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A PART OF HIS OWN :

THOMAS MORE'S LITERARY PERSONALITY IN HIS EARLY WORKS

In his famous letter to Ulrich Hutten of July 23, 1519, Erasmus, summing up the character of his friend, Thomas More, recalls how "John Colet, a man of keen and exact judgement, often observes in intimate conversation that Britain has only one genius, although this island is rich in so many fine talents." (1) Erasmus obviously shared Colet's opinion of More's remarkable abilities; writing in 1519, he could look back on twenty years of friendship with his subject and his letter itself goes a long way towards defining, with considerable precision, just what Colet meant when he spoke of More as 'England's only genius.' More's talents, as Erasmus describes them, were both ethical and aesthetic; he had a genius for life, but he also had a genius for art. The following brief survey of More's early works attempts to delineate the main features of his artistic personality as it was manifested in and developed by his youthful literary experiments.

Neither Erasmus nor Colet was the first to note the genius of Thomas More. Here are the opening sentences of William Roper's *Life of More* :

This Sir Thomas More, after he had been brought up in the Latin tongue at St. Anthony's in London, was by his father's procurement received into the house of the right reverend, wise, and learned prelate, Cardinal Morton. Where, though he was young of years, [about 13 or 14], yet would he at Christmastide suddenly sometimes step in among the players, and never studying for the matter, make a part of his own there presently among them, which made the lookers-on more sport than all the players beside. In whose wit and towardness the Cardinal much delighting, would often say of him unto the nobles that divers times dined with him, "This child here waiting at the table, who shall live to see it, will prove a marvellous man." (2)

The point of Roper's anecdote is not so much the felicity of young More's impromptu acting, though this is

important, but rather the "marvellousness," in the Cardinal's words, with which he creates a part for himself within the dramatic context of the Christmas interlude. We know almost nothing of More's life before this episode in Morton's household (1490-92) and it is surely significant that Roper should choose to introduce his hero with a story like this. The anecdote is, of course, perfectly calculated to fit Roper's narrative method. His biography lives in its little dramatic vignettes, each of them reinforcing the other, as if, for him, his father-in-law's life were essentially a series of scenes, each of them weighted with a symbolic significance, and most of them set down in dialogue form so that the principal character, More himself, seems, as he did during the Christmas festivities at Lambeth Palace, to be both narrator and subject, creator and character, playing out the drama of his life on the stage of the world in a role which he had fashioned as his own. The last time we see More in Roper's *Life* he is again on the stage, but this time, as More was to say in his *Richard III*, it is not the Cardinal's games in which he acts, but the King's, and the latter are indeed, "played upon scaffolds." (3)

And so was he by Master Lieutenant brought out of the Tower and from thence led towards the place of execution. Where, going up the scaffold, which was so weak that it was ready to fall, he said merrily to Master Lieutenant: "I pray you, Master Lieutenant, see me safe up and, for my coming down, let me shift for myself." (4)

The Thomas More who "shifts for himself" here is the same man who, as a boy, "made a part for himself" in a play which did not include him in its list of *dramatis personae*.

What, then, are the qualities of genius which emerge from Roper's brief anecdote? We can note that More, at the early age of thirteen or so, already possessed a remarkable sense of form, a sensitivity which enabled him to grasp all the implications of his surroundings and to adjust himself to the demands which they invoked. He is, above all else, aware of himself in relation to others; in the old meaning of the word, he has a "conscience," a knowing-with. Nor is this quality merely social; at the literary level, it implies an awareness of form as such, an ability to create and to criticize simultaneously, to be himself while he was being someone else. And it is precisely on this point that so many misinterpretations of his character have arisen. The Protestant chronicler Edward Halle summed up the bewilderment which many have felt when confronted with More's complex personality. Halle could not understand how a man could jest on the scaffold,

and he concluded his account of More's death by remarking, "I cannot tell whether I should call him a foolish wyseman or a wise foolishman." (5)

Halle, of course, wrote long after the *Praise of Folly* (*Encomium Moriae*) had appeared, and More, in 1491 or 1492, had not yet met the man who was later to dedicate that work to him. (6) Roper's anecdote, consequently, becomes all the more important, for it shows quite clearly that More's personality had developed a fine flexibility, a multiplicity of viewpoint, before he was old enough to find authority for his attitude in the writings of the learned and before he was able to exemplify his self-awareness in his own literary productions. And when we turn to his earliest writings, we do indeed find him concerned with themes that are perfectly consonant with the implications of Roper's opening story as I have analyzed it.

Almost all of More's English poetry was written in the first thirty years of his life. It was preserved by William Rastell, who, almost as an afterthought, decided to introduce his edition of the *English Works* in 1557 with some sixteen unfoliated pages containing four separate poems by More. Three of these four poems ("A mery iest how a sergeant would learne to playe the frere," "A ruful lamentacion... of the deth of quene Elisabeth," and "Certain meters... for the boke of Fortune") exist in other texts, but the fourth is found only in the 1557 folio. Here is Rastell's introduction to this fourth item, the so-called "Pageant Verses."

Mayster Thomas More in his youth deused in hys fathers house in London, a goodly hangyng of fyne paynted clothe, with nyne pageauntes, and verses ouer euery of those pageauntes: which verses expressed and declared, what the ymages in those pageauntes represented: and also in those pageauntes were paynted, the thynges that the verses ouer them dyd (in effecte) declare, which verses here folowe.

More's nine pageants are Childhood, Manhood, Venus and Cupid, Age, Death, Fame, Time, Eternity and, finally, the Poet. The first eight are each described in a rhyme-royal stanza; the last, entitled "The Poet", receives six elegiac couplets of Latin verse. As they stand, the Pageant poems represent a curious amalgamation of two traditions on More's part. His sequence suggests the medieval pattern of the seven ages of man, which Shakespeare was later to exploit, but it also draws heavily upon Petrarch's *Trionfi*, which were very popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. (7) Petrarch's six "triumphs" are those of Love, Chastity, Death, Fame, Time and Eternity. More omits Chastity, adds Childhood, Manhood, and Age from

the Ages of Men paradigm, and tops everything off with a most individual touch, the Poet who sees all and who alone can interpret the meaning of the entire sequence. In translation, the first four lines of the Poet's verses go as follows :

If anyone finds pleasure in looking at these pictures (*fictas figuras*) because he feels that, although they are products of the imagination, still they represent man truly and with remarkable skill, then he can delight his soul with the actual truth just as he feasts his eyes on its painted image.(8)

The Latin verses go on, in a deeply religious way, to ask that the reader aim for the love of God, which alone endures forever. But More's little sequence, his youthful "interior decorating," has also made the point that art (both the paintings and the verses) provides a means of interpreting life. And if More's English verses do not, in themselves, have any great artistic merit, they nevertheless do show us his basic stance, his ability to focus a number of different perspectives and to organize them towards a particular end.

The other English Poems in the 1557 folio also testify, either directly or indirectly, to More's interest in drama and to his concern with role-playing as a way of enlarging the personality. The "Merry Gest," a rollicking, sing-song poem in the tail-rhyme meter of the "Nut-Brown Maid," tells the story of a Sergeant-at-Law who disguised himself as a friar in order to arrest a debtor. The officer's acting is really bad acting, for he is not interested in his role for its own sake, but for what he can get out of it. When he is farcically revealed and soundly trounced for his troubles, he voices the moral of the poem :

*Quod he now lost  
Is all this cost,  
We be neuer the nere.  
Ill mote he the,  
That caused me,  
To make my selfe a frere.*

In the "Ruful Lamentation," a moving, slow-paced elegy which C. S. Lewis has justly praised,(9) More presents the figure of Queen Elizabeth, who died in 1503, speaking in her own person. The rhyme-royal stanzas are as good as anything in *The Mirror for Magistrates* fifty years later, and More is able, by having the Queen survey all that she leaves behind--family, fortune, friends and realm--to invest her death with a sense of poignant immediacy that could hardly have been achieved without this dramatic presentation.

Finally, in the English verses which he contributed for the *Book of Fortune*,(10) More does speak in his own person; but, when he does so, he warns against trusting in any power which can be said to control the universe with arbitrary ruthlessness. Fortune's instability, her capriciousness, is in fact the exact antithesis of that free creation which More so admires. If they become slaves of astrology, men will not try to exercise their own powers to the fullest. More himself prefers the example of the philosopher Bias, who chose wisdom over "Fortune's brotle fees" and who "counted nought his that he might lose."

More's views on Fortune and Astrology were undoubtedly reinforced by his reading in the works of Pico, whose long treatise, the *Contra Astrologos*, strongly reaffirms man's responsibility for his own actions. I shall say more about Pico in a moment, but I want first to look briefly at More's Latin poems, many of which were certainly written during his very early years. Professors Bradner and Lynch have remarked on the variety of subject matter in the *Epigrammata*:(11) More develops a number of traditional themes, but he also explores several new ones--the tyrant versus the just ruler, for example. Occasionally, as in his satiric attacks on the French humanist, Germain de Brie, he forthrightly declares his own poetic principles, accusing his opponent of a fake classicism that simply parrots the words and phrases of antiquity. Among the epigrams are three poems (nos. 141-143) on Henry of Abyngdon, a musician of the Chapel Royal, who died in 1497. More must have been about twenty or so when he wrote this little series and they show him, in both their form and in their content, to have developed already an attitude toward art that harmonizes with that which he was also dramatizing in his English verse. The first poem praises Abyngdon and his music in energetic Latin. The lines, urged on with strong verbs, move upward like the organ notes of the musician himself. More is classical here, and eloquently so.

*Nunc illum regi rapuit deus, intulit astris,  
Ipsis ut noua sit gloria caelitibus. (12)*

In the second poem, however, the scale moves downward. More writes in debased rhyming medieval verse that simply has to be read aloud to be laughed at :

*Hic jacet Henricus, semper pietatis amicus.  
Nomen Abyngdon erat, si quis sua nomina quaerat.*

Instead of the vision, at the end of the first poem, which saw Henry enthroned among the saints, the rhyming second poem ends with a dismally imperative plea that Christ admit him to heaven :

*Nunc igitur, Christe, quoniam tibi seruiit iste  
Semper in orbe soli, da sibi regna poli.* (13)

One might almost see the two pieces as reflecting Renaissance and Medieval attitudes in little, but the third poem, addressed to a certain Janus, Abyngdon's heir, enlarges and comments on the whole scene. Janus, it seems, did not like More's first, classical poem; he did, however, praise the wretched medieval one and cause it to be inscribed on Abyngdon's tomb. His name is decidedly ironic: instead of looking before and after like the Roman god, he is unable to see in any direction. The point is not so much that he can't appreciate good humanist poetry, but that he praises bad medieval verse. Instead of being "bifrons," he is "effrons"; a mere mole (*talpa*), this Janus deserves, far better than Abyngdon, to be buried in the tomb with the second poem for his epitaph. The poet himself, Thomas More, stands allied with Abyngdon, alive after death by the power of his art, an art firmly manifested in the three poems he has produced. The third poem, which damns Janus, is just as classical as the first, which exalted Abyngdon.

More's literary activities, in the years prior to the composition of *Utopia*, embraced far more than English and Latin poetry. We know from Erasmus, and from one of More's own letters, that he was also writing (and acting in) comedies. (14) None of these have survived but the impulse that produced them, as A. W. Reed has shown, was passed on to More's circle later in the plays of John Rastell and John Heywood. With Erasmus, More also worked on the translation of Lucian from Greek to Latin; More translated three of the dialogues himself, plus Lucian's *Tyrannocida*, the argument of which he countered in a declamation of his own. In his prefatory letter to the 1506 edition, (15) More defended the reading of these witty dialogues and expressed for the first time his full humanistic awareness of the way in which classical literature could and should be used to reinforce the pursuit of Christian truth.

The Lucian translations, which have been so ably discussed by Professor Craig Thompson, (16) who is editing them for the Yale edition, are careful, literal versions of the original Greek. More's other efforts at translation in these early years are a different story. In his *Richard III*, he translated himself, moving easily from Latin to English or from English to Latin and producing two separate texts, one in the vernacular and one in the international idiom of the humanist world. (17) By 1513, when More probably began work on the *Richard*, he had discovered that translation, whether from Greek to Latin or from Latin to English, could become a means to original

creative composition. Something like this view can be discerned in the *Epigrammata*, which begin with a series of exercises, the *Progymnasmata*. In this group of eighteen poems More printed the original text of the *Greek Anthology*, followed by his Latin version of it and then that of his friend, William Lyly. But in the *Epigrammata* proper, about 160 out of 253 poems are original compositions. I think we can say that translation, for More, was a kind of verbal role-playing. To translate another man's poem, one had, so to speak, to become the other man. But if you were Thomas More, strikingly gifted in languages and never content, whatever disguise you adopted, to be anything but yourself, then you might well strive to make the other man's words your own, to extend your personality into his, but, characteristically, to return to yourself with your own mind and art enriched to the full by the new perspectives which "playing a part" had opened to you. When he translated, More became someone else; but, as in the days at Morton's household, he very quickly created "a part of his own."

It is against this background that the last of More's translations from these years, his version of the *Life of Pico*, should be considered. We cannot be certain just how early More became acquainted with Pico and his works, but I find it difficult to believe that some knowledge of the great Italian humanist had not filtered back to England even before the first collected edition of his *Opera* (Bologna, 1496) had appeared. At least three of More's teachers and close friends, Linacre, Grocyn, and Colet, had been in Italy and at Florence during the years of Pico's greatest fame. That they would have failed to introduce their brightest pupil to Pico's works is almost inconceivable. By 1505, which is, I think, the best date for More's translation, the Venice (1498) and the Strassburg (1504) editions of Pico's *Opera* were also available to him. On textual grounds (18) it can be demonstrated that More used the Venice edition, which fact raises the interesting possibility that it may have been More who first introduced Erasmus to Pico. It is not until 1500, one year after his first visit to England, that Erasmus mentions Pico's achievement, and it is not until 1503, in the *Enchiridion*, that he draws upon Pico's writings, adapting, for his own purposes, the same "twelve rules of spiritual combat" which More was to paraphrase from Pico in his own translation. (19)

Most of More's early biographers -- Roper, Harpsfield, Stapleton, and the anonymous 1590 life -- do not make very much of his interest in Pico. But Cresacre More, writing in the 1620's, does tell us how More,

When he determined to marry [about 1504-05]... pro-

pounded to himself for a pattern in life a singular layman, John Picus, Earl of Mirandula, who was a man most famous for virtue, and most eminent for learning. His life he translated and set out, as also many of his most worthy letters, and his Twelve Precepts of Good Life, which are extant in the beginning of his English works. (20)

Now it is quite possible that Cresacre is not relating a real family tradition here but merely making an obvious deduction from the existence of More's translation. Nevertheless, his story has often been taken too lightly and not enough scholars have attempted to investigate the implications of his statement. As a matter of fact, Cresacre's biography has been rather unduly neglected. He does, it is true, come at the end of the line (he was More's great-grandson), and most of his materials derive from his predecessors; but he has the advantage of knowing their work and he often adds a fresh insight that illuminates More's character or his literary achievement. It is Cresacre, for example, not Harpsfield or Stapleton, who comments succinctly on More's ability to feign, seeing this quality as a distinct virtue in both life and art:

Yea he was very cunning in dissembling his virtues so that few came to know what holy exercises he practised, even as in his writings he often feigned matters cunningly to have heard of others which he himself invented, as in the preface of his Utopia he artificially discourseth as though Raphael Hithlodius had told that whole story unto him.... So he feigned as an Englishman called Rosseus pleasantly confuted Luther's book, as he discoursed with his host in Italy, who afterwards published all their communication in print, by which means Luther could never learn who he was that answered him, after his own furious fashion, which angered him sore.... (21)

Cresacre's *Life of More* badly needs new edition, but the textual and biographical problems involved in this task make it unlikely that anyone will soon have a go at him. (22)

When More presented Pico in English, he did so with a particular purpose in mind. His *Life* was addressed to his "right entirely beloved sister in Christ, Joyeuse Leigh, who was a minoresse (i.e. Poor Clare) in London. He sends the nun his work as a spiritual New Year's gift, charmingly introducing it with a letter in which he asks her to "loyously receiue any thing, that meanelly soundeth either to the reproch of vice, commendacion of vertue, or honoure and laude of God." (23) As has often been noticed, More thus writes in terms of a very old English tradition;

like the author of the *Ancrene Riwe* and like Richard Rolle and Walter Hilton, he puts his literary talents to use for the benefit of nuns, providing them with spiritual nourishment. But overemphasis on this aspect of the *Life of Pico*, particularly by R.W. Chambers, (24) has tended to cloud our awareness of just how deeply More knew Pico's *Works*.

That he knew them thoroughly becomes apparent when we consider the way in which he handled the Venice folio as he prepared his New Year's gift. The *Life* of Giovanni Pico, which More translates, is actually a preface to the volume. It was written by Pico's nephew, Gianfrancesco, though More himself never tells us this. In translating, More was careful to omit a number of passages in the original, including a long list of Pico's books and a few passages concerning his troubles with the papacy. (25) He did not hesitate to add a lengthy paragraph at the beginning in which he discourses on true nobility and virtue. But More's translation of Gianfrancesco's *Life* makes up only about half of his thin quarto. To supplement it, More turned first to Pico's letters, translating three from a large selection in the Venice folio. He then appended a translation of Pico's commentary on Psalm XV, followed by an extensive paraphrase, in rhyme-royal stanzas, of Pico's Twelve Rules for Spiritual Combat, his Twelve Weapons of Spiritual Battle, and his Twelve Conditions of a Lover. Finally, More ended his book with a verse translation of Pico's Lucretian hymn, the *Deprecatoria ad Deum*, taking care to eliminate the more Lucretian elements in it.

What More had, when he finished, was a deftly fashioned spiritual handbook which contained a new kind of saint's life, some homiletic letters, a warm illustration of how to read scripture, a series of handy rules for fighting the good fight, and a sublime hymn lifting the soul to God. Joyeuse Leigh might well have been pleased, but one wonders if she appreciated how carefully More had gone through the 1498 folio in order to extract these elements from it. As he worked, More no doubt paid careful attention to Pico's other works, the 900 questions, with their glorious prefatory oration, the *Heptaplus* -- Pico's extended commentary on Genesis 1: 1-26 -- and the *Contra Astrologos*, not to mention the many letters to humanist friends. There will have to be some intensive studies of Pico's *Works* in relation to More's own writings before we can pinpoint exactly the nature of the influence which Pico exerted, but it is not too early to say that More must have recognized a kindred spirit.

Take, for example, the following famous passage from Pico's oration on the dignity of man. Pico imagines God speaking to Adam on the last day of creation:

"Neither a fixed abode nor a form that is thine alone nor any function peculiar to thyself have we given thee, Adam, to the end that according to thy longing and according to thy judgment thou mayest have and possess what abode, what form, and what functions thou thyself shalt desire. The nature of all other beings is limited and constrained within the bounds of laws prescribed by Us. Thou, constrained by no limits, in accordance with thine own free will, in whose hand We have placed thee, shalt ordain for thyself the limits of thy nature. We have set thee at the world's center that thou mayest from thence more easily observe whatever is in the world. We have made thee neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with freedom of choice and with honor, as though the maker and molder of thyself, thou mayest fashion thyself in whatever shape thou shalt prefer." (26)

Thomas More was already an adept at shaping his own destiny when he read these words, but he must nevertheless have relished Pico's view of "Man the chameleon," who, in changing himself into other beings, produces a new form for himself. Such a philosophy is essentially aesthetic, it allows for a multiple view of human personality, and it sees life as a profound personal drama, whether the characters be men in relation to other men or man in relation to God. In translating Pico, More surely came to see that there are many ways in which a man can learn to translate himself.



I have deliberately refrained, in this short survey of More's literary position in his early years, from examining other aspects of his life which contributed to the shaping of his career. It is perfectly possible, for example, to point to various events in the life of Pico which find their counterpart in the life of More. (27) Each was a young genius, each inspired their close friends; Pico's conversion to the ascetic life by Savonarola no doubt confirmed More in his own ascetic practices, which he adopted while he lived with the Charterhouse monks. Such parallels can become tenuous and probably shouldn't be pushed too far. Nor have I attempted to speculate on the way in which More's legal studies, in the years after he left Oxford, played their part in the shaping of his dramatic instincts. A good lawyer -- and More was certainly to become one -- is able to see both sides of a case. More's training in the moot courts gave him professional opportunities to test out his own penchant for role-playing. If the law, as Erasmus once lamented, was later to consume

too much of his time, his early study of it can hardly be said to have deadened his literary sensibility. (28)

It is, above all else, this acute sensibility which emerges from an examination of More's works in the years before *Utopia*.

He tried, as we have seen, almost every literary form that came his way, experimenting with English verse, writing Latin epigrams, translating from several languages in a variety of ways. And these youthful experiments, which often turn out to reveal much about his own frame of mind, were later to bear fruit in his mature works. In the great polemical letters of the 1515 to 1520 period, he demonstrates, again and again, that his opponents (and Erasmus') are really bad actors, men who are playing their parts without a full realization of what such roles entail. (29) In his *Responsio* of 1523, he pictures Luther as a "licentious buffoon," playing a bawdy comic part when the script calls for dignified behavior. (30) More's greatest literary triumphs, however, come when he manages to build up a work in which his own dramatization of himself achieves an objective form. He writes most effectively when, as in the *Utopia*, he can play more than one part, functioning as both character and creator, controlling everything as author, yet qualifying his own control by picturing himself, in the work, as dancing to the tune of the fiction he unfolds. Dramatic dialogue, as the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* and the *Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation* later illustrate, was his real forte. Most himself when he could play at being someone else, the mature man, as his finest works show, never ceased to draw on the reserves of that dramatic talent which he had demonstrated as a boy actor and which he had developed so interestingly in his youthful literary compositions.

#### NOTES

1) - "Ioannes Coletus, vir acris exactique iudicii, in familiaribus colloquiis subinde dicere solet Britanniae non nisi unicum esse ingenium: cum haec insula tot egregiis ingeniiis floreat." *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, ed. P. S. Allen et al. (Oxford, 1906-1958), 4, 21.

2) - George Cavendish and William Roper, *Two Early Tudor Lives*, ed. R. S. Sylvester and D. P. Harding (New Haven and London, 1962), pp. 197-98. A. W. Reed (*Early Tudor Drama*, London, 1926, pp. 99-100) relates this anecdote.

dote to the comic subplot of Henry Medwall's *Fulgens and Lucrez*. Medwall was a chaplain in Morton's household in the 1490s.

3) - "The History of King Richard III" in *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, vol. 2, ed. R. S. Sylvester (New Haven and London, 1963), p. 81.

4) - *Two Early Tudor Lives*, p. 254.

5) - Edward Halle, *The Vnion of the two noble and illustrate famelies etc.* (London, 1548), sig. PPP 4 v.

6) - In the letter to Hutten, Erasmus wittily remarks that More himself was responsible for the *Praise of Folly* -- "quin et mihi vt Morias Encomium scriberem, hoc est vt camelus saltarem, fuit autor." (Allen, *op. cit.*, 4, 16).

7) - See *The Triumphs of Petrarch*, tr. E. W. Wilkins (Chicago, 1962). The best Italian edition is that of Ezio Chiorboli, *Le rime sparse e i Trionfi* (Bari, 1930).

8) - *The Latin Epigrams of Thomas More*, ed. and tr. Leicester Bradner and C. A. Lynch (Chicago, 1953), p. 238.

9) - *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford, 1954), p. 133.

10) - For a splendidly detailed account of the textual problems involved in the study of the Fortune verses, see Hubertus Schulte Herbrüggen, "Sir Thomas More's Fortune-verse, Ein Beitrag zur Losung einiger Probleme," in *Lebende Antike, Symposium für Rudolf Sühnel* (Berlin, 1967), pp. 155-72.

11) - Bradner and Lynch, pp. xxvi-xxix.

12) - "Now God has taken him away from the king and installed him among the stars to add glory to the very inhabitants of heaven." *Ibid.*, pp. 68 and 189

13) - "And so now, Christ, since he served You always on earth, admit him to the Kingdom of Heaven." *Ibid.*, pp. 69 and 189. I am most grateful to Mrs. Susan R.L. Holahan of Yale University for first calling my attention to the complex attitude which More develops in these three poems.

14) - "Adolescens comoediolas et scripsit et egit." (Allen, 4, 16). For More's letter to Holt, mentioning the now lost "Comedy of Solomon," see E. F. Rogers, *The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More* (Princeton, 1947), p. 3.

15) - Rogers, pp. 10-14.

16) - *The Translations of Lucian by Erasmus and Thomas More* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1940).

17) - See the Introduction to my edition of the *Richard* (above, note 3).

18) - In his translation of Pico's letter to Andreas Corneus, More rendered "quam nos uti mannus uehat aequalibus" into English as "which shall beare vs as it were in handes more easely" (*English Works*, sig. a8; Venice edition, 1498, sig. Y<sub>1</sub>). The Bologna edition reads "mannus (a cart horse)," the Venice "mānus," and one must believe, given More's knowledge of Latin (this is his only mis-translation in the *Pico*) that he was misled by the abbreviation in the second edition.

19) - Erasmus' knowledge of Pico and his debt to him have not been fully explored. For the information given here I am indebted to the neglected articles by Ivan Pusino in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 45 (1926), 370-82 ("Zur Quellengeschichte für eine Biographie Picos") and, especially, 46 (1927), 75-96 ("Der Einfluss Picos auf Erasmus").

20) - Cresacre More, *The Life of Sir Thomas More*, ed. Joseph Hunter (London, 1828), pp. 27-28.

21) - *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

22) - The *Life* is extant in at least three manuscript versions and in two seventeenth-century editions (1626 and 1642; Gibson, nos. 106 & 107). Hunter, in his edition, argued that the seventeenth-century attribution to Cresacre's brother, Thomas (d. 1625), was incorrect, but his arguments are not conclusive.

23) - *English Works*, sig. a<sub>1</sub>. More's pun on the name of Joyeuse Leigh ('joyously') reflects the gentle wit which he displays in this dedicatory letter.

24) - See Chambers' essay, "On the Continuity of English Prose," in Harpsfield's *Life of More* (London, 1932, Early English Text Society, O.S., No. 186), pp. xvi-clxxiv, especially cxxi f.

25) - These omissions are partially noted by Stanford E. Lehmborg, "Sir Thomas More's Life of Pico Della Mirandola," *Studies in the Renaissance*, 3 (1956), 61-74. The early articles by Max Kullnick ("Thomas Morus Picus Erle

of *Mirandula*," *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen*, 121 (1908), 47-75 and 316-40) rely on unauthoritative texts and are shot through with errors.

26) - The translation is by Elizabeth L. Forbes in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, ed. E. Cassirer, P. K. Kristeller, and J. H. Randall (Chicago, 1948), pp.224-25.

27) - See R. W. Chambers, *Thomas More* (London, 1935), p. 92, and Lehmborg (above n. 25), for some of these parallels.

28) - The relationship between More's legal studies and his literary activities has been fruitfully explored by R. J. Schoeck in his "*Sir Thomas More, Humanist and Lawyer*," *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 34 (1964), 1-14.

29) - I have treated this aspect of the Letters to Oxford, to Dorp, to Brixius, and to a Monk in my "*Thomas More: Humanist in Action*," (*Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, ed. O. B. Hardison, 1 [University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1966], 125-37).

30) - *Eruditissimi Viri Guilielmi Rossei etc.* (Gibson, No. 63), sig. BB<sub>2</sub>. Much the same treatment is accorded to Robert Barnes in the eighth book of the *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer* (*English Works*, sigs. B<sub>8</sub>v f.).

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