

### Unveiling Power Relations:

#### A Comparative Analysis of Individual and Group Influence in *Wish* (2023) Movie

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*"The LORD gives strength to his people;  
the LORD blesses his people with peace."  
- Psalm 29:11 (NIV)*

#### ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the representation of individual and collective power in *Wish* (2023) through qualitative thematic analysis, drawing on Thomas Hobbes' theory of individual power and Michel Foucault's concept of relational power. The findings reveal that: **1)** the protagonist's pursuit of autonomy reflects Hobbes' notion of individual power; **2)** the interplay of magic and authority illustrates Foucault's link between knowledge and power; and **3)** the narrative highlights resistance to domination at both personal and societal levels. The film demonstrates how cinematic texts critique power structures, offering insights into authority, resistance, and collective agency in contemporary contexts.

**Keywords:** *Wish* (2023), power dynamics, individual power, collective power, authority, resistance

#### INTRODUCTION

Power in general is a complex and multifaceted concept that refers to the ability to influence or control the behavior of others, as well as determine or shape outcomes decisions in various contexts. A lot of times power is misused. Not only in the government, but also in the community. At work, school, and often even at home. Therefore use literature for the scope, why literature? Because in journal writing is essential to ensure that the research is credible, has a solid foundation, and makes a meaningful contribution to existing knowledge.

"Wish", a Musical Fantasy movie released on November 23, 2023, is produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios and distributed by Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures. Directed by Chris Buck and Fawn Veerasunthorn, the movie features an impressive voice cast, including Ariana DeBose as Asha, Chris Pine as King Magnifico, and Alan Tudyk as Valentino. Since its premiere, "Wish" has achieved

widespread acclaim. Specifically, it has won one award and garnered 22 nominations, a testament to its quality and appeal. Notably, the film has been recognized by prestigious organizations such as the Phoenix Critics Circle, North Texas Film Critics Association, Critics Choice Awards, Golden Globe Awards, and Image Awards NAACP. Consequently, "Wish" has become a celebrated entry in Disney's storied filmography. Furthermore, the film's success highlights the continued relevance and innovation of Disney Animation Studios in the realm of animated features.

The story of "Wish" centers around a woman named Asha who lives in the kingdom of Rosas, led by King Magnifico. To the people of Rosas, King Magnifico appears to be smart, wise, and authoritative. However, in Asha's eyes, he is selfish and manipulative. Asha realizes that King Magnifico is deceiving his people, who believe their wishes will be granted someday. In reality, King Magnifico keeps their wishes, many of which remain unfulfilled even until the wish-makers' deaths. Asha, aware of this deception, seeks to return the ungranted wishes to the people. In a twist of fate, Asha makes a wish, causing a Star to appear. Asha and her friends embark on a quest to retrieve the wishes, which the king views as rebellion. Ultimately, they succeed in overthrowing King Magnifico.

At the individual level, Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan* (1651/1996, Ch. 10) defines power as the present means to secure future goods, distinguishing between natural abilities (original power) and external supports such as wealth or reputation (instrumental power). This framework is used to examine how characters such as King Magnifico and Asha embody competing forms of individual agency.

In contrast, Michel Foucault conceives power not as concentrated in a single authority but as relational and dispersed, operating through social structures and everyday practices (*Discipline and Punish*, 1975/1997; *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, 1976/1978). This perspective informs the analysis of collective resistance in the film, particularly in how Asha and her allies mobilize against Magnifico's dominance.

A journal article by Adryan Allen et al. (2021), *Representation of Hobbesian Theory in the Film Series "Squid Game" in the View of Generation Z*, discusses the relationship between Hobbes' political theory and contemporary perspectives on power in the digital age. Their study shows how younger generations interpret authority and social dynamics differently from previous ones. Similar to our research, their work applies Hobbes' views on politics and government; however, their focus remains on how *Squid Game* represents Hobbesian concepts, while our study applies Hobbes' theory to analyze individual power and Foucault's framework to examine collective dynamics. In our case, Hobbes' theory is considered in terms of original and instrumental power (*Leviathan*, 1651/1996), while Foucault's framework emphasizes power as relational, circulating through social interactions (*Discipline and Punish*, 1975/1997; *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, 1976/1978).

The problem of power is endless. In this day and age, power is something that everyone wants. According to society, to become a successful person, power is the main key. It is not necessarily just about money or position, but can be obtained through skills or advantages that others do not have. On this basis, many people use power without regard to right and wrong. Some use power alone, some use power in groups, the important thing is that their goals can be achieved. But to get power requires recognition and being the holder of the power itself.

According to the above issue, this study dives into individual and group power; the way of ruling will greatly affect power. Knowing that power as an individual is “The power of a man, to take it universally, is a present means of obtaining some future apparent good; and is either original or instrumental” (Hobbes, Thomas. Leviathan. 1651. Chapter 10). It means that individuals make good use of both original and external abilities to achieve goals. While power as a group is defined as “Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere.” (Michelle Foucault, Discipline and Punish 1997.). It means power is a complex and distributed phenomenon, which arises from various interactions in society.

### Binary Opposition

INDIVIDUAL	GROUP
<i>King Magnifico</i> : An individualistic leader who was successful at first, until fear and thirst for power brought him down from his own throne.	<i>Asha</i> : Inviting his friends to rebel against the king in order to regain the “wish” that was rightfully theirs. With a group of seven, they succeeded in their goal.
<i>Asha</i> : One of the people who knew the dark side of King Magnifico, yet the only person who dared to overthrow the king from his throne.	
<i>Star</i> : Another main individual who helped Asha throughout her journey of bringing back the wishes.	

### METHOD

This study employs qualitative thematic analysis to examine the representation of individual and collective power in Wish (2023). The analysis is guided by Thomas Hobbes’(1651/1996) theory of

individual power and Michel Foucault's (1975/1997) concept of power as relational and dispersed. The film was viewed repeatedly, and key scenes depicting power relations were identified and coded according to whether they reflected individual or group dynamics. Close reading and thematic categorization were applied to interpret how character actions, decisions, and interactions illustrate power structures. The film itself serves as the sole primary text; no additional data collection was undertaken. To enhance reliability, coding and thematic interpretations were cross-checked among researchers to ensure consistency and alignment with the theoretical framework and the analysis is limited to a publicly available cultural text.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. King Magnifico vs. Asha as Individual Power

King Magnifico exemplifies Hobbes' notion of individual power, defined as the means by which a person secures future goods through original and instrumental capacities (*Leviathan*, 1651, Ch. 10). His original power lies in his charisma and ability to wield magic, while his instrumental power derives from wealth, reputation, and control over the wishes of Rosas. By monopolizing wish-granting, he consolidates authority and transforms dependence into obedience, illustrating Hobbes' view that unchecked individual power can devolve into domination.

In contrast, Asha represents an alternative form of individual agency. Hobbes observes that when two individuals desire the same object, conflict inevitably arises (*Leviathan*, Pt. 1, Ch. 13). Asha's wish challenges Magnifico's monopoly, sparking a struggle over authority in Rosas. Unlike Magnifico's coercive control, her individual power derives from moral conviction and empathy, qualities that inspire others to resist. This demonstrates that individual power need not be oppressive; it can also serve as a catalyst for resistance and transformation.

The most prominent individual strength is King Magnifico, who is also the antagonist of the movie. Magnifico discovered an island and founded a kingdom called Rosas with his wife with the aim of realizing people's wishes. In "Once upon a time, there was a young man who believed there was nothing more important than a wish." (00:01:05). It is evident that King Magnifico places a high value on the concept of a wish.



Because King Magnifico believes that wishes can be granted, he also learns magic from several sources that can make him grant everyone's wishes, from here King Magnifico is liked or liked by the inhabitants of Rosas. From here, King Magnifico has the power to rule the people of Rosas because the entire population of Rosas already knows that the only one who can grant wishes is King Magnifico himself, from here, the relationship between the concept of "The Power of Individual" is closely related to King Magnifico.

The relationship between the individual and King Magnifico is clear at the end of the movie. King Magnifico destroyed the hopes of several people to increase his power to fight the Star. This shows he is individualistic and related to the concept of "power of the individual." The quote from Thomas Hobbes states "The Power of a Man, (to take it Universally,) is his present means, to obtain some future apparent Good. And is either Originally, or Instrumental." In explanation, Hobbes says a person's power is what helps them achieve something good. This power can be divided into two types; original power refers to a person's natural abilities and traits. Instrumental power comes from external resources that help a person gain power or achieve goals. Examples include wealth, social connections, and reputation. These tools help an individual increase influence and achieve desired outcomes. Hobbes emphasizes that power is not only about what one has, but also about how effectively one can use those means to secure future benefits.

Based on Original Power, the aspects that King Magnifico possesses are his appropriate appearance and his ability to grant everyone's wishes. Only these two aspects can give him power over the people of Rosas, or the people of Rosas have assumed that the moment they meet King Magnifico, they will be reminded that he is the one who grants everyone's wishes. Based on Instrumental Power, King Magnifico has several aspects that greatly influence his power, the first of which is that he is the richest man in Rosas, his reputation is very high, and King Magnifico's name is very fragrant in the eyes of the people of Rosas.



We can see that the relationship between Individual Power and King Magnifico is very close, and the way Individual Power works is very much like the way King Magnifico got it. And the appearance of Individual Power with King Magnifico is clearly shown in the fragment of the movie at "*i believe i have just been threatened*" (00:29:45) it is clear that King Magnifico began to think about how to make the person who has power in Rosas in the future is King Magnifico himself, and the way King Magnifico works is very much in accordance with Thomas Hobbes' concept of Individual Power discussed above.

While Asha is the protagonist of the movie, who demonstrates her individual power as she challenges the authority of King Magnifico, who holds control over all wishes in the kingdom of Rosas.

Asha is an ordinary girl living in the kingdom of Rosas, where the king's power is dominant, and he controls all the wishes that the people have given to the king. She is highly empathetic, caring for her community, and driven by a strong sense of justice. Thomas Hobbes theory "If any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies." (*Hobbes, Thomas. Leviathan, Pt. 1, Ch. 13.*) represents Asha's



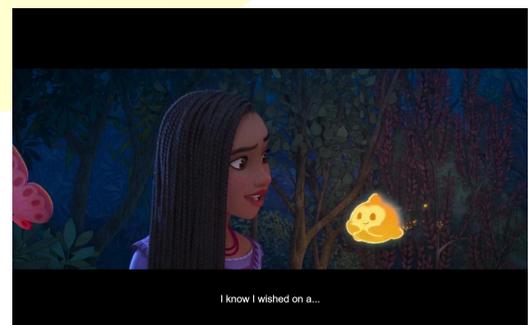
brave action. Unlike many other characters, Asha does not willingly accept the rule of King Magnifico, who controls the people's wishes to maintain his power. However, Asha shows that even though she is just an individual, she has the ability to change things.

The individual power that Asha possesses emerges when she makes a wish and the star descends into the world because of Asha's wish. With this wish, Asha not only gained magical powers from the star, but also inspired the people around her to come together to oppose Magnifico. From the picture taken from the film, Asha says "I know I wished on a..." (00:31:38).

This illustrates that 'Star' appeared because Asha said her wish from the bottom of her heart, after knowing the reality of what happened to the wishes of the people in Rosas, which were kept by King Magnifico. Asha expresses the wish from her heart, as she sings and expresses her sadness for the Wish that was not granted by King Magnifico and people still believe in King Magnifico.

The use of a medium long shot, placing Asha against the vast night sky, visually emphasizes Hobbes' notion of the individual as limited in power when isolated. Her small figure amid the expanse of darkness underscores individual vulnerability in the face of Magnifico's dominance. Yet, the bright star above her introduces a counterpoint: the possibility of original power, rooted in inner conviction, which Hobbes defines as the natural capacity to pursue desired goods (*Leviathan*, 1651/1996, Ch. 10).

The subsequent close-up of Asha with the glowing star shifts the emphasis from isolation to empowerment. Here, the warm lighting and radiant contrast against the dark background symbolize the transformation of personal desire into collective inspiration. This moment aligns with Foucault's conception of power as relational and circulating within social networks (*The History of Sexuality*, 1976/1978).



The star's glow, reflected in Asha's expression, anticipates her ability to mobilize others, showing how an individual wish can catalyze broader resistance.

Emphasize the central character in the white dress standing on the branch by using close-ups to capture her hopeful expression as she looks at the bright star. Use soft, ambient lighting to create a serene atmosphere, enhancing the star's brightness. Apply a soft spotlight on the character. Start with a wide shot and then zoom in slowly, using a pan to capture the star-filled sky and tree. Follow her movements with tracking shots. Keep the background static and highlight the intricate details of the scene. Enhance the glow of the star and apply a soft glow to the entire scene. Ensure her subtle movements loop seamlessly for visual continuity.

## 2. Star Representing as Neutral Individual Power

Another individual is Star, a star that falls from the sky due to Asha wishing on the sky. Star does not have a character that does not take sides with anyone or can be said to be a neutral individual. In the movie, the Star is not really a falling star but just a representation of wish. It can also be represented as a desire or wants. After Star appeared and performed several miracles, Asha had many questions. In response all the talking



animals sing, starting from the dialogue *"To all your questions, there's one very simple answer."* (00:32:45) to *"If you really wanna know just who you are. You're a star!"* (00:35:24 - 00:35:26) tells indirectly that the Star or hope is within each of them. According to Michel Foucault, "Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere." (Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.) which means power is not concentrated in one place. It is distributed throughout society and affects individuals in different ways.



Humans or specifically the citizens of Rosas can't live without wishes, desires or wants. Just like Thomas Hobbes's theory, "There is no such thing as perpetual tranquillity of mind while we live here; because life itself is but motion, and can never be without desire, nor without fear." (Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan, Pt. 1, Ch. 11.*) which means that Hobbes thinks this is just how

humans are, and we shouldn't expect to ever be completely calm or satisfied all the time. The kingdom of Rosas is made for wishes to be granted and Star as a magical individual can grant those wishes, but it doesn't want to grant selfish wishes (00:36:13). In one of the climax scenes where King Magnifico sucked Star into his wand it makes his power even greater because that time he's more powerful than Asha and the rest of Rosas citizens (01:16:49). In the climax, when the citizens of Rosas emit a yellow-orange glow, cinematography reinforces Foucault's idea of power as diffused rather than centralized. The collective illumination visualizes his claim that "power is everywhere" (Foucault, 1978, p. 93). Unlike Magnifico's concentration of magical power in a scepter, the people's radiance circulates horizontally, depicting resistance as a shared force rather than a sovereign act. It starts to show a yellow-orange light from their heart representing their biggest wish or desire to defeat King Magnifico (1:20:55). This happens because Star is a neutral individual, it depends on the largest power.

### 3. Asha Contribution in Group Power

From this picture we can see that to create a captivating and magical scene, focus on making the small glowing yellow creature the element of movement by having it pulsate with light or move gently up



and down while keeping the rest of the scene, including the characters and the wooden door, completely still; this contrast will draw attention to the glowing creature and enhance the magical atmosphere. Make sure the movement of the glowing creature is seamless and loops smoothly to maintain the mesmerizing effect. This is a scene where Asha introduces Star and gathers her friends to make a team. Foucault has a view that power is a

relation, as he quotes "Power is relations; power is not a thing, it is a relationship between two individuals... such that one can direct the behaviour of another or determine the possible actions of the other" (Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. Pantheon Books.). This is exactly what Asha did. In the movie Asha rallies her friends to work together to free the balls of hope and bring down King Magnifico (00:44:00 - 00:45:00). Throughout the storyline they work well together. Asha, Star and her friends succeeded in bringing down King Magnifico.

Although there is conflict between Asha and her friends because of the trust issue, it was shown by Dahlia's dialogue "Please don't say you destroy those people wish?" (01:04:26) waiting for Asha's validation. In the end, they remain a team. As a team they divided the tasks, Asha attracted the attention of

King Magnifico, Queen Amaya and Dahlia looked for the weakness of the king's scepter and the rest were tasked to free the balls of hope. Like Foucault's theory "Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or as something which only functions in the form of a chain. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization." (*Foucault, Michel. The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.*). At the end of the story, all the Rosas sing and emit a yellow-orange light that represents hope. With the individual power gathered by Asha, King Magnifico was defeated.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the film offers a poignant exploration of individual strength through its characters King Magnifico, Asha, and the Star each representing different expressions of power and desire. King Magnifico's power is rooted in control and manipulation. By granting wishes, he holds the people of Rosas captive to his will, showing how one person's craving for power can turn into a force of oppression. His actions reveal how individualism, when driven by selfishness, can destroy others' dreams and stifle their potential.

In contrast, Asha exemplifies a more uplifting and transformative form of power. She is an ordinary girl, but her deep sense of empathy and justice leads her to challenge King Magnifico's hold on the kingdom. Through her wish, she doesn't just seek personal gain—she sparks a change that inspires others to join her cause. Asha's journey teaches us that one person, even without extraordinary abilities, can make a huge impact when motivated by a genuine desire to make the world a better place.

The Star plays a central role, symbolizing hope and the shared desires that exist within everyone. It's not just a magical being, but a reminder that change comes from within, from the collective hopes of individuals. When Asha makes her wish, she taps into this deeper force, showing that real power isn't concentrated in one person, it flows through communities, connecting and shaping relationships. As Michel Foucault suggests, power is not owned by anyone, it circulates and is shaped by how we interact with one another. Asha's success with her friends highlights the strength of unity. Despite conflicts and doubts, they come together with a shared sense of purpose. Their collaboration shows that trust, hope, and teamwork are more powerful than any individual's control. Ultimately, the people of Rosas triumph not through isolated efforts, but through a collective movement, powered by Asha's unwavering belief in justice.

The story reminds us that individual power, when used for selfish reasons, can harm others. True strength comes from using our gifts and abilities for the greater good, helping others, and standing

together in pursuit of a common goal. Asha's journey proves that even the smallest actions can create ripples of change, inspiring a movement that has the potential to transform the world.

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