

CICERONIAN HUMANISM IN MORE'S *Utopia*\*

In the last few years George Logan, Arthur Kinney, Elizabeth McCutcheon and Quentin Skinner have focused attention on the parallel passages, major themes, and frequent allusions in *Utopia* drawn from Cicero.<sup>1</sup> Yet wide disagreement exists about the role of these Ciceronian elements in the overall plan of More's elusive work. In this essay, I argue that the many references to Cicero form a subtext within *Utopia*, providing another internal measure by which to weigh the arguments proposed by Raphael and Morus.<sup>2</sup> This subtext invites comparison between the theory and practice of civil or Ciceronian humanist Morus and of disengaged Hythlodæus.

The distinction between civic humanists like Morus and detached observers like Hythlodæus arises in the prefatory letter of Guillaume Budé, the most famous civic humanist of More's day. Budé praises Morus for his great experience in human affairs<sup>3</sup> and laments that grave injustice reigns throughout Europe. Why is this injustice so widespread? Partly because humanist scholars live "far from public business for the sake of relaxation or for the investigation of truth" (9/17-18). Because of their political withdrawal, such scholars are unable to deal with the "combination of Gordian knots and charlatan methods" used by unjust nobles and magistrates (9/18-19).

This conflict between those dedicated to the business of the city (*negotium*) and those who abandon the city for the sake of leisure (*otium*) constitutes, as Quentin Skinner has shown ('87, 126-131), one of the fundamental issues debated both in More's time and in the ancient world. Cicero's most distinctive position as a political theorist, in fact, arises precisely out of this debate. Cicero was the first to argue what became a common position among the civic humanists of the Renaissance: "that

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the noblest way of life is one of virtuous public service" rather than a life of withdrawal and contemplation (Skinner '88, 450). Significantly, More not only chose Cicero's way of life for his own,<sup>4</sup> he also chose Cicero's literary method for exploring the underlying issues associated with that way of life. He chose the dialogue genre filled with deliberate ambiguity and paradox. In so dramatizing this question concerning the best way of life, More and Cicero dialectically engage all those who had treated or would treat this perennial issue of personal and political import.

Yet one must immediately ask: What alerts the perceptive reader to the Ciceronian subtext in *Utopia*? The title itself, *De optimo reipublicae statu...*, would lead most humanists to think immediately of Cicero. Cicero had written his own *De re publica*, and one must not forget that Plato's *Republic* received its name from Cicero's Latin translation of the Greek *Politeia*. Not only the first words of *Utopia* but also the last would alert More's fellow humanists to the dominant role of Cicero in the work before them. The last two lines of *Utopia* restate almost word for word Cicero's famous judgment upon Plato's *Republic*: "There are very many features in the Utopian commonwealth which are *more to desire than to hope for*."<sup>5</sup> This parallel passage is significant for, in using it, Morus establishes the same distance between himself and Raphael's best regime as both Aristotle and Cicero established between themselves and Plato's best regime.<sup>6</sup>

The Yale editors of *Utopia* cite well over fifty possible references and allusions to Cicero; at the time of the work's publication in 1965, they called for a thorough study of the Ciceronian dimension of More's *Utopia*. This study was long in coming. In 1978, Thomas White suggested that "More may have deliberately echoed" Cicero's central concepts of decorum and utility.<sup>7</sup> He argued persuasively that these parallels exist, but he did not go further in explaining the place of such literary allusions in the work as a whole. George Logan in 1983 followed White's lead and pointed out other important allusions to Cicero, such as his treatment of *honestas*, civic humanism, and the debate over virtue and pleasure.<sup>8</sup>

Arthur Kinney was the first to explain the literary principle that informs More's use of Cicero. According to his 1986 essay, the numerous textual references and allusions to Cicero and other classical authors "are pointers for our reading of More's text" (72, 78). Alistair Fox makes a similar point when he says that "More typically adumbrates classical and scriptural allusions or echoes within the texture of his narrative in order to illuminate the significance of what is taking place.... The effect

of such adumbrations is to present the occasions as archetypal."<sup>9</sup> In other words, by alluding to previous great thinkers who contributed to the same discussion, More intentionally deepens and broadens his dialogue about the best way of life and the best state of the republic. In doing so, he invites his humanist audience to think through the same issues, considering what was said before in light of the new perspectives which he brings to bear.<sup>10</sup>

Cicero was perhaps the most highly regarded thinker among the civic humanists of the Renaissance.<sup>11</sup> Commentators today seem surprised at this claim since most current critics consider Cicero inconsistent and eclectic at best.<sup>12</sup> If Renaissance figures considered Cicero so inconsistent a thinker, however, what would have attracted humanists like More to value him so highly? An adequate interpretation of *Utopia* may well depend upon our ability to answer this question, and our answer seems to require a fuller grasp of the classical tradition than we have at present. In the recapturing of this tradition, Thomas More's dialogue may serve not only as an example but also as a guide.

If we begin with the Renaissance assumption that Cicero is a pre-eminent thinker worthy of close study, we open ourselves to a depth in *Utopia* hitherto unclaimed. Accordingly, this article begins with a sketch of Cicero's understanding of the highest good, the best way of life, and the best state of the commonwealth. The second section then compares Morus's Ciceronian positions with those of Raphael.



Cicero grapples throughout his writings with the question of the highest good and yet, imitating his "beloved" Plato and Socrates,<sup>13</sup> nowhere does he unequivocally state his final position. He frequently evaluates the positions attributed to or taken by others, but he maintains that he belongs to the school that follows the true method of Socrates most closely, i.e., the moderate skeptics of the Old Academy. For Cicero, the question of the highest good can be given a probable but not an absolute answer. In at least five of his major dialogues, he investigates this question by weighing the two positions most commonly taken in that best of all regimes, Rome.<sup>14</sup> The Stoics considered virtue the highest and only good; the Epicureans claimed that pleasure comprised the highest good. Cicero agrees that virtue is the highest good, but he sharply criticized the Stoics for being unrealistic in their claims "to explain with certitude and consistency all things" and for maintaining the extreme posi-

tion that material benefits such as wealth and health were really not goods at all. Cicero and Aristotle and the Old Academy agreed that such benefits were not comparable to the highest good, but they were recognized as goods of a lower order. Cicero also criticized the Stoics for failing to provide a place for politics in their philosophy.

The Epicureans, however, were far more dangerous than the Stoics because they actively advocated withdrawal from political affairs. Also serving to undermine natural civic virtue and civic-mindedness was their theory of pleasure as the chief good. For Cicero, pleasure is "that enemy which lurks deep within us, entwined in our every sense -- that counterfeit of good, which is, however, the mother of all evils" (*Leg.* I.xvii.47; also *Acad.* II.xlvi.140; *Off.* III.xxiii.116ff); virtue alone leads to happiness. Although in places Cicero rhetorically argues against both positions (Niegorski '84, 569-71), he takes very seriously the fundamental option which they pose to all persons at all times. At the end of the *Academica*, for example, after reviewing the full range of positions on knowledge of the ends of life, Cicero says: "There remains therefore one match to be fought off -- pleasure versus moral worth [*honestas*]..." (II.xlvi.140).

Just this match is dramatized in *Utopia*. There we find a society supposedly constructed upon the philosophically impossible amalgam of the Epicurean and Stoic views of the highest good. For the Utopians, the highest good is pleasure, but pleasure defined as the Stoics define virtue (163-167). How can this be? We also discover that the Utopians deny what both the Epicureans and the Stoics agree upon: the existence of free will (223/7-8). How can this be? In raising these questions and many others like them, the observant reader must look more deeply into the Utopian view of human nature and the way of life that best completes human nature -- thus launching us into the obvious intent of the book.<sup>15</sup>

To understand the importance of this issue, one would profit from a review of Cicero's rather comprehensive treatment of the subject. Such a view would go beyond the scope of this article, but one can reasonably assume that Thomas More would expect his humanist readers to be familiar with this most basic philosophic issue. The issue at stake is not an academic question of the relative worth of pleasure over correct moral action; the issue has to do with human nature and what will bring human nature to its completion or happiness. Succinctly put, the question becomes, "What is the best way of life?" For Cicero, this question has a definite answer, whereas the question of the *summum bonum* does not.

Why? The second question is a speculative one, incapable of final resolution. Moving from the speculative to the practical realm, however, Cicero could from his own experience conclude that the life of virtue would lead people to happiness. If one decides against virtue and follows the life of pleasure, "many things fall in ruin, and especially fellowship with mankind, affection, friendship, justice and the rest of the virtues" (*Acad.* II.xlvi.140). Like Nietzsche, Cicero leaves open the speculative possibility that truth may not be beautiful or lovable. Practically speaking, however, no political order has ever recognized such a view of truth; nor could any city or civilization last if it did.

In exploring the questions about the nature of the person and the state, Cicero consciously adopts what he calls a Socratic approach.<sup>16</sup> He begins by asking questions about the human condition and -- like Socrates -- chooses to avoid speculation about broad, cosmic issues that lie beyond his own immediate experience. Cicero's philosophic reasoning begins by observing the person's many natural inclinations, including the strong inclinations toward truth, fellowship, independence, and security. For Cicero any position on the nature of the person and the best way of life must account for all of these inclinations. The decorous or proper way of life is one which forges these inclinations harmoniously under the guidance of reason.

Decorum refers to a quality of reasonable action that is both *honestum* and *utile*, morally right and useful. For Cicero, a person or commonwealth cannot act decorously without acting in a morally right and a prudentially appropriate or useful manner.<sup>17</sup> As we will see, decorous or fitting behavior provides a key to understanding Cicero's thought and that of Morus in *Utopia*. In Cicero's view, the best way of life unites the useful (*utile*) with the right (*honestum*) and accounts for the full complement of inclinations.

Cicero concludes that virtue, not pleasure, will bring happiness; thus the life of virtue is the best way of life. Such virtuous activity is appropriate (*cum decoro*) and right (*honestum*) and arises out of each person's natural inclinations to do good. Virtuous behavior is "forged and fashioned" (*Off.* I.iv.14) by respecting the legitimate demands of nature while allowing reason to order them in a fitting or decorous manner (*Off.* I.iv.15). Yet how does one decide what is fitting or decorous given all of the many conflicting demands of nature? The difficulty of this task Cicero does not underrate, as anyone knows who has studied the second and third books of *De officiis*.

The best way of life is known by reason's reflection on the com-

prehensive requirements of human nature.<sup>18</sup> This reflection reveals the need for reason's ordering of these apparently contradictory inclinations; it also reveals the weakness and inability of reason to achieve this order by its power alone. As a result, law and rhetoric are both required to achieve the best way of life, a way of life that needs the institutional support of a just state for its implementation.

Cicero recognizes that most people, subject to passions and the other pressing demands of life, need external forms created by reason to enable their own reason to develop and to guide them to live virtuously. Just law and true rhetoric are the two external forms most effective in bringing about virtuous living. For example, law establishes the extent of citizen involvement and the order of government; it regulates the exercise of religion and the form of education; it determines policies of war and policies toward other nations; most importantly, it establishes and protects private property. In other words, law establishes institutions that arise from a people's collective use of reason in ordering life to respond more adequately to the needs of human nature.

Yet why is rhetoric necessary for reason to reign in the individual and in society? Cicero recognizes the innate craving of each person for independence. Because of this inclination, Cicero constructs his best form of government upon the free and rational consent of the citizens. Rhetoric plays an important role in what ideally is a deliberative process focused upon issues of civic import. As Cary Nederman explains in his recent study of Cicero, "[W]hile men always retain their natural inclination to congregate... the recognition of this nature and its implications for their lives needed to be awakened in and drawn out of them by means of reason and persuasion. Men will only unite, in other words, when they become expressly aware that it is natural (not to mention beneficial) for them to do so."<sup>19</sup> Nederman's study helps us appreciate the depth and centrality of Cicero's conception of rhetoric. Reason and speech do not simply separate men from animals in some abstract sense; this faculty for rational discourse "renders possible the mutual understanding through which the sacrifices and burdens of human association may be explained and justified" (Nederman '88, 7). Rhetoric leads people to accept law, and thus makes government possible. "Cicero held that social and political arrangements were the product of explicit common agreement among primitive men arrived at through non-coercive means, viz., through the application of reason and persuasion" (Nederman '88, 9). Without understanding the place of rhetoric and its role in free government, one could not understand how Cicero intended his best regime to be built

upon bonds of love and reason, not upon the fear and compulsion which characterize the government of Utopia. Significantly, rhetoric marks the apex of a statesman's education for Cicero, but has no place in Utopian education or government.

Cicero's best regime, then, rests upon free cooperation that proceeds from the good will of friendship and civic-mindedness, not upon fear, which Cicero considered the motive least effective and most foreign to healthy political life (*Off.* II.vi.21 ff). This cooperation is fostered primarily through the free exercise of benevolence and liberality. Taking seriously the phenomenon of duty and friendship which arise from our nature as social beings, Cicero considers this social dimension of human existence to be so important that he concludes: "[N]othing ought to be more sacred in men's eyes" than duties governing the welfare of their fellowmen (*Off.* I.xliii.155). As a consequence, "the claims of human society and the bonds that unite men together take precedence over the pursuit of speculative knowledge" (I.xliv.157). Why? For the simple reason that a safe and well-ordered state is the precondition for achieving other goods.

In summary, Cicero considered virtue as the best way of life, and the best state of the commonwealth as one based on friendship and good will, protected by law and fostered by rhetoric.

### **Morus vs. Hythlodæus**

In the prefatory letter to Giles (39ff), Morus indicates the personal sacrifice needed to live as a civic humanist. Such a life places duty (*negotium*) over leisure (*otium*); the state, family and friends over personal study and literary pursuits. *Utopia* itself, Morus tells us, was written during time stolen from eating and sleeping (41/9-10). In contrast, Raphael has abandoned his kin and countrymen, refuses the servitude of duty, and "lives as he wills."

In the opening of Book I, Morus lavishes praise upon his fellow civic humanists, singling out those qualities much admired by Cicero such as friendship, diplomacy, skill in law and rhetoric, and virtue. He also tells us exactly what interests him about Raphael's travels. He is not interested in Raphael's tales of Ulysses-style monsters and "stale travelers' wonders" (53/36), but rather in learning about the wise and prudent customs and institutions that other nations devised to enhance civic life (53/33-55/14). This statement reveals a great deal. First, it implies that Raphael told many tales which did not interest Morus. Secondly, what Morus here identifies as having potential interest – customs and institu-

tions that promote civic life – he later judges absurd at the end of Raphael's account (245/18). Why he does so makes sense in light of Morus' Ciceronian perspective.

After Giles and Morus both have encouraged him to devote his talent to the common good, Raphael strongly refuses, calling such service servitude and declaring his desire to live as he wills – "*sic uiuo ut uolo*" (56/1). These words echo Cicero in *De officiis* I.xx.70 where he is speaking of the magnanimous man who would risk everything in defense of his liberty. It is appropriate for such magnanimous people, says Cicero, to live as they please ("*cuius proprium est sic vivere, ut velis*"). The liberty which Cicero praises is of a different kind than the liberty Raphael passionately defends for himself. Neither kind of liberty, however, is possible for the Utopians.

To defend his position, Raphael gives an historical example about John Cardinal Morton, a noted civic leader and counsellor to the king. As various commentators have pointed out, this example does not support Raphael's position.<sup>20</sup> Raphael intended to argue that it is useless for a wise man to enter public life in an imperfect regime. Yet Morton demonstrates that one humanist can indeed influence the history of nations for the good and can even change the direction of civic policy for the better.

Morus, accomplished diplomat that he is, does not directly point out this discrepancy to Raphael,<sup>21</sup> but he does strongly argue that Raphael has a duty as a good man to give constructive advice and thus to contribute to the common good. Here Morus "echoes the sentiments and even the imagery of the *De officiis* almost word for word" (Skinner '87, 133), but Raphael dismisses these common Renaissance sentiments in a total and insolent manner.<sup>22</sup> To justify this dismissal, Raphael cites two fictional examples. Morus considers both of these imprudent and inopportune, and he compares such advice to an actor who performs the way he wants without regarding his role in the play at hand. Morus also criticizes Raphael's undiplomatic manner ("*sermo tam insolens*"). Such behavior, Morus argues, is not decorous nor will it help cure the maladies afflicting the commonwealth.

Here Morus urges Raphael to adapt his speech and behavior *concinne et cum decore* (99/12-13). In response, Raphael echoes the Cynics by insisting that "his own principles and philosophy require a blunt, abrasive style."<sup>23</sup> When Morus cautions Raphael about using *sermo tam insolens* and advises that he adopt a civil philosophy, Raphael responds with invective and strident rhetoric instead.

Raphael's response is unfitting from a Ciceronian perspective. Since the bond between people is forged primarily by reason and speech (*Off.* I.xvi.50), virtuous persons strive to establish bonds of good will through conversation and oratory. In explaining the decorum one should observe in speech, Cicero recalls some fundamental principles which Raphael does not endorse:

But as we have a most excellent rule for every phase of life, to avoid exhibitions of passion, that is, mental excitement that is excessive and uncontrolled by reason; so our conversation ought to be free from such emotions: let there be no exhibition of anger or inordinate desire, of indolence or indifference, or anything of the kind. We must also take the greatest care to show courtesy and consideration toward those with whom we converse. (*Off.* I.136)

Perhaps, one might object, Raphael is correct in not endorsing those principles when issues of fundamental importance are at stake. Besides, should not Cicero's emphasis on courteous and considerate speech be abandoned in administering reproof? Cicero's answer is clear:

It may sometimes happen that there is need of administering reproof. On such occasions we should, perhaps, use a more emphatic tone of voice and more forcible and severe terms and even assume an appearance of being angry. But we shall have recourse to this sort of reproof, as we do to cautery and amputation, rarely and reluctantly – never at all, unless it is unavoidable and no other remedy can be discovered. (*Off.* I.136-137)

This passage helps us appreciate the reaction of More's humanist contemporaries to Raphael's abrasive, even insulting manner and speech. According to rules of decorum, one should speak as Raphael does only in the most extreme situation, not in the garden of a friendly and generous host who has asked for advice. Yet if Raphael offends so egregiously and if Morus disagrees with him on fundamental points of the greatest philosophical and political significance, why does Morus not reprove Raphael at the end of the book? For the simple reason that decorum forbids it. Raphael is an old man, hardened and unbending in his position. What would be accomplished by confronting him with the many inconsistencies of his own account?<sup>24</sup> Morus explains the reasons for his decorous silence: Raphael is tired from his long and emotional tirade, and Raphael has made it clear that he will not "brook any opposition to his views" (245/27-36).

In explaining his notion of decorum, Morus uses medicine as an image of the statesman's task. Morus, like Cicero and his classical predecessors, compares the statesman's craft to the care administered by a physician.<sup>25</sup> "Curing the ills of peoples" is one of the fundamental purposes of politics in the classical conception (Cicero's *Leg.* I.xiii.37). The various cures and degrees of cure come about through prudent action and gradual cultivation of virtue and reason (*Off.* I.xxxviii.136, for example). Raphael does not agree, and he uses this traditional image in a completely different way. For him, "there is no hope...of a cure and a return to a healthy condition" apart from the complete elimination of private property (105/37-39). The only cure that Raphael can envision comes about from the radical elimination of the economic and social underpinnings of all known domestic and civic institutions. No partial or gradual cure is either possible or morally permissible for Raphael.

Ciceronian decorum, therefore, involves a particular view of the person and of politics that differs radically from Raphael's view; for Cicero and Morus it involves a course of action that is *honestum* and *utile*. The full passage in which Morus speaks of decorum makes this clear:

But there is another philosophy, more practical for statesmen, which knows its stage, adapts itself to the play at hand, and performs its role neatly and appropriately [*concinne et cum decoro*] (99/13-16).

Raphael interprets this statement, as have many critics, to mean that statesmen could abandon principle in favor of expediency. This interpretation, however, goes against Cicero's consistent position that the truly expedient action (*utilitas*) cannot violate *honestas* and still be decorous. The just man must adapt to the ever-changing circumstances of human existence, but without ever violating moral principle. To illustrate the point, Cicero presents this tough case as an example: Should a traitor who poisons his king be rewarded by the foreign power he helps to victory? Cicero gives an unqualified "no." Since such action is not *honestum*, it cannot be *utile*.<sup>26</sup> What then are we to think of the Utopians who encourage and praise such action as virtuous and honorable (203/36-205/32)?

Raphael rejects Morus' argument for decorum by calling it madness (101/6) and lying (101/8) and by misinterpreting Christ and Plato. In referring to Plato, Raphael alludes to *Republic* 496d-e where indeed Socrates indicates that it is sometimes necessary for the philosopher to leave the streets. This 'sometimes,' however, is not the norm that Raphael wishes to imply. Socrates speaks of certain conditions that make it impos-

sible for the philosopher to participate in public life, such as the rule of a tyrant. Yet once this storm passes, the philosopher would be expected to leave his seclusion and to enter the city again. Plato himself advised a king, and one of the best-known teachings of his *Republic* deals with the need for philosopher-kings. Although Raphael seems unaware of these inconsistencies, More and his fellow civic humanists were not.

Morus makes this point indirectly when he chooses the *Octavia* as an example to explain decorous action (99/21). In that play a philosopher speaks with a tyrant — Seneca with Nero. Now Seneca, another favorite of the civic humanists, advised Nero until that young king became an unyielding tyrant. As John Crosset has shown, *Octavia* presents "exactly the situation about which More and Hythloday are debating: a philosopher attempting to give advice to a king. In history, the king (Nero) listened to the philosopher (Seneca) for five years, a period in which Rome seems to have been well governed."<sup>27</sup>

After Raphael defends the "most prudent and most holy institutions" of Utopia (102/27-28) and asserts that there can be no justice and no happiness without the utter abolition of private property (105/18-21), Morus once again strongly disagrees, and he sets forth the classical position in defense of private property. To understand the major differences between the Ciceronian and Hythlodæan views on this point, one would have to think deeply about the relationship between the virtue of justice and the institution of private property. For Cicero, natural justice has two parts, (1) what we commonly call justice — i.e., not harming anyone and serving the common interest (*Off.* I.x.31) — and (2) *beneficentia*, i.e., kindness and generosity. These two natural inclinations are the foundation whereby common bonds (*communitas*) are maintained and society is established (*Off.* I.vii.20). Cicero states this clearly in *Laws* I.xv.43 where he says that "our natural inclination to love our fellow-men" is the "foundation of Justice" or in *De amicitia* VII.23 where he says that "if you should take the bond of goodwill out of the universe no house or city could stand, nor would even the tillage of the fields abide."

Yet how do these two parts of natural justice give rise to the institution of private property? First, one must recall that Cicero defines the commonwealth itself as the property of all the people (*Rep.* I.xxvii.43). The political issue then becomes: how can this common property best be administered and protected? This presents no problem in the family because of the family's size and close bonds; in the family all property can be treated as common. In the state however, the size and the nature of bonds are different, and experience has shown that common pos-

session in a state leads to war and destroys the bonds of equity and good will (*Off.* II.xxi.73, xxiii.78-79). In arguing this position, Cicero gives the example of King Agis, a Spartan king who eliminated private property, (which Plutarch calls the "most excellent of institutions" in *Agis and Cleomenes*, V.3). As a result the Spartans killed Agis and from that time on, "dissensions so serious ensued that tyrants arose, the nobles were sent into exile, and the state, though most admirably constituted, crumbled to pieces" (*Off.* I.xxiii.80). It is surely no accident that Utopia was founded in the year of King Agis' reign.<sup>28</sup>

Aristotle, whom Cicero praises often for his study of the state (*Fin.* IV.ii.3, *Leg.* III.vi.14, I.xxi.55), gives a very clear and perceptive explanation of the relationship between virtue and private property, using many of the terms Cicero will borrow. Aristotle, like Cicero, distinguishes between the unity of a family and the unity of a state (*Politics* 1263b 31ff; *Off.* I.xvii.53-54), a distinction Utopia eradicates (149/3-4). Trying to achieve the unity of the family in the state, Aristotle warns, leads to an inferior commonwealth because such unity destroys the plurality which the state needs in protecting the diversity of its citizens' interests and characters (1261a-b).<sup>29</sup> Excessive unification would also destroy private property, and without private property, political life could not succeed. Why? Aristotle gives two of the same reasons Morus presents: (1) when many people own something, each assumes someone else will care for it (*Politics* 1261b 33-39; cp. *Utopia* 107/9-10), and (2) discontent arises because any distribution of limited goods inevitably gives rise to complaints (*Politics* 1261a 10-15; *Utopia* 107/10-11, 13). In addition, Aristotle sets forth a reason which More implicitly uses in the invention of Utopia, a reason based on pleasure and one's intrinsic inclination towards benevolence.<sup>30</sup> Aristotle argues:

How immeasurably greater is the pleasure when a man feels a thing to be his own; for surely the love of self is a feeling implanted by nature and not given in vain, although selfishness is rightly censured; this, however, is not the mere love of self, but the love of self in excess, like the miser's love of money; for all, or almost all, men love money and other such objects in measure. (1263a40-1263b4)

Because of the person's love of self, each person loves to have things as his own. This love, rightly ordered, is natural and good. Aristotle then goes on to explain his justification of private property based on this good human inclination:

And further, there is the greatest pleasure in doing a kindness or service to friends or guests or companions, which can only be rendered when a man has private property. These advantages are lost by excessive unification of the state.... No one, when men have all things in common, will any longer set an example of liberality or do any liberal action; for liberality consists in the use which is made of property. (1263b5-14)

Education in the proper use of property is education in virtue. Virtues such as benevolence and liberality, kingpins in Aristotle's and Cicero's theories of ethics and politics, arise from the inclination to friendship, and friendship provides the model for the proper relations between citizens in these thinkers' view. For this reason, "the special business of the legislator is to create in men a benevolent disposition" that will incline them to use their private property for the common good (1263a 36-40). Such a statement might lead us to ask, what disposition marks the ordinary Utopian?

Aristotle shows his preoccupation first and foremost with the virtues that private property develops, not with the arbitrary laws and institutions that more or less protect private property. In fact, he criticizes those regimes that place institutional arrangements over virtue (as does Utopia), and he explicitly condemns communist institutions for undermining virtue, especially benevolence. He explains the fundamental fallacy behind the elimination of private property in a passage which I quote at length because of its special relevance to the defense Raphael gives for his Utopia:

Such legislation may have a specious appearance of benevolence; men readily listen to it, and are easily induced to believe that in some wonderful manner everybody will become everybody's friend especially when someone is heard denouncing the evils now existing in states, suits about contracts, convictions for perjury, flatteries of rich men and the like, which are said [by men like Raphael] to arise out of the possession of private property. These evils, however, are due to a very different cause — *the wickedness of human nature*. Indeed, we see that there is much more quarrelling among those who have all things in common.... (1263b 15-26, emphasis added)

Because the most basic cause of injustice arises from human nature itself and not from institutional structures, Aristotle criticizes all political theories that look more to changes in external institutional arrangements than to arrangements that would foster virtue within (see 1263b 37-41). Of

course institutions are important, but these will be fabricated and fostered by citizens of prudence and virtue. No institutional arrangement, however, could withstand a corrupt citizenry.

Raphael rejects completely Morus' traditional views on private property, not with arguments from reason but from his own uncommon experience: if only Morus had lived in Utopia, then he would believe as Raphael does. After this invocation to faith, Morus invites Raphael to tell of his unique experience in Utopia. When all has been told in the course of a long afternoon, Morus makes his final judgment in a passage that has long been a center of debate:<sup>31</sup>

When Raphael had finished his story, many things came to my mind which seemed very absurdly established in the customs and laws of the people described – not only in their method of waging war, their ceremonies and religion, as well as their other institutions, but most of all in that feature which is the principal foundation of their whole structure. I mean their common life and subsistence – without any exchange of money. This latter alone utterly overthrows all the nobility, magnificence, splendor, and majesty which are, [according to commonly accepted opinions],<sup>32</sup> the true glories [*decora*] and ornaments of the commonwealth. (245/16-26)

Decorum, again a key term in Morus' position, refers here to what is fitting in regard to the external manifestation of the commonwealth as a whole rather than what is fitting to the words and actions of individual citizens. Taken at face value, this passage is thoroughly consistent with Morus' role as Ciceronian humanist. Cicero agrees that private property is the principal foundation of civil society.<sup>33</sup> He also advocates widely different policies for waging war and for conducting ceremonies and religion than those practiced in Utopia (*Leg.* II, III). Cicero, who greatly respected law and custom and whose own Republic is famous for its prudent institutional arrangement of mixed government, would never agree with Raphael's conception of the best commonwealth. Granting that this part of Morus' final judgment is consistent with Cicero, what about the last sentence which maintains that common opinion considers nobility, magnificence, splendor and majesty as the decorum of the commonwealth? Is that statement consistent with Cicero's philosophy?

If we consider the qualifying phrase "*ut publica est opinio*," there can be little question about this statement's consistency with Cicero's view. While certainly not agreeing with the common opinion on all political

matters, Cicero insists upon the importance – indeed the political necessity – of "showing what I may almost call reverence" towards men of all classes and their opinions (*Off.* I.xxviii.28.99). Cicero goes even further in his respect for public opinion: It is in the just and considerate treatment of men and their opinions where "the essence of decorum is best seen [*in quo maxime vis perspicitur decori*]" (*Ibid.*).

Yet, do not most loyal citizens think it appropriate for their leaders and institutions to be characterized as magnificent and majestic? Of course, even Raphael does. One cannot overlook Raphael's description of the Utopian cities as magnificent (112/16) and his statement that the priests of Utopia are said to possess "true majesty" (230/15). Cicero would agree that such qualities could be attributed to certain persons and things (Allen 109); he also attributes nobility and splendor to some. Examples used by Cicero of the noble and splendid are those virtuous persons who "prefer the life of service to the life of pleasure" (*Off.* III.v.25, I.xviii.61) or those whom Cicero calls true philosophers (*Off.* I.xx.69).

There are other contrasts between Ciceronian and Utopian principles and customs. As we saw earlier, Cicero praises the commonwealth based on just law and universal principles. Such a foundation gives rise to institutions that foster virtues which are indeed virtues, i.e., permanent qualities of the soul that are exercised universally, not just with one's own friends or within one's own state. Thus, according to Cicero, the common bonds of justice establish duties to foreigners and "even to those who have wronged us." As a result, "there is a limit to retribution and to punishment" and therefore a state in its foreign relations – even in war – must strictly observe humane laws (*Off.* I.xi.33; xiii.39-40; III.xi.47ff; *Leg.* I.23, II.8).

In direct opposition, the Utopians use war tactics that are understandably condemned as cruel and "of a degenerate nature" (205/23), and they use punishments so severe that their enemies will be afraid to fight again (205/23-38). Even in domestic relations, they use fear as the primary principle for control. Raphael explicitly states that fear is "the greatest and almost the only stimulus to the practice of virtues" among the Utopians (235/7-8; 221/38-223/3, 229/4-6, 233/32-36).

For the Utopians, furthermore, every action must have some pleasurable reward, even charity. Raphael explains charity as a good act done for "return of benefits" and for pleasure (164/31). Cicero, however, teaches that "virtue driven to duty by pleasure as a sort of pay is not virtue at all but a deceptive sham and pretence of virtue" (*Acad.* II.lxvi.140). Throughout his works, he maintains that virtue must be pursued for its own sake, i.e., for love of the good, not for any reward and certainly not for the sake of pleasure.

Since fear and pleasure are the principal motives of Utopian actions, virtue as Cicero understands it is not possible in Utopia. True, Raphael tells us that the Utopian institutions foster virtue, but he adds that virtue is only possible after the total elimination of private property. This elimination, he claims, has brought an end to poverty and social disorder – in a land no one can find. Yet what would lead a man of Ciceronian prudence to believe Raphael? *Si Hythlodaeo credimus...*, that has been the point of the major debates in Utopian scholarship for over two decades now.<sup>34</sup>

To understand the nature of what the Utopians call virtue, one would have to reflect upon such practices as mandatory beliefs, family customs, punishment of crimes, election of magistrates, and care for the dead. True intellectual virtue is not fostered when one is forced to believe propositions about God and the universe that, as Cicero recognizes, have left philosophers in disagreement throughout the centuries (*Academica* II.xx-xxviii). And what precisely is the role and place of the family in Utopia? Cicero's state gives special protection to the family, granting it the freedom it needs to foster independence in its members and to foster the care and affection which are characteristic of the family. Raphael's institutions aim at destroying the family bonds<sup>35</sup> as seen, for example, in the prohibition against crying for departed loved ones (223/36). Cicero outlaws excessive mourning of the dead (*Leg.* II.xxiii.59-xxiv.60), but he recognizes and values the bonds that characterize loved ones. Such bonds are never mentioned in Raphael's account of Utopia; Raphael himself seems to have no close bonds with any of the people he mentions. In speaking of his own companions who died while returning from Utopia, Raphael simply says that they "succumbed to fate" (219/12).

The many cases of capital punishment should also surprise anyone who recalls Raphael's condemnation of state executions as direct violation of biblical injunctions (73/22-36). He says nothing, however, against the many instances of capital punishment in Utopia – for speaking of political matters outside the senate or the public assembly (125/1-2), for rebellion (191/34-36), or... whenever the senate decides (191/22ff). Yet also disturbing are the extraordinarily severe punishments for such "crimes" as premarital sex offenses (187/27-38, 193/3-8). What is the point of a policy that seems to foster correct action at any cost rather than the development of virtue that comes from free choice and hence from mistakes? Granting that these offenses should be discouraged, should not a seasoned statesman expect young lovers occasionally to fall, given the frailty of human nature and the strength of erotic ties? Moral

frailty and eroticism, whether sexual or intellectual, however, have no place in Utopia.

Neither does the family as More knew and cherished it. In Utopia, families can be separated for the sake of keeping numbers and trades in order (127/15-19, 137/4-6). Family meals where all would normally speak freely and enjoy one another's company are replaced by regimented stys where adults must sit in assigned places and where children stand in absolute silence, waiting for some adult to feed them from the table as one would normally feed the family dog (141-143). This scene is both humorous for its absurdity – who can imagine a room full of hungry children perfectly silent waiting for their parents to finish eating the best of the food? – and horrifying for the terror and force it would take to effect such silence.

Education is wholly outside family direction. Instead, the state exerts the strictest possible control over what is taught. Even religious doctrines must pass state censorship, the ultimate criterion demanding that religious beliefs be "useful for the preservation of their commonwealth" (229/13-14). Not surprisingly, universities do not exist in Utopia.<sup>36</sup> How could they unless the free pursuit of truth were valued and encouraged? As it is, most education in Utopia focuses upon the improvement of material benefits such as health, military tactics, and the preservation of the political status quo.

Magistrates, Cicero tells us, determine the nature of one's regime. In Utopia, the magistrates are freely elected and are humble public servants, or so we are told. But why do these public servants get the best of everything? And why are some sent abroad "to live there in great style and to play the part of magnates" (215/31-33)? Equally disturbing are the election procedures. Candidates are pre-selected – only the "scholars" can hold public office – and officials are eventually elected by secret ballot. But who counts these secret ballots? In Cicero's best regime, the election procedure is both by secret ballot and by public acclaim – to prevent fraud and to let the magistrates know the true feeling of the people (*Leg.* III.33-40).

Many other curious features come to light when *Utopia* is read as a palimpsest which juxtaposes Raphael's ideas and institutions with those proposed by Cicero. In devising this juxtaposition, More sets forth an internal measure by which Raphael and his fictitious Utopians can be judged. If weighed from a Ciceronian perspective alone, Morus wins the argument of Book I not simply by his use of consistent Ciceronian arguments but by exercising Ciceronian decorum and statesman-like

restraint throughout. In view of this measure, one also sees the supposed freedom and stability of Utopia in a different and less appealing light.

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#### NOTES

1. See George Logan, *The Meaning of More's Utopia* (Princeton, 1983); Arthur F. Kinney, *Humanist Poetics: Thought, Rhetoric and Fiction in the Sixteenth-Century England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1986), 77-78; Elizabeth McCutcheon, "More's *Utopia* and Cicero's *Paradoxa Stoicorum*," *Moreana* 86 (July 1985), 3-22; Quentin Skinner, "Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* and the language of Renaissance humanism" in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Pagden (London: Cambridge UP, 1987). See also Quentin Skinner's essay on political philosophy in the *Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. Charles Schmitt and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge UP, 1988), 412-452.

2. Thomas White, among others, has shown the Platonic and Aristotelian dimensions of *Utopia*. See his "Aristotle and *Utopia*," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 29 (1976), 635-675, and his "Pride and the Public Good: Thomas More's Use of Plato in *Utopia*," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 20.4 (Oct., 1982), 329-354. Kinney also points out numerous classical allusions, especially to Seneca and Lucian, in his *Humanist Poetics*.

3. *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, vol. 4, *Utopia*, ed. Edward Surtz, S.J., and J.H. Hexter (New Haven, 1965), p. 4/21-23. Hereafter all references will appear in the text within parentheses.

4. More chose the active life of the civic humanist years before writing *Utopia*. He had already served in parliament, was an undersheriff of London, and had one of the largest law practices in England. He writes *Utopia* while representing the king, and he was trade representative of the London merchants on several occasions prior to this one. See Jerry Mermel's "Preparations for a politic life: Sir Thomas More's entry into the king's service," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 7 (1977), 53-66.

5. *Utopia* 246/2, emphasis added, my translation. The last five words of *Utopia* are "*ciuitatibus optarim uerius quam sperarim.*" Cicero's formulation in *Republic* II.xxx.52 is "*civitatemque optandam magis quam sperandam.*" All references to Cicero are from the Loeb editions, Harvard UP.

6. More did not have access to the full text of *De republica*, but he knew it through Augustine's *City of God* and through commentaries. The distinction Morus repeats is also significant since Cicero habitually distinguishes between *optare* and *sperare*

throughout his works. He uses *optare* to express a desire for the fulfillment of a possible wish (See James Reid, ed., *Academica of Cicero*, London: MacMillan & Co., 1885, p. 319n.) For example, Cicero uses *optare* in referring to someone who propounds wild theories (*Acad.* II.121; *Tusc.* II.30; *Fat.* XX.46; *Verr.* I-I.1), while using *sperare* in referring to someone hoping for the possible (*Balbo* 59; *Verr.* II-I.19; *Milo* 78; *Epis.* 787.1; Morus also uses *sperare* in this sense at 40/18). See also Aristotle's *Politics* 1265a 17, 1325b 39, 1288b 35-1289a 8.

7. Thomas White, "Festivitas, Utilitas, et Opus: The Concluding Irony and Philosophical Purpose of Thomas More's *Utopia*," *Albion* 10 (Supplement, 1978), 140n.

8. Logan 51-52, 85-86, 102-103, 109n, 179-80.

9. See "Richard III's Pauline Oath," *Moreana* 57 (March 1978), 14, and Richard Sylvester, "Thomas More: Humanist in Action," reprinted in *Essential Articles for the study of Thomas More* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1977), p. 468; originally in *Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, No. 1, ed. O.B. Hardison, Jr. (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1966), 134-5. See as well Paul O. Kristeller, "The Moral Thought of Renaissance Humanism," in *Chapters in Western Civilization* (New York: Columbia UP, 1961), 305 as well as his article in *Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, p. 114. Most importantly, see Thomas More's own remarks *CW3/II*, 610/29 - 612/6.

10. More, a great student of literature, explicitly recognizes the "imitator's obligation to consider context and historicity" when using and alluding to classical sources: *CW3/II*, 551ff. and poems 188-195 but especially 193; *The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More*, ed. Elizabeth F. Rogers (Princeton UP, 1947), 218-221; Thomas Greene's *The Light of Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1982), 2, 243-4, 332-3 especially; R.S. Sylvester's "Thomas More: Humanist in Action" in *Essential Articles*, p. 468. For a perceptive overview of the Renaissance practice of imitating and alluding to earlier authors, see George Pigman's "Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 33 (1980), 1-32.

11. Jerrold E. Seigel, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism: The Union of Eloquence and Wisdom, Petrarch to Valla*. (Princeton UP, 1968), p. 3ff. Also see Kristeller '61, 297, 304-5; Charles Trinkaus, *The Scope of Renaissance Humanism* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1982), 343-4; Kinney '86, 69; Skinner '88, 414ff.

12. For example, Neal Wood in his recent study, *Cicero's Social and Political Thought* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988), maintains that Cicero was "a mediocre philosopher, unoriginal and eclectic" (p. 11). Walter Nicgorski argues for a positive assessment of Cicero's political philosophy in "Cicero's Paradoxes and His Idea of Utility," *Political Theory*, 12 (1984), 557-578, and "Cicero and the Rebirth of Political Philosophy," *Political Science Reviewer*, 8 (1978), 63-101. These two articles shed new light on the integrity of Cicero's philosophy, and they provide an important contribution to Ciceronian scholarship.

13. Cicero's admiration for Socrates and Plato is seen throughout his writings. For example, see *Leg.* III.ii.5, vi.14, xiv.32 and I.1.i.1; *Brutus* 12e; *De or.* III.iii.15; *Orator* iii.10.

14. *Academica, De finibus bonorum et malorum, Tusculanae disputationes, De natura deorum, De officiis.*

15. As Logan explains well, the first step in what he calls the best-commonwealth exercise is explaining the nature of a person and what leads to happiness; determination of the best commonwealth follows (136). By appreciating this progression, one can understand why politics proceeded from ethics for classical and humanist thinkers (Logan 87).

16. *Academica* I.viii.30ff, II.xx.65ff, xxiii.74.

17. At *De off.* I.xxvii.27-94, Cicero states that "in everything to discern the truth and to uphold it — that is [decorum]," for "what is proper is morally right, and what is morally right is [decorum] (*nam et, quod decet, honestum est et, quod honestum est, decet*)." Throughout Book III, Cicero insists that *utile* and *honestum* cannot be separated. See III.34 as an example.

18. Here Cicero shows the ground of his philosophical reasoning. He does not ground his moral theory on a system of logic or of physics as the Epicureans and the Stoics do. His ultimate ground and test is the ability of a way of life to satisfy the full complement of natural inclinations manifest in real, not logical or speculative, human beings. As Nicgorski suggests, Cicero does have an ontological basis for his theory of ethics and politics, a basis similar to Socrates' and Plato's ('84, 575, 561ff, 572-3).

19. "Nature, Sin and the Origins of Society: The Ciceronian Tradition in Medieval Political Thought," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 49:1 (Jan-Mar 1988), 5-6.

20. R.S. Sylvester, "Si Hythlodaeo Credimus: Vision and Revision in Thomas More's *Utopia*," *Soundings* 51 (1968), 285 (reprinted in *Essential Articles*); John Schaeffer, "Socratic Method in More's *Utopia*," *Moreana* 69 (March 1981), 11-13; Alistair Fox, *Thomas More: History and Providence* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982) 62-3; Logan '83, 47. Logan points out this inconsistency but attributes it to an oversight of More, who "simply lost touch of one of the implications of the passage."

21. Schaeffer gives a helpful analysis of the irony of Morus' response, p. 13.

22. Kinney '86, 61.

23. See William Kennedy's analysis in *Rhetorical Norms in Renaissance Literature* (New Haven: Princeton UP, 1978), 97-100.

24. Kinney gives an excellent account of the many factual errors and internal inconsistencies of Raphael's tale, pp. 62ff, 82ff especially.

25. Compare *Utopia* 105/35ff with 99/32 and Plato's *Sophist* 230 and Cicero's *Leg.* I.37, *Off.* I.xxxviii.136.

26. See *Off.* III.xxii.86 as well as all of Book III which examines the relationship of *utilitas* and *honestas*.

27. John Crossett, "More and Seneca," *Philosophical Quarterly*, 40 (1961), p. 578. See also Kinney's perceptive analysis, '86, 69-72.

28. *Utopia* was founded in 244 B.C., the year Agis IV became king of Sparta. See 120/27 and the accompanying note on page 395. Also see R.J. Schoeck's "More, Plutarch, and King Agis: Spartan History and the Meaning of *Utopia*," *Philological Quarterly*, 35 (1956), 366-75.

29. Compare this assessment with Raphael's statement that "the whole island is like a single family," *Utopia* 149/3-4.

30. Morus does not use this argument directly, but since pleasure and the lack of true benevolence constitute the principal bases of Hythlodaeus' Utopian society, More certainly wants his readers to reflect upon its implications.

31. Ward Allen gives a thorough and, in my view, unrefuted analysis of the literary construction and tone of this passage in "The Tone of More's Farewell to *Utopia*: A Reply to J.H. Hexter," *Moreana* 51 (1976), 108-18. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Allen for his careful scholarship and for his generous and kind assistance in my own research.

32. The words in brackets replace the Yale translation: "in the estimation of the common people." For the correction, see Skinner, '87, 153n.

33. Wood, 105-115. Wood claims that Cicero "is the first major thinker to give such emphasis to the notion of private property and to make it a central component of his structure of social and political ideas" (105).

34. See *Utopia* 10/30 and R.S. Sylvester's classic study, "Si Hythlodaeo credimus".

35. Harry Berger, Jr., "Utopian Folly: Erasmus and More on the Perils of Misanthropy," *English Literary Renaissance*, 12 (1982), 279-90.

36. See John Gueguen, "Why Is There No University in *Utopia*?" *Moreana* 77 (Feb. 1983), 31-34.

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### Précis

Throughout *Utopia* More creates a subtext of allusions to Cicero, thus providing one of several measures by which to weigh the arguments of Raphael and Morus. Morus defends the philosophy and practice of Ciceronian humanism, while Raphael argues from a perspective directly opposed to Cicero's views on good government and the best way of life.

### Résumé

Le "sous-texte" d'allusions à Cicéron qui parcourt l'*Utopie* permet une nouvelle évaluation de l'argumentation de Raphaël et de More. More défend la philosophie et la pratique de l'humanisme cicéronien tandis que le point de vue de Raphaël s'oppose radicalement à celui de Cicéron sur les meilleures formes de gouvernement possibles.

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### Un vent d'*Utopie*

Tel est le titre d'un poème paru dans *Volutes* (cahier 12, juin 1987): l'auteur, Dominique Ménard, né à Angers en 1956, chante des "matins de lumière" où L'humain se dessine enfin un avenir à visage d'homme...  
Les nuages ont tenu leurs promesses de vent,  
Un vent d'utopie.

Le mois suivant, en Avignon, une "Gazette *UTOPIA*" publiée durant le Festival – 1er juillet au 18 août – annonçait pièces et films de la saison ainsi que "voyance directe sur photo"; le titre grec de 1516 est, dirait Chesterton, "une idée morienne devenue folle".

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### 1988: *The Renaissance Bulletin* n° 15

Ce cahier de 80 pages est publié par 'The Renaissance Institute', qui a son siège social à l'Université Sophia de Tokyo. More y figure grâce aux 47 pages de Peter Milward, "Admissions of an absent-minded author", les aveux d'un auteur distrait. Ce Jésuite né à Wimbledon a passé le plus clair de sa vie au Japon. Le monde dont il rêve, et qu'il a décrit dans *My Utopia*, combine la sagesse de son île natale avec celle de l'île où la volonté de ses supérieurs l'a envoyé dès 1954. Il évoque son professeur d'Oxford, C.S. Lewis, plus connu par ses écrits de fiction et de spiritualité que pour ses travaux savants. Father Milward est encore plus prolifique: 120 livres sous son nom! More y occupe une place honorable, sans égaler la Bible, Shakespeare, Hopkins, T.S. Eliot et Chesterton. Co-fondateur, avec P.A. Sawada, de la "Thomas More Association of Japan", il a conduit des pèlerins nippons (presque tous non-chrétiens) sur les lieux où a vécu More, en Angleterre et en Belgique, ainsi qu'à Angers. Son *The Footsteps of Sir Thomas More* nous sera précieux pour la 2<sup>de</sup> édition (Pâques 1992) de notre *Guide to Thomas More's London*.