

A man for all seasons  
– more vs. rich essay  
sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

In his preface to the play, Bolt calls More “ a hero of selfhood.” More refuses to sacrifice his self, which he defines by his moral conscience, even as he sacrifices his life. Robert Bolt tries to represent his characters in the form of symbolism turns out to be a major force driving the action of the play. Characters are motivated by More’s reputation as a moral man, not by More’s individual characteristics. Perhaps, in fact, More stands for being perceived as a saint or a moral man. Throughout the play, characters such as Rich view More as a representative of a concept rather than as a person. His consent is important to the king and to Norfolk because it would make them feel and appear moral. Chapuys – a character in the play sees More as an upstanding moral and religious man, and Chapuys takes comfort in the fact that the virtues More represents contradict the king’s actions. Though More was much later sainted for his refusal to swear an oath to king Henry’s supremacy to the pope, Bolt does not depict More as someone who ascribes to religious dogma of any sort.

As a hero, More is more existential than religious, because he looks inwardly for his motivations and does not rely on any external ideals to guide his speech and actions. In fact, More’s morals are continually shifting, and he surprises Chapuys and other characters with his sharp wit and unexpected pragmatism. . If an ideal agrees with his conscience, More will do his best to live up to it; if not, he will discard it. Richard Rich symbolizes the tendency to succumb to the temptation of wealth and status. Rich and are the same in one aspect because they are both hero’s however rich Rich is a Machiavellian hero. This means he is someone who seeks to advance himself politically and socially, whatever the cost. Despite his selfishness, Rich

reveals his humanity when he wrestles with his own conscience while he sells out his friend More. In Rich's awareness of his moral shortcomings, he is similar to the Common Man.

Like Cromwell, Rich serves as a foil to More, highlighting More's superior character. Rich also illuminates More's character in less obvious ways. For instance, in the opening scene, More tells Rich that he should be a teacher. More shows great interest in Rich's moral fiber and wishes for him to quell his petty, self-interested urge to gain wealth and status. More's conversation with Rich reveals More's own interest in teaching as not just a profession but as something he himself practices throughout the play. In his interaction with Rich in the first scene, More teaches by testing Rich by offering him the goblet, letting Rich know that the goblet was a bribe and is therefore tainted. More understands Rich's faults from the very opening of the play, but he tries to nurture Rich anyway. It is therefore tragic that Rich eventually perjures himself to condemn More to death. This shows the smarts of More and the downside of Rich, they are the same however very different in views and heart.