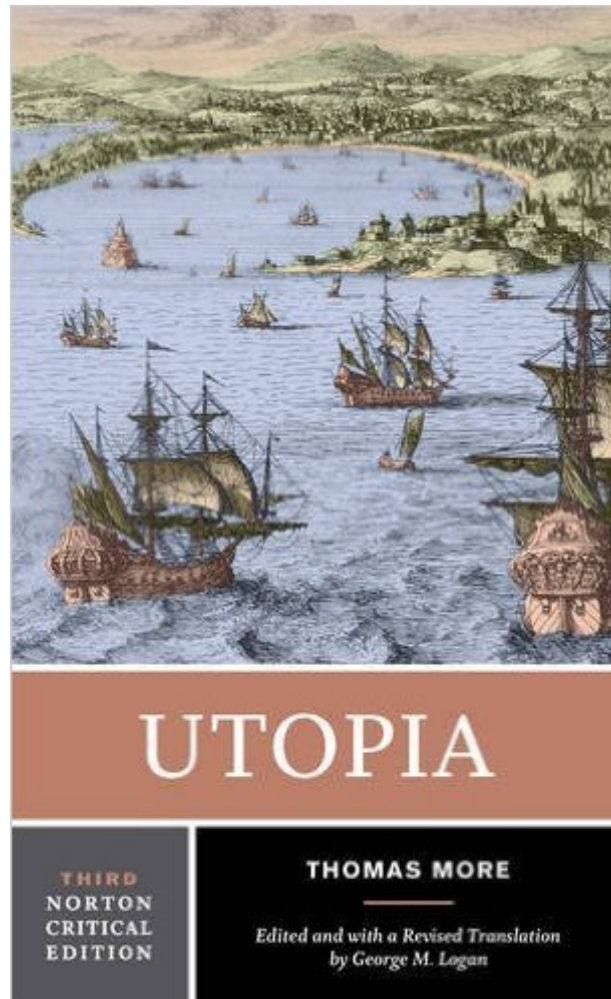


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# Utopia (Third Edition) (Norton Critical Editions)



## Synopsis

Inspiring, provocative, prophetic, and enigmatic, *Utopia* is the literary masterpiece of a visionary statesman and one of the most influential books of the modern world. Based on Thomas More's penetrating analysis of the folly and tragedy of the politics of his time and all times, *Utopia* (1516) is a seedbed of alternative political institutions and a perennially challenging exploration of the possibilities and limitations of political action. This Norton Critical Edition is built on the translation that Robert M. Adams created for it in 1975. For the Third Edition, George M. Logan has carefully revised the translation, improving its accuracy while preserving the grace and verve that have made it the most highly regarded modern rendering of More's Renaissance Latin work.

**Backgrounds** • includes a wide-ranging selection of the major secular and religious texts from Plato to Amerigo Vespucci that informed More's thinking, as well as a selection of the responses to his book by members of his own humanist circle and an account by G. R. Elton of the condition of England at the time More wrote. **Criticism** • now offers a more comprehensive survey of modern scholarship, adding excerpts from seminal books by Frederic Seebohm, Karl Kautsky, and Russell Ames, as well as selections from stimulating and influential recent readings by Dominic Baker-Smith and Eric Nelson. In the final section, on *Utopia's Modern Progeny*, the opening chapter of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* is now complemented by excerpts from another great work in the complex tradition of utopian and dystopian fiction, Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*. Throughout the Third Edition, the editorial apparatus has been thoroughly revised and updated. An updated Selected Bibliography is also included.

## 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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