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*Utopia* Analysis Paper

There were many differences, but also similarities between the works of Cosgrove and More. Thomas More’s *Utopia* seemed like a peaceful land where everything went exactly as planned, compared to how Cosgrove spoke about the New World so realistically in *Mapping* *Arcadia*. This difference made me question as to why More would place Utopia in the New World because the New World was an actual real life place. Arcadian myths voiced by Sanzzaro and Virgil also displayed both differences and similarities from More’s *Utopia*. Differences and similarities were mainly focused on class systems and physical landscape respectfully. Some parallels can be drawn as well between the Utopian nation that More set out in 1516 and the set of ideas that culminated in the American Revolutionary War over 250 years later.

I believe Thomas More had many reasons for placing Utopia in the New World. Europeans viewed the New World as a fresh start where everyone was equal. Anyone could own land no matter who you were born to because wealth was not necessarily real in Utopia. More developed what appeared to be a casteless society in Utopia to portray the fact that the New World was open to anyone who wanted to start a life free of any social bounds that had impacted them in Europe. The people of the real New World also wanted to have a classless system, but in both Utopia and the New World they failed at this because everyone still had slaves (*Utopia*). In Utopia, More even described that the societies would change houses every ten years to keep things fair because something as mathematical as that only seemed possible in the New World. The New World acted as an overall symbol of hope and new beginnings for Europeans, which easily applied to the people of Utopia.

More’s *Utopia* and the Arcadian myths described by Sanzarro and Virgil were different, but also alike in a number of ways. Utopia was very structured and everyone was on equal playing field. For example, More made it seem like a classless place by the fact that no one was higher than anyone else and everyone had equal housing rights. It was a very precise and planned out so that everyone could live peacefully fairly, but that isn’t necessarily free to live in such a calculated manner. Sanzarro describes a deep lovesickness in his work towards the land and explains how to get over it, which is odd because Utopia doesn’t portray anything really negative or anything about love in general. Sanzarro explained the process of overcoming lovesickness in great detail beginning with: “Their adolescent yearning for a release from heartache leads them to s sacred grove 'which never did any dare to enter with any axe or iron,’ in whose craggy depths lies an image of the woodland god Pan” (*Mapping Arcadia*, 75). Virgil was actually similar to Utopia in the fact that Virgil described Arcadia as a place of urban industrialization as Rome rose to become a city (*Mapping Arcadia*, 77). Utopia and Virgil’s Arcadia were both developing places that portrayed freshness and newness for the people that lived there. Utopia and Virgil’s Arcadia had structure and were much more realistic than how Sanzarro described the myths of his Arcadia.

More’s *Utopia* and the supposed Golden Age of Hesiod, Varro, and Virgil were also very comparable in their similarities and their dissimilarities. They were alike in the fact that both the Golden Age of Rome and Utopia seemed to be classless, but in reality both places had slaves. They were different because the Golden Age drove people to fight so strongly for love and death was a common occurrence. Utopia was very peaceful and structured in comparison. Utopia also did not obsess over gold because gold was so abundant; it wasn’t worth anything (*Utopia*). In the Golden Age though, people obsessed over gold and everyone wanted it because it was incredibly valuable. Overall, I believe that the era of the Golden Age and Utopia were more different than alike due to the fictional aspects of harmony and peace in Utopia.

Lastly, I found that I could draw some parallels between the Utopian nation described by More and the set of ideas revolving around the American Revolutionary War. Although these events are over 250 years apart in history, both Utopia and the American Revolutionary War were both concerned with forming a fair and equal government centered on freedom. They were not alike in the fact that Utopia only focused on idealistic ideas, which was why Hythloday did not want to share his intelligence with the government. Hythloday would rather keep everything to himself than risk sharing his thoughts with the government and losing the goodness of Utopia (*Utopia*). The American Revolutionary War was much more realistic in forming their government by having structure and punishments, but still idealistic in a way. It was idealistic because no one had ever before fought or independence even though all the odds were stacked against them, while trying to form a republic at the same time (shmoop). Both Utopia and the ideas of the American Revolutionary War displayed hope in their developing nations.

In conclusion, many parallels, similarities, and differences could be found between Thomas More’s *Utopia*, the Golden Age, thoughts of Virgil and Sanzarro, and even the American Revolutionary War. Utopia was a place of idealistic ideas that affected the government, society, and landscape. The New World was much more realistic when it came to the government, but it was still like Utopia in the fact that the New World was full of possibilities and everyone was on equal standing ground. More’s Utopia also compared to the Arcadian myths of Sanzarro and Virgil. Utopia and these ideas were different because Utopia focused more on equal and calculated, while Arcadia was focused on things like love and death and more urban societies. Lastly, the Utopian nation and the American Revolutionary War compared to each other because both had an idealistic outlook. Utopia was based on the rights of everyone being the same and not having a super powerful government, and that is exactly what the Americans fighting in the Revolutionary War wanted. Overall, Utopia, Arcadia, and the American Revolutionary War all reflected each other and differed from each other in their own unique ways and varying periods of time.

Works Cited

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