 Moreana XXIX, 110 (June 1992), 19-32

J.H. Hexter and the text of *Utopia*: A Reappraisal

Thomas More's *Utopia* has long been the occasion of critical disagreements of which the most central has been that on the relationship between the book's seemingly prescriptive ideas and its form and status as a work of fiction. Is More to be regarded as an Erasmian humanist, so that *Utopia* becomes a Morean version of the *Institutio principis Christiani*, stressing the need for the ruler to be guided by a generous and essentially Christian conception of the public good and pleading for radical reforms in the political, legal and social fields? Or does More's interest in ironical literature come into conflict with his presentation of his ideas? Is *Utopia* to be read as a social and political treatise, as a work of fiction, or as a combination of both these possibilities?

Perhaps the most influential interpretation of these difficulties has been that of J.H. Hexter, who placed More firmly on the side of the radical humanists. [1] He did so, not merely by assessing the arguments put forward in *Utopia*, but by carefully examining the process of composition of the book. His argument that More intended Utopia to be regarded as a realisable ideal, and that his own position on the problem of humanists entering the service of princes was, in 1516, identical to that expressed by Hythloday, has been increasingly called into question. Critics have variously referred to Utopia as a detestable state; [2] have increasingly stressed the elements of irony and of Menippean satire; [3] and have taken issue with Hexter's powerful argument that on the important matter of communism, Hythloday's opinion is that of More. [4] Although there are still dissenting voices which stress the political ideas of *Utopia* at the expense of its fictional elements, [5] it is not without reason that Quentin Skinner has referred to those interpretations of the text which stress its ambiguities and equivocations as 'the new orthodoxy'. [6]

Perhaps surprisingly, Hexter's account of the genesis of the text, which formed an integral part of his argument, has not been similarly re-assessed. I will argue in this paper that the growth of the text of *Utopia* was more complex than that outlined by Hexter, and that we can trace

a development which leads from an original impulse to sketch an ideal society through a process of increasing ambiguity and indirection to the final state of *Utopia* in the Basel edition of March 1518.

Hexter showed that the origins of *Utopia* lie in More's membership in an English embassy to the Netherlands in 1515 to discuss trade problems with the future Charles V. [7] When the negotiations reached an impasse, More found himself at leisure. He travelled to Antwerp to meet a friend of Erasmus, Peter Giles. They discussed many things together, including, under the stimulus of Amerigo Vespucci's account of his voyage to the New World, the topic of the ideal state. When More came to commit this to paper, it took the form of a traveller's account of such a society, chanced upon in the course of a voyage. The whole was then supplied with a fictional narrator, Raphael Hythloday. [8]

On his return to England, More was offered employment in the royal service by Wolsey and Henry VIII. [9] Meditating on the implications of this offer for his career as man of letters, More remembered what he had written in Antwerp, and, recalling the figure of Hythloday, constructed an imaginary debate between him and a new character called Morus, on the merits and demerits of a humanist entering the service of a prince, which was inserted into the previously written work. [10] In this 'Dialogue of Counsel,' Hythloday argues strenuously that political conditions at court are so corrupt that a humanist can do no good by becoming an adviser to his prince; he would either be ignored, or forced to compromise his ideals. Morus opposes this with the prudential argument that he might at least make things less bad, but Hythloday's moral fervour and radical political prescriptions prevail.

Hexter adduced a number of reasons for identifying More with Hythloday, one of which turns on the date of More's entry into royal service. This had to be pushed back as far as possible so that More, in 1516, could be seen as an unengaged 'intellectual'. He builds his case on the fact that it was not until March/April 1518 that Erasmus learned from More of his acceptance to join the royal service, and was surprised by the decision. He cites a letter from More to Erasmus written in October 1517 from Calais where More was engaged in commercial negotiations on behalf of Henry VIII. This letter was written in reply to one from Erasmus, who had said that he had received a commission from the Emperor, and had warned More against becoming entangled in official business. [11]

The relevant section of More's reply is as follows:

> I approve of your plan in not wishing to be involved in the busy trifles of princes; and you show your love for me in desiring that I may be disentangled from such matters, in which you can scarcely believe how unwillingly I am engaged. Nothing indeed can be more hateful to me than my present mission. I am sent to stay at a little seaport with a disagreeable soil and climate; and whereas at home I have the greatest abhorrence of litigation, even when it brings me profit, you can imagine what annoyance it must cause me here when it comes accompanied with loss. [12]

Erasmus was clearly concerned that More was considering his entry into the royal service, and More makes no effort to disabuse him of this notion. His complaints about the business in which he is engaged are based on his dislike of the climate, and the necessity of being about unremunerative royal business rather than gaining income in the City. As noted by R.W. Chambers, this 'was the burst of impatience of a man who felt the ties of office closing round him. But they had been closing for some time'. [13]

Indeed they had, as G.R. Elton has convincingly shown. The commission for More's embassy to Calais of 26 August 1517 names More and his fellow commissioners as Councillors. [14] Elton concludes that by this date More was already a member of the Council. [15] No definite evidence shows More as being formally in Henry's service earlier than this, although he had received a royal pension as early as Februrary 1516. [16] The delay in informing Erasmus of the true position has been thus explained by Elton: 'he did not like to admit all this to Erasmus, so much so that he allowed him to suppose that no decision had been taken even while, as king's councillor, he was negotiating at Calais and expecting Erasmus to visit. More, it would seem, respected Erasmus' known opposition to a scholar's involvement in affairs sufficiently to prevaricate about his contrary view'. [17]

The new dating of More's entry into the royal service has an important effect on the interpretation of the 'Dialogue of Counsel', and of the development of *Utopia*. By post-dating More's decision to enter the royal service, Hexter can argue that he had the opportunity to do so in 1516, but held back 'because he did not think he ought to be there, he suspected he ought not to be there.' And if that is so, his own attitude on the bondage of princes when he wrote the Dialogue of Counsel is the same as the one there expressed by Hythloday and is not the one that he ascribes to himself... In 1516 More still tenaciously clung to the position of the unattached intellectual of which Erasmus' career was the exem-

plar'. [18] If More, in 1516, was already weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of joining the royal service, it is more likely that both Morus and Hythloday express facets of his argument with himself. More himself is not to be identified with the opinions of either protagonist, but with the process of the debate. [19] And if More and Hythloday are not identical in Book I, this raises doubts about More's agreement with Hythloday's account of Utopia, and about Hexter's argument that the Antwerp section of *Utopia* represented More's 'first intentions' [20].

In Hexter's terms, those 'first intentions' turned on the description of an ideal state meant as a realisable ideal, but there are several objections to this. More may well have begun to describe an ideal state, but his Utopia contains several features, notably practices such as divorce and euthanasia, with which the orthodox Catholic More could not have agreed. Then, too, there are the more fundamental matters of religious toleration and community of possessions which are all very well in an ideal, fictional state, but much more problematic in the actual postlapsarian world in which More had to live. This is suggested in Book I by Morus' reply to Hythloday's views on the bondage of princes: 'What you cannot turn to good you must make as little bad as you can. For it is impossible that all should be well unless all men were good, a situation which I do not expect for a great many years to come!'(101/1-4). [21] It seems that, as More wrote, his strong sense of the real conditions under which the humanist politician had to operate worked to qualify his initial idealising enthusiasm. What began as a description of an ideal state came to contain elements which worked to undercut it.

In the epigrams published in the same volume as *Utopia* in 1518, there is one which throws particular light on More's attitude towards building ideal states. This is the one entitled QVIS OPTIMVS REIPVB. STATVS. [22] In this poem, More is asking whether a king or a senate governs best. After arguing strongly in favour of a senate, he breaks off, saying:

> Is there anywhere a people upon whom you yourself, by your own decision, can impose either a king or a senate? If this does lie within your power, you are king. Stop considering to whom you may give power. The more basic question is whether it would do any good if you could (No. 198/28-31). [23]

The editors make valuable comments on this poem in relation to *Utopia*. More could give any government he liked to Utopia, but that was 'Noplace'. [24] They link the poem to the letter to Erasmus, in which

More recounted his dream of himself as king of the Utopians. [25] As the editors note: 'his reverie came to an end and left him in the complex realities of a waking world. In this poem, too, after speculating about the theoretical advantages of a monarch or a parliament, he calls himself back down to the real world of expedient rather than ideal choices'. [26] Finally, the question in the last line of the poem 'is not which form is best but which form works in particular circumstances; or the question is whether it is expedient that you do the choosing. In the dramatic context of the poem (including its publication in the same volume with *Utopia*), the two words 'an expediat' are like a struck gong reverberating in the mind'. [27] Although the composition of this poem cannot be dated more certainly than 1500-1518, [28] its relevance to Utopia is obvious: More here expresses scepticism about the theoretical construction of ideal states, and allows this to be published in the same volume as his own account of such a state.

It can be seen that the epigram gives us a possible explanation as to why More has so heavily qualified his description of Utopia. This qualification is, as Elizabeth McCutcheon has shown, all-pervasive at the level of style owing to the extensive use of the figure of litotes. [29] This figure is used more than 140 times in *Utopia*, and while it is a common Renaissance figure, 'A closer look at More's text ... suggests that these litotes cannot simply be seen in the light of a period style at its most ordinary or habitual, that they are, rather, a major element in the fine brushwork of the *Utopia*. The repetition ... is ... too purposeful'. [30] It becomes, by virtue both of its frequency and its many subtle variations, a paradigm of the structure and method of the book, 'echoing, often in the briefest of syntactical units, the larger, paradoxical and double vision which will discover the best state of the commonwealth in an island called Noplace'. [31] The double vision conveyed by litotes stresses 'the radical contrast between two value-systems, one concerned with well-being, the other concerned with power', [32] and is symptomatic of More's ability to see two sides to a question. [33]

The care with which More has built these ambiguities into the smallest units of his text suggests a conscious effort to utilise his mastery of the arts of rhetoric to make it difficult for the reader to accept his description at face value. Again, we must doubt Hexter's assumption that the discourse on Utopia substantially represents the conversations held between More and Giles. It is improbable that such conversation would have included such profuse use of the resources of litotes; the discourse on Utopia is not simply a transcription of the conversations between More

and Giles, but is a reconstruction of them, artistically and stylistically shaped so as to give expression to the full complexity of More's response to the theoretical exercise of describing an ideal state.

This *prima facie* evidence for the artistic re-shaping of the text is supported by evidence of revision at a late stage. In a letter of September 3, 1516, in which Erasmus is asked to take care of the publishing details, More writes: 'I am sending you my "*Nowhere*", which is nowhere well written'. [34] On September 20, he wrote again saying: 'Some time ago I sent you my "*Nowhere*" .' [35] Thus at the time when More had put the book in the hands of Erasmus, he was still referring to it by the Latin title of 'Nusquama' rather than by the ambiguous Greek title 'Utopia' which it assumed some time between September and December 1516. And there were later revisions: the adjective *Mentirano*, in reference to the capital, was not changed to *Amaurotico* until the edition of 1517. [36]

The nature of some of the prefatory material suggests similar conclusions. The commendatory letters from such eminent humanists as Busleyden and Budé emphasise the seriousness of the book's ideas, while the map of the island and the specimen of the Utopian alphabet stress its fictionality and playfulness. As expressed by Peter R. Allen: 'the appended material shares in the deliberate ambiguity of *Utopia* itself; it draws out, expands, and illustrates *Utopia*'s double, humanistic purpose of delightful instruction and by doing so teaches the reader both to enjoy the fiction and to understand its basic didactic purpose'. [37] This ambiguity is echoed in the letters of More and Peter Giles. Giles treats Hythloday in a manner which suggests that he was aware of the fictional status of *Utopia*, but the most important of the introductory materials is More's letter to Giles, in which he apologises for and offers an explanation of his delay in publishing the book (38/1-40/2); introduces the process of fictionalisation by asking Peter to recall several details which Hythloday had mentioned about Utopia (40/10-42/4); and takes the opportunity to satirise those who will misjudge the work (42/24-44/21). As Elizabeth McCutcheon has shown, the letter constitutes a hermeneutics for *Utopia*, a guide to its interpretation. [38] It is silent on the subject-matter of the work, and is ambiguous and paradoxical, in spite of its concern for truthfulness in what follows. The writer of the letter talks of the simplicity and artlessness of the work, while the text insists on its own subtlety and sophistication. [39] As More distances himself further and further through the figure of Morus, he becomes increasingly present through the subtlety and sophistication of the language. [40]

In conjunction with the other prefatory material, this letter bears

out Robbin S. Johnson's contention that the three stages of composition--Book II, Book I, and the *parerga*--make the work progressively less direct and more complex rhetorically. [41] This is a valuable insight, but it can be extended by showing that Book II itself is the end-product of a prolonged process of composition rather than a record of what More committed to paper in Antwerp, and that, as part of this process, More first created a fictional narrator, then altered his characterisation to make it fit his own developing conception of what *Utopia* had become.

It is part of Hexter's argument that Hythloday had always been present as part of More's conception. [42] Given Hexter's account of the growth of the text, this presupposes that More, while addressing his original audience, Giles, constructed a perfectly formed narrative addressed to an unspecified audience, and provided it with an elaborate setting in which Hythloday narrates his tale of Utopia to a fictional audience including both More and Giles. Granted that More was capable of inventing elaborately circuitous fictional selves and audiences, [43] this surely implies a process of deliberation and reflection, the construction of a conscious rhetorical artifice, rather than anything remotely resembling the direct transcription of experience assumed by Hexter.

The probability that Hythloday did not form part of the original text focuses attention on his personal interventions in the Discourse. These are of two types: simple words and phrases, and lengthier addresses. Many show signs indicative of their having been interpolated into the text, and in both tone and content the longer passages are markedly similar to the arguments advanced by Hythloday in the Dialogue of Counsel. This suggests that, having introduced his narrator as part of the fictional framework, More later altered his characterisation of him. Originally an experienced, trustworthy traveller, he became an impractical, uncompromising idealist, and certain passages were inserted into the Discourse in order to make the two versions of the narrator more coherent.

The first of these interventions comes after four pages of factual description, and runs as follows:

> The person who knows one of the cities will know them all, since they are exactly alike insofar as the terrain permits. I shall therefore picture one or another (nor does it matter which), but which should I describe rather than Amaurotum? First, none is worthier, the rest deferring to it as the meeting place of the national senate; and, secondly, none is better known to me, as being one in which I had lived for five whole years (117/25-31). [44]

This is the first piece of information about the narrator, and what is notable about this introduction of the personal element is that it is comparatively uncommon in the first part of the Discourse. What, then, is its purpose? Clearly, it serves to introduce the narrator as one who has personal experience of the island and its people, but such a casual insertion of this information seems inartistically abrupt; the phrasing is compatible with an originally impersonal phrase having been rewritten in the first person in order to fit in with the later insertion of a fictional narrator.

With this in mind, many subsequent uses of the first person assume more than passing interest, for the next half-dozen uses of the first and second person all consist of one-word phrases: 'uiderim' (120/16), 'inquam' (126/7), 'erretis' (128/28), 'intellegetis' and 'reputetis' (128/34) and 'putes' (128/30). Such a plethora of phrases of this type seems indicative of a conscious attempt by More to personalise an originally impersonal narrative.

If this argument is correct, then the Discourse must be even further disintegrated, for what follows the last three references is a lengthy comparison of Utopia to contemporary Christendom in a tone which is familiar from Book I, but which is alien to the hitherto factual objectivity of Book II. This is clearly marked by transitional points in the narrative--from describing Utopian recreations, the narrator suddenly says 'But here, lest you be mistaken, there is one point you must examine more closely' (129/30-31) and proceeds to a contrast of Utopian social customs with those of Europe. He has been arguing that the short hours of work in Utopia do not result in a shortage of necessities since it is more than enough time to supply all that is really necessary, and continues:

> This phenomenon you too will understand if you consider how large a part of the population in other countries exists without working. First, there are almost all the women, who constitute half the whole; or, where the women are busy, there as a rule the men are snoring in their stead. Besides, how great and how lazy is the crowd of priests and so-called religious! Add to them all the rich, especially the masters of estates, who are commonly termed gentlemen and noblemen. Reckon with them their retainers--I mean, that whole rabble of good-for-nothing swashbucklers. Finally, join in the lusty and sturdy beggars who make some disease an excuse for idleness. You will certainly find far less numerous than you had supposed those whose labor produces all the articles that mortals require for daily use (129/36-131/10). [45]

Here the narrator is not simply describing but actively defending Utopian customs: the tone is reminiscent of the Raphael Hythloday of Book I. The direct comparison ends at 132/31 but is implicit in the following two paragraphs. Here, then, we can begin to see how an account of Utopia which was originally purely descriptive has, with the subsequent introduction of the narrator, acquired tones of criticism and evaluation unmistakeably reminiscent of the Dialogue of Counsel. The insertion of Hythloday has changed More's seriously playful fantasy into a much more strident piece of argumentation.

The next lengthy interpolation is an even clearer example of a section whose tone is at odds with the surrounding narrative but in accord with that of Hythloday elsewhere. It runs from 147/21 to 147/32, and the transitions are very clearly marked. From describing restrictions on travel, Hythloday suddenly says: 'Now you can see how nowhere is there any licence to waste time...', and bursts into a rhetorically exuberant praise of the lack of opportunity for laziness and corruption in Utopia. The tone of this is in keeping with More's developing conception of Hythloday, and the direct address to the reader would be strictly redundant if More were simply narrating a traveller's tale to Giles. Again the evidence suggests substantial revisions in More's presentation of Hythloday.

Among these interpolated passages, Hythloday's treatment of Utopian ethics, always one of the most problematic matters in *Utopia*, constitutes a *locus classicus* for our understanding of More's wish to render his text ambiguous, and of the role of the narrator in this process. The heart of the Utopian ethical system is the equation of virtue with pleasure, but, as Surtz notes, More has cunningly prejudiced the debate by his use of the term 'uoluptas'. Initially it seems to mean sensual pleasure; later it becomes clear that the pleasure of the Utopians is above all mental pleasure. [46] Equivocal as this might be, it was dangerous speculation for More; [47] he found it necessary to distance himself from it, and achieved this by the use of the fallible narrator.

Hythloday is made to misinterpret the Utopian ethical system and to involve himself in a blatant self-contradiction in a manner which raises questions about his credibility. After briefly outlining the substance of Utopian ethical discussions, Hythloday says: 'In this matter they seem to lean more than they should to the school that espouses pleasure as the object by which to define either the whole or the chief part of human happiness' (161/25-29). [48] This is to misunderstand the real nature of Utopian ethics, as the subsequent outline of their system makes clear.

The disclaimer is unnecessary, and so can hardly have been present in the first version of the text. Similarly, his concluding statement is a direct contradiction of his treatment of the system of communism: 'Whether in this stand they are right or wrong, time does not permit us to examine--nor is it necessary. We have taken upon ourselves only to describe their principles, and not also to defend them' (179/15-18). [49]

In this conflation of two quite different conceptions, More exhibits great economy of purpose. Hythloday's comments provide a double check against the reader's temptation to think that More meant Utopian ethics to be taken seriously, while his apparent misinterpretation of the ethical system points up the possibility of his being equally fallible at other points in the text. The entire section is a paradigm of More's procedure in constructing and revising *Utopia*.

While there is no extant version of what More originally wrote, its general character can now be tentatively reconstructed. In circumstances propitious to the uninhibited free play of ideas, More began to devise an ideal society which eliminated many of the evils of Europe. By including many features objectionable to a Catholic humanist, he made it difficult to accept his creation as a pattern recommended for adoption; it was, rather, intended as a stimulus to thought. Over a period of more than twelve months, he made a number of revisions; although it is impossible to state the exact chronological sequence in this process, it certainly included stylistic revisions, the inclusion of a fallible narrator whose interpretations of his experience are not always to be relied on, and the insertion of a wholly new section in which the principles on which the ideal state should be constructed are debated without any definite conclusion being reached. Finally, the whole book was provided with prefatory material, the nature of which prepares the reader for the conflicting levels of interpretation available in the text.

The general tendency of these revisions is away from direct statement and towards increasing ambiguity and indirection. In this context, the inconclusiveness of the ending of *Utopia* reminds the reader that, far from being a specific programme for reform, its purpose is to set out, in a dynamic manner, the principles involved in any discussion of the nature and purpose of political society: 'I therefore praised their way of life and his speech and, taking him by the hand, led him into supper. I first said, nevertheless, that there would be another chance to think about these matters more deeply and to talk them over with him more fully. If only this were some day possible!'

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NOTES

1. J.H. Hexter, *More's 'Utopia': The Biography of an Idea* (Princeton, 1952); Part I of the Introduction to *The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, Volume 4, *Utopia*, edited by Edward Surtz S.J. and J.H. Hexter (New Haven, 1965). All quotations are taken from this edition.

2. T.S. Dorsch, 'Sir Thomas More and Lucian: An Interpretation of *Utopia*', *Archiv für das Studium der Neuen Sprachen und Literaturen*, 203 (1967), 345-363.

3. R. Bracht Branham, 'Utopian Laughter: Lucian and Thomas More', *Moreana* 86 (July 1985), 23-43; W.J. Barnes, 'Irony and the English Apprehension of Renewal', *Queen's Quarterly*, 73 (1966), 357-376; David Bevington, 'The Dialogue in *Utopia*: Two Sides to the Question', *Studies in Philology*, 68 (1961), 496-509; R. Coogan 'Nunc vivo ut volo', *Moreana*, 31/32 (1971), 29-45; A.R. Heiserman, 'Satire in the *Utopia*', *PMLA* 68 (1963), 163-174; A.F. Nagel, 'Lies and the Limitable Inane: Contradiction in More's *Utopia*', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 26 (1973), 173-180; John D. Schaeffer, 'Dialogue and Faith in More's Humanism: Voice and Belief in *The Dialogue Concerning Tyndale*' (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, St. Louis University, 1972); R.J. Schoeck, 'On Reading More's *Utopia* as Dialogue', *Moreana*, 22 (1969), 19-32; Richard Sylvester, ' "Si Hythlodaeo Credimus": Vision and Revision in More's *Utopia*', in *Essential Articles for the Study of Thomas More*, edited by R.S. Sylvester and G.P. Marc'hadour (Hamden, Connecticut, 1977); W.W. Wooden, 'Sir Thomas More, Satirist: A Study of the *Utopia* as Menippean Satire' (Unpublished dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1971), and 'Thomas More and Lucian: A Study in Satiric Influence and Technique', *University of Mississipi Studies in English*, 13 (1972), 25-57.

4. On this controversy, see Ward Allen, 'Hythloday and the Root of All Evil', *Moreana*, 31/2 (1971), 51-60; J.H. Hexter, 'Intentions, Words and Meanings: The Case of More's *Utopia*', *New Literary History*, 6 (1975), 529-541; Ward Allen, 'The Tone of More's Farewell to *Utopia*: A Reply to J.H. Hexter', *Moreana*, 51 (1976), 108-118.

5. George M. Logan, *The Meaning of More's 'Utopia'*, (Princeton, 1983).

6. Quentin F. Skinner, 'Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* and the language of Renaissance humanism' in *Ideas in Context: The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, edited by Anthony Padgen (Cambridge, 1987), p. 124.

7. *The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More*, edited by Elizabeth Frances Rogers (Princeton, 1947), pp. 16-26.

8. *CW4*, p. xix-xxxiii.

9. Ibid., p. xxxiii.

10. Ibid., pp. xxxvi-xxxvii.

11. *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, edited by P.S. Allen, 11 volumes (Oxford, 1906-58), III, No. 669, 12-14.

12. Hexter, 1952, p. 134; Tuum consilium probo, qui non vis principum negociosis nugis implicari; et me plane amas, quum iisdem optas vt extricer, in quibus haud credas quam inuitus versor; neque potest quicquam esse odiosius quam haec est legatio. Nam et relegatus sum in oppidulum maritimum et solo et coelo iniucundum; tum domi qui meapte natura vehementer ab litibus abhorream, etiam quum lucrum adferunt, quantum necesse est hic adferant taedium, quum veniant comitatae damno. Sed dominus benigne pollicetur omnia repensurum Regem. Quum recepero, faciam vt scias. (Allen, III, No. 688, 13-22.) The final two sentences, showing More engaged in negotiating with the king over payment for his services, are omitted in Hexter's translation.

13. R.W. Chambers, *Thomas More* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1963), p. 146.

14. *Correspondence,* ed. Rogers, No. 42, 28-30.

15. G.R. Elton, 'Thomas More, Councillor', in *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government,* v.2, (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 129-133; see also J.A. Guy, *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More,* (Brighton, 1980), pp. 6-11.

16. Allen, II, No. 388, l. 128.

17. Elton, p. 133.

18. Hexter, 1952, pp. 135-136.

19. Bevington, pp. 497, 508.

20. Hexter, 1952, p. 128.

21. & quod in bonum nequis uertere, efficias saltem, ut sit quam minime malum. Nam ut omnia bene sint, fieri non potest, nisi omnes boni sint, quod ad aliquot abhinc annos adhuc non expecto (100/1-3).

22. *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More* Volume 3, Part II, edited by Clarence H. Miller, Leicester Bradner, Charles A. Lynch and Revilo P. Oliver (New Haven and London, 1984), No. 198.

23. Est ne usquam populus, cui regem siue Senatum / Praeficere arbitrio tu potes ipse tuo? / Si potes hoc, regnas: nec iam cui, consule, tradas / Imperium: prior est quaestio, an expediat (198/28-31).

24. *CW* 3.2, p. 50.

25. *Ibid.;* Allen II, 499/40-48; *St. Thomas More: Selected Letters,* edited by Elizabeth Frances Rogers (New Haven and London, 1961), p. 85.

26. *CW* 3.2, p. 50.

27. *Ibid.*

28. Ibid., pp. 10-11, 391.

29. Elizabeth McCutcheon, 'Denying the Contrary: More's Use of Litotes in the *Utopia*', *Moreana* 31-32 (1971), 107-121.

30. Ibid., p. 108.

31. Ibid., pp. 109-110.

32. Ibid., p. 114.

33. Ibid., p. 120.

34. *Selected Letters,* p. 73; Nvsquamam nostram nusquam bene scriptam ad te mitto. Allen II, 461/1.

35. *Selected Letters,* p. 76; Misi ad te iam pridem Nusquamam... Allen II, 467/13-14.

36. Arthur Barker, '*Clavis Moreana*: The Yale Edition of Thomas More', in *Essential Articles*, p. 222. See *CW*4, p. 146/25, apparatus.

37. Peter R. Allen, '*Utopia* and European Humanism: the Function of the Prefatory Letters and Verses', *Studies in the Renaissance,* 10 (1963), 91-107, p. 101.

38. Elizabeth McCutcheon, *My Dear Peter: the* Ars Poetica *and Hermeneutics for More's* Utopia (Angers, 1983).

39. Ibid., p. 19.

40. Ibid., p. 20.

41. Robbin S. Johnson, *More's 'Utopia': Ideal and Illusion* (New Haven and London, 1969), p. 4.

42. Hexter, 1952, pp. 17-18.

43. On this point, see Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980).

44. Vrbium qui unam norit, omnes nouerit, ita sunt inter se (quatenus loci natura non obstat) omnino similes. Depingam igitur unam quampiam (neque enim admodum refert quam) Sed quam potius, quam Amaurotum? qua nec ulla dignior est, quippe cui senatus gratia reliquae deferunt, nec ulla mihi notior, ut in qua annos quinque perpetuos uixerim (116/22-28).

45. id quod uos quoque intellegetis si uobiscum reputetis apud alias gentes, quam magna populi pars iners degit. primum mulieres fere omnes, totius summae dimidium, aut sicubi mulieres negociosae sunt, ibi ut plurimum, earum uice, uiri stertunt. ad haec, sacerdotum ac religiosorum, quos uocant, quanta quamque ociosa turba, adjice diuites

omnes maxime praediorum dominos, quos uulgo generosos appellant ac nobiles, his adnumera ipsorum famulitium, totam uidelicet illam cetratorum nebulonum colluuiem. robustos denique ac ualentes mendicos adiunge, morbum quempiam praetexentes inertiae, multo certe pauciores esse quam putaras inuenies eos, quorum labore constant haec omnia quibus mortales utuntur (128/32-130/10).

46. E.L. Surtz, *The Praise of Pleasure* (Princeton, 1957), p. 93.

47. Alistair Fox, *Thomas More: History and Providence* (Oxford, 1982), p. 54.

48. At hac in re propensiores aequo uidentur in factionem uoluptatis assertricem, ut qua uel totam, uel potissimam felicitatis humanae partem definiant (160/20-23).

49. qua in re rectene an secus sentiant, excutere nos, neque tempus patitur, neque necesse est. quippe qui narranda eorum instituta, non etiam tuenda suscepimus (178/12-15).

Précis

A close examination of the genesis of the text of *Utopia* throws light on the debate as to whether the book is a prescriptive political document or a work of fiction. Study of the process of the work's composition shows that More introduced the figure of Hythloday at a late stage and surrounded the work with *parerga* which made its literary status ambiguous. As part of the process of revision, he introduced the figure of Hythloday, inserted new material into his account of Utopia and revised the original text to increase its ambiguity. As a result of these changes, More made *Utopia* increasingly less a political and social statement and correspondingly more a complex, ironical work of fiction.

Résumé

L'examen attentif de la genèse de l'*Utopie* éclaire le débat sur la question: ce livre est un document politique ou ouvrage de fiction? L'étude de sa composition nous montre que More fait entrer le personnage de Hythloday assez tard et que les *parerga*, brèves annexes qui éclairent l'ouvrage, en soulignent le caractère littéraire et donc l'ambiguité. C'est au cours de la révision que Hythloday entre en scène et que des matériaux nouveaux sont incorporés au récit; More révise son texte initial pour en augmenter l'ambiguité. A cause de tous ces changements l'*Utopie* devient de moins en moins document politico-sociale, et, dans la même mesure, un ouvrage de fiction de plus en plus complèxe et ironique.