

**Traversing Utopian Nature: A Proto-Ecological Approach to  
Thomas More's *Utopia***

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**Abstract**

An understanding of the ecological philosophy of More's *Utopia* invites both a textual and contextual analysis. This fact/fiction interrelationship, inherent within utopian texts, makes any critical attempt to concentrate solely on their historical context or textual format flawed and reductive. More's society was an agrarian, feudal, subsistence economy on the verge of transformation to a capitalist market economy. Land enclosures, referred to by More in the First Book of *Utopia*, represent a site for defining oppositional views regarding nature/human relationships. In early modern texts, pastoral and georgic concepts of nature were blurred in a perpetual process of interpenetration. It is this liminal position, which *Utopia* assumes as a fictional as well as a factual space that invites its interpretation as a chronotope. My research is concerned with dealing with the canonical text, *Utopia* from an ecocritical perspective. Questions which concern me in this research revolve around: The relation between textual and contextual Nature in this text, Exploring the relationship between nature and humans from its earliest expressions and tracing within these early expressions the beginnings of contemporary ecological problems.

**Keywords:** *Ecocriticism, Chronotope, Nature, Utopia.*

An understanding of the ecological philosophy of More's *Utopia* ensues both a textual and contextual analysis. Gary Morson considers utopian texts as boundary works situated between social fact and social fiction (92). This fact/fiction interrelationship, inherent within utopian texts, makes any critical attempt to concentrate solely on their historical context or textual format flawed and reductive. Contextually, it is of essence to consider the historical background conducive to More's ecological explorations in *Utopia*. More's society was an agrarian, feudal, subsistence economy on the verge of transformation to a capitalist market economy. Land enclosures, referred to by More in the First Book of *Utopia*, represent a charged historical site for defining oppositional views regarding nature/human relationships. In early modern texts, pastoral and georgic

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concepts of nature were blurred in a perpetual process of interpenetration and capitalist perceptions of the land were on the rise. It is this liminal intersectional position, which Utopia assumes as a fictional as well as a factual space that invites its interpretation as a chronotope.

By factual, I am referring to the contextual nature of Utopia's ecological philosophy that designates it as a comment on early modern England's conceptions of nature. Bakhtin defines chronotope as a category of literature in which "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships [...] are artistically expressed in literature" demonstrating how narrative through a blurring of the line between fiction and non-fiction connects itself to place (qtd. in Holquist 109). An analysis of chronotope can hence help in clarifying representations of nature/human interactions, occurring within a narrative text. By considering More's *Utopia* in light of Bakhtin's concept of chronotope, the significance of the paradoxical no-place/good place dichotomy becomes clear. According to Bakhtin, the chronotope constitutes the matrix where the temporal and spatial aspects of a work of art converge, where dialogues, encounters and events occur (246). In this sense, Utopia becomes the non-existent space where illusory ideals of cultivation and civilization are questioned. Due to my emphasis on the indistinctness of the factual and fictional in Utopia, my following argument will be twofold. On the one hand, my analysis of Utopia as a chronotope aims to establish the historical contextual character of its narrative space ecologically. On the other hand, I will seek to demonstrate how the influences of textual narratives like Virgil's *Georgics* play a role in aestheticizing and complicating environmental history, challenging perceptions of actual spatio-temporal contexts. As an ecocritical exercise, this paper will dwell on the shifting boundaries between nature and culture tracing the constructions and reconstructions of nature.

The relation between space and time established through narrative--the narrative describing ecological systems in early modern England and Utopia--helps to forge a link between fiction and fact, lived and represented. The land of Utopia, as a chronotope, is the space where literary textual representations of nature and contextual ideas about nature in early modern England are embodied. Bakhtin argues, "philosophical and social generalizations, ideas, analyses of cause and effect-gravitate toward the chronotope" (250). Bakhtin's argument regarding chronotopes is associated with dialogism and the multi-vocal voices and values involved in spatio-temporal settings. It is my attempt to trace how Utopia,

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functions as a site for dialogue between “philosophical” and “social” proto-ecological discourses of early modern England. Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor explain that: “In early modern England the cultivated landscape becomes the supreme expression national, political, and religious of the ‘country’, and the most powerful figuration of the cultivation of the human spirit” (Introduction 4). In light of this, what is lacking in the First Book of *Utopia* is a cultivated spirit, as well as a properly cultivated land. Labor and land problematics represent a central component in *Utopia's* proto-ecological perception because More directly addresses his English countrymen's use of land arguing that,

[b]efore the Englishmen can hope to achieve their own Utopia they must first alter their relationship with the land [...] This representation of the physical missteps of English farmers and landowners in relation to their land as a cause for scarcity and hardship lends credence to More's assertion that his Utopians must have found the most productive relationship with the land. (Kamps and Smith 123)

More chooses to relate this deficient agrarian cultivation to perceptions of land enclosure and private property, though land enclosures were not completely perceived in a negative light in early modern England. In the Second Book of *Utopia*, Utopians go to extremes to cultivate both the land and the spirit, so that cultivation and the progress it issues becomes an end, rather than a responsibility or a source for pleasure. The only exclusion to the rule--of cultivation for the sake of cultivation--is the Utopians's gardens. In the First Book of *Utopia*, Hythloday ironically comments on the act of enclosure of land and its conversion to pastures saying, “forests, chases, lands, and parks, those good holy men turn all dwelling places and all glebeland into desolation and wilderness” (More 22). The interrelationship between such unproductive nature/human interactions and degenerating human conditions is made clear.

Hythloday refers to scarcity of provisions because feudal farming, as a means which supports many individuals, has declined and is replaced by market economy sheep herding, which does not require as many workers “For one shepherd or herdman is enough to eat up that ground of cattle, to the occupying whereof about husbandry many hands were requisite” (More 23). The scarcity and inflation in prices not only affects sheep raising, but also affects all other kinds of cattle cultivation, so that “after farms [were] plucked down and husbandry decayed there [was] no man that passeth for the breeding of young store” (More

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23). Moreover, this scarcity of provisions is directly associated with the decline of social relationships. There is a decrease in hospitality amongst people and an increase in theft and beggary (More 24-25). More intentionally constructs his narrative of land enclosures, in a manner that highlights the depravity that ensues due to the transformation of the feudal system to the capitalist system, privileging in the process his own political agendas. An interesting aspect of More's analysis of the economic situation in early modern England is its lack of historicity and the deliberate construction involved in it. More's shaping and restructuring of events helps one to glean the forces of his ecological consciousness. The older feudal system, though constraining class-wise, retained a degree of organicism that privileged a sacralization of nature. Carolyn Merchant explains, "Central to the organic theory was the identification of nature, especially the earth, with a nurturing mother" (2). What More strongly denounces, in capitalist perceptions of nature, is an objectification of the land as a source of profit.

Merchant clarifies the dangers inherent within emerging capitalist beliefs arguing that "the new images of mastery and domination functioned as cultural sanctions for the denudation of nature" (2). Under the feudal system, despite all its downfalls, land was not owned by individuals but was entrusted to them forging a different human/nature interrelationship. Entrustment of land leads to a degree of responsibility towards it, while ownership seems to suggest a commodification of the land. In this way, the confusion surrounding the concept of land enclosure in early modern England and More's depiction of it informs understanding of nature/human relationships in *Utopia*. As James Siemon argues the term enclosure functioned in the early modern period as an instance of heteroglossia where criss-crossing values were contested (23).

Siemon explains how a Sir Thomas Smith typifies the multivocality of the era's discourse on enclosure by distinctly specifying that enclosure of arable land for improvement, not for conversion into pasture, was encouraged making enclosure by agreement popular in the period (23-24). In fact, by the mid-sixteenth century, enclosure became associated with productive economies that provided employment (Siemon 24). There was nothing about the enclosure concept that was particularly offensive to an early modern feudal society. However, when the enclosure of land was connected to pursuit of profit, as Siemon points out, problems arose (27). In this sense, enclosure becomes an anti-feudal element that played an important role in "feudal-capitalist interarticulation" (Siemon 29). This is why, when More denounces land enclosures so forcefully in the First Book he

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is engaging in this “feudal-capitalist interarticulation” (Siemons 29). Interestingly, the Second Book with its description of an all-encompassing commonwealth enclosure of land is not delineated in a wholly eutopian light either.

The persona in the Second Book expresses his doubt regarding the efficacy of communal ownership stating, “how can there be abundance of goods or of anything where every man withdraweth his hand from labour? Whom the regard of his own gains driveth not to work” (More 46). Elizabeth McCutcheon points to the constrictive nature of communal ownership of land, “It is as if the whole country has been enclosed, to become, paradoxically, a kind of ‘commons’” (281). Individuals in Utopia do not own land, since they regard themselves as “the good husbands [rather] than the owners of their lands” (More 51). Everybody practices farming for a particular number of years to ensure expertise in farming and avoid “scarceness of victuals” (More 51). Moreover, as McCutcheon posits, they “abhor waste (of materials, resources, labor), and by eliminating all wants or desires they consider false, they eliminate the conspicuous consumption that characterized the lives of the very small group of privileged elite in sixteenth-century England” (281). Though McCutcheon does not clarify the reason for the conservation inclinations of the Utopians, the key lies in their spiritual perception of a nature that they regard as holy.

Two particular sections in *Utopia* substantiate this argument. Nature is constructed as a holy site where one can practice spiritual contemplation as Hythloday describes, “They think that the contemplation of nature, and the praise thereof coming, is to God a very acceptable honour” (More 112). In fact, they conceived a lesson to be learned from nature and believe God “beareth [...] more goodwill and love to the curious and diligent beholder and viewer of his work and marveller at the same time” (More 87). They also upheld a common belief regarding mining, prevalent in the early modern period, which compared nature to a “loving mother” who “hath placed the best and most necessary things open abroad, as the air, the water, and the earth itself. And hath removed and hid farthest from us vain and unprofitable things” (More 70). To some extent, such beliefs echo proto-ecological attitudes that existed in the early modern age, which touted the philosophy of a nurturing earth.

This is why human/nature relationships in Utopia portray nature as a benevolent mother to be respected. Carolyn Merchant clarifies, “the image of the nurturing earth still carried with it subtle ethical controls and restraints” (4).

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However, one must not forget that an organicist, sacralized view of nature does not necessarily generate positive ecological stances, since it suggests an essentialist correspondence between moral attitudes and actions that does not always exist. Valerie Hanes, in critiquing organicism, argues, “organicism is responsible for two specific limitations of human ecology [...] a restricted focus on macrolevel phenomena, and [...] an uncritical acceptance of integration as a core idea of urban sociology” (68). Through a focus on “macrolevel phenomena,” Utopians reduce individual human interactions to codified relationships that are falsely portrayed as static. As a society, Utopia is not as static as it seems, as will be discussed later in this study. The inherent organicism of Utopian society would suggest an acceptance of integration that is not really practiced. An example of this is the limitation of travel in Utopia, which is set to prevent integration of Utopians with other communities. In fact, the geographical organization of Utopia encourages its isolation from other communities.

For the most part though, constructed sacred conceptions of nature encouraged taboos in human/nature relationships. Within these sacralized conceptions, one can trace the correspondence between historical, contextual attitudes towards nature and literary, textual representations. Due to the fact that there is an assumed correlation between proto-ecological attitudes of the early modern period and their textual equivalents in the text *Utopia*, it is useful to consider how Utopia, as a chronotope, functions as a convergence point for different historical, contextual perceptions of nature. McCutcheon describes how utopian texts like More's are the result of the transitional period during which a feudal economy was being transformed into a capitalist economy (portrayed in the First Book) without bringing to the fore other possible subversive perceptions of nature (such as the organicist nature philosophy) that remained in vogue and can be traced in the Second Book of *Utopia*.

The organicist metaphor of nature as a nurturing mother had normative associations related to it. According to Merchant, “As long as the earth was considered to be alive and sensitive, it could be considered a breach of human ethical behavior to carry out destructive acts against it” (3). Hence, this image functioned as a cultural restraint, which conceived devaluation of nature as encroachment upon the body of a nurturing mother. However, these behavioral restraints towards nature are transformed into sanctions when “the descriptive metaphors and images of nature change” (Merchant 4). This once more raises the issue of the interrelationship between the textual representations of nature and

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contextual ramifications. However, Merchant does not complicate this relationship enough falling prey to essentialism, when she states that textual changes in nature metaphors directly lead to the transformation of restraints into sanctions, placing a great deal of weight on textual expression. Political and economic, contextual conditions could also cause the textual transformation of nature metaphors. It would perhaps be wiser, to see both textual and contextual perceptions of nature simultaneously at work with one another. Other problems arising are the primitivistic ideas inherent in an organicist view of nature, where past organicist natural concepts are idealized and held in opposition to more profit-oriented views of nature leading to simplistic binary conclusions. In reality, organicism had within it the seeds of its own downfall.

A sense of the animism of nature “created a relationship of immediacy with human beings and hence functioned as a restraining ethic” (Merchant 28). Moreover, nature was believed to be animated by the soul of God and hence sacred. Mining of mother earth was constrained due to this. While some writers perceived mother earth as a generative body that continuously produces metal ores, others perceived mining as a violation upon nature arguing that “the earth had concealed from view that which she did not wish to be disturbed” (Merchant 29-30). The ores of gold and iron were considered as corruptive of human nature since “gold led to avarice, extracting iron was the source of human cruelty” (Merchant 31). Along these lines, it is interesting that in *Utopia* gold is utilized for the meanest of purposes while iron needs to be exported from other countries. The danger inherent in the perception of nature as an earth mother was that as a passive body, she invited the probes and gazes of humans to dissect, structure and restructure her. Paradoxically, while organicism functioned as a restraint it also functioned as an invitation to ravish nature. *Utopia* seems to be a society on the verge of discarding the sacralized restraints, which govern nature/human relationships.

One can argue that *Utopia* with the introduction of literature and the compass and the printing press, which Hythloday has left with them, is a society on the verge of change; as a result, it becomes a threshold chronotope. Bakhtin describes the threshold chronotope as “the breaking point of a life, the moment of crisis, the decision that changes a life” (248). Hythloday describes how he and his crew introduced the Utopians to the art of printing and making paper (More 87). *Utopia*, as an emerging market economy, recently introduced to means of more accurate travel will probably become more involved with trade. Access to the

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printing press opens the market of book acquisition, establishing the conception of the commodification of knowledge because the sale of books will eventually ensue. Utopia can then be conceived as a transitional stage, which places its ecological attitudes also in a transitional state. Utopia can be described as an Iron Age society whose evils are controlled by its strict organicist system; despite its façade of stability inherent to the concept of organicism, Utopia is a society in flux. Merchant refers to how Ovid in *Metamorphoses* describes the iron age as the age during which evil spread through “trickery, slyness, plotting, swindling, and violence, as men dug into the earth’s entrails for iron and gold” (31). It seems that the Utopians only tout the uses of iron, while the “trickery, slyness, plotting, swindling, and violence” are strictly controlled by their harsh system of social conformity.

Hythloday describes the Utopians’s respect for iron in comparison to gold and silver saying, “And then who doth not plainly see how far it is under iron, as without the which men can no better live than without fire and water” (More 70). Gold and silver are despised for the evil effect they have on men and are devalued through their use for “chamber-pots,” “chains, fetters, and gyves wherein they tie their bondmen” (More 71). Yet the continuance of such distaste for riches seems questionable because the geographic isolation of Utopia which facilitates the domination of such ideally non-materialistic values, is challenged by travel that will eventually result in the discovery of the value of gold in other countries. One can trace this in the Utopians’s reaction to the ambassadors of the Anemolians who pompously display their gold on their visit to Utopia. Though most Utopians mock their pride, some people who have “been in other countries for some reasonable cause” did not see the ambassadors’s elaborate dress as shameful (More 73). In these lines, lie the possibility of change and transformation and the redefinition of nature and its exploitation for the sake of the competitive ideals of a capitalist society. Georgic conceptions of nature, prevalent in *Utopia*, will bear the weight of a redefinition of nature.

The Second Book’s depiction of georgic ecology deserves exploration because of its examination of the human/nature relationship of “dwelling” (Garrard 108). Garrard describes the dwelling aspect of georgic ecology saying, “‘Dwelling’ is not a transient state; rather, it implies the long-term imbrication of humans in a landscape of memory, ancestry, and death, of ritual, life and work” (108). One notices in Garrard’s definition how georgic ecology, as an example of nature/human relationships, blurs boundaries of text and context. To dwell on



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land, in a georgic sense, means associating space with memories and conceptions of familial history, as well as actual cultivation of the land. McCutcheon describes *Utopia* as a proto-ecological text because of its georgic ecology, without going into great detail regarding the characteristics of georgic ecology. One can decipher the characteristics of georgic ecology in the Utopians's treatment of their land. The Utopians greatly value their gardens Hythloday describes this saying, "I never saw thing more fruitful nor better trimmed in any place [...] concerning the trimming, husbanding, and furnishing of their gardens" (More 54). Everyone must work as a husbandman at some stage in his or her lives. This is why it seems that everyone is directly involved with the land at some stage in their lives.

Georgic conceptions of the land serve as a heteroglot of contextual and textual references. McCutcheon in her essay depends on Anthony Low for her rather general definition of georgic ecology, as an attempt to restore the natural world by human effort and rebalance the distribution of goods describing Utopia's portrayal of nature as georgic (qtd. in McCutcheon 281). I would like to further study the implications of More's utilization of the georgic as a mode of natural representation in relation to early modern historical context and textual literary expression. As Gary Miles clarifies, the original *Georgics* written by Virgil represent an effort to retrieve and revive pride in the rustic spirit of Rome's past "Efforts to recreate the past or retrieve the spirit of the past were more urgent than efforts to realize a utopia in the future" (3). In this sense, the georgic is essentially a nostalgic representation of nature.

When Virgil wrote his *Georgics*, improving economic conditions were driving the Romans from the physical work of husbandry to live in cities, which lead to the transformation of perceptions of the countryside to become--in the Late Republic and the Augustan Age--an escape from the city to rural luxury. At the same time, the simple life of the farmer celebrated in tradition persisted, so that in his *Georgics* we see Virgil alternating between these diverse views of country life "two polar opposites of Roman experience were embodied and symbolized: on the one hand austerity, discipline, and a tradition of civic responsibility; on the other, luxury, self-indulgence, and the rejection of traditional values and customs" (Miles 62). With the early modern humanist interest in all that is classic, it is not surprising that such attitudes should be revived and rewritten in early modern texts like *Utopia*. As a humanist, More looks back to a classical subsistence economy but portrays it on the verge of change. One cannot hence claim that the georgic structure, which More upholds in Utopia is drawn by him in a completely positive

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light. More himself was astonished at the idea that his contemporary readers conceived the land of Utopia as ideal.

In fact, More's championing of a disciplined, Virgilian, georgic tradition of civic responsibility towards agrarian work is characterized by a nostalgia for a past idealized life, which hides the material conditions related to this past class-oriented feudal society. The idealized georgic past (embodied as the present in Utopia) is really a construction, not a reality. Raymond Williams argues that linking fondness for a rural past with an "ideally shared communal memory" and "the feel of childhood" evokes a remembered time of intimate belonging, an experience he describes as "accepting and enjoying" rather than "consuming and using" people and things (297-298). Conjuring this imagined past, Williams utilizes a pastoral image of our own lost days to launch a critique of capitalist social relations. The problem with this idealization of the georgic work ethic in Utopia, which More himself is aware of, is that it distracts attention from such material realities such as the dependence of Utopians's economy on slavery and their excursions into colonization. Though their agrarian relation to their lands seems to be superficially ideal, it is really an experience of "consuming and using" rather than "accepting and enjoying". As Garrard argues, "The farmer [...] is often an enthusiastic agent of rural capitalism [...] and is, therefore, ill-suited to the stabilizing role suggested by Virgil" (110). Hence, georgic farmers--due to their self-interests--cannot assume a completely objective relationship to the land making it difficult to dispense both good husbandry and Roman social virtues as Virgil aimed. Moreover, such a completely objective relationship to the land is not only impossible but also undesirable because of its dependence upon the dualisms of first-wave ecocriticism; second-wave or social ecocriticism questions imposed dualistic thought that naively speaks about nature and culture as discrete entities; finally, the third wave which this research positions itself in relation to is concerned with a network-based model of interpretation (Kamps and Smith 115-117). This is why an analysis of human/land interactions in relation to agrarian lands and gardens, during a key moment in history when Feudalism was being replaced by Capitalism becomes a chrontope moment charged with the possibilities of a more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the intersectionalities of nature/culture relationships in a text, *Utopia*, deeply concerned with what is natural and the ramifications of such a question. Degrees of human intervention are explored and the garden represents one such example of intervention.

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Though Virgil in his *Georgics* did not deal with gardens, the garden is a site of intriguing interaction between nature and humans in the text *Utopia*. John Hunt relates the possibility of extending the *Georgics* to include gardens, to a pervasive conception in the early modern age that there is a scale of human intervention in nature. He bases his argument on “an explicit sixteenth century Italian reference to gardens as a third nature, which by implication makes an allusion to Cicero’s specific identification of a second nature, the phraseology of which in its turn presupposed a first nature” (Hunt 197). The distinction of each of these natures is made by “the degree of human intervention in the natural world and of the motive for that intervention” (Hunt 197). According to this categorization of the intervention of humans within nature, gardens become the least ecocentric of spaces, completely ruled by human aesthetic notions of beauty, controlled and pruned. It is interesting that this least natural of spaces is the space most cherished in *Utopia*, suggesting the Utopians’s own possibly artificial relationship to nature.

Gardening in comparison to agricultural cultivation precludes more intervention on behalf of humans because of its interest in the aesthetic pruning and structuring of nature. However, despite of this, a link still exists between second and third nature “the force of that hierarchical emergence of a third, garden nature out of the second, agrarian one is that the two, though separated by a greater aesthetic self-consciousness and different patterns of use, were still regarded as being linked” (Hunt 198). In Virgil’s *Georgics* both the agricultural and garden views of country life are necessary, because they represent historical, contextual perceptions prevalent at that time expressing the “increased demands of public life, growing wealth, [...] and the desire to escape the confusion of the Roman civil conflicts” which lead to a celebration of a third nature (Miles 24). This perception of country life in which nature becomes an escape from the cares of everyday life can be traced in More’s *Utopia* in the Utopians’s relationship to gardens. Hythloday describes the gardens of Utopians to be “so finely kept, that [he] never saw thing more fruitful nor better trimmed in any place” (More 54). This would suggest the extensive care administered for establishing the luxurious beauty of these gardens, which makes them similar to the escapist gardens of Virgil’s Augustan Romans. However, personal involvement of every Utopian citizen in the keeping of these gardens distinguishes the nature/human relationship in *Utopia* depicting it more along the terms of the traditional *Georgics*, since “Their study and diligence herein cometh not only of pleasure” (More 54). What

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then is the significance of More's choice of this particular form of georgic, which tenaciously clings to a direct involvement with the land?

More fears the dangers of a capitalist economy that functions through enclosure of arable land to create fields for shepherds. He is also aware of the deficiencies of a class-oriented feudal system. In the First Book of *Utopia*, one is introduced to the problems of an increasingly indirect relationship with the land, which can lead to its gradual commodification. However, in the Second Book a more direct human/land relationship, in which everyone still relies directly on the land, is touted through a regression to a georgic rustic life. Unfortunately, though despite of the seeming stability of the organicist social/natural structure in Utopia, this environment is not as stable as it seems. Regression to constructed georgic idealizations of a past harmonious human/nature relationship are portrayed as unsatisfactory for the future, because they attempt simplistic solutions to complicated problems. Though the farmer's georgic discipline makes his crops fruitful (along the same lines as Utopia's system leads to the order of its people) this constrictive approach to the problem of cultivation and civilization can cause power to become an end in itself. Utopia is on the road to becoming an outgrowing economy, the strictly controlled environment of Utopia is the cause for this. Paradoxically, an over-organized and productive society eventually becomes an outgrowing economy, which surpasses its own limits of production. This is due to the fact that, "The rapidly expanding production of the Industrial Revolution, also enabled by a mistaken sense of the Earth's infinitude, was undergirded by a new conception of nature that arose in the second half of the seventeenth century [...] the replacement of the vitalistic model with a mechanistic model" (Egan 22). Virgil portrays in his *Georgics* the problems related to a strictly disciplined relation to the land and how "this aggressive approach to the problem of civilization-cultivation exposed the danger that the exercise of power and resourcefulness may become an end in itself" (Miles 110). Along with development of land and exertion of power, there should also be restraint. This concept of restraint is what More explores in *Utopia*.

Finally, as a chronotope, *Utopia* is where the historical contextual and literary textual perceptions of cultivation in relation to civilization converge and are developed by Thomas More. In the First Book, More depicts an English society declining culturally and agriculturally but thriving financially due to new opportunistic economical systems. The Second Book does not give us the remedy for this, but rather the extreme opposition, which makes *Utopia* a site for dialogue

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where the “ideas” and “passions” of the Utopians--as well as early modern England society regarding nature--are interrogated. As a chronotope, Utopia becomes a time/space format from which a narrative unfolds. This narrative represents a heteroglot of early modern perceptions of cultivation and civilization. No one perception of cultivation is championed, but rather many are introduced and studied. By also drawing our attention to the shortcomings of an organicist ecology applied in the Second Book of *Utopia*, More invites us to formulate new structures for human/nature relationships in which a symbiotic relationship of cooperation is possibly more successful than a power-oriented one, through a stress on relationality rather than hierarchy.

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اجتياز الطبيعة اليوتوبية: منظور بيئي أولي

لتوماس مور في يوتوبيا

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## مستخلص

يتطلب فهم الفلسفة البيئية لتوماس مور في يوتوبيا تحليلاً نصياً وسياقياً ، هذه العلاقة بين الحقيقة و خيال المتأصلة في النصوص اليوتوبية تجعل أي محاولة نقدية للتركيز فقط على سياقها التاريخي أو تنسيقها النصي غير معبرة بالقدر الكافي، كان مجتمع مور قاءما على نظام اقتصادي إقطاعي في طريقه للتحويل إلى اقتصاد السوق الرأسمالي، و لذا تمثل في يوتوبيا، موقعاً لتحديد وجهات النظر المختلفة فيما يتعلق بالطبيعة و العلاقات الإنسانية. في نصوص عصر النهضة كانت المفاهيم الرعوية والجورجية للطبيعة غير واضحة وفي حالة تداخل مستمر مما أدى الى تشكيل تصوير الطبيعة في يوتوبيا كفضاء خيالي وواقعي و هذا يدعو إلى امكانية تفسيرها على أنها كرونوتوب و لذا يهتم بحثي بالتعامل مع نص يوتوبيا من منظور بيئي . تدور الأسئلة التي تهمني في هذا البحث حول: العلاقة بين الطبيعة النصية والسياقية في هذا النص ، واستكشاف العلاقة بين الطبيعة والبشر من تعبيراتها المبكرة وتتبع بدايات المشكلات البيئية المعاصرة من خلال هذه التعبيرات المبكرة.

**الكلمات الدالة:** النقد البيئي، الكرونوتوب ، الطبيعة.