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Comfort Through Dialogue : More's Response to Tribulation ★

MORE's first compositions in dialogue may have been the « little plays » that Erasmus reports More wrote as a youth, one of them presumably the *comediam de Salemone* that More mentions in a letter to John Holt [1]. However, it was the dialogues of Lucian that most clearly marked More's early career. Some ten years after translating four of Lucian's longer dialogues in collaboration with Erasmus, More adapted the Lucianic dialogue form for his first great literary success, *Utopia* [2] ; and as he took up his pen in his polemical battle against Luther, Tyndale, and rising Protestantism, he continued to use the dialogue form, though he adopted new models. His *Responsio ad Lutherum* is cast as a discourse and employs the methods of a lawyer refuting previous arguments, as More, responding to quotations from Luther and Henry VIII, creates the effect of a three-person dialogue. In *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies,* the narrated dialogue between More's persona and the messenger of a friend who is sent « not for any doubte » in the friend « but for the doubte...perceyued in many other, » [3] casts More as the spokesman for truth. Following the tradition of other religious controversialists, More here and elsewhere in his polemical works makes dialogue a vehicle for propaganda to the point, at times, of caricaturing his opponents' positions. Slander and personal insult abound in these debates over Biblical interpretation and church doctrine.

Forcibly removed from the political arena, More chooses the dialogue once again for his last English work written in the Tower ; but he draws upon a tradition far different from those utilized in his previous

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writing. Lucianic irony and religious controversy are put aside as More in *A Dialogue of Comfort* focuses upon the spiritual crisis he perceived both in his world and in himself. Though this most personal and most philosophical of More's writings has been compared to Plato's dialogues -- particularly the *Phaedo,* in which Socrates prepares for death [4] -- More's didactic purpose, religious values, and complementary duologue of like minds contrast most strikingly with Plato's work. *The Consolation of Philosophy* has also been naturally linked to *A Dialogue of Comfort* because both works were written in prison while their authors awaited execution. However, unlike More, Boethius seeks consolation in his stoicism rather than in his Christianity ; and his symbolic instructor, Dame Philosophy, unlike More's interlocutors, lacks human dimension.

Closer to More's method in *A Dialogue of Comfort* is the Ciceronian dialogue form, which typically focuses upon a principal speaker methodically developing an argument ; the Ciceronian model was much more widely studied and imitated in Renaissance Europe than either the Platonic or the Boethean forms. No schoolboy escaped the rhetorical and philosophical dialogues of Cicero, which were widely adapted by theologians and Renaissance humanists. [5] One of the most important adaptations of the Ciceronian model is that of St. Augustine, a teacher of rhetoric and an admirer of Cicero before he was converted to Christianity, who emulated Cicero's method of exposition through dialogue in the *Cassiciacum Dialogues (Contra academicos, De beata vita,* and *De ordine*), written early in his career. Like Cicero, Augustine identified philosophical positions in these dialogues with historical persons, but as he proceeds from his *Soliloquies* to his *Confessions,* his inquiry into truth becomes increasingly a search for God as he depicts the divided soul in internal dialogue. Self-examination exposes the sinful being in order that it be cast off, allowing the higher self to emerge. This method of meditation inspired many followers, including Petrarch who identifies his model by making St. Augustine his examiner and spiritual guide in *Secretum*, written when he at thirty-eight was suffering a spiritual crisis. This dialogue between the imagined Augustine and the Petrarchan persona represents a confrontation of opposing perspectives for the purpose of discovering a higher truth. Pitting the erected wit in the figure of St. Augustine against the infected will in the Petrarchan self, the poet recognizes his self-delusions and shortcomings in order to reconstruct his values on a Christian foundation.

More does not indicate a personal knowledge of Petrarch's *Secretum*, though several Latin editions were published in Strasbourg in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. [6] However, More's favorite author in religious matters is St. Augustine, whose interpretations are frequently paraphrased and quoted in the polemical works as well as in the Tower writings. St. Augustine's influence on More extended beyond substantive questions of doctrine to the ways in which More thought about his religion and the nature of his commitment. It is natural, therefore, when More faced his supreme spiritual crisis as a prisoner awaiting death that he, like Petrarch, would follow St. Augustine's analytical practice in examining his judgment and his course of action. But unlike Augustine and Petrarch, More distances himself from his personal circumstances by creating a fictional occasion and fictional interlocutors. Perhaps motivated in part by a concern for his personal safety, More's fictionalizing fosters greater objectivity and extends the applicability of the discussion. By shifting the context of his consideration of tribulation from his immediate situation to Hungary threatened by another onslaught of the Turks under Soleiman the Magnificent, More establishes an analogy to England's plight under a reformist-led king ; but he also emphasizes the strength of faith under duress. As readers we are constantly aware of the double vision More has created, for as his interlocutors consider their response to the Turkish threat, we perceive More dealing with the threat to his own life, and to the faith of those dearest to him. The fiction thus masks the emotion as it directs the reason to find comfort in tribulation.

More's representation of the dialogue as occurring between the seventy-eight-year-old prisoner, Antony, and his twenty-six-year-old nephew is more complex than it may first appear. Though most critics have identified More with the aged Antony, More was at the time of writing some twenty years younger ; and Margaret Roper, frequently identified with Vincent, was at the time of composition three years older than Vincent. This association obviously results from More's letters alluding to conversations with Margaret in the Tower as well as the famous letter in which Margaret recounts to Alice Alington her dialogue with their father in August of 1534. Yet, in creating old Antony, More is creating more than a thin cover for himself. It is possible that the name Antony was initially suggested by the Sicilian Antoine, who, made a prisoner of the Turks during the siege of Négremont by Mahomet II in 1470, became famous for his courage and his personal sacrifice to the Christian cause. [7] Yet Antony's advanced age and his withdrawal from

the world also recall St. Antony, the fourth-century founder of Christian monasticism, a hermit who, according to *The Golden Legend,* « was forced to undergo innumerable temptations by the demons » and whose advice was sought on more than one critical occasion during his 105 years. He is also reported to have left a sermon on the duties of the spiritual life. [8] Antony's authority and assurance project an idealized image of faith and inner strength that More sought ; Antony's role is that of spiritual instructor, like St. Augustine in Petrarch's *Secretum*.

Vincent's description of the family as « comfortless orphans » looking for guidance from Antony « as though unto us all, you had been a natural father » (*Dialogue of Comfort,* p. 4, *CW* 12:3-4) [9] clearly echoes More's paternal obligations as it makes Vincent a representative of the family ; but Vincent does not urge Antony to accommodate his conscience to the demands of the enemy as do Margaret and More's step-daughter Alice Alington, whom More playfully equates with Eve and the serpent respectively. Addressing Margaret as « maistres Eue, » More asks, « hath my doughter Alington played the serpent with you , and with a letter set you a worke to come tempt your father again...? » [10] Vincent does not directly challenge Antony's decisions nor suggest a different course of action ; the dialogue is not confrontational like Petrarch's *Secretum* because Vincent shares the same basic values as Antony. Vincent is simply wanting in understanding ; like the Messenger in the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies,* he is a friendly audience for More's *raisonneur*. But why is he called Vincent ? According to the OED, the name was applied to the dupe in a betting game in sixteenth-century England, and more generally to the simple man who stands by. Vincent's rather simple and passive role in the first part of the *Dialogue of Comfort* reflects this meaning, but in the second and third books, as he questions and occasionally challenges Antony's judgment, he appears to represent possible reader responses as well as doubts More may have about his own motivations and commitment. Vincent's role changes according to the rhetorical demands of the dialogue, [11] and by the end of the work his earlier despair is overcome -- he finds comfort in Antony's argument and promises to convey it to the world. As Father Marc'hadour suggests, his name is associated with the Latin *vincere* (to be victorious or to overcome), [12] and by the end of the work, Vincent has overcome his anxiety as the play on his name in the penultimate chapter suggests : « *Vincenti dabo edere de ligno vitae* : To him that overcometh, I shall give him to eat of the tree of life » (p. 315, *CW* 12:309) [13] ; but Vincent also registers More's triumph over his

own fear and despair. Vincent thus becomes the other weaker, anxious self that More occasionally reveals in his letters to his family. [14] Like St. Augustine and Petrarch, More provides an internal dialogue as the divided self examines its actions and reviews its judgment. As in *Secretum,* a mentor with extraordinary knowledge and judgment leads the less experienced and less perceptive pupil to a greater understanding of his position in the world and of his relationship to God. This reaffirmation of the Christian commitment brings comfort to the Petrarchan and Morean personae as it registers the renewed commitment of their authors.

Like Petrarch's division of the *Secretum* into three dialogues recalling the three Graces, the Trinity, and the « Gentile » philosophers' « traditional use of the same number in worshipping their own deities, » [15] *A Dialogue of Comfort* is divided into three books. Evoking the symbolic associations of the number three, More in his dialogues considers the central virtues of the Christian -- faith, hope, and charity -- in their relationship to tribulation. [16] Whereas Petrarch focuses throughout on his individual position as a misguided sinner whose pride is exhibited in his desire for fame and whose love for woman has distracted him from his love for God, More initially generalizes about the nature of tribulation and only gradually and then obliquely addresses his particular situation. Instead of the dramatic intensity that Petrarch conveys as the worldly humanist responds to Augustinian doctrine, More offers a detached disquisition on the appropriate response of the Christian to tribulation as gleaned from the Bible. More's humanist learning and his study of the Christian fathers displayed in his secular and polemical writings are subordinated here to scriptural authority.

Book I reads like a theological treatise with its barrage of Biblical citations. As the editors of the Yale edition note, there are « almost five hundred quotations from and specific references to scripture in *A Dialogue of Comfort*, an average of almost two to a page, » [17] and the greatest density occurs in Book I. One wonders if Book I was begun as a gathering of quotations for devotional purposes before More conceived the idea of a dialogue, for Vincent remains largely silent as Antony conveys his conventional wisdom. Only briefly does Vincent interrupt, and rarely do his interruptions, which usually occur at the beginnings and ends of chapters, offer any substantive comment on what is discussed. Vincent's words are respectful and appreciative, though they evidence little depth of understanding. Only on four occasions in the twenty chapters are the interchanges more than perfunctory (chapters 7, 10, 15

and 20) ; only twice does Vincent offer any objections to Antony's views (chapters 15 and 20), and the objections simply point the argument. Antony's extended soliloquy remains theoretical as the occasion for the consideration of tribulation, the Turkish threat, fades into the background. The abstract conceptions are seldom illustrated, and when they are, they startle the reader with their concreteness as in the example of the lady saved from lust by providential tribulation :

> Some young lovely lady, lo, that is yet good enough, God seeth a storm coming toward her that would (if her health and her fat feeding should a little lenger last) strike her into some lecherous love, and instead of her old-acquainted knight, lay her abed with a new-acquainted knave. But God, loving her more tenderly than to suffer her fall into such shameful beastly sin, sendeth her in season a goodly fair fervent fever, that maketh her bones to rattle and wasteth away her wanton flesh, and beautifieth her fair fell with the color of the kite's claw, and maketh her look so lovely that her lover would have little lust to look upon her and maketh her also so lusty that if her lover lay in her lap, she should so sore long to break unto him the very bottom of her stomach that she shold not be able to refrain it from him, but suddenly lay it all in his neck (p. 30, *CW* 12:29).

This vivid description ending with the lady's ambiguous desire to break unto her lover « the very bottom of her stomach » until she vomits upon his neck illustrates the mysterious workings of God in a rather humorous fashion, but rarely do such flashes of wit or humor lighten Antony's serious argument.

In the preface to Book II More indicates a change in form -- Antony wishes that he and Vincent in their first meeting « had more often interchanged words, and parted the talk...as learned men use between the persons whom they devise disputing in their feigned dialogues » (pp. 82-83, *CW* 12:79). Both Cicero and St. Augustine as well as Petrarch and Renaissance dialogists generally represent a more fully developed exchange of views than Book I offers. More's self-conscious admission of falling short of his models is followed by « a merry tale » of a loquacious nun, after which Antony vows to « take another way » and « drive » Vincent to take « the tone half » of the talk (p. 84, *CW* 12 : 80). Antony does not fulfill his promise, but Vincent does play a larger role in Book II, in spite of remaining silent for five chapters in the middle of the book. Another change in style is Antony's attempts to « refresh » his audience « with a foolish merry tale » now and then,

though he promises that they will serve « but for sauce...not our meat » (pp. 87-88, *CW* 12:84). As a result Antony's style becomes more anecdotal and concrete as homey images such as comparing God to a mother hen protecting her chicks in times of danger (p. 108, *CW* 12:103-04) enliven his argument. Vincent too adds to the more colorful style by being a more involved listener and by drawing upon his past experience. His mimicking of a Lutheran preacher in Germany (p. 97, *CW* 12:93-94) upstages Antony, if only for a few minutes.

The subject matter also involves the reader more fully by becoming more directly relevant to More's own position when Antony turns to four kinds of temptation related to tribulation. He takes as his text Psalms 90:5-6, which he translates : « The truth of God shall compass thee about with a pavis ; thou shalt not be afeard of the night's fear, nor of the arrow flying in the day, nor of the business walking about in the darknesses, nor of the incursion or invasion of the devil in the midday » (p. 109, *CW* 12:105). Serving as the nucleus of the remainder of the dialogue, these temptations are considered individually in terms of the Turkish threat and more immediately in the context of More's personal situation. The « night's fear » is first linked to the scrupulous conscience, which is described as « a very timorous daughter, a seely wretched girl and ever puling » (p. 116, *CW* 12:112). This metaphoric association curiously inverts More's circumstances, for his daughters, Margaret Roper and Alice Alington, as well as his wife, urged him to set aside his scrupulous conscience in humoring the king. The scrupulous conscience criticized also by More's former colleagues and friends is ridiculed in Mother Maud's tale of the ass who thought everything he did was a deadly sin. First attributed to Lord Chancellor Thomas Audley in a conversation with Alice Alington, this tale is discussed with Margaret in the Tower, where the scrupulous ass with « so sore a conscience, for the taking of a strawe for hungar out of his maisters shoo » [18] is identified with More. However, in *A Dialogue of Comfort,* Antony says the ass feared to eat lest he « hinder another. And thus stood he still fasting till, when he told the cause, his ghostly father came and informed him better, and then he cast off that scruple and fell mannerly to his meat, and was a right honest ass many a fair day after » (p. 122, *CW* 12:117). Antony's conclusion conveys More's ironic image of himself, but it also registers his faith that God will relieve him of any fault and direct his action. Antony expresses this view more baldly as he directs the sufferer from a scrupulous conscience to « forbear the judgment of himself, and follow the counsel of some other, whom he know-

eth for well learned and virtuous, and specially in the place of confession. For there is God specially present with his grace assisting his sacrament » (p. 125, *CW* 12:121). More's doubts about his personal judgment are exposed, but he finds comfort for his troublesome conscience in the act of confession that reaffirms his faith.

An even more disturbing « night's fear » for More is the temptation of suicide, which is given more attention than any other single temptation in the dialogue [19], a stress which leads one critic to charge that it « disrupts the whole organization of Book II. » [20] More seeks to put this dark night of the soul behind him by treating the subject almost retrospectively, yet the intensity of the struggle is evident as the complexities of the temptation are elaborated. Introducing the topic of suicide with the grimly humorous tale of a woman who chided her husband into cutting off her head because she believed her murder would cause him to be hanged, Antony considers various motives that lead to self-destruction, but the motive that is most telling for More is the desire to be taken for a martyr in order to be canonized. Anticipating Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral,* Antony considers that the temptation to become a saint is rooted in pride and illusions sent by the devil. Examples, both feigned and real, illustrate the nature and complexity of martyrdom, but the crucial point is the distinction between true revelation and false illusions. How much attention More has given to this question is indicated not only by the length of the discussion but also by the many pertinent quotations from Gerson, St. Augustine, St. Bernard, and other religious authors as well as from the Bible. More's extensive research on this issue and his sophisticated discussion of it reveal his own fear lest he be courting martyrdom out of pride and self-delusion. Vincent, deeply involved in the question, challenges Antony to distinguish true revelation from false illusion. Antony responds that « he which hath that kind of revelation fro God is as sure of the truth as we be of our own deed while we be waking, and he that is illuded by the devil is in such wise deceived, and worse too, than be they by their dream, and yet reckoneth for the time himself as sure as the tother, saving that the tone falsely weeneth, the tother truly knoweth » (p. 143, *CW* 12:139). Antony recognizes that the imagination can mislead, and he advocates Scripture as the touchstone against which the validity of the relevation can be tested, yet ultimately he perceives faith in God as protecting the tempted from his fantasy. Antony assures Vincent (and More) that if he « abide in the faithful hope of God's help, ... the truth of God ... [will] so compass him about with a pavis [large shield] that he shall not need to dread this night's fear of this wicked temptation » (p. 160, *CW* 12:156).

After exorcising this demon of the night, More rather easily dispenses with the temptation of « the arrow flying in the day » -- that is the arrow of pride in prosperity -- for he does not feel this temptation so personally. Arrogance and vainglory are perceived in others, but since his prosperity is passed, this temptation no longer appears relevant. The third temptation, « business walking about in the darknesses, » likewise lacks immediacy, though Vincent's radical argument that because wealth enhances man's danger of damnation, the rich should distribute their wealth to the needy prompts Antony to reject communism and justify the unequal distribution of wealth : « men of substance must there be, for else mo beggars shall you have pardie than there be, and no man left able to relieve another » (p. 183, *CW* 12:179-80). Antony adds that « the rich man's substance is the well-spring of the poor man's living » (p. 184, *CW* 12:180). The reordering of social structures and values that More represented in *Utopia* has faded into the past as a more conservative voice is heard. Consideration of the second and third temptations, which remain theoretical, serves as an interlude before More addresses, in Book III, the fourth temptation, « the incursion or invasion of the devil in the midday. »

The midday devil is identified with the Great Turk whose imminent return to Hungary adds a sense of urgency to the dialogue, but in the double vision of the work, More is realizing that his time is running out. The Turk's threat to Christianity is implicitly compared to Henry VIII's threat to the Catholic Church, as the tribulations suffered by the faithful are considered in vivid detail. From the beginning of Book III Vincent takes a much larger role ; he provides information, distinguishes his perspective from Antony's, and at times plays the « devil's advocate, » which forces Antony to examine more closely and explain more completely his views. Vincent shares a quarter of the conversation and is persuaded by Antony's argument as the dialogue proceeds, but the liveliness of the interchange and the development of Vincent's understanding [21] make the third book the most comparable in technique to More's models and most effective as dialogue. It is also the most engrossing for the reader as the immediacy of More's fate becomes increasingly apparent.

At the beginning of the book More appears to address the faithful outside of prison, since Antony and Vincent discuss the material losses to be suffered -- money, plate, land -- as well as offices and autho-

rity, which Antony identifies as « the goods of fortune » (pp. 210-17, *CW* 12:203-12). It is in this context that Vincent describes the great prelate in Germany (thought by Nicholas Harpsfield to refer to Cardinal Wolsey) [22] provoking flattery from his guests (p. 218, *CW* 12:213) ; and Antony tells of a good friend's wife urging her husband to seek a higher place in an apparent reference to Dame Alice (p. 225, *CW* 12:219-20) [23]. In alluding to details from his personal life, More seems to remind his friends and family of the more peaceful, prosperous past, but in emphasizing that wealth and authority are ephemeral, he embraces the conventional *de contemptu mundi* theme. He has already put these « gifts of fortune » behind him as is indicated by his detached and at times playful consideration of them, and he is trying to prepare those whose fortunes have fallen with his own, be they family or faithful friends, to accept their losses and to correct their values. They are told that such tribulation can be beneficial to the soul ; likewise the loss of liberty through imprisonment is not as bad as it seems, for as Antony says, all the world is a prison. This well-known homiletic metaphor significantly provokes Vincent to charge that such views « be but sophistical fantasies » (p. 269, *CW* 12:262), but after a lengthy explanation he is convinced that indeed « every man is in this world a very prisoner » (p. 277, *CW* 12:270) to be freed only by death. More here is seeking to comfort his family who worry about the physical conditions of his imprisonment, as he humourously describes a wife's complaint that she wouldn't be able to breathe behind the locked door of a prison cell though she daily locks the doors of her own house (pp. 283-84, *CW* 12:277). [24] More appears to be coming to terms with his imprisonment and is preparing himself to leave his world behind.

If Book III is to reassure More's friends and family that he has accepted his fate and that they must do likewise, he is also seeking to reassure himself that he will stay the course. As we know from his letters to Margaret, More worried about the physical pain that awaited him ; he wrote, « I founde my selfe (I cry God mercie) very sensuall and my fleshe much more shrinkinge from payne and from death, than me thought it the part of a faithfull Christen man. » [25] In another letter More expresses personal comfort in God's mercy as he elaborates his personal anguish and fear of pain :

> I am of nature so shrinking from paine that I am allmost afeard of a philip [afraid of a small tap with the finger], yet in all the agonies that I haue had, wherof before my coming hether (as I haue shewed you ere this) I haue had neither small nor few, with heauy fearfull heart, forecasting all such peryls and paynfull deathes, as by any maner of possibilitie might after fall vnto me, and in such thought lyen longe restles and wakying, while my wyfe had went [reckoned] I had slept... [26]

Yet, as he assures Margaret, in spite of his fear he has determined to follow his conscience and do nothing to displease God. This note pervades the latter part of the third book, for although Antony expresses the physical pain of persecution and death that may be in store for those who pit their faith against the power of the Great Turk, he argues that the pain is bearable ; quoting St. Paul, he assures Vincent that God will subject us to no more pain than we can bear (p. 254, *CW* 12:247). As he moves toward the end of the dialogue, More considers the imminence of painful death, but he appears to be seeking to convince himself through the persona of Vincent that the pain will be momentary while the pain of suffering in hell is eternal. Fear of hell thus subsumes the fear of physical torture and painful death. Vincent concludes that thinking « on these pains of hell, ... alone were able enough to make, I think, many a martyr » (p. 311, *CW* 12:304).

After this extended emphasis on the negative fears leading to salvation, Antony turns to a contemplation of the joys of heaven, and Vincent falls silent. This shift toward the positive reward that awaits the Christian leads finally to meditation on the death of Christ as an image of pain endured because of His love for man. A vivid delineation of the physical suffering of Christ in His crucifixion emphasizes the extent of His love, which, Antony believes, should shame man into willingly following Christ's example in returning His love. As Jay Wilson notes, « just as the Body of Christ occupies the central place in the sacrament of communion, so More conceives of our chief comfort as dialogue with the person of Christ, » [27] -- the words of Antony express More's gratitude and renewed commitment. Antony declares : « of this am I very sure : if we had the fifteenth part of the love to Christ that he both had and hath to us, all the pain of this Turk's persecution could not keep us from him, but that there would be at this day as many martyrs here in Hungary as have been afore in other countries of old » (p. 321, *CW* 12:314-15). More here is expressing the assurance that he has reached through his dialogue and his willingness to become a martyr in imitation of Christ like the martyrs of old. He has confronted the midday devil who tempted him to give up his faith, and he appears to have overcome

his weaker self that caused him to doubt and fear his strength. In his peroration, Antony, More's projected ideal of faith and inner strength, calls upon all to resist with him the devil in the form of the Great Turk, an analogue to Henry VIII. Vincent at the end confirms the comfort both he and Antony have received through their dialogue, which demonstrates More's resolution of his spiritual crisis. Vincent's promise « to put [Antony's] good counsel in remembrance, not in our own language only, but in the Almain tongue too » (p. 326, *CW* 12:320) indicates More's design to obligate his friends and family to convey his message and his example to the world he would soon leave behind. Like Petrarch and St. Augustine before him, More has used the dialogue form to examine his vulnerable self and find a higher truth in reaffirming his commitment to God.

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1. *The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More,* ed. Elizabeth Frances Rogers (Princeton University Press, 1947), p. 3.

2. For More's use of the dialogue form in *Utopia* and other works, see my article, « The Role of Drama in More's Literary Career, » *SCJ,* 13:4 (1982), 59-75.

3. *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More,* Vol. 6, Part I, ed. Thomas M.C. Lawler, Germain Marc'hadour and Richard C. Marius (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1981), p. 27.

4. Walter M. Gordon, « The Platonic Dramaturgy of Thomas More's *Dialogues,* » *JMRS,* 8 (1978), 210-12.

5. See David Marsh, *The Quattrocento Dialogue* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1980), pp. 1-23. K.J. Wilson in *Incomplete Fictions, The Formation of English Renaissance Dialogue* (Washington, D.C. : Catholic University Press, 1985), after seeking to differentiate the Platonic and Ciceronian dialogue traditions, suggests that More combines the traditions in his *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* and continues to use « Ciceronian methods of oratory » in A *Dialogue of Comfort* (pp. 150-51).

6. At least four editions were published in Strasbourg between 1470 and 1501. Italian translations were published in Siena in 1517 and in Venice in 1520.

7. See *Biographie Universelle,* 10 (Paris, 1854), 79. This French source accounts for the French forms of the names.

8. Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend,* trans. and ed. G. Ryan and H. Ripperger (New York : Arno Press, 1969), pp. 99-103. Germain Marc'hadour associates Antony with St. Antony the Great : « a bridge between the church of the martyrs and that of the confessors, he inflicted upon himself the hardships that an earlier generation had endured in imperial jails or mines. And in sixteenth-century Christendom, the time had come for confessors to face again the threat of martyrdom » (*Moreana,* 29 [1971], 88).

9. All quotations from *A Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation* are taken from the modern-spelling version, ed. Frank Manley, in the Yale Selected Works series (New Haven and London : Yale University Press, 1977) ; the second references in the parentheses are to the original-spelling edition in *The Complete Works,* Vol. 12, ed. Louis L. Martz and Frank Manley (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1976), henceforth designated as *CW12.*

10. See Ltr. 206 (Margaret Roper to Alice Alington) in *The Correspondence,* pp. 515 and 529.

11. Louis Martz claims that Vincent's primary function is rhetorical in registering the reader's response (*CW12,* lxxxviii-lx).

12. *Moreana,* 29 (1971), 88.

13. Note also a few lines later, « *Vincenti dabo manna absconditum, et dabo illi calculum candidum. Et in calculo nomen novum scriptum quod nemo scit nisi qui accipit* : To him that overcometh will I give manna secret and hid, and I will give him a white suffrage, and in his suffrage a new name written, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it. »

14. In at least two letters to Margaret (Ltrs. 210 and 211), More expresses his shrinking from pain and death, as noted below.

15. *Petrarch's Secret or The Soul's Conflict with Passion,* trans. William H. Draper (London : Chatto and Windus, 1911), p. 105.

16. As Frank Manley points out, Book I deals particularly with faith, Book II with hope, and Book III with charity (*CW12,* lxxxix-cxvii).

17. p. cxlviii.

18. Ltrs. 205 and 206 in *The Correspondence,* pp. 224-25.

19. See Walter M. Gordon, « Suicide in Thomas More's *Dialogue of Comfort,* » *The American Benedictine Review,* 29:4 (1978), 358.

20. Leland Miles, « More's *Dialogue of Comfort* as a First Draft, » *SP,* 63 (1966), 129.

21. Martz, who notes that Vincent's role increases to a quarter of the dialogue, finds that Vincent's « mind has been aroused and strengthened » (*CW12,* lxxviii-ix).

22. *The Life and death of Sr. Thomas Moore, knight, sometymes Lord high Chancellor of England,* ed. E.V. Hitchcock (London : Oxford University Press, 1932), pp. 34-35.

23. Harpsfield, pp. 94-95, makes the identification.

24. Again Harpsfield, pp. 97-98, links the anecdote to Dame Alice.

25. See Ltr. 210 in *The Correspondence,* p. 542.

26. See Ltr. 211 in *The Correspondence,* p. 546.

27. *Incomplete Fictions,* pp. 173-74.

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Post-Scriptum.

L'article auquel Howard Norland nous renvoie (à la note 2) est immédiatement suivi, dans *The Sixteenth Century* (XIII, 4, Winter 1982) de treize pages signées J.K. Sowards, et intitulées « Erasmus and the Education of Women » (77-89). Margaret Roper nous y accueille (p. 81), et nous introduit dans le foyer de Thomas More, ce domicile des muses (et de la sagesse chrétienne) où nous retient une très longue citation de la lettre d'Érasme à Budé (1521). Sowards prend congé de son lecteur par un extrait de l'épître-programme que More adresse à William Gonnell, précepteur de ses filles.

Quant à Norland, il puise à des sources auxquelles notre revue ne s'est jamais abreuvée : « Sir Thomas More's View of Drama » de George Williamson (1928), « More and Seneca » de John Crossett (1961). Une inexactitute, pourtant, parmi les choses intéressantes qu'il nous apprend ou nous rappelle : l'entretien de l'*Utopie* eut lieu dans le jardin de More, non celui de Pierre Gilles. Sachons-lui gré d'avoir, ci-dessus (p. 53), rendu par « little plays » le *comoediolas* d'Erasme. Une *comoedia* ne désignait pas nécessairement une pièce comique : la pièce de More sur Salomon, drame biblique, n'était sans doute pas une comédie au sens moderne.

G.M.