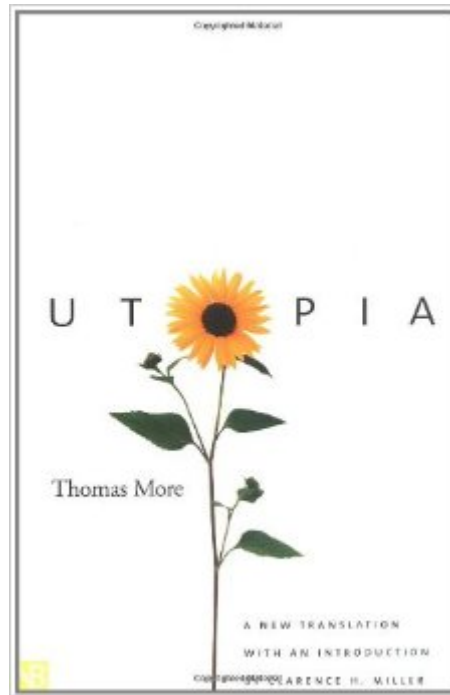


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Utopia: Thomas More



Synopsis

First published in 1516, Saint Thomas More's *Utopia* is one of the most important works of European humanism. Through the voice of the mysterious traveller Raphael Hythloday, More describes a pagan, communist city-state governed by reason. Addressing such issues as religious pluralism, women's rights, state-sponsored education, colonialism, and justified warfare, *Utopia* seems remarkably contemporary nearly five centuries after it was written, and it remains a foundational text in philosophy and political theory. Preeminent More scholar Clarence H. Miller does justice to the full range of More's rhetoric in this new translation. Professor Miller includes a helpful introduction that outlines some of the important problems and issues that *Utopia* raises, and also provides informative commentary to assist the reader throughout this challenging and rewarding exploration of the meaning of political community.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a first-rate biography of the sainted Thomas More. Ackroyd's goals in this biography are to present a non-anachronistic depiction of More, and through his portrait of More, to give readers a sense of the late Medieval world destroyed by the Reformation and the emergence of nation-states. Ackroyd presents More as a man exemplifying the late Medieval ethos. Deeply religious, highly intelligent, and well educated, More existed with a profound sense of human fallibility and saw all aspects of his world as manifestations of a divine order. The world as the body of Christ, a metaphor

to which Ackroyd returns repeatedly, is a recurring theme. The temporal world is transient and a necessary preparation for the eternal and in a crucial sense, less real than the eternal world of Christian teachings. This world is bound by custom and inherited legal and religious traditions, hierarchial and paternalistic in its structure of authority, and deeply enmeshed in rituals that mirror the structure of divine authority. More was not, however, a reactionary except when the radicalism of the Lutherans pushed him to stringent and violent acts needed to defend the integrity of his perception of the Christian world. A prominent member of the Northern European Humanist movement, More was dedicated to the recovery of a renovated faith based on a new reading of the Patristic fathers, attention to classical, particularly Greek neoplatonic authors, and disdain for complex scholastic theology. He and his fellow Humanists hoped for reformation of the Church without abandoning the unity of Christendom, the apparatus of ritual and hierarchy that defined so much of their lives, and the primacy of papal authority. Ackroyd's efforts to present More and the late medieval ethos are very successful.

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