

Thinking against Utopia: a comparison between Thomas More and Emil Cioran

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to underline the relation between Utopia and carnival imagery in More's dialogue. Additionally, we aim at clarifying Cioran's definition of Utopia as "the grotesque *en rose*". Subsequently, we try to define the concepts of "seriousness" and "futility" in Cioran's interpretation of utopian literature. When Cioran says that "futility is the most difficult thing in the world", he's actually pointing out a problem that will enable us to outline the paradoxical condition of the inhabitants of Utopia.

We'll see that in Cioran's writings the utopian idea of building a perfect society is *necessary and ridiculous at the same time*. It consists in a human attempt to renew the world which reveals the double nature of this renovation: *serious and grotesque* at the same time. In fact, Utopia is a *revolutionary city* that looks like a *carnavalesque overturning* of this unrighteous reality.

Thanks to the enlightening analysis of Carlo Ginzburg, we will examine the complex game that More entertains with Lucian of Samosata and the "ritual of inversion" in his *Saturnalia*. Finally, we will see how the concept of "inversion" operates in Cioran's reflections about history and politics, where he defines utopia as the desire "to remake Eden with the instruments of the Fall".

Keywords: Cioran, More, Utopia, carnival.