



## “UTOPIA” BY SIR THOMAS MORE

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**Abstract.** It is through this article that every reader will have a keen understanding of Thomas More’s Utopia. More’s Utopia questions and criticizes the contemporary concerns of Tudor England.

**Keywords:** Utopia, utopianism, humanism, satire, reform, revolution, urban culture, rational thought, communal prosperity, productivity, no class distinctions or poverty, little crime or immoral behavior, religious freedom, little violence

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most well-known, translated, and significant works of the European Renaissance is Thomas More's Utopia, which has garnered a great deal of critical attention since it was originally published in Latin in 1516. For the first time, three distinct perspectives on More's book are combined in this handbook of specially commissioned and original chapters written by authorities in their respective fields: the Renaissance contexts, the utopian legacies, and the vernacular translations. A comprehensive analysis of the origins, vernacularization, and afterlives of More's book is presented in each chapter, offering a novel and approachable perspective that will be beneficial to scholars, students, and ordinary readers alike. The handbook's unique feature of tracking Utopia over space and time while analyzing the frequently revolutionary events that prompted new writers from far-flung locations like France, Russia, Japan, and China to translate the book is particularly noteworthy. For those who are unfamiliar with Utopia, the editors include a thorough introduction and a synopsis of the book.

### RESEARCH MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

Many topics are covered in utopia, including power, riches, slavery, and the root causes of injustice. The idealized character of a utopian society serves as the book's main theme. Since there is no money or private property in Utopia, there is no corruption, greed, or power battles. Everything is held in common, where everyone's needs are met, and there is very little hierarchy. The foundation of utopia is the belief that wealth taints politics, undermines social fairness, and ruins happiness.



Hythloday notes that despite their wealth, even the richest men are not content since they are preoccupied with protecting and growing their possessions. They deprive the rest of mankind of the means to achieve their goals, which breeds injustice, suffering, and eventually criminality ("Utopia: Theme Analysis"). Throughout the entire book, there is emphasis on the pursuit of justice. They draw attention to the reality that, in England up to the 19th century, criminals were unfairly punished with the death penalty. According to Hythloday, a punishment for a crime like stealing shouldn't be as severe as death; rather, it should be commensurate with the offense. Hythloday also demonstrates how the legal system tends to oppress the poor in order to uphold the interests of the upper classes ("Utopia: Theme Analysis").

### RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among other things, the main goals of hypothetical utopias include equality in the areas of economics, politics, and justice; the specifics of their planned implementation, however, differ depending on the ideology. According to Lyman Tower Sargent, societies are not homogenous and have competing needs that cannot be satisfied at the same time, which makes the nature of a utopia fundamentally contradictory. To quote:

There are socialist, capitalist, monarchical, democratic, anarchist, ecological, feminist, patriarchal, egalitarian, hierarchical, racist, left-wing, right-wing, reformist, free love, nuclear family, extended family, gay, lesbian and many more utopias [Naturism, Nude Christians, ...] Utopianism, some argue, is essential for the improvement of the human condition. But if used wrongly, it becomes dangerous. Utopia has an inherent contradictory nature here. — Lyman Tower Sargent, *Utopianism: A very short introduction* (2010) In his most well-known work of fiction, Sir Thomas More describes an ideal, fantastical world—the term "utopia" was originally used by him. In his work "16th Century Dreams: Thomas More," a complex island society with a shared culture and way of life is described. The Greek word *ou-topos*, which means "nowhere," is the source of the name he invented ("Utopia Summary"). Paradoxically, it is the reverse of the Greek word *eu-topos*, which sounds similar and means "a good place" ("Utopia Summary"). Fundamentally, the book asks if a "perfect" world ever could exist. It also uses this subject as a springboard to show how chaotic European politics were at the time. More's attempt, drawing on "Utopia," to offer suggestions for enhancing European civilization, is presented in this 1516 work. A significant character in the English Renaissance, More was profoundly concerned with the moral and political obligations of individuals. Eventually, he attained one of the greatest positions in the



nation, and in 1529, while serving as England's chancellor, he had a disastrous run-in with his own monarch. More vehemently opposed Henry VIII's break with the Catholic Church and declined to ratify the Oath of Supremacy, which would have placed King Henry above the Pope. He was put in the Tower of London prison after being found guilty of treason. He was still being pushed to sign the oath, but he refused. The standard punishment for traitors is hanging, drawing, or quartering, but the monarch commuted this to execution by beheading. He said as he was being put to death, "The king's good servant, and God's first," from the scaffold. Thomas More lived in a European society that was crooked, full of intrigue, and engulfed in controversy; this society is not the same as the one portrayed in Utopia. This opposing relationship is demonstrated by the author's experiences with politics in his own time and the utopia he created. In Utopia, people can easily meet their needs because it is communal, whereas in European society, people are said to be left in poverty and misery because "Idle monarchs and nobles seek to increase their own wealth and power at the expense of the people" ("Utopia: Theme Analysis"). Evidently unhappy with his surroundings, More attempted to construct an entirely new universe on paper, one devoid of the social classes that finally proved to be fatal to the writer.

### CONCLUSION

Utopia does provide a way out of the deadlock that it perceives between Hythloday and More. Although Utopia critiques European society and provides a standard by which it may be judged and possibly improved, the book's conclusion is that Christianity and the return of Christ are the only paths to perfection. It may be argued that Thomas More himself underwent this journey, continually balancing his allegiance to his monarch and nation with the goals of humanist philosophy. Ultimately, he became a martyr for religious convictions that few others shared, and for that he was beatified.

### USED AND RECOMMENDED LITERATURE

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