

More's *Utopia* and Cicero's *Paradoxa Stoicorum*

Claiming that he has described Utopia as truthfully ("uerissime" [236/31] as he can,¹ Raphael Hythlodæus, Thomas More's fictional world-traveller and occasional stoic philosopher, gives a grand peroration at the end of Book II of *Utopia*. He praises that wonderful country, defends it as the *only* commonwealth worthy of the name "Respublica" because there alone do people look after the *public* welfare, and attacks other nations (really the known world) where injustice reigns and where there is a conspiracy of the rich, who abuse the poor and aim "at their own interests under the name and title of the commonwealth" (241/28-29). As part of his proof he observes that, in Utopia, "Though no man has anything, yet all are rich": "& quum nemo quicquam habeat, omnes tamen diuites sunt" (238/10-11). The expression is a striking one. To begin with, there is the sharp antithesis between *nemo* and *omnes* and the obvious paradox of "nothingness"/wealth. In its present context, moreover, the paradox is doubly or triply ironic. Money or wealth means almost nothing to the Utopians, who share all goods equally and do not measure value in monetary terms, rewarding virtue instead. (Given Utopia's view of money, the expression seems consciously ironic: "uirtuti *precium* sit" [102/29; my italics].) But they are singularly well-endowed with gold and precious jewels, the very things western Europe covets, so that Utopia's "existence," and the enormous amounts of gold and silver it has acquired by trade (according to Hythlodæus), mock European pretensions and deflate Europe's pride and greed in an ironic, often bitter, and sometimes comic manner. For like the proverbial man in the top hat who slips on the banana-peel, the Europeans, in the persons of the Anemolian ambassadors, will be discovered to be fools and slaves, from a Utopian perspective.

Hythlodæus dissolves the paradox of wealth/poverty almost immediately by a psychological transformation of a sort dear to Cicero and Seneca. "For what can be greater riches for a man," he asks, "than to live with a joyful and peaceful mind [*laeto ac tranquillo animo uiuere*], free of all worries — not troubled about his food or harassed by the querulous demands of his wife or fearing poverty for his son or worrying about his daughter's dowry, but feeling secure about the livelihood and happiness of himself and his family . . .?" (239/16-20) The question, for all its rhetorical showiness, may say something about the situation of the historical More, who was so very much a family man and had a

wife known for her sharp tongue, a son to educate and launch in the world, and three young daughters to educate and see well married. Raphael's question also seems indebted to Cicero's insistent hammering at the measurement of wealth, illustrated by the problem of dowries, in his sixth Stoic paradox (295-97).² Certainly the consciousness behind it is Stoic. Notice the polarized contrasts, the psychological thrust, the put-down of undue attachment to material possessions, and the ethical orientation most clearly revealed in Raphael's concern for those who are helpless but once worked as well as for those who work now, but inherent in his whole argument. These qualities, coupled with a fondness for the rhetorical question and the well-turned commonplace, characterize the Stoic paradoxes, whether we think of their appearances in Seneca's epistles to Lucilius, in Horace (who, like Seneca, may also mock them), in Persius, in Varro, or, most fully, in Cicero's *Paradoxa Stoicorum*.³

Typically, the authorial More does not let Raphael stop here. His appeal to a mind which is both *laetus* and *tranquillus* suggests an infusion of diluted Epicureanism that the speaker (ironically) has professed to deplore earlier in his *sermo*. But this is, in part, additional evidence for Thomas More's sensitivity to the moral paradox as a way to startle, provoke inquiry about the truly good, and strike the conscience. So Seneca had frequently quoted Epicurus in his moral epistles, surprising his audience and establishing a rapprochement between Epicurus and the Stoics with respect to virtue and pleasure, normally treated as ethical extremes in Stoic thought.⁴ For the remainder of this essay, then, I should like to consider the *Utopia* in the light of Cicero's *Paradoxes of the Stoics*, showing how it illuminates a habit or style of thought, the artistry, and the values of an extraordinarily elusive and provocative writer.

Cicero completed (and perhaps wrote all of) his *Paradoxa Stoicorum* in the early spring of 46 B.C., when public political participation was no longer possible.⁵ The work introduces concerns that Cicero explored further in his late dialogues and treatises and stands "between the oratorical and the philosophical style of Cicero."⁶ The *Paradoxa* itself is a very short work, made up of six prose pieces variously described as essays, declamations, and rhetorical monologues that sometimes turn into diatribes.⁷ Each one is based upon a philosophical thesis developed by syllogisms, commonplaces, and *topoi* and by historical and other sorts of exempla. There is also a preface to Brutus, the future tyrannicide, nephew of Cato the Stoic.

Each of the *Paradoxa* turns upon a major moral paradox, except for the fourth one, which takes up a new paradox after a gap in the text, so that there are seven major paradoxes in all. Cicero begins with the most fundamental one, "Quod honestum sit id solum bonum esse" (258): virtue is the only good. Paradox II logically follows: "That the possession of virtue is sufficient for happiness [*ad beate vivendum*]" (267). Paradox III explores the most outrageous of all the Stoic paradoxes (from a non-Stoic perspective): "That transgressions are equal and right actions equal" (271). Cicero himself challenges the idea elsewhere and Raphael Hythlodæus objects to it in Book I, when, conversing with Cardinal Morton, he rejects capital punishment for the theft of a coin: "In my opinion, not all the goods that fortune can bestow on us can be set in the scale against a man's life. . . . For we ought not to approve such stern Manlian rules of law . . . nor such Stoical ordinances as count all offenses equal [*omnia peccata . . . paria*] so that there is no difference between killing a man and robbing him of a coin when, if equity has any meaning, there is no similarity or connection between the two cases" (73/10-12; 15-21).⁸ Paradox IV begins as if it were about how every fool is mad, but actually explores the idea that wise men are citizens and fools exiles from the state. Paradox V, growing out of IV, maintains that only the wise man is free and that every fool is a slave (*servus*). Paradox VI completes the work with its argument that only those endowed with virtue are rich, because they alone are content with what is theirs, think that what they have is enough, and seek for nothing more, want nothing, lack nothing, and need nothing (303).

This too bald summary does not wholly indicate how the movement of thought oscillates between a number of moral extremes: virtue/vice; freedom/slavery; citizenship/exile; virtue/pleasure; virtue/riches; the wise man/the fool. These polarities, evidence of the Stoic fondness for reasoning by either/or, are crystallized in a play of words between *bonum* (virtue, the only *true* good, possessed by the *sapiens*), and *bona* (goods, *impedimenta*, all those things which weigh down and enslave the fool, also portrayed as the madman). There is, thus, a natural movement from the first paradox, which focuses upon the *bonum* and draws a contrast between the *sapiens*, who loves the good, and all those who are enslaved to and by *bona*, goods (260), to the last paradox, with its ironic claim that only the *sapiens* is rich. In this way there is a polarized consciousness that allows Cicero to distinguish true values from false ones.

Cicero's preface to what he calls his very little work, "parvum opusculum" (256), paradoxically claims both little and much for the work to come, like the prefaces to any number of Renaissance works, including the *Utopia*. On the one hand, Cicero professes merely to be playing. He characterizes himself as "ludens" (256) and explains that he has thrown "into common form, for your benefit, even those doctrines which the Stoics scarcely succeeded in proving in the retirement of the schools of philosophy" (257). So, earlier (in his *De oratore*), Cicero had maintained, in part ironically, that the Stoic paradoxes were so rigorous and so far removed from ordinary perception or the common understanding that they were wholly unsuited for use by the orator, because his speech would be rendered wholly unintelligible.⁹ This makes his present work a *tour de force*. He is, so to speak, out-Stoicizing the Stoics, as More will do later. Indeed Cicero himself points out that "These doctrines are surprising ("admirabilia") and "run counter to universal opinion" (257), and so defines the term *paradox* for his audience. All this seems designed to emphasize the operation of wit and intellectual acuity and a consciously paradoxical stance, although, if we remember the close association of the ludic with the satiric and the Horatian, we may find ourselves thinking of Horace's famous remark, which More also echoes: "Quamquam ridentem dicere verum/quid vetat?"¹⁰

It is perhaps, less surprising, then, that Cicero goes on to say that he wrote the more willingly "because the doctrines styled *paradoxa* by the Stoics appear to me to be in the highest degree Socratic, and far and away the truest" (257).¹¹ He thus seems to be insisting upon the ultimate seriousness of his endeavor. But his thoughts take yet another turn as he explains that he has transposed things normally handled philosophically into what he calls "this oratorical style of discourse that is my own" (257). He ends in an equally equivocal manner. This work could hardly be put in the Parthenon, like the famous statue of Minerva (an analogy that seems particularly telling, since Minerva was the goddess of wisdom). Perhaps it belongs to the same workshop, though (259).

Cicero is, in other words, appropriately paradoxical about a paradoxical work. It would not be too much to see the *Paradoxa* as a joco-serious philosophical/rhetorical monologic sequence, intended to bring moral issues into the light of common daily life and expounded rhetorically, not philosophically. Like More's *Utopia*, then, Cicero's *Paradoxa Stoicorum* is a mercurial work, at once comic and serious, entertaining and engaged, addressing serious moral issues, albeit not always in a

wholly serious way, and daringly using moral paradoxes, theses that run counter to and unsettle common opinion, to do so.

The *Paradoxa Stoicorum* has been interpreted in very different ways. (Notice how the range of interpretations could easily be transposed to criticism of the *Utopia*.) For some, the *Paradoxa* is little more than a rhetorical exercise.¹² Others, mindful of the insistent Socratic strain, stress the serious philosophical purpose.¹³ Some emphasize the satire, which attacks, often in thinly veiled terms, abuses of the state and actual political enemies, like Clodius (see Paradox IV).¹⁴ For others, however, the *Paradoxa* is a consolation in political defeat or, as Molager puts it, "une oeuvre de combat."¹⁵ These readers are responding to the psychological element that is an intrinsic part of any Stoic or quasi-Stoic text. With its appeal to the inner self, its reliance upon virtue, and its scorn of fortune and external goods, Stoicism could function admirably as a psychological survival kit, both in Roman times and in the Renaissance.¹⁶ Finally, some, disturbed by discrepancies (and apparent discrepancies) between this work and others, have inquired about the consistency of Cicero's thought and attitudes.¹⁷

By thus focusing upon the *Paradoxa Stoicorum*, I have, perforce, made it seem more important than it is generally held to be. For many twentieth-century classicists, at least, the *Paradoxa* seems to be a minor (albeit a lively) work. Nor has it received a great deal of attention from those who have studied paradox in the Renaissance. Rosalie Colie mentions it in passing and emphasizes the irony but seems to undervalue the degree to which Cicero's paradoxes did challenge common opinion when she writes that they "do not present axioms contrary to received opinion, but merely restate the old Stoic moral saws, now 'paradoxical' in Cicero's irony because an hypocritical society, though still giving lip service to them, utterly fails to live by them."¹⁸ Helen Peters alludes to the *Paradoxa* in her introduction to John Donne's *Paradoxes and Problems*; for her it is a straightforwardly serious literary work (there is no mention of any wit) that had an impact only after 1543, when Ortensio Lando published his paradoxes.¹⁹ Two older studies, by E. N. S. Thompson and Warner Rice, actually do more justice to the complexity of Cicero's work, although they too are interested in it as an early stage of the Renaissance essay and self-contained paradox of the Ortensio Lando type.²⁰ Perhaps the most sympathetic recent discussion (though brief) is Brian Vickers', then, which insists that, "For the Renaissance . . . the paradox was essentially

a mode of serious philosophical argument."²¹ Nevertheless, it seems that the moral paradox has been almost eclipsed by the flashier mock encomium, developed so magnificently by Erasmus in his *Moria*, praising Folly and More.

We need to remind ourselves, then, of just how familiar the Renaissance was with Cicero's *Paradoxes of the Stoics*. It is common knowledge that Cicero's *De officiis* was one of the most popular classical texts published in the Renaissance and that it was also one of the earliest to be printed. But we have forgotten that the *Paradoxa Stoicorum* was printed with it.²² The *Paradoxa* was a popular school text, too; in his work on the grammar school Brinsley recommends "*Tullies Paradoxes*" as "most singular patternes for true Rhetoricke." Admitting that they are not easy, he suggests that they should be studied after the "theames" in Athonius, if "the Schollers be of capacity and ripenesse."²³ By 1512 the *Paradoxa* had been translated into French, and there were two English translations: by R. Whittington (in 1540) and by T. Newton (1569). The association with the *De officiis* continued, too, and the *Paradoxa* was grouped with Cicero's philosophical texts in the collections of his *Opera* that appeared throughout Renaissance Europe.²⁴ This means that the term *paradoxa* was surely linked with Cicero, and that there was, for the Renaissance, a much stronger connection between the *De officiis* and the *Paradoxa Stoicorum* than we might make today. Whittington makes much of this connection in the preface to his translation of the *Paradoxa*.²⁵ And this connection persisted into the nineteenth century; in 1820, for example, William Guthrie subjoined the moral paradoxes to the *De officiis*, explaining that they "are a kind of philosophical exercises which are executed with wonderful spirit, and they have by many learned men been preferred to any piece of our author."²⁶

Guthrie never tells us which learned men he had in mind. But I should like to nominate Thomas More. Obviously he was aware of Cicero's *Paradoxa Stoicorum* as he worked on the *Utopia* — we can remember Raphael's pointed rejection of Paradox III. Raphael also echoes (in this case approvingly [57/1–3]) the definition of liberty that appears in Paradox V: "No one is free save the wise man. For what is freedom? the power to live as you will" (285). The same definition appears in the *De officiis* (the source cited by the Yale edition, 309, note to 56/1). But we need *both* contexts to see the double game More is playing: like the passage in the *Utopia*, which exploits the idea of servitude to kings, the *Paradoxa* is concerned with the difference between

servitude and freedom, while the *De officiis* asks about another Utopian concern, who should stand for public office rather than embrace a life of philosophical retirement.

There is just one other verbal echo I want to mention here, because it is half-hidden and yet crucial to our understanding of rhetorical strategies that More uses throughout *Utopia*. This is the much discussed objection to Utopia's communal economy, "without any exchange of money" (246/23), that the reportorial More makes at the end of Book II when he maintains that such a life "utterly overthrows all the nobility, magnificence, splendor, and majesty which are, *in the estimation of the common people*, the true glories and ornaments of the commonwealth" (245/24–26, my italics). This seems calculated to call attention, *via diversa*, to the paradoxical reversals of ordinary opinion which characterize so much of Utopian life: Utopia *does* overturn such values as magnificence, so often a privileged term in the Renaissance. Thus, the remark is a softened form of paradox as Cicero identified it in the preface to his *Paradoxa Stoicorum*, speaking of doctrines "contra . . . opinionem omnium" (256). Both the paradox and the irony are further sharpened by More's Latin syntax. Since "ut publica est opinio" (244/20–21) stands between *uera* and *decora*, it encourages us to ask what the *true* glories and values of a commonwealth should be. Just as Erasmus had transformed the classical mock encomium, then, I believe that More incorporated and transformed these ancient moral paradoxes, viewed in the Renaissance as arguing "*praeter opinionem*," Erasmus' own gloss in a preface to Cicero.²⁷ But this formulation is still simplistic, since the *Moria* and the *Utopia* contain both types of paradox and are (in any case) much denser and more ironic and sophisticated than their classical prototypes.²⁸

In the remainder of this essay, I want to consider other, larger-scale connections between More and Cicero by looking at the heart of Book II of *Utopia* — the section called "De Peregrinatione Vtopiensium." The "[Etc.]" in Yale's translation, "Utopian Travel, [Etc.]" (145/32), emphasizes the apparent hodge-podge of subjects treated and suggests how difficult it is to translate the most apparently straightforward word in *Utopia*. The title is probably best read as a play on the figurative meanings of wayfaring, surveying the world like a traveller. Admittedly this section begins with talk about actual visits from one city to another, thereby reiterating our sense of Utopia as a tangible place and *Utopia* as a travel account, although some readers have wondered why anyone would even want to go to another Utopian city when they are all almost

identical. Raphael addresses another, even more important theme — trade — which, ironically, allows the Utopians to stockpile gold and silver. (A hard look at their trading practices should give us pause: no country could have amassed such incredible amounts of gold and silver without being constantly attacked by its neighbors.)

But most of this section is about travel in a radically symbolic way. Despite their island fortress (a necessity, in view of their wealth), the Utopians live as if they were travellers or wayfarers who have no “continuing city” on this earth. That they change houses every ten years is, then, not just a device to insure equality and eliminate pride by preventing attachment to things (the houses are mirror images of each other anyway). It seems to be a mimetic enactment of Hebrews 13:14: “For here we have no continuing city but we seek one to come.”²⁹ The full force of this verse from Hebrews asserts itself ever more clearly throughout Hythlodæus’ description of Utopia’s values, a system of values which we hear expounded in full only after we see their negation in the scene with the Anemolian ambassadors and in the preceding account of the strange way in which the Utopians disparage gold and silver. More thus reverses the movement in the *Paradoxa Stoicorum* (as he reverses so much else): where Cicero moved from *bonum* to *bona*, he moves from false goods to the truly good. In addition, More adds the poetic to Cicero’s mix of the philosophical and rhetorical, fictionalizing and otherwise imaginatively — and paradoxically — literalizing what are only tropes in Cicero. Cicero’s “slaves,” for example, become Utopia’s bondsmen, persons who have enslaved themselves by their passions and vices.

The procession of the ambassadors, introduced by Utopia’s ways with gold, is a metaphoric bridge, then, which moves us into Utopia until we find ourselves in the main street of the capital city, Amaurotum, the navel or center (112/25) of this commonwealth of Noplace. We see, and more significantly, hear, the otherwise faceless and speechless Utopians who have gathered to watch what is, from their point of view, a perplexing scene indeed. But once he has moved us as far as he can from the actual world into Utopia, More — through Raphael Hythlodæus — can bend back the urgent social, political, ethical, and religious commonplaces and paradoxes that raise questions of value and are articulated in the remaining sections of Raphael’s *sermo*. It is no accident that this scene precedes the discussion of the Utopian philosophy of pleasure/virtue, or, to speak more precisely, is embedded in it,

and that the same Stoic commonplaces (e.g., being proud of a coat made of finer wool, 157/16–20 and 167/27–39) recur in both parts. Like a latter-day Stoic preacher, in other words, Raphael Hythlodæus reassembles the moral commonplaces of Western thought and belief, already paradoxes insofar as they challenge the ordinary view of things and the way that human beings live, and reanimates them by distancing himself, his immediate audience, and us from the actual world, showing us ourselves in a new light. So even the most fatigued generality has a new, startling, shock effect which is magnified by the internal paradoxes of Utopia’s ethical system.

The paradoxes explored later in Book II produce increasing unease and uncertainty: what are we to make of Utopia’s just wars, for example? Here, however, there is little doubt about where we are intended to stand, as Raphael Hythlodæus repeats Stoic commonplaces about gold and the *bona* and as More dramatizes and visualizes these same attitudes with immense comic verve. (Compare Budé’s letter praising Utopia’s “contempt of gold and silver” [11/12–13].) From the very beginning, in fact, More delights in enhancing the paradoxical possibilities of Raphael’s description, for Raphael, deadpan, employs a rhetorical paradox or *inopinatum* to explain what the Utopians do with their gold. Unless he himself had been there to see it, he could never have believed it, he claims: “nisi uidissem praesens” (150/7), reiterated subsequently as “nisi peritis non credibilem” (152/3). Only after repeated protestations of this sort — prompting the comment, “O Artful Rogue,” by the marginal commentator (151/7) — does Raphael reveal the shocking truth: the Utopians “eat and drink from earthenware and glassware of fine workmanship but of little value” but have chamber pots [*matellas*] of gold and silver. In addition, their slaves are loaded down with chains and solid fetters made of gold, while criminals “have gold ornaments hanging from their ears, gold rings encircling their fingers, gold chains thrown around their necks, and, as a last touch, a gold crown binding their temples. Thus by every means in their power they make gold and silver a mark of ill fame” (153/11–16). Thus, too, if the Utopians were to lose all their gold and silver (associated with trade and war and mostly used to hire mercenaries who fight wars on behalf of their allies, not themselves), “no one would feel that he were losing as much as a penny” (153/20).

This is a brilliant and unforgettable passage. The chief measure of value in the world More knew so well is debased until, finally, it is

equated with excrement. Perhaps no other image in all of the *Utopia* is as powerful as these gold chamber pots and fetters. But it was the Stoics, as J. Duncan M. Derrett has pointed out, who consistently associated the greatest wealth with gold chamber pots. He quotes Plutarch on Chrysippus.³⁰ To this we can add another reference, this one from Cicero's *Paradoxes of the Stoics*, which completes the citation from Plutarch by explaining More's slave reference and reminding us that, for the Utopians and Stoics alike, jewels are something that little children play with. In his fifth paradox, Cicero identifies various classes of fools and "slaves," i.e., people who are enslaved by their desires and thus not free. Among them are people who stand gaping before a beautiful picture or chased silver and Corinthian works of art. "I beg of you," he writes, "do let the charm that those things are deemed to possess make them serve not as fetters for men but as amusements for children. For what do you suppose? if Lucius Mummius saw one of you people handling with eager, covetous looks a little Corinthian pot [*matellionem*], whereas he himself had despised the whole of Corinth, would he have thought him a distinguished citizen, or an industrious major-domo?" (289-91).³¹ Cicero's passage has little of the slapstick comedy and less of the psychological and physiological energy of More's — which must owe something to the Old Comedy. Yet they share a common value system (including a concern for the commonwealth) and images and attitudes that More has brilliantly transformed.

These attitudes are nowhere funnier, or more powerful, than in the procession of the Anemolian ambassadors, as More remorselessly drives home the contrast between them and the simple Utopians, whose amazement and wonder at such a sight work as shaming mechanisms.³² (Compare and contrast Cicero's use of Lucius Mummius, above.) We are barraged with the word "gold" (twenty-one times repeated) as the proud ambassadors, windy in more ways than one, parade through the main street of Utopia in all their silks and cloth of gold, weighed down by their gold chains, gold rings, gold necklaces, and gold earrings. From one point of view, we have a moral emblem, and there is a severe moral energy behind the techniques of inflation-deflation as two antithetical value systems meet, and Anemolian pride is punctured, bladder-like.³³ There is also a particularly delicious irony. Both Utopia's slaves and the Anemolian ambassadors are bound by gold chains, but the latter's are vastly inferior to the Utopians', whether judged by Western standards of value (cost) or Utopian, and Stoic, standards of use.

But More's penchant for comedy and his ability to dramatize the scene from the Utopian perspective and make it self-reflexive are what make it, finally, so powerful. For we are allowed to overhear a conversation between a puzzled little boy and his mother. As he watches the ambassadors, he turns to his mother and says, "Look, mother, that big rascal is still wearing pearls and jewels as if he were yet a little boy!" (155/33-34). And the mother, in earnest, tries to quiet him, as mothers will: "Hush, son, I think it is one of the ambassadors' fools [*morionibus*]" (155/136-37). This is a beautiful exchange, sensitive to the various kinds of social and other reality. We feel the mother's embarrassment. Her answer is all the more resonant because direct discourse so rarely appears for a Utopian observation (normally Raphael paraphrases their beliefs). In addition, More is maximizing a technique he uses in his epigrams, letting a naive observer discover, so to speak, that the emperor has no clothes on.³⁴ Finally, there is the play upon his own name, which allows him, through Raphael, to deflate not just the world of power and pride and self-intoxication but to comment on his own part in it. Indeed, the full thrust of Raphael's attack hits most directly at More himself — a fact appreciated by the marginal commentator who again remarks, this time in Greek, "*O Artful Rogue!*" (155/36).³⁵

Raphael's long discourse on Utopian ethics, with its dual focus on virtue/pleasure and on what constitutes true pleasures, is the natural counterbalance to and complement of his description of its ways with gold. Wholly realized as fiction and fable, the earlier scene involved us viscerally and kinesthetically in an intensely comic/serious examination of human values. Its thrust is overtly negative: human pretension, pride, attachment to those things ironically called "bona," and our infinite capacity for self-delusion are discovered in all their emptiness. By contrast, Raphael's present discourse (it can hardly be called a scene) addresses ideas and values which, though sometimes presented negatively, have positive value. Now slapstick comedy is replaced by sophisticated and sometimes sophisticated paradoxes and a correspondingly cerebral humor as More's consciousness plays over the major schools of Western philosophical thought: Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic, and Epicurean, with more than a glance at Christian ethics, to create a hierarchy of true goods.

Despite recent attempts to defend the Utopians as "good," logical Epicureans, I myself find it hard to account for this section as a cogent philosophical exposition.³⁶ Thompson seems on target when he speaks of an "extended elucidation, by means of a logic that is not always clear

and not always convincing even when clear, of pleasure as the operative principle of life."³⁷ Moreover, as Surtz has pointed out, Epicurus himself rejected the very idea of communism which is the basis of Utopia's economy as well as those religious principles, including faith in providence, immortality, and judgment after death, which are presuppositions for citizenship in Utopia.³⁸ And yet Raphael's discourse is a philosophical inquiry — a paradoxical one — about the nature of human happiness, the meaning of virtue, and the purpose of life. Developed so that it vivifies what might otherwise become too abstract or dangerously inert, it provides a yardstick with which to measure values in the known world. To dismiss this section of the discourse too quickly as a cheap paradox, then,³⁹ is to radically undervalue the nature of paradox in *Utopia* and, specifically, the way that More has rethought ideas and strategies at hand in Cicero's *Paradoxa Stoicorum*.

We have to begin with More's speaker, the aptly named Raphael Hythlodæus, who plays the part of the Stoic sage and/or the detached observer of what he treats as strange customs and ideas and who would have us believe (or half-believe) that the Utopians are, perhaps, *too* devoted to pleasure. According to him, their dominant philosophical school is "voluptatis assertricem" (160/22). So, later, he claims that he is only describing the principles of the Utopians, not defending them (179/15–18), though he says this only after he has given us the information which would allow us to correct his own assertions. Yet he actually overturns his own position early on, when he explains, in a note of grave wonder or surprise, that the Utopians "seek a defense for this soft doctrine" of theirs from a religion which is "serious and strict, almost solemn and hard" (161/30–32). If Raphael were just a Stoic sage, their religion should not seem all that strict. Parenthetically, we can note that Utopia's doctrines are not actually "soft," so that his statement generates further ironies which we are meant to enjoy and ponder. In any case, his protestations of surprise have to be weighed against the actual effect of his discourse, which becomes a praise and defense — what Surtz, appropriately, calls a declamation — of Utopia's philosophy of pleasure.⁴⁰

From this point of view, then, we have a Stoic or "Stoic" defending Epicureanism or "Epicureanism," while purporting only to describe it. This is, in part, a witty joke. But it is also serious. Since Raphael is defending attitudes that, from one point of view, run counter to received opinion, his position is inherently paradoxical. A fresh evaluation of Epicureanism was under way when More was writing, subsequently

becoming an integral part of Erasmus' paradoxical colloquy, *The Epicure* (1533), with its claim that godly Christians are true Epicureans and, more daring still, that the name best fits Christ himself. But the idea of Epicureanism as a crude or sensual hedonism still had tremendous shock value, which More, through Raphael, is exploiting here. We can see the more usual attitude when Erasmus has the wide-eyed Spudæus explain that no sect is "more universally detested."⁴¹

But even so this is only part of a more complex situation. Like Erasmus in *The Epicure*, More has redefined the Epicureanism Raphael describes/defends. The Utopians practice an enlightened ethics which links pleasure and virtûe. As readers, we are soon disabused of any notion that the Utopians are happy or licentious pigs, wallowing in some sensual sty — if, indeed, we ever entertained such an idea, given all we know about them. In fact, the marginal commentator himself steps in at Raphael's first mention of pleasure, the *voluptas* by which the Utopians measure happiness, to tell us that it is "honesta volupta[s]" (160/21–22). He thereby signals the all-important qualification in Raphael's argument, only developed explicitly later, and gives some part of Raphael's (or rather, More's) game away. This must mean that, as readers, we are expected to enjoy the ingenuity with which Raphael makes his case — knowing, of course, that it is a rhetorical *tour de force*. So we can see Raphael's presentation as a brilliant but unstable amalgam of ideas and attitudes that, as Thompson suggested, break apart, logically, if pressed too hard, but that work as paradox and present values dear to More and some part of his audience. In that sense, More could have echoed Cicero; like him, he is presenting philosophical ideas in an "oratorical style of discourse that is my own" (257).

We need a more specific sense of how More uses rhetoric for philosophical ends. Father Surtz has already worked out many of the major dilemmas in his *Praise of Pleasure*.⁴² And in his elegant edition of the *Utopia*, André Prévost has shown how Raphael's discourse paradoxically integrates Stoic and Epicurean thought by employing a Stoic vocabulary to discuss Epicurean principles.⁴³ So Raphael's discourse relies heavily upon the ambiguity of a word like *voluptas*, pleasure. From a Stoic point of view, the word has negative overtones, and Father Surtz has argued that More uses it here for its shock value.⁴⁴ Yet — removed from a context where it is placed in antithesis to virtue — it could be positive. Indeed More used the word in a positive sense in his prefatory letters to Peter Giles and Ruthall.⁴⁵ Daringly, he goes further, pressing *gaudium*, which in a Christian context means the gladness of

the beatific vision, into service, creating tensions between otherwise different value systems that dissolve harmlessly (see 166/3).

What we find, then, is a gliding syntax that slips from Epicurean to Stoic, from ethics to religion, from pleasure to virtue, now adding, now subtracting, to arrive at a Stoicized Epicureanism, or Epicurean Stoicism, with significant Platonic undertones (More is drawing upon the *Philebus*),⁴⁶ which adumbrates a Christian ethic, too. As Raphael explains it:

They hold happiness rests not in every kind of pleasure but only in good and decent pleasure. To such, as to the supreme good, our nature is drawn by virtue itself, to which the opposite school alone attributes happiness. The Utopians define virtue as living according to nature since to this end we were created by God. That individual, they say, is following the guidance of nature who, in desiring one thing and avoiding another, obeys the dictates of reason.

Now reason first of all inflames men to a love and veneration of the divine majesty, to whom we owe both our existence and our capacity for happiness. Secondly, it admonishes and urges us to lead a life as free from care and as full of joy as possible and, because of our natural fellowship, to help all other men, too, to attain that end. (163/18–31)

If we look closely at this passage, with its echo of Cicero's second paradox, we can see how Raphael (typically) gives and takes by talking about happiness and pleasure, a volatile word that he almost immediately qualifies: only "good and decent" pleasure ("bona atque honesta") count. This is the pivot point that allows Epicurean notions of pleasure and Stoic ideas of virtue to move together. And as they do, Raphael repeats the famous Stoic definition of living according to nature. Nature, in turn, becomes a middle term which allows him to slide from happiness and pleasure to virtue and back again. Now *ratio*, another Stoic term, enters the discourse. But then we hear of another ethic which approximates the Golden Rule: to love God and your neighbor as yourself. In fact, More, through Raphael, presents in an extremely condensed form (later expanded upon) a variation of what Thompson calls the "seemingly audacious paradox" of Erasmus' *The Epicure*, with its claim that "There are no people more Epicurean than godly Christians."⁴⁷ As he points out, the paradox is defensible "if, but only if, we know what 'true' pleasure is. It is virtue, righteousness."⁴⁸ That same "if" functions here, generating Raphael's subsequent description/defence of Utopia's Epicureanism.

"De Peregrinatione" invites us, then, to stand, metaphorically, inside

the paradox — that is, to take seriously the idea of a pleasure which is virtuous and a virtue which is pleasurable, for all that its proof is rhetorical. The idea is doubly ironic from the point of view of what More elsewhere calls common opinion, which finds virtue painful and whose pleasures are painful and vicious. This same paradox is behind the careful, long-winded, and apparently repetitious exposition of false pleasures and true ones, as Raphael Hythlodæus weighs activities often perceived as pleasurable but here found wanting. There are an enormous number of such false pleasures (compare Erasmus' *Moria*): pride in fine clothing, foolish honors, gems, dicing, hunting, etc. By contrast, the Utopians have a hierarchy of *true* pleasures and a "pleasure principle" that allows them to recognize the pleasures of the body but to qualify or adjust them in the light of the greater pleasures of the soul. On the one hand, they find health a pleasure. On the other, according to their constitution, "Quam plurimum temporis ab seruitio corporis ad animi libertatem cultumque ciuibus uniuersis asser[i]tur. In eo enim sitam uitae felicitatem putant" (134/18–20; my italics). An antithetical syntax dramatizes a movement — characteristic of Utopia — from the service of the body and its needs to the freedom and cultivation of the mind. What this really means, as we discover elsewhere, is happiness in the exercise of virtue, the consciousness and memory of a life well-lived, and the hope of future good.

When we review the Utopians' "Epicurean" values, then, which begin and end with God, we discover that they are surprisingly close in some ways to values to which Europe (at its best) subscribed, but to which it too often gave only lip service, if that. Like Cicero in his *Paradoxa Stoicorum*, in other words, More (through Hythlodæus) is breathing new life into old commonplaces even as he takes the measure of values professed and practiced and points to the gap between them. Thus, some of Utopia's values gain an ironic paradoxicality from their purported distance from (and actual closeness to) classical and Christian values. So, too, the elements of diatribe which are never far beneath the surface in Cicero's *Paradoxa*, and which already surfaced in those massive shaming techniques and Stoic commonplaces in "De Peregrinatione," again surface, this time as a long diatribe on false pleasures, pleasures the Utopians disdain and reject but with which the West is altogether too familiar.

But More goes far beyond the Cicero of the *Paradoxa*, since Raphael's paradoxes are internal as well as external. Were this simply a Stoic paradox of the Ciceronian sort, in other words, Raphael might have

found himself praising or defending virtue, which in some sense he indeed does do. (Note, though, that the Utopians have a plurality of goods, not just one.) But he also describes/defends pleasures which are virtuous and virtues which are pleasurable, and in that special sense Epicurean. Like Erasmus, then, who mischievously has the earnest Spudacus in *The Epicure* object that Hedoneus (the devotee of pleasure) "present[s] us with a paradox topping all the paradoxes of the Stoics,"⁴⁹ More is simultaneously writing a declamation (or mock encomium) and a moral paradox of the Stoic sort, daringly combining what are, from a traditional Stoic perspective, polarized extremes as he does so.

If we further ponder this series of polarities and the reciprocal interchanges of virtue-pleasure, body-soul, self-other, service-freedom, etc., as I believe we are intended to do, we can see that Raphael is describing a country where the various tensions that exist in any actual place between and among various goods have been harmonized and resolved, both for the country as a whole and for each individual citizen, so long as he or she singlemindedly pursues the calculus of pleasure/virtue traced out here. From Raphael's point of view we have been given the golden rule that counterbalances the leaden one he complained that preachers give — a rule that bends to situations, and adapts to the nitty-gritty actuality of human passions. The same rule allows him to indict the perverted values of this world and to explore the problem of perception: why *are* so many people beguiled by false pleasures? We are encouraged to see "truly," to reflect upon the genuine relationship between virtue and pleasure, each side of the paradox playing upon and defining the other.

But there is a "but": the gap between the yardstick, Raphael Hythlodæus' measure or golden rule, and life itself remains. In practice, as the authorial More knows, it is far harder to banish false values and far more difficult and often painful to act upon this rule of virtuous pleasure or choose between pleasures, each one valid, than Raphael admits to here. We confront one of the fundamental puzzlements of Utopia, then: the very definition of ends and values which lets the Utopians realize their humanity makes them less than human in our eyes. We do not see or feel the stresses and strains which such a calculus of virtuous pleasures would create in life as we know it, although we are altogether too aware of the controls the Utopians have imposed to cope with them. In addition, Raphael Hythlodæus himself is vulnerable to charges normally directed at the Stoic preacher: his rigor is extreme, from one point of view an affront to human nature. (This is

why Stoicism came to soften its distinction between the wise man, who alone attained virtue, and everyone else.) Finally, and ironically, the despicable "bona" and human selfishness, greed, and pride are more imaginatively and fully realized than the contrary virtues, which remain in part unfleshed, despite their cerebral development and the moral urgency which More brings to them. It is the gold chamber pots, the golden fetters, and the comically crestfallen Anemolian ambassadors that wholly engage us, rather than the calculus of virtuous pleasures. And this is perhaps the best possible evidence of how More used and transformed the Stoic paradoxes as he created a uniquely Morean, joco-serious, paradoxical-philosophical-rhetorical work about a Noplace/Absurd Place/Best Place he called Utopia.

ELIZABETH MCCUTCHEON
University of Hawaii

Notes

This essay has been long in the making. A John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship made the earlier stages of research possible; I am also grateful to the staffs and holdings of the Huntington and Newberry Libraries.

1. For all matter from the *Utopia*, my text is *Utopia*, ed. Edward Surtz, S. J., and J. H. Hexter, *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, vol. IV (New Haven, 1965). On occasion I have retranslated a crucial word; otherwise, the translation is G. C. Richards', as modified by Surtz.

2. For convenience, citations from the *Paradoxes of the Stoics* are from Cicero, [*Works*,] vol. IV, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, Mass., 1942). I have also consulted the editions of A. G. Lee (London, 1953) and Jean Molager (Paris, 1971).

3. Studies of the uses of the Stoic paradox include: Anna Lydia Motto, "Stoic Elements in the Satires of Horace," in *Classical, Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies in Honor of Berthold Louis Ullman*, ed. Charles Henderson, Jr., 2 vols. (Rome, 1964), I, 133-41; Kenneth J. Reckford, "Studies in Persius," *Hermes* 40 (1962) 476-504; David L. Sigsbee, "The *Paradoxa Stoicorum* in Varro's *Menippeans*," *Classical Philology* 71 (1976) 244-48; A. Michel, "Cicéron et les paradoxes Stoïciens," *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 16 (1968) 223-32; Lee, pp. ix-xxii; and Phyllis Snyder Bowman, "The Treatment of the Stoic Paradoxes by Cicero, Horace, and Persius," Ph. D. Diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1972.

4. See the interesting study by A. L. Motto and J. R. Clark, "Paradoxum Senecae: The Epicurean Stoic," *The Classical World* 62 (1968) 37-42. They point

out that Seneca cited Epicurus sixty-four times, and thus more frequently than any other single philosopher, though references to the Stoic school predominate. They also see Seneca as a *spoudaiogeloios*, turning to "the shocking and playful paradox" as a way of directing the conscience, p. 40.

5. Lee, p. xxix.

6. Lee, p. xxvii.

7. On the diatribe see Clarence W. Mendell, "Satire as Popular Philosophy," *Classical Philology* 15 (1920) 138-57; pp. 152-54 argue that "Cicero's *Paradoxa* furnish the best extant examples." See, too, Lee, Molager (who has reservations) and Bowman.

8. Here, as in Book II, the issue is life versus money. In this instance, Raphael is asking about punishment for something done, whereas the Stoics were concerned with departures from an absolute standard of good.

9. Cicero, [Works.], IV, 53-55. For valuable discussions of this passage see J. E. Seigel, "'Civic Humanism' or Ciceronian Rhetoric," *Past and Present* 34 (1966) 3-48, especially pp. 33-35, and Jerrold E. Seigel, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism* (Princeton, 1968), pp. 20-23; 29.

10. Horace, *Satires*, I, 1, 24-25; More's *Apology*, ed. J. B. Trapp, *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, vol. IX (New Haven, 1979), 170/35-36. See, too, the important discussion by George Converse Fiske, *Lucilius and Horace: A Study in the Classical Theory of Imitation* (1920; rpt. Hildesheim, 1966).

11. Both Lee and Molager discuss the question of Socratic connections.

12. In Rackham's edition, for example, they are called "a series of rhetorical trifles" (Cicero, [Works.], IV, 253); cf. Lee, pp. xxii-xxiii and Bowman, pp. 25-26.

13. See, in particular, Michel, Mendell, and Molager's edition, with its excellent study of classical backgrounds.

14. This interpretation is implicit in various reactions to the text, e.g. Rosalie Colie's (see n. 18 below).

15. See, in particular, Molager, pp. 17-24.

16. See my edition of Sir Nicholas Bacon's *Great House Sententiae: Latin Text with First English Translation, and Introduction, Notes, and Bibliography*, *English Literary Renaissance Supplement Number 3* (Amherst, 1977).

17. In his provocative essay, Michel concludes that Cicero accepts the paradoxes of Socratism, rather than their Stoic formulation. Cf. Molager, pp. 39-54, and Bowman.

18. Rosalie L. Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (Princeton, 1966), p. 14; cf. pp. 11-12.

19. Peters, ed. John Donne, *Paradoxes and Problems* (Oxford, 1980), pp. xvii-xix. It is significant, I think, that Ortensio Lando knew More's work well and made the first Italian translation of the *Utopia*; see Paul F. Grendler, *Critics of the Italian World 1530-1560* (Madison, Wis., 1969), pp. 32-33.

20. See E. N. S. Thompson, "The Seventeenth-Century English Essay," *University of Iowa Humanistic Studies* 3 (1926) 94-105, especially pp. 94-95, at

Warner G. Rice, "The *Paradossi* of Ortensio Lando," *Michigan Essays and Studies in Comparative Literature* 8 (1932) 59-74, especially pp. 59-61. As he observes, "Cicero's purpose in thus developing the Stoic paradoxes was partly philosophical, partly polemic, . . . and partly literary," p. 61.

21. Brian Vickers, "King Lear and Renaissance Paradoxes," *MLR* 63 (1968), 305-14; citation from p. 305.

22. See R. R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries* (Cambridge, England, 1958), p. 276. I was fortunate to see the elegant incunabula of the *De officiis*, with the *Paradoxa*, at the Newberry Library.

23. John Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius or The Grammar School*, ed. E. T. Cournac (Liverpool, 1917), p. 184. A very interesting edition of the *Paradoxa*, with extensive rhetorical glosses (Paris, 1541), reflects a rhetorical interpretation. I hope to do a separate study of these glosses.

24. I consulted a number of texts at the Newberry Library, including Erasmus' edition (1520), the *Opera* printed in Basle in 1534, the collection printed in London in 1579, and the *Opera Omnia*, Venice, 1579.

25. *The paradox*, tr. R. Whittington (London, 1540), sig. A4.

26. Cicero, *De Officiis*, trans. William Guthrie, Esq. (London, 1820), p. xii.

27. In his edition of *Officia Ciceronis* (Basle, 1520), p. 266.

28. On the development of an ironic style in the Renaissance, see William J. Kennedy, *Rhetorical Norms in Renaissance Literature* (New Haven, 1978), chapter 2 ("The Style of Ironic Discourse").

29. For four other instances in More's works (all from his Tower period) see Germain Marc'hadour, *The Bible in the Works of St. Thomas More*, Part III (Nieuwkoop, 1970), p. 148.

30. J. Duncan M. Derrett, "The Utopians' Stoic Chamber-Pots," *Moreana* 73 (1982) 72-76. For a later, patristic analogue, see Katharina M. Wilson, "An Affront to Gold and Silver: Tertullian's *De Cultu Feminarum* and More's *Utopia*," *Moreana* 73 (1982) 69-74. Charles Clay Doyle's note, "The Utopians' Therapeutic Chamber-Pots," p. 75 of this same issue, points to the "deep-seated connection between wealth and excrement."

31. See Lee's note, p. 76, pointing out that *matellionem* is a "disparaging diminutive intentionally chosen by Cic. to suggest *matella*, 'a chamber-pot.'"

32. On the significance of shame in *Utopia* see Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980), pp. 47-57.

33. Compare Spenser's treatment of Orgoglio in the *Faerie Queene* and Alciati's emblem on avarice and court life: a man is in a stock, the motto, "In Aulicos." I owe this reference to Virginia Callahan.

34. See, e.g., No. 201, "On the King and the Peasant," in St. Thomas More, *Latin Poems*, ed. Clarence H. Miller et al., *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, vol. III, part 2 (New Haven, 1984), 230-33.

35. My discussion does not begin to exhaust the importance of this scene for More. See his letter to Erasmus (December 4, 1516) in St. Thomas More, *Selected Letters*, ed. Elizabeth Frances Rogers (New Haven, 1961), p. 85.

36. On the other hand, Robert P. Adams argues that More "was strictly logical, according to his premises": see "Designs by More and Erasmus for a New Social Order," *SP* 52 (1945) 143. Cf. George M. Logan, *The Meaning of More's "Utopia"* (Princeton, 1983). While granting that the praise of *voluptas* is paradoxical, Logan has set out to "have the parts of the argument restored to their logical sequence," pp. 147-81. I find the value of this study elsewhere — in its discussion of Cicero and, more generally, of Stoicism.

37. Craig R. Thompson, trans., *The Colloquies of Erasmus* (Chicago, 1965), p. 537.

38. Edward Surtz, S. J., *The Praise of Pleasure: Philosophy, Education, and Communism in More's "Utopia"* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), pp. 26-27.

39. Cf. Hexter's remarks, pp. cvi-cvii in the *Yale Utopia*.

40. Surtz, pp. 9-10; 21.

41. *Colloquies*, trans. Thompson, p. 538. For more on Epicureanism, see Don Cameron Allen, "The Rehabilitation of Epicurus and his Theory of Pleasure in the Early Renaissance," *SP* 41 (1944) 1-15; Thompson's discussion, pp. 535-37; Surtz, pp. 9-76; and Logan, pp. 144-81.

42. See, in particular, pp. 19-21.

43. André Prévost, ed., *L'Utopie de Thomas More* (Paris, 1978), p. 687.

44. Surtz, pp. 10-12.

45. *Utopia*, 42/31; *Translations of Lucian*, ed. Craig R. Thompson, *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, vol. III, part 1 (New Haven, 1974), 2/6. In both instances, More seems to have Horace in mind.

46. Judith P. Jones, "The *Philebus* and the Philosophy of Pleasure in Thomas More's *Utopia*," *Moreana* 31-32 (1971) 61-69.

47. *Colloquies*, trans. Thompson, p. 538; Thompson, p. 536.

48. Thompson, p. 536.

49. *Colloquies*, trans. Thompson, p. 539.