

**Thursday Sep. 13, 1:30-3:00 pm – “Thomas More's Utopia”**

**Chair: Prof. Elliott Simon (U. Haifa)**

**Dr. Jesús López-Peláez Casellas** - *University of Jaén, Spain* (jlopez@ujaen.es)

**‘Gold, a useless commodity in itself’: Nascent Capitalism, Spanish New World Gold and Thomas More’s *Utopia***

Although Thomas More’s *Utopia* is packed with various references and comments to money, credit and commerce, the economic dimension of this text does not seem to have received significant attention when compared to that given to its moral, theological, political or literary qualities. Alternatively and confusingly considered a proto-Communist manifesto, a nostalgic vindication of a residual feudal society, and a forward-looking early capitalist tract, More’s *Utopia* certainly addresses many of the economic concerns of early modern Europeans. Although not an economist, More was an acute observer of nascent capitalism, and consequently his work includes current preoccupations with the New Economics in England. Such disturbing notions as value and worth, monopolistic practices, hoarding, and the fluctuation of coins are among some of the notions which, explicitly or not, the *Utopia* addresses. Interestingly, most of these concerns were not exclusive of More’s England or of his Island of Utopia, but were already present in the world’s leading power, Charles I’s Spain. This paper will deal with some of these issues, and will relate More’s economic preoccupations, as presented in his main work, with other texts similarly concerned with economic change, such as Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, and emblematic literature by Geoffrey Whitney and Andrés Mendo.

