Moreana XXI, 82 (June 1984), 5-17

MORE AND TYNDALE AS PROSE STYLISTS : FINDING DIRECTIONS IN *A DIALOGUE OF COMFORT* AND *THE PRACTICE OF PRELATES*

That Thomas More and William Tyndale, those mighty opposites, were both fine prose stylists could scarcely be disputed. But they are not writers of the same kind. In his classic discrimination of their virtues, C.S. Lewis singled out More's lively humor, Tyndale's powerful intensity as distinctive. « What we miss in Tyndale is the many-sidedness, the elbow-room of More's mind, » Lewis says ; « what we miss in More is the joyous lyric quality of Tyndale. » [1]

One cannot hope to match the vividness of Lewis's impressions. One may add something to them, however, by tracing stylistic differences between More and Tyndale to sources in their convictions and methods. Louis Martz has observed that in his *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer,* More follows the method of Augustine, allowing meaning to develop « by repetition, recapitulation, association, even by digression, » while Tyndale typically addresses the pure intellect. [2] In turn these rhetorical and spiritual modes lead to distinct philosophies of interpretation. It is well known that More and Tyndale disputed the value of allegorical interpretations of the Bible. Those who make or find allegories in Scripture must often puzzle over enigmas. More and Erasmus could welcome such mysteries, even while encouraging scholarship that reclaimed the literal text. In *De Copia,* Erasmus pointedly recommends that in allegories « things should not be written in such a way that everyone understands everything, but so that they are forced to investigate certain things and learn. » [3] More's fondness for enigmas persisted to the end. The Tower letters turn again and again to the riddle of « a case in which a man may lese his head and haue no harm. » [4]

Tyndale, however, rejects senses beyond the literal and mistrusts enigmas. A prominent section of his *Obedience of a Christian Man* traces many miseries of the church to far-fetched allegories, the « greatest cause, » he says, of the « captivitie and the decay of the fayth and this blyndnes wherein we now are » :

> For Origen and the[y] of his tyme drew al the scripture vnto allegories. Whos ensample they that came after folowed so longe / tyll at the last they forgat the order and processe of the texte / supposinge that the scripture

sarved but to fayne allegories apon. In so moch that twenty doctours expounde one texte .xx. wayes / as childern make descant apon playne songe. Then came oure sophisters with their Anagogicall and chopologicall sence and with an antetheme of halfe an ench / out of which some of them draw a threde of .ix. dayes longe. Yee thou shalt fynde ynow that will preach Christ / and proue what some euer poynte of the fayth that thou wilt / as well out of a fabell of Ovide or any other poyet / as out of saynte Johns Gospell or Pauls pistels. [5]

Though he permits certain homiletic allegories, Tyndale clings firmly to « the order and processe of the texte, » working so that English readers could literally understand the Bible. The intense intellectual power that he brings to the task may be responsible, in part, for the « joyous lyric quality » of his best prose.

The « many-sidedness » and « elbow-room » Lewis finds in More's style is connected even more clearly with a theory and practice of indirect meaning. It is a practice typical of More. In his *History of King Richard III* the enigmatic method produces conscious irony such as is felt when the people of London resolve not to mar Richard's sordid play or meddle in « Kynges games ... plaied vpon scafoldes. » [6] In *Utopia* dispersal of authority yields more enigmas. More defends role-playing and oblique counsel ; Hythlodaeus appears to reject them. [7]

The indirect approach is clearest, however, in More's *Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*. Writing on « The Design of More's *Dialogue of Comfort,* » Martz has shown how « the turmoil of human existence is in some danger of overwhelming the unity and the direction of the dialogue. » [8] Lee Cullen Khanna has suggested, in turn, that More creates around Antony and Vincent a « duplicitous » world where « truth can be apprehended only indirectly. » [9] From such remarks the general contrast between More and Tyndale seems apparent. Here I wish only to confirm previous generalizations and to test Lejis's stylistic impressions by examining closely a pair of tall tales : the first from More's *Dialogue of Comfort* (II, 12), the second from Tyndale's *Practice of Prelates*.

I

Book II of *A Dialogue of Comfort* is a curious nocturne. Full of grim tales and ludicrous distractions, the conversations of Vincent and Antony still closely regard « the nightes feare, » against which the Psalmist promises aid. Antony introduces the reassuring text, Psalm 103.20-21 : « Thow hast good lord set the darknes, & made was the night / & in the night walken all the bestes of the woodes / the whelps of the lions roryng & calling vnto god for their meate. » [10] The roaring lions give Antony occasion to remind his timid kinsman that he should fear less for his body than for his soul. Those « bestes of the woodes, » which men fear so needlessly, also bring a story to Antony's mind, and it is from this tale that I wish to estimate the indirection of More's style :

I remember that [when] I was a yong man, I was ones in the warre with the kyng than my master (god assoyle his soule) & we were campid within the Turkes grownd many a mile beyond Belgrade (which wold god were ours now as well as it was than) but so happid it that in our camp about midd night, there sodenly rose a rumour & a scrye that the Turkes whole armye was secretly stelyng vppon us / wherwith our whole host was warnid to arm them in hast, & set them selfe in array to fight / & than were the Scurers of ours that brought those sodayn tidinges examinid more leasurely by the counsayle / what suretye / or what likelyhed they had percevid therin. Of whom one shewid that by the glimeryng of the mone, he had espied & percevid & sene them hym selfe comyng on softely & soberly in a long range all in good ordre / not one farther forth than the other in the fore front / but as even as a therede & in bredth ferther than he could see in lenghth.

His felowes beyng examynid said that he was somwhat prikkyd forth before them, & cam so fast bak to tell it them, that they thought it rather tyme to make hast & give warnyng to the camp / than to go nere vnto them / For they were not so farr of, but that they had yet them selfe some what an vnperfit sight of them to /

Thus stode we watching all the remenaunt of the night, euermore harkenyng whan we shuld here then come / with husshe / stand still, me thynke I here a tramplyng / so that at last many of vs thought we herd them our selfe also / But when the day was sprongen & that we saw no man / out was our Scurer sent agayne / & some of our capitaynes with hym to shew where about the place was in which he percevid them. And when they came thether, they found that the greate ferefull army of the Turkes so soberly comyng on, turnid (god bethankyd) into a fayre long hedge standyng evyn stone stil. (*CW12,* p. 109/29 f.)

Having told his tale, Antony next draws the lesson :

And thus fareth yt in the nightes feare of tribulacion / in which the devill to bere down & ouerwhelme with drede, the faythfull hope that we shuld haue in god, casteth in our imaginacion mych more fere than cause / for while there walke in that night, not onely the lions whelps, but ouer

> that all the bestes of the wode beside / the beest that we here rore in the dark night of tribulacion, & fere it for a lyon, we sometyme find well afterward in the day, that it was no lyon at all / but a sely rude roryng asse. And the thyng that on the see semeth sometyme a rokke, ys in dede nothyng els but a myst / How be it as the prophet sayth, he that faythfully dwellith in the hope of godes help / the pauice of his trouth shall so fence hym round about / that be it an asse / colt / or a lions whelpe / or a rok of stone or a miste / *Non timebit a timore nocturno* / The nightes feare therof shall he nothyng nede to drede / (*CW12*, p. 110/27f.)

Readers are likely to find here a well-told tale. Antony moves along with colloquial smoothness, building suspense until the supposed army of Turks is revealed to be nothing more than a hedge. Even this smoothness conceals some stylistic play, however. By and large, Antony avoids the actual sounds of the incident, for example, keeping to indirect discourse. But no one could miss the sudden verisimilitude when Antony whispers, « husshe / stand stille, me thynke I here a tramplyng. » Again, although the story as a whole moves rapidly, individual sentences unfold slowly. Similar paradoxes of indirection may be found in More's diction, syntax, and figures.

The diction of the passage may be considered first. In addition to the widely discussed term *pauice*, other words here belong to military diction. Thus *scrye* (an aphetic form of *ascry* or *escry*) can refer to a sudden, loud noise, an attacker's shout, or an attack itself. Likewise a *Scurer* or scourer (also aphetic, from *descouvreor)* is a scout or « discoverer. » Other words in the tale derive from the same jargon : *capitaynes, fore front, camp, fence, host, array,* and *armye.* Because many of these words have extended their boundaries since More's day, one needs to be reminded that he uses them precisely, not only evocatively. They are the names for the things described. They impart a sense of the military camp without being a soldier's slang. More's diction is not polished, however. A soldier would doubtless use Antony's reduced forms : *scrye* not *escrye, scurer* not *descouvreor.* Thus More's terminology is both precise and colloquial.

Besides the aphetic forms just mentioned other words point toward the colloquial. For instance, *glimeryng* and *tramplyng* (both frequentatives of doubtful etymology) probably occur most often in informal language. The same may be said for words like *whelp* or *ass* and for expressions like *stone still* or *as even as a thread.* Yet Antony also uses more learned terms : *perceive, rumour, imagination,* or, the focus of the

dialogue, *tribulation.* In general, however, there are here few words of Romance or Latinate derivation, the typically learned classes of English diction. [12]

I have called More's language here precise as well as colloquial. Thus *glimeryng* is more specific than *light.* A particular sound is named by *tramplyng,* and a *pauice* is a precisely delineated sort of shield. To say *lions whelpe* or, even more, *sely rude roryng asse* defines the reader's mental picture more clearly than saying *lion* or *ass* alone would, though the broader terms would make Antony's point. Other words in the tale, of course, are more abstract. The recurring verb *perceive* does not name a precise kind of sensation. *Beasts,* too, is a broad term. But More must make these terms general, for the whole tale demonstrates the imprecision of our eyes and ears. If in the dark we heard an ass instead of perceiving a beast, we might be less fearful.

The syntax of this story also reveals an indirect approach. The sentences are long and complex. Of eighteen real sentences, only four are simple. All the rest qualify their nucleus of meaning with reported speech or subordinate clauses. The ninth sentence is a fair specimen of More's practice. Rearrangement can show its hypotactic structure :

> His felowes beyng examynid said
> that he was somwhat prikkyd forth before them,
> & cam so fast bak to tell it them,
> that they thought it
> rather tyme to make hast
> & give warnyng to the camp /
> than to go nere vnto them /

Hypotaxis like this segments the continuum of life, placing emphasis less on discrete experiences than on the relations among them. Thus the sentence quoted gives not only the scouts' report of what they did but also the reasons for their action and the circumstances under which they filed their report.

Hypotaxis is a recurring feature of More's English prose, stemming, no doubt, from deep immersion in the periods of Latin and Greek. But frequency does not make complex sentences simply a mannerism. In this tale hypotaxis serves definite purposes. First, it allows Antony to be accurate about events without telling them in chronological sequence. More important, complex sentences readily create suspense. Antony delays crucial words until the end of a period, as in the sentence revealing the roaring lion for an ass. Such suspense implies a roundabout or stylized method of telling a story, for pace and control

are attributes of narratives not events. By giving Antony's tale such qualities, More achieves psychological and aesthetic effects not otherwise obtainable.

The subtle stylization of More's sentences rewards scrutiny. It begins with doublets, two words of different etymology or formality applied to the same things : « a rumour & a scrye, » « what suretye / or what likelyhed, » « bere down & ouerwhelme, » or, a triplet, « espied & percevid & sene. » (The triplet reminds us, of course, that the tale is about perception.) Subtler in effect are the places where More extends the doubling to whole phrases : « And when they came thether, they found that the *greate ferefull army* of the Turkes so soberly *comyng on,* turnid (god bethankyd) into a *fayre long hedge standyng* evyn stone stil. » The careful parallelism -- two adjectives, a noun, a present participle -- and the alliterating *st* cluster bring a sense of closure to the end of the tale. A rhythm equally marked closes Antony's moralization of the story. Once again, it may be helpful to reflect structure by altering typography :

> How be it as the prophet sayth.
> he that faythfully dwellith in the hope of godes help/
> the pauice of his trouth shall
> so fence hym round about /
> that be it an asse / colt/
> or a lions whelpe /
> or a rok of stone
> or a miste /
> *Non timebit a timore nocturno* /
> The nightes feare therof shall he nothyng nede to drede /

Here again More employs relative and subordinate clauses and postpones the climactic word « drede » until the last instant. Again he mixes precise military terms with colloquial words : *pauice* and *fence* stand near *asse* and *colt*. Again, too, he creates parallelism of whole clauses, Latin balanced against English. Finally, in his list of what the feared object might prove to be, Antony creates a chiasmus. The lesser terrors -- ass, colt, and mist, each monosyllables -- flank the truly fearsome objects, each expressed in a two-beat phrase : « or a lions whelpe / or a rok of stone. » The indirection here gives a fair demonstration of More's rhetorical skill. [12]

II

To this point I have focused on relatively static features of More's style. Perhaps its more dynamic movements will appear more clearly if Antony's story can be contrasted with one told by Tyndale.

Like More, Tyndale had cause to think about tribulation. His *Obedience of a Christian Man,* published a few years before his arrest in 1535, opens by offering comfort to those who fear persecution for reading it. Even if bold readers are « baptised in tribulacions » for their act, Tyndale reasons that they should take heart. [13] Because « God workes backwarde, » some sort of humiliation awaits all faithful people (sig. A5[r]). Tyndale's expansion of this paradox reveals the strong rhythms and pointed contrasts of his best style :

> Iff Gokd promyse riches / the waye therto is pouerte. Whom he loueth him he chasteneth / whom he exalteth / he casteth downe / whom he saveth he damneth fyrst. He bringeth no man to heuen excepte he sende him to helle fyrst. Iff he promise lyfe he sleyeth fyrst / when he byldeth / he casteth all downe fyrst. He is no patcher / he can not bylde on a nother mans foundacion. He will not worke vntyll all be past remedy and brought vnto soch a case / that men may se how that his hande / his power / his mercy / his goodnes and trueth hath wrought all to gether (sig. A5[r]).

Tyndale closes his preface with an admonition to the reader : « Let thy care be to prepare thy selfe with all thy strength for to walke which waie he will have the and to beleve that he will goo with the and assiste the and strength the agenst all tyrauntes and delyver the out of all tribulation » (sig B2[v]). The message here anticipates More's in *A Dialogue of Comfort,* but the style is markedly different.

Truly to measure the narrative styles of More and Tyndale, however, one must match story with story. Beside Antony's tale of the fearful scourer I want to place a more sardonic narrative from Tyndale's *Practice of Prelates.* It is a story about Charlemagne, and, needless to say, Tyndale's purpose in telling it is different from More's in *A Dialogue of Comfort.* The story forms part of an accusation about venal pardons and the unhealthy submission of kings to popes. Nevertheless both this story and More's consider varieties of folly and illusion and thus reward comparison.

Tyndale begins with the incredible assertion that the emperor kept four concubines and « laye with two of his awne doughters therto. » [14] But incest is only the first charge against Charlemagne :

the sayenge is : that in his old age a hore had so bewitched him with a ringe & a perle in it and I wotte what ymagerye grauen therein / that he went a saute after here as a dogge after a bitche / and the dotehed was besyde hym selfe and hole oute of his mynde : in so moche that when the hore was deed he coude not departe from the deed corpŝ / but caused it to be enbaumed & to be caryed with him wother so euer he went / so that all the worlde wondered at him : tyll at the last his lordes accombred with caryenge her from place to place and a shamed that so old a man / so greate an Emperoure and soch a most christen kynge / on whom & whose deades euerye mannes eyes were sette / shuld dote on a deed hore / toke counsell what shuld be the cause. And it was concluded that it must neades be by enchauntement. Then they went vnto the cophyne and opened it and sought and founde this rynge on hir finger : which one of the lordes toke of and put it on his awne finger. When the ringe was of / he commaunded to burye hir / regardinge her no lenger. Neuerthelesse he cast a phantasye vnto this lorde and begane to dote as fast on him / so that he might neuer be oute of syghte : But where oure charles was there must that lorde also be / and what Charles did / that must he be preuye vnto : vntyll that this lorde perceauynge that it came because of this enchaunted ringe / for very payne & tediousness toke and cast it in to a well at Acon in douchlonde. And after that the ringe was in the well the emperoure coude neuer departe from the towne / but in the sayde place where the ringe was cast / though it were a foule marresse / yet he bilt a goodly monasterye in the worshyppe of our ladye and thyther brought reliques / from whence he coude gett them and pardones to sanctefye the place and to make it more hanted. And there he lyeth & is a saynte / as right is. For he did for Christes vicare as moch as the greate Turcke for Mahomete. [15]

Many quantifiable features of style in this tale do not differ much from the same features in More's. Real sentences in both tend to be long, twenty-five or thirty words. In Tyndale's story the percentage of words deriving from French or Latin is only slightly higher than in More's (11.5% *vs.* 10%), and some of these words are bound to the vocabulary of religion that Tyndale must use toward the end of the anecdote. He like More affects doublets. Charlemagne is « besyde hym selfe and hole oute of his mynde, » the lords are « accombred ... and a shamed, » and the unlucky lord who keeps the ring suffers from « payne & tediousness. »

Yet few stories could resemble each other less than these do. Tyndale's words, rhythms, and strategies are all blunter, more direct and immediate than More's. Tyndale wants to debunk the practice of prelates, and he aims directly at that goal. More's tale is also directed toward a goal, for Antony wishes to allay Vincent's fears. But More, as

Martz has argued, follows a roudabount path toward his goal. Like Polonius, if more wisely, he follows « assays of bias, » by indirections finding directions out.

Terminology provides the first evidence for this distinction between prose styles. By comparison with More's, the terms Tyndale chooses are strongly evaluative. From the start he calls Charlemagne's mistress a whore [16]. The blunt condemnation in the term coincides with the effects of other words and phrases in the story : « dotehed » or dotard, « foule marresse », or « as a dogge after a bitche. » That Tyndale's emphasis is deliberate becomes plain in the redundancies of a sentence like this : « when the hore was deed he coude not departe from the deed corps. » While the phrase *dead corpse* was not necessarily tautologous for Tyndale, he gets tautology by using « deed » twice. Nearly all of the terms cited allow Tyndale to judge the actors in his story. From the outset Charlemagne is portrayed as a gullible fool.

More's tale, on the other hand, avoids evaluative terms almost entirely. Antony has no opprobrious epithets for the Turks. He even praises the « long range all in good ordre » of their formation. Neither does Antony condemn the frightened scourer for raising a false alarm. He chooses instead a gentle way to reveal the man's error. He does not say the scourer *mistook* a hedge for an army, but that « the greate ferefull army ... *turnid* (god bethankyd) *into* a fayre long hedge » -- a metamorphosis. More does not judge. Even the phrase « sely rude roryng asse » is more descriptive than evaluative. [17] One comes aways from the tale believing that the soldiers have been foolishly credulous, but that belief rises from the narrative itself, not from judgments upon it. Tyndale tells : More shows.

In his prose rhythms Tyndale also seems to hurry toward his goal by the shortest route, while More ambles along the assay of bias. Tyndale's prose creates powerful currents. Parallel stresses follow one another rapidly, pausing only to drive home insistent verbs : « Then they *went* vnto the cophyne and *opened* it and *sought* and *found* this rynge on hir finger » or, another rhythm, « *where* oure charles was *there* must that lorde also be / and *what* Charles did / *that* must be he preuye vnto » (emphasis added). Few sentences in *A Dialogue of Comfort* pound out their rhythms so strongly. Instead More often adds subordinate words and softening syllables, as in the following sentence, distributing along the whole period stresses that might otherwise cluster together :

> for while there walke in that night, *not onely* the lions whelps, *but ouer that* all the bestes of the wode beside / the beest that we *here* rore in the dark night of tribulacion, & *fere* it for a lyon, we sometyme *fynd* well afterward in the day, that it was *no lyon* at all / *but a* sely rude roryng *asse*. (Emphasis added.)

By using an impersonal transformation, « there walke ... whelps, » instead of the kernel sentence *whelps walk*, More is able to stretch and complicate this sentence. Adverbial phrases like « in the dark night of tribulacion » or « well afterward in the day » add to the effect, letting the sentence balloon until the pin-prick of the final deflating word. Both More and Tyndale, then, find characteristic rhythms, but once again More takes a longer way than Tyndale has patience for.

III

The figures of speech in these stories reveal even more radical differences between the prose styles of More and Tyndale. Each tale has but one formal simile. Antony's scourer says the rank of advancing Turks was « as even as thread. » For his part Tyndale reports that Charlemagne, having received the prostitute's ring, « went a saute after her as a dogge after a bitche. » [18] This one simile marks the limit of figuration in Tyndale's story. His aim in the work is to decry the practices of prelates and their vassals. To reach that aim he finds a scandalous tale about Charlemagne, calls him a dotard, and, lest any should miss the point, brings the emperor down to the level of a rutting dog. That done, Tyndale sets metaphor aside.

The scourer's simile, on the other hand, scarcely hints at the highly figurative operation of More's tale. Some familiar features of the dialogue are worth remembering in this context. First, Antony's story is itself an extended moral allegory by which he hopes to define the nature of false fear. Moreover, the story is only one of several approaches taken toward such a definition. Just before this anecdote, for example, Antony tells Vincent, « Now wote you well that yf a man walke thowrow the wode in the night, many thynges may make hym a ferd, of which in the day he wold not be a ferd a whit. For in the night euery bush to hym that waxeth ones a ferd semeth a thefe. » (*CW12*, p. 109/24f.). As an analogue the story of the false alarm then folrows, and Antony returns to the image of dark woods toward the end. There More summons, from Psalm 102, the image of young lions roaring to God for food. In splendid complexity, however, that image also evokes Aesop's

ass in the lion's skin and Peter's lion as a figure for Satan seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5.8). But More follows the assay of bias even further. Phrases here and there in the scourer's tale remind us that the vocabulary of lions, asses, rocks, mists, Turks, standing hedges, Hungarian outriders, and the shadows of night refers allegorically to spiritual events. Concerned not with night but with « the dark night of tribulacion, » Antony seeks to fortify Vincent against pusillanimity, not lions -- or asses. Indeed, as Martz contends, in the dialogue More takes so indirect a path that we may not see until the end his unwavering direction, a fortified spirit. [19]

Unlike Tyndale the literalist, More was at home with riddles and metaphors. Their use affords him the « many-sidedness » and « elbow-room » Lewis describes. By placing an army story in several contexts at once (one of them the context of other tall tales in Book II), More uncovers its spiritual significance. The scourer's mishap even emblematizes the path to knowledge by way of indirection. Because he mistook a hedge for the Turkish army and discovered his error only later, the scourer presumably learned something about fear and perception, something that he could not have learned so well if he had seen clearly all along.

Thus More's meaning follows the bias of his style. Bias does not imply imprecision, of course. No mystic, Antony sees the objects of this world clearly and knows their names. More, too, knows that the Psalmist's lions have no literal connection with those of Aesop or St. Peter. But he links them in a metaphor, applying all three to the comfort of souls. The obvious stylistic success of *A Dialogue of Comfort* thus invites readers to understand, in Tyndale's phrase, « the order and processe of the texte » more broadly than Tyndale himself, for all his intensity, would have done.

Auburn University James Andrew CLARK

NOTES

1. C.S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 192.

2. Louis L. Martz, « More as Author : The Virtues of Digression, » *Moreana*, 62 (1979), 107.

3. Desiderius Erasmus, *On Copia of Words and Ideas,* ed. and trans. Donald B. King and H. David Rix (Milwaukee : Marquette University Press, 1963), p. 30. The corresponding passage will be found in *Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto University Press), vol. 24 (1978), p. 337.

4. Elizabeth Frances Rogers, ed., *The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1947), pp. 530, 542, 557.

5. William Tyndale, *The obedience of a Christen man* (Marburg : Hans Luft, 1528), sigs. C32^{v}-C33^{r}. This is *STC* 24446. I quote from a microfilm of the copy in the Bodleian Library ; printer's contractions have been silently expanded. M.E. Kronenberg has identified « Hans Luft » with Johannes Hoochstraten of Antwerp, see *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer,* vol. 8 of *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More,* henceforth referred to as *CW* (Yale University Press, 1973), Appendix B, by Anthea Hume, pp. 1065f.

6. Thomas More, *The History of King Richard III,* ed. Richard S. Sylvester, (*CW2,* 1963), p. 81.

7. Thomas More, *Utopia,* ed. E. Surtz and J.H. Hexter, (*CW4,* 1965), pp. 98-102, 128.

8. Louis L. Martz, « The Design of More's *Dialogue of Comfort,* » *Moreana,* 15-16 (1967), 339.

9. Lee Cullen Khanna, « Truth and Fiction in *A Dialogue of Comfort,* » *Moreana* 65-66 (1980), 62.

10. Thomas More, *A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation,* ed. Louis L. Martz and Frank Manley, (*CW12,* 1976), p. 108.

11. In this story 31 of 542 words used derive from Romance sources, 21 from Latin or Latinate French. The combined total of 52 words contributes about 10% of More's diction here, a figure not extraordinarily high. Etymological information is taken from *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (1973).

12. The final sentence of this story also initiates More's refrain on the pavice of truth. Even here, because the word has been used twice before in the chapter, *pauice* comes as something of a refrain.

13. Tyndale, *obedience,* sig. B1^{v}. The next references in the text are to this book.

14. William Tyndale, *The practyse of Prelates* Marburg [for Antwerp, see note 6 supra] : 1530), sig. C4^{r}. This is *STC* 24465. I quote from a microfilm of the copy in the Huntington Library ; printer's contractions have been silently expanded.

15. Tyndale, *Practyse,* sigs. C4^{r}-C5^{r}.

16. While *prostitute* is not recorded as a noun before the seventeenth century Tyndale could have chosen *harlot,* a word which he used in translating Luke 15:30 : « Thy sonne ... which hath devoured thy goodes with harlootes. » In the same verse Wyclif has *whores.* See *OED* Harlot, *sb.,* sense 5.c. *OED* suggests that in the sixteenth century *harlot* was the less offensive term.

17. In the sixteenth century, *seely* often means « deserving of pity or sympathy » (*SOED* sense 4) or « insignificant, mean, poore, feeble » (*SOED* sense 5). According to Germain Marc'hadour, More uses the word most often in relation to the « silly souls » in *Purgatory,* in whose defence he wrote his *Supplication of Souls.* Moreover, *rude,* when used of animals, could mean simply « irrational » (*SOED* sense A.I.c.). Thus More's judgment of the ass in this tale is likely to be more sympathetic than the words at first suggest.

18. *A salt* and its twin *assaut* both derive from French *à saut.* literally « unto leaping, » and signify sexual arousal. See *OED* Assaut.

19. Martz, « The Design of More's *Dialogue of Comfort* » pp. 339, 341-42.

★ ★ ★

In ***CENTERING : Your Guide to Inner Growth*** (New York, 1978 : a Warner Destiny Book which has gone through various editions since), Sanders G. Laurie and Melvin J. Tucker exploit Thomas More not as a paragon of « wholeness » and integration, nor as a master of meditation or « comfort », but as the man who loved to quote Mat 10:16, and did not shrink from describing Christ as « that holy, wholesome serpent that devoureth all the poisoned serpents of hell » (p. 241), and from applying to the Blessed Sacrament the figure of the brazen serpent (Num 21:8-9).

★ ★ ★

In ***BENEDICT'S DISCIPLES,*** ed. by David Hugh Farmer (Leominster, 1980), Dame Veronica Buss mentions More as a signer of the commission appointed by Wolsey to provide Glaston with a new abbot : Richard Whiting was elected in 1525, martyred in 1539, beatified in 1895. John Beche, abbot of Colchester, called Fisher and More « the greatest ornaments of Church and State », whose killers were « tyrants and bloodsuckers » (p. 242) : this was a major count in the indictment which led to his execution on 1 Dec. 1539. The book ends with Dame Frideswide Sandeman's study of Dame Gertrude More, the martyr's great-great-granddaughter (pp. 263-81).

G.M.