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"*Quid dormitis?*": *More's Use of Sleep As a Motif in* De Tristitia

THOMAS MORE'S FINAL WORK, *De Tristitia, tedio, pauore, et oratione christi ante captionem eius,*[1] the third of what have come to be known as "The Tower Works," recounts the gospel narrative of Christ's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane and his subsequent betrayal and arrest. It is both an exegetical commentary and a devotional treatise, both a public and a private composition.[2] Like the accounts in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and in Jean Gerson's *Monotessaron*, More's avowed source, *De Tristitia* divides naturally into two parts: Christ's agony and his arrest. Unlike Matthew, Luke, and Gerson, however, More chose to concentrate more attention on the first part (roughly sixty per cent). Of the 310 folio pages of the Valencia manuscript roughly one third contain references to sleep and related concepts such as sloth (*desidia, ignavia, segnitia*), laziness (*pigricia*), sluggishness (*socordia*), and apathy (*torpor*), and to their opposites, wakefulness (*vigilantia*), watchfulness (*pervigilium*) and diligence (*diligentia*). The vast majority of these occur in the first part of the work, which is not surprising since it recounts Christ's injunctions to stay awake and pray and his discoveries of the disobedient apostles sleeping. What is surprising, however, is the number of references to sleep and watchfulness and the way in which they develop. Germain Marc'hadour has pointed out how the two phrases, "stay awake and pray that you may not enter into temptation" and "for the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak" (159/5–7), "fournissent à More la matière d'une trame serrée, où s'en-

trecoupent des fils majeurs : prière et vigilance, infirmité de la chair et allégresse d'esprit, tentation et tentateur."[3] In fact, the metaphor of the tightly-woven web can be applied equally well to the phrases, "[Christ] went to the disciples and found them sleeping" and "he found them sleeping for sadness," and to the question, "Why are you sleeping?" In the network of sleep and waking images these phrases inspire in the first part of the *De Tristitia* there is also an intersecting of major "threads": slothful disregard for God's orders, the wrongness of seeking consolation in sleep, and the folly of sleeping when danger is at hand. It is the purpose of the present article to discuss the thematic significance of the sleep motif, but also to explore the way in which the various images form a structural pattern in the first part of the work and contribute to its literary qualities.

The two central topics of concern to More in *De Tristitia* are the fear which Christ and the martyrs felt when faced with suffering and death, and the importance of good praying habits. Related to this second theme is the more general question of man's spiritual sloth and its dangers. The motif of sleep is used in discussing all three.

A reference to sleep appears only once—and this briefly—in relation to the theme of martyrdom. The need to sleep serves as a sign of Christ's humanity, says More, along with other bodily needs like hunger and thirst, or with normal emotions like weariness and fear (51/5-7, 53/1, 89/6). The *lassitudo* Christ felt (89/6) should not be interpreted as "slackness" or "sloth" (*socordia*) in accepting martyrdom and quoted as a precedent by fearful and hesitant martyrs. Rather, they should emulate Christ's victory over such human needs as sleep, won by means of prayer. Sleep is not in itself bad, for it is a natural function;[4] it becomes an instrument of evil only when it interferes with our accomplishment of duty or acceptance of martyrdom.

In the discussion of prayer, his second major theme, More leans much more heavily on images of sleep and sloth to make his points. From the opening words of Gerson's narrative, "Hec quum dixisset Iesus / hymno dicto exierunt in montem Oliueti" (3/3), More extracts two ideas: how to pray and when to pray. Whereas Christ and the apostles sang a hymn of thanks for the meal, we just manage to mumble grace through our yawns. And where they went out into the night, "and not to bed," we turn our thoughts to sleeping (7/5-7). More then introduces a figure who stands midway between Christ and us: the prophet of the Psalms who rises at midnight to pray and who thinks of God even when he is in bed.[5] The contrast between good and bad praying habits is elaborated upon a little later (33/1-2). Christ had

the *custom* of spending whole nights in prayer, whereas those who sacrifice a little sleep to pray on special occasions pride themselves on their virtue (31/3-6, 33/1- 2). He also prayed at night in the open air, whereas the hypocritical pharisee "molli stertebat in lecto" (35/3-4). This leads into a comment on Christians in general that echoes the earlier observation concerning the prophet: even if too lazy to emulate Christ, we should at least remember his all-night vigils and offer a moment of prayer when, More says with a touch of wry realism, we turn over in our beds, half-asleep (35-37).[6]

The discussion on how to pray continues with the gospel words, "et progressus pusillum procidit in faciem suam super terram et orabat" (111/5-6). More invites his readers to contemplate Christ's posture and thereby correct their lazy, sleepy way of approaching God (*segniter*, 115/8, and *sompnocenti*, 117/1). He uses an analogy to reinforce his point that we must concentrate while praying. The minds of those who pray negligently are besieged by fantasies, as the mind of the sleeper is besieged by dreams (119/8-123/3).[7] As one should prepare one's mind for prayer by concentrating, so one should assume an appropriate stance. In a passage whose direct and almost bantering tone is reminiscent of the *Utopia*, More asks if we would yawn and stretch in the presence of a temporal prince as we do in the presence of God (133/4). Again, he sets up the three-figure contrast to illustrate his point: Christ lay prostrate to pray, the prophet of Psalm 62 lay on his bed thinking of God but rose to pray, we lounge, or need cushions to support us. The vocabulary chosen points up the difference in the three postures: Christ, we are told, "procidit", denoting a posture of humility; the prophet simply "fuit super stratum"; we however lie back, "corporis incuria et supinitate." It is acceptable to pray lying down (*cubantem*) but only as long as we are thinking on God.

If we must pray diligently, we must also pray constantly, night and day, because prayer is both useful and extremely necessary in order to combat the temptations of the flesh, one of which is sleep (167/9-11). More reminds us that Christ said not just *vigilate* but *vigilate et orate*, not just occasionally but constantly, and not just in the day, as we doze and yawn, but even at night-time when we would usually be asleep (171/7-11, 173/1-3). Constant prayer is also a powerful aid when we weary in following God's path. The verb More uses is not the *tedere* of the work's title, which means to become spiritually weary or discouraged, but *languere*, to be physically tired, or sluggish (205/5). Sometimes we progress so slothfully (*segniter*) or are hampered by weak irresolution (*mollici*), and laziness (*pigricia*), so that we need to beg God

to pull us along with him. We must however pray earnestly, not lazily or carelessly (227/6) if we are to be given the right kind of consolation.[8] Lastly, prayer will ensure forgiveness of past sins, help us deal with the present, and act as a surety for the future, but again our prayers must be said not lazily and yawningly (*oscitanter*) "but incessantly and fervently" (311/9–10).

More insists on the need for diligent and constant prayer because the sleep of the Apostles in the Gethsemane narrative represents for him the spiritual sloth into which we all slip on occasion. The dangers of such sleep are many and appear throughout the *De Tristitia*. Drowsiness (*sompnolentia*) prevents us from understanding the significance of biblical names, which in turn causes us to misinterpret God's purpose in the world (17/5). When sloth (*desidia*) overtakes us, fondness for prayer is the first of our virtues to disappear.* (209/1–2). Laziness (*pigricia*) makes us neglect our prayers. Sleep blunts our feelings, even for Christ whom we should love most (159/3–4), as the narrative clearly shows when Christ returns to the Apostles to find them sleeping. It also prevents us from holding firm and obeying God's will, as is sharply emphasized in Jesus' words to Peter: "Simon, dormis? non potuisti una hora uigilare mecum?" (159/5–6). The double "sting" in Christ's use of "Simon" rather than "Peter" is directed at the Apostle's having fallen asleep, More asserts. Peter means "firmness," hardly applicable for one so "infirm" that he cannot keep awake; "Simon" means "listening" and "obedient," no less inappropriate, for Peter has made himself deaf with sleep and in so doing has disobeyed. Furthermore, he has laid himself open to another danger: sleep has made him defenceless at the very moment that Satan is "seeking to sift the Apostles like wheat" (167/1). The readiest of the band to defend Christ, he will deny his Master thrice before the night is out.

The traditional association of sleep with the traps and snares of the devil and the workings of evil at night, found both in the Bible and patristic and exegetical writings, must have influenced More's imagination very strongly, for it appears seven additional times in the *De Tristitia*, as well as in several of his other works. Evil never sleeps; rather, it keeps watch while we sleep. Thus while the Apostles slumbered, Judas was "so wide awake that the idea of sleep never entered his mind" (259/3–5). Later, More says that we stumble into temptations and traps (*insidia*) set by the devil because our eyes are closed, yet we slumber on, "watching the dream visions induced by mandragora," rather than praying (307). The association of sleep with the devil is elaborated upon in the metaphor of the castle of the soul, to which we deny prayer

entry when we sleep and into which we consequently allow the "besieging troops of the devil to break" (311/1–2). The Apostles overestimated their power to overcome these troops, as witnessed in their succumbing to sleep while danger was at hand (333/5–9).[9] The question is revived in the second half of the work. Sleep enabled the devil to weaken the will of all the Apostles, "nutantes et incogitantes"; thus unprepared to face the imminent danger with forbearance, they either fought or fled (563).

Again in the tradition of exegetical and homiletic writings, More uses sleep, in both *De Tristitia* and his other works, as a metaphor for man's state of sinfulness and vice.[10] As we are "slumbering on the pillow of our sins," God in his goodness . . . "shakes us, strikes us, and does His best to wake us up" (203/1–3). Sometimes, however, we are "so fast asleep in our vices" (211/7) that even God's calls cannot arouse us; like Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, he leaves us to sleep. More then passes from the general to the specific by associating sleep with the type of sin that threatens the very church itself through the administrations of unworthy prelates and priests, and of heretics. He suggests that the scene contrasting the sleeping apostles and vigilant traitor clearly projects "as if in a mirror" (259/7–8) an image of the state of the church throughout the ages: sleeping and apathetic bishops too slothful to protect the truth or defend their flocks from Christ's vigilant enemies. Some are even worse than the apostles, for their sleep is induced not by sadness but by "the new wine of the devil, the flesh and the world" (259–263). Others are so overcome by dejection (*maestitia*) and sleep that they neglect their duty (265/3–8). No better are priests who administer the sacrament unworthily and neglect their duty to stay awake and pray for their people (351).[11] Worst, however, are the heretics. Like the devil and Judas, they are constantly awake, ready to spread evil and betray Christ.[12] Again, More interprets the scene of the sleeping apostles tropologically, calling it an "imaginem ac mysterium temporis futuri" (341/5). The added "dormientibus discipulis quum traderetur filius hominis" (341/4–5), as Miller points out (p. 917), introduces the sleep-betrayal association in preparation for the following section, where it becomes an important theme. We must not sit and sleep or be caught snoring, cautions More, if we are to combat the threat to Christians by Turks from without and by heretical sects from within. Christ's question, "Quid dormitis?" applies to us all: Why are we sleeping in the face of heresy, that "creeping disease" which, like a slowly but surely spreading cancer, betrays Christ and his followers? (347–51).

The description of sleep as a disease had been used a little earlier. Christ offers a remedy for "that sluggish disease of somnolence" (*ignavam sompnolentiae morbum*), one More wishes we would apply occasionally: getting up and praying (303). The disease metaphor leads into a passage containing two other figures of speech that describe the dangers of sleep, both found in exegetical and devotional writings. More had spoken earlier of the Apostles being "buried" in sleep (*sepultos*) (259/1), and the bishops being "lulled to sleep and buried" (*sopiti et sepulti*) in destructive desires, sleeping, "like pigs sprawling in the mire" (263/1–2); now he explicitly calls sleep the "very image of death"[13] and warns us to resist its seductive powers:

> Itaque non est lucta sensim superandus sompnus sed illecebrosa brachia quibus nos amplectitur et reclinat semel impetu diuellenda sunt nobisque protinus ab eo proruendum. Tum uero ubi semel sompnum desidem mortis uidelicet imaginem reiecerimus uitae succedet alacritas. (305/2–6)

Casting off sleep is also the only way to fight one final danger: sadness, the *tristitia* of the work's title. While recognizing the source of the Apostles' sadness—the knowledge that their Master was in imminent danger—More criticizes the fact that they succumbed to it by falling asleep.[14] Such sadness leads to heavy-heartedness (*maestitia*) and then despair, for we abandon hope and seek refuge in sleep. Ultimately, it will lead to hell, as More tells us in his criticism of the dejected, sleeping bishops who neglect their duty (265/3–7), for God gives sinners chances that, if asleep, they cannot but ignore (283/1–2). Consolation in sleep, unlike the true consolation prayer provides, fails to relieve our troubled minds and, weary, we fall unseeingly (*oculis clausis*) into the devil's traps (287).

The three-part structure of the account of the agony in the garden was imposed on More by the Gospel narrative: Christ three times leaves the apostles in order to pray, telling them to do likewise, but returns to find them sleeping. Within this overall structure, however, More was free to elaborate on or condense his materials, shift emphasis, and establish a more complex pattern or "sub-structure" of references to sleep. The characteristic feature of this pattern is the establishment of balanced parallels and contrasts, or polarities.[15]

The pattern of sleep references develops in a tightly-ordered sequence. The first ten folios constitute a type of introduction: Christ and the apostles recite a hymn, cross the brook Cedron, and enter the Garden of Gethsemane, where Judas knew they often went. More sets up a series of polarities revolving around sleeping and watching in order to present his two subjects: the need for constant and proper prayer and the evils of sleep and sloth. Thus he contrasts Jesus and the vigilant prophet with us slothful Christians; the ever-vigilant Jesus with the sometimes-vigilant pharisee; the hymn-singing Christ and his apostles with us, mumbling our grace yawningly; the care taken by the evangelists to include in their narrative significant biblical names with the drowsiness that prevents us from comprehending that significance.

More begins Part I of the narrative by quoting Jesus' exhortation, "Sustinete hic et uigilate mecum" (39/3–4). Again, he presents the twin subjects of praying properly and avoiding the dangers of sleep in a series of parallels and contrasts: Christ's humble praying posture and ours, lazy and irreverent (115–117); our behavior when petitioning a temporal prince and when praying to God; the careless worshipper and the sleeping dreamer. The section concludes with Christ's discovery of the sleeping apostles, which provides More with a final contrast: their "giving into sleep" indicates the limited nature of their love for their Master whereas his returning to see them demonstrates his ever-vigilant love (157–59).

The next stage of the narrative opens with Christ's question to Peter, "Simon dormis?" and his second injunction, "uigilate et orate" (159/5–6). This time, More reverses his previous order by speaking, first, of the dangers of sleep that prevent us from behaving like Christians, then of the role sleep plays in distracting us from praying properly. The contrasts start with an etymological one: Peter's sleep represents his infirmity, deafness and disobedience rather than the true significance of his names (161–163). Sleep represents the weakness of the flesh; if the apostles, those "young green branches," could not resist, how can we, "sapless sticks"? (169). God's kindness in waking us up is contrasted with our negligence in slumbering on the "pillow of our sins" (203/1–3), his vigilant care for us with our laziness and softness as we travel life's road (205–207), and his mercy in stirring us from our deep sleep of vice (211–13). Similarly, contrasts are set up between Christ's instruction on prayer and our unsatisfactory execution of it (173) and between his agonized praying that will bring true consolation in the form of an angel and our lazy, hurried and sluggish efforts that deprive us of true comfort and leave us troubled (255–57).

Christ's second discovery of the sleeping apostles, his question, "Quid dormitis?" (this time addressed to all the apostles as seen in the plural verb form), and his third exhortation, "surgite et orate," introduces the third but this time more complex sequence of references to sleep

and waking (257). Sleep is used as an image of heresy and betrayal, extreme sadness leading to despair, and disease; there follows a repetition of "surgite et orate." It is then used to symbolize death and evil in the form of the devil's troops; this too is followed by "surgite et orate." The section continues with instructions on praying properly, expressed in sleep images, and then ends as it had begun, with the question of heresy, which flourishes while we sleep (345/5–361/5).

The first part of this third section, discussing betrayal and heresy, is built on both contrast and analogy: the apostles buried in sleep are unlike the wakeful Judas; on the other hand, heretics resemble the archtraitor in that they are constantly awake, and negligent bishops and priests resemble the slothful apostles. The subsequent points More makes are also centred around figures of contrast. The apostles' and bishops' reaction to sadness (283 ff.) is to escape into sleep whereas Christ's is to pray: the consolation they receive contrasts sharply with the true consolation offered by prayer. If sleep is a disease, to get up and pray is an instant remedy (303); if it is the image of death, to be wide awake is to allow life to begin anew (305). A final contrast is drawn between the busy troops of evil battering the castle of the sleeping soul (309–11) and the nocturnal activities of heretics and the snoring insouciance of slumbering Christians.

This carefully and densely constructed pattern of images of sleep and waking thus forms one of the underlying structures in the first part of the *De Tristitia.* It also illustrates the fact that More composed this his last work in much the same way as he had all his previous writings. He announces his themes early in the work; then, lawyer-like, he explores them by arguing for and against before returning to his theme and restating the case; next he departs in a new direction—but without losing the thread of his argument—often in a seeming digression, only to return to his theme once more. As Louis Martz has demonstrated, such was More's writing procedure in the *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, *Dialogue of Comfort* and *Treatise on the Passion.*[16] In the third part of this article, I shall discuss the literary aspects of More's use of the motif of sleep with a view to demonstrating that here too More was faithful to his habits of composition. Although working under great duress and with little time to spare, he carefully revised his manuscript as he wrote, as the Valencia manuscript reveals, and many of his revisions were made not only in order to sharpen his arguments and clarify his points, but also to make stylistic improvements. As a result, I shall argue, the *De Tristitia* is of literary as well as exegetical and homiletic value, despite Alistair Fox's comment that "it does not

rate very high as literature."[17] In the passages containing references to sleep, we discover examples of More's sense of drama, and of his use of irony, digression, repetition, and rhetorical questions.

One of the contributing factors to the "public" character of *De Tristitia* is the way in which More imparts a sense of drama. He does this in several ways. First, he uses set speeches, some of which are paraphrases of Jesus' words. Two of the most striking are related to the subject of sleep. The first is inspired by the five-line speech to Peter taken from the Gospel and beginning, "Simon, dormis?" This is expanded into a paraphrase of what Jesus could have said had he been more reproachful (163–67). It comprises a series of nine questions following immediately one upon the other and ending with a variant of the verb *dormire*: *dormis*, *dormitans*, *indormias*. The last four all end with "et tu Simon dormis?" (165). The repetition of "Simon" nine times in the speech underlines the irony that More says is intended in Christ's use of the name, while the volley of questions emphasizes the sense of urgency. At the same time, the passage underscores More's point that underlying Jesus' "gentle words" was a feeling of sharp disappointment.

In the second paraphrase of Jesus' final injunction to his apostles, "Sleep on, Take your rest" and then in the next breath, "Get up," the rhetorical pattern is elaborately developed around the basic polarity of sleeping and waking (289–91). The tone is set by More's opening words: Jesus grants permission to stay asleep but intends to take it away. The passage that follows is built upon a rapid succession of antitheses: *dormite*, *dormiatis*, *vigilare*; *dormitastis*, *dormiendi*, *ne sedendi*, *surgendum*. Jesus' final contradictory and almost sarcastic statement forms a fitting conclusion: "sleep . . . rest—you have my permission—that is, if you can. But you will certainly not be able to." A final wry antithesis reminds us of More's point that evil-doers are always active while the slothful sleep: "For there are people coming . . . / who will *shake* the *yawning sleepiness* [italics mine] out of you." The sense of drama is heightened throughout the passage by the use of connectives like "now" and adverbs like "immediately" and "soon" which impart a sense of urgency and build up to the final emphatic "for the hour has almost come." The paraphrase is repeated some sixteen folios further on but this time revolves round the orders "stay awake" and "get up" (337–39). Again, "now," "straight away," and "at this very moment" are used effectively to increase the tension.

Two other favourite literary devices of More's are used in *De Tristitia* to create a sense of drama: rhetorical questions and the introduction of a fictional adversary, whose role is to argue points of doctrine or

biblical interpretation. The devices are used side by side in a passage discussing the veracity of the Gospel statement that the apostles were all asleep while Jesus prayed (189–99). How could the apostles relate what Jesus said if they were truly asleep? Why did Jesus return to see if they were awake? If he wanted them to stay awake, why didn't he make them? After suggesting answers, More creates a character who might still not be satisfied concerning the third question: an officious investigator of the divine plan, as More rather mockingly calls him (197/3–4). The "investigator's" question and More's reply are both couched in direct speech, with More calling him "bone vir" (the flattery is of course ironical). All these techniques, used in the *Utopia*, *Dialogue of Comfort* and several of the polemical works, further animate the passage.

The figure of irony manifests itself in two ways in those *De Tristitia* passages containing sleep references. Firstly, there is an ironic and at times even sarcastic tone in some of More's own words and comments. In his paraphrase of Jesus' reproach (165/1–2), he has Jesus say: "As for that old name of yours, Simon, you live up to that very well, that's certain!" (*scilicet*).* As Monsuez has pointed out, *scilicet* is used at the end of a sentence in exactly that ironic way in the *Utopia*.[18] Elsewhere, More ironically tells the reader in direct speech: "Now imagine if you talk carelessly and lazily" (*supinus*, which can also mean lying on one's back) and, he continues, "loll, yawn and stretch in the presence of a temporal prince!" (131–33). Again, the tone is reminiscent of the *Utopia*, where Hythloday imagines himself in the French King's Council and starts his description in exactly the same way: "Age."[19] The second type of irony in *De Tristitia* comes directly from the Gospel account. According to More, Jesus' final, cutting words to the apostles, "Sleep on now. Take your rest. That is enough. Get up. Let us go," is not irony of the "trivial and jesting variety" (*leuicula et iocosa*) enjoyed by "idle and witty men" (289/5–6). Rather, it is "serious and weighty" and thus quite in order in Scripture, despite some opinions to the contrary.[20] Interestingly enough, More seeks to support his defence of biblical irony with yet another sleep image, this time taken from the Old Testament. Elias ridiculed the prophets of Baal by telling them: "Call louder! For your god is sleeping, or perhaps he's away on a journey somewhere!"* (295/6–7). The image of the sleeping god is doubly rich. The statue of Baal was deaf, More says; he thereby reminds us of Simon Peter's deafness, which as he had pointed out contradicts the etymological significance of his name, and of the deafness that assails us when asleep and prevents us from hearing God's voice. More completes his argument about irony by giving Saint Augustine's contrasting view that Jesus' words were not ironic, "in order to put forth both sides of the question," and he concludes with a final ironic twist of his own: "It is not for a nobody like myself to render a decision as if I were an appointed arbitrator"* (301–3). The self-mocking pun on *arbiter honorarius* (appointed arbitrator) and *onorarius* (beast of burden) heightens the irony contained in the statement: More of course had often been called upon to render decisions in court. It is also perhaps yet another echo of the passage in *Utopia* describing the French King's Council, where Hythloday had made a similar tongue-in-cheek statement that it was not for him, an *homuncio*, or little man, to express opinions.

The *De Tristitia*, an exegetical and devotional work sometimes thought to be very different from More's previous compositions in both subject and tone, in fact shares many of their features. Some of these manifest themselves in the various references to sleep, as has been shown in this article. Themes like the value of prayer and good praying habits, the need to be constantly on guard against evil, and the dangers of falling into spriritual sloth, figured forth here in images of sleep and wakefulness, are discussed by More in his various works. The use of an underlying pattern of imagery built on polarities and serving to explore those themes and formulate arguments, and the careful attention to style are familiar features of his writings. This consistency is made further apparent by the fact that More had used images of sleep and sloth in similar fashion in his previous writings, particularly in the *Dialogue of Comfort*, although nowhere had he been given the opportunity to weave them into such a close fabric as in his discussion of Christ's agony in the Garden. Nor must it be forgotten that like More's first great work, the *Utopia*, the *De Tristitia* was written in Latin. As Louis Martz says, it is a "moving and appropriate thought that in the somber close of his career More should have sought to communicate with the audience that had admired his *Utopia*."[21] Lastly, the *De Tristitia* in many ways completes the group of "Tower writings." It combines the thematic concerns of the *Dialogue of Comfort* and the exegetical and devotional nature of the *Treatise upon the Passion*, and like them exploits certain literary devices which enabled More to express both his public and private thoughts.[22]

As Alistair Fox notes, *De Tristitia* is thematically the "logical, climactic conclusion to [More's] whole opus."[23] I would also add that More's final work demonstrates a continuation of the various literary techniques and stylistic strengths that characterize his whole body of writings. This is certainly true of his concern with both the physical and

spiritual aspects of sleep and of the way in which he weaves appropriate images of sleep and waking into his writings. As he awaited execution, he no doubt had to fight not only the fear of pain and death but also the heavy-heartedness that he confessed in one of his last letters to Margaret had kept him lying "longe restles and wakying, while my wyfe had went I had slept . . ."[24] However, by describing the sleep of the apostles and the agony of their Master, he prepared himself to face—honorably and bravely—the final "sleep of death."

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Notes

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1. This is the title that More gave to his work. Clarence H. Miller discusses the various titles of *De Tristitia* in the Introduction to his edition, *De Tristitia christi*, Volume 14 of *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*. (New Haven and London: 1976), 739–40. All quotations will be taken from this edition and the page and line references will be indicated in parentheses in the text. Most English translations are also from this edition; my own translations are indicated by an asterisk.

2. Garry Haupt discusses this dual aspect of the *Treatise upon the Passion* and *De Tristitia* in his Introduction to the *Treatise upon the Passion*, CW 13, pp. li–cxxii; Clarence Miller touches on the question in his Introduction to CW 14, pp. 741–43; Louis Martz writes at some length on the question of the public humanistic audience and the private meditative nature of *De Tristitia* in "The Tower Works" in *St. Thomas More: Action and Contemplation*, edited by R. S. Sylvester (New Haven: Yale University Press: 1972), and "Thomas More: The Sacramental Life," *Thought* 52 (1977): 300–18.

3. Germain Marc'hadour, *Thomas More et la Bible* (Paris: 1969), 342.

4. In *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, More specifies that God provides sleep for man's refreshment; the problem with David (and us) is that "we slepe when we shulde not." *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, edited by Louis A. Shuster, Richard C. Marius, James P. Lusardi and Richard J. Schoeck as Volume 8 of the *Collected Works* (1973), 535. In *A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*, Antony tells Vincent that although "Waking in good business is much more acceptable to God than sleeping, yet God wills us to sleep." *A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation* edited by Louis L. Martz and Frank Manley as Volume 12 of the *Collected Works* (1976), 57.

5. Psalms 119:62 and 63:6. The vigilant prophet had also appeared in one of More's earliest works, the *Life of John Picus* where, in the Seventh Rule, Pico had praised him. More translated Pico's "super custodiam meam stabo" by "Thou must with the prophet stand and keep watch." *The Life of John Picus* in *The English Works of Sir Thomas More*, edited by W. E. Campbell and A. W. Reed (London: 1931), 383. The Utopians, it will be remembered, devoted eight hours to sleep, six to work, and expelled all idle persons from the commonwealth. CW 4, 126/31–32. The editor notes Stapleton's statement that More himself devoted no more than four or five hours to sleep, p. 405.

6. In *A Dialogue of Comfort*, More describes with equal realism the plight of the sinner who instead of grasping the help God offers in the form of prayer lies awake at night "amending his pillow," engaging his bed-partner in conversation, and so on. CW 12, 60.

7. While More possibly drew this analogy from Gerson's *De oratione et ejus valore*, a work he quotes later in the *De Tristitia* (327/1), (*Opera omnia*, edited by Louis Ellies du Pin, 5 vols. Antwerp: 1706. Vol. 3, p. 250), he goes beyond his source. The wandering thoughts of the "waking dreamer" are not simply "useless" but "unnatural," and "abominable" and, More adds as a final touch, would not be recounted "apud pueros" even if they had been dreams. Waking illusions and dreams had been compared by Antony in the *Dialogue of Comfort* although within the context of a discussion on divine revelation, CW 12/141–43.

8. In his *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, More reminds Tyndale that Jesus exhorted us to watch and pray at all times, which is harder than any church-inspired commands on prayer; the rest and ease Christ offered in return is not a "lewd liberty of slothfull rest" but "a pleasaunt taste of heaven." *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies* edited by Thomas Lawlor, Germain Marc'hadour and Richard Marius as Volume 6 of the *Collected Works* (1981), 106.

9. Miller includes in his edition the cancelled folio 23^{v} in which More had elaborated upon the danger of the devil's setting snares while we sleep (pp. 690–91).

10. In *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, More had disputed Tyndale's explanation of David's adultery and his murder of Uriah in a section entitled "One who sins does not sleep" (pp. 534 ff.). He accuses Tyndale of using sleep as an excuse for his heretical belief that since the elect do not sin wilfully, any sins they do commit while asleep are not in fact sins because they take place in a trance. In the *Dialogue of Comfort*, Antony warns against sleeping away the day in the secure hope that God will wake us at the last minute; in other words, we must not idle away our lives in sin in the hope of last-minute grace (p. 95).

11. G. R. Owst has pointed out the association of sloth and the clergy in medieval homilies and literature but remarks that Sleuthe in *Piers Plowman* is both cleric and layman. *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England: A Neglected Chapter in the History of English Letters and of the English People* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1961), 88–89, 278–89, 554–69. Incidentally, Sleuthe shares several specific characteristics with More's description of sloth: he needs a

hassock to pray (V. 382), his heart is miles away from the words when he says the rosary (V. 400), and he has to be woken and shaken out of his despair by *Vigilate* (420). More also discussed sloth, sister of Gluttony because they both muddle people's thinking and make men "lye down like swyne," and cautioned against underestimating its power in *The Four Last Things. The Workes of Sir Thomas More Knyght, Sometyme Lord Chancellor of England, Wrytten by Him in the Englysh Tonge* edited by William Rastell (London: 1557), 80 ff. On the church's attitude toward idleness, see More, *The Answer to a Poisoned Book*, Stephen Merriam Foley and Clarence H. Miller, Volume 11, The Complete Works of St. Thomas More (New Haven and London, Yale UP, 1985), pp. 33–34.

12. Contrasting the apostles' sleep and Judas' wakefulness in *The Confutation* (CW 8, p. 36), More had already likened the traitor to heretics always writing "ungracyose bookes" and the apostles to sad, slumbering defenders of the faith.

13. More had used the metaphor in *The Four Last Things* (*EW*, 80 ff.) where he had called sleep a "swowne" in which we "lye like dead stokes," and added, "Among al wise men of old it is agreed that slepe is the very ymage of death." The metaphor appears in several places in the New Testament: Mark 13.36, Romans 13:11, 1 Cor. 11:30, 15:20, et cetera.

14. The "sleeping for sorrow" excuse in Luke 22:45 that More rejects here is glossed by Chrysostomus in the *Catena*: the Apostles' sleep is "somnus in torporis sed maevoris." Some kinds of sadness are unacceptable, namely those that we find so unbearable that we escape in sleep, as did the apostles. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Catena aurea in quatuor evangelica* in *Opera omnia*, 25 vols. (Parma: 1852–73), Vol. 12, p. 234. Nicholas De Lyra also explained the relation between sadness and sleep, as Miller points out (p. 1029). Erasmus makes it clear in his Paraphrases that the apostles' sleep was induced by the "weakness of their nature" and "grievous mental suffering." *Complete Paraphrases* (Basel, 1523), 2 vols. More himself had developed the sadness-bodily weariness contrast in a folio that he subsequently cancelled in preference for the sadness-sleep theme (p. 691). Earlier, in the *Dialogue of Comfort*, he had had Antony explain the various kinds of consolation for sadness, one of which is a "careless, deadly dullness . . . the comfortless kind of heaviness in tribulation [which is] the highest kind of the deadly sin of sloth" (CW 12/14). In the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, More had related this wrong kind of repose and consolation to heresy, calling it a "lewd liberty of slothfull rest" and comparing it with the "easy yoke" of the "sweetness of hope" (CW 6/106).

15. Miller (pp. 763–69) discusses the parallels and contrasts both in More's style and in the larger structural patterns of the *De Tristitia*, singling out some of the "dominant polarities" such as body and soul and eager and fearful martyrs. He does not however mention the contrasting images of sleep and waking.

16. Louis Martz, "More as Author: The Virtues of Digression," *Moreana* 62: 105–19.

17. Alistair Fox, *Thomas More: History and Providence* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982), 243. See also Clare M. Murphy's comment on Fox's charge in her review of his book, *The Catholic Historical Review* 72, 1 (January 1986): 85–86.

18. R. Monsuez, "Le Latin de Thomas More dans 'Utopia,' " *Caliban* 3, 35–78. See page 44, note 6.

19. CW 4, 86–88. Monsuez points out that of all Cicero's interjections, More retains only three, one of which is *age* (p. 42).

20. Throughout his life, More had highly apprized wit but had differentiated between various forms of it. He had also expressed the humanist belief that wit must be tempered by decorum: in the story of the jester and the friar in *Utopia*, in his Letter to John More, and in the *Dialogue of Comfort*. The same held true of the use of wit in religious contexts, as he states clearly in the *Confutation* and *Responsio ad Lutherum*. The statement in *De Tristitia* is thus in accordance with the opinions that he had expressed earlier. As for irony in biblical texts, More espoused Erasmus' view, which differed from that of the church fathers. See Miller's note to this (p. 1030).

21. Louis Martz, "Thomas More: The Sacramental Life," 307.

22. For a detailed discussion of this, see Garry Haupt, CW 13, cxlxviii–clxxxi.

23. Fox, 244.

24. Letter No. 211 (1534), in *The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More*, Elizabeth Frances Rogers, ed. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1947), 546.