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THOMAS MORE : IN DEFENSE OF TRIBULATION

Thomas More's *Dialogue of Comfort* has both intrigued and puzzled scholars attempting to evaluate its artistry. Book I in particular has posed a difficulty for the critic trying to relate it to the overall plan of the *Dialogue* and is often damned with faint praise.[1] Most readers, noting its more formal structure, the somber tone, and the heavy emphasis on logic, assume that it is intended to lay the theoretical groundwork for the practical arguments of Books II and III.[2]

My contention is that the relationship of Book I to the *Dialogue* as a whole has not been adequately explored. The *Dialogue of Comfort* could be called More's *Moriae encomium*. More's defense of tribulation in Book I establishes the position that the entire work will take on worldly wit and Christian wisdom.

Antony, the elder participant, speaks for the defense, attempting to change his young « cousin » Vincent's ironically unchristian attitude toward tribulation and comfort, ironic because Vincent clearly considers himself a true and faithful Christian and Antony assumes that Vincent accepts the basic tenets of Christianity. Vincent, caught up in the affairs of the world and fearing that a Turkish invasion of Hungary is imminent, seeks the relative calm of his « uncle » Antony's sick room where the two men can discuss dispassionately the meaning of tribulation and comfort. It is soon obvious that Vincent's knowledge of the world and its ways has not given him wisdom. Although now removed physically from the world, Antony has a source of wisdom from which Vincent hopes to benefit.

In presenting his argument More appeals primarily to reason and employs many of the rhetorical tools that belong to forensic oratory, particularly refutation.[3] As Frank Manley remarks, the general intent of Book I is « to lead us to the reversal of ordinary, worldly judgment, to the peculiar paradoxes that occur in the light of operative faith. »[4] However Manley's view that the argument of Book I is « based on the obscure motion of grace in the soul, which lies beyond the power of man to achieve »[5] seems to put too little emphasis on the carefully structured logical framework of that argument. In fact the book has the argumentative thrust of forensic oratory and it displays the formal divisions of the classical oration including exordium, narration, proof/refutation, and formal peroration.[6] Through the exordium and narration More establishes the basic conflict between worldly wit and divine wisdom that underlies his argument.[7] And through the proof/refutation he works out the paradox of comfort.

Exordium

The prefatory section of Book I functions as an exordium and is intended to put the audience in the right frame of mind to benefit from its arguments. The

two speakers are Hungarians residing in Buda, where rumors that Suleiman the Grand Turk plans a large-scale invasion of Hungary have been heard. Vincent comes to Antony to seek advice about what comfort he and his friends can find in the event of such an invasion. But their introductory dialogue presents a deliberately general view of the kind of tribulation for which comfort is sought or will be offered. In fact, their initial conversation appears to be « informal, extemporaneous, spontaneous, » characteristics that Louis Martz describes as belonging to More's « art of improvisation, his art of exploration. »[8]

More, however, uses this apparently improvisational dialogue to create dramatic conflict between men and ideas. Vincent's opening remarks serve a threefold purpose : (1) they establish Vincent in his dual role both as addressee within the fictional world of the dialogue and as model for the audience outside the work; (2) they give evidence of Vincent's unconsciously antagonistic attitude toward the type of counsel Antony desires to give; (3) they reveal the essential paradox underlying the entire discourse--that hope of life is possible only by accepting the fact of death and thus that tribulation itself is a source of comfort.

Vincent's first sentence suggests that he has been taken unawares by the turn of events that has made all Hungarians fear a Turkish invasion :

> Who would have went [supposed], O my good uncle, afore a few years passed, that such as in this country would visit their friends lying in disease and sickness, should come (as I do now) to seek and fetch comfort of them or, in giving comfort to them, use the way that I may well use to you.[9]

And the paradoxical reversal of roles that he describes (i.e., the well seek comfort of the sick) suggests his spiritual blindness. His sight is limited to things of this world, as the next sentence makes clear :

> For albeit that the priests and friars be wont to call upon sick men to remember death, yet we worldly friends, for fear of discomforting them, have ever had a guise [habit] in Hungary to lift up their hearts and put them in hope of life [p. 3].

The worldly attitude toward death that is a « guise in Hungary » is emphasized by the grammatical structure of the sentence in which parallel clauses stress Vincent's point that « priests and friars » and « we worldly friends » are two distinctly different categories of comforters. The first person plural includes Vincent himself among the « worldly friends » who are so bound up in this world that they forget that any other world exists. Significantly the concluding phrase of one clause (« to remember death ») is intended by Vincent to be understood as antithetical to the concluding phrase of the other clause (« [to] put them in hope of life »). By making the phrase « hope of life » refer explicitly to mortal life, Vincent underscores the attitude that death and hope are mutually exclusive. He does not refer to any life after death; he only makes the rueful comment that a man now living may find comfort in death because through death he will escape from this suddenly precarious life :

> so great perils appear here to fall at hand, that me thinketh the greatest comfort that a man can have is when he may see that he shall soon be gone [p. 3].

Vincent, after voicing this secular point of view, acknowledges that faith gives Antony a higher, more positive hope : « But that may be your great comfort, good uncle, sith you depart to God » (p. 4). The Christian should look forward to death as the means of his ultimate union with God. While Vincent never expresses the least doubt about Antony's basic premise, that true comfort comes from God in whom man must place his faith, his opening remarks do suggest that his exposure to the world has not led him to share the wise foolishness of Christ's followers.

In his opening sentence, Antony denounces emphatically the counsel given by « worldly friends » labelling it as

> unchristian comforting, which albeit that in any sick man it doth more harm than good, withdrawing him in time of sickness with the looking and longing for life, fro the meditation of death judgment, heaven, and hell, whereof he should beset much part of his time, even all his whole life in his best health, yet is that manner in my mind more than mad, where such kind of comfort is used to a man of mine age [p. 4].

When Vincent admits that « we worldly friends » try to comfort sick men by making them forget their own mortality, he acknowledges his own shortsightedness. The same first person plural pronouns used by Antony refer obviously to right-minded Christians who never fail to remember their own mortality. These two opposing uses of first person plural pronouns function rhetorically to dramatize the conflicting attitudes between Vincent and Antony without, however, making the two speakers appear personally antagonistic. While he condemns such « unchristian comforting, » Antony does not single out Vincent for reproof; instead, through his first person plural reference he implies that both he and Vincent are united in rejecting such a foolish method of comforting.

Conversely Antony uses third person pronouns when he wants to excoriate those who do not conform to the ideal. Thus when Vincent displays his wrong-headedness, Antony can avoid offending his young cousin by pointing out that some people (« they ») are wrong in holding such views while inviting Vincent to join « us » in holding a different opinion. By extension we, the readers of the *Dialogue*, are also encouraged through this distinction in the use of first and third person to fulfill the role that Antony claims belongs to the true Christian and accept tribulation as an unavoidable part of God's plan for our salvation.

Through such manipulation of pronouns in Antony's speeches More underscores the dual role Vincent plays. Within the fictional world of the *Dialogue* Vincent appears as a half-hearted Christian who would rather avoid tribulation if at all possible but who is nonetheless willing to admit his errors and

attempt to follow Christ's teachings. Yet he serves also as role model for the audience outside the work.[10] Paradoxically the more down to earth Vincent appears, the better he functions as a role model. For Vincent's very lack of conviction and great need of able counsel bring him much closer to the average man than is Antony and, consequently, one with whom any believer can identify.

Antony, on the other hand, may sound almost inhuman in his denial of the importance of sensual pleasure and in his readiness to embrace pain and suffering.[11] But this perversely « inhuman » man is not very far removed from the seemingly more jovial character of Book II who admits that he is « of nature even half a giglet and more » (p. 86). For his folly is that of the fool for Christ as defined by Saint Paul and anatomized by Erasmus in *Moriae encomium*.[12] More's Antony is fully aware of his own role in the human comedy of errors in which it is man's nature to participate.

In fact Antony himself is not proof against all fear of suffering. Although he thought he could face the Turk fearlessly, Vincent's graphic account of the horrors of a Turkish invasion made such an impact on his imagination that « I waxed therewith myself suddenly somewhat aflight [distressed] » (p. 9). After this experience Antony agrees that all men at some time may need a store of comfort « as a treacle against the poison of all desperate dread that might rise of occasion of sore tribulation » (p. 9). It is with due humility he will attempt, as his « poor wit » will serve him, to supply that comfort.

The introductory dialogue thus serves as exordium in that (1) it prepares the audience to listen with open minds by denouncing the attitude most men have toward tribulation as both unreasonable and unchristian; (2) it establishes one speaker, Antony, as a wise but humble man willing to share the fruits of his experience with his fellowmen; and (3) it emphasizes worldly wit versus divine wisdom which opens the way for Antony to present a defense of tribulation.

Narration

Chapter I of Book I serves as both a statement and a summary of the case, two functions of the narration in forensic oratory.[13] Antony points out that the old pagan philosophers, the « natural wise men of this world » (p. 10), could not provide sufficient comfort against tribulation because they could offer only « natural reasons, » their sight (like Vincent's) being confined to earth.

For those who do not recognize their limitations, the pagan philosophers are like « bold blind pothecaries » who « either for lucre or of a foolish pride give sick folk medicines of their own devising, and therewith kill up in corners many such simple folk as they find so foolish to put their lives in such lewd and unlearned, blind bayards hands » (p. 11). The references to blindness and folly are significant for they serve to recall Antony's earlier warning that the kind of comfort Vincent and his worldly friends usually provide is « more than mad, » since the « frail folly » it nurtures prevents even old men from seeing that their hope of life lies only with God.

The statement of the case in this opening chapter provides the paradoxical framework upon which the entire defense of tribulation will be constructed in Book I. Since the common attitude toward tribulation is not only unchristian but « more than mad, » in the remaining chapters of Book I this attitude will be corrected by Antony's proving that tribulation is not what it *appears* to be. At the outset, Vincent's attention was focused on appearance : « the world is *here* waxen such, and so great perils *appear here* to fall at hand, that me thinketh the greatest comfort that a man can have is when he may *see* that he shall soon be gone » (italics mine). But what he failed to perceive was the paradoxical truth of his statement, the paradox of man's whole life on earth and the central truth upon which Antony constructs his entire discourse : man's life on earth has meaning only insofar as it earns for him the right to eternal life. Therefore the statement which Vincent considered absurd is actually true : « the greatest comfort that a man can have is when he may see that he shall soon be gone. »

Because the knowledge of the pagan philosophers did not « stretch so far » (p. 10) to reach the source of man's comfort (the hope of ultimate union with God) they assumed that all tribulation was inherently evil; this assumption, normal in men whose sight is limited to this world, is illogically shared by many spiritually blind Christians. Antony's introduction of « that high physician our blessed Savior » (p. 12) supplies the paradoxical key to his defense of tribulation : just as God willed that Christ's suffering and death would turn His « most wholesome blood » into an « incomparable medicine » to cure « our mortal malady » (p. 12), so God also wills that our tribulations will be, in effect, not evil but good. For Christ cured « our mortal malady » not in a physical sense by enabling us to live on earth forever (a cure perhaps more awful than any disease) but in a spiritual sense by making it possible for man to transcend his mortality by achieving union with God in heaven.

Antony concludes his argument by exhorting all men to ask Christ

> to send us and put in our minds such medicines at this time, as against the sickness of sorrows and tribulations may so comfort and strength us in his grace as our deadly enemy the devil may never have the power by his poisoned dart of murmur, grudge, and impatience, to turn our short sickness of worldly tribulation into the endless, everlasting death of infernal damnation [p. 12].

This statement not only incorporates one of the primary arguments found in Book I -- that men who chafe against worldly tribulation are actually under the devil's power -- but it also introduces the metaphoric terms in which most of the argument is presented : « the sickness of sorrows and tribulations » can be effectively cured by medicine « put in our minds. » Thus the foolish wit of worldly men cannot give comfort in tribulation. Only the wise fool who is not distracted by worldly pleasure can find true comfort in tribulation. Attacking the attitude of these wise fools, Erasmus' *Moria* remarks that these Christians « seem completely devoid of normal human responses, just as if their minds

were living somewhere else, not in their bodies. »[14] But she betrays her own foolish blindness, and in Book I More's first concern is to confront the blind folly of such worldly wit with the wise foolishness of Christian teaching. He focuses on two closely related questions : What is comfort? What is tribulation? Through a carefully worked out process of definition, he reaches the unexpected conclusion that tribulation itself is a source of true comfort to the faithful Christian soul.

Proof / Refutation

The proof, including refutation, comprises chapters 2 through 19 of Book I. Like any good defense attorney, More begins with a clear statement of the premises, « that holy scripture is the word of God, and that the word of God is true » (p. 13), underlying his words of comfort. The opening statement posits the need for a firm foundation of faith, but although More does begin by asserting the importance of faith and stressing that it is a gift from God, his focus in Book I is on man's active part in responding to this gift.[15]

With such firm faith, he concludes, « we shall be well able to command a great mountain of tribulation to void from the place where he stood in our heart, whereas with a very feeble faith and a faint, we shall be scant able to remove a little hillock » (p. 14). With these gospel metaphors which emphasize the achievement of faith, he couples another, also from scripture, about the active cultivation of that faith : as Christians we must « withdraw our thought fro the respect and regard of all worldly fantasies, and so gather our faith together into a little narrow room » (p. 13).

This leads him quite naturally to classify all men on the basis of their attitude toward comfort, stressing the negative effects of the wrong attitude. Among those who spurn comfort some « fall into a careless, deadly dullness, regarding nothing, thinking almost on nothing » (p. 15) while others appear « half in a frenzy » (p. 15). As for those who do seek comfort, if they trust « in the delight of these peevish worldly things » (p. 16), they too will remain disconsolate. Those who share this attitude (and certainly Vincent would see his « worldly friends » if not himself in this group) are distinguished from another sort who find comfort merely in knowing that they are seeking it from the right source, God.

Since Vincent agrees that a man's attitude itself can comfort him in tribulation and that it is through « folly » that some men « seek for their chief ease and comfort anywhere else » (p. 17), Antony can now begin the more difficult task of proving that tribulation itself is not evil but good. For one thing tribulation often gives a man the desire to turn to God for help. Thus friends who visit a man in tribulation should encourage him in desiring God's help instead of « trifling and turning him to the fancies of the world » (p. 19) as is the « guise » of Hungary's layfolk. When Vincent asks innocently whether it isn't sufficient for a man to ask God to comfort him by removing his tribulation, Antony responds by again emphasizing the foolishness of such a solution : « What wit have we

poor fools to wit what will serve us » (p. 23). Such unwisdom has occupied not ignoble hearts : St. Paul himself had to be told by God that « he was but a fool » (p. 23) for asking God to take his tribulation away from him.

The next step in Antony's argument, the classification of tribulation according to its medicinable qualities, again stresses men's varying attitudes :

> every tribulation which any time falleth unto us is either sent to be medicinable, if men will so take it, or may become medicinable, if men will so make it, or is better than medicinable, but if we will forsake it [p. 24].

While discussing these three categories of tribulation, Antony constantly contrasts what may seem true to men of limited vision and what is really true.

After Antony has introduced some hypothetical examples of men who would gain merit by suffering for the defense of God's cause if they should fall into the hands of the Turks, Vincent inserts a statement that provides almost comic relief, easing the tension that a reference to the Turkish threat would necessarily bring : « Then if a man sue me wrongfully for my land in which myself have good right, it is a comfort yet to defend it well, sith God shall give me thank therefor? » (p. 35). Once again Vincent has missed the point. His worldly attitude toward comfort is as yet essentially unchanged, as Antony's good-humored answer emphasizes : « Nay, nay, cousin, nay, there walk ye somewhat wide, for there you defend your own right for your temporal avail » (p. 35). Antony closes his argument by introducing a string of scriptual quotations, all of which proclaim that those who sacrifice their temporal comfort for the sake of others « so may fulfill their hearts with spiritual joy that the pleasure may far surmount the heaviness and the grief of all their temporal trouble » (p. 36).

Antony now returns to the paradox at the core of his argument based on the contrast between the temporal and the eternal, worldly wit and divine wisdom. This world, he says, « our place and our time of merit and well-deserving » (p. 37), will enable us to enjoy the other world « whereof our blind mortality cannot here imagine nor devise the stint » (p. 38). He is getting ever closer to the paradoxical reversal of comfort and tribulation.[16] But first he must answer a double objection that Vincent raises, the Lutherans' rejection of purgatory and their denying efficacy to man's good works, for these cut to the heart of his argument. As Vincent points out, many Christians « affirm for a sure truth that there is no purgatory at all » and say also that « men merit nothing at all, but God giveth all for faith alone, and that it were sin and sacrilege to look for any reward in heaven either for our patient and glad suffering for God's sake, or for any other good deed » (p. 39).

These erroneous contentions Antony dismisses with the simplest logical defense : « Cosin, if some things were as they be not, then should some things be as they shall not » (p. 39). Regarding the existence of purgatory he appeals to tradition with one sweeping sentence : « I dare not now believe these men against all those » (p. 40). As for the efficacy of good works, there is enough

agreement between « them » and « us, » since all Christians believe « that men are bound to work good works if they have time and power, and that whoso worketh in true faith most, shall be most rewarded » (p. 41). The overweening challenges of an immemorial Tradition provoke More's taunt : God will not suffer us Catholics, « that are but mean-witted men, and can understand his words but as himself hath set them, . . . to be damned for lack of perceiving such a sharp, subtle thing » (p. 41).

In each subsequent objection that Vincent raises, the argument focuses on the inadequacies of worldly wit. For example when Antony repeatedly denounces the folly of « those that drown themself in the desire of this worlds wretched wealth » (p. 43), Vincent objects that « great cunning men as I trow can tell the truth » when asked by rich and powerful men « whether, while they make merry here in earth all their life, they may not yet for all that have heaven after too, they do tell them, 'Yes, yes well enough,' for I have heard them tell them so myself » (p. 46). In his rebuttal, however, Antony looks first not at the testimony but at the motives of these disloyal teachers : [17]« I fear me that they flatter them either for lucre or fear » (p. 46). He clearly alludes to beneficed priests who « tell great men such tales as perilously beguile them » (p. 47) for fear of their own temporal loss.[18]

Antony is now ready to complete his definition of tribulation which develops quite naturally from a further objection that Vincent places before him. In voicing that objection Vincent appears to assume a new and rather unexpectedly disputatious tone to argue that prosperity cannot be « to the soul so perilous, and tribulation thereto so fruitful » (p. 48) as Antony has suggested. Vincent attempts a *reductio ad absurdum* of Antony's original proposition : « then were as me seemeth every man bound of charity, not only to pray God send their neighbors sorrow, but also to help thereto themself » (p. 49). Such a daring rhetorical thrust from the generally acquiescent Vincent is rather surprising.[19] Vincent, however, still refrains from an absolute denial of Antony's words. He first introduces facts (« we see that the whole church » [p. 48]) to suggest that public practice supports his view. What is more, he presents his objections as arising solely from his own experience («And I can see » and «as far as I can hear » [p. 48]), leaving open the possibility that a man of greater experience and knowledge might be able to contradict his evidence and thus negate his logic. In fact Antony has already referred in chapter 6 to the existence of just such prayers as Vincent now mentions (cf. p. 21).

Antony opens his rebuttal by denying that he ever held the apparently absurd position attributed to him, thus weakening the major force of Vincent's charge.[20] He then restates the general argument that Vincent had offered in a form that he can answer, at the same time introducing the metaphor of a shooting contest in order to put the argument in sporting terms so that win, lose, or draw, both speakers can display good sportsmanship. And Vincent uses the metaphor to acknowledge the *cause* of his bad marksmanship : « and no great marvel though I shoot wide, while I somewhat mistake the mark » (p. 51).

Without this metaphor the point by point refutation of charges that follows might have too much of the courtroom about it. For Antony begins by restating all of Vincent's charges, one by one, in order to simplify his own task of rebuttal. Still using the contest metaphor, he introduces the definition of tribulation upon which he will base most of his counterarguments: « First must you, cousin, be sure that you look well to the mark. And that can you not, but if ye know what thing tribulation is » (p. 52). And since « tribulation is every such thing as troubleth and grieveth the man, either in body or in mind » (p. 52), then « for the perpetual lack of all trouble and all tribulation, there is no wise man that either prayeth for himself or for any man else » (p. 54).[21] When Vincent repeats his attempt to prove that Antony's position is absurd, asserting that as far as he can see, no one « should either wish or pray or any manner thing do, to have any kind of tribulation withdrawn, either from himself or any friend of his » (p. 58), Antony takes all the force from his attack by unexpectedly agreeing with him and citing no less an authority than God himself to support his position :

> I think in very deed tribulation so good and so profitable, that I should haply doubt as ye do, wherefore a man might labor or pray to be delivered of it, saving that God which teacheth us the one teacheth us also the tother [p. 59].

After hearing all Antony's arguments, Vincent sounds appropriately convinced as he says simply, « Verily, good uncle, with this good answer am I well content » (p. 61). Antony now brings the discussion around again to those who seek comfort in worldly diversion by playing on Vincent's words, « but many men are there, with whom God is not content » (p. 61). He then introduces a group of satiric vignettes with scathing criticism of those men who « some for comfort seek to the flesh, some to the world, and some to the devil himself » (p. 61), the three classic categories, in a crescendo. Significantly Antony uses only the third person pronouns in describing such men, suggesting thereby that « we » (Antony and Vincent themselves and any others who share their attitude) do not displease God.

In a sense all of Book I has been leading up to this point. Antony's theoretical arguments in defense of tribulation were all intended to prepare Vincent to agree that such men are indeed « fond fools ». While the argument is serious, Antony does introduce comic touches in the portraits, particularly through tripping alliteration and parallel phrasing, that highlight the foolish worldly wit of these « fond fools, » e.g., his description of those who try to forestall death by surrounding themselves with pleasure-seeking friends :

> And then left them their gamners [gamesters] and slyly slunk away, and long was it not ere they galped up the ghost. And what game they came then to, that God knoweth and not I. I pray God it were good, but I fear it very sore [p. 64].

These lively portraits, which bring the theoretical issue of Book I down to the

most practical level, anticipate the « remarkable array of racy, vivid, colloquial anecdotes »[22] that confront the reader in the next book.

The last vignette, of the sick man who « will meddle with no physick in no manner wise, nor send his water to no cunning man, but send his cap or his hose to some wise woman otherwise called a witch » (p. 65), is a tour de force of ironic parody and double talk through which Antony both raises a laugh at the absurd credulity of such « fond fools » while lamenting that « In such wise witches and in such mad medicines have their souls more faith a great deal than in God » (p. 65). This final sentence returns the discourse to the more serious issue of spiritual sickness and God's comfort. Clearly the ailing Antony intends more than simply a parody of witchcraft.[23] The wise woman's diagnosis of the sick man's illness can also be read as a very serious parody of the spiritual danger of weak-willed Christians :

> when he took none heed, he was taken with a spirit between two doors as he went in the twilight [p. 65].

Christians without the strength of God's grace, the only useful spiritual medicine, if they take no heed will also be « taken » with the evil spirit between heaven and hell as they go in the half light that makes clear perception of the truth extremely difficult. This reference to a twilight that blurs man's sight of his true goal prepares us somewhat for a part of Psalm 90, « of the devil named *negotium perambulans in tenebris,* that is to wit, business walking in the darkness » (p. 169), that Antony analyzes in chapter 17 of Book II.[24] Without the firm foundation of faith that Antony has attempted to build up in him through the defense of tribulation in Book I, Vincent too would remain forever in the twilight of partial understanding.

Now, though, Vincent still clings to one last shred of hope that it is not necessary for him to reverse completely his worldly wisdom. His final question springs from that hope : he asks why it is that men can find more cause of comfort in tribulation than in prosperity. But Antony will give him no quarter, insisting that complete abnegation of worldly wit is necessary before man can find true comfort in God.[25] He begins with a series of definitions through which he shows that Vincent's question is based on a worldly attitude, for Vincent equates prosperity with worldly comfort. So Antony brings out his heaviest logical artillery to emphasize again the temporal limitations of worldly wit as opposed to the eternal truth of Christian wisdom.

He warns that comfort is not merely « the sensual feeling of bodily pleasure » (p. 70); instead it is « the consolation of good hope, that men take in their heart, of some good growing toward them, than for a present pleasure with which the body is delighted and tickled for the while » (p. 70). What is more, scripture « discommendeth this worldly wretched wealth and discomfortable comfort utterly » (p. 72) because it cannot lead to any hope of God's reward, the only true source of man's comfort. Worldly pleasure is limited by man's own temporal and mortal condition and thus always accompanied by the recognition

that it cannot last long. Only tribulation can give man the true comfort of feeling that unending good will spring from it. So « in matter of very comfort tribulation is as far above prosperity as the day is above the night » (p. 73). With this strong assertion Antony concludes his formal defense of tribulation.

Peroration

In forensic oratory after the speaker has presented his final argument he usually concludes with a formal summing up of his case. The last chapter of Book I constitutes just such a formal summary. More might well have ended Book I with Antony's definition of comfort and the arguments derived from it; instead he provides a formal peroration in keeping with the forensic plan of Book I. Books II and III will not have this kind of formal conclusion. The summary speech is not very long (about 600 words), but it covers all the important issues raised in Book I and presents them in a series of statements replete with rhetorical devices that are reminiscent of courtroom oratory.

These include anaphora : the second sentence -- a series of fourteen clauses all opening with « a thing » or « the thing » -- lists all the attributes that make tribulation appear truly « a gracious gift of God. » Eight of these clauses exhibit parallelism and antithesis, e.g.,

> A thing that causeth us [to] set less by the world; a thing that exciteth us to draw more toward God [pp. 77-78].

The speech also includes frequent exhortation (e.g., « let us be glad thereof and long to go to him » [p. 79]); abridged grammatical constructions with an aphoristic ring; a sequence of seven clauses that exhibit definite parallel cadence patterns (e.g., « mine heart cannot give me but he shall be welcome » [p. 79]); and Biblical proverbs (p. 79). The final clauses reiterate in prayer form man's dependence upon God, and come full circle to Antony's opening assertion that « God is and must be your comfort and not I » (p. 5).

Two short phrases in Vincent's concluding bits of dialogue suggest that he has taken Antony's counsel to heart. First he thanks Antony for « bearing my folly so long and so patiently » (p. 79). Then he prays not that Antony be returned to good health but that « Our lord send you such comfort as he knoweth to be best » (p. 79).

Thus through the forensic mode Book I succeeds in defending tribulation against the false charges of would-be Christians who are in actuality worldly men. Only with the paradoxical comfort of tribulation thus established can Antony and Vincent, in Books II and III, look more closely at the world around them from the wise perspective of the fool for Christ.

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NOTES

1. For J. Stephen Russell, Book I « contributes least to Vincent's and the reader's comfort » and is a « rhetorical failure » (« More's *Dialogue* and the Dynamics of Comfort, » *Moreana*, XVII, 65-66 [1980], 41).

2. See Louis Martz, « Introduction, » *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, Vol. 12 (hereafter designated *CW 12*), *A Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation*, ed. Louis L. Martz and Frank Manley (New Haven and London : Yale University Press, 1976), pp. lxvii-iii.

3. Quintilian notes in his *Institutio Oratoria* that « as a rule no strong appeal to the emotions is made in refutation » (H.E. Butler, trans. [Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1966], V.xiii.2, Vol. II, p. 311).

4. *CW 12*, p. xci.

5. *CW 12*, p. xci.

6. According to Quintilian, forensic oratory has two chief duties : « the bringing and rebutting of charges » and is divided into five parts : « *the exordium*, the *statement of facts*, the *proof*, the *refutation*, and the *peroration* » (III.ix.1-3, Vol. I, p. 515). As Craig R. Thompson points out, in More's time « The classical ideal of eloquence was still a fundamental aim of education, » and it « required command of the principles and procedures, strategy and tactics of formal rhetoric » (*The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, Vol. 3., *Translations of Lucian*, ed. Craig R. Thompson [New Haven and London : Yale University Press, 1974], p. xxxvi).

7. « Wit » in More's text means « mental capacity, reason, intellect » (cf. gloss by Manley and Martz, *CW 12*, p. 543). For example, « What wit have we poor fools to wit what will serve us » (p. 23).

8. *CW 12*, p. lxi.

9. St. Thomas More, *A Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation*, edited by Frank Manley (New Haven and London : Yale University Press, 1977), p. 3. All quotations from the *Dialogue* are from this edition and subsequent page references will appear in the text following each quotation.

10. Frank Manley discusses the complex question of the audience for whom More wrote his *Dialogue*, but he is concerned primarily with identifying differences among potential readers as a means of elucidating the text (*CW 12*, pp. cxx-clxiv), whereas my purpose is to discover what ways More uses the text itself to control the responses of his audience.

11. Russell claims that « this Antony is almost totally out of touch with the human realities of pain and adversity and . . . has become steeled to human feeling . . . » (p. 43).

12. Antony may allude to Erasmus' work when, in the first Chapter of Book II, after confessing his own foolishness, he remarks, « howbeit so partial will I not be to my fault as to praise it » (p. 86). Antony can be likened to Saint Paul in his experience of suffering, in his self-deprecatory references to his own foolishness, and in his general attitude toward tribulation. As Walter Kaiser points out, St. Paul « commanded that those who are considered wise by the world should become fools in order that they may be truly wise » (*Praisers of Folly* [Cambridge, Mass : Harvard University Press, 1963], p. 8).

13. *Institutio Oratoria*, IV.ii.9-14, Vol. II, pp. 55-57.

14. Desiderius Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*, trans. Clarence H. Miller (New Haven and London : Yale University Press, 1979), p. 132. The difficulty some readers experience with Book I is due in part to this attempt to reverse the normal human pattern of responses. For example, Stephen Russell describes Book I as « unequal to the human reality of tribulation » and Antony as « anything but a comfort in human terms . . . He seems aloof . . . » (p. 41-42).

15. Lee Khanna's assertion that Book I « works to make both Vincent and the reader come to accept the role of a patient whose sickness can lead to everlasting spiritual health » (p. 58) seems to overstress passivity whereas Antony emphasizes the active role of the Christian in responding to God (Lee Cullen Khanna, « Truth and Fiction in *A Dialogue of Comfort*, » *Moreana*, XVII, 65-66 [1980], 58).

16. Manley's argument that « in their overall effect chapters 11-19 [of Book I] constitute an encomium of tribulation that explores its fundamental benefits, which are not apparent except paradoxically to one who has the gift of faith to perceive them » (*CW 12*, xciv-xcv) is true in part, but the emphasis of the book is on refutation of arguments.

17. Regarding the testimony of witnesses Quintilian comments, « the effect of evidence on the individual judge depends on the extent to which he has been previously influenced in the direction of believing the witness or the reverse » (*Institutio Oratoria*, V.vii.8, Vol. II, p. 173).

18. This argument repeats in essence the warning Antony gave earlier regarding « bold blind pothecaries » who « either for lucre or of a foolish pride » (p. 11) kill their patients by prescribing the wrong medicines.

19. Louis Martz comments, « Vincent listens respectfully and seems to be taking in the arguments, and yet about three-fifths of the way through the first book he suddenly enters a startling objection » (*CW 12*, p. lxvii).

20. Concerning the task of the defense, Quintilian notes that if our opponent's arguments are obviously false « it will be sufficient to deny them » (*Institutio Oratoria*, V.xiii.15, Vol. II, p. 321).

21. Quintilian notes that charges « may be demolished . . . by definition, when we shall examine whether they are relevant to the case . . . » (*Institutio Oratoria*, V.xiii.19, Vol. II, p. 323).

22. Martz, « Introduction, » *CW 12*, p. lxix.

23. The commentary in *CW 12* focuses solely on the parody of witchcraft and sympathetic magic (p. 361).

24. Antony's exegesis in Book II, chapter 17, makes clear that he is concerned not with physical twilight but with spiritual twilight. Cf. pp. 169-171.

25. This insistence has often been misinterpreted. One reader has even suggested that Book I fails to bring comfort because « both Antony's presentation and Vincent's reception are unequal to the human reality of tribulation » (Russell, p. 41) and Antony's final arguments in Book I are « wholly irrelevant to Vincent's appeal for comfort on the emotional level » (Russell, p. 44). But this criticism is unfair. In Book I More deliberately eschews emotion. He bases Vincent's objections not on emotion but on logic.

MUSIC FOR MARTYRS

• 21 May 1982.

From Father John P. Marmion, St. Joseph's, Sale (Cheshire).

The Centenary of the martyrdom (1581) of St Edmund Campion was noted by an exhibition at the British Library. I am sure that this was a worthwhile display of Campion's considerable genius, but I thought that such an attractive character should not be confined to libraries, and I was able to gain the assistance of a very talented parishioner. Actually Arnold Ashbrook is not a catholic, but the father of a fine catholic family in the parish, and I usually tell him that he is a country member of the club. By profession he is in the furniture industry, by talent and inclination he is a musician and composer. Some years ago he gave us a delightful rendering of Dickens' Christmas Carol. *This time with the help of Evelyn Waugh's essay and the last work of our own E.E. Reynolds he produced a very swinging presentation of St. Edmund Campion in modern music. Ringing choruses of « Elizabeth rules, » some fine solos, and all in all a very memorable presentation.*

Possibly some readers of Moreana *might be interested in the libretto. A line to Arnold Ashbrook, 85, Hope Rd. Sale, M33, England will open up possibilities. And how to follow that ? I have been wondering if our own Thomas might be given the same treatment, as the effect it has on the younger generation is really most impressive and worthwhile. The problem, as I see it, is to get away from Robert Bolt's* Man for all Seasons. *Do you or any of the readers of* Moreana *have any suggestions which might especially suit a music More ?*

On which high not I must leave you.