Socio-Political Satire By Thomas More

In Thomas More’s 1516, socio-political satire, Utopia, he challenges the values of his contemporary world. Through the book, he is able to criticise many of the political, social, and economic ways of his society. In the book Moore explores a perfect island of Utopia through a carefully constructed character of Raphael. The Utopians are a peaceful group of citizens that rarely have any disputes occurring in their society. Yet Throughout the novel, Moore reveals to the readers that Utopia is not a “perfect” society, as it is revealed that their society was dependant on slaves. More seeks to critique his contemporary world, run by greedy monarchs by contrasting his own world to the perfect society of “Utopia” with the ultimate goal to explore the intricate workings of humanity and how with our different morals and ethics, a perfect society cannot be achieved.

Thomas More questions his own contemporary world and how its justice system is run on greed, resulting in the degradation of its people and its workings. He believes that this ultimately stems from the greed that is found within humanity. Moore criticizes the contemporary justice system through the character of Raphael; how someone would be punished for murder the same way he would be punished theft and how in “our efforts to terrorize thieves we’re actually encouraging them to murder innocent people”. Thieves are given the same punishments as someone who had committed murder. More believes that this is the result of the monarchy not educating its people and expect them to take care of themselves and to flourish. He describes a contrasting humane arrangement he came across whilst travelling through Persia in a district known as Tallstoria which is an absurd play on words; 'tall story' (lie) to emphasise it is not a real place, and how there are many rules put in place to ensure criminals are forced to become good citizens, and spend the rest of their lives making up for the harm they’ve done in the past. Moore questions his own world and its injustices within them, he contrasts this through the world of Utopia and its perfect society. Yet underneath all the differences, Moore has explored the intricate nature of human actions and how its natural greed and evil prevents us from forming a perfect society.

Thomas More delves into the human nature of discovery and our innate urge for discoveries. The novel presents two types of exploration. In one sense, More's anecdotal story mimics his society’s undertakings of explorers who looked through the obscure areas of the globe. These explorers were motivated to a great extent by fantasies and accounts of a new world and one of the most well-known storylines was the possibility of the ideal paradise. Utopia cements the idea of a place that is not merely a paradise, but more specifically, a society of human perfection. Utopia means 'no place' however, we see that the Utopian culture is very flawed. Despite the fact that More praises the pursuit of perfection he acknowledges the rational observation that the reality of a perfect society. Even though perfection is unachievable the conditions within a society can always improve. More's philosophical investigation is focused on the idea that the philosophical reflection and debate will facilitate the processes through which society is improved. This is evident as More suggests that the perfect society should be Plato's suggested structure where philosophers like himself should be king and should rules over all aspects of society. More also suggests that his own kings in his society are not intelligent enough to run the country as he states ' kings are too deeply infected with wrong ideas in childhood to take any philosopher's advice unless they become philosophers themselves. More is takin at shot at

King Henry and his poor choices in running the country of England, by belittling him for not being as smart as philosophers and scholars like himself, and they should run the country.

Ultimately, Thomas More intends to delve into the intricate workings of humanity and to explore what we as humans hold as important. He questions his own contemporary world and its unjust punishment system comparing it to a perfect paradise of “UTOPIA”, slowly revealing that a Utopia cannot exist due to the greedy and selfish nature of humans.