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In More on Utopia, Brendan Bradshaw argues that J.H. Hexter’s analysis of Utopia in his Yale edition succeeded not only in creating a definitive version of More’s text, but also in establishing a new framework for its interpretation. (Page 1) The author then presents an example of a critique of Hexter’s interpretation by a man named Dermot Fenlon. He then states that the purpose of this study is not to vindicate one historian or another, but to “attempt the hazardous voyage to Utopia yet again.” (Page 2)

Next, Bradshaw poses a two part question which he claims to be essential to interpreting *Utopia*’s meaning: “What does More intend to describe and what is his purpose in describing it?” (Page 2) Bradshaw weighs two options, whether *Utopia* is an idyll- intended to provoke the consciences of his readers in Europe as to the pitfalls of their society- or an ideal- referring “not to what might have been in a hypothetical world of perfect nature but what ought to be in the real one.” The latter is the aforementioned author Hexter’s hypothesis.

Bradshaw then attempts to explore the idealogical context of *Utopia*, something Hexter uses to support his claims in his interpretation. This context is Erasmian humanism, something the reader is apparently expected to be familiar with because the term is not defined. According to the author, Hexter argues that despite seeming anti-religious on the surface, More’s utopia is in fact a Christian commonwealth governed by the ideals of the Christian faith rather than the rituals that governed European religious societies at the time *Utopia* was written. The author further postulates that Hexter believes *Utopia* to be not only this, but a critique of Christian humanism itself as well. He says Hexter believes modern Christian humanists to be too soft centered, hoping optimistically for a moral chance among humanity rather than realizing the need for a structural overhaul of the entire society.

The author then presents the counter argument of Fenlon, the author from the first page, in full. Fenlon ‘turns Hexter’s argument upside down’ (Page 1, 5) by pointing out that More actually creates his utopia with the purpose of highlighting the impossibility of such a society. In short, he delegitimizes Christian humanism entirely, by creating an imaginary society on a remote island on which the followers of that belief live. At the end of the article, the author seems to side with Fenlon, but acknowledges that Hexter’s interpretation set a new standard for analyzing More’s *Utopia* and created a framework from which debates can arise.

Brendan Bradshaw (1981). More on Utopia. The Historical Journal, 24, pp 1-27.

“I pledge that I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work.

James David Steen.”