Utopian Literature of the Ideal Society
A Study in Al-Farabi's Virtuous City & More's Utopia

الأدب اليوتوبي للمجتمع المثالي

دراسة في المدينة الفاضلة للفارابي ويوتوبيا لتوماس مور

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ملخص البحث:

يعـالج الأدب اليوتـوبي (الخيـالي) في معنـاه الأوسـع المفـاهيم والأفكـار الـتي لا يمكـن تطبيقهـا في الحيـاة الإنسـانية الواقعيـة. هـذا النـوع مـن الأدب بـل ومـن التـفكير أيضـاً، على الـرغم أننا نعتبره خياليـاً وربما وهميـاً؛ إلاّ أنـه يحمل في طيـاته معانٍ سـامية ويهدف إلى غايات إنسانية نبيلة.

فالفـارابي في **المدينـة الفاضـلة** ومـور في **يوتوبيـا** يقـدمان إلى الإنسـانية مـن خـلال هـذين العملـين العظـيمين نموذجـاً للمجتمـع الإنسـاني الفاضـل والمثـالي اللـذان يطمحـان كفيلسـوفين، تحقيقـه في واقع الحياة الإنسانية.

وعلى الـرغم مـن صعوبة تحقيق هـذا الطمـوح – كما يعترفان هما بذلك –   إلاّ انه يظل هـدفاً نبيلا وغايـة سـامية – يمكن تحقيقها إذا كانت الفضيلة والخيرية تقودان خطى البشرية إلى الكمال والسعادة.

تبحث هذه الدراسة هذين العملين كأدب يوتوبي بصرف النظر عن الأفكار الفلسفية العميقة والمقاصد الإنسانية النبيلـة الـتي هـي أسـاس وهـدف هـذين العملين.

ABSTRACT:

Utopian literature in its broadest meaning deals with the idealistic conceptions and themes that are not applicative in real human life.

This type of literature and thinking, though we regard it as imaginative and may be fanciful, yet it embodies great themes, and aiming at noble human goals and purposes.

Al-Farabi in his work the Virtuous City and More in his Utopia present to the humanity through these two magnificent works, under discussion in this research, an example of the virtuous and idealistic community they aspire, as philosophers, to be achieved in real human life, if virtue and goodness guide mankind to its perfection and happiness.

This research discusses these two works as Utopian literature, irrespective to the profound philosophical thoughts they comprise.

Key words: *Humanism, Ideality, Renaissance, Utopian Literature*

Introduction:

The concept of *Utopian Literature* dates back almost as long as literature itself. It is the philosophy of how man can construct a society void of social and political evils. Therefore, it is literature that emanates from man's innate goodness right away to his reason; but to soar highly above rational meditation to man's passion and fantasy.

Plato (427-347 B.C.) the great famous Greek philosopher may be the first European intellect to write Utopian Literature. Plato's **Politeia** or **Republic** that was written almost in 370-360 B.C., "*is an exposition of the principles on which an ideal society, in Plato's view, should be based. The rulers (guardians)are to be philosopher - kings who alone have knowledge of the ideas of Justice and the Good*". [Howatson 1989: 485]. Thus, Plato tried to construct theoretically his idealistic state according to his philosophy of idealism.

In a similar context, Abu Nasr Al-Farabi (870-950)[1], the greatest Islamic Arab philosopher and Plato's successor in the tenth century, has written his treatise **Ara Ahel Almadina Al-Fadilah** in 943 (The Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City). However, one of the main differences between Al-Farabi and Plato "*is the role of the 'perfect individual' or citizen in building the perfect city. For Plato, citizens have a minor role and their perfection is not of priority compared to the guardians or philosophers. While in A-Farabi, that perfection is sought for every citizen of the city or community as they all act as one organism*" [Khoshnaw:2014:6]

During the European Renaissance period, Sir Thomas More (1477- 1535) the English philosopher and Christian humanist wrote his **Utopia** in Latin in1516 to follow the same context of Plato's **Republic**. This work has been translated into English in1551. More's **Utopia** tackles the idea of the 'ideal society' whose magistrates and Prince are men of intellect and virtues. However, More's **Utopia** is different from the precedent works of Plato and Al-Farabi in its style of writing; where it takes the prose-fiction style. Concerning this manner of fiction writing, Walter R. Davis in his **Thomas More's Utopia 'As Fiction'** argues that "*Thomas More's Utopia is his only fully developed work of fiction, and as such has attracted both literary scholars and the common reader by the particular feeling of liberation and*

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[1] All dates cited in this research are documented according to the Gregorian calendar, only not to be confused by the reader with Hegira calendar

free speculation that fiction characteristically affords its reader. Yet all through his career More was interested in the fictional reshaping of events into intelligible pattern" (p: 249).

When Plato wrote his **Republic** in the fourth century B. C., Athen's state and society were experiencing social and political abuses due to the ill-treatment of democracy. Above all those abuses, according to Plato, was Socrates trial and execution in 399 B. C. that "*had indelible impact on Plato's thought. It was the drama of debased democracy in action that would later give impetus to his conception of the ideal state in The Republic, as Plato perceived that the material greed of politicians was one of the worst evils of political life, and so economic power must be divorced from political power. Further the experience filled Plato with a hatred of the mob and a resolve that democracy must be replaced with a government by the wisest and the best*" (Plato, 2000: VI)

In 943, Abu Nasr Al-Farabi wrote his **Virtuous City** in a similar manner of his predecessor Plato. As an intellect and philosopher, Al-Farabi was also aware of the disintegration of Abbasyd State which was the centre of the Islamic world. His responsibility, then, was to help, in his own way as a thinker, in constructing a perfect and virtuous human community. He wrote his **Virtuous City** as an example for idealistic society and state "*Philosophers, watching those events, developed the political constructs, that would help create consistency and order in the state. Ideas, proposed by Al-Farabi, were intended to transform society, to instill the principles, norms and rules, and compliance which will stabilize the political situation, and would subsequently bring about the centralization of the state power and wellbeing of the population*" (Kurmangaliyeva and Azerbayv, 2016: 88).

Sir Thomas More, likewise, wrote his **Utopia** in 1516 as a protest against socio-political evils in European countries, and particularly in England. Private property and the regime of landlordism lead to avarice and wars within the one state and among European states. Injustice, indignity and pride lead to tyranny and totalitarianism "*More was opposed to tyranny and regarded it as the chief obstacle to reconstitution or rehabilitation of society*" (Caudle,: 163) and his **Utopia** is a radical alternative to such social and political plagues that gnaws the social construction.

Other works to be included under the literary term of *Utopian Literature*: **The Book of the City of Ladies** (1404) by Christine de Pizan, **La Cita de Sole** (The City of the Sun) (1602) by Tommaso Campanella and **The New**

Atlantis (1626) by Francis Bacon. There are many other works of Utopian Literature that have been written since the time of Bacon up to the present time□.

Utopian Literature aims at establishing a society devoid of man's evils; a society of peace, tolerance, justices, liberty, justice and happiness. Al-Farabi **Virtuous City** and More's **Utopia** consist of deep philosophical thoughts with noble goals of humanity; yet they depend on tremendous imagination and great fantasy. It is a visionary system of social perfection. Both authors confess that such ideal society or state as it is envisioned in their books never to be applicable perfectly. However, they remain noble attempts for humanity to aspire for perfect happy community.

The main theme that connects *Utopian Literature* with Humanism is that both are concerned with human virtues of goodness, justice and happiness. Renaissance humanism in England emerged in the 16th century, at the time of the rediscovering of *Classical Literature* of the Greek and Roman. Humanism means "*the development of human virtues, in all its forms, to its fullest extent. [.....] The purview of Renaissance humanism included not only the education of the young but also the guidance of adults (including rulers) via philosophical poetry and strategic rhetoric. It included not only realistic social criticism but also utopian hypotheses, not only painstaking reassessment of history but also bold reshaping of the future.*" [Encyclopedia Britannica (Electronic version):2013]

Renaissance humanism was based on Classical Literature which was the chief concern of Oxford University scholars including the leading figures William Grocyn (1446-1519), Thomas Linacre (1460-1524), and John Colet (1466-1519).

In addition to Erasmus (1466-1536) the most distinguished humanist in Europe, Sir Thomas More was greatly influenced by the Oxford humanist scholars to constitute what was called English humanism that "*is based exclusively on human nature and aimed exclusively at human happiness*" [Ibid]. More's **Utopia** (1516) and Sir Thomas Elyot's (1499-1546) **The**

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[2] In the late nineteenth century the term *'Dystopian'* was first used by J.S Mill (1806 – 1873), the British philosopher, to suggest an imagined state which was not desirable; opposite to the Utopian state. Aldous Huxley's **Brave New World** (1932), and George Orwell's **Nineteen Eighty-Four** (1949) could be classified as Dystopian literature.

Book Named Governor (1531) are considered typical of English humanism.

About six centuries earlier to the European Renaissance, the Islamic Arab State witnessed the emergence of great intellectual and cultural revival. Progress in different fields of knowledge was at its uppermost. The movement of translation from different cultures, especially of Greek culture was intensely supported by AL-Ma'amoon (786-833), the Seventh Abbasyed Caliph. He established Dar Al-Hikma (House of Wisdom) as the chief official authority of translation in Baghdad. This movement was a fundamental factor in the evolution of Islamic Arab culture and civilization. The masterpieces of Greek philosophy and natural sciences were the essential target of translation. Haneen Ibn Ishak (808-873) was appointed as the Head of the Department of Translation. He translated many Greek Classics into Syriac and Arabic languages, especially that of Plato and Aristotle. Ishak Ibn Haneen (died in 911) followed his father's steps in translating Greek Classics on different fields of knowledge. There was also the philosopher and the physician Abu Bisher Matta Ibn Yunus (died in 940) the professor of Al-Farabi and the first scholar who translated Aristotele's **Poetics**. Abu Zakaria Yahya Ibn Adi (893-974), Al-Farabi's student, was also among those scholars who translated some Greek books into Arabic and wrote other books in philosophy, literature and theology. Such cultural and intellectual huge revival founded what may be called the intellectual movement of Humanism in the Islamic Arab culture. In this intellectual and cultural environment lived Abu Nasr A-Farabi where he admired and absorbed the classical Greek philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. He learned philosophy under the guidance of great philosophers and scholars of his time including Abu Bisher Matta Ibn Yunus and Yuhanna Ibn Haylan.

Accordingly, there are similarities between the cultural and intellectual environment of the age of Al-Farabi in the tenth century and that of More in the sixteenth century. Both have the same sense of classical thought of Platonism and that of humanism. Their masterpieces: The **Virtuous City** and **Utopia** are a clear- cut example of their philosophical utopian literature and that of humanism.

Humanism, thus, is not related to one specific land or one specific age; but to all countries and all ages. According to the definition of Encyclopedia Britannica "*accepting the notion that Renaissance humanism was simply a return to the classics, some historians and philologists have reasoned that*

Classical revivals occurring anywhere in history should be called humanistic..."

Consequently, Al-Farabi and More are two humanists related to different nations and ages.

The Objective of the Research:

This paper attempts at discussing Al-Farabi's **Virtuous City** and More's **Utopia** as *Utopian Literature* irrespective of their profound philosophical ideas and deep conceptions. These two works stand as typical examples of *Utopian Literature* according to the main characteristics and traits of utopianism they embody.

The Significance of the Research:

The significance of this paper resides in the need of popularizing the concept of the idealistic society and state in an age of corruption and virtuelessness. It also resides in the fact that there is no one, to the best of my knowledge, has written a research in English or even in Arabic to discuss these two works as an integral research on *Utopian Literature*. Besides, our Arab and Muslim students and researchers will find a fruitful subject matter to enrich their human intellect and literature; and to give them free scope for further studies.

THE IDEAL SOCIETY IN AL-FARABI VIRTUOUS CITY

Al-Farabi The Second Teacher

Before starting to study the Utopian Literature in Al-Farabi's Virtuous City, it is better to survey briefly the author's intellectual career as a leading figure of Islamic Arab philosophy in the tenth century.

Abu Nasr Mohammed Ibn Mohammed Al-Farabi was born in Farab, a district in Kazakhastan. He is called "*Al-Moa'alem Althani*" (the Second Teacher) probably because he is second to Aristotle "*Al-Moa'alem Al-Awal*" (the First Teacher) in the field of philosophy.

Dr. Wafi in his book **The Virtuous City by Al-Farabi** asserts this historical fact that Al-Farabi's great status in philosophy, who was the best scholar of his time to understand and interpret Aristotle's theories "*was considered as the great philosopher after him, and the greatest publisher and interpreter of his opinions. Because Aristotle had been celebrated as the "First Teacher", thus his successor in the world of philosophy and the*

publisher of his opinions was called the "Second Teacher□." (Wafi, No date cited:5)

Al-Farabi started his education in his birthplace, Farab, where he studies mathematics, natural sciences, arts and philosophy. He also studied Persian, Greek and Arabic language.

He left Farab when he was about fifty years old heading for Bagdad, the centre of education, culture and knowledge at that time, seeking for more advanced studies. He studied Arabic under the supervision of Abu-Bakar Mohammed Ibn Assarraj (died in 929) the famous grammarian of his time. He had his advanced learning in philology, logic and other fields of knowledge under the guidance of great scholars including the prominent Abu Bisher Matta Ibn Yunus and Yuhanna Ibn Haylan.

Al-Farabi lived an ascetic life, devoting himself to meditation. He excelled in philosophy especially that of Plato's and Aristotle's theories. He was the best to comprehend and interpret them "*He is considered as the actual founder of philosophical studies in the world; and the first initiator of what we call today 'the Islamic philosophy.' He had established its construction and laid the foundation of all its branches. Scarcely we find an idea on those Islamic philosophers, who came after him unless it has its origin with him. He is the most Islamic philosophers acquaintance with the history of philosophy and the theories of the philosophers. He speaks in his works as an expert in Greek schools and to bring into view the difference between them and endeavor to conciliate between plato and Aristotle.*" (Wafi: 11)

Al-Farabi occupied a high-ranking status in history of Islamic Arab civilization. It was said that Al-Baihaki in his **History of the Sages of Islam** assumes that "*the sages are four: two in the pre-Islamic period (Aristotle and Hippocrates; and two during the Islamic period (Abu Naser (Al-Farabi) and Abu Ali 'Avicenna')"* (cited in: Sa'ad: 1981, p: 21). According to Ibn Abi Ausaibia, Al-Farabi was "*a perfect philosopher, virtuous Imam (leader), mastered the philosophical studies, skilled in mathematics; has a chaste soul, has a strange brilliance, avoiding secular life, satisfied in his living, following the life of conduct of his precedent philosophers*" (Ibid: 21)

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[3] All quotations taken from Arabic references are of the researcher's translation.

Al-Farabi's reputation in socio-political matters is not less than his fame in philosophy, in view of the fact that socio-political issues have been prominent topics in philosophy since the time the ancient Greek philosophers: Socrates, Plato and Aristotle up to our present time.

Al-Farabi has written more than a hundred books; forty of them have survived. Thirty two are written in their original language (Arabic), six are translated into Hebrew and two into Latin language. Among the most famous and the outstanding books are: **Ara'a Ahel Al-Madina Al-Fadila** (The Opinions of the Inhabitants of the Virtuous City), **Kitab Assiasatel Madania** (The Book of Civil Politics), **Kitab Al-Jama'a Bain Al-Hakeemain: Plato and Aristotle** (The Book of Connection Between the Two Sages: Plato and Aristotle). However, the **Virtuous City** and The **Civil Politics** are considered to have similar content in common.

Al-Farabi's status as a scholar of philosophy and his contribution to the philosophical studies in the middle ages was not restricted to the Islamic Arab intellect and culture; but overstepped the boundaries to reach the medieval Europe. Al-Farabi's book **The Virtuous City**, in particular, was of a remarkable contribution to Utopian Literature of the time as well as to the thought of humanism. "*Throughout the middle ages, the works of Al-Farabi enjoyed great popularity in Western Europe and undoubtedly contributed to the development of Renaissance humanism*" (Tanabayeva etal: 2015, p: 129)

Al-Farabi left behind him numerous quantity of works. Most of his books are translated in the thirteenth century into Latin and other different European languages. That incited the German Orientalist Mortiz Steinshneider to single out a review in 278 pages, published for the first time in 1869. The German Orientalist Dr. Frederick Detritchi of Berlin University published **The Virtuous City** for the first time in 1895.

THE VIRTUOUS CITY: PHILOSOPHY AND UTOPIAN LITERATURE

The analysis of **The Virtuous City** depends mainly on two Arabic texts; the first was edited by Dr. Ali Abdel Wahid Wafi, a professor of Sociology, without publishing date; the second was edited by Dr. Alber Nasri Nader, a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Lebanon. The book was edited in 1968.

The **Virtuous City** as a scientific treatise is divided into two main parts. In the first part Al-Farabi summarizes his philosophical concepts and principles as the intellectual foundations of his *'virtuous city'*. It includes twenty five items; starting with the *'First Existent'* or the *'First Cause'* and ending with the *'Revelation and Vision of the Angel'*. The second main part of the treatise includes twelve items starting with *'Man's Need to Social Life and Cooperation'* to end with the *'Ignorant Cities'* that opposes the *'Virtuous City'*. In this way the philosophical part of the book constitutes the intellectual construction of the 'Virtuous City', while the second part constitutes the socio-political construction of the *'Virtuous City'*. Since the intention of this paper focuses more on the utopian elements in the book as an ideal envision of the ideal society; therefore, the second part of the book is more concerned.

THE INTELLECTUAL CONSTRUCTION OF
THE VIRTUOUS CITY

Al-Farabi in the first part of his book deals with the philosophical concepts in which he believes to be the opinions of the inhabitants of the virtuous city. They are in fact from his own philosophical opinions in which he himself believes. They constitute the essential intellectual principles and foundations of his utopian trend.

The starting point in Al-Farabi's metaphysical philosophy is the Unique *One God*; because it is the fixed principle that he adopted to construct the whole intellectual construction. Farook Sa'ad in his book **With Al-Farabi and the Virtuous Cities** (1981) summarises some considerations of scholars who think that Al-Farabi theological analysis forms the bases of all theological studies in Islamic Arab Philosophy. Those scholars believe that Al-Farabi established his thesis about God in two ways: one is logical and the other is theological. The latter is the one he discussed thoroughly in **The Virtuous City**. They assert that "*Al-Farabi's opinions of the 'First Existent' agree completely with the principles of Islam*" (cited in Sa'ad, 1981: 46 – 48). Dr. Abdel Wahid Wafi also suggests that Al-Farabi opinions about the First Existent that is God "*agree completely with the principles of Islam, and what it settles about the Sublime Essence and its attributes. It indicates Al-Farabi's strong faith and integrity of his faith; its purity, its voidness of aberration and deviation.*" (Wafi: 23). However, Dr. Wafi also argues that Al-Farabi's statement about the secondary existents and their ranks and

natures, and their relation to the *'First Existent'* are against religious faith. "*Even you think that the one who says these opinions is another person, different from the one who stated the first nine items in this part (of the book) concerning Almighty God and His completeness*" (Ibid: 24) Dr. Wafi attributes this contradiction and inconsistence to the influence of the Greek philosophy especially of the □**Neo-Platonism** that believes in "*the opinion that there are minds and souls emanate from God to oversee the existence.*" (Ibid: 24) This theory of emanation also has its origin from the oriented religious schools of Sufism (mysticism). It believes that direct knowledge of God or of the spiritual truth may be achieved through meditation or interior illumination in a way different from tangible realization or logical thinking. Therefore, "*the theory of emanation is an attempt of reconciliation between religious precept that God is the creator of the world on one hand, and on the other it adds that the world started to emanate from God since. He was there, that is to say from eternity.*" (Sa'ad, 1982: 49). Dr. Nader assumes that Al-Farabi found in emanation "*a logical solution for all questions that are raised by revelation; that the intellect meditates on, especially the quest of the origin of the world, the nature of God; the origin of the soul of human being and its destiny, prophecy and the foundations that the virtuous city is constructed on*" (Nader, 1968: 17). Nonetheless, Dr. Nader concludes that these solutions which emanationism attempts to find "*do not agree with the heavenly law*" (Ibid: 22). On the contrary professor Rojeh Arualdize in his research entitled **'Metaphysics and Politics in Al—Farabi Thinking'**, published in Arabic Autumn 1975, tried to refute this statement saying "*It is not permitted to accuse Al-Farabi putting metaphysics above revelation, first of all it does not accord fully with the essence of Qura'an; for God teaches people insistencely that He revealed the book guidance for people, with everything they need to know, that is presented (exposed) plainly and explicit. The divine revelation is not merely the metaphysical cosmology. It is a law. It is not a mere guessing but tangible proof.*" (cited in Sa'ad, 1982: 56-57). Dr. Nader also regards Al-Farabi's **The Virtuous City** though small in size yet it is "*a collection of the important philosophical, political, social and moral issues. Avicenna, who became his pupil through studying his works, carried out afterwards an enlarged and complete reviews for all*

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[4] "*Neo-Platonism is dominant philosophy of the ancient world from the times of Plotinus (205 – 270)...it extended strong influence on medieval Renaissance thought........Neo-Platonism was not only philosophy, it also met a religious need by showing how the individual soul might reach God.*" (Hawatson, 1981: 381).

these issues. He collected them in an expanded and enormous book called **Al-Shifa** *(Remedy) that had been summarised latter in his book* **Al-Najat** *(Salvation)*" (Nader, 1968: 18).

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONSTRUCTION OF
THE VIRTUOUS CITY

The philosophical concepts in the first part of the book are considered as the intellectual bases and principles on which Al-Farabi intends to construct his ideal society or state 'the virtuous city'.

Al-Farabi's philosophy of the idealistic society is based on the hypothesis that people are unable to attain ultimate perfection and true happiness unless they live in one unified systematic social community. Man's nature is to live a social life in one social community; since each member or individual of the society is in need of the other. Therefore, a member of the society is compelled to cooperate with the other to attain perfection and happiness. Al-Farabi in his book says "*And everyone of the people is naturally disposed to be in need in his subsistence, and to reach his true perfections to many things that he is unable to carry out them all by himself alone. He needs people whom each one carries out something of his needs.*" (Nader, 1968: 117). Al-Farabi believes that noble goals of human activities cannot be achieved but through noble means and virtuous men. The inhabitants of the virtuous city are the virtuous people who believe in goodness and justice; and through these means true happiness is achieved. "*Al-Farabi's main concept of socio-political discourse is happiness. It is the purpose of human existence and it is the state responsibility to create conditions for achieving it. His works show how important the subject of happiness, how important it is to the aspirations of man's value and idea; way of perfection is the way to achieving happiness*" (Kurmangaliyeva and Azerbayv, 2016: 92). Rational knowledge forms an essence of Al-Farabi's philosophy that guides the residents of the virtuous city to absolute perfection and true happiness. The virtuous citizen is the one who offers all his mental and physical cooperative activities for the benefit of all citizens at large. In this process, man finds his true perfection and happiness. However, "*happiness itself is unattainable unless there is cooperation, especially intellectual cooperation.*" (Wafi:37). In his treatise, Al-Farabi resembles human community to the human body. He believes that the virtuous city is similar in its construction to a physically fitted human body. The heart is the master organ in human body that represents the *Head Member* (Al-Odo Al-Ra'ees) in the virtuous city. The

other secondary organs of the body function as the inhabitants of the virtuous city. Each secondary organ functions to help the body to live healthy and each inhabitant has his function to help the first rank member in order to make their city perfect and the whole inhabitants live in happiness.

Al-Farabi divides the virtuous community into three types: great, medium and small. The great virtuous community is the community that is constituted of cooperative virtuous nations under one universal state. The medium virtuous community is the one that includes virtuous cities to constitute one virtuous unified national state. The small virtuous community is the one that is constituted of virtuous inhabitants of a city to make one virtuous city-state. Al-Farabi suggests that "*the city that intends together and cooperate for the things that by them happiness may be obtained, is actually the virtuous city. The gathering through which cooperation is intended to obtain happiness is the virtuous gathering. The nation that all its cities cooperate to obtain happiness is the virtuous nation. In that manner the virtuous world is obtained if the nations cooperate to achieve happiness.*" (Nader, 1968: 118). While speaking about the whole complete and the whole perfect human communities, Al-Farabi comes to speak about the incomplete or imperfect human communities. They are the communities that are unable to live economically or socially independent; such as the village, the street and the family. They need to live in a bigger community that is the city community through which they achieve perfection and happiness. That is what Al-Farabi states "*The incomplete is the gathering of the inhabitants of the village, and the gathering of the inhabitants of the district, then the gathering of the street, then the gathering in a house. The district and the village are both related to the city……. The best goodness and the ultimate completeness is not attained but firstly by the city not by the one which is less than it...*" (Nader, 1968: 117 – 118).

Though he speaks about the three types of the perfect or virtuous communities; the world, the nation and the city; Al-Farabi seems to be more realist to put emphasis on the community of the city. The virtuous city is more applicable to be attained than the other two. Al-Farabi realised the difficulty of constituting one unified universal state, or even one unified national state; so he prefers the city-state as a realistic and national alternative. Dr. Wafi attributes Al-Farabi's attitude to ignore the first and the second alternatives because he believes "*that the gathering of the whole world in the way he mentioned is an idealistic gathering and impossible to be attained. That the city is the initial cell for the perfect societies. In its righteousness these societies come to the righteousness, and in its*

corruption these societies are corrupted." (Wafi: 39). To speak about the virtuous city: its Head Member and its virtuous inhabitants, Al-Farabi is keen enough to speak about the opposed cities to the virtuous one. It is a kind of comparison between the virtuous and the vicious, between the whole perfect and the imperfect and between the ones who are aware of the spiritual happiness and those who are immersed in materialistic happiness.

One of these opposed cities is the *'ignorant city'* whose inhabitants have misused the right path to ultimate perfection. They do not recognize what is the meaning of true happiness. Even if they are rightly guided to happiness, they do not have the will or the desire to comprehend or believe it. The rulers as well as the residents of the ignorant city do not have the intention to seek the spiritual happiness, which is achieved through the virtues of goodness and justice. Their main concern is in the worldly happiness of pleasure, physical health and wealth. (Nader, 1968: 131). The main purpose of human cooperation, according to Al-Farabi's thought, is to achieve absolute perfection and true happiness (i.e. spiritual happiness). This could be achieved through the virtuous means of goodness and justice, as well as by the means of rational knowledge. Nader states that "*Avicenna agrees with Al-Farabi that happiness occurs by meditating the eternal actualities in the active mind. The unhappiness of the ignorant souls occurs in their feeling that they are far away from these actualities and their origin. Therefore, there is no substantial difference between Avicenna's Sufism (mysticism) and that of Al-Farabi*" (Nader, 1968: 21).

Al-Farabi calls him the Head Member (Al-O'do Al-Ra'ees) of the virtuous city the one who possesses, what he calls the natural qualities:

- Perfect limbs and organs to use them perfectly and skillfully.

- Naturally good at understanding and perceiving everything that is said to him, keeping it in his mind according to what the speaker intends and what the thing demands.

- Good at retaining what he understands, what he sees, what he hears and what he apprehends in general.

- Sagacious, shrewd and intellectual when he sees the slighted indication of a thing, he has to grasp it in the way indicated.

- Eloquent and has a tongue that enables him to express himself fluently.

- Fond of learning and acquiring knowledge without any feeling of discomfort.

- Naturally not greedy either for food, drink or sexual intercourse; hating gambling and worldly pleasures.

- Naturally fond of truth and men of truth, hating falsehood and liars.

- Proud of spirit, fond of dignity and honour; his soul being naturally above everything that is disgraceful. His soul has to soar above to the most supreme.

- Dirham and dinar and other vanities of the worldly life are of less account in his view.

- Naturally fond of justice and men of justice; hating oppression, tyranny and injustice, and those who practice them. Fair to himself and to others, urging people to act justly, showing pity to those who are oppressed by injustice.

- Strong in his determination in what he thinks ought to be done; brave, bold and fearless to carry it out (see Nader, 1968: 127 – 129).

Al-Farabi then speaks about other six acquired qualities, affirming 'wisdom' as the essential of them all. If it is lost the whole city will come to perdition. "*When it comes to an agreement that wisdom is not a part of the headship and the other prerequisites are there, the virtuous city remais without a king, and the head of this city is not a king and the city is exposed to perdition. If it is not agreed that there is a sage to him wisdom is to be added, the city will come to perdition in a matter of time.*" (Nader, 1968: 130)

However, Al-Farabi confesses that such qualities "*to be found all in one man is something difficult*" (Ibid: 129).

Acmad T. Macarimbang comments on this saying that "*It maybe assumed, for Al-Farabi, the philosopher – king as the best ruler is only in his mind, in his imagination, or better to say, the ideal ruler that the kings and dynasties should possess.*" (2013: 11)

Many scholars and critics note the clear-cut influence of the Greek philosopher Plato and his **Republic** on Al-Farabi construction of his utopian virtuous city, and the idealistic qualities of the Head Member of the virtuous city. Nevertheless, most of those scholars and critics acknowledge that Al-Farabi adds divine suggestions to the character of the Head Member that shows plainly his religious faith as a Muslim. Dr. Wafi in his book: **The Virtuous City by Al-Farabi** states that "*it is noteworthy that the spiritual prerequisite that Al-Farabi was the only one to indicate it had stood alone*

concerning the head of the virtuous city, with the exclusion of the Greek philosophers, whom he had ladled his philosophy from their wellspring, such prerequisite had never been mentioned in Plato's Republic, on which Al-Farabi depended entirely. It seems that he drew this prerequisite from what he had understood from the essence of Islam and its practice during the front period of Islam when the Messenger (Peace Be Upon Him) was the ruler. Followed by his successors, the orthodox caliphs (Al-Kulafa Al-Rashdoon), whose souls reached the lofty levels of purity and perfection" (Wafi: 67). In the same context, Maryam G. Jahormi asserts the divine feature of the Head Member of the virtuous city that Al-Farabi attributed to him commenting that "*Farabi believes that the governor has theoretical and natural talent, also enjoys strong will; such a governor is likely to receive divine grace.*" (2015: 74)

It is well-known that Al-Farabi's **The Virtuous City** is one of the early works of Utopian literature. It might be second to the Plato's **Republic**. It is also noteworthy that Al-Farabi, who was greatly influenced by Plato's **Republic**, fashioned his **Virtuous City** mostly similar in a way or another by the **Republic**. Al-Farabi is the first Muslim philosopher who attempted, since the tenth century, to harmonize Greek philosophy with Islamic tradition. The great Muslim scholars and philosophers who succeeded Al-Farabi, Avcenna and Averroes (Ibn Rushid) have acknowledged Al-Farabi's eminent contribution not only to the Islamic Arab philosophy but to the world philosophy in general.

As an intellect, scholar and philosopher, Al-Farabi had to think deeply in a society void of social and political evils and abuses. He had to think of a perfect society, a matter which occupied the minds of the ancient philosophers, the contemporary and future philosophers. One of the main studies of philosophy throughout the whole ages is to help mankind to keep up with the human values and virtues; seeking for perfection and happiness.

Plato wrote his Republic aiming at fashioning a better society and state than his Athenian society and the state of his time. Al-Farabi traced the footsteps of his predecessor to shape his virtuous city. However, both of them wrote in a manner depending on the desirous and aspired spirit. They thought to find answers and solutions for man's perfection and happiness; but they soar too high with their aspiration and imagination to draw perfect societies difficult to be attained. Though they believe in rationality; yet their humanitarian spirit leads them to fly above man's attainable goals. This is what critics classify as *Utopian Literature*; it is the literature that aims at

planning ideal (sometimes fanciful) communities never to be applicable in reality.

In such manner, Al-Farabi, about ten centuries earlier, envisioned his virtuous city. It is a noble thought for a noble purpose, aiming at achieving human perfection and happiness. As it is explained in the few previous pages, Al-Farabi's vision for the virtuous Head Member is to have the natural qualities that enable him to instruct and to guide the inhabitants of the virtuous city to attain absolute perfection and true happiness. A leader whose natural as well as acquired qualities bring him to be closer to God and consequently to wisdom. Such a leader (Imam) is qualified to instruct and guide his people according to the teachings of the *'First Cause'* (God). To find a virtuous Head Member with such qualification *"is something difficult"* as Al-Farabi himself acknowledges. It becomes evident that "*Morality in the philosophy of Al-Farabi endowed with deep ontological meaning, given by the First Cause, because the essence of human relations and the criterion of its creative activities, and, therefore, it is updated as a universal phenomenon.*" (Kurmangaliyeva and Azerbayv, 2016:88)

Al-Farabi here fashions his idealistic utopian society that is constructed through human virtues of goodness and justice, to come to its happiness in this world and the world to come.

Different from the ancient Greek concept of social class system in a society; Al-Farabi's thought of society springs from the fact that all members are equal; and every one of the virtuous city, regardless his social status, is able to contribute willingly and hopefully to the perfection and happiness of his virtuous city according to his abilities, and motivated by the virtues of goodness and justice "*In contrast to ancient Greek philosophers, he did not limit the concept of 'man' by ethnic framework. Asserting the idea of the possibility of familiarizing people knowledge, irrespective of their natural, social, religious affiliation, Al-Farabi had risen a proclamation of the ideals of universal humanism.*" (Tanabayeva etal, 2015: 129). According to Tanabayeva and the other collaborators, Al-Farabi's humanism "*has intellectual, educational nature. In his view on man, he comes from recognition of certain common to mankind natural properties, they perceived in a reasonable activity*" (Ibid: 128 – 129).

Fraternity and equality as essential principles in Islam are evident in Al-Farabi's thinking. It is clear that the inhabitants of the virtuous city are all equal because they have realized the meaning of goodness and justice. They act cooperatively motivated by their purity and righteousness; and each

according to his /her abilities and capabilities to attain the ultimate perfection and true happiness. Mahmood Khshaw in his paper entitled **Al-Farabi Conversion of Plato's Republic** argues that "*A central difference between Al-Farabi and Plato is the role of the 'perfect individuals' or citizens in building the perfect city. For Plato, citizens have a minor role and their perfection is not of priority compared to the guardians or philosophers. While in Al-Farabi, that perfection is sought from every citizen of the city or community as they all act as one organism.*" (2014: 6)

In his division of the virtuous community into three types: the great (world), the medium(nation) and the small (city), Al-Farabi is the first to extend his sight to the whole world with all its races and its nations. No one from the ancient Greek philosophers before him had considered it in their treatises. Most of their treatises concentrated entirely on the city-state and rarely on a nation; but never to the whole human world. Dr. Wafi argues on this historical fact stating that "*It is observed that the first community Al-Farabi mentioned and regarded it the most perfect of all other perfect communities, no one before him had mentioned it; rather it had been occurred to the minds of Greek philosophers whom he had ladled from their philosophy and their theories as Plato and Aristotle. It might be due to his influence by the teachings of his religion; since Islam aims at overmastering the whole world under the government of Caliph. As for the Greek philosophers, they did not have that thought. The greatest they thought of and they realized was the city or the republic*" (Wafi: 39).

Concerning Al-Farabi's vision of his virtuous city as Utopian Literature of unrealistic thought, Dr. Jameel Saleeba in his book **From Plato to Avicenna**, (cited in Sa'ad 1982, 66), argues that Al-Farabi in his **The Virtuous City** draws a fanciful construction of a city rather than a realistic one. His thinking "*springs from the fact of his faithful vision and his great faith in man's nature and innate character. His city is the city of the upright people who are ruled by philosophers or vowed prophets consecrated to God. This city in this case was a fanciful city, far away from real life and experience. Al-Farabi followed Plato's model in his description of the head of the virtuous city and in other most topics, but he exaggerates in the experience more than him, that makes his virtuous city far away from reality; closer to heaven than to earth.*". In the same context, Acmed T. Macarimbarg finds the utopian world of **The Virtuous City** similar in a way to the *kingdom of God*, and not to the world of mankind. Something never to be achieved in human world. The ultimate perfection and true happiness never to be obtained in this world, but in the hereafter. He

suggests that Al-Farabi's "*Virtuous city might be the kingdom of God, and genuine happiness is attainable only with God's rule. This makes happiness an unrealistic aim for human beings. Therefore, happiness for a man will remain a desire and not an absolute truth; because if the ruler cannot be like the First Cause and if the philosopher-king never exists in the real world, then happiness is not attainable by man.*" (2013: 19-20)

Out of this discussion, one comes to conclusion that Al-Farabi in his **Virtuous City** is influenced by Plato's Republic; however this work has its own character. Al-Farabi himself has his own distinctive and distinguished philosophy; his **Virtuous City**, then, has its own different style and manner in both thought and writing. Al-Farabi's philosophy is not a mere of Greek philosophy; he studied it and he contributed to human philosophy in general. His great amount of books and treatises show how he is a distinguished philosopher. Al-Farabi in all his works shows clear-cut influence of Islamic thought and religious teachings. His philosophy might be influenced by Neo-Platonism, yet the influence of Islamic Sufism is shown clear in this respect.

The Virtuous City, in addition to the metaphysical philosophy that it presents in the first part, expresses human desire and aspiration to attain perfection and happiness in man's life. Its idealistic spirit surpasses man's abilities. It could be read as a distinctive wonderful piece of utopian literature. It remains a philosophical and educational means of aspiration for better human life. It remains a moral motive for human being to look forward towards ultimate perfection and true happiness.

THE IDEAL SOCIETY IN MORE'S UTOPIA

More: The Intellect and the Saint

Here again we have to go rapidly to survey Sir Thomas More's intellectual career as a leading figure in sixteenth century England, More is considered as the most Christian humanist; and the most controversial Christian intellect of his time. According to the Catholics, he was a *'martyr'* but to the extreme Protestants he was a *'traitor'* and an enemy to the Gosphel. However, his life as a man of intellect, religion, a man of letters and a man of state; puts him in the forefront of the outstanding intellects and the cultural icon of his age. He took a prominent part in the development of the Renaissance Humanism and "started a series of slow changes in the intellectual reorientation of European culture" (Walter R. Davis, 1980: 250).

He was educated at St. Antony's School in London, then he left to Oxford University in 1492 to remain there for two years. It was a period when the *'New Learning'* Movement started in England; the movement that called for the rebirth of the Greek classics and the masterpieces of Latin Literature. Similar, in a way, to Al-Farabi who was fortunate to meet outstanding scholars of Greek classics in Iraq, More was also fortunate to meet at Oxford University professors of Greek classics including Wlliam Grocyn (1446 – 1519) and Thomas Lincare (1460 – 1524) who taught him Greek language and literature. In addition to those two professors, More formed intimate friendship with the humanist and professor of Greek language John Colet (1467 – 1519). Though he was younger than those professors, More formed a lasting friendship with them because of his great interest in Greek classics and in the principles of Humanism.

As a humanist, More aspired to meet Erasmus (1466 – 1536) the great humanist and the famous scholar, in Northern and Western Europe, in his first visit to England in 1499. Their friendship consolidated the principles of Humanism. During Erasmus second visit to England, they both collaborated to publish in Latin some works of the Greek writer Lucian (115 – 180) to be his first published work. However, More's first work was **Epigramata** written in Latin and translated into English in 1518 as **Epigrams**.

More was greatly interested in the works of the Italian writer Pico della Mirandola (1463 – 1494), one of the famous writers of the Renaissance and Reformation. More has written Mirandola's biography in English in a book entitled *The Life of John Picus Erle of Myrandula* (1510).

He wrote many books and treatises in Latin and in English including: **Four Last Things** (1522), **Meditations** (1534) and **Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation** (1535). Nevertheless More's **Epigrams**, **Richard III** and **Utopia** probably have similar topics in common of criticizing terrorism, totalitarianism, tyranny and the avarice of the rulers.

More shares some trends in common with Al-Farabi, both were influenced by Greek philosophy especially that of Plato and Aristotle. They both wrote their **Virtuous City** and **Utopia** having Plato's Republic as their model.

Different from Al-Farabi, Sir Thomas More played an active role in public life and in the politics of his time. He became a member of the parliament when he was twenty six years old. He played an important role in the opposition to king Henry VII application to have more money that

was permitted of his daughter's wedding to the king of Scotland. More became a friend to king Henry VIII and helped him in writing his **Defense of the Seventh Sacraments** in an answer to Martin Luther, the German leader of Protestantism. With the king's favour, More became the Speaker of the Common House in 1523, and Lord Chancellor in 1529. This friendship did not last, when king Henry VIII accused More as a traitor because More refused to accept the king as the Head of the Church of England.

More's unfair trial is considered as the darkest spot in the history of English judiciary, and the worst in the king's horrible crimes.

More was mourned by his intimate friend Erasmus as the man "*whose soul was purer than any snow, whose genius was such that England never had and never again will have its like*" (Encyclopedia Britannica Library, 2013). In 1886, More was beatified and in 1935 he was canonized.

His **Utopia** remains as one of the outstanding works of socio-political philosophy and a masterpiece in Utopian Literature.

UTOPIA: FACT AND FICTION

Sir Thomas More wrote his **Utopia** first in Latin in 1516 under the original title: **Libellus Vere Aurfus Nec Minus Salutaris Quam Festius De Optimo Reip. Status, Deque Nova Insula Utopia**. It was first translated into English by Ralphe Robynson in 1551; sixteen years after More's tragic death; entitled: **A Fruteful and Pleasant Work, of the Beste State of a Publyque Weale, and of the New Yle, Called Utopia**.

This first edition was followed by other revised editions in the following years. **Utopia** was also translated by other scholars among them Gilbert Burnet in 1684, Arthur Cayly in 1808 and G. C. Richard in 1923. However, Richard's translation was revised by the two great scholars, Edward Surtz., S. J. and J. H. Hexter. Published by Yale University Press in 1965.

The term *'Utopia'* is derived either from the Greek words: *'outopia'* which means 'no place' or *'eutopia'* which means 'good place'. However, both meanings explicate the content of the book.

More's **Utopia** speaks about a world in which all realistic world evils disappear. In the world of **Utopia** all human dreams of justice and happiness are achieved.

Utopia is written mostly in narrative fiction related to the author's realistic world of poverty, oppression and wars. In this work, More presents a literary perspective of an ideal island and state claiming its reality to our real world. In this **Utopia**, More relates the idea of his dream like world of justice, peace and happiness to the gloomy realities of his contemporary Europe.

Utopia is considered as one of the documents of Humanism, and an outcry of protest against the socio-political evils that dominated Europe in More's time. It is a call for justice, equality and peace; a call against the philosophy that justifies exploitation and despotism.

Utopia reflects More's contemporary life of geographic explorations and discoveries, the growth of Humanism; the life of vagabondage and unemployment. It reflects also the abuses of totalitarianism, the corrupted governments and other phases of oppression and subjugation.

More gives an atmosphere of realism to his fanciful utopian world by mixing between fancy and reality. In reality, he mentions some historical people such as Cuthbent Tonstal, Peter Giles, Morton and More himself; and events such as the political tension between the government of England and some of its neighbours. There is also a great assimilation between the imagined character of Raphael Hythloday and the real character of Thomas More. Both of them represent the humanitarian trends and principles; both of them possess amplitude of knowledge and fondness of Greek language, literature and philosophy.

BOOK THE FIRST: THE GATEWAY TO UTOPIA

The First Book stands as a prologue to the Second Book which comprises the main body of the whole work concerning the main philosophical and practiced constructions of the ideal society and state.

More, who personates Sir Thomas More in this prose fiction, starts his narrative with some real historical events that happened in that contemporary period of the sixteenth century. He was appointed as a member of the delegation sent to Netherland to settle some controversial issues between his government in London and the government of Netherland.

In the city of Antwerp, More meets Peter Giles "*a man of great honour, and of good rank in his town.*" (9) It is Peter Giles who introduces Raphael

Hythloday to More, describing him as a man that no one is alive who "*can give so copious an account of unknown nations and countries as he can do*" (10). In such a way the author, Sir Thomas More starts his narrative fiction to introduce to the reader the main character of his fiction, *Raphael Hythloday*, and the ideal country of Utopia. Hythloday is introduced here to be the main narrator of this prose fiction as well as the main interlocutor of the philosophical debate. Hythloday is presented as a man of great knowledge of Greek language and philosophy, fond of travelling around the world and the one who reached the island of Utopia. As a philosophical prose fiction different from Al-Farabi's philosophical treatise *The Virtuous City*; Sir Thomas More derived the name of his made-up character *Hythloday* from the Greek word 'nuthlos' which means 'nonsense'. The chief town of the island Utopia is called *Amaurat* that means 'the ghost city'. Its river is called Anaider which means 'the no water river' and other names; all these names reveal negation as Dr. Angel P. Sama'an suggests (p. 50). Thus Sir Thomas More confirms that his work deals with fiction and **Utopia** is a fiction rather than a real ideal society.

Since Hythloday is a philosopher and a man of fruitful and mature experience, More asks him to make use of his wisdom and his experience to serve in a royal court as a consultant; the matter that Hythloday rejects directly and openly "*I should enslave myself to any king whatsoever*" (15). This statement, in fact, opens a floodgate of debate about politics and political corruption in European states in particular.

However, it is a preliminary to the philosophical debate of socio-political topics that will take place in the Second Book of this philosophical prose fiction.

Hythloday puts forth the question of the corrupted rulers who are neither concerned with public interests of their people and their countries nor they care much enough about intellects and men of wisdom. They care about their private interests and wealth and rarely accept an opinion opposite to their desires and their whims. Compiling wealth through wars and private property is their utmost desire which is a vice of avarice that leads consequently to moral collapse.

Such socio-political evils and moral corruption raised here in the First Book is, in fact, a prelude to bring up in the Second Book the Utopian model of the virtuous society and the ideal state.

The interlocution goes on in the same stream of socio-political corruption leading to more specific topics. One of them is the merciless punishment to death of thievery in a society demanded by idleness and poverty.

This injustice raises the question of landlord is landlordism and private property as a chief cause of merciless exploitation and firing wars. Hythloday, and behind him Sir Thomas More, argues about wars as a means to extend the rulers' kingdoms and to enlarge their private wealth "*For most princes apply themselves more to affairs of war than to the useful art of peace....they are generally more set on acquiring new kingdoms, right or wrong, than governing well those they possess.*" (p: 17). Walter R. Devis suggests that "*More and Hythloday may be said to present two sides of the author Thomas More: 'More' the practical side of him……'Hythloday' the speculative side of him……*" (p: 254).

Sir Thomas More, and through his mouthpiece Hythloday, raises the philosophical topic of goodness. To speak about the good ruler and the good government, Hythloday, the most admirer of Plato, refers to his **Republic** stating that "*Plato thinks that nations will be happy when either philosophers become kings or kings become philosophers*" (41). However, they all agree that philosophy has "*no room for it in the courts of princes, where great affairs are carried on by authority*" (51). This confirms Hythloday's attitude to reject serving as an advisor in the royal courts of despotic rulers. Bernard Bradshaw believes that Hythloday "*perfectly embodies the Platonic position …..because he can see no room for morality and rationality where government is directed to political ends; self-interest, power and wealth*" (p: 22). It is Sir Thomas More's admiration of Plato's philosophy and the influence of his **Republic** in **Utopia** that is clearly evident.

As a devoted Roman Catholic, Sir Thomas More believes that religion plays a significant role in the perfection and the happiness of the individual and the community. He suggests that philosophy that seeks man's perfection and happiness is much closer to the teachings of Christianity and this what Hythloday asserts "*We must, even among Christians, give over pressing the greatest part of those things that Christ hath taught us….*" (p: 53). This statement shows plainly Sir Thomas More's intimate belief in the crucial role of religion concerning man's perfection and happiness. Dr. Mildred Witt Caudle in her research **More's Utopia: Origins and Purposes** argues that "*Christian dogma rejects the idea that man could become perfect; only God is perfect. This assumption does not excuse man from the duty of*

striving toward perfection which is oneness with God. More was above all as a devout Christian and was representative of Christianity's noblest tents" (p: 168).

Another essential issue that Sir Thomas More stirs is the private property as an evil seed against man's purity and happiness. He assumes that man will never obtain his happiness as long as he is governed by the mentality of piling wealth by the elite or men of state. This comes obviously on the mouth of Hythloday when he comments that **"***as long as there is property, and while money is the standard of all other things, I cannot think that a nation can be governed either justly or happy***"** (55).

This interlocution guided by Raphael Hythloday, the philosopher, aims at establishing an intellectual ground for a Utopian society and state whose citizens are equal in front of law; and all are equal concerning wealth distribution.

Being as an introduction to the Second Book, Hythloday in this First Book refers directly to an ideal state he is going to talk about it in detail, as a request from More who entreats him earnestly to describe it. However, Sir Thomas More prepares the reader to read the Second Book "*as rhetoric of fiction rather than a treatise*" (Walter R. Davis: 257)

BOOK THE SECOND: UTOPIA – THE WORLD OF IDEALITY

Sir Thomas More devotes this book to narrate on the mouth of Hythloday, the Utopian Society and state he envisages it; and as he aspires human community to be.

Hythloday starts his narration by a detailed description of the geographical situation of the island of Utopia. It is well secured and protected by natural barriers; in a sense that it is a virtuous country protected by heavenly power. The island includes fifty four cities in which the city of Amaurot stands as the centre. In an indication of the policy of expansion among European empires that lead to wars, Sir Thomas More brilliantly hints to pacifism that preoccupies the Utopians' mentality. They never think of expansion to enlarge the bounds of their cities since people "*consider themselves as tenants rather than landlords*" (64). According to Sir Thomas More, landlordism and avarice of despotic rulers lead to wars among nations. Justice and equality are means to peace and security. Hythloday describes social life showing that all the towns and inhabitants in Utopia are equal in rights and duties. *Utopus*, the founder of Utopia and its first ruler,

was a man of justice. Different from the rulers of Europe, Utopus is portrayed as a virtuous ruler. He looks after the interests of his people; he never thinks that the throne of the state is made only for him. He believes that there are other rulers who will succeed him to begin from where he ends.

Hythloday then shifts to speak about the political institution of the ideal state of Utopia where the magistrates are elected. Those magistrates who are two hundred in number "*Choose the Prince out of a list of four who are named by people." He is chosen through secret election as the "most fit for the office.*" Different from the magistrates who are annually elected; the Prince is elected "*for life, unless he is removed upon suspicion of some design to enslave the people*" (71). In this case as Mildred Caudle suggests "*The government is representative. It is neither democratic nor liberal in the modern sense*" (164).

We come to know that Utopia is an agricultural community that the main job of the inhabitants is agriculture. Landlordism is not to be found in the Utopian society; all inhabitants are equal in ploughing the land, and its corps is for them all.

They are also equal in learning, they attend public lectures according to their inclinations. They use their own native language in their study. They are not familiar with the famous philosophers of the known world. They only learn about them and about Greek language when Hythloday and his companions arrived there. Nevertheless, they are perfectly acquainted with astronomy and the motions of the planets. They have their well-contrived instruments to compute the course and the positions of the stars.

The Utopians show great eagerness to study Greek language; its literature and philosophy. "*In three years' time they become masters of the whole language, so that they read the best of the Greek authors very exactly*" (120). Here we feel Sir Thomas More's spirit and his zealotry to Greek literature and philosophy.

Utopian Moral Philosophy

As far as philosophy is concerned, Hythloday finds out that Utopians usually dispute about what is good and what is evil. They dispute about what is good to the body and mind; and what is the nature of virtue and happiness. However, their main discussion is about man's happiness as an

essential thesis of philosophy throughout the ages. It is also a matter of serious concern to heavenly religions, "*for they never dispute concerning happiness without fetching some arguments from the principles of religion as well as from natural reason*" (103). Therefore, religion and reason go hand in hand for the perfection and happiness of man and this is what Sir Thomas More believes in. Thus morality according to the Utopians depends on the concept of religion and reason. They believe that man's soul is immortal and should be happy, because it has been designed of Good's goodness. Accordingly, God has "*appointed rewards for good and virtuous actions, and punishment for vice*" (104) in the hereafter. To achieve happiness, man has to undergo much pain and trouble since virtuous goals are usually acquired through bitterness and suffering. Moreover, James Steintrager in his research ***Plato and More's Utopia*** argues that Sir Thomas More insists that the magistrates and the men of state, including the Prince, should be men of intelligence and virtue, in the sense that "*the decisive consideration is wisdom not consent*" (Steintrager: 363).

Utopians "*believe that a man, then, follows the dictates of Nature when he pursues or avoids things according to the direction of reason*" (Utopia: 105). Reason, thus, plays a significant role in instructing man; it "*directs us to keep our minds free from passion and as cheerful as we can, and that we should consider ourselves as bound by the ties of good-nature and humanity to use our utmost endeavours to help forward the happiness of all other persons*" (Ibid 105).

However, Steintrager argues that Utopian morality in general, is much more hedonistic in the sense that it is related to the doctrine of pleasure and happiness than to the morality of Plato's **Republic**. "*This natural morality is related to a natural hierarchy of human needs, but a hierarchy which gives full consideration to each level or type of need*" (Steintrager: 371).

Happiness is achieved by making others happy and that man's good nature is "*to ease the miseries of others, to free from trouble and anxiety, in furnishing them with comforts of life*" (Utopia: 105 – 106). Individual happiness, then, is not possible to be achieved unless by helping others to be happy. Egoism has no room in the moral philosophy of the Utopians. They all serve for the happiness of all, since they regard it as something religious "*to prefer the public good to one's private concern*" (Ibid: 107). Their virtuous morals condemn the one who seeks his own individual happiness at the cost of others. When Hythloday speaks about the pleasure of body and mind, he means happiness, and happiness of mind is more valuable; and this

arises "*out of true virtue and witness of a good conscience*" (116). Regarding this philosophical nation, Midred Caudle finds out that "*There is much concern in Utopia with what makes the 'good life'. In the Utopian view, to live in accordance with nature is virtue. Nature leads us to pleasure. Pleasure is not license but the outgrowth of those satisfactions which do not harm others. It is of two kinds: that of the body, which is concerned with food, drink, and health; and that of the mind, which comes from intelligence and the contemplation of truth. The latter is superior to the former, for it leads to the 'best life'*" (165). Closer to the idea of Caudle is what John A. Gueguen suggests in his research **Reading More's Utopia** as a criticism of Plato in which he asserts Utopian's pleasure of the spirit including "*both contemplation and virtuous activity (are) superior to the pleasure of body*" (433). It is not enough, anyway, to depend only on reason to obtain knowledge and happiness; heavenly inspiration is much essential to provide men with happiness. Hythloday informs his interlocutors that Utopians "*think that no man's reason carry him to the truer idea of them unless some discovery from heaven should inspire him with sublimer notions*" (118). Religious essence is a genuine trait in the moral philosophy of the Utopians. They deeply believe in religious dogma as a ground for learning and conduct. Religion nourishes both the soul and the mind of human being to attain happiness. Harry Neumann in his study **On the Platonism of More's Utopia** states that "*The Utopian delight in learning is based on religious principles regarded as rational by all loyal citizens. The delights of the mind are more common and therefore bring more individual happiness than the exclusively Utopian beliefs*" (510).

Utopians Social Life

Family life is immensely disciplined according to the traditional regulations and rules that are based on their moral philosophy. The family pays more respect and honour to the eldest man in the family regarding him as its governor. The wives serve their husbands and children their parents; and the younger is supposed to serve the elder. However, all the inhabitants old or young are equal. Health care is provided in Utopia with great intention. The sick are lodged in public hospitals; and those who are sick of infectious diseases are kept apart from the rest. "*The hospitals are furnished and stored with all things that are convenient for the ease and recovery of the sick*" (Utopia: 86).

Contrary to other human communities who estimate jewelry of gold, silver and 'precious' stones as the most valuable metals; the Utopians look

down upon them. They prefer iron as the most needed metal. Gold and silver are used as chains and fetters for their slaves "*to some of which, as a badge of infamy, they hang an earning of gold, and make others wear a chain or a coronet of the same metal*" (Ibid: 96).

'Precious' stones such as pearls and diamonds are not of particular value or distinct interest to the Utopians. They are given to their children as a sort of delight; but when they grow up they lay them aside in a sign of reaching maturity. When it happens that ambassadors of neighboring countries visit Utopia, clothing themselves with silk adorned with gold and plenty of gems "*They looked upon them as slaves, and forbore to treat them with reverence*" (98 – 99). The children of Utopia make fun of them and call them "great fools."

Sir Thomas More attacks avaricious wealthy people of his contemporary countries, who strife earnestly to reassure jewelry and precious stones; and inflame hatred an enmity among the people of the same nation as well as wars among nations and states. Sir Thomas More also shows how private property and other materialistic and worldly concerns are serious danger to goodness, justice and peace.

According to their social customs and traditions, Utopian women are not allowed to get married before eighteen, nor men before twenty two. The more curious fact in their social traditions is that before marriage the bride is presented, by a grave matron, naked in front of her bridegroom. On the other hand, the bridegroom is presented, by a grave man, naked in front of his bride, to make sure that they are bodily fit. The Utopians think that the future happiness of family life requires such ritual.

Utopian social traditions do not permit polygamy; divorce as well is not permitted except in the case of adultery or insufferable troubles and perverseness. In the case of tempting a married woman or committing the crime of adultery in both cases the punishment is severely equal.

Before the customs and traditions, all the people are equal including the magistrates who are highly honoured and respected. "*The Prince himself has no distinction, either of garments or crown, but is distinguished by a sheaf of corn carried before him; as the High Priest is also known by his being preceded by a person carrying a wax light*" (133). To compare this type of equality to the false equality in the societies of known countries the disparity is enormous.

Another unexpected social phenomenon in Utopia is slavery. In a society of equality and justice, one does not expect Sir Thomas More to stir such a question though he enwraps it with much tender and mild treatment. The slaves either those who commit crimes or those who are found by merchants are guilty and condemn to death. Other slaves are those poor of the neighbouring countries and who offer themselves to serve the Utopians.

Utopian Mentality of Pacifism

Peace seems to be the main scheme of the Utopian state to establish human relations among the neighbouring states. This pacifist belief emerges from utopian moral philosophy and religion. They condemn and hate wars and consider them undignified and inglorious; however they are ready to protect their country. They "*think that there is nothing more inglorious than that glory that is gained by war*" (Utopia: 140). Furthermore, they become "*ashamed of bloody victory over their enemies*" (Ibid: 142) believing vehemently in the glory that is achieved "*by dexterity and good conduct without bloodshed*" (Ibid:143).

They detest war as a dirty and a brutal act; and they do their best to prevent bloodshed from either side, calling for peace and security to all nations.

Regarding their pacifist mentality no man is forced to participate in battles, however, woman is not hindered if she is willing to go along with her husband.

Even if the Utopians are obliged to fight their enemy; their pacifist spirit call them to treat the conquered people very kindly. They do not burn their fields nor hurt the disarmed men. They never plunder the enemies' towns; on the contrary they find it their responsibility to protect them, and take much care of their inhabitants.

This pacifist mentality and behaviour of Utopian state stands antipode to the contemporary European states at the time of Sir Thomas More. By this attitude Sir Thomas more attacks the mentality of war, aggression, avarice and oppression. Thus, this literary philosophical work is an outcry against such evils and corruptions in Europe.

James Steintrager thinks that Utopia "*is the place where moral virtue and human excellence develop. It seems unlikely that either More or Plato*

thought war a good thing, but rather an unfortunate evil for which prudent men are prepared" (361).

Hythloday shows us how harmless people of the Utopia are. They avoid slaughtering their cattle to use their meat in food "*because they think that pity and good nature prevent them to do so, therefore they let their slaves to execute this act*" (85).

Religious Belief and Virtue of Tolerance

In his fascinating description of Utopia, Hythloday retains his narrative about the religious belief of the Utopians to the end. The first remarkable perception is that the Utopian community believe in religious tolerance. "*There is not one religion that the Utopians have their faith in*" (155). Some of them worship the planets, others worship their virtuous and dignified ancestors. But most of them "*adore one eternal, invisible, infinite and comprehensible Deity*" (155) whom they believe spreads over the whole universe "*by His power and virtue*". However, all the Utopians, regardless their different religions, believe in Supreme Being to whom all worship. Utopus, the virtuous ruler and the founder of Utopian state, is the one who established its convection of religious freedom and tolerance. Each inhabitant of the island is free to choose his own private belief; in the condition that no one has any right whatsoever to discredit or distort other peoples' religions. He made this convention "*not only for preserving the public peace....., but because he thought the interest of religion itself required it*" (159). This is another prominent intellectual hint from Sir Thomas More to religious tolerance not only for the public peace but also for fraternity of religions.

Sir Thomas More hints to the sect of mysticism (Sufism) and those who ignore worldly life, devoting themselves to ascetic life. They live unmarried "*wearing themselves from all the pleasures of the present life, which they account hurtful*" (165).

The priests are chosen by the Utopians through secret elections, theirteen in every town. They are responsible for all sacred things as well as the education of the youth. They are more honoured than the magistrates. If any priest commits a crime – and that is very rare – he is not questioned or punished; his punishment is left to God and his own conscience. Few chosen priests accompany the army to the battle field; their role is to pray first for peace and then for the victory of their own army. However, they pray that

victory is to be achieved without much bloodshed from both sides. Sir Thomas More concludes his study on the ideal society and state through Hythloday's last comments on the constitution of the Utopian common wealth. He regards it as "*the best in the world, but indeed the only common wealth that truly deserves that name*" (175 – 176). Thus, Thomas More presents to us the ideal community that he aspires to be attained in human life; a community of justice, tolerance, goodness, peace and happiness. Hythloday, then, defies any one of the attendance to show him any state in Europe that is much more justice, or even equitable to the Utopian state. He ends his narrative wishing that "*all the world could be so wise as to imitate them*" (181). Though it seems much fanciful human commonwealth; yet it remains a wishful thinking of a philosopher calling and aspiring for a virtuous human community. More seems very plain when he comments at the end that there are some absurd notions about Utopians' thought of economics, religion and war affair. Though he agrees with Hythloday's profound learning and knowledge, yet he expresses his disagreement to some of what he has related. The book ends with his last controversial statement when he marks that "*there are many things in the commonwealth of Utopia that rather wish, than hope, to see followed in our governments*" (183).

Concerning the last ironical and controversial comments of More, Brendan Bradshaw in his study **More On Utopia** concludes "*The irony of More's concluding critical reflection on Utopia is that it shows that he had learned the lesson well enough to apply it to the teachings of the master himself.....(that) the message has still a deeper implication for those concerned with the reform of the commonwealth. It is that the possibility of constructive social and political progress resides neither in the moral realism of the intellectual alone nor in the special pragmatism of the politician, but in a constructive and continuing dialogue between the two*" (27).

On the other hand, Harry Neumann has his own point of view concerning More's comments on Hythloday's zealotry towards the ideal commonwealth of Utopia, stating that critics have two main different points of view "*some are convinced that he really did reject the views advanced by Raphael. Others contented that was partially serious or not serious at all in his opposition*" (496).

Whatever scholars and critics argue about Sir Thomas More's Utopia, it remains one of the best masterpieces of Utopian literature. It is enough to

realize that the title of one of the literary schools is derived from this philosophical fiction: **Utopia**. This prose philosophical fiction takes us beyond the world of reality to a fanciful world of much idealistic world of values and virtues; to a human community and state that is of a wish fulfillment. Sir Thomas More is an intellect and a man of religion; similar to Al-Farabi in his *Virtuous City*, aspires for the best secured, just and virtuous community.

In a time that man has to look forward for the virtue, he is likewise has to be aware that human being is usually attached to his worldly life. Such philosophical and literary works awaken man from the pleasures of materialistic world to live or even dream of a virtuous ideal world.

Conclusion:

The study comes to a conclusion that the two philosophers Al-Farabi and More, and through their two masterpieces: **The Virtuous City and Utopia**, attempt to convey a message to the human community to avoid evils of worldly life and to aspire for human perfection and happiness. They believe that such noble humanitarian goals are not attainable but through humanitarian values and heavenly virtuous.

The study makes it clear that both authors believe intensively in heavenly religion and in the principles of Humanism. They both ladled from the wellspring of Greek philosophy and were immensely influenced by it. This influence seems obvious in their works, especially the influence of **Plato's Republic**.

The study displays the similarities between the two works in their treatment of the idea of idealistic society in one hand, and the two authors' influence by their scholar Plato and his Utopian masterpiece the Republic. The authors' copious of Greek philosophy, form a pivot of assimilation in composing their Utopian works.

A question might be raised here, whether More was acquainted with **Al-Farabi's Virtuous City** or not; especially if we know that Al-Farabi's works were translated into Latin and other European languages in the thirteenth century; keeping in mind also that Sir Thomas More was a voracious reader of the classics and well acquainted with Latin. Furthermore, Al-Farabi was a well-known philosopher and Aristotle's successor and interpreter. This question remains a mere hypothesis and it is in need of proofs.

The two authors' works, reflect their aspiration, as religious and humanist scholars, for idealistic and virtuous human community. The study comes to conclusion that though these two works are philosophical in intention; they include fundamental literary traits of Utopian literature. They might be both read as philosophical works or as literary masterpieces. Al-Farabi **Virtuous City** is more closer to a scientific treatise than a mere literary work; while More's **Utopia** is closer to prose fiction, More's style is similar to that of Ibn Tufail (Abubacer: 1100 – 1185). In his philosophical work **Hayy Ibn Yaqthan** (The Living Son of Awake), in which Ibn Tufail, about four centuries before More, has demonstrated his philosophical concepts through prose-fiction style.

However, this study is concerned to analyse these two works as Utopian literature rather than a moral philosophy. This type of literature opens vast vistas for man to meditate deeply, seeking for life void of worldly evils, and dominated by justice, tolerance, security and happiness. Thus, in an age plagued by corruption and the loss of justice and peace, philosophical literature remains an important human prologue to human understanding and tolerance, to attain virtue and virtuous human community

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