kept outside society's boundaries; if all these means prove insufficient, they must be killed (Jacobsen, 2016, p.141).

Here, we can delve deeper into a critical question: Why does modern society have an inherent and urgent need for the formation and acquisition of state power? This question holds significant importance, as it unravels multiple narratives that shed light on the underlying motivations. Stereotypically, we think that since Nietzsche

foreshadowed God's death, we have become entirely self-reliant as we have all sorts of solutions to practical human problems. Nevertheless, what is less acknowledged is that he also conjectured that with the death of the monotheistic God, the psychological need for a powerful entity would not be eradicated. And how can we expect cultural or humanistic consciousness to evolve dramatically? In other words, modern society finds its consolation in the transcendental dreamland and promise of an afterlife, transformed into the need for State utopias. Additionally, these state utopias imagined paradise on Earth, which later became a catastrophe. Nietzsche referred to this as the "shadows of god", and he wrote: "God is dead; but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown (Nietzsche, 2017)." Still, the challenging thing is that the practices of so-called "ideal state" values significantly impact the individual and collective consciousness, i.e., it shapes the whole course of human destiny in a certain conditioned way. In the words of Waldemar Gurian wrote:

The authoritarian and fascist culture that arose after the First World War is much like fundamentalist religious movements as their aim is not only to change socio-political institutions but also to alter the whole structure and nature of man and society (Huntington, 2012, p.31).

Building on Nietzsche's ideas, it becomes evident that regardless of the specific political system employed, such as dictatorship, Marxism, socialism, or authoritarianism, they all embody a sense of God-like transcendence. These systems initially emerged as transcendent utopias, promising an ideal state of existence, but eventually transformed into earthly manifestations of power and success. Nietzsche himself referred to socialism as "latent Christianity," highlighting the underlying religious undertones. Expanding on Nietzsche's perspective, Carl Jung examined the correlation between the decline of religious beliefs in Europe and the subsequent rise of political radicalism. Jung observed that the state, in the absence of God, assumed a divine role and socialist dictatorships themselves became religions. He expressed this notion by stating, "The State takes the place of God...the socialist dictatorships are religions" (Jung, 2014, p.43). Jung's position suggests that proponents of utopian political theories sought to create a socially engineered new man, seeking redemption from past flaws and sins. The underlying concept is straightforward: the more discontented individuals are within themselves, the more chaotic their external environment becomes.

Moreover, political utopias promised their followers that by attaining sufficient power and control, the state would construct a perfect world, a heaven on earth. However, history has shown us the consequences that befell the entire Western world. In outline, Nietzsche's insights, coupled with Jung's analysis, shed light on the god-like nature inherent in various political systems. These systems, initially driven by transcendent utopian ideals, often deviate from their original visions, resembling earthly manifestations of power. Jung's observations underscore the idea that the state has replaced God in society, leading to the rise of political ideologies that resemble quasi-religious entities. The pursuit of political utopias, with their promises of a perfect world, can unwittingly lead to disillusionment and chaos (Ingram, 2017). A prime example is the Nazi ideology, which envisioned an Aryan utopia (Stratigakos, 2022), or the views of Karl Marx, who proclaimed that the establishment of communism would signify the "end of history". Marx viewed communism as a utopia that transcended time and space, analogous to religious eschatology such as the

arrival of the Messiah, the second coming of Christ, or nirvana. As Immanuel Wallenstein metaphorically put it:

Totalitarianism is not only hell but also the dream of paradise—the age-old dream of a world where everybody would live in harmony, united by a single common will and faith...If Totalitarianism did not exploit these archetypes, which are deep inside us all and rooted deep in all religions, it could never attract so many people...” (Milan Kundera, 2005, p.115).

Assisting the present study to the recent socio-political movements and ideas, one of the common threads that come out of the confluence of factors that are undermining the fabric of society mainly found its place in the very formation of states that are run by certain biased ideologies and offering liberty to them for some false lies. Most governments and institutions are corrupt to the core and later become pretty torturous. Moreover, one trend has also taken place in modern times: so-called democratic politicians are detached from people’s representativeness and view those who want freedom as their enemies. It is the condition of a democratic state; else, we may imagine the situation of other forms of government. Further, the crisis has also increased as the mass media transmuted toxic propaganda that supports the government, which is a great misfortune for all of us. In other words, the medium, which is considered the fourth pillar of a free society, as a replacement for the truth, becomes the puppet of state power and defames those who dissent just for some selfish gains. So, there is no doubt that the constructive role media may play in building an ideal state is rare to find, but the question arises, does it work in that way? Again, we will have to be negative about it. As The Commission of Freedom of the Press described in 1947:

Modern media itself is a new phenomenon. Its typical unit is the great agency of mass communication. Those agencies facilitate thought and discussion. They can stifle it. They can advance the progress of culture, or they can thwart it. They can debase and vulgarise humankind. They can endanger the peace of the world . . . They can play up or down the news and its significance, foster and feed emotions, create complacent fictions and blind spots, misuse great words, and uphold empty slogans (Levin, 2020, p.7).

Furthermore, the global economies have also been cadaverous by destructive government policies and rigorous overall control, making things worse. Few of us may argue that we have been seeing rampant money printing, and if we also find economic stability, then where is the problem? So, in this regard, we should try looking for long-term measures of the same. It is much more like a mirage in the desert that looks beautiful at first glance but soon gives way to a dreadful reality. In other words, we should look into the fabric of the differences between pure market and political entrepreneurship. The fundamental difference between the two lies in the fact that while the former aims to satisfy the consumer to obtain large amounts of wealth, the latter obtains its fortunes by using the power of the State. This is done in many ways, luring subsidization for bailouts, tax terror, etc. Overall, fundamental secrets to the megalomaniac positions lead to the idea that politicians first make us believe that our lives are largely miserable and require their political support or ruling, and then they produce their true nature, that is, to practice power over others. Approaching George Orwell’s words perfectly fit into this context:

...Now I will tell you the answer to my question. It is this. The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power, pure power. What pure power means you will understand presently. We are different from the oligarchies of the past in that we know what we are doing. All the others, even those who resembled us, were cowards and hypocrites. The German Nazis and the Russian Communists came very close to us in their methods, but they never dared to accept their motives. They pretended, perhaps they even believed, that they had seized power unwillingly and for a limited time, and that just around the corner absent lay a paradise where human beings would be free and equal. We are not like that. We know that no one ever captures power to relinquish it. Power is not a means; it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution to establish the dictatorship. The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power. Now you begin to understand me (Wrong, 2017, p.147).

With such critical expressions, what Orwell and other thinkers cited above suggest is that in the realm of modern politics, power dynamics play a significant role in shaping society. While we often critique politicians for their corruption and deceit, we still succumb to the influence of propaganda and ideological biases when electing them. This raises a challenge: although we may unintentionally make mistakes in forming or allowing a flawed state, we often lack the courage to challenge it. It appears that we have become accustomed to the enslavement imposed by the state itself. This can be observed in contemporary communist regimes like those in China and North Korea. The way they worship their political masters seems like they have no problem. As Rollo May put it:

Totalitarianism in religion and Science, let alone politics, has become conformity because they feel individually powerless and anxious. So, what is the solution ...except follow the mass political leader...or follow the authority of customs, public opinion, and social expectations? ... Our particular problem in the present day...is an overwhelming tendency toward conformity... In such times ethics tend more and more to be identified with obedience. One is "good" to the extent that one obeys the dictates of society... It is as though the more unquestioning obedience, the better...Nevertheless, what is ethical about obedience? If one's goal was simple obedience, one could train a dog to fulfil the requirements well (May 2009, p.77).

Strangely enough, no matter what form of government we try, ultimately, we cannot overlook the overall corrupting influence of state power on social and individual freedom. In contemporary times, it is essential to acknowledge that the substantial bureaucratic class, integral to the functioning of numerous governments, undergoes replacement not through electoral processes but through examinations that may be categorised by impractical standards, biases, or predetermined criteria. The selection process often involves candidates parroting subjects or conforming to specific conditions, introducing complexities and potential challenges to the meritocracy of bureaucratic appointments (Dwivedi,1967). Moreover, in a general sense, individuals within bureaucratic structures may either become instruments manipulated by politicians or integral components of the same political machinery.

In succinct terms, bureaucratic roles do not inherently ensure the cultivation of virtuous character traits. Consequently, it is not solely the actions of politicians that contribute to the complexity of the situation; rather, the interconnected network amplifies the overarching corrupting phenomenon. Here, again the question related to human nature and its relationship with political power could also be studied to understand the philosophy of ruling, state torture, and overall human nodding, which we shall discuss in the upcoming section.

Building upon the meticulous examination of the philosophy and critical analysis of power dynamics within utopian regimes in the preceding segment, this section further endeavours to expound upon the critique of diverse forms of utopian governance and their tactics. In the contemporary era, Lord Acton, alongside certain luminaries associated with modernism and Enlightenment thought, emerges as one of the inaugural literary figures to manifest a discerning stance vis-à-vis various governmental structures. His critical disposition extends beyond the contours of the State, encompassing entities depicted by pseudo-democratic, socialist, or authoritarian attributes (Lazarski, 2012). Acton's aphorism has outlasted his other contributions because it captures a philosophical and scientific insight that rings true to the recent rise of political power and tortuousness (Lazarski, 2023). The notion that power corrupts may seem intuitive, but it requires evidence and arguments for widespread acceptance. Fortunately, periods like the Enlightenment and modern times have fostered questioning, leading to the exposure of collective illusions. For example, while it was long believed that state control was essential for a welfare state, individuals have increasingly identified the importance of integrity beyond cultural and socio-political influences. The entire concept of feminism, anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, and other identity-based ethical movements is a positive outcome of this virtuous tendency. However, as we know, these changes have not been easy to achieve; there have been numerous challenges, both internal and external. The challenges posed by the states were of greatest threat. As Leinart put it:

Life in the system is so thoroughly permeated with hypocrisy and lies...Because the regime is captive to its lies, it must falsify everything. It falsifies the past. It falsifies the present, and it falsifies the future. It falsifies statistics. (Leinarte, 2015, p.98).

Interestingly, despite the experiential aspect of the above words, throughout history, there has been a prevailing belief in the necessity of governance and rule for social order and prosperity. Esteemed Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle asserted the indispensability of political authority. Aristotle famously stated, "there are some who are born to rule and others to be ruled (Aristotle, 2013)." Similarly, social contract theorists like Hobbes and Locke pointed out the need for a mandatory system to ensure social security and peace. Plato and Hobbes used metaphors such as the ship and the leviathan to describe their ideal states, but these metaphors represented closed systems that even their creators could not fully comprehend (Kukathas, 2003). This encapsulates the essence of dystopian states (Popper, 2012).¹ Despite this history, we are left wondering if there are alternative

¹For more better understanding of the closed and dystopian systems such as of Plato, Thomas Hobbes, and Karl Marx, see- Popper, K. (2012). *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis.

approaches. Until now, we have not found any alternative for that or struggle for the same. Now the question is what else we may do. One potential solution, as highlighted in the introduction from a normative perspective, lies in the power of critical thinking and analysis. But what is it? A model is reflected in the following words of George Orwell:

And if all others accepted the lie which the Party imposed—if all records told the same tale—then the lie passed into history and became truth. ‘Who controls the past’ ran the Party slogan, ‘controls the future: who controls the present controls the past (Cooper, 2007, p.285).

This imperative suggests that we will have to be critical enough to understand how the things considered good may be beholding the violence and aggression. Likewise, as the title of the research suggests, free individuals with free minds should get the top priority in forming an ideal state. However, the question is, does the modern idea of the State embrace such virtues? Few social scientists have studied the corrupting effects of power in recent developments in political theories. Pioneering sociologist Robert Michels studied the tendency of political parties to become less democratic (Michels, 2018). Even in the most revolutionary parties, the leaders have gained greater power and become entrenched in their positions. The party structure becomes an end, more important than the party’s original aim. Michels presumed that every corporation is affected by these tendencies. Pitirim Sorokin and Walter Lunden examined the behaviour of influential leaders, such as the kings of England (Sorokin & Lunden, 1959). They found that those with the most extraordinary powers were far more likely to commit crimes, such as theft and murder, than ordinary society. This is a striking study that shows how power tends to corrupt the state and power.

Nevertheless, why is power corrupt? ...For a person to be autonomous is widely considered a good thing. It is a feature of being fully human. When a person exercises power over others, the power holder gains the impression that the others do not control their behaviour or, in other words, they are not autonomous. Hence, they are seen as less worthy. In short, a person who successfully exercises power over others is more likely to believe that these others are less deserving of respect. This becomes a good prospect to be exploited (Kipnis, 2012, p.94).

In the same way, it is a fact that Governance is by default essential even in the most democratic of organisations because direct self-government of large groups is impossible. Moreover, the psychology and values of the masses make leadership inevitable. However, there is a pattern that conveys that when we have leadership, oligarchy begins, and democracy splits into the leaders and the leaders. In addition, this binary is the beginning point of corrupted power and regime atrocities. As Pitirim Sorokin mentions, one of the reasons for the widespread corruption phenomenon:

Leaders are autocratic because of their long tenure, detachment from the masses, control of the party’s financial resources, influence through the press, and prestige as public officeholders. Their authoritarian spirit is augmented by their psychological reaction to the exercise of power. The embourgeoisement of working-class parties further fortifies the tendency toward oligarchy. Attempts to restrain this tendency have failed. We must conclude, “The majority of human beings, in a condition of eternal tutelage,

are predestined by tragic necessity to submit to the dominion of a small minority and must be content to constitute the pedestal of an oligarchy (Michels, 1915, p.390).

Of equal status, it is also an element that we all are aware of the fundamental defects of all forms of government, but still, we get ready to sacrifice our most intrinsic virtues, such as freedom, peace, and fraternity, either for the sake of selfish gains or for mere communal envy that the politicians itself frequently create and promote. Take, for instance, despite experiencing that tyranny represents monarchy that functions in the interest of the sovereign only; oligarchy too is not perfect as it works in the interest of the wealthy; similarly, when democracy may turn into majoritarianism (Lijphart, 1984), we may not be able to prevent it. Of course, we may have a brighter picture, but we have witnessed the darkest periods more often. So, what do we want? What may be considered the ideal form of government? Ideally speaking, one option is a form of government in which the one, the few, or the many, govern with a view to the good of all. For those seeking a theoretical model for this, Aristotle provided a detailed answer to such questions in his masterpiece "*The Politics*," where he classified six main forms of government: "monarchy, aristocracy, polity, tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy" (Saunders, 1981).

According to Aristotle, monarchy, ruled by a single individual, can be virtuous if governed for the common good but becomes tyrannical if self-serving. Aristocracy, governed by a virtuous few, transforms into oligarchy when ruled in the elite's self-interest. Polity, a mixed government with power shared among social classes, degenerates into democracy if the middle class pursues its interests, potentially leading to mob rule. Tyranny and oligarchy represent the corrupted forms of monarchy and aristocracy, respectively, where rulers spotlight personal gain over the common good. Through these classifications, Aristotle offers insights into the dynamics and potential pitfalls of different systems of governance. These are ideal versions detailing every aspect of good governance, but have we ever had such a state in the history of humanity? Most probably, we will have to be pessimistic, as references suggest that primarily governments and their rulers have worked for private interests only. In other words, they may have promised something lofty, but ultimately, we are forced to see the perversions only. In the famous words of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon :

...To be Governed is to be watched, inspected, spied upon, directed, law-driven, numbered, regulated, enrolled, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, checked, estimated, valued, censured, and commanded, by creatures who have neither the right nor the wisdom nor the virtue to do so. To be governed is to be at every operation, at every transaction noted, registered, counted, taxed, stamped, measured, numbered, assessed, licensed, empowered, admonished, prevented, forbidden, reformed, corrected, punished. It is, under the pretext of public utility, and in the name of the general interest, to be placed under contribution, drilled, fleeced, exploited, exploited, extorted from, infolded, hoaxed, robbed; then, at the slightest resistance, the first word of complaint, to be repressed, fined, vilified, harassed, hunted down, abused, clubbed, disarmed, bound, choked, imprisoned, judged, condemned, shot, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed; and to crown all, mocked, ridiculed, derided, outraged,

dishonoured. That is government; that is its justice; that is its morality (Hislope & Mughan, 2012, p.15).

Proudhon's words are not mere romantic prophecies, rather they are experiential. We may observe any form of modern regime, including the democratic one, and we will find that every form of state represents the extreme position only, i.e., they stand for majoritarianism or authoritarianism, i.e., rather than being truly democratic they are pseudo-democratic (Runciman, 2015; Brennan, 2017). In this regard, we may take motivation from Carl Jung and Hannah Ardent, who encountered that in contemporary civilisation, the idea of the state has taken the place of God as very few of us dare to challenge; they observed how the very entrance of power corrupts an individual; consequently, the dream of a utopian state (Dickson, 2023). As Carl Jung put it:

Where are the superior minds capable of reflection today? If they exist at all, nobody heeds them: / instead,/ there is a general running amok, a universal fatality against whose compelling sway the individual is powerless to defend himself. And yet this collective phenomenon is the individual's fault as well, for nations are made up of individuals./ Therefore,/ the individual must consider by what means he can counter evil (Tacey, 2012, p.78).

Before such critical empirical research, Jean-Jacques Rousseau also advised us to be free from conformity and collective illusions such as society and state as he considered these phenomena to be against human freedom and creativity. As he put it, "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in the chain (Rousseau, 2016, p.7)." This slogan conveys many connotations in the first place, particularly how the notion of human nature directly implies what sort of way of life and values we practice in our private and public lives. Rousseau, for instance, contrasted Locke and Hobbes and believed that humans are intrinsically good, and if we can help humans return to their pristine nature, there would be abundant welfare for others. It also implies what we mean by the free mind, which is to be good and virtuous. Perhaps he was one of the first prominent thinkers who promoted egalitarianism and proposed that all men were socially equal. Disparities, as per Rousseau, are the mere creation of collective illusion, which means that we do not want disparity, but by some force (state, society, etc.), we practice the same. Though Rousseau has been considered a strong proponent of modern democracy and the evolution of democratic thought, he had concrete ideas on the government's form. He endorsed direct democracy, in which freedom directly resembles the socio-moral responsibility to embrace the good of all (Cohen, 2010, p.10; Miller, 1984). Furthermore, he was also an egalitarian who solely stood for the freedom of all individuals. In other words, if Rousseau were to choose between free individuals and states, he would likely opt for the former. However, as discussed earlier, the formation of states is deemed inevitable in our complex modern society. The question then arises: how can we adapt ourselves within this narrative?

For such reasons, intense debates have permeated discussions on the trajectory of our society and civilisation over the centuries (Rajan, 2023). Alongside these debates, the future of governance and individual freedom has become a subject of great interest (Mahdavi, 2016). In this context, in addition to those, two noteworthy figures from the 20th century, namely, George Orwell and Aldous Huxley, delved

into the domain of dystopia. Their respective works search the intricate dynamics between the state, and society, and their repercussions on collective consciousness, creativity, and the autonomy of the individual (Postman, 2005). Both Orwell and Huxley concealed a profound scepticism regarding the attainment of an ideal state. Huxley, in particular, envisioned a futuristic society striving for a utopian community, where superficial happiness reigns but individuals are enslaved to technology and drugs. Huxley predicted that political leaders, the masters of this society, would exploit science and technology to manufacture masses of compliant slaves, conditioning them to conform and desire only what they were programmed to want. In this process, essential freedoms, such as independent thinking and deep emotional experiences, are stifled, ultimately suppressing creativity and philosophical exploration. This depiction captures the essence of a dystopian state, where initial promises of prosperity and well-being mask underlying chaos.

It suggests that the intentions of those in power may not have been pure from the start, or that the acquisition of power itself alters the course of leadership, leading to unforeseen consequences. By examining these dystopian visions, we are reminded of the importance of vigilance and critical analysis when it comes to governance and the exercise of power. It prompts us to question the motivations behind political leadership and the potential ramifications of unchecked authority. Furthermore, it encourages us to be wary of any state promising perfection, as the pursuit of an ideal society can inadvertently lead to the erosion of fundamental freedoms and a loss of individual autonomy. In essence, the insights of Orwell and Huxley serve as cautionary reminders, urging us to question the nature of power, inspect its effects on society, and remain steadfast in safeguarding the principles of freedom, creativity, and independent thought. Additionally, our biases and collective illusions extend beyond the public realm to the private sphere. For example, the hedonic tendencies of individuals, though seemingly personal, profoundly influence public life. Those who exploit this vulnerability can manipulate human psychology, evident in the flourishing drug and pornography industries. Such exploitation renders us susceptible to control by those in power. Modern political megalomaniacs exploit this, promising increased pleasure in all aspects of life. When we relinquish our inclination to resist, existential shadows loom large. As Arthur Schopenhauer exposes the personal life biases in *The World as Will and Representation*:

There is only one inborn error, and that is the notion that we exist to be happy.... So long as we persist in this inborn error and even become confirmed in it through optimistic dogmas, the world seems full of contradictions (Schopenhauer, 2012, p.634).

The existential dilemma is unequivocal; we find ourselves excessively fixated on the concept, or one might even say, the dogma of happiness, engaging in the mindless pursuit of pleasure in various forms (Russell, 2015). This inclination becomes a tool exploited by socio-political demagogues and even commercial entities for their gains. It is considered both the measure and the purpose of the good, but is this endless search for pleasure and happiness a holistic way of life? If we are unhappy and unsatisfied, which is a reality for most people most of the time, we will probably think about what is wrong with us. In addition, the political demagogues make us believe that there is something wrong with our lives that we need to correct via state formation or following the same. The propaganda of communal disparity that politicians create and promote is based on hedonic principles. They make the

whole of the communal violence much like a game in which one or more communities stand for a particular team. Aside from criticism, there are alarming consequences of instant gratification. Pleasure serves as a potent motivator in human nature, yet its attainment can leave us unfulfilled and craving more. While pleasure may seem like a worthy pursuit, philosophically, it raises significant questions. Anthropologists and psychologists have debunked the myth that finer things in life bring lasting satisfaction. True happiness lies in the ordinary things that can be creative as well, not in the collective illusions we create or live.

Here, the fundamental problem arises— is it better to be happy or free? Moreover, how can we forget the importance of freedom, which is the key to ethics, creativity, leadership, and other positive things? We need immediate attention to know that if an individual's freedom is affected, then nothing prosperous could be imagined (Rajan, 2023). Freedom is like the air we breathe in and out, but we are not aware of that as long as it is being prevented. Nevertheless, the moment we feel this crisis, everything is jumbled. In a similar tone, George Orwell speaks out in his book "1984", where he depicts how totalitarian governments and bureaucrats try to control every aspect of life just to enjoy power and profit. They even condition people to spend every moment of their private time not being aware of their crisis. Neil Postman, in his famous book "*Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*", digested two famous dystopian novels, 1984 by George Orwell and *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, in the following manner:

What Orwell feared were those who would ban books. Huxley feared that there would be no reason to ban a book, for no one wanted to read one...Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture...In 1984 people were controlled by inflicting pain. In *Brave New World*, they are controlled by inflicting pleasure. In short, Orwell feared that what we feared would ruin us. Huxley feared that what we desired would ruin us (Postman, 2005, p.47).

In other words, Totalitarianism might not be possible in the modern world because democracy has been accepted and practiced as a key value worldwide. However, it may change its form, and then Huxley's prediction sometimes seems fit to describe the modern world about how freedom dies and consequently leads to multiple crises, including the scarcity of free minds. The critical thing is that contemporary civilisation ethos is not an exception under the domination of Huxley's prediction about the modern world; it has a long tradition that we must repeatedly observe. Freedom is essential for everyone, including leaders, regarding choices and followers' way of life.

Followers are not mere 'sheep': they, in fact, often quite deliberately observe, weigh, test, choose, and, indeed, 'deselect' leaders — thus determining the fate of leaders as much as leaders determine theirs. From this perspective, leadership, like any other feature of social life, emerges as a symbolic, negotiated order (Hart, 2008, p.11).

The discussed notion of freedom here diverges from the typical understanding, encompassing not only social and political freedom but also a crucial aspect often overlooked: emotional and psychological freedom. In the modern

context, this form of freedom is notably absent and has become a target for political demagogues through communal instigation and illusory propaganda. Seeking guidance from the philosophies of Gandhi and Huxley can provide valuable motivation and reference in addressing this nuanced perspective (Gandhi, 1997; Huxley, 2008, p.125). They advocated for inclusive freedom, underlining the importance of psychological, emotional, and spiritual liberty for individual well-being, effective leadership, and societal prosperity. Failure to cultivate such virtues risks stagnation or regression, reminiscent of historical manipulative agendas. Furthermore, addressing contemporary crises necessitates a thorough examination of alternative philosophical perspectives. Specifically, exploring concepts like the federalisation of power and the formation of parallel societies is crucial (Faguét & Pöschl, 2015; Smith, 2023). Moreover, the nature and forms of an independent parallel society, which may offer alternative options to propagate utopian regimes, constitute a subject of philosophical contemplation and open-ended perpetual inquiry. Commencing this discourse with the words of Immanuel Kant on enlightenment—advocating the use of one’s reason—we embark on a comprehensive exploration. This open-ended approach not only initiates the discussion but also leaves room for subsequent research and scholarly investigation. To end the discourse with the words Ivan Jirous:

If it proves impossible legally to compel the ruling power to change the ways it governs us, and if for various reasons those who reject this power cannot or do not wish to overthrow it by force, then the creation of an independent or alternative or parallel [society] is the only dignified solution... the “independent society” does not compete for power. Its aim is not to replace the powers that be with the power of another kind, but rather under this power – or beside it – to create structures that respect other laws and in which the voice of the ruling power is heard only as an insignificant echo from a world that is planned in an entirely different way (“The Parallel Society vs Totalitarianism,” Academy of Ideas, 2022).

CONCLUSION

Through this critique, we observed that the concept of state utopias has historically permeated the perspectives of intellectuals, political demagogues, and diverse cultures. It is presented as an attainable and potentially comforting ideal—an idealistic societal blueprint or a theoretical pursuit laden with promises. This paper adopted a critical approach, posing the question: Is it conceivable for humanistic discourse to reimagine political utopias? Can the contemplation and apprehension of utopian ideals contribute to the regeneration of a robust society and the well-being of individuals? This paper conducts a comprehensive evaluation, drawing on insights from prominent thinkers, to reevaluate the influence of utopianism on society and individuals. While admitting dystopian characteristics in various utopian regimes, it argues against a blanket rejection of all forms of governance. Instead, it advocates for exploring alternative solutions. The key lies in fostering free minds, moral consciousness, and a commitment to the collective good, regardless of the form of government. Just as individuals highlight health check-ups, it is crucial to subject socio-political and religious systems to philosophical scrutiny to prevent the formation of harmful cults and atrocities. Thus, fostering a culture of critical thinking and non-cooperation is essential for identifying, correcting, or rejecting

deviations from socio-political norms.

In essence, our approach calls for an active and engaged community. By implication, it also creates scope for several case studies that may elucidate the nature of utopian regimes both in the past and the present. We have cited numerous past instances such as Soviet Russia, Hitler's regime, and others. Likewise, examples from the present could include the functioning of states in Russia, China, North Korea, Afghanistan, and others. These case studies allow for a detailed examination of how utopian regimes have been deceiving in both historical and contemporary contexts. For instance, the totalitarian control and propaganda machinery of Soviet Russia under Stalin or the cult of personality surrounding leaders like Kim Jong-un in North Korea provide insights into the deceptive nature of such regimes. Similarly, the authoritarian rule and human rights abuses in contemporary China and Afghanistan shed light on the challenges posed by utopian ideologies in governance. Through these collective efforts, we can work towards building a society that values free thinking, moral consciousness, and the greater good. By subjecting our governance systems to ongoing scrutiny, we can strive for a more just and equitable society that upholds the principles of individual freedom and collective well-being. This is the spirit that contemporary socio-political ethos needs. As Solzhenitsyn put it while challenging the socialist regime:

Public opinion! I don't know how sociologists define it, but it seems evident that it can only consist of interacting individual opinions, freely expressed and independent of government or party opinion. So long as there is no independent public opinion in our country, there is no guarantee that the extermination of millions and millions for no good reason will not happen again, that it will not begin any night – perhaps this very night. (Solzhenitsyn, 1974, p.92)

Essentially, historical warnings against power and corruption originate from ancient Greco-Roman and Indian cultures. We have endeavoured to contribute to these insights by formulating questions pertinent to the establishment of a free and moral society. Philosophers, scholars, and saints accentuated that power devoid of virtue is akin to navigating the sea without a compass. In ancient India, governance was centred around the concept of Dharma for optimal rulership and state administration (Hiltebeitel, 2011, p.36&479; and Bowles, 2007). So, it is pertinent to acknowledge that despite adverse experiences, we need not adopt a nihilistic stance toward the prospect of an ideal state. Valuable insights gleaned from both ancient and contemporary socio-political philosophies offer avenues for constructive reflection. For those seeking resolution, conceiving of a free society ought to be perceived as a methodology rather than a definitive endpoint. The axiom that “power tends to corrupt” serves as a pragmatic directive, prompting a deeper consideration of abstract human values such as philosophical inquiry, liberty, solidarity, and equity. Through examination of state structures across moral and social dimensions, it becomes apparent that adherence to a regime-based governance model often falls short of serving the collective good. In light of this observation, what philosophical recommendations can be posited? Firstly, there is merit in learning from historical missteps to avert the transformation of utopias into dystopias. Secondly, there arises a necessity for prudent evaluation of the extent to which an ideal state safeguards abstract human values encompassing freedom, fraternity, justice, and similar tenets.

References

- Academy of Ideas. (2022, February 26). The parallel society vs totalitarianism: How to create a free world. <https://academyofideas.com/2022/02/parallel-society-vs-totalitarianism-how-to-create-a-free-world/>
- Aristotle. (2013). *Aristotle's "Politics" (2nd ed.)*. University of Chicago Press
- Bowles, A. (2007). *Dharma, disorder, and the political in ancient India: The Âpaddharmaparvan of the Mahâbhârata*. Brill.
- Brandenberger, D. (2012). *Propaganda state in crisis: Soviet ideology, indoctrination, and terror under Stalin, 1927-1941*. Yale University Press.
- Brennan, J. (2017). *Against democracy*. Princeton University Press.
- Chomsky, N. (2014). *On anarchism*. Penguin Books Limited.
- Cohen, J. (2010). *Rousseau: A free community of equals*. OUP Oxford.
- Cooper, C. R. (Ed.). (2007). *Politics of orality*. Brill
- Cronk, N. (2017). *Voltaire: A very short introduction*. OUP Oxford.
- Dickson, J. (2023). *The politics of the soul: From Nietzsche to Arendt*. Routledge.
- Dwivedi, O. P. (1967). Bureaucratic corruption in developing countries. *Asian Survey*, 7(4), 245–253. <https://doi.org/10.2307/264247>
- Faguet, J., & Pöschl, C. (2015). *Is decentralization good for development? Perspectives from academics and policy makers*. OUP Oxford.
- Fleischacker, S. (2013). *What is enlightenment?* Routledge.
- Gandhi, M. (1997). *Gandhi: 'Hind Swaraj' and other writings*. Cambridge University Press.
- Glover, J. (2012). *Humanity*. Yale University Press.
- Hart, P., & Uhr, J. (2008). *Public leadership: Perspectives and practices*. ANU E Press.
- Herbert, A. E. W. M. (1885). *The right and wrong of compulsion by the state: A statement of the moral principles of the party of individual liberty, and the political measures founded upon them*. Williams and Norgate.
- Hiltebeitel, A. (2011). *Dharma: Its early history in law, religion, and narrative*. Oxford University Press.
- Hislope, R., & Mughan, A. (2012). *Introduction to comparative politics: The state and its challenges*. Cambridge University Press.
- Huntington, S. P. (2012). *The third wave: Democratization in the late 20th century*. University of Oklahoma Press.
- Huxley, A. (2008). *Brave New World revisited*. Random House.
- Ingram, J. (2017). *Political uses of utopia: New Marxist, anarchist, and radical democratic perspectives*. Columbia University Press.
- Jacobsen, M., & Pode, P. (2016). *The sociology of Zygmunt Bauman: Challenges and critique*. Taylor & Francis.
- Jan-Erik, L., & Ersson, S. (2020). *Culture and politics: A comparative approach*. Taylor & Francis.
- Jowett, G. S., & O'Donnell, V. (2014). *Propaganda & persuasion*. SAGE Publications.
- Jung, C. G. (2014). *Civilization in transition*. Taylor & Francis.
- Katz, J., Capron, A. M., & Glass, E. S. (1972). *Experimentation with human beings: The authority of the investigator, subject, professions, and state in the human experimentation process*. Russell Sage Foundation.
- Kipnis, D. (2012). *Technology and power*. Springer New York.
- Kollman, K. (2013). *Perils of centralization: Lessons from church, state, and corporation*.

Cambridge University Press.

- Kukathas, C. (2003). *The liberal archipelago: A theory of diversity and freedom*. OUP Oxford.
- Kusch, M. (Ed.). (2019). *The Routledge handbook of philosophy of relativism*. Taylor & Francis.
- Lazarski, C. (2012). *Power tends to corrupt: Lord Acton's study of liberty*. Cornell University Press.
- Lazarski, C. (2023). *Lord Acton for our time*. Cornell University Press
- Leinarte, D., & Ilic, M. (2015). *The Soviet past in the post-socialist present: Methodology and Ethics in Russian, Baltic and Central European oral history and Memory Studies*. Taylor & Francis.
- Levin, M. R. (2020). *Unfreedom of the press*. Threshold Editions.
- Lijphart, A. (1984). *Democracies: Patterns of majoritarian and consensus government in twenty-one countries*. Yale University Press.
- Mahdavi, M. (2016). *Towards the dignity of difference? Neither 'end of history' nor 'clash of civilizations'*. Taylor & Francis.
- Malcolm, N. (2007). *Reason of state, propaganda, and the Thirty Years' War: An unknown translation by Thomas Hobbes*. Clarendon Press.
- Marshall, P. (2012). *Demanding the impossible*. HarperCollins Publishers.
- May, R. (2009). *Man's search for himself*. W. W. Norton.
- Mencken, H. (2013). *Minority report*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.
- Michels, R. (1915). *Political parties: A sociological study of the oligarchical tendencies of modern democracy*. Hearst's International Library Company.
- Miller, J., & Miller, J. (1984). *Rousseau: Dreamer of democracy*. Yale University Press.
- Mookherjee, D., & Bardhan, P. (Eds.). (2006). *Decentralization and local governance in developing countries: A comparative perspective*. MIT Press.
- Nietzsche, F. (2017). *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Devoted Publishing.
- O'Shaughnessy, N. J. (2004). *Politics and propaganda: Weapons of mass seduction*. Manchester University Press.
- Popper, K. (2012). *The open society and its enemies*. Taylor & Francis.
- Postman, N. (2005). *Amusing ourselves to death: Public discourse in the age of show business*. Penguin Books.
- Rajan. (2023). Critique of contemporary civilization ethos and public leadership crisis: A dystopian interpretation and philosophical prospects. *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research*, 40(1), 35-64. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40961-023-00297-x>
- Rose, T. (2022). *Collective illusions: Conformity, complicity, and the science of why we make bad decisions*. Hachette Books.
- Rousseau, J. J. (2016). *Social contract & discourses*. Devoted Publishing.
- Runciman, D. (2015). *The confidence trap: A history of democracy in crisis from World War I to the present - Updated edition*. Princeton University Press.
- Russell, B. (2015). *The conquest of happiness*. Taylor & Francis.
- Saunders, T. J. (1981). *The politics*. Penguin Publishing Group.
- Schopenhauer, A. (2012). *The world as will and representation, Vol. 2*. Dover Publications.
- Scott, J. C. (2020). *Seeing like a state: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. Yale University Press.
- Shaw, J. (2019). *Evil: The science behind humanity's dark side*. ABRAMS, Incorporated.\
- Shermer, M. (2018). *Heavens on Earth: The scientific search for the afterlife, immortality and*

- utopia*. Little, Brown Book Group.
- Smith, B. C. (2023). *Decentralization: The territorial dimension of the state*. Taylor & Francis Limited.
- Solnit, R. (2005). *Hope in the dark*. Canongate.
- Solzhenitsyn, A. I. (1974). *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918-1956: An experiment in literary investigation*. Harper & Row.
- Stratigakos, D. (2022). *Hitler's northern utopia: Building the new order in occupied Norway*. Princeton University Press.
- Szasz, T. (2017). *Liberation by oppression: A comparative study of slavery and psychiatry*. Taylor & Francis.
- Tacey, D. (2012). *The Jung reader*. Routledge.
- Wrong, D. (2017). *Power: Its forms, bases, and uses*. Taylor & Francis.
- Zechenter, E. M. (1997). In the name of culture: Cultural relativism and the abuse of the individual. *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 53(3), 319-347.

