

Importance of Utopias

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In Azerbaijan, many new and especially liberal ideas are ridiculed by the general public as well as the local, overwhelmingly nationalist intellectuals on the grounds that they are “perfectionist” and “utopian.” Proposing a new, a radical, approach to social and political issues is assumed by them to be not only against societal values, but also human nature since these proposals depict perfect, flawless human beings. It almost becomes impossible to leave the traditionalist / nationalist discourse if one desires to be accepted as a reasonable and respectable person. New ideas are ignored or met with hostility; unless a person does not want to be labeled as an utopist, one is only allowed to maneuver within the traditionalist / nationalist discourse with arguments such as “indeed, only my arguments represent the true traditional values and / or true conception of nationalism.” In order to broaden our choices, we, as a society, need to break this circumscribed discourse and appeal to utopias. However, before that, we need to understand what they are.

Original meaning of utopia is far from the one that many people use today. Thomas More created this neologism in 1516 by combining two Greek words – *ouk* and *topos* – with the suffix *ia*, which meant a non-place. But to complicate the issue, in a poem at the end of his book *Utopia*, the place, because of its good people and laws, was called *Eutopia* (the good place). As a result, since utopia and eutopia are pronounced in the same way, More’s fictional state became a non-place and a good place at the same time (Vieira 2010, 3-4). In order not to further complicate the issue, I will consistently use “utopia” as a reference to a better or a good place. While there are many definitions of utopia and utopianism, I prefer to use the one proposed by Lyman Tower Sargent, professor emeritus of political science at the University of Missouri-St. Louis and

arguably the most influential utopian scholar. In his definition, utopianism is a “social dreaming – the dreams and nightmares that concern the ways in which groups of people arrange their lives and which usually envision a radically different society than the one in which the dreamers live. But not all are radical. For some people at any time dream of something basically familiar” (Sargent 1994, 3).

However, in the general usage in Azerbaijan, utopia and utopianism are usually accused of being perfectionist. Because of this misunderstanding and misuse of utopias, the scope of debates around almost all issues is extremely narrowed. This unprofessional, amateur approach to utopias also have a background in academia and Karl Popper, Lezsek Kolakowski, as well as Ralf Dahrendorf among others are the main figures of this anti-utopian tradition. In the following sections, I generalize their arguments under the name “critiques of perfectionism.”

I generally divide these anti-utopists into two groups and I examine the arguments of both groups against utopias and argue that they criticize a misrepresentation of utopias based on their own definitions, that is, they fall into the straw man fallacy. For this purpose, I analyze utopian view on human nature. By doing so, I try to debunk the arguments of the critics of perfectionism who believe in unbridgeable gap between utopias and real humans. Then in order to further strengthen my argument and to demonstrate suspicious views of utopians on inherent goodness of humans, I give examples to the methods of punishments in main literary utopias. Indeed, literary utopias are one of the elements of utopianism, I only prefer to use them to support my arguments because while utopian scholars may have conflicting views on what can and cannot be classified as a part of utopianism, they have already reached a consensus literary utopias belong to this tradition. For example, although Sargent divides utopianism into three parts – literary utopias, communitarianism, and utopian social theory – he also acknowledges that the latter

two are debatable.

Although it would be impossible to thoroughly analyze relationships of ideology with utopia in the scope of this article, in the next section, I briefly discuss and define both terms for the sake of clarification. As a part of my answer to the second group, I argue that utopias do not necessarily lead to violence unless they are hijacked by dogmatic and powerful ideological, religious, nationalistic or other kinds of in-groups. Quite the contrary, utopias are one of the most essential characteristics of the human beings and they are crucial visions for development in any society.

Utopia and Ideology

The most important figures in the literature of utopia and ideology are Karl Mannheim and Paul Ricoeur (see Sargent 2008). Mannheim's definition of ideology was based on the assumption that it is a distorted form of reality: "knowledge is distorted and ideological when it fails to take account of the new realities applying to a situation, and when it attempts to conceal them by thinking of them in categories which are inappropriate" (Mannheim 1998, 86). For him, ideology has two forms: the particular and, most importantly, the total. The particular form of ideology is somehow conscious attempt to "disguise ... the real nature of a situation" while the total form is "the ideology of an age or a concrete historico-social group" (Mannheim 1998, 49). In this sense, for Mannheim, ideologies were mainly based on purposeful lies or untrue statements and beliefs that hold a particular group together. And he argued that the "disguises ... of these unconscious motives should be" unmasked (1998, 35). The underlying implication of this definition of ideology is that an insider cannot recognize the ideology from within and is doomed to accept the "reality" as it is demonstrated by her ideology. Mannheim suggested that only "unattached" intellectuals or "relatively classless stratum" can be capable of recognizing an ideology (1998, 136-146).

In Mannheim's definition, utopian ideas are those that transcend the existing social order and aims to radically change the status quo. While he states that "A state of mind is utopian when it is incongruous with the state of reality within which it occurs," he immediately adds that not all incongruous states of mind which transcend the current order can be understood as utopian. He clarifies his point by highlighting that "Only those orientations transcending reality will be referred to by us as utopian which, when they pass over into conduct, tend to shatter, either partially or wholly, the order of things prevailing at the time" (Mannheim 1998, 173). It is challenging to propose a clear distinction between utopia and ideology because a transition from the former to the latter can happen when the utopias of the past become the realities of today. These terms can usually be classification retrospectively [\[1\]](#). We can look at the past and decide which ideas were used to preserve the then status quo and which ideas aimed to shatter "the bonds of the existing order" (Mannheim 1998, 184).

In Ricoeur's account, an ideology aims to distort the reality, legitimize the existing social order, and create an identity. The goal of ideology is to preserve the value system of a particular group and shape its worldview in a particular, distorted way. He states that fantasy or escapism is a negative aspect of utopias. An utopian person may choose to live in her dreams in order to escape her worldly problems. As the two positive aspects of utopia, however, Ricoeur first mentions that utopia is "an alternate form of power." Utopia is concerned with establishing a society without any hierarchy: "utopia's problem is always hierarchy, how to deal with and make sense of hierarchy." Second, "utopia is the exploration of the possibly" (Ricoeur 1986, 310). While Mannheim suggested that unattached intellectuals can recognize an ideology, Ricoeur proposes that we must "assume a utopia, declare it, and judge an ideology on this basis. Because the absolute onlooker [Mannheim's unattached intellectual – I.H.]

is impossible, then it is someone within the process itself who takes the responsibility for judgement" (Ricouer 1986, 172-173). An alternative society, that is a utopia, is the thing that forces us to see strange and ridiculous trends in our current way of life. From the standpoint of "nowhere," we judge our society in order to see the latter's flows.

This long quote from Mannheim so perfectly explains the importance of utopias that I felt obliged to present it in the original form: *"It is possible, therefore, that in the future, in a world in which there is never anything new, in which all is finished and each moment is a repetition of the past, there can exist a condition in which thought will be utterly devoid of all ideological and utopian elements. But the complete elimination of reality-transcending elements from our world would lead us to a 'matter-of-factness' which ultimately would mean the decay of the human will. Herein lies the most essential difference between these two types of reality-transcendence : whereas the decline of ideology represents a crisis only for certain strata, and the objectivity which comes from the unmasking of ideologies always takes the form of self-clarification for society as a whole, the complete disappearance of the utopian element from human thought and action would mean that human nature and human development would take on a totally new character. The disappearance of utopia brings about a static state of affairs in which man himself becomes no more than a thing. We would be faced then with the greatest paradox imaginable, namely, that man, who has achieved the highest degree of rational mastery of existence, left without any ideals, becomes a mere creature of impulses. Thus, after a long tortuous, but heroic development, just at the highest stage of awareness, when history is ceasing to be blind fate, and is becoming more and more man's own creation, with the relinquishment of utopias, man would lose his will to shape history and therewith his ability to understand it"* (Mannheim 1998, 235-236).

Critics of Perfectionism

For them, utopias are considered alternative and better places, where human perfection has been achieved, to our contemporary societies. According to the critics of perfectionism, utopists are dreamers who imagine a radically different society from the one that they live in where most, if not all, of their problems are solved. As Crane Brian points out, utopians are convinced that “things are bad [and they] must become better, perhaps *perfect*” and because things will not improve naturally on their own, “a plan [by the elite] must be developed and put into execution” (1965, 348 emphasis added). Due to this kind of perfectionist and elitist understanding of utopias, many people, including scholars and intellectuals, tend to dismiss them because they believe that utopian claims are against human nature and they lead to self-destruction. These critics can roughly be divided into two groups: First group of them not only believes that taking utopias seriously is naïve and a waste of time, but also claims that we should stick to “reality” if we want to improve our society. Second group of anti-utopists argues that utopias are dangerous because they have a strong tendency to violence and totalitarianism when they are implemented.

Opponents of utopianism argue that utopists are dreamers or fools who believe that they have found a model for a perfect world in which change is impossible. For this reason, utopists are considered naïve and weak individuals who prefer to live in their imaginations as a way out of daily problems. In this view, utopianism is also dangerous because utopists are unwilling to compromise and listen to others since they are convinced that their model world is perfect. By time, they become dogmatic and attempt to impose their views on others. In other words, utopists believe that ends justify means and they do not hesitate to execute their opponents when they seize the power. Common criticism of utopianism is equating it with Communism, Fascism, and Nazism (see Cziganyik 2017, 10-11). Critics argue that each of these ideologies had one utopia in their cores and they led to totalitarianism and

violence as soon as they wanted to realize their dreams. In this respect, critics conclude, utopians are dogmatic people who are against pluralism, tolerance, and compromise.

One of the most influential opponent of utopianism was Karl Popper, who argued that utopias, as a result of their claim for human perfection and unchanging society, eventually lead to violence and self-destruction. He defined the term in the following way: "I consider what I call Utopianism as an attractive and, indeed, an all too attractive theory; for I also consider it dangerous and pernicious. It is, I believe, self-defeating, and it leads to violence" (Popper 1986, 5). Many other scholars also emphasized words such as "perfect" and "changeless" in their definitions of utopianism. For instance, philosopher Leszek Kolakowski stated that social utopias are based on "the idea of the perfect and everlasting human fraternity" (1983, 237). One shared element of "all utopias," sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf asserted, is that "they are all societies from which *change is absent*" (1958, 115 emphasis added).

Indeed, I must acknowledge that utopias may become dangerous if a clique of powerful people use their own exclusive utopias as an ideology that justifies everything they do. Nationalists may want to establish an exclusive utopia in which only the members of a particular nation are accepted and treated better than *the others*. Or a religious person, let us say, a Muslim may want to live in an Islamic utopia, ruled by Islamic laws, in which non-Muslims are secondary citizens who have to pay an additional tax. One may reasonably claim that these examples are also part of utopianism, that is, social dreaming of a nationalist and a religious person, accordingly. But while these particular exclusive "dreams" have some elements of utopia in their cores, once realized, they become an ideology. Moreover, if these nationalistic and religious utopias legitimize any social order, instead of shattering the status quo, they are more likely to be classified as ideologies rather than utopias.

When we analyze the views of utopians on human nature, crime, human perfection and rationality, we clearly see that utopians do not believe in apotheosis. H.G. Wells' *Men Like Gods* is arguable the best example to reject all the abovementioned accusations by the critics of perfectionism. Wells describes how Mr. Barnstaple, the protagonist, who came to Utopia, which is approximately three thousand years ahead of his home Earth, is disappointed. For he assumed that in Utopia there would be no need for any changes and everything would be perfect but his expectations were not met when he realized dynamic nature of Utopia: *Life marched here; it was terrifying to think with what strides. Terrifying because at the back of Mr. Barnstaple's mind, as at the back of so many intelligent minds in our world still, had been the persuasion that presently everything would be known and the scientific process come to an end. And then we should be happy for ever after. He was not really acclimatized to progress. He had always thought of Utopia as a tranquillity with everything settled for good. Even to-day it seemed tranquil under that level haze, but he knew that this quiet was the steadiness of a mill race, which seems almost motionless in its quiet onrush until a bubble or a fleck of foam or some stick or leaf shoots along it and reveals its velocity* (Wells 2002 [1923], 68)

Utopias and Human Nature

Although utopists believe the potential of humans to develop their goodness, they still find it necessary to have punishment, prisons, and laws in order to preserve the society from criminals. For instance, despite the fact that in Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* all crimes are considered a relic of atavism, and because the society does not have a jail, all criminals are treated in hospitals as mentally ill people (2008, 86). Julian West, the narrator, is told that those who refuse to serve in the industrial army are "sentenced to solitary imprisonment on bread and water till [their] consents" (2008, 57). Or in A. P. Russell's *Sub-Coelum* although individuals have almost no private life, and "their

police system [is] inseparable from their society as organized", the narrator continues that "habits of the people discouraged if they did not forbid privacy" (2013, 59). Despite the fact that utopian literature is criticized for being naïve and perfectionist, these criticisms miss the significance of this issue. Generally, utopias seek to change the institutions rather than human nature. The message is clear: people are able to control their own actions, yet it is much better "if they know they are watched" (Sargent 1975, 89). This demonstrates an attitude of utopias towards human nature: on the one hand, they have a strong faith in humans, on the other hand, they are unwilling to put down their guns.

Most utopists do not believe in the inherent goodness of human beings. They would rather agree with anarchist philosopher William Godwin that human beings are inherently neither good nor bad, but are shaped by their environment; thus, we are equal not only physically, but also morally (1793, 12-18). Gorman Beauchamp points out that for utopists man is the product of his environment, and this claim has been supported by two assumptions (2007, 280). The first was formulated by Rousseau that "man is naturally good," however, he has been depraved of his goodness by "changes that have happened in his constitutions" (2002, 39), and the second famously declared by Lock that the human brain is just a "white paper" and it has been shaped by his experiences (2007, 18). In other words, utopists believe that "man has no nature. What he has is history" (Gasset 1936, 313). For utopists, humans are like plastic which can be shaped by education, humane treatment, love, and reason. According to utopists, humans have a *tendency* to the goodness and kindness, and they have been made bad by social institutions. Ergo, if we correct the social institutions, there will be no obstacle for humans to reach their potential goodness.

Underlying implication of the perfectionist view is that utopias depict a world in which any change becomes impossible because "perfect" means "completed." Although this is a

popular view on utopias, as Sargent puts it, this claim simply “irritates me” (Sargent 2006, 13). For a simple analysis of utopias, especially literary ones, would make us to see that utopists are not naïve enough to assume that changes are not needed and individuals have an ability to become perfect. Except religious myths of the nineteenth century, Sargent continues, one cannot find a literary utopia work which claims to be perfect. “The overwhelming majority of utopias were not written as depictions of unchanging perfection” (Sargent 2006, 13). Utopists want to establish a society where institutions are arranged in a way that enable humans to reach their full potential but perfection.

Yet, despite all these optimistic approaches to humans, utopists acknowledge that even in a good society there will be a few crimes and each utopia has its own way of dealing with criminals. Utopists do not believe that people are able cooperate without any fear of being punished, which explains the existence of different kinds of punishments such as *imprisonment*, *cautions*, *financial restitution*, *reformatories*, and *banishment* and in some extremely rare cases, the *death penalty* in literary utopias. These methods demonstrate that utopists explicitly reject human perfection – otherwise, there would be no need for sophisticated punishment methods in literary utopias[\[ii\]](#). Imprisonment is the most common method of punishment in literary utopias but in the following paragraphs, I also give examples to alternative methods of punishments. By doing so, I show that the vast majority of utopias reject human perfection or an idea of changeless society, and they believe that appropriate institutional arrangements are required for a better society.

Harsh Methods of Punishment in Utopias

Thomas More’s *Utopia* is considered the first early modern utopia, and this work is particularly important because it gives the genre its name. More established a general guideline for later literary utopias in the Christian West. It goes

something like this: while in a journey, a person lands in a distant unknown place. This utopian traveler is usually welcomed and offered a guidance. She is informed about the social, economic, and political structure of this place and the traveler realizes the superiority of utopias to her home country. The implication is that then she returns home "in order to be able to take back the message that there are alternative and better ways of organizing society" (Vieira 2010, 7).

Compared to the people in 1516, More's Utopians certainly are superior to their contemporaries; however, they commit crimes and the state imposes harsh punishments on the offenders. Due to imperfect nature of the Utopians, the state finds it necessary even to control the people's private life. Marriage ages, decided by the state, for girls and boys are eighteen and twenty-two, accordingly (More 1516, 127) as well as polygamy and divorce are forbidden (1516, 129). "The adulterer and the adulteress are condemned to slavery" in the first impure act, and they are deprived from marriage till the end of their life (More 1516, 130). If the adultery is repeated, they ought to be punished by death. Even suicide without permission from the state is considered a crime, and their corpses are thrown "into a ditch" (More 1516, 127). In More's Utopia it is believed that harsh punishments are a strong deterrent for crime and slavery is the worst type of punishment (1516, pp. 133, 131). Raphael Hythloday, a Portuguese sailor, explains that Utopians prefer slavery to capital punishment because "state of servitude is more for the interest of the commonwealth than killing them, since, as their labor is a greater benefit to the public than their death could be" (More 1516, 131).

At the same time, rebel slaves are killed because their riots demonstrate the impossibility to control them (1516, 131). Even the citizens of Utopia cannot leave their own cities without state permission. It shows that the state does not want to satisfy by only controlling the private lives of its

citizens, it also aims to control and regulate the minds of Utopians. Therefore, R.W. Chambers, one of the most well-known biographers of More, rightly asks that “[h]as any state, at any time, carried terrorism quite so far?” (Chambers 1958 in Beauchamp 2007, 288).

The institutions of Utopia are founded not by the ordinary citizens, but by their benevolent King Utopus, and these institutions control the imperfect Utopians. For instance, in More’s Utopia there are no lawyers (1516, 134) because lawyers are able to find many violations in the society, and mostly ordinary people do not know that their rights are violated by their neighbors unless lawyers tell them. More’s idea is that people are not able to live harmoniously in a complex society where there are many rules and life should be simplified for them; therefore, in such simple society there is no place for lawyers. Moreover, by diminishing the freedom of choice, the strict rules almost make it impossible to commit a crime. Utopians live in small communities where everybody knows each other, in their each and every action they feel that they are watched by the state. Economically they are well off. In this kind of world one has very limited freedom of choice in order to violate the rules.

In the first part of the book, Hythloday argues that humans are the product of the environment; their characters are shaped by social interactions and education, also social injustice forces people to commit a crime. Thus, by thinking that punishment will be a deterrent for crime is meaningless. The society creates a situation that many people have no choice but crime, and in such kind of unjust society if state punishes its citizens, Hythloday asks More, is not it “first make[ing] thieves and then punish[ing] them?” (More 1516, 28). Therefore, in Utopia More establishes a society where everybody’s economic conditions are better off, and rules are very strict. Hythloday mentions that even if magistrates commit crimes, neither anybody can question their authority, nor punish them because “their punishment is left to God”

(More 1516, 167). Moreover, if the citizens discuss public affairs outside of the senate or popular assembly, their punishment is death penalty (More 1516, 72). These punishments again demonstrate that the state does not believe the ability of Utopians to self-govern, they are required to obey the rules, and not to question the authority and honor of the rulers. In short, More suggests that without changing human nature, one can create a better world only by creating new institutions.

In Campanella's *The City of the Sun* the main element of justice is based on revenge; an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. In the Solarian society there are more than a dozen magistrates, and the fifth one's name is Criminal and Civil Justice. Because there are no written laws, in most cases, the accused person is punished by ostracism, such as depriving them of the common table, and intimacy with the opposite sex (Campanella 2013, pp. 6, 22). He puts great importance on the role of science and reason in his utopian society that even in the case of the death penalty, the offender should be convinced by reason. Moreover, the offender has the right to use rational arguments in the court in order to defend himself, and if he manages to convince the court that he is not guilty, only Hoh has an authority to pardon him (Campanella 2013, 22). Since the justice is based on revenge, in the case of a murder, the accused persons are killed not by the state or executioners, but by the people by stoning them. The only mercy is that accused persons are permitted to commit suicide if they do not want to be killed by the people (Campanella 2013, 23).

Interestingly, Campanella's fictional state, like More's, has many authoritarian features that restrict the freedom of its citizens to the degree that it almost becomes impossible to commit a crime. Campanella depicts a society where *irrational crimes* – neither incest, nor adultery “can be found” (2013, 6). Despite the fact that Solarians are portrayed as more rational than Utopians, still the state in *The City of the Sun*

finds it necessary to watch its citizens. For example, “since [Solarians] always walk and work in crowds,” the court required five witnesses in order to accuse a person (Campanella 2013, 23). This feature of the Solarian society is similar to that of Utopia where almost everybody knows each other and individuals are always in the gaze of other people. In other words, the very structure of the society makes it extremely hard to find a blind spot in order to commit a crime.

In addition, there is a strong patriarchy in the Solarian society that it demands its female members to behave and wear according to the tastes of men. Being natural is very important and there is one accepted form of beauty for females in this society: strong limbs, “tall and agile body”; those who use cosmetics and wear “high-heeled boots [... are] condemned to capital punishment” (Campanella 2013, 12). Finally, even though Campanella’s fictional state does not have prisons for ordinary criminals, there is only one prison “for shutting up rebellious enemies” (2013, 22). Soldiers who failed to conquer the enemy because of their own fault are blamed; those who refused to help their fellow soldiers are beaten; and those who disobey the orders are closed in a cage with lions and bears (2013, 17).

In *The Law of Freedom in a Platform* (1652) Gerrard Winstanley portrays a society in which property and money are abolished and everybody’s basic needs are met by the state. Everybody lives in common storehouses and men’s property are their flats in that storehouse, their children, wives, and furniture. Since property and money are abolished, everybody is required to work and gain his living; also, idles and thieves are executed. Like the previous utopias, Winstanley puts great importance on rationality and reason. For example, he says that if a man abuses a woman, he will be punished because of his “ignorant and unrational practice” (Winstanley 1965 [1652], 527). At the same time, compared to More’s and Campanella’s utopias, Winstanley depicted more democratic

society where the members of the Parliament are elected by the people, and in the case of any unlawful act, those deputies are punished under the rule of law as any other ordinary citizen. Moreover, Winstanley says that old oppressive rules of the King should be changed, and the new legislative body, Parliament, should seek the consent of the people "because the people must be all subject to the law, *under pain of punishment*; therefore, it is all reason they should know it before it be enacted, that if there be any thing of the counsel of oppression in it, it may be discovered and amended" (Winstanley 1965 [1652], 559 emphasis added).

In *Libellus: or, A Brief Sketch of the Kingdom of Gotham*, written by an anonymous English writer, the legal system of the society, like in *The City of the Sun*, is based on *lex talionis* or rule of revenge and the murderers are "destroyed by the same means" (anon. 1798, 50). For example, if assassins stab their victims, they are stabbed and wounded because it is believed that they should suffer and feel the same pain until their death. Similarly, if a person kills somebody by poison, s/he should drink poison publicly, and suffer while the mass look at her/him. For this society revenge, and pain of the offender is very important that even nobody "drop[s] a water to cool the tip of [the offenders] tongue" (anon. 1798, 50).

Mild Methods of Punishment in Utopias

In his novel, *Meda*, Folingsby portrays a society where wrongdoers are punished by the admonitions from the elders of the community in trivial offences, and despite the seriousness of crimes, nobody can be sentenced to capital punishment (1892, 248). The elders are not chosen to this position because of their wealth or social influence, they are elevated to the jury because of their intellect, honesty, and maturity. Though the exact procedure of this punishment is not mentioned by Folingsby the traveler was told by his guide that in this society "immorality is unknown," and "intelligence has gained..

control over people's passions" (1892, 143), that crimes are rare, and self-control is very strong among the inhabitants of this society. First it may sound naïve that Folingsby considers admonition as a type of punishment and deterrence. However, since the traveler highlights the importance of intelligence and reason in that society, the influence of admonitions from the elders became very significant because this punishment forces the wrongdoers to see their own inner weakness, and their incapacity to self-control.

Another interesting punishment has been portrayed by F.W. Hayes in *The Story of the Phalanx* (1893), where those who refuse to work are punished by public censure. The information about warned person is distributed to the whole society by local "gazettes" and it brings shame to the wrongdoer. While in *Meda* the fear of the wrongdoers is to face their own inner weakness, in Hayes's world it is ostracism and denunciation by their society. Therefore, it can be argued that with cautions Folingsby tries to *cure* his Utopians but Hayes, because he *punishes* his Utopians, believes that a wrongdoer should suffer.

Interestingly, Morris creates a socialist utopia in his *News from Nowhere* in which the state eliminates almost all crimes, including crimes of passion and family crimes, by abolishing private property. In his view, crimes of passion derived from the attitudes of men to women as a property and family crimes are the results of tyranny in families, where the members are kept together by coercion instead of love (Morris 2007, 51-52). He also mentions that those offenders who are mentally ill are cured while others are humiliated by their neighbors. Because nobody wants to be a jailer or torturer in this society, they do not have imprisonment and torture as a punishment method. It shows that Morris, like Folingsby, wants to cure and reform its utopians rather than punishing them.

In *A Modern Utopia*, Wells famously declared "[c]rime and bad lives are the measure of a State's failure, all crime in the

end is the crime of the community" (2004, 90). Wells uses disciplinary schools for the first offenders and for all offenders under 25 as a "cautionary and remedial treatment" (2004, 90), and these enclosures are placed in remote areas. However, there are some people who cannot be reformed that this fictional state establishes *prison islands* where criminals are sentenced for a life and each type of them is kept separately. For example, those people who are accused of being drunk are sent to one island and they have an autonomy on that island (Wells 2004, 91). State patrols control those islands from the sea in order to make sure that nobody escapes; however, they do not interfere into the prison islands and offenders themselves should organize their society. There is no jail in this utopia because "[n]o men are quite wise enough, good enough, and cheap enough to staff jails as a jail ought to be staffed" (Wells 2004, 90). As portrayed by the author, the disciplinary schools are temporary, and their rules are stricter than the prison islands. In these isolated schools the offenders are forced to choose either their freedom, or their inner "evil trend" (Wells 2004, 90) while criminals in islands are free to do anything they want. The rationale is that those who are in disciplinary schools have a chance to change but those on prison islands are irreformable. Since utopians consider crime a failure of the state and community, they separate the offenders rather than killing them. The most interesting fact is that Well's fictional state kills all disabled and unhealthy kids because "there is no justice in nature... [whereas] the idea of justice must be sacred in any good society" (2004, 90). Wells wants to create a just society in an unjust world by killing unhealthy offspring and removing criminals from that society. It can be argued that Well's fictional state only establishes a façade of a just society.

In Stanley's *The Case of The. Fox*, the author describes a society where "crimes decreased naturally by the spread of education" (1903, 122), however, despite all reforms, there

are still criminals. The penalty for murder, which rarely occurs, is isolated open-air prisons where all murderers are treated humanely. Moreover, he states that drunkenness, which is considered a crime, has “nearly died out” (Stanley 1903, 123). Similarly, in Ouseley’s *Palingenesia* (1884) crimes are treated as mental illness and instead of prisons, criminals are sent to reformatories where they should work in order to reconstitute money to the victims.

In Samuel Butler’s *Erewhon* quickness, honesty, and sincerity are considered a negative characteristics and those children who demonstrate these features are sent to Provincial Defamatory for Boys (1901, 55-56). The aim of this place to harden those boys who “are notoriously too good to become current coin in the world,” and the boys are told to “resist good and it will fly from you” (1901, 56). In some cases, fathers can be punished because they did not teach their boys to tell a lie (Butler 1901, 44). One of the teachers in the defamatory explains to the traveler that their aim is to reach imperfection because “being always right” is a great mistake, and since perfection is impossible, humans can create a better society by achieving imperfection “within a reasonable time” (Butler 1901, 57). While Butler, like Wells, wants to establish a better society, he, unlike Wells, uses a different kind of authoritarian/coercive/paternalistic power to change his utopians rather than by simply killing and removing all *unfit* individuals.

I believe now it is clear that “perfection has never been a characteristic of utopian fiction” (Sargent 1994, 6). Since More, utopias are open to changes and development because they are anything but perfect model or a blueprint of alternative and better places. I suppose that the readers were baffled when they saw these horrific punishments in literary utopias – these “worlds” are not better than the one we live in. These positive changes in our thinking concerning what utopias should like demonstrate that dreams about better places are essential for development. In other words, as Oscar Wilde put

it, “progress in the realization of utopias” (quoted in Sargent 1994, 1). Utopias are like horizons; although we can never reach them, they remind us that better alternatives do always exist.

Conclusion

In many instances, it may be difficult to see the flows and contradictions in our society and way of thinking since we have been reared with some social values that cherish our traditions. Accepting that some of our beliefs and beloved values are simply wrong and have no rational basis may turn out to be a devastating experience for individuals. However, we need utopias in order to see the flaws in our thoughts and in the society that we live in. That is, “you may not like a whole range of particular utopias, but it is still essential that we continue to believe in the possibility of a significantly better society” (Sargent 2010, 115) by establishing or proposing alternative yet inclusive utopias. Many of the horrible methods of punishments used in literary utopias are unacceptable in our society and the discussed literary works seem to be dystopias rather than utopias. They may be better places compared to their own times and our understanding of morality and justice have significantly changed. We no longer argue that the state should punish adulterers by death or people should not be allowed to discuss public issues outside of the parliament. In short, our notion of utopia is contingent.

When one says that “individuals should not be discriminated by any person or entity based on their sex/gender, religion, ethnicity, race, social status, and appearance,” instead of blaming her on naiveté, stupidity, and “being utopian,” think about whether it is desirable goal and, if yes, then how we can achieve it. Maybe you dismiss these kinds of ideas simply because you do not expect anybody to believe in them and follow them since you are unable to overcome your biases towards some (group of) individuals. Without utopias, we

cannot depict a better world, a model that we wish to achieve. Utopias are our dreams and without them we all are uninteresting creatures in which a change is absent.

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[i] "Ideas which later turned out to have been only distorted representations of a past or potential social order were ideological, while those which were adequately realized in the succeeding social order were relative utopias" (Mannheim 1998, 184).

[iii] For well-known four literary utopias of the XVI-XVIII centuries, see Thomas More – *Utopia* (1516), Tommaso Campanella

– *The City of the Sun* (1623), Gerrard Winstanley – *The Law of Freedom in a Platform* (1652), and *Libellus: Or a Brief Sketch of the Kingdom of Gotham* (1798) written by an anonymous English writer.

For the late XIX and the early XX century literary utopias Gideon Jasper Richard – *Palingenesia* (1884), Edward Bellamy – *Looking Backward* (1887), William Morris – *News from Nowhere* (1890), Kenneth Folingsby – *Meda* (1892), Addison Peale Russell – *Sub-Coelum* (1893), F.W. Hayes – *The Story of the Phalanx* (1893), Samuel Butler – *Erewhon Revisited* (1901), William Stanley – *The Case of The. Fox* (1903), H.G. Wells – *A Modern Utopia* (1905), and Edgar Wallace – *The Just Four Men* (1908).