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AESTHETIC DISTANCE IN THE *UTOPIA*

In a letter to Peter Giles among the material prefixed to the *Utopia* in 1516, More deplores that after he has labored to publish a work "that will bring profit or pleasure to others," nevertheless many will "receive it with disdain or ingratitude" because they are "so dull-minded that they fear all satire as much as a man bitten by a mad dog fears water."[1] Although More himself thus pointed out the satiric nature of the *Utopia*, until recently his satiric techniques have not been studied in detail.[2] To emphasize the delightful or pleasurable aim in a work strongly critical of his time, More employs many traditional devices in order to achieve aesthetic distance. Although detachment of the author is essential in almost any satire, More's distancing is especially effective because in most of the condemnation the satiric observer is twice removed from More himself. The devices More uses to achieve this double satiric detachment are ironic handling of the main characters *More* and Hythloday, paradoxical names, contrast, indirection, and explicit criticism of England expressed usually by the Utopians and merely reported by Hythloday. Directly or indirectly, Hythloday (most frequently More's satiric spokesman) is almost always involved in the detachment.

On the occasions when the direct criticism is not expressed by the Utopians, it is not the author or the character *More* but Hythloday who speaks. In such passages of invective, More utilizes a conventional mask for the satiric persona, the indignant, upright, public-minded citizen who is angered by the folly around him and who speaks the truth in plain language. The satirist increases the verisimilitude of Hythloday's account by insisting that *More* has merely recorded verbatim Hythloday's "careless simplicity"

1. Edward Surtz, S.J., and J.H. Hexter, eds., *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More, Utopia*, IV (New Haven : Yale Univ. Press, 1965), 43-45, subsequently referred to as the Yale edition.

2. One helpful study is "Satire in the *Utopia*," *PMLA*, 78 (1963), 163-74, by A.R. Heiserman, who finds unprecedented More's combination of satiric conventions of structure (dialogue and journey), persona (dialectician, nonsense babbler of truth, and traveler), and diction (plain style). Elizabeth McCutcheon explores the satiric use of one rhetorical device in "Denying the Contrary: More's use of Litotes in the *Utopia*," *Moreana*, (No. 31-32), Nov. 1971, pp. 114-16

of speech.[3] Hythloday's denunciations are often Juvenalian in their bitterness, as when he condemns European princes, who are "more set on acquiring new kingdoms, right or wrong, than on governing well those they possess."[4] Likewise, Hythloday censures the monarchs not only because they have imperialistic ambitions but even more because they constantly break treaties. Although part of Hythloday's criticism in this selection is indirect, near the end of the passage it becomes invective ; there are evidently two types of justice, he states : one standard for most of the world and another, in which "lawful and unlawful are only measured by pleasure and interest," for kings (p. 51). Hythloday is equally angry when he criticizes educational institutions, the European "trifling logical schools" that force "barbarous niceties" on the students (p. 37). Because these passages of diatribe are juxtaposed with the more frequent indirect criticism, they effectively emphasize the satirist's impatience ; the folly he castigates becomes so intolerable that he must sometimes burst into invective.[5]

One of the best methods of detaching himself, and also one of the most debated points of the satire, is More's handling of the characters *More* and Hythloday. Three main theories about their relationship to the author have been suggested. The least popular view is that *More* is the voice of the satirist.[6] *More's* weak argument, especially at the end of Book II, however, suggests that Hythloday, not *More,* usually states the writer's view.[7] One cannot deny the similarities between Hythloday's and the author's moral convictions and dislike of war, and often Hythloday does express the satirist's beliefs, but on some occasions (especially the debate in Book I about the philosopher's responsibility to enter

3. Yale edition, p. 39.

4. *Utopia,* in "Utopia" *and Its Critics,* ed. Ligeia Gallagher (Chicago : Scott, Foresman, and Co., 1964), p. 5. Unless otherwise indicated, subsequent references to the *Utopia* are to this edition, which uses an updated version of Robinson's translation (1551), and are cited in the text.

5. Jacques Gury has recently noted in "Raphäel Hythlodée et Isaïe," *Moreana,* No. 41 (March 1974), p. 107, parallels between the Renaissance and Old Testament prophets in their denunciations of the corruption of contemporary society and announcement of a "new Jerusalem."

6. See, for example, R.W. Chambers, *Thomas More* (New York : Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1935), p. 155.

7. See Robert C. Elliott, "The Shape of Utopia," *ELH,* 30 (1963), 325 ; Hexter, Yale edition, p. xiv ; Paul Coles, "Interpretations of More's *Utopia,*" *Hibbert Journal,* 56 (1958), 370.

court service) a third view seems more reasonable. In this debate both *More* and Hythloday may represent More's own indecision about the value of court service.[8] Through the agreement of the two characters on the intellectual's difficulties in court, moreover, one can probably see a reflection of the detached author's view. And just as the two characters disagree as to whether the value of the philosopher's service in court is worth the sacrifice it entails, so More himself seems to be considering the advantages and disadvantages of entering royal service. Thus, often the author's viewpoint is evident in Hythloday but occasionally in both characters simultaneously.

Such shifts in More's satiric spokesmen lead one to question the roles of the two personae. More uses Hythloday to achieve verisimilitude in several ways. Having travelled with Amerigo Vespucci on four voyages to America before discovering Utopia, Hythloday is presented as a well-qualified narrator. The narrative framework further removes More, and at the same time it heightens credibility ; *More* recounts that he meets Giles, who in turn introduces him to Hythloday. In Book I Hythloday's primary function is to point out the follies of the English. His Juvenalian outburst on the men-devouring sheep (pp. 8-9) is one of the best illustrations of Hythloday's function as the satiric observer ; in his account are several traditional satiric devices, most notably the beast fable and irony. The usually mild sheep, he says, now "devour men, and unpeople, not only villages, but towns." Continuing, he points out the ironic result of enclosure : after the owners have forced the farmers off the land, many sheep have been killed by a disease -- so the owners' efforts are futile. But in Book I Hythloday's function is not wholly negative, for he also suggests remedies to these ills in the example of the Polylerites who fight no wars and whose criminals make retribution to those they have injured and then work for the state (p. 11).

Some of the most effective examples of More's use of Hythloday to detach himself twice lie in Hythloday's shocked reaction to Utopian customs. That is, so that the reader does not automatically identify the author's view with Hythloday's, More occasionally shows that the satirist's view does not coincide with

8. Edward Surtz, S.J., *The Praise of Pleasure* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard Univ. Press, 1957), p. 182 ; David M. Bevington, "The Dialogue in *Utopia,*" *Studies in Philology,* 58 (1961), 496, 507 ; Elliott, p. 326.

Hythloday's. Utopian pre-marital inspections seem to Hythloday "absurd," "ridiculous," and "indecent," for example (p. 47). But the Utopians, Hythloday goes on to explain, employ this analogy : before buying a horse, a man is careful to inspect every part of the horse ; how much more important is the same procedure in choosing a wife, "on which depends the happiness or unhappiness of the rest of his life" (p. 47)! When the reader remembers that in Utopia divorces are difficult to obtain and the penalty for adultery severe, he realizes that care before marriage is especially desirable in Utopian society. So, because the satirist's approval is actually of the Utopian belief, Hythloday's disclaimer serves as double protection for More. In other instances of irrational condemnation, More uses Hythloday as a foil for the admirable viewpoint of the Utopians, a view which at first shocks him.

A related technique is More's casting Hythloday in another traditional role of the satiric persona, the *ingénu* who "wonders" at the meaning of what he sees and who casts blame by his apparent praise. This pose is evident in More's ironic censure of scholasticism when Hythloday appears to be amazed that, despite all their philosophical and scientific studies, the Utopians cannot match the "inventions" of European logicians : "in fact, they have discovered not even a single one of those very ingeniously devised rules about restrictions, amplifications, and suppositions which our own children everywhere learn."[9] "In fact" and "not even a single one" represent the speaker's feigned naïveté, while "inventions" and "ingeniously devised" expose the critical satirist behind the façade of the *ingénu's* admiration. As Hythloday comments on the Utopian use of arguments from religion to support their belief that man's happiness lies in pleasure, "what may seem more strange," Hythloday is again the naïve onlooker through whom More satirizes the false emphasis on "severity and roughness" by which clergy and laity hide the true joy of Christianity (p. 38).

In these passages the tone of the *ingénu* is light ; however, at other times, as in his ironic praise of European treaties, the satirist can use the mask of the *ingénu* to reveal the bitterness behind the apparent naïveté : "We know how religiously [treaties] are observed in Europe, more particularly where the Christian doctrine is received, among whom they are sacred and inviolable,

9. Yale edition, p. 159.

which is partly owing to the justice and goodness of the princes themselves, and partly to the reverence they pay to the popes" (p. 50). Without knowledge of the times, one might accept these apparently innocuous lines literally ; however, the reader knows that many late fifteenth-century and early sixteenth-century European monarchs were notorious for breaking treaties and that several Popes of the period (Alexander VI and Julius II in particular) were notorious for their worldliness and political ambitions. Thus, phrases like "the justice and goodness of the princes" are actually as bitter as Erasmus' or Juvenal's harsh censure.[10]

Just as Hythloday is often a foil for More's presentation of the Utopian view (the norm), so the character *More* sometimes serves as foil for Hythloday's expression of admirable ideas. Although in the court debate in Book I, *More* is Hythloday's equal, at the end of Book II his "defense" of private property, the key economic issue of the work, is not a defense at all. J.H. Hexter has admirably described the satirist's technique in this passage : More "did not set up a straw man in order to knock it down ; he actually set up a straw man that he had already not only knocked down but utterly and completely demolished."[11] *More's* inadequate reasons for his repudiation of Hythloday's praise of communism reveal the author's double satiric detachment. *More's* objections to communism are indeed designed to be demolished : "living in common without the use of money, by which all nobility, magnificence, splendour, and majesty, which, according to the common opinion, are the true ornaments of a nation, would be quite taken away" (pp. 67-68). At these words the reader recognizes that the author is making *More* a gull. Taking on the views of the "common opinion," *More* shows that he has misunderstood Hythloday's entire discourse, for, as Hythloday's description of the Anemolian ambassadors has revealed, emphasis on externals is laughable when seen in true perspective. Moreover, not only the *Utopia* itself, but More's whole life and his other

10. John Traugott, "A Voyage to Nowhere with Thomas More and Jonathan Swift," *Sewanee Review*, 69 (1961), 559, sees Hythloday, like Gulliver at the end of the fourth voyage, as the "foolish wise man" who ironically can no longer participate in actual life because of the ideal which he believes he has found. In relation to Hythloday, whose rejection is of court service (not life itself) and whose view often reflects the satirist's, this theory does not seem to hold up.

11. *More's Utopia : The Biography of an Idea* (Princeton : Princeton Univ. Press, 1952), p. 42.

works are a renunciation of the false values which he associated with "magnificence, splendour, and majesty."

Besides his ironic switching of satiric spokesmen and making "straw men" of Hythloday and *More*, the satirist gains aesthetic distance through his paradoxical, even ridiculous names for admirable characters, places, and objects. The very title – *ou* ("not") and *topos* ("place") – suggests the unreality of the island. However, as a prefatory poem indicates, the name "Utopia" may also derive from "Eutopia" or "Happy Place" : "The ancients called me Utopia or Nowhere because of my isolation ... Deservedly ought I to be called by the name of Eutopia or Happy Land."[12] This make-believe quality is suggested also by the prefatory letters where the frequent shifts in attitude toward the reality of both Hythloday and Utopia imply that the writers are playing with the idea of Utopia as a type of metaphor.[13] The fictional nature of the work is revealed finally by *More's* concluding statement : "there are many things in the Commonwealth of Utopia that I rather wish, than hope, to see followed in our governments" (p. 68).

In addition to its title, the second suggestion of the work's unreality lies in the names of the characters, especially the surname "Hythloday," presumably derived from the Greek *hythlos* ("idle talk" or "nonsense") and *daios* ("knowing," "cunning"). As has been frequently noted, Hythloday is the traditional satiric voyager who, because his values have changed, no longer feels at home in Europe and who is therefore considered a fool by the corrupt Europeans. By placing much of his criticism of the existing society in the mouth of *Nonsense,* More further separates himself from the work and deliberately heightens the ambiguity of its meaning. Literally More announces that he is arguing with *Nonsense,* but the eloquence of *More* in Book I and his earnestness throughout show that *Nonsense* is a formidable opponent. As in *The Praise of Folly,* where Folly often speaks wisdom, here *Nonsense* speaks truth. Other Greek derivatives reveal the same reversals. The Polylerites ("much nonsense") are the norm in Book I, the Utopian chief city Amaurot ("dim," "uncertain") is ruled by a

12 Yale edition,pp. 20-21 ; see also Paul A. Sawada, "Toward the Definition of *Utopia,*" *Moreana,* No. 31-32(Nov. 1971), pp. 139-140.

13. R.S. Sylvester discusses this introductory material in "'Si Hythlodaeo Credimus' : Vision and Revision in Thomas More's *Utopia,*" *Soundings,* 51, No. 3 (1968), 277-79.

prince whose title is Ademus ("without a people"), and their main river is Anyder ("without water"). All these paradoxical names may suggest the unreality of the Utopian world, or, like the admirable Utopian customs, may indirectly reveal the corruptions of Europe, where the ideas of Hythloday or the Polylerites would be considered nonsensical.

The inversion of values suggested in these paradoxical names is related to a third satiric technique of achieving distance, ironic contrast. More juxtaposes European values or tastes with their Utopian counterparts in order to reveal European folly as opposed to Utopian reason. Seen without the bias of custom, European values and tastes often seem ridiculous or even shocking. The most striking instances of juxtaposition concern the Utopian relegation of gold and silver to chamber pots, chains for slaves, and earrings or coronets as signs of infamy, and also their equating of jewels with children's toys. Thus the Utopians mistake the "most meanly clad" of the Anemolian delegation for the ambassadors, and a well-meaning Utopian mother shushes her child who laughs at a richly dressed diplomat, "Hold your peace, this I believe is one of the ambassador's fools" (p. 36). Here the juxtaposition is complete. Another use of ironic contrast is Hythloday's comment on fashion : the Utopians value linen only for its cleanness, as opposed to the European emphasis on color and fineness of thread. As Hythloday, representing the common sense view of the Utopians, remarks, "how fine soever that thread may be, it was once no better than the fleece of a sheep, and that sheep was a sheep still for all its wearing it" (p. 37). Hythloday also observes the Utopian contentment with one suit, in contrast with the unwarranted European desire for many.

The satirist uses contrast to undercut other time-honored ideas in Hythloday's description of Utopian methods of warfare. Through their practices of bribing the enemy as well as their complete lack of concern for the mercenaries they hire, More is pointing out specifically the hypocrisy of the traditional concept of "honor" and generally satirizing the irrationality of war itself. With the common sense evident in their selection of mates, the Utopians recognize that, regardless of the jingo rhetoric which attends it, war is brutal ; and as such, it is not appropriate to men. To emphasize its brutal nature, More employs animal imagery in the war passages (pp. 51-52), perhaps to stress his view that reason, which distinguishes man from beast, is absent

in physical warfare.[14]

Similar to More's condemnation by juxtaposition is criticism by implication or indirection, the most frequent technique he uses to achieve detachment. Found chiefly in Book II, this device is occasionally used in Book I, as in Hythloday's description of the Polylerites' just and kind treatment of criminals, a practice which contrasts sharply with England's harsh penalties. The only direct reference to England is Hythloday's offhand comment that this method might be tried there ; he says nothing about the cruelty of English punishment but instead relies on his reader to recognize the differences. Even more clearly in the discourse in Book II, where More uses the narrative to provide a contrast with contemporary England, the purpose of More's indirect criticism is not prescriptive but satiric. His indirection covers all areas of Utopian, and hence English, life : academic, social, political, economic, and religious. Thus, having described the Utopians' facility and eagerness in learning Greek, Hythloday need not explicitly advocate substituting the study of Greek for scholasticism, because his approval of Greek and disapproval of degenerate scholasticism are apparent. More removes himself further here through Hythloday's suggestion that the Utopians' proficiency may be explained by a relation between Greek and their own language. But, as when More undercuts Hythloday's objection to Utopian marital customs, the Utopian position is the stronger. The reader remembers not Hythloday's rationalization but the Utopians' ability ; within three years, Hythloday reports, they were "masters of the whole language" (p. 44).

Much of the criticism of the Utopian approval of social institutions like euthanasia and slavery can also be answered by noting that More is using them for satiric, not prescriptive, functions.[15] By pointing out the prevalence of euthanasia, More implicitly criticizes the lack of choice of death in England, where many die from neglect. Likewise, the custom of bondage can show that the Utopians' kindness, as opposed to England's, extends even to the lowest level of society ; the poor of neighboring nations often volunteer as Utopian slaves because slaves

14 See Edward Surtz, S.J., "Aspects of More's Latin Style in *Utopia*," *Studies in the Renaissance*, 14 (1967), 100.

15. According to Chambers, p. 128, "More did not mean that Heathendom is better than Christianity. He meant that some Christians are worse than heathen" ; see also Heiserman, pp. 172-73.

in Utopia are better treated than free paupers in their own countries (p. 46). The Utopian ill are also treated with skill and consideration, even receiving the best food from a city's common market (pp. 31-32). Further, through the Utopian emphasis on virtuous or beneficial "pleasures," a belief which should not be condemned as hedonistic, More is exposing the preposterous values of the English, who enjoy pursuits which lead to no worthwhile end and which obscure or contradict the dictates of reason.[16] For example, the Utopians' basic physical pleasure, which also results in mental enjoyment, is good health, for only when one feels well can he fully enjoy other pleasures (p. 42).

Like social institutions and values, English politics are also lampooned by indirection. The main consideration of the Utopian government, in contrast to Henry VIII's, is the citizens, who themselves place the public good over personal gain (pp. 30, 39). Moreover, Utopian laws are few, and each law is simply, concisely, and clearly written, a definite contrast to the English legal system, as More knew from his own experience. The Utopians have no lawyers, whose profession they feel is to "disguise matters, and to wrest the laws" (p. 49). The lust of kings like Henry VIII and Francis I, who considered their craving for military glory a sufficient *causa belli*, is indicted by the Utopians' going to war only for just causes (the welfare of their allies or their own citizens) : "in opposition to the sentiments of all other nations, [they] think that there is nothing more inglorious than that glory... gained by war" (p. 51). Other political criticism of England is implicit in the Utopians' faithful observation of truces and their kindness to captured soldiers (p. 56). And when Hythloday tells of their surplus population colonizing unused land in neighboring countries and fighting if they are opposed, the reader should not condemn the Utopians as imperialistic. The Utopians justify their colonization policies on the ground that, since all property is held in common, a nation has the right to settle on wastelands if the life of the colonizing nation depends on the settlement. Early sixteenth-century apologists for the Catholic king Ferdinand had similarly justified annexation of heathen lands.[17] Possibly, More is thinking of new homes for farmers dispossessed by enclosure. Probably he is also criticizing by indirection the

16 In *The Praise of Pleasure*, pp. 37-77, Father Surtz perceptively analyzes the difference between the Utopian concepts of false and true pleasures.

17. Yale edition, pp. 415-16, note.

trivial causes of European wars.

Economically, Utopian "communism" has sparked more critical argument than any other area of More's book. The Marxist thinker Karl Kautsky, sees More as a socialist born before his time,[18] thus imposing nineteenth-century values on a sixteenth-century work. As Chambers has demonstrated, More's economic system reveals his consideration of two contemporary problems, enclosure and monasticism.[19] More's first readers would have considered the Utopian economy as reactionary or old-fashioned, looking back to Plato's *Republic* and the medieval agricultural system which held all property in common, and opposing the rising commercialism as it was being theorized by Machiavelli's precepts for a ruler. It is also evident that the Utopian society parallels the monastic system in many ways, for example, in the Utopians' owning nothing individually and following regulated, disciplined lives. Satirically, the function of the Utopian economic system is to show that deplorable economic conditions are related to social evils. Like the Polylerite way of life in Book I, the healthy communitarian regime of Utopia, which fosters social justice, serves as a contrasting standard by which to judge economic and social inequities in Europe.

More's description of the Utopian religion also reflects England's Church life. Not that religious freedom is total in Utopia : punishment is allotted to those who criticize other religions "with more zeal than discretion" (More leaves ambiguous the problem of who determines the extent of acceptable criticism), nor can God's providence or the immortality of the soul be denied with impunity. Through their tolerance, though restricted, More suggests that Christianity need not fear discussion. At the same time, the qualifications to religious freedom serve as protective shields for the satirist who, even in the indirect criticism, is not advocating sweeping radical reform but a sane, open-minded religion. The form of the Utopians' congregational prayer is a specific example of More's indirect criticism. Rather than praying for guidance in their government and religion as is christendom's current practice, they humbly ask that *if* theirs is the right religion and government, God will strengthen them and convert other nations to their way of thought ; if they are wrong in either

18. *Thomas More and His Utopia,* trans. H.J. Stenning (London : A. and C. Black, Ltd., 1927), p. 171.

19. Chambers, pp. 131-32, 136.

government or religion, however, they ask that God will correct them (p. 65). Their humility is a striking contrast with the usual pride of both church and nation.

A last technique of More's aesthetic distance is placing the most explicit criticism of Europe in the mouths of the Utopians themselves, a device like Swift's having Gulliver merely report the Houyhnhnm or Brobdingnagian denunciations of mankind. Although the Utopians never specify which countries are the objects of their criticism, those foolish "other nations" clearly resemble Europe and especially England. The Utopian attacks are most often aimed at superficial or material values. Among the "false pursuers of pleasure," they include members of the nobility and their courtiers, gamblers, and hunters. Concerning the nobleman's enjoyment of the outward devotion of his hangers-on, the Utopians question, "Will the bending another man's knees give ease to yours ? And will the head's being bare cure the madness of yours ?" (p. 40). The nobility is wrong for mistaking signs of reverence for true respect. The harsh tone sometimes employed by Hythloday in direct criticism is more characteristic of the Utopians' denunciations. They chastize the hunter with the lash of common sense as they seek to understand what motivates him (like Hythloday, they can speak with the mock innocence of the *ingénu*). If the hunter enjoys watching the dogs run, they reason, he should have one dog chase another so that the runners would be more equal than a dog and a rabbit are ; if he enjoys seeing the hare mutilated by the dogs, he is clearly depraved, for this sight should inspire pity, not enjoyment (p. 41). The Utopians laugh too at material values, as seen in those who prize only real jewels, even though no one but a jeweller con distinguish them from imitations.

Despite his usual aesthetic distance, More's personal views occasionally creep into the direct criticism of the Utopians as it is reported by Hythloday. When they condemn the deliberate misuse of the body for any but religious purposes, one recalls. More's early experience of the Carthusians and the appeal their rule retained for him, to witness the hair shirt he wore throughout his life. Hythloday reports that except for religious purposes the Utopians "think it madness for a man to wear out the beauty of his face, or the force of his natural strength ; to corrupt ... his body by sloth ... or to waste it by fasting" (p. 43). Sloth and dieting

(fasting without a religious purpose) represent the two extremes of physical misuse ; laziness reveals lack of will and dieting a diligent but misplaced use of the will or, like More's criticism of the false courtiers, a deceptive dependence on externals. Another censure which seems to reveal the author's wishful thinking is the Utopian condemnation of "those nations" whose laws "swell up to so many volumes" (p. 49) ; the Utopians recognize the unreasonableness of requiring men to obey laws that are both numerous and difficult to understand. As a lawyer More probably recognized the impossibility of their ideal ; satirically, the function of this passage is to condemn excessive and unnecessary complexity of the law.

Continuous critical arguments about More's ideas in the *Utopia* prove that through the satiric devices of irony, inversion, juxtaposition, and indirection, he succeeded in detaching himself from the work. Some would say, in fact, that he succeeded too well. Perennial controversy centers around two questions which result from his aesthetic distancing : who is the satiric spokesman, and what is More's attitude toward communism ? As I have suggested, Hythloday usually seems to represent More's views ; in the debate in Book I, however, the conservative, accommodating argument of *More* and the liberal, philosophical views of Hythloday seem to reflect More's own indecision about court service. The second question is more difficult. Although it is impossible to determine how More actually felt about communism, the speculation most valuable in interpreting this work is that based on the Christian humanism fundamental to More's own Weltanschauung, as revealed in his life and in his writings.[20] His traditional attack on folly in the *Utopia* is effective largely because of the aesthetic distance or double satiric removal that he achieves through the ironic handling of *More* and Hythloday, paradoxical names, juxtaposition of values, and especially indirection, techniques which, since the work's publication, have amused readers and confounded biographically oriented critics.

San Antonio College. Irma NED STEVENS.

20. One such interpretation has been suggested by Hexter (*More's Utopia*, pp. 66-80), who believes that More's achievement lies in his recognition of the common root of the specific evils he points out in the *Utopia* ; this common foundation is evident in private property but can be traced further to the basic sins of greed, sloth, and pride – especially pride, a traditional butt of satire. In Book I Hythloday states this theme : "there is in man a pride that makes him fancy it a particular glory to excel others in pomp and excess" (p. 31), a criticism which could be applied to both the economic and social values of sixteenth-century England.