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# My Dear Peter

## THE *ARS POETICA* AND HERMENEUTICS FOR MORE'S *UTOPIA*

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*Moreanum*,  
BP 808  
49005 Angers  
1983

Our cover reproduces the border by Hans Holbein which Johann Froben used to frame More's letter to Giles in his two editions of *Utopia*, and the title page in the second edition (Nov. 1518). The P. Giles on the back cover is from the magnificent color plate in '*The King's Good Servant*': *Sir Thomas More*, by J.B. Trapp and Hubertus Schulte Herbrüggen (London : National Portrait Gallery, 1977) p. 53.

To the Memory of  
Thomas W. Serviss

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Since this study of the letter which Thomas More addressed to Peter Giles and placed before *Utopia* has its own preliminary summary statement, I can reiterate my present focus very briefly. Treating the letter as a poetics and hermeneutics for *Utopia*, *My Dear Peter* is concerned with what I have come to think of as an aesthetics of honest deception, designed by More to exercise the mind, imagination, and moral sense of the reader. I have been especially interested in More's language, in the movements of mind and the play of imagination it reveals, and in the interactions of the writer and the reader with the text. Part I provides an overview, Part II a detailed reading that emphasizes the complex process More created through the generative transformations of his words. Although the questions I have asked are framed by a literary perspective, they presuppose and build upon a substantial body of research on matters Utopian by philosophers, historians, and biographers. I owe a general debt, too, to the vigorous debate about the nature of a work of art, and the ways we experience it, that characterizes so much current critical discourse. But I have tried to rethink these issues in the light of material accessible to the Renaissance writer and reader. Finally, I should note that *My Dear Peter* is only part of a longer, ongoing study of More's *Utopia* as paradox. When the reportorial More challenged Raphael Hythlodæus' description of Utopian life at the end of Book II, objecting in particular to « their common life and subsistence -- without any exchange of money, » on the grounds that this « utterly overthrows all the nobility, magnificence, splendor, and majesty which are, in the estimation of the common people, ('ut publica est opinio') the true glories and ornaments of the commonwealth, » he echoed the usual definition of the formal paradox -- a defence of something contrary to received opinion -- by reversing it. As author, then, More obliquely signalled some part of the intricate dialogue and paradoxical vision that I am continuing to explore. In the interim, I hope that this study will prove fruitful, to borrow a metaphor that More himself used in his prefatory letter to Peter Giles.

I cannot write about More's letter to Giles, which so conspicuously invites response from its readers and *amici*, without acknowledging the generous help and support I received in the course of this project. Ward Allen, Germain Marc'hadour, and Clarence Miller read an earlier draft of the manuscript in the light of their own special know-

ledge of More. Joyce Berger, Kathryn Cook, Kathleen Falvey, James McCutcheon, and Daniel Stempel brought more general questions to their reading of my text, as did Esther Gilman, who was indefatigable as my research assistant. On March 9, 1981, I presented a departmental colloquium on « My Dear Peter » ; the monograph is the richer for the incisive comments and questions of my colleagues. I am indebted to the holdings and the staffs of the following libraries : The British Library, the Warburg Institute, the Folger, the Newberry and the Huntington Libraries, and Hamilton Library, the University of Hawaii. The research and first draft of the monograph were made possible by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship I was awarded, and I want to reiterate my gratitude for this fellowship now. Finally, I owe the Abbé Marc'hadour a special thank you for his many good offices as the editor of *Moreana* and this series of monographs. It seems singularly appropriate that *My Dear Peter* should appear under the auspices of an association made up of *amici Mori*.

Honolulu, Hawaii  
February, 1982

*Elizabeth  
J. McCutcheon*

Now whyle he was tellynge her thys tale, she nothyng wente about to consyder hys wordes / but as she was wont in all other thynges, studyed all the whyle nothyng ellys, but what she myghte saye to the contrary. And whan he hadde wyth mych worke and ofte interruptyng, brought at laste hys tale to an ende, well quod she to hym as Tyndale sayth to me, I wyll argue lyke and make you a lyke sample. My mayde hath yender a spynnyng whele / or els bycause all your reason resteth in the roundenes of the world, come hyther thou gyrl, take out thy spyndle and brynge me hyther the wharle. Lo syr ye make ymagynacyons I can not tell you what. But here is a wharle and it is rounde as the worlde is / and we shall not nede to ymagyn an hole bored thorow, for it hath an hole bored thorow in dede. But yet bycause ye go by ymagynacyons / I wyll ymagyne wyth you.

More : *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer* (CW 8, 605).

*Audrey.* I do not know what « poetical » is : is it honest in deed and word ? is it a true thing ?  
*Touchstone.* No, truly ; for the truest poetry is the most feigning....  
Shakespeare : *As You Like It*.

## Part I : An Overview.

Ever since it was first published in 1516, St. Thomas More's *Utopia* has invited resolution and resisted it. <sup>1</sup> Bringing perennially challenging ideas about the common good and the « republica » to life, and testing values as they are professed and practiced, it delights, baffles, and provokes, remaking itself for each generation and each reader. It has been fruitfully read in the light of the most diverse disciplines, and interpreted in countless ways that are demonstrably contradictory one to another. But it still eludes us -- one sign of the inherent and profoundly life-giving paradoxicality of the text. Like many other Renaissance artists who used paradox, only more so, More played seriously with human understanding in *Utopia*, stimulating the mind and the conscience through an exercise of wonder. <sup>2</sup> Paradox enabled him to evoke rather than to explain ideas, values, and attitudes, to explore problems non-systematically and wittily, wholly to involve his readers, startling them into a search for truth and insisting upon some reaction (since otherwise a paradox is not really completed). It enabled him to be engaged and disengaged, seriously playful and playfully philosophical at once, shifting modes and moods at will.

It would be both misguided and impossible to explain away the ambiguities, contradictions, and formal paradoxes of *Utopia*. We could, however, clarify some part of More's intentions and illuminate the subtle workings of his consciousness if we had his own poetics and hermeneutics. The letter to Peter Giles which immediately precedes the first of the two books we call *Utopia* is just such an *ars poetica*. As much a work of art as *Utopia* itself, and an essential part of it, this letter conceals a poetics which it invites us to discover, embodying the ambiguities and fictions and adumbrating the formal paradoxes of the larger work, to which it is homologous. For what the Renaissance would have called the groundplot or controlling invention <sup>3</sup> of letter and *Utopia* alike is a dense tangle of sometimes complementary, sometimes truly antithetical, opposites, which are duplicated and reduplicated on every level of the text, from single word -- *Utopia* -- to idea to largest structure. Like *Utopia*, then, whose first book (or most of it) is a dialogue between different, carefully balanced points of view, further complicated by flashbacks with lively dialogues of their own, its second book a description, praise, and defence of a paradoxical Noplace by an equally paradoxical narrator, and like *Utopia*, an often inverted mirror image



In his Antwerp garden, ambassador More sits between the bearded Hythlodæus and Peter Giles. To the left, his pupil-servant John Clement.

(Woodcut from the third edition of *Utopia*, Basel 1518, ascribed to Ambrosius Holbein).

of a world already upside down, <sup>4</sup> this letter is composed of a controlled series of apparent and real contradictions from the smallest scale to the largest, surprising, puzzling, and demanding a response, in some sense an « overturning » or weighing, on our part.

### Themes and Strategies.

Quintessentially humanistic and uniquely Morean, this letter is almost as familiar as the *Utopia* itself, and often, though unfortunately not always, is printed with it. <sup>5</sup> Two early editions, March and November 1518, handsomely set off its salutation and first words with a fine woodcut border by Hans Holbein, <sup>6</sup> thereby signalling its special importance to its elite and learned audience of fellow humanists and statesmen or « governors, » including Erasmus, Giles, Busleyden, Budé, Desmairais, and Le Sauvage on the continent, and Wolsey, Tunstal, Warham, Colet, Lupset, Bonvisi, Linacre, and Ruthall at home. More recently, the letter has been viewed from a biographical and historical perspective. <sup>7</sup> It has been carefully read in the context of the other letters, the poems, and the glosses constituting the parerga with which More and his colleagues, in some sense conspirators and very much an in-group, surrounded his « libellus, » little book. <sup>8</sup> Parts of it have been isolated and pressed into the service of a specific literary or philosophical interpretation of *Utopia*. <sup>9</sup> And one critic has astutely pointed to the division of the « total work » of *Utopia* into what he calls « three moments, » this prefatory letter being the first one. <sup>10</sup>

Even so, the letter continues, for the most part, to be read in pieces, and at (or close to) the face value of the fictions it creates, as if it were no less, but also little more, than the usual Renaissance preface and a clever exercise in verisimilitude. Admittedly More does give us some of the information we would normally expect to find about the circumstances of composition : a who, what, when, and how, if not a why. At the same time he leads us into the text, developing his guise of writing a letter of transmittal to a fellow-auditor for an « historia », a narrative, told by the elusive Raphael Hythlodæus, which he is not sure he ought to publish. In these ways, then, he writes what could be thought of as equivalent to the introductory letter and the letter of dedication he could have written directly only by jeopardizing his fiction of a merely reportorial self. Indeed, this letter is sometimes referred to as if it were a letter of dedication, although actually More did not dedicate the *Utopia* to anyone. Later, then, he is free to use it as an indirect bid for atten-

tion, writing in January 1517 to a member of the Court that he « had had it in mind to betroth my *Utopia* to Cardinal Wolsey alone (if my friend Peter had not, without my knowledge, as you know, ravished her of the first flower of her maidenhood), if indeed I should betroth her to anyone and not rather keep her with me ever unwed, or perhaps consecrate her to Vesta and initiate her into Vesta's sacred fires. » <sup>11</sup>

The material that More does give us in his prefatory letter is curiously selective, moreover. Its near silence on the subject matter of the work it is introducing and its veiled mention of any purpose are telling in themselves, and oddly atypical of the early Renaissance letter of introduction, whether we think of its usual form or of an oblique one, like Erasmus' letter of dedication to More in his *Moriae Encomion*. <sup>12</sup> And his letter is not only fictional, despite the uses it makes of actual facts ; it is ambiguous and paradoxical, for all the apparent easiness of its style and its insistent concern for its truthfulness to the « report » that follows. Only when we attend to the text and question the assertions that More makes as the putative reporter of the narrative and the implications of the fictions he creates can we begin to see more precisely the method that the authorial More is following. It is as if we had two letters, one written by the putative reporter, the other by the author. These are sometimes parallel, sometimes overlapping, occasionally identical, but frequently counterpoised. Requiring us to catch constant readjustments within the reportorial self, who radically understates his own role as narrator and plays his own complicated game, and between his reportorial and authorial selves, More creates an aesthetic and interpretive groundwork for *Utopia* by extreme indirection.

The letter *is* a preface to *Utopia*, then, but in more and different ways than it purports to be. Behind its fictions and the convolutions and contradictions of the text are the necessary coordinates of a full-fledged *ars poetica* : the inter-relationships of writer, work, world, and reader as Meyer Abrams has defined them in his *Mirror and the Lamp*. <sup>13</sup> Indeed the thoughts of both the reportorial and the authorial More revolve (albeit differently) about the same questions : the relationship of the scribe/writer to the work, the formal craft of its making, the ontological status of the narrative, differences between a bad reader or critic and a good one, and reader-writer-text relationships. And if we stand far enough away from the text we can discover a surprisingly logical and progressive unfolding of just these topics in just this order. But these topics as topics are Abrams' and mine, not More's, who has chosen to dramatize and fictionalize them and paradoxically deny and otherwise

conceal them within the framework of a letter to a dear friend. Eschewing theory and too-simple generalization here, just as he does in the larger *Utopia* through the dialogue of Book I and the portrayal of *Utopia in situ* in Book II, More remained faithful to the fabrications and the teasing and paradoxical complexity of his own method when he added this prefatory letter to his *Utopia*.

Reading this letter, and finding an *ars poetica* in it, gives us, in turn, the preliminary exercise we need to read the whole of *Utopia* and to play *Utopia*.<sup>14</sup> The letter creates a hermeneutics as we read it, teaching us how to read the larger work. Such a teaching is at once a playing, a teasing, and a testing -- in Renaissance terms, an exercise of wit. More does not tell us what he is doing. Speaking as a candid and conscientious reporter, indeed, he will deny it or create leads which are both true and false, in these and other ways making strenuous demands upon his readers. But he does not appear to do so, treating his assertions and fabrications with wide-eyed literalism, candor, and seeming gravity and plainness, while signalling the hypothetical, fictive, and contradictory nature of these same assertions through ambiguities in the very language which, read at another level of abstraction, establishes the « facts » or otherwise convinces. At every step along the way, in other words, he brings us up short or knocks us off balance, asking us (indirectly) to mediate between opposites, real and apparent, in the text, in the worlds within his fictions, in life, and in our selves. But though he causes us to « fall, »<sup>15</sup> he also allows us to recover our equilibrium, at least temporarily. At once logical and non-logical, he invites us to make our own discoveries on axes of thought established by him. He is also, of course, very witty, at times dauntingly so, for his poetics and hermeneutics are just where they should be, in accordance with Renaissance notions of decorum : in a prefatory letter.<sup>16</sup> But they have gone largely unrecognized or have been fragmented and subject to misinterpretation because he has so brilliantly, if deviously, disguised them.

Such delightful and infuriating inquiry and serious play outperforms even the games of Erasmus' *Moria*, More's namesake. It is as if More has wholly realized the general Renaissance fascination with the cryptic and mysterious and a more specifically humanistic delight in deliberate, often comic and witty mystification, together with an equally humanistic preoccupation with education, grammar, and rhetoric as tools to discover the potential and the limits of the human condition.<sup>17</sup> We also have to reckon with More's special love of play and paradox

and his sense of poetry or fiction (the terms are interchangeable)<sup>18</sup> as furnishing « a good mother wyt. » As he points out in the course of a long exchange in *A Dialogue Concernynge Heresydes* (1529) :

Now as the hande is the more nymble by the vse of some feates, and the legges and fete more swyfte & sure by custome of goynge and rennyng, and the hole body the more wyldy and lusty, by some kynde of exercise : so is it no doubt, but that reason is by study, labour, and exercyse of Logike, Philosophy and other liberall artes corroborate & quickened, and that iudgement bothe in them and also in oratours, lawes and storyes muche ryped. And albeit poetes ben with many men taken but for paynted wordes, yet do thei much helpe the iudgement, and make a man among other thynges well furnyshed of one speciall thyng, without which all lernynge is halfe lame. What is that quod he. Mary quod I, a good mother wyt.<sup>19</sup>

This is a typical exchange ; the Morean « I » never tells the younger, naive, and earnest « he » exactly what a « good mother wyt » is, choosing rather to fictionalize and dramatize the experience.<sup>20</sup> But the extended analogy made with the good effects of physical exercise upon the parts of the body and the movement of thought between « paynted wordes » and « good mother wyt » are themselves revelatory. The « paynted wordes » of the poet may well be unreal, artificial, feigned, or disguised -- the speaker makes an ironic concession -- but they are especially able to quicken and develop the judgment and the native intellectual faculty because of the vigorous mental and imaginative exercise they provide.

More's claim is an important one. It answers traditional questions about poetic « deception » and the status and uses of poetry and anticipates the responses of his contemporaries and later Renaissance rhetoricians and critics who valued the *Utopia* as poem or fiction. For Puttenham, for example, the *Utopia* is an instance of historical poesy, resting « all in deuse » rather than in « veritie », and all the more mirthful and useful for being feigned and fabulous.<sup>21</sup> And it is central to his own implicit aesthetic for *Utopia*, to which we shall return in Part II, when we consider the reportorial and authorial More on truth-telling, lying, and « lying. » For now, however, I want to give the last word to Budé. Writing to More in 1518 and complimenting him upon the *ingenium* of his *Utopia*, he proposed changing More's name to *Oxy-*

*morus*, a conceit he liked so much that he ended with « Vale mi Oxy-more. »<sup>22</sup> This letter, then, complements his better-known epistle on the significance of More's *Utopia* (which became part of the *parerga* in the second edition in 1517) by calling attention to More as the master of wit and condensed paradox.

### Peter Giles and Thomas More.

On September 3, 1516, More wrote to Erasmus, « I am sending you my 'Nowhere,' which is nowhere well written. I have added a prefatory epistle to my friend, Peter » (« praescripsi epistolam ad Petrum meum »).<sup>23</sup> Giving us, incidentally, the only date we can attach to this letter to Peter Giles, and revealing his concern for the style he has used by his own overly modest disclaimer, More thus articulates the basic guise and the frame for his *ars poetica*. He writes as to a good friend, exploiting a classical form which was dear to all the humanists -- the familiar epistle. A personal and private form, associated with the study, this was thought of, in Demetrius' classic formulation, as a conversation carried on in absence between good friends, and as a gift, « designed to be the heart's good wishes in brief, »<sup>24</sup> reasons enough for its popularity among the humanists, who valued friendship so highly. It is also a coterie form, allowing More to take almost for granted a network of relationships and shared values, social, intellectual, aesthetic, and ethical. He had no need, then, to hammer at points which were a matter of common concern. Indeed, it would have been indecorous on his part to have done so, although there is an obvious limit : More had a larger audience in mind as well. There is a less obvious limit too : Peter Giles -- in part standing in for Erasmus, whom More could not have addressed directly without revealing much more of his game than he wished to do -- was not quite as close a friend as More's language and stance seem to suggest. In any case, we need to consider the addressee/addressees, addressor/addressors, and relationships between and among them and thus recover the context More largely assumes as he fictionalizes both Peter Giles and himself and creates his audience through Giles.<sup>25</sup>

Peter Giles, the first and immediate addressee of More's letter, was the chief secretary of the city of Antwerp and a humanist, editor, and patron of the arts. He was a particularly good friend of Erasmus, and it was through Erasmus that More met Giles while abroad on his first (« Utopian ») embassy in 1515.<sup>26</sup> Typically, More praises him hyperbolically at the beginning of *Utopia* (48/2-11), describing him as

« a native of Antwerp, an honorable man of high position in his home town yet worthy of the very highest position, being a young man distinguished equally by learning and character ; for he is most virtuous and most cultured, to all most courteous, but to his friends so open-hearted, affectionate, loyal, and sincere that you can hardly find one or two anywhere to compare with him as the perfect friend on every score. His modesty is uncommon ; no one is less given to deceit, and none has a wiser simplicity of nature. Besides, in conversation he is so polished and so witty without offense that his delightful society and charming discourse largely took away my nostalgia and made me less conscious than before of the separation from my home, wife, and children to whom I was exceedingly anxious to get back, for I had then been more than four months away » (49/3-16). He praises him more succinctly in a letter written in 1516 to Erasmus, who was Giles' intellectual mentor, thereby complimenting them both : « But in all my travels I had no greater good fortune than the society of Pieter Gillis, your host in Antwerp, such a good scholar and so amusing and modest and such a good friend, that I swear I would cheerfully barter a good part of my fortune for the sole pleasure of his company. »<sup>27</sup> In fact, More did something better. He made Giles an integral part of his Utopian fiction, turning him into Raphael Hythlodæus' sponsor and a young humanist and governor who was deeply, if somewhat naively, concerned with the well-being of the state and the importance of good councilors. Here, as throughout *Utopia*, the naïveté is part of More's game ; Giles was already an experienced administrator, but he was younger than either More or Erasmus. More thus repaid him, and through him Erasmus, for their efforts as conspirators and co-editors of *Utopia*, and for all that their friendship meant to him.

Quentin Matsys' famous diptych of Erasmus and Giles, commissioned by them in 1517 as a gift for More,<sup>28</sup> is an elegant visualization of what these humanists meant by friendship. As Erasmus points out in a letter dedicating his *Parabolae* (1514) to Giles : « [Our] idea of friendship rests wholly in a meeting of minds and the enjoyment of studies in common. »<sup>29</sup> This virtually glosses More's letter as well as the portrait, where both men are painted as in their studies and are accompanied by books associated with them (and More) and with their efforts to recover the classics, both secular and sacred. Erasmus, portrayed as the meditative scholar, a second Jerome, is just beginning to write his paraphrase upon St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, as he was in fact -- like More, Matsys takes pleasure in trompe l'oeil effects as he fictional-



zes and frames life. Balancing this is a portrait of Giles as humanist-administrator and friend to learning. The lettered volumes behind him -- Plutarch, Seneca, Suetonius, Curtius Rufus, and Erasmus' own *Institution of a Christian Prince* -- speak to the first role. More interesting still is the way the second role is developed. Giles' right hand partly rests upon and partly points to, perhaps even moves forward, a book inscribed *ANTIBARBARON*, that is, Erasmus' *Antibarbari*, but curiously anachronistic if thought of as a printed copy, since this work was still in manuscript, while his left hand holds a letter from More in which Matsys has reproduced the handwriting, to More's great delight.<sup>30</sup> The angle and projection for the *ANTIBARBARON* are such that the volume appears to be half-offered to Erasmus, and half-offered to the spectator (More, specifically, or us). In this way the diptych becomes a triptych, with More as the honored (although invisible) center, while we as spectators are invited to respond to Giles' gesture. It has been suggested that the title, *ANTIBARBARON*, was a later addition,<sup>31</sup> but More would have known the work in manuscript and the title speaks compellingly to the ongoing role all three men shared as friends and co-defenders of the republic of letters, a major theme of the *Antibarbari*, as it is of the last section of More's prefatory letter. Was it also intended, I wonder, to allude, albeit obliquely, to their community of interests in *Utopia*, in which they had, after all, been so recently involved as joint participants? On a more intimate basis still the letter Giles holds from More in his own handwriting (so that Matsys, like More, serves as the perfect reporter) speaks directly to their friendship, confirming the significance of the familiar epistle for the Renaissance humanists and supplying a context for More's prefatory letter to Giles.

But at the same time that More addresses one dear friend in his prefatory letter, and indirectly addresses another even better friend, Erasmus, he addresses other potential readers of the *Utopia*. So this letter is more public and less personal than it appears to be. In this sense More duplicates a common humanistic practice: the printing of ostensibly personal letters which were often written with at least one eye to publication. Yet there is an important carryover from the not-too-familiar familiarity of the text. The letter courteously invites its readers (other than the boors and fools it excludes) to become More's friends, in the full humanistic sense, by reading *Utopia* and by playing *Utopia*. It invites us to read as friends, moreover, imagining ourselves in an ambiance comparable to that of the Matsys portrait. It is important, then, that we are each addressed singly as « te, » and that Peter himself

is More's « right welbeloued Peter Giles » (p. 1),<sup>32</sup> as Robynson, *Utopia*'s sixteenth-century English translator, renders words which advance a motif much repeated and played upon in the course of the letter.

Like the addressee, the addressor of this letter is more than doubled. For More is here establishing both his reportorial and authorial selves, which helps to explain just why this prefatory letter is the first of the three moments constituting the whole of the Utopian experience. Indeed, this is his major opportunity to do so. In part this is because the emphasis shifts from reporter-author relationships to putative narrator relationships very shortly after we enter Book I (though More does, in fact, exploit the former in his infrequent but crucial appearances in the text, notably towards the end of Book I and at the end of Book II). But we also need to take account of the inherent nature of the familiar letter which (according to Demetrius, amplified by Renaissance theorists) « should abound in glimpses of character. »<sup>33</sup> And as More develops this letter, some revelation of self or soul does occur, but of a subtle and ambiguous sort indeed, the reporter and author alike becoming engaging tricksters while playing at candor and only indirectly revealing the workings of the sophisticated consciousness they share.

It is true that the letter writer appears to be the putative recorder, More, often called persona-More or « Morus. » It is also true that, like other medieval and Renaissance artists, More is fictionalizing himself as he authenticates his fiction by borrowing from life, so that he juxtaposes and, at times, fuses his reportorial and historical selves. But More further plays the reportorial against the authorial self in complex and extremely multivalent and paradoxical ways. By referring to himself as More and claiming to be a mere reporter within a network of fictions which are disguised as facts, More collapses or otherwise conceals or blurs the frames which logically separate different planes of being or levels of abstraction -- in this case the lines or frames separating the supposed reporter from author and both reporter and author from historical self. At the same time, however, More manipulates his language so that he compels us to become aware of the missing, collapsed, or blurred frames and of the author outside the fictions, the reportorial self, the narrators and the fictions as paradoxical.<sup>34</sup> (In aesthetic terms we become aware of the *trompe l'oeil* as *trompe l'oeil*.) More thereby achieves a flexibility of self or selves which has compelled me to abandon the by now customary reference to persona-More as too fixed, rigid, and distant in the conceptions of self and role-playing it assumes.<sup>35</sup>

When Erasmus makes Moria both the subject and the author of her own self-praise in the *Praise of Folly* (which also praises More) he

does something analogous, insofar as he too collapses different levels of abstraction, and insofar as Moria herself, chameleon-like, changes before our eyes.<sup>36</sup> More surely owes something, too, to the Horace of the *Satires*.<sup>37</sup> And there is still another, and in some ways closer literary parallel: the reportorial self of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Both More and Chaucer delight in creating a reportorial self, some part fool, some part *ieron*, who claims to be the plainest of speakers and an intermediary and mere recorder of other peoples' narratives and an interconscientious artists, they magisterially create and control the sophisticated fictions they disclaim. For both, too, much of the humor, wit, irony, and emerging complexity of meaning depends upon the reader's perception of the discrepancy between the self as reporter and the self as narrator and artist, a discrepancy they conceal, feigning naïveté and utter artlessness, and yet, paradoxically, allow their language to reveal. As Chaucer explains, in a passage from his « General Prologue » which raises the same issues about reporting, feigning, and lying that More's prefatory letter does, while it purports to answer them:

But first I pray yow, of youre curteisye,  
That ye n'arete it nat my vileynye,  
Thogh that I pleyntly speke in this mateere,  
To telle yow hir wordes and hir cheere,  
Ne though I speke hir wordes proprely.  
For this ye knowen al so wel as I,  
Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,  
He moot reherce as ny as evere he kan  
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,  
Al speke he never so rudeliche and large,  
Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrewe,  
Or feyne thyng, or fynde wordes newe.<sup>38</sup>

So More's letter, even less directly but emphatically, I should say crucially, speaks to puzzling reader-reporter-narrator-author-text relationships which have bedevilled More criticism. And they really do resist easy or final clarification because of the way he blurs the lines separating his various selves, speaking sometimes as one or two or all three, or counterpoising one to another, or blending selves in various proportions, or varying the distance between and among them, while sliding like quicksilver from role to role. In fact there are moments which defy any separation of selves at the same time that they invite it, and to this extent my use of the terms reportorial and authorial selves is only an attempt to clarify for critical purposes what More deliberately leaves ambiguous.

### Structural Considerations.

Although this letter is related to the dialogue of Book I and the *sermo* of Book II by the narrative voice of the speaker, by the sense of conversation created, by the plain style all three forms traditionally share, and by a common inner dialectic, it is, formally, outside of the two books we usually think of as *Utopia*. But it is indispensable to it --so much so that we can hardly define either reader-writer relationships or the art of *Utopia* without it. The original editorial practice is suggestive here; the marginal glosses which accompany the *Utopia* and carry on a dialogue with the text and other readers begin, not with Book I or with the apparatus in general, but with this prefatory letter, and the separate typography for the marginalia unites the letter visually with the two books which follow it. We are implicitly asked, then, to read the letter as part of *Utopia*, weighing the letter's 122 lines (whose concentrated energy and self-consciousness to some extent make up for their brevity and lack of quantitative weight) against Book I, some eight times as long, and Book II, more than twice as long again.

This, in itself, witnesses to the kinetic and asymmetrical balance of the work as a whole. It is as if More were anticipating later experiments in structure, point of view, and epistolary fiction. In fact he will exploit the fictive potential of the familiar epistle in two later, controversial works: his *Responsio ad Lutherum* and his *Dialogue Concernynge Heresydes*. The letters preceding the *Responsio* frame it and constitute a « prejudicial introduction »; <sup>39</sup> in the *Dialogue* they are an intrinsic part of the preliminary narrative situation and allow More to clarify the roles to be played by the author and the reader. But the feignings of the letter to Peter Giles are more fully imagined still, and complexly dialectical. This letter yields its deeper meanings only if and as we overturn it, and More thus remains true to the implications of the formal paradoxes of the larger *Utopia*. The typical paradox form refuses to complete itself. If it is circular it continues to turn around on itself. Otherwise, it breaks its own form or is reopened in some way, as More reopens *Utopia* at the end of Book II when he comments that « there are many features in the Utopian commonwealth which it is easier for me to wish for in our countries than to have any hope of seeing realized » (247/1-3), after objecting to so many of these features in a speech which is itself open to diverse readings because of its complex ironies and dialectical structure. By adding this prefatory epistle to his already open-ended form, More dramatically extends its boundaries once again, signi-

fificantly just as he obliquely addresses each of us and suggests the part each reader should play.

Among the three parts of the letter, moreover, there is a less dramatic but equally interesting balanced imbalance. Of the 122 lines, More devotes 41 1/2 (just over one third) to what I am calling reporter-text relationships and the formal craft of the work (the link between them implicitly revealing a « pragmatic » or audience-directed critical orientation, to use Meyer Abrams' terminology),<sup>40</sup> almost 47 lines to its ontological status, and only 34 lines to reader-writer-text relationships. Actually he glides from one topic to the next in typical Renaissance fashion : hence the half line. Indeed the letter is seamless by its own rhetorical norms ; significantly the beginning of both the second and third sections is « *quanquam*, » *and yet* (40/11 ; 42/24), quite literally adding to and so reopening apparently completed ideas. But the 47 line middle does speak to a metaphysical interest which the web of fictions does much to conceal (at least at first or second reading). Moreover, this is the formal structural center of the letter, read as fiction or poem. In sharp contrast to many early seventeenth century poetic structures, which often postpone their major turn to the end, sixteenth-century ones may peak in the center as well.<sup>41</sup> What, then, do we make of the apparent slighting of the third topic : reader-writer-text relationships ? Again, and as so often, More is having it both ways. From the point of view the line count provides, More *is* particularly interested in metaphysical questions. But his own ambiguities and paradoxes, which necessarily involve the reader and insist upon some response, continuously allow him to address reader-writer-text relationships without appearing to do so.

More's « development » of these three groups of topics, really an unfolding, is equally paradoxical. He unfolds or otherwise explores and evokes his topics by loops of thought which override their own logical categories and the formal rhetorical divisions of the letter<sup>42</sup> to turn around on themselves like cartwheels, denying and asserting themselves simultaneously. Just as a loop of thought completes itself, moreover, it reopens, in this way microscopically mirroring both the dialogic circles throughout Book I of the *Utopia* and the internal convolutions of Raphael's account in Book II. But, despite the many times that the thought revolves around itself, it simultaneously moves forward, carrying reporter, author, and Peter Giles and each of us as readers from beginning through middle to end of the letter, just as, later, we are moved towards, into, and out of *Utopia*. In other words, the cartwheels

also move in a line. It is as if the letter were danced. At any given moment a dancer may move circularly or turn backwards or fall and recover, but larger and larger patterns form before us as the dancer moves through space. In fact More's thought and style are so wholly kinetic and muscular, so daringly imbalanced yet balanced, so apparently spontaneous yet focused and controlled, so much a matter of high energy seemingly effortlessly expended, that they demand the language of dance or a similarly kinetic aesthetic form : I shall later speak of *Utopia* as a mobile.

The imbalanced balances and the different kinds of opposition which characterize the letter's large structure are truer still and more exciting in its fine texture : the words, syntax, tropes, and figures of its rhetoric and poetic. In the twentieth century we have been so attracted to large structure that we have sometimes neglected or slighted the small, especially when the ideas are as intrinsically challenging as they are in *Utopia* and when, too, the work may be read only in translation. But it is dangerous to neglect style and language in any text, and even more so in a Renaissance one, both because the sixteenth century was so fascinated by microscopic patterns that it reversed our own priorities,<sup>43</sup> and because it thought of speech and style as -- in Erasmus' words -- a mirror and image of the mind.<sup>44</sup> It is especially dangerous when the mind, method, and expression are paradoxical. As a form of contradiction and the ultimate form of ambiguity, paradox depends upon word-play, equivocations and concealed contradictions, and instantaneous shifts in syntax, feeling, and mode which no translation, however brilliant, can hope to replicate, but which constitute a mirror, admittedly a complex and multi-faceted one, of the movement of the mind. And it is uniquely dangerous in More, whose wit and imagination are at once inexhaustibly capacious and almost incredibly precise.

We need More's language, reading his letter, and I should argue all of *Utopia*, as we do a poem, recognizing it as both the fiction and paradox it is. Here, on the finest scale, we can discover how More conceals and reveals, retards and accelerates, denies and affirms the movement of his thought through the creative play of a fertile and subtle mind which dares to make, unmake, and remake the text constantly, never allowing it to stand still. His fictions, his deceptively simple *nots* and *nothings*, his *ifs* and other syntactical strategies, his ambiguities and equivocations, his cryptic and otherwise understated allusions, his inverted sententiae and topoi, his tropes and figures -- notably his hid-

den metaphoric transformations and turns -- are all crucial. And, since his groundplot is itself a dense play of opposites, his methodology paradoxical, he naturally puts to special use those tropes or figures of thought based upon the logical category of contraries and contradictions, a category which includes irony, antithesis, and the figure of paradox.<sup>45</sup>

## Part II : Foregrounds.

### Reporter, Writer, and Text.

#### *Almost less than no time.*

Thomas More is much concerned with reporter-writer-text relationships in the first third of his letter to Giles, and frequently uses figures of negation, opposition, exaggerated understatement, and hyperbole for dramatic, witty, profound, and profoundly antithetical effects which reflect the larger dialectical movement, asymmetrically balanced oppositions, and strategy of the letter as a whole. There is, to begin with, a witty congruence and comic fit between a book about a place called Utopia and the special circumstances of its purported non-writing and non-existence, as the reportorial self describes them. For we are about to read a lavishly glossed text, enriched in three of the first four editions with a Utopian map and alphabet, and surrounded by letters from an international circle of highly placed humanists, which claims that it is « nothing » and that it was not written (indeed could not have been written) by someone who insists that he is not the author and which, perhaps, should not be published after all. We can note, parenthetically, that More himself, despite understandable anxieties, was most anxious to have the work published, and published well, as his letters to Erasmus attest.<sup>46</sup> But more to the present point, these circumstances are so very special as to demand a response on our part : some negation of the speaker's « negations, » some overturning of his paradoxes. Indeed, we must do so as soon as we begin to read the text.

In fact negation of any sort is a major antithetical action of the mind. As Kenneth Burke has pointed out, there are no negations in the natural world, and « the negative is a peculiarly linguistic resource. »<sup>47</sup> For all its apparent grammatical simplicity, then, negation initiates a strenuous mental exercise. To negate negations, as we are asked to do here, requires a doubling of an already double movement of the mind, for only so can we complete the paradox or contradiction. More's exaggerated understatements also insist upon correction or decoding, functioning, paradoxically, like hyperbole. Understatement is normally thought of as the antithesis of overstatement or hyperbole, of course : the former falls short of truth, viewed in this context as a mean between

extremes ; the latter overshoots it. <sup>48</sup> But « diminution too can sometimes involve hyperbole, » as Erasmus notes in his *De Copia*, without saying why. Exaggeration is the reason, as his examples suggest ; one in particular, the more interesting because it is his own and involves nothingness, is very like More's in its sub (or super) negation : « He has less than nothing. » <sup>49</sup> So, in More's text, where the understatement is so extreme that it asserts what is (from one point of view) impossible or incredible, the diminution coalesces with hyperbole which, while moving in the opposite direction, also asserts the incredible or impossible. Thus More's exaggerated understatements transform a figure usually associated with the *iron* and due or undue modesty, as in Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. Though hardly figures of boasting they speak « beyond the limites of credit » to become a kind of hyperbole, what Puttenham calls « *Dementiens* or the lying figure », or the « ouer reacher » or the « loud lyer », « for his immoderate excesse. » <sup>50</sup> But, as Seneca first pointed out, hyperbole (to which we must now add exaggerated understatement) « asserts the incredible in order to arrive at the credible » ; to turn again to Erasmus, « the truth can be inferred from the falsehood. » <sup>51</sup> In other words, we simultaneously are given one side of a paradox (if we read the assertions literally, as the text itself momentarily encourages us to do) and an outrageously overstated understatement, both of which we are asked to complete, reverse, adjust or in some other way overturn.

In fact, More in the guise of reporter overturns his own easier hyperbolic diminutions and paradoxes. Moving in one circle after another of affirmation through negation and overstated understatement, at times adumbrating the paradoxical mysteries of nothingness, he plays this particular game of « nots » as far as it can go and further. For as he tells it here (speaking as reporter), to have actually written the book, much less to have written it well, would have been an impossible task, one which he could have done « *nullo tempore, nullo studio* » (38/19-20), with no amount of time and effort. Even so, just copying it out from memory, as it were, is described *twice* as the merest « nothing » (38/22 ; 38/23) so that one suspects a play of words upon the « nothing » Noplace that is Utopia. And for this hyperbolically modest « nothing » (« *tam nihilo negocij peragendo* » [38/23]) his other occupations have left him « *minus fere quam nihil temporis* » (38/23-24), almost less than no time. Our minds boggle briefly at the fine zero logic here. It is absurd, yet compelling, because of the apparently artless « *fere*, » *almost*. Making it all seem so natural and real and going one step beyond the witty nothingness figure from Erasmus which I cited

earlier, « *fere* » is responsible for a momentarily literal and therefore paradoxical reading. But if it is initially the more convincing, because of its casualness and artfully artless qualification, it is ultimately less so because, with « *ferme* » and similar words, it appears several times in the course of the letter. (It even has its own grammatical gloss in the Yale *Utopia* [n.38/4, p. 290]). Almost simultaneously, then, we sense the wit of the hyperbolic understatement, the paradoxical over-under-reaching which knows it is over-reaching and expects us to know it.

We catch this again as the putative recording secretary engages in a complicated balancing act of his own, portraying himself as he mediates among the various claims of his legal, public, and domestic life, and between others and self. These claims are so closely related to the life of the historical More that they carry conviction and are usually read with the utmost seriousness. And they have a serious side, suggesting the perennial dilemma that confronts human beings, faced with so many different and apparently conflicting demands, each valid in its own sphere. (If they weren't valid there would be no problem in resolving them.) More particularly, such claims reflect the situation of the humanists who moved, in life and in art, between opposites which we could multiply almost endlessly -- past and present, classic and Christian, theory and practice, nature and nurture, God and man, eternity and time, society and self, the ideal and the circumstantial -- as they tried to find a balance which dynamically and fluidly changed at every moment because they were *in* (though not wholly *of*) time. <sup>52</sup> It is almost as if the newly recovered classical mean of moderation were animated and charged, set in motion, so to speak, by the opposites between and among which they moved. So, here, the speaker (dramatically embracing the active, public, and societal mode of the civic humanist, and almost simultaneously signalling one of its dangers), will explain, for example, that unless you want to be a « *peregrinus* » (38/31), a stranger in your own home (again setting up a delicate play of paradox), you must talk with your wife, children, and household.

But this minuscule drama of shifting perspectives and conflicting values, which the real More so brilliantly and humanely fulfilled -- as Erasmus bears witness in his letter to Ulrich von Hutten -- is not just or « simply » serious. Indeed, by a logical anti-logic and paradoxical parallelism More is often most witty when most serious and vice versa. <sup>53</sup> So here there is a pleasant game of words and wit in the claim, a matter of litotic understatement, hyperbole, and paradox, that the putative reporter is left with « *nihil* » for himself, nothing for literature and

letters, that is (38/27), or for his « boke » if we follow Robynson's more specific translation of « literis » (p. 3), supported by a later reference to « suos labores decreuit ipse mandare literis » (42/22). This is, hardly accidentally, the sixth time in thirteen lines that some form of « nothing » has appeared in this letter. But this time the order is climactic, unbalancing a series of conspicuously balanced clauses which are a mimesis of More's own life : « Dum causas forenseis assidue alias ago, alias audio, alias arbiter finio, alias iudex dirimo, dum hic officij causa uisitur, ille negocij, dum foris totum ferme diem alijs impartior, reliquum meis, relinquo mihi, hoc est literis, *nihil* » (38/24-27) [italics mine]. Through a pun analogous to but more complex than the one he made in his letter to Erasmus, sending him his « *'Nowhere,'* which is nowhere well written, »<sup>54</sup> More breaks through his own text to raise a crucial dilemma for the Christian humanist and paradoxically answer it. Someone (the authorial More) has done exactly what, on another level, the text denies : if he has not left « nothing » for literature, he has left a kind of « nothing, » a noplacé Place. But again as reporter More overturns this assertion of nothingness, read literally : after all, the book, and by implication some part of the self, however « nothing » either may be, are in front of us.

He goes further, to show us how « nothing » became something, playfully echoing the idea of poetic creation as analogous to the original creation *ex nihilo*. This became an important critical principle in the course of the Renaissance, allowing the artist, god-like, to create a second, or other, fictional and hypothetical world which he could set against the actual world and in which the mind could play prismatically.<sup>55</sup> The principle is peculiarly true of a paradoxical fiction like More's, about a « nothing » that reflects, albeit often in inverted fashion, a world which is upside down and that (as a possible impossible) exists through the power of its language, defying the laws of space as we know them.<sup>56</sup> Hence, as Émile Pons has pointed out, « On pourrait presque dire que tout, dans l'incroyante utopie, comme dans l'univers chrétien, provient du verbe. Le verbe est le principe et la fin. Et il constituera quelquefois, pour nous, lecteurs, la clé de la doctrine. »<sup>57</sup> But More can hardly develop the analogy explicitly, or even allow it to surface in his text, having disclaimed all creativity for his report and for Raphael Hythlodæus'. Nor can he directly discuss the mimetic relationship of Utopia to the world (normally part of an *ars poetica*). Here he explores obliquely the work's status as fiction ; he turns to its mimetic function only in his second letter to Giles, added to the *Utopia* in 1517.

At this point in his first letter he chooses to play a quantitatively paradoxical game instead, virtually parodying double-entry book-keeping as he simultaneously subtracts and adds the time he didn't/did have and otherwise contradicts himself to account for the way the text was written down, as time -- the day, the month, the year -- slips away (« elabatur » [40/4]) and yet is retrievable in some part. Like so much else in this letter, this answer (if we can call it that) is at once serious yet absurdly comic. Now the reportorial self delineates what is literally as well as figuratively a matter of balance : the arithmetic of human time, a conceit sharpened by the buried arithmetical or numerical sense of many of the verbs he uses. For the Christian humanists, concerned as they were with balancing the various claims upon their life, that is, their time, talents, and energy, so as to be of service to others and to fulfill their own being (and be fulfilled) in and through time and eternity, time was an especially urgent human problem.<sup>58</sup> Convinced of its inestimable value and of the need to use it well, and abhorring its misuse and irresponsible waste, they took to constructing actual timetables and schedules for its right use -- schedules which reveal their inevitably ethical orientation. Hence Erasmus' daunting timetable for the young Gaspar of the *Colloquies*,<sup>59</sup> Rabelais' almost round the clock schedule for Pantagruel, and the more relaxed daily life in Utopia itself, with its careful accounting and accountability. Or part of More's own late prayer in the Tower, « To by the tyme agayn that I byfore haue loste, » the Pauline echo suggesting another form of paradoxical accounting, now in a wholly spiritual context.<sup>60</sup> So, here, the speaker articulates the real pressures upon and responsibilities of the self in time, and time's elusive nature, while he turns to the other side of the question : to some discovery of the fulfillment time makes possible, despite its associations with evanescence and mortality.

This is itself a paradox of a sort, but it is compounded and qualified by the engagingly playful contradictions of the text. As if in a battle with time, or testing himself, as it were, the reporter portrays himself as someone who has had to snatch his moments from food and from sleep, which alone, he says, consumes *almost half* of life (again that almost) so as to finish recording the *Utopia*. But the full schedule already sketched (« while I devote almost the whole day outside to other people, and the remainder to my family, I leave for myself, that is for literature, nothing ») allows almost no time for food or sleep, rather than so much. Indeed More manipulates the syntax here so as to conceal the edges of this hyperbolic contradiction, in some sense justifying it or, at least, encouraging us temporarily to swallow it. Beginning with the

« ego, » the « I » who is so very busy, he shifts to the more general « we » with his question, and ours, « Quando ergo scribimus ? » (40/5), to the distant third person « many » (no longer the subject of the clause in which it appears) for whom, it is claimed, food takes *no less time* than sleep (the syntax here cunningly compelling us to perform a microscopic balancing act), to the prosopopeia of Sleep, « somnus, » which becomes so active that it takes almost half of life (« uitae » [40/7]), a universalized state which seems to include everyone. But we end with the absurd suggestion that between them food and sleep often take almost all of life, a patent hyperbole for some people at least, regardless of its satiric thrust.

More further shapes this potentially absurd and self-contradictory accounting by a manipulation of temporal topoi which in other contexts are serious matters indeed. Medieval devotional writers like Innocent III in his *De contemptu mundi* and Renaissance ones like Luis de Granada in his *Of Prayer and Meditation* often itemized the expenditure of time to demonstrate life's all consuming brevity, our living death, and our need therefore to prepare for eternity now. The speaker here seems to be echoing this notion while reversing the emphasis and psychological movement, turning what is normally a perception of time's diminution (designed to propel us into an other-worldly awareness) into something which is diminutive yet additive in this world.

Even more striking and more concrete is an adaptation of a topos of time which is ultimately traceable to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. In the course of discussing the nutritive faculty of the soul, Aristotle observes that it functions most in sleep, « while goodness and badness are least manifest in sleep (whence comes the saying that the happy are no better off than the wretched for half their lives...).<sup>61</sup> More was impressed enough by this section of the *Ethics* to return to it again and again ; with various psychological thrusts some form of it appears in four of his Latin epigrams (Numbers 89, 90, 96, 121) and in his unfinished treatise on the four last things. <sup>62</sup> Epigram Number 89 : « On Sleep, from the Greek : An Aristotelian Proverb, » which begins, « Almost half of life is sleep, » is particularly relevant. « Ferme dimidium uitae dormitur » <sup>63</sup> is extremely close in its language and idea (though not in feeling) to the letter's « somnus ipse, qui uitae absumit ferme dimidium » (40/7), and sharpens our sense of More's addiction to the cautious notion of *almost*. But now sleep is an active principle rather than a passive state, thereby magnifying the dilemma of the reporter who, if we can believe his claim, has for himself « only the time I steal from sleep and food, » time which could be almost *everything*, if we follow his cal-

culations here, or almost *nothing*, if we remember his earlier claims, or *something* (« aliquid » [40/9]), as he finally admits.

For not even the reporter, clever juggler though he is, can indefinitely maintain this particular balancing act. After numerous delaying tactics and the losses and gains, understatements, hyperboles, and contradictions which create a series of comic moments of tension and release and require constant rebalancing on the speaker's part and ours, he must admit that he has accomplished *something*, the very something that -- on another level of abstraction -- More himself has written and that we are about to read. Thus there is an inherent ambiguity in a word like « scribimus » as well. Do we read it literally, as describing a physiological action, a writing out of something, or metonymically, describing the much more complex process of composition ? In either case, the reportorial self's conclusion rings true, the contradictions of the process notwithstanding : « Slowly, since this time is so little, but finally, because it is still something, I have finished *Utopia*, and am sending it to you, my dear Peter, for you to read over -- and to advise me, if anything has escaped me. »

From one point of view, in fact, this is actually a tautology, arrived at by a characteristically Morean sleight of logic, once again weighing the time available against all and nothing. In another sense, however, it is experientially crucial to the author's and the fictive reporter's and our own realization of self, to the fulfilment of one's humanity. For the Renaissance a book is the person (or a part of the self) <sup>64</sup> as well as something which insofar as it can be thought of as permanent defies time, yet is created through it, so that it is itself a balance or « bridge » between opposites, as it quite literally is in this case.

Like the book and his letter to Peter, the author, too, bridges the gaps between what endures and the all too evanescent and fragile life in time, between art and life, fiction and fact, and all the other real or apparent contradictions inherent in man's existence. And as he does so, he dramatizes and fictionalizes a humanist preoccupation, the self-reflexiveness described in another context as a « process of specularity, the humanist looking at himself in the process of looking at himself, » <sup>65</sup> in what is a highly self-conscious part of both the letter and the larger Utopian experience. So we participate with the authorial More and the reportorial More (and to some extent, indeed, the historical More) in the making of the book and the creation of the reportorial and narrative *ego* -- and, behind that, some suggestion of the authorial self. Yet, character-

ristically, there is a dramatic and existential question left unanswered here. Can we say in just what sense the book is the self, as the reporter claims? And there is a more immediate question, too -- to which we will return: what, if anything, can we say about the chronology of the larger creative process behind the *Utopia* as distinct from its writing out?

For these and other reasons this present balance point is only temporary. Speaking as author and reporter, More invites our responses and corrections (to both the book and the whole Utopian experience) by asking Peter to remind him of anything which has « escaped » him: formally this is part of the *petitio* of the letter. And too the reportorial self is about to confess to doubts on first one and then another detail through which More himself may play with fact and fiction and indirectly clarify the nature of the work and the relationship between his reportorial and authorial selves.

*Almost ashamed.*

But first we need to return to the beginning of the letter, formally its *captatio benevolentiae*, to consider in detail the description of a rhetorical process most of which the reportorial More attributes to the putative narrator, Raphael, since he himself only needed to rely upon his memory, after all. It is a beautiful beginning: « Pudet me propemodum charissime Petre Aegidi libellum hunc, de Vtopiana republica, post annum ferme ad te mittere, quem te non dubito intra sesquimenssem expectasse » (38/3-5). That is, « I am almost ashamed, my dearest Peter Giles, to send to you after almost a year this little book about the Utopian commonwealth, which doubtlessly you expected within a month and a half. » And he goes on to say, « For *you knew* that for this work I was wholly spared the labor of finding apt matter, and that I didn't need to think at all about setting it in order; all I had to do was repeat what in your company I'd heard Raphael relate » [italics mine]. So More, exploiting his reportorial guise, brilliantly renders the modesty topos, a traditional opening dear to orators, story tellers, and letter-writers alike, and familiar to his readers, of course. « Like Erasmus' Moria, or Sidney's defender of sweet poetry or that other artfully « artless » reporter, Chaucer, he claims, in effect, « My wit is short, ye may wel understande. »<sup>67</sup> And as he does so (again like Chaucer) he repeatedly tells Peter what he claims Peter already knows and wishes us to know. So we can catch the authorial self in the process of creating his own fictions and establishing the parts he and his readers are to play, « scires » and « ut scis » serving as a signal.

At the same time he presses into service a number of the figures associated with the category of contradictories. Besides the by now familiar irony and the litotic understatement which paradoxically turns into overstatement there is paralipsis, where the speaker pretends to pass over an issue but tells it nonetheless. For the three stages of the larger rhetorical process, which are twice denied in the most precise and particular detail, necessarily call attention to themselves (39/5-26). Had he been faced with the problems of invention and arrangement, not to mention the whole question of style and eloquence, the reporter could never, he says, have written a work which in fact has been written using just these steps -- steps which have shaped the very letter we are now reading, moreover. (Modestly and litotically he claims only that his memory doesn't fail him altogether, memory being another of rhetoric's traditional parts; even that he professes some cause to doubt.)

Similarly the putative reporter keeps telling us how very plain and simple the work is, how styleless, how artless. There was, he insists, « no need, then, for me to work at the style, since his way of speaking couldn't have been really polished: first because it was off-hand, and spoken on the spur of the moment, and second because, as *you know*, the man is not as proficient in Latin as in Greek » [italics mine]. And a few lines later, we are told, « Now since, in truth, I was relieved of all these concerns over which I should have had to sweat so much, the only thing left for me to do was to write out plainly what I heard, and that was no trouble at all. » But even as he tells Peter and us this, the language here, as in the larger *Utopia*, does somersaults and handsprings, insisting upon its subtlety and sophistication, contradicting its own claims.

Again we are expected in some way to question and otherwise qualify assertions made about the work, the reporter, and the narrator in terms of the opposites denied. Like hyperbole itself, all of More's strategies become over-reachers and loud liars. For this letter and Books I and II of the *Utopia* are neither plain nor simple but intricate and complex, not extemporaneous or unpremeditated but planned and subtly structured (especially when they appear least so, I should argue), not negligent, easy, or carefree if not careless -- the reporter's words, significantly, are « neglectam simplicitatem » (38/13), echoed by « simpliciter » (38/22) -- but highly polished, both elegant and subtle in ways that defy description and analysis, so quick is the wit of the author. It is, then, a half-truth, I think, to say that More distances his own work through the creation of what is so often referred to as persona-More. If



he distances himself on the one hand, seeming to recede further and further from his own text -- it wasn't me, More, but « Morus, » it wasn't « Morus, » but Raphael -- adding one form after another to the work, first Book II, then Book I, then this letter, he is also increasingly there (or here) through language which we can hardly attribute to a plain and simple reporter or a plain and simple narrator (or a plain and simple author, for that matter). Indeed one of More's more delightful if devious touches is to create a narrator who, we are so solemnly assured, understands Greek better than Latin, but whose Greek last name not only contradicts (and is contradicted by) the weight of meaning attached to his first, Hebraic, name, but half calls into question the validity of his own narrative as he tells it.

Actually the leg-pulling is more complicated than this, and raises an important stylistic and critical point. It is the reportorial More who slights Raphael's knowledge of Latin, claiming that he is « non perinde Latine docti quam Graece » (38/11-12), rendered by the Yale *Utopia* as « not so well acquainted with Latin as with Greek » (39/12-13), by Robynson as « better sene in the greke language then in the latine tong » (p. 2). But when Peter Giles introduces Raphael to More in Book I, he says « latinae linguae non indoctus, & graecae doctissimus, » (48/32-33), employing an inherently ambiguous litotic construction.<sup>68</sup> The Yale *Utopia* renders it as « no bad Latin scholar, and most learned in Greek, » (49/39-51/1), Robynson as « verye well lerned in the Latyne tonge ; but profoude and excellent in the greke tonge » (p. 27). However it is translated, it is clear that the reporter has turned it into a simpler and misleading negative. While what he says is literally true he has suppressed certain information and insinuates what is false, for the fictional Raphael's Latin is less learned only by comparison with his superlative Greek. For this and other reasons, notions which some readers have entertained about Raphael's unlearned Latin and the rough and unfastidious or simple style of his narrative seem to be built on shaky ground indeed.

So too with the roles that More plays in this letter. Insofar as he speaks among friends, he enjoys the wordplay upon his own name immortalized in Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*, and delights in presenting his reportorial self, at times, as a kind of fool. As putative reporter, moreover, he likes to portray himself as earnest, terribly conscientious, fussy, given to endless worry about the accuracy of every detail, parodying his legal self, while reminding us that he is a barrister, arbiter, and judge. He is also, he says (or implies), slow-witted, naive, clumsy, and richer in

memory than in wit or learning, for all that he is a disdainer of « noselessness. » And of course he is *such* a slowpoke : after all it's taken him *almost* a year to send something which doubtlessly Peter Giles expected within six weeks. The inference is the reporter's however, not Giles' ; More is putting ideas into his head, and ours, and it does not follow that « Giles had reason to expect to see *Utopia* within six weeks of More's departure either from Antwerp or from the Netherlands, » or « That he did in fact believe the work to be almost complete before his friend More went back to England. »<sup>69</sup> For the reporter, and the author who plays him, constantly change roles and engage in exaggerations and self-contradictions on a scale which requires us to test the validity of every assertion. Even on the simplest possible level, in fact, that of the king's « orator » (46/12) at the beginning of Book I, More is hardly the simple man he claims to be. And the authorial self is patently learned, a brilliant lawyer, logician, rhetorician, putter of cases and story teller. In particular he is a person of consummate intellect, imagination, humor, and wit, some measure of the wittiness being caught in the incongruity between and among the various roles More chooses to play here and elsewhere in *Utopia* and in the complex relationships between the reportorial self he creates and the authorial self these roles point to, sometimes by parallelism, sometimes by paradoxical inversion. But unless we reckon with the implications of the language and admit the flexibility of the reportorial self (who is also a narrator) and the presence of an authorial self, we are left with something very flat and dull indeed, the joke, the wit, and the fine performance largely disappearing.

Similarly, the wonder is not that it has taken *almost* a year to finish the *Utopia* but that a work of such complexity could have been invented, written, and written down at all, much less in a year, if indeed it was. In his *Biography of an Idea* and his Introduction to the Yale *Utopia* J.H. Hexter has argued exhaustively that « the life span of the idea for *Utopia* is brief, » the idea itself being « embalmed in print just a little more than a year after its birth. »<sup>70</sup> But this letter provides no evidence for a chronology of this sort. It allows us only to say what no one has ever questioned : that a final fair copy of the manuscript was written out sometime after More returned to England from the Low Countries (in late October 1515)<sup>71</sup> but presumably before September 3, 1516, when he wrote Erasmus that he was sending him the manuscript with this prefatory letter. And even so the reportorial More claims both too little time and too much, finally settling for « something, » which, while

obviously true, is scarcely helpful. It appears that More has tailored his prefatory letter to fit his Utopian fiction (set in September or October, 1515) and that we cannot expect to find hard evidence for *Utopia's* genesis and development when More has deliberately withheld it.

But for all the ambiguity and playful obfuscation of its language, the letter does raise an important point, albeit by implication. We have to weigh the putative reporter's insistent claim that it took him almost a year simply to copy out the *Utopia* and in this sense finish it (« *perfecti* » is the word he uses [40/9]) and that he could never have written it if he had had to worry about its *inventio*, *dispositio*, and *elocutio* against the fact that someone (More) did write it and did have to think about the whole rhetorical process. By inference (insofar as « the truth can be inferred from the falsehood, » a process which in this case is more complicated than Erasmus suggests in *De Copia*), the letter hints at a fairly long period of composition, that term being given its fullest possible sense. To this extent it supports André Prévost's case for a process of some six years, following a seminal period in the summer of 1509, when Erasmus, in More's own house, wrote the *Praise of Folly*.<sup>72</sup> Certainly we need to allow time for More to develop the implications of his initial conception, perhaps begun in part as an inverted mirror image of the *mundus inversus* topos, for he turns so frequently to topoi which he likes to invert or otherwise change, and this one unifies the whole work and is inherent in the idea of Utopia and Nusquama, More's earlier name for this island state. In any case, More needed time to gather together and rethink an immense amount of complicated material and to structure, write, restructure, and polish the book. In practice this process would have been overlapping, was surely time-consuming, probably occurred in snatches but culminated in 1515-16, and continued beyond the first edition (1516). We can point, by analogy, to the « piecemeal composition » of his *History of Richard III*, which he probably was working on from 1513 to 1518, so that it overlapped with *Utopia*.<sup>73</sup> And interesting pieces of evidence from the *Utopia* itself suggest its gradually evolving conception and multiple foci, although it is difficult, perhaps impossible, wholly to determine the degree of authorial and editorial responsibility for the alterations. Especially important are the substitution of *Amaurotico* for *Mentirano* in 1517 (146/25), a change which signals a shift from a simpler, ironic notion of Utopia's capital to a paradoxical one,<sup>74</sup> and the additions, deletions, and rearrangements of material in the *parerga*, with consequent rebalancings of the focus.<sup>75</sup>

Yet the qualities and claims which we are intended to query are such important measures of the impression More wants to give of the

work, the reportorial self, and of himself and Raphael as narrators, that we cannot simply overturn them. The purported negligence, spontaneity, ease, and naïveté, and the humor and absurdity thereby generated -- together with the attribution of the account of Utopia to another -- are disarming and protective, allowing the author to speak safely as mere reporter, to play seriously, to speak truth in jest. Standing behind Horace, More alludes to a simpler form of the strategy in an often cited passage from his *Apology* where he defends himself against objections to his mix of « *ernest maters* » with « *fansyes and sportes, and mery tales* » : « For as Horace sayeth, a man maye somtyme saye full soth in game. »<sup>76</sup> In one respect the humor is crucial here, letting More say what otherwise could be too dangerous and would hurt too much.

Absurdity and truth are near neighbors in any paradoxical structure, moreover,<sup>77</sup> and paradox as More employs it allows for almost instantaneous shifts from the metaphoric to the literal, from play to actuality, from the comic to the serious, and back again -- hence its value as a critical, satiric, and exploratory tool. When, for example, Raphael Hythlodæus talks about the Utopian incubation system, where newly hatched chicks follow human beings as if they were their mothers, he treats it like a joke and a paradox, using the language of wonder to speak of it as a « *mirabili artificio* » (114/20). Yet what is presented as fiction is also fact. (More could have obtained information on the imprinting of chickens from Pliny or through his own observations [Yale, 389, n. 114/22].) At the same time, it is emblematic of a serious antithesis, the relationship between nature and nurture which is explored throughout Book II.<sup>78</sup> Behind the Utopian reversal of beast and man, then, is the question of *education*, caught in the play upon *educant* (114/19) ; the chicks are at once hatched and educated, as it were. So the authorial More can raise fundamental questions about the structure, values, and goals of any commonwealth through constant oscillations between different levels of abstraction and different kinds of impossibility within *Utopia* or between Utopia and the actual world, brilliantly shifting the ground he and we metaphorically stand upon as things are simultaneously true and false or factual and fictional, and encouraging us to read « between the lines. »<sup>79</sup>

In some sense too we can even call the style plain. We do not have the grand style of so much public oratory, in other words, but an impression of colloquial conversation between friends, and there is an immediate parallel between this letter (a form written traditionally in the plain style or an elegant variation upon it) and the conversations created

in the larger *Utopia*, or some part of it, for there are times when Raphael shifts either to more public, consciously persuasive modes or to more pointed, epigrammatic ones. The language of the letter (again like the *Utopia* as a whole) is never ornate or merely pretty, but muscular, vigorous, kinetic, and remarkably lucid in its Latinity -- though paradoxically so, since it is also so polysemous. More generally eschews the elaborate or showy tropes and the complex sound patterns and formal rhythms of the classical high style and oratorical prose, relying rather on verbal repetition, enargia and energia, concealed metaphor, figures of opposition, playful humor, irony, and the bite of satire to create a sense of the individual experience and portray the dialectical processes whereby we move towards truth. And he evokes an aesthetic of sprezzatura, the apparent ease, grace, and candor which the Renaissance prized so much but never confused with sincerity in its later Romantic sense.

These same elements characterize the plain style (or Attic oratory) as Cicero describes it in a long passage in his *Orator*. Together with the Socratic philosophical *sermo*, this became the central source for the Renaissance view of the plain style, a style which clearly interested the early humanists and, in many forms, some of them extremely oblique and arcane, became a dominant force in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.<sup>80</sup> Not surprisingly it was specifically associated with genres and modes operative in the *Utopia*: the epistle, dialogue, *sermo*, comedy, and satire. But what is most telling in our present context is that More alludes to this very passage. In a typical throw-away line, a mimesis of its own artful artlessness and still another comic touch, the reporter claims for himself and Raphael a style of « neglectam simplicitatem » (38/13), « careless simplicity, » that is, frankness, openness, artlessness, or candor, what Robynson paraphrases as « homely, playne, and simple speche » (p. 2), catching the connotations for a sixteenth-century audience. « Neglectam » is the key, pointing to the word which above all others could be said to characterize the plain (but elegant) style as Cicero describes it. In fact Cicero uses some variation of the word three times in seven lines, speaking first of a « non ingrattam neglegentiam, » then observing that « Illa enim ipsa contracta et minuta non neglegenter tractanda sunt sed quaedam etiam neglegentia est diligens. »<sup>81</sup> His point, needless to say, is not that the style is really careless, but that it has a « careful negligence, » reflecting a « not unpleasant carelessness on the part of a man who is paying more attention to thought than to words. »<sup>82</sup>

What we can almost see in More's letter, then, is a moment of double transformation, first as the classical tradition of a « not unplea-

sant » negligence metamorphoses into the Renaissance idea of sprezzatura, and secondly as the plain style tradition is stretched elastically to accommodate the supple ambiguities and the paradoxes and other subtle workings of a sophisticated consciousness. As author, More is finally too complex, ironic, and paradoxical to be fitted comfortably into any plain style model without a radical redefinition of the form. We might better summarize the style here in terms Erasmus used of More's oratorical style, emphasizing its Isocratic *structura* (perhaps intended to call attention to its antithetical quality), its dialectical or « logical subtlety, » its *urbanitas*, and its poetry.<sup>83</sup> But the quick reference to « neglectam simplicitatem » and with that to the plain style does give us a point of departure, More's groundwork as it were. It also underlines his concern with the workings of the mind and provides an important network of associations which link what might otherwise seem and have been thought to be disparate elements in the letter and the larger *Utopia* together.

#### « De Vtopiana Republica. »

As the thought turns around upon itself and More unfolds apparently contradictory sides of an assertion at once, saying a good deal about the aesthetics of his art, himself as artist, and the roles he plays without appearing to do so, he artfully deflects attention from (yet calls attention to) the topic of his « little book. » By the second line it is identified casually and briefly -- but also paradoxically, and thus related to, while counterpoised against, the larger structure -- as « de Vtopiana republica » (38/4 ; compare 42/23). It is true, of course, that Peter Giles does not need to have the subject matter explained to him, if we follow the story line. It is also true, in fact much truer, that the author does not wish to reveal his subject here and that we are meant to experience it for ourselves, just as we are meant to experience and thus discover his *ars poetica* and his hermeneutics. It is important, too, that the subject is identified concretely rather than in terms of the general question hovering behind it : the best state of the commonwealth. More's focus, then, is on this newly discovered commonwealth, intensified by the witty language game he plays. By juxtaposing two words, each of them ambiguous, so that his language contradicts itself several times over, More presents us with multiple meanings as he moves among the different levels of abstraction and reality which generate the ambiguity and paradox.

As the adjective formed on « Utopia, »<sup>84</sup> a newly invented « Vtopiana » participates in the double, triple, perhaps quadruple perspectives triggered by inversion, denial, and antithesis. Like *Nusquama*, *nowhere*, the island's pre-publication name, *Utopia* allows More to deny its existence on one level while paradoxically affirming it on another (as a fiction and argument). But the name is negative in a second way, as an inversion of or a contrary to « place, » that somewhere which is England or, more broadly, Western Europe or the known world, More's psychological and Raphael's fictional point of departure as world traveller. Thus we already have the people of a place called Noplace and the people of Place-Not. If we accept the wordplay on Eutopia, which is supported by allusions in the parerga and by affinities between Utopia and Macaria (96/12-29), a blessed place, we also have the people of a place which is in some sense a Happy Place, so that there is a doubling of an already double movement, a double inversion and a double paradox. Now we find ourselves moving from a negative to a positive, or, more accurately, towards a negation of the negation, insofar as Utopia as Eutopia moves us from the abuses, horror, and madness of this world towards a society organized in accordance with more perfect or ideal principles : a place (in particular) where common interest rather than self-interest rules. Or rather, a place where the two (paradoxically) are the same, and where, according to Raphael, « virtue has its reward, and yet, with equality of distribution, all men have abundance of all things » (103/34-35). This is more pointed still in Raphael's witty Latin, which claims a « *precium* » (102/29) for virtue in Utopia -- ironically contrasting virtue's place in a country where nothing is measured by cash values with virtue's « rewards » (or lack of) elsewhere. We have, then, not one set of antitheses, negations, and paradoxes, but two or three which are inversely related to one another ; we move simultaneously from place to Noplace and Place-Not, from positive to negative, and from place towards Happy Place, from negative to positive. And if there is yet another pun on the name, on the Greek word for *strange* or *absurd*, as *ἀτόπος*, P. A. Sawada has suggested, then the absurdity is further magnified.<sup>85</sup> To his linguistic argument we can add the many marginal glosses throughout *Utopia* that respond, sometimes playfully, sometimes seriously, to its topsy-turvy inversions, and Erasmus' comment to Antonius Clava (1517) : « When you have read More's *Utopia*, you will feel you have been suddenly transported into another world ; everything there is so different. »<sup>86</sup> In any case we are left trying to balance different sets of contraries as More allows the fac-

tual and fictional, the literal and the metaphoric, positives which are in some sense negatives and negatives which are sometimes positive to collide, reverse, and play with one another and with us.

By contrast with « Utopia » and « Utopiana », which are esoteric words, and neologisms, « republica » is a very common one, yet it too is complex and polysemous. The editors of the Yale *Utopia*, speaking from a carefully limited political perspective, note that its Englishing posed special problems (cxv ; n.1/1-2, p. 267). Their original preference was for « *society* » ; their final choice was « *commonwealth* » because it retains « some consciousness » of its early sixteenth-century setting (cxv). Even in its most specific political context, then, it is a slippery and difficult word to understand and to translate, and there is a range of associations which no single rendering can catch (this probably explains why Robynson translates the word in more than one way). But in addition More seems to be playing upon the meanings of each part of the word, exploiting what Quintilian recognized as a form of verbal ambiguity -- « where a word has one meaning when entire and another when divided » --<sup>87</sup> while he turns an abstraction back to its concrete foundation, so that the wit becomes profound and allows him, through Raphael, to generate an attack upon the injustice of all existing « commonwealths. »

The root *res* is, I suppose, the most polysemous of all Latin words. Wholly dependent upon its context for translation, it « doth not only betoken that that is called a thing which is distinct from a person, but also signifieth estate, condition, substance, and profit, » to borrow Thomas Elyot's point about its « divers significations » from the opening of his *Governor*.<sup>88</sup> And *publica* may mean *public*, *common*, *belonging to the people*, or *open and manifest*. When we look at *res* and *publica* in the light of Raphael's description of Utopia, a place where every *res* is held « in common, » or « for the people », or is « open and manifest, » where the common cause is served, in other words, we have a lively array of possible meanings and overtones. Happily, two of the more usual sixteenth-century words for the *state* or *society*, the whole body of the people, *commonwealth* and *commonweal*, do preserve some of them, although Elyot will pointedly go out of his way to refute such associations, arguing that « men have been long abused in calling *Republicam* a common weal. And they which do suppose it so to be called for that, that every thing should be to all men in common, without discrepance of any estate or condition, be thereto moved more by sensuality than by any good reason or inclination to humanity. »<sup>89</sup> Elyot's

attack underscores his own commitment to a hierarchical society, of course ; it also illuminates the serious wit, the paradoxical vision, and the shock value of Utopia, where things are held in common *and yet* well ordered. Hence the special point of Raphael's subsequent claim that those who had seen Utopia would admit they « had never seen a well-ordered people ('populum recte institutum' [106/17]) anywhere but there » (107/23), a claim vigorously challenged by the fictionalized Giles, who speaks on behalf of law and order in terms which Elyot would understand and agree with.

When we put « Vtopiana » next to « republica » still more contradictions and absurdities are generated. In particular, although its values and practices are not, in fact, wholly unknown to the West, so that there is matter for satire, vision, and paradox, the Utopian commonwealth is not likely to be accepted as a « common cause » or viewed as a matter of common knowledge from any perspective other than its own. And More turns this epistemological paradox into a joke towards the end of the letter, engaging in what can only be called deliberate mystification. There we find the reporter, about to publish Raphael's « historia, » worried about the propriety of making the *Vtopiensium republica* « uulgata, » public, or « known, » to follow the Yale translation, thereby robbing Hythlodæus' version, if he plans to print one, of the « flower and charm of newness. » But what he is worried about is redundant in the Latin, and ambiguous in its terms of reference. For does he speak of the country as well as the text when he says « Vtopiensium per me uulgata republica » (42/23) ?<sup>90</sup> His words double back upon themselves as he worries about making what is on its own terms wholly common or public « common » or « public, » from one point of view, or prostituting and profaning it from another, as if the *republica* were a sacred text and a holy land, implications obliquely confirmed by other wordplay on betrothal, deflowering, etc.<sup>91</sup> Interestingly, Robynson tried to catch some part of this witty complexity by another play of words ; he here has the speaker talk of « publyshynge the Vtopiane weale publyque » (pp. 8-9), so that « publyque » modifies « weale » but is balanced against « publyshynge, » just as More weighs « uulgata » against « publica. » But however we read it, the language signals a double consciousness -- More is writing simultaneously as reporter and author, breaking through his own text.

Just how literally radical More's wordplay upon *republica* becomes clear only at the end of *Utopia*, however, with the peroration he gives to Raphael Hythlodæus. Grounding the argument upon a definition which is at once a tautology and a paradox, More allows Raphael

to claim that he has described the « structure of that commonwealth which I judge not merely the best but the only one which can rightly claim the name of a commonwealth ('quae sibi suo iure possit Reipublicae uendicare uocabulum' [236/33]). Outside Utopia, to be sure, men talk freely of the public welfare -- but look after their private interests only. In Utopia, where nothing is private, they seriously concern themselves with public affairs » (237/37 - 239/3). Behind Raphael's repeated insistence that the *republica* is a *republica* only if it fulfils the literal implications of its name -- compare his impassioned denunciation of « all commonwealths flourishing anywhere today » as a « kind of conspiracy of the rich, who are aiming at their own interests under the name and title of the commonwealth » (241/25-29) -- is Scipio's definition of a commonwealth in Cicero's *De Republica*, a definition transmitted to the Renaissance by St. Augustine, who used it in the *City of God* to attack the injustice of the Roman state. Rome, he argued, was not a dishonorable or unjust commonwealth, but no commonwealth at all, since it was no « estate of the Commonalty, » no « Estate of the people...gathered together in one consent of law and one participation of commodities, as hee [Scipio] had defined a Commonalty before. »<sup>92</sup> The verbal and conceptual echoes suggest that Raphael's prophetic stance, like his facility for diatribe, owes something to St. Augustine. At this point, however, Raphael and More follow a more oblique path, although they are no less concerned with the question of justice in the commonwealth. For St. Augustine, the City of God is the only true commonwealth, because only there will true justice and the « weale of the Commonalty » be found, under Christ, its founder and ruler. Thomas More would ultimately agree.<sup>93</sup> But this is not the central focus in *Utopia*. Its paradoxical and fictional commonwealth, located between the actual world and the City of God and treated as real by Hythlodæus though hypothetical for us, allows Raphael (and More) to attack the private interests, the distorted values, and the fundamental injustice of this world by presenting an alternative value system which sometimes inverts the values of the actual world, sometimes parallels them, and sometimes parodies them. At some moments, then, the argument of *Utopia*, for all its wit and paradoxical complexity, has some parallels with a single-minded indictment of the rich and exhortation to charity which appeared anonymously in 1548 (but was written before 1535) : *The Prayse and Commendacion of Suche as Sought Comenwelthes : and to the Contrary, the Ende and Discommendacion of Such as Sought Priuate Welthes. Gathered both out of the Scripture and Phylosophers.*<sup>94</sup>

Clumsy though the title is, its play upon common and private wealth and weal illuminates the probing wit of *Vtopiana republica* and reflects the social conscience and Tudor ambiance behind More's more urbane, philosophical, and imaginative inquiry about the best state of a commonwealth.

### Poetic Fictions.

The larger ontological questions which lurk behind More's fictions, dense language play and verbal contradictions are the focus of the long central section of the letter, in this way its half-playful, half-serious crux and climax. They are a crux for the *Utopia* as a hypothetical work and a work of fiction that claims to be an « historia » as well, since More is indirectly addressing that « movement from fact to fiction, from actuality to imagination, from life to art, » which from Plato through the Renaissance was so inextricably connected with the question of lying that fact and fiction were thought of as opposites, and the Renaissance defence of poetry became a defence of fiction or the « right to feign, 'to make things up.' » We could even claim a place for More in what C.S. Lewis describes as « an age-old debate; and that debate, properly viewed, is simply the difficult process by which Europe became conscious of fiction as an activity distinct from history on the one hand and from lying on the other. »<sup>95</sup>

But neither the questions nor the answers are identified as such. The language here, as throughout the letter and so much of the larger *Utopia*, is feigned, concrete, lucid yet ambiguous, actively and wittily resisting our every effort to turn it from the specific to the abstract, appropriately so since the question is the nature of a fictional work and fiction resists abstraction. Hence the subtlety of More's wit and the playful brilliance of a mind which anticipates the theoretical developments of later criticism. More than ever, in fact, More conspicuously avoids any systematic development of ideas, instead embracing and enacting the role of truthful speaker against which he counterpoints his lies and « lies. » Yet there is a strikingly witty correspondence as his fictions, « lies, » evasions and paradoxes create their own ontological status : he has turned an unstated debate over the status of a work of art into a creative process.

Even more than most Renaissance writers, in fact, More plays with fact and fiction, collapsing different levels of abstraction or planes of being so as to pull us in opposite ways at once. What he asserts is presented as if both factual and impossible or inopinable, as if wholly

true yet « false » or false, moving us continuously between extremes of belief and disbelief. It is as if a traffic light flashed green and red at the same time; we must go and stop simultaneously and find ourselves in the double bind situations which are psychologically analogous to paradox. To put the same thing another way, in contrast to Sidney, who insists disingenuously (his argument is itself paradoxical, as he admits) that « the poet is the least liar » since he « never affirmeth, » More affirms and denies, denies and affirms simultaneously in this letter and his larger *Utopia* alike, notwithstanding the fact that he is writing poetry or fiction, a logic of the « 'as-if', »<sup>96</sup> and tells us so obliquely.

Again we find a perfect paradoxical interrelationship and balanced tension of antithetical feelings and modes : this is both the funniest section of the letter and the most serious. There is, then, a succession of outrageously comic and outrageous stories and anecdotes. It is in this section, naturally, that we hear about the wondrously « devout » man, a professional theologian, who is burning with the desire to evangelize Utopia and become its bishop, and is not at all embarrassed about the need to make a suit to the pope to obtain his post. All we can do is repeat what the marginal commentators already said, eyes lifted, *sotto voce* : « *A holy ambition.* » More also relies heavily upon hypothetical and conditional statements in addition to his exaggerated understatements -- so much so that we begin to apprehend the method in his play. There is, too, a complicated fictive and logical manoeuvring between and equivocation upon truth-telling and lying as he exploits the paradoxes of truthful lying within what is actually a work of probability, turning the problem inside out. Ultimately both the reportorial self and the authorial self do find a point between what are presented as the polar opposites of truth and falsehood. For the reporter this appears to be memory, for the author something we would call fiction and must also call the probable, the possible, or the hypothetical by analogy with the « ifs » in this same section. In this indirect and devious way More « answers » ontological questions which admittedly have been asked at best obliquely, and gives us the foundation for a Utopian aesthetic. But the answers are not a resting point, however much they seem to constitute one, because they remain ambiguous and are witty variations of the Liar (or so called vicious circle) paradox.

Despite all the jokes, the humor, and the wit, then, this section makes more demands upon us as readers than the first third of the letter does. Understatements, overstatements, and negations, while complex and ambiguous, call relatively clearly for correction or at least partial

reversal. As figures of opposition or contradiction litotes and double negations are located along the same axis; if something is not « nothing » it moves (admittedly ambiguously but still in one plane) from nothing towards something. And hyperbole is patently the over-reacher. But the stories and the hypothetical and subjunctive « ifs » of this section are potentially more ambivalent and paradoxical still, the language more oblique, the fictions more suspended, and the reversal, when it occurs, more dramatic, dynamic, and ambiguous. In part this is because the sheer pleasure of the stories can lull us into simply enjoying them; moreover, they complete themselves and we must shift to an altogether different plane of being, a different set of axes, thinking in three dimensions, as it were. And for those of us with minds less subtle and lawyerly than More's, or less expert in Latin, conditional and hypothetical statements are inherently intricate, especially when, as here, they are piled one on top of another or rather grow out of each other in a complex but lucid way. Then too there is the inherent puzzle of the topic. Truth-locutions and self-reflexive statements, where the mind is both its subject and its object and tries to say something about its own meaning or activity, are classical sources of paradoxes which refuse to stay solved. And what is « truth » ?<sup>97</sup> Finally, the gap between what the reportorial self claims and the authorial self obliquely suggests is immense. At this point in the letter the two selves are parallel yet stand on axes which cross at right angles so that we are pulled in opposite (but paradoxically complementary) directions, led away from but towards « answers » which aren't wholly answers. We truly need double vision.

### *Telling a lie and lying.*

This section depends, logically (or pseudo-logically) upon a sly treatment of truth and falsehood as if they were exclusive or immediate contraries -- that is, contraries with no middle ground, so that if one is denied the other must be asserted.<sup>98</sup> So too the reporter's language insists upon actuality and a world of facts and figures while both the authorial and the reportorial More mischievously play with and upon the language of the mediaeval and Renaissance storyteller.<sup>99</sup> But the logic and pseudo-logic and the rhetoric are subsumed in a role the reportorial self slips into when he begins his letter, portraying himself and Raphael as plain speakers, his only concern the truth, *veritas*, « which is the only concern in this affair that I ought to, and do, care about. » Plain speaking, like its corollary, plain dealing, was invariably linked in

the Renaissance mind with ideas of sincerity and truth. « Trueth loueth simplicitie and playnes » i.e., plainness (Sig. A iii\*), as Robynson will explain in the gloss he adds at this point, alluding (perhaps ironically) to ideas traceable in part to Cicero's assertions about the plain style in *Orator*. So we can savor the reportorial More's insistence upon his careless simplicity, his plain style, and plain speaking in the first section of the letter as preparation for the role of truthful teller which dominates this middle section.

What impresses, in fact, is not that More chose this role for his reportorial self (and for himself and Raphael Hythlodæus as narrators) -- it is the obvious one, given the tallness of the tales involved -- but the way that he is able to maintain it, in spite of all the contradictions, equivocations, and evasions of both his reportorial and authorial selves. So, for instance, he blunts or at least delays the full force of the contradiction between the putative narrator's first name and his last by using either one name or the other but never both together in the letter. So too he liberally sprinkles his text with forms of « truly, » although we must note parenthetically that this insistent repetition does underline a double or triple or quadruple reading. It is double because it is ambiguous and ambivalent, triple because it is less a question of truthful telling than of truthful seeking -- More himself being interested in the inquiry after and search for truth and unconvinced by any easy answers, including, of course, the ones he gives us as putative reporter -- and quadruple because « the truest poetry is the most feigning, » the thought coming full circle.

But the stellar performance of self as plain and truthful teller occurs as the reporter queries two details about which he has great doubts but which, he says, could easily be resolved with the help of Peter Giles and Raphael: the length of the bridge spanning the river Anydrus at Amaurotum and the location of Utopia. Actually More allows his reportorial self to question them separately, building each one up in the most deliciously drawn out detail which we are meant to enjoy as he spins out his story to ever finer lengths in the best tradition of the artist as trickster. And even after he does so the reportorial self audaciously reiterates the idea of truthful telling and exclusive or immediate contraries: will you, he begs, « make sure that this work of mine contains nothing false and lacks nothing true, » (aut insit falsi, aut veri desyderetur [42/16-17]). The fine antithetical balance here, one of several in this section -- compare « Neither did it occur to us to ask, nor to him to say, in what part of that new world Utopia is situated » -- the

lawyer-like precision, exactly mirrors the exhaustive search by a mind that delights in presenting itself as precise, deprecatory, earnest, and above all, « sincere. » At the same time the insistent rhetoric and the absurdity of omitting such an obvious thing, not to mention the self-contradiction of the two details singled out -- how long *is* a bridge over a river called Waterless? Where is Noplace? -- riddles and insolubles both, and the playfully mimetic function of these same details, functioning, bridge-like, to convey us to Utopia, disclaim what the language, from another perspective, claims. It signals a double consciousness on the part of the author and alerts us to a necessity to see and read two ways.

It is, of course, in this same section of the letter that even the putative reporter can no longer maintain an exclusive opposition between what is true and false and allows, but only hypothetically, for the possibility of doubt. As he explains so solemnly, he will write down (as he has already done) what he himself seems to remember, subject to correction by Peter Giles and Raphael. And it is at this same point that we reach the crux of the letter: what purports to be an attempt to distinguish kinds of lies. Picking up the last few of an exquisitely suspended series of clauses, each one important, we find: « ...nam ut maxime curabo, ne quid sit in libro falsi, ita si quid sit in ambiguo, potius mendacium dicam, quam mentiar, quod malim bonus esse quam prudens » (40/27-29). That is, « For as I'll take the greatest care lest anything in the book be false, so, if anything should be in doubt, I'd rather tell a lie than lie, because I'd rather be honest than clever. »<sup>100</sup> « Potius mendacium dicam, quam mentiar » is not as tautological as it sounds, although I think it is meant to have that effect at first reading and in a curious way does so ultimately. And certainly the artful and initially startling distinction between *telling a lie* and *lying* throws the weight upon that part of the period, deviously leading us away from the preceding « si » clause which is finally more important. Moreover, since both « mendacium dicam » and « mentiar » can refer to *lying* or to *feigning*, in the latter sense adumbrating the realm of fiction, they are inherently ambiguous -- a point to which we will return.

These textual puzzles of More's own making are further complicated by a cryptic marginal gloss, peculiarly important as the first one in all of the *Utopia*, which directs us to note the « theological » distinction between « *mentiri & mendacium dicere* » (40/25-26). Father Surtz could not find this distinction « in moral guides by Aquinas, Antoninus, and Silvester, or even by a later authority like Alphonsus Ligouri » (n.

40/28-29, p. 291). I do not think it is findable, in fact. Since the customary theological noun for « lie » is *mendacium*, the verb *mentiri* -- I am relying upon St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas --<sup>101</sup> the note is either a deliberate red herring or a calculated half-comic mirroring of More's sophisticated game, or both. If it is not yet another sly hit at late scholastic theologians, with their overly fine quibbles, then it ambiguously asks us to ask about the meaning behind the words, rather than in them.<sup>102</sup>

In any case, despite the marginal note, the context for these words is not theological but rhetorical and ethical. More has telescoped parts of two sententiae from a favorite passage in Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights* in which Publius Nigidius, a man of great eminence in the study of the liberal arts, delivers his opinions on the difference between « mendacium dicere et mentiri » (n. 40/28-29, pp. 291-92).<sup>103</sup> At the heart of the distinction is the all-important moral question of deceit: the one who lies (*mentitur*) is not himself deceived, but tries to deceive someone else, while the one who tells a lie (*mendacium dicit*) is himself deceived or mistaken. Actually we can borrow More's words from a later work, his *Debellacyon of Salem and Bizance*, where he addresses the same issue: « I remembre that there is a difference put betwene *mentiri et mendacium dicere*, that is as we myght say betwene hym that wittingly lyeth, and hym that telleth a lie wening that it were true. »<sup>104</sup> What the reportorial self would have us understand, then, is that he is reporting everything just as he can recall it. Though he might tell a lie, it is one only in the sense that his memory is mistaken, not because he wishes to deceive anyone else. In other words, even though he may unintentionally lie, there is still a conformity or congruence between his mind and what he recalls so that -- as the later More so aptly put it (in a wholly different context, of course), he lies « wening [i.e., thinking] that it were true. » And to the extent that the reporter is simply recounting things as he remembers them he can hardly be said to intend to lie by even the most stringent theological definition: as St. Thomas notes, echoing a popular bit of medieval etymology, the term *mendacium* is derived from the idea that the lie is something spoken « contra mentem. »<sup>105</sup> Even this conditional statement of doubt, then, so solemnly asserted by the reportorial self, sustains the double image of the truthful teller and the good man who would rather be honest (« bonus ») than clever or prudent (« prudens »). And it brilliantly reiterates the larger and so compelling fiction of the mere reporter who has only his memory to rely upon.

More subtle and devious still, on the specific « facts » in ques-



tion the reporter's memory has served him well. But we only discover this much later, again by an artful indirection which paradoxically opens up the question of the reporter's candor on the one hand as it confirms his truthful telling on the other. For in the *Utopia* itself the reportorial More gives us more information than he admits to here, or at least can recall as he writes his letter. As author, then, More is engaging in a playful parody of legal wit, using the same evidence to confirm the truth of the assertion (as assertion) and the evasiveness of the witness (some part of himself). To return to the text, we find that what the reportorial self has expressed as a future less vivid condition is, it appears, and on one level of abstraction *is*, a condition contrary to fact. Notwithstanding the recollection of the young John Clement, which has thrown him into such *great* uncertainty or perplexity (« *magnam dubitationem* ») -- compare the first edition's great doubt or wavering (« *magnum dubium* »)<sup>106</sup> -- he is right about the length of the bridge over the river Anydrus. For, as Nagel's fine detective work has shown, More here « has balanced the specifying and the suppression of detail. »<sup>107</sup> In Book II we discover that the river is five hundred paces wide at the city of Amaurotum (118/4-5). And it must follow, as the night the day, that the bridge is also at least five hundred paces long, as the reportorial More said, rather than the three hundred paces John Clement suggested (41/24-28).

Similarly, if we were to plot the location of Utopia in accordance with information Raphael gives and the reporter duly reports, we would find that it approximates the antipodes of Europe and probably England<sup>108</sup> (necessarily so insofar as Utopia is its inverted mirror image). The Utopians, then, are antipodeans, always a source of paradox and merriment for the Renaissance.<sup>109</sup> And we can point to the nest of paradoxes and opposites much played upon in the early pages of Book I as we are turned upside down and back again by referring to More's *Dialogue Concernynge Heresyys* (1529), which addresses the topos of the world upside down: « Or who wolde not wene it impossyble but yf experyence had proued it that the hole erthe hangeth in the ayre / and men walke fote agaynst fote / & shyppes sayle bottom agaynst bottom / a thyng so straunge & semyng so far agaynst nature & reason / y<sup>e</sup> Lactancyus a man ryght wyse and well lerned in his worke whiche he wryteth de diuinis institutionibus rekeneth it for impossible / and letteth not to laugh at the phylosophers for affyrmyng of that poynt / whyche is yet nowe founden trew by experyence of them that haue in lesse than two yeres sayld the worlde rounde about. »<sup>110</sup> But

when More wrote the *Utopia* the world had not been circumnavigated;<sup>111</sup> we must credit the discovery to Raphael, and the paradoxes and impossibilities multiply almost *ad infinitum*.

But all this begs the question -- the question raised by the very details the reportorial self professes to have doubts about. At this point we must shift to a wholly different plane of being or level of abstraction, noting as we do so just how More leads us simultaneously towards the crux and away from it by calling attention to details which his fiction paradoxically both solves and leaves unsolvable. The reportorial More (like the fictional narrator, Raphael Hythlodæus) is speaking from within the frame of a larger fiction written by the authorial More, and the contradictions inherent in the punning names of places invented by the author cut through his own fiction on an axis at right angles to the axis followed by the story reported by reporter and narrators as though true in fact. To borrow terminology from twentieth-century criticism, the point of reference for the reportorial More appears to be contiguous or metonymic while the author's is metaphoric, or rather, More is metonymic and metaphoric simultaneously, with one kind of foregrounding (his performance as the reportorial More) acting as a cover for another (his authorial strategy), neither cancelling the other out.

But I should myself prefer to follow More and use the language and grammar he himself has used here, returning, then, to his future less vivid condition, « si quid sit in ambiguo... » (40/28). In a story « de Vtopiana republica, » it is hardly a question of « if » or anything. *Everything* is « *in ambiguo*, » in doubt, uncertain, or in a state of going at least two ways, to follow the root meaning of the word *ambiguus*, upon which More as author is surely playing. Did More, as I suspect, also count on his sixteenth-century readers, who knew their Aulus Gellius so well, to remember the passage which immediately follows Publius Nigidius' bravura turns on *lying* in the *Attic Nights*: a discussion of ambiguity which preserves part of the pre-Aristotelian debate on the nature of truth and falsehood and with it the possibility of contradiction and paradox?<sup>112</sup> There Aulus Gellius juxtaposes two theses, in some sense antinomies, and dramatizes them. On the one hand the Stoic Chrysippus claims that « every word is by nature ambiguous, since two or more things may be understood from the same word. » On the other hand Diodorus claims that « No word is ambiguous and no one speaks or receives a word in two senses; and it ought not to seem to be said in any other sense than that which the speaker feels that he is giving to it. » When the speaker means one thing, and the auditor understands ano-

ther, he adds, we have obscurity, not ambiguity. But -- in a subsequent and hypothetical concession -- he admits that ambiguity could occur when « he who speaks it [the word] expresses two or more meanings. »<sup>113</sup> This is exactly the feat which More achieves almost constantly in both the larger *Utopia* and this letter, written as it is by both an authorial and a reportorial self. He is also, of course, ambiguous in Chrysippus' sense, giving us words we may, indeed must, understand in two ways.

In any case, what the reportorial More offers as a small « if » with respect to two great doubts about which he did not need to have any doubts at all is a crux for the letter and the larger *Utopia* alike, and an extraordinary instance of grammatical ambiguity or amphibology. In two different and contradictory ways the assertion is contrary to fact. We no longer have just a future less vivid condition, in other words, but an implied counterstatement about the conditionality of the work as a whole, significantly expressed through a paradoxical inversion of the « si » or hypothetical and conditional form. (In fact we could also read this clause as an extreme instance of exaggerated understatement / overstatement on the part of the reportorial self and arrive at similar conclusions). But it is the idea of conditionality, the « if, » together with the pun on *ambiguus*, which is all important here. It reflects More's awareness of ambiguity, his own subtle legal mind, putting the case as it were, his love of fiction and paradox, and his early training in « disputation » at Oxford and in mootings at Lincoln's Inn, and in the rhetoric, the fine logic, and other aspects of the late scholastic and rhetorical world of his youth.<sup>114</sup> And it anticipates the many recent theoretical discussions of the *Utopia* or utopias as inherently hypothetical, written in the subjunctive, and a related concern with fictional modes of presentation.<sup>115</sup>

But we cannot overturn the « if » part of this period without rethinking the « potius quam » clause which follows that and the consequent antithesis between « bonus » and « prudens. » It would be much too crude and inaccurate to say that they are arranged like dominoes, for the changes are not all of a kind. Each paradox and opposition sets its own rules, here and throughout the *Utopia*, and requires its own negotiation, renegotiation, and re-renegotiation as it multiplies -- hence the inexhaustible paradoxicality of the work. But some changes are imperative. If everything is, from the author's point of view, conditional or hypothetical, then the distinction so insisted upon by the reportorial self between *mendacium dicere* and *mentiri* is scarcely clear-cut.

Indeed it is inextricably ambiguous and finally nonexistent, the more so as More is playing upon the idea of the writer as liar. Though a reporter could, theoretically, be misled by a narrator, or misremember, the authorial More is certainly not copying something as it was told to him, but creating it, so that the question of his having been deceived or telling a lie thinking it true is wholly irrelevant.

The alternative question of lying or actual deception remains, of course, and some readers of *Utopia* have used words like deceptive or duplicitous about the work. But I prefer Malloch's characterization of paradox as a « show of deceit to force the reader to uncover the truth, »<sup>116</sup> although I should change the verb « force » to « invite. » For proof I would point to More's language, which may well mislead and confound, but allows us, potentially, to make corrections and adjustments. In other words, if More leads us down the garden path he also gives us certain signposts (admittedly sometimes mystifying ones) which allow us to find our way back or out or around. The work signals its own duplicities, then, and More is not, finally, trying to deceive us but to delight us at the same time that he startles us into inquiry, inviting us to discover his own art and to participate in an ongoing dialogue which he initiates. In fact, we can fully appreciate More's art only when we see how he « deceives » us; More faces the problem of every trompe l'oeil artist, who must signal his own duplicities.

In these ways he is representative of his period, since the Renaissance is so preëminently a period of irony and paradox, and yet transcends it. In the course of the sixteenth century rhetoricians will themselves use terms like « deceits » or « dissembling » or « counterfeiting » as words of praise. Wilson, for instance, comments that, « It is a pleasaunt dissembling, when we speake one thing merily and thinke an other earnestly... » linking Socrates with More.<sup>117</sup> Similarly, Nicholas Harpsfield, one of More's earliest biographers, usefully points out the trompe l'oeil quality of *Utopia*, comparing it to the popular story about the painter who deceived the birds, and was in turn deceived by a rival painter.<sup>118</sup> And recent studies of later ironists and paradoxists like Rabelais and Montaigne have also used words like deceit, dissembling, craft and bluff to catch this « conscious attempt to disconcert the reader. »<sup>119</sup> But More's « show of deceit » is more devious, subtle and convoluted still, as well as being both more witty and more serious. The renegotiations we must make occur not only book by book and section by section but page by page, line by line, and virtually word by word. The answers lead

to more questions about fundamental values for the commonweal while the ambiguities and paradoxes of this letter (and I believe of the larger *Utopia* as well) point to coherent but sometimes contradictory readings, with paradoxes within paradoxes in an infinite regress.

Moreover, to return to *mendacium dicere* and *mentiri*, there seems to be little distinction we can make between them, except grammatically, in any context other than the one supplied by the sententiae from Aulus Gellius. In the one case we have the usual noun for lie joined to a verb of saying, in the other the usual verb form, and both constructions share a reference to the mind, *mens*. Finally, in the light of the author's relationship to his text, there must be a play of words, so that feigning, telling stories is ambiguously suggested. So what is presented as if it were a genuine antithesis and *is* one, from the point of view given in Aulus Gellius, but is already undermined by the putative reporter (who is himself engaging in a show of deceit which leads us to question his own insistent claims), collapses altogether as we shift our perspective from the reporter's to the author's point of view. The words fold in upon each other across a void or chasm and the assertion becomes first a tautology -- « I am lying » -- and then a pun : we are no longer concerned with lying at all, but with the telling of fictions in a work of probability.

We must make a different kind of adjustment in the last clause, converting what is presented as a « rather...than » to a « both...and. » In this prefatory letter the reportorial More does, of course, insist vehemently upon his desire to be an « honest » man rather than a « clever » or shrewd and prudent one, and this assertion has been held to be the author's as well. But this is an impossible stance for anyone who lives in the actual world, and the reportorial self half-contradicts his own assertion several times over. To begin with, he protests too much, then there is his artful performance in this letter, and finally there is the role he assumes for himself throughout Book I. For it is the reportorial self who becomes the spokesman for prudent judgment, counterbalancing Raphael's insistent refusal to serve (or be in servitude to) kings with the language of accommodation. On another level the author of this narrative would be both « honest » *and* « prudent » -- hence his own « show of deceit » and his stance of engaged disengagement or disengaged engagement. Indeed, the historical More himself combined the simplicity of the dove with the wisdom of the serpent in his own life.<sup>120</sup> This is the sort of humanistic balance that led the sixteenth-century humanists to works like Cicero's *De Officiis* and Seneca's *Epistulae*, works

which addressed the relationship between the good and the expedient and the nature of inward freedom in the context of public service, and so spoke immediately to the humanists' dilemma.

But at this point we must stand back and articulate the curiously freewheeling and partly comic variation upon the Liar paradox which More has buried so artfully beneath his text by playing with the idea of the self as liar and commenting as reporter on his own truthfulness or fallibility. This paradox, which involves a « self-contradictory proposition about itself, » originated in Greece, being attributed first to Epimenides the Cretan, who said that all Cretans are liars, and then to Eubulides, a Stoic logician.<sup>121</sup> As an inherently ambiguous semantic paradox which raises crucial questions regarding self-referential assertions of truth or falsity and the nature of language, and, more broadly, inquires about relationships between words and things, structure and metastructure, and language and metalanguage -- what Gregory Bateson calls the paradoxes of abstraction -- it has been much argued about in the twentieth century. The paradox was also immensely interesting to logicians and philosophers throughout the later Middle Ages and the early Renaissance.<sup>122</sup> One recent book, Paul Vincent Spade's *The Medieval Liar*, contains an inventory of seventy-one discussions written between the beginning of the thirteenth and the early fifteenth century, and Paul of Venice, writing in the early fifteenth century, itemized fifteen different attempts to solve the puzzle.<sup>123</sup> In its most economical medieval formulation it was the *insolubile* of the man *qui se mentiri dicit*, but medieval logicians constructed much more intricate instances of interdependent self-referentiality : « Socrates says, 'What Plato says is false,' and Plato says 'What Socrates says is true,' and neither says anything else. Is what Socrates says true or false ? »<sup>124</sup> The sixteenth century was interested in this paradox, too, but turned to classical sources -- to Cicero and to Aulus Gellius, who speaks more than once about the pleasure of paradoxical arguments and encomia.<sup>125</sup>

More stands, then, at the end of one stream of influence and the beginning of another, and the use he makes of this paradox is, characteristically, both oblique and comic (yet serious in some part, for all that), encapsulating the agile convolutions between truth and falsehood which dominate this section of the letter. For finally what we find is not the Cretan cretanizing (as Erasmus puts it in his *Adages*)<sup>126</sup> or the liar lying, but an indirect signal that someone will « lie » or tell stories. To some extent, then, More not only plays upon the idea of the artist as liar, but recreates some part of the urbane and dramatic ambiance of the *Attic*

*Nights*, while he plays with what for the humanists were the arid subtleties of late scholastic philosophy. But his own subtleties reveal an awareness of the medieval tradition behind him, confirming on this fine scale the link Malloch has established more generally between scholastic thought (in particular the *quaestio disputata*) and the Renaissance paradox and dialogue.<sup>127</sup> At the same time that he invites us to laugh, moreover, he exploits the ambiguities inherent in this paradox and -- what is especially important -- reveals his own consciousness of the implications of self-referentiality and metalanguage which enabled him to create the Utopian experience.<sup>128</sup> More's way of thought, then, no matter how deeply we probe his text, seems inextricably self-reflexive and paradoxical, its forms both hypothetical and fictive, its expression at once playful and serious, its language that of generative self-contradiction, by analogy with the Liar paradox he so cunningly reshapes and conceals.

There is yet another dimension to More's witty adaptation of the Liar paradox. In putting it to partly comic and parodic and obviously fictional uses he echoes Lucian, who begins his *True History* by mocking the poets, historians, and philosophers for the tall tales and elaborate lies they tell but pass off as mere reporting. A disregard for the truth is common, he grants, even among philosophers, and he too is a liar. But he is a much more honest one, for he will admit that he is lying: « The one and only truth you'll hear from me is that I am lying.... Well, then, I'm writing about things I neither saw nor heard of from another soul, things which don't exist and couldn't possibly exist. So all readers beware: don't believe any of it. »<sup>129</sup> More too could be said to alert his readers as he plays with them. But there are important differences between Lucian and More, who has half-reversed Lucian's already witty reversal, as putative reporter claiming to tell as true what are -- as his authorial self signals here -- fictions, if not impossibilities, which, for all their absurdity, surpass Lucian's tall tales in their ultimate seriousness and relevance to life while being at least as entertaining as his. Moreover, where Lucian is his own narrator and flaunts his comic variation of the Liar paradox, relying on hyperbole and an easy irony, More, straight-faced, disclaims any role as narrator, creates the straight-faced Raphael Hythlodæus, and plays with and conceals his variation of the Liar paradox between and behind layers of convoluted language and twists in thought which lead us on a cerebral romp through classical and medieval logic and philosophy, the history of Western fiction, and his own *Utopia*. Thus More's well-concealed varia-

tion of the Liar paradox concretely and forcibly addresses a question of long standing among More's readers: is More's *Utopia* Lucianic and if so in what way?<sup>130</sup> And again, and as always, the answer is twofold: it is and it isn't. Like Lucian, the More of the *Utopia* is a trickster, finding in that role a way to entertain and yet question the unexamined life, the conventions, hypocrisy, distorted values, madness and absurdity of the world. But More's consciousness and conscience are far more subtle than Lucian's, for all that he admired in Lucian's writings and reworked for his own purposes.

#### *More's second letter to Giles.*

More provides a less extraordinary and less amusing discussion of these same ontological problems in a second letter to Peter Giles, important confirmation of his interest in them.<sup>131</sup> Placed immediately after Book II of the *Utopia*, and thus counterpoised to the first letter (which immediately precedes Book I), it gracefully echoes the earlier letter in its *salutatio* and *conclusio* to dearest Peter. But it was included only in the Paris edition of 1517 (n. 248/2, p. 569). It could well have seemed superfluous by 1518, when More's and Erasmus' epigrams were published under the same covers as *Utopia*. To begin with, Beatus Rhenanus' prefatory letter, which accompanied More's epigrams, spelled out the secret and the joke of More's role and disclaimers -- the relevant passage is cited, below. Moreover, the juxtaposition of *Utopia* and epigrams is inherently telling, underscoring their common ground as literature. More also could have felt that his letter to Giles gave away too much of the game too easily (part of the pleasure being the puzzle); alternatively, he could have been tired of playing it. Certainly the relationship of self to fiction has changed in this second letter. Though More still writes as the putative reporter of an « historia, » his reportorial and authorial selves have moved much closer together, and he writes retrospectively, as critic and apologist, using his own fiction rather than creating it. He continues to invite us to participate in the discovery of his hermeneutics, but, while oblique, he is less cryptic. So his rhetoric has a distinct family resemblance to that in his prefatory letter, yet it is less paradoxical and ambiguous and more conspicuously ironic. Generalizations are always dangerous with respect to More, but we are more frequently expected not just to overturn what is asserted, but to resolve it. The effect is a sophisticated instance of that pleasant dissembling the sixteenth-century rhetorical manuals admired so much.

To say that this second letter is simpler than More's first one is not to say that it is simple, however. Again we find indirection and contraries, this time in the form of a dilemma or a two-pronged condition, a sophistic trap. It seems that an unusually sharp-sighted person has raised some questions about the nature of the work and the author's intentions : « If the facts are reported as true [*vera*], I see some rather absurd elements in them, but if as fictitious [*ficta*] then I find More's finished judgement [*exactum iudicium*] wanting in some matters » (248/5-6). Just who this purportedly sharp-sighted person is we do not know. He could have been an actual or composite reader -- Father Surtz suggests a « contemporary Scholastic » because of the way the questions are put.<sup>132</sup> But I suspect that he is at least in part another of More's fictions. Although « sharp-sighted » is, for the most part, ironic, the initial dilemma posed does come close to the heart of the perplexities upon which More is playing in the prefatory letter and the larger *Utopia*. And it allows him to counterbalance some of the hyperbolic praise of the earlier letters in the parerga while obliquely addressing the genuine bafflement and patent confusion of some of his contemporaries. Beatus Rhenanus is our best witness here, telling how « a certain dolt insisted that no more thanks were due to More than to any recording secretary who merely records the opinions of others at a council, sitting in after the fashion of an 'extra' as they say, and without expressing any opinions of his own, in that all More said was taken from the mouth of Hythlodæus and merely written down by More. Therefore, he said, More deserved praise for no reason other than that he had recorded these matters well--and there were some present who approved the fellow's opinion as that of a man of very sound perception. *Do you not, then, welcome this elegant wit of More, who can impose upon such men as these, no ordinary men but widely respected and theologians at that ?* » (253/23-33). Moreover, there is a delicious touch of self-mockery and parody if this open-eyed reader is largely More's invention. Whether as lawyer or as writer, More had a discernment, a *iudicium*, which was acute, exact, and precise : the fit of his wit (and his conceits) speaks for itself. Any « exactum iudicium » which is « wanting » in the *Utopia* is due to the inherent paradoxicality of a work about a Utopian « respublica » and the ambivalence and complexity of life itself.

In any case, More, speaking as reporter, begins by complimenting the critic (real, fictive, or a fusion of the two) for his careful, thoughtful reading; he has, it appears, read the whole work through -- « not perfunctorily and hastily, as priests are wont to read

the hours » (if they do so at all) -- , but « slowly and carefully so as to weigh all the details intelligently » (249/14-17). But he ends by impaling him upon the horns of his own dilemma in a superb demonstration of the controversial mode, most of the compliments boomeranging or otherwise becoming double-edged, the critic becoming a dunce. To some extent, then, More shows his readers how to become sharper-eyed readers of the *Utopia* under the guise of writing to a sharp-sighted critic. But this formulation is too easy a reversal and coarsens the finer play of More's mind. For him the notion of being sharp-eyed has negative connotations, as when he writes to Erasmus in 1516 about critical opposition to his translation of the New Testament.<sup>133</sup> It suggests a reader who may read closely but prides himself on his close reading and reads to find faults, to attack the author, or to elevate himself by putting the author down. This theme, to which More turns in the last part of his first letter to Giles, and which is amplified in *Utopia*, explains part of the only partially disguised condescension with which More speaks about the critic here.

As the reportorial self, clearly speaking for the authorial self, addresses the dilemma, he characteristically turns it so as to have it both ways. From one point of view the dilemma becomes a tautology, from another it refers the « sharp-eyed » reader (and all readers) back to life or the ways of the world. Significantly, then, More temporarily passes by the antecedent of the first condition (the question of the work's status, factual or fictional) to address the consequent, the absurdities, so-called, of some Utopian institutions and Utopia itself, asking the perplexed reader to consider the absurdities of peoples elsewhere, and, for good measure, the writings of philosophers on the commonwealth, the ruler, and domestic economy. By implication, then, the absurdities of the Utopian commonwealth become a way to measure or weigh absurdities elsewhere, which is to say, in the actual world, and are not simply a way to call attention to the fictive status of the work, although they do that too.<sup>134</sup> Only now does he turn to the antecedent of the first horn, which he couples with the antecedent of the second so as to sharpen the dilemma or paradox : is the *res* -- that elastic and ambiguous word again -- *vera* or *commentitia*, that is, real (or true) or fictitious (or feigned) ?<sup>135</sup> His « answer, » of course, is a complicated one. On the one hand, he refuses to answer it directly, instead turning the consequent of the second horn back upon the critical reader (while shifting the meaning of « exactum iudicium ») to inquire after his precise views. On the other hand he sets up an elaborate series of subjunctive conditional

clauses, offered as contrary to fact statements, but in fact paralleling what he did both as putative reporter and as author (for all that he denies it even as reporter). So we find : « Thus, if I had done nothing else than impose names on ruler, river, city and island such as might suggest to the more learned that the island was nowhere, the city a phantom, the river without water, and the ruler without a people, it would not have been hard to do and would have been much wittier than what I actually did. Unless the faithfulness of an historian had been binding on me, I am not so stupid as to have preferred to use those barbarous and meaningless [*nihil significantibus*] names, Utopia, Anydrus, Amaurotum, and Ademus » (251/13-21). His last claim, to have reported the names just as they were given to him, is the more interesting since, as in the prefatory letter, the authorial self plays upon *nihil*, thereby reiterating the complexly paradoxical « nothingness » of Utopia, rather than the « meaninglessness » of the Yale translation. Thus More, while technically maintaining his reportorial role and allowing the notions of true and false, fact or fiction, to collide, virtually admits that the work is fictional. At least as important, and something he could not do in his prefatory letter, he stresses its absurdities, for him a way to open up the text and encourage its readers to inquire about values there (in Utopia) and here.

### The Bad Reader, the Good One, and the Text.

The third and final section of More's prefatory letter to his friend, Peter Giles, is largely concerned with reader responses. And now the reportorial More moves much closer to his authorial self as he considers whether or not to publish Raphael's narrative after all. The language is correspondingly simpler but, interestingly, more imagistic; in contrast to the hyperbolic understatements, negations, and overturnings of the first part of the letter, and the conditional hypotheses and elaborate fictions of the second part, much of the third section consists of assertions in the third person indicative plural and portraits of bad readers. Possible criticism and objections are put in the mouths of carping critics and the reporter appears to be speaking of literature in general. But in fact the fit between the imagined criticism and *Utopia* is precise (although More conceals the words that prove this). Thus this section indirectly reveals a great deal about the author's intentions and the way that he would have his work read, clarifying right reader-writer-text relationships and the roles More would have his reader play as well as the nature of his text.

The reportorial self begins by dramatizing and caricaturing the opponents and quasi-friends of good letters. To some extent the points he makes parallel Erasmus' in his *Antibarbari*, not published until 1520, but written earlier.<sup>136</sup> Like the *Antibarbari*, the reportorial (and authorial) More indicts the enemies of culture, whether they prefer ignorance to learning or narrow-mindedly define literature in the light of their own studies and inferior conceptions. But whereas Erasmus is defending the whole republic of letters, and is especially concerned with the revival of classical learning and literature, the focus here is upon contemporary writing. Moreover, we have to sense the contrast between Erasmus' spacious, leisurely dialogue and these brief, almost epigrammatic thrusts : the power of distillation and condensation is what impresses, together with an element of aggression on the speaker's part -- a sign of just how much More himself cares.

More specifically the mind of the putative reporter identifies a number of ever smaller groups, arranged logically, beginning with the very many who are devoid of learning and the many who despise it, and ending with those readers who, like churlish guests at a rich banquet, are no more grateful to the author, however delighted they have been with the work. In every case, moreover, these misreadings are interpreted psychologically as reflections of the reader's own self-interest and as a projection, conscious or unconscious, of his own self-image onto another's work. This theme, which we have just seen in another form in More's second letter to Peter Giles, is a dominant one in many of his humanistic epistles. In his letter to Dorp defending Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*, for instance, More writes, « Every man is charmed by his point of view, just as each person thinks his own wind smells sweet. »<sup>137</sup> It is a crucial issue in *Utopia* as well, which asks so fundamentally about self-interest and self-aggrandizement as distinguished from and related to the common interest -- those things which we could (or do) have in common as human beings.

This larger logical and psychological movement is vividly realized through a series of rhetorical figures belonging once again to the category of contraries, almost ostentatiously calling attention to themselves as kinds of antithesis.<sup>138</sup> At this point, indeed, we could do what the Renaissance rhetoricians taught their pupils to do : write the appropriate rhetorical figure next to each brilliant character-sketch and portrait (which is already a rhetorical form -- *characterismus* -- thereby prefiguring the seventeenth century full-fledged character). We find *synchrisis* (the comparison of contrary things and diverse persons) as the

reportorial and authorial More heaps up, and for good measure reverses the direction of, antithetical responses : some people are so barbarous that they reject everything which is not clearly barbarous, while others (who think they know something) scorn as trivial what isn't full of obsolete terms; some only like what is old, others only like their own work. There are such playful verbal paradoxes and puns as the flat-nosed (« simi »), who in effect are noseless, without a smell (we should say taste) for satire, and there are the saltless ones, too saltless to like salt (wit), as More literalizes metaphors. There is irony, obviously, throughout, and a finely wrought variation upon *inter se pugnancia* (reproving one's adversary for the discrepancy between what he preaches and what he does) as the speaker attacks those who sit in taverns and tear the work of others apart, they themselves being wholly immune from criticism (having written nothing at all). And finally there is *antiphrasis* (condensed irony) and *epitrope* (ironical permission) and with it echoes of Erasmus and Chaucer (n. 44/19, p. 294), as the reporter/author turns wryly to address himself : « Go now, and prepare a banquet at your own cost for men of such delicate palates, such various tastes, whose minds are so full of thanks and gratitude ! »

This is a patently rhetorical manoeuvre, a series of defensive gestures designed to ward off the very responses the passage describes. Both the reportorial and authorial More are doing here what Raphael later does. And Thomas More had many reasons to be wary, quite apart from the inherent sensitivity of his topics. In publishing a work dealing paradoxically with all the matters informing a *respublica*, he had gone beyond even Erasmus' heady and controversial *Moriae Encomium* (which essentially explored one axis of paradox : wisdom and foolishness). Moreover, as paradox the work was and is inevitably open to misinterpretation, asking as much of its readers as it does, hovering between play and seriousness, confounding the literal and the metaphoric, knotty in its thought patterns, refusing to stay put. In fact in some ways it is deliberately undecipherable. Then as now, critics, More included, could be a tough and nasty lot. If they indulged in the kind of congratulatory praise which characterizes the letters and poems in the parerga for *Utopia*, they could, and did, attack viciously. More himself was soon to be taunted by Brixius, whose *Antimōrus* set out to catch some of More's most shocking solecisms and barbarisms in his epigrams and *Utopia*, not the least of which (doubly ironically, given this letter and More's basic groundplot) was the name of this new-found country.<sup>139</sup> Erasmus was partly responsible for the attack, by including nine of More's epi-

grams attacking Brixius and his inflated poem about a naval battle between France and England in the edition (1518) of the epigrams.

These antithetical character sketches go beyond sheer defensiveness, however. By indirection More suggests part of the aesthetic context for his own work by adumbrating the new form he has created and obliquely sketching a portrait of the good reader. Like the putative reporter, we too must hold on to each set of contradictories and opposites, balancing between and among them. The *Utopia* belongs to learning, then, but it draws from old *and* new, from the writings of others *and* from the experiences and knowledge of its author, and it entertains *and* engages the mind and moral sense of the reader. Obviously each word and phrase in turn could be the subject of an extended reading of *Utopia*, so condensed is More's formulation here. But it is crucial to note the many different ways in which the *Utopia* is an instance of the new Renaissance development of the mixed form or kind. Unconventional and allusive, such a form tends towards the all-inclusive in its ability to gather to itself so many possibilities of the intellectual and imaginative world of its author.<sup>140</sup>

Formally, topically, genetically, even verbally, the *Utopia* is again, and at least, a « both...and, » rather than an « either...or. » So, for example, More has combined narrative with speech; dialogue (of various types) with a monologue which is itself a composite form (in some sense a *declamatio* but also a travelogue, portrait, encomium, sermon, diatribe, anatomy, et cetera); political with philosophical and geographico-historical inquiry; satire with dream and vision. We can think of the book both as a new genre and as a paradigm<sup>141</sup> which links thematic concerns with structural characteristics and enables More as author to ask fundamental questions about the best state of the commonwealth through a double and inherently paradoxical perspective, a set of ever-shifting contraries made concrete through the image of Utopia.

So, upon a smaller scale, More has woven together material of the most diverse sorts to create the fabric of letter, dialogue, and *sermo*, with its continuously shifting views of the citizens of Utopia. At one moment the Utopians are creatures of nature or otherwise naive and simple beings, at another they are wise and philosophical pagans, at another oddly reminiscent of Greek or Germanic tribesmen, or American natives, or a Mithraic cult, while at other moments they are curiously like Renaissance Western Europeans, despite their many differences. Similarly, More can use a topos from Plato, Aristotle, Aulus

Gellius, Sallust, or St. Augustine straight. Frequently, however, he reshapes it, turning it upside down or inside out, and countering one sententia or commonplace with another inherently contradictory one, resisting attempts to place it or the work and its author in a single philosophical tradition. More is consistent in his method, however, and his use of this commonplace method helps to explain *Utopia*'s allusiveness, amplitude, and genetic development, so that this letter, with its many topoi and commonplaces, is again homologous to the intricate mosaic of the larger *Utopia*. Erasmus is a brilliant example of how Renaissance humanists transformed the past through what Bolgar has called their « note-book method. »<sup>142</sup> More, too, as I hope to show in more detail elsewhere, accumulated an enormous array of material, either on paper or in his head -- his memory (reflecting the residue of his oral culture) was close to incredible by modern standards -- which allowed him to write or finish writing out the *Utopia* as apparently spontaneously and quickly as he seems to have, ending what must have been a long period of incubation with a quick parturition as he transformed his storehouse of images and ideas.<sup>143</sup> And even the language More uses is a subtle and sophisticated mix of the historical, oratorical, poetic, and philosophical, joining the most arcane and esoteric words with the most plebeian and colloquial ones, the two extremes paradoxically coalescing in his neologisms.<sup>144</sup>

Similarly, the reportorial/authorial More quickly but precisely sketches the good reader's stance and the spirit in which he would have his *libellus* read, counterbalancing the enjoyment and the thoughtful response he hopes for against the attitudes of those who are too severe and gloomy, or too flat and dull, on the one hand, and those who are literally too « spirited » or « spiritous » on the other. He goes so far, indeed, as to spell out some part of its joyful play, its jokes and wit, and its satiric sense, allowing us to infer something about the purposes and nature of a work which is designed to provide an inextricable fusion of pleasure and profit by exercising the mind, imagination, and moral sense of the reader. The immediate context is the plain style tradition that he invoked earlier in the letter and now reinforces by his echo of Horace's *Art of Poetry* : both « utilitati » and « uoluptati » (42/31) underscore and strengthen the Horatian idea that « Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci, / lectorem delectando pariterque monendo » (« He has won every vote who has blended profit and pleasure, at once delighting and instructing the reader »).<sup>145</sup> Interestingly, More used these same nouns earlier, in the prefatory letter accompanying his trans-

lations of Lucian, praising him for the way he « fulfilled the Horatian maxim and combined delight with instruction » (« uoluptatemque cum utilitate coniunxerit »).<sup>146</sup> And what he went on to say of Lucian there could more truly be said of the author of *Utopia* : « Refraining from the arrogant pronouncements of the philosophers as well as from the wanton wiles of the poets, he everywhere reprimands and censures, with very honest and at the same time very entertaining wit, our human frailties. And this he does so cleverly and effectively that although no one pricks more deeply, nobody resents his stinging words (*aculeos*). »<sup>147</sup> For the *Utopia* is some part a joke, farcical and witty in all the senses the Renaissance gave to that word. It is also satiric in many different ways at once, participating as it does in Menippean or Lucianic satire, Horatian satire, the classical epigrammatic satiric tradition, and England's copious literature of complaint.<sup>148</sup>

But, like Socrates, More is both gadfly and truth-seeker, and the term satiric as it is usually used is finally too limiting for his more elusive and subtle purposes. Nor does it do full justice to the *Utopia* as fiction and paradox. We might better see *Utopia* as a unique instance of the many witty and paradoxical exercises in the cause of truth which Dornavius, a learned anthologist of paradoxical encomia and other forms, called *sapientiae socraticae joco-seriae*.<sup>149</sup> First publishing his great two-volume « amphitheatrum » of such pieces in 1619, Dornavius included Erasmus' *Encomion Moriae* in the second volume, given over to persons and ideas customarily despised, like Helen, Busiris, Epicurus, injustice, beggars, fevers, death, etc. More's *Utopia* (complete with parerga) occupies the climactic final position in his first volume, devoted to such trifles, shadows, and paradoxical « nothings » as the flea, the fly, the worm, the lily, dawn, sleep, laughter, nobody, and finally, « nowhere. » Dornavius' own criteria are elastic, and he overrides generic considerations to include orations, sermons, encomia, disputations, a treatise by Copernicus, lyric poems, and a selection from Ecclesiastes. What such different works share are a dialectical conception, a love of paradox, and the dual concern for pleasure and profit that is signalled by the Horatian citation on the title-page : « Ridentem dicere verum / Quid vetat ? »<sup>150</sup> So Erasmus suggested a comparable thrust for *Utopia* when he wrote in 1517 to Guillaume Cop : « As for More's *Utopia*, if you have not yet read it, be sure to ask for it when you want to be amused, or more truly, if you wish to see the very wellsprings of all troubles in the commonwealth. »<sup>151</sup> Language, with its inherent sequentiality, compelled Erasmus, like More, to resort to antitheses to adumbrate the



double vision that is *Utopia*, epitomized in the serious joke of golden chamber pots.

In short, the complexity and inner dynamics of the *Utopia* are such that More would have alert, learned, witty, sophisticated, and sensitive readers like Erasmus and Giles, who love language, are adept at the roles they play, have sharp intellects and an acute moral sensibility, and can keep their balance. This is the exact antithesis of the stance spelled out here in one of the most important lines in the entire letter -- a brilliant example of the mosaic process of composition and of the way More reshapes the past. It describes readers who are so changeable, so fickle, so *mobiles*, « that sitting they praise one thing and standing another thing » (45/9-10). But we need the Latin: « aliud sedentes *proben*, aliud stantes » (44/8). This is a variation upon a sententia which first appeared in the *Invective against Cicero*, attributed to Sallust: « Aliud stans, aliud sedens sentis *de re publica*. »<sup>152</sup> More could count upon some of his contemporaries to recognize the sententia both in its original form and in the version in Erasmus' *De Copia* and *Adagia*, where it becomes *Aliud stans, aliud sedens loquitur*.<sup>153</sup> Insofar as we read the sententia seriously or only « straight, » Erasmus amplifies the thematic context. For him it is a proverbial figure for the inconstant man: the person who is changeable in his attitudes and beliefs in contrast to the person who is always himself. Both the pseudo-Sallust and Erasmus, then, allow us to reiterate the significance of More's mini-portrait or emblem and to see how, by contrast, More obliquely suggests the good reader, one who will never lose his balance, and who is also a good person -- the ambiguity in the « good reader » is deliberate on my part. But we must also recognize the buried challenge and the wit. Given More's paradoxical form and style, which so constantly knocks us off balance, it is no mean feat to keep it or, more accurately, refind it. We must be at once flexible and focused.

The verbal transformations More makes allow us to say more. When we compare the original form with its appearance in the *Utopia* we discover that More has suppressed the very words -- *de re publica* -- which justify reading this third part of the prefatory letter (ostensibly by the reportorial More) as a description of actual authorial strategies, and this discovery confirms the exact fit between the sententia reworked and the book and matter at hand. Though More characteristically has blurred the frame separating the two, his topic is twice identified in the letter as the *respublica*. Obliquely, then, we can see just how fine, witty, and subtle his memory, mind, and imagination are, for

all his reportorial disclaimers, and how very mischievous his relationship with his readers is. More also shifts the verb from singular to plural, a minor change to fit his present case, and changes it from the pseudo-Sallustian *sentis* and the neutral Erasmian *loquitur* to the much more emphatic *proben*. In its present context it means « approve » or « commend, » but since it can mean « probe, » « test, » « inspect, » « try, » or « judge by trial » in another context, it ironically suggests the activities More would have the good reader do -- again we can think of his second letter to Giles. Finally, More realigns the elements of the sententia to achieve a grammatical mimesis of the idea. For now we have a literal balance, with a verb (which obliquely suggests a form of weighing) serving as a fulcrum between the two pronouns and the activities described, while More also inverts the original *standing / sitting*. Perhaps this simply reflects his almost habitual inversions, a microscopic instance of his larger inverted mirror imaging. But I think that we also see More's psychological orientation. To move from *standing* and *sitting* to *sitting* and *standing* is to shift from the Roman world of public oratory and the forum to the Renaissance worlds of the colloquy and of the reader: first we sit, then we stand, whether in amazement (insofar as More is teasing) or as we move from the garden, the symposium, or the study to the active world. In either case, it is this extra precision which is uniquely Morean.

But my formulations here are less than wholly accurate insofar as they seem to close a situation which More himself in some sense leaves open-ended. He does seek for a judicious and thus balanced response. But in portraying these opposites and diverse truths between and among which we are asked to mediate, he creates a situation which is directed and yet open-ended without being wholly relativistic. We are asked to move along axes and between contradictories of his choosing, while encouraged to experience the work and to test our own responses, to find and refind the balancing points in the work and in our selves. Just as an individual word or sentence or idea can knock us off balance, while helping us find a new one, so -- to shift to the larger structure -- the *Utopia* paradoxically takes us out of ourselves by bringing us to *Utopia* and presenting us with an alternative measure of human value, but it returns us to ourselves and the world in which we must live. Thus each smaller circle or set of contradictions and antitheses adumbrates the larger structure of letter and *Utopia* alike, where we are given countless opportunities to weigh assertions and values and to discover the many different ways in which they are true or false or both at once, as

More tests the nature of human society and human nature and relationships of self to other, the natural and social world, and God.

By indirection, indeed, More allows for genuine error, on his part and others', so long as it is error in the service of truth and reflects concern and love, rather than self-centered self-aggrandizement. At this point, then, we can think back to John Clement, the historical More's boy secretary, who was also made a part of the fictional Utopian experience and from whom the letter-writer expects such an excellent harvest. He was mistaken, it turns out, about the width of the river; the reportorial More remembered the facts (or « facts ») correctly. But (speaking from within a whole network of fictions, of course) that he spoke up as he did enabled More in the guise of reporter to ask the questions which in turn led us as readers towards answers which are more complex and contradictory than the reportorial self admits. We are asked, then, to value the process towards truth, the clarification of values, and the development of good judgment as well as any conclusions, the more so as the *Utopia* itself never really ends and addresses questions for which, given political realities and the nature of man and of this temporal world, there are no final answers.<sup>154</sup> At this same point the reporter/author turns to metaphor; he has prepared a feast for the mind (thus catching up and integrating a number of food and drink images, some positive, some negative) and asks us (in effect) to be grateful and unoblivious guests.

Finally we must contrast the characterization of the carping critics and bad readers with the portrayal of the sweet friend with which More ends his letter, his historical, authorial, and reportorial selves wholly coalescing. Formally these last two lines are the *conclusio* of the letter, balancing (even overbalancing) the initial « Pudet me propemodum charissime Petre Aegidi » with a second use of the full name and a second superlative form of the dear Peter leitmotif which More has carried throughout the letter : this is its sixth appearance. At the same time that the conclusion completes the circle, then, it opens it up, structurally, thematically, syntactically and emotionally. For despite its brevity it daringly outweighs the sentences devoted to the ungrateful readers in the power of its feeling. (On these grounds I would question readings which stress only the dark pessimism of the last part of the letter.)<sup>155</sup> Modestly, courteously, but invoking perhaps the strongest and surely the most resonant of all humanistic themes -- friendship -- with special significance for More who, in Erasmus' words, was born and made for friendship,<sup>156</sup> More asks only for steadfastness in an ongoing relation-

ship, even though his affection for Peter has grown beyond its accustomed state : « Love me as you always have, for I love you even more than I ever have. »

This is, in part, a rhetorical plea to all readers for sympathetic understanding, for reading at once knowledgeably and *con amore*.<sup>157</sup> But I should be most reluctant to view this merely as a rhetorical strategy. The emotion is fully justified and well earned both in terms of the indictment which precedes it and the reader's present situation. After the hard work of intellection, the cerebral exercise, the soaring flights, the repeated tension (only partly dissipated by the laughter) we need this moment of equipoise and sweet charity. We need the Latin, too, to feel the full force of More's final pledge : « Vale dulcissime Petre Aegidi : cum optima coniuge : ac me ut soles ama : quando ego te amo etiam plus quam soleo » (44/26-27). The verbal echoes, the rhythmic patterns (with the graceful reversal of the *antimetabole*) are part of a beautiful formal dance, invoking that sweet amity and charity, that faithful friendship which binds More with Peter Giles, with Giles' beloved wife, and, by implication, with everyone who reads and responds as an *amicus* or *amica Mori*. And, typically, More gives more than he asks for; desiring of each of us « me ut soles ama » he promises « te amo etiam plus quam soleo, » as he ends his letter with an overflow of love and an asymmetrical syntactical and thematic balance. So the reportorial, authorial, and historical More alike promise more than they dare request while offering a costly and inexhaustible banquet, full to overflowing. But the author has done his part; the feast is prepared as More turns each of us to the larger *Utopia* which follows, sending us on our way to read and criticize *con amore*, just as, at the end of the whole *Utopia*, he turns us back again to this world of which Utopia is so often an inverted mirror image.

### Towards Utopia

Because paradoxes necessarily invite the reader's response, they do not end, although they may stop. And it is almost as difficult to finish this study. More naturally drew upon Horace in this prefatory letter, as he did in the epistle preceding his translations of Lucian, for aesthetic principles which allowed him to justify his own indivisible fusion of pleasure with profit : *voluptas* with *utilitas*, the *festivus* with the *salutaris*. Like Horace, too, the humanistic More is « conversational, epistolary, idiomatic, ironic, satiric. »<sup>158</sup> As Wimsatt and Brooks add,

« This [the Horatian] view has the advantage of opening up the linguistic, the idiomatic, the metaphoric and in that sense again the 'dramatic' aspect of all poetry. » It would be reductive, then, simply to characterize More as a pragmatic or rhetorical critic, or an artist whose aesthetic structures are directed only towards affecting and moving his audience. And it seems almost as reductive to try to summarize the major elements of More's aesthetics as he has half-concealed and half-revealed them in this letter behind his fictions, evasions, suppressions, contradictions, under-and-over-statements, ambiguity, word-play, inversions, reversals, convolutions, syntactical traps, deliberate obfuscation, paradoxical transformations, and blurred and collapsed levels of discourse. We can recognize the subtlety and sophistication of his composite forms, his fascination with the roles of writer and reader, his powerfully realized fictions, the unique blend of the lucid and ambiguous in his language, his sense of the hypothetical or conditional, his aesthetic of complementary opposition and honest deception, and a method of paradox and puzzle which constantly challenges us and reflects the subtlety, suppleness, and vigor of his mind and imagination. But to work out the implications of this prefatory letter to Peter Giles with respect to the larger *Utopia* -- which is paradoxical in so many different ways at once -- demands its own book.

Yet we can say that there, as here, we are presented with a complicated series of contraries and contradictions on every level (verbal, syntactical, metaphoric, formal, structural, thematic) which are played against each other but which are sometimes complementary to one another. Moreover, the relationship between any two contraries (real or apparent) and the relationship between one set and another constantly shift, so much so that any generalization about ways to resolve them is somewhat suspect. True to his rhetorical, poetic, and dialectical orientation More invites us to experience the *Utopia* and *Utopia* for ourselves, to look for truth in and behind each assertion, fiction, ambiguity, and paradox, delighting in each step along the way. In this sense the letter and the larger *Utopia* are both open-ended. But More shapes our thought and directs our concerns through the very contraries he creates, leading us irresistibly to question the values which society embraces and to contemplate alternatives which in turn raise additional questions and refine our judgment. Reflecting its own paradoxical ontology, *Utopia* is a literally speculative and paradoxical image of a world which is already topsy-turvy, surprising us, sensitizing us, sharpening our wits as it gives answers which turn out to be questions and raises questions which are sometimes answered. Like all paradox, then, the *Utopia* is in some sense

tautological, in some sense the nothing it plays upon, inextricably connected with language, wholly incomplete until and as we read it, and inexhaustibly generative.

To shift metaphors, *Utopia* aesthetically is like an enormous and many-levelled mobile: at every moment it is balanced but at every moment it rebalances; at once in motion and still, it dynamically creates new patterns before our eyes. More's first letter to Peter Giles is a brilliantly compressed and intense replication of this same mobile-like form: in balance but rebalancing it asks us to find our equilibrium. More paid his readers as readers the highest compliment, inviting each of them and each of us to read his text well. So neither this letter nor the larger *Utopia* is mere gymnastics as wit and paradox are sometimes derogatorily viewed. Rather each is a genuine exercise of the mind, imagination, and conscience preoccupied with fundamental questions facing human beings in an ambiguous and complex world. The wit or the paradoxicality -- the terms are interchangeable in part -- hovers continuously between play or game and profundity. If we lean too far to the one side we cheapen and fracture the wit; if we lean too far to the other we turn *Utopia* into a heavy-handed philosophical treatise. By contrast More himself sought a perilous and precarious balance between these and other opposites, aesthetic for the letter, aesthetic, social, political, and ethical for the book, as he played out his own paradoxical vision.

In the course of More's own life the balance changed so much that by the end of it the only balance he could find for himself was -- while still paradoxical -- a matter of Christian mystery: of losing his head to save it.<sup>159</sup> In these, the golden years of pre-Reformation humanism, the balance, albeit in practice almost as difficult to achieve, was differently, and more playfully perceived. The challenge that faced the humanists is our challenge too, as readers of the text and players of *Utopia*. Finding our balance is, in fact, the central metaphor for the letter and the larger *Utopia*. Never articulated directly (that is, as an image in the twentieth-century sense) it is implicit in the syntactical movements, in the gestures and activities of the putative reporter, in the dramatic relationships between characters and ideas, in the exercise of consciousness and conscience offered by the author, and in the kinetic and dramatic action the language invites us to participate in as we read. So this letter, like the larger *Utopia*, offers only temporary moments of rest as we all renegotiate (as we must) the tough yet playful game of art that turns us back to life itself.

## Footnotes

1. A survey of « the later fortune of *Utopia* » is part of Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel's *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard Univ. Press, 1979), pp. 117-49. I received this book only after completing the present study and was, then, especially interested to note on pp. 134-35 its brief but positive references to paradox, a word too often used negatively about More's work. Judith Paterson Jones' « Recent Studies in More, » *ELR*, 9 (1979), 442-58, includes a more detailed summary of recent trends and major studies. A useful sampling of the range and diversity of interpretations is included in Sir Thomas More, *Utopia : A New Translation, Backgrounds, Criticism*, trans. and ed. Robert M. Adams (New York : W.W. Norton & Co., 1975). See too Ligeia Gallagher's *More's « Utopia » and Its Critics* (Chicago : Scott, Foresman and Co., 1964) and William Nelson's *Twentieth Century Interpretations of « Utopia »* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice-Hall, 1968).

2. By the early sixteenth century *paradox* could mean both « a statement contrary to received opinion, » strange, marvellous, or incredible, and « a statement apparently self-contradictory »; see Sister Miriam Joseph, C.S.C., *Rhetoric in Shakespeare's Time : Literary Theory of Renaissance Europe* (1947; rpt. N.Y. : Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962), pp. 323-24; the *N.E.D.*; Robert Estienne, *Thesavri Lingvae Latinae* (Basel, 1576); and *paradox* in *A Milton Encyclopedia*, ed. William B. Hunter, Jr., VI (Lewisburg : Bucknell Univ. Press, 1979). The larger *Utopia* is paradoxical in both ways, while the second use is particularly relevant to this letter.

C.S. Lewis's *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1954), pp. 167-71, while it briefly makes one case for *Utopia* as paradox, understates the mix of seriousness and comedy. Studies of paradox which I have drawn upon for general background include Theodore C. Burgess, *Epidictic Literature* (Chicago : Univ. of Chicago Press, 1902), pp. 157-66; Arthur S. Pease, « Things Without Honor, » *CP*, 21 (1926), 27-42; E.N.S. Thompson, *The Seventeenth-Century English Essay, University of Iowa Humanistic Studies*, 3 (1926), 94-105; Warner G. Rice, « The Paradoxi of Ortensio Lando, » *Michigan Essays and Studies in Comparative Literature*, 8 (1932), 59-74; A.E. Malloch, « The Techniques and Function of the Renaissance Paradox, » *SP*, 53 (1956), 191-203; Sister M. Geraldine Thompson, C.S.J., « Erasmus and the Tradition of Paradox, » *SP*, 61 (1964), 41-63; Rosalie L. Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica : The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (Princeton : Princeton Univ. Press, 1966); Brian Vickers, « 'King Lear' and Renaissance Paradoxes, » *MLR*, 63 (1968), 305-14; Barbara C. Bowen, *The Age of Bluff : Paradox & Ambiguity in Rabelais & Montaigne*, Illinois Studies in Language and Literature 62 (Urbana : Univ. of Illinois Press, 1972); Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (New York : Chandler, 1972), especially « A Theory of Play and Fantasy, » pp. 177-93; Margaret M. McGowan, *Montaigne's Deceits : The Art of Persuasion in the « Essais »* (Philadelphia : Temple Univ. Press, 1974).

3. As in George Gascoigne's *Certain Notes of Instruction Concerning the Making of Verse or Ryme in English* (1575) and Sir Philip Sidney's *An Apology for Poetry*, first published in 1595 but probably written in the early 1580's. On the significance of these terms see S.K. Heninger, Jr., « Sidney and Milton : The Poet as Maker, »

in *Milton and the Line of Vision*, ed. Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr. (Madison : Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1975), pp. 57-95.

4. Besides Malloch and Colie, especially pp. 14 and 42, see Darko Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction : On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre* (New Haven and London : Yale Univ. Press, 1979), with its discussion of the utopian genre as a « possible impossible .»

5. For the Latin text of the letter, the *Utopia*, and other Utopian material I am using *Utopia, The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, 4, ed. Edward Surtz, S.J., and J.H. Hexter (New Haven : Yale Univ. Press, 1965). I cite the modified English translation of G.C. Richards from this same edition for everything but More's prefatory letter to Giles. After working with the letter in Latin for some time, I found myself forced to retranslate it so as to try to suggest more fully the nuances of More's style that document the points I hoped to make. The text and translation of the entire letter are included in the Appendix. References to the commentary of the Yale *Utopia* are indicated in my text as « Yale » followed by note and page numbers. Italics in the quotations are mine.

6. Yale « Introduction, » pp. clxxxviii-clxxxix and Yale n. 38/1, p. 289. Full justice is done to the singular importance of this letter by a facsimile of the elegant November 1518 edition, complete with the Holbein border, in *L'Utopie de Thomas More*, ed. André Prévost (Paris : Mame, 1978), pp. 343-56. Prévost's notes on the prefatory letter need to be used with caution insofar as they make little allowance for More's reportorial guise.

7. J.H. Hexter, *More's « Utopia » : The Biography of an Idea* (1952; rpt. New York : Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 11-30, and his introductory material and « Appendix A » in the Yale *Utopia*.

8. Peter Allen, « *Utopia* and European Humanism, » *SR*, 10 (1963), 91-107; Warren W. Wooden, « A Reconsideration of the Parerga of Thomas More's *Utopia*, » in *Quincentennial Essays on St. Thomas More*, ed. Michael J. Moore (Boone, North Carolina : Albion, 1978), pp. 151-60.

9. Robbin S. Johnson, *More's « Utopia » : Ideal and Illusion* (New Haven : Yale Univ. Press, 1969), pp. 1-13; Alan F. Nagel, « Lies and the Limitable Inane : Contradiction in More's *Utopia*, » *RQ*, 16 (1973), 173-80; Andrew D. Weiner, « Raphael's Eutopia and More's *Utopia* : Christian Humanism and the Limits of Reason, » *HLQ*, 39 (1975), 4-8; William J. Kennedy, *Rhetorical Norms in Renaissance Literature* (New Haven : Yale Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 103-05.

10. Harry Berger, Jr., « The Renaissance Imagination : Second World and Green World, » *The Centennial Review*, 9 (1965), 61, 71.

11. *St. Thomas More : Selected Letters*, ed. Elizabeth Frances Rogers (New Haven and London : Yale Univ. Press, 1961), p. 90.

12. Cf. the discussion of « The Epistle Dedicatory » by Walter Kaiser, *Praises of Folly : Erasmus, Rabelais, Shakespeare* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 27-34.

13. Abrams (New York : Oxford Univ. Press, 1953), pp. 3-29.
14. It is patently impossible to record my overall debt to studies of *Utopia*. However I should like to single out some of the many recent rhetorical readings, concerned like mine with writer-audience-text relationships. But whereas my present reading reflects a specific focus upon language, inner structure, and paradox, they are mostly concerned with more general rhetorical strategies and our final views of the *Utopia* often differ : Weiner, « Raphael's Eutopia and More's *Utopia*, » pp. 1-27; Kennedy, *Rhetorical Norms in Renaissance Literature*, pp. 79-105; Arthur F. Kinney, « Rhetoric as Poetic : Humanist Fiction in the Renaissance, » *ELH*, 43 (1976), 413-43; Arthur F. Kinney, *Rhetoric and Poetic in Thomas More's « Utopia »* (Maliibu : Undena Publications, 1979); Joel B. Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind : Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama* (Berkeley : Univ. of California Press, 1978), pp. 64-67 and 79-87; Richard J. Schoeck, « The Ironic and the Prophetic : Towards Reading More's *Utopia* as a Multidisciplinary Work, » in *Quincentennial Essays on St. Thomas More*, ed. Michael J. Moore, pp. 124-34. I am still learning from the Prévost edition of the *Utopia*, which stresses the experiential aspect of the work and is essential reading. Douglas Duncan, *Ben Jonson and the Lucianic Tradition* (Cambridge, Eng. : Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979), pp. 52-76, is a provocative discussion of the ludic or *jocoserious* method of the *Utopia* in the light of Lucian, Erasmus, and More's biography.
15. I am borrowing (and playing upon) Stanley Fish's terminology for the reader's experience from *Surprised by Sin : The Reader in « Paradise Lost »* (1967; rpt. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London; Univ. of Cal. Press, 1971).
16. On Erasmus' practice in his letters of dedication and prefaces (some forty-three addressed simply « To the Reader ») see *The Correspondence of Erasmus*, trans. R.A.B. Mynors and D.F.S. Thomson, annotated Wallace K. Ferguson, I (Toronto : Univ. of Toronto Press, 1974), xiv and xvi.
17. Relevant here are Edgar Wind's *Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance*, Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens*, and the comprehensive studies of Renaissance humanism by Kristeller, Trinkaus, and Prévost.
18. On the Renaissance identification of poetry and fable and its source in Aristotle's *Poetics* see W.S. Howell, « Poetics, Rhetoric, and Logic in Renaissance Criticism, » in *Classical Influences on European Culture A.D. 1500-1700*, ed. R.R. Bolgar (Cambridge, Eng. : Cambridge Univ. Press, 1976), pp. 158-60.
19. Book I, ch. 23; citation from *The Workes of Sir Thomas More* (1557), facsimile ed. introduced by K.J. Wilson (London : Scolar Press, 1978), I, 153.
20. Alistair Fox's « Thomas More's *Dialogue* and the *Book of the Tales of Canterbury* : 'Good Mother Wit' and Creative Imitation, » in *Familiar Colloquy : Essays Presented to Arthur Barker*, ed. Patricia Bruckmann (Canada : Oberon Press, 1978), pp. 15-24, comments on the way More views the poetic as a process which brings home the « human situation » (p. 16).
21. See *The Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Gladys Doig Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge, Eng. : Cambridge Univ. Press, 1936), pp. 40-41.
22. *Gvlielmi Bvdaei, Regii Secretarii Epistolae* (Basel, 1521), pp. 13 and 21. Cf. the *Annotata in G. Bvdaei Epistolas* (Basel, 1528), pp. 7-8.
23. *St. Thomas More : Selected Letters*, p. 73; Latin text added from *Opvs Epistolarvm Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, ed. P.S. Allen and H.M. Allen.
24. Demetrius, *On Style*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts, in *Aristotle, « Longinus, » and Demetrius*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass. and London : Harvard Univ. Press and Heinemann, 1973), IV, 224, 225, and 231. On the familiar letter in general in the Renaissance see Wesley Trimp's magisterial survey of « The Epistolary Tradition, » pp. 60-75 in his *Ben Jonson's Poems : A Study of the Plain Style* (Stanford, Cal. : Stanford Univ. Press, 1962).
25. In « The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction, » *PMLA*, 90 (1975), 9-21, Walter J. Ong, S.J., briefly discusses the many dimensions of fiction in the familiar letter (p. 19).
26. Biographical details based upon Allen; the Yale *Utopia*, passim; and J.B. Trapp and Hubertus Schulte Herbrüggen, 'The King's Good Servant' : *Sir Thomas More : 1477/8 - 1535* (London : National Portrait Gallery, 1977), item 54. See too M.A. Nauwelaerts, « Un ami anversoise de More et d'Erasmus : Petrus Aegidius, » *Moreana*, No. 15-16, Nov. 1967, pp. 83-96.
27. From *The Correspondence of Erasmus*, trans. Mynors and Thomson, annotated James K. McConica, III (1976), 235/157-62.
28. For « Pieter Gillis » see colour plate II, p. 53, in Trapp and Schulte Herbrüggen, 'The King's Good Servant.' The corresponding portrait of Erasmus is reproduced as Figure 1 in Margaret Mann Phillips, « The Mystery of the Metsys Portrait, » in *Erasmus in English*, 7 (1975), 18-21. Since I have not seen these portraits *in situ*, my descriptions are based upon these reproductions and the accompanying information, supplemented by the full study of this diptych in Lorne Campbell, Margaret Mann Phillips, Hubertus Schulte Herbrüggen and J.B. Trapp, « Quentin Matsys, Desiderius Erasmus, Pieter Gillis and Thomas More, » *Burlington Magazine*, 120 (1978), 716-25.
29. From *The Correspondence of Erasmus*, III, 44/9-10.
30. See More's letter to Giles, thanking him for the diptych, in *The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More*, ed. Elizabeth Frances Rogers (Princeton : Princeton Univ. Press, 1947), No. 47, pp. 98-100, and discussions by Phillips and Campbell et al.
31. Campbell et al., p. 719.
32. Citations from the first and second editions of the Robynson translation (1551 and 1556) refer normally to *The Utopia of Sir Thomas More*, ed. J.H. Lupton (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1895). For Robynson's marginalia, omitted by Lupton, I have used the facsimile of the second edition published by Scolar (Menston : 1970).

33. Demetrius, *On Style*, IV 227.
34. I am here applying a model of communication theory drawn from Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, pp. 177-93.
35. Only after I completed this study did I encounter Martin Stevens, « The Performing Self in Twelfth-Century Culture, » *Viator*, 9 (1978), 193-212 plus plates, an incisive exploration of the rise of the artist as a subject of his own work in the middle ages. Objecting to the use of the narrator-persona as a way to describe the « fallible first person singular » who serves as story-teller, because such a teller is not autonomous, he prefers the term « performing self .»
36. Cf. discussion by Kaiser in his *Praisers of Folly* and Clarence H. Miller's introduction to his translation of *The Praise of Folly* (New Haven and London : Yale Univ. Press, 1979), pp. ix-xxv.
37. Zoja Pavlovskis, « Aristotle, Horace, and the Ironic Man, » *CP*, 63 (1968), 22-41, surveys the classical development of the *ieron*, usefully exploring the question of his ability to practice deception. Robert C. Elliott, *The Shape of Utopia : Studies in a Literary Genre* (Chicago and London : Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970), considers More and Horace as ironists, pp. 25-49. Affinities between More and Horace are more important, if more allusive, than I can discuss here; see subsequent references to Horace in this study, and H.A. Mason, *Humanism and Poetry in the Early Tudor Period : An Essay* (London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959), especially pp. 67-70, 117 and 130.
38. From *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. F.N. Robinson, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass. : Riverside Press, 1961), p. 24 (ll. 725-36). Studies of Chaucer consulted include : G.D. Josipovici's « Fiction and Game in *The Canterbury Tales*, » *CQ*, 7 (1965), 185-97; Richard A. Lanham's chapter on Chaucer in his *Motives of Eloquence : Literary Eloquence in the Renaissance* (New Haven and London : Yale Univ. Press, 1976); and Robert O. Payne, « Chaucer's Realization of Himself as Rhetor, » pp. 270-87 in *Medieval Eloquence*, ed. James J. Murphy (Berkeley : Univ. of California, 1978). Martin Stevens' study of the performing self in the middle ages argues forcibly for the centrality of Chaucer.
39. Rainer Pineas, *Thomas More and Tudor Polemics* (Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1968), p. 15.
40. *The Mirror and the Lamp*, pp. 6-7, 14-21.
41. Cf. Paula Johnson's interesting study, *Form and Transformation in Music and Poetry of the English Renaissance* (New Haven and London : Yale Univ. Press, 1972). I should classify More's letter (and the larger *Utopia*) as extraordinary instances of controlled balance and imbalance (reflecting their paradoxical groundwork); recurrent moments of climax and anticlimax, pivot points, and mirrorings are also crucial.
42. Though such divisions are the least important of the various structures of the letter, I shall identify them when relevant. The epistolary form of some of More's other letters is discussed in Richard Schoeck's *The Achievement of Thomas More : Aspects of*

*His Life and Works* (Victoria : Univ. of Victoria, 1976), pp. 26-38; see too H. Schulte Herbrüggen's introduction to his edition of *Sir Thomas More : Neue Briefe* (Münster : Aschendorff, 1966), pp. xxii-xliv.

43. Cf. Madeleine Doran, *Endeavors of Art : A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama* (Madison, Wisconsin : Univ. of Madison Press, 1954) on « Eloquence and 'Copy' », especially pp. 24-30.

44. In *Ciceronianus or a Dialogue on the Best Style of Speaking* (1528), trans. Izora Scott (1908; rpt. New York : AMS Press, 1972), pp. 121-22; « speculum animi » and « mentis imaginem » in *Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami Opera Omnia*, I (1703; rpt. Hildesheim : Georg Olms, 1961), 1021. Cf. Moria's version in *The Praise of Folly*, trans. Miller, p. 13; Miller points to the proverbial source (p. 13, n. 5). So too George Puttenham, later in the century, announces that style (« a constant & continuall phrase or tenour of speaking and writing ») may be called « the image of man [*mentis character*] for man is but his minde, and as his minde is tempered and qualified, so are his speeches and language at large, and his inward conceits be the mettall of his minde, and his manner of vtterance the very warp & woofe of his conceits.... » From *The Arte of English Poesie*, p. 148.

45. Sister Miriam Joseph, *Rhetoric in Shakespeare's Time*, pp. 322-25.

46. See *Selected Letters* No. 6, p. 73; No. 7, p. 76, where he shows himself most anxious to have his *Nowhere* « published soon and also that it be handsomely set off with the highest of recommendations, if possible, from several people, both intellectuals and distinguished statesmen »; No. 9, p. 80; No. 12, p. 87, where he describes his hopes : « From day to day I look forward to my *Utopia* with the feelings of a mother waiting for her son to return from abroad. »

47. See Kenneth Burke, « A Dramatistic View of the Origins of Language and Postscripts on the Negative, » in *Language as Symbolic Action* (Berkeley and Los Angeles : Univ. of Cal. Press, 1964), pp. 419-79.

48. See Erasmus' *De Copia*, trans. Betty I. Knott in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, ed. Craig R. Thompson, 24 (Toronto : Univ. of Toronto Press, 1978), 344. For the ethical background involved, see St. Thomas Aquinas' discussion of self-depreciation or false modesty (*ironia*), *Summa Theologiae*, 2a 2ae. 113. I have used the Latin text with English translation by T.C. O'Brien, 41 (London : Blackfriars, 1972), 192-98. See too Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.

49. *De Copia*, p. 344. Cf. More's example of hyperbole -- really exaggerated understatement -- in *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, Book III : « For Tyndale can not saye here that Cryste spake yt there by the figure called *yberbole*, as saynte Iohan dyd where he sayed, his wytnesse no man taketh, meanyng very few, » p. 239/12-14 in *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, 8, Part I, ed. Louis A. Schuster, Richard C. Marius, James P. Lusardi, and Richard J. Schoeck (New Haven : Yale Univ. Press, 1973). I owe this reference to Joseph Delcourt's study of More's neologisms in his *Essai sur la langue de Sir Thomas More d'après ses oeuvres anglaises* (Paris : Didier, 1914), p. 437.

50. Puttenham, p. 191.
51. See Seneca's *De Beneficiis* as cited by Brian Vickers in his study of hyperbole's functions: « The 'Songs and Sonnets' and the Rhetoric of Hyperbole, » in *John Donne: Essays in Celebration*, ed. A.J. Smith (London: Methuen & Co., 1972), pp. 132-74, especially 139-48. Erasmus, *De Copia*, p. 344.
52. Cf. H.A. Mason's fine portrayal of Christian humanism and the « precarious balance » More achieved in his *Humanism and Poetry in the Early Tudor Period: An Essay*; Marcel Tetel finds « antithetical interaction » in other humanists in « The Humanist Situation: Montaigne and Castiglione, » *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 10 (1979), 69-84.
53. So H.A. Mason points out that « As with the *Praise of Folly*, the serious and the trifling are inextricable, and each reinforces the other, » p. 106.
54. *Selected Letters*, p. 73.
55. See Abrams, pp. 272-9, and Berger, pp. 47-52 for discussions of the heterocosmic theory and its role in the Renaissance. Malloch, p. 193, points to its special witty relevance for the paradoxist, who also « makes something out of nothing. »
56. See Nagel, « Lies and the Limitable Inane. »
57. « Les Langues imaginaires dans le voyage utopique: un précurseur: Thomas Morus, » *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 10 (1930), 590.
58. Discussed at greater length in my study of « Time in More's *Utopia*, » *Acta*, Third Congress of Neo-Latin Studies, ed. Jean-Claude Margolin (Paris: Vrin, 1980), pp. 697-707. Other studies concerned with the humanistic sense of time include Richard Glasser, *Time in French Life and Thought*, trans. C.G. Pearson (1936; rpt. with trans. Manchester, 1972), pp. 198-224; Hans Baron, « A Sociological Interpretation of the Early Renaissance in Florence, » *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 38 (1939), 436-38; Georges Poulet, *Studies in Human Time*, trans. Elliott Coleman (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1956), p. 11; Ricardo J. Quinones, *The Renaissance Discovery of Time* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1972), especially ch. 3.
59. Erasmus, « The Whole Duty of Youth, » in *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, trans. Craig R. Thompson (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, p. 35); cf. Glasser, pp. 198-205. See too Erasmus' extended praise of time in *De Copia*, pp. 622-23.
60. From *Thomas More's Prayer Book*, transcription and translation with an introduction by Louis L. Martz and Richard S. Sylvester (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1969), p. 186. See too *Treatise on the Passion, Treatise on the Blessed Body, Instructions and Prayers, The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, 13, ed. Garry E. Haupt (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1976), 227/10.
61. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1102b.
62. From his *Workes*, p. 80F: « Consider also...that almost half our tyme euer in. xxiii. houres we be fayne to fal in a swowne whiche we cal slepe, and there lye like dead stockes by a long space or [=ere] we come to our selfe againe: in so much that among al wise men of old, it is agreed that slepe is the very ymage of death. »
63. See *The Latin Epigrams of Thomas More*, ed. Leicester Bradner and Charles Arthur Lynch (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1953), p. (171) [for the English] and p. (48) [for the Latin text].
64. Cf. n. 46, above, for More's witty use of the book-as-child topos.
65. Tetel, p. 75.
66. See the many virtuoso examples in Ernst Robert Curtius' *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (1953; rpt. New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 83-85 (« Affected Modesty »).
67. *Canterbury Tales*, p. 24 (1.746).
68. On the reasons for litotic ambiguity see my study, « Denying the Contrary: More's Use of Litotes in the *Utopia*, » *Moreana*, No. 31-32 (November, 1971), pp. 107-21, rpt. in *Essential Articles for the Study of Thomas More*, ed. R.S. Sylvester and G.P. Marc'hadour (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1977), pp. 262-74.
69. Hexter, *Biography of an Idea*, p. 29; cf. *Yale Utopia*, p. 576.
70. Hexter, *Biography of an Idea*, p. 3.
71. I prefer this to the date more often given, More's visit (or visits) with Peter Giles, since the evidence for the latter is ambiguous, as Hexter points out in Appendix A, *Yale Utopia*, pp. 573-76.
72. In his introduction to *L'Utopie*, pp. 61-82. In two reviews of Hexter's *Biography of an Idea*, Richard J. Schoeck has suggested an even longer life span, originating with More's early lectures on Augustine's *City of God*; see *CHR*, 38 (1953), 448-49 and *MLN*, 68 (1953), 498-500.
73. See the detailed analysis of More's compositional practices in *Richard III in The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, ed. Richard S. Sylvester, 2 (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1963), xvii-1.
74. See Prévost, pp. 132-34; 497.
75. I hope to return to this problem in a separate study; the order in the *Yale Utopia* is a composite one, blurring the effects of the changes in any one edition.
76. From *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, ed. J.B. Trapp, 9 (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1979), 170/35-36. The reference is to Horace, *Satires*, I, 1, 24-25: « ...quamquam ridentem dicere verum/quid vetat? » See Surtz's dis-

cussion of the passage in his introduction to the Yale *Utopia*, p. cxlix.

77. See Margaret L. Wiley, « Sir Thomas Browne and the Genesis of Paradox, » *JHI*, 9 (1948), 303-22.

78. Cf. Wayne Rebhorn on the human art of agriculture in Utopia : « Thomas More's Enclosed Garden : Utopia and Renaissance Humanism, » *ELR*, 6 (1976), 140-55.

79. In this connection see Leo Strauss's *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Glen-coe, Illinois : The Free Press, 1952), pp. 22-37; More is discussed briefly on p. 35.

80. I am compressing material which deserves much fuller coverage than I can give it here, and to which I hope to return. For the classical period I have found the following helpful : G.L. Hendrickson, « The Origin and Meaning of the Ancient Characters of Style, » *AJP*, 26 (1905), 249-90; G.C. Fiske, « The Plain Style in the Scipionic Circle, » *University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature* No. 3 (Madison : Univ. of Wisconsin, 1919), pp. 62-105.

For the Renaissance period, works consulted include Trimpi, *Ben Jonson's Poems*, pp. 3-91; the essays of Croll, in particular his « 'Attic Prose' in the Seventeenth Century, » included in *Style, Rhetoric and Rhythm : Essays by Morris W. Croll*, ed. J. Max Patrick and Robert O. Evans, with John M. Wallace and R.J. Schoeck (Princeton : Princeton Univ. Press, 1966); George Williamson, *The Senecan Amble : A Study in Prose Form from Bacon to Collier* (1951; rpt. Chicago : Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966); E. Catherine Dunn, « Lipsius and the Art of Letter-Writing, » *SR*, 3 (1956), 145-56; Gary R. Grund, « From Formulary to Fiction : The Epistle and the English Anti-Ciceronian Movement, » *TSL*, 17 (1975), 379-95; and Kennedy's study of a new sixteenth century ironic style in *Rhetorical Norms in Renaissance Literature*.

81. From *Brutus*, trans. G.L. Hendrickson and *Orator*, trans. H.M. Hubbell, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass. and London : Harvard Univ. Press and Heinemann, 1942), p. 362 (xxiii. 77 and 78).

82. *Orator*, p. 363.

83. *Ciceronianus*, p. 104; Latin cited from *Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami : Opera Omnia*, 1, col. 1013.

84. The word play has been much discussed from a variety of perspectives; the essential linguistic information is contained in the Yale *Utopia*, cxlviii and n. 112/1-3, pp. 385-86; Prévost, pp. 134-37.

85. Paul A. Sawada, « Toward the Definition of *Utopia*, » *Moreana*, No. 31-32 (November, 1971), p. 139.

86. *The Correspondence of Erasmus*, IV, 223/34-35.

87. *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian*, trans. H.E. Butler, Loeb Classical Library, 3 (1921; rpt. Cambridge, Mass. and London : Harvard Univ. Press and Heinemann, 1976), 155 (VII. ix. 4).

88. Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Book Named the Governor*, ed. S.E. Lehmborg (London and N.Y. : Dent, 1962), p. 1.

89. Elyot, *The Governor*, p. 1.

90. So Dick Sylvester pointed to the distinction of book and place as a « practical problem » and a « kind of clue to More's intentions when he published his book, » in his lecture on « Images of the City in Thomas More's *Utopia* » in *Les Cités au temps de la Renaissance*, ed. M.T. Jones-Davies, Centre de Recherches sur la Renaissance, No. 2 (1977), pp. 198-99. Cf. More's description of his *Utopia* as « a book which I think clearly deserves to hide itself away forever in its own island, » from a letter to Antonio (probably Antonio Bonvisi), *Selected Letters*, p. 90.

91. See, e.g. More's letter quoted on p. 11 *supra*.

92. I am citing the handsome translation by J. Healy, with the learned comments of Vives (London, 1620), pp. 82-83. See Book 2, ch. 21, on Scipio who « commendat brevem rei publicae definitionem, qua dixerat eam esse rem populi. » Cf. Book 19, ch. 21 : « Now it is time to performe a promise which I passed in the second booke of this worke : and that was, to shew that Rome neuer had a true Common-wealth, as Scipio defineth one in *Tullyes booke De Repub.* his Definition was, a Common-wealth is the estate of the people : *Respub. est res populi*. If this be true, Rome neuer had any, for it neuer had an estate of the people, which he defines the Common-wealth by : For, he defineth the people to be a multitude, vnited in one consent of law and profit : what he meareth by a consent of law, he sheweth himselfe : and sheweth thereby that a State cannot stand without iustice : so that where true iustice wanteth, there can be no law... », p. 729, trans. J. Healy. Significantly, Raphael Hythlodæus uses similar reasoning but suppresses the « if. »

93. See the stimulating study of *Utopia's* 'dimension métaphysique' by Martin N. Raitiere, « More's *Utopia* and *The City of God*, » *SR*, 20 (1973), 144-67, with its argument that « More's humanism furnished him with a *naturrechtlich* criterion from which to judge the obvious ethical irrationalities of contemporary Europe, but his Pauline and Augustinian attitude of patriarchalism continually qualified the validity of this criterion » (p. 147).

94. For more information on this work, see Helen C. White, *Social Criticism in Popular Religious Literature of the Sixteenth Century* (New York : MacMillan, 1944), pp. 60-62.

95. See Berger, p. 39, citing C.S. Lewis, and Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama*, pp. 318-19. William Nelson's *Fact or Fiction : The Dilemma of the Renaissance Storyteller* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard Univ. Press, 1973) traces the history of this dilemma in detail, and Nagel's more philosophically oriented « Lies and the Limitable Inane » includes an incisive reading of part of this section of *Utopia* to emphasize its fictional nature. K.K. Ruthven's chapter on « Truth and Credibility » in *Critical Assumptions* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1979), is a useful survey of major issues.



96. See Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry*, ed. Geoffrey Shepherd (1965; rpt. N.Y. and London : Manchester Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 123-24, and Shepherd's fine notes, pp. 199-200, with their reference to the classical legal distinction between *fabula ficta* and *historia*.
97. Cf. here Jean-Claude Margolin on « Erasme et la Vérité, » in *Colloquium Erasmianum* (Mons : Centre Universitaire de l'Etat, 1968), pp. 135-70. What he writes of Erasmus, « L'homme est fait pour le recherche de la vérité et non pour sa possession » (p. 136) could be written of the position of the reader in More's *Utopia*, as well.
98. Joseph, *Rhetoric in Shakespeare's Time*, discusses the four kinds of opposites (contraries, relatives, privatives, and contradictories), pp. 322-23.
99. See Nelson for many instances; he discusses More *passim*.
100. Cf. the Yale *Utopia's* « Just as I shall take great pains to have nothing incorrect in the book, so, if there is doubt about anything, I shall rather tell an objective falsehood than an intentional lie -- for I would rather be honest than wise » (41/31-35), and Robynson : « For as I will take good hede that there be in my booke nothyng false, so if there be anythyng in doubt, I wyll rather tell a lye then make a lye; bicause I had be good then wise rather [first ed.] (rather be good then wilie [second ed.]) » (p. 6). His alternative translations usefully call attention to the inherent ambiguity of the text.
101. The titles of Augustine's treatises speak for themselves : *De Mendacio* and *Contra Mendacium*, both in *Patrologia Latina*, Vol. 40; Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a 2ae. 100. Sisella Bok, *Lying : Moral Choice in Public and Private Life* (N.Y. : Random House, 1978) examines the ethical background involved. For More's familiarity with some of the categories St. Augustine established for types of lies, see his *Apology* (CW, 9, 107/19-27 and note, p. 360).
102. The Yale edition attributes the marginal notes to Giles and Erasmus; see pp. 280-81, n. 22/21, and clxxxvi. The more I work with the *Utopia*, however, the more convinced I am that More also had a major part to play in these glosses, since they are so carefully, albeit deviously, adjusted to the text; « mendacium dicere et mentiri » is a particularly telling example. For an overview of the notes see Dana G. McKinnon, « The Marginal Glosses in More's *Utopia* : The Character of the Commentator, » *Renaissance Papers* (1970), ed. Dennis G. Donovan (Durham, North Carolina : The Southeastern Renaissance Conference, 1971), pp. 11-19.
103. *The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius*, trans. John Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library, 2 (London : Heinemann, 1927), 325 (XI, xi. 1). In « More's Attic Nights : Sir Thomas More's Use of Aulus Gellius' 'Noctes Atticae,' » *RN*, 13 (1960), 127-29, R.J. Schoeck shows More's familiarity with Gellius in works other than *Utopia*. For Aulus Gellius in *Utopia* the indices in the editions by Yale and Prévost are helpful.
104. In *Workes*, p. 1032A, called to my attention by G. Marc'hadour's « Translating Thomas More and Translator Thomas More, » *Moreana*, No. 11 (1966), p. 72.
105. *Summa Theologiae*, 2a 2ae. 110, 1.
106. In his urbane and very Morean « Review Article : Clavis Moreana : The Yale Edition of Thomas More, » *JEGP*, 65 (1966), 318-30, rpt. in *Essential Articles*, pp. 215-28, Arthur E. Barker discusses this change, admitting its refinement on the one hand and its loss of meaning on the other, since « the original word appears in its usage to carry, more than the substitute, the implication of vacillating or swinging from side to side connected with the root, » p. 324.
107. Nagel, p. 178.
108. Yale *Utopia*, 52/2, 108/1-2, 196/29-31, and n. 52/2, p. 305. George B. Parks, « More's Utopia and Geography, » *JEGP*, 37 (1938), 224-36 plus 3 Figs., argues that More worked with existing geographical theory to arrive at his antipodeal location, taking seriously what I would take more playfully as another sign of More's interest in paradox and opposites. Cf. Barker, pp. 325 and 328, and Hans Ulrich Seeber, « Hythloday as Preacher and a Possible Debt to Macrobius, » *Moreana*, No. 31-32 (November, 1971), pp. 71-86.
109. See Ian Donaldson, *The World Upside Down* (Oxford : Clarendon, 1970), pp. 83-85, 96-97 for a variety of examples.
110. From *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies, The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, 6, ed. Thomas M.C. Lawler, Germain Marc'hadour and Richard C. Marius (New Haven and London : Yale Univ. Press, 1981), 66. See too John Cavanaugh's catalogue of sententiae in « The Use of Proverbs and *Sententiae* for Rhetorical Amplification in the Writings of Saint Thomas More, » Ph.D. thesis, St. Louis Univ., 1970, pp. 433-34.
111. Prévost, p. 662, points to the wit involved.
112. For antinomies among pre-Aristotelian thinkers see William Kneale and Martha Kneale, *The Development of Logic* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 16. Cf. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 3, 153 (VII. viii. 7) : « I turn to the discussion of *ambiguity*, which will be found to have countless species : indeed, in the opinion of certain philosophers, there is not a single word which has not a diversity of meanings. »
113. Aulus Gellius, 2, 325, 327 (XI. xii. 1-3). This passage exemplifies Gellius' role as « a Cicerone to the ancient treasures »; see Hans Baron, *From Petrarch to Leonardo Bruni : Studies in Humanistic and Political Literature* (Chicago and London : Univ. of Chicago, 1968), pp. 196-215.
114. Schoeck, in *Achievement of Thomas More*, pp. 11-24, links More's humanism with his law. On the scholastic logical tradition and its interest in « sophismata » see Walter J. Ong, S.J., *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue : From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), especially pp. 36-37.
115. A few examples in lieu of a bibliographic essay : Suvín; Berger; Alexandre Cioranescu, *L'avenir du passé : Utopie et littérature* (Paris : Gallimard, 1972); Walter R. Davis, « Thomas More's *Utopia* as Fiction, » *CR*, 24 (1980), 249-68; Michael Holquist, « How to Play Utopia : Some Brief Notes on the Distinctiveness of Utopian Fiction, » *Yale French Studies*, No. 41 (1968), pp. 106-23; Philip W. Porter and Fred E. Lucker

mann, « The Geography of Utopia » in *Geographies of the Mind : Essays in Historical Geography in Honor of John Kirtland Wright*, ed. David Lowenthal and Martyn J. Bowden (New York : Oxford Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 197-223; Raymond Ruyer, *L'Utopie et les Utopies* (Paris : Presses Universitaires de France, 1950), pp. 8-26; R.S. Sylvester, « 'Si Hythlodæo Credimus' : Vision and Revision in Thomas More's *Utopia*, » *Soundings*, 51 (1968), 272-89, rpt. *Essential Articles*, pp. 290-301.

116. Malloch, p. 192.

117. *Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique : 1560*, ed. G.H. Mair (Oxford : Clarendon, 1909), p. 147.

118. *The Life and Death of St Thomas Moore, Knight*, ed. Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock, with an introduction by R.W. Chambers (London : EETS, 1932), p. 104. Harpsfield is retelling the story of Parrhasios and Zeuxis; see Pliny's *Natural History*, Book XXXV. xxxvi.

119. See, in particular, Bowen's *Paradox & Ambiguity in Rabelais and Montaigne* and McGowan's *Montaigne's Deceits*; citation from Bowen, p. 6.

120. Germain Marc'hadour, *Thomas More : ou la sage folie* (Paris : Seghers, 1971), pp. 116-128.

121. The literature is immense, but the history of the paradox can be traced through the index to Kneale, *The Development of Logic*; other studies consulted include Colie; W.V. Quine, « Paradox, » *Scientific American*, April, 1962, pp. 84-96; Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell, *Principia Mathematica*, 1 (2nd ed. Cambridge, Eng. : The University Press, 1925), pp. 60-65; and Bateson, whom I cite, p. 184. A bibliography of modern studies is included in *The Paradox of the Liar*, ed. Robert L. Martin (New Haven and London : Yale Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 135-49.

122. See E.J. Ashworth, « The Treatment of Semantic Paradoxes from 1400 to 1700, » *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic*, 13 (1972), and Francesco Bottin, *Le antinomie semantiche nella logica medievale* (Padua : Antenore, 1976).

123. Kneale, p. 229.

124. Kneale, pp. 227-28; cf. Ernest A. Moody, *Truth and Consequence in Mediaeval Logic* (Amsterdam : North-Holland Publishing Co., 1953), pp. 101-110.

125. Cicero, *De Natura Deorum Academica*, II, xxix-xxx; Aulus Gellius, XVII. xii. 1-3 and XVII. ii. 10-11. Ashworth lists still other classical examples.

126. From *Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami Opera Omnia 2* (1703; rpt. Hildesheim : Georg Olms, 1961), 81-82 (I.2.29).

127. Malloch, pp. 196-202.

128. Cf. E.H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion : A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (London : Phaidon Press, 1972), pp. 200-03, on the « Perplexing effect of self-reference » and its analogies to the Cretan liar. So, in his introduction to

Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*, Clarence Miller points out that « Folly's praising Folly leads into a maze like that of the Cretan liar » (p. xvii).

129. From *Selected Satires of Lucian*, ed. and trans. Lionel Casson (1962; rpt. N.Y. : Norton, 1968), p. 15. Roy Arthur Swanson's « The True, the False, and the Truly False : Lucian's Philosophical Science-Fiction, » in *Science Fiction Studies*, No. 10, 3 (1976), 228-39, includes a brief discussion of the comic paradox on p. 228; cf. Nelson, *Fact or Fiction*, pp. 11-12. Duncan's *Ben Jonson and the Lucianic Tradition* devotes its first chapter to Lucian, pp. 9-25.

130. The issues are addressed in Duncan, pp. 67-76.

131. The only extended study of this letter is Edward Surtz, S.J., « More's *Apologia Pro Utopia Sua*, » *MLQ*, 19 (1958), 319-24.

132. Surtz, « More's *Apologia*, » p. 324.

133. *Selected Letters*, p. 79.

134. I would then question the Yale *Utopia*, n. 248/26-250/1, p. 570 : « The absurd elements help to impart verisimilitude to the ideal commonwealth; the wise elements serve to furnish models for improvement and reform. » I do not think the absurd elements and the wise ones can be so easily separated.

135. Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* discusses the meaning of *commentitia* as *invented irresponsibly, fabricated*, pp. 45-47.

136. See Prévost, p. 353, and Phillips' Introduction (pp. 1-15) and the opening of Batt's speech (pp. 42-43) in *The Antibarbarians*, trans. and annotated by Margaret Mann Phillips in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, ed. Craig R. Thompson, 23 (Toronto : Univ. of Toronto Press, 1978).

137. *Selected Letters*, pp. 56-57.

138. Joseph, *Rhetoric in Shakespeare's Time*, pp. 323-25.

139. The More-Brixius debate is traced in detail in Hoyt Hopewell Hudson, *The Epigram in the English Renaissance* (Princeton : Princeton Univ. Press, 1947), pp. 49-58. For Brixius' point that « Utopia » should be « Udepotia » see Yale *Utopia*, n. 10/1-2, p. 274; his other corrections can be followed through the index.

140. The Renaissance development of genres is addressed in Rosalie L. Colie, *The Resources of Kind : Genre-Theory in the Renaissance*, ed. Barbara K. Lewalski (Berkeley : Univ. of Cal. Press, 1973), especially chapter III.

141. I am applying a term as discussed by Isabel G. MacCaffrey in « The Meditative Paradigm, » *ELH*, 32 (1965), 388-407, in particular p. 390.

142. See R.R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries*

(Cambridge, Eng. : Cambridge Univ. Press, 1954), pp. 271-75, 295-301; Margaret Mann Phillips, *The 'Adages' of Erasmus : A Study with Translations* (Cambridge, Eng. : Cambridge Univ. Press, 1964); Clarence Miller, « The Logic and Rhetoric of Proverbs in Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*, » *Essays on the Works of Erasmus*, ed. Richard L. DeMolen (New Haven and London : Yale Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 83-98.

143. Cf. More's epigrams and Richard Sylvester's fine analysis of More's « tessellated » style in *Richard III, CW 2*, lxxx-xcviii.

144. Studies include Surtz's Appendix B, *Vocabulary and Diction in Utopia*, pp. 579-82 in Yale *Utopia*, and Prévost, pp. 241-52, with a bibliography, p. 243, n. 1.

145. *Ars Poetica*, 11. 343-44, from *Satires, Epistles, and « Ars Poetica, »* trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library (London and N.Y. : Heinemann and Putnam, 1929), pp. 478-79.

146. From *Translations of Lucian, The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, 3, Part I, ed. Craig R. Thompson (New Haven and London : Yale Univ. Press, 1974), 3/5-6.

147. *Translations of Lucian*, 3/7-13.

148. Major readings include A.R. Heiserman, « Satire in the *Utopia*, » *PMLA*, 78 (1963), 163-74 and Robert C. Elliott, *The Shape of Utopia : Studies in a Literary Genre* (Chicago and London : Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 25-49. See too White's *Social Criticism in Popular Religious Literature of the Sixteenth Century*, which includes an important discussion of « The Utopia and Commonwealth Tradition, » pp. 41 ff., and places More's work in the long medieval and Renaissance tradition of religious and social protest. Jones's « Recent Studies in More » traces the satiric element in many other studies.

149. Full bibliographic information for Dornavius is supplied in *St. Thomas More : A Preliminary Bibliography of His Works and of Moreana to the Year 1750* (New Haven and London : Yale Univ. Press, 1961), No. 10; cf. No. 16. Dornavius was a physician, orator, counsellor, and poet who, in 1608, was rector of a gymnasium at Görlitz. I consulted copies of his « amphitheatrum » at the Folger and Newberry Libraries. Cf. Kennedy, *Rhetorical Norms in Renaissance Literature*, p. 83, on Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*, More's *Utopia*, and Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel* as examples of « serio-comic philosophic jest. »

150. For More's explicit use of this dictum, see n. 76 *supra*.

151. *The Correspondence of Erasmus*, 4 (255/21-23).

152. Yale *Utopia*, n. 44/8, p. 294; Sallust, trans. J.C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library (2nd ed.; Cambridge, Mass. and London : Harvard Univ. Press and Heinemann, 1947), pp. 500 and 501. More's transformations, here and elsewhere, illustrate V.L. Saulnier's points about the evolution of the proverb in his « Proverbe et paradoxe du XVe au XVIe siècle, » *Colloque Scientifique sur la pensée humaniste et la tradition chrétienne aux XVe et XVIe siècles* (Paris : Boivin, 1950), pp. 87-104.

153. From *Opera Omnia*, 2, 794C (III.3.61). Compare his use in the *De Copia* as one of many examples of irresolution, p. 646.

154. Cf. n. 93, *supra*.

155. Berger, p. 62; Johnson, pp. 12-13.

156. From his letter to Ulrich von Hutten in Huizinga, *Erasmus and the Age of Reformation*, p. 234. See too Margaret Mann Phillips, « The Correspondence of Erasmus and Thomas More, » from *Thomas More : 1477-1977* (Brussels : Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1980), pp. 27-37, with its sympathetic analysis of their friendship.

157. Answering my question about humanistic sources for the theme of criticizing with love, Margaret Mann Phillips characterized it as a variant of the great theme of friendship which begins in the *Adagia* and includes the preface to the *Moria* and *exempla* in the *De Copia*. Specifically she called my attention to *Adagia* I.5.57 (*Stellis signare*) where Erasmus cites Cicero's description of Atticus, whose practice it was to mark in red those things which he approved of less in Cicero's writings (letter of March 22, 1980).

158. William K. Wimsatt, Jr. and Cleanth Brooks, *Literary Criticism : A Short History* (New York : Random House, 1957), p. 751.

159. In his « Introduction » to *De Tristitia*, Clarence Miller notes More's fondness both for balanced statements and asymmetry, observing that ultimately all opposites are resolved in Christ : *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, 14, Part II, ed. and trans. Clarence H. Miller (New Haven and London : Yale Univ. Press, 1976), 754-76.

Appendix :

**MORE'S LETTER  
TO  
PETER GILES**

### TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

This translation grows out of my interpretation of Thomas More's prefatory letter to Peter Giles as a concealed *ars poetica* for his *Utopia*. In including it here, I could say with more reason than More did, « Pudet me propemodum, » since I am not a classicist or a Latinist. Too often my attempts to illustrate the nuances of More's Latin prose were frustrated by translations at hand, however, and it became increasingly clear that a new translation was needed. *My Dear Peter* is the obvious justification for including this version, then, but it is not the only one. Our understanding of any literary work that was written in one language and is read in another benefits from multiple translations, each of which can hope to catch only some part of a multi-faceted work of art.

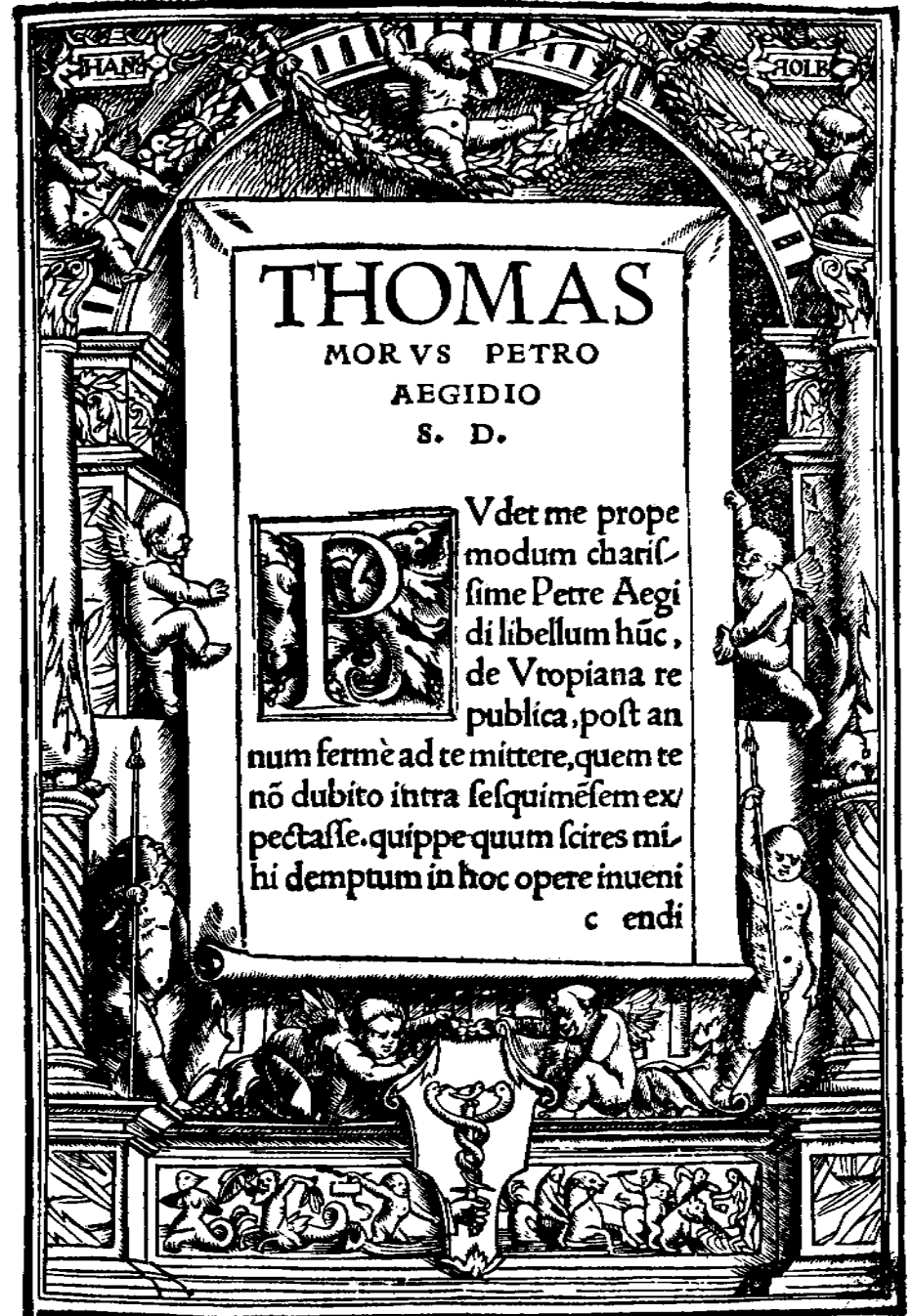
The wordings of the present version are best explained by the analyses of More's text made in the course of *My Dear Peter*. In general, I have tried to do justice to More's delight in « go[ing] by ymagynacyons » and to the complexity of a supple, ambiguous, and ironic prose that claims to be simpler than it is and depends heavily upon syntactical and verbal strategies that are not always translatable into English. Where More chooses to suspend or draw out the play of thought, English wants to resolve it. And More's many qualifications, correlatives, particles, circumlocutions, tight balances, antithetical to-ings and fro-ings, and other convolutions can quickly clog an English rendering, sometimes hopelessly. Yet to remove these -- in the name of a colloquial, conversational prose approximating his own -- is to jump from the frying pan into the fire. For then we lose the verbal signals that the authorial More hoped we would catch and that we must catch if we want to play the game of *Utopia* by his rules. This is why I tried to keep as much of More's syntax, and the exercise of mind and the ongoing dialogue that it invites, as English can tolerate, while stopping short of translating his Latin wholly literally. I could not always retain More's many passive constructions, for example, constructions that allowed him to magnify his purported role as mere copyist, although at times (as in the first sentence), a similar effect became possible through a principle of compensation, which led me to play down the action of a subsequent verb. It proved to be even more difficult to suggest the vigor and energy of More's language, the density of his wordplay and verbal transformations, and the resonance and weight that he achieved by

adjective-noun juxtapositions and repetition. Even such an apparently simple Latin word as *labor* works far harder and is more evocative than any English equivalent I could find. I consulted several Renaissance Latin-English dictionaries in pondering shades of meaning in difficult or elusive words (among them, *ingenium*), and in a number of cases I chose to turn a Latinate abstraction back to its concrete base, but I am well aware that More's Latin letter is more subtle, dramatic, muscular, and poetic than my English version of it. It must be said, too, that part of the experience More creates in this letter is irrecoverable.

For the convenience of readers who want to consult More's Latin quickly, a transcription of the Latin text of the letter, based upon the Froben edition which was published in Basle in November 1518, has been included. Contractions other than the ampersand have been expanded, accents omitted, and the spelling normalized, except in those cases where the forms reflect More's well-attested preferences: *literis*, *quenque*, *desyderetur*, *loquutus*, and *forenseis*, for example. Punctuation proved to be problematic in some instances; obvious errors have been corrected, and the punctuation has been otherwise normalized and slightly modernized. Finally, paragraphing which parallels the English translation has been introduced. The elegant first page of the letter, designed by Hans Holbein, is reproduced here (p. 91) from the November 1518 edition; the entire November 1518 text is reproduced in facsimile in André Prévost's edition of *Utopia*. Access to the critical edition of the Latin text in the Yale edition is also assumed.

The present translation is indebted to several other English translations of the *Utopia*, a text which, more than most, refuses to be translated. In particular, I consulted three recent versions: G.C. Richards' as reworked by Edward Surtz, S.J., for the Yale *Utopia*; Paul Turner's for Penguin Classics, and Robert M. Adams' for the Norton Critical Edition, and two older ones: Ralph Robynson's and Gilbert Burnet's. A draft of this version was first tested at an English department colloquium at the University of Hawaii on March 9, 1981; Jacques Chomarat graciously reviewed it, and Robert Ball and Dorry Wollstein shared their expertise in Latin with me as I rewrote and polished it. I owe even more to the Abbé Germain Marc'hadour, as the voluminous correspondence between us on every aspect of both the translation and the Latin text attests.

Elizabeth McCUTCHEON



## THOMAS MORUS PETRO AEGIDIO S.D.

*Pudet me propemodum, charissime Petre Aegidi, libellum hunc de Vtopiana republica, post annum ferme ad te mittere, quem te non dubito intra sesquimensem expectasse. Quippe quum scires mihi demptum in hoc opere inueniendi laborem, neque de dispositione quicquam*  
 5 *fuisse cogitandum, cui tantum erant ea recitanda, quae tecum una pariter audiui narrantem Raphaelem : quare nec erat quod in eloquendo laboraretur, quando nec illius sermo potuit exquisitus esse, quum esset primum subitarius, atque extemporalis, deinde hominis, ut scis, non*  
 10 *perinde Latine docti quam Graece, & mea oratio quanto accederet propius ad illius neglectam simplicitatem, tanto futura sit propior ueritati, cui hac in re soli curam & debeo & habeo.*

*Fateor mi Petre, mihi adeo multum laboris hijs rebus paratis detractum, ut pene nihil fuerit relictum. Alioquin huius rei uel excogitatio, uel oeconomia, potuisset ab ingenio neque infimo, neque prorsus*  
 15 *indocto postulare, tum temporis nonnihil, tum studij. Quod si exigere-tur, ut diserte etiam res, non tantum uere scriberetur, id uero a me praestari, nullo tempore, nullo studio potuisset. Nunc uero quum ablatiis curis hijs, in quibus tantum fuit sudoris exhauriendum, restiterit tantum hoc, uti sic simpliciter scriberentur audita, nihil erat negocij.*

*Sed huic tamen tam nihilo negocij peragendo, caetera negocia mea minus fere quam nihil temporis reliquerunt. Dum causas forenseis assidue alias ago, alias audio, alias arbiter finio, alias iudex dirimo ; dum hic officij causa uisitur, ille negocij ; dum foris totum ferme diem alijs impartior, reliquum meis, relinquo mihi, hoc est literis, nihil. Nempe*  
 20 *reuerso domum, cum uxore fabulandum est, garriendum cum liberis, colloquendum cum ministris. Quae ego omnia inter negocia numero, quando fieri necesse est (necesse est autem, nisi uelis esse domi tuae peregrinus). Et danda omnino opera est, ut quos uitae tuae comites, aut natura prouidit, aut fecit casus, aut ipse delegisti, hijs ut te quam iucundissimum compares, modo ut ne comitate corrumpas, aut indulgentia ex*  
 25 *ministris dominos reddas.*

## THOMAS MORE TO PETER GILES.

*I am almost ashamed, my dearest Peter Giles, to send to you after almost a year this little book about the Utopian commonwealth, which doubtlessly you expected within a month and a half. For you knew that for this work I was wholly spared the labor of finding apt matter, and that I didn't need to think at all about setting it in order : all I had to do was repeat what in your company I'd heard Raphael relate. There was no need, then, for me to work at the style, since his way of speaking couldn't have been really polished : first because it was off-hand, and spoken on the spur of the moment, and second because, as you know, the man is not as proficient in Latin as in Greek. And so the closer my use of language came to his careless simplicity, the closer it might be to the truth, which is the only concern in this affair that I ought to, and do, care about.*

*I grant, my dear Peter, that all this ready-made material took so much work off my hands that there was hardly anything left for me to do. Otherwise, either thinking out this sort of thing, or arranging it in order, could have demanded no little time and effort from an intelligence that was neither the meanest nor utterly unlearned. Had I been required to write it out not only truthfully but also elegantly, I truly couldn't have done it -- with no amount of time and effort. Now since, in truth, I was relieved of all these concerns over which I should have had to sweat so much, the only thing left for me to do was to write out plainly what I heard, and that was no trouble at all.*

*But still, my other occupations left me almost less than no time to carry out this nothing. While I am constantly busy with legal matters, pleading some cases, hearing others, now as an arbitrator arranging a settlement, now as a judge deciding a case ; while I visit this person on account of an obligation, that one on account of business ; while I devote almost the whole day outside to other people, and the remainder to my family, I leave for myself, that is for literature, nothing. For when I've come home, I must talk with my wife, chat with my children, and converse with my servants. I count all this as business when it has to be done (and it has to be done, unless you want to be a stranger in your own home). Besides, you must make yourself as pleasant as possible to the companions of your life, whether nature made them so, or it happened by chance, or you yourself chose them, so long as you don't spoil them by kindness or make masters out of your servants by indulgence.*

5 *Inter haec, quae dixi, elabitur dies, mensis, annus. Quando ergo scribimus? Nec interim de somno quicquam sum loquutus, ut nec de cibo quidem, qui multis non minus absumit temporis, quam somnus ipse, qui vitae absumit ferme dimidium. At mihi hoc solum temporis*  
 10 *adquiro quod somno ciboque suffuror; quod quoniam parcum est, lente, quia tamen aliquid, aliquando perfecti, atque ad te, mi Petre, transmissi Vtopiam ut legeres, & si quid effugisset nos, uti tu admoneres. Quanquam enim non hac parte penitus diffido mihi (qui utinam sic ingenio atque doctrina aliquid essem, ut memoria non usquequaque destituor) non usqueadeo tamen confido, ut credam nihil mihi potuisse excidere.*

15 *Nam & Ioannes Clemens puer meus, qui adfuit, ut scis, una, ut quem a nullo patior sermone abesse in quo aliquid esse fructus potest, quoniam ab hac herba, qua & Latinis literis & Graecis coepit euirescere,*  
 20 *egregiam aliquando frugem spero, in magnam me coniecit dubitationem. Siquidem quum, quantum ego recordor, Hythlodaeus narrauerit Amauroticum illum pontem, quo fluius Anydrus insternitur, quingentos habere passus in longum, Ioannes meus ait detrahendos esse ducentos, latitudinem fluminis haud supra trecentos ibi continere. Ego te rogo, rem ut reuoces in memoriam. Nam si tu cum illo sentis, ego quoque adsentiar, & me lapsum credam. Sin ipse non recolis, scribam, ut feci, quod ipse recordari uideor mihi, nam ut maxime curabo, ne quid sit in libro falsi, ita si quid sit in ambiguo, potius mendacium dicam, quam mentiar, quod malim bonus esse quam prudens.*

Nota Theologicam differentiam inter mentiri & mendacium dicere.

25 *Quanquam facile fuerit huic mederi morbo, si ex Raphaelo ipso, aut praesens scisciteris, aut per literas, quod necesse est facias, uel ob alium scrupulum, qui nobis incidit, nescio mea ne culpa magis, an tua, an Raphaelis ipsius. Nam neque nobis in mentem uenit quaerere, neque illi dicere, qua in parte noui illius orbis Vtopia sita sit. Quod non fuisse praetermissum sic, uellem profecto mediocri pecunia mea redemptum, uel quod subpudet me nescire, quo in mari sit insula de qua tam multa recenseam, uel quod sunt apud nos unus & alter, sed unus maxime, uir pius & professione Theologus, qui miro flagrat desyderio adgundae Vtopiae, non inani & curiosa libidine collustrandi noua, sed uti religionem nostram, feliciter ibi coeptam, foueat atque adaugeat. Quod quo faciat*



*Among these matters that I've mentioned, the day, the month, the year slips away. When, then, do I write? Nor have I spoken about sleep yet, or even food, which for many people consumes no less time than sleep does, and that consumes almost half our lives. But as for me, the only time I gain is the time I steal from sleep and food. Slowly, since this time is so little, but finally, because it is still something, I have finished Utopia, and am sending it to you, my dear Peter, for you to read over -- and to advise me, if anything has escaped me. For although I don't wholly distrust myself on this count (I just wish my intelligence and learning were a match for my memory, which doesn't fail me altogether), still, I don't trust it to the point of believing that nothing could have slipped my mind.*

*For John Clement, my young assistant, who was there with us, as you know (I allow him to miss no conversation in which there can be something fruitful, since I expect an extraordinary crop some day from this tender shoot, which has begun to grow green in both Latin and Greek literature), has thrown me into great uncertainty. Insofar as I remember it, Hythlodæus reported that the bridge at Amaurotum, which crosses the river Anydrus, is five hundred yards long. But my John says that two hundred yards must be subtracted, that the width of the river there does not exceed three hundred yards. Will you please recall your memory of it? For if you agree with him, I'll see it that way too, and think myself mistaken. But if you don't recollect it, I'll write, as I have done, what I myself seem to remember. For as I'll take the greatest care lest anything in the book be false, so, if anything should be in doubt, I'd rather tell a lie than lie, because I'd rather be honest than clever.*

*And yet it would be easy enough to clear up this defect, if you'd just ask Raphael himself, either by word of mouth or by letter -- something you must do anyway, because of another doubtful point that has arisen, though I don't know whether the error is more mine, or yours, or Raphael's. For neither did it occur to us to ask, nor to him to say, in what part of that new world Utopia is situated. I'd be willing to spend a good amount of my own money to make up for that omission. For one thing, I'm somewhat ashamed -- now that I've enumerated so many details about the island -- not to know what sea it lies in. For another, there are one or two people here, and one in particular, a devout man and a theologian by profession, who is on fire in his eagerness to go to Utopia: not out of any empty and curious passion for seeing new sights, but to foster and augment our religion, so happily begun there. To do*

Note the theological distinction between lying and telling a lie.

- rite, decreuit ante curare ut mittatur a Pontifice, atque adeo ut creetur Vtopiensibus Episcopus, nihil eo scrupulo retardatus, quod hoc antistitium sit illi precibus impetrandum. Quippe sanctum ducit ambitum, quem non honoris aut quaestus ratio, sed pietatis respectus pepererit.
- 5 Quamobrem te oro, mi Petre, uti aut praesens, si potes comode, aut absens per epistolam, compelles Hythlodaeum, atque efficias, ne quicquam huic operi meo, aut insit falsi, aut ueri desyderetur. Atque haud scio an praestet ipsum ei librum ostendi. Nam neque alius aequae sufficit, si quid est erratum, corrigere, neque is ipse aliter hoc
- 10 praestare potest, quam si quae sunt a me scripta perlegerit. Ad haec : fiet ut hoc pacto intelligas, accipiatne libenter, an grauatim ferat, hoc operis a me conscribi. Nempe si suos labores decreuit ipse mandare literis, nolit fortasse me : neque ego certe uelim, Vtopiensium per me uulgata republica, florem illi gratiamque nouitatis historiae suae praeripere.
- 15 Quanquam, ut uere dicam, nec ipse mecum satis adhuc constitui, an sim omnino aediturus. Etenim tam uaria sunt palata mortaliu[m], tam morosa quorundam ingenia, tam ingrati animi, tam absurda iudicia, ut cum hijs haud paulo felicius agi uideatur, qui iucundi atque hilares genio indulgent suo, quam qui semet macerant curis, ut aedant aliquid quod alijs, aut fastidientibus, aut ingratis, uel utilitati possit esse, uel uoluptati.
- Plurimi literas nesciunt, multi contemnunt. Barbarus ut durum reijcit, quicquid non est plane barbarum. Scioli aspernantur ut triuiale, quicquid obsoletis uerbis non scatet. Quibusdam solum placent uetera, plerisque tantum sua. Hic tam tetricus est, ut non admittat iocos, hic tam insulsus, ut non ferat sales. Tam simi quidam sunt, ut nasum omnem, uelut aquam ab rabido morsus cane, reformident. Adeo mobiles alij sunt, ut aliud sedentes probent, aliud stantes. Hi sedent in tabernis, & inter pocula de scriptorum iudicant ingenijs, magnaue cum auctoritate condemnant utcunq[ue] lubitum est, suis quenque scriptis, ueluti capillicio uellicantes, ipsi interim tuti, & quod dici solet, ἔξω βέλους.
- 30 Quippe tam leues & abrasu undique, ut ne pilum quidem habeant boni uiri, quo possint apprehendi. Sunt praeterea quidam tam ingrati, ut
- Sanctus ambitus.
- Ingrata hominum iudicia.
- Simos, uocat homines nullo naso.
- Prouerbiu[m].

*this in all due order, he has decided to arrange to be sent by the Pope, and more, to be made Bishop to the Utopians. He's not kept back in the slightest by any scruple over having to procure this position by his own suit. Indeed he reckons it a holy ambition, which has sprung from a sense of religious zeal, rather than from any consideration of honor or gain.*

A holy ambition.

*And for this reason, my dear Peter, I beg you, approach Hythlo-daeus, in person (if that's convenient), or by letter, if he's gone, and make sure that this work of mine contains nothing false and lacks nothing true. And I don't know but what it might be preferable to show him the book itself. For if there are any errors, no one else is better able to correct them, nor can even he do so unless he reads over what I've written. Besides, in this way you'll find out whether he's pleased, or annoyed, that this work was drawn up by me. For if he himself has decided to put his own efforts down in writing, perhaps he may not want me to. And certainly I'm unwilling to anticipate him, and rob the flower and charm of newness from his account by making the commonwealth of the Utopians public.*

*And yet, to tell you the truth, I myself still haven't decided whether to go ahead with the edition at all. For the palates of mortals are so diverse, the minds of some so hypercritical, their souls so ungrateful, their judgments so preposterous, that people who cheerfully and contentedly follow their own inclinations seem to be far happier than those who torture themselves with worry over publishing something for people who will either disdain or be ungrateful for what could be of use or pleasure to them.*

*A great many are wholly ignorant of literature ; many despise it. The boor rejects as hard whatever isn't completely boorish, while those who think they know something scorn as common whatever isn't bursting with obsolete words. Some like only what's old, and even more like only what's their own. One person is so sullen that he won't allow any jokes, another so tasteless that he cannot bear a dash of salt. Some are so flat-nosed that they dread satire the way someone bitten by a mad dog dreads water. Others are so changeable that they approve of one thing sitting down, another standing up. These people sit around in taverns, making judgments over their drinks about the talents of writers. They condemn -- with great authority, and just as they please -- each one by his writings, pulling him by the hair, as it were, while they themselves are safe and (as the saying goes) out of harm's way. For, like wrestlers, they're so completely smooth-shaven they don't have even one hair of an honest man to be caught by. Some, moreover, are so ungrateful that although exceedingly pleased by a work, they don't love*

Ungrateful judgments of people.

He calls men without a sense of satire, flat-nosed.

A proverb

quum impense delectentur opere, nihilo tamen magis ament autorem.  
 Mira collatio. Non absimiles inhumanis hospitibus, qui quum opiparo conuiuio pro-  
 lixe sint excepti, saturi demum discedunt domum, nullis habitis gratijs  
 ei, a quo sunt inuitati. I nunc & hominibus tam delicati palati : tam uarij  
 5 gustus : animi praeterea tam memoris & grati, tuis impensis epulum ins-  
 true.

Sed tamen, mi Petre, tu illud age quod dixi cum Hythlodæo.  
 Postea tamen integrum erit hac de re consultare denuo. Quanquam si id  
 ipsius uoluntate fiat, quandoquidem scribendi labore defunctus, nunc  
 10 sero sapio. Quod reliquum est de aedendo, sequar amicorum consilium,  
 atque in primis tuum.

Vale, dulcissime Petre Aegidi, cum optima coniuge. Ac me ut  
 soles ama, quando ego te amo etiam plus quam soleo.

Thomas Morus

A marvellous  
comparison .

*the author any the more for it. They're not unlike uncivil guests who, after they've been liberally received at a sumptuous feast, are finally full and go home without so much as a thank-you to the person who invited them. Go now, and prepare a banquet at your own cost for men of such delicate palates, such various tastes, whose minds are so full of thanks and gratitude !*

*But still, my dear Peter, do handle with Hythlodæus the points I mentioned. Afterwards I'll be free to consider this whole matter once again. And yet, so long as it's done with his consent -- seeing that I've finished the work of writing it up -- now I am wise too late. As for the rest, the edition of the book : I'll follow the advice of my friends, and especially your advice.*

*Goodbye, my sweetest Peter Giles, and all best wishes to you and your very good wife. Love me as you always have, for I love you even more than I ever have.*

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