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Memorializing History in *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore*

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Tracing the various playtexts of *Sir Thomas Moore,* a play of the 1590s written partly by Shakespeare, reveals differing perspectives on the cause and significance of Evil May Day and thus serves as a litmus test on its various cultural meanings and a history of cultural change. Under a strongly Protestant regime, the Catholic Thomas More is seen heroically as an authority who puts down protest and uprisings, a champion of peace. From another viewpoint, he is the humanist interested in social justice. After the threat of the Spanish Armada, however, attention turned to the rioters as alien workers displacing natives ones. To make More more acceptable, he was turned into a man of wit and of theatricality, his Catholicism parodied. Together, such varied responses suggest the rich complexity of a play which deserves to be better known.
Key words: Catholicism, Thomas More, Evil May Day, humanism, riots, alien workers, wit.

Suivre la genèse et l'évolution des divers scripts de Sir Thomas Moore, *pièce écrite dans les années 1590, en partie par Shakespeare, permet d'observer la succession d'approches différentes dans l'explication des causes de la révolte d'Evil May Day, et agit comme un test de vérité qui révèle les divers enjeux culturels et leur évolution. Sous un régime protestant fort, le catholique Thomas More est perçu comme un champion de la paix, une autorité qui mate héroïquement les protestations et les soulèvements. Après la menace de l'Invincible Armada, cependant, l'attention se porte vers les révoltés, au moment où les ouvriers étrangers prennent la place des ouvriers anglais. Pour rendre More plus acceptable, on en fait un personnage d'esprit et théâtral, on parodie son catholicisme. L'ensemble de ces diverses réactions font éclater la riche complexité d'une pièce qui mérite d'être mieux connue.*
Mots-clé: catholicisme, Thomas More, Evil May Day, humanisme, révoltes, ouvriers étrangers, esprit.

Al cotejar los varios libretos de *Sir Thomas Moore,* una obra de la década de los 1590 escrita parcialmente por Shakespeare, descubrimos perspectivas divergentes respecto de las causas y significado del llamado «Evil May Day». El citado cotejo es, por tanto, una auténtica prueba de fuego de los variados significados culturales, así como una historia del cambio cultural. Bajo un régimen fuertemente protestante, un Tomás Moro católico es visto como una autoridad que sofoca protestas y alzamientos, un campeón de la paz. Desde otra perspectiva, estamos ante un humanista interesado en la justicia social. Después de la amenaza de la Armada Invencible, sin embargo, la atención se desplaza hacia los alborotadores como trabajadores foráneos, desplazando a los nativos. Para hacer a Moro más tolerable, se le convierte en un hombre de ingenio y dotes teatrales, parodiando su catolicismo. Todas juntas, este abanico de lecturas apuntan la rica complejidad de una obra teatral que merece ser mejor conocida.
Palabras Clave: Catolicismo, Thomas More, Evil May Day, humanismo, disturbios, trabajadores extranjeros, ingenio.

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I

A popular ballad of Tudor England, largely ignored by scholars and critics alike, can serve as an important signifier for a late Tudor play, *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* (1593; 1603). Entitled "The Story of Ill May-Day in the Time of King Henry VIII," the text of the song reads in part,

> Peruse the stories of this land,
> And with advertisement mark the same,
> And you shall justly understand
> How Ill May-day first got the name.
> For when King Henry th'Eighth did reign,
> And rul'd our famous kingdom here,
> This royal queen he had from Spain,

> With whom he liv'd full many a year;
> Queen Catherine nam'd, as stories tell,
> Sometime his elder brother's wife;
> By which unlawful marriage fell
> An endless trouble during life:
> But such kind love he still conceiv'd
> Of his fair queen and of her friends,
> Which being by Spain and France perceiv'd,
> Their journeys fast for England bends;
> And with good leave were suffered
> Within our kingdom here to stay:
> Which multitude made victuals dear,
> And all things else, from day to day;
> For strangers then did so increase
> By reason of King Henry's queen,
> And privileg'd in many a place
> To dwell, as was in London seen.
> Poor tradesmen had small dealing then,
> And who but strangers bore the bell?
> Which was a grief to Englishmen,
> To see them here in London dwell:
> Wherefore (God wot) upon May-eve,
> As prentices on Maying went,
> Who made the magistrates believe,
> At all to have no other intent.
> But such a May-game it was known,
> As like in London never were;

For by the same full many a one
With loss of life did pay full dear;
Four thousands came with bilboa-blade,
As with an army they could meet,
And such a bloody slaughter made
Of foreign strangers in the street,
That all the channels ran down with blood,
In every street where they remain'd;
Yea, every one in danger stood
That any of their part maintain'd:
The rich, the poor, the old, the young,
Beyond the seas tho' born and bred,
By prentices they suffer'd wrong,
When armed thus they gather'd head.
Such multitudes together went,
No warlike troops could them withstand,
Nor yet by policy them prevent,
What they by force thus took in hand:
Till at the last King Henry's power
This multitude encompass'd round,
Where with the strength of London's Tower
They were by force suppress'd and bound;
And hundreds hang'd by martial law
On sign-posts at their masters' doors,
By which the rest were kept in awe,
And frighted from such loud uproars:
And others, which the fact repented

(Two thousand prentices at least),
Were all unto the king presented,
As mayor and magistrates thought best.
With two and two together tied,
Through Temple-bar and Strand they go
To Westminster, there to be tried,
With ropes about their necks also.
But such a cry in every street
Till then was never heard or known,
By mothers for their children sweet,
Unhappily thus overthrown.[1]

This anonymous ballad must have been composed very early in the sixteenth century because it has a wealth of detail that is lost in the succession of retellings of Evil May Day throughout the decades following. It must be early because it establishes as the initial cause of the economic difficulties of London tradesmen and apprentices Queen Katherine of Aragon, a cause that drops out early in subsequent accounts. Even the *Anglicae Historiae* of Polydore Vergil (first published in Basle in 1534 and reissued there in 1546 and 1555), the first important Tudor chronicle, locates a different situation inciting the Evil May Day of 1517, as do subsequent chronicles, while *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* sets Evil May Day among much later, more pressing, circumstances. What the ballad alerts us to, then, is that Evil May-Day becomes a kind of Tudor litmus test, an event which conveniently serves as the starting point for different, often distinctive, concerns, just

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[1] Reprinted from Evans' s *Old Ballads*, iii, 76 (1810) by Rev. Alexander Dyce in his edition of *Sir Thomas More, A Play*, London: Shakespeare Society, 1844, pp. xix-xxi.

as the decade separating the playtexts of *Sir Thomas Moore* and their probable performances seems to have had quite distinct meanings. What may at first seem a widespread cultural nodal point may, upon closer investigation, be seen as a signifier not only of cultural meaning, but of cultural change. That *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* could be seen to view Evil May Day from differing perspectives allows us to appreciate more fully the play's inherent meanings. It also will help to explain why the play was so central—and so contested—in two different decades under two different English monarchs.

II

Now known to us only in the unique but imperfect British Library MS Barley 7368, already discolored, brittle, and partly illegible due to centuries of chemical reactions from air and dust when W. W. Greg examined it in the summer of 1911, and subsequently, according to R. C. Bald, further deteriorating from "unintelligent" repairs by which "Holes were patched with gummed paper, and the leaves that showed signs of crumbling—six in all—were pasted over on both sides with a semi-opaque tracing paper" that had earlier forced Greg to lean on the Reverend Alexander Dyce's careful but somewhat inaccurate transcription for the Shakespeare Society of London in 1844, the textual palimpsest of *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* has come down to us in a puzzling scramble of intention and amendment; only the long-held suspicion that Shakespeare may have had a hand in it has sustained any occasional critical attention. "What had once been a fair copy of the play written out neatly by one of the dramatists across some twenty-two folio pages," writes Carol A, Chillington,

> was now a welter of excisions and revisions conflating the handwriting of six individuals. Entire scenes had been crossed out and rewritten; new characters had been added; stage directions had been inserted. One of the playwrights, using a blank space on a partially written sheet, had sketched out a few lines to serve as transition between two earlier scenes; another writer picked them up, transferred them to their proper location, and expanded them in the process. A different playwright made his addition by striking out an exit direction and appending his lines at the bottom of a sheet already half filled by a previous contributor. Elsewhere, a folio was filled on the recto by one hand, and on the verso by another. One of the collaborators must have been responsible for assembling all the revisions into manageable order, for someone inserted missing stage directions and placed crosses in the margins to indicate where additions were to be located.[2]

Even so, we can pretty reliably reestablish the basic playscript and the arrangement of its scenes.[3]

Addition II of *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* is concerned with the historic "Evil May Day" riot of 1517, the subject of the ballad and of an early account in Polydore Vergil. This revolt against authority, the climax to the first half of the composite playtext, is balanced in the second half of the play by Moore's own decision to resign the Lord Chancellorship in protest against Henry VIII's newly established prerogative concerning the Church of Rome. Both are treated by authorities as rebellions and in both cases the rebels are viewed as breaking the law and order necessary to peaceful, uninterrupted government. Thus despite the work of many hands—quite probably five with a sixth serving as scribe—unity is guaranteed by a structural arrangement which insures the depth and complexity of Moore's character, since he is the figure of law and order in the first half, but the

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[2] Carol A. Chillington, "Playwrights at Work: Henslowe's, Not Shakespeare's, *Book of Sir Thomas More*," *English Literary Renaissance* 10:3 (1980), 439-40. Earlier descriptions are drawn from W. W. Greg, *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore*, Malone Society Reprints, (1911; rep. 1961), p. vii; R. C. Bald, "The Booke of Sir Thomas More and Its Problems," *Shakespeare Survey* 2 (1949), 44.

[3] See, for instance, Scott McMillin, *The Elizabethan Theatre and The Book of Sir Thomas More* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), esp. ch. 5; William B. Long, "The occasion of *The Book of Sir Thomas More*" in *Shakespeare and Sir Thomas More: Essays on the play and its Shakespearian interest*, ed. T. H. Howard-Hill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 45-56, and Giorgio Melchiori, "*The Book of Sir Thomas More*: dramatic unity" in Hill, pp. 77-100.

one who rebels in the second. What makes Moore heroic and his rebellion explicable is precisely the fact that he is one who believes in traditional law and order in the first half, but substitutes his sense of religious for civil law and order in the second. In both instances he is a champion of peace, through conciliation in the first rebellion and through resignation concerning the second. Because he is successful as Sheriff of London upholding law with justice and mercy, he achieves a dignity he means to utilize in his own later battle against the Crown. He is further aided, throughout both parts of the play, by his ever-present sense of humor; and in still another planned symmetry, the theme of "wit and wisdom" which is the explicit thesis of a play-within-a-play in the first half (even at the expense of misnaming the actual interlude) is made, more implicitly, the controlling feature of Moore's character through the second. Whoever wrote Addition II was probably aware of these unifying considerations.

Addition II differs from other parts of the play, however, in drawing its source material not from the biography of More by his son-in-law William Roper—which remained in manuscript until 1626—but from the chronicle of Edward Halle and its redaction in Raphael Holinshed. Halle begins his account of the ninth year of Henry VIII's reign this way;

> Vpon this rumour the .xxviii. daye of Aprill, diuerse yoūge mean of the citie assauted the Alyens as they passed by the streetes, and some were strikē, & some buffeted, & some throwen in the canel. Wherfore the Mayre sent diuerse persōs to ward, as Stephyn Studley skynner, and the Bettes and Stephenson & diuerse other, some to one coūter, & some to another, and some to Newgate. Then sodeynly was a cōmen secret rumour, & no mā could tell how it began, that on May daye next, the citie would rebell & slaye all Aliens, in somuche as diuerse straungers fled oute of the citie. This brute [bruit=rumor] ranne so farre that it came to the kynges coūsayl, insomuch as the Cardinall [Thomas Wolsey] beyng lord Chaūcelour, sent for Ihon Rest, Mayre of the citie, and other of the counsail of the citie, & demaūded of the Mayre in what case the citie stode, to whome he aunswered that it was wel & in good quyet: Nay sayd the Cardinal, it is informed vs that your yoūg and riotous people will ryse & distresse the straungiers, heare ye of no such thing? No surely sayd the Mayre, & I trust so to gouerne thē that the kynges peace shalbe obserued, & that I dare vndertake if I & my brethren the Aldermen may be suffered. Wel sayd ye Cardinal, go home & wisely forsee this matter, for & if any suche thyng be, you may shortly preuent it. The Mayre came from the Cardinals at .iiii. of the clocke at after none on May euen, & demaūded of the officers what they harde, diuerse of thē aunswered that the voyce of the people was so, & had ben so .ii. or .iii. dayes before. This herying the Mayre sent for al his brethrē to the Guylde hall in great hast, & almost .vii. of the clocke or the assemble was set. Then was declared to thē by Master brooke ye recorder how that the kynges coūsail had reported to thē ye cominaltie that night would ryse, & distresse all the Aliēs & straungers yt inhabited in the citie of Lōdon; the Aldermē aunswered they harde say so, but they mistrusted not the matter, yet they sayd that it was wel done to forsee it. Then sayd the recorder, it were best that a substācial watche were set of honest persons, housholders, whiche might withstand the euell doers. An Alderman sayde, that it was euell to rayse men in harneys, for if such a thinge were entended, they coulde not tell who woulde take their parte. Another Alderman sayd, that it were best to kepe the younge men asonder, and euery man to shut in hys doores, and to kepe hys seruauntes within. Then with these opinions was the Recorder sent to ye Cardinal before .viii. of the clocke, and then he with suche as were of the kynges counsaill at hys place, commaūded that in no wyse watche shoulde be kept, but that euery man shoulde repayre to hys awne house, and there to kepe hym and hys seruauntes tyl .vii. of the clocke in the mornynge, with whiche commaundement, the sayde Rycharde brooke sergeaunt at the lawe and recorder, and syr Thomas Moore, late vndershrife of Lōdon, & then of the kynges coūsaill, came to the Guylde hall halfe houre and before .ix. of the clocke, and there shewed the commaundemēt of the kynges counsayl. Then in all hast, euery Alderman sent to his ward that no man should styre

after .ix. of the clocke out of his house, but to kepe hys doores shut, and hys seruauntes within tyll .vii. of the clocke in the mornynge. After this commaundement, syr Ihon Mondy Alderman came from hys warde, and founde two young men in Chepe plaiynge at Buckelers, and a great company of young men lokynge on thē for the commaundement was then skace [scarce] knowen, for then it was but .ix. of the clocke. Master Moudy, seyng that, bade them leaue, and the one younge man asked him why? and then he sayd thou shalt know, & toke hym by the arme to haue had him to the counter. Then all the yoūg mē resisted the Alderman, & toke him from master Mondy, and cryed prentyses and clubbes. Then out at euery doore came clubbes and weapōs and the Alderman fled, and was in great daungier. Then more people arose out of euery quarter, and oute came seruynge men, and water men and Courtiers, and by a .xi. of the clocke there were in Chepe .vi. or .vii. hundredth. And out of Paules churcheyarde came .iii. hundredth, which wist not of the other, and so out of all places they gathered, and brake vp the counters [jails], and tooke out the prisoners, that the Mayre had thether committed for hurtyng of the sttaungers, and came to Newgate and took out Studley and Petyt, committed thether for that cause. The Mayre and Shrifes were there present, and made Proclamaciō in the kynges name, but nothyne was obeyed. Thus they ranne a plump [mob] thorow sainct Nycholas Shābles, & at saynct Martyns gate, there met with them syr Thomas Moore and other, desyrynge theym to go to their lodgynges: And as they were intreatyng, and had almost brought them to a staye. The people of saynct Martynes threwe oute stones and battes, and hurte dyuserse honest persones, that were persuadynge the ryotous people to ceasse, and they bade them holde their handes, but still they threwe oute bryckes and hoate water. Then a sergeaunt of Armes called Nycholas dounes, whiche was there with master Moore, entreatynge them, beynge sore hurt, in a fury cryed doune with them. Then all the misruled persons ranne to the dores and wyndowes of saynct Martyn, and spoyled all that they founde, and caste it into the strete, and lefte fewe houses vnspoyled. And after that they ranne hedlynge

into Cornehill by Leaden hal, to the house of one Mutuas a Frencheman or Pycarde borne, which was a greate bearer of Frenchemen, were they pyckpursses, or howe euell disposicion soeuer they were of, and within hys gate, called Grenegate, dwelled dyuerse Frenchmen that kalendred Worsted, contrary to the kynges lawes: & all they were so borne out by the same Mutuas, yt no mā durst medle w[ith] them, wherfore he was sore hated, & if the people had found him in their fury, they would haue striken of his head; but whē they foūd hym not, the water men, & certayn young priestes that were there fell to riflynge: some ranne to Blāchechapelton, & brake the straūgers houses, & threwe shooes and bootes into the strete: This from .x. or .xi. of the clocke, continued these ryotous people, durynge, which cyme a knight called syr Thomas parr, in great hast went to the Cardinall & tolde him of thys ryot, which incōtinent strengthened his house with men & ordinaunce. And after, this knight roade to the kyng to Richemōd, & made ye report much more then it was: Wherfore the king hastely sent to Lōdō, & was truly aduertised of the matter, & how that the ryot was ceassed, 8c many of the doers apprehēded. But while this ruffling cōtinued, syr Richard Cholmeley knyght, Lietenaunt of the Towre, no great frende [t]o the citie, in a frantyke fury losed a certayne peces of ordinaunce, & shot into ye citie, which did litle harme, howbeit his good wil apered. About .iii. of the clocke, these ryotous persons seuered and went to their places of resorte, & by the waye they were taken by the Mayre and the heddes of ye citie, and some sent to the Towre, and some to Newgate, and some to the Counters, to the number of .iii. C. some fled, and specially the watermen and priestes, & seruyng men, but the poore prentices were taken. About fyue of the clocke, the cries of Shrewesbury and Surrey, which had harde of this ryot, came to London with suche strength as they had, so dyd the Innes of court, and diuerse noble men: but or they came, all the ryot was ceased, and many taken as you haue heard.[4]

[4] Edward Halle, *The Vnion of the two noble and illustre famelies of Lancastre &*

Halle's memorial account—or reconstruction—of Evil May Day is thus similar to and divergent from the account in the ballad. This may be because Halle was an unswerving admirer of the Tudor monarchy and a strong supporter of Henry VIII in all significant matters. His work, *The Vnion of the two noble and illustre famelies of Lancastre & Yorke* (1548) became, for much of the century, the dominant memory; the chronicles of Grafton, Stow, and Holinshed are all largely redactions. His memory became the cultural norm.

So, for instance, Holinshed records in 1577,

> And then the Recorder and sir Thomas More late vndershirife of London, and nowe of the kings counsaile, came to the Guylde hall halfe houre before nine of the clocke, and there shewed the pleasure of the Kings Counsayle, whereupon euerye Alderman sent to hys warde that no man should styre after seuen of the clock out of his house, but to keepe his doores shut, and his seruants within, tyll nine of the clocke in the morning...
>
> The Maior and Sherifes were present there [in Cheapside], and made proclamation in the kings name, but nothing was obeyed. Herewith being gathered in plumpes, they ran through S. Nicholas Shambles, and at Saint Martines gate, there mette with them sir Thomas More, and other, desiring them to go to their lodgings. And as they were thus entreating, and had almoste perswaded the people to departe, they within Saint Martyns threw out stones and battes, so that they hurt diuerse persons, that were ther with sir Thomas Moore, perswading the rebellious persons to ceasse, insomuche as at length one Nicholas Downes a Sergeant of armes being there with the sayde sir Thomas Moore, and sore hurt amongst other, in a furie, cryed downe with them, and then all the misruled persons ranne to the doores and windowes of the houses within saint Martines, and spoiled all that they found.[5]

York (1548), sigs. 3L1-3L2.

John Stow merely remarks, in *The Annales of England* (1592), that "the Recorder and sir Thomas More, late undershriue of London, and nowe of the kinges Counsell came to the Guild-Hall, halfe an hour before nyne of the clocke, and there shewed the pleasure of the Kings Counsell" (sig. 314), as Holinshed had, and then goes on,

> Herewith being gathered in plumps, they ranthrough Nicholas Shambels, and at S. Martins gate, there met with then sir Thomas More, & other, desiring them to go to their lodgings: and as they were thus entreating and had almost perswaded the people to depart, they within S. Martins threwe out stones & bats, so that they hurt honest persons, that were with sir Thomas More, perswading the rebellious persons to cease: insomuch as at length, one Nicholas Dennis a Serieant at armes, being there sort hurt, in a furie cried downe with them, and then al the misruled persons ran to the doores and windows of the houses within Saint Martins, and spoyled all that they found (sig. 314v).

It is worth remarking that Stow, closest in time to the play *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore,* emphasizes More proportionally in his account. But in all other ways he agrees with his predecessors; their nearly identical cultural memory and historical record argues a strong, perhaps impermeable, tradition. The play, moreover, reinforces this shared understanding of London apprentices rising against foreign laborers who have taken their jobs from them and found favor with the City of London. The play dramatizes the rioters' position by having their leader, John Lincoln, issue a petition on their behalf:

[5] Raphael Holinshed, *The Last volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande*, 1577 ed., pp. 1500-01.

(Lin) reads <to you> all the worshipfull Lords and maisters of this Cittie, that will takke compassion ouer the poore people your neighbours, and also of the greate importa<b>le h<ur>ts, losses and hinderaunces, wherof proceedeth extreame pouertie to all the K<in>gs subiects, that inhabite this Cittie and subburbs of the same. ffor so <it> is that Aliens and straungers eate the bread from the fatherlesse children, and take the liuing from all the Artificers, and the entercourse from all Merchan<ts wherby pouertie is so much encreased, that euery man bewayleth the miserie< of other, for crafts men be brought to beggerie, and Merchants to needines. wherfore, the premisses considered, the redresse must be of the cōmons, knit and vnited to one parte. And as the hurt and damage greeueth all men, so much all men see to their willing power for remedie, and not suffer the sayde Aliens in their wealth, and the naturall borne men of this region to come to confusion.[6]

So far, so good. The play reinforces the concerns of the apprentices and the native laborers of London and accuses the foreign laborers of bringing them to desperate straits. But Addition II would reconfigure cultural memory rather than reinforce it. Instead of taking prisoners, the play would have Sheriff Thomas More appease their anger through a speech of conciliation, handle the matter verbally rather than physically.

MOOR Let me sett vp berore yor thoughts good freinds
on supposytion which if yo^{u} will marke
yo^{u} shall pceaue howe horrible a shape
yor ynnovation beres, first tis a sinn
which oft thappostle did forwarne vs of vrging obedienc

[6] *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore*, ed. W. W. Greg, p. 4. I will cite the Greg text for the Malone Society throughout this essay.

to aucthory<ty...
nay certainly yo^{u} ar
for to the king god hath his offyce lent
of dread of Iustyce, power and Comaund
hath bid him rule, and willd yo^{u} to obay
and to add amplier matter. to this he [god] hath not [le]
only lent the king his figure his throne [his] sword, but
gyven him his owne name
calls him a god on earth, what do yo^{u} then
rysing gainst him that god himseaIf enstalls
but ryse against god, what do yo^{u} to yor sowles
in doing this o desperat [ar] as you are (pp. 76-77).

It is not simply a matter of denying the divine right of the king (and his absolute authority derived from God) but for More a matter of high treason.

.... TELL ME BUT THIS what rebell captaine
as mutynes ar incident, by his name
can still the rout who will obay [th] a traytor
or howe can well that p[ro]clamation sounde
when ther is no adicion but a rebell
to quallyfy a rebell, youle put downe straingers
kill them cutt their throts possesse their howses
and leade the matie of lawe in liom
to slipp him lyke a hound; [saying] [alas alas] say nowe the king
as he is clement, yf thoffendor moorne
shoold so much com to short of your great trespas

as but to banysh you , whether woold you go.

what Country by the nature of yor error

shoold gyve you harber go you to ffraunc or flanders

to any Iarman p[ro]vince, [to] spane or portigall

nay any where [why you] that not adheres to Ingland

why you must needs be straingers « woold you be pleasd

to find a nation of such barbarous temper

that breaking out in hiddious violence

would not afoord you , an abode on earth

whett their detested knyves against yor throtes

spurne you lyke doggs, and lyke as yf that god

owed not nor made not you , nor that the elaments

wer not all appropriat to [ther] Comforts

to which Lincoln, clearly responding for all of his forces, answers, "weele be ruld by you master moor yf youle stand our freind to p[ro]cure our p[ar]don" (pp. 77-78), which, of course, he accomplishes. This is a profound moment in the play, for this reconfigured dialogue of Moore not only quells the riot. It ***rewrites cultural history.*** The firm hold of a relatively singular cultural memory upheld by the chronicles collapses into a single speech of reconciliation.

But the reversal here is a double one, for the playwright of Addition II that provides the climax to Evil May-Day in *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* is returning to the history of England. It is just that the history he chooses **is** not the traditional one beginning with Halle, but the earlier one by Polydore Vergil that had somehow dropped out of the cultural memory of Tudor history.

> The year 1517 from Christ's birth was now at hand, when great disturbances in the city of London were made by the "apprentices" ....

These apprentices, indeed, usually carried on a struggle with the foreign craftsmen and merchants, because they were especially envious of their skill in buying and selling, although neither party could defend this without being greatly in the wrong. This may be learnt from Plato and the Stoics, according to Cicero, who in book I *De officiis* writes as follows:

> "But since, as Plato puts it so well, we are not born for ourselves alone, but our country, our parents and our friends make claims upon a share of our being; and, as the Stoics think, everything which is produced on earth is made for the use of man; moreover men are born for the sake of men in order that they may all co-operate to help one another; in this we should follow the lead of nature, render services to the community by a mutual exercise of duties, by giving and receiving, and thus by our skill, labour and abilities bind together the society of mankind." Thus Cicero.[7]

Whereas the general view of Thomas More as an early humanist scholar of classical thought has been thought to rest in the humanistic chronicle of Halle and his successors, *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* returns us to the historic More whose early study of Plato, Ficino, and Neoplatonism and whose practice of Ciceronian rhetoric supplied a different way of managing government. In the play's cultural history,

[7] "Aderat iam annus natalis Christi MDXVII, cum turbae magnae fiunt in Londinense ciuitate a paremptitiis, ...Ii sane paremptitii simultates utplurinum cum artificibus et mercatoribus externis gerunt, quia aemuli emendi uendendique artis praecipue sunt, quamuis neutri causari queant, quin ualde peccent, quod cognosci licet ex Platone et Stoicis, teste Cicerone, qui libro de officiis primo ita scribi: Sed quoniam, ut praeclare dictum est a Platone, non nobis solum nati sumus, sed ortus nostri partem patria, partem parentes uendicant, partem amici, atque ut placet Stoicis, quae in terris gignuntur, ad usum hominum omnia creari, homines autem hominum causa esse generatos, ut ipsi inter se alii aliis prodesse possent: in hoc debemus naturam ducem sequi, et communes utilitates in medium afferre, mutatione officiorum, dando, accipiendo, tum artibus, tum opera, tum facultatibus deuincere hominum inter homines societatem. Hactenus Cicero." Trans. Denys Hay, Camden Series 74 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1950), pp. 242-43.

then, Moore is historically grounded in a way that leaps over, and contradicts, generally received opinion. He is a man whose humanism is classically defined rather than politically oriented, and his subject is not justice but peace, not confrontation and punishment, but reconciliation and mercy. Remembering history has meant re-membering it.

III

Both culturally memorialized histories of Thomas More are thus initiated by Tudor chronicles. They are, in that sense, traditional. The note censoring the play's dramatization of Evil May Day, then, may have come as something of a surprise. But Edmond Tilney's notation in the margin of the manuscript as the Queen's Master of the Revels, whose job it was to review all plays for the government to see if there was any difficulty with them, is inked in with & forceful clarity.

> <Leave ou> /ye insur<rection>/ wholy &/ ye Cause ther eff & /<b>egin wt Sr Thom: / Moore att ye mayors session/ wt a reportt afterwards/ off his good servic'/ don being' Shriue off London/ vppon a mutiny Agaynst ye Lumbards only by A Short/ reportt & nott otherwise/ att your own perrilles/ E. Tylney (p. ln.).

William B. Long has remarked that these lines, put at the very start of the play, constitute "the longest inscription by a censor in a manuscript of a surviving pre-Restoration play," adding, "Tilney crossed out six speech-heads to squeeze this in, and he took a remarkable amount of trouble to tell the playwrights how to revise the play to avoid difficulty."[8] He did this by censoring seventeen instances of the word "stranger"; fourteen of them are marked for deletion (although not all by Tilney himself). Tilney crossed out "stranger" and "Frenchman" and wrote in "Lombard," clearly wanting Lombards rather than the French, Dutch, or alien workers mentioned because

[8] Long, p. 45. Tilney's notation is taken from Greg.

Lombardy had virtually become the enemy as Spanish territory, part of the Spanish threat.

Not only a Spanish threat, strengthened and prepared for following the defeat of the Armada in 1588, but, Long writes,

> the religious waverings of Henri of Navarre were of paramount importance to the English government. [And] there were other problems as well sometimes more immediately disturbing if not of such great consequence. In a society with no standing army and in a city with no metropolitan police force, a large group of unruly citizens could present a formidable threat to the safety of life, limb, and property, if not to the stability of the government itself. The possible problem of a crowd had to do with its size and with its often mercurial temper, and those in turn often were controlled by that elusive element, public opinion. Elizabeth and Burghley were particularly adept in influencing—even in moulding and controlling—this factor.... Homilies and publicly read prayers were often-used methods of policy. (Burghley himself wrote a number of such prayers) (pp. 45-46).

But even before the Armada, in 1586, William Fleetwood, Recorder of the City of London, interrogated apprentices "conspiring an insurrection in this cittie against the Frenche and Dutche," as he wrote Burghley, thinking that "all things as lyke unto Yll May Day, as could be devised in all manner of cyrcumstances, *mutatis mutandis*, they wanted nothing but execution."[9] The cultural memory of Evil May Day had stuck, and it had stuck because alien workers were still competing with and undermining the practices and incomes of native laborers and their conflict remained intense, perhaps incendiary.

Moreover, the native laborers were motivated by and contributed to a widespread mood of discontent. It took many forms, according to Keith Wrightson:

[9] Quoted by A. V. Pollard in *Shakespeare's Hand in the Play of "Sir Thomas More"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), p. 37.

> public presentment; private litigation; mediation and formal arbitration. It extended also to more fugitive forms of political action: gossip; verbal abuse; anonymous threats; libellous attacks on the credit of opponents; the use of gestures and symbols; the cacophonous processional mockery of 'rough music'; insubordinate grumbling, footdragging, 'playing dumb.'[10]

There was a body of writing in support of what is now thought of as resistance theory. The momentum had begun building at least since the early work of two Marian exiles, John Ponet and Christopher Goodman, whose radical political thought argued that disobedience could on occasion be justified. According to his *Short Treatise of Politic Power* (1556), Ponet claims that

> A commonwealth may stand well enough and flourish, albeit there be no kings, but contrary wise without a commonwealth there can be no king. Commonwealths and realms may live, when the head be cut off, and may put on a new head, that is, make them a new governor, when they see their old head seek too much of his own will and not the wealth of the whole body, for the which he was only ordained (sig. D7).

Leaders are always subject to policies and policies should take the people, such as London merchants and apprentices, into account. Christopher Goodman's *How Superior Powers Ought to be Obeyed*, published in Geneva in 1558, argues that docile followers of evil leaders are just as evil themselves: they "suffer themselves like brute beastes rather than reasonable creatures, to be led and drawen where so ever their Princes commandements have called" (pp. 145-46). In such an environment, then, it is easy to see why a play about a constantly remembered insurrection in the city of London, whose circumstances

[10] Keith Wrightson, "The Politics of the Parish in Early Modern England," in *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England*, ed. Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox, and Steve Hindle (London: Macmillan, 1996), p. 12.

were still not alleviated, would be topical and why—perhaps because of More's role in quelling the 1517 riot—a reenactment might take the form of a play about Thomas More's life.

Long summarizes scholarly evidence and opinion when he remarks that it seems most likely *Moore* was planned by Lord Strange's Men for performance in the 1592-1593 season (p. 48). The daily activity of Strange's Men can be tracked through the records kept by Philip Henslowe in his *Diary*. The company was especially drawn to plays on English themes: nearly 40 per cent of the 105 performances from February to June 1592 were related to English history or romance. There was *Henry VI, A Knack to Know a Knave* (also about an English king). *Harry of Cornwall, Sir John Mandeville, Friar Bacon, A Looking Glass for London and England*. In addition, Strange's Men is the company named on the title-pages of *The Famous Victories of Henry V, The Troublesome Reign of John, The True Tragedy of Richard III, The Old Wives' Tale, Selinus, King Leir, Clyomon and Clamydes*. But their attitude toward history seems to have been mixed. Scott McMillin notes that

> Lord Strange's men, originating (as far as we know) out of commercial interests rather than royal fiat, played a repertory of varied and unpredictable implications. Some of their plays are conservative in a stern, steel-ribbed, moralistic mode: *A Knack to Know a Knave*, for example, or *A Looking Glass for London and England*. This is not the political conservatism of the Queen's men. It is a moral and religious conservatism which in the aftermath of the Martin Marprelate uproar of the late 1580s would have seemed provocative and bold. It is, I think, the provocation rather than the conservatism that was characteristic of Lord Strange's men... Strange's men, while they performed all kinds of plays and were certainly not engaged (as the Queen's men were) in a deliberately political program, courted controversy and sensation more willingly than any other company of the 1580s and 1590s. Name the most sensational plays of the Elizabethan theatre: most of them will have been staged by Lord Strange's men at their London playhouse, the Rose. A reasonable list would include *The Massacre at Paris, The Spanish Tragedy, 1 Henry VI*, and *The Jew*

> *of Malta,* all performed by Strange's men at the Rose during the seven months from June 1592 into January 1593. These are drastic plays—drastic in dramaturgy and in political boldness, for they seize on controversial subjects and vivify them with new techniques of stagecraft that could not help but draw crowds.[11]

Of the playwrights connected with the company and the Rose, Thomas Kyd was arrested on suspicion of treason and Christopher Marlowe was killed under dubious circumstances in a brawl at a Deptford tavern.

Furthermore, the play came at a most critical time, a flashpoint in London economic history. On June 11, 1592, a riot of apprentices occurred when they assembled not in London but at a play in Southwark, just across the river. The cause was offensive behavior: the Knight Marshal's men entered the home of a feltmonger's servant with their daggers drawn and took him and others off to prison without charging them. But resentment had been building for some time. Foreign craftsmen had not only kept arriving as refugees from religious persecution on the Continent, but the government had actually made allowances for them to produce and sell their goods. Their safety and right to work had been urged on the Queen by ambassadorial influence, and the Privy Council had responded on June 2 when they decided to delay all "proceedings" against the foreigners, or strangers, and began an inquiry into their number and dwelling places. Such a census was conducted in secret out of fear of inciting a reaction from English tradesmen and apprentices; they too had on their minds the cultural memory of the 1517 uprising. Thus the apprentices' riot of June 11, 1592, seemed to the government ominous; by the spring of 1593 strangers were openly threatened with attack by apprentices and journeymen—one prediction was for a force of 2336—so that the Privy Council issued an order for the apprehension and examination (and, if necessary, even torture) of anyone suspected of planning such an insurrection. In such a condition, then, "Strange's men were ready to

[11] McMillin, p. 60. Play-titles here are taken from McMillin, p. 67, p. 60n; see also the discussion on pp. 67-68.

exploit a dangerous situation," McMillin sums, "and that they were ready to risk the displeasure of the authorities" in doing so (p. 69). In such a situation, then, Tilney's act of censorhip would come as no surprise.

What is surprising, however, at least at first, is that Tilney did not prevent performance of the play; he merely required the script to be amended. This is a point Long is at pains to make clear.

> Tilney made major changes to *Sir Thomas More* [sic]… scenes and passages found objectionable include "the prentices' rebellion (scene v, suppressed), violence against public authorities (scenes iv and vi, partly rewritten, partly toned down by the introduction of the clown), street fights among rival gangs (the Paternoster Row fray, suppressed and replaced by scene viii), and possible criticism of royal behaviour (More's speech in scene xiii, reworded by Chettle)." But these do not necessarily argue that Tilney was forbidding the play. On the contrary, … they show him making changes and cuts that **would allow the play** to go on …
>
> It is very important to note that if he were refusing licence, there would have been no reason either for the amount of specific directives here or for the additional directives later in the text. He noted "Mend Y^is^" opposite a passage about "the displeased commons of the Cittie" [lines 316-21, p. 12] and included for revision another section on the same page [lines 372-85, p. 13] by carefully placing a vertical line in the left margin. Civil discontent, apparently rather too sharply worded, was the problem here as well. In the passage where More refuses to sign the "Articles," Tilney wrote in the right margin "all alter" and drew a vertical line in the left margin indicating that lines 1246-75 [p. 42] are to be changed. He deleted nothing. He did order a revision of 25 percent of the

> scene. Significantly, he neither cut nor altered More's refusal to sign which is crucial to the whole play (p. 46).[12]

Tilney's perspective, from his cultural viewpoint, is that a play which shows an uprising which is put down by a town official and which results eventually in a pardon of all but one of the rioters is an example of obedience to the law. The play is equally instructive to city government and to those who enforce peace: it shows a way in which a sheriff can (and should) dispel a mob peacefully, by persuasion rather than by force. The displacement of physical action by verbal action, that is, is very much the point that can be taken from the play. It might well be, then, at the play's initial performances planned for 1593, *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* enlisted the historical memory to serve as a precedent for calming what might otherwise continue to be a smoldering situation.

In fact, obedience is what firmly joins the otherwise disparate halves of the play: the apprentices are called to obey the law in the first half; More is executed for not openly subscribing to the Act of Supremacy declared by Henry VIII in the second half. "The themes of Elizabethan chronicle plays were regularly developed through significant and often symbolic acts of great men," Long writes. "This play thus begins with More as the stable, wise, and honest public official, adds a series of events which show him also as a warm (and even affable) human being, and climaxes with the death even of such a one who in spite of his host of public and private virtues still must die because he had gone against the will of his sovereign" (p. 51). Whether noisy or silent, the play repeatedly concentrates on civil disobedience. When Moore is knighted as a reward for putting a stop to the 1517 insurrection, he tells Shrewsbury, who reports the honor to him, "I thanke his highnesse for thus honoring me." And again he is rewarded, and again he makes a point of his obedience:

> **Shrew,** This is but first taste of his princely fauour,

[12] He is quoting the essay by Melchiori; emphasis mine.

> for it hath pleased his high maiestie,
> (noating your wisedom and deseruing meritt,)
> to put this staffe of honor in your hand,
> for he hath chose you of his priuie Councell.
>
> **Moore.** My Lord, for to denye my Soueraignes bountie,
> were to drop precious stones into the heapes
> whence first they came, [from whence they'd nere returnes,]
> to vrdge my imperfections in excuse,
> were all as stale as custome. No my Lord,
> my seruice is my Kings, good reason why:
> since life or death hangs on our Soueraignes eye (p. 19).

The sentiment is shared a few lines later by John Lincoln, who is the only casualty of the 1517 insurrection in the play. His last words at the gallows are:

> **Lin.** Then to all you that come to viewe mine end,
> I must confesse, I had no ill intent,
> but against such as wrongd vs ouer much.
> And now I can perceiue, it was not fit,
> that priuate men should carue out their rederesse,
> which way they list, no, learne it now by me
> obedience is the best in eche degree.
> And asking mercie meekely of my King,
> I paciently submit me to the lawe (p. 22).

The gallows speech thus reinforces Moore's long monologue quelling the riot—

> **MOOR** [sic] yor ynnovation beres, first tis a sinn

which oft thappostle did forwarne vs of brging obedienc to

aucthory< ty...

for to the king god hath his offyce lent

of dread of Iustyce, power and Comaund

hath bid him rule, and willd yo^{u} to obay (pp. 76-77)

—but is meant to signal the parallel situation when More refuses the King himself by refusing to sign the Oath of Supremacy:

Moore, Sir, tell his highnesse, I entreate

some time for to bethinke my of this taske.

In the meane while, I doo resigne mine office,

into my Soueraignes hands.

and Surrey responds, underlining Moore's disobedience:

Sur. <now let vs to our Soueraigin>e.

this strange> that my <lord> Chauncellour should refuse

the dutie that the lawe of God bequeathes

vnto the King (pp. 42-43).

Surrey's final speech, ending the play, hammers on the same point:

Sur. A very learned woorthie Gentleman

Seales errour with his blood. Come, weele to Courte.

Lets sadly hence to perfect vnknowne fates,

whilste he tends prograce to the state of states (p. 65).

The visual, dramaturgical mirroring of Lincoln and then Moore led to execution emphasizes the play's significance in 1593 and explains why Tilney wanted to tone down the play, but not prevent its being staged.

IV

Then, suddenly, memorializing the history of Thomas Moore seems to have taken another direction: there is no record of any performance in 1593, while Strange's Men were in turn sidelined, their company relegated to only three performances a week, and those at the comparatively remote Newington Butts playhouse while, McMillin notes, the Rose "stood empty" (p. 70). Despite Tilney's careful instructions for making the play acceptable to Elizabeth's government, *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* seems to have appeared dangerous once more.

For the situation that the play written by Anthony Munday in collaboration with four or five others was insufficient and, being insufficient, could yet initiate more riots. The *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic* is thick with references to merchant strangers throughout much of the 1590s, beginning with licenses and pardons of alienation on November 29, 1591. Still more urgent are related matters recorded in the *Acts* of the Privy Council. In March, 1597, the Privy Council relates an incident that is remarkably close to the one recounted in *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore:*

> A letter to the Lord Maiour of London. Whereas there was a lewde and vyle ticket or placarde set up upon some post in London purportinge some determynacion and intencion the apprentyces should have to attempt some vyolence on the strangers, and your Lordship as we understande hath by your carefull endevour apprehended one that is to be suspected thought likelie to have written the same. Because oftentymes it doth fall out of soche lewde beginninges that further mischheife doth ensue yf in tyme it be not wyselie prevented, wee have thought good to praie your Lordship to cause the person by you apprehended and committed upon suspition to have written that libell to be strictlie and very carefullie examined of his meaninge and purpose to make that writinge, who were any waie privie to the same and did give him advice or incouragement, and what he is hable to discover of that facte, and yf there shalbe pregnant matter to argue him to be guiltie of the writinge of the saide placarde, and yet he will not by faire meanes be broughte to utter his

> knowledge, wee thincke it convenient he shalbe punyshed by torture used in like cases *and so* compelled to reveale the same. Wee truste you are so carefull in the government of the citty as yf some lewde persons had soche wicked purpose to attempt any thinge against strangers that by your carefull forsighte the same shalbe prevented. And herein we praie you to certefie us what you shall further understande and learne by th'examinacion of this lewde fellow or by anie other meanes.[13]

At about the same time, in a letter to the mayor of Southampton, the Council was also reporting a petition from

> one William Terry, a strainger and an inhabitant of that towne of Southampton whereby he dothe informe us that havinge exersised the xvj^en yeres a trade in that towne in pressinge of cloth surges, and of late others, straingers borne, which have lived onely by dyinge of those clothes (as ys now informed) doe bothe use that trade of pressinge and also of dyinge the same clothes, to the inrichinge of them selves and hinderance of the poore suppliant, his wife and famely, who hath as they say no other trade. Upon this humble suite of the same Terry wee have thought good to referr the consideracion of this matter unto you, and doe require you, after you have duly considered the cause of this complainte and shall finde yt inconvenient that the dyers of the said clothes should bothe dye and presse that kind of stuffe and to use twofaculties under one, then wee thincke yt meete you take order that the dyers maie be inhibited to presse these kinde of sergies and to keepe themselves to their owne facultie which they first used, whereby the suppliant maie followe and exercise his trade to the maintenance of his family and charge.[14]

[13] *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, ed. John Roche Dasent (London, 1904), XXVII, 187.
[14] *Acts* XXVII, 172. A cautious postscript is added: "If you thincke yt not convenient to be don then wee pray you to certefy us your opynion."

This is far from being an isolated instance in the *Acts* of the Privy Council.

But the whole matter doubtless impressed itself on the London playwrights when a fellow writer, Thomas Deloney, himself an affected tradesman, protested on behalf of the city weavers in an infamous letter co-signed by William Muggins and one Willington which sent all three of them to Newgate. Their joint letter, a petition by the yeomanry "To the Minister and Elders of the French Church in London," was also sent to the Lord Mayor and aldermen; it outlined specific complaints against alien weavers who "soe unkindly use themselves towardes us that by all the bad Courses they can devise they onely seeke their owne private Lucre without any Christian regard of the native borne of our Country and without respect of the liberties and priviledges graunted to the Freemen of this honorable Cittye, to the great and amazing endamaginge of the Comon wealth and to the utter spoile and begerrie of the Queenes leige people of this faculty"[15] By then alien malpractice had become general and pervasive—"they will exceede and kepe more Loomes and Servants than any Freeman dare doe, and rather then they will be bridled of their will they runne into the Countrye five or sixe myles from the Cittye out of our Liberties, and there malitiously kepe and doe what they list" (fol. 126)—but the complaints are specific:

> 1. First, many of them kepe Apprentices and Loomes twyce or thryce as many as they ought whereby such an intollerable multitude of workemen are growne, that nowe one is not able to live by another.
>
> 2. Secondly, they doe not refuse to teache their Countrymen, which new come over, the Arte of Silke weaveinge, though before they were a Taylor, a Cobler, or a Joyner, and theis alsoe by and by take houses and kepe as many Servants as the rest. And by this meanes such follower that never

[15] *The Weavers' Company Records*, Book 3, fols. 125-26. The entry is reprinted in full by Frances Consitt as Appendix 22 of *The London Weavers' Company* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), pp. 312-16.

served daye for the trade have as great Comoditye by our Occupacion as ourselves that served 7, 8, 9 or 10 yeares for yt…

3. Thirdly, they sett Wooemen and Maydes at worke, whoe, when they are become perfect in the Occupacion doe marry with men of contrary trade, and soe bringe that which should be our lyvinges to be the mainteynanace of those that never deserved for it, and theis likewise increase an infinite number.

4. Fourthly, they have opened and discovered the secrete of our Occupacion to their worke Maisters, that nowe they are growne as Cunninge in any worke as ourselves, and by this meanes have we alsoe ben made stande and drudge unto them, to labour and toyle all the weeke for a morsell of bread, insoemuch as it is growne to be a proverbe amongst them—that is Silkeweavers will kepe themselves true, the Silkemen will kepe them poor enough—and they have nothing failed to fulfill this proverb (fols. 127-28).

There are additional minor grievances. Weavers from other countries choke the London market with goods made at Norwich, Sandwich, and Canterbury, contrary to current regulation and practice (fol. 129); they import silk goods to undersell local products "in great aboundaunce even to the very Cuttinge of our throates that are poore Silkeweavers and Freemen of the Cittye" (fol. 150); they are not liable to duties and rates. The complaint that workers make in Addition II of *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* also surfaces,

He whoe was brought up in the Cittye, served many yeares to have the pryviledge thereof, whoe is alsoe sworne to all manner of Charges, whoe payes all dutyes belongeinge to a Subject, being both himself and all that hath readye to doe the Queene and the Cittye service, when he Cometh with his worke, alas, he cometh too late; the Straunger hath supplied his roome (fol. 129).

Nor do matters show any sign of slackening. The *CSP* records on December 6 (?1599) a deposition from one John Potter taken before the justice of the peace in London against the merchant stranger Nicholas Bowdeson, who "has during this year sent 1,800l. beyond the seas to the Cardinal of Austria," while in May, 1600, there is a

Suit of the Earl of Cumberland to the Queen, for licence for 11 years, on rent of 500l. a year, to buy and sell yearly in the realm 1,000 sarpcloths of wool, without conversion into stuff, with prohibition to aliens to buy wool during that time without his licence, and grant to him of the moiety of all forfeitures, accruing from transgressions. Also for the sole licencee during that time to transport white broad cloths undressed, with a smiliar moiety of forfeitures, provided that all transported by strangers pay double duties.[16]

In such an atmosphere, staging *Moore* could only be provocative and against the interests of the city of London and the nation as a whole. Aligned, perhaps, with the notorious uprising of the Earl of Essex in 1601, when on a Sunday in early February, he assembled 200 to 300 of his followers to march against the Queen at Whitehall, picking up dissident London workers along the way, the notion (and practice) of disobedience was too dangerous, too seditious, to perform. Once thought suitable by Edmond Tilney, once it was revised as he requested, *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* now seemed unstageable, the cultural memorialisation relegated to the dustbin of history.

V

Why, then, was such a dangerous play apparently revived in 1603? This sudden change may have been caused by the change in the

[16] Cf. the abuses discussed in *APC* XXX, 602-04, 606-07, 671-72; XXXI, 78, 111, 443-44; and the regulations cited in XXX, 417-18 and XXXI, 473-74.

monarchy, moving from the Tudor to the Stuart dynasty.[17] Unlike the reign of Elizabeth I, characterized by anxiety not only of London riots but of Spanish incursion—a fear that caused her to mount a widespread espionage system under Sir Francis Walsingham and a pursuit of recusants under her master of torture, Richard Topcliffe—James I promoted himself as the "rex pacificus," ready to reconcile religious factions within England to make peace with Spain. The very dangerous recusants—whose rebellion would not forcefully surface until the Gunpowder Plot of 1605—were largely ignored (or at least demoted in the national perspective) and the long-standing oral tradition concerning Thomas More—where he was the subject of jest-books, like his fellow Catholic John Skelton—came to the fore. Current biographies of More continually cast him in the role of a jester. *The Vita et Illustre Martyrium Thomae Mori* of Thomas Stapleton, for instance, records one of the trickster More's jokes at some length:

> One day, when More was on the bench of magistrates, some pickpockets were brought before them. Those whose purses had been stolen were complaining of the losses they had sustained, when one of the magistrates, a very dignified old gentleman, with some asperity began to lecture them for not guarding their purses more carefully, and for providing, by their negligence and thoughtlessness, an opportunity for rogues of this kind to exercise their trade. Thus did he inveigh against those for whom he should have given judgment. A speech of this nature was little to More's taste, and accordingly, as the case was adjourned, he had one of the thieves brought from the prison privately to him that night, and arranged with him that at the next session he should steal the purse of the magistrate who had thus inveighed against the innocent, as he sat in court. The thief was quite willing, and More promised him his favour for this one occasion. When, then, More and the other magistrates were again assembled in court, the thief was one of the first to be called upon to answer the charge made against him. He replied that he could clear himself if he were allowed to whisper some secret information to one of the magistrates. Being asked to choose whichever one he wished, he fixed upon that particular old gentleman. Coming close to him to whisper his story into his ear, he skillfully cut off the well-filled purse which was hanging at his side. When he had finished what he had to say, he returned to his place and gave a sign to More that he had succeeded. A little while after More suggested that help should be given to some poor fellow who was in danger of death and permitted a public collection to be made on his behalf. It began with him and his magistrates. The old gentleman, wishing to give an alms, then discovered that he had lost his purse: with shame and annoyance he averred that he certainly had had it when he took his place on the bench. More then suggested that he should not be too severe on others who suffered a like misfortune and bade the thief restore the purse.[18]

[17] McMillin offers an alternative explanation to mine, namely that Alleyn returned to the stage and wanted to perform his old plays (see p. 82).

The jest is the subject of scene iii of the play in which it is said that Moore is "a merie man" (p. 11). It is merry Moore, too, who exchanges roles with his servant Randall to fool Erasmus on their first meeting (pp. 26, 84-85), who chastises Faulkner for his long hair (p. 28). Stapleton records two more :

> [1] At his imprisonment, on his entry into the Tower, when according to custom he was asked by the porter for his upper garment he handed him his cap. ("This certainly," he said, "rests in the highest place.") What the porter really demanded, with the warrant of custom, was his cloak (p. 220; *Moore*, pp. 54-55).

> [2]When he was going up on to the scaffold where he was to die, he stretched out his hand for help: "I pray you," he said,

[18] Thomas Stapleton, *Vita et Illustre Martyrium Thomae Mori, Angliae Quondam Svpremi Cancellarii,* trans. Philip E. Hallett (1928) and ed. by E. E. Reynolds (1966) as reprinted in *Sources of Four Plays Ascribed to Shakespeare,* ed. G. Harold Metz (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989), pp. 218-19.

> "see me safe up: as for my coming down I will not trouble anyone" (p. 220; *Moore*, p. 63).

These and many other jests in Stapleton may be borrowed from the far more popular biography of More by his son-in-law William Roper, but they were standard fare concerning More's life by 1603.

Merry More may be elided with the more serious More who preaches peace at the 1517 riot (much as James I was preaching peace and toleration in 1603) in the central panel of *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* when Moore entertains the Lord Mayor of London with a play called *The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom*:

> **Moore.** My good Lord Cardinalles players, I thanke them for it,
> play vs a play, to lengthen out your welcome,
> [my good Lord Maior, and all my other freends.]
> They say it is the mariage of wit and wisedome,
> A theame of some importe, how ere it prooue:
> but if Arte faile, weele inche it out with looue (p. 34).

When the actor playing Vice disappears to find a beard, Moore himself volunteers for the part, dramatizing in later life an incident in all the popular biographies of More's childhood when

> [He] among many other tokens of his quicke and pregnant witt, being very yonge, would yet notwithstanding vpon the soden stepp in among the Christmas players, and forthwith, without any other forethinking or premeditation, playe a part with them himselfe, so fitly, so plausibly and pleasantly, that the Auditours tooke muche admiration, and more comfort and pleasure thereof then of all the players besydes; and especially the Cardinall, vpon whose table he wayted.[19]

[19] *The life and death of Sr Thomas Moore, knight, sometymes Lord high Chancellor of England, written in the tyme of Queene Marie by Nicholas Harpsfield, L. D.*, ed.

Surely it is suggestive that Moore volunteers to play the Vice, although he will later claim the role to be that of Good Counsel, for at this point his character in the play can be seen as wholly ambiguous. Indeed, "ffollie waites on witt, as the shaddow<e on the bodie," he tells the actor playing Inclination, the Vice, "and where witt is ripest, there follie is readiest" (p. 34). Such ambiguity seems strange in apposition to John Fisher, the Bishop of Rochester, whose execution a little later seems to predict Moore's, for Rochester is of a singular mind:

> **Rochest.** Your kinde perswasions, honorable Lords,
> I can but thanke ye for, but in this brest
> there liues a soule, that aimes at higher things,
> then temporarie pleasing earthly Kings (p. 46);

and, in the following scene, Moore confesses to his wife, his son-in-law, and Catesby that his earlier secular life—unlike Fisher's—represented "painted dayes, only for showe" (p. 50). And his sense not only of belief but of **theatricality,** of a kind of two-mindedness bordering hypocrisy, returns at the moment of his execution;

> **Moore** : My Lord, He bequeathe this legacie to the hangman, and doo it instantly. I confesse his maiestie hath bin euer good to me, and my offence to his highnesse, make<s me of a state pleader, a stage player, (though I am olde, and haue a bad voyce) t<o act this last Sceane of my tragedie (p. 64).

What the progressive characterization of Moore shows, then, is a kind of double-sense which aligns him finally not with the martyr More nor with merry More, but with his fellow Catholics who, as recusants under Elizabeth and James, maintained a kind of duplicity of their own, their outward loyalty to the monarch hiding their deeper allegiance to the Church of Rome.

Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock (London: EETS, O.S. 186, 1922), 10:28-11:9, quoted by Melchiori, p. 93.

J. Duncan M. Derrett has, in fact, suggested the contemporary Catholic interpretation of More's death, castigating "'popular' reconstructions [which] utilise inferior material", and drawing instead on "recent discoveries" which have "antiquated the accounts of the trial which appear in the better-known biographies."[20] A particularly telling response, according to Derett, sent to Paris within ten days of More's death,

> *merely says,* "... ac vos soli nullam habetis potestatem statuendi quicquam absque reliquorum Christianorum consensu, quod sit contra unitatem et concordiam religionis Christiane." ("And you have no jurisdiction to enact anything contrary to the unity and concord of the Christian faith without the consent of all other Christians.") The argument in general amounted to this, that the Act of Treasons was void, because it was enacted in support of the Act of Supremacy, which was itself void because Parliament had exceeded its legislative competence. There is no doubt but that More believed it was very doubtful, and he argued vigorously accordingly, whether the legislature of any one country could claim omnicompetence in matters which concerned the faith of all Christians (p. 49).

In other words, More's consistency lay in his fundamental belief in the supreme law of the Roman Church and his comments at the close of *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* was the kind of equivocation that Father Henry Garnet would later define and use on his behalf and those of the conspirators condemned in the Gunpowder Plot. Merry More was only half-saying what he believed, and the unvoiced second half of his confession, subordinating his allegiance to Henry VIII with a greater loyalty to the Church of Rome, would have sent him to Heaven with a clear (and clean) conscience.

[20] J. Duncan M. Derrett, "Thomas More and the Legislation of the Corporation of London," *The Guildhall Miscellany,* 2, no. 5 (1963), reprinted in *Essential Articles for the study of Thomas More*, ed. R, S. Sylvester and G. Marc'hadour (Hamden, Conn, 1977), p. 49.

But this view of Moore need not depend solely on Catholic doctrine and recusant practices. Once again, the *Anglicae Historiae* of Polydore Vergil may lie just behind *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore.* He lays the insurrection of 1517, through John Lincoln and those who taught him, directly at the feet of adherents to Catholicism. He continues the passage praising Plato and Cicero for their higher sense of a community of mankind,

> But sentiments of such a nature are sometimes condemned even by those whose duty it is to teach the people the Gospel and the laws of God, when in preaching from the pulpit they expound views full of sedition, bewailing (especially in London) the losses and damage by which the people are afflicted, because foreign merchants and craftsmen flock thither from distant places and snatch a large portion of the livelihood and wealth of the citizens. Thus it is that ignorant fellows ruin the commercial activity through which it comes about that the products of any people whatsoever seem to be themselves native among all peoples: for instance, wine is not native to England, yet the English nevertheless enjoy a great abundance of wine. From the ranks of these "scholars" came two monks, one a Dominican and the other a regular canon. Wishing at this time to deserve well of their country, they quickly stirred a multitude of people by their sermons, and—having stirred them up—equipped them with folly. They eagerly and repeatedly cried that such damage and loss, together with the very many other mischiefs of the foreigners, were no longer tolerable, so that the apprentices readily heard their orders and evil counsel (p. 243).[21]

[21] " Haec et eiusmodi fieri uetant interdum uel illi, qui populum debent euangelium legesque Dei docere, quando concionando ex suggestis uoces seditionis plenas emittunt, deplorantes praesertim Londini de plebis incommodis et iniuriis, quibus illa assidue afficatur, quod mercatores artificesque alienigenae ex longinquis partibus illuc adulent, bonamque uictus ac lucrorum partem e manibus ciuium rapiant: atque sic homes rudes tollunt rerum commercium, per quod fit, ut quicquid usquam gentium sit, illud ipsum apud omnes gentes natum uidatur. Verbi gratia,

Henry VIII's appointed chronicler thus places blame—as successive Protestant government in Tudor England would—on Catholics from the start. The arrogant certainty that Polydore finds in the two Dominicans is echoed in Moore's sentiments in the play. The collaborator who wrote Addition I gives to Moore these lines:

> O happy banishment from worldly pride
>
> when soules by priuate life are sanctified (p. 67)

while the playrights give to Moore near the end of the play these lines addressed to his immediate family:

> I must be gon, (God blesse you,)
>
> to talke with God, who now dooth call (p. 61).

Such lines may not only derive from Polydore, but also from the chief playwright of *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore,* Anthony Munday, whose anti-Catholicism could be overwhelming. In 1576, Munday was apprenticed to John Alde, becoming a freeman of the Drapers' Company, his deceased father's guild, in 1585. He spent three months in the English College at Rome in 1579, later writing about its customs; and in 1581 he began his anti-Catholic persecution in earnest by reporting on the trial and execution of the Jesuit priest Edmund Campion. For years he was an intelligencer for Walsingham on recusants and pursuivant to his "master" Richard Topcliffe, Elizabeth's notorious recusant-hunter and torturer; he also worked for Sir Thomas Heneage, treasurer of the chamber, who paid spies until his death in 1595. Munday wrote a number of anti-Catholic pamphlets and from 1588 to 1596 he styled himself "Anthony Munday, Messenger of Her

uinumin Anglia non nascitur, uino attamen Angli maxime abundant. Duo de numero istorum doctorum monachi alter Dominicanus alter Canonicus regularis, hoc tempore cupientes de patria bene mereri, ita concionando multitudinem cito concitauerunt, cocitatamque temeritare armarunt, certatim et frequenter clamantes non esse diutius perferenda tanta detrimenta atque damna, cum permultis allis externorum hominum maleficiis, ut eorum praeceptis ac talibus montiis facile aures paremptitorum patuerint" (p. 241).

Majesty's Chamber." Like Polydore Vergil before him, Munday was the government's writer-for-hire, and his reputation clearly marks his part in the authorship of *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore.* It lies, for instance, behind the scene concerning Faulkner in both its language and its structure:

> Methinkes this straunge and Ruffinlike disguise,
>
> fits not the follower of a secretarie.
>
> **Faulk.** My Lord, I weare my haire vppon a vow.
>
> **Shrew**. But for no penaunce of your sinnes I feare.
>
> **Sur.** No, hees no haire-cloth man, though he weare haire.
>
> **Moore.** ffaulkener, how long ist since you cutt your locks?
>
> **Faulk.** Three yeares my Lord.
>
> **Moore.** How long will be before your vow expire?
>
> **Faulk.** As many yeares as since my haire was cut.
>
> **Moore.** Sure, vowes are holy things, if they be made
>
> to good intent, and Sir, you shall not say,
>
> you were compelde by me to breake your vowe.
>
> But till the expiration of the same,
>
> because I will not haue ye walke the streetes,
>
> for euery man to stand and wunder at,
>
> I will cōmitt ye prisoner vnto Newgate.
>
> Except meane time, your conscience giue you leaue,
>
> to dispense with the long vow that you haue made
>
> Away with him (p. 28).

There is Munday's kind of genius here, in which holy vows are parodied in Faulkner's actions, but then compared to More's excessive reaction which parallels Faulkner is the kind of excessiveness of behavior biased (explicitly with Faulkner, implicitly with Moore)

precisely on vows. But More's action with Faulkner prepares the way for Shrewsbury and Surrey to return again to ask More for a vow supporting the Act of Supremacy which he will not give them and their sending him off to house arrest and, eventually, to the Tower of London (p. 41), But the whole play is structured by an increasing containment as McMillin has commented:

> The visual contrasts among these scenes are deliberate and clear. One motif follows the decline of the family group—-from the ceremony of the Lord Mayor's entertainment with its rich furnishings, to the lamenting scene with its humble seats, and then to the final gathering of the family in the bare furnishings of the prison scene. Another motif follows More through various public chambers—from the sessions court in scene ii, through the council chamber where he resigns, and again to the prison where the Chancellor of the state has become the state's captive (p. 101).

The overall structure of the play, then, to which all the collaborative authors addressed themselves, is from Moore's victory on Ill May Day to his defeat in the Tower of London.

Such decisive anti-Catholicism was unnecessary under Elizabeth, but it must have seemed increasingly warranted during the opening years of James's reign. But there was another reason for its new-found topicality in 1603. One indication may be found in John Speed's severe recension of Ill May Day in his account for his *Historie of Great Britaine* in 1611:

But the state of *Londons* Tradesmen prospered vnder his greatnesse nothing so well, for such was the concourse of strangers, and so much were they borne with, by the superiours, that they abused the English openly in the Markets, kept from a Citizen his owne Wife, with his plate, yea, and past with a small penance for killing an Englishman. These, first were complained of in a Sermon at Saint *Maries* Spittle, and afterwards assaulted, and much hurt done to their substance and houses, for which riotous offence *Iohn Lincolne* the onely Instigator was hanged; and foure hundred men, boyes, and eleuen women led in ropes

along the Citie in their shirts, and halters about their neckes, to the Kings Hall at *Westminster,* where his Maiestie sitting vnder a cloth of Estate, pardoned the offences, to the great rejoycing of the *Londoners* (1632 edition, revised, enlarged, and corrected, sig. 4P2).

What here is emphasized is the absolutism characteristic of the regime. *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* opens precisely on this note:

> Enter at <one end Iohn Lincolne with together, at the other end enters ffraunces <de a lustie woman, he haling her by the <arme
>
> [**Doll**.] whether wilt thou hale me?
>
> [**Bard**.] whether I please, thou art my prize and I ple<ade purchase> of thee.
>
> [**Doll**.] Purchase of me? away ye Rascall, I am an honest plaine Carpenters <wife and thoughe I haue no beautie to like a husband yet what soeuer is <mine scornes to stoupe to a straunger: hand off then when I bid thee.
>
> [**Bard**.] Goe with me quietly, or Ile compell thee.
>
> [**Doll**.] Compell me ye dogges face? thou thinkst thou hast the Goldsmithes <wife in hand, whom thou enticedst from her husband with all his plate, and <when thou turndst her home to him againe, madste him (like an Asse) pay for <his wifes boorde.
>
> **Bard**. So will I make thy husband too, if please me (pp. 1-2).

Bard's total control of the carpenter's wife and his threat against her carpenter husband is echoed in Moore's response when he is elevated to the Privy Council, also early in the play, also setting forth a possible attitude for Moore; "my seruice is my Kings, good reason why: since life or death hangs on our Soueraignes eye" (p. 19). Both instances assign to absolute power a sense of undeniability that is brutal and even, perhaps, frightening, in its implications. But it is precisely that

sense of absolutism, based on absolute beliefs that stoutly remain despite questioning, that characterizes Moore, the Catholic. There is no recourse in arguing with him. There is no possibility of victory when arguing with him. He is, in his steadfast certainty and self-righteousness, an immoveable object, a kind of unconquerable force. From the moment James I passed through Newcastle on his way to London in the spring of 1603, arresting and executing a poor thief without any recourse or trial, there was anxiety over his insistent dominance. His political treatises, moreover, *Basilicon Doron* and *Trew Law of Free Monarchies,* already in circulation, demonstrated his belief in divine right and absolute government. In those two ways, divine direction and absolute certainty, Moore is the playwrights' character who can easily harbor the new anxieties over James and the character and disposition of his rule. Not in 1593, but surely in 1603, *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* commented on the political, not the religious, form of early Stuart government. Memorializing history, which may have begun simply by revering the records of the past, had taken on new meanings. Moore was re-membered as a model of obedience under Elizabeth, correcting those who would rebel, but he became a figure of resurgent underground Catholicism and absolutism under James. *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* was a play both popular and threatening because it harbored within its messy text a pattern that could withstand cultural change and so keep memorializing history on the English stage.[22]

[22] For companion essays that trace differing cultural responses to the same text, see my "The horrible murder of Arden of Faversham" in *Beyond Philology* 3 (2004): 69-78 and "*Utopia*'s First Readers" in *Challenging Humanism: Essays in Honor of Dominic Baker-Smith,* ed. Ton von Hoenselaars and Arthur F. Kinney (Newark; University of Delaware Press, forthcoming).

El Anticristo y el Imperio: utopía y salvación en el pensamiento de Tommaso Campanella

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«L'Antéchrist et l'Empire : utopie et salut dans la pensée de Tommaso Campanella. »

Cet article avance la thèse selon laquelle l'apocalyptique (et, par surcroît, la pensée utopique) de Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639) trouve l'une de ses sources fondamentales dans l'énigmatique passage paulinien sur l'*ánomos* et le *katéchon* comme force qui retient la fin des temps (2 *Thess.* 2). Parmi les sources qui ont façonné la pensée théologico-politique du philosophe calabrais se comptent les textes d'Irénée, Hyppolite, Tertullien, Lactance, Chrysostome, Ambroise, Augustin, les *Oracles Sibyllins,* Adson, Luther et Calvin, entre autres. L'auteur essaie de montrer la façon à travers laquelle Campanella s'approprie cette tradition textuelle et la met en contact avec le droit romano-canonique afin de considérer l'Empire espagnol comme le *katéchon* qui retient la venue de l'Antéchrist et propose son remplacement par une théocratie papale universelle, destinée à réaliser l'utopie finale à l'aube du royaume messianique du Christ.

Mots clé: Utopie, Tommaso Campanella, katéchon, Empire, Antéchrist.

"The Antichrist and the Empire: utopia and salvation in Tommaso Campanella's thought."

This article sets forth the thesis that the apocalyptic (and, therefore, the utopian thought) of Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639) uses as one of its main sources the enigmatic Pauline passage on the ánomos and the katéchon as the force that retains the end of times (2 Thess. 2). Amongst the sources that have influenced the theologico-political thought of the Calabrian philosopher, we must take into account Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Lactantius,