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THOMAS MORE
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY NIALL KISHTAINY

UTOPIA

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UTOPIA

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THOMAS MORE

With an Introduction by
NIALL KISHTAINY

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Map of Utopia by Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598) circa 1595

AN INTRODUCTION

BY NIALL KISHTAINY

In 1516, a book written in Latin was published with the invented word 'utopia' in its title: *Concerning the Best State of a Commonwealth, and the New Island of Utopia*. It described an imaginary place, a good society located somewhere in the New World. The book contained a map of a distant island and a translation of a curious alphabet purportedly used by the islanders. *Utopia*, as the book became known, was Thomas More's most famous work and one of the most celebrated of Renaissance Europe.

More was not the first to imagine an alternative civilization: Plato did so in his *Republic*, but More created a literary form that inquired into social conditions using vivid storytelling rather than theory. A poem at the start of the book hails *Utopia's* vision as surpassing Plato's because it goes beyond the abstract: 'For what Plato's pen has plotted briefly, In naked words, as in a glass, The same have I performed fully, With laws, with men, and treasure fitly.'

More was born in London in 1478 and spent most of his life in the city. He became a lawyer of great distinction and held a variety of posts before becoming secretary to Henry VIII and in 1529, Lord Chancellor.

Today he is remembered for his opposition to the king's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, which led to the break from Rome of the English church.

For refusing to bow to the king's wishes, More was executed in 1535. He became a legendary figure in British history, to many a faultless Catholic martyr. In our secular times, we prefer to view him as a hero of conscience who defended individual belief in the face of tyranny. With *Utopia*, he is seen as a social prophet whose vision for a better world continues to inspire. More was canonized by the Catholic Church in 1935. In 2000 Pope John Paul II declared him the patron saint of politicians.

THE WRITING OF *UTOPIA*

In 1515, More was sent to Bruges as part of a diplomatic mission charged with settling a trade dispute between England and Flanders. During a lull in the talks, More visited Antwerp where he stayed with the town clerk, Peter Giles, with whom he developed a close friendship. Antwerp was then Europe's leading commercial city, and Giles one of its prominent officials and a highly learned man. The time in Antwerp had a stimulating effect on More. While at leisure there he conceived and began to write *Utopia*.

There appears, therefore, to have been an element of serendipity in the composition of *Utopia*, but in fact the ideas in it had been brewing in More's mind for years. By the time of the Bruges mission, More was a busy lawyer, and was Undersheriff of London. He had become a Member of Parliament and had negotiated on behalf of the Mercers' trading company, which represented wool and cloth merchants. These activities would have made More well aware of the social problems facing Tudor England as its commercial economy grew and traditional ways of life were displaced.

Steeped in theological and classical learning, More had become one of the most brilliant scholars of his day. When a young man, he had caught the attention of England's men of letters by delivering a series of lectures on *The City of God*, the vast work written at the end of

the Roman Empire by the early Christian father, St Augustine of Hippo. Augustine's central idea was that of two cities that exist within human society: the worldly city of temporal desire and sin and the godly city of peace and fulfilment. Augustine was a major influence on More's spiritual development, and the idea of the two cities applied to social questions most likely fuelled the thinking that went into *Utopia*. A few years earlier, More had begun writing *A History of Richard III*, an account of the king whose defeat by Henry Tudor at Bosworth Field ushered in the Tudor reign. Richard's notoriety came in part from More's unflattering portrait of him in this work. Through Richard's story, the book deals with questions of tyranny and of sound kingship.

Utopia, then, was written by a man of considerable intellectual and practical credentials. More knew the law inside out, moved in the highest scholarly and court circles, and in his early works had already begun thinking about the pressing social and political problems of the day. Authors of the utopian tracts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries aimed their works at a wide audience, hoping that their ideas would be adopted in practical programmes of reform. *Utopia*'s sixteenth-century audience was much narrower: the book was written for the elite Latin-speaking scholars of Europe rather than the bakers and butchers of More's daily life in London.

THE ISLAND OF UTOPIA

Utopia takes the form of a traveller's tale told by a seafarer who once chanced upon the island of Utopia. During a series of dialogues with various interlocutors the explorer tells of life on the happy island and makes scathing critiques of English society. The story starts with real events and with More himself, who begins by telling of his mission to Flanders and his journey to Antwerp.

The fiction starts when More recalls one day stepping into the street after Mass and seeing Peter Giles talking to a sun-beaten mariner. Giles tells him that the man, Raphael Hythloday, is a traveller with amazing tales of far-off lands. The men retire to a garden and Raphael tells More and Giles about his travels generally, his views on

the state of contemporary Europe, and about the distant nation of Utopia.

In Raphael's description of Utopia, we encounter a society that in some of its surface features resembles England. For example, like London, Utopia's capital city of Amaurot lies on a hill by a tidal river with a stone bridge over it. But at a deeper level Utopia is an inversion of the societies of England and Europe. In Utopia property is held in common and there is no money. Whenever a family needs food or clothes, the head of the household goes to the city warehouse and takes what is required. The Utopians are a disciplined, frugal people devoted to the higher pleasures of conversation and learning. They have no reason to take more goods than they need, having no desire to flaunt their possessions. Their sturdy houses have no locks on the doors and are exchanged every ten years by lot.

One of the most memorable Utopian customs, used to show the Utopians' rejection of opulence, is the making of chamber pots out of gold and the public shaming of wrongdoers by placing gold crowns on their heads. Pearls and diamonds are given to the children for playthings; they discard the baubles as they grow up.

In Utopia everyone works in the fields or at handicrafts, unlike in Europe where societies are dragged down by the wasteful extravagance and idleness of noblemen and their retainers. Because all lend a hand and there is no need for luxuries, the Utopian working day is short and there is plenty of time left over to engage in learning and contemplation. There are only a few laws, simple enough for everyone to understand, and no lawyers. The Utopians come together for their meals, during which a morally improving text is read out and discussed. After dinner, the people play music or converse in their gardens.

Utopia ranges over many questions including: war (the Utopians hate the pursuit of military glory that Europe's princes lust after); the qualities of priests (the Utopians' priests are few in number and truly pious, unlike those in Europe); the functioning of politics (aimed at avoiding tyranny); and marriage customs (divorce is allowed in special circumstances and infidelity is punished). But the communal principle

of *Utopia* is the big theme that encompasses all of these, and at two places in the book Raphael pauses his travelogue to deliver tirades about the impossibility of justice in societies based on private property. More and Giles raise objections, arguing that without private property society could not function because people would not bother to work. Raphael is undaunted. The rich will always exploit the poor, he says, through private fraud and by capturing the law. Policies to mitigate these defects will never have much of an effect while there is still private property. Raphael hails Utopia as the best commonwealth because with everything held in common everyone is guaranteed their subsistence. The abolition of property and money ends fraud, murder, disorder, and anxiety. What would stop the adoption of utopian arrangements, then? Human pride, which measures fortune by the ill-fortune of others.

UTOPIA AND THE REAL WORLD

Utopia is divided into two books. Book One begins with the fictional More's meeting with Raphael, then leads into a series of dialogues between Raphael, More, and Giles. Raphael's recollections of conversations that he had while visiting England introduce a number of other characters. These first conversations are not about Utopia directly, the topic of the island appearing almost as an aside.

On hearing Raphael's descriptions of the different societies that he saw during his travels, Giles says that Raphael should become an adviser to a king, where his knowledge could be put to good use. But Raphael says that courts are places of flattery and rigid convention where the ideas of visionary philosophers are misunderstood and ignored. Much of the rest of Book One is a tug of war between Raphael on one side and More and Giles on the other, the latter two pressing the case for public service on the unshakeable Raphael.

During this discussion Raphael reports a conversation that he had in England that shows the futility of serving kings. At a dinner, a lawyer had praised the harsh punishment given to thieves. Raphael replied

that such punishments were pointless and wrong because in an unjust society the poor had to steal to survive. Then comes a famous passage in which Raphael identifies another cause of theft: sheep, which in their grazing swallow up people and whole villages. Raphael is condemning the enclosure of land then underway in England in which agricultural common lands were fenced off and turned over to the raising of sheep for the lucrative wool trade. As a result, farming communities were thrown off the fields and into poverty. The lawyer rejects Raphael's argument for less severe punishments, claiming that they would threaten public order. The other guests agree with the lawyer, but when the distinguished master of the house says that Raphael's argument may have merit, they quickly do an about-turn. This, says Raphael, illustrates his point that courts are filled with sycophants who simply parrot what they think their masters want to hear.

How do Books One and Two relate to each other? Book Two in narrative terms is the less complex, consisting mainly of Raphael's description of Utopia. More actually wrote this book first. Book One is a swirl of voices, in turn quizzical, curious, and disputatious, that together probe questions of practical politics and statecraft seemingly removed from the grand social vision of Book Two. It is telling that More began Book Two while on a sojourn away from his usual London life and turned to Book One when back in the city and immersed again in his legal and official duties. Book One frames Book Two by exploring how radical solutions can be made into reality. Can we hope for utopia in a world of imperfect politics?

This question has lain at the heart of utopian debates ever since, echoed in the argument between Raphael, More, and Giles about where visionaries should employ their talents. To maintain their ideological integrity, many utopians have since followed Raphael in wishing to stay aloof from the grubby, compromised world of politics.

At the end of Book One, the fictional More sets out a middle way. Raphael's social visions are speculative and abstract and hard to fathom for most people, says More. In the court of a king they would fall on deaf ears if expounded without taking proper account of the context. The

problem is that such abstract philosophy lacks sensitivity to its setting and its audience – to the stage on which political life is played out. More instead advocates a philosophy that is tailored to the audience, one pursued by the wise visionary who realizes that though politics is imperfect there is no reason to stay aloof from it. Through tact and judgement one may manage things 'so that, if you are not able to make them go well, they may be as little ill as possible'.

MORE'S CAREER DILEMMA

As More worked on Utopia, he was himself facing the question of

Hans Holbein's *Sir Thomas More* (1527), Frick Collection

whether to get more closely involved with political life by becoming a royal official. From a young age, More had moved in circles of privilege and influence and seemed destined to hold high office. But he was also a person of deep spiritual yearning. At the beginning of his legal

career in the early years of the sixteenth century, More undertook intense theological study. One result was his lectures on St Augustine. He also attached himself to the Charterhouse, a Carthusian monastery just outside London's city walls, where he followed a regimen of prayer and fasting.

An important part of More's later image is that during these years he was hankering after the life of a scholar-monk, but was being sought out as an official by the king. It was said he was reluctant to agree to royal service, wanting to serve God and not the worldly intrigues of the court. His friend, the great Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus, claimed that More had to be 'dragged' to court.

It is true that More disliked the pomp and ostentation of court culture. But on his return from Bruges he was a regular visitor to court, always making sure to pay his respects to the Lord Chancellor, Thomas Wolsey. It is possible that the perception of More as a reluctant courtier is part of the busy legend-making pursued by himself and by his friends and early biographers. In all likelihood, More was simply seeking the middle way that his fictional alter ego in *Utopia* recommended: to be an intellectually independent but practical courtier who, despite the compromises of political life, sought at least to do some good and to reduce harm. Thus, in 1518, More became a member of the King's Council and soon became the king's secretary. He acted as a go-between between Henry and Wolsey, who, until his fall in 1529, would be England's most powerful official.

A UTOPIAN IN TUDOR ENGLAND

It was an auspicious time for a man of More's interests and background to enter royal service. The question of Henry's divorce that would later lead to Wolsey's fall and to More's execution had yet to dominate English politics. The civil wars known as the Wars of the Roses had ended in the late fifteenth century when More was still a boy. The Tudors had come to power, putting the English nation state on a more stable footing.

With European explorers discovering and plundering new lands, international trade routes were opening up and England was becoming an important trading power and London a major commercial hub. When Henry VIII took the throne in 1509, More wrote verses hailing the dawn of a new era of prosperity and justice. Henry was himself a scholar, and a new breed of learned courtiers began to emerge, like More drawn from middling social ranks and trained in the law.

More and many of his friends at court were connected to the Christian humanist scholarship that had originated in Renaissance Italy and spread to Northern Europe during the fifteenth century. Its exponents returned to original Greek and Latin texts, revived classical rhetoric that would give new ideas practical as well as intellectual potency, and rejected the abstract logical methods of medieval scholastic philosophy. More and other humanist scholars believed that the renovation of literary scholarship would promote human virtue, a purer form of Christianity, and a better society. Erasmus and More were leading lights of this movement and forged a famous friendship and intellectual partnership. Helped through publication by Giles and Erasmus, *Utopia* was one of the most famous literary creations of this new cultural setting.

Thomas Wolsey epitomized the opulence and worldly ambition of the court that More deplored, but he was a champion of the new learning and was promoting policies that would find parallels in *Utopia*. Wolsey attempted to reform the inefficient and sclerotic English legal system, which had long disadvantaged the poor. In 1517, he established a commission on the enclosure of common land, then illegal, and attempted to prosecute those undertaking such practices.

When More became Lord Chancellor in 1529, he continued Wolsey's legal efforts to make the law swifter and more accessible to the poor. More may even have considered dedicating *Utopia* to Wolsey, and it has been conjectured that the book inspired Wolsey to set up his enclosure inquiry. It is hard to draw precise connections between Wolsey's and More's actual policies and the new forms of society set out in *Utopia*. However, the echoes of one in the other are another reason for believing that More might have been less

conflicted about entering royal service than many of his biographers have assumed.

Another echo of *Utopia* in More's life is found in the reputation of his family as having been especially learned and virtuous. More had four children by his first wife, Jane Colt, who died in her early twenties; his second wife, the well-off Alice Middleton, acted as stepmother and stayed with him until his death. The family followed a routine of prayer and study and all were encouraged in cultural pursuits. More's children were carefully educated in the classics and religion and his favourite, Margaret, became one of the most learned women in England. At mealtimes, a religious text would be read out and discussed. Erasmus called the household a Platonic Academy devoted to study and spiritual cultivation. Visiting scholars would come to stay, courtiers pass through, and sometimes even the king would drop in for dinner. More's admirers have thought of his home as a little humanist Utopia, a place of scholarship, Christian virtue, and public duty.

MORE'S INTENTION IN *UTOPIA*

The subtitle of More's opus – *A Truly Golden Little Book, No Less Beneficial than Entertaining* – raises the central critical problem of *Utopia* that its readers have been arguing about ever since: what did More intend? Is the book meant as a piece of literary entertainment or as social instruction? If we are meant to take its social arguments seriously, then which of the opposing characters' views are we meant to believe? Is the real More instructing us about how to take our own societies closer to perfection, or is he saying that this is a futile endeavour? Who speaks for the real More: the fictional More and Giles, the sceptics, or Raphael, the arch-radical?

This sense of ambiguity runs through the text, which is full of word play and paradox, starting with the word *utopia* itself. It is a Greek-derived neologism of More's that could mean 'good place' (*eu-topia*) or 'no place' (*ou-topia*). The river that flows through Amaurot is called Anyder or 'waterless' and the governor of Utopia is named

Ademus, 'without a people'. Even the shape and dimensions of the island described by Raphael turn out to be mathematically impossible. Raphael Hythloday bears as his first name that of the archangel who came to heal, yet the second part of his name means 'peddler of nonsense'. Finally, More was fond of punning the Latin version of his name, *Morus*, the Greek for 'fool'. It raises the question: if Raphael peddles nonsense, then why does the fictional More oppose him with the objections of a halfwit?

This slipperiness is reinforced by the story's basis in real events and people as well as the inclusion in the text of a map, alphabet, and prefatory letters. In one of these letters, More apologizes to Giles for taking so long to finish the book. He admits that he was at first worried about the challenge of arranging the material and expressing it elegantly, but then realized that all he really had to do was to 'write plainly the matter as I heard it spoken'. He tells Giles that now he has got to the end of the writing he finds that a few details have slipped his mind, such as the width of the bridge spanning the Anyder. Was it five hundred or three hundred yards long? Would Giles mind getting in touch with Raphael and asking him to settle the matter – and while he is at it, clear up a crucial point which More is embarrassed not to have clarified at the time, that is, where in the New World is Utopia actually located? In another letter, Giles says that during their conversations, Raphael did mention the location of the island but, as he did so, someone nearby coughed loudly, drowning out the crucial words. Giles promises to find Raphael and ask him, though there are rumours that he died on his way home or that he returned to Utopia.

This sense of literary play remains even in that part of the text in which Raphael drily catalogues the customs of the Utopians, even without interjections from More and Giles. Some of these seem designed to puzzle and confound. There are slaves in Utopia (people are not born slaves but are made into them as punishment) and the death penalty is used for certain offences. Utopia is a society of strict control and surveillance: the Utopians can only travel with official permission and discussions about public policy outside the senate are punishable by

death. The Utopians foment plots in enemy nations and hire assassins to kill enemy leaders.

Here it must be remembered that More wrote before the advent of modern liberalism and individualism, and so to us some of the Utopians' practices look highly objectionable. But they would have looked much less so to a person of the early sixteenth century. What are we to make, though, of the Utopian practice of displaying potential marriage partners naked so that they can inspect each other before deciding to marry – just as one examines a horse before buying it? One modern critic quipped: 'So this is Utopia is it? I beg your pardon; I thought it was hell.'

INTERPRETING *UTOPIA*

Many of the earliest responses to *Utopia* passed over the paradoxical aspects of the text and took what More said at face value. Some of his contemporaries took More's game playing literally. One reader was said to have been so excited by More's description of Utopia that he asked to be sent there in the capacity of Bishop. Even those who did not believe that Utopia was a real place often assumed that More earnestly sought to describe a perfect commonwealth that could be used as a criticism of existing societies and as a means for reforming them.

Later commentators were more sensitive to the various layers of the text, which made More's intentions and real views harder to pin down. One way of dismissing the seriousness of More's social vision has been to identify the views of the real More with the firmest denials of Raphael's arguments by the fictional More. A particularly influential interpretation of *Utopia* from Raymond Chambers in the 1930s downplays its radical content: More's tale is in fact an allegorical lament for the old medieval world of piety and communal life and a rejection of the new one of commerce and individual striving. In this view, More drew on his experience at the Charterhouse to imagine Utopia as a spiritual idyll in the form of an expanded monastery. This place of piety was created by pagans ignorant of Christ and the Bible who, through

the exercise of natural reason, created a religion similar to Christianity. Utopia then stands as a criticism of Christian Europe, which has degenerated into corruption and impiety and falls far short of the virtue achieved by the non-Christian Utopians. By this view, More is one of the last great medieval Catholics, a conservative trying to hold back the tide of modernity.

From the nineteenth century, More began to be seen as an early communist, and Raphael as voicing More's true conscience. After the Russian Revolution, Lenin had an obelisk erected in Moscow which celebrated thinkers who promoted the liberation of humankind. Alongside the names of Marx and Engels was that of Thomas More. Socialist and communist thought sets out a path of history from feudalism to capitalism. Contradictions within capitalism blow that system apart, making way for socialism. Socialist champions of More such as Karl Kautsky in the late nineteenth century saw much of this in *Utopia*: the condemnation by Raphael of enclosure is of a piece with Marx's account of the accumulation and dispossession that drive the creation of the capitalist economy. Wealth falls into the hands of a few and creates a landless poor that endures great suffering. When Raphael attacks the harsh punishment of thieves, he voices an important socialist principle: that people's choices are limited by the material conditions that they find themselves in. Their lives, and therefore their actions, can be elevated by improving those conditions.

Yet socialism grew out of a critique of the smoky factory capitalism of the nineteenth century, which pitted a mass proletariat against large capitalists. This was far from the England of More's time, which still retained remnants of a feudal economy. Utopia had a handicraft economy quite different to the industrial one which socialists considered to be the foundation of a future socialist system. Both capitalism and socialism pursue by different means the end of satisfying growing human wants. Utopia, on the other hand, is a disciplined society of ascetics which aims at the restriction of desire. Gains in the efficiency of production are used not to give people more goods or mindless leisure but to allow them more time for study and self-improvement.

Although the content and context of modern socialism are different from those of *Utopia*, More's book shines a light on the negative impacts of the money economy. In championing a communal way of life, it does anticipate the social vision of later socialism. The view of *Utopia* as an elegy for medieval Catholicism has been challenged, but even if we prefer to view More as a forward-looking radical rather than a backward-looking conservative, it reminds us in our secular times not to ignore the religious context of More's work. More revered the monastic way of life when it was carried out with proper discipline, and this is reflected in the high-minded lives of the Utopians.

But Utopia is much more than a monastery writ large: it is a nation with a government, with families in which children are born and raised, and with armies that go to war when they have to. Our final glimpse of the Utopians comes at the end of Book Two when we see them at prayer in their temple. They thank God for placing them in a happy commonwealth, but ask that if their society falls short of perfection, God will show them their error. They promise to try out any new social arrangements that will take them closer to perfection. In their prayer they show the willingness of true radicals, socialist or otherwise, to boldly throw off the past and to discard unprofitable traditions in favour of better ways of life.

More recent interpretations such as those of Elizabeth McCutcheon and Dominic Baker-Smith have emphasized the paradoxical nature of *Utopia*. Anticipating postmodern concerns with multiple perspectives and the subjectivity of truth, *Utopia*'s irony and its play of opposing voices are perhaps its point. More's linguistic ploys unmoor the reader from commonplace social beliefs so that unorthodox ideas can be introduced and explored. Far from proposing a complete utopian blueprint, More tells his story of the good society through a set of shifting perspectives so as to lay bare the promises and pitfalls of the utopian quest. This is arguably the best context within which to deal with the question of who the real More was and with the potentially confounding aspects of Utopian life. Perhaps the

real More, himself a complex and highly paradoxical man, is both the fictional More and Raphael.

Utopianism is a dynamic, experimental ,and never-ending method of social inquiry, not one in which perfection can easily be defined and implemented. This sense that the search for utopia has to be an open-ended pursuit that must balance different perspectives is hinted at when Raphael has completed his description of Utopia. The fictional More says that much of what Raphael described 'seemed very absurd'. As Raphael appears to be tired from talking, instead of arguing with him further, More leads him into supper, expressing hope for further opportunities for discussion.

Utopia closes on a note of equivocation from More: 'I cannot perfectly agree to everything he has related. However, there are many things in the commonwealth of Utopia that I rather wish, than hope, to see followed in our governments.'

UNCOVERING MORE THE MAN

In his later career, More was caught up in the turmoil of Reformation politics. His biographical persona has often been moulded by historians according to their religious and political allegiances, making it hard to uncover the 'real' More. The earliest accounts of his life from which we gain many biographical details were written by people close to him. Many were hagiographies aimed at building the case for More's saint-hood. They present More as witty, learned, and industrious, a morally spotless man who bravely died for the Catholic Church.

More lost some of his repute in Protestant England. The author of the first English translation of *Utopia*, published after the Reformation, included a rebuke in his introduction, saying that More was a man of 'incomparable wit' and 'profound knowledge' but 'obstinate' in matters of religion 'even to the very death'. More was gradually absolved of his refusal to conform. His anti-clericalism and desire for a purer church were used to rehabilitate him as a Protestant reformer in spirit if not in name.

Twentieth-century historians led by Geoffrey Elton and Richard Marius revised these portrayals of a righteous More to reveal a complex, imperfect figure. One line of attack has been on More's involvement in the detection and punishment of Lutheran heretics when in Henry VIII's service. More's admirers have downplayed his role in these campaigns, but revisionist historians have seized on it as evidence of More being a religious fanatic – drawing a contrast with the earlier humanist More who wrote *Utopia*. One highly critical account by Jasper Ridley claims that if More had lived in the twentieth century he would have been the kind of zealot who in the service of an ideology justifies the death of millions.

Revisionist historians have also returned to the question of why More put aside his apparent aspirations to become a monk for family and official life. Some have argued that he chose to marry out of sheer sexual frustration, and that his decision tormented him for the rest of his life. He would only achieve a resolution of sorts at the end of his days when imprisoned in his cell, living like a monk, praying and writing spiritual tracts. More, who wore a hair shirt under his clothes and whipped himself before the altar, under this less favourable view was a brooding, conflicted man, much less attractive than the earlier picture of him. A version of this darker image appears in the acclaimed 2009 novel *Wolf Hall* by Hilary Mantel, which caused controversy for its less than flattering depiction of More.

These critical views have been a useful corrective to More hagiography, and help to explore the tensions at the heart of More's life and work. Both approaches often go too far though. Balanced assessments try to avoid seeing More as saint or villain and concede that much of the internal motivation for his actions cannot be known.

Despite the scholarly controversies, the popular heroic image of More is still very much alive, most famously in the play by Robert Bolt, *A Man For All Seasons*, which premiered in London in 1960 and was later made into two films. Here More becomes a sort of liberal exemplar, bravely standing up for his conscience in the face of tyranny. Speaking of the religious belief that has brought him into conflict with the king,