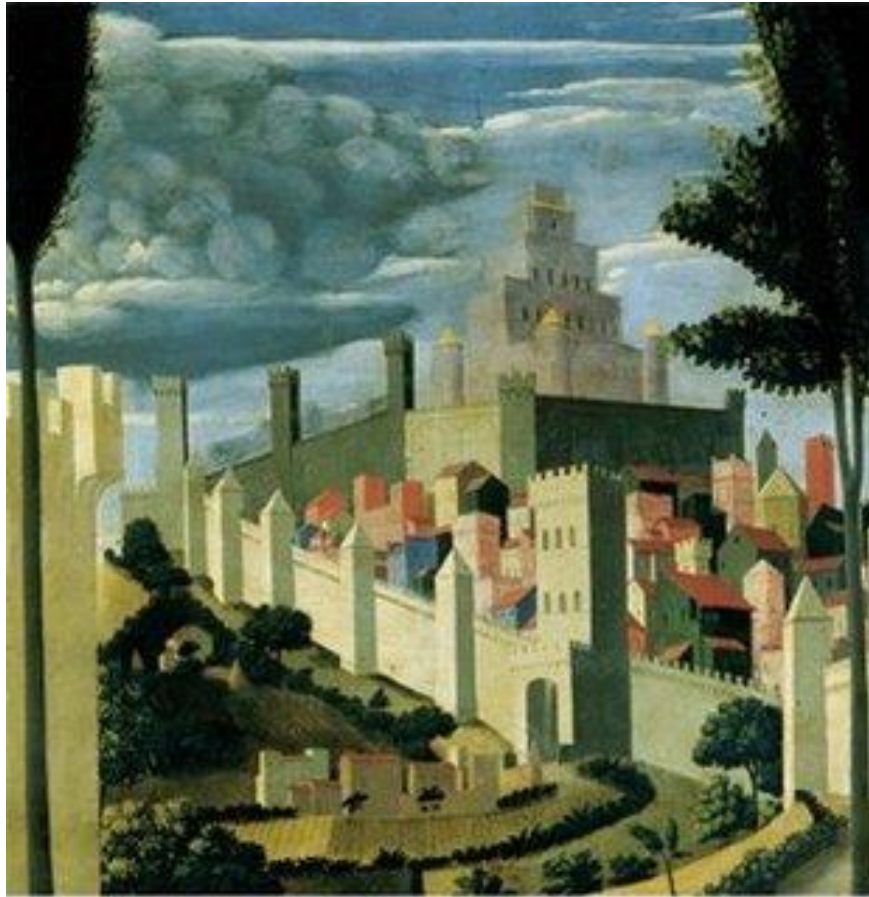


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Utopia



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Utopia Summary

A Vision of an Ideal Society and Its Challenges

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About the book

In "Utopia," Thomas More invites us into an intriguing world of idealism and social critique, where the quest for a perfect society unfolds on the fictional island of Utopia, a name that itself suggests both an ideal and an unattainable dream. Through the eyes of a traveler, More explores radical concepts of communal living, equity, and justice, challenging the realities of 16th-century Europe—marked by inequality, corruption, and strife. The dialogue sparks a profound reflection on human nature, morality, and the very fabric of society, beckoning readers to ponder whether such a paradise could ever exist or if it remains a mere figment of imagination. As you delve into this thought-provoking work, prepare to question the status quo and envision a world redefined by fairness and harmony.

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About the author

Thomas More was an English lawyer, statesman, and Renaissance humanist, born on February 7, 1478, in London. He is best known for his seminal work, "Utopia," published in 1516, which presents a fictional island society and its socio-political system, serving as a critique of contemporary European society. A devout Roman Catholic, More's steadfast adherence to his faith ultimately led to his execution in 1535, when he refused to accept King Henry VIII's supremacy over the Church of England. More's enduring legacy as a philosopher and writer is marked by his exploration of morality, governance, and the human condition, positioning him as a pivotal figure in the intellectual landscape of the early modern period.

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Chapter 1 Summary: DISCOURSES OF RAPHAEL HYTHLODAY, OF THE BEST STATE OF A COMMONWEALTH

In Chapter 1 of Thomas More's "Utopia," the narrative begins with a detailed introduction by More himself, who serves as an ambassador for King Henry VIII of England. During his diplomatic mission in Flanders, he becomes acquainted with Peter Giles, a well-educated and amiable man from Antwerp. Through Giles, More meets Raphael Hythloday, a learned Portuguese traveler who has extensive knowledge of various nations and their customs.

Hythloday captivates More and Giles with accounts of his travels, including the striking differences he observed in governance and societal structures across different lands. He laments that many nations, including England, exhibit significant problems, particularly in the areas of justice and wealth distribution. Hythloday argues that certain nations fall prey to injustices and that their systems can lead to moral corruption and societal decline.

As More and Giles engage Hythloday in conversation, they express admiration for his insights and experience. Hythloday criticizes the harsh penalties for theft in England, suggesting that such extreme measures only foster further crime and social decay. He proposes alternative forms of punishment to better rehabilitate offenders rather than punish them with



death, aligning with philosophical principles regarding the value of human life and the need for a more humane system of justice.

The chapter also delves into the socio-economic conditions that lead to poverty and crime. Hythloday explains how mismanagement, a focus on war, and the neglect of agriculture and welfare contribute to the plight of the common people. He criticizes the idle nobility who profit from others' labor while remaining detached from the reality faced by their tenants.

Eventually, Hythloday shares his thoughts on Utopia, an ideal society he has observed during his travels. He reflects on how this society is governed with a focus on communal well-being and equality, contrasting sharply with the issues he sees in England and elsewhere.

The discussion culminates with Hythloday's compelling reasoning that if princes and rulers truly sought the happiness of their subjects, they would prioritize their people's welfare over their own wealth and power. The chapter closes with the group's eagerness to learn more from Hythloday, setting the stage for a deeper exploration of Utopian society in the subsequent chapters, underscoring themes of justice, equality, and the philosophical underpinnings of governance.

Overall, this chapter serves as an engaging framework that introduces key characters, sets thematic elements regarding societal critique, and establishes



the foundation for Hythloday's expositions on the organization of Utopian society.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The importance of humane justice systems

Critical Interpretation: Imagine living in a world where justice is not defined by harsh penalties but by understanding and rehabilitation. The reflections of Raphael Hythloday in Chapter 1 of 'Utopia' can inspire you to advocate for a more compassionate approach to justice in your community. Instead of treating offenders as irredeemable, you could support initiatives that focus on reform and social support, believing that everyone has the potential for change. This perspective can foster a society that prioritizes human dignity and well-being over retribution, encouraging a collective rise towards a more just and equitable world.

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Chapter 2 Summary: OF THEIR TOWNS, PARTICULARLY OF AMAUROT

In Chapter 2 of "Utopia" by Thomas More, the focus shifts to the town of Amaurot, which serves as a representative example of the Utopian society. This chapter intricately describes the town's layout and architecture, making it clear that while all Utopian towns share similar characteristics, Amaurot stands out as the most significant due to its role as the seat of the supreme council and More's personal experience living there for five years.

Amaurot is situated on a hillside, with a nearly square shape that slopes down to the River Anider, which broadens into a robust waterway as it flows towards the ocean. The river, combined with a strategic bridge of stone featuring grand arches, allows for easy transportation and access to ships. There is a second smaller river that runs through the town, supplying fresh water and further illustrating the inhabitants' foresight in ensuring a sustainable water source, especially in the event of a siege.

More elaborates on the town's defenses, including its high walls, towers, and a deep ditch filled with thorn bushes, which provides security and a barrier against potential attacks. The streets are designed for convenience, being broad and well-sheltered. Each structure looks uniform, making the town aesthetically pleasing, with gardens that flourish behind the houses. These gardens, tended to with meticulous care, not only serve practical purposes



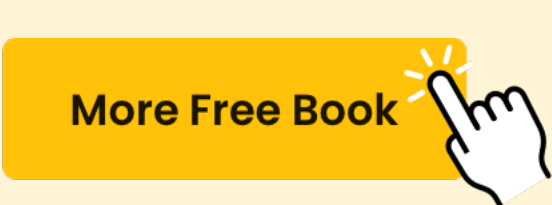
for cultivation but also become a source of community competition and pride among residents.

Interestingly, the Utopians practice communal living, having no private property, and shift houses every ten years, allowing everyone access to various spaces. This approach fosters a sense of equality and collaboration among the citizens, as they not only share their living spaces but also their efforts in maintaining lush gardens, which they take great pride in. More emphasizes the beauty and productivity of these gardens, showcasing the community's appreciation for nature and aesthetics.

Furthermore, the chapter briefly traces the town’s historical evolution from humble beginnings—simple cottages of timber and straw—to the grand three-story houses made of stone and plaster that characterize Amaurot today. This evolution reflects the Utopians' commitment to improvement and adaptation over centuries, highlighting a society that cherishes progress while maintaining a deep connection to its past.

Overall, this chapter paints a vivid picture of Amaurot, celebrating its architectural harmony, community spirit, and the Utopian ideals of shared resources and collective responsibility, all crucial themes within More's exploration of an ideal society.

Key Element	Description
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Key Element	Description
Location	Amaurot is located on a hillside with a square shape, sloping down to the River Anider.
River System	The River Anider broadens into a waterway for transportation; a second smaller river provides fresh water.
Architectural Features	Uniform structures with gardens behind houses; well-designed streets for convenience.
Defenses	High walls, towers, and a deep ditch with thorn bushes ensure security.
Living Arrangements	Communal living with no private property; citizens change houses every ten years.
Community Pride	Residents take pride in maintaining gardens, fostering competition and collaboration.
Historical Evolution	The town evolved from simple cottages to grand three-story houses, representing progress.
Themes	Architectural harmony, community spirit, shared resources, and collective responsibility.



Chapter 3: OF THEIR MAGISTRATES

In Chapter 3 of "Utopia" by Thomas More, we dive into the intricacies of the governance system in Utopia, where community involvement and careful deliberation hold significant importance. Each year, thirty families select a magistrate called the Philarch (formerly known as the Syphogrant). Over groups of ten Syphogrants, a higher-ranking official called the Archphilarch supervises. Interestingly, the community plays a crucial role in electing the Prince, who is chosen from a list of candidates provided by the people. This voting process is shrouded in secrecy to ensure fairness, and the Prince serves for life unless there's suspicion of tyranny against the people.

The chapter outlines a well-structured political system where annual elections for other magistrates, like the Tranibors, allow for fresh ideas while maintaining continuity. The Tranibors convene frequently to discuss both public and personal matters, emphasizing the importance of regular communication and consideration. To prevent rash decisions, there's a strict rule that no matter can be deliberated on the day it's proposed, allowing for a cooling-off period that enhances thoughtful debate. This approach ensures

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Chapter 4 Summary: OF THEIR TRADES, AND MANNER OF LIFE

In Chapter 4 of "Utopia," Thomas More provides a fascinating view of the island's society, emphasizing their trades, lifestyle, and approach to work. Agriculture is a cornerstone, with both men and women educated in farming from a young age, combining school lessons with practical fieldwork. Each individual also chooses a specific trade—like wool or flax manufacturing, masonry, or carpentry—reflecting the community's structure where no single trade is particularly esteemed over another.

Uniformity is a key characteristic; everyone wears similar clothing differentiated only by gender and marital status, which remains unchanged and practical to suit the climate. Families produce their own garments, leading to a simple and cooperative economy where trades may be passed from parent to child, yet individuals can switch trades if their interests lie elsewhere.

The governance structure, led by Syphogrants, ensures that everyone is engaged in meaningful work, avoiding idleness yet not enforcing relentless labor. A typical workday is strictly limited to six hours, divided into manageable blocks, with leisure time dedicated to reading, public lectures, and social gatherings, highlighting the Utopian value on both work and intellectual enrichment. Notably, idle games such as dice are absent,



replaced instead with games that encourage moral reflection and promote virtue.

One striking aspect is the efficiency achieved in Utopia, where the tasks required to meet basic needs are completed in less time due to the entire population being industrious and not burdened by needless luxury or extravagance. More critiques other societies by pointing out the contrast in industriousness, where a significant portion of people often live idly, contributing little to the communal economy.

Buildings are constructed and maintained with foresight, emphasizing repair and sustainability over new constructions, leading to less waste and labor. Their clothing practices are similarly efficient, minimizing effort and expense while maintaining functionality. Utopians exhibit a keen awareness of their resources which leads to abundance rather than scarcity. Magistrates focus on regulating labor to fulfill societal needs while allowing individuals the necessary time for personal growth and intellectual pursuits, which More suggests is essential to a happy life.

Through this chapter, More showcases a society where balance between labor, leisure, and ethical living not only sustains the community but cultivates an environment where individuals thrive both materially and spiritually. The ideals presented in Utopia serve as a sharp critique of contemporary European societies, inviting readers to reflect on the nature of



work, community, and fulfillment.

Aspect	Description
Agriculture	Fundamental to society; both genders educated in farming from a young age, mixing education with practical work.
Trades	Individuals choose specific trades (e.g., manufacturing, masonry) with no trade being esteemed over another, reflecting community equality.
Clothing	Uniformity in clothing, differentiated by gender and marital status, practical for the climate; families produce their garments.
Economy	Simple and cooperative; trades can be passed from parent to child, but individuals can switch trades as interests change.
Work Ethic	Governed by Syphogrants to prevent idleness; typical workday limited to six hours, balancing labor with leisure and intellectual activities.
Leisure Activities	Reading, public lectures, and social gatherings encouraged; idle games like dice are absent in favor of virtue-promoting games.
Efficiency	Utopians complete tasks in less time without luxury; the industriousness contrasts with idle societies elsewhere.
Construction Practices	Focus on repair and sustainability over new buildings to reduce waste and labor, maintaining long-term resource use.
Resource Awareness	Efficiency leads to abundance, implying a keen awareness of available resources and their optimal use.
Governance	Magistrates regulate labor to meet societal needs while allowing time for personal growth and intellectual pursuits.
Overall Theme	Balance between labor, leisure, and ethical living; critiques contemporary European societies, promoting reflection on work and community fulfillment.

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Chapter 5 Summary: OF THEIR TRAFFIC

In Chapter 5 of "Utopia," Thomas More intricately details the social structure, commerce, and way of life of an ideal society. The Utopians live in family units composed of closely related members. While the women marry and leave, the men—children and grandchildren alike—remain in the same household under the guidance of the eldest male, who assumes the role of governor. To maintain population balance in their cities, which are capped at six thousand families, children are redistributed among families as needed, ensuring no household has fewer than ten or more than sixteen members.

More explains that, when cities grow too sparse or too populous, the Utopians adjust their communities. If a city suffers decline—as happened during bouts of plague—they draw from their colonies abroad rather than let the population drop too low. Utopian society emphasizes cooperation and mutual aid, valuing nature and cultivation of land. When encountering other nations, they invite them to share in their abundance, but do not shy away from conflict if necessary, believing in the natural right to cultivate and use land that lies idle.

The manner of living in Utopia is also unique. Every family contributes to a central market and takes what they need without exchange or payment, fostering a sense of community and alleviating greed. The Utopians promote



a healthy coexistence, avoiding unnecessary violence or cruelty. For instance, they prohibit citizens from killing animals, delegating this task to slaves, creating a culture of empathy toward all living beings.

Public healthcare is a cornerstone of their society, supported by hospitals deliberately placed to accommodate the sick safely and comfortably. These facilities are spacious, ensuring that contagious individuals are isolated from the healthy. The care received in hospitals is exceptional, with skilled physicians and ample resources, making it preferable for sick citizens to be treated there rather than at home.

Social gatherings are characterized by shared meals in community halls, where the elderly are given respect and precedence in dining. Meals begin with a moral lecture fostering companionship and resilience among generations. The older members of the community engage the younger in conversation, promoting a valuable exchange of ideas and respect.

In addition to the solemn aspects of dining, Utopians indulge in music and fragrances during meals, ensuring that every gathering is enjoyable. While citizens in towns share communal meals, those in rural areas tend to eat at home but are never in need, as resources are transferred from the countryside to the cities.

This chapter paints a rich picture of a harmonious society where principles



of equity, communal living, and respect for nature reign supreme, highlighting More's innovative vision of an ideal world.

Aspect	Description
Social Structure	Family units consist of closely related members, with men remaining in the household under the eldest male's guidance as governor.
Population Control	Communities adjust size to maintain a balance of no more than six thousand families, redistributing children as needed.
Response to Decline	In case of population decline, they draw people from colonies abroad rather than allow low populations.
Commerce	Utopians contribute to a central market, taking what they need without exchange or payment, promoting community and reducing greed.
Interactions with Other Nations	They invite other nations to share resources but will engage in conflict if necessary, asserting their right to cultivate idle land.
Treatment of Animals	Citizens cannot kill animals; this task is reserved for slaves, fostering empathy towards all living beings.
Public Healthcare	Hospitals are well-resourced and spacious, providing exceptional care, with contagious individuals isolated from the healthy.
Social Gatherings	Meals are shared in community halls, featuring moral lectures and promoting respect between generations while enjoying music and fragrances.
Rural Dining	Citizens in rural areas eat at home but have no need, as resources are distributed from the countryside to the cities.
Overall Theme	The chapter depicts a harmonious society centered on equity, communal living, and respect for nature, showcasing More's vision of an ideal world.



Chapter 6: OF THE TRAVELLING OF THE UTOPIANS

In Chapter 6 of "Utopia," Thomas More provides a detailed account of the customs and societal structures of the Utopians, focusing on their unique approach to travel, trade, and the nature of pleasure. He begins by describing how Utopians are allowed to travel freely with permission from local authorities and are given essential resources for their journeys, but they must always return on time, reflecting a structured yet generous society. This system prevents idleness and promotes productivity as all citizens are engaged in meaningful work.

The Utopians have no taverns or places of corruption, fostering a community where everyone can thrive equally. The chapter emphasizes their abundance of resources, enabled by a cooperative network among towns to share food and goods without the need for currency, which they view as a hindrance to true wealth. They cultivate their land excellently, ensuring a healthy and bountiful output, which they trade with other nations, generously donating a portion to the needy.

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Chapter 7 Summary: OF THEIR SLAVES, AND OF THEIR MARRIAGES

In Chapter 7 of "Utopia," Thomas More discusses the treatment of slaves and the structure of marriages in an ideal society. He begins by explaining that slavery in Utopia is a result of crime rather than war, with natives facing harsher conditions than foreigners. While some may become slaves due to the actions of merchants in distant lands, others might willingly serve as laborers, albeit subjected to more tasks. Interestingly, those who choose to return to their homeland are not sent away empty-handed, highlighting a measure of compassion in their system.

More paints a picture of a society that cares for the sick with great reverence. Those with incurable illnesses are encouraged to choose a dignified death rather than burden others. Priests support this decision, believing it aligns with both reason and religious duty. However, individuals cannot be coerced into ending their lives; instead, their autonomy is respected, revealing a balance between compassion and constraints.

When it comes to marriage, the Utopians impose strict regulations. They allow marriage only after certain ages—eighteen for women and twenty-two for men—and punish premarital indiscretions severely. This system reflects a societal belief that sexual restraint is vital to maintaining the integrity of families and communities. Marriages are presented in a peculiar manner;



future partners are exchanged naked to ensure transparency, a practice deemed wise by the Utopians but strange to outsiders. They argue it's essential for compatibility, acknowledging that true attraction goes beyond physical beauty, emphasizing virtues like obedience and integrity.

Divorces are tightly controlled, permitted only under specific circumstances like infidelity. Adultery carries significant punishment, with offenders facing slavery and emotional hardship for their betrayal. The chapter also explores justice; while severe, it is aimed at preserving social harmony rather than merely punishing for punishment's sake. Utopians believe in self-correction, valuing the potential for redemption in wrongdoers.

Moreover, magistrates in Utopia are held in high regard, serving selflessly without the trappings of wealth or pomp. Laws are minimal and straightforward, promoting a society where citizens understand their duties without being bogged down by convoluted legal texts. There are no lawyers, as everyone is expected to represent themselves, simplifying judicial processes. The Utopians also view alliances and treaties with skepticism, believing true unity comes from human kindness rather than formal agreements.

In sum, Chapter 7 intricately weaves together themes of compassion, moral responsibility, and the balance of individual rights within a communal structure. It illustrates an ideal society that strives for harmony through



ethical considerations in personal and civic relationships while critiquing the complexities of legalism seen in other cultures.

Theme	Summary
Slavery	Slavery results from crime, not war. Natives endure harsher conditions than foreigners. Compassion shown when slaves return home with rewards.
Care for the Sick	Encouragement for dignified death for incurably sick, supported by priests but respecting autonomy.
Marriage Structure	Strict regulations on marriage ages (18 for women, 22 for men), severe punishments for premarital indiscretions to ensure sexual restraint.
Marriage Uniqueness	Future partners are exchanged naked for transparency in compatibility, prioritizing virtues over mere physical attraction.
Divorce Regulations	Controlled divorce practices with punishments for infidelity, aiming at maintaining social harmony.
Justice System	Severe but aimed at preserving harmony; promotes self-correction and redemption opportunities for offenders.
Magistracy	Magistrates serve without wealth influences; minimal laws promote a clear understanding of duties among citizens.
Legal Simplification	No lawyers; citizens represent themselves, simplifying judicial processes.
Alliances and Treaties	Skepticism towards formal agreements; genuine unity derives from kindness rather than legal contracts.
Overall Themes	Balance of compassion, moral responsibility, and individual rights within the communal structure for social harmony.



Chapter 8 Summary: OF THEIR MILITARY DISCIPLINE

In Chapter 8 of "Utopia" by Thomas More, the author explores the unique military discipline and philosophy of the Utopians, who have a different outlook on war compared to many other nations. They hold a strong aversion to war, deeming it a brutal affair that tarnishes human nature. Unlike most societies, where martial glory is celebrated, the Utopians see such glory as inglorious. They engage in military training, not out of eagerness for war but to defend themselves or to assist others against tyranny. Their commitment to justice means they only consider offensive action after peaceful avenues have been exhausted.

Interestingly, when the Utopians engage in warfare, their chief motivation lies in rectifying injustices they've suffered rather than in personal or national pride. For them, success in war is measured more by strategic finesse than by bloodshed. They believe that true victory comes from outsmarting the enemy rather than defeating them through sheer force. Their military operations are marked by clever tactics and a preference for capturing rather than killing.

The chapter reveals the tactical sophistication of the Utopians in war. They employ psychological strategies against adversaries, such as offering rewards for betraying enemies. This approach aims not only to weaken their



foes but also to minimize bloodshed, as they aspire to end conflicts peacefully whenever possible. If their initial tactics fail, they resort to sowing discord among their enemies, fostering internal divisions, or even encouraging rival factions to vie for power.

When it comes to their own military forces, the Utopians do not coerce participation; they rely on volunteers, encouraging families to fight alongside one another. In battle, they adhere to values such as loyalty and mutual support, which drive them to fight fiercely rather than out of fear. Their unique blend of compassion and strategic insight shapes their approach to combat, leading to a military ethos that values life over glory.

Overall, More depicts the Utopians as wise and humane conquerors, who prioritize ethical conduct over violent conquest, viewing warfare as a last resort and a necessary means to reclaim justice. Their sophisticated military discipline and their emphasis on calculated strategies over brute force illustrate a vision of warfare that stands distinct from contemporary practices, revealing a deep philosophical inquiry into the nature of power, conflict, and morality.

Aspect	Description
Attitude towards War	Utopians have a strong aversion to war, viewing it as brutal and a blemish on human nature.
Military	They do not seek martial glory; instead, they see it as inglorious and

Aspect	Description
Philosophy	engage in military training only for self-defense or to assist against tyranny.
Motivation for War	Their motivation for engaging in war is to rectify injustices rather than for personal or national pride.
Success in Warfare	Success is characterized by strategic finesse rather than bloodshed; they aim to outsmart the enemy, not just defeat them.
Tactics	The Utopians employ psychological strategies and prefer capturing over killing. They aim to minimize bloodshed and end conflicts peacefully.
Recruitment	Military participation is voluntary; families are encouraged to fight together, fostering loyalty and mutual support.
Values in Combat	They uphold values of loyalty and support, fighting fiercely out of commitment rather than fear.
Overall Military Ethos	Their approach combines compassion with strategic insight, prioritizing ethical conduct over violence and viewing warfare as a last resort.
Philosophical Inquiry	More presents a vision of warfare that uniquely intertwines power, conflict, and morality, contrasting with contemporary military practices.



Chapter 9: OF THE RELIGIONS OF THE UTOPIANS

In Chapter 9 of Thomas More's "Utopia," the discussion centers on the diverse religious beliefs of the Utopians and how these beliefs shape their society. The island features various religions, with worship directed toward celestial bodies, historical figures, or a single Supreme Being referred to as Mithras. Despite their differences, Utopians generally acknowledge one all-powerful Deity who governs the universe, and they share a common respect for this essence.

The chapter explores the gradual shift among the Utopians away from superstitions towards a purer form of worship. However, historical events often sway their beliefs, leading to fear that abandoning old gods may incur divine wrath. After learning about Christ's teachings and the sacrifices of martyrs, many Utopians express a strong inclination toward Christianity, especially since it aligns with their ideals of communal living.

Here, More introduces the challenges faced by the new converts, who, while eager to embrace their newfound faith, lack sufficient priests to administer

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