Thomas More, a sixteenth-century English philosopher and politician, coined the word, “Utopia,” for a paradise of total equality and happiness. Equality and happiness are guiding utopian principles that philosophers focus on for discussing perfect societies or critiquing issues with current society. Two of these philosophers are More and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. More and Rousseau argue that wealth and property naturally leads to inequality and unhappiness due to human nature. The lack of wealth and property prevents a hierarchical structure from oppressing lower classes, allowing for uniformity. This uniformity leads to the successful utopian principles of happiness and equality. Both discuss these concepts through their larger discussions of clothing, private property, vices and virtue, and power.

Clothing symbolizes wealth and inequality in both More and Rousseau’s writing as they demonstrate the separate class divisions and resulting privileges. More and Rousseau delve into detail through their diction choice. In More’s *Utopia,* he removes differences in clothing by having all Utopians wear the same outfit. More’s uniformity in clothing illustrates how he creates equality and eliminates socio-economic strife between groups. This equality furthers More’s main argument that lack of individualized property leads to happiness and equality, which are guiding utopian principles. More demonstrates this specifically through the quote, “[how can anyone] be silly enough to think himself better than other people, because his clothes are made of finer woolen thread than theirs. After all, those fine clothes were once worn by a sheep, and they never turned it into anything better than a sheep,” (More 121). In this quote, More emphasizes how the clothing originally was sheep’s wool, symbolizing his message on how property blindly corrupts people and creates an oppressive hierarchy. More’s choice in sheep as the animal represents the human nature to naturally create a hierarchy based on differences, leading to inequality. More further implies through this metaphor that people blindly believe and follow wealthier people just as sheep blindly follow the shepherd, demonstrating his argument against property. This metaphor adds value to More’s assertion that wealth and property creates inequality which leads to unhappiness. More demonstrates the issue with property and wealth through the sheep by directly connecting the sheep to clothing and logically explaining that the differences in the quality of clothing lead to the issues resulting from inequality. While Rousseau agrees with More’s argument against property, Rousseau argues that the societal impact on clothing leads to issues of inequality. He presents this through the quote, “…so long as they were satisfied with clothes made of the skins of animals and sewn together with thorns and fish-bones, adorned themselves only with feathers and shells, and continued to paint their bodies different colours,” (Rousseau 123). In this quote, Rousseau shows the evolution of clothing from basic animal skin to the ornate dresses. In addition, this evolution of clothing demonstrates Rousseau’s argument against property as he shows how as human kind becomes greedier leading to more discord and less utopian principles in placement. This evolution into wealth and property of clothing shows the spiral into inequality as humans never fully satisfy their greed; and therefore, continuously evolve and change, leading to separation between the new and old clothing and inequality. Rousseau argues that greed leads to inequality due to lack of balance of goods; therefore, this inequality leads to communal discord and cannot be present in a utopia.

Private property leads to the creation of wealth and subsequent inequality; furthermore, private property prevents happiness, which causes violence to emerge due to greed and inequality. This logic contrasts typical utopian principles of happiness and equality, giving the reader a better picture of what a utopian community is not. More address the question of private property by arguing that individual ownership is the downfall of a utopian society and proposes that communal living is the only way to create a real utopia. He furthers this argument through the quote, “…wherever you have private property, and money is the measure of all things, it is hardly ever possible for a commonwealth to be governed justly or happily,” (More 128). Key words in this quote are private property, money, justly and happily. More focuses on private property and money as the root causes of the demise of perfection in society, which enhances his assertion that property and wealth lead to dystopias rather than utopias. He also emphasizes the words “justly” and “happily” in the sentence to contrast the utopian principles with the dystopian attributes. Rousseau takes a similar approach to the issue of private property as More did. He states that private property leads to the corruption and inequality, creating issues of violence and poverty in society. Rousseau firmly takes this point through the quote, “How many crimes, wars, murders, how many miseries and horrors Mankind would have been spared by him who, pulling up the stakes or filling in the ditch, had cried out to his kind: Beware of listening to this impostor; You are lost if you forget that the fruits are everyone's and the Earth no-one's,” (Rousseau 123). First, Rousseau questions the audience about the amount of violence caused as a result of the inequality caused by private property. This questioning creates a personal connection with the audience, impressing an emotional blaming and connecting them with his argument against private property. He then advocates for communal based living without any property similar to More’s position, strengthening the argument against property.

More and Rousseau directly contrast each other’s position with vices and virtue through the lens of property; however, they completely agree that religion is part of the systematic oppression tied in directly with wealth and property. More discusses vices and virtues through the lens of religion. More argues that religion allows for equality in eyes of God and for harmony leading to utopian principle of happiness; thus, he exemplifies the Utopian principles of equality and happiness. This argument ties into hierarchal issues that stem from wealth and inequality, and he adds onto his argument that the differences in classes lead to the systematic oppression. On the other hand, Rousseau argues that vices and virtues are a natural part of the social hierarchy that systematically oppresses classes and creates inequality through private property leading to dystopian principles of inequality and unhappiness. Rousseau clearly contrasts More’s argument on vices and virtues. More advocates that vices and virtues through the principles of religion allow for equality while Rousseau argues that vices and virtues lead to a hierarchy that leads to dystopian principles. This hierarchy caused by private property leads to inequality and unhappiness. These vices and virtues presented by Rousseau supplement and support the issues of inequality raised by private property. More begins to examine vices and virtues in religion through the quote,“The religious principles that [the Utopians] invoke are of this nature: that the soul of man is immortal, and by God's goodness born for happiness; and that after this life, rewards are appointed for our virtues and good deeds, punishments for our sins,” (More 134). This quote emphasizes the concepts of private property intertwined with religion as More chooses the word “reward” to symbolize the individual benefit gained from religion. More however argues that since “religious principles are of this nature,” these individual rewards are good for the community as they follow God’s guiding rules, making the city holy. Rousseau, on the other hand, discusses the vices and lack of virtues in private property that harbors dystopian thinking in the quote, “But in some great souls, who consider themselves as citizens of the world, and forcing the imaginary barriers that separate people from people,” (Rousseau 122). In this quote, Rousseau represents private property as the separation between people further creating a hierarchal system, leading to dystopian prinicples.

In terms of evaluating their argument, More and Rousseau have different meanings of power between each other. Rousseau uses the power of discovering the natural human instinct and peeling back the layers of society in order to imply that all institutions create dystopian principles. More uses the power in Utopia to contrast that of 16th century European diplomatic powers. He shows the dystopian principles of inequality and unhappiness. He argues that power based on wealth and property does not make sense, but rather it should be based on justice and strong ethics rather than superficiality found in wealth and property. Rousseau argues that the power of the natural human instinct is the purest form of human existence and the best possible shot for a utopia. As soon as man becomes civilized, utopian principles do not stand a chance. He argues this through the quote,“I conceive two species of inequality among men; one which I call natural, or physical inequality, because it is established by nature, and consists in the difference of age, health, bodily strength, and the qualities of the mind, or of the soul; the other which may be termed moral, or political inequality, because it depends on a kind of convention, and is established, or at least authorized, by the common consent of mankind. This species of inequality consists in the different privileges, which some men enjoy, to the prejudice of others, such as that of being richer, more honoured, more powerful, and even that of exacting obedience from them,” (Rousseau 137). This quote clearly demonstrates how power leads to oppression in inequality and wealth. More on the other hand argues that power should not be purely dictated by those with wealth and shows how at this point Utopia is not possible. This logic is seen through the quote,“[The Utopians] do not understand why a dunderhead with no more brains than a post, and who is about as lewd as he is foolish, should command a great many wise and good people, simply because he happens to have a big pile of gold,” (More 113). This quote demonstrates the power concept leads to issues with inequality and wealth, preventing any utopian principles from occurring.

In conclusion, the lack of wealth and inequality leads to utopian principles of happiness and fairness as More and Rousseau demonstrate through their carefully chosen symbolism and themes. More and Rousseau craft their arguments around the concepts of clothing, private property, vices and virtues, and power. While More and Rousseau contrast each other in their diction choices, they agree on the basic principle that property leads to inequality and discord in communal settings, and that property cannot play a role in a utopian society.