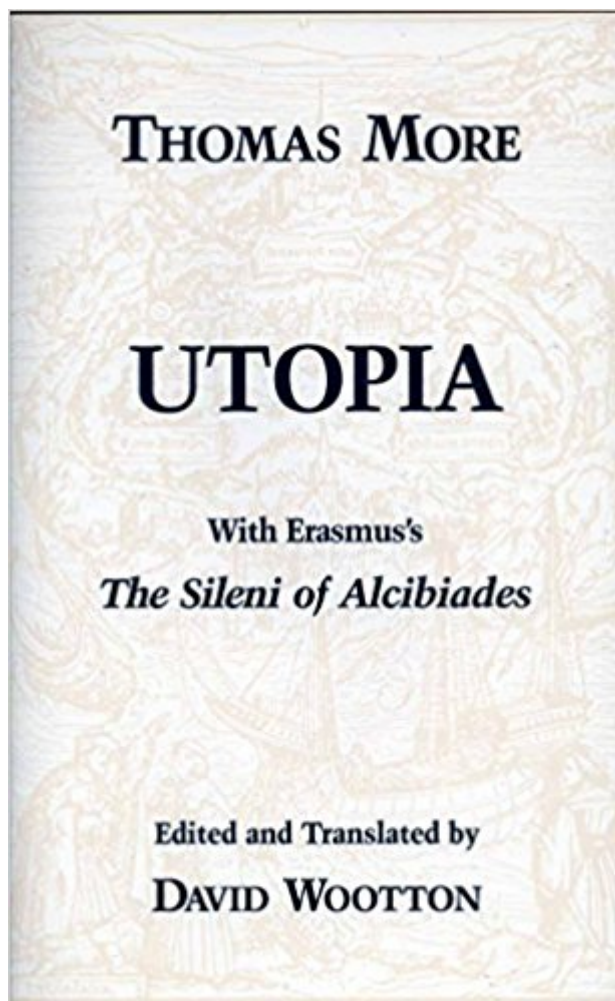


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# Utopia With Erasmus's: The Silent Alcibiades (Hackett Classics)



## Synopsis

Wootton's translation brings out the liveliness of More's work and offers an accurate and reliable version of a masterpiece of social theory. His edition is further distinguished by the inclusion of a translation of Erasmus's 'The Sileni of Alcibiades,' a work very close in sentiment to Utopia, and one immensely influential in the sixteenth century. This attractive combination suits the edition especially well for use in Renaissance and Reformation courses as well as as for Western Civilization survey courses. Wootton's Introduction simultaneously provides a remarkably useful guide to anyone's first reading of More's mysterious work and advances an original argument on the origins and purposes of Utopia which no one interested in sixteenth-century social theory will want to miss.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In addition to its elegant and precise translation of Utopia, this edition offers the prefatory material and postscripts from the 1518 edition, and More's letter to Giles from the 1517 edition. Mr. Wootton has also added Erasmus's 'The Sileni of Alcibiades,' which is crucial for the interpretation he gives in his Introduction of the many ambiguities and contradictions in More's text as well as his life. The Introduction is a most valuable guide for understanding this man who was a proponent of toleration and a persecutor of heretics, a courtier full of worldly ambition ending as a fearless martyr. The contradictions of the man translated into a complicated

and contradictory historiography to which Mr. Wootton's Introduction is a most intelligent guide. A welcome addition to the More literature. -J. W. Smit, Professor of History, Columbia University

Every serious reader of Utopia, friends and foes alike of Thomas More, will be enlightened by Wootton's essay. Combining it with his translations of More and Erasmus works well. This is a delightfully fine piece of scholarship, even down to the notes on the illustrations. --Donald J. Millus, Sixteenth Century Journal

Like his Introduction, which says much, both directly and indirectly, about the complexity of More's language and mentality, David Wootton's translation of the Utopia is a thoughtful and careful one. Wootton has been particularly scrupulous in his handling of marginal annotations. . . notes are economical but helpful. Students interested in 16th century humanism and/or developments in early modern Europe will find this edition especially appealing, as will everyone interested in interpretations of More's Utopia, here fruitfully juxtaposed with Erasmus's philosophy and perspective on the world as these are represented by his adage on 'The Sileni of Alcibiades.' --Elizabeth McCutcheon, Utopian Studies

Text: English (translation) Original Language: Latin --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

If all you know of Thomas More is the film *A Man for All Seasons* or that he was eventually canonized a saint for sacrificing his life by refusing Henry the Eighth's demand that he recognize his divorce from Catherine of Aragon and his marriage to Anne Boleyn, I strongly recommend you read this excellent Hackett Publishing version of *Utopia*. With a brilliant and incisive introduction coupled with a superbly readable translation, both by David Woolton serving as editor, the reader is given unusually complete context for the world's first Utopian romance/manifesto/travelogue. I first read this work in college and enjoyed it immensely but failed to grasp its subtlety and depth. Reading it now, especially surrounded by background material that illuminates the work with skillful intelligence, making it especially appropriate reading during these days of political instability and religious turbulence, I found it to be a profound and intellectually stimulating work. *Utopia* was published exactly 500 years ago yet it seems utterly contemporary in its skillful positing of the thesis that the socialist/communist society of Utopia is a possible paradigm of a political entity. But More is too subtle and brilliant a thinker to simply write a political tract in favor of such a government. His genius resides in his sophisticated recognition of the incessant ambiguities that complicate human interactions. He creates a multi-layered dialogue in which his characters provide all of the counter-arguments and warnings about the shortcomings and possible failures of such a communist state, while never denying its effectiveness in combating human economic inequality. The result is a

powerful dialectical argument about the nature of governments, a brilliant discussion about the power of the state to provide for human happiness some 260 years before Thomas Jefferson, and a beautifully rendered philosophical debate about the deep human need for freedom and the state's requirement for acquiescence in order to function effectively. There are many more aspects to Utopia that make it fascinating reading, even if it is "merely" required reading for a class. Thomas More was a man of tremendous intellect: a profoundly religious man who embodied many contradictions, including that of great worldliness and even an immensely subtle cynicism that requires careful, patient reading to discover. Utopia is a masterpiece of political/economic thought disguised as an improbable travelogue. It is the very first Utopian novel and as it celebrates its 500th anniversary, it lays claim to being the most important of this fascinating genre ever written.

Purchased this book for a history class and enjoyed the connection to early Europe through the eyes of commoners rather than from those in the business of recording history via records or manuscripts.

required book for my college class good read. would recommend it to other history majors studying England in the Tudor era.

got in for a class and was great! Great packaging! T h a n k y o u ! ! ! ! ! :)

It was not the book I was expecting. It's not the book Utopia, it's just a translation and I didn't realize.

With many letters to the author and others of the time included, the book provides a well rounded look at the topic. Utopia is a land that is somewhat of a social commune. A land where everyone does work but has ample time to rest and relax. This book definitely is a must on the reading list.

I needed Utopia for a class, so whether or not I enjoyed it is pretty much irrelevant. I doubt this book is being read for personal enjoyment, but it wasn't a bad read.

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