

Edited and Introduced by
Edward J. Alam

THOMAS MORE'S
UTOPIA

500 YEARS ON...
AND COUNTING



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THOMAS MORE'S UTOPIA

500 YEARS ON. . . AND COUNTING

Notre Dame University-Louaize
NDU Press©

ISBN 978-614-475-004-9

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Author: Thomas More
Editor: Edward J. Alam

Cover design: Department of Creative Design
Printed by: Meouchi and Zakaria Printing Press

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Forward

Kamal Abouchedid

Notre Dame University-Louaize

Lebanon

It is a pleasure to provide the forward for this book. It represents a platform of renewed hope and grit for creating a better society built on hope, love, justice, and integrity—a redolence of the Catholic legacy of Saint Thomas More’s *Utopia* published in 1516. The 500th anniversary of the publication of *Utopia* is not only an occasion for celebrating an imagined *Utopian Island*, a self-contained world of sharing common values per se, but also an occasion for reflection, introspection, synthesis and evaluation. As such, the Benedict XVI Endowed Chair and the Faculty of Law and Political Science (FLPS) held an international conference in May 2016 at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) to meet a longstanding need, i.e., to partake in a Catholic intellectual odyssey to contemplate sustainable solutions to perennial world-torn divisive politics, resultant multiple-deprivations and concomitant ubiquitous injustices. Being cognizant of myriad social, political, cultural, and economic challenges facing societies today, the Benedict

XVI Endowed Chair engages academics hailing from different backgrounds in scholarly debates that seek to conjure up sustainable solutions based on reason, research, and hope.

During the conference, discussants tackled a medley of interrelated pertinent interdisciplinary topics focusing on the landmark work by Saint Thomas More, *Utopia*. Being a lawyer, scholar, King Henry VIII's trusted civil servant, and above all a venerated Saint by the Catholic Church, Saint Thomas More's profound experience spans multiple fields that have provided an overarching theological tinged theoretical framework to the topics and themes discussed in the subsequent chapters of this book.

Finally, this book, which discusses *Utopia*, both normatively and analytically, offers tonic suggestions for promoting a wider commitment to the common good. I am confident that it will become a useful supplemental text for religion, philosophy, and social issues courses that may include *Utopian Socialism* by the French philosopher, François Marie Charles Fourier, *The City of the Sun* by the Italian Dominican philosopher, Tomaso Campanella, and the concept of *A World without Physicians and Judges* by Andalusian philosopher, Ibn Bajj.

Introduction

Edward J. Alam

Notre Dame University-Louaize

Lebanon

As we know, 2016 was a year of commemorating great literary figures. Universities and various institutions all over the world were celebrating the life and work of Shakespeare and Cervantes, four hundred years after their deaths, so why not commemorate the life and work of St. Thomas More five hundred years after the publication of his masterpiece, *Utopia*. Five hundred years later, it is still a book for all seasons, and Thomas More himself is, as the first paper in this volume puts it, a man for all *reasons*! And so when my colleague, Dr. Elie El-Hindy, first approached me with the idea of organizing an international conference to commemorate the five-hundredth anniversary of Thomas More's 1516 publication of *Utopia*, I immediately embraced it.

Very few books continue to attract interest after a century and even fewer after five centuries. Thomas More's 1516 masterpiece is such book. Not only More the man is a 'man for all seasons' but his masterpiece is also a

book for all seasons, for all disciplines, and thus far, for half a millennia. There is something here for literally everyone, for the economist, for the businessman, for the sociologist, for the literary man, for the scholar, for the monk, for the priest, for the statesman, for the general, for the poet, for the philosopher, for the king, for the worker, for the comedian, for the lawyer, for the diplomat, and most importantly, for the lover. One gets the feeling while reading *Utopia* that More himself has firsthand experience in each of these areas. And one easily forgets while reading this carefully crafted concise and colorful *tour de force* that it was written five hundred years ago. It is not mere hyperbole to claim that it very well could have been written just yesterday.

Underscoring just how important Thomas More is, the Catholic Church took the well meditated decision during the jubilee year in 2000 of proclaiming Saint Thomas More as the Patron Saint of politicians and statesmen. Pope John Paul II stated then that “The life and martyrdom of Saint Thomas More have been the source of a message which spans the centuries and which speaks to people everywhere of the inalienable dignity of the human conscience. Precisely because of the witness which he bore, even at the price of his life, to the primacy of truth over power, Saint Thomas More is venerated as an imperishable example of moral integrity”. Thus we

see that the life of Saint Thomas More clearly illustrates a fundamental truth of political ethics—the very ethics the world is in such dire need of today.

NDU took great satisfaction in organizing the conference in 2016 and now takes great pride in bringing the proceedings of that conference to publication. With the exception of the fine piece by Greg Reichberg, all the papers here were given at the conference. The aim is to give hope and encouragement to our young people here in Lebanon, who all too often either give up in near despair when it comes to Lebanese politics, or are manipulated by their political elders who really should know better. We were honored to have with us not one, but two Ambassadors during the conference representing the UK and the Vatican respectively. Their presence underscored just how important Thomas More really was, is, and will be in the future. I thank them and all who participated for their support, in particular, the Faculty of Law and Political Science, and especially Dr. Elie El-Hindy, whom, as I have mentioned, came with the original idea and needed enthusiasm to get the event off the ground.

Ambassadorial Remarks

Hugo Shorter

*The Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Lebanon
Lebanon*

It is an honour to be here at NDU (Notre Dame University- Louaize), speaking alongside so many distinguished individuals; not least of course the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, the Apostolic Nuncio, Gabriele Giordano Caccia, and the President of the University, Fr. Walid Moussa. This year's 400th anniversary of the death of Shakespeare has overshadowed another important anniversary: the 500th year since the publication of More's *Utopia*. Thomas More is considered by some as one of the greatest Englishmen. Erasmus thought his genius was "such as England never had and never again will have." Beyond his national importance to my country, I think Thomas More is relevant to modern-day Lebanon in a number of ways. This is why I accepted your invitation to speak today.

The first way is as Patron Saint of politicians and statesmen. And heaven knows, our politicians and statesmen are faced with such momentous challenges today that

they need all the help they can get! More was above all a man of principle and a faithful servant of his king. But when, under pressure from the King, he had to choose between the two, he chose to go to the scaffold, putting principle above his own personal interest - indeed, above his own personal survival. Perhaps unusually for his time and place, he was not corrupt: the King did in fact try to frame him for corruption, but the case had to be withdrawn for lack of evidence.

The second way More is relevant today is on the matter of co-existence (I prefer the French term, *vivre-ensemble*). As a Catholic, he was a fierce persecutor of what he called “heretics,” many of whom were Protestants. John Paul II acknowledged that “in his actions against heretics, he reflected the limits of the culture of his time”. So it is all the more remarkable that the Anglican Church, which he played a role in persecuting, has named him a “martyr” of the Reformation. In this respect he represents reconciliation between Anglicans and Catholics. Because nowadays, politics cannot be run on the basis that there is one same God whom we all, in our private and public lives, must obey according to the same rules. People’s right to practice different religions, in full respect of each others’ beliefs, and within the framework of the law, is an essential tenet of international human rights law, and, of course, of the Lebanese constitu-

tion. Embracing co-existence is an essential ingredient for successful societies in the globalised world we live in. I am proud that London, Thomas More's city, has shown that by electing Sadiq Khan as Mayor a few days ago. And the Lebanese are rightly proud that Lebanon is seen as an example of *vivre-ensemble* for the region, though all of us are all too aware that that co-existence cannot be taken for granted.

Finally, More is relevant to Lebanon today as the author of *Utopia*. Oscar Wilde said "progress is the realisation of Utopias". I think Utopias are never finally realised, because no society can be perfect and the world at large keeps changing, so countries must keep adapting. I'd say instead: "progress is the striving towards Utopias". Because I'd argue that every country needs a set of shared principles towards which it collectively strives: "*liberté, égalité, fraternité*" for the French. The US Constitution strives to "form a more perfect Union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, etc." The United Kingdom, of course, hasn't written down in one place what it strives for. But most British would say something like: a fair, democratic society, where all have equal opportunities for fulfillment and are equal before the law, and where the state's power is limited by individual rights.

What is Lebanon's Utopia? Perhaps it could be summed up in the word co-existence. But as the Lebanese know

better than anybody, co-existence has multiple meanings and can be applied in multiple ways. The National Pact enshrines a sectarian approach to co-existence. But the abuses and blockages in the sectarian system as currently configured are paralysing and weakening the state. And, if I may speak with the directness of a newcomer, the combination of sect-based clientelism and weaknesses in state institutions are failing Lebanon and its citizens in ways that are not sustainable in the long term. Maybe that suits some. Of course, the Constitution sets a “national goal” of abolishing political confessionalism. But the key thing is this: those who want to preserve a sectarian form of co-existence should also want a strong state. That means democratic and legal checks and balances that go beyond the mathematical division of the state and its spoils on sectarian lines.

How to pursue the national Utopia is often a matter of fierce political debate and difficult change. But it is necessary, if a country is to achieve progress, to go through that democratic process. The current municipal elections are one welcome arena for such a debate. But the election of a President, as well as Parliamentary elections, with the widest possible participation (both of candidates and voters) are key. It is not for me to answer what kind of electoral law or what kind of institutional reforms are needed. But I sense throughout the

country that the model of “*plus ca change, plus c’est la meme chose*” is exhausted. It is time for the Lebanese to have a country that reflects the dynamism and creativity of its people and that is capable of flourishing as a unique gateway between the West and the Middle East. That would indeed represent progress towards Utopia for the Lebanese, and for the region.

A Man for All Reasons: The Utopian Legacy of Saint Thomas More

Richard Woods, O.P.
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My introduction to St. Thomas More came in the form of a children's book presented to me when I was about eleven. Written by Aloysius Croft, it was called *Twenty-one Saints*.¹ Copies may still be found in old bookstalls and on the Internet. The chapter on More, which presented him as a hero and champion of the Catholic faith, impressed me deeply. Years later, in 1964, I attended a conference hosted by Rosary College (now Dominican University), that focused on the theme of political conscience. This was a stormy period in the United States. The war in Vietnam was fast becoming a national crisis and racial relations had reached an explosive point. The late Jesuit proponent of non-violence, Daniel Berrigan, spoke, as did Bishop John Wright, who selected Thomas More and Joan of Arc as his subjects. For Wright, More, like the Maid of Orleans, was a martyr of conscience, a witness to the inviolable sanctity of

¹ Aloysius Croft, *Twenty-one Saints* (Bruce Publishing Company: Milwaukee, 1944); repr. 1961.

moral certitude. It was a very impressive talk; an occasion I remember surprisingly well even 52 years later. My interest in More was sharpened with the appearance of Robert Bolt's highly successful and multiple award-winning 1960 play, *A Man for All Seasons*, and the equally lauded 1966 film adaptation in which Paul Scofield again portrayed More, for which he won every major film award for acting in 1967. Bolt, like Wright, portrayed More as a martyr of conscience.

One of the most accomplished figures of his generation, known internationally for his writings and diplomatic endeavors, More was indeed a man for all seasons, a phrase first used of him by his great friend Erasmus, although attributed usually to the translation of Erasmus' Latin expression by Robert Whittinton who wrote in 1520:

More is a man of an angel's wit and singular learning. I know not his fellow. For where is the man of that gentleness, lowliness and affability? And, as time requireth, a man of marvelous mirth and pastimes, and sometime of as sad gravity. A man for all seasons.²

2- Prof. Clarence Miller, the executive editor of the Yale edition of More's Collected Works, writes, "Whittinton's Latin for 'a man for all seasons' - 'vir...omnium horarum' - clearly came from Erasmus' prefatory letter dedicating his masterpiece, *The Praise of Folly*, to Thomas More. The Folly or Moria, as Erasmus and More usually called it after Folly's name in Greek, was written at More's house in 1509. It was suggested, says Erasmus in the prefatory letter, by the similarity of Moria and More, since, though More was far from being a fool in the usual sense of the word, he nevertheless delighted, like the personified Folly, who speaks her own praises in Erasmus' book, in making fun of the ordinary lives of mortals. 'On the other hand,' Erasmus went on to say, 'though your remarkably keen intelligence places you worlds apart from the common herd, still the incredible sweetness and gentleness of your character makes you able and willing to be a man for all seasons to all men

Only later, as I tried to deepen my understanding of this astonishing figure, did I come to appreciate him as a political satirist as well as the preeminent legal figure of his time, a very competent theologian, renowned scholar, and for a time under Henry VIII, Lord Chancellor of England, the second most powerful figure in the realm. But it was his great early work *Utopia* rather than his spiritual and theological works that led me to adopt it as a text. I was at the time conducting a special seminar on utopian and dystopian works, and the choice was both natural and inevitable.

Influences

Thomas More was not the first nor surely will be the last writer of uncommon political insight and theological wit to provide a profound critique of current affairs by means of an imaginary *topos*, a Noplace that supplies the matter for analysis and contemporary commentary. Deeply rooted in the classics, he drew on Greek and Roman examples, from Plato (*Republic*, *Critias*, *Timaeus*) and Lucian (*A True Story*) to Augustine (*The City of God*), and without doubt influenced subsequent authors – Shakespeare (*The Tempest*), Tomasso Campanella (*City*

(cum omnibus omnium horarum hominem agere).’ The *Moria* was a sensationallly famous book — it had gone through 22 editions all over Europe by 1520 — and there can be little doubt that Erasmus, with a little help from Whittinton, ultimately provided the title for Bolt’s play.” Clarence H. Miller, “On ‘A Man for All Seasons,’” *Thomas More Studies* 1 (2006) 26-27.

of the Sun), Francis Bacon (*The New Atlantis*), Rabelais (*Pantagruel and Gargantua*), and Jonathan Swift (*Gulliver's Travels*), among others. More may have indirectly influenced Montaigne ("On Cannibals") through Erasmus, and one way or another an ever-growing gallery of science fiction and fantasy works such as James Hilton's *Lost Horizon*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, C. S. Lewis's *Perelandra*, the musings of Stanislaus Lem³ and J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter books. *Utopia* also echoes in George Orwell's works, but these are even darker and more disturbing attacks on the abuses Orwell and kindred writers perceived in the society of their time. Although no films have been made of *Utopia* that I am aware of, a host of cinematic utopian-dystopian offerings have appeared since what was probably the earliest, Fritz Lang's 1927 silent epic, *Metropolis*. There's no end in sight. More's book has cast a very long shadow. It can therefore be safely said at the outset that while More did not invent the genre of utopian, much less dystopian,⁴ literature, he did contribute massively to it and gave it a name.

3- See Paweł Frelík, "Stanisław Lem's *Summa Technologiae* as Impossible Utopia," *Science Fiction Studies*, 40 (3) 2013, 439-450. <http://doi.org/10.5621/sciefictstud.40.3.0439>, and Peter Swirski, *The Art and Science of Stanisław Lem*, (McGill-Queen's University Press: Montreal, 2006).

4- The term 'dystopian' did not come into use until 1868, but lack of a name does not signify absence, especially in More's case *Dystopia* is not the antonym of *utopia*, however, but of *eutopia*, which would signify 'good place.' According to the Oxford English Dictionary, John Stuart Mill first used and perhaps coined the term *dystopia* in a speech in the House of Commons in 1868. Another term, *cacotopia*, was used to the same effect by Jeremy Bentham as early as 1818.

The Darker Side of Utopia

Utopia is one of those works which, undertaken as what seems to be as something of a “merry jest” or at least with a humorously satirical intent, has had a profound impact not only on the form of the literature that followed but the ideas it entertained, if I may use the expression. Dean Jonathan Swift’s “A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People from Being a Burthen to Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Publick” comes to mind in that regard, although it was much more grimly ironic in its telling. More’s work is manifestly more optimistic, if hardly less incisive. Without doubt, however, it also addresses serious social abuses of the day. What makes *Utopia* so different, besides the tone, is the depth of the discussion and the greater adherence to traditional Catholicism than found in Rabelais in particular.⁵ Still, critique and condemnation of ecclesiastical malfeasance was never beneath More’s efforts.

The Lighter Side of Utopia

Contrived dialogues in which philosophical and theological issues are probed and propounded can be traced back as far as Plato’s *Dialogues*, just as pseudonymous

5- François Rabelais (c. 1483 - 1553) was both a monk and a friar before departing religious life. His masterpiece, *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (1532-34), is a funny, bawdy, savage satire on both civic and especially ecclesiastical mores.

authorship has an ancient and honourable lineage, including biblical and early Christian ancestry, as in the case of St. Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*. So while the form of *Utopia* is not original, in More's hands it acquired a distinctive and novel cast. An especially characteristic trait is the wry humor, so much a part of More's personality and many of his writings, that salts the entire work. More was ever fond of jokes and jests, as noted in his biographies. But he was a humorist in the vein of Aldous Huxley and Evelyn Waugh, a master of irony and mordant wit. Contemporaries remarked that his delivery seemed so solemn ("sad" was the word often used) that it was difficult to tell when he was joking or in dead earnest, which, of course, added to the comedy. That is not to say that *Utopia* lacks a darker, subversive side, one so richly hued by More's genius for irony and indirection that it can be considered to be not merely subversive but implicitly dystopian. But while fabricated with the amiable connivance of his friends Peter Gilles and Jerome Busleyden, *Utopia* is neither duplicitous nor even mildly mischievous, like the brilliant fiction written by Msgr. Robert Hugh Benson in 1906, *The History of Richard Raynal, Solitary*, which purported to be a recently discovered fifteenth-century manuscript.⁶

6- Robert Hugh Benson, *The History of Richard Raynal, Solitary* (Echo Library: Fairford, Gloucestershire, 2006). Benson was so accomplished a scholar and writer that many of his readers were taken in by the ruse and he eventually had to acknowledge authorship.

More acknowledged his responsibility for *Utopia* from the outset. But he assumes the role of an interlocutor, imitating the style of Plato in many respects, although his protagonist Rafael Hythloday (or Hythlodaeus) is a fictitious character. Or perhaps not entirely fictitious, as he serves to propose many of More's own ideas about statecraft, politics, morality, and religion, but also some with which he found himself at odds. As a practiced and brilliant lawyer, More was fully capable of arguing both sides of a question. And he does, not merely as a show of lawyerly bravado but as what is largely now recognized as More's thoughtful ambivalence toward many of the issues of the day (e.g. private ownership of property, a money economy, slavery, capital punishment, war, euthanasia, even the practice of law itself). In this respect, Hythloday takes the role of More's alter ego or, perhaps more accurately, his shadow self. Fr. Joseph Koterski remarks in his preface to his valuable anthology of More's last writings that:

In contrast to Raphael Hythloday, the intellectual world-traveler who cannot bring himself to consent to public service for fear that his conscience would be compromised by the insatiable quest of this world's princes for territory, wealth, and glory in war or by the pressures of the sycophants at royal courts, the character More argues that politics is the art of the possible. It is a mat-

ter of remembering one's nonnegotiable principles and then determining what is negotiable, and how far one may go without compromising those principles.

He adds, tellingly:

In the give-and-take between the characters More and Hythloday, one need not look too far to see More, in the humanist tradition of concern for morality and politics, readying his conscience for the inevitable tests that lie ahead.⁷

Although More could not have foreseen how his struggle with conscience would eventually lead him to the scaffold, premonitions seem to be scattered throughout the work of the great cost that would be exacted for his adhering steadfastly to conviction based on moral principle. Like his life itself, *Utopia* thus turns in a critical respect on the role conscience plays in the creation of a good life.⁸

Matters of Conscience

The dark shadows of More's last years lay far in the future when he began work on *Utopia* during a fruitless

7- *Saint Thomas More: Selected Writings*, Preface by Joseph Koterski, S.J., ed. by John F. Thornton and Susan B. Varenne (Vintage Books: New York, 2003) xxii.

8- Let me add here that so far as I know, English is the only modern language that differentiates linguistically between conscience and consciousness.

trade mission to Bruges in 1515. Later, back in London, he added a long preface, which we know as Book One. In this, More took pains to connect many of the themes he explored in the first draft, Book Two, with current events in England and the continent. But his criticism was subtle and largely indirect, only occasionally pointing at some event or condition that especially exercised his displeasure, admiration, and not uncommonly, wit. For More was a humorist among so many other things, not entirely different from much later writers such as Henry Fielding, Anthony Trollope, P. G. Wodehouse, and the Americans Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) and H. L. Mencken. And, like them, More was a wit with a conscience. Koterski observes in this regard that:

Among all More's writings, *Utopia* rightly holds a special place. That work is a fascinating humanist exercise of the imagination that has been legitimately interpreted in diverse ways—as a political program, for instance, as an ironic satire, and even as an anticipation of Marx's communism. But the book, especially the first of its two parts, may also be understood as an exercise in the formation of conscience undertaken by More just two years before he entered Henry's service.⁹

If it be granted that More's conscience ultimately prevented his acquiescence to the king's

9- Ibid.

demands, in Jesus before Pilate, or of Marguerite Porete's refusal to speak in her own defense in her trial for heresy before the theological faculty of the University of Paris, it is not only fair but important to ask, what does conscience mean in this regard?

Koterski argues, correctly I think, that the interpretation of conscience favored by Bolt and other modern authors, among them Bertolt Brecht (*The Life of Galileo* and other works) and, I would add, Arthur Miller (*The Crucible*), differs significantly from what More understood by the term. Conscience today, while undoubtedly a powerful moral force and as profoundly required in our world as it was in Tudor England, is frequently reduced to either an individualistic, subjective affair, sheer moral stubbornness, or a psychological quirk, an inhibition acquired by socialization and identified by Freud and others as the so-called Superego. But for More, like Socrates, conscience was the moral voice of reason, a capacity for judgment founded upon a thorough grasp of principles hammered out over centuries of disputation and sometimes agonizing conflict. Conscience was not some mystical intuition or even a supernatural instinct like the daemon that conveniently warned Socrates against wrong actions. Rather, for More conscience was a guiding orientation acquired over time by a deep examination of the pros and cons involved in moral decision-making measured against accepted principles of right and wrong. Conscience is founded upon reason, reason and certainly for More, faith.

Conclusion: The Reasonableness of Thomas More

As a scholar and lawyer steeped in the classics of Greek and Latin antiquity, More valued reason next perhaps only to faith, but he was not a rationalist. He did not elevate reason beyond its place, but inevitably sought for reason and for reasons in disputation and discourse. But he knew well that having a reason for a position or an action was not the same as being reasonable; or being right. Neither More's *Utopia* or Plato's Republics (for there were a number) were proposed as perfect societies. Each, or in Plato's case, all, had imperfections, limitations that inevitably gave rise to serious problems. But these were thought experiments,¹⁰ idealized social constructs, not blueprints. They were devised to explore consequences and establish criteria, not to offer practical solutions. But that More had England and particularly London in mind in his description of Utopia and its capital is well brought out in Peter Ackroyd's penetrating study of More's life and writings.¹¹

In the case of *Utopia*, while the description in Book Two extols the wisdom and harmony achieved by the descendants of Utopus, "No-Land," success was achieved by not entirely bloodless conquest and violent imposition,

10- Cf. Ilia Delio, *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being* (Orbis Books: New York, 2013) 26, note 24: "A thought experiment considers a theory in order to think through its possible consequences. There need not be any intention of actually carrying out the experiment; in fact, it may not be possible to do so."

11- Peter Ackroyd, *The Life of Thomas More* (Anchor Books: New York, 1999) 171.

and defended as well as expanded by warfare. More appears to have been thinking of a highly developed but purely natural society. That is, until the imaginary arrival of Christian missionaries on one of Amerigo Vespucci's voyages, *Utopia* lacked the divine guidance of Scripture and the long tradition of Christian ethics that could guide them to a more perfect society or at last a less imperfect one. Reason and natural virtue were seen as preparation for the Gospel, however. Hythloday points out that as soon as the Utopians heard the Christian gospel proclaimed, they immediately subscribed to it. The Christian commonwealth envisioned by Thomas More lay beyond the confines of any world devoid of divine assistance, a conviction inherited at least in part from his close reading of St. Augustine's *City of God*.¹² It was a tenet that would play a decisive role in the final drama of his life as he witnessed both schism and heresy infiltrating his beloved England on his watch.

This returns us to the question of conscience, that moral orientation that, properly formed, guides practical judgment. For More, steeped as he was in the high if waning scholasticism of Oxford and Cambridge, conscience was far more than *synderesis*, the intuitive sense of good and evil, or more practically, of right and wrong in hu-

12- "... the long discussion of political philosophy and its political embodiment in *Utopia* turns out to have deep roots in the Augustinian distinction between the two cities in *City of God*." Koterski, p. xxiii.

man experience. It was rather a principled *set* of developed convictions imbedded in both faith and reason.¹³ In one of his last letters to his daughter Meg, something of a feigned dialogue about these pillars of conscience, More inserts a kind of parable about a man named Company who must wrestle with grave and exacting issues much as he himself was doing. Fr. Koterski comments:

In that touching letter, More is thus telling Meg that she may not just change her mind about something for the sake of pleasing others or for personal convenience. But this is not stubbornness—the character Company is reasonably ready to change his mind, but only if a set of good reasons can be presented, and not just reasons of political expediency.¹⁴

Unlike Hamlet, for whom “conscience doth makes cowards of us all,”¹⁵ for More conscience made what later if not all commentators recognized as heroic virtue and a

13- Fr. Koterski remarks in this regard, “Unlike the vision of conscience found in Bolt’s *A Man for All Seasons*, this is not the notion of conscience that philosophical individualism champions but the idea of conscience found in Christian tradition—a conscience that knows most truly when it knows what it knows *along with Christ*. For reasons of his own, Bolt has More end in moralizing: ‘Finally, it is not a matter of reason but of love’—but, like the passage cited earlier from that play, this line also fails to do Thomas More full justice. For him it was *always* a matter of reason: a matter of careful discernment about principles he did not choose or create himself but which he honored as the groundwork for a reasonable decision.” Koterski, pp. xxviii-xxix.

14- *Ibid.*, p. xxix.

15- *Hamlet*, III, I, 91.

martyr's unflinching resistance to moral compromise. More had many reasons for his stance but it was moral conviction, founded on faith and guided by reason, that led him to the scaffold and immortal memory. Beatified by Pope Leo XIII in 1886, Pope Pius XI canonized More in 1935 as a martyr, along with St. John Fisher and 52 other English men and women. Traditionally venerated as the patron saint of lawyers, in 2000 Pope John Paul II declared Sir Thomas More also the "heavenly Patron of Statesmen and Politicians." Perhaps he should have added, "and Utopians."

Thomas More's Utopia: Towards a Theology of Love

Robert Cheaib

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Premise: Misfortune and Opportunity of a Theme

There is an Italian expression “*ingannevole come l'amore*” which means “as misleading as only love can be”. Not only love, but also choosing *a priori* to speak about love in More's *Utopia* was “*ingannevole*” because when I first learned about this conference, I was in a train going to southern Italy to give a conference on the theology of mercy and love (*rehem* and *hesed*) in the Old Testament, and the train was blocked in the midst of *nowhere* for an unidentified time. I was, so to say, in the midst of *Utopia*, reading *The Four Loves* by C.S. Lewis and preparing a course on the theology of love for the Carmelite Theological Faculty in Rome. When I saw the themes proposed my eyes and election fell upon this topic and I chose it even before knowing thoroughly the content of More's *Utopia*. When I got the e-book and did the initial research, I found that, like the prophet Jeremiah (Jer.

20:7) of old, I had been seduced: there were only three occurrences of the term love in the entire text! Nonetheless, the reading and rereading of More's *Utopia* with this theme in mind has proved to be quite fruitful and has produced more than twenty pages of notes, which I attempt to unify here under the title of a theology of love—a theology which I shall further attempt to locate dialogically within the context of other authors writing on this subject.

Hermeneutical Introduction

I have structured this paper as a kind of hermeneutical introduction to four major points: love as *eutopia* and *utopia*; love and justice; self-love and pleasure, and love of God. If we look at More's *Utopia* with Ricoeurian hermeneutical intuitions, particularly those of the *distanciation*,¹⁶ we not only see the regular distance between text and author, and text and readers, but also between author and text, who keeps a well-measured distance between himself and his text. Perhaps the first question that comes to mind when thinking about *Utopia* in connection to its author is: does *Utopia* express More's view? It seems that More himself does not want us to know. He is the first to distance himself, already

16- Distanciation refers to an important concept in Paul Ricoeur's Theory of Interpretation. See P. Ricoeur, *Cinq études herméneutiques* (Genève : Labor et Fides, 2013) 53-74.

at the beginning of *Book I*, while writing to Peter Gilles: “My job was simply to write down what I’d heard.”¹⁷ In addition, the More figure throughout the book is quite marginal. Moreover, to confirm what we can rightly call the “hermeneutical enigma”, More writes at the end of *Book II*: “While Raphael was telling us all this, I kept thinking of various objections. The laws and customs of that country seemed to me in many cases perfectly ridiculous.”¹⁸

At the same time he confirms his *prise de distance* and his sympathy with the utopian vision and style, leaving the reader unconditioned and thus free to make up his mind: “I cannot agree with everything that he said, for all his undoubted learning and experience. But I freely admit that there are many features of the Utopian Republic which I should like – though I hardly expect – to see adopted in Europe.”¹⁹ If humor is an expression of the maturation of one’s thought, then More’s use of it to say something serious and profound is unmatched. In his Introduction to the Penguin’s translation and edition of *Utopia*, Paul Turner describes it as “a really splendid little book, as entertaining as it is instructive”. In other words it professes, like Horace’s *Satires*, to “tell the truth with a laugh,” or, like Lucian’s *True History*,

17- Thomas More, *Utopia* ed. Paul Turner (London: Penguin Books, 2003) 7.

18- *Ibid.* 113.

19- *Ibid.*

“not merely to be witty and entertaining, but also to say something interesting.”²⁰ More himself is conscious of the wisdom in irony and humor when speaking of great ideals because he knows well that he can’t take himself too seriously when speaking of macro reform and reformation. Man can’t change the world, man can hardly change himself. And if there is ever a chance to really change the world, it’s through changing oneself.²¹

In brief, *Utopia* is a thought experiment: utopia never existed, it does not exist, it will not ever exist, and probably should not exist. The book wants to raise questions, not give answers. It prefers question marks to full stops. More seems not to want to give us his thoughts, but rather to make us think. Utopia is “decidedly not the ideal republic” but rather “a subtle and extremely complex conflict or coincidence of opposites.”²² The simple fact that the protagonist of the book is Raphael Huthlodaeus sheds light on the maieutic intent of the book which wants to stand in the terrain of *la folie saine*

20- Ibid., xi.

21- See A.D. Cousins, *Augustine, Boethius and The Fortune Verses of Thomas More*, *Moreana* xxxix, 149 (March 2002) 17-40.

22- K. Corrigan, *The Function of the Ideal in Plato’s Republic and St. Thomas More’s Utopia*, *Moreana* xxvii, 104 (Dec. 1990) 27-28. See also the opinion of Elliott Simon: “We can interpret Utopia in terms of Erasmus’s *The Praise of Folly* (1509) as an entertaining fantasy, or we can interpret it in terms of his concern for the redemption of the individual’s soul in the *Novum Instrumentum* (1516) and *The Education of the Christian Prince* (1516). It is this latter interpretation that I feel comes closest to More’s artistic intention.” See E.P. Simon, *Thomas More’s Utopia: Creating an Image of the Soul*, *Moreana* xviii, 69 (1981) 21.

et sauve,²³ as Fredric Le Gal puts it. Many analysts see in his name and family name a fantastic “trilingual pun”²⁴ that would mean: God heals through the nonsense of God.²⁵ Beyond the etymology, the name Raphael points back to the Hebrew Book of Tobit²⁶ where the archangel Raphael is sent by God to cure Tobias’ blindness, recover his wealth and find a wife for his son, Tobit. So, we could see in More’s Raphael a figure that opens the eyes of men to the cause of social ills and to the recovery of prosperity and harmony. As for nonsense or folly, it is worth remembering that More’s friend, Erasmus of Rotterdam, entitled his famous book *The Praise of Folly* (*Stultitiae Laus*, 1511), as the *Praise of More* (*Morias Enkomion*).

Love as Eutopia and Utopia

Our postmodern intelligentsia has lost faith in all the *meta-récits* of which Jean-François Lyotard speaks. We trust neither in politics nor politicians for change. We do not understand those men of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who believed in big systems, in to-

23- See F. le Gal, *La folie saine et sauve. Pour une théologie catholique de la folie sainte*, Cerf, Paris 2003.

24- Robert Adams, trans., *Utopia* (New York: Norton Critical Editions, 1975) 5, n. 9.

25- God heals (from the Hebrew *Rapha-El*) through the nonsense (from the greek *huthlos*) of God (from the Latin *Deus*).

26- The *Book of Tobit* forms part of the biblical canon for the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches, but is not recognized as a canonical part of either the Hebrew Bible, or the Protestant canon.

talitarianism, or even in *summas*:²⁷ we lost that faith; it fell to pieces with the fall of Communism, Fascism, and Nazism, symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall. Recently, our faith in economy and capitalism has checked too. It fell again with the subprime crisis where systems built riches and assets and packages on money that was no-where, and which was not “utopic money” so to say. Were we to listen to the sense and sensibility of our *koiné* we would say that the only possible meaningfulness in our ocean of senselessness is love. Love fits *par excellence* in the meaningful meaninglessness evoked by the personality of Raphael Huthlodaes. Love, according to the Augustinian distinction carried on by the medieval has not to do with utility or usefulness (*uti*) but with fruition (*frui*).²⁸ We do not love to make use of something; love has to do with gratuity and grace. Love is the real *Utopia* and *Eutopia*, the non-existing place and the most beautiful place: dreamland and never-land, to evoke a James Matthew Barrie²⁹ construction, poverty and richness, to evoke Plato’s theory of the genesis of Eros in the *Symposium*.³⁰

27- See J.-F. Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne : Rapport sur le savoir* (Paris : Minuit, 1998)

28- See W.G. Jeanrond, *Teologia dell'amore* (Brescia: Queriniana, 2012) 72; Hanna Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996)42.

29- Author of *Peter Pan*

30- Platone, *Tutti Gli Scritti*, ed. Giovanni Reale (Milano: Bompiani, 2014) 203 B-E, 511.

In a similar vein, significant contemporary thinkers, such as Xavier Lacroix, note that with its nebulous images and vague overtones, love is one of our latest objects of worship, the ultimate refuge of myth, magic or the religious in a secularized world; love is the last place of enchantment in a disenchanting world and thus a modern utopia. “Who today is not in love with love?” he asks, and then goes on to analyze western culture’s veneration of love beginning with the Beatles’ world famous song, “All you need is Love” to the modern tautological motto, “love is love” that wants to legitimize everything.³¹

Love and Social Justice

Because More is not an incurable romantic his role in liberating love from the reductive individualistic chains that would imprison it becomes all the more important. Through a provocative reflection on social justice and reformation, More gives a land (place) to the no-land (place) of love and thus is able to establish love as a fundamental element in the collective and relational process. Beginning from a social perspective, justice makes a place for love; it makes love possible.³²

31- Xavier Lacroix, *Les Mirages de l'amour* (Paris : Bayard, 1997) 7-8: “Qui, aujourd’hui, n’est pas amoureux de l’amour?” and “Avec sa nébuleuse d’images et de résonances, l’amour est l’un de nos derniers objets de culte, l’ultime refuge du mythe, de la magie ou du religieux dans un monde sécularisé. Le dernier lieu d’enchantement dans un monde désenchanté.”

32- E.P. Simon, *Thomas More’s Utopia: Creating an Image of the Soul*, in *Moreana XVIII*,

The first thing that More appeals to is a reform of the social structure:

Each greedy individual preys on his native land like a malignant growth, absorbing field after field, and enclosing thousands of acres with a single fence. [The] Result: hundreds of farmers are evicted. They're either cheated or bullied into giving up their property, or systematically ill-treated until they're finally forced to sell.³³

He then denounces the greedy economical system that cheats farmers and turns "England's greatest natural advantages into a national disaster."³⁴ It is striking how our development of science has not been accompanied by a proportional and analogous development of conscience. We have learned how to split the atom, but do not yet know how to split a piece of bread with the poor. More denounces and explains how the poor are defrauded: "[t]he wretched earnings of the poor are daily whittled away by the rich." But the real scandal is that this gross injustice is performed not by outlaws but rather within and because of the law itself: "not only through private dishonesty, but through public legislation."³⁵

69 (1981) 21, "Utopia was designed on the common humanist principle that the moral improvement of man's fallen condition could be achieved through the transformation of his social institutions; or conversely, that the institutions of a rationally ordered state could improve the individual's moral condition."

33- Ibid. 25.

34- Ibid. 26.

35- Ibid. 111.

More believes that a just system can make men better and more responsible. A human being in a structural context of justice more easily builds positive (and loving) relationships:

Make a law that anyone responsible for demolishing a farm or a country town must either rebuild it himself or else hand over the land to someone who's willing to do so. Stop the rich from cornering markets and establishing virtual monopolies. Reduce the number of people who are kept doing nothing. Revive agriculture and the wool industry, so that there's plenty of honest, useful work for the great army of unemployed—by which I mean not only existing thieves, but tramps and idle servants who are bound to become thieves eventually. Until you put these things right, you're not entitled to boast of the justice meted out to thieves. . . You allow these people to be brought up in the worst possible way, and systematically corrupted from their earliest years. Finally, when they grow up and commit the crimes that they were obviously destined to commit, ever since they were children, you start punishing them. In other words, you create thieves, and then punish them for stealing!³⁶

36- Ibid. 27.

Contrary to ideological and simplistic readings of More's *Utopia*, his vision is not that of a 'communism *ante-litteram*', but a way of spiritually reforming man.³⁷ At the end of Book One, he has his literary More say:

I don't believe you'd ever have a reasonable standard of living under a communist system.³⁸ There'd always tend to be shortages, because nobody would work hard enough. In the absence of a profit motive, everyone would become lazy, and rely on everyone else to do the work for him. Then, when things really got short, the inevitable result would be a series of murders and riots, since nobody would have any legal method of protecting the products of his own labour - especially as there wouldn't be any respect for authority, or I don't see how there could be, in a classless society.³⁹

His vision is closer to that of the Christian monastic tradition, than to Marxism, and has deep patristic inspirations in Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa and John Chrysostom. His vision is more communitarian and than communist. It is closer

37- Peter Berglar, "Justice and Mercy in Life and Work of Thomas More," *Moreana* XX, 78 (1983): 51.

38- This interpretative translation of Turner is rendered more literary by the aforementioned Adams translation: "men cannot possibly live well where all things are in common." 29.

39- *Utopia*, 45.

to Saint Benedict's *Regula* than to Marx and Engel's *Capitalist*. Saint Benedict writes:

Let no one presume to give or receive anything without the abbot's leave, or to have anything as his own, anything whatever, whether book or tablets or pen or whatever it may be; for monks should not have even their bodies and wills at their own disposal. But let them look to the father of the monastery for all that they require, and let it be unlawful to have anything which the abbot has not given or allowed. And, as the Scripture saith, let all things be common to all, nor let anyone say that anything is his own or claim it for himself. But if anyone shall be found to indulge in this most wicked vice, let him be admonished once and a second time; if he does not amend, let him undergo punishment.⁴⁰

In short, conditions must be created in society that help human beings develop their own natural tendencies to be good. In stark contrast to Rousseau's *bon sauvage*, More speaks more accurately of our tendency to be naturally good two hundred years before the French thinker did. More believes that if we give man justice, he becomes just or, at least, he has no extrinsic reasons to be unjust and unloving. Social justice catalyzes per-

40- Benedict of Norcia, *Regula*, cap. 33.

sonal and private goodness. Justice makes room for love and makes love possible:

No living creature is naturally greedy, except from fear of want—or in the case of human beings, from vanity, the notion that you're better than people if you can display more superfluous property than they can. But there's no scope for that sort of thing in Utopia.⁴¹

Justice is also a just evaluation of material good; that is why gold is devaluated in *Utopia*.⁴² The Utopian system includes not only deterrents from crime, but also incentives for good behavior in the form of public honor (through erecting statues in public squares for instance). Seen in his own biographical and cultural context, what More proposes clearly comes from his Christian perspective. Utopia springs from the Christian ideals and aspires to Christendom, to the dream of God, to the dream of the Gospel which barely stands a chance to become reality in this “valley of tears.”⁴³

41- Utopia, 61.

42- See *Utopia*, 69: “Nor can they understand why a totally useless substance like gold should now, all over the world, be considered far more important than human beings, who gave it such value as it has, purely for their own convenience”.

43- Henry W. Donner proposes a catholic reading of More insinuating that the author of *Utopia* was less interested in the constitution of the Commonwealths and more interested in the reform of souls. He arrives to this conclusion by highlighting the absurdity of the utopian constitutions in themselves, showing that Mores' agenda is that of a personal amelioration (See H.W. Donner, *Introduction to Utopia*, Sidgwick & Jackson, London 1945). Similarly, Elliott P. Simon affirms that “Utopia was designed on the common humanist principle that the moral improvement of

Eudemonia and Philautia

More's *Utopia* also sheds great light upon two virtues that have been somewhat eclipsed in modernity: *Eudemonia*, or 'human flourishing', and *Philautia*, or 'proper care of oneself'. With respect to the latter, Jesus's confirmation of the greatest commandment and the 'second' which is like it, "Love your neighbor as yourself", has been interpreted differently at different times. Does it mean that we must first love ourselves in order to love our neighbor? But is it possible to love oneself before loving others? The question is not superficial, and to arrive at an enlightened answer, it is crucial to make a fundamental distinction between self-love and egoism. "Self-love is the exact opposite of egoism. The egoism of a person is usually a sign of the person's incapability to love oneself."⁴⁴ As Erich Fromm puts it: "Selfishness and self-love, far from being identical are actually opposites. The selfish person does not love himself too much but too little; in fact he hates himself. This lack of fondness and care for himself, which is only one expression of his lack of productiveness, leaves him empty and frustrated."⁴⁵ Healthy self-love, *philautia*, was considered

man's fallen condition could be achieved through the transformation of his social institutions; or conversely, that the institutions of a rationally ordered state could improve the individual's moral condition" (E.P. Simon, *Thomas More's Utopia*, 21).

44- R. Cheaib, *Il gioco dell'amore. 10 passi verso la felicità di coppia*, Tau Editrice, Todi 2016, 25.

45- E. Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, Library of Congress, New York 1960, 60.

by the Greek Classics to be a virtue; the term literally means ‘friendship with oneself’ and could also be rendered into ‘proper care of oneself’ as stated above. This type of friendship with oneself is considered by Aristotle to be the standard or basis of any other love.⁴⁶ Far from self-indulgence it is a quest for one’s own good and even Supreme Good (Summum Bonum).⁴⁷

Regarding the virtue of *Eudemonia*, *Utopia* also brings much needed insight because it considers happiness to be a radical human instinct that needs to be satisfied and oriented at the same time:⁴⁸ “Surprisingly enough, they defend this [so-called]⁴⁹ self-indulgent doctrine by arguments drawn from religion, a thing normally associated with a more serious view of life, if not with gloomy asceticism.”⁵⁰ In arguing for eudemonism from a religious motive, More somehow anticipates Kant’s three postulates of morality: the immortal soul, God and free will. The Utopians believe, More tells us, that “every soul is immortal, and was created by a kind God, who meant it to be happy.” They also believe in the reality of reward and punishment in the next world for good

46- Aristotele, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 9, 4.

47- See I. Hausherr, *Philautía. Dall’amore di sé alla carità*, Qiqajon, Magnano (BI) 1999; W. Schmid, *L’amicizia per se stessi. Cura di sé e arte di vivere*, Campo dei Fiori, Roma 2012; R. Cheaib, *Alla presenza di Dio. Per una spiritualità incarnata*, Il pozzo di Giacobbe, Trapani 2015.

48- See *Utopia*, 71-79.

49- My addition.

50- *Utopia*, 71.

or bad deeds committed in this life. We are then told that “although these are religious principles, the Utopians find rational grounds for accepting them.”⁵¹ Belief in eternal life, therefore, constitutes an important postulate in moderating and orienting the principle of pleasure for the Utopians: “For what’s the sense of struggling to be virtuous, denying yourself the pleasant things of life, and deliberately making yourself uncomfortable, if there’s nothing you hope to gain by it?”⁵²

More is not simplistic, though, and he does not identify bliss and happiness with every type of pleasure but “only with the higher ones.” In this respect, “happiness is the *summum bonum* towards which we’re naturally impelled by virtue—which in their (the Utopians’) definition means following one’s natural impulses, as God meant us to do.” This stoic eudemonic life, *katá phýsin* (according to nature), carries man directly towards the basic religious act, the basic practice of the so-called virtue of religion, as the scholastics put it. For “reason also teaches us, first to love and revere Almighty God, to Whom we owe our existence and our potentiality for happiness, and secondly to get through life as comfortably and cheerfully as we can, and help all other members of our species to do so too.”⁵³

51- Ibid., 71-72.

52- Ibid., 72.

53- Ibid.

In More's vision, self-love and love of others constitute a hermeneutical circle where each element nourishes and founds the other. We love ourselves because we discover ourselves as loving persons. We love good, and thus we are moved to love ourselves when we are good, being so to others and to ourselves. More considers self-hate to be "idiotic" and against nature. The utopian vision is therefore against immoderate asceticism:

The fact is, even the sternest ascetic tends to be slightly inconsistent in his condemnation of pleasure. He may sentence you to a life of hard labour, inadequate sleep, and general discomfort, but he'll also tell you to do your best to ease the pains and privations of others. He'll regard all such attempts to improve the human situation as laudable acts of humanity—for obviously nothing could be more humane, or more natural for a human being, than to relieve other people's sufferings, put an end to their miseries, and restore their *joie de vivre*, that is, their capacity for pleasure. So why shouldn't it be equally natural to do the same thing for oneself?⁵⁴

Utopia's eudemonic ideal can be put in these terms: if pleasure and relief are goods then we should give them to others and not deprive ourselves of them. For either

⁵⁴ Ibid.

it is bad to enjoy life, and thus we should not let those whom we love enjoy it, or it is good to enjoy life, and thus it should be a possibility given to everybody, including oneself. As the second answer is correct, it is natural and worthy to live and enjoy life:

If it's good for other people, and you're not only allowed, but positively obliged to make it possible for them, why shouldn't charity begin at home? After all, you've a duty to yourself as well as to your neighbour, and, if Nature says you must be kind to others, she can't turn round the next moment and say you must be cruel to yourself.⁵⁵

On the basis of eudemonism, Utopia establishes altruism because if a man wants to be happy he is called to give happiness. Its principle is somewhat evangelical: "There is more happiness in giving than in receiving" (Acts 20,35). The same *phýsis* that pushes man to seek his personal happiness wants men "to help one another to enjoy life." Nature is "equally anxious for the welfare of every member of the species." This kind of altruism is based on religion itself, where man's "small sacrifices of momentary pleasure" are rewarded by God with the eternal gift of "perfect joy."⁵⁶ Man's nature and reason calls us to do good to ourselves and other and to seek the

55- Ibid., 73.

56- Ibid.

higher pleasures while avoiding the “idiotic conspiracy” of vice: “Human nature constitutes a treaty in itself,”⁵⁷ and loving ourselves and our neighbor as ourselves is written deeply into this treaty.⁵⁸

Love of God

Utopian piety is pragmatic. Technically, there are not theologians among them because they believe that we love God by living and not by academic studying: “Most Utopians feel they can please God merely by studying the natural world, and praising Him for it. But quite a lot of them are led by their religion to neglect the pursuit of knowledge.”⁵⁹ The norm of pleasing God is to do good, thus religion is strictly connected to morality:

They believe that the only way to earn happiness after death is to spend one’s life doing good works. Some of them look after invalids, while others

57- Ibid., 90.

58- More’s vision is reminiscent of Meister Eckhart’s deep intuition concerning the hermeneutical circle constituted by the three (oneself, neighbor and God) *players*: “If you love yourself, you love all men as yourself. As long as you love a single man less than yourself you have never truly learnt to love yourself—unless you love all men as yourself, all men in one man, that man being God and man. It is well with that man who loves himself and all men as himself, with him it is very well. Now some people say, ‘I love my friend, who is good to me, better than any other man’. It is not right so, it is imperfect. But it must be tolerated, just as some people sail across the sea with half a wind, and still get there. So it is with people who love one person better than another, it is natural. If I truly loved him as myself, then whatever happened to him for good or ill, whether it were life or death, I would be as glad for it to happen to me as to him, and that would be real friendship. See Meister Eckhart’s *Deutsche Predigten*, 13.

59- *Utopia*, 103.

mend roads, clean out ditches, repair bridges, dig up turf, sand, or stone, cut down and saw up trees, or cart such things as timber and corn into the towns. In short, they behave like servants, and work harder than slaves, not only for the community, but also for private individuals.⁶⁰

More's religious faith is deeply humanistic in that we are divinized in as much as we are humanized. In this regard, E. P. Simon states: "Like the Italian humanists, Manetti, Platina, Ficino, Pico and Pomponazzi, More believed that man was created in the image of God and possessed a rational mind capable of improving his fallen condition. A consistent theme among humanists from Petrarch to Erasmus and More is that an ideal social order can represent man's spiritual redemption."⁶¹ In other words, Humanization of man is a way towards divinization—a utopist idea that touches the patristic intuitions of *theosis*, divinization of man through the humanization of God. *Utopia*, then, is not the *telos*, it is the humanized social model through which man can achieve his own redemption:

Rather than turning to theology or metaphysics and portraying man as Dante's hero drawn to heaven on the wings of divine love, or Ficino's hero contemplating abstract divine truth, More believed that a regenerated man could achieve

60- Ibid.

61- E.P. Simon, *Thomas More's Utopia*, 22.

such moral perfectibility using reason governed by Christian love as represented by the Utopian family.⁶²

More thus presents love for God as a faithfulness to Heaven with earth at the heart and vice versa. So in addition to the “*natural*” loving of one’s neighbor as oneself, there is a *natural* virtue—that of *religio*—which leads man to God; it is the first rule of reason, for man owes to God his own existence and his very own happiness. Peter Berglar sees a similitude between More’s intuitions and the juridical dimension of the virtue of religion in Saint Thomas Aquinas:

God’s love is not addressed to passive beings—man has been so created and equipped that he can freely respond to it. The ‘equipment’ includes the innate capacity to recognize God’s existence and to want to worship him. The urge to do so has also a genuinely jural sense, in that the very fact of man’s existence implies a ‘jural relation’ between the Originator, Maintainer and Steersman of this existence and his human creatures.⁶³

Love towards God is a duty because it is “due”. He is worthy of *obsequium fidei*.⁶⁴ In this contest, also, Terrence Merrigan sees a similitude between Thomas More and

62 Ibid.

63- P. Berglar, *Justice and Mercy in Life and Work of Thomas More*, 52.

64- See Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation: Dei Verbum*, n. 5.

John Henry Newman's visions about man's conscience and God: both men recognized the primacy of the conscience as a dimension that does not exempt man from relation to the community, but inserts him there. Conscience in More is first of all the intuition that the person is an *adonné*;⁶⁵ he exists in a strict relationship with God as a responsible subject, as a subject capable of giving an answer of love to the Love that has given him existence and the capacity to answer and rejoice. No doubt this dimension of total dedication to God is all the more present in More's life and practice, before being so in his theory of Utopia. This presence and total dedication to God makes of *Utopia*'s author "a man for all seasons", as Robert Bolt canonizes him in his famous play, because Thomas More has gone beyond seasons and times fixing his being on eternity, or better, on the Eternal God. In final analysis, this love of God is the key that opens the mysterious Utopia to the Mysterion and to the mystical experience of God. And it is for God Incarnate, Jesus Christ, and not primarily for a set of moral codes that More will embrace martyrdom. For, as Bolt's More states profoundly and beautifully: "Well. . . finally. . . it isn't a matter of reason; finally it's a matter of love."

65- According, that is, to the lexicon of Jean-Luc Marion. See Marion's, *Etant donné. Essai d'une phénoménologie de la donation*, Puf, Paris 2013.

Utopia: Contemptus Mundi, or Engagement with a Fallen, but Redeemed, World?

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We search for Utopia, but have to settle for heaven instead! Searching for Utopia is searching for “nowhere”—which is what *utopia* means. We are searching for what we’d *like* to find. We even at times try to *construct* a perfect society—an expression that has sometimes been applied to the Church, although in an extremely restricted manner.⁶⁶ What we are looking for and cannot find, what we sometimes wish to build but cannot achieve, is exceeded by what we *can* glimpse and what we should *start* to build in this world—and that is the next world, the state of eternal blessedness. The Second Vatican Council’s *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern*

66- *Societas perfecta inæqualis* means that the Church, which has the perfection in Christ of every human being as her goal, is perfectly equipped (for example, in word and sacrament) with the means humans need to attain that perfection. The expression clearly does not mean that every member of the Church is morally or spiritually perfect.

World (Gaudium et spes), connects the project of finding and getting to heaven with the project of building a good society (if not yet a perfect one) when it says:

Christ's faithful on pilgrimage to a heavenly city should seek and value what is above; but far from diminishing, this enhances the importance of their duty to collaborate with all others in building a world of more human construction. In fact, the mystery of the Christian faith provides them with greater incentive and help in fulfilling this task more enthusiastically, and especially in uncovering the full significance of the work, and according human culture its distinguished place, in the complete vocation of humankind. (GS 57)

This is not a teaching espousing *fuga mundi*, flight from the world as it actually is, in order to replace it with something other-worldly, or at least, with something that points to a higher realm while judging this world with disdain. Nor is the Council espousing *contemptus mundi*, detestation of the world. Both expressions, *fuga mundi* and *contemptus mundi*, have been, and are, subject to serious misunderstanding when they are taken as denoting that the world, *as such*, is contemptible and not fit for us to deal with. *Gaudium et Spes* takes a positive view of the world—of matter, of human creativity and culture. This is not surprising. God created the world;

God endowed humans with the intelligence that allows them to be creative; and God intended humans to be social animals, which means consequently that the creativity of individual humans will combine with that of others to produce cultures which constantly evolve. The Catholic Church has always taught this. She has always combated a dualism that opposes “good” spirit to “evil” matter, as her centuries-long fight against Manichaeism and its corollaries demonstrates.

The same Pastoral Constitution admonishes us, however, not to take our love of creation too far. The text warns of the “danger of trusting too much to modern discoveries and considering ourselves all-sufficient, and of abandoning the search for higher reality” (GS 57).

In other words, *Gaudium et spes* warns us to avoid two evils. The first danger is that of thinking that we need not try to improve the human condition because it is contemptible by contrast with the “higher reality”, the *next* life, which will be completely fulfilling: our happiness will be total. In this scenario, we endure our earthly existence as if it were a kind of incarceration—an imprisonment made somewhat tolerable because of the possible delights of the next life. First *pain*, then *gain*.

The second peril is to forget altogether the “heavenly city”. Instead of viewing this life as a pilgrimage that ends in a Kingdom that cannot be built by human effort alone, this “forgetfulness of our future” considers

any happiness we might strive for or expect to be due entirely to our own work. If we believe pessimistically that our efforts will be ultimately futile, we can seek solace in hedonism: we can “eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.”⁶⁷ We can run from the notion that there is some universal purpose to our lives, denoting a universal standard of moral behavior; that running away is a *fuga cæli*—a running from heaven. If we think that perhaps our societal arrangements, whether considered as social contracts or as something else grounded in mere pragmatism, can achieve a modicum of happiness at their best, and that modicum is as much happiness as we shall *ever* enjoy, we replace *contemptus mundi* with *contemptus coeli*.

So, we could veer towards a stoic acceptance of the world as bad, and pin all our hopes for happiness on a future state of existence that is fundamentally different from our current state. This view sees no connection between our world and the next, and it is a view that stresses long-suffering in this world. Or, we could veer towards *resignation* about the state of the world because we do not think about, or we deny, an afterlife of happiness. We can then either console ourselves with hedonism or engage in the arduous and ultimately frustrating task of developing our own notions of what happiness is, and then trying to achieve it.

67- This popular expression results from a conflation of two Biblical texts: Ecclesiastes 8:15 and Isaiah 22:13.

The first of these possibilities sees this world as irrelevant with regards to the next. The second sees the concept of an afterlife as irrelevant to the pursuit of happiness here. Thomas More's *Utopia* subtly avoids the Scylla and Charybdis of these two dangers. Like other writings or experiments with utopianism, More's work is an analysis by way of critique of the condition of fallen humanity. Although More takes his cue from the situation found in sixteenth-century England, *Utopia* is not a fictional narrative expressing how the *English* fall short of the mark, but of how *humanity* does.⁶⁸ More, however, plainly sees even the human condition at its best—in a situation of more or less exemplary justice and good sense—not as the summit of perfection, but as the *springboard* for perfection.

Thus, *Utopia* does not espouse *contemptus mundi*, a “rejection” of a world considered as valueless, even though it *does* favor a studied rejection of the sins of people and the sins of their institutions that deflect civilizations from realizing the common good. The rejection of deficiencies is, in fact, presented in a context of what one *could* strive for in the world (engagement with the world), even if More concludes that this is wishful thinking rather than a well-grounded hope. Hope, of course, is the theological

68- *Utopia* concludes: “[T]here are many things in the Commonwealth of Utopia that I rather wish, than hope, to see followed in our governments.” Thomas More, *Utopia* (1517) (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1997) 85.

virtue by which we strive habitually to make decisions in *this* life that will get us to the *next* life. The theological virtue of hope is premised on the link between our current condition and a divine promise of total fulfillment in the next life. The *Utopia* More describes clearly posits the *practical* utility of the idea of an afterlife. More writes, “There is no doubt to be made that a man who is afraid of nothing but the law, and apprehends nothing after death, will not scruple to break through all the laws of his country, either by fraud or force, when by this means he may satisfy his appetites.”⁶⁹

To have an eternal Judge, then, is useful for restraining our baser impulses. But More sees the idea of an afterlife as not merely a pragmatic reality, a Pascalian good bet, or an illusion useful for encouraging virtuous behavior. His Utopians believe in a benevolent God; they are open to the Christian message; and they are attracted to the *connection* between the earthly sharing of goods and the eternal sharing in divine life.⁷⁰ That link, articulated in one way by *Gaudium et spes*, is also found in *Utopia*.

I believe that as we commemorate 500 years since its publication, we would do well to situate *Utopia* in a long line of critiques of the human social tradition that judge

69- *Utopia*, 74.

70- *Utopia*, 72.

how human relationships should *usually* be, on the basis of how human relationships *sometimes* are in fact. We have a Christian tradition that expresses itself from time to time, according to which we dream of, or seek to instantiate in the here and now, the best values and behaviors that seem to punctuate our existence only from time to time. Almost always, the result is that our earthly ideal is an *amor mundi*, a *fuga peccati*, and a deep conviction that the goodness of this world is not totally satisfying because the human *condition* is meant by God to be a condition of pilgrimage to heaven. This long line begins, like so much, even before the Christian era, with the Book of Genesis.

The first eleven chapters of Genesis, assembled almost certainly from different narrative strands, present us with a first story of the origin of the human race, through Adam and Eve, and a second story of the peopling of our planet after the Flood. We have *two* original sins, if you will. The first involves Adam and Eve eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—a sin they commit because they, made to the image and likeness of God, were susceptible to the serpent’s beguiling temptation to *exceed* their created limits and be more like God, to *rival* God. The *second* original sin is likewise a sin of pride, a pride that human effort can rival God, and that sin is the construction of the Tower of Babel.

Now, if we can grant that the Book of Genesis was re-

dacted during the Babylonian Captivity in the 6th century BCE, it is intriguing to consider the questions that the Jewish people would have been asking in that situation. How would the Israelites, how would *we*, describe the way the world should be, prescinding from any understanding of eschatological fulfillment? *That* is basically the question that undergirds More's composition of *Utopia*. Would it not be a world in which nature was at peace with itself? Would it not be a world without murder, without fratricide? Would it not be a world of abundance? Would it not be a world of such virtue that nudity among humans would occasion no more prurient reaction than does nudity among animals? Would it not be a world where humans all spoke the same language and so could easily understand one another, cooperate with one another, and collaborate? Would it not be a world in which all could prosper, and none would die? Would it not be a world without sin? More might not have asked if it would be a world without slavery. As John Noonan points out in *A Church that Can and Cannot Change*,⁷¹ magisterial condemnation of slavery is extremely recent—it was, Noonan says, an “unknown sin” condemned only as recently as 1839 by Pope Gregory XVI in a bull whose opening words were *De Nigritarum Commercio non exercendo* – on not engaging in the trade of black people.

71- John Noonan, *A Church that Can and Cannot Change* (South Bend Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005) 4-17.

These questions prescind from eschatology. They do not, in any obvious way, presuppose that the eminent destiny of human beings lies outside the created order. As such, they are the kind of questions that provide a basis for a utopian narrative. These ruminations are perennially fascinating. The American humorist Mark Twain, who died in 1910, published short stories purporting to have been authored by Adam and Eve. In *Extracts from Eve's Autobiography*, Eve writes:

Love, peace, comfort, measureless contentment—that was life in the Garden. It was a joy to be alive. Pain there was none, nor infirmity, nor any physical signs to mark the flight of time. Disease, care, sorrow—one might feel these outside the pale, but not in Eden. There they had no place, there they never came. All days were alike, and all a dream of delight. Interests were abundant, for we were children, and ignorant; ignorant beyond the conception of the present day. We knew *nothing*—nothing whatever. We were starting at the very bottom of things—at the very beginning; we had to learn the ABC of things. Today the child of four years knows things which we were still ignorant of at thirty. For we were children without nurses and without instructors. There was no one to tell us anything. There was no dictionary, and we could

not know whether we used our words correctly or not. We liked large ones, and I know now that we often employed them for their sound and dignity, while quite ignorant of their meaning; and as to our spelling, it was a profligate scandal. But we cared not a straw for these trifles; so that we accumulated a large and showy vocabulary, we cared nothing for the means and the methods.⁷²

For his part, Adam writes:

If there is anything on the planet that she is not interested in, it is not in my list. There are animals that I am indifferent to, but it is not so with her. She has no discrimination, she takes to all of them, she thinks they are all treasures, every new one is welcome. When the mighty brontosaurus came striding into camp, she regarded it as an acquisition. I considered it a calamity—that is a good sample of the lack of harmony that prevails in our views of things. She wanted to domesticate it, I wanted to make it a present of the homestead and move out. She believed it could be tamed by kind treatment and would be a good pet; I said a pet twenty-one feet high and eighty-four feet long [6.46m x 25.8m] would be no proper thing

⁷² Mark Twain, *The Diary of Adam and Eve, and Other Adamic Stories* (London: Hesperus Press, 2002) 43.

to have about the place, because, even with the best intentions and without meaning any harm, it could set down on the house and mash it, for anyone could see by the look of its eye that it was absent-minded. Still, her heart was set upon having that monster, and she couldn't give it up. She thought we could start a dairy with it, and wanted me to help her milk it. But I wouldn't it was too risky. The sex wasn't right, and we hadn't any ladder anyway . . . she had one theory remaining about this colossus: she thought that if we could tame him and make him friendly, we could stand him in the river and use him for a bridge. It turned out that he was already plenty tame enough—at least as far as she was concerned—so she tried her theory, but it failed. Every time she got him properly placed in the river and went ashore to cross over on him, he came out and followed her around like a pet mountain. Like the other animals. They all do that.⁷³

It was when the humans overreached by asserting a god-like autonomy—thus surpassing the created limitation of our species—that God removed this wonderful order from our lives, and we came to know *disorder*—pain, suffering, and soon enough, even violent death. Genesis thus takes human reflection of how we are when we are

⁷³ Ibid., 34.

at our best (and, by implication, when we are at our happiest), and says that that is how we *think* we are meant to be: that *should* be our condition. And why are we *not* that way—why does the whole world seem at times to be an impediment to our happiness? Because humans tried to free themselves from their condition. By aiming to be self-sufficient, they lost the privilege of good order and acquired the duty of coping with pain, passions, dimmed reason, and an inability to communicate clearly. Since our best intentions are not enough to save us from disaster, we begin to see that the salvation we want must be a gift from outside.

Much more could be said about all this, but now it is time to turn our attention to attempts within our Christian religious tradition properly so called to restore, in some measure, the harmony that characterizes humans at their best. Being Christian, these attempts always keep an eye on heaven. I wish to note four: the monasteries of Pachomius in the 4th Century CE; the 17th and 18th century Jesuit *reducciones* of modern-day Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay; the Franciscan missions of Alta California founded by Saint Junipero Serra in the 18th century, and the continuing phenomenon of Catholic communes, exemplified by two instances in the United States of America.

Pachomius pioneered cenobitic monasticism in Egypt around the year 318, and by the time of his death in

345, he had monasteries for men and others for women, in several locations along the Nile. Together they held hundreds of monks and nuns. These communities were largely self-sustaining, with gardens for agriculture, fields, orchards, bakeries and ovens, storage areas, shops for leather working and metal working, worship areas, houses, dormitories and cells, and later areas for producing manuscripts, and even docks along the Nile. Although self-contained, they were nevertheless also federated. Seemingly from the beginning, these monasteries were organized according to a principle of subsidiarity, with the local superior aided by what I will call lieutenants within the various areas of the abbey. The abbeys were not entirely autonomous. There was a superior general over the whole federation, with a system of visitations to each monastery.

Unlike the monasticism with which we are familiar, the Pachomian monks and nuns did not follow a strict daily horarium for prayers and meals. So they functioned more as towns for the pious (albeit for pious who were usually all of the same sex) than as monasteries in the sense we know. In fact, a century after Pachomius' death, one monastery had roughly 4000 inhabitants, 55% men and 45% women in different compounds. Although Yves Congar proposed the opinion that when the Church views society as hostile, the Church tends to take refuge in its own self-contained structures, the

initial period of Egyptian monasticism was not one where Christians were on the defensive. Instead, the anchorite, eremitical life of those seeking perfection was mirrored by a cenobitic drive, and clearly it brought the world into the monastery and Christianized it. The Pachomian Rule threatened with expulsion those who flouted the Decalogue and the rules by which the vowed religious lived. Thus, since the monasteries could expel flagrant violators of its covenants or principles, the monasteries could seek to instantiate a utopian vision of how, *with* an eschatological perspective, society at its best could function.

An experiment more familiar to us, especially if we have seen the 1986 film *Mission*, is the federation of Jesuit missions, known as *reducciones*, in the area of South America whose inhabitants speak Guaraní. Jean Lacouture in his book *Jesuits, a Multibiography* entitles one chapter “Utopia and the Guaraní Republic.”⁷⁴ In order to protect the Guaraní from the predations of Spanish and Portuguese colonialists, the Jesuits, beginning in 1610, began to establish a federation of missions that would evangelize and civilize them. Earlier Dominican and Franciscan missionaries had not been successful in planting the Catholic faith, perhaps because the indigenous people linked them closely to the colonial powers, so the Jesuits tried the approach of establishing safe, enormous refug-

74 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991) 227-260.

es, with a church situated in the center, surrounded by workshops, music rooms, stone residences, and, outside the compound, areas for agriculture. The fine arts were encouraged, and the whole mission followed a regular rhythm of prayer and held everything in common.

Now, the Guaraní were semi-nomadic, with no tradition of central authority or, indeed, or of institutional authority of any kind. “The Guaraní community,” writes Lacouture, “was quite simply a society without a state and even without any form of higher authority.”⁷⁵ Therefore, adapting to the stability and authority of mission life was a radical change, even if such stability was, it might seem, a small price to pay for survival from the aggressions of the Spaniards and the Portuguese. Some evaluate the Jesuits’ efforts very positively. One Jesuit quoted by Lacouture said that the Jesuit republic “by leading the Guaraní beyond the Iguazú rapids [...] protected them from the *Paulistas* [slave raiders]. By insisting that Guaraní be spoken in the missions, they allowed it to remain a written language” (p. 229). Others decry the missions as the destroyers of the Guaraní culture.

However one evaluates the Jesuit effort, the Portuguese reaction to the missions was such that it became a motivation to press for the suppression of the Society of

75- Ibid., 235.

Jesus, which was carried out by the Franciscan Pope Clement XIV in 1773. Perhaps not enough time elapsed to let us see if the missions really could have developed into a utopia. For it seems that if a society depends for its welfare entirely on the benevolence of outside authority, it probably is not sufficiently strong to be considered utopian. The Jesuit *reducciones* were probably the most organized and sustained effort at concretizing the notion of utopia, but they were not the last. The Franciscans, spearheaded by Saint Junipero Serra, established 21 missions in the modern state of California in the late 18th century, beginning in San Diego in 1769.

More often than not, the missions were established not only to form communities of disciples, and to teach other “civilizing” subjects, but also to protect the Indians from the unwanted attentions of Spanish, and later Mexican, army garrisons. There is a paradox here. The mission *padres* were viewed by the authorities in Spain as an integral arm of extending Spanish influence in that distant area of the New World. In effect, the friars were to make *Spanish* Catholics of the Indians. Yet they also had to protect their charges from Spanish military authority. In fairly short order, however, disease and the secularization of the missions by Mexican authorities led to the abandonment of almost all of the twenty-one sites. So the Franciscan experiment failed.

If utopia cannot be—or at least, *has not been*—successfully

imposed from outside, one wonders if one can construct it without resorting to a monastic model or a mission model. That question might not be easily answered, but it is worth noticing that now, following Congar's belief that a hostile world spurs the Church to assure its best life behind walls, there is no shortage of attempts to do just that—create enclaves of virtue, enclaves of Christian living, enclaves of Christian legislation. I will list just a couple: Ave Maria in Florida,⁷⁶ conceived and funded by American pizza magnate Tom Monaghan as the site of both his Catholic university and a self-contained Catholic city where pharmacies could not dispense birth control pills. The whole city was to be characterized by its “Catholic Heart.” The state of Florida has insisted that state policies that are at odds with a Catholic theocracy be, in fact, observed there. The second is the Catholic Eco-village in Kentucky. Its website reads, in part, “Part of the teaching of Catholicism is to strive to be more Christ like. What better way to do this than to surround yourself with others trying to do the same? All vocations of life, single, married, families and active seniors have something to add. Please feel free to drop and email. Begin the change in your life, through Christ and community.”⁷⁷

Clearly, the drive to find or create Utopia continues. But

76- See avemaria.com.

77- See [Catholicceovillage](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) on youtube

it is elusive—and this side of heaven, that is no surprise. Nevertheless, the urge to make concrete the kind of society that respects human dignity, which is tantamount to the kind of society that promotes the common good, is the same urge that demands that committed people stand up in the public square to urge, persuade, and even fight for what is right. In fact, this urge at times suggests withdrawing from the world, but more often results in engaging with the world.

Thomas More's *Utopia*, analysis and critique that it is, is not a presentation of a society that can be imitated or replicated, but it is a call to men and women of rightly formed consciences to promote a more human society. From the Christian perspective, that *more* human society will be found in its fullness only in the Kingdom of Heaven. But the very fact that such a Kingdom is even attainable points to the dignity of every human on pilgrimage, and that dignity is something that right reason demands that we acknowledge, explain, defend and promote.

Prudential War in the Utopia

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A section of *Utopia*, book II (“*De re military*”)⁷⁸, is famously taken up with military practices. Readers who approach *Utopia* after having frequented works by the Scholastic *Just War* theorists, Thomas Aquinas, Francisco de Vitoria, Francisco Suarez, and their ilk, will find themselves on uncertain terrain. Some points will seem familiar, as for instance the supposition that war is a wrongful state of affairs insofar as it disrupts the natural kinship that human beings have with each other, or that war can rightly be waged only for a limited set of valid reasons, with other reasons thereby being excluded. But *Utopia* invariably develops these points in unfamiliar ways, when the argument is advanced, for instance, that treaties undermine the friendship that might otherwise exist between independent political communities (thus

78- Citations are to Thomas More, *Utopia*, English text and Translation, edited by George M. Logan, Robert M. Adams and Clarence H. Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). “*De re militari*” is in book II, pp. 201-217. For analysis of More’s conception of military affairs in the *Utopia*, see Robert P. Adams, *The Better Part of Valor* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962) 144-57.

treaties should be eschewed)⁷⁹, or likewise that war can sometimes be allowed, “to obtain territory for colonization, whenever the Utopian population exceeds the optimum number.”⁸⁰ By contrast, the Scholastics consistently held that treaties were ordinarily an expression of inter-state friendship, and thus should be entered for that reason, just as they consistently denied that war for enlargement of empire could be justifiably be waged.⁸¹ Moreover, in the *Utopia* a set of practices are introduced that would have seemed entirely alien to a Scholastic, for instance, the employment of mercenaries to wage war on foreign land,⁸² or the offer of rewards to civilians on the enemy side who are willing to assassinate their leaders.⁸³

The *Utopia*'s distinctiveness vis-à-vis Scholastic approaches to *Just War* is the more striking insofar as the period in which More wrote this work also coincided with important developments in *Just War theory*. Four years before *Utopia* first appeared (1516), a Dutch chaplain, William Mathiae, wrote an opuscula on “just and

79- *Utopia*, I 97-201.

80- Editors' "Introduction" to *Utopia*, p. xxxii.

81- See Gregory M. Reichberg, "Philosophy Meets War: Francisco de Vitoria's *De Indis* and *De jure belli relectiones* (1557)" in *The Classics of Western Philosophy*, J. Gracia, G. Reichberg, & B. Schumacher, eds. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2003) 197-204.

82- *Utopia*, 209-211.

83- *Utopia*, 212-213.

licit war”.⁸⁴ It provided a detailed examination of three conditions requisite for a just war, namely that a war be waged for a just cause, in a legitimate manner, and under the press of an urgent necessity. He was particularly drawn to the question, “why does God permit there to be war?”.

In 1512, the Dominican Sylvester Prierias published a *Summa*⁸⁵ that included sustained reflection on the conditions of a *Just War* as had been outlined by Thomas in the thirteenth century. Then, in 1517, Cardinal Thomas de Vio, better known by his nickname “Cajetan,” completed his monumental commentary on the *Summa Theologiae* (henceforth cited as “ST”) of Thomas Aquinas. A section of the work was devoted to a detailed treatment of St. Thomas’s “Quaestio de bello” (ST part II-II, q. 40).⁸⁶ It spawned numerous other Scholastic writings on the theory of just war. Cajetan himself wrote a lengthy section in his *Summa* (published 1524), a work geared to confessors, on “When war should be called just or unjust, licit or illicit”.⁸⁷ Ten years later the Dominican Francisco de Vitoria wrote his own commentary on

84- *Libellus de bello justo et licito*, completed 1512; see Robert H. W. Regout, *La doctrine de la guerre juste de saint Augustin à nos jours* (Paris: Pedone, 1934), p. 130.

85- The *Summa Sylvestriana* appeared in 1514; see Regout, p. 122.

86- For a translation of Cajetan’s commentary on Aquinas’s “Quaestio de bello,” see Gregory M. Reichberg, Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby, *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 241-245.

87- In *Ethics of War*, pp. 245-50.

Aquinas's "Quaestio de bello," and it was more famously followed by the two lectures he delivered in 1539 at the University of Salamanca on matters pertaining to war. The first, *De Indis*, examined whether the Spaniards had justification for conquering the newly discovered lands in what were then called "the Indies," now referred to as the Americas. The second, *De jure belli*, provided a systematic analysis, from the point of view of natural law, of the rights and wrongs of war.⁸⁸

In reflecting on war in the *Utopia*, More was clearly drawing on sources very different than the Scholastics mentioned above. Thomas Aquinas, most notably, seems not to have exerted the least influence on More's thought regarding these matters. Even Aristotle's *Politics*, which might have provided a shared link with the Scholastics, is less present in the *Utopia* than Plato's *Republic*, a work that was unavailable to Aquinas and his fellow theologians of the thirteenth century, and accordingly had little influence on the later development of Scholastic thought.

The gulf that exists between *Utopia*, on the one hand, and the Scholastic writings, on the other, amounts however to more than the fact that they relied on different sources. It involves, more fundamentally, a difference in moral epistemology. Whereas both view engagement

88- See *Ethics of War*, pp. 290-332, for a selection of passages from both works.

in war as requiring prudential judgment on the part of political leaders, they work from very different conceptions of what political prudence is and how it is to be exercised. For Aquinas (and the tradition that springs from him) political prudence is a virtue both intellectual and moral; consequently, all political decisions, including decisions about matters of war, must ultimately be regulated by the demands of morality. Although he recognizes that political and personal prudence are in some measure distinct, hence the first should not be viewed simply as an extension of the second,⁸⁹ he insists that both must ultimately render judgment by reference to the same unitary end, an end to which we are efficaciously directed by the theological virtue of charity. Without a vital link to charity there can be no “complete” or fully operational prudence. This holds not only for the personal or familial prudence by which private individuals are guided in their actions, but for political and military prudence as well. By the latter, individuals in civic leadership positions guide the communities under their charge (whether the polity itself or its army) toward a goal which is inherently moral, namely, right human living in ordination to God, the ultimate end of human life.

89- Political prudence is discussed by Aquinas in ST II-II, q. 50, a. 4. For an analysis, see Gregory M. Reichberg, *Thomas Aquinas on War and Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 138-39.

In the *Utopia*, by contrast, More operates with a conception of political prudence (and its military variant) that is in keeping with the Humanist tradition that is today most closely associated with the name of Machiavelli (whose *Prince* was written in 1512). This conception has two components.

First, political decision making has a consistency of its own that renders it irreducible to the sphere of personal morality. Thus conceived, politics is no longer a branch of ethics as it was for Aristotle; rather, for the Humanists, political leadership engages a set of distinctive competencies, a set of skills that must be disentangled on their own terms. These competencies do not necessarily cut against the demands of morality, and sometimes even seek to promote moral uprightness on the part of the citizenry; but their intrinsic measure is taken from what befits the interest of the political community. Expressing this orientation by reference to Machiavelli, Jacques Maritain notes how “[E]thics is here present, but in the matter to be shaped and dominated.”⁹⁰ Or, to put the point somewhat differently, the Humanist approach adopts a “merely artistic concept of politics”; it represents “an artistic transposition of the Aristotelian concept of virtue.”⁹¹ Art is understood here in the Aris-

90- Jacques Maritain, “The End of Machiavellianism,” chap. 11 of *The Range of Reason* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1952), pp. 134-64, at p. 140.

91- Maritain, “The End of Machiavellianism,” pp. 139-141.

totelian sense of the term, namely, any sort of “making” in contrast to “doing.” What is characteristic of “making” is the fact that success is measured by whatever completes the work (which in the case under consideration consists in management of the *polis*). The work itself, its internal exigencies, is what finalizes the action of the maker. In *doing*, by contrast, it is the good of the doer, her finalities, that is the measure of the thing done. And for Aristotelians, this finality must be defined morally, in contrast to the end of an artwork, which rescinds from such a reference.

Second, for the Humanists, the political good has no inherent reference beyond itself to a transcendent good. Human beings might have such a reference, heaven is for them, but there is no heaven for the *polis*; it is self-sufficient and must be defined without express ordination to a beyond. By contrast, for Aristotelian Christians such as Aquinas, the temporal city, while having its own specific nature, nonetheless has the character of an intermediate end; its subordination to a higher end, the end of the Church and ultimately the celestial Jerusalem must be recognized. This means that those who lead the temporal *polis* cannot entirely rescind from the higher moral rule that derives from *caritas* in their judgement of what befits that *polis*. Maritain accordingly notes how, “because good life on earth is not the absolute ultimate end of man, and because the human

person has a destiny superior to time, political common good involves an intrinsic though indirect reference to the absolute end of the human members of political society, which is eternal life, in such a way that the political community should temporally, and from below, help each human person in his human task of conquering his final freedom and fulfilling his destiny.”⁹²

In his analysis of the cardinal virtue of *prudentia*,⁹³ Thomas Aquinas notes that we can speak of this virtue in three different senses. In the most proper sense of the term, *prudentia* designates an intellectual ability for making morally upright choices. This ability will function as it should only when it operates with a vital connection to virtues that assure moral direction in human life, both natural virtues such as justice, but also the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and charity. *Prudentia* in this mode Aquinas names *complete* prudence.⁹⁴ He recognizes that sometimes prudential judgment can be exercised in matters of more limited scope, say in running a business effectively, or in constructing a building

92- Maritain, “The End of Machiavellianism,” p. 143.

93- ST II-II, qq. 47-52.

94- For the distinction between “complete” (*perfecta*) and incomplete (*imperfecta*) prudence, see ST II-II, q. 47, a. 13. (This runs parallel to the distinction made earlier in ST - I-II, q. 65, a. 1 - between complete and incomplete virtue.) As examples of “incomplete prudence,” Aquinas mentions business acumen, and skill in navigating ships. The article likewise contrasts the two forms of “true” prudence -- “complete” and “incomplete” - to the “false prudence” (*prudentia falsa*) of thieves and other such malefactors who successfully employ their minds for the promotion of evil ends. See Reichberg, *Aquinas on War and Peace*, p. 75.

that fits a specific need. Defined by a limited task and its attendant risks, this prudence is akin to art, and as such, it no longer has a specifically moral good as its referent. For this reason, it can render correct judgement without requiring support from the full range of moral and theological virtues. This he names *incomplete* prudence. Finally, he notes how one can be very clever in reasoning about wrongful pursuits, as when we say that someone is a “good thief,” in the sense of being very adept at absconding with the money of others. This is *prudencia* in appearance only. It is, in Aquinas’s words, a *false* prudence.

These three senses of prudence have pertinence not only to the choices of private individuals, but also to the choices of public officials who act on behalf of the polities that are under their leadership. As we shall see in a moment, when Aquinas defined a special modality of political prudence for the direction of military affairs, he had in mind a prudence of the complete kind. The sort of prudential judgment that is displayed in *Utopia* is chiefly of the artistic or *incomplete* variant, while the prudence we today associate with Machiavellianism is akin to the *false* prudence of thieves.

In what follows I will first explain how Aquinas conceived of military prudence of the complete sort⁹⁵; sec-

95- Aquinas discussed military prudence first in ST II-II, q. 48, a. 1 (where is men-

ondly, I will show how *Utopia* exemplifies an artistic or incomplete military prudence. This prudence should not however be equated with “dirty hands” and other forms of political conniving that Aquinas would have placed under the label of mere “cleverness” or false prudence.

Aquinas on Military Prudence⁹⁶

The designation of a special military mode of prudence cannot be found in Aristotle. Nor was *prudentia militaris* a standard turn of phrase in the Roman military manuals that circulated widely in Latin Christendom during the thirteenth century. These texts employed the nomenclature of military art (*ars*) or science (*scientia*), rather than of military prudence. Aquinas seems to have picked up the expression “*prudentia militaris*” from *De affectibus* (On the Emotions), a text that medieval scholarship had erroneously attributed to the Peripatetic philosopher Andronicus of Rhodes. The term appears in a list of different kinds of prudence, but without further elaboration. Since *prudentia militaris* represented an uncommon usage, it is understandable that Aquinas would have felt compelled to justify it by explaining why precisely leadership in the “things of war” ought to be cat-

tioned alongside other modes of *prudentia*), and then in q. 50, a. 4, which is devoted to this specific virtue.

96- These reflections on Aquinas’s contrast between prudence and art are taken from chap. 4 of *Aquinas on War and Peace*, pp. 67-81.

egorized under the moral heading of prudence, not art. Unlike our modern usage, whereas prudence can designate cleverness and even cunning, for Aquinas and his contemporaries this term designated an ability to make decisions that combines intelligence and moral uprightness. Prudence, as he understood it, presupposes rectitude of the will. Hence among the intellectual virtues, prudence alone has the singular status of also being a moral virtue, i.e., a virtue assuring right volition in relation to one's judgments about actions to be performed.

Aquinas initially showed some uncertainty whether there should be designated a specifically military form of prudence. Standing against this attribution was the part played by technical competence in generalship; a competence that can be mastered by the perverse and upright alike. An avid reader of the Old Testament Book of Job, Aquinas was well aware that all manner of evil, including defeat on the battlefield, could befall the just man. Inversely, he did not deny that victory could sometimes be achieved by perfidious means. But on his reasoned account this moral ambivalence does not remove generalship from the sphere of moral virtue, because on Aquinas's understanding, victory is not the *nec sum ultra* of generalship. Beyond this particular result, he emphasized how generalship has an essential ordination to the common good. This ordination must take precedence over, and thereby subordinate to itself, the techni-

cal (“artistic” in Aquinas’s terminology) skills that the general will have acquired in the course of his military training.

Where Aristotle had spoken of *victory*, Aquinas refers instead to the *common good* as the specifying goal of the general’s art. This enables him to reach a novel conclusion. Ordered to an overarching end, namely, the well-being of the entire political community, military command requires full-fledged moral prudence. Inversely, the lower military skills (horsemanship, archery, building fortifications, etc.) directed as they are to narrow, more limited goals, may adequately be described under the heading of art. Ordered as it is to the achievement of some specialized task, art has no direct need of the moral virtues by which we are directed to comprehensive end of human life. This ordination to the overarching end remains extrinsic to art.

In a reduced sense, however, Aquinas does recognize that art cannot entirely bypass virtue within its own domain, as no one will advance very far in making a sculpture, designing a house, acquiring expertise in engineering, and so forth, without having a disposition to persevere in these activities. Moderation, likewise, will also be needed, as for instance when an architect is expected to keep within the financial restraints imposed by her assignment. It is clear, however, that this perseverance and moderation need not reach into all areas

of her life, and in fact may be sorely lacking outside the sphere of her art. Aquinas, as we have seen, refers to the appetitive dispositions required for the cultivation of an art or science under the heading of “incomplete virtue.”⁹⁷ Whereas the “complete” virtue presupposed by prudence is applicable throughout life as a whole, with the result that each moral virtue stands interconnected with the others, the “incomplete” moral virtue associated with art consists in an inclination to pursue goals of more limited scope. Since such limited goals are independent of each other, the various dispositions that conduce to their respective fulfillment can survive without being interconnected. Insofar as art must associate itself with some measure of virtue (involving appetitive inclination and choice), and is directed to contingent matters (there is more than one way to build a house well), it bears a likeness to prudence. For this reason, Aquinas occasionally speaks of some arts, especially those involving the administration of human affairs (management of a business, for instance), as modalities of incomplete prudence, namely a prudence that regulates our engagement in tasks of limited scope.

By contrast, as already noted, Aquinas does not consider the direction of an army as being the sort of limited task

97- The contrast between incomplete (*imperfecta*) and complete (*perfecta*) moral virtue is drawn by Aquinas in ST I-II, q. 65, a. 1. There he explains how by the first we have an inclination to the production of a specific good work, while by the second we are inclined to perform a good deed well.

that would be adequately described under the heading of art or incomplete prudence. Hence military professionals, exemplified in his discourse by the figure of the general, are expected to possess full prudence. This is entailed by the essential link which exists between their professional role and service to the common good. This service requires that they be more than skilled technicians of their craft. Or, to put the same point differently, the very end of the military calling demands that technical skills be ordained to a good higher than victory. The coordination of these technical skills with the more comprehensive end of human society is the central task of prudence. And to carry out this coordination, prudence in turn depends on the full complement of moral virtues because the egregious lack of any one virtue would conduce to choices harmful to the common good.⁹⁸

Finally, what Aquinas terms the *bonum commune* (common good) should not be equated with what today is termed the “national interest,” namely the sum of benefits that might accrue to a nation irrespective of its positing *vis-à-vis* moral goods.⁹⁹ For Aquinas, morality is

98- It should be noted, however, that the moral virtues need not be possessed with equal firmness and consistency, nor will a weakening of each and every one of them have the same deleterious effect on military prudence as would a deficiency of justice (a virtue consisting in a “perpetual and constant will to render each man his due” (q. 58. a. 1)).

99- See Mary Keys, *Aristotle, Aquinas, and the Promise of the Common Good* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

inherent to the common good: it is a collective flourishing in the goods proper to virtue. This he made clear, for instance in his treatment of legal justice, a virtue of political leadership by which all the acts of the other virtues are directed to the common good.¹⁰⁰

The above review of Aquinas's teaching on *prudentialia* shows that when he placed the things of war under this heading, he committed himself to a thick moral conception of military command. This is commensurate with his overarching supposition that *Just War* is exercised by the prince for the benefit of the common good. Inversely, had Aquinas categorized military leadership under the heading of *art*, morality would have applied to it in an extrinsic manner only. A general who ordered the commission of atrocities, or who waged war for a manifestly evil purpose, could still be deemed a *habile* commander if he successfully led his troops to victory, even though, on moral grounds, he must be deemed a bad man. But to assert that military command is indeed an instance of *prudence* is for him equivalent to saying that morality is intrinsic to this practice, such that any willful misconduct on the part of the general by direct intention or negligence would evince a faulty command. In such a case not only is he to be rightly condemned *qua* man, but more to the point, his competence *qua* commander would be called into question.

100- ST II-II, 58, a. 5.

Military Prudence in the Utopia

In providing his sketch of an ideal city (utopia), More precedes from two heuristic principles. First, of all this is not a city of professed Christians. It is not that they are anti-religious or “secular-minded” as we would say today, but simply that they do not recognize a transcendent good that lies above and beyond the city. In the absence of this transcendent good, decisions about what is good or evil must have the city itself as its sole locus. For them there is no “interest of God” that structures and places limits on the “interest of man.” But it is not that individuals are themselves the supreme rule. In fact, the Utopian government places restrictions on individual freedom when necessary. This indicates how the supreme good, in view of which all else must be evaluated, is the good of the city. But because there is nothing beyond it, whatever befits this ideal city will have the character of goodness, and whatever opposes it will be bad. The *interest* of the city is accordingly the supreme rule of action. This is the second heuristic principle.

In laying this twofold foundation for a utopia, More elaborates a viewpoint subtly different from the classical Aristotelian-Thomist concept of *bonum commune*, which, as we have seen, has a moral content that renders it irreducible to the “common interest.” Within a common *good* perspective, it is recognized that certain bed-

rock values can never be violated, however the common *interest* might otherwise benefit. Aquinas accordingly denies that it is ever licit for public authority to kill an innocent human being even should material harm to the city nonetheless result.¹⁰¹ Preserving the life of the innocent (i.e., morally good people) *always* enhances the common good qua moral good.¹⁰² By contrast, in *Utopia* a gap sometimes opens between the normal demands of morality and the needs of the polis. It is important to recognize that this gap is possible precisely because the utopia is constructed from a common *interest* standpoint. That said, we should avoid the other extreme of equating his utopia with a form of utilitarianism, as it is not designed by More as the sum of individual needs and pleasures.

Utopia transcends the interest of its individual members, taken as individuals; its value subsists apart from them. That said, it exists nowhere else than in its individual members, taken as a collectivity. As already noted, the Utopians do not recognize the existence of a heavenly Jerusalem which could afford its members continued life after death. This being the case, of paramount concern in military operations, indeed *the* paramount concern,

101- [N]ullo modo licit occidere innocentem" (ST, II-II, q. 64, a. 6).

102- Aquinas implicitly emphasizes how the "life of just men (*vita justorum*) preserves and promotes the common good" (ibid.) precisely because this justice is essential to what the common good is; this justice is constitutive of that common good.

is what we would today call “force protection,” namely the adoption of strategies that keep a utopia’s citizen-soldiers from harm’s way. Chivalric notions of self-sacrifice are entirely alien to their way of life. It is not that they are cowardly; far from it. But they organize themselves militarily so that occasions for dying are kept at a minimum. Hence the use of alien mercenaries in fighting foreign wars: why put your own men at risk if you can pay others to wage war abroad? Moreover, because these mercenaries are men of low moral bearing, there is little to be lost in the event they should die. Likewise, as earlier noted, the Utopians resort to measures such as political assassination (“decapitation” or “lethal targeting of enemy leaders,” as it is now called) as a method for avoiding large battlefield confrontations that would result in heavy casualties to the utopian side.

This emphasis on the preservation of life gives the appearance of being animated by moral concern. But this is a matter of appearance only, as the practice is premised instead on the preeminence accorded to community self-interest. The concern is “strategic” in the way that military professionals often speak today of avoiding harm to non-combatants in counter-insurgency situations, not precisely because such harm is intrinsically wrongful, but rather to avoid losing the support of local civilians who might shift their allegiance to the enemy side if the belief grows that they have been treated callously.

Revisiting the Concept of “Just War”

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Etymologically, utopia means “nowhere” but in reality, it means “everywhere.” Utopia starts at the individual level to spread to the community and beyond. Someone once said, “Everybody wants to change the world, nobody wants to change himself.” We all remember Martin Luther King’s speech, “*I Have a Dream*.” We recall Cervantes and his famous *Don Quixote de la Mancha*. We also remember the worst: Hitler and the Holocaust¹⁰³. Jesus himself came up with his own utopia: “My kingdom is not of this world” (*John 18:36*). To have a dream is one thing; to make it reality is another. Dreams often conflict with reality, because dreams require others to agree, freely or forcefully, before they can take root and transform.

Thomas Mores’ *Utopia* is such a dream, never challenged by reality. What if utopia, however, had to challenge reality? Would it have a feasible chance? Would utopia still be utopia? Throughout the centuries, different uto-

103- Lest we forget the *Lebensborn* project.

pias have emerged (religious, ideological etc.), most of them conflicting, each propagating its own vision. The question, then, is, “What happens when one utopia conflicts with another?” A fortiori, or when one utopia is expansionist or subject to the expansion of another utopia. The globalized world levies threats and challenges that need to be braved. Is resistance to such overwhelming evolution possible? Natural right supporters¹⁰⁴ legitimize their right to resist. They even classify such resistance as a moral duty. The question became even more persistent with the influence of Christian idealism; a religion built on peace, forgiveness, and nonviolence¹⁰⁵. We end up wondering, therefore, whether Christian-ism is nihilist by essence or not.

If we would simply rely on the teachings of Jesus himself, we would find no justification to resort to violence under any circumstance. Early Christian philosophers had to rely on the answer given by John the Baptist to a soldier in order to back up their theory by extrapolation

104- Locke considers the right of self-defense as the first Natural Law. Each person owns his or her life and no other person has a right to take that life. Consequently, a person is entitled to resist aggressive attacks. John Locke, “*An Essay Concerning the True Original, Extent, and End of Civil Government*,” 1690, para. 11, 17, 18, 172, 222.

105- “Do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also” (*Matthew 5:39*). “Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you” (*Matthew 5:44*). “Jesus said... ‘all who live by the sword will die by the sword’” (*Luke 22:51*). “Do not repay evil with evil” (*Peter 3:9*). Our Scriptures tell us that if you see your enemy hungry, give food, or if thirsty, give drink. “Your generosity will surprise him with goodness. Do not let evil get the better of you; get the better of evil by doing good” (*Romans 12:21*).

of a “just war.” *Just War theory* is essentially the right to self-defense. To sum up, the whole issue is one of *modus vivendi*, i.e. facing external threats to its existence. *Just War theory* does not deal directly with internal threats. What happens, for instance, in the case where a subversive attitude is being demonstrated within a specific *modus vivendi*?

A Modus Vivendi Built Upon Peace

Prima facie, the Utopians in More’s *Utopia*, hate war, which they consider inhuman and an act not even practiced by the beasts in the animal kingdom. For them, the so-called “glory” achieved in war seems inglorious. They train constantly, however, in the disciplines of war. Both men and women are involved in such trainings, ever-ready for any exigency.¹⁰⁶ Limited reasons condition their engagement in war: (1) to defend their country; (2) to defend their friends; and (3) to deliver a weak nation from oppression or tyranny. Utopians would rather honor strategy over gaining victory through great bloodshed. Once war is declared, they circulate leaflets across the enemy’s country, offering a generous reward to anyone who assassinates the king or other leaders, in order to sow suspicion and dissent throughout the enemy nation. Their greatest treasures,

¹⁰⁶ As the saying goes, *Si vis pacem, para bellum*. If you want peace, prepare for war: *Epitoma Rei Militaris*, by Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus.

gold and silver, are dedicated for use in wars. They are, therefore, able to offer lavish rewards to enemy defectors and are able to employ mercenaries at a handsome rate.

They honor the idea of hiring mercenaries, such as the Zapoletes, a race in a nearby country who are brutish, strong, and brave fighters, whom they employ to send into battle. They are pretty much aware that those mercenaries have no principles of loyalty and could be persuaded to defect to the enemy side if paid more, but Utopians are generally in a position to outbid their competitors, which they do readily, calculating shrewdly that a large number of the mercenaries will be killed and will never live long enough to collect their pay. Utopians prefer to avoid engaging their own citizens in battle unless their own country is invaded, and in such an event, they recruit volunteers only. Women, who are willing, are encouraged to accompany their husbands and stand with them in battle. Once involved in an armed conflict, special trained forces would be sent to capture, kill, or seek out the commander of an enemy force. If they gain the upper hand and the enemy retreats, they prevent their troops from engaging in random, disorderly pursuit; instead, avoid wholesale slaughter, preferring to take prisoners. Under certain circumstances, they would fake a retreat to trap an unwary enemy. Their light body armor offers suitable protection and allows

for marching long distances or swimming. Part of their training is to swim in armor. In the case of their offense strategy, they prefer the use of battle-axes, rather than swords and bows and arrows, given their skill, strength, and accuracy with the former. They are innovative and are able to create special weapons for war. They do not destroy or plunder a captured city or waste the fields of the enemy, and they observe exceptional clemency toward the defeated nation, with the exception of the leaders who instigated the war and those among the enemy who oppose the surrender. A conquered nation is, however, obliged to pay tribute to reimburse the Utopians for their expenses in the conduct of the war. This payment can be in either money or the rich estates of the defeated country.

More's treatment of war is longer than any other topic, with the expectation of religion, and that is surprising because war was not a subject of predilection on which he was especially knowledgeable and probably was one in which he had no great interest. For instance, he represents the Utopians, as loathing war, giving the impression that he perceives it to be unwise and spiteful. Utopians perceive war as a dirty affair; therefore, they consider themselves justified when they resort to any necessary action. Incitement, bribery, and deceit to kill appear to be the better alternative. They are determined to win by whatever means, but they strive to limit ca-

sualties, especially among their own people. Using mercenaries to fight battles was common on the European continent for centuries; sometimes entire military brigades were hired under the command and supervision of a *condottiere*¹⁰⁷.

The weakness of the system was that hired troops could be bribed to change sides. Furthermore, if one troop of mercenaries faced another mercenary outfit, the combat often lacked ferocity and the casualties were kept to a minimum, since neither army was fighting for a cause that meant much to them. In More's time, it was becoming obvious that a troop of amateurs, formed of farmers and shopkeepers might perform better in the field than the foreign professionals, because they were fighting for their survival. It should be noted here, however, that the discussion of mercenaries is less applicable to England than to Continental nations and that the attitude of the Utopians toward the loss of life among their hired Zapoletes appears rather cruel.

As noted earlier, both women and men were trained in warlike exercises, and women could join men into battle if they were willing. The question of whether or not they bore arms and engaged in the actual slaughter

¹⁰⁷- "*Condottiere*, plural *Condottieri*, leader of a band of mercenaries engaged to fight in numerous wars among the Italian states from the mid-14th to the 16th century; the name was derived from the *condotta*, or "contract," by which the *condottieri* put themselves in the service of a city or of a lord." See: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/condottiere> Accessed on 9 August 2018.

is unclear. The presence of women on the battleground was by no means an innovation. Amerigo Vespucci reported customs showing that women might sometimes be used to carry supplies for their soldiers in during war. They sometimes served simply to provide soldiers with moral support. Socrates, for instance, had proposed having the women accompany their soldiers and some records reveal that Germanic and Swiss armies brought women into the fight. The types of weapons and the armor mentioned show clearly that the Utopians engaged in a rather archaic form of combat. The most noticeable feature is the absence of any mention of firearms. This is surprising in view of the fact that gunpowder had been introduced into warfare a century and a half earlier and was coming into fairly general use by the beginning of the 16th century.

More may have thought that the use of cannons was a little too sophisticated for those remote islanders. Possibly, he had an aversion to that “*villainous saltpeter*” that was spoiling the heroics of knightly combat, much as Hotspur’s messenger had. We know that Henry VIII retained his confidence in the longbow, believing it was a weapon England should rely on in its wars, because twenty-five years later he commissioned Roger Ascham to write a manual on archery to encourage its continued use.¹⁰⁸

108- Ascham’s *Toxophilus* (“*Lover of the Bow*”) was written in the form of a dialogue

In refraining from plundering captured cities or ravaging farms, the Utopians demonstrate a stage of progress toward civilized behavior that corresponded to other aspects of their policies in conducting wars, i.e. attempting to limit bloodshed in combat.

When we compare More's Utopians to a group that arose in Europe in the Eleventh century, the Cathars, we are able to approach this *Modus Vivendi* from another angle, namely, from the angle of *turmoil*. The story of the Cathars may give us an insight into how and why More's imaginary Utopians live the way they do, especially when it comes to war.

A Modus Vivendi in Turmoil: The Cathars' Experiment

Much is known about the Cathars, but what may be important for our purposes in terms of analyzing More's work, is that in opposing the Catholic Church, they established an anti-sacerdotal party that protested against what they considered to be the spiritual, political, and moral corruption of the church. St. Bernard of Clairvaux, although opposed to the Cathars, famously wrote of them in his well-known *Sermon 65 on the Song of Songs*:

If you question the heretic about his faith, nothing is more Christian; if about his daily converse,

and published in 1545 as the first book on archery in English as far as we know.

nothing more blameless; and what he says he proves by his actions. . .As regards his life and conduct, he cheats no one, pushes ahead of no one, and does violence to no one. Moreover, his cheeks are pale with fasting; he does not eat the bread of idleness; he labors with his hands and thus makes his living. Women are leaving their husbands, men are putting aside their wives, and they all flock to those heretics! Clerics and priests, the youthful and the adult among them, are leaving their congregations and churches and are often found in the company of weavers of both sexes.¹⁰⁹

When a key leader of the anti-Cathar persecutions, Bishop Fulk, excoriated the Languedoc Knights for not pursuing the heretics more diligently, he received the following reply, “We cannot. We have been reared in their midst. We have relatives among them and we see them living [utopian] lives of perfection.”¹¹⁰ Catharism stands for “the pure ones.”¹¹¹ It was a Christian dualist or Gnostic revival¹¹² movement that thrived in some areas

109- Quoted in Walter L. Wakefield, Austin P. Evans, edd. and trans., *Heresies of the High Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969) 136.

110- Stephen O’Shea, *The Perfect Heresy: The Revolutionary Life and Death of the Medieval Cathars* (New York: Walker & Company, 2000) 42.

111- John Simpson ed. *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989)

112- Cathar theology was essentially Gnostic. They believed in the existence of two “gods”: one evil and one good. The evil one, in charge of all the visible and material

of Southern Europe, particularly northern Italy and the south of France, between the Eleventh and fourteenth centuries.. Cathar beliefs varied from one community to another, because Catharism was initially transmitted by ascetic priests who had set few guidelines. The Roman Catholic Church denounced their practices, including the *Consolamentum* ritual, by which individuals were baptized and raised to the status of “perfection.”¹¹³

Their roots seem to go back to the Paulician movement in Armenia and Anatolia. Even though the term “Cathar” had been used for centuries to identify the movement, it is unclear as to whether the movement used this name of itself. How familiar with the history of this movement More was, is unclear, but it is unlikely that he had not been exposed to many of their teachings, even though the sect was all but gone during his time. The belief that only two gods existed, one being good and the other evil, was a central Cathar belief. They considered, for instance, that the god of the *New Testament*, creator of the spiritual realm, was the good god. In contrast, they regarded the god of the *Old Testament*, creator of the physical/material realm as evil and

things in the world, was held responsible for all the atrocities in the world, including those described in the *Old Testament*. The good one, on the other hand, was the one the Cathars worshipped and was responsible for the message of Jesus. They, therefore, made every effort to follow the teachings of Jesus as closely as possible so as to avoid being rebuked.

113- Malcolm Lambert, *The Cathars* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998) 21.

identified as Satan. This evil god created all visible matter, including the human body, tainted with sin from the beginning of creation. Cathars maintained the belief that human spirits were the genderless spirits of angels trapped within the physical creation of the evil god, and that they were condemned to an eternal incarnation until they could achieve salvation through a ritual called the *consolamentum*¹¹⁴ wherein they reached perfection. Obviously, this belief gravely contradicted the dogmas of the Catholic Church. From the very beginning of his pontificate, Pope Innocent III attempted to put an end to Catharism by sending missionaries and by persuading the local authorities to act against them. Pierre de Castelnau, the papal legate, was assassinated in 1208, while returning to Rome after excommunicating Count Raymond VI of Toulouse, whom he considered to be too lenient with the Cathars¹¹⁵.

Once again, investigating the beliefs and history of the Cathars may shed some light on why More chose to write *Utopia* in the first place; it also provides much food for thought when it comes to the history of *Just War theory*.

114- Margaret Schaus *Women And Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Taylor and Francis Group, 2006)

115- Jonathan Sumption, *The Albigensian Crusade* (London: Faber and Faber, 1999).

Thomas More and Dostoevsky: Kindred Spirits?

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The French proverb, “The more it changes the more it stays the same,” shows us that despite the time difference between Thomas More and Dostoevsky, what is still the same is the eclipse of spirituality. More’s *Utopia* is a description of the cure that society needs when it falls into the trap of materialism. Dostoevsky takes a parallel road by describing what happens to society when evil takes hold of it. For both, spirituality resists the extinction of desire for a transcendental consciousness which lucidly appears in the *Utopia* as well as in *The Possessed*. Both follow the way of “The Lord Jesus Christ.” This is well illustrated in the answer of More to his daughter, Margaret, when she logically supplicated him to give his oath to Henry and secretly keep his allegiance to the Catholic church. To her supplication he replies that the issue is not about logic, but about love. Similarly, Dostoevsky shows us that the issue is redemption, which cannot be achieved except by the curing love of Christ

and also by our resistance to evil. More, as a proficient lawyer and a spiritual man, shows us that the use of law when it points to the spiritual life will ever help a society to be redeemed. More and Dostoevsky are enkindled with transcendental consciousness. This is the spiritual form for both.

Having this frugality of desire and hope, one begins to taste the indispensable spirituality for the cure of England's and Russia's spiritual eclipse. Both request the world to stop fighting the windmills and try to change the direction of the winds; an image I take from Cervantes. With spirituality one resists the irresistible non-meaningful superficialities of life, i.e., when a society has excess of wants and less of needs it becomes a place of more wants and a place of little joy: a little joy is a sign of the degeneration of the culture. Despite the excess of materialism, the phenomenon of the *Zeitgeist* can never be emptied from the desire for a new form of consciousness where the invisible dimension of life becomes visible by what the mystics call the "Third Eye."

During the Middle Ages it was called the science of the spirit innovated by the alchemists, and later was developed by the great insights of people like Paracelsus who was known as the biologist of the spiritual world, and who lived the experience of what Theodore Adorno calls "the fearless receptivity" to the thoughts of the cosmic mind. Many followed in his steps such as the

Rosicrucians and Jacob Böhme, and others. There is no doubt that both Dostoevsky and More were living this *Geist* and collected the rich harvest of this older learning to represent the spirit of Christ who transmutes the body and soul. This is clear in *The Possessed* in the person of Tikhon the mystic and in Stepan Verkhovensky, particularly in his last public confession. In Book I and Book II of *Utopia*, “The way of our Lord Jesus Christ” is emphasized. As Christ transmutes body and soul, society can also be transmuted moving from a society of superfluous wants to one of genuine and legitimate needs. Detachment is a high level of transcendental consciousness: it is the epistemology of love and faith immersed in a blessed life.

Love and faith cannot be complete without humility. In *Utopia*, Raphael never uses the pronoun I. He always repeats the word Utopians as if he is not speaking of himself. In Book I, talking about his encounters with other cultures, he says that consciousness goes beyond the desire for laws. Consciousness of justice preempts the act of justice, leading to mercy, which everyone deserves. In *The Possessed*, Dostoevsky shows that the desire for a non-spiritual power does not allow people like Stavrogin and Pyotr Verkhovensky to embrace a person like Shatov who dedicated his life to the ideals of Christ and his mercy. With cold blood they murdered him. For Shatov, the body and mercy of Christ is the religion

that More calls “The Philosophy of Christ”. Shatov was killed by people who showed their beastly claws when they were faced by the love of Christ. For them, there is no distinction between good and evil. This shows their wounded vanity. Love and justice can overcome the passing time and prove their eternity. Recovering the Dostoevskian analysis of evil helps to promote the kind of social justice and repentance that Thomas More advocates in his *Utopia*.

Another character who symbolizes the eclipse of spirituality is Stavrogin, who is unable to speak the truth, and thus not able to repent. In Book II, the overall theme is that repentance is necessary for forgiveness. Repentance destroys the power of despair. Repentance is rooted in patience and faith, which allows leisure, encounter, conversation and experience. This shows that both authors emphasize virtue rather than the “insufficiencies of daily laws.” Raphael makes the point that virtue is an inner discipline, which helps the virtuous person distinguish between the “infinite controversies” that arise from mindless conformity to man-made rules and regulations. In Book II, Raphael also speaks of truthfulness rather than experts. In *The Possessed*, Varvara Stavrogin, the mother of Stavrogin, wants experts. She chose Pyotr Verkhovensky, the young anarchist to be her advisor, but finally sees through the deformity of his logic—the same logic, lacking a transcendental character, used by

Stavrogin, and Kirilov, who along with Pyotr, deny the existence of God, and yet hold on to the belief that they cannot live without God; so logically, they all commit suicide.

What is so impressive is the fact that without repentance, punishment is the result. In *The Possessed* the evil persons Stavrogin, Kirilov and Pyotr subjectively punish themselves, while with More, it is the law that punishes the non-repentant. However, between the subjective punishment and the punishment dictated by the law, there is an interior unity between the two authors. The law that punishes gathers itself back to spirituality and attests to the divine rather than to the demonic. It is a punishment without hate and without vengeance. Though the law is logically understood, it is pre-figured by a transcendental consciousness which by osmosis fuses opposites. It is a metamorphosis where injustice is transformed into a spiritual gem: it is felt by having faith in Christ's forgiveness. It is not a progress in the soul of the human being; on the contrary, it is redemption. Thus, redemption, as a collective virtue, is available to all who sit peacefully at the feet Christ.

We may better understand the notion of a collective virtue by having recourse to the Lakanian gaze; a gaze that points to the heart of things rather than to the end of things. Briefly said, a gaze grasps the heart of things where the progressivity of time is suspended. By this,

I mean that More's *Utopia* is not only bent towards the future, it exists in the heart and mind where the essence of justice and moral equality rests themselves, despite materialism. It is the spiritual world. The same can be said for Dostoevsky. Despite evil people and evil structures in the world, there is the power of Christ who still expels the evil spirits which inhabit human beings, just as he did when he ordered the evil spirits to depart from the young man in the Gospel. "Leave him", he said, and the evil spirit left the soul of the young man and entered the swine which rushed and drowned themselves in the lake. Finally, the young man peacefully sat at the feet of Christ. How close Dostoevsky and More are to each other. At the feet of Christ one can find the peace the world desires. This human state is beyond history. Despite the evil of Stavrogin, Tikhone's humility becomes the necessity for sitting at the feet of Christ. Stavrogin asks Tikhone whether he has full faith, and Tikhone's humble answer is that he is not sure. His mother, Varvara, is interrupted by the wider consciousness of redemption when she prophetically says, "I have no son". Stavrogin hanged himself, Kirilov, like the swine, drowns in his arguments and finally shoots himself. In More's *Utopia*, we find no such arguments. We only find descriptions of how a truthful gaze constantly gives the remedy to the dominant injustice in the state.

With both authors we find that the time difference

does not threaten the underlying unity at which they both gaze. Materialism does not act as an allure to distract them. In Shakespearean language, the instruments of darkness do not bribe them with honest trivialities that betray them. What is constant is the way of Christ, which can never be shaken. Even the materialistic invasion of our world cannot conquer the not-yet disruptive invasion of the spiritual happening which induces an unexpected change. That is why spirituality is the constant existence anchoring itself against the *faux bijoux* intellectuality revealed in mediocrity, vulgarity, and ignorance. Spirituality buttresses itself in the mystical, i.e., the *is-ness* which we consciously or unconsciously gaze at in order to grasp it. It is where the stillness of wisdom and love resides. Spirituality is the yeast that assures the quality of the dough to be baked and becomes a representation of a spiritual body.

To conclude, Theodore Adorno's expression "fearless receptivity" is suitable for this discussion. Fearlessly we need to be receptive to this multidimensional consciousness of the mystic which is well explained by Ibn Arabi and others. With fearless receptivity we become obedient to the disruptive awareness of the divine graces; graces of the inquisitiveness of selfless love and a penetrating wisdom. When Raphael speaks his wisdom, he speaks as if he is not the child of wisdom. It is the same humility we find in Shatov and Tykhon; and above all

it is the humility of Christ, as Dostoevsky tells us in *The Possessed*, who was nailed on the cross of shame, which itself became the ground of the glory of his resurrection. It is the loving consciousness which has the force of action and transfiguration. It is the hope, the expectation and the desire of More and Dostoevsky. This spirituality transcends time. It is a vitality which invades time and disrupts its progress. It is a vitality which echoes in the heart and mind of the human being to affirm and promise a virtuous perfectibility of human life.

Catholic Social Theory and Practice in the 21st Century: A Challenge for Believers in the Middle East

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This year¹¹⁶ we celebrate the 125th anniversary of Catholic social teaching. On 15 May 1891 Pope Leo XIII issued the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (Of the New Things) promoting a revolutionary change in Christianity's understanding of the rights and duties of the capitalist class and organized labor. Equally damning of both laissez-faire liberalism's plan to totally deregulate the economy and socialism's dream of ending private ownership of the means of production (POMP), this authoritative papal circular letter promoted a third path to a better world. The social teachings of the Catholic Church have provoked much controversy over the years. Today, the revolutionary challenges set out in the Vatican's al-

¹¹⁶- A version of this paper was delivered in May of 2016 at the International Conference on Thomas More's *Utopia*, organized by Notre Dame University-Louaize in Lebanon; the links between the ideas here and More's work are briefly addressed in the final section of this paper.

ternative, faith-based approach to peace, freedom, and social justice are again seen as an option for those seeking a spiritually grounded and economically sound route to solidarity, reciprocity, and ultimately the survival of the human race.

Rights and Duties of Capital and Labor in the North and South

Social discourse within the Roman Catholic Church at the time of the issuing of *Rerum Novarum* can be understood as a dual response to the challenges of extreme poverty and a sense of alienation during the height of the Second Industrial Revolution (c. 1870-1914), as well as to the class warfare that resulted as a response to these phenomena. Catholic Social Teaching (CST)¹¹⁷ sought to steer a path between the radical challenges to private property on the left and right wing attempts to turn back the clock of time to a period long gone, in which industrialization, urbanization, universal education, mass migration, and the transformation of gender roles still seemed preventable. CST thus occupies a middle

117- In this context CST will refer to mainstream approaches to social theory within the Catholic Church based on the Compendium of the Social Doctrine. For an overview see Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004). http://www.antoniano.org/carbajo/FST/Readings/Magisterium/EN_Compendium_CST.pdf, retrieved 14 May 2016. The entire spectrum of Catholic thinking on social issues will be referred to as 'Catholic Social Theory' in order to include left-wing ideologies such as Liberation Theology and right-wing approaches such as the Alt-Right in the United States.

ground between Marxist and other anti-capitalist ideologies, on the one hand, and reactionary, anti-liberal, and anti-modern world views, on the other.¹¹⁸ As shall be described below, in the Global North CST continues to play the role of a moderating, faith-based, third path to social progress, between adherents of left-leaning Liberation Theology and the right-wing Alt-Right forces within the body of believers. In the Global South, however, the situation is much more complex.

What does CST mean to followers of Christ in the Middle East today? How does the historical challenge of *Rerum Novarum* play itself out in the region in which the Abrahamic religions originated, but where Christians today have become an increasingly embattled minority? Which role can the struggle for freedom, social justice, and good governance, all core attributes of the Catholic Church's social teaching, play in helping to sustain the faith in the MENA region?

To understand the reception of modern Christian concepts of social justice in general, and the Catholic understanding of solidarity and reciprocity in particular, it will be necessary to explore the context in which these ideas first emerged in Europe and how develop-

118- Domènec Melé, *Three Keys Concepts of Catholic Humanism for Economic Activity: Human Dignity, Human Rights and Integral Human Development*, in: Domènec Melé and Martin Schlag eds, *Humanism in Economics and Business: Perspectives of the Catholic Social Tradition*, (Dordrecht: Springer Science+Business Media, 2015) 113-136.

ments in the Middle East differ from the situation in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, and Italy, where CST originally took root in the 19th century.¹¹⁹ To do this, we must not only differentiate between the situation in the Global North and Global South, but take a more nuanced look at the position of Christians in the Middle East and other regions with a significant Christian presence such as Latin America, Sub-Sahara Africa, or the Philippines. Furthermore, the environment in which Middle Eastern Christians promote social justice is strongly influenced by a longstanding secularist tradition within a number of countries in the region. Many secularists perceive of Christianity as a natural partner for progress. Others see a faith-based approach, as well as the influence of religion in society in general, as part of the problem which can only be resolved by pushing religion to the sidelines.¹²⁰

In order to study the challenges that CST represents for believers in the Middle East, focus will be placed on the significant socio-economic differences between the Global North and its former colonies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, on the one hand, and between and within the regions of the Global South, on the other.

119- Roger Aubert, *Catholic Social Teaching: An Historical Perspective*, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2003).

120- Rouba El-Helou and Eugene Sensenig, *The "Gender-Citizenship Nexus": Lebanese Family Status Law and the Challenge of Legal Pluralism*, (Beirut: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2017) 4, 21-22.

Can the relationship between social justice and faith be better understood when viewed from the perspective of political economy, i.e. from the bottom up as opposed to the top down? In other words, have industrial and technological developments in the Global North significantly impacted social welfare policy, the liberalization and deregulation of the business sector, and ultimately the framing of political and security concerns, thereby shaping the thinking of the churches and individual believers around the world? To test this hypothesis and ultimately answer this question, the ‘Dialectic Method’, a form of philosophical argument first proposed by Socrates and further developed by Hegel and Marx, will be applied here. In order to compare the European regions of origin of CST to the situation in the Middle East, the foundations of the Industrial Revolution in the Global North will be analyzed using a dialectical ‘Basis—Uberbau’ (base—superstructure) approach. The foundations for class conflict, so convincingly condemned by Pope Leo XIII at the height of the revolutionary crisis in Europe in the decades prior to World War I, will be juxtaposed to the socio-economic situation in the Middle East. Did the economic and social environment, or ‘base’, in the Arab World, have a decisive impact on the role of the church and thus influence its position on the peace, social justice, and freedom agenda spelled out in *Rerum Novarum*? Have the distinctions between the socio-economic ‘base’ in Europe and the Arab

World also led to divergent paths toward social justice within the Church in both regions of the world?

In order to better understand the unique trajectories of Christian communities in the heartland of CST, a brief review of the founding period of reform discourse will be beneficial. To comprehend the initial intention of the Catholic scholars and church leaders, such as Tommaso Maria Zigliara, Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler, and Cardinal Henry Edward Manning, who supported Pope Leo XIII in drafting *Rerum Novarum*, one must reflect on the social and political conflicts in Europe during the decades prior to the promulgation of this encyclical during the second half of the 19th century. This will require a brief presentation of the impact of the Second Industrial Revolution on society in the Global North. Of equal importance was the highly detrimental influence of laissez-faire capitalism on the moral fabric of society in the region, along with the debate within the Catholic and Protestant churches with respect to it. It is important to note here that both rapid industrialization and radical deregulation of the economy played only a limited role in the predominantly Eastern Orthodox countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, e.g. Czarist Russia and the recently independent Balkans states of Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, and especially Greece.¹²¹

121- Nikos Kokosalakis and Effie Fokas, *Greece, Overview of the National Situation*, in: Anders Bäckström et al, *Welfare and Values in Europe: Transitions related to*

The role model function of those influential Catholic and Protestant countries active in the Middle East at the time (e.g. France, Germany, Italy, UK, and USA), was not replicated by their Orthodox equivalents. Russian influence was transformed by the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and the Balkan states simply lacked the resources and international clout. For this reason, emphasis will be placed primarily on dialogue between the CST faith tradition and the Protestant Social Gospel. References will be made, however, to the dichotomy between the role and social responsibility of organized religion and government institutions in the Orthodox tradition in order to reflect on possible explanations for the state-centric approach to the social justice agenda in the ME-NA.¹²²

The Road to Rerum Novarum in the Global North

Using the base-superstructure approach to social development and the Church's response to it described above, emphasis will be placed here on the foundational moment guiding modern Christian social thinking,

Religion, Minorities and Gender, volume 2. Uppsala: Uppsala university, Acta universitatis upsaliensis, Studies in Religion and Society 5, 2012) 237-261.

122- Johan Gärde, *Concepts on Zakat, Caritas, and Diaconia in the changing social welfare landscape of Europe*, (Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought), 36:1-2, 2017, 164-198, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15426432.2017.1311242>; Robert Hamd, *Generous Neighbors? Guest Workers and the Church in the Middle East*, (Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2013); Erik Blennberger and Mats J. Hansson, eds *Diakoni, tolkning, historik, praktik*, (Stockholm: Verbum, 2008).

namely, the early Industrial Revolution. Beginning in the decades prior to the French Revolution, it built on a gradual shift in economic power away from the landed aristocracy and clergy to the bourgeoisie, with its wealth based on manufacturing and commerce. By 1789 economic power in Central and Western Europe was clearly in the hands of the entrepreneurial classes, leading to a rapid expansion of the Liberal concept of total socio-economic deregulation, or *laissez-faire*. Classical Liberalism was not only directed against the influence of the traditional aristocratic state, with its antiquated concept of ‘Divine Right of Kings’, but also against the institutions of organized religion and their charitable control over the educational and healthcare sectors. By the Council of Vienna at the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, the Industrial Revolution was in full swing, gradually replacing traditional agriculture and crafts-based manual production with mechanized farming and manufacturing.¹²³

The net result of this process was the rapid demise of the economic base for large swaths of the traditionally conservative population in the countryside, towns, and small cities. While anti-aristocratic and anti-clerical sentiment had largely been dominated by the radical

¹²³- Patrick Karl O’Brien, *The Contributions of Warfare with Revolutionary and Napoleonic France to the Consolidation and Progress of the British Industrial Revolution*, Working Papers No. 150/11, (London: London School of Economics, 2011).

liberalism of the French Revolution and laissez-faire mentality that accompanied it, the mood became more differentiated by the mid-19th century.¹²⁴ The Great European Revolution of 1848/1849 (often referred to as the Spring of Nations or Springtime of the Peoples) saw the expression of mass organized socialist protest against the excesses of capitalism for the first time. This was expressed in the Communist Manifesto completed the previous year, which called on workers to join forces with the middle classes against the clergy and aristocracy, but to then take the revolution one step further and challenge the rights of all propertied classes to POMP.

The European aristocracy and clergy were divided on the issues of liberalism, democracy, and secularism at the end of the Napoleonic period. Whereas Britain, and to a limited extent post-revolutionary France, supported a brand of progressive Conservatism propagated by Edmund Burke in his 1790 work, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Catholic Austria, Protestant Prussia, and Orthodox Russia formed the Holy Alliance in the months after the Congress of Vienna in an attempt to prevent liberalism from ever taking hold in Europe again. It was to be the armies of this Holy Alliance which played a decisive role in 1848 in putting down the combined lib-

¹²⁴ Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century*, in 3 volumes, (New York: Harper and Row, 1981-1984); Peter Temin, *The Cambridge History of Capitalism*. In "Journal of Economic Literature", 2015, 53 (4): 996-1016, DOI: 10.1257/jel.53.4.996

eral and (albeit fledgling) socialist revolutionaries and thus stabilizing their regimes in Central and Eastern Europe. This dichotomy of progressive conservatism in the West and reactionary conservatism in Central and Eastern Europe was reflected in debates within the religious institutions of the day.¹²⁵

Both laissez-faire liberalism and revolutionary socialism posed existential threats to the conservative power elites in the Holy Alliance of the three “divine monarchies” of Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox Europe. Spearheaded by the Chancellor of Austria at the time, Klemens Wenzel von Metternich, the Holy Alliance proved to be successful in maintaining control over the superstructure, e.g. the media, educational sector, and civil society as a whole. However, the proverbial Metternichian system of world order was incapable of stopping the foundational driving force behind both liberalism and socialism in Europe, the Industrial Revolution. As the mechanization of production progressed, fossil fuel powered manufacturing and transportation led to an increasingly mobile, educated, and urbanized European population. The railroads, the introduction of machine tools, and power driven technologies across all sectors made the bourgeoisie unstoppable. Liberalism promised a new world in which everyone was free and judged solely on their own merit. Socialism in turn re-

125- Noël O’Sullivan, *Conservatism* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1976)

sponded by promising a future in which everyone would be equal and would contribute to society based on their own capabilities. Both the liberal and socialist utopias were antithetic to the conservative mindset, based on core values such as family, religion, and dedication to inherited wealth, which would be passed on in better shape to future generations.

As a response to the salvific messages propagated by liberalism and socialism, the Catholic Church issued the encyclical *Quanta Cura* in 1864 under Pope Pius IX to which was attached as an annex the *Syllabus Errorum* (Syllabus of Errors). Both classical liberalism and revolutionary socialism had taken positions openly hostile to the role of organized religion in society. More importantly, they negated the significance of faith-based institutions in navigating the relationship between those who owned the means of production (aristocracy, clergy, and bourgeoisie) and those who did not (the proletariat, landless peasants, and the few remaining systems in which various forms of slavery were prevalent). The *Syllabus of Errors* was backward looking in that it criticized the excesses of moderate and absolute rationalism, the predominance of civil society, socialism, communism, liberalism, and secularism without offering an alternative societal model which would have been able to compete with the earthly salvation promised by its declared enemies. In the seventy-five years after the

beginning of the liberal French Revolution and the sixteen years following the birth of socialism during the Springtime of the Peoples, the response of the Catholic Church had been largely limited to a rearguard defensive stance similar to that taken by the secular “divine monarchies” on the continent. During the final half of the 19th century any illusions that the effects of the Industrial Revolution could be reversed appeared to be increasingly desperate. Changes in the base of society were overwhelming its superstructure.

By the 1870’s, the “one-nation conservatism” of British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli and the “state socialism” of the conservative German Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, had set out to counter the brutality of unbridled laissez-faire liberalism, to meet the needs and reduce the suffering of the urban working classes, to undermine the powerful British Labor and German Social Democratic movements, and ultimately to unify their respective nations around a conservative world view and plan for the future.¹²⁶ These policies proved to be short sighted largely because they did not take the impact of the gradual introduction of universal suffrage into consideration and as the right to vote was slowly expanded throughout Europe to include the petit bourgeoisie and working class, traditional conservatism proved to be too limited in scope.

¹²⁶- Ibid.

By the 1880's, Christian Social labor unions, political parties, and consumer cooperatives had been organized in many parts of continental Europe to offer socially conservative and politically progressive workers an ideological home.¹²⁷ The papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, issued forty-three years after the Revolution of 1848, was able to put these developments in a succinct theological and socio-political perspective. Unlike the Syllabus of Errors, Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical "Of the New Things" tackled both liberalism and socialism head on by offering a coherent alternative based on the concept of a unified society allied along lines of dignity and mutual respect for both employers and employees. By recognizing the existence of conflictual relationships between the social classes and embracing the need for workers organizations, *Rerum Novarum* gave those workers disappointed by reactionary conservatism and alienated by socialist anticlericalism a third option. In addition, this encyclical clearly distanced itself from those Christian entrepreneurs who had embraced the liberal concept of laissez-faire capitalism in which neither the government nor Christ's church was responsible for

127- John W. Boyer, "Austrian Catholics and the World: Facing Political Turmoil in the Early Twentieth Century" in: Solomon Wank, et al, eds., *The Mirror of History: Essays in Honor of Fritz Fellner* (Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, —) 315-349; Emmerich Tálos and Alois Riedlsperger, eds, *Zeit-Gerecht - 100 Jahre katholische Soziallehre: Catalogue for the Exhibit "Time and Justice: 100 Years of Catholic Social Theory - Perspectives, Orientation, Initiatives"* in: the Museum Industrielle Arbeitswelt (Museum of the Industrial Working World); Steyr, Upper Austria, 1991.

the needs of the poor and unfortunate. Finally, the concept of subsidiarity established by this encyclical placed responsibility for societal cohesion and social justice clearly with the workers organizations, the employers, and the Church, recognizing the state as a player of last resort to be called in only when conflicts could not otherwise be resolved.¹²⁸

The lengthy introduction presented above, highlighting the technological, economic, and political context in which CST developed was necessary primarily in order to juxtapose the situations in the Global North and Global South. In summary, a uniquely Christian approach to establishing social justice, as opposed to mere charity focusing on the symptoms of inequality, was able to develop in Europe and North America in the slip stream of the Industrial Revolution and the gradual maturation of the Liberal, Conservative, and Social Democratic partisan movements. Constant technological advancements led to an undermining of the economic power base of the landed aristocracy and organized religion. The economic, and thus political, dominance of the entrepreneurial classes promoted both liberalism, as well as revolutionary socialism as a response to the ex-

128- Pedro Teixeira and António Almodovar, "Economics and Theology in Europe from the Nineteenth Century: From the Early Nineteenth Century's Christian Political Economy to Modern Catholic Social Doctrine" in: Paul Oslington, *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity and Economics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) 113-134.

cesses of 19th century capitalism. However, by the 1890's, laissez-faire liberalism had run its course and been replaced by the welfare state, supported by the liberals and conservatives alike, along the lines of Disraeli's and Bismarck's concept of entrepreneurial paternalism. Finally, during the decades immediately prior to World War I, the radical form of revolutionary socialism propagated by Marx in 1848 had developed into revisionist Social Democracy, which accepted POMP in exchange for universal suffrage, including voting rights for the working class, and an ever expanding welfare state.

In order to build a bridge to discourse on CST in the Global South, in general, and the MENA region, in particular, a few aspects of the experience in the Global North after World War I will be reviewed in following. Prior to 1914, Christian Social parties gradually began to play a dominant role in parliamentary politics, in many cases replacing more traditional conservative parties which had focused on the interests of large land owners, industrialists, and the powerful merchant classes. With their focus on workers who had either been forced off their small farms or lost their livelihoods as craftsman or small businessmen, the typical CST based political movement combined traditional conservative values such as promoting the family, the role of the Church, conventional gender roles, and respect for private property with issues often associated with the left-wing so-

cialist, communist and anarchist movements, including public funding for health care, housing, and education, fair wages and safe and healthy working conditions, and ultimately the right to organize labor unions and negotiate collectively with their employers. As such, CST was not limited to helping the poor, but also asked why so many people in the affluent, industrial centers of Europe and North America were so desperately poor. In this manner, Christian Social movements offered Christian and other conservatively minded workers an option in tune with their non-antagonistic values towards religion, but one that spoke truth to power and stood up to the liberal and conservative power elites in their respective countries.

In the period between the two World Wars CST played a major role in the dual struggle against fascism in Italy, Germany, Austria, Spain, and in the Bolshevik movements throughout the democratic countries of Western and Central Europe; Germany, Hungary, and Austria being a case in point. Many Christians sympathized grudgingly with fascist parties and governments because they seemed to offer a bulwark against the Soviet Union and its allies in the West. In Italy, the Catholic social activist Giorgio La Pira, who would become the Christian Democratic mayor of Florence after WWII, played a key role within the Catholic Church in fighting the fascist movement of Benito Mussolini. The Cardi-

nal of Cologne, Josef Frings, actively opposed the Nazi government of Adolf Hitler, breaking with the complacency of his predecessor in one of Germany's most important Catholic cities.¹²⁹ In German occupied Belgium the pre-war Catholic social leader Cardinal Joseph Cardijn openly opposed the Nazi regime and organized resistance against its oppressive policies. After WWII Cardijn became one of Europe's most important advocates of peace, freedom, and social justice, along with Italy's La Pira. Many individual Catholics opposed the harsh conditions imposed by the fascists of their time. One of the most remarkable is Franz Jägerstätter, a simple Austrian peasant who stood up against the brutality of the Nazi regime and was executed in 1943 because of his refusal to serve in the German military. He was later recognized as a martyr of the faith by Pope Benedict XVI and beatified in 2007. Of particular importance is the co-founder of the Catholic Workers Movement in the United States, Dorothy Day. An early supporter of feminism, socialism, and labor union radicalism, she converted to Catholicism at the age of 30 and built the Catholic Social labor movement during the years of the depression; founding the *Catholic Worker* newspaper and

129- Annette Mertens, "Widerstand gegen das NS-Regime? Katholische Kirche und Katholiken im Rheinland 1933-1945", in: *Internetportal Rheinische Geschichte*: <http://www.rheinische-geschichte.lvr.de/Epochen-und-Themen/Themen/widerstand-gegen-das-ns-regime-katholische-kirche-und-katholiken-im-rheinland-1933%2588%25921945/DE-2086/lido/57d13613522708.12312072> (retrieved 17.07.2018).

a network of urban and rural Catholic intentional communities together with the French De La Salle brother and social activist Peter Maurin. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops endorsed a proposal to canonize Day in 2012, which is still pending.

The transition from the 20th to the 21st century was marked by the end of fascist and military rule in the predominantly Catholic countries of the Mediterranean and Latin America, on the one hand, and the collapse of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe, on the other. With the demise of totalitarianism and the end of the historical split between the East and the West, the much older and more fundamental issues directly related to human dignity, freedom, and the negative impact of global capitalism returned full-force. Now unadulterated by the ideological fault lines and long-standing global conflicts between Moscow and Washington, the struggle for social justice could be seen in a new light. The impact of climate change, poverty and disease in the Global South, protracted military conflicts, and the ever widening technological gap between the world's haves and have-nots are challenges to which CST has provided responses since its inception 125 years ago. In the Global North a renewed openness for faith-based responses to social and cultural problems has gone hand-in-hand with an increased interest in the vibrant faith-traditions of Catholics and Protestants throughout

Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Whereas the religious communities in the metropolitan centers of power in Europe and North America tend to be culturally liberal and economically conservative, Catholic, Anglican, and other Protestant communities in the Global South tend to embrace more traditional family values, while simultaneously supporting more courageous approaches to rethinking the global terms of trade and international division of labor. Finally, the Church of the South has seen a rapid spread of “basic ecclesial communities” or the “Church at the grassroots” since the 1960’s in Latin American and the Philippines, and more recently in Africa and other parts of Asia including Korea, India, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.¹³⁰ Faith-based approaches to social change, including mainstream CST and Liberation Theology, and the grassroots church movement have a long tradition in the South and North, as can be seen in the case of the intentional communities and workers’ rights movement championed by Dorothy Day. The struggles of the church Global South continue to challenge Christians in the Global North and thus

¹³⁰ Marcello De C. Azevedo, *Basic Ecclesial Communities: A Meeting Point of Ecclesiologies*, *Theological Studies* 46 (1985), <http://cdn.theologicalstudies.net/46/46.4/46.4.1.pdf>, retrieved 22 June 2017; Dieter Tewes, (2013). *Kirchliche Basisgemeinden—Kleine Christliche Gemeinschaften—Lokale Kirchenentwicklung: Eine (Begriffs)Klärung aus deutscher Sicht*, in: *The Discussions of the Tübinger Symposium “In der Welt von heute? Kirche unterwegs in christlichen Basisgemeinden”* (17.-20. Jan. 2013) http://kcg.missio-blog.de/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2013/09/Artikel_T%C3%BCbingen2013_Basisgemeinde-Begriffe_Tewes.pdf, retrieved 17 April 2017.

provide a bridge into the 21st century along the lines of freedom, peace, and social justice.

“Saints or Communists?” Catholic Social Teaching in the Global South

Dom Hélder Pessoa Câmara: *Quando dou comida aos pobres, chamam-me de santo. Quando pergunto por que eles são pobres, chamam-me de comunista:* (“When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why they are poor, they call me a Communist”)¹³¹

The final section of this presentation will be dedicated to comparing the development and impact of *Rerum Novarum*, and CST in general, in the Global North, to developments in the Global South and the Middle East in particular. Emphasis will be placed on the unique characteristics of economic, technological, and political developments in the former European colonies in Latin America, Africa, and Asia as well as the specific environment in which Christians find themselves in the MENA region today.

When reviewing the major distinctions between the trajectory of CST in Europe and developments in its

¹³¹ Zildo Rocha, *Helder, O Dom: uma vida que marcou os rumos da Igreja no Brasil* (Helder, the Gift: A Life that Marked the Course of the Church in Brazil), (Brasília: Editora Vozes, 2000) 53.

former imperial holdings, two issues seem to be of particular significance. The first and most foundational difference is the pace at which technology, the economy, and military capacity has advanced in the North and South. The second issue, which distinguishes Christian communities in the Middle East from their coreligionists in overwhelming Christian regions throughout the world, is the status of the Church in society. The *Basis—Überbau* dialectical approach will be used to link advancements in the means of production (i.e. the base) to changes in culture, religion, and social relations (superstructure). This interpretive lens can help juxtapose the late introduction of heavy industry, mechanized agriculture, and global commerce in the colonies of Africa, Asia, and Latin America to the nature of faith-based social justice discourse in the Global South. Modern class relations between the landed clergy and aristocracy, the bourgeoisie and proletariat, and local state institutions were introduced in the South over a period of several hundred years by Spanish, Portuguese, French, British, Dutch, and later German, Italian, and American colonial powers.

In the Spanish and Portuguese empires, Catholicism rapidly became the dominant religion of both the immigrant and indigenous populations. This had a pronounced influence on the reception of CST in Latin America, the Philippines, and the Portuguese colonies

in Africa and Asia during the period of industrialization in these regions. Workers in the Iberian colonial mines, plantations, metal works, food processing plants, and transport industries were strongly influenced by their counterparts in Europe and North America.¹³² Because Catholicism was predominant, developments in the faith communities in the colonies ran parallel to the experience in the colonial motherlands. The martyred archbishop of San Salvador, Óscar Arnulfo Romero (1917–1980) and the current president of Caritas International, Cardinal of Manila Luis Antonio Tagle, are symptomatic of mainstream CST in the former Iberian empires. Both combine a conservative approach to social and cultural values with a politically progressive stance on social justice on both the local and global levels. The late Brazilian theologians, Dom Hélder Câmara (1909–1999) and Paulo Freire (Brazil 1921–1997), are just two representatives of a movement in the mid-20th century which called on the Church to reinvigorate its mission of transforming society from below. Referred to as subsidiarity,¹³³ this principle sees the collective self-organization of society as a preferred response to

132- Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully eds., *Christian Democracy in Latin America: Electoral Competition and Regime Conflicts* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

133- Brian J. Benestad, *Church, State, and Society: An Introduction to Catholic Social Doctrine* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2011) 278–280; Patrick McKinley Brennan, *Subsidiarity in the Tradition of Catholic Social Doctrine*, in: Michelle Evans and Augusto Zimmermann eds., *Global Perspectives on Subsidiarity*, (Dordrecht Springer Science+Business Media, 2015) 29–48.

challenging oppression and promoting human dignity and freedom. Practical struggles championed by these movements include land reform, labor union organization, and access to reliable and affordable healthcare, education, transportation, housing, water, and electricity. Câmara and Freire were not formally part of the larger movement dubbed Liberation Theology,¹³⁴ which was headed by their contemporaries Leonardo Boff in Brazil, Gustavo Gutiérrez in Peru, Juan Luis Segundo in Uruguay, and Jon Sobrino in Spain, and which has been accused of synthesizing CST, Marxist social analysis, and a state-centric approach to social reform.

The Christians of the Middle East are unique in many ways.¹³⁵ They are not only the descendants of the original, first century Church, and thus not the product of European colonial expansion, but more importantly for this topic and as opposed to the experience of the former Iberian colonies in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the social justice agenda in the MENA region is strongly influenced by its “inner diaspora”¹³⁶ status. The Orthodox

134- Bastiaan Wielenga, *Liberation theology in Asia*, in: Christopher Rowland ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 39-62.

135- Along with this author’s personal experience during two decades in the Middle East, much of the insights for this topic have been taken from Kenneth Cragg, *The Arab Christian: A History in the Middle East* (Louisville KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991).

136- The term “inner-diaspora” has been adapted from discourse on peoples who have become foreigners in their own land, such as the disposed populations following the collapse of the European empires after WWI, see Katalin Lajos, *Variants*

and Catholic, and more recently Protestant, communities must navigate the common problems facing all Christians around the world along with the realities of a 2000 year old faith-tradition which has been relegated to a minority status since the Arab-Muslim conquest of the Levant and Egypt in the mid-7th century.

Thus, the colonial experience of the Church of the Middle East is starkly different than that of Christians in the rest of the Global South. In Latin America or the Philippines the Church is built on a legacy of Iberian empires subjugating and converting vassal populations with overwhelming force. In the Arab world the situation was the exact opposite. Following the successful “*fatah*”, or opening, of the MENA region for Islam, the originally predominant Christian Church has had to survive and flourish as minority communities for almost one and a half millenniums. This had clear consequences for the mission of CST in the Middle East. Relegated to their respective millets, or confessional groups, under Muslim administrative law, the good news “Of the New Things” seemed to be limited to the Christian communities in the region.¹³⁷

of *Identity-Identity in Change*, (Miercurea-Ciuc: Pro-Print Publishing House, 2016) <https://www.degruyter.com/downloadpdf/j/ausp.2016.8.issue-3/ausp-2016-0040/ausp-2016-0040.pdf>, retrieved 15 November 2017 and Raymond Pearson, *Hungary: A State Truncated, a Nation Dismembered*, in Seamus Dunn and T. G. Fraser, *Europe and Ethnicity: The First World War and Contemporary Ethnic Conflict* eds. (London: Routledge 1996) 95-103.

137- Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism*

No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house: Matthew 5:15 (NRSV)

The Christian prerogative of spreading the *light* of their message “to all in the house” was thus limited for over a thousand years by an Arab-Muslim and later Ottoman contextualization, which tolerated religious practice for the “People of the Book” within the consociational confines of their respective faith communities. As the Middle East transitioned from a traditional merchant, craftsman, peasant society, to a modern, global, capitalist economy under late Turkish rule, and later French and British colonial domination, the limitations placed on the propagation of the Christian social justice agenda would prove to be stifling. Whereas Arab nationalism, liberalism, and socialism were not impacted by the logic of the millet system, CST has not been permitted to have the same enlightening impact on society at large that it has enjoyed in the Global North and the predominantly Christian regions of the Global South.

From its origins in the early proletarian movement prior to the Revolution of 1848, Catholic labor leaders were able to influence both their Protestant and Marxist

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 96–99; Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 61–62.

counterparts because of the backing they received from progressive members of the European clergy such as the above mentioned Zigliara, von Ketteler, and Manning. The late industrialization of the Orthodox regions of Europe and their lack of colonial expansion has meant that Russia and the Balkan region were only marginally engaged in this exchange. The rooting of the Christian labor movement as an integral part of civil society, as well as the revolutionary message proclaimed by *Rerum Novarum*, enabled Catholic reformers to play an important role in setting the agenda for social change around the world, in particular in the former colonies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The exception has been the Middle East. The reasons for this are still up for debate,¹³⁸ however, the following factors seem to have played a significant role. The belated industrialization and exposure to the global market economy in the Middle East went hand-in-hand with limitations on confessional labor organizing, thus undermining the development of genuine Catholic Social unions, workers consumer cooperatives, and labor parties. The pillarization of society based on the millet system has created segmented loyalties, which cut across class lines, focusing group affiliation within respective confessional sects instead of

¹³⁸ This issue has been discussed at length during various conferences and workshops at NDU, including Thomas Scheffler, *Christian Social Teaching: An on-going history of exchange between East and West*, presentation to the workshop “Christian Social Theory: A European-Middle Eastern Dialogue, Zouk Mosbeh: Notre Dame University, 2008.

within ideological camps based on world views such as liberalism, socialism, and CST.

A state-centric approach to charity and social justice stands in stark contrast to the concepts of subsidiarity and grassroots solidarity propagated by *Rerum Novarum* and later Catholic social encyclicals.¹³⁹ The Orthodox tradition, which is by far the largest in the MENA region, places emphasis on government institutions when dealing with social injustice. This has started to shift with the adoption of the “Mission of the Orthodox Church in Today’s World” by the Pan Orthodox Council in Crete in 2016, which contains extensive guidelines related to peace, freedom, and social justice.¹⁴⁰ However, state-centric approaches to social justice still play a strong role within the ranks of Middle Eastern Christianity. With respect to the Protestant community, recent research has demonstrated that the Anglo-American and Central European traditions based on the Social Gospel and

139- For an overview see Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004). http://www.antoniano.org/carbajo/FST/Readings/Magisterium/EN_Compendium_CST.pdf, retrieved 14 May 2016.

140- Jonathan Luxmoore, Historic Orthodox Council ends with upbeat but cautious message, National Catholic Reporter. See <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/historic-orthodox-council-ends-upbeat-cautious-message>, Jun 27, 2016, retrieved 23 March 2017; Der Bischöfliche Jubiläumssynod der Russisch-Orthodoxen Kirche, Moscow , 13-16 August 2000, Die Grundlagen der Sozialdoktrin der Russisch-Orthodoxen Kirche (http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_1369-544-1-30.pdf?050120163338); Daniel P. Payne, *Eastern Orthodoxy’s Theology of Economics*, in: Paul Oslington, *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity and Economics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) 197-205.

German Evangelical Social Theory have had only limited impact in the MENA region.¹⁴¹ More significantly, the politically and economically conservative thinking of the Alt-right, be it based on Protestant “Christian-Zionism” or the thinking of Catholic right-wing luminaries such as Julius Evola and Steve Bannon,¹⁴² has tainted the image of Western Christianity in the MENA region. In response, the one example of Liberation Theology in the Middle East which bears some similarity to its Iberian role model can be found within the ranks of Palestinian Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants, who have linked their struggle for peace, freedom, and social justice to the traditions of CST, as well as faith-based anti-racism movements in the United States and South Africa.¹⁴³

141- Johan Gärde, *Concepts on Zakat, Caritas, and Diaconia in the changing social welfare landscape of Europe* (Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought) 36:1-2, 2017, 164-198, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15426432.2017.1311242>; Robert Hamd, *Generous Neighbors? Guest Workers and the Church in the Middle East*, (Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2013); *Luther Decade 2007-2017* with NEST and USJ, with support of NDU and AFBB. Looking forward to Quincentennial of the Peasant Wars ('Comparing Popular Rebellions' - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/205680216637407/>)

142- Peter Montgomery, “Catholics, Conservatives and Capitalism,” in: *The Public Eye Magazine*, 21 April 2015, <https://www.politicalresearch.org/catholics-conservatives-and-capitalism/>, retrieved 5 May 2017; Kevin E. Schmiesing, “Another Social Justice Tradition: Catholic Conservatives” in: *University of St. Thomas Law Journal*, Vol 2/2 Spring 2005) 308-325.

143- CAFCAW (2014). From the Nile to the Euphrates: The Call of Faith and Citizenship, A Statement of the Christian Academic Forum for Citizenship in the Arab World, 2014 Diyar Publisher, Bethlehem, www.cafcaw.org, (https://web.archive.org/web/20160509222804/http://www.diyar.ps/uploads/file/Agreement_beirut%20conference_EN_online_final.pdf) retrieved 03 June 2018; Elisa Farinacci, *Palestinian Liberation Theology. Seeking Social Justice Through a De-Zionization of the Holy*

Catholic Social Leaders in the Middle East

In preparation for this presentation, this author surveyed the existing literature in search of examples of CST in the Middle East.¹⁴⁴ Using Catholic labor leaders, journalists, intellectuals, and community organizers in Europe and the Americas as a point of reference and soliciting feedback from experts and activists in the MENA region, the following overview was compiled. Based on the role models of Càmara, Cardijn, Day, Freire, Frings, Jägerstätter, La Pira, and Tagle as described above, the following examples of CST in practice provide a cross-section of experience in the fields of welfare provision, training, and civil society activism. It should be noted at the outset that the traditional fields of labor union organizing and grassroots mobilization for infrastructure development are only marginally part of the CST mix in the Middle East.

Two of the most prolific representatives of CST in Egypt,

Scriptures, (Bologna: The European Conference on the Social Sciences 2014 University of Bologna: Official Conference Proceedings, 2014); https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319959585_Palestinian_Liberation_Theology_Seeking_Social_Justice_Through_a_De-Zionization_of_the_Holy_Scriptures, retrieved 22 May 2018; Mitri Raheb, (2012). *Toward a New Hermeneutics of Liberation: A Palestinian Christian Perspective*, in: Mitri Raheb, *The Biblical Text in the Context of Occupation: Towards a New Hermeneutics of Liberation (Bethlehem: Diyar Publishers 2012) 11-27.*

¹⁴⁴ Three good resources are Roy P. Domenico and Mark Y. Hanley, *Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Politics*, Volumes 1 and 2: (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 2006); Paul Oslington, *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity and Economics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); and Christopher Rowland ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Henry Habib Ayrout, and Katia Antonio Mikhaël, are both of Lebanese decent. Ayrout (1907-1969) was active in the field of land reform, working with local communities in Upper Egypt to promote development for the most needy. Mikhaël, an Xaverian sister from Lebanon, worked with the Egyptian Bishops Conference to provide training for Catholic clergy and laypersons alike in the field of CST.¹⁴⁵ The Lebanese Grégoire Haddad, Youakim Moubarac, and Afif Osseiran are the three names most commonly mentioned in association with CST in their country. However, Louis-Joseph Lebret is the Catholic social activist in Lebanon who most closely fits the international norms. Moubarac (1924-1995) was a Maronite priest who dedicated most of his life to Christian-Muslim dialogue, rural development, and the promotion of food sovereignty. He founded the Lebanese

145- Karl Ammann, a personal friend and representative of Caritas Germany pointed out in various discussions that Ayrout was a Syro-Lebanese Egyptian, who established the Catholic Association for Schools of Egypt (today known as Association of Upper Egypt for Education and Development (AUEED) in 1940. His study of the Egypt's *fellahin*, *Moeurs et coutumes des fellahs* (The Egyptian Peasant), was first published 1938 and is regarded as a major work on the subject. He advocated land reform in Egypt. He directed all his efforts to help the needy in Upper Egypt and to push the development process forward. His book *The Peasant* introduced an applicable paradigm for development capable of alleviating the suffering of the poor. (<http://www.upperegypt.org/who%20are%20we/Ayrout.htm>). Mikhaël, wrote a trilingual (English, French, Arabic) training manual on Catholic Social Teaching and organized the first seminar on Catholic Social Teaching in Alexandria, trainees included bishops and other parts of the civil society (mainly religious congregational representatives working in the social field). She was involved in providing the same training in the Coptic Catholic Seminary in Maadi. The training sessions, which focused on Justice and Solidarity issues, promoted the idea that CST is not only an intellectual reflection but also has to do with daily activity and projects.

Development Cooperative based on the principle of “basic ecclesial communities” established in Latin America. Haddad is known in Lebanon as the “Red Bishop of Beirut”. He was the Archbishop of the Melkite Greek Catholic Archeparchy of Beirut and Byblos from 1968 to 1975. His radical support for the separation of church and state and an integration of CST and Marxism led to his early retirement after which he led a variety of leftist, faith-based social movements until his death forty years later.¹⁴⁶ Osseiran, a Latin Catholic priest who converted from Shia Islam, was primarily involved in promoting projects focusing on homeless youth and impoverished working children. In this capacity he challenged the complacency of both the state and the Church with respect to the working poor.¹⁴⁷ Finally, Louis-Joseph Lebreton is a bit of an anomaly within the Lebanese context because he was actually a French brother in the Mendicant order of Dominicans, a Catholic social activist and

146- Haddad was responsible for bridging the gap between Marxism, Catholicism, feminism, ecologism, and other forms of left-wing activism in Lebanon. This author knows many individuals whose professional careers and personal lives have been uniquely influenced by him.

147- According to Karl Ammann, many critical voices described the Shia convert, Father Afif Osseiran, as one of the few “true Christians in Lebanon” during the Civil War. Although much of his work was charity based, his life was a reminder of need for the church to serve the poorest of the poor and not just the rich and powerful. From a well-established and influential Shia family in Sidon, he became a Catholic (and eventually ordained a Catholic priest) while maintaining many of his Muslim social practices. References to his legacy can be found at the Fondation Père Afif Osseiran. (<http://www.fondationpereafifosseiran.com/index.php>) / (<https://www.editionsducerf.fr/librairie/livre/6903/afif-osseiran-1919-1988>) / (<http://conversion-religion-catholique.com/fr/afif-osseiran>).

labor organizer in his native Brittany, and as a consultant to the Lebanese government under President Fuad Chihab attempted to apply the lessons learned in France and later Latin America to the Middle East.¹⁴⁸

The application of CST in the Palestinian context is similar to the rest of the Middle East in that Christians in Israel and the Occupied Territories are confronted by the same “inner diaspora” environment as are their coreligionists throughout the region.¹⁴⁹ However, the attempt on the part of mostly Evangelical Christians in the Global North to reinterpret the Bible to justify political Zionism has made their struggle particularly

148- *Lebret first served in the Middle East* during the First World War with the Lebanese squadron and was later director of the Beirut Port. In 1960, at the request of President Fuad Chehab, he returned to Lebanon with a team from IRFED, where he conducted a country-wide socio-economic study from 1960 to 1964. (Report in French title “Besoins et possibilités de développement du Liban,” a 20-volume Development Plan). In the period between his military service in the Middle East and his research activities as part of IRFED in Lebanon, he entered the Dominican Order, returned to his native Brittany and dedicated his life to helping the fishermen and rural poor of the region. This included not only charitable measures, but led as well to organizing labor unions, and working on the structural and economic causes of their poverty. He “investigated links between unemployment and the fishermen’s starvation wages, between the chaotic local organization of fishing enterprises and the international effort of large firms to monopolize choice fishing banks, between the tremendous vulnerability of small fish merchants and the broad market structures they could not control”. Thus, he not only helped the poor, he asked *why* they were poor and did something about it in his native region and later in the Global South. This approach was then applied to Lebanon with only partial success. Denis Goulet, *Lebret’s thoughts on development*, <http://www.lebret-irfed.org/spip.php?rubrique95>, retrieved 11 March 2015.

149- Naim Stifan Ateek, *A Palestinian Theology of Liberation: The Bible, Justice, and the Palestine-Israel Conflict*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017); Samuel J Kuruvilla, *Radical Christianity in Palestine and Israel: Liberation and Theology in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013).

difficult. Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Michel Sabbah,¹⁵⁰ Greek Catholic Patriarch Lutfi Lahham (Gregorius III Lahamus), and Greek Catholic Archbishop of Akko, Haifa, Nazareth and All Galilee Elias Chacour, have played an important role in emphasizing the emancipatory messages of the scriptures with respect to both national self-determination and social justice. In all three countries, however, CST diverges from the international norm in that it does not focus primarily on promoting infrastructure development and labor union rights, two issues which are desperately underdeveloped in the MENA region.

There is Some Good in This World, And It's Worth Fighting For. . .

In conclusion, what are the main issues with which Catholic social theory has been struggling over the last 125 years and how are they related to Thomas More's *Utopia*? Be it mainstream Catholic Social Theory based on the authoritative foundation of the Compendium of Social Doctrine, Liberation Theology with its blend of Christian activism and Marxist political economy, or the revisionist and economically conservative positions of the Alt-Right within the Catholic Church, all three seem to have been confronted with one key question re-

¹⁵⁰ Michel Sabbah, H.B. Msgr., *Faithful Witness. On Reconciliation and Peace on the Holy Land*, Hyde Park (NY): New City Press, 2009).

lated to the issue at hand, i.e., it is it desirable to create a society on earth in which good is rewarded and evil is punished, or is this Utopian communal form of life an utter illusion? The eminent British intellectual historian, Quentin Skinner, has argued over the years that Thomas More was convinced of the former. He was determined to challenge POMP in the same manner that secular and faith-based revolutions did in later centuries. According to Skinner, “what he said at this crucial moment was precisely what he meant,” that is, “I am fully persuaded,” he goes on, “that no just and even distribution of goods can be made and that no happiness can be found in human affairs unless private property is utterly abolished. While it lasts, there will always remain a heavy and inescapable burden of poverty and misfortunes for by far the greatest and by far the best part of mankind.”¹⁵¹

Based on the dual principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, CST would reject More’s Utopian assumption that a just society is achievable through the use of institutional authority. In this respect Liberation Theology would be closer to More’s thinking and the Alt-Right would disagree with both of them.

But where do we go from here? To build on a statement made by J.R.R. Tolkien in *The Two Towers*: Is the good

151- Quentin Skinner, The Lesson of Thomas More, in: (The New York Review of Books, October 12, 1978), <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1978/10/12/the-lesson-of-thomas-more/>, retrieved 10 February 2016.

in the world, which he rightly states is worth fighting for, the establishment of a predominantly good society, or should we rather strive personally to be good in an otherwise overwhelmingly evil world? The message of *Rerum Novarum* for the Middle East is that in either case the state is not the solution. CST places the burden for a better world squarely on the shoulders of workers and entrepreneurs. It is their personal responsibility to create their own self-regulated associations, unions, and self-help organizations and thus counter both the state-centric approach typical of Liberation Theology and the focus on the market place so often found in the thinking of the Alt-Right. On the most fundamental level however, the concept of “basic ecclesial communities” might provide an answer and give More’s *Utopia* a shot at realization.¹⁵² The “Church at the grassroots”,¹⁵³ based as it is on voluntary individual cooperation on the lowest rungs of society, opens up the possibility of lived utopia amongst a community of peers. For the Middle East this could provide the opportunity for Christians to live their faith proactively and to not only help the poor, but to ask *why* they are poor, and thus to put their light on the lampstand and give light to all in the house.

152- Eugene Sensenig, *Looking for a City with Foundations: Intentional Urban Communities as a Christian Response to Violence, Oppression, and Injustice*, in: Peter Simonic (ed.), *Solidarity and Reciprocity*, (Oddelek za etnologijo in kulturno antropologijo, Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani: Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana Press, Zupanic’s Collection 34, 2018)

153- Norlan H. Julia, S.J., *Beyond Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs): Challenges to the Reception of Communio Ecclesiology in Asia*, (Journal of Loyola School of Theology / Landas, Volume: 26 Issue: 1, 2012) 127-138.

More's masterpiece, *Utopia*, is a masterpiece precisely because of its prescient nature: five-hundred years ago, he already envisaged into existence the kind of "polite" civil religion of later centuries wherein religion would be stripped of its supernatural clothing for the sake of civility and peace. Immediately after ascending the throne, More's imaginary King Utopus legally declared that "every man might cultivate the religion of his choice, and might even proselytize for it, provided he did so quietly, modestly, rationally, and without bitterness toward others." Whereas More himself does not advocate or encourage any such stripping, he is certainly sympathetic, nonetheless, with the argument of the great Erasmus, who came before him, that religion must be the cause of peace, not war.

