Foreword

Thomas More’s *Utopia* was first published in 1516. Its purpose was to reconsider human social existence – as it had been, as it then was, and as it might be. By describing social life in an imagined country (*No-place*), More enabled his readers to see their own social life with new eyes, and to judge it, and to imagine other ways of life.

The book appeared at a time of profound transformation in the history of the human world, a first globalising of the human condition. The human world was being revealed as a place containing countless human societies with their extreme cultural diversity and their ancient histories, their isolation, and their unity-in-diversity as *humanity*.

It was also a time of discovery and exploration within human consciousness itself, the discovery and exploration of a New World of the *human mind*. A new kind of human world was coming, with new values and purposes, new forms of society, and even a new kind of human being. It was a world that would call itself ‘the modern world’ – a world of frenetic collective human energy, taking power over the natural world through science and engineering, transforming the human world through permanent mental and social revolution.

More’s *Utopia* was not intended to be a description of an ideal society. His readers have struggled to find hidden in More’s book his own idea of what he once referred to as *Eutopia* (a good Utopia; ‘a place of happiness’). Also, he could not have offered a reimagining of the global co-existence of the new societies in what has come to be called the ‘international’ world. The turbulent co-existence of settled societies is as old as human history, but no one could have foreseen the terrible effects of the globalised co-existence of ‘states’ which would dominate human life over the succeeding five centuries.

It is four centuries since Francis Bacon proposed ‘a total reconstruction of sciences, arts, and all human knowledge, raised upon proper foundations’ (*Great Instauration*, 1620). His writings were the magnificent prelude to the multiple social and cultural and scientific revolutions of the seventeenth century, leading to the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, and the multiple social and cultural and scientific revolutions of the nineteenth century. He saw that a revolution in our understanding
of the human mind could produce every other kind of revolution. He saw that the human mind can transform the human world. We are his beneficiaries to this day.

The present author’s *Eunomia: New Order for a New World* was published in 1990. Its purpose was to reconsider human social co-existence at the international level, especially in the light of our experience of that phenomenon since the days of More and Bacon.

Unlike More’s work, it is an explicitly idealising project resting on a foundation of particular ideas of order and society and law. It presents an idea of *Eunomia* (the good order of a good society under law) embracing every social level, including the level of international society. It expresses a contrast between what is and what might be, between the actual and the ideal, in the co-existence of human beings and human societies.

Since *Eunomia* was published, the globalising of human social and mental existence has proceeded at a pace and in ways that could not have been predicted then, and with ever more troubling consequences, and ever more serious threats and challenges. Chaotic globalising is even negating humanity’s tentative unity-in-diversity.

More and Bacon, leading figures of the English Renaissance, could not have thought many of the things that we can now think. They could not possibly have imagined the way in which human life would develop in the following centuries. Since the sixteenth century, the human mind has produced a torrent of ideas of every kind in every field. There has been a frenzy of human experience in every aspect of intellectual and social life, gathering momentum in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, under the banner of progress, to reach a situation in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries when human life and the human mind have become overwhelmed by the density and energy and confusion and threats of the human-made world.

If they were to return in spirit, the first thing More or Bacon would notice is that human beings, in their ancient guise as tool-maker (*homo faber*), have greatly increased their domination over the natural world, making it serve countless new human purposes. And then, with the ironic smile that conceals a tear, they would see that human beings have hardly progressed at all, and may even have declined, in their other guise, as self-creating and self-ordering beings (*homo rationalis*).

The most troubling aspect of the state of the human world in the twenty-first century is a collapse in the higher levels of intellectual life and a collapse in the theory and practice of education at all levels. There has never been a greater volume of talking and writing than there is today, but never have we felt so powerless in the face of social change. We have disempowered ourselves spiritually and intellectually in empowering ourselves practically.
Human beings are left in a state of hopeless mental confusion about the reality and the possibilities of the human condition. We are a species with unlimited potentiality that is failing in crucial aspects of its self-evolving and self-perfecting. The challenge now is not only a global social challenge. It is a universal human challenge.

Our predecessors never stopped thinking and talking and writing about the ever-changing social and mental phenomena they were witnessing. The great and ancient existential debate was not merely a debate among professional philosophers. It involved anyone with a sense of responsibility for the way the world is, and the way the world could be. In the twentieth century, the great human debate decayed in a miasma of nihilism and despair, unable to comprehend or to redeem terrible real-world events that the human mind itself had caused.

_Eunomia_ and _Eutopia_ simply ignore the End of Philosophy proclaimed in the twentieth century. The human mind is still perfectly capable of taking up again the great philosophical tradition. That is the necessary and urgent revolution in the human mind. Over the course of twenty-seven centuries, the great philosophical tradition accompanied and influenced, for better and for worse, the making and the remaking of the human world, the human condition, human society, and individual and collective human consciousness.

Without philosophy, we would not have inherited the best things that we have inherited as a self-creating and self-evolving and self-perfecting human species. Without philosophy, we have little or no control over the making and the remaking of a better human future. Without philosophy, now and hereafter, the human species may not survive.

_Eutopia_ is designed to bring the great and ancient existential human debate back to life, before it is too late. The governing ideal of the place we may call Eutopia is the permanent possibility of making the human world into a ‘place of happiness’.

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Thomas More’s _Utopia_ was first published in Latin in 1516 at Louvain (Leuven). It was published again in Paris in 1517. On the back of the title page of that edition there are lines of Latin verse written by the Poet Laureate of Utopia in which Utopia addresses the reader.

‘The ancients called me Utopia or Nowhere because of my isolation. At present, however, I am a rival of Plato’s republic, perhaps even a victor over it. The reason is that what he has delineated in words I alone have exhibited in men and resources and laws of surpassing excellence. Deservedly ought I to be called by the name of Eutopia or Happy Land.’
Eutopia


The Richards translation is based on an edition published in Basel in 1518. The first English translation was by Richard Robinson in 1551.

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